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The Inter Faith Network for the UK
2005-2006 ANNUAL REVIEW

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987 to promote good relations between people of different faiths in this country and to "advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in Britain, including an awareness both of their distinctive features and of their common ground".

The Network's 133 member bodies include the representative bodies of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths; national, regional, local and other inter faith bodies; and educational and academic bodies specialising in inter faith relations. With them it works to promote understanding and respect between the faith communities in the UK.

The Inter Faith Network:

- Runs an information and advice service
- Publishes materials to help people working in the religious and inter faith sectors
- Holds meetings of its member bodies, where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
- Sets up multi faith working groups, seminars and conferences to pursue particular issues in greater depth
- Proceeds by consensus wherever possible and does not make statements on behalf of member bodies except after full consultation
- Holds meetings of the different categories of Network member bodies including "link" meetings for local inter faith groups
- Works to raise awareness of the importance of good inter faith relations
- Fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues

Further information about the Inter Faith Network can be found on its website: www.interfaith.org.uk or can be obtained by writing to the Network office.

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The Inter Faith Network for the UK

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ANNUAL REVIEW 2005-2006

Contents

Co-Chairs' message	3
Linking and promoting inter faith work	5
Women's inter faith initiatives survey	11
Network National Meeting	14
Faith and citizenship	22
Faith and the public agenda	28
Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities	33
Information and advice	34
Network membership	36
Trustees	36
Staff and internships	37
Statement of financial activities	38
Balance sheet	39
Supporters in 2005	40

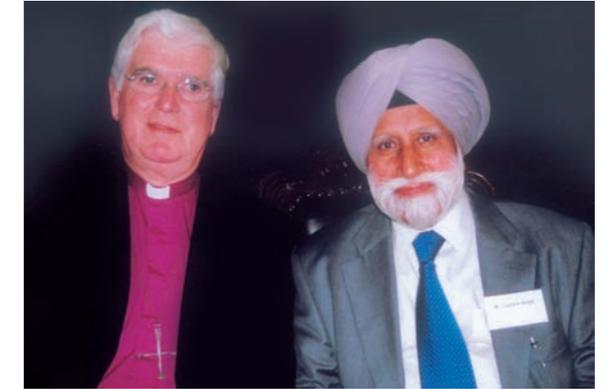
Co-Chairs' message

This year's Annual Review reflects a time of rapid change in the inter faith landscape with many important new developments. The National Meeting in July offered a valuable opportunity for reflection on these.

The year has seen another rapid increase in the number of inter faith bodies – especially at local and regional level. This is a most welcome sign that increasing numbers of people of all faiths are now actively engaged in working for better inter faith relations. The involvement of women within inter faith dialogues at senior level and in many local contexts, however, remains relatively low and we have been delighted this year that Dr Fatheena Mubarak has undertaken a short research project for the Network to look at the pattern of women's inter faith activity. We hope the examples of good practice which it highlights will inspire more initiatives of this kind.

Across the last year there has been increased reflection and public debate on issues of identity, belonging and shared citizenship – sadly, in part prompted by the bombings last July in London. The Network's seminar in February, in association with the Citizenship Foundation, *Faith, Identity and Belonging: Educating for Shared Citizenship*, provided an important opportunity to address these issues in the vital context of the education of young people. The Network will be taking these educational issues forward in the coming year as well as continuing our shared exploration, as part of our wider Faith and Citizenship project, of foundational questions about the character and future of our society.

Government at all levels is now engaging with faith communities to an increasing degree. At central Government level the setting up of the new Faith Communities Consultative Council and the bringing together of key areas of work of concern to faith communities in the Equalities Group of the Department for Communities and Local Government are both potentially helpful steps. Another significant development is that for the first time substantial Government funding in the form of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund has been made available to the faith sector. There has been a



Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler and Mr Jagjiwan Singh, Co-Chairs, Inter Faith Network

wide welcome for this from faith and inter faith organisations and, at the same time, a keenness to maintain their independence in making their own distinctive contribution to society.

Thank you to the Network's staff and to our fellow trustees whose hard work and commitment have helped the Network develop its work further and to rise to new challenges. We would also like to express our appreciation of the work of Network member bodies for their support and involvement this year and the many ways that they are working to build good inter faith relations.

We are very grateful for the funding which we have received from the Government and from faith communities, trusts and other donors. Donations at all levels are warmly appreciated and are carefully used to make it possible for the Network's work to continue to make a vital contribution to community cohesion here in the UK and to help in developing deeper understanding between people of different faiths.

As Government Minister Meg Munn, speaking about the Network at its National Meeting in July, said: "The UK is the only European Union member state to have a broad national inter faith linking structure of this kind. It is an important contributor to helping develop community cohesion. I really think that if the Inter Faith Network did not exist we would have to invent it!"



Rt Revd Dr Tom Butler
Co-Chair, Inter Faith Network



Jagjiwan Singh
Co-Chair, Inter Faith Network

Linking and promoting inter faith work

The Inter Faith Network links and works with inter faith organisations so that they can learn from each other's projects and so that more people can become involved in their work and bring about greater inter faith understanding and cooperation. It does this through publications, meetings and direct advice and support.

In the 2001 Census, 76.8% of people in the United Kingdom identified themselves as having a religious faith. Even in areas not considered as particularly 'multi faith' or 'multi cultural', there are adherents of most major faiths.

In an increasingly diverse UK building good inter faith relations becomes ever more important and in the last few years there has been a steep increase in local initiatives to bring people of different faiths together. There are now over 230 local inter faith bodies compared with under 80 at the start of 2000. Numbers have more than tripled in five years. There are also more than 60 branches and groups belonging to bodies such as the Council of Christians and Jews and Three Faiths Forum which work with two or three faiths. As well as formal structures, there are many individual inter faith projects run by other bodies.

There has also been a growth in national inter faith bodies, with the last year seeing the arrival

of significant new initiatives such as the Christian-Muslim Forum and in England at regional level an expansion in regional faith forums with the arrival of the Northwest Faiths Forum and the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum. At the Network's 2006 AGM these and other regional bodies came into membership, strengthening the pattern of connection between initiatives around the UK.

Working with local inter faith bodies and initiatives

The important role of local inter faith bodies

Local inter faith bodies play a very important role. They bring people of different faiths together to learn more about each other's faiths and to work on projects and events to deepen good inter faith relations. They can also ensure



Network staff member Harriet Crabtree (centre) with Rosemeen Jaffer (left) and other participants at an Interfaith MK women and faith event

that key members of the different faiths in a locality meet regularly. These personal links are crucial to ensure rapid and effective response if problems and tensions occur.

Some local inter faith bodies also carry out programmes of work to tackle prejudice and discrimination through awareness raising, diversity training and educational programmes; advise local government, the police, hospitals and other public services on religious issues and the needs of users of different faiths; and assist on local civic ceremonies and events.

This bringing together of the faiths, in meetings and in civic contexts, also has symbolic importance – not to be undervalued – giving a visible sign of principled peaceful coexistence and co-operation within our society.

“Harmonious co-existence of people of different faiths and beliefs is vital to community cohesion”

COMMUNITY COHESION: AN ACTION GUIDE,
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION 2004

How the Inter Faith Network supports local initiatives

The Network works to support existing local inter faith bodies and to help develop new initiatives. Its helpline and advice service are extensively used and Network staff and trustees also visit

local groups and respond to speaking requests. These visits are an important part of keeping the Network office in touch with local developments.

The Network holds ‘link’ meetings for organisers of local inter faith groups in the English Regions. The meetings are a chance for organisers to share news and discuss issues of common concern as well as suggestions for running effective and interesting programmes. This year, meetings were held in December in Bolton for the North West Region (held before the launch of the Northwest Faiths Forum); in March in Bristol, for the South West Region (in association with the South West Council of Faiths), and in May in Guildford, for the South East Region (in association with the South East England Faiths Forum).

Many new local inter faith initiatives have received funding this year under the first round of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund (a fund administered by the Community Development Foundation for the Department for Communities and Local Government). There has therefore been a higher level than usual of enquiries about the practicalities of issues such as recruiting development workers, agreeing a constitution and general project management.

