

## CCRJ Commissioner Meets Mandela

The Black Methodists for Liberation and Unity (BMLU) of Great Britain were invited by its sister organisation The Black Methodists Consultation (BMC) of South Africa to attend their Executive Council Meeting in Pretoria. Here is the account of By Naboth Muchopa (far left), The Connexional Secretary for Racial Justice for the Methodist Church.

"The excitement and anxiety of meeting Nelson Madiba' Mandela gripped us all. Madiba receives about 1000 requests a day for an audience with him and many are turned down. We were afforded 30 minutes with him. We were dazzled by his presence, his charm and his calm reflective manner. The gravitas of the man coupled with his humility made this occasion memorable and all of us agreed later that this was something that would live with us for the rest of our lives.



Madiba remains optimistic about the future of the world and as committed to the ideals of freedom and justice as he has ever been. It was also evident that he is now physically frail, yet his mind and wit remain as sharp

as ever. He is jealously guarded by his staff who allowed us a further ten minutes with him for a photo session. We left full of admiration and awe at being in the presence of this wonderful human being."

## Call for Race and Faith Debate

**U**K Christian think tank Ekklesia has backed a call by the progressive New Generation Network for a better debate on race and faith issues, in the wake of the 30th anniversary of the Race Relations Act.

The freshly-formed Network, comprising individuals from a range of backgrounds, is particularly asking the government to drop its 'colonial' approach in order to listen to a wider range of voices beyond self-appointed "community leaders".

It says that the current public conversation on race and faith issues is often simplistic and has been manipulated by recent governments to demonise

minority groups, as well as by faith and community leaders whose claims to speak on behalf of others need to be challenged.

New Generation has been set up by journalist and commentator Sunny Hundal, founder of Asians in Media and the acclaimed Pickled Politics weblog – which focuses on politics, media and society from a broad, mainly South Asian perspective.

Its founding statement is backed by Sunder Katwala (General Secretary of the Fabian Society, Yasmin Alibhai-Brown (writer and journalist), Gurpreet Bhatti (author of the banned Sikh play Behzti), Dr Robert Beckford (TV presenter and black theologian), Simon Barrow (Co-Director of Ekklesia), and writers Ziauddin Sardar, Hari Kunzru and Dave Hill among many others.

The New Generation Network manifesto says that a focus on equality involves accepting people's multiple identities

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Yasmin Alibhai-Brown

## CCRJ is changing shape!

Changing shape speaks of God's creativity – that divine ability to find new wineskins in order to avoid losing the precious wine. The Churches' Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ) is an arm of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and it is dedicated to the work of achieving racial justice. CCRJ is changing shape, but its wine remains as potent as ever!

The Racial Justice Fund, always an important but until now a fairly self-contained part of what we do, is being brought into the centre to become the springboard for renewed action to address the changing racial justice agenda. Already the Fund is becoming a Network of projects and organisations all committed to creating a society where people from every background can flourish.

Out of the Fund and the Network will come new energy and resources: educational materials for churches and others; information we can use to lobby the government; and partners who can work together on new projects – the sky's the limit!

The CCRJ staff team has changed too, with the exception of Margaret Pattinson our Administrator who continues to hold us all together. Revd Claudette Douglas is our Research and Development Officer. Her responsibilities include the Fund, the Network, the capacity building, Racial Justice Sunday to name but a few.

The Bail Circle, run by Puck de Raadt, continues to be a vital lifeline for many people in detention. Fortunately that doesn't leave much for me, Andy Bruce, to do: I'm just the Manager! The wineskin is changing: the wine has lost none of its kick!

Andy Bruce is Manager of CCRJ and can be contacted on 020 7654 7240 or [andy.bruce@ctbi.org.uk](mailto:andy.bruce@ctbi.org.uk)



Culture, religions and food of the world were celebrated when Sheffield Hallam University paid homage to the diversity of its rich number of international students.

Over three thousand students shared their experiences of living in South Yorkshire and being at Sheffield Hallam University during the second annual International Week.

The festival presented opportunities to experience different cultures, and brought home the true meaning of religious festivals such as the Diwali 'festival of lights' interpreted through traditional Hindu dance, and an insight into the real meaning of Bonfire night and the history of Guy Fawkes. The festival is devised to improve the understanding of other traditions, values and beliefs

## Dancing in the street

through workshops, activities and discussions.

International Week organiser, Rick Brand, said: "Inter-faith understanding is increasingly important, particularly with young people who are the future opinion formers in our society. Through education and focused events such as International Week, we can help to promote a better understanding of different cultures and support the development of tolerance and peace. Sheffield Hallam is extremely proud of our international relationships and how they are expressed in our increasing number of students and academics from across the world."

Other activities included a discussion of the importance of the Ramadan fast for Muslims, why the Buddhist religion continues to grow in popularity, and an insight into the Sikh religion and how it sits within contemporary British society.

### Pause for thought:

- How could you celebrate diversity in your area?
- Do you think you would be able to involve other community projects and maybe apply for funding from your local Borough Community Chest Grant to make this happen?

## Short Stories Under The Sun

Children from the Chiswick Seventh-Day Adventist Church primary school have raised £1,200 via a series of fundraising activities. The money will allow the Bani Kosseye Government School in Niger to buy much needed uniforms for its pupils. Children from the Chiswick school were touched to act after hearing stories from developing countries such as Africa, the West Indies and the Philippines that were told as

part of the "Story Time Under The Sun" project.

The project was developed by the Chiswick school to encourage children in Britain to be socially aware and to reach out to communities beyond their own geographical boundaries.

In the last six years the project has raised money for an orphanage in El Salvador and has helped children and families in Haiti, Jamaica and Grenada.

The Bani Kosseye project was

chosen due to the poverty and vulnerability of the people in that part of Niger, the second poorest country in the world. The children benefiting from this project live in an arid zone close to the Sahara Desert. The new uniforms will protect them from the alternating cold, windy and very warm weather in that part of Africa.

