

idea

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Inside:
COMMEMORATING A
DECADE SINCE 9/11

LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR

THE CROSS AND THE QUR'AN POST-9/11

REBUILDING GROUND ZERO

Looking to a
better future

BISHOP MICHAEL NAZIR-ALI

Behind and
beyond 9/11

NATIONS

News from
Northern Ireland,
Scotland and Wales

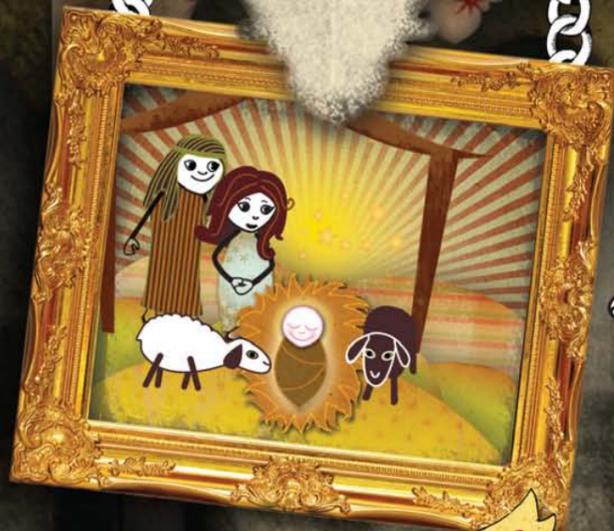
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Editorial

As I'm writing, the world is still reeling from the horrors of the massacre at Utøya in Norway, committed by a man described as an 'anti-Muslim', 'fundamentalist Christian'. Referred to in the press as 'Norway's 9/11', hatred and violence in the name of religion is a phenomenon we are increasingly having to deal with.



Although it is 10 years since the 9/11 attacks which have become engraved in our collective memory, we are still dealing with the repercussions – some of which play out in the area of Christian-Muslim relations. We all remember where we were on that fateful day. All of us glued to the incomprehensible images that seemed like they belonged in a disaster movie. Or a nightmare. The Twin Towers. The billowing smoke. The men and women plummeting to their deaths.

Globally, the attacks put religion back into the headlines. Many portrayed the ensuing conflicts and further terrorist attacks – including 7/7 here in Britain – as a war between Islam and the West, provoking tensions between Islam and Christianity. As Richard Sudworth writes in his excellent book *Distinctly Welcoming*: "We live at a juncture in history fraught with tension...The events of 9/11 and 7/7 have brought to the fore our deepest fears and we could be excused for being paralysed by inaction."

Questions have been asked time and time again in the past decade about what the relationship between our faith and that of Islam should be. Can there be fruitful dialogue between Muslims

and Christians without diluting our faith? Is Islam the biggest threat to UK Christianity? How should we support our brothers and sisters facing persecution in Muslim countries? How do we reach Muslims with the gospel? How do we welcome new believers from Muslim backgrounds and be sensitive to the sacrifices they make once they convert? What would Jesus do?

This edition of *idea* explores some of these questions. We feel the 10th anniversary of 9/11 is the right time to do so. So we have dedicated a whole magazine to it, portraying a range of views from across the evangelical spectrum. We hope that the following interviews, news stories and features will be a reminder to us all to love our neighbour without prejudice, and without compromise; to pray for the persecuted, and to not just rejoice when Muslim people turn to Christ, but to share life with them wholly and sensitively.

We are thankful to all who have contributed to this edition, including Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali (p13), the Tony Blair Faith Foundation (p16), Geoff Tunnicliffe of the World Evangelical Alliance and Imam Feisal of the Cordoba Initiative in New York (p28). We hope that you will be challenged and inspired by it. Also check out our video interview with Steve Bell, author of *Friendship First* and *Grace for Muslims* on our website. As always, we welcome your feedback.

• In July we said farewell to Rev Dr John Stott – one of the 20th century's leading evangelical thinkers – who died at the age of 90. Rev Dr Stott had a long association with the Alliance and it is his phrase "double listening" which informs the ethos of this magazine. We pay tribute to him on page 9.

Chine Mbubaegbu
Editor

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uniting to change society

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Church men

I am very interested in language, how it works, how it reveals our attitudes and influences our behaviour and so in the article *Men at Church* (May/June) I was interested to read "Language needs to be re-cast". I would like the editor to consider the language used in the article itself.

From the start the language reveals assumptions that damage both men and women. The language is stereotypical and attempts to create a world in which men can be classified and women denigrated (as in the comment "Men think. Women talk.") I am concerned that as a voice of the evangelical church your magazine supports damaging attitudes rather than challenging them.

Margaret, via email

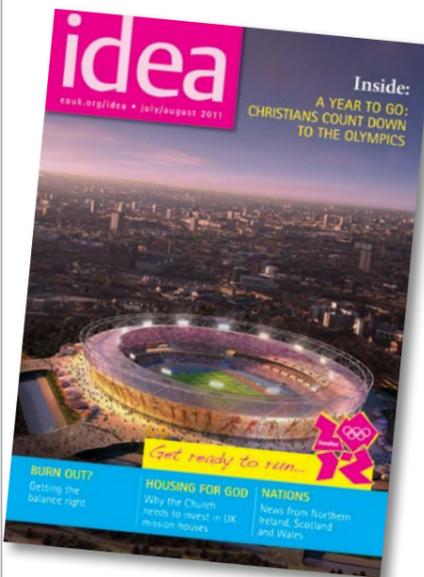
Rest through blogging

In some ways it is strange that I find rest in times of reflection and Bible study, mainly through blogging. The time I spend jotting down the thoughts and ideas, responses and reflections on what God prompts me with throughout the day brings a measure of peace and stillness. As I write, Bible passages spring to mind: I look them up, thanking God for the blessings of online Bibles such as biblegateway.com, and then find myself pursuing other Bible passages. The odd half hour spent typing is as refreshing as a cup of tea in an armchair or a chat with a friend...also wonderful ways of resting. I also lead a ladies' breakfast once a month. Considering what I am going to talk about focuses my thoughts and time in a way that wouldn't happen otherwise, as I jot down notes and dip into the Bible, praying through what is on my mind to share. Of course, it's not my 'day job' - perhaps, were I in full-time ministry, I would have to find other ways to rest. In my case, however, a 'change is as good as a rest' from my busy life as a primary school teacher. Just the time alone with God and studying His word is rest in itself.

Angie Pollard, Guernsey

EDITOR'S REPLY:

Thank you to all those who entered our *Time for Reflection* book competition in the July/August edition of *idea*. We will be sending out copies of the book, by author Ann Persson to competition winners.



Conflicting church

Howard Stern's article *Dealing with conflict in the Church* (July/Aug) laments any disputes in churches, and essentially says that these are always bad things. But are they? I wish Howard had wrestled more with his key question: "Why is it that disputes and conflicts break out in the Church?" The Bible's answer lies buried in what he admits: if we love Him (God) then we must obey Him. One of the things He commanded is that we must correct others if they are in error. Indeed we must try to do it gently and graciously, admitting that the error may be ours - but if others stick to their guns despite being wrong, we are regretfully obliged to stick to ours too. Howard quotes Romans 14:19, but the context here is "disputable matters" (v1), and v20 makes it quite clear that Paul continues to regard

all food as clean despite pressure from those who oppose his view. In Galatians he teaches that there are occasions when statements from the opposition cannot be tolerated (1:8), fellow Christians need to be opposed in public (2:11), and submission for the sake of love is a bridge too far (5:2). I agree with Howard's desire for reconciliation, and with his deprecation of pride, resistance to change, and biblical illiteracy. But the Protestant Church has always stood for the primacy of obedience to God over conformity to the ideas of other Christians, and recognised that the possibility of conflict is deeply embedded in what it means to follow Jesus. Exhortations to be reconciled must never be used as a weapon to force Christians to climb down from the gospel.

John Hartley, Bradford

Healthy emotions

Thank you to Marijke Hoek for her piece *Make Room for the Singles* (July/Aug). I do think we are called as singles to be real about the damage that lies behind a lot of singleness and not run away from it - and I'm contemplating the need to revise my book *A Wild Constraint: the Case for Chastity* to include a section on emotional pain, and the inability to trust that singleness is so often the glaring sign of. If we spiritualise over the problems society is throwing up - and I liked best the bit about struggle in Marijke's article - we consign one another to needless burdens, and will be less able than ever to meet this society at possibly its greatest point of need. Damaged relationships mean damaged people. Full psychological healing through schema therapy is possible, but it means hard work and as Christians we cannot and must not simply pray away the need to take responsibility for our own emotional health. A society that functions at all will increasingly depend on it.

Jenny Taylor, Bounds Green

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idea is published bimonthly and sent free of charge to members of the Evangelical Alliance. Formed in 1846, the Alliance's mission is to unite evangelicals to present Christ credibly as good news for spiritual and social transformation. There are around two million evangelical Christians in the UK, according to a 2007 Tearfund survey.

idea is published in accordance with the Alliance's Basis of Faith, although it is impossible in every article to articulate each detail and nuance of belief held by Alliance members. Articles in *idea* may therefore express views on which there is a divergence of opinion or understanding among evangelicals.

Letters and story ideas from members are welcome, and will be considered by the editorial board, which reserves the right to edit letters and stories for length and style. We regret that we are unable to engage in personal correspondence. Unsolicited material will only be returned if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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Are you aware?

"Violence in the name of religion must come to a full stop," so says the strapline of Awareness Sunday, an initiative focussed on the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on 11 September.

The initiative is organised by the Awareness Foundation and backed by their patron The Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, as well as Joel Edwards, John Sentamu, Desmond Tutu and leaders representing Muslim and Jewish communities. There will be a special evening service of remembrance and reconciliation in Westminster Abbey on 11 September at 6.30pm.

Says Chris Williams, an evangelical pastor and programme director of the initiative: "Awareness Sunday is neither interfaith nor multi-faith. It is Christian. We have much in common with other faiths, but also profound differences. But through education and awareness, we can avoid fear and suspicion which becomes a breeding ground for extremism."

The Awareness Foundation is a charity that helps Christians make sense of their faith and culture in the 21st century, increasing awareness of their neighbours' faiths and cultures, so that they can live in a diverse society without fear and without compromising their beliefs. The Foundation believes that the damage left by the terrorist

attacks can now be countered by good if people from different faiths interact better.

Speaking at the launch of the campaign in the summer, Michael Mates, former MP and the chairman of the Awareness Sunday Committee, said that the day would enable people to make sure that they did not "let the evil of a few affect our faith". He added the initiative is about creating better understanding of faith and culture and "engaging with neighbours and colleagues without compromising our faith".

With support from Muslim leaders - who are holding an Awareness Friday - and the Chief Rabbi in Britain, (an Awareness Sunday Shabbat is planned across the UK and Commonwealth), the initiative has gained support among a number of groups.

Rev Nadim Nassar from the Foundation says: "We live with other cultures and we need to be salt and light in the world - that's a huge responsibility. Many faith leaders consider Awareness Sunday as a chance to work together and heal wounds. Practical religion works to bring peace and love. Religion is not theoretical - it is very real and people should live their faith."

The Awareness Foundation has been running courses with churches for eight years to enable them to reach out to other faiths



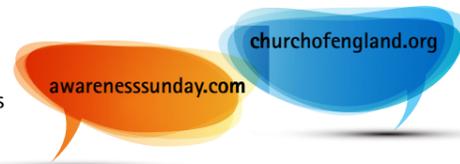
and most recently held courses in Luton, Blackburn, Birmingham and London.

As part of Awareness Sunday in September, churches around the country are holding their own Awareness Sunday services and attending or teaching 'Speak Out' - half-day workshops on articulating faith, and part of the Awareness Course.

Rev Nassar recently visited a church in central Birmingham where the congregation took candles to their Muslim neighbours to hold a vigil for those affected by the troubles in the Middle East.

He says: "The church in central Birmingham is very active in the Asian community. They shared their candles and met shop owners and those from other faiths who were really touched by the gestures. They didn't try to hide their faith or play it down. Awareness Sunday will prepare people to engage and speak and talk to their neighbours. The work already being done is not just about ticking a box - it is about building confidence that is the heart of our work."

- Listen to podcasts on the initiative by Rev Nassar



Best of the Web <http://www.eauk.org/> RSS

Top stories published recently on the Evangelical Alliance website:

NOTW
The Alliance gave comment in response to the closure of the *News of World* saying that its closure should not deflect attention from values that too often drive the press from a culture that demands "knowing everything about everyone". eauk.org/articles

Amy Grant
The Alliance interviewed renowned singer Amy Grant about her life, work and music. The interview includes Amy's thoughts on the power of music during difficult times. eauk.org/slipstream

East Africa
We ran a story the week of the DEC appeal for the East African famine, charting the responses of Christian organisations Tearfund, Christian Aid, World Vision and Concern Worldwide. It also highlighted the generosity of the public in difficult economic times. eauk.org/articles

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news in brief...

WORD AND DEED

Watch out for new resource *Inside Out* - a DVD to help people think about mission as part of their everyday lives. Coming out in the autumn, *Inside Out* is a joint initiative of the Evangelical Alliance, aid agency Tearfund and social care and missions charity Livability. The DVD has six sessions and an accompanying film to inspire people into mission in their communities.



TOYBOX

Street children's charity Toybox has launched an appeal for a Baptist ministry project for children at Miramonte Baptist Church El Salvador. Lack of funds means the project, entirely run by volunteers in an area where 70 per cent of children do not complete their education, is at risk. Andrew Gray, international director at Toybox, said: "Ultimately this [project] will help ... break the cycle of poverty and get the kind of job their parents could never have dreamed of." toybox.org.uk

Community relations vital to tackle poor water and sanitation

October will mark 10 years since troops entered Afghanistan

Specifically developing ways to help amidst the conflict situation, Alliance member Tearfund is assisting local people to improve their water and sanitation systems, with locally trained teams with religious leaders and village communities.

In an assessment carried out in the country in 2008, only 27 per cent of the population had access to clean water and five per cent to adequate sanitation.

Programmes in the Kapisa Province of the country are leading to vastly improved health and people are now also able to earn income as a result of cleaner water and better toilet systems.

According to Tearfund, the project's success has been down to its community-led focus. It has also had locally trained technicians installing filter equipment, promotion of the programme through the media, leaflets, and demonstrations, as well as close work with religious leaders.

Says Quand Agh from one of the villages: "Half our income every year is spent on doctors and medicine because we are always getting sick with stomach complaints and diarrhoea."

To improve the water quality, members of the community have decided that bio-sand filters are the best and most convenient way of making water clean.

Bibi Fatema, from the village, says: "The money that we previously spent on expensive medication to treat water-related diseases, we now use to buy fruit for our children."

Adds Noorullah Ahmed: "Before, I was always sick. Now with filtered water from the bio-sand filter, I am well."

A Tearfund report on the programme said: "It was important to work closely... to explain the importance of good hygiene behaviour, and then, together...carry the same message to



the larger population. In many communities, faith-based institutions are central to the social fabric of a community." tearfund.org

Term-time texting

From September's new term, thousands of young people will use their phones to start a conversation about their faith.

Running from 12 -30 September and having been urged to take up the new challenge at various summer youth festivals, Textify is encouraging young people to spend a week praying for three friends and then texting them a conversation starter. Texters will pray for their chosen mates each day, think through their 'God story', and send a message to kick off a chat about what Jesus means to them.

Phil Timson, youth director for HOPE, said: "We know how amazing it is to follow Jesus but understand how hard it can be to talk about what we believe. Textify is a chance to get out of the comfort zone, build up confidence and go for it together."

Textify is a campaign by Hope Revolution, the youth branch of HOPE, a movement for united mission in communities.

The initiative is also supported by Mike Pilavachi, leader of Soul Survivor and HOPE board member. "I love using my phone, so Textify is a no-brainer," said Mike. "Sharing our faith in Jesus is about our words and actions. It's about all of our lives, and that of course includes our phones, Facebook and Twitter accounts."

It is hoped hundreds will use social media platforms to share their progress and visit the website for tips, videos and youth-friendly resources. hope-revolution.com



Afterlife

A church in Bishopsgate, London, is encouraging inter-religious dialogue with students and the wider community in east London. Rob Scott, who co-ordinates international outreach at St Helens, and is author of *Dear Abdullah; Eight questions Muslim people ask about Christianity (IVP)*, has been running joint discussion events with East London Mosque for six years.

"The events help with relations and give people a chance to state what we believe and...have really helped people engage with their Muslim friends and colleagues," he said.

Recently holding a discussion on the afterlife, the groups have also looked at religion in everyday life, family and Jesus in the Qur'an. "It is a great way of dispelling myths and helps us to understand and evangelise," adds Scott. "It also gives a chance to meet new people, build on community and gives a real opportunity to build your own faith."

- For Rob Scott's live debates eauk.org/idea



continued...

WORSHIP ACADEMY

Famous for his songs *Jesus Shall Take the Highest Honour* and *Lamb of God*, Chris Bowater runs the Worship Academy in Lincolnshire which celebrates its 10th anniversary in September. The academy runs training schools for worship leaders at Cliff College in Derbyshire and weekends with tutors such as Graham Kendrick, Richard Lewis and Dr Stewart Burns. There are also other academies run in Romania, Singapore, Texas and South Africa. To read an interview with Chris see eauk.org/slipstream

RUN THE RACE

The Alliance is also offering our popular Square Mile resource - four weeks worth of sessions for small groups and churches, in a better than half price deal until the end of October. With teaching from Tim Keller, Tom Wright and Elaine Storkey and real-life case studies and daily devotional material. eauk.org/squaremile/deal.cfm



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John Stott: 27 April 1921 – 27 July 2011

by *Chine Mbubaegbu*

He was dubbed the 'pope of evangelicals', but to those who knew him, he was simply known as 'Uncle John'.

Rev Dr John Stott died at the age of 90 on 27 July at his nursing home in Lingfield, Surrey, surrounded by close friends, reading scripture and listening to Handel's Messiah. The scene was a fitting departure for a man who lived and breathed the Bible and who – though he remained single and celibate his whole life – surrounded himself with a family of friends.

