



Faith network meeting – Wednesday 14 March 2007
Launch of Sheffield Faiths Forum

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Summary of event

- 130 bookings, 115 attendees
- All 7 world religions present in Sheffield represented and other minority faiths

Programme

6.00 – 6.05	Welcome from the chair
	Inderjit Bhogal, Director of Yorkshire & Humber Regional Faiths Forum
6.05 – 6.20	Background and development of Sheffield Faiths Forum
	Tim Wright, Faith Network Development Worker and Dave Jackson, Director of Offer
6.20 – 6.40	The Lord Mayor of Sheffield, Councillor Mrs Jackie Drayton.
	Welcoming Sheffield Faiths Forum and its individual members on behalf of the city.
	Short scripture readings from Faiths Forum members
6.40 – 6.50	Sajda Shah, Vice-Chair of Yorkshire & Humber Faiths Forum
	Greetings from the regional Faiths Forum and a regional perspective.
6.50 – 7.05	Right Reverend Jack Nicholls, Anglican Bishop of Sheffield
	The challenge to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly.
7.05 – 7.10	Formal close
7.10 – 8.00	Buffet and networking

Aims

- *Celebrate the launch of Sheffield Faiths Forum*
- *Welcome the Forum's new members*
- *Find out about the Forum's development and its plans for the future.*

Presentations

Unfortunately, we do not yet have transcripts of the presentations from each of the speakers – they will be added to the OFFER website (see below) as soon as they become available.

Background and Development of Sheffield Faiths Forum

This briefly covered: - Why have a forum? Why is OFFER involved? The structure of the forum. History of the forum's development. The forum's values. What the forum won't be doing. Who is involved in the forum. Where we hope to make a difference. The full presentation can be viewed at <http://www.offer.org.uk/content.php?c=66>

Scripture readings by Faith Forum members

Baha'i reading:

God's purpose in sending His Prophets unto men is twofold. The first is to liberate the children of men from the darkness of ignorance, and guide them to the light of true understanding. The second is to ensure the peace and tranquillity of mankind, and provide all the means by which they can be established.

"Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh" pp. 79-80

Buddhist Reading:

METTA SUTTA

Loving kindness, or metta meditation, is a traditional Buddhist practice that helps us to move from a sense of dislocation and isolation into more of a connection with ourselves and, ultimately, with all beings everywhere.

The literal translation of the word metta is "friendship." So metta means being a friend to ourselves and a friend to all of life. Its foundation is connection.

Every action that anyone commits – even the most misguided and evil action – is an attempt to escape suffering. So we can wish that all beings, including ourselves, find the wisdom to see that true happiness is supported by love and awareness, and not by hatred and violence.

May all being be happy and secure.

May all beings become happy in their heart of hearts!

And think of every being without exception: the weak and the strong, from the smallest to the largest, whether you can see them or not, living nearby or far away, beings living now or yet to arise – may all beings become happy in their heart of hearts!

May no one deceive or look down on anyone anywhere, for any reason. Whether through feeling angry or through reacting to someone else, may no one want another to suffer.

As strongly as a mother, perhaps risking her life, cherishes her child, develop an unlimited heart for all beings.

Develop an unlimited heart of friendliness for the entire universe, sending metta above, below, and all around, beyond all narrowness, beyond all rivalry, beyond all hatred.

Whether you are staying in one place or travelling, sitting down or in bed, in all your waking hours rest in this mindfulness, which is known as like living in heaven right here and now!

Christian Reading:

34"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

37"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

40"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

Matthew 25:34-40 (New International Version)

Hindu Reading:

Lord Krishna says in Bhagavad-Gita (Chapter IV, 7-8)

"Whenever and wherever there is a decay of Dharma (religion) and a superiority of irreligion, I manifest Myself. For the protection of the virtuous, the destruction of the vicious and for the establishment of morality, I manifest Myself millennium after millennium."

Jewish Reading:

Seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you and pray to God on its behalf; for in its prosperity you shall prosper.

TaNaKh - Jeremiah 29:7

Muslim Reading:

O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware.

