



# Faith Focus

The Voice of the Faith Groups in Lambeth

Issue 2, February 2005

## Faith in Town Centres

This edition of Faith Focus highlights some of the valuable work that is being done by Faith Groups in Lambeth to tackle social regeneration problems.

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For any additional information on the articles featured in this copy of the newsletter or if you would like to highlight any projects you are involved with, contact Kau Belleh on 0207 926 2414 or email [kbelleh@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:kbelleh@lambeth.gov.uk).

The next issue will be out at the end of April. Any information concerning events should be sent no later than the first week in April 2005.

### LAMBETH MULTI-FAITH ACTION GROUP

The Lambeth Multi-Faith Action Group - LAMAG - was established 12 years ago in 1993, when several Lambeth people from different religious backgrounds happened to meet up at a major multi-faith conference which took place in Blackheath. The individuals who created the group back at the beginning included: Roman Catholics, Quakers, Methodists, Jews, Anglicans, Muslims, followers of the Bahai Faith, Baptists, and members of the Cherubim and Seraphim Churches. Over the years, members of other faith communities have become involved as well for varying spells of time, whilst some of the founders have left as they moved out of the Lambeth area long ago. Nonetheless, the group has consistently maintained a committed core of local people from a broad variety of faith communities. Indeed, in recent years it has been able to expand its modest programme of yearly events. Nonetheless, from 1993 to today, LAMAG has remained true to its unique role embodied in its name, which was chosen carefully and which reflects certain key dimensions of its identity.

First of all - "**Lambeth**": the group has one single London borough as its home and the focus of all its activities - namely Lambeth! Next, "**Multi-Faith**". This signifies that it is a group which brings together people from a multiplicity of faiths - which is different from being an "interfaith" group: interfaith projects concentrate on the relationships between faiths, and generally do this by exploring spiritual and theological issues. LAMAG, on the other hand, does not concentrate on interfaith relations. Instead, as a multi-faith group, it simply



consists of people from a number of different religious backgrounds who are keen to meet up and work together - to address common public issues "out there" in the everyday world of Lambeth. Thus LAMAG concentrates on the interaction between the public sphere and the world of faith, rather than interaction between faith communities themselves. This takes us on to the final element - "Action Group". By enabling people of different faiths to focus on local issues (and occasionally some national and global ones) jointly, LAMAG aims to help them to act - that is, to do things.

LAMAG has steered clear of trying to "represent" the world of religion in Lambeth, and has never aspired to be some sort of local assembly of faith communities. It does not presume to speak in the name of Lambeth's faith communities; instead, it can only do its bit to help them speak for themselves. Meanwhile, it recognises that the differences which set religions apart from each other are significant - so much so that successfully "representing" this diversity would be a tall order. Likewise, one must respect the fact that there are those who do not choose to engage in joint projects with other faith communities; for their own particular reasons, they are not interested in "interfaith" or "multi-faith" partnerships of any kind. It would be foolish to pretend to "represent" them - though they are local people of faith. Finally, LAMAG has its own clear, non-negotiable values: since the beginning, it has explicitly opposed different types of discrimination, prejudice and exclusion. However, not all religious people share these commitments; some adopt very different positions - and LAMAG has no wish to "represent" them.

And so, LAMAG can only represent... itself: that is, the individuals and communities who choose to be a part of it. As a rule, they do so because they find it stimulating to get together with people from other faith traditions and because they share a common interest in important public issues of the day. It is this outward-looking stance which characterises what LAMAG does: and the main thing it does is organise public events, at present three times a year. In March or April each year, there's the annual Public Policy Forum - these address some aspect of the public services here in Lambeth. Last year's forum looked at mental health, for instance, and this year's (5 April 2005) will consider education. Then, in June or July, there's the LAMAG Summer Event - as a rule, this deals with the relationship between faith and some general social/political theme - recent topics have been "faith and the law" (2003) and "religion and regeneration" (2004). Finally, there's the One World Week event every October. Although LAMAG organises its own event here in Lambeth, this is in fact a national initiative with a national theme each year.

