



FAITH TO FAITH IN BRADFORD

with Awais Mughal

September 2010

Visit to Burnley & Pendle Faith Centre - Awais Mughal



The members of my Faith to Faith Support Group at Touchstone very kindly accompanied me on a visit to the Burnley & Pendle Faith Centre, situated in the heart of the community. We were introduced to the ground-breaking work of the centre which allowed our group to explore innovative ways of working together for peaceful coexistence with people of other faiths and cultures.

The group was warmly welcomed by Terry Murnane (Community Faith Co-ordinator) and Richard Hoyle (Methodist Worker). Terry is an extremely engaging speaker who is well tuned into the issues of his community. We all found our visit exciting, interesting and informative.

Peter Holroyd commented on the exceptional role of the local government (Lancashire County Council) in facilitating the presence of the Faith Centre on a very active campus that includes a nursery, a secondary school, a 6th Form College and a drop in café and library for local people.

Bonny Portland added that the main thing she got from the day was how inspiring the whole set up was; a very positive and energised place to be. The need of the community was very much in the centre of everything. Margaret Sowden was particularly fascinated by the decoration of the ceiling in the Prayer Room (pictured right).

The “Seeking What Unites Us - The Golden Rule” poster was appreciated by the group and Terry Murnane very kindly gifted one to the Touchstone Centre.

For more details please visit the Burnley & Pendle Faith Centre website (the easiest way is to Google it) or contact Terry at terry.murnane@lancashire.gov.uk



Baking Bread Somewhere Else in Liverpool



The role of food in cultural practices and religious beliefs is complex but food and hospitality are a vital part of many faiths. Hospitality is a way forward in weaving good relations and it affirms a common humanity to all people.

This year, the Touchstone Interfaith Women's Group had their annual day out at "Somewhere Else" - the "Bread Church" in Liverpool. 40 women and children enjoyed taking part in making bread and for most of them it was a first

time experience. It was also the first time the hosting team had organised bread baking sessions for an interfaith group.

Some Asian women soon found parallels in the recipe for bread with the recipe for making naan. The children were most excited about this activity and waited impatiently for their bread to be baked.

Rev Ian very wisely managed to take care of



some energetic children while their mothers were busy baking and bonding as a group.

The Women's Group truly appreciated the hospitality and warm welcome of the members of the Bread making project, who had generously organised soup and bread for lunch, also a first time encounter for many. Some members of the hosting team expressed their interest in a reciprocal visit to Touchstone to learn how to make chapattis.

Some of the comments about the day:

Asba: "Thanks for inviting us to Liverpool. I enjoyed myself and the best part of the day was when we went to the bread factory (church)".

Aryan and Raheem: "The trip was fantastic. We have never been to Liverpool, so thank you very much."

Naseem Akhtar: "It was a wonderful experience and the hospitality was excellent. Thank you Touchstone! If only words could describe the excellent time I had."





Maria: “Thanks for offering this magnificent trip. Maybe it should be more often - the trips organised by Touchstone are always fabulous. I will remember it always - can’t wait to see what’s next...”

Mehek & Uzma: “Thank you very much for this brilliant trip. It was fantastic. I hope we can go on more trips. I really enjoyed today and thank you for the hospitality.”

Mrs Ashraf & family expressed their thanks for organising this wonderful trip.

Awais Mughal: “We all are grateful to the whole team of Bread Church for their generous hospitality and warm welcome. We wish them every blessing in their good work.”



magnet
resources

Magnet Resources is a new charity set up to publish Magnet magazine and associated Christian resources. You can find a wealth of interesting and stimulating material for your own interest and for use in leading worship or groups on the website: www.ourmagnet.co.uk

The current issue of Magnet magazine covers the issue of Survival. The essence has been to start with the question of how to cope when all that is known to you and on which your life depends is lost or damaged. Immediately we think of earthquakes (p4) and refugees (see p30). But there are more silent situations from which the survival route is less obvious: sexual abuse (p8), ritual abuse (p22), stories of rejection and homelessness (p14). Many of these struggles are bleak and would remain so were it not for the hope and support of counsellors, doctors, therapists, ministers and friends. We’ve discovered, as we hope you will too, God’s loving Spirit at work in a sometimes desperate darkness, gathering tormented dreams and lost memories, the fragile strands of shattered lives and weaving them into a purpose. Through a moment of relief, an insight, a change, a flash of humour, something unexpectedly new is created. Our page of humour is included as part of the story of survivors (p38).