Globally, he was renowned as one of the foremost evangelical thinkers of the past century and was credited with leading the resurgence of evangelicalism after World War Two.

While celebrated and revered as one of the leaders of our Christian tradition and even recognised outside the Church as a great man (in 2005 he was named in *Time* magazine's top 100 most influential people), Rev Stott remained a humble man throughout his life.

Chris Wright, international director of Langham Partnership International which was founded by Rev Stott – said: "Like Moses, he was one of the greatest leaders God has given to His people, and yet at the same time, one of the humblest men on the face of the earth. He was, for all of us who knew him, a walking embodiment of the simple beauty of Jesus, whom he loved above all else."

His long-time friend Billy Graham has led thousands to Christ through mass crusades all over the world, but Rev Stott's gifting was in teaching, explaining biblical truths and using the Bible as the foundation for how Christians should see the world.

He was the author of more than 50 books including *Basic Christianity*, *The Cross of Christ* and *The Radical Disciple*.

Rev Stott also had a long association with the Evangelical Alliance and served as our president in 1973-4.

Speaking after his death, Steve Clifford, general director, said: "John Stott's life, writing and teaching had a profound impact on the 20th century Church.

"He will be remembered as a generous evangelical, committed to a gospel of truth packed with grace which could be communicated to a lost world. He will go on to be remembered as one of the leaders of the evangelical movement and will continue to have an impact for generations to come.

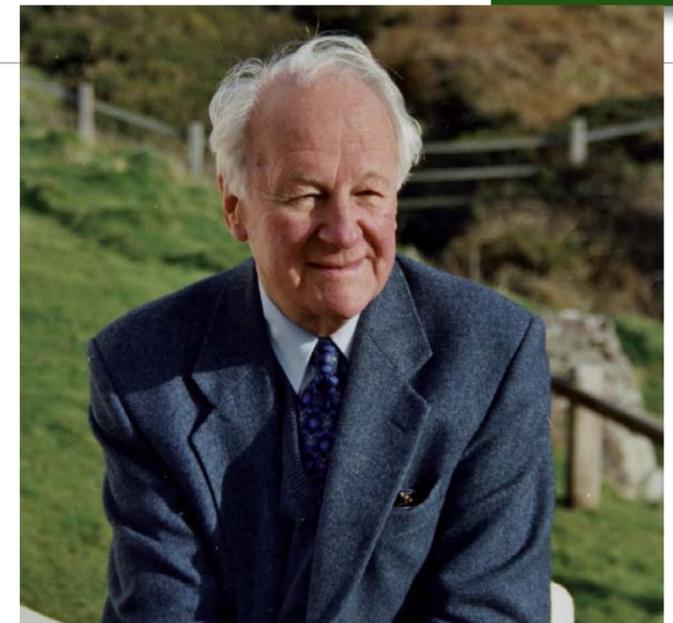
"While we mourn the loss of our brother in Christ, we rejoice that he has gone to be with the Lord he so loved."



Life

Rev Stott was born in London in 1921 to parents Sir Arnold and Lady Stott. He studied French and Theology at Cambridge University, where he earned a double first at Trinity College before theological training at Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

He was ordained in 1945 and became assistant curate and then rector at All Souls, Langham Place, the church he had attended since he was a



Like Moses, he was one of the greatest leaders God has given to His people, and yet at the same time, one of the humblest men on the face of the earth.

child. In 1975, he became rector emeritus – a position he held until he died.

Rev Stott had a hand in starting a number of evangelical organisations. Bemoaning the anti-intellectualism of the evangelical Church and the fact that it had little influence in the Anglican hierarchy, he revived the Eclectic Society – which had originally been founded in 1793.

Although it started with just 22 of his friends, by the mid-1960s it had more than 1,000 members. The Eclectic Society was the home from which a number of other initiatives grew, including the National Evangelical Anglican Congresses in 1967 and 1977.

As well as chairing the Alliance in the 1970s, he also served as chair of the Church of England Evangelical Council, and was president of Scripture Union and the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship.

One of the main teachings of Rev Stott was the notion of "double listening", relating the Bible to today's world. It was this that led him to found the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity in 1982.

He also played an important role in drafting evangelical documents including acting as chair of the drafting committee for the Lausanne Covenant. He was also chair of the Lausanne Theology and Education Group from 1974 to 1981.

Recognising the great life that came to an end in July, many have been paying tribute to Rev Stott.

Broadcaster Jeremy Vine said: "He was a very softly-spoken man. Whenever I spoke to him he downplayed everything about himself; his books had sold in millions, and yet so far as I could tell he never had or spent money. He seemed to own only one suit. Always unmarried (I guess because he had such a clear sense of his calling), he was extremely modest and felt great discomfort at even a single word of appreciation or praise. In our society there is something refreshingly counter-cultural when you find the person who ought to be famous, but doesn't want to be."

Long-time friend Billy Graham, who once described Rev Stott as "the most respected clergyman in the world today", said on his death: "The evangelical world has lost one of its greatest spokesmen, and I have lost one of my close personal friends and advisors. I look forward to seeing him again when I go to heaven."

johnstottmemorial.org

See page 38 for Chris Wright's reflection on the impact John Stott had on the evangelical world.

A living truth

Labib Madanat is Bible Lands team co-ordinator of the Arab Israeli Bible Society, the Bible Society in Israel and the Palestinian Bible Society. Here he tells us how the Bible influences his work among Muslims, Christians and Jews in the Middle East...

idea: What is your earliest memory of reading the Bible?
I cannot remember. It's like asking: "Do you remember the first meal you ever ate?" The Bible has always been a part of my life. I do confess that many times it has felt like a 'matter of fact' rather than a 'living truth'. Having said that, I remember very well the first Bible passage I preached on was Romans 11:33-36, and it was 1978 in Amman.

How do you keep your reading of the Bible fresh?
By keeping it from becoming a religious practice or a guilt-driven action. Mostly my Bible-reading is part of my prayer life. I do enjoy reading the Bible within the daily devotionals I receive from Scripture Union's WordLive.

When your bookshop was bombed in 2007, did the words of the Bible hold any comfort for you?
I remember the scene very well. I remember the chaos and destruction at the place. But above all I remember the peace and resilience of the Bible Society team in Gaza. The words of Jesus were very clear that day: "Blessed are you when others persecute you..." (Matthew 5:11-12)

We all are sinners loved by a merciful God.



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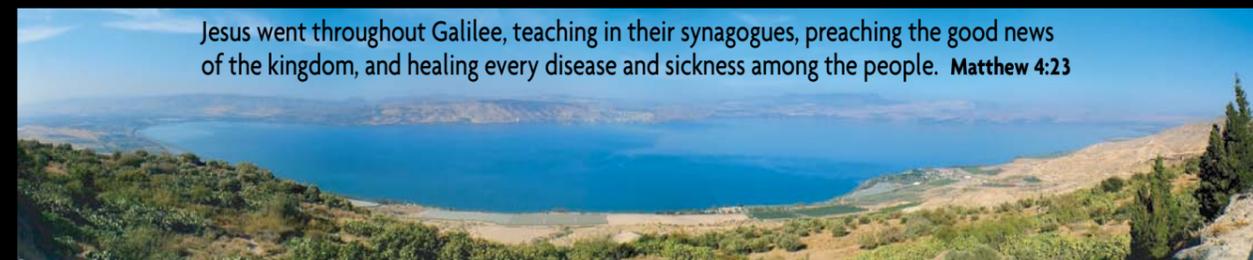
What is the Bible's role in your work of reconciliation among Muslims, Christians and Jews in the midst of a difficult political situation?
Religion is so tangled with the political and national and is seen as a source of misery or a justification of iniquity and injustice. Our ministry is to bring the living word into the lives of believers from all backgrounds within our societies, publicly through acts of mercy and service and development and debate and dialogue and challenge and affirmation. Reconciliation is a ministry that permeates everything we do among Palestinians and Israelis.

You live in a Muslim community in the Palestinian territory. In what ways has the Bible encouraged you to love all people, including Muslims?
By knowing I am no better than anyone - we all are sinners loved by a merciful God. Also the Lord has shown me Muslims and Jews who do not believe in Jesus, and yet I see at times more of Jesus in them than in me. I pray that my relationship to them is that of "love your neighbour as yourself" before it is "love your enemy". AM

When Jesus visited here, it changed the world.



Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. **Matthew 4:1**



Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. **Matthew 4:23**

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<p>ASIAN MISSION PARTNERSHIP DAYS 10 September - Harrow 26 November - Wolverhampton An opportunity to build partnerships for reaching South Asians. South Asian Forum and Global Connections are holding a series of day conferences to share experiences and encourage Christians in reaching out to South Asians in the UK. This day is open to all who are involved in such outreach, whether from mainstream churches or South Asian churches or any others. cauk.org/saf</p>	<p>THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA Saturday, 22 October - Bristol A SAT-7 road show event with speakers including 'Vicar of Baghdad' Canon Andrew White and a Middle Eastern believer. For further information or to register attendance please telephone 01249 765865</p>	<p>ISRAEL'S FUTURE AND OURS 12 November - Crawley, West Sussex This Christian conference aims to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges facing the Jewish people and Israel today, and the consequences for all Christians. Tickets cost £20 and must be booked in advance. For more information call 0800 032 2088 or 07980 185 899, or email organiser@hagoshrim.org.uk</p>	<p>BIBLEFRESH GET A GRIP TOUR Glasgow (ICC) - 28 October Cardiff - 3 November London (King's College) - 7 November Durham (St. John's College) - 8 November This autumn, Biblefresh will be running a series of daytime events, sponsored by CPAS, to help church leaders get to grips with some of the trickier texts of the Bible. biblefresh.com</p>	<p>THE BIBLE AND MODERN SCIENCE Saturday, 12 November - London A Christians in Science conference to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. Speakers will include Dominic Smart, John Bimson, Bob White, Lydia Jaeger, and Rodney Holder. cis.org.uk</p>	<p>INTEGRATED 1 October - All Souls Langham Place, London As part of the All Souls contribution to Biblefresh, Integrated is an initiative to help Christians to integrate their faith with their working lives more deeply and intentionally. The day will seek to develop thinking and provide practical steps and specific application on how to connect "Sundays to Mondays". allsouls.org/integrated</p>
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HOW 9/11 PLACED RELIGION IN THE DOCK

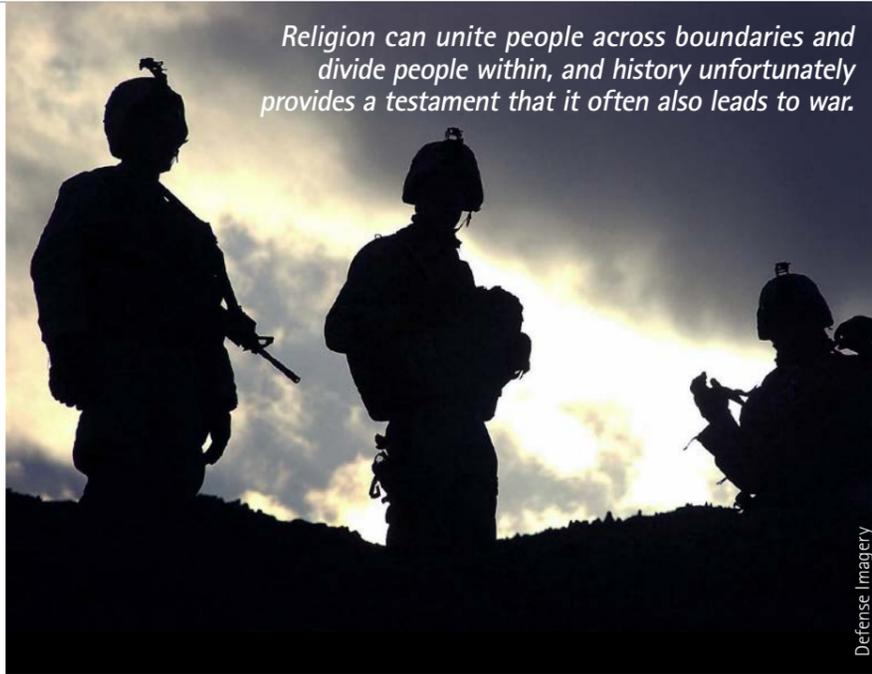
By Daniel Webster

When the Cold War ended, and the Berlin Wall came down, the world held its collective breath to see what would come next. Had the liberal values of trade and multilateral international bodies firmly cemented peace, or would the vacuum be flooded with warring nations desperate to become the next superpower? Although we like to think that war is unusual, that it is what happens when things go wrong, history tells us that this view is only available through rose-tinted spectacles. In the final decade of the 20th century nothing much changed, aggression in the Gulf was dealt with swiftly, ethnic cleansing in the Balkans somewhat belatedly addressed and Africa experienced perpetual conflict. Even so, there were few signs as to the future global landscape. Maybe America was becoming the world's policeman, or maybe they would intervene only when their own interests were at stake?

All this changed on a Tuesday morning in September 10 years after the Soviet Union broke up. When 19 terrorists hijacked four planes, nation states suddenly became a whole lot less important in international affairs. Global politics changed on that day because it was people and not countries that decided to wage war. The FBI drew up a most wanted list but when it came to the US, the UK, and their allies declaring war, it was on a country and not against a person.

Yet it was neither a country and its nationalistic ambitions, nor an individual and their personal whim, which led to the terrorist attacks and the ensuing conflict 10 years later. It was religious beliefs. Without wishing to delve into the legitimacy of al-Qaeda's Islamic basis, it is nevertheless fair to say that they justified their actions on what they held and promoted as correct Islamic teaching. This was therefore at a conflict with religious belief at its core, and it showed how religious belief transcends both people and countries.

Religion can unite people across boundaries and divide people within, and history unfortunately provides a testament that it often



Religion can unite people across boundaries and divide people within, and history unfortunately provides a testament that it often also leads to war.

Defense Imagery

also leads to war. Religious beliefs are strongly held, and are usually at the core of human identity. The first and second world wars were about nationalism, ideology and race, the wars that heralded the start of this millennium have placed religion, and in particular Islam, in the dock. For people to commit such atrocious acts of inhumanity it requires a powerful motivating force. In other times and places ideological and ethnic passions, and often the defence of these identities, has provoked acts of terrorism.

Wars of previous centuries have often carried a religious dimension; in 1555 the Peace of Augsburg gave rulers the authority to decide the religion of their country. This brought to an end bitter fighting between Catholic and Protestant forces in modern day Germany and set a precedent across Europe. The notable difference with this contemporary re-emergence of religion as a factor in international affairs is that previously it was states that carried out actions even if they were synonymous with religious factions. In the actions of al-Qaeda and other such bodies it is a religious force that becomes equated with certain countries.

This only heightens the sense that this is a religious conflict. In the UK the 7/7 bombings were the acts of British Muslims, albeit trained abroad. This meant that an increased focus was placed on where such domestic religious extremism came from. The government's engagement with religious groups therefore became a tool through which to try and combat religious, and specifically Islamic, extremism.

Religion suddenly came into sharper focus in public debate. One consequence was that

religion was seen by some as a contagion which the world would be better to do without, the arguments put forward by Dawkins and co were enhanced when the war on terror was considered as a product of religious fanaticism. Linked to this was a criticism from secularist groups that Christians and other faiths used the provision of community and public services as a platform to evangelise. These combined themes meant that the role of religion in public life came under fresh scrutiny.

After a poor start which illustrated the lack of religious understanding at the heart of our politics the past few years has seen the government adopt a more nuanced position on faith involvement. This began with the former Labour secretary of state for communities John Denham MP who issued a guide for councils to bust some of the myths that stopped them working with churches. Eric Pickles MP has continued this engagement under the current administration.

It was the historian Michael Burleigh who observed that 'Politics and Religion is the issue for the next 50 years! The past decade has seen religion re-establishing itself as a major talking point in global politics. It has generated public debate about the war on terror and the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. It has traumatised secular liberal elites in the West, showing them to lack the political thinking and language needed for the 21st century. The degree to which the increased rhetoric around religion has changed global politics, either for better or worse, remains to be seen. However, what is clear is that religious belief cannot be ignored, and it is very much relevant to how our world works.

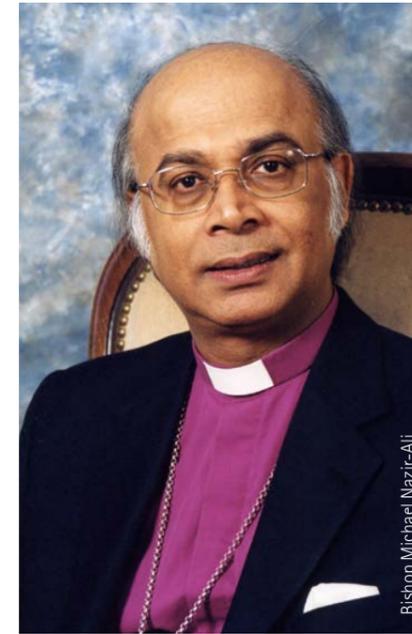
Daniel Webster is the Evangelical Alliance's parliamentary officer

BEHIND AND BEYOND 9/11

Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali, director of the Oxford Centre for Training, Research, Advocacy and Dialogue, looks back at 9/11 and forward at what the Christian response should be...

Ten years on from the ghastly atrocity of 9/11, and all that followed it, it is worth asking about 'the stagnant and fetid waters' that have given birth to terrorism on such a vast and well-organised scale. Commentators have drawn attention to the seething, and growing, resentment in the Muslim world at the dominance of the West, the experience of colonialism, the creation of Israel, the Kashmir dispute and, of course, the *casus belli* of so much, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

This resentment, however, has not just been the usual one of the weaker against the stronger or of the subjugated against the oppressor. It has also been informed by a world-view which expects 'manifest victory' for Islam, has not been



Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali

9/11 and other acts of terror have had a profound influence on the American and European psyche. It is not an exaggeration to think of it as a traumatising.

reconciled to lands 'lost' to Islam, whether India, the Iberian peninsula or, indeed, Palestine, seeks the restoration of the Caliphate and the abolition of the nation-state in the cause of a united *Ummah* or Islamic nation.

