



# INTER FAITH

# UPDATE

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## Funds boost faith based work for cohesion

In February, the Home Office announced that the Faith Community Capacity Building Fund has enabled a range of grants from £5,000 to £50,000 to be made to 578 organisations for faith community capacity building to increase community cohesion and inter faith activity across England and Wales. The funding will give much needed support to an area of work which has not been well funded to date and will make possible many new inter faith projects as well as the strengthening of existing ones. The Community Development Foundation were commissioned by the Home Office to run the Fund and are also taking forward the second round, details of

which are due to be announced this summer. An interview with CDF's Director of Projects, Debbie Ladds, responsible for CDF's work on the Fund appears on page 18.

CDF are also responsible for administering the new Connecting Communities Plus - Communities Grants programme for small locally managed organisations running local projects. One of the themes of this programme is 'bringing together communities from different races and faiths and promoting a shared sense of belonging (community cohesion)'.

Further information can be found at [www.cdf.org.uk](http://www.cdf.org.uk) The closing date for applications is 5 July.

### Subscribing to Inter Faith Update

This newsletter is published three times a year and is available by subscription at £7.50 per year.

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Inter Faith Update Subscriptions,  
 Inter Faith Network,  
 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN

## Equality Act reaches the statute book

The Equality Act received the Royal Assent on 16 February. The enactment of this important piece of legislation is the culmination of a lengthy process which goes back to the adoption, at the end of 2000, by the European Council of Ministers of a Directive dealing with discrimination in the employment field relating to the six 'strands' of disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and age. This led to Government consultations on the best way to provide institutional support on discrimination in these fields, given that the Disability Rights Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for

Racial Equality were already in place. The question was whether to set up a new body to cover the remaining strands of religion and belief, age and sexual orientation; to set up three separate bodies covering each of these strands; or to create a new body bringing together the existing Commissions and covering the new strands as well. It was this final option which emerged as the preferred way forward and the Equality Act makes provision for the setting up of a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights. Successive stages on the path to this point have been charted in previous issues of Inter Faith Update.

*(continued on page 5)*

## New resources from the Inter Faith Network

In March, the Network published a third edition of **Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory**. The new edition contains contact details and short descriptions of the work and structure of over 250 organisations working to promote good inter faith relations at UK-wide, national, regional and local level, 42 of which are new listings. ISBN 1 902906 24 1 Available from the Inter Faith Network at £7.50 (including £1.55 postage and packing). A sample page from the directory showing a local inter faith group entry can be found at [www.interfaith.org.uk/orderdirectory.htm](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/orderdirectory.htm)

To produce the directory, every entry was checked with bodies listed. Regional inter faith bodies were asked to let the Network know of any new local bodies which had emerged since the last issue and in Scotland the Scottish Inter Faith Council ensured that new initiatives could be approached for inclusion. The decision has been made to make the directory available only in hard copy at this stage but e-mail contact addresses for all regional and local inter faith groups willing to have these listed on the internet have been added to the Network's website at [www.interfaith.org.uk/local/directory.htm](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/local/directory.htm)

## Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of Our Faith Communities

As reported in the last issue of Inter Faith Update, the Network produced, shortly after the bombings of 7 July, in consultation with the Commission for Racial Equality, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Chief Fire Officers' Association, guidelines for faith community organisations working together to respond to inter-community tensions and to attacks, or the threat of attacks, on

places of worship or other faith community property. These guidelines had been developed following a meeting convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, at Lambeth Palace some months earlier. The guidelines were widely distributed by e-mail but following requests for hard copy, they have been produced, with assistance from a Home Office project grant, as an A4 leaflet. The pdf can be downloaded free from the Network's website [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk) or single copies are free with an A4 sized SAE from the Network office. Bulk copies can be ordered. To enquire e-mail [gaylina.nguyen@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:gaylina.nguyen@interfaith.org.uk)

## New 'local inter faith zone' for the Network's website

During the last six months, the Network's website has received a major facelift and has had a new section added: 'The Local Inter Faith Zone'. This links to the recently published second edition of **The Local Inter Faith Guide** (published by the Network in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council, 2005 ISBN 1 902906 1 95. Price £6.95 plus £1.75 postage and packing from the Network office). Work on the website has been carried out for the Inter Faith Network by Bhupinder Singh, its former Information Officer.

Check out the  
new website at  
[www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

## Inter Faith Update

*Inter Faith Update* is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

Please send any items and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue by **5 September** to: The Newsletter Editor, Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN or e-mail to [harriet.crabtree@interfaith.org](mailto:harriet.crabtree@interfaith.org) marking your e-mail 'newsletter'.

## NETWORK NEWS

### Faith communities discuss faith and citizenship

As part of the Inter Faith Network's 'Faith and Citizenship' project a special meeting of the Network's Faith Communities Consultative Forum was held in London on 6 December. Brian Pearce, the Network's Director, introduced the project and set the scene for the day's discussions. He was followed by Judith Lempriere, Head of the Home Office's Cohesion and Faiths Unit, offering a Government perspective, and there were also presentations from Dr Manazir Ahsan, Director General of the Islamic Foundation and a Network Vice-Chair, and Sister Isabel Smyth, former Chief Executive of the Scottish Inter Faith Council and Secretary of the Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations of Action of Churches Together in Scotland.

There were four contributions from different faith communities reflecting on aspects of inter faith relations and engagement with wider society to work together, as citizens, for the common good. These were from Miriam Kaye, Interfaith Officer of the Board of Deputies of British Jews; Barnabas Leith, Secretary for External Affairs of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the UK and a Network Vice-Chair; and Anil Bhanot, General Secretary of the Hindu Council (UK).

Anne Breivik, the Network's 'Faith and Citizenship' Project Officer, spoke about the importance of faith communities helping with materials for schools on faith and citizenship and about the forthcoming February seminar on the educational dimensions of the Network's project.

Throughout the day there were lively plenary sessions with a wide range of contributions from those attending the meeting.

From the day's proceedings there emerged a shared recognition of the need for members of faith communities to make a positive contribution to the development of British society; a positive approach to civic identity even if the legal connotations of citizenship can be more problematic; and a need for a nuanced and inclusive understanding of 'British' identity.

### Educating for Shared Citizenship

On 7 February the Inter Faith Network, in association with the Citizenship Foundation, organised a seminar on 'Faith, Identity and Belonging; Educating for Shared Citizenship' to explore how schools can best help in preparing young people for life in multi-faith and multicultural society and how teachers tackle issues related to faith and citizenship in the classroom and to discuss such key issues as:

- How do faith identities affect understanding of British citizenship?
- How do we handle our multiple identities and loyalties?
- How does our UK citizenship interrelate with our international links and our responsibilities as global citizens?
- What does it mean to educate for shared citizenship within this complex of identities?

The event brought together over seventy invited specialists in Religious Education and Citizenship Education and members of faith communities. There were presentations from key people within RE and Citizenship Education, reflections from the classroom and young people's perspectives. Substantial time was set aside for plenary discussion since one of the overall aims of the day was to establish contact and dialogue between the different communities represented at the seminar. The working group session in the afternoon allowed participants to delve deeper into some more specific aspects of the day's focus.

The day was jointly chaired by Brian Pearce, the Network's Director, and Don Rowe, Director of Curriculum Resources, the Citizenship Foundation. Speakers included Tony Breslin, Chief Executive, Citizenship Foundation; John Keast, Consultant to the DfES on Religious Education and Intercultural Education; Balbir Sohal, Advisory Teacher for Citizenship, PSHE and Equalities, Coventry Local Authority; Rauf Bashir, Projects Manager, Building Bridges Pendle; Clare Giles, Citizenship Coordinator, Whitstable Community College, Kent; Deepa Mashru, Leicester Inter Faith Youth Group; and Sophia Ashraf, Bradford Student Shadow SACRE.

Coming out of the day was the acknowledgement that schools and teachers were facing substantial challenges within the field of faith and citizenship. The need for more resources and teacher training was highlighted, as was the need for schools to establish closer links with the community. Despite the room for improvement, there were examples of several projects that have very successfully addressed faith and citizenship. A lot of the debate in the plenary sessions revolved around issues of identity and belonging.

A report on the day's proceedings will be available from the Network's office in early May, cost £4.50 including postage and packaging.

## Faith Communities Consultative Forum

The Faith Communities Consultative Forum of the Inter Faith Network met on 27 October and discussed the Home Office's consultation document, Preventing Extremism Together: Places of Worship and the Government's Terrorism Bill, as well as noting the position reached by then on the Racial and Religious Hatred Bill and the Equality Bill and on preparations for setting up the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights.

## Meeting of national inter faith organisations

A meeting of representatives of national inter faith organisations was held by the Inter Faith Network in London on 24 November. There was a useful exchange of news and plans and also discussion on issues connected with the Network's current membership review.

## Local inter faith link meetings in the North West and South West

The Inter Faith Network held regional meetings for local inter faith organisers in the North West in Bolton on 13 December and South West in Bristol on 28 March. These were a chance for sharing of news and discussion of their work.

### Network newsletter

The current issue of Inter Faith Issue is a double one. The Autumn/Winter issue was delayed and the Network Office apologises to readers for this.

## NATIONAL UPDATE

### Equality Act reaches the statute book

(cont from page 1)

The CEHR is due to become operational in October 2007 when it will take on the work of the Equal Opportunities and Disability Rights Commissions, together with responsibilities in the field of age, religion and belief and sexual orientation. Responsibility for race matters will be transferred to the CEHR from the Commission for Racial Equality in 2009. The Commission will cover England, Scotland and Wales. In Scotland and Wales there will be statutory committees responsible for the work of the CEHR. In addition to its work in the area of discrimination, the CEHR will be charged with the promotion and protection of human rights, providing institutional support for the Human Rights Act and the promotion of good relations between members of different groups, and between members of those groups and others.

The CEHR will have a duty to consult with stakeholders to ensure that all groups have an opportunity to participate and engage in its work and a duty to monitor progress on equality, human rights and good relations between communities through publishing a regular 'state of the nation' report on these matters.

In February the Commission for Racial Equality launched a proposal that a new non-governmental body should be set up, alongside the CEHR, to guide, advise and mediate on community relations, civic engagement and citizenship, arguing that this would complement the work of the CEHR by focusing on the distinct challenges presented by community relations work. The CRE's proposal can be found at [www.cre.gov.uk/newbody](http://www.cre.gov.uk/newbody).

Secondary legislation enacted at the end of 2003 under the European Communities Act 1972 gave effect to the 2000 European Directive in the employment field in relation to religion or belief and to sexual orientation. Regulations, relating to discrimination in employment on the grounds of age, were recently approved by Parliament and are due to come into force in October.

Part II of the Equality Act makes unlawful discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities, services, premises, education and the exercise of public functions. It also provides powers to outlaw, by secondary legislation, discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities, services, premises, education and the exercise of public functions. The Department of Trade and Industry is at present consulting on a draft of these regulations (see page 6). It is intended to bring into effect in October of this year both the powers in the Equality Act in relation to religion or belief and the secondary legislation in relation to sexual orientation. The Equality Act also creates a new duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between men and women and to prohibit sex discrimination in the exercise of public functions.

The Religion and Belief Consultative Group on Equality, Diversity and Human Rights brings together representatives of faith community organisations and also of the British Humanist Association and the National Secular Society to monitor and discuss developments in the equality and diversity field. It is chaired by Barnabas Leith of the Baha'i community, a Vice-Chair of the Inter Faith Network. It keeps in close touch with the work of the Government's Steering Group which is preparing the way for the setting up of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights and also with progress on the Equalities Review and Discrimination Law Review.

The Equalities Review issued its interim report on 21 March (see page 6). The parallel Discrimination Law Review is examining the effectiveness of current anti-discrimination legislation and identifying gaps in protection for some groups. It is intended that the work of the two reviews should lead to a new Single Equality Act bringing together legislation on discrimination into one legal framework and the Government has committed itself to enacting this during the lifetime of the present Parliament.

## Further Government measures on sexual orientation and discrimination

On 13 March the Department of Trade and Industry published a consultation paper outlining the Government's intention to introduce regulations in October 2006 to be made under the Equality Act 2006 to prohibit sexual discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, the use of premises, education and the exercise of public functions. In December 2003, sexual orientation discrimination was made unlawful in the workplace and in the provision of occupational training, but there were specific exemptions for religious organisations.

The new draft regulations prohibit direct and indirect discrimination and victimisation, but not harassment. The Government's consultation paper recognises that "there may be circumstances where the new regulations could impact on aspects of religious activity or practice in the light of the doctrines of some faiths concerning sexual orientation and the beliefs of their followers" and views are invited on the impact that the regulations may have in these areas. The document says that "any exceptions would need to be clearly defined", and, it suggests, "limited to activities closely linked to religious observance or practices that arise from the basic doctrines of a faith". The document does not envisage any exemptions from the general prohibition on sexual orientation discrimination in contexts where a religious organisation provides a wider service to the community with a social or welfare aspect; where a religious organisation is contracted by a public authority to deliver a service on its behalf; or where a service is provided on a commercial basis.

Responses to the consultation are required by 5 June. The consultation document is also available from DTI publications ADMAIL 528, London, SW1W 8YT. It can be downloaded from [www.dti.gov.uk/consultations/files/publication-1606.pdf](http://www.dti.gov.uk/consultations/files/publication-1606.pdf)

## Interim report of equalities review

The current Equalities Review, chaired by Trevor Philips, Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, is looking at the root causes of inequality and how these can be tackled. It issued its interim report on 21 March. This has been published in order to provide a basis for the wider public debate which it hopes will inform its final report.

