



Concord

LEEDS INTERFAITH FELLOWSHIP

www.concord-leeds.org.uk

Newsletter - April 2014

Christian Ethics—Living Responsibly

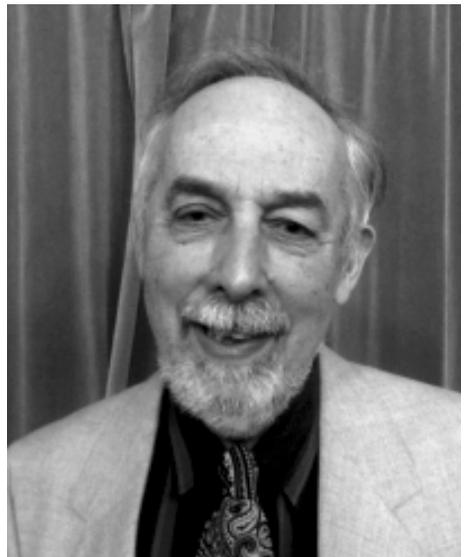
THE second talk in the new series on Ethics in World Religions attracted an unusually high attendance. On 18th February 28 people gathered at the Quaker Meeting House to hear the Revd Dr Albert Jewell give a talk on Christian Ethics in Contemporary Society. Dr Jewell is a retired Methodist minister with a particular interest in the process of aging and the needs of the elderly, and he made use of his expertise in these areas in his talk.

Christianity is characterised by great diversity. Dr Jewell examined the various sources of authority to which Christians appeal in trying to determine ethical stances. He outlined the four principal sources which constitute the Quadrilateral (Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience), illustrating them with examples. Scripture is the primary source, but it does not address every moral issue and Christians differ in their interpretation of key passages. Tradition and Reason are important, but they too have their limitations. Experience plays a part, but can be subjective. In addition to these a key role is played by a fifth source, the Spirit of the Age, which has in the past led to the abolition of slavery, and which today is central to debates on sexuality.

Dr Jewell explained the importance in Christianity of Situational Ethics, which considers love of one's neighbour as the principle and guide to determining what is right in a particular context and set of circumstances, and he showed how this

approach to ethics is rooted in the teaching of Jesus and of St Paul. Christian ethics, he claimed, is very much about living responsibly in a community in which Christians seek to act in the best interests of one another.

This very well structured, concise and eloquent talk was delivered vivaciously, and it led to a lively question-and-answer session afterwards, ranging over a number of contentious issues, including denominational differences in the status accorded to scripture and attitudes towards same-sex marriages, abortion and euthanasia. Many people have said how much they enjoyed Dr Jewell's excellent presentation. *JSS*





Women Peace-ing Together

Concord's 40th Anniversary Banner

by Cynthia Dickinson

FOLLOWING on from our successful launch in November, Jenny and I have been busy having discussions and applying for funds to ensure good progress is made. We now have a special logo, a Partnership Agreement with Leeds Museums and South Asian Arts and have received grants from Leeds City Council MICE fund, the Co-operative Members Community Fund, Leeds Galleries and Museums and Leeds Soroptimists as well as financial support from Concord. Musarat, a professional textile designer and teacher, is facilitating the project, which will take place in different parts of the city and could last over a year.

We held our first taster workshop in March when we tried our hand at tie-dye and applique; four more are planned in the coming months followed by our first module of six creative workshops. To see how we got on, take a look at our page on the Concord website.

Women of all ages, faiths, nationalities and abilities are welcome to join in with this project. In fact we need as many contributions as possible for it to be truly representative of Leeds, a wonderful multi-faith, multi-cultural piece of work.

Jenny and I have colourful flyers you can hand out or leave in suitable places to spread the word; just ask.

TASTER WORKSHOPS:

Monday April 28th at 10.00 am in the Museum's Discovery Centre, Carlisle Road LS10 1LB. Tea and coffee provided; please bring vegetarian food to share for a light lunch at 12.30 pm.