Resentment in itself is not enough, even if it is supported by an unfulfilled world-view, to lead to extremism and then to terrorism. What has happened, rather, is that there has been a succession of movements and leaders who have turned the world-view and anger into ideology.

The emergence of Islamic ideology, Sunni or Shia, has led to the rapid islamification of nearly every Muslim community. Indonesian or Malay Islam, for example, which sat at ease with the Hindu and animistic heritage of people has quite quickly been transformed into recognisable orthodoxy. Even though Sufism, or mystical Islam, has been influential in countries like Pakistan or Egypt for centuries, the public face of Islam increasingly resembles a Wahhabi-Salafi profile. One of the effects of this process has been the revival of teaching of suspicion and of hate directed against Jews, Christians and other non-Muslims. In some situations, this has been disseminated through text books, in various subjects, and other aspects of the educational system. The increasing and widespread radicalisation of the madrassas and seminaries

has meant that newly-emerging religious leaders are themselves immersed in such ideological propaganda. The mass media, and particularly new technology, has also contributed with the ether being dominated by ideological rather than moderate Islam.

The net result of all this has been a growing change in the mindset and expectations of large sections of the population who are encouraged to see bombings, assassinations and other kinds of terroristic activity as being in the cause of liberation for oppressed Muslims, as vengeance for past wrongs and even as victory for Islam which Muslims should expect. At the same time, 9/11 and other acts of terror have had a profound influence on the American and European psyche. It is not an exaggeration to think of it as a traumatising. The non-Western is seen less and less as 'the exotic' and the 'ethnic' which should be investigated and sampled and more and more as a threat to be avoided and, if necessary, repelled.

In such a highly polarised situation, what should be a properly Christian approach? We must firstly attempt to distinguish between Muslims, Islam and Islamist ideology. We can never lose sight of God's love for Muslims, as for all of His creation, and of our obligation to love them as well. Although we will not agree with everything in the faith of Islam, we can study it

with profit to better understand our neighbour and to be able to converse with our Muslim friends, to witness more effectively to them of God's love for them revealed in Jesus Christ and to seek to serve them in his name.

Islamist ideology, however, may need to be opposed if, for example, it seeks to reduce freedom of belief, expression or the freedom to change our beliefs. Christians will also wish to defend freedom of movement and of opportunity for women and girls and to resist punishments that demean the human person, are cruel and do not have rehabilitation and reformation, as well as retribution, included in their overall aim. Although they will want an appropriate role for the spiritual dimension in public life, they will oppose what is coercive and theocratic and promote what is persuasive and democratic. Alongside this, they will want protection for fundamental freedoms and for the rule of law.

Although we need carefully to distinguish between Muslims, Islam and Islamism, we must also recognise that there is considerable overlap here. A devout and pietistic Muslim can be influenced by extremist ideology, and Islamism certainly uses much in the fundamentals of Islam to argue its case.

In witnessing to Muslims, how far can we work with 'the logic of Islam' and when do we have to be not only counter-cultural but also counter-theological? How far can we affirm what the Qur'an teaches, for instance, about Jesus and when do we need to challenge Islam on its doctrine of God, sin, salvation and grace? Dialogue with moderate Muslims is always a pleasure but we have to be realistic in asking whether it will be able to deliver on the hopes invested in it. Any dialogue should avoid being 'kissy-kissy' and ask tough questions about freedom, integration and equality.

Islamism has brought particular hardship, discrimination and persecution for many non-Muslim communities in the Islamic world and even for some Muslims. One aspect of Christian ministry which has come greatly to the fore is that of advocacy; of being a voice for the voiceless and of support for the persecuted Church.

The best protection for the West from terrorism is the encouraging and the establishing of freedom in Muslim countries together with democracy and the rule of law. Narrow self-interest should not lead us to abandon the women and children of Afghanistan or the Christians and Ahmadiyya of Pakistan or the Baha'is of Iran to their fate. If we do this, we can be sure that our turn will also surely come.

Reach Muslims



Nick Chatrath
is author of *Reaching Muslims: A One-stop Guide for Christians* (Monarch, 2011).
RRP £7.99

By Nick Chatrath

There are more than two million Muslims living in the UK. They are ethnically diverse, culturally rich and often wonderfully passionate about life and faith. Can we do better than segregating our lives from them, burning their Qur'an or being afraid?

Yes! We have something magnificent and life-changing to share – Jesus really is great news for everyone. God is interested in Muslims and at work among them the world over.

Understanding Islam and Muslims

One way to get a better understanding of Muslims is to explore their culture through stories, beliefs, politics, justice, identity and demographics. Stories vary from Muslim to Muslim. For example a friend of mine once commented: 'You can't imagine the war zones we fled from and the financial difficulties we have faced. It hasn't been easy to be a Muslim in such a non-Muslim society that is suspicious of us'. Young Muslims have interesting stories too: 'Islam is too serious. I just want to have some fun' or 'My parents aren't morally observant; I'm returning to a pure, proper form of Islam'.

Other stories are held in common, such as how terrible the Crusades were or what a glorious past Muslims have (meaning the Prophet Muhammad and subsequent expansion of the Islamic empire).

Beliefs vary too. The vast majority of Muslims believe that there is one God (Allah) and that the Qur'an is God's final message to humanity, revealed word-for-word to the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims also accept the books of Moses, the Psalms, and the gospels as the Word of God (although they generally add that the version Christians now have has been corrupted). They believe in the five pillars of Islam: the creed, pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime, giving to the poor, fasting during Ramadan and praying five times a day. However, they differ about other beliefs.

Shia Muslims number approximately 10 per

cent of all Muslims worldwide and they hold that members of Muhammad's family and descendants are the rightful rulers of Islam, starting with Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. Sunni Muslims (approximately 85 per cent) consider Ali to have been the fourth leader of the Muslim community after Muhammad. Sufi Muslims advocate using tombs of saints as places of worship and approve of dancing, whereas Wahhabi Muslims denounce all this as heretical.

The best way to understand Muslims is to talk to them yourself. Try asking questions such as 'What stories have shaped your life?', 'What

do you believe about God?' or

'What is your family background?' In my experience, Muslims enjoy responding to such questions.

Connecting with Muslims

To connect really well, we need to build open-hearted friendships. There are two parts to this: first, welcome and accept Muslims into your life and secondly, level with them.

Leonard Sweet writes: "Our problem in evangelism is not a lack of training. The problem is that we don't love enough. Do you need training to talk to your grandchildren?"

I find this so challenging. We actually need to get to know Muslims as individuals. It may sound over-simple but take the plunge, whether at a cafe bar, community centre or in the shops. Jesus was not so consumed with meeting his followers that he had no time for others. Go round to your Muslim neighbour and say "Eid Mubarak" (which roughly means "Happy Eid") at the time of one of the two Eids. Take cake! Get invited in! In non-Western cultures, one way to honour people is by going to their house, knocking on the door

and receiving hospitality from them.

Related to this, pray for open hearts and think hard about how your church is a community at all times, not just on Sunday mornings. And keep welcoming Muslims as they come to follow Jesus. We are aiming not just for converts but disciples – not just of individuals, but of families and communities.

A good friendship involves honesty about what you believe and so we must level with them. Many of the questions Muslims have about Christianity relate to the Bible (its contents and history) and the nature of God (for example the Trinity, and/or who Jesus is) so focus your preparation on these two areas. Learn to reason from the Bible: To what extent can you really justify your own beliefs about God from the Bible?

On almost every occasion that I have mentioned Jesus' name to a Muslim, they have responded with respect, and an expression of happiness such as a nod or a smile. So learn how the narrative and details of the Bible find their sublime centre in Jesus Christ. Tell stories of promises given to Abraham and Moses (all of whom Muslims believe are prophets) and then fulfilled in Jesus. Tell the story of Luke 24. And so on.

Large numbers of moderate Muslims are rejecting extremism but want to believe in God so the door is open for us to give reasons for the hope we have. Muslims are friendly, hospitable, hurting, wonderful people – in short, they are just like you and me. Every encounter we have will be different because every Muslim is different. And God goes ahead of us. He is active in the lives of our Muslim friends. We should never underestimate what God has done and is doing in our lives, to make us ready for that next encounter.

For a glut of stories of Muslims from different nations committing their lives to Christ see morethandreams.org

Muslims are friendly, hospitable, hurting, wonderful people – in short, they are just like you and me.

To connect really well, we need to build open-hearted friendships

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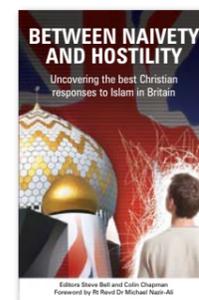
Resources

Many UK Christians find the prospect of reaching out or evangelising to Muslims a daunting prospect. But there are a whole range of resources available to help you: whether you are thinking about running a discipleship course for Muslims, or want to understand their culture and theology, there are books, DVDs and events that can help. Here are just a few...

Between Hostility & Naivety: Christian Responses to Islam in Britain

(Authentic) by Steve Bell and Colin Chapman
The Christian Responses to Islam in Britain (CRIB) network has produced this brilliant book including writing from a range of experienced and respected commentators in the field of Muslim-Christian relations. Including articles from Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali, and missionary and polemicist Jay Smith. Launched this September, the 10th anniversary of 9/11, this book is fascinating, thought-provoking, challenging and encouraging.

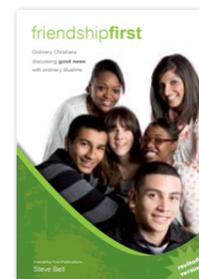
£8.99
authenticmedia.co.uk



Friendship First

by Steve Bell
A manual designed to help Christians limit the number of mistakes they might make when discussing the good news about Jesus with Muslim people. Written in a magazine format, it aims to be a lively and user-friendly tool to help you form friendship with Muslim people. Perfect for Christians who may be clueless about Islam, but have a heart for reaching Muslims.

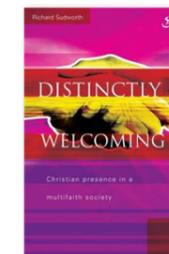
£10
interserve.org.uk/resources



Distinctly Welcoming (Scripture Union)

by Richard Sudworth
A clear and practical guide to the main issues churches face when attempting to engage with people of other faiths. Written by Richard Sudworth, a Church Mission Society partner and a consultant with organisation Faith to Faith, this is a helpful guide to give churches confidence in a multi-faith 21st century society.

£9.99
scriptureunion.org.uk



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Sat-7 aims to equip and build up the Church in the Middle East and north Africa through satellite TV in these regions. The organisation hopes to overcome barriers, giving access to Christian teaching in places where such access is limited. By showing viewers God's love, Sat-7 hopes to educate and combat misconceptions about the Christian faith.

sat7.org



Catch our video interview with Steve Bell, national director of Interserve, in which he shares how we can reach Muslims with grace. eauk.org/idea

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Photo © Deanna Mandarino

Why inter-religious dialogue is liberating

by Professor Ian Linden,
director of policy, Tony Blair Faith Foundation

Here are three premises. The first is Paul writing to the Corinthians: "Now this Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom." The second is a "conviction of faith that God's plan of salvation for humanity is one and reaches out to all peoples". The third is that the "fruits of the Spirit of God in the religious tradition of peoples testifies to God's saving and revealing action among them and through their history".

The last two are the words of a Jesuit theologian, Jacques Dupuis, who has struggled with a theology of religious pluralism, gaining censure from the Vatican for his pains. The last may be the most contentious for many Christians.

Yet it is only if the last premise be true that interfaith dialogue makes much sense. Making sense for a Christian can mean many things. But it must, at some level, mean understanding more deeply God's love for the world, sensing it in others, or to use the fashionable phrase in "the Other".

Religious pluralism

The word "praxis" smacks of philosophy classrooms and left-wing intellectuals in full flood. So to claim that inter-religious dialogue is a "praxis of liberation" sounds pretentious and overblown. Better to say that the first act of a lived religious pluralism is inter-religious dialogue, meaning working together in compassion and obedience, discovering who is my neighbour.

By working together for the Common Good with people of other faiths, new insights are afforded as a fruit of friendship, about yourself, as much as about "the Other"; and this friendship provides a new and safe space for a deepening in understanding of each faith. Inter-religious dialogue that is "hands to heart to head" is a "praxis of liberation" in that it can lead to truth and freedom. Or in Anselm's

words, it is "fides quaerens intellectum", faith seeking knowledge, through friendship.

This is not to downgrade the dialogue of theological and textual discussion, scriptural reasoning, the anti-clockwise process of "head to heart to hands". In fact it might be called the other half of the dialogue cycle. But only a small scholarly minority have the head for it while most people have the hands for working together.

There has been much scholarly energy unleashed by the historic Muslim initiative, "A Common Word between Us and You", sent to Christian religious leaders in 2007. Inspiring responses and discussion groups resulted. What has emerged to date is that love of God and love of neighbour in the different traditions are a core concern for fruitful scholarly conversation. Yet this debate cannot fulfil its potential, as its participants acknowledge, unless it leads to new friendships, and obedient action reflecting a merciful and compassionate God, and makes its insights cascade down to local communities.

Liberate from what? I would say an implicit or explicit ideology of rejection, of hardened hearts, an exclusivity masquerading as faith, a perverse idea of holiness as superiority. That was what Jesus denounced repeatedly about the religion of the Pharisees. Muslims call those practising it *takfiri*. But also for Western Christians, liberation from blindness to more than the parochial: that the vast majority of the world's poor perceive their "ultimate concern and symbolise their struggle for liberation in the idiom of non-Christian religion and culture", to quote from the Indian theologian, Aloysius Pieris.

The dialogue cycle

The Tony Blair Faith Foundation is promoting the dialogue cycle. Our schools programme prepares young people for respectful conversation in the classroom about students' faiths and their

contribution to solving the major problems of the 21st century. We train teachers in adapting our standard set of modules. They in turn prepare their classes for membership of an online community linking schools, to date, in 17 different countries. A three-way video conference, with a secure website to follow up friendships after classroom discussion, brings them together. There has been great interest from governments in the programme in predominantly Muslim countries as well, for example, India, the US and Canada.

Our universities' course, Faith and Globalisation, aims at opening up dialogue about religion in the modern world to participants beyond divinity schools and scripture scholars. It takes in the next age-cohort and, to date, involves lead universities in seven countries. The course is a template modified according to local academic interests so that students at Yale, Durham, McGill, University of Western Australia, Monterrey, Peking, and Singapore cover similar core material but deal with faith issues relevant to their cultural context.

On the clockwise side of the cycle is the Faiths Act programme aimed at realising the full potential of the faith communities in accomplishing the Millennium Development Goals, a vision shared with Micah Challenge. We have chosen the prevention of malaria deaths as the focus of an international campaign led by Faiths Act Fellows, interfaith pairs, 20 to 27-year-olds working to mobilise, fundraise, and link faith communities in the US, Canada, UK and India with, to date, communities in malaria endemic regions of Africa and parts of India. We have recently launched a national anti-malaria campaign in Sierra Leone in association with the Inter-Religious Council, Ministry of Health and Christian Health Association.

As Tony Blair said, launching the first cohort of Fellows in Los Angeles in September 2008: "As change-makers for current and future generations, young people have the opportunity to establish a new vision of inter-religious interaction that places protecting the welfare of the world's poorest at its centre." Call it the "praxis of liberation" if you like.

Jesus through Asian eyes

By Lizzy Millar

The Alliance launches a new booklet answering 15 frequently asked questions by South Asians about the Christian faith.

For many people, western culture is intertwined with Christianity. So how do South Asians present their case?

A new booklet *Jesus through Asian eyes – 15 frequently asked questions* aims to give clear answers to those often-asked questions about Christianity from a South Asian perspective.

The booklet is the brainchild of the South Asian Forum (SAF), a group set up last year as part of the Evangelical Alliance to represent South Asian Christians in mainstream churches, mission and in society at large.

It aims to dispel common misconceptions that Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists have about the Christian faith. The A5 booklet is intended to be informative, engaging and enlightening and to pay equal respect to people of other beliefs.

Kumar Rajagopalan, regional minister responsible for racial justice at the London Baptist Association, added: "Whenever we try to communicate a message there is always the possibility of miscommunication by the speaker, misunderstanding of the hearer and very often both, which naturally leads to misconceptions. This has occurred over many centuries as people have sought to share the Christian message with South Asians. This booklet will enable Christians to answer these questions and can be given to serious enquirers. It is my earnest prayer that this resource will help South Asians in their journey to discover Jesus as their Saviour and Lord."

A team of writers has come up with answers based on their own experiences with biblical points of reference. The respondents hail from countries as diverse as Kenya, Pakistan, India and the UK. Although their native languages and cultural backgrounds may vary, the writers all live in Britain and are united in their faith in Jesus Christ. Several other contributors have written about why they converted to Christianity.

Manoj Raithatha, national co-ordinator for SAF, says: "I know when I first became a Christian three years ago, my Hindu family and friends would ask me; 'don't all roads lead to heaven?'. I decided to swot up on the Scripture so I could give them reasoned and seasoned answers. I later discovered that my

Some questions answered in the booklet eauk.org/saf

- Is Christianity a Western religion?
- Isn't it better to follow the religion of your family?
- Would I have to leave my family and culture to follow Christ?
- What do Christians mean by calling Jesus the Son of God?
- Does God favour men over women?
- Why are so many Christian not like Jesus?

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Jesus through Asian eyes

15 Frequently asked questions



fellow South Asian believers had been asked similar questions, so together we decided to publish a booklet giving questions and answers."

Commenting on the booklet, Ram Gidoomal, chairman of South Asian Concern, recalls his own experiences: "Can I be an Asian and a follower of Jesus? Do I have to give up my cultural heritage? These were questions I personally faced when confronted with the truths about Jesus.

"This booklet helps dispel these and many other myths and is a timely contribution and resource for churches, individuals and all those seeking to help their Asian friends and neighbours understand who Jesus is and what it really means to follow and become his disciple. I warmly recommend this booklet and encourage you to use it if you wish to understand and reach those of other faiths."

The booklet costs just 50p per copy and is available from m.raithatha@eauk.org or on the SAF website. It comes with guidelines on how it can be used for group discussions.

