



# Interfaith Conversation

**Scottish Churches House**

March 5<sup>th</sup> 2009

## **Nurturing Children in Faith - Home, School or Faith Community?**

**Chaired by Andrew Sarle – Inter Faith  
Education Officer for CAIRS**

*Andrew Sarle has been Education Officer for CAIRS since 2005, and was a Maths teacher before this. He grew up in a mixed faith home, and was inspired to work in inter faith relations by the late Professor David Kerr, formerly of Edinburgh University. Andrew is about to launch an independent inter faith consultancy IRENIC to continue and expand some of the work he has been involved in during his time with CAIRS. He is secretary of Central Scotland Interfaith, and a director of Falkirk Churches' Youth Project. Andrew is also a Church of Scotland Reader.*

### **Introduction**

This is a concern of many parents and teachers of religious convictions. But it can also be a contentious subject with political and social repercussions. What is the difference between nurture and education? Who should be responsible – home, school, or religious community? Can it be a cause of division among people of different faith or is it one of the meeting points where we can come together and share our concerns and potential solutions?

Today we have four speakers with experience and interest in this issue from the Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities in Scotland who gathered together at Scottish Churches House in Dunblane, on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2009 to share their perspectives with participants from different faiths.

Each speaker will introduce their thoughts on what it means to 'nurture children in faith' and then participants will be encouraged to explore the issues raised further in small groups. The second part of the programme will look at whose responsibility it is to nurture children in faith – home, school, or religious community, and a report of the discussion will be prepared for future publication.

The event is being cosponsored by Scottish Churches House and CAIRS, the Churches' Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland, whose Education Officer, Andrew Sarle will Chair the day as one of his final duties before his three and a half year period of employment ends due to lack of continued funding from the churches.

**Dr Satwant Singh Multani** has served as the convenor of Central Scotland Interfaith, and of the management committee of Central Scotland Racial Equality Council. Until his retirement he was a GP in Polmont, and is a member of the Central Gurudwara in Glasgow. He is passionate about the young people of the Sikh community knowing about their background and so is presently in charge of teaching Punjabi to about 60 young Sikhs. He is equally passionate about people from different faiths and cultures coming together and living in harmony. Satwant is also a member of the Police Lay Advisory Committee.

### Nurturing Children in Faith

Sikhism started in 1469 by Guru Nanak. He travelled about 39,000 kilometres on foot with his two companions taking his mission far and wide and was respected by Hindus and Muslims alike.

From the first to 10<sup>th</sup> masters (gurus), Sikhs were taught principles of faith:

- love,
- peace,
- compassion,
- selfless service,
- and Worship of God who is THE creator of the whole of humanity,
- quality of obedience,
- rendering service to the *master (Sangat, Pangar and Langar)* thus telling us about brotherhood.

Our holiest shrines are Amritsar and Holy Scripture (*Adi Granth*). Each master in succession has taught us, one must not lose equanimity in pain, pleasure, sorrow or joy and should resign to the will of God.

The path of to which is the process of transforming the Sikh into *Khalsa* – kind hearted, pious, noble, brave, and truthful. This equips us with 2 swords, one for worship and the other for power (but never to be offensive, it is to be used in defence of the vulnerable and to defend one's own faith. Our masters taught us:

- to develop balanced and poised personalities with full devotion to the Almighty

- to serve the sick in a most caring way, irrespective of who they are (our eighth guru suffered of chickenpox himself and died aged 8 (he was initiated at the age of 5 for his wisdom and clarity of vision even at aged 5 years).
- to make sacrifices for the sake of the weak and oppressed, (not only is this a philosophy but Guru Teg Bahadur sacrificed himself protecting the faith of Kashmiri Hindus who could not defend their own faith) to have great respect and equality for women at all times
- the 10<sup>th</sup> Guru occupied the spiritual throne at the age of 9 and later sacrificed his four sons for the protection of righteousness and destruction of wickedness and cruelty.
- his thinking was quite contemporary and he turned Sikhs into Singh's by administering Nectar. His philosophy was to be brave, honest, share with others, and never take advantage of difficult times of others.
- to use Sword (*Kirpan*, which is *Kirpa* ...kindness and *Ann* ... one's honour and faith) as a defence, thus making us a valid strong military force.

All in all we Sikhs were coached by our masters for about 241 years and this learning has been passed down from father to son.