For more details contact: [Dorothy.Clarke@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:Dorothy.Clarke@rbkc.gov.uk) / 0208 575 1739.

I dream of Africa

# Slavery

## the unfinished business

With the ushering in of 2007 the British transatlantic slave trade would have been abolished for 200 years - although the Act of Parliament was initiated in 1807 slavery in fact did not 'visibly' end in the major parts of the world until some 30 years later. The massive movement of people from the African continent during the two centuries prior to the passing of the Act of 1807 had reshaped the demographic make-up of Africa, the Caribbean and the Americas. The consequences of economic exploitation, loss of identity, and racism are still with us and deserve our continuing attention. Meanwhile we have in our midst today new forms of slavery which we can confront drawing on the inspiration of the people who made 1807 possible – the black slaves themselves, Christian, and other abolitionists in Britain and elsewhere.

Southwark Diocese Black and Minority Ethnic Forum and Churches Together in England's Set All Free have joined forces to convene a conference next year on the heritage of transatlantic slavery and contempo-

rary forms of enslavement. The conference will explore issues that include an apology and reparations for the slave trade, theology of slavery, the legacy of racial discrimination, black identity and slavery, racism in churches, relationships between African and Caribbean people, economic exploitation of Africa.



It will also look at the contemporary forms of enslavement of child labour, people trafficking, bonded labour, slavery which continues in the Sudan, and the Dalits of India. The conference will be underpinned by ecumenical worship, with a mix of presentations, discussion groups, and workshops.

Keynote speaker will be Professor James Walvin of York University, the leading UK expert on the history of slave trade, and Dr Anthony Reddie from the Queens Foundation,

Birmingham University, will provide theological input. These are only two of a first rate line-up of speakers and workshop leaders.

Part of the legacy of the conference will be a publication which draws together the contributions of the speakers and workshop leaders as a lasting record of the proceedings. But participants will also be encouraged to continue to take forward contemporary issues from the conference within their own organisations.

The conference will be held on Friday 15th June, starting at 1pm and all day Saturday 16th June at St John's Church, Waterloo, London. Adm: £20 per person.

*For further information, please contact:*

*Delbert Sandiford on 020 7939 9418*

*or delbert.sandiford@southwark.anglican.org*

*Rev Wale Hudson-Roberts on 01235 517753*

*or whudson-roberts@baptist.org.uk*

*Richard Reddie on 020 7529 8146*

*or Richard.reddie@cte.org.uk*

### Pause for thought:

- What do you think are the continuing effects of slavery in your area of the UK?
- What, in your opinion, can be done to stop them?

## A Higher Calling

A two-day Music and Worship Conference that looked at the different aspects of worship culminating in an unusual partnership between Gospel music of Swedish and US persuasions, in the form of

a spectacular in London concert recently.

Hosted by Charmaine Noble - McLean, (Emma Award nominated Journalist and Premier Christian Radio Presenter), the concert

focused on the celebration of cultures coming together as a testimony to how diverse communities can work together in unique cohesion and expression using gospel music as a medium. Speakers included Michael Wakelin from the BBC, and Revd Nolan Williams Jnr (USA) and Ken Burton, with Master Voice an Internationally renowned Gospel Choir from Sweden, and, Grammy-nominated Singer/Songwriter Hallerin Hilton Hill.



## CONGRATULATIONS: Revd. Aled Edwards

CCRJ was thrilled to learn that Revd Aled Edwards, Chief Executive of CYTÜN and a specialist in work with asylum seekers, has been appointed



Commissioner for Wales for the Commission For Racial Equality.

His one year part-time appointment, which will run concurrently with his role in CYTÜN, ensures that Christians in Wales will continue to make a strategic contribution in the fields of racial justice.

# 200-year old text challenges modern-day slavery and racism

A controversial antislavery pamphlet has been republished in advance of next year's Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act.

Originally available in 1774, John Wesley's *Thoughts Upon Slavery* challenged those in the society of his day to wake up to the evils of slavery.

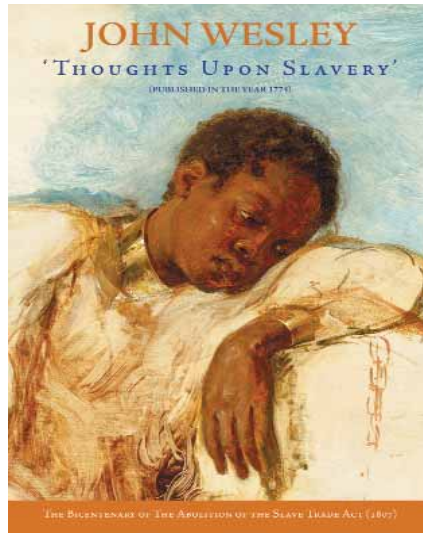
John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church and celebrated preacher, was well known as an opponent of slavery. He wrote *Thoughts Upon Slavery* to confront the widespread acceptance of slavery and to call for the abolition of the Slave Trade Act. His writings and preaching were instrumental in the abolitionist movement.

*Thoughts Upon Slavery* has been reproduced with additional biographical details, including links to resources and information on the cur-

"We cannot turn a blind eye to the modern day forms of slavery that surround us such as people trafficking, immigrants being paid slave wages and unfair trade laws"

rent *Set All Free* campaign to combat modern forms of slavery.

Naboth Muchopa, Methodist Secretary for Racial Justice, said it is



essential that we remember that the slave trade is not dead. "We cannot turn a blind eye to the modern day forms of slavery that surround us such as people trafficking, immigrants being paid slave wages and unfair trade laws that force countries into poverty and debt. The Methodist Church today must go back to Wesley and his call to name the evil that we would term 'racism' and shame us of our contemporary ills."