'Whether there exists a supernatural creator, a God, is one of the most important questions we have to answer.'

- Richard Dawkins

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From tragedy to triumph?

by Lindsey Holley

World domination now seems within the grasp of our tiny country – well domination of the world golf scene anyway. Just in case you missed the news over the summer Northern Ireland claimed yet another title, the British Open. Darren Clarke was the third Northern Irish golfer in just over a year to win a major – a triumph made all the sweeter by what preceded it. Not only had it taken Darren 20 attempts to win a major, but five years ago he lost his wife to cancer. This story of amazing patience and hope filled the papers and media outlets. One news piece in particular seemed to catch the mood – 'From Tragedy to Triumph'.

For a country frequently famed for tragedy rather than triumph this headline captured more than just the story of one man's sporting achievements. Post-conflict Northern Ireland is still coming to terms with the tragedies suffered during the Troubles and even now triumphs are too scarce, especially in the political arena. For many in Northern Ireland, times have changed unrecognisably and they are fully embracing the peace dividend. Yet young people from more deprived areas, bearing severe scars from the Troubles, believe that they see none of these benefits. "Everyone talks about a bright new Belfast but there's none of that around here," commented one young person involved in the summer rioting.

Many third sector groups, including EANI member organisations such as the 174 Trust, are

working tirelessly to facilitate better relations within and between groups in inter-face areas. Yet most community relations work – while hugely important – is limited in what it can achieve without progress on wider issues like shared schools, shared housing, educational under-achievement and unemployment.

Darren Clarke's win illustrates how good things do not always come quickly or easily. In Northern Ireland, and all other post-conflict/post-tragedy areas, healing is not something that happens overnight. It takes a great deal of hard work to move on from past hurts and the ongoing reality of injustice.

This summer EANI drafted a paper on the Assembly's Programme for Government – the overarching document that sets the policy priorities for the next five years – and we have submitted it to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and all other department ministers. It

contains key policy recommendations, which we believe

will bring about a more peaceful and prosperous society for all in Northern Ireland. A copy of the paper is now available on our website.

Too often politicians talk about rights, equality and inclusion without reference to the relationships that make them possible.

Relationships are key to our wellbeing and are at the heart of the gospel. Churches and

faith groups can, and do, play a vital role in encouraging and supporting good family and community relationships. Our political leaders are beginning to recognise this and as spending cuts deepen, the gap to be filled by the Christian community grows.

There are two other political projects relevant to this issue to watch out for (and engage with) in the coming months. First, a new working group being headed up by Jeffery Donaldson MP examining how protestant working class areas can be reconnected with the peace process, looking at issues like deprivation, educational under-achievement and political alienation. Secondly, the contentious Cohesion, Sharing and Integration strategy which is due to be published in the autumn followed by the action plan in December.

Some 3,526 people were killed as a result of the Troubles between 1969 and 2001. We might not be experienced in Muslim-Christian relations in

"We might not be experienced in Muslim-Christian relations... but we understand conflict and peace-building."

Northern Ireland given how few Muslims live here, but we understand conflict and peace-building. Churches have historically been seen as part of the problem; now they are part of the solution.

Churches working together with government on such issues might just mean that we see more headlines on triumphs after tragedy – and not just on the sports pages!



Madness on the Horizon

The EANI team were kept busy over the summer at a number of festivals. Krish Kandiah joined us for Summer Madness in Belfast helping people see the big picture of the Bible with *Route 66*, as well as debating Bell's Hell. EANI director Peter Lynas was involved in a number of seminars and the team spent time connecting with a younger audience about the Alliance's work.

During a slightly wet July, the team headed to New Horizon, on the north coast where they were joined by Steve and Ann Clifford. The theme this year was Truth Unleashed. While Steve was in danger of catching hypothermia, the viral Bible was successfully launched in

Northern Ireland with one Bible heading off to Portugal within days. Steve led a seminar on evangelical unity, which raised some great questions, especially about our recent survey – *21st Century Evangelicals*. Peter hosted a seminar on the Big Society, explaining the range of opportunities open to churches to engage in their local communities. He talked about a 'Faith in Policing' initiative being pushed by Matt Baggott, NI Chief Constable, which invites churches to work alongside the police. We also hosted a lunch for our supporters, which provided a great opportunity for engagement.

The Mission Agencies Partnership (MAP)

brought together their 45 agencies to run the Mission Zone and Hope Street café at New Horizon. We heard some great stories about truth being unleashed through technology and translation, evangelism and church planting, Bible teaching and discipleship, by working with the persecuted Church and in the Muslim world. The agencies worked together in these five different streams, rather than each having their own stand, which sent out a real message of unity.

If you want to be part of the EANI/MAP team serving at festivals next summer or would like to discuss volunteering with us through the year please get in touch: nireland@eauk.org

Grace amid hostility

Interview by Alistair Stevenson

Julyan Lidstone, Operation Mobilisation's (OM) regional overseer for Central and South East Asia, tells us about his experiences of Christian-Muslim relations. Julyan, who lives in Scotland has worked extensively among Muslim communities in hostile parts of the world and is a renowned thinker and writer in the UK on the subject...



idea: Do you think the events of 9/11 affected relationships between Muslims and Christians in the areas where you work with OM?

It has certainly polarised Muslims and Christians. For Christians it has heightened anxiety and fear so that many tend to stereotype Muslims as fundamentalists and terrorists and therefore find it hard to relate to them. On the Muslim side there has been a growing radicalisation – 9/11 was a result of that process. As much as 9/11 itself, the western response through the invasion of Iraq has resulted in many Muslims perceiving the West as the aggressor and crusader heightening anti-West hostility. OM has workers in many sensitive and unstable Muslim nations. Colleagues of ours have been murdered, as well as members of other Christian organisations. Just last year seven Christians doing eye camps in remote areas were killed in Afghanistan. Persecution of Christians has increased right across the Muslim world with a growing harshness and suspicion.

What are the challenges of Christian organisations working in Muslim countries?

Firstly, western Christians are fearful of going to Muslim countries which makes it much harder for organisations like OM to encourage people to go – especially to the more radical parts of the world such as Pakistan. Families and churches tend to look at you in horror when you suggest it. But actually mission has always been a high-risk activity. If you read the Bible and mission history

there are lots of instances of danger and loss of life and that has not stopped people going in the past. I worry that it is stopping people now with the growth of our health and safety culture. Secondly, visas are more difficult to obtain as governments get more suspicious and hostile towards westerners. Paradoxically in some places there is a greater openness to the gospel because Muslims are disillusioned with fundamentalist Islam and want to search for alternatives. This has led to significant growth in places like Iran and Algeria. Overall I am quite positive because these trends are opening up more opportunities if we have the guts to take advantage of them.

Many Christians are fearful of dialogue with Muslims for fear of compromising their faith. How would you respond to this?

I've been criticised for trying to have dialogue with Muslims. For many the word dialogue has come to mean compromise. But in fact authentic dialogue is when I express and explain what I believe and vice-versa. It is about helping each other understand what we really believe as opposed to the stereotypes that each community has of each other. It's not about agreeing but genuinely sharing what we really believe. Through this dialogue I aim to build understanding which will hopefully lead to relationships and ultimately sharing what is most important to me. It does not lead me to compromise my faith, but leads to exciting opportunities to share my faith with

people who are willing to listen.

Do Muslims and Christians believe in the same God?

Yes and no. Firstly Allah is just an Arabic word for God. It's a cognate of Elohim which is used in the Old Testament and has the same Semitic roots. The Muslim view of God is that he is one, he is creator, judge, and he sends the prophets and reveals himself. The Qur'an has lots of similarities to our Scriptures. There is lots of material we have in common which we can build on to communicate. Having said that, the Muslim understanding of God is not the same as Christian's. The Muslim god is not the father of Jesus Christ and he is not the gracious god who takes the initiative for salvation by sending his son as a sacrifice. So we clearly have differences. For me we can both talk about God but when I do so with Muslims I have some significant differences which I seek to address and correct. When I talk to a Muslim I do so as I would to a Jew or a Jehovah's Witness. When Muslims have come to faith they always talk of how they continue to believe in the same god but now have a better understanding and appreciation of his love.

Finally, how can Christians most effectively share Christ with Muslims?

Go and have a cup of tea! Accept them as people, as neighbours and people who are like us and have similar concerns and needs. We need to get alongside them and accept them as people – start there and see where it takes you.

Uniting to Transform Scotland – Leaders Day

On 10 September the Evangelical Alliance in Scotland will host its first Uniting to Transform Scotland leaders conference at Stirling Baptist Church. Following recent decisions made at the Church of Scotland Assembly on the ordination of ministers in same-sex relationships, many friends of the Alliance asked for a space for evangelicals from the Church across Scotland

to encourage and support one-another. Helping to provide an opportunity for leaders to pray together and hear from God about how to move forward, the day will include speakers Rev Jim Ritchie (former Church of Scotland minister and now Director of the Scotland Trust) and Alasdair Black (Senior Pastor, Stirling Baptist Church).

Clan Festival

The Clan Gathering in St Andrew's in the summer saw 4,000 people gather for a week of worship and teaching. The Alliance co-hosted a seminar tent throughout the week including sessions from member organisations Scripture Union Scotland and CARE. Members of the team in Scotland were also involved in a variety of different workshops and other seminars.



Cross-party faith in Cardiff

Visitors to the National Assembly of Wales in Cardiff Bay often remark on the intimacy of Welsh democracy. Assembly Members (AMs) and members of the public can be seen mingling in the Assembly's Senedd building, thus giving the democratic process a more immediate bite.

A feature of the Assembly's work has been the development of cross-party groups, enabling AMs and the public to discuss and debate matters of public interest. One such group is the Cross-Party Group on Faith. As its name suggests this group consists of AMs and representatives of some of the nation's leading religious groups. The group meets to consider and discuss national issues that have an ethical or social justice dimension. It is a place for debate, sharing opinions, voicing dissent and seeking any common ground that may be possible.

Under the chairmanship of Darren Millar AM, a committed Christian, the group has discussed a number of key issues over the past two years. Subjects have included the place of faith in a secular education system; whether prayer has a place in modern medicine; teenagers and sexuality and the impact of devolution on religious communities in Wales.

Each meeting of the group follows a similar pattern. A guest speaker is invited to lead the debate on a chosen subject, followed by questions and discussion. Notable speakers have included the Most Rev Barry Morgan, Archbishop of Wales, Saleem Kidwai OBE, secretary general

of the Muslim Council of Wales and Rachel Gardner of the Romance Academy.

Evangelical Alliance Wales' National Assembly liaison officer Jim Stewart provides the secretariat for the group and other members include the Muslim Council of Wales and CYTUN (Churches Together in Wales).

But is it possible or even desirable for Christians to work with people of other faiths? Jim believes that such collaboration is necessary for the well-being of civic society. "There are of course many profound differences between the various religions but also much common ground. In the 1980s evangelicals and Catholics were campaigning together against abortion. Today it might be Muslims, Hindus and evangelicals speaking up for the place of religious education in schools. We passionately believe in our distinctiveness as evangelical Christians, but there are issues of public life and social concern where it is appropriate, even desirable, to explore our various viewpoints and to work together where appropriate.

"In very general terms, all the various faith communities in Wales have to deal with the expectations of secularism. So the issues of wearing religious symbols, praying with patients, educating children or understanding sexuality, to name but a few, are familiar to people of all faiths. The Cross-Party Group on Faith enables people of all faiths and none to express their viewpoints to each other and to elected politicians."

Transatlantic partnerships in South Wales

Americans are no strangers to the UK. Renowned for their love of history and genealogy, travellers from the New World are regular guests in places of great national interest. This does not generally include the valleys of South Wales.

However during late June and early July, members from three American churches landed in Bridgend, a town that straddles Cardiff and Swansea on the M4. Led by First West Baptist Church, Louisiana, and accompanied by Wedgwood Baptist Church, Texas and Henderson Hills Church, Oklahoma, they came to this small town to continue a three-year partnership.

A total of 80 Americans partnered with eight Bridgend Churches to engage in a variety of mission activities. They had contact with approximately 10,000 people. A variety of teams visited five high schools, 10 primary schools and 10 retirement homes. Eight community projects were formed through the week and they led fun days, hospital ministry, prayer walking, litter picking and lawn mowing.

Rob Burns, a missional leadership consultant working with Evangelical Alliance Wales, said: "This has been a great example of partnership and collaboration. We all came together to learn from each other and trust God to lead us. The American churches, under the leadership of First West Baptist Church, came in great humility and really enjoyed themselves."

Alongside the mission was a special forum for 20 key evangelical leaders in South Wales. This group gathered to discuss future partnership possibilities. It was the overwhelming conclusion felt that God was moving powerfully through these transatlantic relationships and that such partnerships should be further developed.



Powys, Llantwit Major and Penarth.

The aim of the week was simply to serve the local churches and to share Jesus through proclamation evangelism. This was done through a wide range of evangelistic activities including, street evangelism, children's clubs, youth events, comedy evenings, a men's breakfast, a curry night, an American Independence Day celebration, an Olympics outreach at a primary school, afternoon teas and a High School Christian Union.

The mission culminated with the Reach the Vale teams joining churches in Barry and a choir from a church in Atlanta in the US for what was called Big Event I and II. Big Event I was a family fun afternoon in Victoria Park in Barry which saw more than 1,000 people attend. In the evening Big Event II was a concert in the Memorial Hall in Barry with the gospel being presented by the church choir and team from Atlanta, with several responding to the gospel message. On the Sunday all the Reach the Vale churches had evangelistic services to finish the mission.



Reach the Vale

Fifty people from 11 different nations came together to share the gospel and work alongside local churches in the Vale of Glamorgan over the summer, as part of the summer mission Reach the Vale.

This partnership was facilitated and organised by OMLifehope (Operation Mobilisation) and OAC Ministries (Open Air Campaigners) and generously supported by Hebron Hall Christian Centre in Dinas Powys which was the base of operations for much of the outreach.

The Vale of Glamorgan has a population of around 125,000 and being an agricultural area has many small villages and hamlets, the largest population centres Barry, Cowbridge, Dinas

LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR

HOW CHRISTIANS ARE ENGAGING WITH MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

The Bible teaches that loving our neighbours must be our priority. But are all parts of the UK Church really switched on when it comes to seeing Muslims as that neighbour? And does a dimension of fear play its part in reluctance to build relationships? Rebecca Taylor takes a hard look at a subject the Church cannot ignore and finds congregations sharing their lives and their faith unreservedly...

For some the thought of building relations with people of another faith is not an easy concept. But if you dig deep – do we really think that God wants us to ignore the elephant in the room that is Muslim-Christian relations and leave it un-tackled?

Jesus himself was living in a country with a vast array of cultures and a foreign occupying army. There were many times he reached out, where he spoke to the person who was not Jewish. Do we need to engage and do the same?

Alastair Kirk is a university chaplain working in the West Midlands as one of the 60 diocesan interfaith relations advisers for the Church of England, who, often combined with other jobs or parish roles, provide advice for churches wanting to develop good relations with different faiths. He agrees that the members of the early Church lived among a mix of cultures.

"It is important to remember where we have come from: the early Christians were in a society where no-one else believed in their faith, and yet Christians were called to be in that context," he says.

In Ephesians 2, Paul speaks of Christians reaching out to those who are outside the faith: "The Cross got us to embrace, and that was the end of the hostility. Christ came and preached peace to you outsiders and peace to us insiders. He treated us as equals, and so made us equals." (The Message) "He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near."

(New International Version)

Tense times

Newspapers and commentators have long reported on tensions in cities. I spoke to one Christian leader who said he recently went to a British city, long hailed as a hotbed of difficulties between groups, and physically felt the desperation and tension as he walked along the high street.

I also know of a Christian community worker who was able to help a Muslim family engage in a long process of healing following a trauma, just because she knew them and could help.

Diluting faith?

Some in the Church find the concept of inter-religious dialogue a challenge, arguing that once involved, our beliefs will be diluted and we will compromise in order to build good relations.

But those involved in the work point to their cross-cultural experiences actually strengthening their Christian beliefs. As they discuss their faith with their Muslim neighbours or work together on a local issue such as bringing together

communities after the awful 7/7 bombings, eradicating a drug culture or donating clothes together to local refugees, they become more confident of their own gospel.

Nick Coke, along with his wife Kerry, is the Salvation Army officer in charge of Hope ashah church in Stepney, east London. With Bangladeshi Muslims making up 65 per cent of the Ocean Estate, Nick and Kerry live in the community and have developed strong relations over a number of years.

"My wife and I spend a lot of time visiting and sharing meals. We meet people through our children who attend the school so we meet local kids and their families. We are intentional about sharing our lives and being in each other's homes."

Nick also talks openly with his neighbours about faith. "We try to share who we are and our faith," he says. "It is very easy to talk about it with our Muslim neighbours and we are open about sharing the gospel. Our Muslim friends tell us about Islam – we have lots of conversations on what we share and look at what our differences are."

As well as relational work, churches are also providing services to their communities – expressing beliefs through action. Phil Rawlings, vicar at St Brides in Old Trafford, Manchester, tells me that as well as English classes, the church runs mother and toddler groups that are attended by large numbers of people from the Muslim community. "People feel it is a comfortable place – it's safe," says Phil. "The work we are doing here is not primarily about about evangelism it's about relationship building."

Peaceful places

For Angela Hughes, minister at Stainbeck United Reformed Church in Leeds, reaching out to local people from different groups is



The Springfield Centre, run by St Christopher's in Birmingham, gives help to more than 1,000 children under-five and their families.

Peaceful places cont...

about making that community work. "It is important that we get to know one another better at a local level so that together we can build communities which are safe and peaceful – good places to live and work," she says.

Holding 'Knit and Natter' groups and cookery classes requested by local Muslim women, the church congregation and its Muslim neighbours have produced a blanket, donating it to a local organisation caring for refugees. Angela believes that the most successful groups have been about getting women together doing ordinary things which unite them and that having local grassroots activities alongside more formal interfaith dialogues is important.