Monday May 12th at 10.00 am in the GNNJS Gurdwara, Ladypit Lane, LS11 6DP.

Tuesday May 27th at 10.00 am in Sinai Synagogue, Roman Avenue, LS8 2AN.

Tuesday June 10th at 10.00 am in the Enterprise Centre, Chapeltown Road, LS7 3DX

CREATIVE WORKSHOPS:

The first module will take place in the Museum's Discovery Centre, LS10 1LB, starting at 10.00 am on Tuesdays June 24th, July 8th, July 22nd, September 2nd, September 16th and September 30th.

For more details contact Jenny or Cynthia

Jenny 0113 2664532

jpatonwilliams@gmail.com

Cynthia 01924 863956

concordwomen@phonecoop.coop

If you would like to be on the e-list for dates of workshop and general information, email:

concordwomen@phonecoop.coop



Bahá'í Rites of Passage

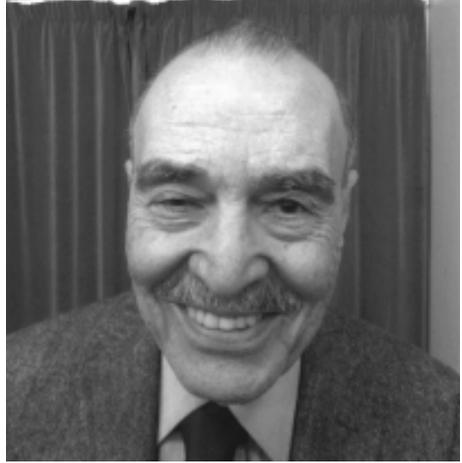
WE WERE delighted in March to welcome Hamed Pakrooh as our speaker on the last in the series on Rites of Passage. Hamed has been a member of Concord for several decades and recently was its Acting Chair for a time.

Birth: Because Bahá'ís have no ordained clergy the welcome and naming of a baby is private and personal, though the child's name will be registered at the National Religious Assembly.

Membership: Parents raise their children as Bahá'ís, although they are free to learn about other faiths at the same time. At the age of 15 they can choose for themselves whether or not to continue. At the age of 21 those who have stayed within the Bahá'í faith will be registered as Bahá'í members. This means they are then eligible to take part in elections (elect or be elected) for the Spiritual Assembly. People wishing to join the Bahá'í community learn all they can about the faith, attend meetings then ask the Local Assembly to write to the National Assembly. If approved they will be registered and receive their ID card and welcome gift, but there is no special ceremony.

Marriage: All Bahá'ís must have a Bahá'í wedding and have the consent of all living parents. They may choose their own partner but getting the consent from parents of both parties is important as the wedding brings the spiritual unity of two families.

The Bahá'í ceremony must precede the civil ceremony and take place on the same day. Marriage vows are recited in the presence of two witnesses approved by the Spiritual Assembly. These are not necessarily Bahá'ís but must be known to the Local Assembly. If the couple decides to have another religious ceremony, that must also take place on the same day.



Death: There are no clergy so funerals are simple, dignified and flexible, led by individuals. For this occasion groups meet to pray together, one person will read from a special tablet and others repeat it.

Burials take place as soon as possible and can be at any cemetery within one hour's journey. There are no cremations and no embalming so that gradual disintegration can occur. The soul is born into a new world where it lives for ever. There is no reincarnation.

There was a lively question and answer session followed by refreshments of Persian cakes and biscuits.

Peter Bell Memorial Lecture 2015

The Executive Committee is very pleased to announce that the internationally renowned broadcaster and journalist **Inderjit Singh** has agreed to give the Peter Bell Memorial Lecture at the Civic Hall in March next year (date to be confirmed). Baron Singh of Wimbledon CBE is a frequent presenter of the "Thought for the Day" on Radio 4 and writes for The Times, The Guardian and The Independent.