The pamphlet was considered highly controversial when it was first published because of the common and often unchallenged acceptance of slavery, which was highly lucrative for Britain and its colonies. But *Thoughts Upon Slavery* is not simply a moral argument about the evils of slavery; it

offers an insight into the way slaves were treated and the conditions under which they were forced to live. It quotes: "After they are whipped till they are raw all over, some put pepper and salt upon them; some drop melted wax upon their skin; others cut off their ears, and constrain them to broil and eat them."

The book also contains the reprint of a letter written by Wesley to William Wilberforce, offering encouragement in his opposition to slavery, written six days before Wesley's death in 1791.

Other resources available for the 2007 bicentenary include posters jointly produced by the Methodist Church and *Set All Free* \*featuring images of abolitionists and freedom fighters, together with their thoughts on the slave trade.

*Thoughts Upon Slavery* is available from MPH ([www.mph.org.uk](http://www.mph.org.uk)). Price £3.50. MPH, 4 John Wesley Road, Werrington, Peterborough, PE4 6ZP. Tel: 01733 325002. The posters are available from The Methodist Church Racial Justice Office, or from *Set All Free*. Price: £5 per set.

\* see [www.setallfree.net](http://www.setallfree.net)

## Pause for thought:

- How do you feel the Church should respond to the Bicentenary of Slavery next year?
- Do you feel that an apology from the Prime Minister would have helped to heal the wounds of slavery or do you feel that too much emphasis is being placed on this?

South  
London  
Faith Forum  
goes from  
strength to  
strength

Hannah Barker, the new Outreach and Development worker for the Clapham and Stockwell Faith Forum, is brimming with anticipation.

Having just staged a Multi-Faith Celebration last month featuring a fantastic buffet meal, speakers from religious communities and members of the public. The Forum is keen to raise their profile and expand both their network of friends and their library of resources.

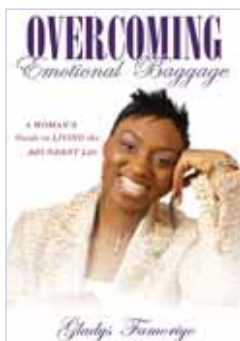
"The celebration was a fantastic opportunity to get to know other people in the Forum and community leaders," says Hannah.

"It was a great chance to welcome those new to the Forum and those interested in our activities."

The Forum has also launched a series of Round Table evening discussions, debates and events. They provide a safe but open environment to discuss current affairs and community issues.

Other new ventures include a Women's Book Club, which will provide a relaxed, informal environment to talk about members' latest must-reads (not necessarily religious books), and to make new friends. The launch is planned for Jan/Feb 2007.

## Tackling the issue of the FEMALE HYBRID



In my decade of working with women, I have come to discover that many are carrying excess weight in the form of emotional baggage. Whilst many are walking wounded from unresolved issues, others bear the hallmarks of burnout, stress, low self-esteem, unmet needs, negative emotions, etc. I call these women 'female hybrids' as they no longer resemble

the woman God originally created.

Sadly, Christian women are not excluded and it seems to affect both those in the pulpit and the pews. Far too many female parishioners (and males too!) arrive, adorning the "EB" (emotional baggage) designer label, which, unlike high society fashion labels, is not exclusive to those who can afford it. Female hybrids live below Gods' standards for their lives and tend to adopt precarious methods to cope with their excess weight such as addictive, compulsive and/or impulsive behaviours. In little or no time, it starts to affect various aspects of their lives including their relationships, health, weight, finances, career/business, etc.

My question is what effective steps are we taking, as the church, to tackle this silent plague? I ask this because emotional issues don't just affect individuals! they affect families, generations, communities, and nations – the evidence we see in the media, daily. Pardon me if I am wrong, but isn't the church meant to be a kind of hospital for those

**"My question is what effective steps are we taking, as the church, to tackle this silent plague?"**

who need restoration in their spirits, souls and bodies? Church is to be a place of refuge or solace for all who require it. But how effective can we be to them when we, ourselves, remain bound – rendering us ineffective for Christ?

I look forward to the day where people (not just women) are free to be effective, purposeful, fulfilled and successful citizens of planet earth. After all, isn't that what Christ came to do?

Written by Gladys Famoriyo, author of *Overcoming Emotional Baggage: A Woman's Guide To Living The Abundant Life* [www.gladysf.com](http://www.gladysf.com) or call 0870 750 1969

## Muslim Schools in Scotland

Scotland's biggest council believes that a state-funded Islamic faith school would lead to the "social isolation" of young Scottish Muslims, a secret document has revealed.

Despite publicly saying it would consider a school if community leaders could prove the demand, a memo obtained by Scotland on Sunday shows that Glasgow's education chiefs have voiced "serious concerns" about any such plans. Meanwhile academics from a leading Islamic institute in Dundee have warned that the creation of Muslim schools will only cause further divisions in British society.

Professor Abd al-Fattah El-Awaisi and Professor Malory Nye, from the Al-Maktoum Institute, called for a radical overhaul of the education

## WE Are FAMILY

Joyce and David Makumi, a Catholic/Pentecostal couple from Nairobi, were invited to speak at the Conference of the Association of Interchurch

return to Kenya.

Representatives of AIF lobbied their MPs on the couple's behalf and only after their intervention was the



From left, Keith Lander, Joyce and David Makumi and Mary Gandhi (Deputy Gal Sect of CTBI)

Families (AIF) in September 2006. They give talks on interchurch married life at home, but had never before spoken outside of Kenya, although David had frequently travelled on business.

The couple applied for their visa in good time, submitted the required paperwork and were finally interviewed in April. They were interviewed separately and questioned in detail about their invitation to speak at the conference. However, their visas were refused because the interviewer believed there was a risk they would not want to

decision to refuse their visas overturned.

The UK policy on visas for overseas visitors is increasingly restrictive. What if David and Joyce had no-one to lobby for them? Was the fact that they were Africans part of the problem? Many with compelling reasons to visit are refused, resulting in hardship and distress.

Perhaps it is time that the churches questioned the fairness of Britain's visa regulations!