Back in Stepney, working with Muslim community leaders has meant that a campaign to get drug dealing off the local streets has turned into something of a success. Initially the church invited all sections of the community to come and talk about the violence and dangerous atmosphere that was being generated by the dealing. Says Nick: "We had Christian and Muslim members speak about how they felt we should deal with the issue and we have been campaigning together. We now hold a local festival on the issue of drugs with other agencies that has been running for three years – 1,000 people attended the last one."

Social responsibility was high on the agenda for Reverend Canon Bob Shaw, vicar in the parish of Beeston Hill and Hunslet moor, who over the last nine years has been responsible for building up positive relations with the Christian and Muslim community in Beeston Hill, Leeds. Bob's experience in the field was painfully needed after the 7/7 bombings when it was discovered that three of those involved were from the Beeston area.

One of the poorest parishes in the area, 30 per cent of the community is Muslim.

Before 7/7, Bob had led on a building project to provide a space for the local community. A parents' centre was built and is now where the local Methodist church meets, with the Anglican church using the building as their parish centre for the area.

The project was something that Bob and his congregation had felt "God had been calling us to do" and with support from locals, outside funding and the Church Urban Fund, they built a joint Christian worship centre and worked with Muslim groups who used the old Methodist building developing it into a healthy living centre.

Like the project in Stepney, strong relations and a robust foundation of closeness was established as a result of working together, and as events unfolded in July 2005, this was never more needed.

Says Bob: "When 7/7 happened it was pretty difficult for the local community. The impact was immediate and devastating. We were swamped by the media, but the community held together and the relations that we had built up before helped to create stability, the very thing that God has asked us to do."

Determined to show an act of unity one week after the bombings, the community made a walk of friendship to the centre of Leeds, and later to St Pancras Old Church, London.

Says Bob: "We were united and we would not be divided. Sometimes bad things happen to good communities. As well as that our Christian calling was to tell the truth about our community whether people wanted to hear it or not."

Between Naivety and Hostility
Uncovering the best Christian responses to Islam in Britain

Editors Steve Bell and Colin Chapman
Foreword by Rt Revd Dr Michael Nazir-Ali

How should Christians respond to Islam in Britain?

This book provides thinking Christians with a broad range of balanced evidence on Islam in Britain.

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"When we went to London we took down books of condolence for the victims of the bombings. We were telling our capital city and nation – that we were determined to be united as a community and that Beeston Hill was a place where god-fearing people were living together."

As well as its cross-cultural work, St Brides, Manchester, has Eden Project youth workers from Alliance member The Message Trust at the church and many of the Trust's dance bands perform in the Old Trafford area. Says Andy Hawthorne, Trust founder who was recently awarded an OBE: "We have a lot of Eden Teams (youth worker placements) in predominantly Muslim areas and our bands do go into a lot of schools in these areas of Manchester."

Says Reverend Rawlings from St Brides: "Jesus said 'love one another' – our response to Muslim communities must come out of love and not fear. God has given us a spirit of love. Discipleship can mean cost – and that sometimes means feeling uncomfortable."

WE NEED TO BE CONFIDENT IN WHO WE ARE
REACHING OUT IN GRACE AND LOVE

Comparing texts

Both Alastair Kirk from the West Midlands and Phil Rawlings study texts with Muslim colleagues and find that the conversations inspire and encourage: "If anything it helps strengthen my faith," says Alastair. "If I can spend time seeing how Muslim friends interpret their own texts and they see how I interpret mine, then we can build deep relationships that help to diminish fear and promote trust."

Says Phil Rawlings: "With a group of Turkish Muslim friends I have given a talk about the Holy Spirit and Pentecost. We've also been involved in visits to Muslim groups during Ramadan – to share a meal and talk about fasting. We are evangelistic and share the gospel but want to do it in a respectful way."

The main message from all the churches involved in this work is not to be apprehensive.

Says Salvation Army pastor Nick Coke: "We shouldn't be fearful – there are fears that we will loose our faith but we don't need to be. We need to be confident in who we are – reaching out in grace and love. We also need to have that tension of bringing that faith and love and allowing God to do His work through us."

By getting the balance of respect and dialogue right now the future could be really bright.

"We are called to love our neighbours," says Bob Shaw from, Beeston Hill, "and that's what we are doing. You can't argue with that."

- Hope asha Church Stepney have a film on the work they are doing in their community see ashes2asha.blogspot.com/p/who-are-we
- For more on the Church of England Diocesan Interfaith work see churchofengland.org



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Bravery, Believing and Belonging:

The reality of Muslim conversion

While an increasing number of Christians are aware of the issues surrounding Islam, how many of us know someone who has converted to Christianity? Do we truly understand the journeys they have undertaken to reach their Christian faith, what they have given up and what they may have been through since making their decision?

Claire Musters writes...

It is difficult to gather statistics in this field, but a moderate estimate is that there are 3–5,000 Muslim-background believers (MBBs) in the UK today. The Church needs to know how to support them because by choosing Christ they are turning their backs on their way of life, often their network of family and friends and opening up themselves, and sometimes their families, to persecution.

Islam pervades every part of a family's life. It is not just a religion, but a whole value system. So for one member of a Muslim family to turn their back on Islam is a monumental decision. For some it means the end of their relationships with their family members – for others it spells definite danger.

Muslim families see conversion as a real betrayal. As Aisha explains: "Looking back, I understand how afraid they were that they would lose me. To them it meant I now wanted to be 'western' and enjoy the so-called freedoms that 'westerners' have. Most Muslims equate Christianity to the West, in their view a race of loose-moralled people lacking any self-discipline."

An obvious point, but each person who converts is an individual. And, while 9/11 and the London bombings have alerted us to the extremists, we mustn't allow this minority to scare us away. That is why it is so vital to spend time getting to know individuals and learn their stories.

For example, Haleema has chosen to stay living with her Muslim family, being the main carer of her elderly disabled mother. This means she has to attend mosque, which she says is "very stressful, especially as I feel it affects my spiritual growth". Haleema's is a unique situation that needs a lot of support.

Roads to conversion

Thomas J Walsh undertook extensive research in 2005 for his MA dissertation, *Voices from Christians in Britain with a Muslim Background: Stories for the British Church on Evangelism, Conversion, Integration and Discipleship*. His findings, based on interviews with 16 MBBs, are eye-opening. Of the 16, 13 said they were already searching while 13 said the lifestyle of Christian friends attracted them. Ten believed engaging

with the Bible was important, while nine said seeing Christians assembled together influenced them. Books and education pointed seven to Jesus, six experienced miraculous events while another six found Christian prayer vital. Five were enthralled by the person of Christ.

For Aisha it was a sense of God calling her through the Bible, even though she first picked it up to prove a Christian friend wrong. "All I remember was an immense feeling of fear when I read the Qur'an, and a complete peace when I read the gospels. Right there I was drawn to the love of Christ...it felt like coming home."

Family responses

It wasn't until five years later that Aisha told her parents. Their response was the same as many other MBBs' parents, "at first simply disbelief and shock which gradually gave way to anger. They pleaded with me not to commit myself to anything like baptism – many Muslims realise that there is no going back from there". In Walsh's research, the majority eventually told their families; all but one experienced difficulties. Over the years some have been able to rebuild relationships; others have lost their families forever.

For Muslim communities outside Islamic countries, great effort is made to maintain their identity. So the backlash against someone who chooses to change religion can be huge. Nissar Hussein's experiences made headlines in both the Christian and secular press in 2005.

Born and raised in the UK, when Nissar and his family became Christians their whole neighbourhood shunned them. When things became dangerous – he was threatened, his car set on fire. Nissar reported incidents to the police only to be told such threats were rarely carried out and he should "stop being a crusader and move to another place".

The Church as family

MBBs come out of a religion that affects every area of their lives and can be shocked to find Christians often only get together once or twice a week. We have to realise that for a lot of MBBs they have lost contact with their loved ones, so we have to be their family – a huge responsibility.

Some converts do turn back to Islam – perhaps because they don't feel part of things within a western Christian setting. We say Church is a place where all are welcomed, but we unconsciously have our own cultural bias and need to be more aware of issues of other religions and cultures.

We also need to be able to offer help to MBBs wanting to tell their families. In Walsh's research 12 indicated they were left without any advice. It can be a source of huge disappointment to MBBs when they discover the Church doesn't know how to help them.

Challenges to British Christians

- Listen to the stories of Muslims you have befriended. Don't enter into such a relationship feeling like you are the superior one.
- Be encouraged that it is possible for Muslims to become Christians!
- Do not be afraid of Islam – rather try to understand it better so that you can be confident and informed.
- Be prepared to experiment with formats to enable the transition to worshipping in a Christian church easier for MBBs – and indeed anyone else from a different culture.
- Remember we are not just seeking converts – MBBs need to be disciplined and this takes time and effort – it is a process.

Aisha says that she was quite suspicious of her church. "Having been part of a domineering religion beforehand, I simply saw 'The Church' as the next institution that would do that." She believes her reaction was partly due to the fact that the church "simply didn't know what to do with me. I couldn't identify with them. Though I loved the worship and teaching, there was little else that made me feel at home". Many converts say a similar thing, that it is close Christian friends that make the difference. MBBs do realise that often their response doesn't help, "to be fair, I never gave them much of a chance I was put off by a few bad, early experiences and so closeted myself".

From converts to disciples

Jesus called us to make not just converts, but disciples. When working with new MBBs be prepared to give them a lot of one-on-one time. Muslims have a strong sense of family, each member knows what is expected of them, so, over time, MBBs need to be taught to take responsibility for their spiritual life. Walsh asked his interviewees how well the Church disciplined them. They all indicated the need for mentors and felt Christians needed to understand their background more, and realise that initially MBBs need space, understanding and a gentle guiding hand. Don't become impatient if they don't 'conform' to the way you 'do' church straight away – and be open to them suggesting new ways of doing things too.

Some names have been changed to protect the people's identities.

3 THE WORLD, THE CHURCH AND OLDER PEOPLE

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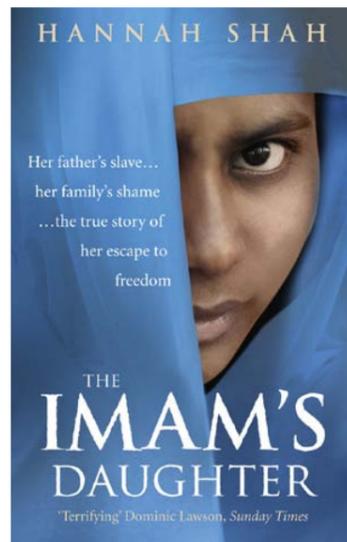
www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk

When British Muslims turn to Christianity, they can feel like 'trophy converts'. *Hannah Shah* appeals to the Church to overcome prejudices, to love, accept and 'do life' with these new believers...

I look like a Muslim, so I am treated with suspicion. I look like a Muslim so I am looked at with fear and racial hatred. I look like a Muslim so when I walk into churches I am spoken to with ignorance and misunderstanding. It's assumed I don't speak English and that I am not a Christian. It's assumed I understand why the terrorists did what they did on 11 September 2001. No I don't understand, nor do many Muslims.

I am a Christian from a Muslim background but I am also a wife, a sister, a daughter, a friend and I work hard to help Christians overcome the fear and prejudice and ignorance they have of Muslim people. Why do I do that? Because I don't want to see another 9/11, or another 7/7. I don't want Muslim men or women feeling alienated, misunderstood and struggling to find an identity. We in the Church have a great opportunity to accept people of faith as our brothers and sisters and to work together against extremism and prejudice. A Muslim in the UK has a lot of pressure on him or her from many sides.

As someone who comes from a Muslim background I still live in two worlds: a world of Christians where I am not fully accepted and a secular world where it doesn't matter what my religion is. One of the results of 9/11 I see in churches is a fear of Muslim people and that



Welcome to the family?

comes mainly from what is on the TV and in the newspapers, and this also influences the way a Christian from a Muslim background is treated.

Unfortunately I and many others like me who come from a Muslim background have had to leave behind family, friends and community in order to be physically safe and continue life as followers of Jesus. For us this means we are looking to church to be our community, to be our friends and family; a great responsibility for us all in church but one that is very much what Jesus wanted for us.

I have been blessed by many Christian people who have let me be part of their lives, and have loved, encouraged and supported me in my life. They have cried with me in difficult times and celebrated with me in happy times. They have lived life with me when I haven't had a family. I have been blessed, but many others who come from a Muslim background would say that they have been left to live life on their own because people have misunderstood them. They feel that once they have been seen as the trophy convert, they are left to deal with the fall-out from their new faith on their own and to figure out what it means to follow Jesus - on their own.

As a Christian, I feel freedom to be the person God created me to be, I feel free to pray and I know that I don't need to do anything to have relationship with the Father because Jesus is the way to the Father and I have the assurance that I will be in heaven with him one day. I am a child of God, created in His image, loved, chosen and called by Him to worship and follow Him.

It's taken me a long time to come to the point

where this is the identity that means the most to me and defines me. But there are fears that affect me and my friends, who are Christians from a Muslim background. They are fears of the future, of not being accepted by people and never feeling you belong, fears of constant loneliness, fears of not finding a marriage partner, fears of not being able to support ourselves financially, of not being accepted by the people who know Jesus. Sadly many of these fears are realised when we enter churches and church culture. Everyone is too busy with their own life, with their own family and friends to notice those who have no family and friends and are new to faith and church.

We have also got a lot to offer the Christian community. We want to help in understanding community and Muslim people. We want to be part of the church community and give in areas we may be helpful in creative ways. I guess what I am saying is we are people with feelings, we are people who want to be treated with love and respect, accepted and involved. Be our friends, our family, teach us what it is to follow Jesus by being role models. It seems to me Jesus was compassionate but challenging, brought healing but also experience, gave time to his friends but not too much, spent time in community but also alone. Teach us to follow him or walk together with us as we all figure out what it means to be disciples of Jesus. Let's do life together.

Hannah Shah is the author of The Imam's Daughter (Rider Books) hannahshah.com

Working together for the persecuted Church

by Chine Mbubaegbu

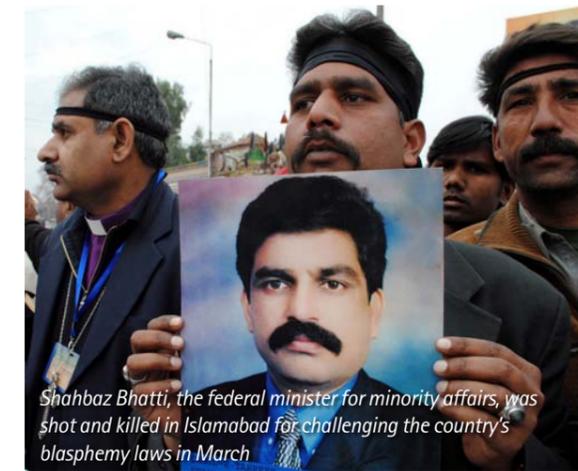
Globally, Christian-Muslim relationships are at their most difficult in those areas of the world where religious liberty is most under threat.

Alliance member organisations are working together with others to raise awareness of religious persecution around the world and speak on behalf of those believers facing imprisonment, torture and death for their faith.

The Open Doors World Watch List released earlier this year showed that persecution of Christians in Muslim countries - which account for eight of the 10 most dangerous countries for persecution - is growing.

"Being a Muslim Background Believer or 'Secret Believer' in a Muslim-dominated country can put a bulls-eye on the backs of Christians."

Eddie Lyle, CEO of Open Doors UK and Ireland, said: "Being a Muslim Background Believer or 'Secret Believer' in a Muslim country can put a bulls-eye on the backs of Christians. But as followers of Jesus, we must break the circle of persecution and embrace Muslims as those who need the gospel and Christ's message of salvation."



Shahbaz Bhatti, the federal minister for minority affairs, was shot and killed in Islamabad for challenging the country's blasphemy laws in March

Open Doors, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) and Release International are members of the Religious Liberty Partnership along with a number of other organisations around the world including Advocates International in the US, Friends of the Martyred Church in Finland and Middle East Concern.

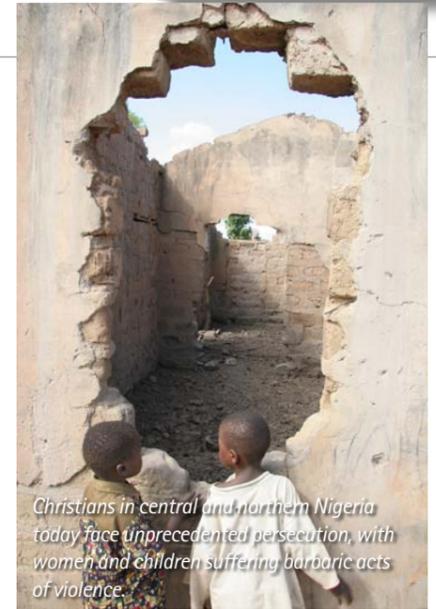
In the past few years, the partnership has addressed religious liberty issues in countries including Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Afghanistan and China.

Commenting on violent attacks committed against Christians in northern Nigeria this year,

Andy Dipper, CEO of Release International, said: "Together as the RLP, we stand in support of Christians in Nigeria, calling upon the Church worldwide to pray for a restoration of lasting peace in Nigeria."

"Christians in central and northern Nigeria today face unprecedented persecution, with women and children suffering barbaric acts of violence. In this context, the Nigerian Church leadership are actively choosing to isolate those perpetrators of these recent killings by not retaliating and relying on God to sustain them in their grief."

Pakistan is one of those countries in which religious minorities are most under threat from extremism. The first few months of 2011 alone saw a number of high profile religiously-motivated attacks including the murder of Shahbaz Bhatti, the federal



Christians in central and northern Nigeria today face unprecedented persecution, with women and children suffering barbaric acts of violence.

minister for minority affairs who was shot and killed in Islamabad for challenging the country's blasphemy laws.

Andrew Johnston, CSW's advocacy director, said: "There is a balance to be struck between giving due importance to the very specific plight of Pakistan's religious minorities and recognising that the nation as a whole is under threat from an extremism that does not tolerate alternative worldviews and that punishes dissent and difference without regard for individual rights."

"Religious freedom violations and the spread of extremist ideologies are intimately linked to one another and approaches to countering both problems need to incorporate this relationship."