Last summer, as noted in the last Annual Review, the Inter Faith Network worked in consultation with its member bodies to produce a revised and expanded second edition of *The Local Inter Faith Guide: Faith Community Cooperation in Action*. This was

Local Inter Faith Projects

Images from recent activities of just a few bodies working locally to promote good inter faith relations.

Waltham Forest ‘Health Preachers Project’ where the Council funded the Primary Care Trust to train 15 ‘health preachers’ recruited by the Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum. 9 Christian ministers (from diverse traditions), 3 Imams and 3 Sikh community workers undertook a 10 week course learning about health issues and have spent the last 3 months communicating key health promotion messages to their congregations.



Taking the message of inter faith understanding through the streets. Images from 3 cities: Leeds, Luton, and Liverpool. From left to right: Leeds Concord Inter Faith Association Walk of Friendship; The 10th Luton Annual Faith Walk which this year was sponsored by a number of organisations such as the University of Luton, Bedfordshire Police, The Mail, Herald & Post, Luton News and the Home Office; Merseyside Council of Faiths 2006 Walk of Faith



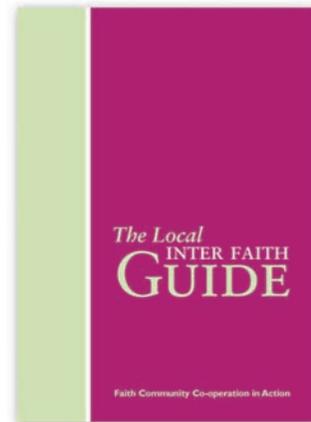
Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council planning session



Civic links – Manchester Interfaith Forum’s Committee with Cllr Mohammed Afzal Khan, the first Muslim Lord Mayor of Manchester

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF BODIES ILLUSTRATED

published in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. This year, thanks to a grant from the Home Office, the new edition was made available on-line as part of the development of a major new section of the Network's site: The Local Inter Faith Zone.



The guide contains advice and information on:

- types of local inter faith initiative
- getting involved in local inter faith activity
- starting a new initiative
- developing effective inter faith initiatives – ideas for activities and information on the nuts and bolts of running a body, from constitutions to membership, to premises and funding
- working with local authorities, Local Strategic Partnerships and regional structures
- keeping local initiatives going successfully
- making the work known through the media

The Network's website's new Local Inter Faith Zone complements the guide, with photographs of groups' activities and additional case studies.



www.interfaith.org.uk
The Inter Faith Network's website

Regional faith forums in England

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 are taken about such matters as transport and planning. 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. The Assemblies bring together representatives from local government, the private and public sector and voluntary organisations.

Over the last ten years, regional faith forums have come into existence to enable faith groups to contribute to these processes in the East, the East Midlands, the North West, the South East, the South West, West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humber. During the year, the Network's newsletter, *Inter Faith Update*, carried a special focus article on the work of these forums and details about them are included in the new edition of *Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory*. All the English regional forums became members of the Inter Faith Network in July 2006 (except the East Midlands which decided that it was not at present in a position to proceed with an application for membership). This will create a stronger communication link and, it is hoped, lead to increasingly fruitful patterns of partnership working with the forums.

At the end of 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Home Office and the Inter Faith Network held a meeting for representatives of all the emerging regional faith forums. In November 2005 a second meeting of representatives of these bodies was held in



Signing ceremony at the launch of Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum in December

Coventry at the initiative of the West Midlands Faiths Forum with the assistance of the Faith-based Regeneration Network (FbRN). 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. In August 2006, the Inter Faith Network office hosted a further planning meeting, arranged by the Faith-based Regeneration Network with the Network, attended by members of all the regional forums. It provided a valuable

opportunity to discuss current developments as well as the shape of further work.

An emerging issue to be explored in subsequent meetings is how best to ensure complementary working of the Network at national level and the forums at regional level in providing advice and support to local inter faith initiatives.

National inter faith bodies

There are now around 25 bodies and ongoing programmes working for good inter faith relations at UK and national level. Some, such as the Hindu-Christian Forum and Alif Aleph, which works with Jews and Muslims, focus on particular traditions. Others, such as the World Congress of Faiths, work with people of any religion or belief. A number, such as Religions for Peace and the Inter Faith Programme of Minorities of Europe which works with young people, have a particular area of focus for their work. A few, such as the inter faith programme of Christians Aware, are initiatives which are run by particular faith traditions to develop good inter faith relations beyond their tradition.

Keeping such bodies and programmes in touch and raising awareness about their work is an important part of the Inter Faith Network's work. A meeting of representatives of national inter faith organisations was held 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 and it was agreed to continue the annual meetings, perhaps focusing in future on particular current themes.

The Scottish Inter Faith Council and the Inter Faith Council for Wales, which are member bodies of the Inter Faith Network, have the main role in promoting inter faith activity in their nations as does the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum, also a Network member body, in Northern Ireland. The Network's office and the offices of these bodies keep in regular touch and a meeting to discuss their work is planned for the end of 2006.

Giving people information about inter faith initiatives

To help the growing number of people interested in finding out whether there is a regional or local inter faith body in their area, the Inter Faith Network's website provides a free to use listing of where regional and local inter faith bodies are to be found, together with contact email addresses. The locations of branches of the Council of Christians and Jews and groups of Three Faiths Forum are also included. Information about UK and national inter faith bodies is given in the section of the Network's site which lists member bodies.

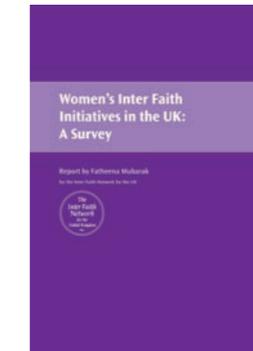
The Network also publishes a handbook of inter faith bodies in the UK, *Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory*. This contains detailed information about the work of the growing number of inter faith organisations working to promote respect, understanding and social cooperation around the UK. In March the Network published the third, revised and updated edition. 42 of its 253 listings are new to this edition.



To order a copy of the directory, send a cheque for £7.50 (including postage and packing) to the Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN or for institutional orders email ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to request a copy of the publication with an invoice.

Women's inter faith initiatives survey

The Inter Faith Network has always had a strong commitment to involving women of different faiths actively in its work. The same is true of its member bodies. However, women's voices are not always heard as strongly as they might be. Across recent years, there has been a growth in inter faith activities organised by, and usually mainly for, women. Earlier this year, the Network commissioned a short survey and report from Dr Fatheena Mubarak looking at some of the reasons why women are developing inter faith initiatives and at the activities which they are carrying out. The report reveals a wealth of exciting developments which are making a distinctive and important contribution to inter faith understanding in their areas.



Dr Mubarak's report looks at some of the different types of inter faith initiatives set up and run by women. It gives many examples of good practice throughout the report, reflects on the role of women in inter faith work more generally and provides a basis for further work in future on this important area.

The report can be downloaded from www.interfaith.org.uk

"The rise in women's inter faith initiatives in the past few years has been an encouraging sign that people are keen to engage in inter faith activity, especially during a time when the political and religious climate, nationally and internationally, has often been tense and unsettled. In such an environment, it is heartening that more women are coming forward with ways to build good



Dr Fatheena Mubarak

inter faith relations. Their commitment and efforts will, undoubtedly, make a vital and powerful contribution towards developing mutual respect and understanding between faith communities."

Women's voices from the Mubarak report:

"We offer a drop-in centre for Asian women, offering advice and support. We do casework



SIFC

Scottish Inter Faith Council women's seminar on perspectives on war and working for peace.

in homelessness, housing, welfare rights and immigration and also have a counselling service, offer training and advocacy support, free legal advice sessions, and home and hospital visits for those who are elderly, disabled, unwell or frail. Our new initiative, which is a one year inter faith volunteering project, aims to train volunteers, all women, between the ages of 16 and 25 from the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities to work in the Hackney area. They will raise awareness of these faiths to enable better relations and strengthen links between these faith groups."

