

## Youth Conference proposes a Month of Prayer for Inter Faith Relations

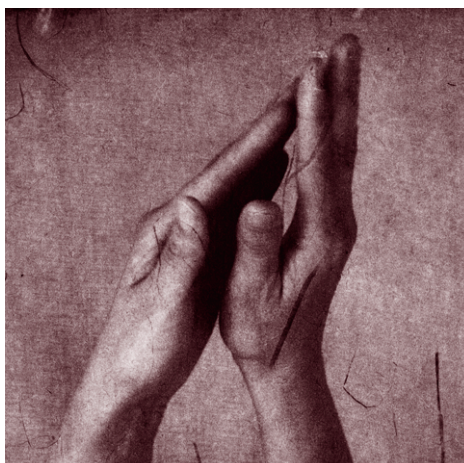
*The Conference dedicates a month in the next connexional year to prayer within church congregations for improved relationships between people of different faiths; and directs resources to be produced to help local churches and young people to engage with people of other faiths and to reflect upon these issues.*

This resolution was submitted to the Methodist Conference 2006 by the Youth Conference of 2005. The Conference agreed to it and February 2007 is the month.

The 2005 Youth Conference pointed to the 'hostile and untrue' things that are said about some faiths, particularly Islam. Inter faith action, they decided, was hugely important as a way of challenging this. And the first step - given that some Methodists fear having anything to do with other faiths - could be skilfully resourced prayer and reflection, leading to action.

Plans for the month are still incomplete but this is what we can say so far:

- The Youth Executive hopes that every Methodist church will do something during the month helped by stories of what other churches are doing.
- The Methodist website will carry ideas for prayer, reflection and action.
- Existing study resources will be promoted and new ones prepared if there are any gaps.
- District Inter Faith Advisers will be ready to help; so will members of the Methodist Inter Faith Relations Committee.
- Ways of sharing good practice will be found.



February is not far away. It is not too early to start thinking about what you can do at church, circuit and district level. Keep your eyes on the Methodist website for more news.

Website: [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

### Sharing Faith with People of Other Faiths

What do inter faith dialogue and evangelism have in common? Are they poles apart, or ends of a spectrum with most people occupying a place somewhere in the middle? A working group drawn from the Inter Faith Relations Committee and the Evangelism Strategy Group of the Methodist Church has spent two years exploring these questions. The members of the group have listened hard to each other, sharing experiences, discussing differences. The result is a six-session resource for groups on sharing faith with people of other faiths, containing case studies, Bible studies and projects.

The working group believes the resource will ask awkward and challenging questions of all of us, whatever part of the spectrum we inhabit.

*Soon to be available from mph.*

### Week of Prayer for World Peace (WPWP) 22-29 October 2006

*'The peace of the world needs to be prayed for by the faiths of the world'*  
(Edward Carpenter, former Dean of Westminster, first Chair of WPWP)

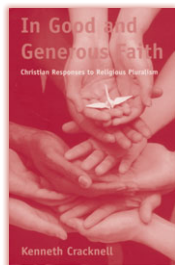
Following a well-established pattern, Christian prayers stand alongside Jewish, Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, Baha'i, Zoroastrian and Buddhist prayers/meditations in the leaflet prepared for the Week. The daily themes include: Safety, Freedom, Commitment and Fruitfulness.

Contact the Inter Faith Office for a sample leaflet or order copies from Mrs Lesley Daisley,  
11 Montrose Avenue, Queens Park, London NW6 6LE Tel: 020 8968 4340

# Book Corner

**In Good and Generous Faith: Christian Responses to Religious Pluralism,**  
Kenneth Cracknell, Epworth Press, 2005, £17.99

Do you have difficulty with the idea of building good relations between faiths? Do you fear that it means compromising the Christian faith? If you do - or if you know other people who do - this book is for you.



It has five sections. The first surveys what the Bible says about people of other faiths. The second looks at Jesus as the Word, the Logos, of John Ch. 1. Here Cracknell suggests four ways of understanding John 14.6 (I am the Way, the Truth and the Light. No one comes to the Father but by me). None of them condemns people of other religions to darkness. Sections on ethics, spirituality and mission follow.

Those who know Cracknell's previous books will recognise some of the material. But there is much that is new. This is a book for all who want to look afresh at how Christians should respond to other faiths.

Also recommended: **Living with Faith: Journeys towards Trust, Friendship and Justice,** Barbara Butler, published by Inspire, £6.99 (available from mph)

Elizabeth Harris wrote on the back cover: 'Barbara Butler reflects on one of the most important issues for Christians - how they can be true to their faith and live positively in a multi-faith world. She brings to this her rich experience of working with people of other faiths across the world and writes in a conversational style accessible to all.'



# News and Ideas from the Districts

## Turning Hope into Homes, Edinburgh

On 16 July 2006 sixteen people who are Muslim, Christian or of other spiritualities left Edinburgh for two weeks to work in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on a housing project, in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity. Nicolson Square Methodist Church initiated the project. The adjacent Central Mosque joined in. And the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association gave advice. Money was raised through a colossal local effort.

## Bradford

Mrs Awais Dominic is the Faith to Faith Worker at Touchstone, a Methodist place of meeting in Bradford. She is involved in many initiatives including the Interfaith Writers for Peace Group and the Interfaith Women for Peace Group. 'Touching Eternity with Hands in the City' was the title of Touchstone's Annual Celebration in April this year.

With Revd Inderjit Bhogal, Director of Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum, speaking, it highlighted Touchstone's role in bringing together city issues and inter faith work.

## Plymouth and Exeter District

Dr Grahame Miles, District Inter Faith Adviser of the Plymouth and Exeter District, has made available ten District Resource Packs on Inter Faith Relations. Each contains four publications useful for groups and individuals, including *Faith Meeting Faith: ways forward in inter-faith relations* (available from mph). So far seven circuits have agreed to hold these. They are available for study groups to borrow inside or outside Methodism, within the District.

Contact the Inter Faith Office if you have inter faith news from your church, circuit or district that you would like to share with others.

## Public Inter Faith Event at the Methodist Conference (26 June 2006, Nicolson Square Methodist Church, Edinburgh)

'Freedom of Speech, Responsibility and Respect' was the theme. Rabbi David Rose (of the Edinburgh Synagogue), Andrew Hill (a Unitarian), Sohaib Saeed (Chair of the Edinburgh University Student Islamic Society) and Elizabeth Harris (Secretary for Inter Faith Relations) were the panelists. Professor Frank Whaling, Methodist presbyter and Chair of the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association, chaired. About 50 attended. Views differed, for example on whether ridiculing religion could be a good thing or whether a secular state was the best protection for minorities. But the panelists agreed that the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad just went too far and that faith schools were not necessarily bad news for social integration.



Panelists at the public inter faith event in Edinburgh during Conference 2006

Photo: Kathleen LaCamera  
Courtesy: United Methodist News Service



### Further Information

Please contact Dr Elizabeth Harris, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR  
Tel: 020 7467 5249 Fax: 020 7467 5282

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