This issue would not have been possible without the inspiring input from Barbara Glasson. As a Methodist minister in the Liverpool Methodist District she was the inspiration for ‘the Bread Church’ Somewhere Else and is now Team Leader at Touchstone in Bradford – a Methodist city centre project in a diverse and multicultural place. She has travelled the world and has an intelligent understanding of survival issues. Her book ‘A Spirituality of Survival’ (reviewed on p29) reflects political as well as individual stories, is deeply biblical and filled with interesting insights into scripture. She is passionate about justice and the rights of the excluded to be included. Much of her ministry has been outside a formal church setting and she is ideally placed to write on the survival of the church in the reality of today’s society (p26).

The meditation pages, worship, Bible study (p10) and prayer focus (p24) are linked in so many ways to reflect both the anguish and the new hope which becomes the harvest of survival.

Launch of “A Spirituality of Survival” and Poetry Session at Touchstone - Awais Mughal

Our Interfaith Writers Group organised another book launch event at the Touchstone Centre; this time our focus was on Rev Dr Barbara Glasson's book “A Spirituality of Survival” which was followed by a poetry session.

Barbara's moving and thought-provoking book explores her experience of working alongside survivors of abuse, based at the centre for therapeutic healing and wholeness at Holy Rood House in North Yorkshire. She challenges the readers to reflect on the stories of people who are victims of trauma and abuse and how these stories can be helpful in transforming society and the church. The relationship between faith and God exists in every faith and she explores how we can stand by others by listening to their stories and challenging the misuse of power. She shares



her own experience of how these stories helped her to gain an insight into human strength which enables people to live above the story rather than live under the burden of such stories. She mentions that creative human relationships have space, a place of stillness and movement; safe spaces mean that we are able to maintain safer inner space in which we take responsibility for walking away from things that harm us. In order to ‘*sur vivre*’ we need to find, negotiate and create safe enough spaces. These spaces will not be

completely safe but will have hallmarks of authenticity that begin to re-establish trust.

I invited two Muslim members of the Writers Group to express their thoughts on this book. They found this endeavour quite challenging; not an easy read for them because of the Christian theological approach. I am grateful to both ally writers to accept this challenge. It was encouraging that they have been able to hear an inter-faith perspective on the real message expressed in the book, which centres on Christian theology.

The Rev Barbara lighted a candle in remembrance of Mr Hafeez's first death anniversary and Fr Patrick McCaffery who died in Pakistan this year in June. The poetry session was facilitated by Ms Tasneem Hassan.



Dr Mukhtar Ahmad presided the session. Some eminent poets, including the poet laureate Gerard Benson, Cathy Benson, Abid Wadood, Tasneem Hassan and Dr Mukhtar, shared their poetry. Some poems in Urdu were not easy to understand by our English guests but, as Barbara has mentioned in her book, Language is a currency of expression and people enjoyed the rhythm of the words. It was a pleasure to have two guests from India with us - Paradeep and Paratik - as well as Dr Khalid Zia from Pakistan. Dr Khalid also spoke about the people who are suffering from Myasthenia Gravis in Pakistan. It is a chronic condition that causes muscles to tire and weaken easily, making it difficult for people to chew, swallow, smile, lift up arms, grip and walk up stairs. Special thanks were expressed to all our honourable guests for making this event enjoyable with their presence.



A summary of Mr Nazir's review read by Ms Liaqa Sheikh on the day is as follows:

"The narrative in the whole book moves in three planes: firstly the objective portrayal of the abuse, the abusers may be either political, religious or near and dear ones; secondly the analyses and psychoanalyses of the victims; thirdly justification of the religious doctrines. Barbara is very clear and candid in her description of the techniques used by the perpetrators of abuse. She says that the political oppressors use the power and authority to silence and bind the tongues of their victims. They break their trust systematically in such a way that 'the neighbours become informers of the

neighbours, the church members on the pastors and the children on teachers'.

