



Concord

LEEDS INTERFAITH FELLOWSHIP
www.concord-leeds.org.uk

Newsletter - April 2018

Jewish and Buddhist Perspectives on Violence

THE FIRST SESSION in a new series of meetings on religious attitudes towards violence began with a look at similarities and difference between Jewish and Buddhist perspectives. A well attended meeting gathered in the beautiful rooms of the Jamyang Buddhist Centre on January 24th to hear a discussion led by Rabbi Jason Kleiman of Beth Hamidrash Hagadol Synagogue and Kerry Prest, Director of the Jamyang Centre (ably standing in for unwell David Midgely), chaired by David Randolph-Horn.

Rabbi Kleiman began by describing the paradox he felt sitting in such peaceful surroundings to talk about violence, yet recognising the need to address the issue in order to understand and to quell it. With a Jewish perspective that humans are made in the image of God and are not born violent, and questioning whether the origins of violence are from nature or nurture, the rabbi stressed the key importance and impact of education in

Judaism and the powerful environment of the home to teach right from wrong. He explained that Judaism recognises that we humans are fallible, and that the 'Yezer Hara'—the evil inclination—is a part of the human condition that wants us to stop behaving in a moral way. Through religious practice and rituals it can be mastered, however, and each person has the ability to conquer it. There also exists

Continued overleaf



Continued from Page 1

the belief and practice of 'Teshuvah'—repentance—which gives the opportunity to turn over a new leaf and change.

Next to speak was Kerry Prest, who warmly welcomed us to the Jamyang Centre and explained that Buddhism is about the mind, so that violence, in whatever form (e.g. hatred, anger, verbal or physical abuse), is seen as external manifestation of what is happening internally. In addressing issues of violence, therefore, spiritual work in the form of meditation needs to be done on the mind. Through study of texts and meditation the ultimate aim of Buddhism is Enlightenment, in which there is no basis for pride or anger or negative thought. He explained that there are different levels of practice to restrain negative or violent body and speech behaviours, and that a basic tenet is to do no harm. Buddhism would work towards having a positive mental attitude of love, wishing to help others, and patience is developed as an antidote to dissatisfaction, which can be a trigger to the development of anger. Kerry further explained that attention must also be given to intention as an underlying reason for violence and the need to understand causes other than anger. He explained that tolerance of suffering is part of life experience and the life cycle, and that experience of violence might come from previous lives of the individual, which stimulated further discussion from the meeting.

Questions were raised by members of the audience, and the time fled. This interesting juxtaposition of Buddhist and Jewish perspectives was felt to be a successful first of a series of meetings exploring different faith perspectives on the subject of violence, and a vote of thanks was proposed by Cynthia Dickinson.

Hilary Curwen

Concord Archives

THE REVD TREVOR BATES, who did such a sterling job in conceiving, organising and editing the 40th Anniversary book *A Leeds Interfaith Story 1946-2016*, has now performed a further service to Concord in sorting a huge collection of archival material, which he has deposited at the West Yorkshire Archives in Morley.

A memory stick contains all of the files and illustrations for the book, should it ever need to be reprinted, along with Executive agendas, minutes and reports from 2004-2011.

Eight files are filled with a wide assortment of documents: minutes, notices, posters, programmes, newsletters, conference papers, lectures, newspaper cuttings, not only of Concord itself and its activities but of other bodies with which Concord has been involved. One file is full of particularly precious material gathered over the early years of Concord by Peter Dale.

It has been a mammoth task to track this material and organise it, and we owe a great debt of gratitude to Trevor for ensuring that it will be preserved for posterity.

Gather us in, thou Love that fillest all!
Gather our rival faiths within thy fold!
Rend all our temple veils and bid them fall,
that we may know that thou hast been
of old;
gather us in.

Gather us in: we worship only thee;
in varied names we stretch a common hand;
in diverse forms a common soul we see;
in many ships we seek one spirit-land;
gather us in.

Each sees one colour of thy rainbow light;
each looks upon one tint and calls it heaven;
thou art the fullness of our partial sight;
we are not perfect till we find the seven;
gather us in.

