

initiatives

SUMMER 2006

Faith in Leadership

L2L YOUTH THEME



ETHIOPIAN-BORN, British Indian Krish Raval believes passionately in helping young people achieve their potential. Having come to the UK at the age of six he knows how it feels to be part of a minority. And having experienced learning difficulties at school he has had to triumph over obstacles to achieve academic success.

In 1995 he graduated with a law degree from Sheffield University. Before going to Cambridge University he attended an Initiatives of Change (IofC) conference in Caux, Switzerland. There he met Sheffield industrialist Richard Field who trains top management in leadership skills. Realising that such skills are not taught at school or college, Raval launched a leadership training programme for young people in 1996, now known as Learn to Lead (L2L).

Today L2L is a national educational organisation where a broad range of community leaders impart their knowledge to university students who in turn pass on their new-found skills to younger teenagers, including those who have dropped out of the education system altogether. The aim is 'community transformation through the development of leadership in young people'. As L2L graduate Catrin May says, 'It was one of the best experiences of my life—it gave me the motivation to pursue both career and life goals.'

A decade later L2L is still evolving. The London bombings of 7 July 2005 'showed something of the sheer scale of the challenges and opportunities facing our society', says Raval. 'I wondered how it would be possible to foster the kind of leadership required to meet these challenges.'

For many years L2L had been hoping to work within faith communities and 7/7 gave this thought 'a new urgency'.

Raval approached IofC colleagues with the idea of working in partnership with L2L and after much brainstorming and contemplation a new project was born—Faith in Leadership (FiL).

FiL, which is currently seeking to employ three interns from within the IofC network, will be launched in January 2007. With IofC's spiritual commitment, heritage and global outreach, and with L2L's skills and standing in the training sector, FiL will be able to offer high level training to young leaders from different faith communities. Areas of learning will range from 'How I live my faith' and 'Religion as a dimension of statecraft' to 'Understanding group dynamics' and 'Effective communication'.

Raval is currently approaching politicians and religious leaders for their support and involvement. It is a huge task but the 33-year-old entrepreneur is spurred on by the vision of 'a new generation of leadership which is able to rise above the immediate concerns of their particular community and instead work for the common good'.

Laura Boobyer

*Email: krishraval@hotmail.com
To make a donation either visit www.uk.iofc.org, click on 'Support these initiatives' and contribute to IofC General Funds, or send a cheque (made out to Initiatives of Change) to 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD marked Faith in Leadership.*



Initiatives of Change

Welcome to *Initiatives*—published three times a year by Initiatives of Change UK to catch you up on what IofC is doing in and from the UK. We hope these four pages will give you information and inspiration—and a chance to share your own news of how you are making a difference. Please write to us at *Initiatives*, 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD or email: newsletter@uk.iofc.org

A CRY IN THE DESERT

I HAVE COME to learn that art is in fact an art of living. A life of the head, the heart, the hands. If water is the greatest thing for a thirsty man and a plain piece of paper the greatest thing for a writer, poet or composer, so the greatest thing for the silversmith is a large piece of silver sheet. He can sculpt it into a new creation.

Art has everything to do with freedom, freedom of mind and freedom of action. In order to gain freedom of mind we should rid ourselves of all sorts of preconceptions, desires or aims. We should come to the point of just being, allowing ourselves to be....

To gain freedom of action the silversmith, as in other art disciplines, needs to equip himself with the cunning of his craft. By doing so he builds foundations for freedom of expression.

Craft itself holds a secret within our society, imprisoned by 'relevance', 'expediency' and 'haste'. The inefficiency of the crafts is a cry in a hasty desert. While hands are creating, the mind is contemplating and the heart is the quiet, hidden recipient of new ideas, new inspiration.

Extract from a talk by Dutch master silversmith Jan van Nouhuys at Greencoat Place in May.

Deadline for next issue: 9 October

Email: newsletter@uk.iofc.org

L to r: Roshan Gul (NZ) and Chris James (AUS) with Indian IofC veteran VC Viswanathan



HOWARD GRACE

Action for Life

Howard Grace writes:

IN MARCH my wife and I were with Action for Life 3 at Asia Plateau before they left India, in smaller teams, for such countries as Zimbabwe, China, Malaysia and Vietnam. One group was in Indonesia at the time of the earthquake; they have had to find a new venue for the Asia Pacific Youth Conference, July 21-30.

The full group of about 40 are very creative and musical. One thing that struck us was their conviction to reach young Westerners with the message and challenge of IofC. There is a great response in Asia but they are well aware of the different mentality in the West. Responding to this conviction I invited three of them, from Australia, New Zealand and Moldova to join us in the UK from September, for six months. Their outreach will include speaking in schools.