AN INTER FAITH VOLUNTEERING PROJECT, ASIAN WOMEN'S ADVISORY SERVICE (AWAS)

"We came together originally because of our concerns about the impact of the Thames Gateway developments on our area. In April 2000 the Mothers' Union convened a forum to discuss issues of main concern. Over 70 women attended and between them represented many different faith communities. It soon became clear that there were many aims in common,

that groups could work together and, by doing so, could combine resources to best effect. A representative forum was appointed which meets at least once every two months. Guest speakers from other groups give the benefit of their community experience. Members have been invited to join the committees of several other organisations and to attend relevant seminars. Thus the Forum has become a recognised resource in the community."

THAMES GATEWAY WOMEN'S MULTIFAITH FORUM

"Our work overlaps and is complementary to the Oldham Inter Faith Forum, which aims to be a representative voice for the faith communities in Oldham. The women's initiative was set up because the Forum was not attracting many women. It was a bit too formal. The women's group gives an opportunity to find out a bit more about each other's faith in a separate environment and context and our structure is formed around us and our needs."

OLDHAM WOMEN'S INTER FAITH NETWORK

"We are an ecumenical discussion group in Dorking, representing 6 different Christian denominations. We have been running for about 15 years and meet monthly in each other's homes, where we share our responses to a variety of books of a spiritual nature. An article "Don't blame my religion" that appeared in the Dorking

Advertiser on 14 July 2005, after the London bombings, prompted us to seek out and eventually make contact with the local Muslim woman who wrote the article. In the words of the report we later submitted to the local press, we "wanted to meet with local Muslim women to offer them the same friendship and understanding that we had developed within our Group". The Muslim woman and two of her friends gladly accepted our invitation to a simple lunch in the Quaker Meeting House in November 2005. This proved a very happy occasion and since then the Muslim women have come along to one of our discussion group sessions and talked to us about their lives as Muslim wives and mothers. We all agreed to continue to meet up at regular intervals to enable us to improve our understanding of each other's faiths."

AN INTER FAITH INITIATIVE IN DORKING



TGWF

Thames Gateway Women's Multifaith Forum on a joint visit to Regent's Park Mosque with Kent Muslim Women's Group and Soroptimists

Network National Meeting

Challenge and Opportunity: Changing Patterns of Inter Faith Engagement in the UK

‘Faith’ and ‘inter faith’ issues have come strongly to the forefront of the public agenda in recent years and the importance of people of different religious traditions living harmoniously has become more widely recognised; indeed, it is now at the heart of the community cohesion agenda alongside good race relations. These two strands will also be central to the ‘good relations’ work of the forthcoming Commission on Equality and Human Rights. The number of organisations specialising in inter faith and multi faith work is increasing rapidly, as is the number of individual inter faith projects being run by faith communities and other bodies such as local authorities and youth organisations.

The 2006 Network National Meeting, at Ironmongers’ Hall in London on 3 July, was a chance for over 130 people of different faiths from Network member bodies around the UK to explore this rich and complex new terrain. The day included contributions from speakers of the different faiths and also from Meg Munn MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary with responsibility for faith matters in the new Department for Communities and Local

Government (DCLG), and from Debbie Ladds of the Community Development Foundation, which is administering the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund for the DCLG.



Brian Pearce

Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network, gave an introductory overview of the changing landscape of inter faith engagement in the UK, looking at issues such as how the task of building good inter faith relations may be changing; how particular strands of inter faith work, such as those involving specific faiths or sectors of the population such as women and young people, are developing; the impact of the fact that Government at all levels has been seeking to engage more effectively with faith communities; and how new funding streams, such as the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, are affecting the landscape.



Dr Edward Kessler

Dr Edward Kessler, Director of the Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations, Cambridge, reflected on principles of successful dialogue and talked about developments in the field of inter faith dialogue and academic study and the vital

importance of developing solid programmes of work in this area. He noted that the study of inter faith relations is very new and there needs to be careful thought given to what disciplines it should span, such as theology; history; the study of religion; political science; literature; cultural studies; and philosophy.



Vijayanti Chauhan

Vijayanti Chauhan, Chair of Preston Faith Forum, member of Lancashire Forum of Faiths and Voluntary, Community, and Faith Sector Liaison Officer for Lancashire County Council reflected on the changing face of local inter faith work and why this continues to grow in importance. She described how this work is being taken forward in Preston and, more widely, within Lancashire and how this illustrates the contribution faiths can make to community cohesion. Using the Preston and Lancashire examples, she also looked at ways in which multi faith forums can act as consultative forums, complementing such consultation carried out with individual faith communities by bodies such as LSPs and local authorities.



Pramila Kaur

Pramila Kaur, Chief Executive Officer, Scottish Inter Faith Council (SIFC) spoke about the pattern of religious identity in Scotland; general developments in inter faith working in Scotland; and about the strategic and operational work of the Scottish Inter Faith Council. SIFC’s work includes

engagement with faith communities and government structures on faith and public life matters; working with religious leaders and with grassroots groups including local inter faith bodies; and carrying out special programmes of work with young people and women. It also includes helping to facilitate and promote Scottish ‘inter faith week’ in November when events take place across Scotland to help encourage inter faith understanding and awareness.

Rev Canon Guy Wilkinson, Inter Faith Adviser to the Church of England, and Moulana M Shahid Raza, Executive Secretary of the Imams and Mosques Council and Head Imam of Leicester Central Mosque, both addressed a question for faith communities in their inter faith relations – To what tasks do new circumstances call us? Canon Wilkinson talked about the anxieties aroused by times of rapid change, especially where deeply held religious beliefs are involved.



Canon Guy Wilkinson

He stressed the need for care in the language used to talk about inter faith issues and in the way that ‘faith and the public square’ issues are handled and spoke of a paradigm shift towards a new understanding of ‘co-citizenship’.



Moulana M Shahid Raza

Moulana Raza spoke of both positive and negative developments on the inter faith front, and some of the difficult challenges currently faced by the Muslim community. He emphasised the need for people of all faiths to tackle some of the tougher issues and to deepen existing dialogue.

Closing plenary panel

Closing plenary reflections were offered by Hon Barney Leith, Secretary for External Affairs, Baha’i Community of the UK; Revd Daniel Otieno-Ndale, Baptist Union and Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs Reference Group of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland; Nitin Palan, Swaminarayan Hindu Mission; and Dr Harriet Crabtree, Deputy Director, Inter Faith Network.

Workshops

Faith communities and their inter faith programmes

Workshop 1 was chaired by Jehangir Sarosh of Zoroastrian Trust Funds for Europe. Presentations on faith communities and their inter faith programmes were given by Neville Nagler, Interfaith Consultant, Board of Deputies of British Jews and Vice-Chair Inter Faith Network and by Anuja Prashar, Chairperson, Interfaith and Race Relations Committee, Hindu Forum of Britain.

Deepening dialogue

Workshop 2, chaired by Venerable Tawalama Bandula of the London Buddhist Vihara, looked at some of the ways that dialogue between people of different faiths is being developed and deepened today. Presentations were given by Alfred Agius, Director of Westminster Interfaith (Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster) and member of the Hindu-Christian Forum, and by Moulana Rashid Musa, Imam of Zakaria Mosque, Bolton.

Women and inter faith initiatives

An increasing number of inter faith initiatives are being run by and for women. Workshop 3, chaired by Dr Harriet Crabtree of the Inter Faith Network, gave a chance to talk with a number of women involved in them and to hear a presentation from Dr Fatheena Mubarak, who had been conducting research for the Network on this topic (see pages 11-13 for further details).

Websites: windows onto the changing world of inter faith work.

Workshop 4, chaired by Priti Shah of the Jain community, included a practical presentation from Bhupinder Singh, who designed and maintains the Inter Faith Network’s website. It offered the opportunity to look at examples of different websites and discuss ways that the internet can be a tool to make the work of inter faith initiatives better known and engage more participants.

Funding and running inter faith and faith initiatives – nuts and bolts

A key issue at the present time is how to rise to the new opportunities and challenges on the inter faith front. Some inter faith and faith bodies are moving for the first time to: fundraise and deploy significant resources for their work; develop appropriate management and financial structures; rent premises; and recruit and employ staff or consultants. Workshop 5, chaired by Brian Pearce, offered an overview by Dr Doreen Finneron of the Faith-based Regeneration Network of some of the issues involved.