LAMAG may carefully avoid the pitfalls of pretending to be falsely "representative", but it is fully committed to being diverse - quite simply because Lambeth's religious population is so diverse. The group has always included people from a strikingly wide variety of faith

traditions. Moreover, there is diversity within given faiths, and this too finds expression. Finally, LAMAG aims to be geographically diverse, ensuring that its events take place not only in a wide variety of houses of worship, but in all parts of the borough. Thus, over the past three years, there have been LAMAG events in Waterloo, Streatham, Brixton, Tulse Hill, Kennington, etc. And the events themselves are varied - featuring talks by invited speakers (sometimes from Lambeth, sometimes from farther afield), panel discussions, videos, poetry readings, live music - even games.

LAMAG takes no money from Lambeth Council or from any other public agency. Accordingly, it has to manage on a minimal bank balance - but it also enjoys a unique degree of independence and has no compromising obligations towards any institution of authority. For about two years, LAMAG held a seat on Lambeth's "Local Strategic Partnership" (LSP) board, but it gave this up in 2004. When the term of the group's delegate on the board, Rabbi James Baaden, ran out, the group couldn't see that its interests would be well served by continuing to hold the LSP seat, and so it was relinquished. Rabbi Baaden himself had begun to sense that ongoing involvement in the LSP would inevitably undermine LAMAG's jealously guarded independence, and he had significant misgivings about the enormously protracted restructuring exercise which the (relatively newly-created) LSP had already embarked upon. To be sure, LAMAG's independence means that the group survives on a shoestring - but all things considered, it survives quite well.

If you like the sound of LAMAG, get involved! We would be delighted to hear from you. Either write to [lambethfaith@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lambethfaith@yahoo.co.uk) or ring Rabbi James Baaden on 8809 0877. You can also get hold of further information about LAMAG, or a copy of our three-year report covering 2002-2004. The next LAMAG event, the annual "Public Policy Forum", is on Tuesday 5 April - the topic is education. Contact LAMAG for further details closer to the date.

### **Spiritual Care and Health - North Lambeth**

The Department of Spiritual Healthcare at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals offers spiritual, religious and pastoral care to patients, visitors and staff, for people of all faiths and none.

A team of over 40 Chaplains and chaplaincy visitors, both full and part-time, work at the Trust. The team consists of chaplains from the major world faiths, as identified by the census figures and by the recording of patients religion.

There are Christian chaplains, from the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Free Church and Pentecostal traditions, Muslim chaplains (speaking 6 languages), a Buddhist monk, a Jewish Rabbi, a Hindu chaplain, a

Sikh volunteer, and the department has links with the headquarters of the faiths, as represented by the Multi-faith Group for Healthcare Chaplaincy and the Interfaith Network. All Chaplains and volunteers are contracted to the Trust, police-checked, medically checked and have received appropriate training. They come from 13 countries, and speak over 15 languages (not all of them!!)

We are always seeking volunteers, and contacts for Bank Chaplains from all faith communities. We offer training, after interview, in various aspects. Students, ordinands and faith group leaders are welcome, on arrangement, to experience a multi-faith chaplaincy team working in healthcare.

The department will be organising a Faith Forum for Spiritual Healthcare in the early summer. This will include a national relaunch of the Multi-faith Group for Healthcare Chaplaincy, currently chaired by our Trust's Rabbi, Rabbi Martin van den Bergh. If you would like an invitation to this event, or if your group would like to display your activities, please get in touch. More details later.

Finally, if any members of your faith community is in hospital and would like a chaplaincy visit, please contact me directly, and we will gladly offer appropriate care. If you have any aspect of our work that you would like to discuss then please get in touch.

Revd Mia Hilborn  
Head of Spiritual Healthcare  
0207 188 7188

## **THE SOUTH LONDON INTER FAITH GROUP**

The SLIFG came into existence 25 years ago. Its aim was, and still is, to make links and friendships between members of the different religious communities living in south London. Membership is open to those of any religion or none. Annual subscription is £6, which covers the cost of mailing out newsletters.