The famous historian Prof. Arnold Toynbee once said that by creating *Khalsa* (a god-loving, god-fearing, sympathetic, pious, and dutiful person) Guru Gobind Singh anticipated Lenin by two centuries.

In addressing the main theme for to-day I feel it is extremely important that children are brought up in faith. This makes them spiritually stronger, caring, thinking not of their own self but of others. It has been said, "No faith, no soul". In this respect a mother (*a married woman is the purest specimen of humanity*) is the most important person in teaching children from a very early age, once they are old enough to understand, the principles of the faith.

They learn to respect their elders and never forget that mother is next to God. She tells them about religious books and stories in the way they understand and can connect the story to the philosophy of the masters and in so doing, to the Almighty.

She teaches them to respect others, spirituality, the importance of prayers at various times of the day and what it means; the importance of rising early to pray, clean their body and by praying clean their soul, and as they grow older about equality, sharing, helping the sick and poor; attending the place of worship as much as possible as part of *Sangat* (congregation).

She also teaches them to see the Divine spark in every person and: in Sikhism a house becomes *Gurudwara* (house of God and worship) once the holy book is brought in.

**God is our Father we are all His children some call Him Ram some Khuddah Jesus Christ, and Allah, but we all came from the same stalk.**

**First God created His light and from His power all men were made  
From Gods light came the whole universe  
Whom shall we call good and whom bad?**

**No one is my enemy and no is a stranger,  
all are friends.**

Is so doing a mother has taught the family the value of humanity, humility, kindness, never take what is does not belong to you, high moral values, keeping body pure, teaching about brotherhood, making them better human beings from these religious teachings.

These teachings are repeated at each opportunity at home and in the place of worship. Our 10 masters taught us the value of family life and this is where God dwells.

Children are taught the importance of reciting and listening to religious scriptures, coming to Gurudwara, serving food, collecting and cleaning dishes. Learning how this helps to build up spirituality, brotherhood, and the importance of service (an important feature to link them with our faith).

We do not worship anything apart from our Holy Book '*Guru Granth Sahib*'. Children are taught to pay respect to the Holy Book as they come and leave.

I remember a very distinguished person would come to a Gurudwara about 5 am every morning with lots of people following him, after washing his hands and feet he will go straight to the community kitchen, wash dishes, then dust all shoes and put them in order, wash the floor, then have a cup of tea along with the others. I wondered who this person was; I was told he was 'Maharaja' of the estate. I was not surprised or shocked; he was only practicing what our Gurus taught. His parents had nurtured this Maharaja in faith thus teaching him the importance of being humble. I am sure this made him a noble person. It made a big impression in my life from then on.

We Sikhs only worship our 'Holy Book' which teaches us about everything, may it be social, political, economic, marital, self defence and religious matters. All our life is guided by its principle. Not a word can be changed in the Holy Book.

This is the way I was taught by my parents and I have tried to teach my gift (children) from the Almighty and I am grateful for all His kindness great and small.

**Rabbi Nancy Morris** is currently the Rabbi and spiritual leader of Glasgow Reform Synagogue in Newton Mearns, Glasgow. Raised and educated in Montreal in Canada, she received her M.A. and LL.B. degrees at McGill University. Rabbi Morris was also privileged to study in many different places throughout her career, including Vienna, Prague and Jerusalem. After working as a lawyer in Toronto, she decided to follow her dream of becoming a Rabbi. She carried out her Rabbinical training at Leo Baeck College in London, England and spent her fifth year student placement in Ontario, Canada as Rabbi of Har Tikvah synagogue in Brampton. After ordination in July 2002, she continued as Rabbi of Har Tikvah Synagogue until moving to Glasgow in October 2003.

### On Nurture or Education:

These notes pertain primarily to the question of Jewish attitudes towards FAITH SCHOOLS:

- In 2008, there were 280,000 Jews in Britain
- Of 48 non-Christian faith schools in Britain, 37 of them are Jewish, so there is an obvious importance put on Jewish faith schools among Jews in Britain
- 63% of Jewish children attend Jewish schools

### The History of Jewish faith schools:

- In earlier times (19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> c.), the dominant Jewish idea was assimilationist
- Anglo Jewry feared a strictly Jewish education would hold people back and hamper their success
- State schools were acceptable at that time and there were many good ones
- from the 1960's, there were radical changes when Labour party and others turned "state schools" into a byword for inferior education and violence
- Fashionability of Jewish faith schools on the rise
- Society became more multiracial and there was more Jewish pride
- There was more Jewish confidence, assertiveness and wealth in British society and it led to greater push for faith schools