Young people and inter faith bridge building

Last year’s national meeting had a full day special focus on this important area. Workshop 6, chaired by Dr Maureen Sier of the Scottish Inter Faith Council, offered a chance to hear from a range of initiatives and to discuss news of recent

developments as well as some of the issues linked to organisations’ current programmes of work in this area.

Some reflections from the day

By respecting our religious differences we can engage with each other as fellow human beings, the better to move towards an inclusive society. All of us – central and local Government, public services, the voluntary sector, business, local communities – have a role in helping Britain become more a country of social equality and strong community.

MEG MUNN MP

... Today, almost one year after 7 July, I strongly feel that there is a greater need for more and more inter faith dialogue and engagement. This dialogue, my friends, should not only be about the descriptions of our problems. This is what I generally feel. We get together, we smile, we embrace, we shake hands, we speak about the description of our problems. Instead we need to offer tangible and clear suggestions about the nature of the solutions of these problems. Perhaps this is the challenge for us. This is the way forward for inter faith dialogue.

MOULANA M SHAHID RAZA

How do faith leaders, politicians and business people collectively strive to portray balance and fairness in the increasingly important political inter faith dialogue taking place in the UK today? How can they achieve balanced representation within their own faith groups and yet stand firm on principles and value systems which also reflect religious values and the globalising reality of the 21st Century? The Hindu/Vedic values of pluralism and self realisation make the task for an individual simple and personal. The integration and social success of Hindus in the UK today is a reflection of this value system effectively in operation.

ANUJA PRASHAR



Rev Daniel Otieno-Ndale giving closing reflections

I want to suggest that the changing circumstance is that the country as a whole and the Churches in particular might be working on what you might call a 'paradigm shift' away from a 'host-guest' type of understanding, towards a 'co-citizenship' type of understanding... the task for us all as people of faith seems to me to be to consider carefully what a 'co-citizenship' model means in terms of the structures of religion within our society... to discover whether it is possible to develop a model which respects the deep religiously embedded, cultural and constitutional structures; accepts the fact of deep religious difference and deep human commonality; and is open, positively open, to the 'other' and ready to learn from it and to work alongside it for the common good. Because the common good for all of us is the flourishing of human beings under God.

CANON GUY WILKINSON

... We are caught in what Martin Luther King called 'an inextricable network of mutuality'. In other words, what affects one directly, affects all of us indirectly... Our communities can only flourish in a decent society which respects the rights of all minorities.

DR EDWARD KESSLER



Hon Barney Leith

I think there is room, in addition to the dialogue we have amongst ourselves as people of faith, for dialogue with secularists, with humanists, with those who have non religious belief systems. I would like to advocate this and it fits very well with the whole issue of freedom of religion or belief. If you believe that a human conscience worthy of its name will investigate the reality around it, will investigate different belief systems and arrive at some conclusions, maybe tentative ones, and will live according to those conclusions, some people may judiciously arrive at non religious

conclusions. I think we should be talking to people who have arrived at those conclusions.

HON BARNEY LEITH

... How we live now, the choices we make, and the energy that we put into building trust and friendships and working cooperatively will surely help shape not just our own lives and local communities on the way, but also help determine whether the society on our horizon – that of coming generations – is harmonious and just and characterised by mutual respect and understanding.

HARRIET CRABTREE

A full report on the day is available at www.interfaith.org.uk



Meeting participants

The Network's National Meeting 2006



Manjula Sood



Ven Bandula and Ven Pematana with Atul Patel of DCLG



Mgr John Devine and Malcolm Deboo



Meg Munn MP and Dr Indarjit Singh



Zafar Khan and Nemu Chandaria



Rev Supriyo Mukherjee, Osman Sheikh (CDF) and Alan Rainer



Neville Nagler and Nitin Palan



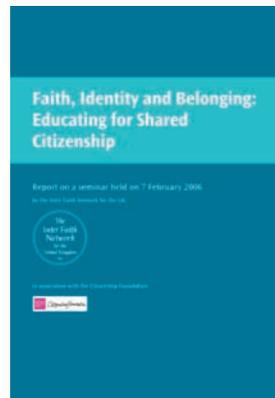
Angela Jagger

Faith and citizenship

Across the last year the Network has been running a new project on 'Faith and Citizenship' to enable exploration of how people of different faiths see 'citizenship' and to encourage reflection on such issues as 'identity' and 'belonging'.

Educating for Shared Citizenship

On 7 February the Inter Faith Network, in



association with the Citizenship Foundation, organised a seminar in London, 'Faith, Identity and Belonging: Educating for Shared Citizenship'. This explored how schools can best help in preparing young people for life in multi faith and

multicultural society and participants discussed such key issues as:

- 'identity, belonging, engagement and participation' in multi faith, multicultural Britain
- how young people can learn about the importance of harmonious co-existence as citizens of different faiths and of no religious commitment, sharing an active commitment

to the common good, within our diverse society

- the handling of the sometimes controversial and difficult issues which arise in dealing with faith and citizenship issues in the classroom
- the theoretical underpinnings of tackling these issues within the framework of the school curriculum
- what resources can support teaching and learning in this area

The Citizenship Foundation's work focuses particularly on developing young people's citizenship skills, knowledge and understanding. It has recently been looking at the role of RE in relationship to Citizenship Education and contributing actively to projects such as Diversity and Dialogue, which is developing resources for educating about inter faith engagement by young people. The Foundation was therefore a natural partner for this seminar and the Network was very pleased to be working in association with it to bring together a wide span of professionals in Religious Education and Citizenship Education – two fields which have key contributions to make to educating young people for shared citizenship in an integrated multi faith and multi ethnic UK – with faith community members in mutual sharing of good practice and discussion together of challenging issues.

The day was jointly chaired by Brian Pearce, the Network's Director, and Don Rowe, Director of

Curriculum Resources of the Citizenship Foundation. It included presentations from key people within RE and Citizenship Education, reflections from the classroom and young people's perspectives.

The working group sessions in the afternoon allowed participants to delve deeper into some more specific aspects of the day's focus and to hear about examples of several projects that have very successfully addressed faith and citizenship.

Coming out of the day was the acknowledgement that schools and teachers were facing substantial challenges within the field of faith and citizenship. A report on the day's proceedings, including observations and suggestions made by the working groups, plenary speakers and other contributors to plenary discussions (some of which are reproduced on the next page), was published and circulated to those who attended and to Network member bodies and Citizenship Foundation Trustees.

The Network and the Citizenship Foundation are in discussion with educational organisations in the fields of RE and Citizenship Education on how best to pursue the ideas emerging from the seminar.

The seminar report can be downloaded from www.interfaith.org.uk

Speakers at the seminar: Sophia Ashraf, Bradford Student Shadow SACRE; Rauf Bashir, Projects Manager, Building Bridges Pendle; Clare Giles, Citizenship Coordinator, Whitstable Community College, Kent; Tony Breslin, Chief Executive, Citizenship Foundation; John Keast, Consultant to the DfES on Religious Education and Intercultural Education; Deepa Mashru, Leicester Inter Faith Youth Group; and Balbir Sohal, Advisory Teacher for Citizenship, PSHE and Equalities, Coventry Local Authority.

Special focus work group sessions were led by: Professor Brian Gates, Chair, RE Council of England and Wales; Rev Canon John Hall, Chief Education Officer, Education Division, Church of England; Dr Edward Kessler, Director, Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations, Cambridge; Joyce Miller, Head of Diversity and Cohesion / Vice Chair, Education Bradford / Association of Religious Education Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants; and Chris Waller, Professional Officer, Association of Citizenship Teachers.