The Review has been invited by the Prime Minister to consider especially those areas of inequality which are not the result of pure economic disadvantage. The interim report suggests that it would be unrealistic to think that socio-economic disadvantages are not an important part of the background to the review but suggests that some kinds of inequalities can be identified which are partly or wholly separate from those caused by socio-economic factors. The Review believes that many of these are not wholly due to the effects of individual prejudice or discrimination or purely the result of cultural situations or choice, but arise from the failures of systems, policies or institutions. The interim report aims to set out the degree to which other kinds of differences or 'domains' besides the ones traditionally called 'class' may lead to individuals or groups of individuals suffering unjust inequalities. It focuses particularly on those inequalities which appear to have persisted over more than one generation and which seem impervious to the efforts to tackle them of Government, civil society or of individuals themselves.

The interim report makes only brief references to religion or belief as a factor in equality. It says that there is very little data available about the impact of this factor on life chances and describes this as being one of the 'data deserts'. Further analysis is being undertaken for the Review which will use data from 1971 onwards from the Office of National Statistics' Longitudinal Study to show how far members of each social group tend to be found to have a similar labour market status at distinct points across their lives. It is hoped that this analysis will also provide more information about the impact of religion or belief on labour market activity.

The interim report is available at [www.theequalitiesreview.org.uk](http://www.theequalitiesreview.org.uk)

## Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006

The progress through its different Parliamentary stages of the Government's Religious and Racial Hatred Bill was dogged by controversy but there is now an Act on the statute book which received the Royal Assent on 16 February. It applies only to England and Wales. Its provisions will not come into force until the Home Secretary makes an order to this effect.

Following the general election in May last year the Government introduced a Bill which incorporated the provisions which it had dropped in past attempts to enact them, first in the autumn of 2004 when they formed part of the Anti-Terrorism Bill of 2001 and then when they were included in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill introduced into Parliament at the end of 2004. In each case the provisions on religious hatred were dropped, in the face of opposition to them in the House of Lords, in order to facilitate the enactment of the main parts of the legislation.

The short new Bill dealing just with incitement to religious hatred, with, as before, provisions parallel to those covering the existing offence of incitement to racial hatred, again provoked demands both inside and outside Parliament for greater safeguards for freedom of speech and expression.

Last autumn the Bill was effectively rewritten as a result of the amendments made to it by the House of Lords despite the Government's opposition to these. They provided that for an offence of stirring up religious hatred to be committed there must have been a clear intention to do so, in addition to words or behaviour having been threatening in character. The amendments also introduced additional safeguards for freedom of expression by providing in the legislation that it does not "prohibit or restrict discussion, criticism or expressions of antipathy, dislike, ridicule, insult or abuse of particular religions or the beliefs or practices of their adherents, or of any other belief system or the beliefs or practices of its adherents, or proselytising or urging adherents of a different religion or belief system to cease practising their religion or belief system".

It seemed at one stage that it might be possible to achieve some form of political compromise but when the Government brought forward its own counter amendments to the Bill on its return, after some delay, to the House of Commons in February of this year, the House rejected these amendments and thereby preserved the amendments which had been made in the House of Lords.

The new Act's provisions, as in the Government's original Bill, deal with the stirring up of hatred against people defined by their religious belief or their lack of religious belief. The Act leaves it to the courts to decide whether any particular belief is a 'religious belief'. The Act also retains the requirement for the Attorney General's agreement to be given before any prosecution can be brought under it.

The debates on this legislation made clear the lack of any broad agreement on the appropriate balance to be struck between freedom of expression and the protection of people against the stirring up of hatred against them on grounds of their religious identity and the extent to which the law should intervene in this.

## Tackling extremism: working group reports

Following the London bombings last July, the Home Secretary set up seven working groups of Muslim representatives. The groups focused on the following topics: tackling extremism and radicalisation; engaging with young people; supporting regional and local initiatives and community actions; engaging with women; imam training and accreditation and the role of mosques as a resource for the whole community; providing a full range of education services in the UK, that meet the needs of the Muslim community; and security for the community, including tackling Islamophobia, protecting Muslims from extremism, and building community confidence in policing.

The reports of these working groups were published on 22 September and can be found at [communities.homeoffice.gov.uk/raceandfaith/reports\\_pubs/publications/race\\_faith/255560](http://communities.homeoffice.gov.uk/raceandfaith/reports_pubs/publications/race_faith/255560)

## Preventing extremism together: places of worship

Following the London bombings last July the Government brought forward a number of measures to deal with terrorism, some of which are contained in the Terrorism Act 2006 which reached the statute book in early April.

In early October last year the Home Office published a consultation document, Preventing Extremism Together: Places of Worship. This proposed that power should be taken whereby those controlling a place of worship could be required by an order of the court to take steps to stop certain extremist behaviour occurring in a place of worship. It was clear that there was considerable concern among faith communities about these proposals. The responses received by the Government queried whether there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate that a power of this kind was required in relation to places of worship and also questioned whether such a power, if taken, should apply only to places of worship and not to other premises where extremism was arguably more likely to arise.

The Government announced on 15 December that it had decided not to proceed with this proposal in the light of the strong support which had been expressed by respondents for joint working and information sharing as the most effective way of stopping any abuse of places of worship by extremists.

## Commission on Integration and Cohesion

In September last year the Home Secretary announced that he had written to faith leaders inviting their views on the Government's proposal for a Commission on Integration and Cohesion, an advisory body to be set up on a fixed term basis to identify and tackle ways to overcome barriers to integration. The proposal for this Commission had earlier been announced on 5 August by the Prime Minister as part of a package of responses to the July bombings in London. Since then, discussions about the shape and work of the Commission have been continuing, but it is understood that an announcement is likely to be made soon about the Commission's terms of reference and its membership.

## New Faith Communities Consultative Council

Following a number of consultative meetings, the Government is in the process of forming a Faith Communities Consultative Council which will bring together the work of the Inner Cities Religious Council in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (which was set up in 1992) and of the Steering Group of the Home Office's Working Together review (which reported early in 2004). The new body will be co-chaired by Home Office and ODPM Ministers and it is expected that its first meeting will take place shortly.

## Entry into the UK of 'ministers of religion'

A new distinction has been introduced between pastoral and non-pastoral religious workers in terms of the requirements for their entry to the UK. Issue 25 of Inter Faith Update reported in the summer of 2004 on the introduction of new pre-entry requirements for overseas 'ministers of religion' coming to the UK, including having a basic grasp of English. Issue 27 reported in the spring of 2005 that the Hindu and Sikh communities were in discussion with the Home Office about difficulties which they were experiencing as a result of the effects of these entry restrictions.

In December 2005, following the conclusion of further consultation with faith communities, the Home Office announced that it would be introducing a new immigration category for religious workers from abroad. This allows religious workers in non-pastoral roles to come to the UK to work for up to two years and covers workers whose duties include performing religious rites - such as reading the scriptures aloud or tending to the deities - but not preaching to a congregation. Unlike 'ministers of religion', they will not have to speak English, and will not be eligible to settle in the UK. A religious worker in a non-pastoral role will also be prohibited from acting as a 'minister of religion', missionary or member of a religious order, in order to avoid this new category being used to circumvent existing rules.

A further proposal contained in the Government's original consultation - for a post-entry civic knowledge test for 'ministers of religion' - is not now being pursued.

## 2011 census

Between May and August 2005 ONS ran a public consultation on the content of the 2011 Census questionnaire for England and Wales. The consultation exercise supported the need for almost all the information collected in the 2001 Census including a question on religious identity. Strong cases were also made for some new questions, especially language, sexual orientation, income and second residences.

A programme of question development and testing is underway. The emerging results of this testing will determine the choice of questions to be included in the 2007 Census Test. The Test questionnaires will be finalised in September 2006. The aim of ONS is to finalise the 2011 Census questionnaire by September 2008, for use in the 2009 Census rehearsal. The final questionnaire for 2011 will then be decided by Parliament.

A full report on the response to the consultation was published on 8 March and is available on the National Statistics website at:

[www.statistics.gov.uk/about/consultations/2011Census\\_response.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/consultations/2011Census_response.asp)

## Department for Constitutional Affairs

The first Faith Forum in Whitehall was launched by the Department for Constitutional Affairs on 21 February. It includes members of staff and members of the judiciary. The objective of the Forum is to develop a better, shared understanding of how faith relates to daily life, particularly in the workplace. Faiths represented include Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs and other faith communities. It is also open to those belonging to no faith but are interested in faith issues.

## The content of civil marriage ceremonies

In November 2005 the General Register Office (GRO) published a report on the consultation exercise which it had carried out earlier in the year on the content of civil marriage ceremonies in England and Wales.

Civil marriage ceremonies were introduced in 1837, with ceremonies taking place in register offices. Since the Marriage Act 1994, such ceremonies can also take place in “approved premises”, such as hotels, and the option of using alternative venues has proved to be very popular. It has been a fundamental principle since the introduction of civil marriage that it should be clearly separated from religious marriage and the Marriage Act 1949 states that “no religious service shall be used at any marriage solemnised in the office of a superintendent registrar”. Civil marriages carried out on ‘approved premises’ are subject to a provision in the regulations governing these which states that “any readings, music, words or performances which form part of a ceremony of marriage celebrated on the premises must be secular in nature [and] ... a reading which refers to a god or deity, prayer or worship, or church or temple would not be secular.”

An earlier review by the GRO found that there has been inconsistency in the ways in which these requirements have been interpreted. On the basis of last year’s consultation, it is now proposed to establish a single set of criteria on the religious content of ceremonies applying to civil weddings in both register offices and ‘approved premises’. It is also proposed to allow ‘incidental’ references to a god or deity in a song or reading in an essentially non-religious context, but readings from sacred texts such as the Bible, the Qu’ran or the Torah will be excluded, as will hymns or religious chants. It is also proposed to apply the same guidance in respect of interpreting the provisions of the Civil Partnership Act 2004 which applies to same sex partnerships.

In addition to making the consequential changes to existing legislation, the GRO intends to issue guidance to registration offices. This will indicate, for example, that classical music of religious origin, such as Ave Maria, Pie Jesu and Zadok the Priest, would be acceptable as background at a civil ceremony and the lyrics may be included as long as these contain no more than an incidental reference to a god or deity. The guidance will also say that popular love songs containing lyrics with religious references would be acceptable, as would be readings from poetry and plays or novels.

A copy of the report on the consultation, together with information about the representations which were received in the course of it can be found at: [www.gro.gov.uk/Images/consultationdocument\\_civilmarriagecontent2\\_tcm69-21282.pdf](http://www.gro.gov.uk/Images/consultationdocument_civilmarriagecontent2_tcm69-21282.pdf)

## Religious Education in faith schools

On 22 February a joint statement was issued from the Department for Education and Skills and Faith Communities on the importance of religious education. This reiterated the support of the signatory organisations for the non-statutory national framework for religious education published in 2004 and the principles underlying this.

The joint statement says that religious education enables pupils to “combat prejudice” and “to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faith and beliefs are different from their own;” “encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging;” and enables them to “flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community.” The statement says that the signatory organisations “believe that schools with a religious designation should teach not only their own faith but also an awareness of the tenets of other faiths and are fully committed to using the framework and developing the religious education curriculum for [their] schools and colleges.” Many faith based schools already teach about faiths other than their own but there is no legal requirement for them to do so.

The statement was signed on behalf of the Catholic Church, the Church of England, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Buddhist Society, the Free Churches Association, the Hindu Council of the UK, the Methodist Church, the Muslim Council of Britain and the Network of Sikh organisations. The full text can be found at [www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr2106b.html](http://www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr2106b.html)

## First state-funded Hindu school in UK

The Department for Education and Skills has approved a state funded Hindu school in Harrow, London following a bid from the I-Foundation/ISKON group. Nitesh Gor, from the I-Foundation said: “We are clearly delighted by this news. This paves the way for the first Hindu faith school in the UK. Our intent is to ensure that the school is fully integrated and working in synergy with the local community and schools. To this end, over the coming months we will be working closely with Harrow Council to begin a rigorous programme of community and local school

consultation to enable us to make this project successful. We are also developing strong relationships with education experts from other faith communities to ensure that pupils will have a strong sense of appreciation for other world faiths.” Harrow has a significantly large Hindu population. 20 per cent of Harrow residents are Hindu, the highest percentage for any local authority in the country.

## Armed Forces appoints new chaplains

The Armed Forces have appointed Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh Chaplains. They were welcomed to their role by Secretary of State for Defence, John Reid, on 15 November. Dr Sunil Kariyakarawan (Buddhist chaplain), Krishan Attri (Hindu chaplain); Imam Asim Hafiz (Muslim chaplain); and Mandeep Kaur (Sikh chaplain) are all civilians with cross-service responsibilities. They were recruited following an external recruitment campaign. The chaplains are fully integrated members of the Armed Forces chaplaincy services and will provide spiritual, moral and pastoral support to service personnel and their dependents. They will also support the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces by providing advice on faith specific issues.

## Chaplaincy in Further Education colleges

The Government’s White Paper on the future development of further education published in March, invites FE colleges to consider how their “pastoral arrangements can best reflect the characteristics of their student body, including faith, for example through multi faith chaplaincy arrangements”. The Faiths in Further Education Forum, which has multi faith membership, has been working to promote the development of multi faith chaplaincy in FE, where it is currently less developed than in institutions of Higher Education.

