

Religious Literacy

A practical guide to the region's faith communities

Voice of the region

**YORKSHIRE
AND
HUMBER
ASSEMBLY**
Voice of the region



Force of the region

Foreword

The diversity of Yorkshire and Humber is one of its many strengths. At the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly, it is one of our key roles to ensure that all people of the region have a voice. This is why we are delighted to support the production of this guide.

Faith, and understanding more about the different faith communities in the region, is the focus of the guide. Written by Dr. Kim Knott of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds and Reverend David Randolph-Horn, Associate Director of Leeds Church Institute, it is designed as an easy-to-use, practical tool. Its suggestions will help us all build understanding, respect and co-operation between people of differing faith backgrounds.

Whether you are an employer, a local authority, a policy maker or someone who simply wishes to understand more about our diverse communities, we hope you will find this guide useful. Packed full of information and references, it offers suggestions for those who wish to know more about the different faith communities in our region and how we can most effectively work with each other.

To accompany the guide, the Churches Regional Commission will be offering in-house training to organisations and employers. For more details of the training or copies of the guide contact Mary White on 0113 244 3413 or email at mary.white@crc-online.org.uk.

This guide is a strong example of partnership working. On behalf of the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly, I would like to thank all those who have contributed, not least Hilary Willmer, the Churches Regional Commission's former representative in the Assembly, whose efforts ensured that this guide reached production.

Peter Box
Chair of the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly
August 2005 (4th edition)

Voice of the

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Introduction

'Faith communities and religious organisations play significant roles in civil society.'
The Parekh Report, 2000, p235

Faith, religion and spirituality are increasingly recognised as being important in civil society and cultural renewal. They have a role to play in public order, social stability and ethical matters. They are significant for people's motivation in work, education and leisure, and for their civic participation. In recent years, seminal work has been done to raise issues concerned with racial and ethnic discrimination. There is another area, however, which has only recently begun to receive appropriate consideration from government. This is the whole area of faith. For a considerable number of people, including those in the most socially marginalised communities, belief and affiliation to a faith community provide the most significant aspects of their identity. People's faith – their beliefs, values and practices – and the religion they belong to cannot simply be equated with either race or culture.

This factor has now been recognised by central Government, local authorities and policy bodies such as the Runnymede Trust. Religious communities and the issue of faith have been mentioned recently in the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, the guidance on Local Strategic Partnerships, and in the reports on community cohesion, the future of multi-ethnic Britain, and religious discrimination.¹ From December 2003 the laws on discrimination also apply to faith, in employment and training.

The subject of this guide is therefore topical. Its purpose is to introduce some of the issues that are raised in relation to membership of faith communities and will give us all confidence in our partnerships and contacts with faith communities.

Analysis

FAITH IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Issues that connect with the faith of believers and the activities of religious organisations comprise a major part of our social fabric. Faith and religion are influential forces that affect not only private beliefs and practices and family affairs, but also the following aspects of public life:

- Daily, weekly, monthly and annual schedules
- Diet
- Death and dying
- Dress codes
- Economic choices
- Education and nurture
- Employment issues
- Ethical decision-making
- Health issues
- Housing
- Identity
- Leisure choices and requirements
- Political choices and participation
- Social welfare
- Travel
- Voluntary activities

Leaders in the region concerned with public issues clearly need to take account of the issues identified above if public services are to be available to all and not just some. Furthermore, faith communities are not simply obstacles to be overcome; they are actual or potential partners in service delivery. Leeds Jewish Board of Welfare and the Children's Society are just two such partners, but many others are referred to in *The Churches and Regional Development in Yorkshire and the Humber* and in *Religions in the UK*. Government guidance on "Best Practice" now requires that Local Authorities work together with all potential partners. Local Government Association (LGA) guidance, in *Faith and Community: A Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities*, makes it clear that this includes faith communities. The recent Guidance on Community Cohesion published by the LGA also contains a section on involving faith communities.

Important work on these issues has been carried out in our region, examples being the reports on religion in the workplace, and on faith and social action in Leeds and Bradford.² We have local knowledge and resources to draw on: our local interfaith groups and multi liaison forums; and specialists on interfaith relations, in Bradford, and on community religions, theology and ethics, in Leeds.³ The *Angels and Advocates* publication produced by the Churches Regional Commission highlights good practice in church social action in Yorkshire and the Humber, and its sister report *Sowing the Seed* focusses on rural church social action.