Covering an area south of the River west to Wimbledon east to Plumstead and south to Croydon, our multi faith committee arranges six or seven events a year. Recent meetings include: Listening to young Muslims at Stockwell Green Islamic Centre telling us how tough it is to be Muslim on London's streets today. Sharing Sunday celebration with the Baha'is in Peckham. A debate about Religious Education at the Muslim school in Tooting. An experience of meditation at the Kagyu Samye Dzong Tibetan Buddhist Centre in Waterloo. Gospel songs and tambourines at the Church of God of Prophecy in Tooting. Evening worship and meal at the Sikh gurdwara in Croydon. A Rabbi speaks of a Jewish perspective on Christmas time.

Every July we have an all-day inter faith walk (talking as we walk) when we visit five places of worship in one locality. 2005 may be a Lambeth Walk – watch this space! Another regular date is our own 'Remembrance Day' event in November, when we meet at St Matthews Church, Brixton for a time of reflection and prayers for world peace.

Whereas this may have begun 25 years ago, as an interesting and enriching enterprise, it has, we believe, become – a matter of urgency to promote peace and harmony in our society when world events beyond our control impact on us at the grass roots. So, for example, when attacks against Muslims and Muslim property happened following 9/11, we were able to send personal letters of support to eleven Islamic Centres in South London with which we already had links. As an 'umbrella' organisation covering such a large area, our ultimate aim is to become redundant! We have always recognised the importance of much more localised groups like LAMAG and the Stockwell Multi Faith Forum where interaction can be more frequent and relationships become deeper. We try to co-operate and to support and publicise each others' events. We'll soon have a website, meanwhile you can contact Sarah Thorley (secretary) on 020 8674 5447 or email [thorleysarah@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:thorleysarah@yahoo.co.uk) or Ganesh Lal on 020 8244 7926

## **STOCKWELL FORUM - Stockwell**

Stockwell Faith Forum grew out of the enthusiasm around the first Stockwell Festival in the summer of 2001 – lots of local groups were getting involved and some of us from the Muslim, Christian and Buddhist faiths agreed to make a contribution to a special Festival church service at St John's on Clapham Road.

The following year, 2002, we released dozens of white balloons (with messages of peace from Stockwell attached) at the start of the Festival Funday in Larkhall Park, along with good wishes for the Festival from two of the local churches, our local Islamic Centre and local Buddhists. It was a windy day and the balloons got tangled up, but they certainly flew off into the sky dramatically. The Festival generously funded a small Peace Space that year, where we had a talk on mediation between neighbours from Lambeth Mediation Service and provided a quiet space for reflection, crafts for children and books and information on peace-building to browse.

For the last couple of years, the Forum has continued to organise peace activities as part of the Festival Funday in a beautiful domed yurt tent, with carpets and cushions covering the ground and free hospitality in the form of tea and biscuits. People are asked to remove their shoes when they enter and people of all ages and backgrounds seem to enjoy the relaxed and peaceful

atmosphere. Conversations meander over the themes of the day and children play and sometimes fall asleep. Stockwell people are no different from most others – we value peace and want to find out what can be done in situations of conflict.



There are talks, demonstrations and literature on a range of practical, hands-on ways to make peace - with oneself and with others - from baby massage to anti-bullying, meditation to mediation, co-operative games to sowing seeds, walking a labyrinth to creating a mandala, a talk on the Slow Movement to an Indian head massage. The Oware Society comes and teaches the ancient African game to anyone who is interested – someone who learnt how to play at the Peace Space in 2003 entered the national championships last year!

This year we showed the touring Forgiveness exhibition – exploring and celebrating the stories of people who have survived tragedy, lived through atrocity and who have found it in themselves to reconcile or forgive. The main activity of the Forum continues to be organising the Peace Space each year, but we have also arranged hustings for local and London Assembly elections, met together over meals and, last year, became constituted and able to apply for funding for peace activities independently. Our three office bearers come from the Muslim, Baha'i and Christian faiths.