### Observations of the phenomenon of Jewish faith schools:

- Many parents want their children to be in a school with other Jewish children, to meet their own kind, socialize, for very good, proud reasons and also for not so positive insular reasons
- Many parents think they are protecting their children from inferior education, violence and social problems they might encounter in Non-Jewish schools
- Parents want their children to have a full day opportunity for Jewish education
- Some parents are lazy and wish to abdicate their role as Jewish educators and role models for their children to the school

### Calderwood Lodge – the only Jewish faith school in Scotland:

- It is the only Jewish faith school in Scotland
- Founded in 1962 by the Glasgow Jewish community and the British Zionist Foundation
- in 1982 it was taken over by Strathclyde Region, moved to Glasgow City Council in 1996 and by 1997 it was, and still is, administered by East Renfrewshire Council
- Children are introduced to Hebrew in nursery and then study it throughout P1 to P7
- French is taught in P6
- Not all the staff or pupils are Jewish (currently the Head Teacher is not Jewish)
- There is much time devoted to Jewish based religious and moral teaching
- Generally considered to offer a good quality of education
- Sometimes only the strictest Jewish Orthodox attitudes are conveyed in terms of Jewish teaching and practise which can lead to old-fashioned ideas of gender roles and even having children question their status as Jews if the Orthodox community does not consider them to be Jewish (since the school is administered by East Renfrewshire, they accept pupils of all faiths. This does not mean that the staff or school committee consider a child who believes him/herself to be Jewish to actually be Jewish)

### Observations on Calderwood Lodge

--Jewish faith day school seems to have a very positive impact in some cases and not so much in others

--Children receive a very specific, and limited, type of Jewish education at that school

--I personally believe Judaism to be a culture, tradition and identity that needs to primarily be learned in the home and through the parents and family of a child.

--Judaism is based around festivals and home based rituals

--Identity is gained through the home and family and through acting out Jewish practices and rituals.

--Day school can sometimes help reinforce this but ultimately cannot instill it if it is absent in the home and family

**Dr Salah Beltagui** of the Glasgow Muslim community was a founding member and vice chairman of the Scottish Inter Faith Council from 1999 – 2000 and was for many years a member of its Executive Committee. He is also Executive Director at the Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations, Scotland. Other volunteering positions Dr Beltagui has held include the chair of the Management Committee for Radio Salaam and Radio Ramadan Glasgow. He was also a member of the national council and president of the Scottish Region of the Islamic Society of Britain between 1994 and 1999. Dr Beltagui was Secretary AND President for Muslim Welfare House in Glasgow from 1999 to 2000 and was also in the Race Working Group for Glasgow City Council Equality Committee during this time.

Professionally, Dr Beltagui has a B.Sc. from the University of Alexandria and a PhD. from the University of Glasgow, both in Mechanical Engineering. He has held related research and lecturing positions in universities and research institutions in Britain and Egypt. He was also Associate Professor at Sohar University in Oman.

### **Salah Beltagui: a Muslim's View**

#### **Nurture or Educate**

Islam is about the pleasure of God and is a complete way of life; and children need to get into the frame of reference of Islam as early as possible. It is about everything in life - food, eating, drink, cleanliness, play, pray etc. It is also about values such as love, compassion, justice, responsibility.

#### **One quote from the Qur'an:**

*It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in God, the Last Day, the Angels, the Books and the Messengers; to spend of your wealth, out of love for Him, for your kin, the orphans, the needy, the wayfarer, those who ask, and for the freeing of captives; to be steadfast in prayers, and practice regular charity; to fulfil the contracts which you made; and to be firm and patient in suffering and adversity and times of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-conscious [2:177]*

Islam – you submit your life to God using the Qur'an as a source of guidance and from the guidance you find rules; mercy and justice occur more than the term love.

The family is the bedrock of society and nurturing children in faith is a duty of parents and other family members. Children learn by experience of having adults model a frame of reference. Muslim parents have to be aware of the challenges of being Muslim in Britain. Salah was brought up in a dominant Islamic country whereas his children have been brought up in Scotland where the Muslim community is a minority within society; where little mainstream Muslim education is available.

The conflict of good and bad, right and wrong, is always there, and nurturing in faith is to equip children with the tools to deal with it.

As young children, gradual nurturing, they are taught through play for the first six years, then trained in behaviour for the next six, then be educated thereafter for another six or maybe forever ! When they are old enough, be brother to them.