But information about how local religions are organised, and what their adherents believe and practise is not widely known or understood in a generally secular society like our own. Little is known about Christianity, except by those who attend a church, and the growing millions that follow a faith other than Christianity face both ignorance and prejudice. This is often compounded by racism, for Black Christians as well as Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, and anti-semitism, for Jews.

Developing our knowledge and understanding of faith is important not only because of its role in civic life, but because a growing number of younger people see this as a key aspect of their identity. Many think of themselves first in terms of their religion and only after that in terms of their citizenship, as British, or their ethnic heritage, as Pakistani or Punjabi. Religious identity has become more, not less important, the longer people have been settled here. Failing to acknowledge this can be hurtful to individuals, and damaging to communities and the relations between them. Simple actions exclude and alienate, such as arranging consultations that clash with major faith festivals, failing to serve appropriate food at a public gathering, or referring to someone by the nationality of their grandparents when they would prefer to be identified by their faith.⁴

SOME USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Faith

A person's beliefs and values

Religion

A set of observances connected to faith

Spirituality

Transforming oneself and one's relations with other people, the whole of creation, and the divine⁵

Race

Social divisions based on skin colour and physical features

Ethnicity

Membership of a social group, often related to a geographical region or place of origin, with a distinctive language, customs, attitudes, and values

Cultural traditions

Norms about how and what to do, often passed down through families and communities.

As a visitor to a Muslim School, an Anglican vicar was treated to a burger in a bap. It was a Halal lamb burger. The culture was Anglo-American, with a dash of Punjabi and Yorkshire ethnicity, but the religious rules were Muslim. Where possible, we need to distinguish between culture, ethnicity, religion and faith.

RELIGION, RACE AND ETHNICITY

"There is an assumption that race identifies faith."

"People always say 'ethnic, ethnic', but what about us Christians?"

"Religion is often not seen as intrinsic to identity... where race is." ⁶

How are faith and religion related to race and ethnicity? They are not necessarily related at all. Judaism, Christianity and Islam all originate from the areas we now refer to as the Near and Middle East, but today their followers include people from many different races, nations and ethnic groups. There are black and white Jews, black and white Christians, and black and white Muslims. This is true for Buddhism too. The Buddha lived in India, but different generations of his followers carried his teachings all over Asia, and, more recently, to Europe, and North and South America. In Yorkshire and Humber there are Buddhists from China and

Vietnam, and an increasing number of western Buddhists. And, whilst the majority of Hindus, Sikhs and Jains are from families whose heritage is in India, their links with it may be active or distant depending on their migration history.

Religions do not organise themselves according to race or ethnicity. However, religious people – just like those who are non-religious – often choose to live near their relatives and among those people with whom they have things in common, like language, customs, and social life. This means that families living in a particular area, in Dewsbury, for example, are often from the same religious group and the same ethnic and racial background. This isn't always the case though. North Leeds is home to Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs from the Punjab region of India and Pakistan. Two of Leeds' earliest Indian settlers in the 1930s – one Muslim and one Sikh – were acquaintances who came from the same village.⁷

RELIGION, FAITH AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE REGION

In Yorkshire and Humber, there are some 4200 places of worship, with many hundreds of other religious organisations focusing on education, social welfare, charity work, and culture.⁸ This shows the vitality of religion in our area.

The size of religious communities in the UK as a whole and in Yorkshire and the Humber is as follows:⁹

UK		Yorks and Humber	
Christian	42,079,417	Christian	3,627,774
Buddhist	151,816	Buddhist	7,188
Hindu	558,810	Hindu	15,797
Jewish	266,740	Jewish	11,554
Muslim	1,591,126	Muslim	189,089
Sikh	336,149	Sikh	18,711
Other	178,837	Other	9,624
No religion/not stated	13,626,299	No religion/not stated	1,085,096

These figures, from the 2001 Census, show that 71.6% of the UK population consider themselves to be Christian (with only 23.2% stating 'No religion' or declining to answer this voluntary Census question).¹⁰ However, not all of these people participate in their religion regularly. There are approximately 6 million active Christians, and about one and a half million active members of other faiths in the UK.¹¹