The RLP has a number of ongoing projects. Its Early Warning Task Group is working on how to identify where religious liberty is at risk, while its Member Health Task Group works with the Refugee Highway Partnership to identify key resources for members on care and health of workers.

Finally, its Future Projects Team looks at trends that the RLP might need to consider addressing as the partnership moves forward.

rlpartnership.org

**Church In Christ UK, London
The Solution Centre, Walsall
Revelation Church, London**

DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

If you're a member of the Alliance but we don't have your email address, you could be missing out on a wealth of great communications. Email: members@eauk.org with the subject line 'My email address'.

Visit eauk.org/getinvolved to sign up for regular email updates

Uniting to change society

The Alliance is working to build unity among its half a million members across 70 denominations, 3,300 churches and 700 organisations. Members are linked through a UK and worldwide network of evangelical Christians who share in ministry and expertise. Benefits for churches are especially valuable, including access to resources, programmes and campaigns, as well as media training.
eauk.org/getinvolved

Meanwhile, the Alliance has welcomed new organisations and churches...

ORGANISATIONS

**Avanti Ministries Ltd, Southend-On-Sea
Christian Broadcasting Network, Hereford
Gujarati Christian Fellowship UK, Hounslow
HALLOWED - UK, Epping**

CHURCHES

**Revival Assemblies, Dartford
North Coast Church, Towny
River of Life Elim Pentecostal, London**

REBUILDING GROUND ZERO

A decade after 9/11, work is being done to build for a better future.
Chine Mbubaegbu writes...



The memorial pool at Ground Zero where the names of all those who died are inscribed in bronze

There are moments in history that define a generation – and the tragic events of 11 September 2001 certainly did that. The actions of a group of Islamic extremists who hijacked planes and flew them straight into two of the most iconic symbols on the Manhattan skyline have influenced global politics, international relations and religious discourse over the past decade.

In New York, work is being done to move forward, to create a lasting symbol that will remind us never to forget but to move on and work together for a better future.

This September we remember the 2,973 people from many walks of life and many faiths that were killed on that day. We condemn the actions and wickedness of those that slaughtered in the name of their god.

But we also ask: what now? As Christians called to be salt and light in the world, how do we bring good out of the situation while the horrifying images remain etched on our memories? How do we relate to Muslims with tolerance, understanding and grace?

For those such as Neil Wain, a Christian and temporary assistant chief constable at Greater Manchester police, 9/11 will forever have a profound effect. At the time of the attacks, Neil was a superintendent in the Force and was on secondment in New York.

"I saw the smoke rise into the blue morning sky from one of the towers, and then watched in disbelief as an aircraft crashed into the second tower of the World Trade Centre.

"Later, as I stood on the edge of what they were calling 'Ground Zero', my senses were

numbed, my mind bewildered and my heart overwhelmed with pain."

Neil, chair of the GMP Christian Association, adds: "I was profoundly affected at the time by those events, both by my proximity and subsequent involvement but also by the bravery of my US colleagues in the New York Police Department and the Fire Department New York. I can say that 9/11 and following events have only served to prove how uncertain this world is and that for me the only thing that is certain is the love of God."

How do you move on from that? How do you pick up the pieces of the crumbling metal and the broken lives? In New York, work is being done to move forward, to create a lasting symbol that will remind us never to forget but to move on and work together for a better future.

On 12 September this year, the 9/11 memorial will open to the public. Occupying eight of the 16 acres where the towers once stood, it will be a "tribute to the past and a place of hope for the future", with the names of each person who died during the attacks inscribed onto bronze panels lining the memorial pools.

Earlier this year, old sores were opened up when US president Barack Obama announced to the world that al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden had been killed. For some, the jubilant scenes at Ground Zero were unsavoury, while others thought it right to celebrate the death of a man who had caused such unimaginable pain to thousands of lives.

An unlikely pair were together for a meal with their wives on the night bin Laden was killed: Geoff Tunnicliffe, a Canadian who is secretary general of the World Evangelical Alliance, and Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf – the Sufi imam who hit the headlines last year for his plans to build Park51 – an Islamic community centre just a few blocks away from Ground Zero.

The pair's friendship is a symbol of how Christians and Muslims can work together with understanding and grace, while not compromising their beliefs. Geoff has been criticised for forming such a close friendship with the imam.

But he says: "Jesus reminded us we must love our neighbour as ourselves, no matter who he/she is or what religion or ethnicity they represent. We must treat a person as an individual not as a representative of some religious group. For many Muslims, hospitality is at the heart of their culture. Showing hospitality and building genuine friendships will help overcome stereotypes and will allow for a free flow of ideas and sharing of one's beliefs.

"I think Jesus was criticised for some of the people he hung out with. Even though Feisal and

I have a different set of beliefs, I am humbled that Feisal calls me his friend."

Both men live and work in New York and were profoundly affected by the events of 9/11. But together, they long to see a better future and are working to bring this about.

Says Geoff: "9/11 shook America to its core. For the most powerful nation on earth to be so vulnerable was shocking to many. For some Americans this has challenged their understanding of their national identity and destiny.

"It has caused some to want to build higher walls and become more insular. For other Americans, it has caused them to seriously reflect on their values, lifestyles and to seek understanding of why such hatred was perpetuated against them."

He adds: "9/11 profoundly changed the world for an entire generation. There are of course the obvious outward signs, including increased airport security, terror alerts, and protracted wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, on a deeper and more individual basis, we have seen increasing fear, insecurity, profiling



Workers rebuild the first freedom tower

Joe Wheelhead, World Trade Center

"The gospel is about reconciliation."

and racism. There is also a greater recognition by governments (in particular western democracies) that faith and religion must be taken into account when developing international policy."

What happened on 9/11 was a stark wake-up call and highlighted what some sociologists have called the 'myth of secularization'. As a recent study conducted between Ipsos Mori and the Tony Blair Faith Foundation revealed, religion really matters.

But the study found that among the 18,000 people surveyed across 24 countries, 33 per cent had no or almost no friends or acquaintances from another religion.

Commenting on the survey, Tony Blair said: "The evidence is that, though people fear the prospect of religious strife, even here in Britain, there is much to encourage the view that people can learn to respect those of another faith and live with them peacefully. Interfaith dialogue and action today is not just an interesting but peripheral minor subject, it is the essence, central to creating greater social cohesion and harmony."

In 2004, Imam Feisal set up the Cordoba Initiative – a multi-faith organisation dedicated to "improving understanding and building trust among people of all cultures and faith traditions". He has worked particularly to improve relations and understanding between Islam and the West. In April this year, *Time* magazine named him as one of the 100 most influential people in the world.

Speaking to idea, he said 9/11 had been a painful time for the Muslim community in New York, but was optimistic that the lessons learned from the tragedy, and as Muslims, Christians and those of other faiths endeavour to break down the walls, the future would be better.

He said: "9/11 was a double whammy for us because we felt that we had been attacked as Americans, but we were also then attacked as Muslims by those who thought we were responsible for it. We have been dealing with this ever since."

Pointing to examples including the furore surrounding Pastor Terry Jones' threat to burn the Qur'an, he urged against extremism of any kind.

"This is not about Muslims and the West. It's about the moderates and the extremists on all sides. We need to align ourselves so that we can pool our efforts and deploy them against the extremists.

"Working together with people of other faiths is not a problem, but we do need to look at where the problems have arisen. A lot of the issues are not primarily religious in nature: they

may be political, sociological, theological in nature, or to do with the media.

"9/11 was an event that framed the discourse between America and the West and structured it in religious terms. If bin Laden were not a Muslim, the same problem would exist.

"In terms of Muslim-Christian relations, there has been a greater understanding of the issues all round. I'm optimistic that gradually we are moving towards a better place."

For people like Geoff Tunnicliffe, as Christians looking back at the tragic events in New York a decade ago and looking ahead to the future, there is only one reason for us to seek to build relationship with our Muslim neighbours. The reason is not political or sociological, but is based on the example Christ sets us of breaking down racial and cultural barriers, and his commandment for us to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Says Geoff: "My office in New York is located just a couple of blocks from Ground Zero. Every day I walk past this site where they are building new skyscrapers and a reflection pool to forever remember the death and destruction that took place at this location 10 years ago. For me it is a constant reminder that we live in a fallen world and that we have a lot of work to do in being peacemakers in the world. The gospel is about reconciliation. We are reconciled to God through the person of His Son, Jesus. Because of this reconciliation we can be reconciled to each other. I pray regularly as I pass Ground Zero that I would be an instrument of reconciliation in a world that is torn by war and conflict."



By Betsy Lynn Krappger, US Defense Imagery



By Bailey Huckabee

Growing up in a post-9/11 America

One by one, my family members abandoned their breakfast at the kitchen table where we were celebrating my sister's sixth birthday that September morning. Mom got a phone call and ran downstairs to the television without a word, and my three siblings and I followed.

I was 11 years old. What was on the news didn't seem too different from anything else on the news. Tall buildings. Fire. People running everywhere. Explosions. Crisis. What does a kid really know of government, terrorism, or even foreign relations? How could I have understood then that this particular disaster would change American life?

Still, the sinking realisation caught up with every American at some point that day. I had to grow up quickly in one day as I understood so much for the first time. Tragedy isn't just something in history books. Adults cry. Buildings can fall in an instant, just as easily as human life can be stifled. A president, even a government, can't keep a whole nation from harm.

Looking back now, I hardly remember anything different. I don't remember life without war. I don't remember simple security at the airport. It's hard to describe the inevitable uneasiness that creeps into my stomach as I board an airplane or walk around the Hancock Center Observatory in Chicago because now it seems that the 94th floor is just not safe. I even avoid elevators when I can.

But maybe it isn't all bad, because along with the rest of America, I've learned to appreciate taking the stairs for more than just safety reasons. Perhaps it's taught us a lesson in putting forth some effort to get to where we need to be.

I've seen America at its worst in a cloud of smoke, ashes and death, and an even heavier cloud of defeat and failure. I've also seen America at its best, fighting back in dignity, and helping a stranger get back on his feet.

My sister's birthday wasn't ruined that day. I still remember the big party we had that night. Everyone was still smiling—especially her. All her birthdays since have been the same. God still blesses America.

Bailey Huckabee is a student at Moody Bible College, Chicago, who did an internship with the Evangelical Alliance UK in June.

911memorial.org • worldevangelicals.org • cordobainitiative.org

24

months for Steve Clifford as the Alliance's general director...

This impact report gives a snapshot of the Alliance's achievements from April 2010 to March 2011. It has been yet another busy but amazing year, with so much happening in the local, national and global Church but also the world around us.

The Alliance is getting its voice heard. We nearly doubled our media appearances this year, increasingly being profiled for the great work



The Alliance's year in numbers

of our members and bringing a gracious yet confident evangelical voice into the public square on issues including marriage, equality legislation and court cases. We actively encouraged political engagement among member churches as the General Election took place, bringing in a change of government. In unity and shared mission, we partnered with hundreds of organisations on various projects throughout the year including partnering with 120 organisations for Biblefresh, the World Watch List with Open Doors and What's Your Promise? with Micah Challenge.

This was also the year we launched the groundbreaking *21st Century Evangelicals* survey into the beliefs, habits and practices of more than

17,000 Christians. As we take this study forward, gaining more insight, getting more statistical evidence and gauging the opinion of evangelical Christians on some of the major issues of the day, we will be well-placed to provide a strong and confident voice in public life.

We thank you, our members, our churches, organisations and supporters, for standing alongside us through the year. It is only with your prayers, support and encouragement that we really can be united in mission and speak God's gracious truth in order to transform our society. We hope that you will continue to stand with us on this exciting journey as we work towards seeing our vision and prayers become a reality.

United in mission

120

organisations working together with Biblefresh...

This year we fell in love with God's Word all over again. As the nation celebrated 400 years of the King James Bible, the Biblefresh team, through campaigns and initiatives including the Viral Bible Project and the People's Bible, reminded the Church that the Bible really can "change your world". The organisations that have joined Biblefresh include whole church streams, small theatre companies, media agencies and many



more. Krish Kandiah, the Alliance's executive director for churches in mission, said: "It's really exciting and encouraging to unite such a diverse range of partners with the same vision: to equip the Church with the words of God in order to do the works of God."

1,036

people impacted at Cymru Institute for Contemporary Christianity events...

A year after its launch in March 2010, hundreds have attended CICC events in Wales which have explored contemporary issues including climate change, gender issues, culture and global business which have been led by leading thinkers such as Mark Greene, Dr Elaine Storkey and Gerard Kelly. The increasingly popular CICC Cafes have looked at topics including leadership, church growth and the Bible.

6,113

hours given to the Alliance by our amazing volunteers...

Volunteers passionate about giving themselves to our vision to unite Christians and change society doubled the number of hours of work they donated to the Alliance this year. We are so grateful to all our volunteers who have given their time and their talents. "I volunteer at the Alliance because I wanted to give some time away as a 'seed' into the Kingdom of God. By giving my time here, I am also reaching out to churches, organisations and individuals across many denominations," says Femi Ige, a volunteer in the membership team. "I've benefited greatly from working in a Christian environment and learning new skills." eauk.org/getinvolved

400

Scottish Christians gathered to change the nation...

Hundreds of Christians braved adverse weather conditions that hit the country in November to attend A Day to Change the Nation in Dunfermline in November. Hosted by the Alliance and the Scotland Trust, it was a time for prayer and worship but also a time for a renewed sense of unity as several heads of Christian organisations in Scotland stood shoulder to shoulder and pledged to work together. "The presence of God was felt by many and people remarked about the sense of a new day of hope among God's people," said Fred Drummond, the Alliance's director for Scotland. "There will be shared platforms and united mission, believing that together in the grace of God we could transform the nation."

4,000

delegates attend the historic Lausanne Congress...

Gathered for just the third time since 1974, the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization took place in Cape Town in October 2010. Four thousand delegates had travelled from 190 of the world's 220 countries. Steve Clifford, general director of the Alliance, was there to witness the global Church standing shoulder to shoulder in unity. "For the small team from the Alliance that attended and participated in the Congress, perhaps the most exciting element was the realisation that God seems to be speaking the same challenge to leaders right across the nations of the world. Time and time again people spoke of the need for unity – not for unity's sake, but unity for purpose and for a shared mission."

Confident in voice

17,000

respondents to the Alliance's groundbreaking 21st Century Evangelicals survey...

The Alliance, in collaboration with Christian Research, launched a groundbreaking report which painted a comprehensive and detailed picture of evangelicals in the UK at the beginning of the 21st century. The report was gathered from data collected from 17,000 people from member churches and at Christian festivals around the UK. It is an invaluable asset to church leaders and Christian organisations as it provides encouragement, presents challenges and stimulates discussion. One of the most important pieces of work the Alliance has done in recent years, we will be continuing research in the months and years to come to paint an even more detailed picture of the beliefs, habits and practices of evangelical Christians in the UK.



1,000

respondents to the Marriage Week survey in Northern Ireland...

Knowing that strong, healthy marriages are the bedrock of society, Marriage Week Northern Ireland, a group of organisations including the Alliance's NI office, carried out a survey in 2010 which looked at a range of topics identifying issues married couples face and how churches are responding to these, as well as sexual attitudes and behaviours. Published in February 2011, the report called for churches to do more to support marriages.

467

appearances for the Alliance in the media...

To be a voice into society, we need platforms on which to speak. This year, the Alliance made a substantial pro-active effort to increase its media coverage and nearly doubled the number of its appearances in print, on radio and TV. Alliance spokespeople were sought by media outlets to bring the evangelical voice to some of the most pressing current affairs issues of the day. Issues we spoke on included assisted suicide, marriage, religious liberty, gambling and the Big Society. The Alliance featured in newspapers including the *Independent*, the *Times* and the *Guardian*, as well as the *Church Times*, *Christianity* magazine and *Christian Today*. Alliance spokespeople have regularly appeared on BBC radio, Premier Christian radio, Channel 4 and the BBC's *Big Questions*.

11,000

pledges made to help halve extreme poverty...

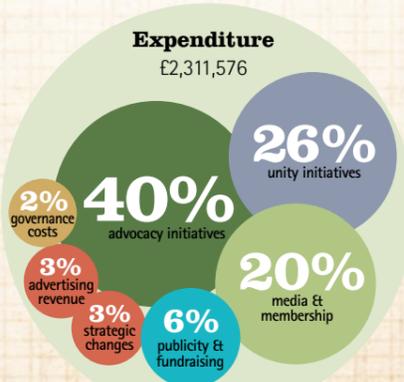
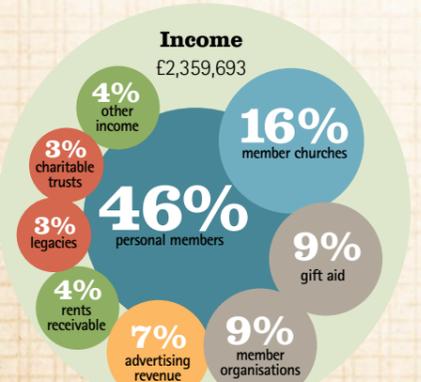
On 10 October 2010, Micah Challenge – a coalition of churches and Christian organisations united in an aim to fight global poverty – called on Christians to give their personal promises to act on poverty. On the same day, around 60 million Christians around the world stood together in prayer to remember the poor. In January, 11,000 pledges made by UK Christians were taken to Parliament and handed to MPs as a reminder of their commitment to the Millennium Development Goals. International director of Micah Challenge Joel Edwards said: "The fact that 60 million Christians made promises shows that the global Church is one of the most powerful and readied agents for change on poverty the world has ever seen."



92

per cent of the Alliance's expenditure spent on charitable activities...

"The Alliance is immensely grateful to God for His provision and faithfulness during a year of considerable change. We are so thankful for the loyalty and support of our personal, church and organisation members who together have provided 82 per cent of our income. Our expenditure reflects the change in strategy and structure during the year, with an increasing amount being spent on our unity initiatives through joint activities such as BibleFresh and increased investment in networking activity at a local level," says Helen Calder, executive director: finance & services.