We now have a website at <http://uk.geocities.com/faith.forum@btinternet.com> and people are welcome to join our mailing list. Just email [faith.forum@btinternet.com](mailto:faith.forum@btinternet.com) or write to the Forum c/o Stockwell Partnership, 157 South Lambeth Road, SW8 1XN.

Our last event on Tuesday 11th January at the Stockwell Resource Centre, 1 Studley Road, SW4, welcomed Hetan Shah of the New Economics Foundation to speak on A Well-Being Manifesto - what would politics look like if promoting people's well-being was the main aim?

Catriona Robertson, Chair, Stockwell Faith Forum.

## Street Pastors – Brixton



Street Pastors is a church response to gun and street crime. A Street Pastor is a concerned member of a local church who goes out on the streets at night to engage, listen and care for people on the margins of society. Their purpose is not to preach heaven and hell, but to provide a solution-focused approach to address the issues facing disenfranchised youth. The street pastors outreach sessions operates on Friday and Saturday nights from 10pm-4am. They go out in teams under the supervision of a senior Street Pastor and wear a distinctive blue jacket and cap bearing the logo "STREET PASTORS" in reflective lettering.

Street Pastors came about after Rev. Les Isaac, Director of Ascension Trust, visited Jamaica and witnessed first hand the extent of gun crime. The church in Jamaica had left matters too late before responding to crime issues. On returning to the UK Les started a "Guns off our Streets" tour and from this tour Street Pastors developed.

Street Pastors are out when other agencies are not open. They deal with whatever problems they encounter in an evening and give details for follow up and more in depth support and advice for those who require it. Some of the issues they are confronted with are homeless people who may need a hostel or just simply ask that you see if they are alive and ok on a weekly basis. Calling emergency services for people who have been hurt and injured, diffusing arguments/conflicts outside clubs, pubs or between gangs by providing a mediator to calm down the situation. Talking to young people and getting their views on what is happening in their area and gathering information on their concerns. Walking residents home who have been mugged and feel vulnerable or merely talking to them at bus stops. As well as talking to people who need a listening ear and maybe suffering from bereavement, domestic problems, employment issues, financial difficulties, drug problems. Whatever people present with Street Pastors will listen and encourage them to seek further help and support, by calling the office for an appointment to discuss and assess their issues in more detail.

Street Pastors are developing on a national basis and have projects in Birmingham, Manchester, Southwark, Lewisham, Brent and Hackney. They are currently funded by the Home Office, trust funds, the police, Local Authorities and the church.

For more information on the Street Pastors, please visit [www.streetpastors.org.uk](http://www.streetpastors.org.uk) or phone 0207 771 9770.

### **The Nehemiah Project - Clapham**

The Nehemiah Project is a charity bringing hope and real change to men trapped by addiction, many who have spent a life in prison, on the streets, or in care. They run two homes in Lambeth and their rehabilitation programme has an enviable success rate, with 75% of its graduates being drug/alcohol free today. It is a demanding programme, so is only suitable for men who are highly motivated to change. The therapeutic communities take a holistic approach to recovery with 12-step groups, education classes on drug/alcohol addiction, peer evaluation, work duties and 1:1 keyworking amongst a wide range of other classes.

They have also just started a programme in Brixton Prison called A New Direction. This is a 12-week programme to help offenders to deal with their drug taking and criminal behaviour before release. John Podmore, Governor of Brixton Prison, says of their work:

“I commend their work, integrity and success here in Lambeth to you. I am confident they will make a valuable contribution to Brixton’s overall goal of reducing re-offending and bringing about social inclusion.”

The name Nehemiah is from the Old Testament prophet who had the broken walls of Jerusalem rebuilt in 52 days - truly a miracle. Miracles are also happening at the Project as men's lives are completely rebuilt. The Project welcomes men of any or no faith who are open to a spiritual approach to recovery. The homes are funded through a combination of supporting people, benefits and donations so are free to residents. The main criterion is that they are motivated to change.

For further details call them on 020 8769 3444 or check out their website at [www.tnp.org.uk](http://www.tnp.org.uk).