Looking at Yorkshire and the Humber, about 10% of the population as a whole participate quite regularly in religious services.¹² Compared with other voluntary and leisure activities, this remains high, even though Christian involvement has been declining in recent decades. Many people, particularly those who are unsure about whether or not there is a God, prefer to think in terms of spirituality rather than religion. Among this group there is an increasing interest in alternative healing, meditation, and ideas associated with the New Age movement. This interest is often personal and need not be expressed in membership of a formal group.¹³

Looking now at two of the region's major cities, Leeds, with a total population of about three-quarters of a million, has a Christian population of nearly 500,000¹⁴. Bradford, with about half a million people, has a Christian population of just over 280,000 as well as a large Muslim

population. About 15% of these Christians are active participants. Christians in the two cities include white and black people, and those from a number of ethnic groups, including Irish, Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, Ukrainian, Greek, Italian, African Caribbean and Asian, as well as English, Scottish and Welsh. They are active in many different Christian denominations.

Figures for religious communities in the two cities are as follows:

Leeds	Community size	Bradford	Community size
Christian	492,656	Christian	281,236
Buddhist	1,587	Buddhist	537
Hindu	4,183	Hindu	4,457
Jewish	8,267	Jewish	356
Muslim	21,394	Muslim	75,188
Sikh	7,586	Sikh	4,748
Other	1,530	Other	996
No religion	120,139	No religion	62,226
Religion not stated	58,060	Religion not stated	37,921

There are also a small number of Jain families. A greater proportion of all these groups are religiously more active than Christians, with between 30% and 60% participating regularly. There is some ethnic variation, particularly among the Muslims and Hindus. The majority of Yorkshire and Humber Muslims are Pakistani by ethnic origin. Smaller numbers have origins in Bangladesh and the western part of India. Leeds also has Muslim students from South-East Asia, the Middle East, and Turkey. Yorkshire Hindus have ethnic origins in northern and western India, but the majority came to Yorkshire from East Africa. All these religious communities are made up of members of different denominations with varying beliefs and practices.¹⁵

Some members of these religions keep up active links with family and religious communities in other parts of the world. Many Jews make regular visits to Israel, for example, and many Muslims attend family occasions in Pakistan or Bangladesh. Nevertheless, there is a strong feeling of Britishness, particularly among younger people. Attachment to two different places and the benefits they offer is not seen as a problem, but rather as a rich opportunity.

In all of the region's religious communities there are rich and poor, those who are comfortable and those who are disadvantaged. Religions have their own teachings on helping those who are less fortunate, and encourage social action and charitable giving. They often have organisations set up for these purposes, which have the potential to be valuable partners in the provision of services and in neighbourhood renewal. They are unable to solve all the problems faced by their members though. The social and economic disadvantage routinely experienced by Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims, for example, needs to be tackled by the appropriate government and local agencies.¹⁶ The prejudice and discrimination directed at ethnic and faith groups – whether on grounds of race or religion – must be dealt with by employers, public services, media, and by each one of us, whatever our background or experience.

THE STRUCTURE OF FAITH COMMUNITIES

The way faith communities are organised, and their use of distinctive books and other foci of worship, have an apparent similarity that can be misleading. For example, the Qur'an and the Bible are often equated as foundational scripture for Muslims and Christians. However, they play different roles within the worshipping life of each faith, with the Qur'an having a centrality for Muslims that Jesus occupies for Christians.

All faiths have some kind of leader associated with local places of worship. Leadership roles in Sikh communities and many local Buddhist groups, as well as some Christian denominations, are generally filled by leading lay people rather than clergy. Most Christian denominations, and Muslims, Jews and Hindus have trained religious specialists. It would be misleading to think that their roles are identical, however. Some focus on conducting worship or prayers, some on teaching or preaching, and others on pastoral and community care. Even within Christianity, there are distinct differences between the roles played by Anglican, Black Church, Free Church (Methodist, Baptist, United Reformed Church) and Roman Catholic clergy, both locally and nationally.

Approaching each faith community in the same way, via a religious leader, may not always produce a similar response or ensure equality of access. The multi-faith directory, *Religions in the UK* provides helpful advice on issues of leadership and access. The first point of contact listed in the directory for a faith group is often a secretary, public relations person or trustee rather than someone with a formal religious role.

A SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- Faith continues to be important for a large number of people;
- Many people, particularly the young, emphasise a faith identity rather than an ethnic one;
- People who belong to disadvantaged visible minorities increasingly identify their communities according to religion rather than ethnicity;
- Agencies tend to relate to them by race and ethnic culture, not faith, and often fail to address them as faith communities;
- Deprivation, particularly in terms of educational achievement and employment, is prevalent in some of these communities;
- Global inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts are capable of giving a focus and flash point to local anger and frustration;
- Religious literacy is at a very low level, leading at times to religious discrimination, and sometimes to abuse and violence.

Forward Action

LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

The tragic events of 11 September 2001 made many people think hard about the relationship between people of different faiths and about the religious teachings they offer on war and peace, compassion and justice. It is all too easy to assume that the actions and views of a minority speak for an entire religion and all the people who belong to it. This is not the case. Each religion is comprised of various groups, like the denominations within Christianity, which offer differing perspectives on central tenets and practices.

Learning more about faiths and understanding that they are like other social institutions – complex and full of human diversity – is important for local and global citizenship. Being polite, but uninformed, is no longer enough. People of all faiths and none must develop more open, engaged, and constructively critical ways of encountering and talking to each other. At local and national level there are individuals and groups who can help with this. There are those in our universities whose role is to help others learn about religion, politics and ethics, the teachings of the different religions, local faith communities and the role they play in public life. There are also local people with experience in inter-faith dialogue, as practitioners and consultants. At a national level, there is the Inter Faith Network for the UK, an organisation which, since 1987, has brought together members of faith communities to discuss their concerns and to debate the role of religion in contemporary British society and the issue of shared values.¹⁷

LAW AND PRACTICE

We accept that racial discrimination is wrong. The Race Relations Act made it illegal in 1976, and many agencies now have racial justice policies. These offer protection to some people, but not to those who define themselves by religion rather than race. The Human Rights Act now makes it easier to prosecute for human rights abuses, including religious rights. It recognises the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and the freedom to uphold it in public or private, through acts of worship, teaching, practice and observance.

Recent research investigated the nature and extent of religious discrimination, and found that unfair treatment is most likely to be experienced in relation to media presentation, employment and education.¹⁸ It is more likely to be experienced by religious people who are also members of ethnic minorities, suggesting that there can be a relationship between religious and racial discrimination. Unfair treatment may be experienced by people regardless of their race or ethnicity, however. And what are the causes? The most serious is ignorance, compounded by fear and suspicion. This often results in people seeing others in terms of stereotypes, such as “fundamentalist”, “oppressors of women” or “brainwashed.”

For such discrimination to be brought to an end, we all need to become more knowledgeable about religions, and more aware of the diversity between and within them. Even people who are religious themselves often know very little about faiths other than their own. Employers need to increase their awareness of these matters in relation to their conditions of service. And those in public services and the media have further to go in delivering fair treatment to religious people and groups. From December 2003 discrimination because of faith has become subject to UK legislation in employment and training.

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 outlaw direct and indirect discrimination against someone because of their beliefs, as well as harassment and victimisation. Indirect discrimination covers subjects such as clothing worn for religious reasons, time off for religious festivals and employees being asked to deal with products that their faiths prohibits. Helpful guidance is available from ACAS (www.acas.org.uk) and their booklet *Religion or Belief and the workplace: A guide for Employers and Employees*. In any case, best practice in terms of equality and diversity demands greater understanding of faiths in the workplace.

TRAINING

Most agencies in the region need religiously literate staff who are able to:

- See their area through the “faith lens” as well as the “race lens”;
- Understand issues of faith identity;
- Use a calendar of religious festivals;
- Know about official policy and advice in this area, such as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) guidelines on neighbourhood and regeneration, Home Office reports on religious discrimination and community cohesion, and the Local Government Association’s work with the Inter Faith Network and Inner Cities Religious Council on faith and community;
- Understand Human Rights legislation and the new Employment Equality legislation;
- Understand the relationship of spirituality to work, and the needs of religious people at work;
- Know how to make contacts with faith communities and networks;
- Understand how people of faith and their communities may be used, to the good, and abused, to their detriment;
- Have the ability to compare “like with like,” and to appreciate faith communities’ differences, strengths, and difficulties;
- Be aware that, like all social groups, faith groups have the potential to work together, but also to be divisive and competitive;
- Know how to consult widely without excluding faith communities.