49:13

Ye who believe! Let not a folk deride a folk who may be better than they (are), not let women (deride) women who may be better than they are; neither defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. Bad is the name of lewdness after faith. And whoso turneth not in repentance, such are evil-doers

49:11

Summary of feedback

- **Did the event increase your understanding of the purpose of the Sheffield Faiths Forum?** Yes / partially - 96%
- **What did you think of the venue?** Very good / good – 96%
- **Did you have enough information in advance of the event?** Definitely / yes – 63%
- **How well do you feel the event was organised on the day?** Very good / good – 85%
- **Overall, did you enjoy the event?** Definitely / yes – 100%

Detailed feedback

115 participants attended. 27 evaluation forms were returned

Comments on how well the event met its objectives.

	Yes	In part	No
Objective 1. Did the event increase your understanding of the purpose of the Sheffield Faiths Forum?	23	3	1
Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I really didn't have much idea about how much had been achieved so far. • And it's a really noble one too • I still think the forum wants to do the work that Sheffield interfaith was set up to do and is perhaps struggling to achieve. So I wonder how you will support Sheffield Interfaith. • Enjoyed explanations of historical background of inauguration of SFF. Loved listening to the quotes from different faiths. • Had read information previously. Good presentations. • Good presentations on power point • I wasn't really aware that it was being setup 			

	Very poor	Poor	Okay	Good	Very Good
What did you think of the venue? Please include any comments on location and accessibility.	0	0	1	9	17
Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dignified, warm, disability friendly • Liked the round tables and the Lord Mayors genuine welcome • Excellent to travel by bus (no parking) • Pity it was late shopping evening. Parking was difficult and buses were held up. • Cost of Town Hall for Offer?? • Central – easy access • Location – central – accessibility - good 					

	Not at all	No	Okay	Yes	Definitely
Did you have enough information in advance of the event? Please include details of any extra information you would have liked.	1	5	4	14	3
Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invites and reminders were well presented and timely • No – but I met Tim at a previous meeting and discovered more details there. • I received nothing except for the Offer application form • Received information from the internet – just downloaded the programme • Leaflet front photo gave impression was muslim / asian only. Surely should have range of photos together, showing different people in Sheffield. 					

	Very poor	Poor	Okay	Good	Very Good
How well do you feel the event was organised on the day?	0	0	4	9	14
Comments: With consideration and care, attention to detail. Time keeping!! Difficulty in hearing / seeing some speakers – a raised dais might have been helpful. The mobile phones were off putting It wasn't over structured – but also, helpers, for information, were a little hard to find – stretched maybe?					

	Not at all	No	Okay	Yes	Definitely
Overall did you enjoy the event?	0	0	0	12	15
What did you enjoy most about the event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishop Jack's rallying call (and irony of MPs being absent due to trident vote) • The presentations, welcoming atmosphere, meeting people of other faiths, the encouragement of Lord Mayor. • Readings by the Forum reps x5 • Seeing how everyone shared similar ideologies • The whole event was most enjoyable and most cheering after all the negative publicity generally • Bishop Jacks speech x 4 • Meeting people after x3 • Multifaith views and meeting different faith people. • The talks by Bishop, Sajda Shah and the networking. • The way everyone worked together has given me a great feeling • Sense of practical spirituality which pervaded the presentations/ inputs • Variety of speakers • All the religious bodies under one umbrella • Meeting representatives and hearing their genuine commitment • Having a good 'excuse' to chat to people from different backgrounds. 				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation and the breath of info given • Learned a lot and plenty of opportunity for informal discussion. The speakers were brief and well focused. • Warm welcome and understanding of aims, from Offer and Mayor • Seeing and experiencing that “integration and sharing of faith(s)” can be done
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<p>What did you enjoy least about the event?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile phones not switched off x 5 • Some religious art, poetry, dance or music would have been good. • Lack of mythological tales! • The introductions were a bit long. • Perhaps too many speakers • Too hot in the room • Noted after applauded ‘togetherness’ speeches, the division between us present occurred, the divisions surely we are aiming to overcome?! • Apologies from MP – but understandable • The fact that, so may so called faith leaders and community leaders are so hung up on themselves and can walk by you without even acknowledging you – I do not find that friendly or convivial behaviour
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Other comments

- I am a little puzzled as to how members of the Faiths Forum will find out what the general community think and how information will be received and disseminated.
- How can we get more young people involved?
- Here’s to developments!