The Revd Canon Charles Dobbin

CHARLES DOBBIN has been team rector of the Moor Allerton and Shadwell Team Ministry since 2000, but in recent years has become more widely known in Leeds because of his interest in and commitment to inter-faith relations and now as Chair of Leeds Faiths Forum.

Charles's early childhood years were spent in Nottingham. He then attended boarding school. Before university he gained work experience in a cut flower gardening nursery in Germany. In 1970 he went to Jesus College Cambridge, where he studied Classics, was keen on rowing and became captain of his college boat club. On graduating from Cambridge he went to Oriel College Oxford where he read theology as part of his ordination training in the Church of England. In his third year he transferred to St Stephen's House, where he took the C of E ordination exams.

In 1976 Charles married Ros and was appointed curate, living in New Addington, an area in South London of 30,000 people in local authority housing with a reputation of severe social deprivation. Whilst Charles came from a 'high church' background, here he was to experience a 'middle-of-the-road' church style which left him free to work out 'how to make sense of faith and how to communicate it in a way that was relevant for life'. Here Charles gained 'tons of experience of people'. In visiting parishioners Charles realised that many were artistic and so prompted the organising of an art exhibition in the Parish Church of St Edward. In filling the church with the beautiful work of ordinary people they discovered the glory of the stained glass windows of the church as well. It

Profile

**3rd in a series of
interviews with interfaith
leaders in Leeds**

*Interviewed by Trevor Bates March 13th
2014 and revised by CD*



was a time of great joy and the whole experience reflected the spirituality of ordinary folk and symbolised 'the Gospel message of valuing people and bringing them alive in a new way.' The art club that resulted from this, continues to this day.

In 1979 Charles and Ros moved on to Melton Mowbray to his second curacy, working in a team ministry with a rector and two others which served five churches centred on St Mary's. Here their two children were born. This was a time of routine parish work, where he had the opportunity to organise things, but also a time when his spiritual director introduced him to contemplative prayer,

focussing on words spoken directly by God or Christ in the Bible. Thirty years on, Charles is now the Chaplain for the Fellowship of Contemplative Prayer.

In 1983 he was appointed vicar of the Good Shepherd Church Parish, Loughborough. 1989 saw him made rector of St Helen's Parish Church, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, which proved to be a massive change in ministry. Church life was far more formal with 'some very high powered people' in the congregation. Charles found himself challenged to 'finding God' whilst having to cope with the costly venture of making safe a church spire on one occasion, and then later a £200,000 historic roof repair project. This was also an early time of awareness of people of other faiths, which led to other commitments later in Charles' ministry. During this period he introduced a contemplative prayer group in the parish, was appointed to the Council of the Fellowship of Contemplative Prayer, and got to know the Cowley Fathers religious community. He was also made rural dean and installed as a canon of Leicester Cathedral.

In the 1990s Charles' spiritual director discovered, en route to a retreat in Australia, a friend of one of the Cowley Fathers who owned a former tea plantation estate in North India. She saw it as a very suitable location for contemplative prayer style retreats and invited Charles and Ros to join her leading a retreat there in 1996. This in turn led to him and Ros leading retreats in India for the next ten years, exploring the theme of 'East meets West', and looking at the scriptures of Indian religions alongside the Bible and gaining practical experience of Indian life and faith. 'Some of the most memorable occasions were the trekking retreats in the Himalayas which took us above the snowline.' Achieving an MPhil degree on inter-faith relations in 2004

consolidated this new direction which 28 years of ministry as a C of E priest had led up to. Charles went on to use his sabbatical time in 2006 to read and study the Qur'an, the Bhagavad-Gita, the Upanishads and some Buddhist scripture.

Charles was selected to become the rector of the Moor Allerton Parish in 2000, and it appeared a timely appointment for him to live and work in that multi-faith area of North Leeds with four churches and three clergy in a parish which now embraces Shadwell, Moortown and the Wigton Moor Estate. Working in this area, which includes Jews and Muslims, with three synagogues and a Muslim centre, gave him the opportunity to help set up the local Three Faiths Group and to engage in inter-faith work more widely in Leeds.