GOOD PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

- 1 Public bodies should develop strategies for faith inclusion.
- 2 Best practice on the faith dimensions in employment should be identified and published.
- 3 Contact lists for faith communities should be regularly updated.
- 4 Local specialists, in universities and other research and development agencies, should be consulted in the development of strategy on religious literacy.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Details of these and other publications referred to in this report can be found in the resources list at the back. For the current proposals on religious discrimination, see www.dti.gov.uk/er/equality/index.htm
- 2 See publications by Stacey Burlet and Helen Reid, and Gail Patrick and Helen Reid in the resources list.
- 3 Names and contact details of local and national specialists and organisations can be found in the resources list at the back.
- 4 Good advice on religious and cultural etiquette is provided in the initial chapters of *Religions in the UK: A Directory, 2001-3*.
- 5 The term 'spirituality' is now used widely and does not necessarily imply belief in God or participation in a religion.
- 6 These views were expressed by people interviewed in association with research on religious discrimination, see *Religious Discrimination in England and Wales*, pp. 17-18.
- 7 Information about them and other early religious settlers can be found in *Religions in Leeds*, edited by A. Mason.
- 8 This information comes from *Religions in the UK*, second edition (1997), p.35 (Recorded and Certified Places of Worship by Region in England and Wales, 1996), and following regional listings.
- 9 These figures are from the 2001 Census, published in February 2003, www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/ (see profiles for the UK and Yorkshire and the Humber).
- 10 Ibid. 4,011,000 people (7.7%) chose not to answer the religious question, which was voluntary. Following an Internet campaign, 390,000 people (0.7%) stated 'Jedi'. See 'national commentary', www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/
- 11 See *UK Christian Handbook: Religious Trends 1998-9*, tables 2.6 and 10.12.
- 12 This percentage is extrapolated from national religious data with referenced to table 2.14, *UK Christian Handbook: Religious Trends 1998-9*.
- 13 The Internet may provide an important means of networking for some of these people.
- 14 The figures in this paragraph and the following table are from the 2001 Census. See local authority statistics on www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/ Comparable figures for other towns and cities in Yorkshire and the Humber are also available.
- 15 For information on denominations in all Britain's religions, see *The Growth of Religious Diversity: Britain from 1945*, edited by Gerald Parsons.
- 16 For information on deprivation and disadvantage among Britain's minority communities, see *Ethnic Minorities in Britain: Diversity and Disadvantage*, edited by Tariq Modood and Richard Berthoud.
- 17 For details of these consultants and organisations, and of the publications of the Interfaith Network, see the resources list.
- 18 Research and discussion on religious discrimination is presented in *Religious Discrimination in England and Wales*, and *Tackling Religious Discrimination: Practice Implications for Policy-Makers and Legislators*, see resources list.

Resources

FAITH AND RELIGION IN THE UK: GENERAL

(see also Online Resources p17)

Religions in the UK: Directory, 2001-3, third edition, edited by Paul Weller, (University of Derby, with the Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2001).
This is available from: The Multifaith Centre, University of Derby
Tel: 01332 591285 £29.50 with postage and packing

This is an essential resource. It provides helpful introductions to each religion, up-to-date listings with contact details, and useful information on visiting places of worship and hosting visits.

Religion in Modern Britain: Believing without Belonging, Grace Davie, (Blackwells, 1994).

UK Christian Handbook: Religious Trends, 1998-9, edited by Peter Brierley, (Christian Research with Paternoster Publishing, 1998).

Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs
(The Inter Faith Network for the UK). www.interfaith.org.uk

Calendar of Religious Festivals

(SHAP World Religions in Education, an annual publication, available from The National Society's RE Centre, 36 Causton Street, London SW1P 4AU, Tel. 0207 932 1194). Online at www.support4learning.org.uk/shap/index.htm

The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (The Parekh Report; Chapter 17 'Religion and Belief'), Runnymede Trust, (Profile Books, 2000).

Ethnic Minorities in Britain: Diversity and Disadvantage, edited by Tariq Modood and Richard Berthoud, (Policy Studies Institute, 1997).

Religious Discrimination in England and Wales: Home Office Research Study 220, Paul Weller, Alice Feldman, and Kingsley Purdam, (Home Office, 2001).