The Faiths in FE Forum can be contacted at [info@neafe.org](mailto:info@neafe.org) or by writing to Mannie Stewart, c/o Education Division, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ.

## The BBC and religion

On 14 March the Government issued a White Paper with its conclusions on the review of the BBC charter. In this the proposed new 10 year charter and continued license fee funding are linked to six new 'public purposes' which the BBC must serve, including 'sustaining citizenship in civil society'.

The House of Lords Select Committee which considered the issue of charter review recently produced a report covering an additional enquiry covering those issues which it was not able to investigate in sufficient detail ahead of its initial report. This additional enquiry included a focus on religious broadcasting. The Select Committee argues in favour of "a wide definition of broadcasting about religion and other beliefs" which "encourages all broadcasters, including the BBC, to find new, innovative and informative ways of tackling issues of religion, spirituality, ethics and values through all the different programming genres." The Select Committee says that the evidence which it received "shows that by approaching religion in this way viewers and listeners engage with it." It also says that the BBC "must provide its viewers and listeners with the background knowledge they require to understand the context of [a news] story. This is as true for stories related to religion and other belief systems as it is for any other subject area." The Select Committee recommends that "the BBC should be given a duty... to make sure viewers and listeners have a better understanding of the different religions and other belief systems through the objective portrayal of their different beliefs, practices and forms of worship." The full text of the Committee's report can be found at [www.bbccharterreview.org.uk](http://www.bbccharterreview.org.uk)

It has been announced recently that Alan Bookbinder will be leaving the BBC this summer after almost five years in charge of the BBC's Religion and Ethics Department.

## Holocaust Memorial Day

The UK's Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations began with a concert in Cardiff attended by around 100 genocide survivors and rescuers. It took place on Thursday 26 January to take account of the Jewish Sabbath, as this year's Holocaust Memorial Day fell on a the Friday, the first time since the event was instituted.

It was the first time that Wales had led the national commemoration. Eva Clarke, who was born at Mauthausen camp in Austria, in April 1945, introduced the concert with a tribute to survivors like her mother, Anna Bergman, 88, as well as the rescuers who "threw a lifeline to humanity" with life-saving acts of bravery. Among those honoured was American Charles Fawcett for his work in Marseille with Varian Fry during World War II. Former UN general Romeo Dallaire, spoke about his mission in Rwanda. Welsh First Minister Rhodri Morgan and Cardiff Council leader Rodney Berman told the audience that, earlier on Thursday, every school child in Wales had taken a pledge to "make a difference". The pledge was in the form of repeating a specially commissioned poem written by Gwyneth Lewis, Wales' national poet. The concert ended with the lighting of the memorial flame by seven-year-old Samuel Pfister, the great-grandson of Belgian woman Claire Keen-Thyrin, who was a teenager when she helped hide Jewish children on the run from the Nazis.

HMD projects and events also took place around the UK at local level. Many had an inter faith dimension. The Borough of Telford and Wrekin held an exhibition, with invited speakers, at the Civic Offices to commemorate the day, remembering those who suffered and the allied forces who strove to save them. An evening service of faith readings organised by Telford and Wrekin Inter Faith Group followed the daytime exhibition and focused on readings and reflections by young people of different faiths through poems and short stories. In the Royal Borough of Kingston on Thames, the local authority and the Kingston Inter Faith Forum commemorated National Holocaust Memorial Day in a morning programme of remembrance. This included a tree planting and dedication and a talk from Marcel Ladenheim, a Holocaust survivor. The Interfaith Forum also gave a presentation of photographs taken by their members who visited Auschwitz in July 2005. The Mayor, Councillor Yogan Yoganathan opened the ceremony remembering the persecution of the Jews and others during World War 2 and those still targeted today because of a difference in culture and faith.

For the sixth year Leicester Council of Faiths was one of the main organisers of the Leicester Holocaust Memorial Day. This was in partnership with the School Development Support Agency, the Stanley Burton Centre for Holocaust Studies and Leicester City Council and was held in the

St Philip's Centre. In London, the City Circle (an organisation of young Muslim professionals) held an early HMD event with the Holocaust Educational Trust at which they were addressed by Lodz ghetto survivor Roman Halter. City Circle's chair, Asim Siddiqui, said it 'Let us young Muslims and Jews stand united in our collective resolve to work together to learn the lessons and prevent a repeat of Europe's shameful past.'

Until January 2005, responsibility for delivering HMD lay with the Home Office. An independent body, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, has now taken over responsibility. In November 2005, the eleven members and Chair of the new HMD Trust were announced.

Newcastle will host the 2007 Holocaust Memorial Day national event when the theme will be 'The Dignity of Difference'. On 30 March the Trust held a conference in London for local activity organisers from across the country to come together with academics and survivors of the Holocaust, and Bosnian and Rwandan genocides to discuss the theme for HMD 2007. HMT also arranged a trip in early March for hundreds of sixth formers and teachers to visit Auschwitz. Joining the groups were Home Office Minister Paul Goggins, a number of MPs, a contingent of police officers involved in race relations, and also the Secretary General of the Hindu Forum, Ramesh Kallidai and the Inter Faith Adviser to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rev Guy Wilkinson.

The United Nations General Assembly passed an official resolution on 1 November 2005 to designate January 27 as an annual international day of remembrance, urging every member nation to honour the memory of Holocaust victims, and encouraging the development of educational programs about Holocaust history as part of the resolve to help prevent future acts of genocide. The UN resolution rejects denial of the Holocaust, and condemns discrimination and violence based on religion or ethnicity.

## Controversy over cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad

Following the publication in the Danish right wing newspaper, Jyllands-Posten, of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, there were angry protests by Muslims in many countries in which some protesters were killed. The vehemence of reactions to the cartoons not only reflected

reactions to the nature of the caricatures of the Prophet but the fact that any depiction of him is not permitted within Islam. Some demonstrators in central London who carried placards apparently inciting the murder of those responsible for the cartoons have had criminal charges brought against them. Their cases have yet to come to trial.

Statements by the Muslim Council of Britain, while strongly deploring the publication of the cartoons, condemned the violence, and threats of violence, which had taken place and made it clear that protests over the cartoons needed to be peaceful and called on Muslims to resist provocation by extremist elements.

The cartoons were originally published in Denmark last September, but the international campaigning against them had not spread widely to other countries until the early weeks of this year. Partly because of the heightened controversy over them the cartoons were reprinted in twenty other countries and on the web. However, the British press chose not to reproduce the cartoons. A number of British newspapers (and other commentators) argued that while they had the right to publish the cartoons if they chose to do so, freedom of expression needed to be exercised responsibly.

Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, commented: "There is freedom of speech, we all respect that, but there is not an obligation to insult or to be gratuitously inflammatory, and I believe that the re-publication of these cartoons has been unnecessary, it has been insensitive, it has been disrespectful and it has been wrong. And if I may say so, I place on record my regard for the British media who have shown considerable responsibility and sensitivity in this regard."

## Hindu protests over stamps

The Hindu Forum of Britain complained to the Royal Mail about one of the stamps issued last Christmas which reproduced a series of nativity paintings from different cultures. This was the 68p stamp, used when mailing letters to India. The complaint related to the fact that the illustration of Mary, the mother of Jesus, had a *kumkum* in the centre of her forehead and that one of the shepherds, a Vaishnavite *tilak*, judged by some to be specifically Hindu marks. It was argued that it was insensitive to produce such a stamp at a time when the issue of conversions in India from Hinduism to Christianity has been the



subject of heated debate. As a result of the complaint, the Royal Mail decided to not to print further supplies of the stamp.

## Institute of Community Cohesion

The Institute of Community Cohesion, set up by Ted Cantle, Associate Director of the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), was established on 27 March at De Montfort University. The new institute is intended to become a key international authority on cohesion work, based on a partnership of academic, statutory and non-governmental bodies, as well as public, private and voluntary sector agencies. It will bring together the expertise of the city councils and universities in Leicester and Coventry and will focus on professional evaluation of best practice, disseminating cohesion ideas that have been shown to have an impact on communities.

The first phase of the project involves the development of tool-kits, and leadership training and development schemes for elected members. Discussions with the Vice Chancellors of both Leicester's universities, and those of Coventry and Warwick, resulted in a decision that different aspects of the Institute's work will be hosted by each university. Overall, eight different departments will be involved across the four universities. National partners include IDeA, the Commission for Racial Equality, the National Health Service, the Housing Corporation, and several Government departments.

Under the auspices of the Institute, the School Development and Support Agency has been conducting a survey of inter faith activity particularly linked to the engagement of young people with a view to identifying useful models for this. Further information from [maurice.coles@sdsa.net](mailto:maurice.coles@sdsa.net)

## Earthquake in Pakistan

On 8 October a major earthquake hit northern Pakistan, sending shockwaves across an area of 30,000 square kilometres. It killed 73,000 and injured another 70,000 people, making 2.5 million people homeless and 2.3 million people without a secure food supply. It destroyed Muzaffarabad - the centre of the earthquake - damaging the towns of Bagh and Rawalakot and

affecting 15,000 villages in the region. Alongside the major aid agencies, including the faith based relief organisations, many Muslim and Hindu groups and members of other faiths in the UK joined in the fund raising and aid effort.

It has also been a time for expression of support across communities. In Guildford, for example, the Bishop of Guildford, Rt Rev Christopher Hill, visited the Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking on 14 October to express solidarity with worshippers in the aftermath of the Pakistan earthquake. The mosque serves a largely Pakistani community and the Bishop addressed a significant number of people gathered for prayer. 'We are profoundly concerned for all who have died or been made homeless by the earthquake,' he said. 'We want to express our solidarity with all those seeking to alleviate the suffering of the survivors of this terrible natural disaster.' In some areas inter faith observances were held, as in Bedford where at the Jamia Gulshani Mosque there was a reading from the Qur'an, a period of silent shared prayer and brief addresses by faith leaders as part of a service, "United in Prayer: Remembering the Victims of the Kashmiri Earthquake."

Faiths have also responded together to other overseas tragedies. In September, the Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, Rt Rev Idris Jones, and Imam Habib Rauf from the Glasgow Central Mosque made a joint donation to the Niger Crisis Appeal. Imam Habib said "Whatever our religion, we are neighbours, whether here in Scotland or across the world. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'Whoever sleeps on a full stomach while his neighbour goes hungry is not one of us'. It is not an option but an obligation to help the poor and needy in the Third World."

## Launch of Christian-Muslim Forum

More than 100 guests attended the launch of the new Christian-Muslim Forum at Lambeth Palace on 24 January. The Forum will offer practical ways of bringing Christians and Muslims together. It is chaired by the Anglican Bishop of Bolton, the Rt Revd David Gillett and the Vice-Chairman is Dr Atallah Siddiqui of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, both of whom spoke at the launch, as did the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, and Prime Minister Tony Blair. Members of the 20-strong Forum include four Muslim presidents, four Christian presidents

and six pairs of Christian and Muslim specialists. Its first appointed co-director is Julian Bond. During the course of 2006 the Forum plans to hold two residential meetings, as well as several day meetings.

Further information at  
[www.christianmuslimforum.org.uk](http://www.christianmuslimforum.org.uk)

## Imams and Rabbis Conference

The first one day Conference of Imams and Rabbis in Britain took place on 30 March. Its topic was 'Working Together: A Jewish-Muslim Dialogue'. 100 Muslim and Jewish religious leaders, religious educators and community leaders, including women and young people, were invited from both communities. Delegates included members of the Sunni and Shi'a Muslim communities and the Orthodox, Reform, Sephardic, Liberal and Masorti Jewish communities. The conference was co-organised by the Imams and Rabbis Steering Group and by the Maimonides Foundation and Alif Aleph which are represented on the group.

## Chief Rabbi calls US ministers to work for good relations

In February Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks addressed the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue conference in Bournemouth. He called on ministers to take a more active role in promoting inter faith relations, saying "We must work constantly for the sake of good community relations at the grassroot level and it is there that we have a significant contribution to make".

## Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia

The Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia hosted a meeting at the Cathedral Westminster Cathedral Hall, London on 9 February to facilitate discussion within, and across, Muslim communities following events such as the London bombings, riots in Birmingham and unrest following publication of inflammatory cartoons in Denmark. The purpose of the meeting was to explore the possible need for an independent group of Muslims and non-

Muslims to facilitate coordinated Muslim responses to these sorts of issues. It was also to exchange information on current activities and initiatives, and to foster alliances between Muslim groups between Muslim groups and non-Muslim groups. It is likely that, in the light of the discussion at the meeting, an Institute of Muslim Affairs will be established "to promote informed dialogue and debate within the Muslim community of Britain and to promote a Muslim perspective on public policy to Parliament, government, the media, and business." Further information from [cbmi@stoneashdown.org](mailto:cbmi@stoneashdown.org)

## 40 years of Nostra Aetate

October 2005 marked the 40th anniversary of the proclamation, in the course of the Second Vatican Council, of Nostra Aetate, which deals with the relationship between the Catholic Church and people of other faiths, and was seen at the time to be a ground-breaking document.

