

York

18 October 2010

Religious Literacy Leadership in HE:

Lightening Inputs 1 –

Engaging with Faith communities

Revd Canon Dr John Hall

Director St Philip's Centre, Leicester

St Philip's Centre, Leicester – Context

Challenge – to get to
know us



St Philip's Centre



Context - Leicester Today

Most multi-religious city in the UK outside London

Leicestershire a 'microcosm of England' - 2001 census figures show:

132,000 Christian (44%)

41,000 Hindu

40,000 Muslim

10,000 Sikh

+ Jews, Jains, Buddhists, B'hai...

Challenge – Universities are in the context of other communities, they are not isolated ivory towers

Context - Meeting places

xxx Numerous churches

13 Hindu Mandirs

35 Mosques

7 Sikh Gurdwaras

2 Synagogues

1 Jain Temple

1 Buddhist Centre

Challenge – nowhere in UK is not diverse. Faith diversity is a matter for all Universities, colleges and communities

Context - St Philip's Ward

16.2% Christian

33.7% Muslim

25.8% Hindu

12.6% Sikh

0.3% Other religions

(2001 census)

Challenge: 1. Know the context
2. build Christian confidence?

Christian Presence and Engagement Training Group



Challenge – what is your University doing to support Christians in their understanding of their faith and their new multi faith society context?

Chaplains

- Have key roles to play
- Need support
- Need appropriate training

Challenge – How well are we doing here?

St Philip's Centre

Objectives and Powers



1. Equipping Christians and others to live and work in a multi faith society
2. Providing opportunities to reflect on Christian mission, presence, engagement, dialogue and evangelism in a multi faith world
3. Offering consultancy and training services to enable people and communities in Leicester and beyond to live together in harmony
4. Sharing regionally, nationally and internationally the experience and expertise gained from the objects in 1,2 and 3 above

Context - Government discourse

What does govt discourse on faith look like?



Context - Government

- - **Faiths possess oodles of Social Capital**
but see JRF 'Faiths and Social Capital Study' (2006) which lists the negatives too
- - **Faiths are depositories of Community Cohesion**
but cohesion stresses commonalities over differences, and we must not avoid these
- - **We need to be Preventing Extremism Together**
"it (preventing terrorism) is the dominant language of the rhetoric" Dr Alan Dinham 17.9.08
- - **The subtext is/has been, Muslims are a special issue**
- - **New Coalition Govt – cuts and 'Big Society' localism**
it remains to be revealed how faiths fit in the new policy agenda...
- - **Faiths Framework – Face to Face and Side by Side**
"I believe faith can be an immense force for good in our communities" Hazel Blears 21.7.08

Radicalisation

- A university security officer approach me about 'Salafi' Muslims, visiting the University, and concerned at their presence...
- This month UCL produced a 'shallow, complacent, self-serving' report on the would-be plane bomber, ex-UCL student Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab.
- A University head of department was concerned at the increased proportion of veiled female students in lectures
- A lecturer was concerned at the number of Muslim student absentees from Friday classes and how to raise the issue
- Some institutional settings are referring individuals identified by staff as at risk of radicalisation (not just Muslims) to the St Philip's Centre for pastoral/mentoring support
- One College found the EDL were using Facebook networks to recruit students

Challenge – how well is the university handling the very wide range of issues

Vice Chancellors and their Staff

‘VC’s and their staff do not engage in robust debate with extremists and try to show vulnerable students the moral and intellectual virtues of liberalism because they are frightened...

Ignorance is part of it. I doubt one lecturer in ten at UCL knows anything about the ideologies of Jamaat and the Muslim Brotherhood’

Nick Cohen
Observer on Sunday
10 October 2010

Challenge: True or false? What follows?...

Face to Face and Side by Side (2008)

A framework for partnership...

Structured around 4 building blocks:

1. Developing the confidence and skills to bridge and link
2. Shared spaces for interaction
3. Structures and processes which support dialogue and social action
4. Opportunities for learning which build understanding

Challenge: How well are the Universities doing in developing frameworks for partnership?

When the EDL come to Town... a partnership response is vital



Leicester 9 Oct 2010

INTER FAITH WEEK - 21st-28th NOVEMBER 2010

- TO 'ENCOURAGE COMMUNITIES AT NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS TO HOLD EVENTS TO CELEBRATE AND RAISE AWARENESS OF THE POSITIVE INTER FAITH WORK THAT IS BEING DONE EVERYWHERE' *CLG Report, 2008*

- **AIM** OF WEEK IS FOR PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS TO USE A VARIETY OF MEDIUMS TO:
 - CELEBRATE EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS AND WAYS OF WORKING
 - CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
 - SHOWCASE INNOVATION

Opportunity – How well have the universities responded to Inter Faith Week?

Dialogue

Challenge: Who enables dialogue across and between faiths... ?



Through Dialogue...

*Dialogue depends on removing misunderstanding
and building up **trust***

*Dialogue leads to common **service** in the community*

*Dialogue is the means of authentic **witness***

“If your own faith is nothing more than a burden, you will not value the faith of others. But if you cherish your faith, you will value other people’s faith also, even though it is different from your own. You will know that faiths are like jewels. One is especially your own, but all are precious.”

Jonathan Sacks

Challenge: Are faiths seen as jewels in the university? How can they be?