George Mattheson 1842-1906

Women Peace-ing Together



by Cynthia
Dickinson

WE WERE DELIGHTED to have been invited to the launch of "A Woman's Place" at Abbey House Museum in January where photographs of seven from the group are on display until December 31st. Their portraits can be seen on the screen and in albums (probably a quicker way to find them) in the exhibition area, along with pictures of over a hundred other women spanning the past century. The exhibition features stories and objects from strong, pioneering women from 1860 to the present day and shows how everyday life has changed for women in the home, school and workplace.



textile jig-saw pieces and we are still not sure what the end result will look like.

We are looking forward to making a contribution to another display in Leeds City Museum's Broderick Hall in November, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the WW1 Armistice with symbols of peace.

We meet on the first Monday of the month (except Bank Holidays) in the Drawing Room of Leeds Central Library's first floor Art library

from 10.30am till 12.30pm.

At our monthly gatherings we have started making letter-flags that will spell out Women Peace-ing Together. These developed from our original plan to create

for more information contact Cynthia on 074 192 12051 (new number) or email concordwomen@phonecoop.coop

Faith in Elderly People: The Leeds Experience

IN FEBRUARY Concord members came together at the Quaker Meeting House to listen to the Revd Dr Albert Jewell and the Revd Canon Alan Griggs talk about the history and purpose of 'Faith in Elderly People' (FIEP).

A lively and entertaining double act ensued, with Alan covering the history of FIEP, including its origins and the factors that led to its creation, going back to the 1960s when churches were seen to be doing a better job in providing for communities. 1985 saw the launch of the *Faith in the City* report authored by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas. As a result, a panel was set up in Leeds to look specifically at 'Faith in Leeds', but the work done failed to say much about the elderly. So in the early 1990s Anne Forbes conducted research into the needs, especially the spiritual needs, of older people, and published her findings as *Called to be Old* (1991), with FIEP being founded in response to the report in the same year.

In 1993 Jackie Treetops, working for FIEP and having a special ministry to older people both in residential care and in their own homes, produced a guide



Alan Griggs and Albert Jewell

to Christian ministry with older people entitled *Daisy amongst the Dandelions* (1993). This was followed in 1996 by *Holy, Holy, Holy*, a practical guide for the churches' ministry amongst those with dementia.

In the mid-1990s, the Memory Box was another project undertaken by FIEP. The premise was that any older person, and especially those entering residential or nursing home care, could take with them a box containing treasures from their past—not just photographs but other objects with a special or symbolic meaning. The memory box can help carers and staff in homes to know more about the earlier life of those for whom they care; the older people themselves can be reminded of good times past; this can help to produce a sense of well-being which may continue even when the objects that caused it have been forgotten. As well as producing an advisory guide on how to create the boxes, FIEP piloted the project amongst a number of care homes and individuals, to much success.



David Randolph-Horn, Albert Jewell and Alan Griggs

The successes that FIEP had experienced to this point, and the generosity of funding they received, enabled them to employ Gaynor Hammond as a part-time worker, initially for three years, to move forward with the work of FIEP. This included establishing 'Friendship Groups' and guidance on how to do this in a care home setting, talking to NHS nurses about getting spirituality included in individual care plans and guidance thereon, and work on 'reminiscence boxes', much like the memory boxes, but topic based rather than person specific.

The wider world has also moved on in its recognition of an aging population and the illnesses that are becoming more prevalent as a result. People in general are now more aware of elderly people's issues, and within the Church there has been a definite drive to become more aware and accepting, including work on making churches dementia friendly.

In the last year, there has been a move to get other faiths involved in FIEP, as there is recognition that cultural differences in certain faith communities, lead to isolation of the elderly and a lack of acceptance/understanding and therefore a knock-on lack of assistance in and by the wider community.

Having somewhat had his show stolen by Alan's detailed presentation, Albert gave us a short presentation on why he became involved in FIEP and he then took us through the publications that FIEP has readily available for purchase. A detailed list of their publications and pricing (which is very reasonable in my humble opinion) can be found on their website: www.fiep.org.uk, along with their contact details if you wish to get involved with their work. A lively question and answer session ensued, with a broad range of topics associated with the elderly discussed, and a lot of personal experience being shared by the presenters and audience members alike.