A variety of events were held to mark this anniversary including a two-day conference held in London at Heythrop College and Westminster Cathedral Hall. It was organised jointly by Heythrop College and two committees of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales: the Committee for Other Faiths and the Committee for Catholic-Jewish Relations. In his remarks to the conference Archbishop Kevin McDonald emphasised the Catholic Church's commitment to inter faith dialogue and talked about the way in which this has developed over the years since the publication of Nostra Aetate, which provided a theological basis for it.

## Plans for new national RE centre

The **Church Times** reports that plans are being made to establish a national centre for Religious Education in a redundant Wren Church, St Nicholas Cole Abbey, in Queen Victoria Street in the City of London. The interior is to be redesigned to include a multi-purpose hall, office and meeting space, a café-bar, display and resource areas and an open cloister area. It is planned that the building will house some physical resources and also be the home of the virtual resource centre REonline. The plans for the new centre are being developed by the Culham Institute, a Church of England

educational body that promotes and develops RE in all types of school. One-off capital funds of around £4 million will have to be raised in order to convert and equip the building to fulfil its new purpose, while preserving its character as a heritage building.

## Centre for the study of Islam in the UK opens in Cardiff

A new Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK at Cardiff University was officially opened by Yusuf Islam on 20 September 2005. The opening was attended by over 400 guests including academics, local civic and political leaders, local and national faith community representatives, local inter faith associations and children from local schools. The Centre, which will be based in the School of Religious and Theological Studies, aims to promote scholarly and public understanding of Islam and the life of Muslim communities in Britain. As well as offering masters, diploma and other postgraduate qualifications the Centre will also host a public lecture series and international conferences. The Centre's Director, Dr Sophie Gilliat-Ray, said at the launch that Cardiff was an ideal location for the Centre as it was home to one of the oldest Muslim communities in Britain and the first mosque in the UK had been established in Cardiff in 1860.

## Women meet to discuss combating prejudice and bigotry

The Women's Interfaith Network held a one day seminar in London on 7 March entitled "The Power of One". This was used to facilitate discussion on how each one of us can make a difference in combating prejudice and bigotry. The seminar was opened by Lady Gilda Levy and during the day there were presentations by Sara Bernstein, Hanadi Younan, Makaram Award and Rose Fitzpatrick. Further information on the work of the Women's Interfaith Network can be found at [www.wominet.co.uk](http://www.wominet.co.uk).

## Faith representation on Local Strategic Partnerships

The Church Urban Fund and the Faith Based Regeneration Network are currently undertaking a study looking at the involvement of faith representatives on Local Strategic Partnerships and other public partnerships. If you are such a representative or can put the project in touch with such representatives in your area, please contact Billy Dann at [billy.dann@cuf.org.uk](mailto:billy.dann@cuf.org.uk) or tel 020 7450 9071.

## Maimonides Foundation

During November the Maimonides Foundation organised a lecture series entitled "Loyalties: Personal and Communal. An exploration of religious loyalties in a civil society". Throughout the month four lectures were held, each one addressed by both a Jewish and a Muslim speaker, allowing them to discuss the same topic from their own personal perspective. The lectures, organised in association with the Leo Baeck College Centre for Jewish Education and the London Middle Eastern Institute, SOAS, covered topics including political leadership, academic debate, youth and young adults and religious leadership.

The Maimonides Foundation held a seminar on 1 February for undergraduate students on the topic of "Marriage in the 21st Century". The seminar, arranged in association with the Chaplaincy at Royal Holloway, was addressed by Jewish and Muslim speakers who discussed the religious regulations of marriage, differences between cultural and religious practices and current issues relating to marriage for young Jews and Muslims in Britain.

## Celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday

People of different faiths gathered on 1 October in Birmingham for a celebration co-sponsored by the World Congress of Faiths and the International Association for Religious Freedom. There were contributions from Dr Daryl Balla, General Secretary of IARF, Richard Boeke and Vinod Kapashi of WCF, Om Parkash Sharma, President of the National Council of Hindu Temples, Dr Joy Barrow of the International Interfaith Centre, and others.

## YOUTH INTER FAITH ACTIVITY

### This issue contains a special report on this growing area

Over the last three to four years there has been a marked increase in inter faith activity involving young people. The Inter Faith Network has helped contribute to this with the publication in 2004, with the National Youth Agency and TimeBank, of the youth inter faith action guide **Connect: Different Faiths Shared Values**, and its special focus 2005 National Meeting, 'Connecting for the Future: Young People and Inter Faith Relations in Britain' (**Connect** and the National Meeting Report can both be downloaded free at [www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/index.htm](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/index.htm)) The National Youth Agency's publication, **A Sense of Respect: Inter Faith Activities for Young People**, by Carmel Heaney and Maxine Green (NYA, 2005) is helping youth groups begin to work more confidently in this area.

### National inter faith body initiatives

A number of the national inter faith organisations in the UK, such as Alif Aleph, Council of Christians and Jews Youth Section, the Maimonides Foundation, Minorities of Europe, and United Religions Initiative UK run active young inter faith programmes (contact details for these bodies can be found on the Network's website [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)). In Scotland, the Scottish Inter Faith Council has made youth inter faith activity one of its key strands of work.

### Local inter faith bodies

An increasing number of local inter faith bodies are beginning to develop work in this area. For example, this year's Annual Lecture of the Forum of Faiths, Kensington and Chelsea, held on 22 March in association with the Community Relations Section of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, was on the theme of 'Faith and Young People'. The opening address for the afternoon's event was given by Councillor Paul Warrick, Cabinet Member for Service Improvement and External Relations. This was followed by a lecture by Dr Peter Vardy, Vice Principal of Heythrop College, a talk by Rev Dr

Alan Race, curator of 'The Global Ethic Exhibition', and a multi faith panel discussion on "Young People and the Common Good".

Some local inter faith bodies are working directly with schools. For example, Torbay Inter Faith Forum carried out a project in five local secondary schools in collaboration with RE teachers to discover teenagers' opinions on religions and school religious education because RE is so critical to living together harmoniously in a multi faith society. Four children of different ages were selected from each of the five schools and responded to a series of questions about their thoughts on religious education in schools which are now broadly based on the world religions.

Inter faith groups even in relatively un-diverse areas are working to increase engagement with young people. West Somerset Inter Faith Group, for example, has developed good relations with the local Community College and has an annual competition for Year 10 children to produce art (poems, pictures and so on) about religious tolerance. They also help with Christian Aid and Muslim Aid days at the school.

Some local projects have had a youth focus from the outset. Notable among these is Building Bridges Pendle. They recently held two events to bring together families and young children from the diverse communities of Pendle. The Festive Celebration for Young Children, held at the Brierfield Community Centre, was attended by 65 children who enjoyed an afternoon of activities including limbo dancing, musical chairs, quizzes and making posters. The children were also given the opportunity to ask questions and encouraged to share in the diversity of their culture and customs. The Festive Family Celebration, saw over 100 guests of all ages spending an enjoyable day together including a sit down two-course meal, several musical acts from different cultures, a magician and various competitions.

Building Bridges Burnley (more recently established) has developed an important programme of work with young people called 'The Bridge'. This brings young people in a number of local primary and junior schools together and gives them opportunities to understand the different cultures, religions, and backgrounds within our society today.

## THE DIVERSITY AND DIALOGUE PROJECT

Diversity and Dialogue is an youth inter faith project set up to create better understanding between young people of different faiths and backgrounds. It is led by Save the Children in partnership with Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid, JCORE, World Jewish Aid, CAFOD, Christian Aid and the Citizenship Foundation and has been running since 2002. The project has organised a series of events in Bradford, Leeds, London, and Manchester to encourage young people to share their beliefs and values over the last two years. It was involved in developing a youth faith trail at the British Museum that was launched in October 2005. The trail is currently accessible on the British Museum's website, in the Compass section where it is listed as 'Faith Tour' under Tours ([www.britishmuseum.ac.uk](http://www.britishmuseum.ac.uk)). The project has also assisted with the set up of a Bradford Youth Inter Faith Forum which was launched on 4 March 2006.

Diversity and Dialogue's website contains many interesting examples of youth inter faith projects ([www.savethechildren.org.uk/diversityanddialogue/](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/diversityanddialogue/)). It is also working on a range of educational resources for schools on 'growing up in a multi faith society'. These are due to go live on the website [www.diversityanddialogue.org.uk](http://www.diversityanddialogue.org.uk) in mid July and will be available free.

In preparation for the resource, 13 young people of different faiths from the London area will be working with the film production company Mouth That Roars ([www.mouththatroars.com](http://www.mouththatroars.com)) to produce a video that will be used as a stimulus to classroom based discussion. The young people involved will be producing the film that has three sections of approximately five minutes each. The video will provide a snapshot of life in a multi faith society and will address issues such as friendship in a multi faith community, personal beliefs and values and the impact of global issues on local communities. It will be accompanied by a set of teachers' notes that will include questions aimed at facilitating discussion in the classroom and suggestions about role plays that can highlight specific issues raised in the video. The educational resources will also includes tips on how to set up a youth inter faith group focusing on social and global issues.

Diversity and Dialogue is nearing the end of its current two year funding but is likely to continue under the auspices of Save the Children. If you have any questions or queries regarding Diversity and Dialogue please contact Becky Hatch, Project Coordinator, on 020 7012 6438 or [r.hatch@savethechildren.org.uk](mailto:r.hatch@savethechildren.org.uk)

## SACREs lead way on youth forums

The National Association of SACREs is just completing its second round of grants to local SACREs to encourage projects which will promote dialogue between young people of different faiths and achieve community benefit in their areas. Two of those funded on the first round were Portsmouth SACRE which has established a Portsmouth Youth Interfaith Forum (PYIFF) and Bristol SACRE which held a youth inter faith conference on 28 March.

## Interaction in learning

Religious Education and Citizenship Education are providing important contexts for the development of learning about inter faith issues in schools around the country. The Inter Faith Network's 7 February seminar, in association with the Citizenship Foundation, on 'Faith,

Identity and Belonging: Educating for Shared Citizenship' enabled reflection by educators and faith community members on ways that this may be developed. The seminar also looked at a range of other relevant issues such as joint work between faith schools of different traditions and extra-curricular projects. See page 3 for further information about the seminar.

Liberal Judaism magazine reports that Southgate Progressive Synagogue, in London, has joined forces with the Islamic Cultural Centre of Wembley to run a Religious Studies A Level class on Judaism and Islam with the teaching shared by Rabbi Stephen Howard and Imam Nyron Hassan Ali Gonzalez. 25 Jewish and Muslim students aged 17-86 are meeting for weekly classes at the Progressive Synagogue. Rabbi Southgate said, "This is excellent for inter faith relations and where the two religions differ, everyone has been very eager to learn about the other's point of view." Imam Gonzalez remarked "I am honoured to have this opportunity to help build bridges between the two communities and foster togetherness in society."

## Campus inter faith forums

Within institutions of higher education, inter faith issues are also coming to the fore. A Cambridge University Faith Forum has joined other forums at Universities such as Warwick. CUFF began in early 2005 with informal gatherings between representatives of different faith societies and has now taken steps to become officially registered. It is currently co-convened by Preet Majithia and Pooja Jain and has a committee which is working on planning a programme of activity. New initiatives are also under development at a number of universities, such as Queen Mary's College, University of London (with the encouragement of Inter-Act and Three Faiths Forum).

One of the priorities for funding of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund (see the interview on this page) has been 'young people' and a number of initiatives have been funded to help this area inter faith work. For example, the Three Faiths Forum has received a £50,000 grant to appoint an inter faith education worker to work with schools and colleges and Minorities of Europe has received funding towards community work aimed at bringing youngsters of different faiths together. This is the Interfaith Champions project, which will involve sixth formers in schools across Coventry and elsewhere. Mark Gifford, Interfaith Director at MoE will be helping teenagers work in their own schools to promote understanding between people from different religions and cultures. Alif Aleph has received a grant which will enable it, among other things, to make its resources better known to young people and encourage their involvement. A special section of their website is being developed as part of this.

## An international angle

Although this newsletter does not usually cover international events, it is interesting to note the attention focused on inter faith working for young people in a number of other countries. This is very much the focus of the US based Interfaith Youth Corp ([www.ifyc.org/](http://www.ifyc.org/)).

On 22 March, 2006 the 'International Conference on Faith and Service' gathered more than 500 leaders from the fields of religion, community service, academia, and public service at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. The conference theme of 'Building Bridges Through

## INTERVIEW

**The Government announced last September the details of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund. It is the first Government grant scheme specifically to support faith based and inter faith activity. In this interview, we speak with Debbie Ladds, the Director of Projects at the Community Development Foundation (CDF) which is administering the Fund for the Home Office.**

**Q Can you tell us about the purpose of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund?**

The Fund is sponsored by the Cohesion and Faiths Unit at the Home Office and has two key aims, both of which are at the heart of the Home Office's work with faith communities and community cohesion. The first aim is to support capacity building which can strengthen groups' organisational capabilities to enable them to sustain themselves in order to play a fuller part in civil society and community cohesion, and engage more effectively with public authorities. The second aim is to support inter faith activity which brings people of different faiths together to promote mutual understanding, respect and co-operation.

**Q Why do you see the Fund as particularly important?**

In a very practical way it gives faith and inter faith organisations the money and therefore the opportunity to contribute to community cohesion, in ways that the faith or inter faith organisation believes will make a difference. The Government has not directly funded the sector in this way before and I think it opens up many opportunities for all of us to make an even greater contribution to our communities.