Tackling Religious Discrimination: Practice Implications for Policy-Makers and Legislators. Home Office Research Study 221

Bob Hepple, QC, and Tufyal Choudhury, (Home Office, 2001).

Faith and Community: A Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities

(Local Government Association, 2002). www.lga.gov.uk

ACAS: Religion or Belief and the workplace: A guide for Employers and Employees (November 2003). www.acas.gov.uk

Partnership for the Common Good: Interfaith Structures and Local Government

(Interfaith Network for the UK with LGA, ODPM and Home Office – October 2003)
www.interfaith.org.uk

Involving Communities in Urban and Rural Regeneration

(DETR, 1997). Online at www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/community/faith

Faith in Politics

(Christian Socialist Movement, April 2001).

Guidance on Community Cohesion (LGA 2002) www.lga.gov.uk***Employing Jews: Employers Guide***

Produced by Board of Deputies of British Jews. Available from 6 Bloomsbury Square, London, WC1A 2LP
info@bod.org.uk

Islam: A brief guide. Free leaflet available from the Muslim Education Trust

130 Stroud Green, London N4 3R2

info@muslim-ed-trust.org.uk

Promoting Mental Health, the Role of Faith Communities – Jewish and Christian Perspectives

(Health Education Authority, 1999).

Religion in Prison: Equal Rites, Sophie Gilliat-Ray and James Beckford,

(Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Addressing Prejudice and Islamophobia: Resources, References and Guidance on the Internet, Autumn 2001,

(Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, 2001, available from the Commission at Stone Ashdown Trust, 4th Floor, Barkat House, 116-118 Finchley Road, London NW3 5HD)

Local Interfaith Activity in the UK: A survey

Interfaith Network for the UK, October 2003

INTRODUCTION TO RELIGIONS***The Growth of Religious Diversity: Britain from 1945*** (vol 1 Traditions, vol 2 Issues),

edited by Gerald Parsons,

(Routledge, with the Open University, 1994-5).

The South Asian Religious Diaspora in Britain, Canada and the United States, edited

by Harold Coward, John R. Hinnells, and Raymond Brady Williams,

(State University of New York Press, 2000).

A Short Introduction to Judaism, Norman Solomon,

(Oxford University Press, 1996).

A Short Introduction to Buddhism, Damien Keown,

(Oxford University Press, 1996).

A Short Introduction to Islam, Malise Ruthven,

(Oxford University Press, 1997).

A Short Introduction to Hinduism, Kim Knott,
(Oxford University Press, 1998).

A Short Introduction to Theology, David Ford,
(Oxford University Press, 1999).

A Simple Guide to Sikhism, Sewa Singh Kalsi,
(Global Books, 1999).

Meeting Muslims,
(Christians Aware, undated).

Meeting Sikhs, Joy Barrow,
(Christians Aware, 1999).

Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All,
(The Runnymede Trust, 1997).

Islamic Britain: Religion, Politics and Identity Among British Muslims,
(mostly on Bradford Muslims) Philip Lewis, (I.B. Tauris, 1994).

RELIGION IN THE REGION

The Churches and Regional Development in Yorkshire and the Humber,
(The Churches Regional Commission, 1998, available from the Commission at
20 New Market Street, Leeds, LS1 6DG. www.crc-online.org.uk).

Faith in Our Future: People of Faith, Social Action and the City of Leeds, Stacey Burlet
and Helen Reid, (Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds and
Leeds Church Institute, 1998).

***A Faithful Future: Churches in Great Horton and Lidget Green Bradford and
the Potential for Involvement in Multi-Faith Initiatives***, Gail Patrick and
Helen Reid, (The Touchstone Centre, Bradford, 1999). 32 Merton Road, Bradford, BD7 1RE

Islamic Social Action

(Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum, March 2001) Contact David
Randolph-Horn at Leeds Church Institute, 20 New Market Street, Leeds, LS1 6DG

Religion in Leeds, edited by Alistair Mason,
(Alan Sutton, 1994, available from the Department of Theology and Religious Studies,
University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT).