Jay Anderson

Religion or Belief Hub

ALL FAITHS are (or can be) represented on the Leeds City Council's Religion or Belief Hub, part of its Equalities Assembly. Faith and Council representatives come together to hear about and discuss items of concern.

At the March meeting there were three presentations:

- **LGBT+ people of faith:** This subgroup's report and action plan is looking at ways in which people of faith with sexuality and gender identity issues could be more visible at an interfaith level. They plan to host LGBT+ interfaith information stalls at events such as Gay Pride in August and Inter Faith Week in November.
- **Public Health and Places of Worship:** The University of Leeds has conducted research into public health and places of worship in the Harehills and Chapeltown area. They looked at health oriented activities initiated or hosted by places of worship and ways of building relationships between places of worship and health providers. It seems to be accepted that faith organisations are filling gaps created by austerity measures and need support.
- **Interfaith and Young People:** A research student brought her proposal for an interfaith event at Leeds University where young people of faith could consider issues pertinent to their generation.

Cynthia Dickinson



The Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso)

The Tibetan Dalai Lama, born in 1935, has lived in India since 1959. In these extracts he suggests that all religions have a common goal of changing people to make them more compassionate.

ALL OF THE different religious faiths, despite their philosophical differences, have a similar objective. Every religion emphasizes human improvement, love, respect for others, sharing other people's suffering. On these lines every religion has more or less the same viewpoint and the same goal.

Those faiths which emphasize Almighty God and faith in and love of God have as their purpose the fulfilment of God's intentions. Seeing us all as creations of and followers of one God, they teach that we should cherish and help each other. The very purpose of faithful belief in God is to accomplish his wishes, the essence of which is to cherish, respect, love and give service to our fellow humans.

Such an essential purpose of other religions is similarly to promote such beneficial feelings and actions. I strongly feel that from this viewpoint a central purpose of all the different philosophical explanations is the same. Through the various religious systems, followers are assuming a salutary attitude toward their fellow humans - our brothers and sisters - and implementing this good motivation in the service of human society. This has been demonstrated by a great many believers in Christianity through history; many have sacrificed their lives for the benefit of humankind

Interfaith Theology

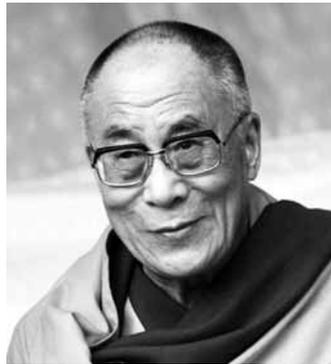
Although in every religion there is an emphasis on compassion and love, from the viewpoint of philosophy, of course, there are differences, and that is all right. Philosophical teachings are not the end, not the aim, not what you serve. The aim is to help and benefit others, and philosophical teachings to support those ideas are valuable. If we go into the differences in philosophy and argue with and criticize each other, it is useless. There will be endless argument; the result will mainly be that we irritate each other - accomplishing nothing. Better

to look at the purpose of the philosophies and to see what is shared - an emphasis on love, compassion and respect for a higher force

If we view the world's religions from the widest possible viewpoint and examine their ultimate goal, we find that all of the major world religions, whether Christianity or Islam, Hinduism or Buddhism, are directed

to the achievement of permanent human happiness. They are all directed toward that goal. All religions emphasize the fact that the true follower must be honest and gentle, in other words, that a truly religious person must always strive to be a better human being.

To this end, the different world religions teach different doctrines which will help transform the person. In this regard, all religions are the same, there is no conflict. This is something we must emphasize. We



must consider the question of religious diversity from this viewpoint. And when we do, we find no conflict.

Now from the philosophical point of view, the theory that God is the creator, is almighty and permanent, is in contradiction to the Buddhist teachings. From this point of view there is disagreement. For Buddhists, the universe has no first cause and hence no creator, nor can there be such a thing as a permanent, primordially pure being. So, of course, doctrinally, there is conflict. The views are opposite to one another. But if we consider the purpose of these different philosophies, then we see that they are the same. This is my belief... .