**Q What is the role of CDF?**

CDF is a non-departmental public body supported by the Active Communities Directorate of the Home Office, and a registered charity. CDF aims to help communities achieve greater control over the conditions and decisions affecting their lives. We do this in many ways, for example by advising Government and other bodies on measures to build strong, active communities and promote community

## WITH DEBBIE LADDS OF CDF

development and involvement. We support community work through networks, links with practitioners, collaborative work with partner organisations and management of local projects. We also carry out research, evaluation and policy analysis to identify good practice in community development and involvement, and spread the lessons through training, conferences, publications and consultancy. We have also managed grant programmes before and will apply many of these activities to the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund which is very much in keeping with these aims.

### **Q Has CDF worked in the past on faith based and inter faith projects?**

This is quite a new area of work for us so as well as drawing on our own experience in the more general area of community development we have been drawing on the expertise of individuals from different faith communities and from a range of bodies with specialist knowledge of these areas, such as the Faith Based Regeneration Network and the Inter Faith Network for the UK. We have also appointed a FCCBF adviser for this area of our work, Osman Sheikh, and are extending our network of consultants with particular expertise in it.

### **Q Some people say that the Government should not fund 'religious activity'. Does the Fund support this kind of activity?**

The guidance for the Fund made it clear that no grants would be given for any work which was of a potentially proselytising nature or which was to support the devotional or congregational life of particular faith communities. It would indeed be inappropriate for the Government to fund activities of this kind.

### **Q How many applications came in and how many grants were given?**

We received a very large number of applications for both the capacity building and inter faith strands. We ran a high profile campaign to let faith and inter faith bodies know about the Fund. In total, 2,128 organisations applied to the Fund seeking funding of £52.5m. 578 grants were offered with funding of approximately £7.5million.

The amount made available in this first round of funding was significantly more than had originally been anticipated. Even so, the number of potentially fundable applications far outweighed the number which could be supported and the particular priorities of the fund, including those such as work with women and young people and work in particular geographical localities, helped shape the final pattern of grants awarded. We opted to fund as many strong applications as we could.

### **Q What impressions did you gain from the applications which came in?**

I was impressed with the number of good quality applications and range of activities that organisations were proposing. I have also been impressed with the enthusiasm of those I have met and their commitment to making a difference where it matters. There are some excellent practical and relevant projects that we will be funding and I look forward to working with these organisations over coming months.

### **Q Is there going to be a further round of funding?**

The fund will open for a second round in June this year and the dates for this will be announced in due course. We are reviewing the first round to learn from what we have already done and the criteria, priorities and paperwork might be amended or refocused as a result of this.

### **Q Is there any particular advice CDF would like to give to those putting in applications for the next round?**

Obviously, read the guidance notes and do your best to match what you are asking for to the criteria and priorities of the fund. If you want help in completing the application form then ring us and ask. We can comment on draft forms for you. If you are applying for inter faith activity, make sure that you have consulted with, and got clear plans to involve, people from the relevant faith communities – not just your own – from an early stage. Lastly, we have 'building' in the title of the fund. Ironically one thing that the Fund does not support is physical building work so people should not to apply for this!

CDF's website is at [www.cdf.org.uk](http://www.cdf.org.uk)

(continued from page 18)

Interreligious Dialogue and Youth Civic Engagement' promoted collaboration among Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and other faiths, emphasizing common purposes shared by diverse religions and the vital role that religious dialogue and youth service can play in reducing conflict throughout the world. The conference was co-convened by the Congressional Education Foundation and the National Conference on Citizenship (chartered by Congress), in partnership with Civic Enterprises, the Case Foundation, United Nations Foundation, MCJ Foundation, Universal Peace Federation, Points of Light Foundation, and many of the US's leading national youth service organizations.

## PEOPLE AND PLACES

### Appointments

#### **New Ambassador to the Vatican**

In December, Francis Campbell was appointed as Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Holy See. He is Britain's first Catholic Ambassador to the Holy See since the Reformation. In his official address to Pope Benedict XVI, he said "The UK is a strong supporter of furthering dialogue among people, in particular with the Christian family and with other faiths" and he identified inter-religious dialogue as one of three main themes for his Ambassadorship.

#### **CTBI**

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CBTI) has announced that Revd Canon Bob Fyffe will become its new General Secretary in May. He is an Anglican priest from the Scottish Episcopal Church. He succeeds Dr David Goodbourn in this post. Baroness Rev Kathleen Richardson has recently stepped down as Moderator of CTBI's Commission for Inter Faith Relations. She is succeeded by Bishop Angaelos of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

#### **Faith community inter faith officers**

The Board of Deputies appointed in the Autumn its first Interfaith Officer, Miriam Kaye. Mrs Kaye is a recent graduate in theology from Cambridge University, where she set up a dialogue group for female Jewish and Muslim

students. Her student internships included periods working at the Home Office and with the Inter Faith Network.

The Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations Scotland, of Action of Churches Together in Scotland, has recently appointed a part-time Inter Faith Education Officer, Andrew Sarle, to encourage Christian churches and their members to engage in dialogue with members of other faith communities.

## Honours and awards

### **Bishop John Austin and Sister Isabel Smyth**

In the New Year's Honours list, OBEs for services to inter faith relations were awarded to Rt Revd John Austin, former Bishop of Aston and Chair of the Church of England's Inter Faith Consultative Group and to Sister Isabel Smyth, the first Chief Executive of the Scottish Inter Faith Council who is Secretary of the Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations of Action of Churches Together in Scotland.

### **Cynthia Capey**

In March, Cynthia Capey was given a **Muslim News Awards** for Excellence in the Championing a Muslim Cause category for her many years promoting understanding between Muslims, Christians and Jews in Suffolk, most recently through Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource and the East of England Faiths Agency.

### **David Cowling**

In January, David Cowling of Grassroots in Luton was presented with the Mayor's Award for Citizenship 2005 for his work, including pioneering inter faith work in the town.

### **Sir Anthony Figgis and Clifford Longley**

Sir Anthony Figgis, Marshall of the Diplomatic Corps, was presented with the Interfaith Gold Medallion of the Three Faiths Forum at a ceremony in the OBE chapel in St Paul's Cathedral on 3 February. On 8 February, Clifford Longley was presented with the Interfaith Gold Medallion in recognition of outstanding contributions to inter faith dialogue, particularly through his radio broadcasts.

### **Louise Mitchell**

In December, the Council of Christians and Jews' Youth Officer, Louise Mitchell, was named 'Young Educational Thinker of the Year' by the Young United Kingdom Programme.

### **Rev Alan Race**

Rev Alan Race was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by the University of Leicester in January.

### **Hari Shukla**

Hari Shukla OBE has been given the Freedom of the City of Newcastle in recognition of his many years of work to develop good community relations in the city.

### **Sir Sigmund Sternberg**

In November, Sir Sigmund Sternberg was awarded an Italian knighthood for his inter faith work with Jews and Roman Catholics from the time of the Second Vatican Council.

## **Obituaries**

### **Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi KBE**

The news of the passing of Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi in January was received with sadness and a sense of great loss. He was a prominent Islamic scholar, community activist and pioneer of inter faith dialogue. Dr Badawi was awarded an honorary OBE in 1998 and an honorary KBE in 2003.

In 1986, Dr Badawi established the Muslim College in London, a postgraduate school for the training of imams and Muslim teachers in the West, incorporating the study of both Islam and Western society and emphasizing inter faith dialogue. The college was established under the aegis of the World Islamic Call Society. At the time of his death he was its Principal and also Chairman of the linked Imams and Mosques Council, a position he held from 1984.

Dr Badawi played a key role in numerous inter faith initiatives. He was Vice Chairman of the World Congress of Faiths and helped to co-found, with Sir Sigmund Sternberg and Rev Marcus Braybrooke, the Three Faiths Forum. His widow, Lady Maryam Badawi, will be continuing his work as a member of the Three Faiths Forum's Board.

Among his many other contributions and achievements, the Egyptian-born Dr Badawi had been Director of the Islamic Cultural Centre and Chief Imam of the London Central Mosque in Regent's Park. He was Chair of the Arabic Forum and of the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR).

Dr Badawi's funeral took place at the Central Mosque, Regent's Park on 27 January. On 27 February, a meeting for condolence (Dua Maghfirat) took place at the London Muslim Centre, hosted jointly by the Muslim Council of Britain and the Three Faiths Forum. A memorial service took place on 26 March at the School of African and Oriental Studies, arranged by the Muslim College and the World Islamic Call Society. Individuals of many faiths were present on all three occasions, and, among others attending the event on 26 March, were Prince Charles, the Home Secretary, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chief Rabbi, reflecting Dr Badawi's great contribution to inter faith dialogue in the UK and beyond.

### **John Finel**

John Finel died in January after a long illness. He was a founder member of the Shap Working Party of World Religions.

### **Bishop Charles Henderson**

Bishop Emeritus Charles Joseph Henderson KCHS died peacefully on 10 April in Blackheath, London, aged 81 following diagnosis with cancer in January.

Bishop Charles was born and grew up in Waterford, Ireland. He was ordained priest in 1948 and titular Bishop of Tricala and auxiliary bishop in Southwark in 1972. Although Pope John Paul II accepted his resignation in January 2001, Bishop Charles retained many continuing commitments.

In 1976 he was appointed to the Ecumenical Commission for England and Wales and remained strongly committed to the process of Christian ecumenism. In the succeeding years he also became involved in the work of taking forward the work of deepening Catholic engagement with other faiths. In 1984 he established the Committee for Other Faiths of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. In 1990, Pope John Paul II appointed him to the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue. Bishop Charles was a member of the Churches Commission for Inter Faith Relations from 1994

to 2002 and also chairman of the Bishops' Committee for Catholic-Jewish Relations from 1992 to 2001, and a vice-chairman of the Council for Christians and Jews for many years. In 2001, he was awarded the Sternberg Interfaith Gold Medallion.

Bishop Charles was a key figure in the preliminary conversations leading up to the establishment of the Inter Faith Network and served as a member of its Executive Committee from its formation in 1987 until 2003. On a number of Network occasions he spoke movingly about the way in which his engagement with people of other faiths in the course of his inter faith work had broadened his own horizons and enriched him. He will be remembered by Network colleagues with deep affection as a person of enormous kindness in matters large and small: patient, encouraging and supportive. He will also be remembered as a man of great vision but one who also took care that whatever project or meeting he and others were involved in was conducted with courtesy and care for good process.

### **Rev Sidney Hinkes**

Sidney Hinkes served as a paratrooper in the Second World War, and was ordained into the Church of England in 1954. He was active in the peace movement for 50 years. During the first Aldermaston march in 1958, which led to the birth of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, he provided accommodation for the peace marchers. He was a key figure in the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship. He helped establish the Week of Prayer for World Peace, was active in the World Congress of Religions for Peace and was the Secretary of Religions for Peace.

### **Joan MacMillan**

Joan MacMillan of Gateshead died on 29 December after a two year battle with cancer. She worked tirelessly in the field of inter faith and inter cultural understanding. Her friends in Gateshead comment with appreciation on how her warm, intelligent and approachable manner drew great respect from all quarters during her more than 30 years work in Gateshead. She was working right up until her last days and left her hospital bed at the end of November to receive the Mayor of Gateshead's Award in recognition of her work.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND**

The Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum (NIFF) met on 29 March at Stranmillis College, Belfast. The meeting began with the Forum's AGM and there was then a talk by Rev Tim Kinahan, a founder member of the Forum. NIFF has recently started an electronic newsletter. For further information about the Forum or to request to be on the newsletter distribution list email [N.Richardson@Stran.acuk](mailto:N.Richardson@Stran.acuk)

## **SCOTLAND**

### **Scotland's religious leaders meet**

Scotland's religious leaders met on 28 March in Aberdeen at the Catholic Chaplaincy Centre of Aberdeen University. The event was supported by the Scottish Inter Faith Council, hosted by the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Most Rev Bruce Cameron, and attended by representatives of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities. Convener of the Scottish Inter Faith Council, Dianna Wolfson, who co-chaired the meeting, said: "There are many issues which all faith communities in Scotland have to deal with and by creating a united approach we can show that it is possible to hold true to your own faith whilst respecting other people's."

### **Scottish Inter Faith Week**

The second annual Scottish Inter Faith Week took place between 27 November – 4 December. Inter Faith Week is an initiative of SIFC and is supported by local inter faith groups and faith communities from around Scotland.

The Week sets out to further promote dialogue, understanding and cooperation between Scotland's diverse religious communities. The Scottish Executive showed support for the Inter Faith Week and their commitment to the One Scotland Many Cultures campaign by hosting a celebratory reception at which a multi faith choir featuring representatives from five major faith communities sang. There was a 5-day Scottish Inter Faith Council exhibition in the Scottish Parliament. and on St Andrew's day meditations

led from various faith perspectives were held at the Parliament. To mark the Week, Allan Forsyth (Chair of the Baha'i Council for Scotland) on behalf of Scotland's religious leaders presented a specially commissioned piece of artwork to the Parliament. The featured quotes and religious symbols in the artwork had been chosen by the leaders to focus on the values inscribed on Scotland's Mace: Integrity, Wisdom, Justice and Compassion. During the week, seven visits to places of worship by religious leaders and MSPS took place in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow.