**Keith Lander**  
Executive Officer  
Association of Interchurch  
Families

### Pause for thought:

- Do you know anyone who has had visa problems coming into the UK because of their ethnic origin?
- What did you do about it?

system to halt the "mutual incomprehension" between most Britons and the Muslim community.

They said: "There are some deeply embedded issues within our society regarding Islam and Muslims of stereotyping, hostility, Islamophobia and misunderstanding."

Professor El-Awaisi said: "The only way forward is not through separation and isolation, but through multicultural education. It's not through establishing Muslim schools."

He added: "It is only through multicultural education we can work to eliminate extremism and fundamentalism."

### Pause for thought:

- What do you think are the racial justice implications for faith schools and why?

# THE Consultants VIEW

## How to Pay for Fundraising

Quite often I am approached and asked if I will help people raise funds for their organisation on a commission basis. For example I may be being asked to help raise £50,000 for a particular legitimate and worthwhile charitable project, in return for perhaps 10% (£5,000) commission when the money arrives. I always refuse for four main reasons as follows.

As a member of the Institute of Fundraising (InF) my professional guidelines discourage such transactions.

As a professional I also know the value of my work and so if people have the means they should pay up front.

Most funding bodies would not fund commission payments and would not consider it part of a social or charitable project. This would mean cutting back on money designated for other parts of the project, which is not only wrong, but also would likely jeopardise the success of the project.

Years of commercial experience have taught me that when the £50,000 cheque arrives you've already concluded that £70,000 was in fact what you really needed and so that then makes it even harder (not to mention fraudulent) to simply write off 10% on a non-project item.

In the example above, if the organisation was so strapped for cash and capacity I would suggest that going for that £50,000 would be a wrong move anyway. Project funding is very specific and not recommended for organisations that cannot already some way fund their day to day activities or core costs.

So in this case I would suggest they go for a small grant between £2,000 - £10,000 and explain to the funders that they want to hire a fundraising consultant. You should always get an outline from any potential consultant as to what they can or would do for the organisation. This would also cover costs and

timeframes involved and expected outcomes. Some consultants may want to charge for this in order to discourage time-wasters.

Potential funders include Awards for All, Local Government grants and of course CCRJ. For small or new organisations they may also want to consider applying to cover the costs of purchasing a computer, broadband Internet access for a year and some administration costs or the like.

### By Amal Douglas

Senior Consultant at the DMC Consultancy Amal Douglas, runs fundraising workshops around the country for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprise. He led the fundraising and capacity building workshop at the CCRJ/CTBI HQ in October and will endeavour to answer some of the subsequent questions that have been raised, either through this column or via the web blog <http://dmc-consultancy.wordpress.com>. For more information: [office1@dmc-consultancy.co.uk](mailto:office1@dmc-consultancy.co.uk) / [www.dmcconsultancy.co.uk](http://www.dmcconsultancy.co.uk)



Revd Claudette Douglas

## CCRJ Capacity Building Day A Success

The (CCRJ) Churches Commission for Racial Justice recently held the first in a series of intensive one day training seminars geared towards addressing the needs of organisations, institutions and groups funded and supported by The Racial Justice Fund.

The high octane seminar, on 5th October 2006, was offered free to all groups, and was attended by over 30 delegates from all over the United Kingdom as well as Europe. This provided an innovative mix of Faiths, culture, expertise and potential.

The day also provided the official launch of the CCRJ National Partners Network which allows organisations to work more strategically within regions as well as allowing groups to make collaborative funding applications, cross reference and cross fertilize in a long term and focused way.

Led by trainer Amal Douglas of DMC Consultants, [[www.dmc-consultancy.co.uk](http://www.dmc-consultancy.co.uk)], the delegates were skilfully guided through a number of areas which included Self-Analysis, Learning and Working Styles, The Fundraising Cycle, Organisational Review and Submitting a successful Grant Application.

Andy Bruce, Manager of CCRJ told the delegates: "We are aiming to build something new here today, we want to develop a relationship that flows from the bottom up, so nurturing our partners, and helping

them deliver sound practice is a priority for CCRJ."

The high powered workshop was designed to get organisations on the road to building the capacity of their projects in a way which will significantly help them to improve their chances of gaining financial support for their work. CCRJ offered a rare opportunity to strengthen the whole operational infrastructure of Network groups as well as building a network of both individuals and Strategic Regional Network Hubs.

Delegates left feeling rejuvenated and redirected. Reverend Lukas Njenga of Heart for the City Ministry in Glasgow stated: "I thought I was very much on the ball before coming to this seminar, but now I realise that I am not where I need to be. I have learned a lot about myself today; when I return to Scotland I am going to take along hard look at myself and my own practice and organisational structure before I pursue any projects."

CCRJ and DMC Consultancy are planning a series of workshops that will cover such topics as Diversity, Communications, Engaging Partnerships and Networks, Governance and other topics throughout the year.

For more information regarding CCRJs National Partnership Network and further Capacity Building Seminars please contact: Revd. Claudette Douglas: Research and Development Officer on 0207 654 7244 or [Claudette.douglas@ctbi.org](mailto:Claudette.douglas@ctbi.org)



Amal Douglas delivering capacity building

# Scales of injustice: Britain's asylum policy

Puck de Raadt of CCRJ's Bail Circle criticises new policy proposals of reducing legal aid, on the imprisonment of long-term foreign residence and 'unremovables' and welcomes the work of volunteer lawyers and doctors in new urgent-response networks.

**A**sylum seekers without lawyers are as mute as goldfish in glass bowls. Yet they are increasingly being 'written out of access' to fair legal procedure under international law, whilst our elected representatives and statutory bodies publicly pretend there is a panoply of measures to protect their legal rights which comply with UK treaty obligations. Here are our concerns:

## Medical care in detention fails asylum detainees

Last year the Bail Circle, a project run under the auspices of CCRJ, found eleven asylum detainees, whose reports of torture or serious medical conditions had not been referred on or treated by the Home Office. As a consequence a number of High Court actions resulted, which showed the need for policy discussions at several levels. A new fast-response volunteer network, Medical Justice, is working for reform.