The variety of the different world religious philosophies is a very useful

and beautiful thing. For certain people, the idea of God as creator of everything depending on his will is beneficial and soothing, and so for that person such a doctrine is worthwhile. For someone else, the idea that there is no creator, that ultimately one is oneself the creator - in that everything depends on oneself - is more appropriate. For certain people, it may be a more effective method of spiritual growth, it may be more beneficial. For such persons, this idea is better and for the other type of person, the other idea is more suitable

Dalai Lama, "Religious Harmony" and 'Extracts from the Bodhgaya Interviews', in Paul J. Griffiths (ed.), *Christianity Through Non-Christian Eyes* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990).

Over to You

SINCE DECEMBER 2007 almost every issue of the Concord Newsletter has included a biographical profile written by the Revd Trevor Bates. The first was of Sewa Singh Khalsi, then Chair of Concord. It was followed by 13 others on Concord members, beginning with officers and members of the Executive. In September 2013 Trevor began a new series on faith leaders in Leeds, which also ran to 14 instalments. In every case he met with the individuals in their homes and interviewed them about their life and experience, wrote up his account and then gave them opportunity to review and correct it before it was published.

Over the years it has been arguably the most interesting feature in the Newsletter, getting to the heart of being an 'Interfaith Fellowship' by giving us insights into what makes so many of our friends and co-travellers on the interfaith journey tick.

Alas, all good things come to an end, and Trevor feels unable to do any more of these wonderful profiles. The question now is what do we do next? For this issue, as a one-off, I have included an extended extract from the Dalai Lama to give us

something to think about. There is plenty more material of that kind that we could include, and will if necessary.

The Executive Committee feel that we want the Newsletter to remain essentially and uniquely Concord's own and to avoid filling it with material drawn from other sources. We would like to continue with the spirit of Trevor's profiles in a different way, by inviting members of Concord to write their own contributions of similar length to convey their own perspectives on interfaith matters.

So, don't be shy! Send me your anecdotes, reflections, opinions. Tell us all why interfaith matters to you. Let out some of the bees in your bonnet. Give us some artwork, if you have the skill. Tell your story. I won't promise to print everything as there may not be room and I will have to exercise some quality control. Let me be the judge of that, and please do send. (See back page for Editor contact details.)

And finally, of course, a massive big THANK YOU to Trevor for the marvellous job he has done for us over the past decade.

Editor

Interfaith: What is the Point?

CONCORD'S March meeting, led by Co-Chair John Summerwill, was very different from usual. We were treated to a selection of videos to inform and inspire discussions around 'What's the point of interfaith dialogue?'

The film clips varied from a black and white silent movie (very amusing), through up-to-date documentaries to a compilation of world-leader statements. They included different types of dialogue—theological exchange, practical and social action as well as conversation.

We heard from Interfaith Scotland promoting the personal and community benefits of understanding the 'other' in this multicultural society by visiting places of worship and joining in each other's festivals, caring for the environment and campaigning for social justice. And it was interesting to see a Christian Centre in Leicester, in partnership with other faiths, offering interfaith education to the armed forces. Another clip focused on a Jewish interfaith activist who described her work to combat Islamophobia; then we heard Baroness Warsi calling for respect and freedom of belief with zero tolerance of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. We were reminded of the way faiths stood together following atrocious attacks in Manchester and London. A clip from Interfaith Network UK focused on a youth event, helping young people to bridge the gap between education and interfaith. Getting children through the complexities of concepts, attitudes, skills and knowledge isn't easy, but by encouraging curiosity and reflection they can discover more about their own faith while learning about another and could become skilled intercultural navigators.

Finally we heard brief comments from faith leaders—bishops, rabbis, imams—agreeing that interfaith is about making friends, having personal contact with



people of other faiths and sharing what we have in common.

After each short film we had a brief discussion, not just about what we had seen but also its relevance to us, in Concord, in Leeds. There were some areas where it was felt our activities had an impact, such as the Peace Service, Walk of Friendship and Women Peace-ing Together, but in areas involving young people we acknowledged that we were struggling. We are aware that there is a lot of interfaith happening informally in Leeds, as well as there being many groups and organisations working specifically to promote it. We have also noticed that public services have become more aware of faith and cultural needs in recent years, and that art and sport provide opportunities for different faiths to interact.

Finally John asked, 'What do we do with this information?' The discussion centred around a way of compiling a small, useful, pocket-sized booklet to help others understand the purpose of Concord and the value of interfaith. No easy task, but something well worth working at.