Inter Faith Week events took place locally across Scotland: in Dumfries, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, Perth, Shetland and Skye. In Edinburgh, for example, a 'three faiths forum' was held, along with the second gathering of Edinburgh's religious leaders, educational events in schools and a women's inter faith gathering. In East Renfrewshire, forty members of the Jewish community and forty members of the Muslim community met to share food during the week and women from the two communities came together to prepare food acceptable to everyone. Glasgow Sharing of Faiths hosted an evening of celebration and entertainment, compered by Ravinder Kaur Nijjar. The same note of celebration was reflected by an inter faith ceilidh in Skye.

The final event of the week was the third Scottish Inter Faith Youth Conference, entitled 'Walking Together Beyond Tolerance' to which young people travelled from across Scotland to attend. It was held in Dundee and included workshops, discussions, exhibitions and music and dance. Religious leaders from all the faith communities joined the young people during the workshops.

This report draws on the extensive coverage of the Week which can be found in issue 9 of the newsletter of the Scottish Inter Faith Council available at [www.interfaithscotland.org](http://www.interfaithscotland.org)

### **Edinburgh Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace**

The third Edinburgh Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace took place from 8-12 March. It included spiritual retreats, workshops and conferences; a wide range of education events, including Persian and Arabic Calligraphy, and printmaking and sculpture workshops; spiritual and peace concerts; Middle Eastern percussion events; film series on Music of the Middle East and peace films; events on spiritual movement and dance; photography and visual arts exhibitions; poetry and theatre events on spiritual themes of the Middle East; Mesopotamian

storytelling; all women spiritual and cultural events and workshops; and community-led cultural events which celebrated Middle Eastern diversity within the wider context of diversity in Scotland. Professor Tariq Ramadan lectured on 'Islam and the West in a Quest for a Just and Peaceful World,' and Bishop Kallistos Ware lectured on 'Acquiring Inner Peace.' A further Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace is planned for next year To find out more [www.mesp.org.uk](http://www.mesp.org.uk)

### **Visit of the Dalai Lama**

During November, the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association hosted and coordinated the visit to Edinburgh of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This included putting on a conference on 'Positive Education' at Edinburgh University and an event at Usher Hall on 'Ethics for the New Millennium'. Further information from [victor@eifa.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:victor@eifa.wanadoo.co.uk)

## **WALES**

Swansea's Interfaith Forum, Face 2 Faith, has now been up and running since the beginning of August last year and has over 40 members from eight different faith communities. The launch at an event in Brangwyn Hall on 11 September 2005 focused on remembering victims of terror, regardless of faith and nationality. It was attended by over 500 people and featured key speakers from Swansea's major faith communities. The group now meets once every six weeks with different faith communities taking it in turns to 'chair' and host the meetings at their places of worship.

## **Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory**

**ISBN 1902906 24 1, £7.50 including p and p**

A5 size, 272 page directory containing contact details for and information about the work of over 250 national, regional and local inter faith bodies.

To order, please send a cheque for £7.50, payable to The Inter Faith Network, to:

Gaylina Nguyen,  
The Inter Faith Network,  
8A Lower Grosvenor Place,  
London SW1W 0EN

or e-mail [gaylina.nguyen@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:gaylina.nguyen@interfaith.org.uk) requesting to be invoiced with publication.

## REGIONAL AND LOCAL

### Focus on the English Regions

England has eight 'Regions' and Greater London operates in effect as a ninth, but with an elected Mayor and Assembly. The English regions are increasingly important because it is at that level that decisions about transport and planning are taken. Also, every region has a Regional Economic Strategy which is drawn up by Regional Development Agencies in consultation with unelected Regional Assemblies and other partners and stakeholders. Over the last ten years, regional faith forums have come into existence in the East (2001/02), the East Midlands (2004), the South East (2001), the South West (1997) and the West Midlands (2003) to enable faith groups to contribute to these processes. In some cases the regional faith forums also include promotion of good inter faith relations within their purposes.

The past six months have seen the launch of two new regional faith forums in Yorkshire and Humber and in the North West, a stepping up of programme activity by the West Midlands Faiths Forum and the new South West body *faithnetsouthwest*, and consultations on a possible faith forum for Greater London. This issue of Inter Faith Update looks at these developments. A focus on work within other regional forums is planned for future issues. Details about the work of all the different regional faith forums can be found in the new edition of **Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory** (Inter Faith Network, 2006) and e-mail contact addresses for them can also be found on the Network's website [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

At the end of November 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Home Office and the Inter Faith Network held a meeting for representatives of the emerging regional faith forums. On 22 November 2005 a second meeting of representatives of these bodies was held in Coventry at the initiative of the West Midlands Faiths Forum with the assistance of the Faith-based Regeneration Network. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Inter Faith Network were represented at this. The meeting enabled an exchange of views and experience between the different regional initiatives and it was agreed that it would be helpful to have similar meetings for this purpose from time to time.

The Inter Faith Network holds regional meetings in England for organisers of local inter faith bodies

and regional inter faith initiatives to share news and ideas for programme development. Where regional forums are already existing, these meetings are planned in consultation with them. Well attended meetings, with participation from local inter faith groups from around the North West and the South West regions were held in Bolton on 13 December and in Bristol on 28 March respectively. The next, held in association with the South East of England Faiths Forum, is in Guildford on 23 May. For further information, contact the Inter Faith Network office.

### Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum

The new Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum was launched on 8 December at Leeds Town Hall. The keynote speech was given by Dr John Sentamu, the new Archbishop of York, and other presentations were made by John Battle MP, Prime Minister's Faith Envoy and MP for Leeds West, Professor Kim Knott of the University of Leeds, speakers from a number of the region's faith communities and the Forum's Director, Inderjit Bhogal.

The launch was the culmination of a long consultative process. This included a research report carried out by the Community Religions Project at the University of Leeds, under the supervision of Professor Kim Knott, which looked into whether people thought that a regional faiths forum was a good idea, what its role would be, who would be involved and what faith communities would contribute to the regional agenda.

For a copy of this report, e-mail [mail@yhassembly.gov.uk](mailto:mail@yhassembly.gov.uk) or call 01924 331580.

There were also ten events round the region asking faith communities what they thought about the idea. The Yorkshire and Humber Assembly, Churches Regional Commission for Yorkshire and Humber and a Multi Faith Steering Group worked closely together to develop the Forum.

The result is a Forum open to all people, organisations and faith communities which will bring people together by e-mail, newsletters and events and will endeavour to ensure that the voices of faith communities are included in relevant regional policies. It will also develop the capacity of faith communities to contribute to the life of the region and to work in partnership to the benefit of local communities.

A council of 21 members has been set up which will include members of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Jain, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths and which will be responsible for driving the Forum. Posts were filled following public advertisement. For further information about the Forum, contact its Director at [inderjit.bhokal@yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk](mailto:inderjit.bhokal@yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk) or tel 0113 380 4861.

## Northwest Faiths Forum

The formal launch of the Northwest Faiths Forum took place on 20 January at St Augustine's New Avenham Centre in Preston. Paul Goggins MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary for State for Crime, Security and Communities, gave the keynote address. Among the contributors, Monsignor John Devine, Churches Officer for the North West, who has been involved since the outset in the work to develop the Forum, talked about the significance of the contribution of faith communities to the life of the North West region and outlined the role of the new Forum.

The Forum exists to relate to, and help shape, public policy, contributing positive insights from the several faith communities on the basis of theological perspectives and spiritual values. Its aim will be to ensure that, alongside other stakeholders, faith communities have a regional voice. It will enable government and other statutory bodies to consult with faith communities and ensure that faith communities can respond effectively to regional initiatives. It will meet three times a year in different parts of the region and have 24 individuals representing 9 major world faiths from every part of the region, with representation weighted on the basis of the 2001 Census. It is supported by the three instruments of regional governance: the North West Development Agency, the North West Regional Assembly and the Government Office for the North West. Its full terms of reference can be found at: [www.faithnorthwest.org.uk/resources/186733/Terms\\_of\\_Reference\\_Nov05.doc](http://www.faithnorthwest.org.uk/resources/186733/Terms_of_Reference_Nov05.doc)

Although the Northwest Faiths Forum is new, it is building on work across several years. This has included the development of a detailed website, [www.faithnorthwest.org.uk](http://www.faithnorthwest.org.uk), and two key reports, **Faith in England's Northwest: The Contribution of Faith Communities to Civil Society** (November 2003), based on a survey of every place of worship of all faiths in the **North West; and Faith in England's Northwest: Economic Impact Assessment** (February 2005) commissioned from DTZ Pieda Consulting by the

Northwest Development Agency and the Churches Officer for the North West. Based on the findings of the report of November 2003, it demonstrated the value of the faith communities' contribution to life in the region in economic terms. The reports can be downloaded from [www.faithnorthwest.org.uk/publications](http://www.faithnorthwest.org.uk/publications)

## faithnetsouthwest

In the South West region, 2005 saw the emergence, with funding from the ChangeUp programme, of a new regional body, *faithnetsouthwest*. The background to its coming into being can be found in **Daily Service: How Faith Communities Contribute to Neighbourhood Renewal and Regeneration in the South West**, a report commissioned two years ago from Marion Jackson and Richard Kimberle of the University of the West of England, by the South West Council of Faiths and the Government Office for the South West. This can be downloaded from the *faithnetsouthwest* website.

*faithnetsouthwest* is an initiative of the Churches' Council for Industry and Social Responsibility (ISR); the Exeter Diocesan Council for Church and Society; the South West Council of Faiths; and the South West Churches' Regional Forum. It is a regional partnership supporting faith groups engaging in social or community activity in the South West region. It is currently mapping the activities of worshipping communities in the region, with a view to discovering the full scope of their presence and their work. *faithnetsouthwest* is also currently working on a regional faith conference for the South West, due to take place in Taunton on 22 June. For further information about the conference or the work of *faithnetsouthwest*, contact Rev Heather Pencavel at [heather@faithnetsouthwest.org](mailto:heather@faithnetsouthwest.org) or visit the *faithnetsouthwest* website at [www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk](http://www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk)

## West Midlands Faiths Forum

The West Midlands Faiths Forum has been running since 2003. It is an independent body aiming to enable the voices of the diversity of faith groups in the region to be heard and gathered in a structured manner by regional bodies, including the Regional Assembly. Its other aims are to promote the recognition that spiritual values are indispensable to the maintenance of an inclusive and cohesive society; to advocate on behalf of concerned faith communities at the regional level; to support

diversity and foster harmony between different communities by increasing knowledge and understanding of each other's ideals; and to create opportunities for inter faith encounter and education. It has an Executive Committee reflecting the major faiths within the Region and a series of Sub-Groups.

The West Midlands Faiths Forum held a conference in September 2005, 'Light and Shade' to explore issues of faith and race and, in particular, to address the need for greater spiritual, social and economic cohesiveness. This was particularly timely in the light of the bombings in London which had happened in July and their impact on people's reflections on identity, cohesion and personal and community safety. Speakers included Trudi Elliot, the Chief Executive of the West Midlands Regional Assembly; Maqsood Ahmed of the Home Office Cohesion and Faiths Unit; Dr Doreen Finneron of the Faith-based Regeneration Network; and Bishop Joe Aldred of the Council of Black Led Churches.

The Forum has recently received a project grant for the period up until March 2007 under the Home Office Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund programme. On the horizon is development of its website at [www.wmfaithforum.org.uk](http://www.wmfaithforum.org.uk) and a second conference with a community cohesion link, 'Faith and Community: Cohesion or Fragmentation?' on 27 April at the Gurudwara Nishkam Sewak Jatha in Birmingham which will include reports from local inter faith and multi faith groups in the West Midlands region. Further information from 0121 551 1125 or [satish.brahmbhat@CovCofE.org](mailto:satish.brahmbhat@CovCofE.org)

## Soundings on a way ahead for linking faiths in London

The London Civic Forum (LCF) is conducting a feasibility study to look at a possible faiths forum for London. At a working lunch on 6 April at Bloomsbury Baptist Church, there were presentations from Inderjit Bhogal, Director of the new Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum and from Fr Stephen Saxby of the London Boroughs Faiths Network who discussed the possible roles and purposes of a faiths forum for London. As an ongoing part of the feasibility study, LCF is contacting a wide range of stakeholders through focus groups, interviews and an on-line survey. The survey will be available on [www.lcf.org.uk](http://www.lcf.org.uk) from 20 April and London faith groups and interested individuals from the faith communities are encouraged to take part in this.

## Snapshots from around the regions

### East

#### Luton

Luton Council of Faiths and Grassroots held a special conference, 'Plural Britain: Challenges and Prospects' at Luton Town Hall on 21 November. Among the speakers were John Battle MP and Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network.

#### Peterborough

Peterborough Inter Faith Council held an event 'People for Peace' involving children of the major faiths in the city. It included prayers for peace and short presentations by the children. There was also a collection for the earthquake appeal.

### East Midlands

#### Derby

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby was officially opened by the Duke of Gloucester on 19 October. Although the Centre had been open for business for several months, the project was not finally completed until the end of the summer. Around 100 people were present to hear many messages of congratulations and encouragement preceded by a presentation outlining the history of the project over the 14 years from when the idea was first conceived until the building was completed. The Centre has been funded by the Millennium Commission, matched by donations from individuals, religious and non-religious organisations, the City and the University of Derby. Further information can be found at [www.multifaithnet.org](http://www.multifaithnet.org)

#### Leicester

The Leicester Mercury reports: Muslim and Christian leaders have been showing off their skills on the football pitch to show how communities can work together. Members of the clergy took on a team of imams at Judgemeanow Community College in January. The charity match was organised by the Muslim and Christian Dialogue Group, an organisation set up to develop links of friendship between the two communities. To ensure fair play, the game was refereed by a member of Leicester's Orthodox Jewish community. Imam Ibrahim Mogra who took part in

the match said: "If families can see how two sets of people, who are as different as chalk and cheese, can come together and have fun, then it will go a long way to educate future generations."