Seeking Knowledge is an obligatory duty on every man and woman. Knowledge of faith is necessary to life accordingly, some basics for all, rituals, prayer, fasting, charity etc. Other specific knowledge, as much as needed, by the profession for example, ethics of the job or trade in addition to the technical knowledge.

Specific to UK Muslims, is the need to live according to Islam and be part of the present society and environment. Is there a contradiction? Not really, but much effort is needed to satisfy this condition.

#### **Where does the responsibility lie:**

The question asked is: Home, School, Religious community? The simple answer is ALL three. I would like to expand the question to: Where does education actually come from? Who or what does affect the children's life beliefs, values and behaviour?

In the present there are the effects of the mass media and intimate influences (peers etc.) and these should be considered as well. Although I think with proper nurturing early in a child's life is the only way to build the child's capacity to deal with these effects.

The needs of Muslim parents are similar to the needs of any rational parent, Christian, Jewish, etc. However they need to put in more effort in order to clarify things which seem different from mainstream society.

There is a hot issue now about the new Scottish Curriculum for Excellence and how it deals with Religious Education. It talks of how the child is to develop his/her OWN faith. The question is what is meant by 'own faith', is it the faith he is brought up in his family or develop something from scratch.

We hope, and would like to be clear, that the curriculum aims to achieve the first, i.e. develop the faith he is brought up with in the child's family. At later stages he/she should learn about all world religions and beliefs to be a good citizen.

Knowledge of other faith, removes the fear which is mostly based on ignorance, bad communication, and stereotypes often represented through the media.

**Nancy Adams** was a lecturer in *International Relations* and a *Political Analyst* for a *Middle Eastern Research Unit* in London before moving to Scotland in 1984. Until recently, she held the post of *Bursar/Secretary to the Board* at *Clifton Hall School*, and was also *treasurer* for 2 other small charities/trusts. She has convened the *Provincial Church in Society Committee* and its *Justice Peace and Creation Network* and is a member of the *Board of Governors of the Aberlour children charity* whose mission is to improve the lives of Scotland's children and young people.

### What does it mean to 'nurture children in faith'?

The dictionary definition of '**nurture**': caring for and encouraging the growth and development of someone ... it incorporates 'upbringing, education and environment' ... and is to be contrasted with inborn characteristics ... and as an influence on or determinant of personality.

So within this definition, 'education' is integral to the **nurturing** process, but it is not the whole picture: nurture also includes the upbringing we receive within our family and the environment within which we are raised (which might include being part of a faith community).

So, for me, it is not an 'either/or' question, but rather one of **both – and**. And this 'both – and' includes another important distinction, which I hope will be helpful.

**Education** is quite often seen as imparting **information** (facts and data) which, hopefully, as children grow, begin to be put together – connections are made – to form the basis of knowledge. But when we talk about '**nurturing**' I see this as providing opportunities for practicing **formation** – formation of character, of personality, of identity, of spirituality, of what it means to be fully human. And this is a life-long process .. a life long journey...

So, if human learning proceeds from '**repeating**' at the infant stage to '**doing**' as children, to what extent are we empowering our young people to realise their full potential

as critical discerning human beings by enabling them to proceed to the next dimensions of '**becoming**' then '**being**' and finally, to '**growing inwardly**'?

Quite often the word '**formation**' is used in terms of training/forming people for ministry. But whereas '**religious education**' which children get at school might provides the essentials of 'information' about different religion, '**religious observance**' which is also a requirement with the education act of Scotland, if interpreted well, is about '**formation**'.

But where does the 'faith' bit come in (and I note that the word is used in this session is not '*religion*' nor '*the faith*' but '**nurturing children in faith**')? Let me quote one of my favourite poets/philosophers – Kahil Gibran:

*Faith is an oasis in the heart  
which will never be reached  
by the caravan of thinking.*

*Faith is a knowledge  
within the heart,  
beyond the reach of proof.*

So if faith is about 'a knowledge within the heart' are we then talking about 'nurturing children' in a way that enables them to understand the difference between the knowledge of the heart and the knowledge of the head ... and then to integrate the two?

Is 'nurture' about providing opportunities to experience rather than to be fed information?

Is 'nurture' about helping young people to understand not only with the mind, but also the spirit?

Is 'nurture' about providing opportunities to be still; giving young people permission to be silent in their noisy worlds; providing safe spaces to reflect or meditate or pray?