## Cutting out legal help for asylum seekers

Plans are in hand to reduce Legal Aid for asylum seekers. Following Lord Carter's recently published Review, the Department of Constitutional Affairs (DCA), which sets legal fees, proposes to apply free-market competition to legal practices, with a fixed fee regime at two thirds of current levels set at approximately £1200. An average appeals costs about £2000, with complex cases up to £3000. This new level would be inclusive of crucial interpreting and translating services.

## Daft Deportation Orders

A number of innocent long term foreign residents have been detained without warning and given inappropriate, even unlawful, deportation orders. Few, if any, have links to 'terrorist' organisations and most charges relate to minor civic offences. Parliamentary undertakings that minor offences - such as driving offences - would not count, are frequently

ignored. Many detainees have West Indian origins and in families with long term residence of up to 40 years. Such deportation orders are handed out at the whim of the IND, and are costly to challenge legally which has prompted concerned lawyers to form the effective Foreign Prisoners Network.

## 'Outsourcing' political blame

These are just some of many face-saving policies introduced by the Home Office to improve its dismal reputation on asylum. They are taking place alongside measures for a systematic contracting out of vital services, not just for profit, but for reducing blame and accountability. Private contracting is now in place for asylum accommodation, for immigrant detention, and for medical services of low quality inside asylum detention centres.

It seems that in Britain, some people are less equal than others under the law.

By Puck de Raadt  
open\_sesame@btinternet.com

## New Scheme for the disabled

A pilot scheme to raise awareness about disability issues amongst black church-goers has been launched recently.

The Wel-Able project kicked off with a series of programmes about autism in support of Autism Awareness. The project will also run another programme, offering free places for people interested in studying British Sign Language (BSL) Level 1, course.

They are also currently looking for Black disabled people to take part in a photo exhibition and fashion show.

Based in Canary Wharf in London, Wel-Able will be aimed at providing information about the experiences and difficulties black disabled people encounter and highlight how the black Christian community can help them overcome the various issues they

face, to live more fulfilling lives.

The project is keen to raise awareness about all aspects of disability, such as mental health issues, sensory disabilities (deafness and blindness), autism, and attention hyperactive disorder and will run disability awareness courses for churches that request them.

The Wel-Able project is the concept of Angela Bent, who suffers from the condition Bipolar Affective Disorder. A former social worker who has worked with people with learning disabilities and children with emotional issues, she said: "There are over 10 million disabled people in this country, some of whom are members of Britain's African and Caribbean community. It's important that the black Christian community understands the issues that black disabled people face so that they are able

to provide them with the spiritual and pastoral care they need."

Ms Bent hopes that the project can also give advice on how churches can support them by devising training and workshops for churches or providing short term breaks for carers.

If you would like further information about the Wel-Able Project or would like a place on the British sign language course contact Angela Bent on 0207 861 9940 or by email at : wel-ableproject@hotmail.co.uk

### Pause for thought:

- What are the main health /disability issues affecting your local minority community?
- Are these issues that face the wider community also; if so what support can you offer?

# MEET THE COMMISSIONER

Racial Justice Today meets Sister Joan Roddy, one of the CCRJ's Irish Commissioners.

## What is your background?

I was born in Ireland, brought up in a very typical Irish family - the eldest of four children - in the middle of the last century! As Catholics we had close links to our local church as well as having family members who were priests, sisters and missionaries.



## How did your career begin?

When I finished secondary school, I joined an international religious community, Daughters of Mary and Joseph (dmj), founded in Belgium in the 1800s with a presence in Belgium, England, Ireland, East/West Africa and the US. I was impressed by the joy of the Sisters and also attracted by the international and missionary aspect of the community.

## What stirs your consciousness?

Social justice issues; from an early age I realized that there are parts of the world that are well off and parts that are not, and that this is at variance with the plan of God for humankind. This influenced my decision to become a Sister and, later, a social worker.

## Where did your career take you?

Having lived and worked in a rural area in Ireland for several years, I went - with two other Sisters (dmj) - to Ghana. There, we were part of a community development project, with a focus on primary health care, based in a rural area. Our role was mainly one of enabling people to recognize and develop their gifts and skills and to use these to improve their own lives and those of their community.

## How did you become a Commissioner in the Churches' Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ)?

When members of CCRJ came to Dublin in 2001, the Refugee and Migrant Project of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, of which I am Director, hosted a meeting with various bodies working in the Republic on racial justice and associated

issues. Following that I was invited to become a Commissioner.

## How does the role make you feel?

Racial justice is a really important issue, as is every aspect of policy, procedure and practice relating to the human rights of people seeking asylum, of refugees and migrants. As Christians, we must mirror the concern of Christ for all who are excluded or in any way marginalized.

## What can Ireland offer the Commission?

That's a really challenging question. I think that we have a lot to learn from other church communities and from the experience of other countries. Ireland has, until recently, been a country of emigration. It is quite new for us to have people from different church and ethnic backgrounds coming to live here. However, there are already many initiatives to 'welcome the stranger', especially at local community and parish level and, in time, the fruits of these will be an enrichment even beyond our shores.

## On the whole, what have you learnt about yourself and the area you represent?

We're not as understanding and open about immigrants to Ireland as one might have expected. Many Irish people were themselves economic migrants to various parts of the world – and often experienced discrimination. On the whole, that experience has not made us always understanding and compassionate toward those coming here. But there are very positive signs too of welcome and inclusion of newcomers.

## Are you optimistic of change?

Getting the right policies in place at government level is absolutely key. As Church, we hope to achieve this by lobbying, advocacy and mediation, in collaboration with other groups. Alongside this is the work we can do as churches at local level in our parish, and the leadership that can be given by churches at a national level. There's no point in having a good parish integration programme if, for example, at the borders of our country people seeking asylum are being turned away. As Church, concern for fair policies and procedures is one side of a coin while, on the other side, are parish/community initiatives to welcome, include and involve every person, without exception.