Rev Javaid Iqbal, of St Denys Church, in Evington, who helped to organise the event, said: "Football is a universal game and this match shows how closely our communities are working together."

The Bishop of Leicester, the Right Reverend Tim Stevens, was on the touchline. He said: "This event shows that Muslim and Christian communities are once again finding new ways of relating to each other and getting to know each other." The match finished 5-0 to the imams. All proceeds from the match went towards the Lord Mayor's better health appeal and two development projects in Malawi.

## Greater London

### Barking and Dagenham

The Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum was launched at a day conference, 'Faith Builds Community' on 17 November after many months of planning by the faith communities. Speakers from different faith groups, plus workshops, lunch and a live band kept people from across the Borough interested and entertained with a varied, day-long programme of events. The Bishop of Barking, the Rt Rev David Hawkins, Muslim scholar Muhammed Sharif Baqa, Jay Lakhani from the Hindu Council, and MPs Margaret Hodge and Jon Cruddas, gave keynote speeches. Forum planning group chairman and organiser Revd Jon Evens outlined the aims and objectives of the group. Barking and Dagenham Council Chief Executive Rob Whiteman, who chaired the afternoon panel, said: "Faith helps to build communities. This ties in with the Council's aim that together we will build communities and transform lives, with cohesion as a positive force for good in the whole community." A special ceremony during the launch involved Jo Richardson Community School pupils and representatives from the Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Jewish and Baha'i faiths.

### Ealing

At the induction of Rabbi Janet Burden at Ealing Liberal Synagogue this autumn, leaders of Ealing's Christian, Sikh and Muslim communities and civic representatives were present as honoured guests, marking the importance for the Synagogue and its congregation of cross-faith understanding and relations.

### Tower Hamlets

Residents from all different faiths who live or work on the Canary Wharf estate can now attend services and meetings at the borough's newest prayer room. The Prayer Room is in the Mall in Churchill Place, close to the new Canary Wharf Idea Store and other local amenities. It has also been designed to ensure the needs of disabled people are met and has extra wide doors for wheelchair users. The new room has been donated rent free by the Canary Wharf Group.

The opening ceremony was held on 30 March on the new premises and was attended by representatives of local religious groups and community members. The ceremony included prayers said by representatives of different faiths. Representatives from faith and community groups and organisations spoke on behalf of their groups, on behalf of Christians the Bishop of Stepney – Bishop Stephen Oliver; on behalf of Muslims Hizar Alikhan; on behalf of Buddhists Frederick Payan; and Henk Bourma who is the Chair of the Canary Wharf Prayer Room Steering Committee.

## North East

### Middlesbrough

A new Council of Faiths has been launched in Middlesbrough. It had its first formal meeting on February 23 at the Jamia Mosque in Waterloo Road. The Council came about after a long process of consultation initiated by the Middlesbrough Community Network, designed to create a Faith Communities Network. The new Council of Faiths will coordinate the activities of a wider Faith Network and enable faith representation on some of the working groups of the Middlesbrough Partnership, to contribute to planning, regeneration and neighbourhood renewal. Plans are also being made to establish an inter faith centre in central Middlesbrough and to develop inter faith work with younger as well as older people. Further information from [counselg@fish.co.uk](mailto:counselg@fish.co.uk)

**SEE THE NEW 'LOCAL  
INTER FAITH ZONE' AT  
[www.interfaith.org.uk/  
local/index.htm](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/local/index.htm)**

## Newcastle

Newcastle Council of Faiths was formally launched on 22 October in the presence of some 170 people and is now successfully established. The City Council has provided funds to enable the appointment of a co-ordinator and a programme of activity is under way. The Council of Faiths builds on the earlier work of the Tyne and Wear Racial Equality Council Inter Faith Panel and complements the work of the Newcastle Faith Leaders' Group. Further information from Hari Shukla tel 0191 243 3620.

## North West

A regional link meeting for local inter faith organisers was held by the Inter Faith Network in Bolton on 13 December, with participation from groups from Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Bolton, Burnley, Greater Manchester, Liverpool, Oldham, Pendle, Preston, Rossendale, Wigan and from regional and subregional bodies including Lancashire Forum of Faiths, Merseyside Council of Faiths and from the Churches Officer for the North West.

## Blackpool

Blackpool Faith Forum and SELNET held a conference on 'Growing Spiritual Social Enterprises' in Blackpool on 30 March to look at social enterprise opportunities in Blackpool for faith groups. Examples of faith based social enterprises were showcased during the day.

The Forum, with support from the local authority, has recently undertaken a survey of local faith communities, looking at membership, involvement in community and social action work and use of faith community buildings, and funding issues. The survey also looked at local faith groups' involvement in inter faith work (31% were currently involved). Next steps are to prepare and publish a new faith directory, **Belief in Blackpool** and to work on a draft inter faith plan, 'Faith in the Future'. Further information from Andy Divall, Inter Faith Development Manager at Blackpool City Council: [andy.divall@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:andy.divall@blackpool.gov.uk)

## Greater Manchester

In Manchester, members of the Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester (MJFGM) have been exchanging visits. An Eid party was held in a Muslim preparatory school and a Chanukah party at the Menorah Synagogue in Sharton. The MJFGM is co-chaired by Henry Guterman and Manchester's Lord Mayor, Mohammed Afzal Khan.

## Nelson

There are two interesting example of 'twinning' projects between places of worship of different faiths in Nelson which may encourage others around the country to initiate similar partnerships.

On Shrove Tuesday (28 February) a group from the Muhammadi mosque visited the Nelson United Reformed Church (and Catholic friends), with which it is now 'twinned'. The Christians and Muslims met for prayers, each in their own buildings, then came together for four brief speeches from Ayesha Jones, Imam Habibur Rheman Chaudhary (from the Mosque), Rev Dale Barton (from Lancashire Churches Together) and Elspeth Smith (from the URC Church) who spoke of the issues of fair trade and presented the mosque with a gift of two hampers of fairly traded goods. All then joined in a meal of meat and potato pie and salads with lime pickle available for those challenged by the bland flavours. This was followed by pancakes (eaten by Christians on Shrove Tuesday when eggs and fat are traditionally used up before the period of Lent).

There is a long standing inter faith project in Nelson called Building Bridges and the evening came about through the building of trusting long term relationships between local faith leaders. This was the second such event in the twinning partnership between the Muhammadi Mosque and the URC church. The first was at the mosque. Both events benefited from a Community Cohesion Grant from Pendle Partnership.

Nelson has a further 'twinning' arrangement between the Central Jamia Ghousia Mosque and Christ Church, Nelson (a church of Methodists and Catholics in partnership) and visits and meetings have taken place across the last year.

## South East

### Elmbridge

Elmbridge Multifaitth Forum have been arranging a series of events revolving around visits to places of worship. February's event took the participants to St Andrew's Church, Cobham where there were presentations on the history of the bible and on Christian beliefs from Rev William Allberry and a guide to the church building by Rev Robert Jenkins.

## Brighton and Hove

Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group held its 9th AGM on 19 February at the Brighthelm Church and Community Centre, Brighton. Abbot Christopher Jamison of Worth Abbey was the guest speaker on the theme "Offering Sanctuary: The Role of Religion in Britain Today."

## Gravesend

Thames Gateway Women's Multifaith Forum held a sell-out social evening in the Miskin Hall in November. 90 members from different faiths, organisations and inter faith groups working in Kent joined in a celebration of festivals of light and hard about the history and traditions of these faith festivals, were entertained by Asian dancing and the music of the Chalk Handbell ringers, and enjoyed a vegetarian supper.

## South West

A regional link meeting for local inter faith organisers was held by the Inter Faith Network in Bristol on 28 March. Groups attended from Bath, Beaminster, Bristol, Plymouth, Torbay, Totnes and District, West Somerset and West Wiltshire. There was also participation from the South West Council of Faiths and *faithnetsouthwest*.

## Bristol

Bristol Inter Faith Group has received a grant from the Home Office's Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund which will allow the appointment of a part time worker to develop the Group's programme and its faith community links. This post is currently being advertised and they are also looking to rent an office from which the appointed person can work.

## West Wiltshire

A new local inter faith body has come into being in West Wiltshire. West Wiltshire Interfaith Group has been going a little over a year and has over twenty members who meet once a month. They have held an event on values which the three Abrahamic faiths hold in common and hosted a variety of talks on themes of conflict and pacifism, spirituality, religions and martyrdom, and on the Buddhist, Sikh, and Baha'i faiths. The Group has also arranged a women's meeting and hope to do so every month because many Muslim women do not find it appropriate to mix socially with men. They also hope to organise a women-only swimming session with female lifeguards of the kind

organised by the Bath Racial Equality Council and Bath and Somerset Council. The Group has agreed to assist Wiltshire Constabulary with their Initial Police Learning and Development programme for new recruits to inform them about faith matters and practices and has organised a two day workshop commencing 2 May. The Group has recently received a grant from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund which they hope will help their development.

## West Midlands

### Sandwell multi faith conference

A free one day conference held by the Sandwell Multi-Faith Network on Saturday 18 March, "Faith, Health and Well-being", focused on how faith communities can contribute to the healthcare debate. Guest speakers included representatives from the Department of Health, Primary Care Trust and local faith communities and participants were given an opportunity to consult on the 2010 Health Care Agenda.

## Yorkshire and Humber

### Calderdale

Calderdale Interfaith Council have published a directory of the faiths and their organisations in Calderdale. Further information from [sail.suleman@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:sail.suleman@calderdale.gov.uk)

### Leeds

Leeds Faiths Forum was relaunched under its new name (it was previously called the Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum) at a special event on 5 March at the Leeds Islamic Centre. At the event, Leeds West MP John Battle highlighted the past achievements of the Forum and stressed how important it was for the group to grow and to engage even more deeply with the City's neighbourhoods. A grant from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund will be helping the Forum do this across the coming year. The Forum is looking for a Development Worker. Post currently for one year. Salary NJC Scale SO1 – SO1 £23,175 - £25,437. Closing date for applications 19 April. Further information from David Randolph-Horn or Pam Butcher at [iff@leedschurchinstitute.org](mailto:iff@leedschurchinstitute.org) or tel 0113 391 7902.

## EUROPE AND INTERNATIONAL

Inter Faith Update does not carry coverage of international events unless they have a significant UK connection. The International Interfaith Centre, which services the Network of International Interfaith Organisations is a helpful resource for finding out about international inter faith events and programmes. Contact [iic@interfaith-center.org](mailto:iic@interfaith-center.org) tel 01865 202745.

### **Iraqi religious leaders meet in London**

A conference for religious leaders from Iraq was held in London from 26-29 March at the invitation of Religions for Peace.

### **Inter Faith Relations: The UK and Europe**

**ISBN 1 902906 14 4**

Looking at the impact of the UK's membership of the European Union on faith communities and the inter faith agenda here.

Report of the 2004 National Meeting. Available from the Inter Faith Network office at £3.00 plus £1 postage and packaging.

## RESOURCES

### **Faiths and Further Education, A Handbook Towards a Whole-College Approach to Chaplaincy for a Pluralist Society**

**Written and compiled by Helen Thompson**

In November 2005 the Learning and Skills Council, in partnership with the National Ecumenical Agency in Further Education, under whose auspices the Faiths in Further Education Forum was established, published this handbook which explores the role and rationale for chaplaincy in an FE context and offers models for organising, funding and managing chaplaincy. It provides a guide through the key areas of chaplaincy activity, including multi faith working. It also offers a basis for a partnership or formal agreement on chaplaincy provision. The publication is available to download from the Learning and Skills Council website: [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk) or can be obtained from LSC publication enquires at 0870 900 6800. The publication reference is LSC-P-NAT-050589.

### **Faith as Social Capital: Connecting or Dividing?**

**Robert Furbey, Adam Dinham, Richard Farnell, Doreen Finneron, Guy Wilkinson with Catherine Howarth, Dilwar Hussain and Sharon Palmer, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Policy Press, 2006.**

The UK government has identified faith communities as important sources of 'social capital' in community development and regeneration. But religion is also associated with conflict and division. How far is this faith in 'faith' justified? And how far should faith communities comply? The report assesses the debate and the evidence and summarises the controversies surrounding the idea of 'social capital' and the place of 'faith' in community policy; assesses the contribution of faith communities to social capital that extends beyond bonding to build bridges and links with others in civil society; and identifies policy and practice implications for secular and faith organisations and networks. The research in the report encompasses five major faith traditions across four English regions. It explores the nature and the quality of social capital stemming from faith buildings, association; engagement with governance, and participation in the wider public domain.

### **Faith, Hope and Clarity: Developing a model of faith group involvement in civil renewal**

**Vivien Loundes and Rachael Chapman, Local  
Governance Research Unit, De Montfort  
University, Leicester.**

This report, published in November 2005, was funded by the Home Office under its Civil Renewal Research Programme. It sets out “to uncover the often implicit – and sometimes competing – rationales for faith group involvement in civil renewal”. The review explores three rationales which it describes as “normative, resources and governance”. It examines the extent to which current policy and practice reflects these three rationales, drawing on documentary analysis and interviews with policy makers and faith group representatives at both national level and in the city of Leicester. The report assesses the relative importance of the three rationales for different stakeholders and proposes a model of the faith group involvement that specifies the relationship between the three rationales, their key components in practice and the challenges they afford to both policy makers and faith communities themselves. The report maps faith involvement in civil renewal identifying the key players and their roles. The report is available from the Local Governance Research Unit at De Montfort University or can be downloaded from [www.togetherwecan.info/acc/faith\\_hope\\_and\\_clarity.html](http://www.togetherwecan.info/acc/faith_hope_and_clarity.html).