Barbara stresses that there is hardly anyone who could rescue these helpless victims because the police and military are on the pay roll of the abusers and friends assume the role of informers. It is here that she raises quite a pertinent question: 'Where is God in all this?' She is quite logical in raising many such questions throughout her narrative in the book. She makes use of the text of scriptures here and there to establish her point of view. Not only that but her interpretation of the texts of the scriptures seems to be more plausible than the ordinary clergy. It does strongly influence the common believers when it takes recourse to the religious context but it does not satisfy the curiosity of "thinking beings" like me.



Dr Sifat in his reflection congratulates Barbara for a daring attempt to write this book which deals with a very delicate, prickly, historically a very old problem of human society, namely "abuse" of an individual, a community, a nation, an ethnic group by another individual, community, nation ethnicity or government. He also expressed that it is an easy read to those who are well versed in Christian Theology.

Rev Sarah Jemison, a Methodist minister in Bradford North Circuit, reflecting about the event said that it was good to have attempted to open up the topic of abuse. It was also good to ask for reviews to get different perspectives on the book and may be encourage people to read it who might not have done so. She expressed that all the meetings she attended have been overwhelmingly positive.

Listening to some of the comments made in the reviews, I was wondering whether discussions around common issues like abuse, which is a common denominator, might be helpful in encouraging people of other faiths to find parallel references from their respective scriptures to work together in helping people who have suffered from the trauma of abuse. One of the recent forms of trauma is for people in Pakistan who are suffering from the floods disaster. The help provided from all over the world is exemplary and Barbara's book also puts across such thoughtfulness. In Barbara's words, we do not have ultimate answers to the questions we ask - we are in a phase of searching for some reasonable answers to our queries because God is all knowing.



Celebration of twenty five years in Bradford

On 17 July, the Holy Family Sisters celebrated their 25 years in Bradford. Over the past 25 years, 16 nuns have been part of the Bradford community and ministry. Each sister has brought her own uniqueness and gifts to respond to the needs of the community especially in the preparations for Baptism and First Communion. They have a thriving group of Holy Family lay associates which meets regularly and has national associations. The present community has extensive networks and has made a valuable



contribution at the Bradford Royal Infirmary, Touchstone Centre, BIASAN (support for asylum seekers), Cook & Eat projects, CAFOD and Justice & Peace. Sr Maria Crowley is a volunteer as well as a friend of the Touchstone Centre.

The celebrations commenced with a Mass at St Mathew's church, which was celebrated by Monsignor Kieron Heskin, the bishop's representative and Fr Canice McGinn. People of different nationalities of the parish community were involved in the service. This

included an African group who processed and sang at the offertory and members of the Filipino community who performed a spiritual dance. After the prayers a big feast was organised at Café West with the help of the lay associates and other friends. Their Muslim neighbours cooked and contributed a pot of curry and rice. Around 150 took part in this heart-warming event, which celebrated the contribution of the indispensable Holy Family Sisters.



Interfaith Week 2010 Celebration

**You are cordially invited to join us to celebrate an interfaith event with
Dr Joy Barrow
Interfaith Relations Officer
Methodist Church House – London
Keynote Address: Continuing Journey with Sikh Faith and...**

**27 November 2010 - 3:00-5:00 pm
at Haworth Road Methodist Church**

Proud of being a Peaceful City - Barbara Glasson

The arrival of the English Defence League in Bradford over the August bank holiday felt like a bit of an invasion. Although their march was turned into a static protest, because of the many signatures collected on a petition, their anti Islamic stance is an offence both to Bradford's Asian community and to any true Bradfordians that work so hard for peace and understanding in this city. The week-end brought many memories of previous unrest and riots and in the weeks leading up to the event there were many confusing plans to resist what felt like a hostile intrusion.