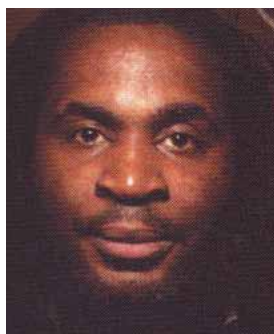
## Faith leaders appeal against global arms bazaar

Fourteen global religious leaders from five faiths covering four continents have made a passionate appeal, on moral and humanitarian grounds, for firm action against the global trade in arms. Their call, in a letter to The Times newspaper in London, comes ahead of proposals to be presented in the forum of the United Nations. Among the signatories are Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama - who have also worked together on other causes, including freedom for people languishing under the yolk of military dictatorship in Burma.

## Archbishop's comments on inter religious encounter in China

In a press conference in Beijing at the end of his two week visit to China, Archbishop Rowan Williams described inter faith encounter in that country as being cooperation rather than dialogue. He said: "One of the very interesting observations made on this subject was that for religious people in China, cooperation has come before dialogue; that's to say there have been ways of communicating, sharing perceptions and sharing priorities through official channels but actual detailed dialogue between the religious communities is probably still in its infancy."



*Race and Faith Debate continued*

Dr Robert Beckford

(rather than privileging some over others) in the public arena. It also means rejecting prejudice from majority and minority ethnic organizations, protect-

ing freedom of speech for all, and including disaffected white working class families in the racial justice agenda. The demonisation of Muslims is singled out as a concern in the document, as is the tendency of the media to elevate extreme voices and hype fear in order to make "a good story".

Ekklesia's Simon Barrow says: "I have signed this manifesto as one voice among many. Ekklesia has long called on the churches to stop defending their privileges, and to recover a radical tradition of justice, equality and peace-building alongside others. We need to renew the transformative voice within all traditions, both religious and non-religious, and to develop a broad concept of civil society beyond 'the great and the good' which dominates government thinking."

Ekklesia began in 2002 and was listed by the Independent newspaper in 2005 as one of the top 20 British think-tanks. It promotes transformative theological ideas in public life. For more see: [www.ekkleisia.co.uk](http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk)

# New Season for Newport

Reverend Winston (pictured) is a man with a vision – a vision that has given members of the Pillgwenlly community in Wales a new lease of life.

When Reverend Winston first arrived in Newport, Wales, in October 2006, he discovered a community which, after the decline of its steel and docks industry, had become one of the poorest in the UK. Plagued by unemployment, poor housing, drug crime and even prostitution, this close-knit community was desperately in need of someone who would reach out and make a real difference.

That person came in the form of Reverend Winston and his New Seasons Project. The new pastor wanted his church to be both a spiritual and a practical blessing for the community. "We wanted to reach out beyond the four walls of the church, to be a group of Christian believers that would be proactive and hands-on, making a real difference to the community we served," he explains.

The church decided that what the community needed was a computer learning centre. The New Seasons Project was granted £2,500 by the CCRJ with which they were able to

buy second hand equipment, an IT infrastructure, as well as pay for their IT lecturer's small expenses.

Reverend Winston was surprised by the community's great response to the proposed course, and was saddened that, due to space restrictions, they were only able to accommodate six people.

However, after the conclusion of the first 25-week course, Reverend Winston says: "We now eagerly look

forward to the commencement of our second course in January 2007, when the church will be able to offer more members of the community such a vital chance at beginning their own careers."



The class that recently completed its course

now awaits its results and nationally accredited certification from Coleg Gwent. Although they found the course demanding, the participants have said that it has been empowering and satisfying, and they are delighted by the knowledge and skills that they have learnt.

With further funding from the CCRJ, Reverend Winston and his church can anticipate another year as the "salt and light" of the blessed community of Pillgwenlly.

**By Sarah Duffett**

## Teaching unions unite for myth-busting campaign

A drive to combat racism in schools is being launched to mark Anti-Racist Workplace Week, after Avril Hall-Callaghan, of the Ulster Teachers' Union, urged the Department of Education to help children cope with differences in language and culture. She said that it was vital that children from minority ethnic backgrounds received adequate support in Northern Ireland's schools.

"Weaknesses in the curriculum inhibiting this should be corrected," said Ms Hall-Callaghan, who chairs the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council. "There should also be a database on the performance of children from minority ethnic backgrounds."

The increase in racist attacks, especially against migrant workers, highlights the very real need for a united approach to this growing problem in our communities, Ms Hall-Callaghan added. "As unions, we are all committed to promoting anti-racism and equality in schools and believe it is important to demolish current myths surrounding migrant workers and asylum workers."

Teaching unions, including UTU, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the National Association of Head Teachers, have united for the "myth-busting" campaign.

# Racing Ahead: But going nowhere?

New research by The 1990 Trust has found nine out of 10 people from the minority ethnic communities feel British but still face huge hurdles to top jobs.

Human Rights officer for The 1990 Trust and author of the 2006 Race Audit, Audrey Adams, found that race discrimination was as rife as ever despite the best efforts of Black communities to integrate. The Muslim community is the youngest and most rapidly growing faith group, and collectively Muslims are more likely to be socially excluded than Sikhs and

**“This report should serve as another reminder that we need to focus public policy on tackling institutional and personal racism in society instead of shifting the blame”**

Hindus. These are just some of the key findings of the report, Britain's BME (Black Minority Ethnic) population grew by 53% between 1991 and 2001, with the vast majority describing themselves as British in contrast

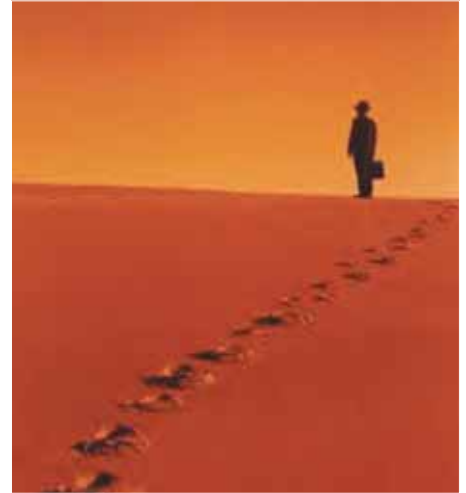
to White groups who mostly identified as English. Launching the report, Audrey Adams said: “For all the talk about diversity it is clear that race discrimination nationally is not getting any better. It continues to hold back talent from achieving its potential, and all too often destroys lives.”