Is 'nurture' about being a companion on the journey of life that encourages, affirms, praises, expresses gratitude, teaches by example how to say 'I'm sorry' or 'please forgive me'?

Is 'nurture' about being a good role model; being aware that children watch what we do far more than they listen to what we say?

Is 'nurture' less about 'what we do' and more about 'how we do it' or 'who we are'?

Is 'nurture' perhaps about helping young people to creatively 'hold the tension between opposites of difficult and complex issues'? Enabling them to feel comfortable living with paradox rather than planting themselves dogmatically somewhere and calling it 'the truth'?

So, where is the 'religious' perspective – the 'Christian perspective'? Christians, like other religions, have as many 'perspectives' on issues – particularly controversial ones – as there are people! And these cut across denominational boundaries as well! And where this issue of 'nurturing children in faith' is concerned, I suspect that all religions hold far more in common than we differ.

For example, the Quakers have a set of Principle for a Holy Life which includes the following: awe, wonder, interconnectedness, nurture, care, respect, love, honouring, humility, valuing, hospitality, stewardship, peaceable living, adaptation and harmony. I suspect no one in this room to disagree with any of these as being fundamental to living what they call a 'Holy Life' or being fully/wholly human.

However, let me quote from two well-known Christian theologians, who articulate what I am trying to say so much better than I am able:

**Archbishop Rowan Williams, in one of his Meditations for the Bishops at the Lambeth Conference last year said:**

*"The new humanity is a vulnerable place where if anyone loses, is hurt or held back, everyone loses, is hurt and held back ... we bear one another's burdens ... we stand as disciples of Jesus as human being to show that. THAT is God's future for humanity: life flowing from each to each as cost and pain flow from each to each ... all contained in infinite love ... that we all need to change, to be converted, and to grow ..*

*that the bishops (or each of us) are a sign of unity of the new humanity in which there are no defensive boundaries between life and the pain of diverse people and communities ... where, in Christ and through the spirit, human lives flow together ...".*

**And Archbishop Desmond Tutu tells us:**

*"We can be human only together, black and white, rich and poor, Christian and Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Jew. The first law of our being is that we are set in a delicate network of interdependence with our fellow human beings and with the rest of God's creation. 'Ubuntu' (which means interdependence in the Nguni language) embodies the belief that we need other human beings to be fully human ourselves. I am because other people are. For us, ubuntu is to fully recognise our universal brotherhood and sisterhood and also our relationship to the rest of creation.*

*In order to realise what God's purpose is for each of us and to be able to cooperate in the dream, we need time for silent meditation to 'see with the eyes of the heart'. The more active our lives, the more essential this discipline is to maintain the balance of our integrity, and therefore the integrity of our actions."*

So, for me, '**nurture**' is about gently, compassionately, lovingly empowering children to be fully human: helping them integrate what they understand in their heads with a knowledge in their hearts so that they become part of the 'new humanity', recognising our universal brotherhood and sisterhood with all of God's creation.

## Participants discussion

### Key points discussed in small groups

- Religious Education – what is it meant to do – does it relate to nurturing?
- What does it mean to be Christian?
- UK has been called a Christian country with a Christian culture and is still the case with some even though it may now be considered secular.
- Christian church doesn't have the same Church and Home rituals that most other faiths have.
- If you don't nurture children in faith they are not prepared for stresses of life in adulthood. They are not prepared for death. People brought up in faith cope with serious health issues better.
- Things you learn as children tend to stay with you.

### The afternoon session was a free flowing discussion around the three main opportunities for nurturing children in faith of home, school and religious community.

- One model of the ultimate model of school: Faith schools when at for example, 10.00am each faith group would gather together to pursue their own matters e.g. speak Punjabi, read the Qur'an etc.
- Concern was express about faith being taught in faith groups as this loses the value of children learning about faith together.
- Faith groups can already meet outwith curriculum time.
- Faith schools might pull children out of their community, including 'non-faith' children.