Voices from the 'Faith, Identity and Belonging Seminar'

Community involvement is about encouraging children and young people to become involved in, and concerned for, the life of their communities. This can include involvement in community service. Within the Sikh faith, we have a concept called 'seva'. Roughly translated, this means 'community service.' Other faiths probably have similar concepts which can be explored as part of community involvement. Political literacy involves learning about the institutions, issues and problems and practices of our democracy, and how citizens can make themselves effective in public life, locally, regionally and nationally, and maybe even internationally. The knowledge and understanding required by the three different strands of Citizenship Education is to be developed by providing opportunities for enquiry and communication, participation and responsible action.

BALBIR SOHAL

... [T]hose of us in the citizenship education community have always been concerned with 'citizenship as process'. In other words, our focus has been on the process of engagement, of empowerment, of activity. By definition, the notion of citizenship as a process is inclusive. It is a birthright, it is not a legal matter, even though

we want to see the rights of citizenship enshrined legally. When we start talking about citizenship as a 'status', with such rights as the right to live in a certain place, or have membership of a certain group, or whatever it may be, we are into quite a different, albeit related, set of issues. The notion of the 'status' of citizenship can appear often to be as excluding as it is inclusive.

TONY BRESLIN

When Citizenship Education was first brought up in the Student SACRE meeting I recall that my reaction was quite hostile. I did not feel that I had to prove how 'British' I am, but, of course, then I realised that citizenship is more than that. Citizenship... will not work if it is just a matter of worksheets and textbooks. It needs to be more than that to relate to the lives of students. I know schools shy away from politics but it would be far more interesting if students were allowed to talk about the issues in which they are interested, including complex and tough ones like Israel and Palestine and current issues such as the Danish cartoons of the Prophet.

SOPHIA ASHRAF, STUDENT MEMBER OF BRADFORD SHADOW SACRE



Working group discussion

Some of the action suggestions from the 7 February seminar:

- Create more resources, including web based resources, for teaching and learning about issues related to inter faith relations and also resources about different faiths' understandings of citizenship.
- Faith communities and inter faith organisations can help in the development of resources about citizenship and about inter faith relations.
- Make available more resources for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to enable more teachers to handle confidently and effectively the often sensitive and controversial issues related to faith and citizenship; to enable to them to facilitate well dialogue and debate about these; and to help children to develop their critical thinking abilities as well as learning to address tough issues with sensitivity.
- Encourage Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) to include units on inter faith relations and religious dialogue in all local RE syllabuses, in line with the encouragement given by the non-statutory National Framework for RE to these dimensions of the syllabus.
- Encourage schools to develop partnerships with their local faith communities.
- Single faith and mainly mono-faith schools can help their pupils engage with those of other faiths through joint projects, school 'linking' projects and exchange visits.
- Ensure, through suitable projects, that there is a clear framework for taking forward engagement between pupils of different faiths beyond the school gates. Young people need to encounter each other through relevant shared activities beyond the classroom.
- When teaching about citizenship, it is always important to remember 'global citizenship' as well as national citizenship.
- Find ways to encourage and facilitate debate between all sections of society – including, very importantly, people who do not have a religious faith – on the type of society we want to see and how different groups can peacefully co-exist within a shared society.

Faith communities discuss faith and citizenship

As part of the Inter Faith Network's 'Faith and Citizenship' project a special meeting of its Faith Communities Consultative Forum was held in London on 6 December. 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 our society; an endorsement of the importance of civic identity, with a recognition that

Speakers included: Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network; Judith Lemprière, then Head of the Home Office's Cohesion and Faiths Unit; Dr Manazir Ahsan, Director General of the Islamic Foundation and a Network Vice-Chair; Sister Isabel Smyth, former Chief Executive of the Scottish Inter Faith Council and involved in a wide range of inter faith issues in Scotland; Miriam Kaye, then Interfaith Officer of the Board of Deputies of British Jews; Hon Barney Leith, Secretary for External Affairs of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the UK and Network Vice-Chair; Anil Bhanot, General Secretary of the Hindu Council (UK); and Anne Breivik, the Network's "Faith and Citizenship" Project Officer.

'citizenship' can be more problematic because of its legal connotations; and a need for a nuanced and inclusive understanding of 'British' identity.

Citizenship is not only about attaining rights, but more about participating, in particular, in the political and civil process. To talk of citizenship is to discuss rights, duties, participation and identity, because citizenship has always been seen as a function rather than as a political end in itself, not something to be attained but to be done and practised...As citizenship is the fulfilment of both rights and duties, Muslims, in fulfilling their duties to state and society, have every reason to expect their rights not only to be acknowledged but granted in full measure. These include being valued as full members of society, being given equal opportunities to fulfil their potential and being protected from discrimination and stigmatisation, especially when the world political climate is so tense and unfavourable in relation to Islam. Without the fulfilment of rights, true belonging is difficult to be actualised and the requirements of true citizenship to be practised.

DR MANAZIR AHSAN

Essentially, the debate on multiculturalism and integration has been about finding the right balance between upholding and respecting the integrity of individual strands, whether of faith or culture, within our society, and the need

for it to have sufficient cohesion not to fragment and become unmanageable. In other words, it is about the balance between unity and diversity – often put as unity in diversity. Why, in this context, is the concept of citizenship such an important one? Like integration and multiculturalism, it has become a focal point for discussion. Citizenship is an expression of the fact that we are linked together within a particular and shared society here on these islands. It is an expression of the fact that we are co-owners of that society and have to shape its future together. But people are rightly concerned that British citizenship should be an inclusive concept and therefore not be too narrowly defined, not seeking to assimilate everyone to a single rigid mould.

BRIAN PEARCE

Rabindra Nath Tagore, a great Indian poet, said, "Faith is a bird that feels the light and sings while the dawn is still dark." In this one sentence Tagore has encapsulated the essence of faith, that it is when the first rays of the sun have not yet shone and it is still dark, that the bird anticipates that first ray and starts singing. We too live in hope for that light which will overcome the darkness completely. As different faith groups, we may have different approaches to finding that light but we are all at least united in the same purpose... if we can learn to separate the

metaphysical from the worldly matters, which are both intrinsically infused in each religion, we can then see our unity of purpose in the metaphysical domain, but in the worldly domain accept that we are different. We need to be different and we need to celebrate that difference...[and]...the need for our different cultural identities cannot be overlooked.

ANIL BHANOT

...It seems to me that for citizenship to work it is not enough, or even necessary, to know facts about British history or the British legal or political system or British culture, whatever that means. But it is necessary to recognise, to acknowledge and to rejoice in the variety of identities that we all have, and indeed the variety of loyalties that we all have, and to convince ourselves that no matter what our nationality or creed may be we all have an investment in the future of the United Kingdom and we all have a part to play in its development. And, of course, any sense of citizenship cannot stop here. We may be citizens of a nation, of a United Kingdom, but we are also global citizens with a concern for and an investment in a world which is far greater than any nation, which has increasingly become smaller and which requires the cooperation and commitment of all nations for its very survival.

SISTER ISABEL SMYTH

Faith and the public agenda

Good inter faith relations are most likely to develop and deepen where people of different religious backgrounds feel safe, secure and valued as members of a just society and where account is taken of their needs and their contribution is appreciated and actively sought. Working with others to bring that about is an important aspect of the Network's role.

Faith Communities Consultative Forum

The Network's Faith Communities Consultative Forum, established in 2003, has continued during the past year to be an important instrument in facilitating discussion at national level between faith community representatives on issues of common concern, particularly those relating to public policy issues.

The Forum met on 27 October and discussed the Home Office's consultation document, Preventing Extremism Together: Places of Worship, including its proposal to take powers to close places of worship in certain circumstances in pursuit of tackling extremism, 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. As reported elsewhere, the Forum held a

special meeting on 6 December as part of the Network's 'Faith and Citizenship' project. At its meeting on 1 June the Forum noted that the Government had decided not to proceed with its proposal to take powers to close places of worship given the strong support which had been expressed for joint working and information sharing as the most effective way of stopping any abuse of places of worship by extremists. It also noted the outcome of further consultation by the Government on entry requirements for 'ministers of religion'.