In the event, the people of Bradford pulled together to enable a peaceful outcome to the day. The Coalition Against Fascism exhibited exemplary behaviour, putting on a collective show of resistance which was both good hearted and non violent. The police managed to maintain law and order, with significantly few arrests and the council put on a diversionary event at Centenary Fields. Youth workers across the city took kids out on a multiplicity of trips and families kept youngsters at home so that they wouldn't inadvertently get caught up in trouble.



So, well done Bradford! We are a city that wants peace and we have enough community cohesion to demonstrate that racist behaviour is not acceptable here. And all credit to the women's group that gave out green ribbons in Centenary Square, the Cathedral and other faith organisations for their prayers and everyone who remained good hearted under provocation. We can be proud of being a peaceful city!

The programme includes Prayers for Peace from different faiths and the Keynote Address by Dr Joy Barrow, followed by Dinner & Refreshments.

RSVP: Bob & Margaret Marsh: 01274 484210 or
Awais Mughal - Touchstone Centre: 01274 721626

Directions to reach Haworth Road Methodist Church by Car:

Follow the B6144 out of Bradford Centre. When you come to the traffic lights at the Toller Lane Junction with B6269, keep left on B6144. Haworth Road Methodist Church is on the right immediately before the turn off to Heights Lane on the left. There is a big car park in front of the church.

The bus route is 620.

Forthcoming Faith Festivals

Sept/October	Harvest Festival	Christian
1 September	Installation of Sikh Scripture in Harmandir Sahib	Sikh
2 September	Janmashtami/Krishna Jayanti Birthday of Krishna	Hindu
5 September	Lailat-ul-Qadr Night of Power	Muslim
9 September	Rosh Hashanah New Year	Jewish
9 September	Ramadan ends	Muslim
10 September	Eid-ul-Fitr Festival of Breaking the Fast	Muslim
11 September	Ethiopian New Year's Day	Rastafarian
18 September	Yom Kippur Day of Atonement	Jewish
23 September	Ganesh Chaturthi Birthday of Ganesh	Hindu
23 Sept-1 Oct	Sukkot Festival of Booths	Jewish
1 October	Simchat Torah End/Beginning of Reading of Torah	Jewish
8-16 October	Navaratri Nine nights	Hindu
16 October	Chung Yuan Festival of Hungry Ghosts	Chinese
17-24 October	Inter Faith Week of Prayer for World Peace	Several
20 October	Conferring of Guruship on Guru Granth Sahib 1708	Sikh
20 October	Anniversary of the Birth of the Bab	Baha'i
22 October	Pavarana Last day of Rains Retreat	Buddhist
1 November	All Saints' Day Thanksgiving for all Saints	Christian
2 November	All Souls' Day Remembrance of the departed	Christian
2 November	Anniversary of the Crowning of Haile Selassie I	Rastafarian
5 November	Divali New Year Festival	Hindu
5 November	Divali Bandi Chhor Divas	Sikh
12 November	Anniversary of the Birth of Baha'u'llah	Baha'i
14 November	Remembrance Sun Remembering dead in two world wars	National
16 November	Eid-ul-Adha Festival of Sacrifice	Muslim
21 November	Anapasati Day Last day Kathina may be held	Buddhist
21 November	Birthday of Guru Nanak - the first Sikh Guru	Sikh
24 November	Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur 1675	Sikh
28 November	Advent Sunday Start of the Christian Year	Christian
30 November	St Andrew's Day Patron Saint of Scotland	National
2-9 December	Hanukah Rededication of Temple in Jerusalem	Jewish
7 December	Al-Hijra New Year's Day	Muslim
8 December	Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Christian
8 December	Bodhi Day Celebration of Gautama's Enlightenment	Buddhist
16 December	Ashura Day of Mourning	Muslim
24 December	Christmas Eve Inauguration of Christmas	Christian
25 December	Christmas Day Celebration of the Birth of Jesus	Christian
31 December	New Year's Eve / Hogmanay	National
1 January	New Year's Day / Hogmanay	National
1 January	The Circumcision or Naming of Jesus	Christian
6 January	Epiphany Coming of Magi / Wise Men to baby Jesus	Christian

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