In 2001 Charles was appointed as convener of Ripon and Leeds Diocesan Interfaith Task Group, achieving diocesan recognition of inter-faith work by securing the creation of the post of Inter-faith Relations Officer, to which he was then appointed. The Interfaith Task Group now works ecumenically with the Leeds District of the Methodist Church, and in 2007 produced an inter-faith strategy for diocese and district which was adopted by both synods. Working with Leeds Faiths Forum Charles organised inter-faith conferences on the environment and on deprivation in Leeds. He became Chair in 2010, and is currently encouraging the development of Leeds Faiths Forum's links with Leeds City Council, and of scriptural reasoning, a scripture-focussed form of dialogue between faiths.

Charles thinks Concord is 'brilliant'. He is delighted that it has 'resurged' and is impressed by its constitution, its programmes and publications, with its emphasis on friendly informal dialogue. He sees Concord as complementing the work of the Leeds Faiths Forum.

Visit to Bradford Touchstone Centre

IN APRIL Concord members visited the Methodist-owned Touchstone Centre in Bradford for a talk on the work of the Centre by the the Team Leader, the Revd Dr Barbara Glasson. Bradford Cathedral, the Methodists and the Pentecostalists are the small remaining Christian presence in what is now a predominantly Muslim area of Bradford city centre. It was interesting to learn that most Muslims in the neighbourhood come from one region of Pakistan and although many now are 3rd or 4th generation, there are always new immigrants as young people go 'home' to find marriage partners. Family customs and traditions are still very important, even among the Yorkshire youngsters.



With 'Listening for a change' as their motto, much of Touchstone's work focuses on projects with small hard to

reach groups, particularly women. They go out into the community with activities that rely more on creativity than language. Having said that, one of the recent successes has been the publication of *Food for Faith*, a book of Pakistani recipes with stories of the people behind the meals.

Touchstone has a strong link with Pakistan which Barbara sees as their nearest neighbour! There is a significant

partnership with the Christian church there, with English Methodists offering support and encouraging interfaith links, something that Barbara considers necessary for a peaceful future.

Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Organisations

EQUALITY LEEDS have been asked to supplement the listings of BME organisations featured in the Doing Good Directory, hosted by Voluntary Action Leeds. The Doing Good Directory is the main source of information available to all sections of the public on which community organisations there are in Leeds, and Equality Leeds has found that most BME organisations are not listed.

They are appealing to BME members of Concord in particular to give consent for their contact details to be entered on the database. One benefit is improved access for each group and its members to the services provided by Voluntary Action Leeds.

If you wish your organisation to be included, please reply to Equality Leeds, by e-mail: director@equalityleeds.org.uk, or by telephone: 0113 2438421; please ask for Tony Stanley, Director or David Odunukwe.

Equality Leeds website:
www.equalityleeds.org.uk

Doing Good Leeds website:
www.doinggoodleeds.org.uk

NHS Blood and Transplant are asking people from all ethnicities and backgrounds to consider becoming a blood donor. If you are interested in becoming a new blood donor, or would like some further information regarding blood donation, then please visit www.blood.co.uk or alternatively call 0300 123 2323.

Concord Secretary

As you are most likely aware, I will be stepping down from the Executive Committee at the AGM in May, so ... Concord needs a new secretary.

The last ten years have been most enjoyable. I have learnt a great deal, attended lots of events, got involved with quite a number of different groups and activities and—most significantly—met lots of wonderful people. But now I would like to focus on the new Women's Group project and let someone else take over Concord's general administration.

FAIRTRADE is something that all faiths can—and perhaps should—support, so when Leeds celebrated its 10th anniversary as a Fairtrade city during Fairtrade Fortnight this year I volunteered to promote a Fairtrade Cake Bake-Off amongst faith communities.