Engagement with Government

In taking this part of its work forward, the Network's relationships with Government departments and with other public bodies are very important. In May, as part of the machinery of government changes accompanying a Ministerial reshuffle, a new Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) was established. This has brought together responsibilities for regeneration, neighbourhood renewal and local government, previously exercised by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, with the communities and civic renewal functions previously undertaken by the Home Office, including the work of its Cohesion and Faiths Unit. DCLG also now has responsibility for equality policy, including policy on race, faith, gender and sexual orientation, where functions were previously split between several Government departments and is to be the sponsor department

for the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights. The effect of these changes is to bring together in one department the areas of work in Government with which the Network has been mostly involved. As the new arrangements settle down this should help to improve coordination between them.

At the same time, the machinery of government changes mean that aspects of two areas of work are now in separate departments. There will need to be a close working relationship on matters affecting faith communities between DCLG and the new Office of the Third Sector (ie the voluntary and community sector) in the Cabinet Office; and also between the DCLG and the Home Office, both of which have responsibilities relating to the Government's agenda for 'tackling extremism'.

Faith Communities Consultative Council in the DCLG

In the closing months of 2005, the Government held a series of consultative meetings which led to the setting up of a Faith Communities Consultative Council. This brings together work previously undertaken by the Inner Cities Religious Council in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and by the Steering Group of the Home Office's Working Together Review which reported early in 2004. The Council has representatives on it from the nine faith communities in direct membership of the

Network, together with representation from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and from the offices of the Inter Faith Network and the Faith-based Regeneration Network. The work of the Council is still in its early stages. The new Council held its first meeting on 27 April. Following the machinery of Government changes in May, the Council has become the responsibility of DCLG. A second meeting of the Council was held on 26 July.

It will be important to ensure that the work of this new Government body and that of the Network's Faith Communities Consultative Forum complement each other, with the Council providing an instrument for consultation between Government and faith communities and the Forum providing a context for faith communities representatives to meet together on their own to discuss issues of common concern.

Planning for the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights

For some time, as reported in previous Reviews, the Network office has been actively involved in consultation processes relating to legislation on equality and diversity issues. The Equality Act received Royal Assent in February. This new legislation makes provision for the setting up of a new Commission for Equality and Human Rights. The three key 'pillars' of the work of the CEHR will be 'equality/discrimination', 'human

rights' and 'good relations' (including good 'inter faith' relations). The Equality Act requires the new body to give particular attention in its work on 'good relations' to issues relating to race and religion/belief. The Act also includes provisions on discrimination in relation to the provision of goods, services and premises on the grounds of religion or belief. These provisions are now due to come in to force in April 2007.

The CEHR is due to become operational in the autumn of 2007 when it will take on the work of the Equal Opportunities and Disability Rights Commissions, together with responsibilities in the fields of age, religion and belief and sexual orientation. Its first Chair is to be Trevor Phillips, currently Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality. Responsibility for race matters was due to be transferred to the CEHR from the Commission for Racial Equality no later than 2009 but the possibility of the CRE also joining the CEHR in the autumn of 2007 is now under consideration.

Planning for the new Commission is now well underway, helped by the recent machinery of Government changes, as a result of which most of the Government's work in this field has now been brought together within the new Department for Communities and Local Government, which will be the sponsor department for the new body.

A study of options on the way in which the CEHR might carry out its responsibilities in the field of 'good relations' is currently being undertaken by the Government. The Network office has been consulted in the initial stages. Its outcome will have an important bearing on the impact which the setting up of the new body will have on the work of inter faith organisations, including the Inter Faith Network. The Religion and Belief Consultative Group on Equality, Diversity and Human Rights, (the creation of which the Network helped to facilitate), mentioned in last year's Review, has provided a joint framework for faith communities and 'belief' organisations to keep in touch with developments in relation to equalities legislation and plans for the CEHR. The Network office is represented at the Group's meetings.

Commission on Integration and Cohesion

In August 2005 a proposal to set up a short term Commission on Integration and Cohesion was announced by the Prime Minister as part of a package of responses to the July bombings in London. Subsequently, Charles Clarke, who was then Home Secretary, consulted faith leaders, inviting their views on this proposal. It was decided around the turn of the year that the proposal should be modified and that a Commission on Faith should be set up, to be chaired by Charles Clarke himself and plans for this were well advanced by the time when he

ceased to be Home Secretary at the time of the Ministerial reshuffle in May. It was intended that this Commission should address a wide ranging agenda of issues relating to the place of faith in the Britain of today with the aim of its reporting before the end of 2006.

In a further change of plan, following the Ministerial reshuffle in May, it was decided to set up a Commission which would in fact address the broader areas outlined in August 2005 and in June it was announced by Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State in charge of the new Department for Communities and Local Government, that she had asked Darra Singh, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Ealing, to chair a Commission on Integration and Cohesion. The Commission is due to report in June 2007. Its recommendations for local areas will cover England only, but it will also consider good practice from Scotland and Wales.

Inter faith issues are likely to be an important strand within the Commission's work. Dr Harriet Crabtree, the Network's Deputy Director, is among the fourteen members of the Commission. The Commissioners have been appointed on a personal basis for their practical experience of community cohesion issues at a local level, rather than as direct representatives of their organisation or community.

Incitement to religious hatred

Last year's Review reported further efforts by the Government to legislate to prohibit incitement to religious hatred. The Network office was involved in meetings on it between the Home Office and faith community representatives and kept its member bodies in touch with developments in the progress of the legislation through its different Parliamentary stages. This was dogged by controversy but the Racial and Religious Hatred Bill received Royal Assent in February. It applies only to England and Wales and its provisions will not come in to force until the Home Secretary has made an order to this effect. There has been preliminary consultation by the Home Office on the content of guidance on the application of the Act.

During its passage through Parliament 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. 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 provisions of new Racial and Religious Hatred Act, 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' and 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 underlined the lack of any broad agreement within society 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.

Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund

In January 2005 the Government published *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* setting out the Government's strategy on race equality and community cohesion. This included the announcement of a new £3 million programme "to help faith communities... not to promote particular faiths, but to encourage dialogue and

understanding between faith groups and others in the community."

In September 2005, the Government announced the arrangements for the "Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund" from which both large and small grants were to be made available for 2006-07 for both faith-based organisations and inter faith organisations. Its priorities were cohesion focused faith community capacity building and inter faith activity. The Fund was administered for the Home Office by the Community Development Foundation (CDF). In February 2006 £7.75 million was awarded to 588 organisations.

This was the first major programme of funding for these areas of work and the Inter Faith Network office acted, with the Faith-based Regeneration Network, in a general advisory capacity to the Foundation, helping sketch out the landscape and answer queries. This involved a sizeable commitment of time of the Deputy Director during the year but this was appropriate, since the Fund is helping extend the kind of work that the Network was set up to promote. A second round of the Fund has now opened for grants for 2007-08.

All successful and unsuccessful applicants in the first round were sent by CDF a pack which included a number of publications to help them

with work on capacity building and inter faith work. Among these were three Network publications: *The Local Inter Faith Guide*; *Connect: Different Faiths Shared Values*; and *Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs*.



Debbie Ladds, Director of Projects, CDF

Looking after one another: The safety and security of our faith communities

In early 2006, a Home Office project grant enabled the publication as a printed leaflet of *Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of our Faith Communities*. As reported in the last Annual Review, the Network produced this shortly after the London bombings of 7 July, in consultation with the Commission for Racial Equality, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Chief Fire Officers' Association. The document gives 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 had been developed following a meeting convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, at Lambeth Palace some months earlier.

The leaflet has been circulated with a number of the Network's mailings this year and is being distributed in Scotland by the Scottish Inter Faith Council with an insert detailing contacts relevant to bodies in Scotland.

The pdf of *Looking After One Another* can be downloaded from the Network's website www.interfaith.org.uk or single copies are free with an A4 sized SAE from the Network office.