### **Presence and Engagement: The Churches’ Task in a Multi-Faith Society**

This report from the Inter Faith Consultative Group of the Church of England looks at the task of churches in areas where 10% of the population are from faiths other than Christian. It focuses on the situation of churches in multi faith neighbourhoods, with the aim of re-affirming the commitment of the Church of England’s ministry in these areas, encouraging Church of England dioceses to review their strategies for supporting clergy, and encouraging theological reflection. The report offers the results of the Group’s survey including both anecdotal and statistical data looking at the themes of identity, confidence and sustainability. The report can be downloaded from [www.cofe.anglican.org/info/interfaith/presence.pdf](http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/interfaith/presence.pdf)

### **Transcendence: Prayer of People of Faith**

**Co-edited by Daniel Favre  
and Tony McCaffry, 2005.**

Newly revised and enlarged edition of a resources for multi faith occasions, such as school assemblies and inter faith celebrations, including prayers drawn from all the world’s spiritual traditions. ISBN 0 9536215 5 3. £7.00 plus postage. E-mail [alfredagius@hotmail.com](mailto:alfredagius@hotmail.com) for further details on ordering.

### **Employing People in Higher Education: Religion and Belief: Guidance.**

This guidance published by the Equality Challenge Unit provides a comprehensive overview of the current and prospective legal position in the area of religion or belief and offers Higher Education institutions practical advice on preventing discrimination and facilitating good relations between people of different backgrounds on the basis of religion and belief. It reproduces as one of its annexes the Network’s code Building Good Relations between People of Different Faiths and Beliefs.

### **Promoting Good Campus Relations: Dealing with Hate Crimes and Intolerance**

Guidelines published in November jointly by the Equality Challenge Unit, Universities UK and the Standing Conference of Principals to help Higher Education institutions deal with hate crimes and intolerance on campus and describes the current legislative framework on this. It includes case studies which show how intolerant and extremist activity can potentially cause problems on campus and how Higher Education institutions might best deal with them.

Copies of these ECU publications can be obtained from [www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/guidancepublications](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/guidancepublications) and [bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk](http://bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk).

## DIARY DATES

### Local Events

The following are just a few examples of inter faith events happening around the UK in the coming months. To find out more about events in your area, you can contact the nearest local inter faith group. A list of local bodies can be found at [www.interfaith.org.uk/locallist.htm](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/locallist.htm)

**Bath, 24 May.** 'The Religions of East Asia'. A talk by Curator Alisa Laxton, 7.30pm at the Museum of East Asian Art, 12 Bennett Street. Further information tel 01225 464640.

**Dunblane, 26 April,** 'A Dialogue with Judaism', the first in a series of events for 2006 in 'Christianity and Scotland's Other Faiths' programme. Led by Rabbi Nancy Morris of Glasgow New Synagogue. 10.30pm – 3 pm at Scottish Churches House, Dunblane. Booking fee of £16. For reservations, contact Scottish Churches House, Kirk Street, Dunblane FK15 OAJ.

**Glasgow, 30 April.** Scottish Local Inter Faith Groups Networking Seminar (11am) and national Inter Faith Conference (2pm) in Pollock Park, Glasgow. Further information from [Maureen@interfaithscotland.org](mailto:Maureen@interfaithscotland.org)

**Godalming, 12-14 May.** World Congress of Faiths retreat at Fintry House. An inter faith discussion on issues of medical ethics. Further information from [jtabick@lineone.net](mailto:jtabick@lineone.net)

**London, 13 May.** Inter Faith Quiet Day led by Jay Lakhani. This is an opportunity to share silence across faiths. Lunch is provided. 8am-3pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6. For further information or to register telephone 020 7604 3053.

**London, 17 May.** 'Faith Communities: Deliverers of Public Services?' Workshop by the Association of London Government with the London Churches Group for Social Action, the London Borough Faiths Network. 2.30-3.30pm 59½ Southwark Street, London SE1. No charge but advance booking essential. Further information from [patlogan67@btonpenworld.com](mailto:patlogan67@btonpenworld.com)

**London, 21 May** Rabbi Dr Michael Shire and **18 June** Dr Ataullah Siddiqui speaking on 'Prophetic Voices' in Religious Traditions. Part of a series at the Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter. 2.30pm-4.30pm, Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. Further information tel 020 7313 8236 [sioncde@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sioncde@yahoo.co.uk)

### Faith Foods Yorkshire and Humber Style!

#### 11 June

The Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum is inviting people of different faiths and beliefs in their Region to participate in a Food Festival planned for Sunday 11 June. Sharing food with each other is a way of celebrating diversity and promoting community cohesion. This initiative is part of the Forum's Commitment to advance the contributions of faith in the region, encouraging people to work together, and challenging discrimination and injustice.

#### Why Food? "First we eat, then we meet"

#### Guru Amardas Sahib

We all enjoy good food. The diversity of the Yorkshire and Humber region and its cultures is reflected in our foods. It is not unusual to be served a Yorkshire pudding filled with Chicken Tikka Masala. Yorkshire pudding, Wensleydale Cheeses, Grimsby Fish, Rothwell Rhubarb, Chicken Tikka Masala, Rice and Peas and more is our fan fare. Food is celebrated in many ways by faith communities. All faith communities keep an open table at meal times and food and hospitality stories from faiths abound. Let us share these stories and our distinctive cuisines with each other with pride, and learn from each other. You can arrange a meal in your local community to bring people of different faiths and beliefs together. It could be a bring and share meal, a picnic in a park, a Bar-B-Q in your garden, Sunday lunch in your home, or a meal in your local worship centre or community centre. Invite neighbours, friends old and new. Eat with each other as a way of meeting with each other to form friendships and foster relationships of respect and trust.

Further information and guidance on holding events from [info@yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk](mailto:info@yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk)

## Exhibitions, courses, seminars and conferences

In most cases, there is a registration fee for these events and the contacts listed can provide details.

**Until 19 April, Oxford.** 'The Via Dolorosa: Multimedia presentation of the Stations of the Cross interpreted by artists of different faiths'. Mon-Sat 9.30-4.30, Sun 1.00-4.30 at Christ Church Cathedral, St Aldgates, Oxford. Admission: £4.50 for adults.

**20 April – 8 June, Edinburgh.** Basic Introduction to the world faiths, led by members of these. A certificated course, organised by Creative Space and the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association, for the public and for professionals with a workplace need. £40 (concessions available). 7-8.30pm at St Georges West Church, Shandwick Place, Edinburgh. Further information from [www.creativespacesgw.org.uk](http://www.creativespacesgw.org.uk) under 'events'.

**27-30 April, Glasgow.** Sikh Religious Educational and Interfaith Event, including an inter faith conference on 30 April organised by the Scottish Inter Faith Council: 'Working Together for Humanity'. There will be an opportunity to observe Sikh worship and view an extensive exhibition of the Sikh faith as well as other world faiths. For more information, e-mail [knijjar@hotmail.com](mailto:knijjar@hotmail.com)

**30 April – 11 May.** Council of Christians and Jews Israel Study Tour 2006: Memory and Modernity. The tour offers an in-depth experience of Israel, including site visits and meeting with people. A visit to the Palestinian territories is usually included in the CCJ study tour. Cost £1,220 (single supplement £200). For further information contact Beryl Norman (tour leader) on 020 8673 9134.

**13 May, London.** INFORM seminar on 'Spirit, Possession and Exorcism'. 9.30 – 4.30 at the New Theatre, London School of Economics and Political Science. For further information on cost, programme and registration, contact INFORM on 020 7955 7654 or e-mail [inform@lse.ac.uk](mailto:inform@lse.ac.uk)

**25 June, Bath.** 'Interfaith Matters'. A conference for local faith communities, statutory and voluntary bodies and members of the public to discuss the role of inter faith understanding in helping to build cohesive communities. 2-6pm, the Guildhall, Bath. Further information tel 01225 341921 or 422252.

**14 -15 June, London** 'Multicultural Britain: from anti-racism to identity politics to...?'. Conference being held by Roehampton University at Southlands College. The aim of the conference is to set the historical context for multiculturalism in the aftermath of '7/7' and assess its long term consequences in the UK and Europe. For information about registering visit [www.surrey.ac.uk/Arts/CRONEM](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/Arts/CRONEM) or contact Mirela Dumic at [M.Dumic@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:M.Dumic@surrey.ac.uk).

**29 June, St Albans.** 'Coping with Death and Bereavement: A Multi Faith Perspective'. Conference organised by the St Albans City and District Bereavement Network. With David Oliviere, Head of the Education Department at St Christopher's Hospice and speakers from different faiths. 9.30am-3.30pm, School of Law, Hatfield Rd, St Albans. £30, including buffet lunch. Some concessionary places at £10. Further information from [m.c.rowegrov@ntlworld.com](mailto:m.c.rowegrov@ntlworld.com).

**23-26 July, Birmingham.** 'Faith, Politics and Society'. A conference hosted by the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations of the University of Birmingham. Further information from [brismes2006@lists.bham.ac.uk](mailto:brismes2006@lists.bham.ac.uk)

**7 - 13 August,** Ammerdown Centre, Radstock, near Bath. Residential summer school with the theme of 'Jerusalem in the three faiths: sacred, beloved, contested' run by the Ammerdown Centre in association with the Three Faiths Forum. The leaders for the week will be Rabbi Michael Hilton and Sheikh Bashir Dultz as well as a Christian leader still to be announced. £325 for the week and £240 for students. Some bursaries may be made available to young people and students (bringing the cost down to £115 for them). To find out more or to make a booking, please contact [centre@ammerdown.org](mailto:centre@ammerdown.org) or tel 01761 433709.

### 18 September, London

Study day on HIV and AIDS - faith and facts. 8.45a.m – 4.15 p.m. at the Mildmay site in London. £80 for the day, lunch and coffee provided. Further information from Fiona Davison on 020 7613 6314 or e-mail [Fiona.davison@mildmay.org](mailto:Fiona.davison@mildmay.org)

### 23-24 October, Birmingham

"Seeking the Transformation of a Fractured World". World Congress of Faiths 70th anniversary conference, with Birmingham University. Further information from Dr David Cheetham [D.Cheetham@bham.ac.uk](mailto:D.Cheetham@bham.ac.uk)

## ANNIVERSARIES AND SPECIAL DAYS AND WEEKS

### 350th Anniversary of the Resettlement of Jews in England

2006 marks the 350th Anniversary of the Resettlement of Jews in England, following the expulsion by Edward I in 1290. For the past year an umbrella group has been working, under the chairmanship of the President of the Board of Deputies, to bring a series of events together and a wide range of activities from the academic to the cultural to the simply entertaining - performances, lectures and publications is taking place. Details on events can be found at [www.britishjews350.org.uk/index.php?page=events](http://www.britishjews350.org.uk/index.php?page=events)

### Festival of Muslim Cultures

The Festival of Muslim Cultures was launched in Sheffield in January 2006 by HRH the Prince of Wales. The Festival continues until July 2007 with events around the UK. It is working with arts and educational institutions across the UK to promote the mainstreaming of Muslim cultures within UK everyday life. The Festival was created out of the need to encourage a better understanding between Muslims and non Muslims (as a two-way process), to promote respect for Muslim cultures and to demonstrate how culture creates the pathways that connect people of many backgrounds together. For further information see [www.muslimcultures.org](http://www.muslimcultures.org)

### 2007: the bicentenary of the abolition of slavery

25 March 2007 will mark 200 years to the day that a Parliamentary Bill was passed to abolish the slave trade in the British colonies. A project entitled **set all free** has been established by Churches Together in England to commemorate the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. **set all free** will be working with government, statutory bodies and community groups to host a conference and produce materials to make people aware of the bicentenary and is eager for a faith-based dimension to all aspects of the commemoration. More information can be found at [www.setallfree.net](http://www.setallfree.net)

The Heritage Lottery Fund is keen to encourage community-based organisations to apply for funding for projects inspired by the Parliamentary abolition of Britain's involvement in the slave trade. A seminar is due to be held on this later in the summer. Further details are available at [www.hlf.org.uk/English/InYourArea/London/News/Transatlantic+slave+trade.htm](http://www.hlf.org.uk/English/InYourArea/London/News/Transatlantic+slave+trade.htm)

### 10 September: Racial Justice Sunday

A day organised by the Churches' Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ) for Christians and others across Britain and Ireland to learn, think and pray about racial justice, and to celebrate human dignity and diversity. The day helps to raise money for the Racial Justice Fund which supports projects around Britain and Ireland which are working to create better community relations. Information packs cost £3.50 and can be ordered from CTBI Publications, 4 John Wesley Road, Peterborough PE4 6ZP (enquiries [sales@mph.org.uk](mailto:sales@mph.org.uk)).



## The Inter Faith Network

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. The Network:

- provides information on faith and inter faith issues;
- advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues;
- publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors;
- fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues;
- holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together;
- links 112 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; and educational and academic bodies



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