This is a summary of the financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2011. Figures include unrestricted and restricted funds of the charity and the trading activities of EA Developments Ltd. They are taken from the full audited Annual Report & Financial Statements, which are available from the Evangelical Alliance, 186 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BT.



Persecuted Christians in the Muslim world

Dr Patrick Sookhdeo, a Muslim convert and international director of the Barnabas Fund, writes...

Blessed are the peacemakers

In 1991 I was the pastor of a church in east London at the outbreak of the first Gulf War, when the far right had threatened to attack British Muslims. Members of my congregation went unprompted to the local mosque and surrounded it, to protect it and the Muslims against any violent attacks.

Our Lord says that the peacemakers are blessed (Matthew 5:9). His disciples must live at peace among ourselves, and with non-Christians too as far as we can. We should also try to make peace between other people and seek to resolve conflicts.

So Christians today must seek to make peace among people of different religions, including Islam. This may involve joining in conversations with Muslims to build good relationships with them, or between them and others. And we must firmly confront fear and hatred of Muslim people.

But a response from the Muslim side is required too. There can be no real peace while many Christians in the Muslim world are persecuted for their faith.

Christ's broken body

In most Muslim-majority countries Christians have a lower status than Muslims, and they are subject to discrimination and restriction. These may leave them locked into poverty, illiteracy and poor employment, without even the basic necessities of life. And as a despised and disadvantaged minority, they are vulnerable to more severe persecution.

Often this is initiated by the state. In Saudi Arabia the government forbids non-Muslims from practising their faith publicly. In Iran the regime has arrested and detained many converts from Islam. In Pakistan the "blasphemy law" demands a death sentence for "defiling the name

of Muhammad", and Christians are at particular risk from malicious and false accusations.

I am a convert from Islam. The Islamic law of apostasy prescribes the death sentence for me and any adult male Muslim who leaves his faith. Although the penalty is rarely imposed, the apostasy law generates such intense hostility towards converts that they often face persecution and violence. In Afghanistan, TV footage showing converts being baptised triggered a frenzied anti-Christian response last year and calls for them all to be killed.

Physical violence against Christians by Muslim militants is also common. Homes and churches may be destroyed by mobs, and whole Christian communities driven from their villages. Individuals are raped or kidnapped, beaten up or imprisoned, and many are murdered. The last two years have seen a sequence of horrific massacres by Muslims against Christians in Nigeria.

The recent revolutions in the Arab world, which many have hailed as an "Arab spring", may turn out to be a Christian winter. Democracy may produce more strongly Islamic regimes and the fuller imposition of sharia law in Egypt, which will restrict Christian worship and witness and endanger converts further. In Syria, the fall of the regime could lead to an anti-Christian bloodbath.

Hope and aid for persecuted Christians

Barnabas Fund supports our Christian brothers and sisters in the Muslim world (and elsewhere) where they suffer discrimination, oppression and persecution because of their faith. We channel donations from Christians and churches into a wide range of projects run by local churches and Christian ministries.

barnabusfund.org

Recent projects have included food for Iraqi Christian refugees in Syria, emergency relief for flood victims in Pakistan, Christian schooling, training for Indonesian church leaders, self-sufficiency projects in Egypt, care for converts in the Arab world and victims of violence in Nigeria, and many others.

The service of Christ's people in their need is part of our service to him. "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me," says Jesus in Matthew 25. We would like Christians in Islamic countries to be able to live at peace with their Muslim neighbours without fear. But while they still suffer because of their love for the Lord, it is our calling and our privilege to stand with them.

The fifth-century theologian Augustine said that hope has two daughters: anger at the way things are and courage to see that they do not have to remain that way. And Dr Martin Luther King said: "You know, my friends, there comes a time when people get tired of being trampled down by the iron feet of oppression... And we are determined to work and fight until justice runs down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

Aasia Bibi, a Christian mother of five, is currently on death row in Pakistan, falsely accused under the blasphemy law. If her appeal fails, she will face execution later this year. Two Pakistani politicians who took up her case have been assassinated, and many Muslims, even in the West, believe that she should be killed. It is Christians such as Aasia, persecuted for their faith and without other help, whom Barnabas Fund exists to support.

In Their Shoes

A Christian theatre company set an example for how to work well with Muslim neighbours by collaborating on a drama project over the summer.

Saltmine theatre group joined forces with Ulfah Arts – a muslim theatre company – to produce *In Their Shoes*, a play which promoted working together despite having differences and toured local schools.

Says the theatre company: "The project wonderfully models the theme it is promoting as the two theatre companies uniquely combine to produce a play that is itself an example of what can be achieved when two different people come together and use their abilities for the same goal."

In Their Shoes was created with the encouragement of More Than Gold, the agency helping churches make the most of the 2012 Games.

saltminetrust.org.uk
morethangold.org.uk/productions



Media Matters

by Lizzy Millar, press officer

The big news story over the summer was the closure of the *News of the World*, and the Alliance's new advocacy director Dave Landrum gave robust responses in a range of media, including BBC Radio Four's *Sunday Programme*, *Christian Today* and *Premier Radio*.

In other news, an off-the-cuff-remark by Danny Cohen, controller of BBC1, landed him in hot water.

Mr Cohen was speaking at the Church and Media annual conference when he was asked by moderator Andrew Graystone why Christians on the beeb were generally portrayed as "freaks, geeks or antiques".

Mr Cohen disagreed, giving *EastEnders* stalwart Dot Cotton as a good example of someone who lives out her faith. Dot, a twice-married chain-smoking granny, is also known for her hypochondria and gossiping.

A reporter from *The Guardian* picked up on this comment so I matched her up with the Reverend Hayley Matthews, chaplain for MediaCity UK, the new Salford base for BBC North, and Matthew Adcock, from the London School of Theology, for feedback.



Another remark, this time by Sir Trevor Phillips, chairman of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, caused a separate media storm.

Mr Phillips was quoted in *The Daily Telegraph* saying Christians were more militant than Muslims and he also described African-Caribbean believers as reviving an "old-time religion".

We at the Alliance immediately issued a press statement that received substantial coverage in the Christian press. In response to this, Steve Clifford, general director, did nine separate interviews for BBC Regional Radio Sunday programmes.

In other PR news, Steve was asked by UCB radio to reflect on how Billy Graham had influenced his own life and that of the Alliance.

The Daily Mirror ran a story following our press release condemning the government for relaxing rules on gambling by doubling winning stakes on fruit machines.

And finally, Ruth Valerio, a member of the Alliance's Council, was featured in *Woman and Home* magazine on how she personally demonstrates the Big Society. Ruth spoke about her efforts to encourage neighbours to regenerate the housing estate where she lives with her husband and their two children.

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The end of the world

World Trade Center

Looking for conversation starters, Sophie Lister finds relevant themes in popular culture...

How do you film the unthinkable?

This was the question facing director Oliver Stone as, just a few years after the destruction of the World Trade Center, he set about piecing together a story about the tragedy. Stone, known for courting political controversy with films like Vietnam War tale *Platoon* and conspiracy drama *JFK*, was clear about his intentions. This film would aim to avoid the 'mythologizing' of 9/11, which, according to Stone, both political sides were guilty of. Instead, it would be the story of a handful of ordinary people, showing the day's monumental events from an intimate perspective.

There was nothing 'ordinary' about any of the stories which emerged from Ground Zero, and the one that is brought to light in *World Trade Center* (2006) is so remarkable that it almost feels as though it were concocted by Hollywood. The truth is that the screenplay was carefully pieced together from the accounts of survivors and their relatives, taking great pains to paint an accurate picture.

When we meet police sergeant John McLoughlin (Nicholas Cage) and younger recruit Will Jimeno (Michael Peña), the date now burned into our collective cultural memory is just another day for them. They awaken, go through their morning routines, head to work. Our knowledge of what is to come makes these mundane scenes almost unbearable to watch, and sure enough, it isn't long before a shadow is cast across New York. None of the officers, initially, grasp the scale of what is happening. But as they are called out to the scene, the truth begins to dawn upon the taciturn McLoughlin. "We're prepared for everything – but not this," he confesses. "Not something this size. There's no plan. We didn't make any."

Into the fray

Amid the chaos and debris, among crowds of people utterly at the mercy of events which they have not yet begun to comprehend, the policemen stand aghast. "The whole world's coming to an end," declares one, and he doesn't appear to be far wrong. The film so effectively conveys the devastation of the planes' initial impact that we

find ourselves willing these men to flee the scene along with the public. But as so many did on the day, McLoughlin, Jimeno and their colleagues take the decision to run, not away from the burning buildings, but forward into the fray.

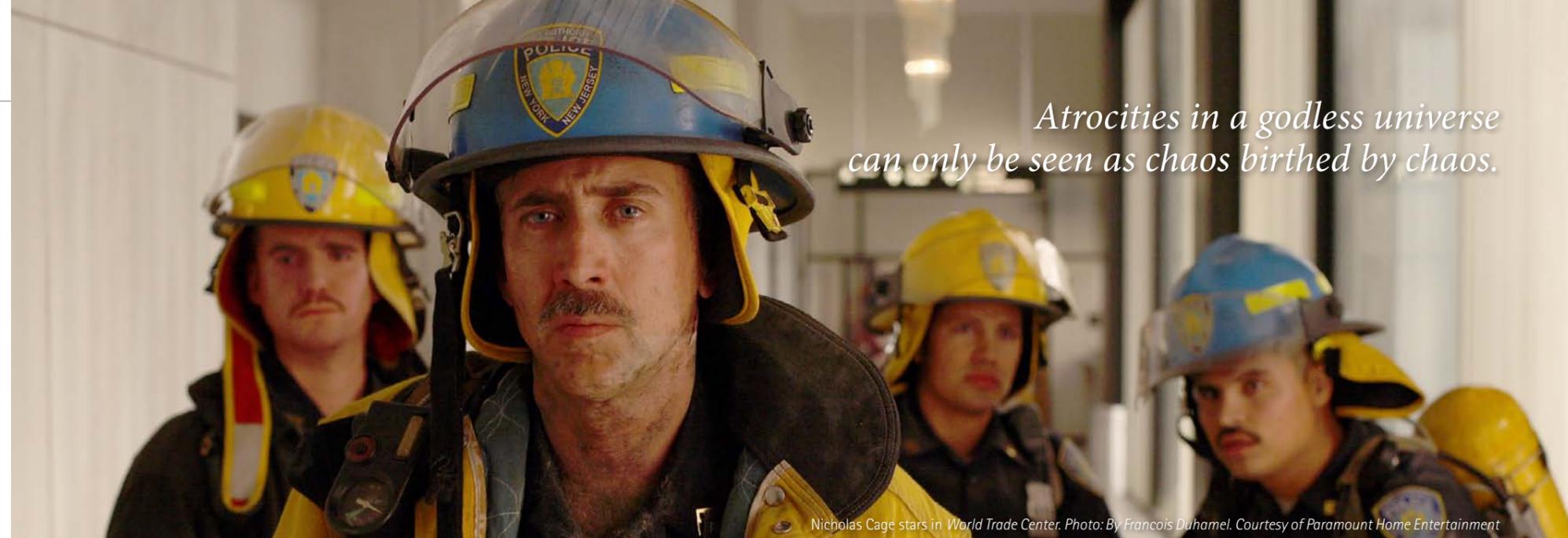
They don't even make it as far as the towers. With the collapse, McLoughlin, Jimeno and the others are left pinned beneath the rubble, and the camera draws slowly up out of their hole. It continues to climb, first above New York, so that we can see the fractured skyline and the billowing smoke, then rising above the planet. It's a comment, perhaps, on our inability to comprehend the scale of the suffering; on our comparative smallness in the face of all that evil can conjure. It seems, for a brief moment before the narrative lifts again, that all of the officers' courage and heroic impulses have simply been overcome by the darkness.

Indeed for many, on that day, there were no happy endings. There were no last-minute rescues, no rising out of the rubble, no tears of relief. *World Trade Center* – some would say to its detriment – draws back from such stories. But McLoughlin and Jimeno's tale is true, too, and it is laced with an extraordinary grace that shines a light even among all the horror. It suggests that somehow, in the midst of all that took place at Ground Zero, a God of goodness and love was still present.

Perhaps the filmmakers chose to tell McLoughlin and Jimeno's story, above any other, because we crave reassurance. After all, very few people would willingly turn out at the cinema just to be told that 9/11 was a senseless, hopeless tragedy. We want to know that nothing is meaningless – that

goodness and love and bravery can win, even against seemingly overwhelming odds. But could it be that this is not mere wishful thinking, rather the reflection of a deeper reality? Atrocities in a godless universe can only be seen as chaos birthed by chaos – as the journalist and poet Steve Turner once put it, "the sound of man worshipping his maker". Our compulsion to hold on to hope, even in the face of the unspeakable, tells us that it cannot be so.

World Trade Center is available on DVD from Paramount Home Entertainment. Sophie Lister writes for the Damaris Trust damaris.org



Nicholas Cage stars in *World Trade Center*. Photo: By Francois Duhamel. Courtesy of Paramount Home Entertainment

REVIEWS

This edition's reviewers: Chine Mbubaegbu, Anna Moyle, Daniel Webster, Andrew Wilson

10,000 Reasons, Matt Redman, Kingsway, 2011



Prolific worship leader Matt Redman is back with another outstanding album. Recorded with more than 1,000 worship leaders in the US last year, *10,000 Reasons* opens with the rousing, stomping *We Are The Free*. The album has much of the trademark epic Redman sound, in tracks such as anthems *Here for You*, and *Holy*, which starts as a contemplative reflection on the nature of God but then builds into a triumphant declaration of who He is. This is one of those songs that is sure to become a classic in worship conferences around the world. Redman at his best.

CM

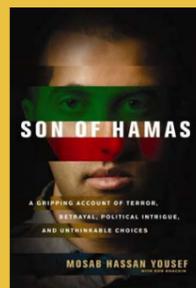
Erasing Hell, David Cook Publishing, 2011
By Francis Chan & Preston Sprinkle



In *Erasing Hell*, Francis Chan, founding pastor of Cornerstone Church, California, is quite unashamedly countering the arguments proposed in Rob Bell's controversial *Love Wins* released earlier this year. But where Bell seems focussed on a man-centred sense of injustice at the concept of hell, Chan's stance is a humble one which focuses in essence on the sovereignty of God and the idea that, quite frankly, He can do whatever He wants. It is an honest account racked with the pain in the realisation that some will face punishment in a literal hell. But Chan stresses that this is more than just about doctrine. It has real and practical effects on how we live the Christian life now. Unapologetic, courageous and honest.

CM

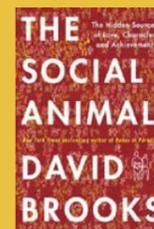
Son of Hamas, Authentic, 2010
By Mosab Hassan Yousef with Ron Brackin



This gripping book is more action-packed than your average summer blockbuster. Filled with incredible stories about one young man's journey from Islam and Hamas to Christianity and political asylum in America, you won't want to put it down once you've picked it up. What makes it so compelling is that Yousef infuses the stories of his past with a grace and love towards his family and friends that he's left behind, while embracing his future life as a Christian. He holds no bitterness to the Israelis and Palestinians that terrorised him, but rather urges them to seek the path to peace and reconciliation.

AM

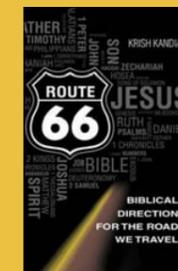
The Social Animal: The hidden sources of love, character and achievement, Random House, 2011
By David Brooks



This book is a culmination of one person's reading into works of neuroscience, evolutionary biology, and the unconscious mind. What author David Brooks discovers is that we are not rational animals – we are social animals, built to connect with each other and to big ideas. Modern science, economics and management principles are not sufficient in determining what motivates human behaviour. Less measurable things such as relationships, emotion and the human unconscious are just as, if not more, important. Brooks attempts to bring this insight down to earth through the fictional story of Harold and Erica, though at times this narrative feels awkward within the scope of the book.

AM

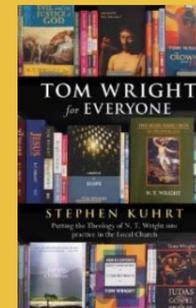
Route 66: A Crash Course in Navigating Life with the Bible, Lion Hudson, 2010
By Krish Kandiah



Krish Kandiah has done us all a favour. He has managed to write a book about the Bible that is creative, readable, thoughtful and evangelical – which not all books on the scriptures are. Yet it also lends itself brilliantly to study in small groups. Launching off the back of this year's Spring Harvest theme, *Route 66* takes the eight main types of writing in the Bible (narrative, law, Psalms, wisdom, prophets, gospels, epistles and apocalyptic), and uses them as a structure for a superb eight-week course, complete with illustrations, insightful analysis, group questions and small group studies. Perhaps inevitably, there are some casualties of the eight-week structure: Acts becomes an epistle, Numbers a book of law, and 1 and 2 Chronicles, as well as Ruth, are lost altogether. But the benefits of Kandiah's helpful structure far outweigh these minor drawbacks, and more importantly, the book manages to combine theological precision, grounded in scholarship, with a bouncy and conversational style that make it accessible to all of us. In short, it is hard to imagine a small group, or an individual, who would not find *Route 66* useful.

AW

Tom Wright for Everyone, SPCK, 2011
By Stephen Kuhrt



In a short and highly readable book Stephen Kuhrt provides a broad overview of the scholarship of Tom Wright and the impact it has had on the local church. A prolific writer impacting both the academic and church spheres, this book is an attempt to show why it is crucial that both groups do more to engage with Wright's theology.

At times it reads as an apology for a misunderstood man, critiquing academics for dismissing him and conservative evangelicals who criticise Wright without fully appreciating what he says. This means that it verges on hagiography in places, but this is balanced by the short section in which Kuhrt outlines where he disagrees with Wright. The application to the life of the Church in mission and pastoral care demonstrates the importance of Wright's theology in a practical context. Yet the strongest section of the book is a whistlestop tour through what Wright has to say about a wide range of topics, from Israel to exile, and from judgement to virtue, and how he challenges our understanding of them. This provides the wide angle vision on Wright's theology, and how it all fits together, that is sometimes hard to grasp when reading his own books.