### **Funding News**

**The Baring Foundation** supports constituted organisations and provides funding for organisations in London. Examples of work that the organisation supports include business planning, and improvements

to essential systems such as information technology. For further information, please visit [www.baringfoundation.org.uk](http://www.baringfoundation.org.uk).

**The Almond Trust** supports evangelistic Christian projects around the reading, study and teaching of the bible. For further details contact Mr. JL Cooke, Trustee, 111 Dulwich Village, London SE21 7BJ.

**The Beaverbrook Foundation** awards funds for the erection and repair of the fabric of any church building, the purchase of books, papers, manuscripts or works of art, care of the aged or infirm in the UK. [www.beaverbrookfoundation.org](http://www.beaverbrookfoundation.org)

**Cyril W Black Charitable Trust Limited** awards grants for evangelical Christian work and for the benefit of young people and the elderly. Contact Mr. MB Pilcher, 6 Leopold Road, London SW19 7BD or phone 0208 947 1040.

**The Garfield Weston Foundation** gives grants of between £ 500 - £5000 to support a broad range of activities in the field of religion, education, the environment, the arts and other areas of general benefit to the community in the UK. For further details telephone 0207 589 6363.

**The Manifold Trust** supports the arts, social welfare, education and the preservation of churches. Contact Miss CC Gilbertson, at Shottesbrooke House, Maidenhead, SL6 3SW.

### **Freebies**

**Donateapc.org.uk** provides information on the latest donated IT equipment which is available on their website. For equipment that is currently available, visit [www.Donateapc.org.uk](http://www.Donateapc.org.uk).

**Dulux Community Projects Scheme** donates free paint to volunteers who wish to carry out community and environment projects. For an application form and a colour card send an A4 SAE with a 60p stamp to Dulux Community Projects Scheme, PO Box, London WC2E 8RJ.

## Bulletin Board

### **The Women's Inter-Faith Network**

The Women's Inter Faith Network is looking for women living in Lambeth to join the network. The Network was formed as a result of September 11 th and seeks to bring women at the grass roots together to break down barriers and combat some of the negative stereotypes in the media.

The long term aim of the organisation is to form local groups around London and eventually nationwide to promote interfaith and inter-cultural dialogue and thus help to establish a more tolerant and safer society.

Eventually, a whole network of groups will create a strong combined women's voice against racism and prejudice.

Local groups are given complete autonomy under the umbrella of the Women's Inter – Faith Network, and will benefit from support and help.

For further information concerning the network visit [www.wominet.co.uk](http://www.wominet.co.uk) .

### **Lambeth County Show 2005 – Arts and Creative Area**

#### **Brockwell Park on 16 / 17 July 2005**

Would your group be interested in attending a meeting ( date to be arranged ) to discuss the possibility of organising an Arts and Creative Area at this year's Lambeth Country Show?

Last year Lambeth Arts were able to support a small arts area at the show, which proved to be of great interest to many of the 100k visitors to the show over the weekend. The groups that participated expressed an interest in meeting in January or February to discuss what, if anything could be done at this year's show.

If you are interested in establishing and participating in the Arts and Creative Area at 2005 Lambeth Country Show and would be willing to attend an initial meeting, please e-mail your contact details to Helen Ridge, Head of Arts, Lambeth Arts on [hridge@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:hridge@lambeth.gov.uk).

### **Faith and Politics**

In February 2005, Faithworks will be hosting a series of public lectures to give Britain's political leaders an opportunity to address individual Christians and local churches in the run-up to the next General Election

Two party leaders will be speaking about the role of the Church and other faith groups in encouraging trust within Britain's communities. They will be addressing the question: "Is faith important for building trust in 21st Century Britain?"

Charles Kennedy will deliver his Faithworks Lecture on Thursday 3rd February at 7:30pm while Michael Howard will deliver his Faithworks Lecture on Wednesday 23rd February at 7.30pm.

email [katherine.brenchley@faithworks.info](mailto:katherine.brenchley@faithworks.info)

### **Central Square , Brixton**

#### **Come and Discuss your ideas and aspirations !**

The vision for Brixton Central Square is to create a safe, high quality public space that expresses the significance of Brixton as a vibrant multi – cultural community.