The Feasibility of a Faith Forum for Yorkshire and Humber: Final report

Kim Knott, Seán McLoughlin and Melanie Prideaux
Community Religions Project, University of Leeds (August 2003). Copies available from the
Yorkshire and Humber Assembly, www.yhassembly.gov.uk

Angels and Advocates: Church Social Action in Yorkshire and the Humber
Churches Regional Commission (November 2002)

Sowing the seed: Church and Rural Renaissance in Yorkshire and the Humber

(October 2003) Churches Regional Commission

Sticking Together: Community Cohesion: A reponse

(December 2003) Churches Regional Commission

Faith in our future

A survey of the community work of the faith groups in the district of Bradford (February 2004) Community Network Bradford and District

Leeds Pilot Faiths Consultation Exercise on Restorative Justice and the Rehabilitation of Young Male Ex-Offenders: Final Report (January 2004)

Kim Knott and Matthew Francis

Shortly to be published by the Home Office

Community Religions Project: Monographs and Research Papers, including

- Hinduism in Leeds, Kim Knott,
- The Bengali Muslims of Bradford, Stephen Barton,
- The Evolution of a Sikh Community in Britain, Sewa Singh Kalsi,
- Sectarian Influences within Islam in Britain, Ron Geaves,
- Afro-Caribbean Christianity in Britain, Vanessa Howard,
- Muslims in Leeds, Ron Geaves,

(Community Religions Project, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT).

INTERFAITH RELATIONS

All these publications are available from the Inter Faith Network for the UK (see Online Resources and contact details below).

The Local Interfaith Guide

(The Inter Faith Network for the UK in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council, DETR, 1999).

Faith and Service to the Community

(Report on the 2001 National Meeting of the Inter Faith Network for the UK).

Interfaith Relations in the UK: The Next Decade

(Report on the 2000 National Meeting of the Inter Faith Network for the UK).

Inter Faith Issues and the Religious Education Curriculum

(Report of a seminar, the Inter Faith Network for the UK in association with the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education, 2001).

The Quest for Common Values

(Report of a seminar, 1996).

ONLINE RESOURCES

www.multifaithnet.org

Run by the University of Derby, this site includes *Religions in the UK: Online*. Basic information on each faith is on open access. Other data is by subscription.

www.interfaith.org.uk

For information about the activities and publications of the Inter Faith Network. Many of the Network's publications are available online.

www.odpm.gov.uk

For information about the Inner Cities Religious Council, neighbourhood renewal and local strategic partnerships.

www.homeoffice.gov.uk

For recent reports on community cohesion and religious discrimination.

www.lga.gov.uk

For local government documents on faith and community, and neighbourhood regeneration.

www.faithworks.info

For information on faith in politics.

www.runnymedetrust.org

For research and discussion on Islamophobia.

www.acas.org.uk

For draft legislation on religious discrimination.

www.statistics.gov.uk

For 2001 Census statistics on religion.

www.bbc.co.uk/religion

Information, introduction to religious beliefs, multifaith calendar and news.

ORGANISATIONS

NATIONAL

The Inter Faith Network UK

8a Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN

Tel: 020 7931 7766; Fax: 020 7931 7722

E-mail: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

www.interfaith.org.uk

The Inner Cities Religious Council

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 6/J2 Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU

Tel: 020 7944 3704; Fax: 020 7944 5286

E-mail: icrc@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

www.neighbourhood.gov.uk

WITHIN THE REGION

Bradford Interfaith Education Centre

Lister Hills Road, Bradford BD7 1HD
Tel: 01274 731674; Fax: 01274 731621
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The Bradford Concord Interfaith Society

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The Leeds Faiths Forum

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The Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship

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Sheffield Interfaith

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Rotherham Interfaith

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York Inter Faith Group

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Calderdale Interfaith Council

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The North Lincs Multi-Faith Partnership (Scunthorpe)

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The Department of Theology & Religious Studies,
 Attention Professor Kim Knott, Community Religions Project, University of Leeds,
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 For more specialist advice on religions in the region.
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Consultation Checklist

This checklist has arisen out of the experience of managing both Government and Church based consultations. It is intended to help to prevent common errors when dealing with religious groups.

It is common to see **simple mistakes** made by well-intentioned individuals and organisations. For example,

- A major voluntary organisation organised a training seminar on religious intolerance and discrimination in Holy Week, the week that precedes Good Friday.
- At the first Parliamentary reception for Muslims to mark Eid the guests were served ham sandwiches.
- An agency working for DFES organised a consultation on racism and the New Deal the timing of which clashed with a Hindu festival and Juma Prayers.
- Vegetarian Hindus were offered meat by the DETR when being consulted about faith and regeneration.
- The participants at a Commonwealth conference calling Christians and Muslims into dialogue were served sausage and bacon for breakfast and alcohol at other meals.