DW

Good news stories

Narratives about Christian-Muslim relations can too often focus on the negative, writes Jenny Taylor...

It is very telling that the first sketch for this article about relating to Muslim people turned out to be overwhelmingly negative. I wrote it from what's already in the media ether, as it were, just as an experiment. Then I sent it to a friend who works day in day out with Muslims in Oxford, for his reaction. He was duly dismayed and felt I focused on the danger to converts rather than the range of responses – including the positive.

He said: "At two different baptisms of Iranians here a few weeks ago, their Muslim family members were present and approving their daughter/sister getting baptised. Readers should be aware of that kind of response too, not just the persecution, otherwise you give a distorted picture."

I had proved how easy it is even for those of us who know something about it to slip into a negative groove about Islam from 'received opinion', without real engagement. Even for a journalist who specialises in Islam, it's difficult to get at the good news. You have to believe there's a good story out there in order to find it. But no-one can engage with Muslim people – or write about the subject – without that attitude of hope.

Yet there it was: at the quiet, intimate level of ordinary interaction, an alternative to the ubiquitous gloom, tension and segregation that seems increasingly to be the default impression. Something amazing is happening in Britain.

Roger Lynch in Balsall Heath, Birmingham, is a former project manager with the National Grid. He now runs a sports project called Kingsbridge, and spends part of his time organising Christian volunteers to help serve the local majority Muslim community. Last year the team spent an afternoon clearing the car park at Birmingham Central Mosque.

"There was a tiny bit of cynicism in the first instance; people thought it'll be a one-off, help the project to tick a few boxes. But we've been doing it now for four years," he said.

"The neighbourhood wardens provide the van and the tools and volunteers do the rest. The worshippers came for afternoon prayers and saw these T-shirts with the Hope logo printed on them. Now they think it's great."

This is a part of the country which the police regard as one of the top hotspots.

Yet it's here too that another remarkable project – The Springfield Project – based at



first on a mums and toddlers group in St Christopher's Church, expanded to become one of the country's beacon Children's Centres, uniquely attracting a £2 million funding partnership between the Anglican Church and the local authority, with provision across the board. It was opened by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2008.

More than 200 mostly Asian families who are unbelievably un-plugged into Britain come to the 'Play and Stay' sessions – which are entirely run by volunteers from mixed backgrounds. One woman had been living without hot water for 18 months. Another was thrown out by her husband, with the children, and had no idea where to go.

Angie King, head of centre, says extremism fills the vacuum that is left when people are not integrated from a young age into a caring environment that identifies them clearly as a wanted part of the whole community.

There is a huge array of caring initiatives now beginning, across the country, to plug them in.

After all, says Steve Bell, national director of Interserve, it is Christians rather than Muslims, who have been charged by Jesus with the work of peacemaking (Matthew 5:9).

Author of the acclaimed *Grace for Muslims* and the *Friendship First* course, he writes: "Local churches are ... well-placed to facilitate social cohesion in a way that government cannot. There are some Christ-like initiatives already in existence, which are offering safe-space around the country. Where this is happening, it is like the formation of small oases of hope in an otherwise bleak landscape."

In his forthcoming *Gospel for Muslims – Learning to Read the Gospel through Eastern*



Dr Jenny Taylor is director of Lapid Media which promotes religious literacy in world affairs. She is a member of the Evangelical Alliance Theological and Public Affairs Advisory Commission and author with Lesslie Newbigin of Faith and Power: Christianity and Islam in 'Secular' Britain (Wipf and Stock 2005)

lapidmedia.com

Eyes (Authentic, Milton Keynes) Bell writes of "spiritual friendships", encounters at the school gate, culturally appropriate displays of respect and kindness at weddings and funerals.

Even more remarkably, he cites a hundred Muslim people attending a Christian community worker's 60th birthday party in a public hall "because they loved her"; 200 parents from a Muslim community attending the closing event of a children's Summer Club run by Christians in the south-east; BBQs; Bible studies; Eid parties and shared advocacy.

But with leadership mostly from returned missionaries who have a linguistic and cultural 'pass', the laity now need to catch on. Says John Ray, retired headmaster of an English medium school in Kashmir: "This is a task that we believe needs the whole of God's church rather than a job for the specialists."

The opportunities are bound to grow, for, says French researcher Jean-Marie Gaudeul, "the days of closed, homogeneous, unchanging societies are rapidly going and they will not come back".

"Social conformism will no longer suffice to deal with the great questions of life. Every human being has to make his own choice by himself, or herself."

And quietly, it is happening. Tim Green of Urban Vision cites a figure of around 4,000 new believers in Britain from countries including Iran, Pakistan, India, Nigeria, Somalia and Zambia.

Ray cautions that some Christians who know something about Islam have no love for Muslims, and some who do love Muslims are naïve about negative trends in Islam.

You can trust those of us in the media to be onto the negative bit.

But we all need to be closer to what's going on on the ground to be part of the best story there is.

Faith, hope and newsprint

Ruth Gledhill, religion correspondent at the *Times*, on alcoholism, phone hacking and how the media views religion post-9/11...

idea: What's it like being a religion correspondent on a national newspaper?

In 1987 at the age of just 27 I achieved most of my life's ambition, which was to join the *Times* as a journalist. My dream was to be the religious affairs correspondent, as it was then styled, before editor Simon Jenkins decided there were too many 'affairs' on the paper. It was not for a couple of years that I was appointed religion correspondent, after being mentored into the role by my brilliant predecessor Clifford Longley. One of my first tasks in an unofficial 'trial' period was to phone the Oxford don Garry Bennett and suggest strongly to him that he had written the now-notorious anonymous Crockford's preface which was highly critical of the then Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie, accusing him of 'nailing his colours to the fence'. Bennett denied it completely. I believed him, naively – after all he was an ordained cleric and a top academic – and went chasing off after someone else. He then committed suicide, revealing himself in the process as the author. I had thought my new

hardly ever get them. Phone hacking to short-circuit processes such as these must have been so tempting, especially if it seemed to be sanctioned by a person in authority over the journalist.

And the lowlight?

The low point of my career was during my drinking days, when I was still an indentured trainee on the *Birmingham Post*. We used to go to a bar in the basement of the newspaper office, appropriately named The Printer's Devil. Not for nothing is alcohol known as 'the demon drink'. I am not going to go into details of what happened in the morning after one of these terrible sessions. I was lucky not to be sacked. My penance was to report on the wedding of the daughter of the company director I had made very angry indeed. We carried the wedding story on the front page. I am so grateful that, by the grace of God, I stopped

"A good atmosphere of trust has been created between scholars of both faiths in Britain, which can only be of benefit to the common good of the entire nation."

role would be free of the strains and stresses of ordinary news reporting. This taught me that religion was as full of intrigue, sensation, death and destruction as any other job in a national newspaper newsroom.

What's been the highlight of your career so far?

My biggest story ever was getting the name of the next Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, before even he knew that he had been chosen. My scoop was obtained by old-fashioned journalism, not through hacking – or blagging! We were already 99 per cent sure the Church had chosen Dr Williams but the information was second-hand and we needed to be 100 per cent sure. That one per cent extra proof would make the difference between the story going inside the paper and on the front page. I made the extra phone call, and got the story. I was under enormous pressure from my newsdesk. I can see how it might have become the norm for some journalists on a certain Sunday tabloid, where the pressure was even greater, to take their now-notorious short-cuts. My Rowan Williams story took hours of work. It cost sleepless nights, endless phone calls, ceaseless networking. These stories are not easy to get. That's why journalists

drinking alcohol in 1985. Had I carried on, I would certainly now be dead, or in prison.

How has the religion patch changed since 9/11?

People such as myself were already aware of the growing importance of faith in international affairs. One effect of 9/11 was to wake up the rest of the world to the fact that, in an age of growing secularism, religious belief was still a vitally important factor in the lives of millions. Religion was seen up until that point as important but its coverage still had something of the 'public duty' about it. The *Times* carried stories on the established Church because most of our readers, I would guess, at that point were churchgoers. So I had a 'constituency' to serve, as I called it. What 9/11 did was show the world that fanatics were still prepared to die and kill, ostensibly for their faith. Many liberals in particular would have rather preferred to believe this was a phenomenon of the Crusades, but certainly not something to be factored into modern life. A fierce debate over the rights and wrongs of believers of all faiths – and none – has continued ever since. And no editor now underestimates the importance of religion, not that they ever did on the *Times* in any case.



In your experience, how do you think Christians relate to Muslims and vice versa?

The present Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams has led the field in creating better understanding of Islam in the Christian community. Although we at the *Times* were among the strongest critics of his 'Sharia' speech, where I still believe he went too far without understanding the problems facing women in particular living under some interpretations of Sharia, he was nonetheless right to raise these points for public debate. He has led the Christian community in encouraging dialogue with Islam, both in Britain and internationally. As a result, a good atmosphere of trust has been created between scholars of both faiths in Britain, which can only be of benefit to the common good of the entire nation, secular and religious, in the future.

Are religion's days numbered?

Religion's days are as numbered as the grains of sands on the beach, and as the stars in the sky. Faith will always be with us. I cannot imagine living without it. Or rather, I can too easily imagine living without it and I tremble at the picture that unfolds in my mind. As I often say when giving public presentations, I have neither the expertise nor the ability to present a convincing intellectual case for the existence of God. But what I do know from personal experience is that faith works for me. I have tried life with God, and life without God, and I know which I prefer. Faith makes me a better person. I don't deny that it is possible for many people to be good people and live a good life without God. But one lesson my drinking days taught me, is that I am not one of them.

ruthgledhill.blogspot.com

Watch our video interview with author Steve Bell eauk.org/idea

The two sides of John Stott's brain

Chris Wright, international director of Langham Partnership International, remembers friend and mentor John Stott...

John Stott's lifetime spans more than half the history of the Evangelical Alliance. And for all his life of active ministry he was a whole-hearted supporter of the vision and mission of the Alliance, and served for some years as its president. The Evangelical Alliance's stated aims of unity could well sum up one of the many passions of John Stott: unity among evangelical believers for the sake of their effective witness in the world – witness that must be personal and public, spiritual and social.

"The Alliance promotes unity and truth, acts as an evangelical voice to the state, society and the wider church, and works collaboratively with Alliance members and other evangelicals, to present Christ credibly as good news for spiritual and social transformation."

All of the above could describe John Stott. He was committed to the truth of the Bible and regarded the evangelical tradition as the simplest and most faithful form of orthodox biblical Christianity. But it was always Bible first. In the truest Reformation spirit, he saw all tradition, including the evangelical tradition, as *semper reformanda*. "The hallmark of an authentic evangelical is not the uncritical repetition of old traditions but the willingness to submit every tradition, however ancient, to fresh biblical scrutiny, and, if necessary, reform," he said, in an interview with Roy McCloughry in *Third Way* in 1995 (Vol. 18.8).

Like the Alliance, John Stott sought to uphold both truth and unity. "I've given a great deal of my life to the preservation and development of the unity of the evangelical constituency, because it has been a great concern of mine," he said, in that same *Third Way* interview. "I have never believed that our differences have been great enough to warrant fragmentation. I don't mind people founding their own societies and going after their own thing – provided they still recognise that we belong to one another."

That spirit of unity in plurality, of truth spoken with grace, explains John Stott's foundational role in the formation of possibly the two most influential manifestations of evangelicalism in the world today – the World Evangelical Alliance and the Lausanne Movement. John Stott was a major speaker at the inaugural conference of the World Evangelical Fellowship (later the WEA) in 1951, and he joined Billy Graham in the first Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in 1974. That was when he framed the epoch-making Lausanne

Covenant, which provided a benchmark for a global network of evangelicals (and Christians from other traditions, it has to be added) who are committed to mission in all the dimensions of its biblical wholeness.

Lausanne, and its consultations that followed in the 1980s (most chaired by John Stott), restored the integration of evangelism and social engagement that had characterised evangelicals in the century of the Evangelical Alliance's formation. And to those two elements has been added the third – our care of creation itself as a dimension of Christian mission. That too was dear to John Stott's theology and heart, and all three have found fresh expression in *The Cape Town Commitment*. That document was read to him gradually over the months before he died, and he delighted in its affirmations and what he called 'the remarkable degree of unity' that was evident at Cape Town.

Another proof of the integrating unity of John's vision was his concept of "double listening". We must listen, he would frequently say, to the Word and to the world. We listen to God's Word in the Bible, in order to believe and obey it. But we must also listen to the world in order to understand it and to relate the gospel relevantly to its challenges and needs. This has been described by some as "the two sides of John Stott's brain". And out of one side came an organisation and out of the other an institute – both founded by him.

Langham Partnership International is



Chris Wright with John Stott, bird-watching on the cliffs of Newfoundland, 2003

"He was committed to the truth of the Bible and regarded the evangelical tradition as the simplest and most faithful form of orthodox biblical Christianity."

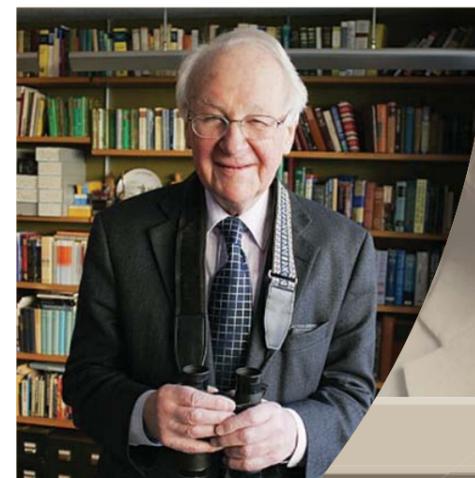
committed to equipping a new generation of Bible teachers – whether that teaching is done in the pulpit (through training preachers), or on paper (through evangelical literature), or in a classroom (through funding theological teachers) – in the fast growing churches of the majority world. It reflects John Stott's conviction that the Church grows through God's Word, and that biblical preaching is essential to Christian maturity and Christlikeness. "The Church is always a reflection of the preaching it receives, and I don't think it is an exaggeration to say that the low standards of Christian living throughout the world are due more than anything else to the low standards of Christian preaching and teaching," he said in that *Third Way* interview.

The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity reflects John Stott's passion that Christians must engage their many cultures for the gospel, as salt and light, and must do so not just in verbal evangelism, but in whole-life discipleship that overcomes the sacred-secular divide by affirming every area of life and work as a means of glorifying God, of obeying His calling, and fulfilling His mission.

May the Evangelical Alliance, in its future as well as its history, remain true to its own vision and goals that were so heartily embraced and fostered by John Stott.

lausanne.org/ctcommitment
johnstottmemorial.org
langhampartnership.org
licc.org.uk

*Do visit www.johnstottmemorial.org for rich resources on John Stott's life and an international book of remembrance. All donations in his memory received in the UK through this site will be divided equally (at John Stott's request) between Langham Partnership and LICC.



In memory of
Revd Dr John R W Stott

27th April 1921 – 27 July 2011

Great evangelical statesman

John Stott is rightly regarded as one of the great evangelical statesman of the last fifty years. He has been a model, example and inspiration to evangelical/Bible-believing Christians all across the world, probably appreciated even more in the non-Western world than even in his home country. His great gifts of masterful biblical exegesis, great theological acuity, and clarity of thought and speech, as well as his considerable output of outstanding books, have had an impact on countless thousands around the world.

Lindsay Brown. IFES Evangelist at Large and International Director of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

'Uncle John'

So many called him 'Uncle John'. That was because he was always willing to listen. No problem was too trivial and he was never impatient. He never sat on the fence but would ever be willing to put himself in the line of fire for the sake of justice. He was humble in a radical but unobtrusive way. No one could long be in doubt that here was a man of the English upper middle-classes (apart from Rugby and Cambridge, he lived within a stone's throw of Harley Street, where his father had practised medicine, nearly all his life). Yet his life-style was simple, even threadbare. He enjoyed the simplest things and was particularly sensitive to the wonders of creation (hence his interest in birds). He was an exemplary rôle-model for so many younger clergy, teachers and scholars. His integrity, charity and the rigour of his scholarship have been a by-word for those who have known him. Above all, he showed us how to follow Christ in a difficult and dangerous world which God, nevertheless, seeks to redeem.

Michael Nazir-Ali. The Former Bishop of Rochester and a member of the House of Lords

Remarkable ministry

It will not be possible to write the history of the church in the 20th century without reference to John Stott. His remarkable ministry spanned the whole of the second half of the century and even in his eighties he was making an impact on the 21st. His leadership of the international evangelical movement was a major factor in moving it from rather narrow-minded fundamentalism after the Second World War, to the fastest growing part of world Christianity that it is today.

To many of those whose lives he influenced most profoundly, however, he was simply 'Uncle John' – a much loved friend and brother, whose conversations and letters we treasure, and to whose prayers we will never know how much we owe. Like Moses, John Stott was one of the greatest leaders that God has raised up for his people, and yet at the same time, one of the humblest men on the face of the earth. He was, for all of us who knew him, a walking embodiment of the simple beauty of Jesus, whom he loved above all else.

Chris Wright. International Director of Langham Partnership International

In the days when London Bible College was still in Marylebone, theological students would divide between All Souls and Westminster Chapel congregations. Their two pastors were superb models of Bible exposition, inspiring a new generation of preachers, for Britain and for the home countries of overseas students. John's refusal of tempting offers of bishoprics and principalships underline the enormous influence which a significant city pulpit can have not only on the immediate congregation, but through them to the whole evangelical cause.

Dr Mike Griffiths - OMF General Director 1969-80; Principal of London Bible College, 1980-89; Prof. Mission Studies, Regent College, Vancouver 1990-93

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Please go to the John Stott Memorial site for more details: www.johnstottmemorial.org

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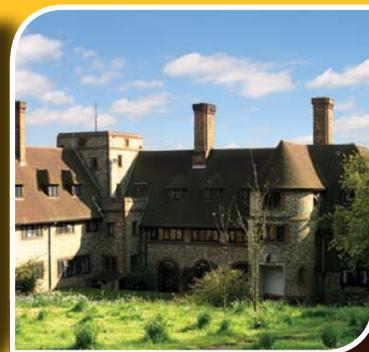
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