Building on views expressed at the initial public consultation in 2001, landscape architects Gross. Max. are developing a design to bring together the spaces of Tate Gardend, Windrush Square and St. Matthew's Peace Gardens and link them with the surrounding buildings ( Library, Town Hall, St. Matthews Church, Raleigh Hall).

For further information contact:  
Jo Negrini or Catherine Carpenter on 0207 926 2766.

## **A Prayer Event Sponsored by the Churches of Lambeth**

**“Lambeth – a future full of hope”**

**Sunday 17th April 2005**  
**Assembly Rooms, Lambeth Town Hall**

**7.00pm – 8.30pm**

**“This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel says.... Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you.... Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you will prosper.”**  
**Jeremiah 29: 4 & 7**

Dear Church Leader,

Over recent months many of us have been aware that God has been challenging our isolationism as churches, breaking us out to work together in unity. He has been clearly calling us to be out serving our community in the name of Jesus, - not least in prayer.

This comes to invite you to an event on 17th April 2005, from 7.00- 8.30pm, in the Assembly Rooms at Lambeth Town Hall, to pray together for Lambeth.

Our vision is of Christians coming together from across Lambeth, from very different churches, to pray together as God has bidden us. What comes out of such an event we'll only know as we respond to what we feel God is asking of us.

We'll worship, listen to the Bible and we'll pray. And we'd love you and your church to join us! For more information please get in touch with any of the sponsoring group.

In the love and grace of Christ,

**Rev. Susan Stevenson**

Minister - Chatsworth Baptist Church

Chatsworth Baptist Church, Chatsworth Way, West Norwood, London SE27 9HN

Tel: 020 8761 0011 / Fax: 020 8761 0001 / email: [office@chatsworthbaptist.com](mailto:office@chatsworthbaptist.com)

Pastor Paul Bruce (Ruach Ministries)  
Canon J.P. Devane (Catholic Borough Dean of Lambeth)  
Pastor John Dompree (Christian Life Fellowship)  
Rev. Les Isaac (Lambeth Borough Dean)

## Bulletin Board

### SUPPORT OUR SCHOOLS – SCHOOLS GOVERNOR RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

10 January saw the launch of the Lambeth 'School Governor Recruitment Campaign' and we are asking for your support in helping to raise the profile of our campaign by encouraging members of the local community to actively help our schools by becoming schools governors.

If you believe that every child deserves the best possible education then we believe you can help our schools. Every school has a governing body made up of parents, staff and members of the local community. Governors work as part of a team, alongside the headteacher, to develop the school. Governing bodies agree school aims and policies, make plans for the future of the school and ensure decisions are carried through. High standards of education and welfare of pupils are central to the work of governing bodies.

A governor does not need to be an expert in education. Training about the work of the governing is free and is available locally and governors are provided with information, advice and guidance to support them in their work.

If you would like to find out more information on this campaign you can do so by calling David Jones on 020 7926 9669 or logging onto [www.lambeth.gov.uk/services/education-learning](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/services/education-learning). Alternatively if you would like a member of our senior team to visit one of your events with information or to discuss the campaign in a group setting we would be delighted to assist.

**If you would like this information in large print, braille, audio tape or another language, please contact us on 020 7926 1180.**

#### Spanish

Si desea esta información en otro idioma, rogamos nos llame al

#### Portuguese

Se desejar esta informação noutro idioma é favor telefonar para

#### French

Si vous souhaitez ces informations dans une autre langue veuillez nous contacter au

#### Bengali

এই তথ্য অন্য কোনো ভাষায় আপনার প্রয়োজন হলে অনুগ্রহ করে ফোন করুন

#### Twi

Se woƆe saa nkaeboy yi wo kasa fofo mu a fre

#### Yoruba

Tí ẹ ba ẹ ìmoràn yìí, ní èdè Òmíràn, ẹjọ, ẹ kàn wà l'ágogo