Black communities were more likely to be employed in the distribution, hotel and restaurant sectors compared to the general population, and less likely to work in the more lucrative construction industry, but many had most success running their own businesses, with a combined turnover of £4.5 billion. They also provide over 70,000 jobs in London's economy alone.

“This report should serve as another reminder that we need to focus public policy on tackling institutional and personal racism in society instead of shifting the blame onto Black communities with an integration and cohesion agenda,” said Adams.

In terms of housing, minority ethnic communities are three times more likely to become statutorily homeless than the majority White

population, and there was a 12%



Walking forward, but nowhere to go?

increase in stop and searches for African, Caribbean and Asian people. Yet despite being over-policed, BME communities are much more likely to be the victims of crime.

In addition, African and Caribbean heritage people were 4.5 times more likely to be victims of homicides. The audit also found that Black people were less likely to be referred by their GP for mental health problems and 44 per cent more likely to be sectioned and detained.

Courtesy of Blink

## Gospelly Wed

Advertorial



Couples who want their wedding to have that extra special touch are being invited to utilise the services of Exclusively You Events, whose many services include organising weddings with a gospel flavour.

Exclusively You Events founder, Theresa Beckles (left) said: “Gospel music is one of the world's most

exciting, dynamic and inspiring music genres. Live gospel performances (such as those by the London Gospel Community Choir) add that ‘wow’ factor to wedding celebrations and foster a great sense of love, joy and togetherness in the couples getting married and their guests.”

Ms Beckles has over 10 years experience of organising weddings for couples of various ages and ethnicities throughout the UK, and is pleased that increasing num-

ber of couples recognise the benefits of hiring a wedding planner to help them plan their weddings.

For more details on Exclusively You Events phone: 0207 404 9238 / 07914 177 459 or visit : [www.exclusivelyyou.net](http://www.exclusivelyyou.net)



The London Gospel Community Choir

# Harvesting The Spirit

## Realigning, Rejuvenating, Restoring



### Learning to move for God

Moving is said to be the one of the most stressful encounters of life: ask anyone who has just recently moved house! Removal vans never come on time, completion days always have some snag, new appliances are not installed when we expect them and quite frankly there are always a number of unforeseen hurdles before we get to the promised finish line.

By its very nature movement requires a shift in perception, place, position, principles or practices. Movement is one of the seven signs of life and therefore it is essential that we understand its past purpose in our lives, before we encounter it again. Sometimes it takes a radical realignment before we are ready to benefit from the changing circumstances that life takes us through.

Being prepared to adjust to and accept change or movement is a necessary part of the Christian Walk that leads eventually to the path of person-

al fulfilment, professional development, excellent practice and a rewarding, meaningful life. None of these benefits come without real sacrifice and a willingness to be open, and teachable.

Take the story of The Children of Israel and their journey to the promised Land. Their biggest obstacle was their own inability to both embrace and learn from the changes God had decided to bring their way. They were constantly grumbling that things were not as they used to be; they refused to follow positive guidelines, and disregarded the statutes of God.

God led the children along a longer and tougher route than seemed necessary. There was a shorter path across land, but God deliberately took them on the journey that would teach them most. He took them the way he wanted them to go, so that they would eventually behave the way he wanted them to.

We can learn a lot from our attitude to change. Have we also been "stiff-

necked" and stubborn like the prodigal Israelites? If we are honest, many of the problems that have faced us personally or professionally have been because of our stubborn refusal to implement the changes required by God.

Our thoughts need movement. We have to re-school and redevelop our thinking to be able to come up to the mindset of God. He wants a lot more for us than we want for ourselves. Re-evaluation is vital! Running ministries, organisations or projects takes enormous strength and commitment and places a great responsibility on the leadership. Leadership, has therefore to be willing to grow and develop an understanding of what must move and what must stay in order to be productive.

Trusting God's voice, re-evaluating our situation, being honest and transparent with ourselves and others are part of nurturing and healing.

CCRJ has also been experiencing far-reaching changes; some of the pruning was painful and some repositioning was uncomfortable, but all of it was necessary for us to maintain and develop our vision. If we can all continue celebrating those who went before us, analysing and learning from the journey so far, supporting each other and being sensitive to all our needs, we will be better equipped and prepared to strategically plan for the road that lies ahead.

**Revd Claudette Douglas**  
Research and Development Officer

For more information about Grants from the Racial Justice fund, training or project development, Revd Douglas by email via [claudette.douglas@ctbi.org.uk](mailto:claudette.douglas@ctbi.org.uk)

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## LISTINGS

Fri 15 Dec 2006

### TABERNACLE YOUTH EVENT

Theme: Consecrate me now.  
Speaker: Pastor James Rafferty (USA).  
Venue: Oxford Street

Seventh-day Adventist church Wolverhampton. Time: 7pm. Monthly Friday night youth meetings organised by the West Midlands Youth Alliance. Come and experience worship, fellowship, and a deeper insight into how God can change your life - with the young people of the West Midlands. Georgia Windrass/  
Phone: 07984 466398.

### During 2007

#### INTER FAITH STUDY DAYS

CAIRS will again host a series of workshop days in 2007. Please put these dates in your diaries. Venue: Scottish Churches House, Dunblane.