The St Philip's Centre has grown out of... local people & relationships



Challenge – to form new partnerships to put on events of mutual benefit

St Philip's Centre - Current Work

- Courses
- Sports and Social Events
- Young People's Inter Faith Hub
- Dialogue Groups
- Lectures, conferences, seminars...
- Engagement with Faiths, FBOs and IFGs
- Individual support

Learning

- St Philip's Centre

MA (de Montfort) in Inter-religious Studies

Fdn Degree – (Leicester) in Faith and
Community Studies for 2011

Chaplaincy Courses

Inter faith Football versus Leicester Police 2010





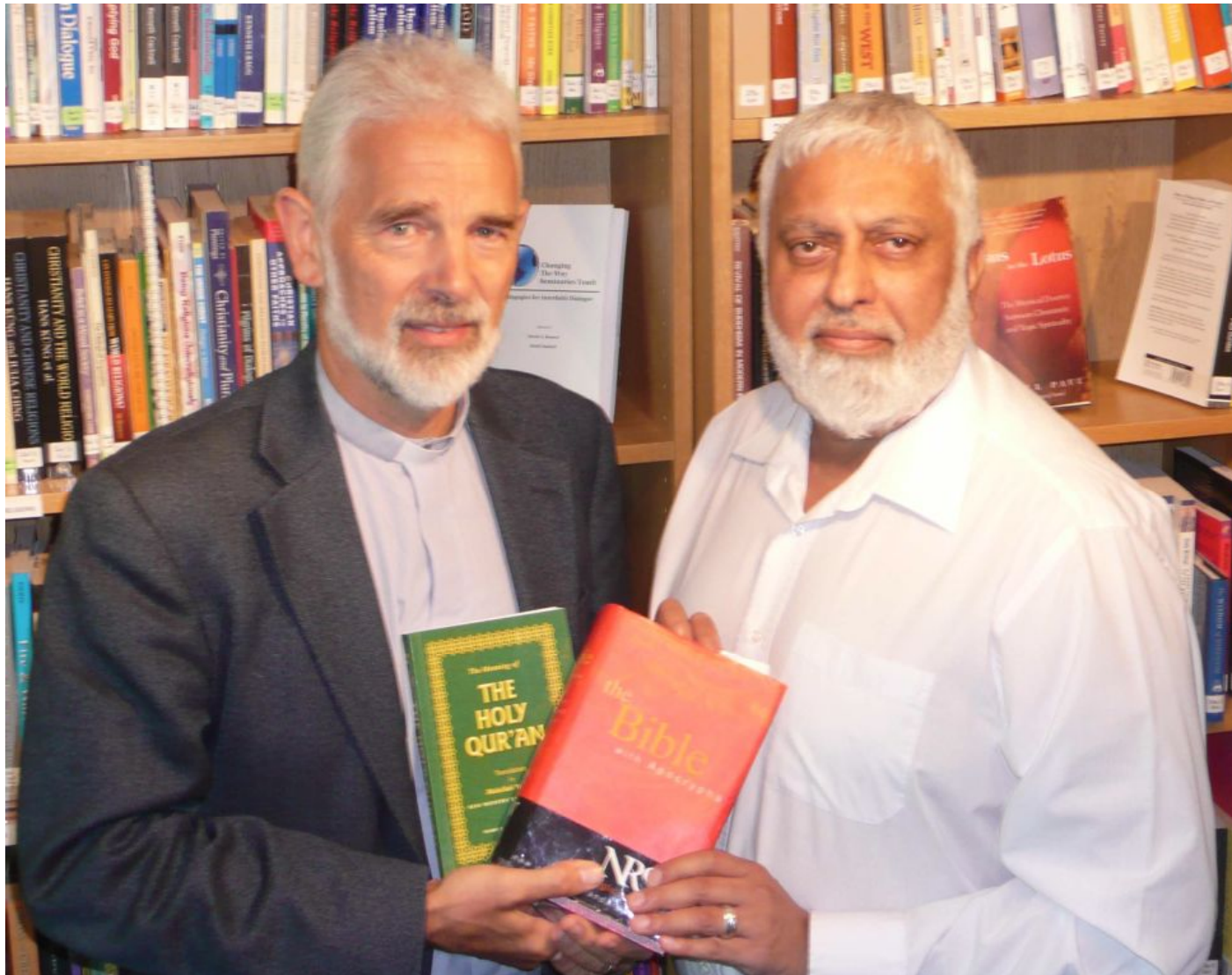
Interfaith
Cricket –
Leicester,
Luton and
Bedford
2010

Challenge
– How to
promote
sport and
other
activities
to build
friendships

Oct 2010 Inter faith running team enters Leicester Marathon



Respecting Sacred Texts – ITV Central News item - Sept 2010



Challenge –
How to
engage in
promoting
respect, rights
and
responsibilities

Inter faith youth hub – mobilising young people for an anti-poverty Leicester city centre activity Sept 2010



Inter faith youth hub – eco event at Riverside Festival 2010



Challenge –
Why not engage with Leicester's interfaith youth hub to see what it might do to bring students of different backgrounds together?

STR!VE – Veils, forced marriage and honour crime event - 2010



Challenge: Autumn Term 2010 - Burnley College bans face coverings, Imp College, London says show your face at the door. Where's the debate at at your university?

Shayk Ibrahim Mogra addresses Training Group



Challenge: are quality faith speakers getting invited?

St Philip's Centre's international programme

Challenge – the global comes local, so how well are we facilitating dialogue, friendship, and learning?





We aim... to offer
training to key
groups in society
on the realities and
opportunities of
living & working in a
multi-faith society

Challenge: Can we help you?