Chris James from Australia says, 'IofC needs committed youth teams around the world if it is to be sustained. I want to learn how to bring more creativity to IofC presentations; to take individuals from being comfortable in their lives to handing their lives back to God, ready to touch lives.'

They will base in Newbury, but need to be able to travel independently with the many school visits ahead of them. If anyone knows of a car they could borrow for six months that would be much appreciated. Adventures ahead!

Email: howard.grace@uk.iofc.org

Soul food

SPRINGS OF RENEWAL was the theme of a Quiet Day organised by Mary Lean and others at St Andrew's retreat centre in Edenbridge, Surrey. Participants were treated to carefully selected reflections, meditations and poems. Water was a central theme. 'There is within each of us', we were told, 'a quiet clear pool of living water.' The day provided an opportunity for participants to connect with that inner pool in a variety of ways: reading, reflecting, painting, praying on a labyrinth walk. Each was free to choose how to spend the time and although there was no obligation to share insights some did so. The backdrop was a quote from Isaiah 43: 'Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters... Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?'

In May a similar Quiet Day was enjoyed by the IofC team in Oxford at Burford Priory. In the same style, a number of Oasis evenings have been held at Greencoat Place. Starting with a light supper, guests are invited to meditate on a given theme. Again the beauty of words, music, silence and visual aids offers a most refreshing experience.

If you are interested in organising a Quiet Day in your part of the country email: mary.lean@uk.iofc.org

THINKTWICE

CHANGE, CHANGE—
WHAT'S ALL THIS TALK
ABOUT CHANGE? THINGS
ARE QUITE BAD ENOUGH
AS THEY ARE! *Lord Salisbury*

Hunte memorial

THE SIR CONRAD HUNTE MEMORIAL FOUNDATION AND TRUST was inaugurated in Barbados in May. Set up by Hunte's family 'in recognition of his contribution to Barbados, the Caribbean and the wider world', the foundation will continue his work in youth development through sports.

Hunte, who was Vice-Captain of the West Indies cricket team for eight years, pioneered IofC's (then MRA's) race relations work in Britain after retiring from cricket in 1967, and spent seven years in South Africa in the 1990s, promoting cricket in the black townships.

The inaugural Sir Conrad Hunte lecture was given by the Rev Wes Hall, his team-mate in the West Indies test cricket side.



Conrad Hunte teaching cricket

RJ FLEMING

In Lebanon

THE LEBANESE ex-militiamen who came to the UK in 2002 send greetings. Recently they addressed 500 Maronite Catholic youth near Tripoli. Assaad Shaftari spoke of his 'Christian' fight against the Muslims in the civil war, his misdeeds and public apology. The youth shouted back that the apology was his only mistake. Mohieddine Shihab, the former Christian-hater weighed in, and after an intense two hours the objectors embraced both men.

Last February a Muslim demonstration in Beirut against the Danish cartoons turned violent. In a Christian area a bank was burned and churches were shot at. Shihab, the Mayor of Ras Beirut, went straight to Lebanon's Mufti who then sent delegates in contrition to church leaders. Shaftari has produced a film for young Christians and Muslims with the aim that 'we learn to grow together in obedience to God'. His wife, Marie, and Lina Sharafeddine (Shiite) have founded a Christian-Muslim women's organisation. My host, Lebanese lawyer, Ramez Salame and I met with 50 of them during my week there.

The weekly Beirut team meeting, another in the Bekaa Valley, sun on snow-capped Mount Hermon, the crowd of all ages on Beirut's Mediterranean corniche, jacaranda in bloom, fig jam for breakfast, a delightful country.

Peter Everington

Hari Shukla with the former Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor David Slesenger



Freedom of the City

IN MAY, Hari Shukla was made a Freeman of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne at a special ceremony in the Civic Centre. *The Newcastle Journal* described him as 'one of the North East's leading multicultural ambassadors... the first person from an ethnic minority to receive the accolade, nominated for his contribution to education, community and interfaith relations'. He was for many years Director of the Tyne and Wear Race Equality Council, was awarded the OBE and is now a Deputy Lord Lieutenant.

On receiving the award, Shukla paid special tribute to his wife and family for their support, as well as to the many people from all sections of the community with whom he had worked over the years on the basis of 'what is right not who is right'. Previous honorary freemen include Nelson Mandela, Jimmy Carter and Sir Bob Geldof.

Shukla has, for many years, been engaged in the work of lofC and acknowledges that its moral values have reinforced him in his bridge-building work within and between communities.

In Romania and Crimea

SINCE 1993 Foundations for Freedom (F4F) has been holding courses in Eastern Europe to help those new to democracy explore its moral and spiritual basis. Teams have grown up from Siberia to Latvia, and Moscow to Crimea.