### Sat 13 Jan 2007

#### 3RD CHILDREN'S GOSPEL FESTIVAL

Organised by the Kainé Management Group, an organisation set up to develop Gospel Arts, the 3rd Children's Gospel Festival is an evening celebrating Gospel through singing, music, dance and drama. Performing on the night are: Young Hope Choir - Birmingham, Leicester Central Children's Choir, New Creation Youth Choir - Leicester, and Personify - London. A night out for all the family!! Venue: The event starts at the Highfields Centre, 96 Melbourne Road, Leicester, at 7.30pm. Tickets: £5 and £4. Info: Mulenga Katebe on: 0116 261 6840.

### Sun 30 Jan 2007

#### ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2007

Edinburgh Inter-faith Association - Annual



ALL WELCOME

## Association of Interchurch Families presents The 5th JOHN COVENTRY MEMORIAL LECTURE

Saturday 17th February 2007 at 2.15 pm

*Listening to the Voices of the World Church*

Speaker: **REVD DAVID COFFEY**

President World Baptist Alliance,  
CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND,  
ASSOCIATION OF INTERCHURCH FAMILIES

**Faulkner Hall, Heythrop College, Kensington Sq., London**

Details from [info@interchurchfamilies.org.uk](mailto:info@interchurchfamilies.org.uk) or 020 7654 7251

Conference. Open to anyone interested in attending, confirmed Speakers (so far) include Roy Jobson, Director of Education, Michael McGrath, Director of the Scottish Catholic Education Service and Ravinder Kaur Nijjar, Sikh Community Rep on Scottish Interfaith Council, and School Teacher. Venue: Edinburgh City Chambers, High Street. 2pm-5pm. Info: [info@eifa.org.uk](mailto:info@eifa.org.uk)

### Thurs 7 Feb - 11 March 2007

#### MIDDLE EAST FESTIVAL OF PEACE AND SPIRITUALITY

The schedule tbc, but the Festival Brochures will start to go out in early December 2006. Venue: Venues throughout Edinburgh.

### Sat 10 Feb 2007

#### WORLD PEACE CONCERT

The 2007 Middle East Festival One World Peace Concert. Venue: The Queen's Hall, 87-89 Clerk Street, Edinburgh. Indian snacks served by Suruchi Indian Restaurant from 5.30pm-6.30pm in the bar. 6.30pm -10pm, doors open 5.30pm. Adm: £8, conc £6 (two-ticket offer of £14, conc £10). Info: in person at the Queen's Hall or 0131 668 2019.

### Thurs 1 March 2007

As part of the Festival Jean Vanier will pay Edinburgh a 5-day visit, and he will also give the 2007 Middle East Festival Lecture. Venue: The Usher Hall in Edinburgh on the theme of



'Spirituality and the Civilisation of Love.'

### Tues 24 Apr 2007

#### IN DIALOGUE WITH SIKHISM

An opportunity to learn more about Sikhism, the Sikh community

in Scotland, and ways to improve dialogue between Christians and Sikhs, led by Mrs Ravinder Kaur Nijjar, Scottish Sikh Womens Association, teacher, Executive Committee member of Scottish Inter Faith Council (Convener 2002-2004) and UK Inter Faith Network. A study day, jointly promoted by SCH and CAIRS. 10.30am - 3pm.

### Wed 26 Sept 2007

#### IN DIALOGUE WITH ISLAM

An opportunity to learn more about Islam, the Muslim community in Scotland, and ways to improve dialogue between Christians and Muslims, led by Sohaib Saeed, student of Philosophy, regular Friday Imam for Edinburgh Central Mosque and Director of the Islam Festival Edinburgh. A study day, jointly promoted by SCH and CAIRS. 10.30am to 3pm.

### Tues 20 Nov 2007

#### IN DIALOGUE WITH HINDUISM

An opportunity to learn more about Hinduism, the Hindu community in Scotland, and ways to improve dialogue between Christians and Hindus, led by Rev Professor Frank Whaling, Methodist Minister, President of the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association, and Emeritus Professor of the Study of Religion at Edinburgh University. A study day, jointly promoted by SCH and CAIRS. 10.30am to 3pm. Info: 0772 456 8259 / [andrew.cairs@acts-scotland.org](mailto:andrew.cairs@acts-scotland.org)

## Theatre: On Religion

Is faith the world's most controversial subject? Through a human, moving and theatrical story *On Religion* explores this subject in a time of fundamentals and fundamentalism. We meet Grace, a militant atheist who clashes with her Christian son. When he is suddenly killed, the conflict between her grief and her principles threatens to rip her and her family apart.

The play is informed by conversations with leading philosophers, theologians and scientists including Atheist/sceptic Professor Richard Dawkins, whose

most recent book *The God Delusion* is set to be a best-seller this Christmas; Rev Dr Giles Fraser, vicar of Putney, lecturer in philosophy at Oxford and Radio 4 Thought for the Day broadcaster; Baroness Julia Neuberger, the UK's first female rabbi to have her own synagogue; Tariq Ramadam, named by Time Magazine as one of the hundred most important innovators of the 21st century and Archbishop Rowan Williams

Written by artistic director Mick Gordon and philosopher AC Grayling, *On Religion* is not about

Christian issues, it is a considered contemplation on the complex issues of faith and religion, exploring beliefs, philosophy and psychology of religion and faith overall whilst maintaining a very human storyline. Expect strong views and maybe even some strong language.

Accompanying the run is a Live Debate on the 7<sup>th</sup>

of December, about the themes raised in the play and a panel discussion on the 12<sup>th</sup>, chaired by Mick Gordon, exploring dramatising big ideas, broad philosophies and belief systems.

*On Religion* will be staged from now until 6 January at Soho Theatre, 21 Dean Street, London W1D 3NE. Time: 7.30pm + 4pm on 9, 16, 23, 30 December + 6 January. BSL interpreted performance. Audio described performance 4 January 2007 at 7.30pm. Adm: £7.50 - £20. Info: 0870 429 6883.