Cynthia Dickinson

Marcus Braybrooke's Lecture, *Interfaith— a Beacon of Hope*

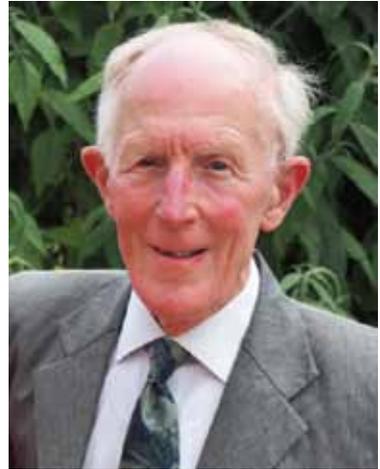
ON WEDNESDAY 25TH APRIL 2018 Concord will be honoured by the visit of the **Revd Dr Marcus Braybrooke**, a world-renowned pioneer in the field of interfaith dialogue.

Dr Braybrooke is primarily an Anglican priest, now retired and living near Oxford. For half a century he has travelled the world attending and lecturing at interfaith events and promoting interfaith dialogue, not as a paid job but as a voluntary activity alongside his priestly ministry. His knowledge of the field and his personal knowledge of the key people involved is vast and unique.

The World Congress of Faiths was founded in the 1930s. Marcus joined in 1964 and is currently its Co-President. He has written the history of the movement in *A Wider Vision*. He was Executive Director of the Council of Christians and Jews from 1984-8, and is a Co-Founder of the Three Faiths Forum, Patron of the International Interfaith Centre at Oxford and a Peace Councillor. He is an Honorary International Adviser to the Parliament of the World's Religions.

Marcus has studied for a time in India and in Israel. In September 2004 he was awarded a Lambeth Doctorate of Divinity by the Archbishop of Canterbury '... in recognition of his contribution to the development of inter-religious co-operation and understanding throughout the world.' He has also received the Sir Sigmund Sternberg Interfaith Gold Medallion, the Kashi Ashram Lifetime Achievement Award and the Sri Ramanuja Mission Trust Lifetime Achievement Award.

He is author of fifty books on world religions and Christianity, many of which are available as e-books. The most recent is *Beacons of the Light*, which introduces 100 of the world's most influential spiritual teachers, setting their lives in the historical and religious context of their time and



summarising their message.

His visit to Leeds to give the Peter Bell Memorial Lecture in the Banquet Room, Leeds Civic Hall, at 7.15 for 7.30 on Wednesday 25th April is a very special event, not to be missed. Bring your friends.



Light for Leeds

AN EARLY reminder that Concord will have a presence at the Interfaith Week event in Kirkstall Abbey, Light for Leeds. There will be a Concord stall and some of our Executive will also be engaged as representatives of their own faith traditions. The event will take place on Sunday November 18th and will include free refreshments, activities and entertainment as well as information stalls. There will also be items commemorating the anniversary of the 1918 Armistice.

Make sure the date is in your diary and remember to come along!

Letting in the Light: Positive steps for peace in a turbulent world



**Featuring Kim Leadbeater, sister of Jo Cox MP,
plus workshops from Initiatives of Change
and Black Lives Matter**

20th– 22nd April 2018

Hinsley Hall, Leeds, LS6 2BX

Book at for.org.uk/positivesteps
01865 250781



*A joint conference with the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, Fellowship of Reconciliation,
and the Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Church Peace Fellowships*

Obituary

Molly Denham,

1932-2018

MOLLY HASLOP was born at St Neot's, Cambridgeshire, in 1932 and spent her childhood years there, in Letchworth and in Peterborough. After leaving school she worked in a tax office and later became a wages clerk. She married Colin Denham in 1958 and they moved first to the Wirral, then, in 1960 to Leeds. Colin worked for the YMCA and later for the DHSS. Molly had various clerical jobs. They had three daughters.

Molly, previously an Anglican, became a member of Chapel Allerton Methodist Church in 1974. When she retired in 1994 she started a range of voluntary activities—visitor for Victim Support, steward at Leeds Town Hall, church steward and pastoral visitor, Trefoil Guild and child minding for her grandchildren. She joined the Open University and gained her degree in 2001,



and in 2011 she was presented with the Stephenson Award for 40 years' service to NCH Action for Children.