This year, as part of the policy of devolving ownership of F4F from the UK to Eastern Europe, it was left to the Romanians to take full responsibility for the annual Regional Meeting. An Orthodox monastery in Bixad was the venue where Gordon Fuller and I found ourselves in May representing the UK. There were 17 of us from eight areas where F4F exists. During six days of meetings including use of the 'open space' technique, topics varied from 'how to build and sustain a community' to 'what makes an F4F person different'.

Meanwhile, down in Crimea, a Changing Course (CC) was in progress with 21 participants aged 17 to 30 from all over Ukraine. Those who had already taken part in a CC, and subsequently been trained as trainers, provided the faculty along with Kees and Marina Scheijgrond from the Netherlands. Back home afterwards one participant wrote, 'The course influenced me greatly. It changed my attitude to different people, and to my actions.'

Miles Paine



16th century church in the monastery at Bixad

For your diary

AT 24 GREENCOAT PLACE, LONDON SW1P 1RD

Tuesday 12 September

6.30pm for 7.15pm

My life is my message:

Greencoat Forum with Chris James (Australia), Roshan Gul (New Zealand) and Vlad Oleatovski (Moldova), recent participants in the lofC Action for Life 3 leadership training programme in Asia

Tuesday 10 October

6.30pm for 7.15pm

Progress for women is progress for all:

Greencoat Forum with Juliet Coleman, President of UNIFEM UK, the United Nations' fund for women, fostering women's empowerment and gender equality

Saturday 14 October

3pm

Bishop Michael Marshall will present 'The Spirituality of Mozart' with recordings and live excerpts from the piano followed by tea. Organised by Friends of Westminster Productions

Tuesday 24 October

6.30pm for 7.15pm

Blind faith—can your inner walk truly shape the outer world?

Greencoat Forum with Lyndall Bywater, Prayer Co-ordinator for The Salvation Army

Wednesday 22 November

6.30pm for 7.15pm

Greencoat Forum:

An evening with Professor Gerald Pillay, Vice-Chancellor and Rector of Liverpool Hope University

Past forums

THE RANGE of Greencoat Forums at the lofC centre in London has been impressive. In March John Battle MP, advisor to Prime Minister Tony Blair on interfaith matters, regaled his audience with hope-giving stories of people bringing about change in his constituency, Leeds West.

In April three media personalities including Bill Porter, Founder of the International Communications Forum, argued the case for the British media as a force for good. Later came leading Muslim academic, Professor Tariq Ramadan. Recognising the fear that exists in Muslims and non-Muslims alike across the world he said it was time for all of us to move out of our 'intellectual ghettos'.

May brought a challenge from, and for, Africa. Amina Dikedi-Ajakaiye from Nigeria and Amira Elmissiry from Zimbabwe initiated an honest dialogue for a clean and just Africa amongst Africans and non-Africans. Poverty, corruption, health, security and fair trade were high on the agenda and anyone interested should consider attending their Agenda for Reconciliation conference at Caux in August (www.caux.ch).

Organisation strategist John Carlisle spoke in June, 'From stupidity to foolishness—a look at good global enterprises'. The evening was as entertaining as it sounds and provided the perfect climax to the AGM.

New books

A Great Gamble: turning enemies into friends

A booklet containing Michael Henderson's talks on forgiveness which were recently broadcast on Nottingham's Muslim Radio Dawn, with a foreword by Imam Musharraf Hussain, who writes: 'These moving stories show that the human spirit of forgiveness is one of the most powerful energies we possess.'

£2 plus 50p postage, or special introductory offer of 5 copies for £5 plus £1 postage; cheques to lofC Books, 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD.

Saeima sign-up

IF YOU WANT to contribute to a heart and soul for Europe the Saeima could be for you. Saeima is a Latvian word for a community gathering and that is what will be happening from 14-21 October in Kiev, Ukraine. Billed as a meeting of the European community of lofC, its aim is to reinforce our network in Europe, say the organisers, 'so that we can better tackle the issues which affect our continent'.

Application forms with more information are available from Greencoat Place and the registration deadline is 1 August. Veronica Craig is co-ordinating UK delegates.

Email: gvccraig@talk21.com

In the British Press

Visit www.uk.iofc.org/people/lives for obituaries of people associated with lofC: Alec Smith (The Times, 12 April), Les Dennison (The Independent, 28 April) and Robin Mowat (The Independent, 12 May).

RESPONSE FORM

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I would like to receive more information about Initiatives of Change.

I would like to receive more information about Greencoat Forums.

I would like to receive more information about a specific activity or programme of Initiatives of Change. Please specify:

Please send me a copy of the Caux programme for 2006.

I would like to make a donation to Initiatives of Change. Please find enclosed a cheque (payable to Initiatives of Change).

Please post to Enquiries, Initiatives of Change, Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD.



Initiatives of Change

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