



Council for
Christian Muslim
Relations

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Council for Christian Muslim Relations (HW)

Wednesday 1st April 2015

Minutes

Present: Chauhdry M Shafique (Chair), Hugh Ellis (Vice-Chair), David Snoxell, Laurence Smy, Mrs Carol Smy, Anne Bowker, Pastor Asif Jamshaid, John Parry, Jackie Lock, John Richey, Mark Macaulay, Dr Shabbir Akhtar (Oxford Centre for Christian & Muslim Studies), Karen Johnstone, Latif Raja, Rana Sarfaraz.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Shafique opened the meeting with a welcome to all and an apology from the planned guest Speaker Dr Ronald Boyd-MacMillan who has been taken ill, it is hoped that he will be able to speak at a later meeting. Thanks were extended to Pastor Asif who agreed to step in at the last minute to share some of his experiences of his recent trip to Pakistan with Shafique.

Shafique addressed the meeting with regard to the warmth he experienced on the Pakistan trip and how keen our Christian counterparts in that country are to work together with us given the model of good relations they see between Christians and Muslims in High Wycombe.

2. Apologies

Ghayas Siddiqui, Greg Livingstone, Katy Simmons, Amjad Mahand, Tony King, John Bajina, Imam Sultan Mahmood, Zafar Iqbal.

3. Minutes of the last meeting 3rd February 2015

The meeting agreed they were a true record of events.

Matters Arising - Can the minutes be updated to include the fact that Mark Macaulay was in attendance.

4. Current Issues – Shafique talked about the common theme of the struggle of Christian minorities in different parts of the world and how those in Pakistan are very appreciative and supportive of the work done by the CCMR in High Wycombe.

5. Think Tank Update – This group is a sub committee of the CCMR which meets bi-monthly to discuss issues around mission to explore what divides as well as what unifies. They wanted to meet with the Mosque Committee (which happened last night) and with all the Imam's which it is hoped will happen before Ramadan. The Mosque committee appreciate and supports the good work being done by the CCMR in promoting community cohesion and are happy to share their child safety policy and

good practice. It was considered a very positive thing for Christians to be publicly involved with the celebrations on the day of the Prophet Mohammed's birthday. The constitution of the mosque includes co-operating with other faith groups, and all new committee members have to be those whose English is adequate, to be able to deliver prayers in Urdu and English to be able to reach young people whose first language is English. The position of women was raised and was acknowledged as an area to be addressed, as some of the cultural traditions are being changed. Our shared response of outrage at what happened at Peshawar recently shows how we are working together. It was a hugely positive meeting and it is hoped that the Imam's will meet with the Think Tank before Ramadan, possibly at Jubilee Road Mosque.

Laurence explained that in response to letters sent to all schools in the area The Imam and Pastor talks have been to 5 more schools since the last meeting with plans for more before the end of May. Imam Sultan has been involved along with Hugh Ellis, Mark Macaulay and John Richey which has been a great opportunity to assess where children are at.

John Parry said the CCMR talks are often of a socio political nature and wondered if the CCMR could explore scripture together to begin to see our own scriptures through others eyes. Laurence suggested we could indeed look at passages from our own faith (Scriptural reasoning) but John emphasised the value of looking at passages from others faiths, Mark pointed out that this is part of what Shabir is involved in at the moment, as he is a Muslim working on a commentary on Galatians. Hugh agreed that this wasn't just timely but essential as Christians today are increasingly interested in what the Quran says.

6. Presentation by the guest speaker

Pastor Asif said that he had been keen to join the CCMR for the past 3 years. He is from Pakistan and is a 3rd generation Christian Evangelical who sees his mission to share the love of Christ. He trained in Pasadena on Strategic Mission and worked in Afghanistan post 9/11, moving on relief work in Pakistan and then to High Wycombe. He is now working in a church in Slough and has regular visitors from Muslim, Sikh and Hindu faiths.

He then shared a speech that a school girl gave from St Anthony's High School in August 2014, about how minorities cannot be full citizens in Pakistan, and experience intense persecution. He talked about the early challenge for Missionaries and the complexity of the situation that has developed over the past 100 years. It was of real value for Shafique to visit the churches and mosques there. Conversation followed about whether the problems are to do with tribalism or historical unconscious bias in certain systems. There is no doubt about the post 9/11 impact on Pakistan as it has been used as a base country by all, with a huge legacy of radicalised people. John Parry commented that it is part of our duty to reassess our theological stance, and consider 'modesty' as an important message, and recognise that we all have only a partial understanding of God.

Shafique talked of the proposal for there to be some kind of seminar/conference in Pakistan with the CCMR delegates but that given the present political situation we will keep it under review. He acknowledged their desire to work with us on Inter faith issues. Shafique mentioned that there may be a chance to meet with the Principal of Edwards College from Peshawar (a Pakistani Christian and a serving brigadier in the army) who may be visiting here in July. **July 16th a possible CCMR date for your diaries TBC.**

7. Vote Of Thanks

Revd Hugh Ellis gave a vote of thanks to Asif for his contribution which helped to inform our discussion and journey together on the path of Peace.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The dates of the next meetings was agreed Tuesday 28th April 10am for 10.30am– with guest speaker Julia Bicknell, Director of World Watch Monitor. (Advance apologies from Jackie Lock)