There were 17 cakes in the final, from a wide variety of organisations including youth and community groups, schools and some places of worship, all on display at a party in the Civic Hall on March 7th. Two professional bakers and the Lady Mayoress of Leeds judged the cakes on appearance, taste and (very importantly) Fairtrade ingredients.

The winner was Rebecca Teiger of Sinai Synagogue, who produced a novelty cake that not only looked good and tasted excellent but also had a dozen Fairtrade ingredients in the recipe! Well done Becky!



At the April meeting of Concord's Executive Committee we agreed that the secretary has three main tasks:

- arrange and take minutes of committee meetings
- book rooms and speakers for open meetings
- respond to queries addressed to the Concord Secretary.

You would need to be a paid-up member with time to attend five or six committee meetings a year plus as many open meetings as you can manage. Using e-mail is a 'must' nowadays.

I'm sure you could do it! Why not drop a line to Simon: chair@concord-leeds.org.uk *Cynthia Dickinson*

Faith in Fairtrade 2014

On Sunday March 9th I went to the GNNSJ Gurdwara on Ladypit Lane for the first (ever?) Fairtrade langar. Amarjit Birdi and family have been promoting Fairtrade for several years in the Sikh community and last year won the Best Outreach Award from the Fairtrade Foundation for translating information into Punjabi. This year during Fairtrade Fortnight they were selling Fairtrade rice, lentils, bananas, dried fruits, nuts and spices for members of the congregation to buy and donate back to the Gurdwara for this special langar. Well done the Birdi family!

Cynthia Dickinson



A Bible for Bosnian Muslims

IN JANUARY James Dannenberg gave us a lively and fascinating talk about his work as a Bible translator. He first got involved when he went to live in Turkey in 1972 and, even though his Turkish was not altogether up to scratch, he realised that the Turkish Bible was very out of date and something needed to be done. That task took 23 years to complete.

After the sectarian violence in 1990s Yugoslavia, Bosnia became an independent country with its own language; it was also left with problems of sectarianism, poverty and hardship. When an Irish farmer took food from his farm to help Muslim widows and children, the imams and scholars were so impressed they asked him about getting the Bible translated into Bosnian. James was approached to help with this unusual project—translating the Bible as a gesture of reconciliation to the Christians.

The Bible is a very difficult book to translate, being so varied and needing experts in different fields—history, architecture and other specialist subjects. The Bosnian team was made up of top



scholars and imams who worked on the translation, giving their final versions to James for checking. He was impressed that not only had they gone through from Genesis to Revelation but there were very few mistakes. He was equally impressed by the respect shown for the Bible and for him. The whole project, completed in eight years, was a great success because it was theirs and, as a result, has done wonders for Christian-Muslim relations.

Principal Religious Festivals Summer 2014

MAY

1	Beltane	Pagan
2	Twelfth Day of Ridvan	Bahá'í
15-18	Theravadin New Year	Buddhist
18	Lag B'Omer	Jewish
14	Wesak	Buddhist
23	Declaration of the Bab	Bahá'í
29	Ascension of Jesus	Christian
	Ascension of Baha'u'llah	Bahá'í

JUNE

4-5	Shavuot	Jewish
8	Pentecost	Christian
16	Guru Arjan Dev martyrdom	Sikh
21	Solstice, Litha	Pagan
28	Ramadan Begins	Muslim

JULY

9	Martyrdom of the Bab	Bahá'í
13	Asalha, Dharma Day	Buddhist
29-31	Eid ul Fitr	Muslim

AUGUST

1	Lughanssad	Pagan
5	Tish'a B'av	Jewish
10	Raksha Bandhan	Hindu
17	Krishna Janmashtami	Hindu

SEPTEMBER

22	Equinox, Mabon	Pagan
24-26	Rosh Hashanah (New Year)	Jewish
25	Navaratri	Hindu

Editor: John S. Summerwill 0113 269 7895 editor@concord-leeds.org.uk
Admin Secretary: Cynthia Dickinson 01924 863 956 secretary@concord-leeds.org.uk