A number of **false assumptions** seem to underlie these errors.

- 1 We now live in a secular state in which religion is a minority occupation that can be safely ignored.
- 2 If there are robust anti-racism policies and practices in place there will be no more difficulties.
- 3 All societies count time in the same way and every religion celebrates its festivals at weekends or on bank holidays.
- 4 The major faiths are all organised in the same way, so all you need to do is find out the Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or Sikh equivalents to Vicar, Church, Chaplain and Easter and you've solved your problems.
- 5 It is no use talking to faith community leaders because they are all men who ignore women's issues.
- 6 It is a waste of time consulting faith leaders because they don't answer letters.
- 7 Politeness and political correctness must govern everything. Debate and criticism are unacceptable.

These need challenging. Taking them in the same sequence,

- 1 Religious statistics show us that the overwhelming majority of people continue to believe in God, and many of those who don't have an interest in spirituality. Religious practice in Britain is now much more diverse than it used to be. It is not simply declining.
- 2 Anti-racism policies are crucial, but, where someone's primary identity is religious, it is insulting to relate to them by race and colour. Unfortunately it is possible to be anti-racist, whilst being prejudiced against religion, religious people and faith communities. As the grand-children and great-grandchildren of visible ethnic minority settlers become the majority of the British black community some of these will assimilate into European culture. Knowing their forebearers came from India will tell us very little. Knowing that they are Sikh, Muslim or Hindu may tell us a great deal. Those with only a "race and ethnicity lens" through which to view the world may treat culture as a qualifier of race and religion as a subsection of culture. This may not be how religious people see things themselves.
- 3 It is not enough just to avoid organising meetings at the times of major festivals. It is important to know that there are different patterns to the day, week and year in the different faiths.
- 4 We need to accept each other's ways of doing things for what they are. A Mullah must be allowed to be a Mullah and a Priest to be a Priest without the Mullah being seen as a deficient priest and the Priest an odd kind of Mullah who doesn't always wear his religious attire!
- 5 Women often have their own leadership structures within religious organisations that may need to be approached directly. Women's networks are not appropriately approached through the male leadership, and the male leadership is not necessarily the place to start.
- 6 Writing official letters to people is not the same as talking to them. Many minority faith leaders work in English as their third or fourth language, and may find it hard to write back. Face-to-face contact may help.
- 7 Formality and political correctness must not be allowed to limit debate and proper challenge in faith and race issues. Not to debate is to build up a form of paternalistic prejudice that involves applying standards to someone else without asking them and assumes that we know what is best for them.

YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER ASSEMBLY

Voice of the region

Yorkshire and Humber Assembly

The Yorkshire and Humber Assembly is the strategic regional partnership. It brings together key partners to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of everyone who lives and works in the region. A voluntary organisation, with members drawn from local authorities, business, education, environmental, voluntary groups and others, its key roles are:

- To be the voice for the region, promoting the region and lobbying for the best deal for Yorkshire and Humber - in Whitehall and in Brussels
- To be the regional planning body, responsible for shaping the sustainable future of the region and its transport, over the next 20 years
- To develop and maintain the region's strategic framework, currently known as Advancing Together. To encourage partners and organisations across the region to commit to the delivery of this, both through expenditure and actions
- To provide regional accountability for Yorkshire Forward, influencing development and scrutinising specific aspects of the work it undertakes, along with other partners.

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The Churches Regional Commission for Yorkshire and the Humber

The CRC was formed by the church leaders in the region, in October 1998. It has up to 25 members of lay people and clergy, and links into the 3,800 churches in the region. The CRC currently represent the many faiths of the region by holding the Faiths seat on the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly. The Commission's role is to work at the regional level, with bodies such as Yorkshire Forward, Government Office and the Assembly; to raise the profile of faith; and to be a partner in regeneration. The CRC meets four times a year and operates mainly through task groups in four areas where Christian faith can make a distinctive contribution: Social inclusion; Rural renaissance; Interfaith; and Culture.

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