It was during this retirement phase of her life that she became a member of Concord—through the influence of Peter Bell, no doubt—and she continued to promote the work of Concord in Chapel Allerton Methodist Church after his death.

Those who have spoken of her have commented on her unassuming nature, never imposing herself or her opinion; her openness to others and their way of thinking; her full commitment to everything she involved herself in; her strong faith worked out in loyalty, diligence and service.

From 2015 onwards she withdrew from her roles as carer and became herself cared for as she lived with advancing dementia and physical frailty.

She died in January 2018 at the age of 85, having lived a life full of goodness.

Compiled from notes supplied by Ted Britton, who gave the eulogy at her funeral.

Women's World Day of Prayer

AHERI grontapu di Gado meki bun doro, doro! That was the theme of this year's service (in Sranan Tongue), written by the Christian women of Suriname: "All God's creation is very good!" Based on readings from Genesis they showed how the gift of creation has everything for our needs but, through laziness, neglect, irresponsibility and greed, we are causing untold damage to the planet. The sea turtle in a circle is a Suriname symbol of God's created world,



and we all know the problems that our careless use of plastic is causing these creatures and the environment.

So the women ask for a commitment: that each one of us starts to make a small change in our daily lives that will make a positive difference to the world and protect the earth for future generations.

Calendar of Festivals

Summer 2018

Bahá'í, Jewish and Pagan festivals usually begin on the evening before the given date.

APRIL

14 Baisakhi (Vaisakhi)	Sikh
19 Yom Ha'Atzmaut	Jewish
21 First Day of Ridvan	Bahá'í
23 St. George's Day	Christian
29 Ninth Day of Ridvan	Bahá'í
Visakha Puja	Buddhist
30-May 2 Theravadin New Year	Buddhist

MAY

1 Beltane	Pagan
Lailat al bara'ah	Muslim
2 Last day of Ridvan	Bahá'í
3 Lag B'Omer	Jewish
10 Ascension of Jesus	Christian
16-June 15 Ramadan	Muslim
20-21 Shavuot	Jewish
20 Pentecost	Christian
23 Declaration of the Bab	Bahá'í

27 Trinity Sunday	Western Christian
Pentecost	Orthodox Christian
29 Ascension of Baha'u'llah	Bahá'í
31 Corpus Christi	Catholic Christian

JUNE

2 All Saints	Orthodox Christian
8 Sacred Heart of Jesus	Catholic Christian
11 Laylat al Kadr	Muslim
15-17 Eid al Fitr - Ramadan ends	Muslim
16 Guru Arjan martyrdom	Sikh
20 Waqf al Arafa - Hajj Day	Muslim
21 Solstice. Litha	Pagan

JULY

9 Martyrdom of the Bab	Bahá'í
22 Tish'a B'av	Jewish
27 Asalha Puja Day	Buddhist

AUGUST

2 Lughnassad	Pagan
6 Transfiguration of the Lord	Orthodox Christian
15 Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary	Catholic Christian
Dormition of the Theotokos	Orthodox Christian
22-25 Eid al Adha	Muslim
29 Raksha Bandhan	Hindu

SEPTEMBER

3 Krishna Janmashtami	Hindu
10-11 Rosh Hashannah	Jewish
12 Hijra - New Year	Muslim
13 Ganesh Chaturthi	Hindu
14 Elevation of the Life Giving Cross (Holy Cross)	Christian
Paryushana Parva	Jain
19 Yom Kippur	Jewish
21 Ashura	Muslim
22 Equinox - Mabon	Pagan
24-31 Sukkot	Jewish
29 Michaelmas	Christian

Interfaith Events

Those of you with e-mail will probably receive a (more or less) weekly list of faith, interfaith and diversity events taking place in and around Leeds. I get information from groups and organisations between York and Sheffield, Hull and Bradford.

If you are not yet a recipient of this What's On list but would like to give it a try, it is by e-mail only so you need to send your request to concordwomen@phonecoop.coop

Reg. Charity No: 516339

Editor: John S. Summerwill 0113 269 7895 editor@concord-leeds.org.uk
263 Lidgett Lane, Leeds LS17 6PP