Information and advice

Enquiries

A major part of the work of the Network office is providing information and advice to a wide range of organisations and individuals. The table below shows a breakdown of the types of enquiries received over the past year:

Central and local Government	9%
Individual enquirers	17%
Faith community organisations	10%
Inter faith organisations	14%
Schools, colleges and universities	12%
Commercial organisations/employers	4%
Media	10%
Other public and voluntary organisations	24%

For some types of enquirers, such as companies and employees, the Network's role is to help make them aware of relevant sources of guidance such as ACAS guidelines on discrimination in the employment field or the Shap calendar of religious festivals. In others, such as assisting the media or central Government, it helps enquirers in making contact with the relevant faith or inter faith bodies. In some cases, where a project fits very closely with the Network's own aims, the Network may remain involved in an advisory role over a long period. So, for example, across the last year there has been close work with developing regional and local initiatives in various parts of the country and with other types

of projects such as the youth focused Diversity and Dialogue Project and with the Community Development Foundation which is administering the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund Programme.

This year a total of 570 enquiries were logged.

The number of visitors to the web site is growing and now averages approximately 5,000 a month.

Newsletter

The Network's newsletter, *Inter Faith Update*, is distributed to member bodies, subscribers, supporters of the Network, media religious affairs contacts and selected Government and other contacts. This year there were two mailings, one of which was a double issue with a special focus piece on regional faith forums in England.

Some examples of this year's enquiries:

We are working on an inter faith event to happen during Islam Awareness Week. Can you help us with speaker suggestions?

Enquirer from the West Midlands

My daughter is doing a school project on Jainism. Could you put us in touch with any Jain organisations who could help with information?

Individual enquirer from London

I work in an MP's office and one of his constituents has asked for guidelines on holding a multi faith event. Can you help?

MP's office, East of England

Our company's offices do not have any prayer space for use by employees. Can you tell me whether there are points to bear in mind now we are considering developing one?

Company in London

Please can you send me some samples of local inter faith group constitutions.

Enquirer from Yorkshire and Humber

Could you give me a contact for Edinburgh Inter Faith Group?

Media enquiry

Our local church is beginning to show an interest in inter faith issues. Who in the Church of England should we contact to find out about

Church resources and are there other resources which would be helpful?

Church of England parishioner in London

What kind of grace or prayer could we use at an awards dinner where there will be guests of several faiths?

Enquiry from a public sector body in London

What are the dates this year for the Week of Prayer for World Peace?

Local authority enquirer from the West Midlands

We are working to set up a 'council of faiths' in our area and would like advice on how to do this and on possible sources of grant support. Can you help?

Enquirer from the North East of England

Is there a legislative structure or mechanism in the UK for 'recognising' or 'registering' a religious group?

Voluntary sector body, South West of England

I am researching examples of positive collaboration between faith communities which contribute to community cohesion. Are there any in my local authority area that may be useful to contact?

Enquirer from London

I am doing a project on nursing patients of different cultures while they are in hospital. Could you tell me about any relevant literature?

Student in the East Midlands

Network membership

At the Network's Annual General Meeting, held in London on 3 July twenty two organisations were accepted into membership:

- Barnet Multi Faith Forum
- Brent Multifaith Forum
- British Muslim Forum
- Calderdale Interfaith Council
- Christian-Muslim Forum
- East of England Faiths Agency
- East of England Faiths Council
- Forum of Faiths for Derby
- Greenwich Multi-Faith Forum
- Islington Faiths Forum
- Moseley Inter Faith Group
- Newham Association of Faiths
- Northwest Forum of Faiths
- Preston Faith Forum
- South East of England Faiths Forum
- Southwark Multi Faith Forum
- South West Council of Faiths
- Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum
- Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum
- Wandsworth Multi-Faith Network
- West Midlands Faiths Forum
- Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum

This brings the total number of Network member bodies at present to 133.

It was reported to the AGM that the review of patterns of Network membership agreed at the 2005 AGM has not made as much progress as anticipated, partly due to the work flowing from the London bombings which took place only a few days after it. The review is considering issues such as whether the current types of membership category remain appropriate and whether the pattern of bodies in membership reflects adequately the situation in the UK. There is to be a continuing process of consultation with member bodies before recommendations are put to the 2007 AGM.

Trustees

At the AGM, Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler and Jagjiwan Singh were re-elected as Co-Chairs, and Dr Manazir Ahsan and Neville Nagler as Vice-Chairs, for the coming year. Ven Tawalama Bandula and Dr Nawal K Prinja were elected as Vice-Chairs in succession to Hon Barnabas Leith and Dr V P Narayan Rao.

Others who stood down from the Executive Committee included Om Parkash Sharma, who had served on the Committee since the Network was founded in 1987, Jehangir Sarosh, who had served on the Committee since 1993, and Nitin Palan and Sister Margaret Shepherd, who had both served on the Committee since 1999. Phil Henry stood down from the Committee towards the end of March and Gul Muhammad

and Janet Scott also did not stand for re-election. All who stood down were thanked for the important contribution which they had made to the work of the Committee.

Professor Brian Gates, Bimal Krishna das, Yann Lovelock, Dorab Mistry, Rabbi Rachel Montagu, Anuja Prashar (all of whom are new to the Committee) and Moulana Shahid Raza (who was a Committee member from 1987 to 2001) were elected to serve on the Committee for the coming year.

Staff and internships

Brian Pearce has continued to serve as the Network's Director; Harriet Crabtree as its

Deputy Director; Gaylina Nguyen as its Finance and Administration Assistant and Hannah Mercer, from the ProspectUs employment agency, as its Secretary/Administrator. Anne Breivik worked during the year as 'Faith and Citizenship Project Officer' before moving to work for TimeBank, one of the two bodies with which the Network published *Connect: Different Faiths, Shared Values*, two years ago. Bhupinder Singh continues to design and maintain the Network's website on a freelance basis and Dr Fatheena Mubarak, carried out a research project for the Network, also on a freelance basis (see pages 11-13). During the year, recent graduate Sarah Barnett and Harriet Lefton, who is entering her final year at North London Collegiate school for girls, did 'mini internships'.

Executive Committee Members 2006-07

Co-Chairs

Rt Revd Dr Tom Butler
Mr Jagjiwan Singh

Vice-Chairs

Dr Manazir Ahsan MBE
Ven Tawalama Bandula
Mr Neville Nagler
Dr Nawal K Prinja

Treasurer

Mr Ramesh Shah

Other Executive Committee members

Dr Fatma Amer
Ven Tawalama Bandula
Professor Brian Gates
Ms Dina Gold
Dr Elizabeth Harris
Ms Pramila Kaur
Mr Ayub Laher
Mr Shabbir Lakha
Hon Barnabas Leith
Mr Yann Lovelock
Mr Dorab Mistry
Rabbi Rachel Montagu
Mrs Ravinder Kaur Nijjar

Mrs Ann Noonan
Mrs Regina O'Callaghan
Rev Daniel Otieno-Ndale
Rabbi Alan Plancey
Ms Anuja Prashar
Dr V P Narayan Rao
Moulana Shahid Raza
Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid
Mr Resham Singh Sandhu MBE
Mr Alan Schwartz MBE
Dr Natubhai K Shah
Ms Priti Shah
Dr Indarjit Singh OBE
Rabbi Jacqueline Tabick
Rev Canon Guy Wilkinson

Statement of Financial Activities

(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)

For the year ended 31 December 2005

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total 2005 £	Total 2004 £
Incoming Resources				
Incoming Resources from generated funds				
Voluntary Income	50,688	241,528	292,216	261,244
Investment Income	–	4,256	4,256	3,142
Incoming resources from charitable activities	–	9,815	9,815	9,372
Total incoming resources	50,688	255,599	306,287	273,758
Resources expended				
Cost of Generating Voluntary Income	3,340	14,071	17,411	10,992
Charitable Activities				
Consultation, Information and Advice	12,268	90,234	102,502	116,456
Meetings and Conferences	10,565	41,896	52,461	33,817
Publications	8,230	54,258	62,488	57,490
Governance Costs	2,929	29,698	32,627	27,183
Total resources expended	37,332	230,157	267,489	245,938
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers	13,356	25,442	38,798	27,820
Gross transfer between funds	(19,522)	19,522	–	–
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year		(6,166)	44,964	38,798
Funds brought forward	16,960	63,703	80,663	52,843
Total funds carried forward	10,794	108,667	119,461	80,663

All the charitable company's operations are classed as continuing. All the charitable company's recognised gains and losses are shown above. The movement on reserves is shown above.

Balance Sheet

As at 31 December 2005

	£	2005 £	£	2004 £
Tangible Fixed Assets		17,440		21,490
Current Assets				
Debtors and prepayments	54,585		34,879	
Cash at bank	82,467		39,498	
	137,052		74,377	
Creditors: amounts due within one year	35,031		15,204	
Net Current Assets		102,021		59,173
Net Assets		119,461		80,663
Funds				
Restricted Funds		10,794		16,960
Unrestricted Funds		108,667		63,703
Total Funds		119,461		80,663

These Financial Statements were approved by the Executive Committee on 23 June 2006 and signed on their behalf by Mr Ramesh Shah, Treasurer.

Supporters in 2005

The Inter Faith Network's programme of building good relations between the different faith communities in the UK is funded through grants and donations from trusts, organisations and individuals supportive of its work, as well as through the subscription fees of its member bodies. During 2005 the Network also received a strategy grant from the Home Office, which from May 2006 became the responsibility of the new Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Trustees of the Network thank most warmly all those who have given financial support to its work during the calendar year 2005 and also those who have given the gift of time to help work for good relations between the faiths in the UK.

Government Funding

Home Office

Trusts, Foundations and Companies

Ardwick Trust
R M Burton Charitable Trust
Hugo Gryn Memorial Trust
P H Holt Charitable Trust
ICIC Foundation
M E Pearce Trust

Rest Harrow Trust
Simone Prendergast Charitable Trust
St Michael's RC School
Swan Hellenic
(P&O Princess Cruises International Ltd)
Thompson Fund
Tolkien Trust
West London Synagogue Charitable Fund
Westminster Foundation

Faith Community Organisations

The Network's member faith communities provide funding towards the Network's budget on a structured basis, with contributions varying in amount with some reference to the relative sizes of the different communities. The sources of contributions received in 2005 have varied from community to community. In some cases these have included donations from individuals, who are included in the list of that category of donor.

Archbishops' Council of the Church of England
Board of Deputies of British Jews
Church in Wales
Church of Scotland
Community Security Trust
Independent Methodist Association
Islamic Foundation
Jain Samaj Europe
Liberal Judaism
Maimonides Foundation
Methodist Church in Britain
Methodist Church in Ireland
Methodist Racial Justice Projects Fund

Moravian Church
Movement Church in Britain
Movement for Reform Judaism
Muslim Council of Britain
National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is
Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)
Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)
Religious Society of Friends
Salvation Army
Sternberg Charitable Foundation
Trinity United Reformed Church, Wigan
United Jewish Israel Appeal
United Reformed Church
Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK)
World Ahlul-Bayt Islamic League

Individual Donors

(including donations from a number
of individuals as part of the structured
faith funding)

Mr Anil Bhanot
Mrs Elizabeth Crabtree
Mr Tom Gulliver
Ms Clare Salters
Ms Sheila Schaffer
Rev Richard Tedlow
Most Ven Dr Medagama Vajiragnana

And others who kindly gave donations
but prefer not to be listed...

And also:

Mr Surinder Singh Attariwala
Dr Peter Bishop
Rev Freda Evans
Mrs Lalage Fair
Mrs Pam Fawcett
Rev Alan Fitch
Mrs Eileen Forrester
Mr Vernon and Mrs Margaret Griffiths
Ms Dina Gold
Mrs Sheila Hayes
Mrs June Jones
Dr Dermot Killingley
Mrs Kathie Morley
Mrs Jenny Nicholson
The Octagon, University of West of England
Rev Roy Pape
Ms Mary Pimm
Mr Nigel Pounce
Mrs Kailash G Puri
Mr O W Reynolds
Richmond Interfaith Group
Mr Harbans Singh Sethi
Dr M M Shah
Sheffield Interfaith
Mr Rashid Siddiqui
Mr John Stubbs
Mrs Iris Tute
Mrs Kathleen Wills

Member Organisations of the Inter Faith Network 2006–07

Faith Community Representative Bodies

Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (UK)
Baha'i Community of the United Kingdom
Board of Deputies of British Jews
British Muslim Forum
Buddhist Society
Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland
Churches' Commission for Inter Faith Relations (Churches Together in Britain and Ireland)
Committee for Other Faiths, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales
Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches (UK)
Friends of the Western Buddhist Order
Hindu Council (UK)
Hindu Forum of Britain
Islamic and Mosques Council (UK)
Islamic Cultural Centre, Regents Park, London
Jain Samaj Europe
Jamiat-e-Ulman Ahrata (Association of Muslim Scholars)
Muslim Council of Britain
National Council of Hindu Temples (UK)
Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)
Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)
Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

Sri Lanka Sangha Sabha of GB
Swamianayan Hindu Mission
Unitarian and Free Christian Churches Interfaith Subcommittee
Valva Hindu Parishad (UK)
World Ahlul-Bayt Islamic League
World Islamic Mission (UK)
Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

Inter Faith Organisations

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum
Scottish Inter Faith Council
Inter Faith Council for Wales/Cyngor Cyd-ffydd Cymru
East of England Faiths Council
Northwest Forum of Faiths
South East England Faiths Forum
South West Council of Faiths
West Midlands Faiths Forum
Yekeleto and Humber Faiths Forum
AIFAleph UK
Christian Muslim Forum
Christians Aware Interfaith Programme
Council of Christians and Jews

East of England Faiths Agency
Interfaith Foundation
International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter)
International Interfaith Centre
London Society of Jews and Christians
Minorities of Europe Inter Faith Action Programme
Religious for Peace (UK)
Three Faiths Forum
United Religious Initiative (UK)
Waterwater Interfaith
World Congress of Faiths

Educational and Academic Bodies

Centre for the study of Jewish-Christian Relations
Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations
Community Religious Project, University of Leeds
Institute of Jatrology
Islamic Foundation
Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby
National Association of SACREs
Religious Education Council for England and Wales
Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education
Mon Centre for Dialogue and Encounter

Local Inter Faith Groups

Akronham Inter Faith Group
Barnet Multi Faith Forum
Bedford Council of Faiths
Birmingham Council of Faiths
Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council
Bolton Interfaith Council
Bradford Concord Interfaith Society
Breat Inter Faith
Breat Multi-Faith Forum
Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group
Bristol Inter Faith Group
Buxley Building Bridges
Caldenale Interfaith Council
Cambridge Inter-Faith Group
Casterbury and District Inter Faith Action
Cockfith Interfaith Association
Cleveland Interfaith Group
Coventry Inter Faith Group
Coventry Multi-Faith Forum
Derby Open Centre Multi-Faith Group
Forum of Faiths for Derby

Dudley Borough Interfaith Network
Gateshead Inter Faith Forum
Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action
Greenwich Multi-Faith Forum
Harrow Inter Faith Council
Hornshaw Friends of Faith
Huddersfield Interfaith Council
Hillingdon Faiths Forum
Lancashire Forum of Faiths
Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship
Leeds Faiths Forum
Leicester Council of Faiths
Leoughborough Council of Faiths
Luton Council of Faiths
Manchester Interfaith Forum
Macclesfield Inter Faith Action Forum
Merseyside Council of Faiths
Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes)
Mossley Inter Faith Group
Newcastle Council of Faiths
Newham Association of Faiths
Newham Faith Sector Forum
North Kirkstons Inter-Faith Council
North Staffordshire Forum of Faiths
Northampton Faiths Forum
Nottingham Inter Faith Council
Oldham Inter Faith Forum
Oxford Round Table of Religions
Building Bridges (Reading)
Peterborough Inter-Faith Council
Preston Faith Forum
Reading Inter-Faith Group
Redbridge Council of Faiths
Rockdale Multi-Faith Partnership
Sheffield Interfaith
South London Inter Faith Group
Southampton Council of Faiths
Southwest Multi Faith Forum
Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource
Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Group
Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum
Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum
Wandsworth Multi-Faith Network
Warrington Council of Faiths
Watford Inter Faith Association
Wellingborough Multi-Faith Group
Whalley Range (Manchester) Inter Faith Group
Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group
Wycombe Skantog of Faiths