- This however, is not likely to happen in Scotland.
- Flagged up – faith groups need to be more robust and proactive; speak to local authorities about what they require. However, this would require resources of people with specialist knowledge. The Curriculum for Excellence attempts to broaden the scope of religious education.
- Noted that England involve faith/religious studies in Assembly Services; however in Scotland not all Assemblies have a religious content.
- If schools were to recognise all festivals relevant to the range of faiths in their schools they could be celebrating festivals every month.
- Nurturing children in faith in not just about religious education or religious observance – what about the development of spirituality in school communities?
- How do we enable children, who don't come from a faith based family, to begin to explore 'faith'?
- Many churches today do not have a Sunday School or youth club. Less than 5% of children attend church.
- How do you engage with young people in Scotland when only 1 in 20 children have a 'faith' connection?
- Adults often do not share their Church connection in a work context. An example was given where it was not discovered until a member of the group had left the school in which he taught that 2 other members of staff at that school are in fact members of the local presbytery – he didn't even know they were Christians. Many adults and children are reluctant to admit to be churchgoers.

- It is difficult for a child from a non faith family to be able to develop faith as a result of a school curriculum.
- Family first – then school
- In East Lothian there is only one RC school so most children attend the local Primary School. The local Father comes once a week. Children leave quietly and return quietly with no comment from other pupils. It is accepted as a norm where children live and study with each other regardless of faith. However, this is somewhat different in the West of Scotland where there is a higher number of Catholic schools and more religious friction exists.
- North Lanarkshire have a school with a joint campus. It was intended to separate RC and non RC children throughout the day. Staff, however, did not want separate staff rooms and children refused to be segregated in the dining hall and playground.
- As a follow up from the mornings input by Rabbi Nancy Morris, clarification was sought on why she said that being Jewish was not about faith. She explained that those who are Orthodox Jews use an interpretative tradition – the written law; Non Orthodox Jews take an oral tradition of laws handed down by Moses; an oral traditional now written down.
- Faith is not talked about; they have fundamental principles. God is a given so faith is not an issue – it is more about how you live your life.
- What happens when generational handing on of faith stalls? The frequency of discontinuation of faith seems to be increasing.
- It was identified that this happens in other faiths as an example Dr Satwant Singh Multani acknowledged his own experience of this with his own children, believing that the

culture that dominates society has a strong influence. Ultra Orthodox Fundamental Jewish groups isolate themselves from the rest of society and thus avoid the cross culture influences.

- Although parents want to pass on their faith it is not always possible – what is important is they do their best. This is not an issue that can be forced. If you push too hard it can force a negative response. Even some Prophets' sons did not follow them.

So, much of instilling (making faith relevant/have meaning) needs to come at an early age – people are less likely to seek faith as adults. Faith education within the family in the child's early years sows seeds and principles which although turned away from as young people, often come back to in later years.

- It is important though to have an expression of faith from church institutions. Young people don't see integrity coming out of the church institutions and don't find what they seek within the buildings.
- A celebration of faith/spirituality during the Edinburgh Festival has been seen to draw young people.
- The media too is influential and in fact may have a greater effect than traditional input, and is more insidious.
- Evangelical traditions seem to be more successful in holding young people. It identifies intellectual exploration and recognises youth culture and is more participative rather than bound by traditions and regulations.

If some of that can be transferred to the schools setting it can open up the fact that faith/church is not only for 'grannies'. We need to listen to young people and **hear** their views.

- When young people become involved in activities that interest them it is possible they learn more about faith; but are we offering activities that interest them?
- Some faiths when referring to 'the family' it is a given that this includes all extended family members; they do not make a distinction between 'family' and 'extended family'.
- The life cycle of interest in church comes and goes – "The hearts of people are in the hands of God".
- Out multi-cultural, multi faith society should nurture faith in children as a result of common values yet we want to hold onto our traditions. Secular values are more about wealth and success. It is important that young people develop sound values and a sense of spirituality.
- We crave identity but does the Christian church provide that. Society today appears respectful of other culture and faiths but not respectful of Christianity. Proponents of Christianity are not clear about the 'Christian Identity'.
- An anti-religions move in 1960's has now become an anti-Christian movement in the UK. The USA has a higher level of Christian faith but there is a greater separation between state and church. Political correctness diverts and dilutes important issues – takes issues underground rather than risk debate that leads to understanding.
- A survey taken in the Muslim community indicates that young Muslims identify themselves first as Scots who are Muslim rather than Muslims who live in Scotland.
- How can parents who do not attend church, teach their children about basic values such as tolerance means it is missing in childhood, even though the parents may return to church at a later time.
- It is noted that Naming Days are replacing Christenings. Baptism is about welcoming a child into the community and parents promise to be concerned about the child's physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. The challenge is after the service in how we support the child and family in body, mind and spirit.
- Very young children have an openness and generosity of heart which adults diminish.
- People who don't practice denominational faith are still seeking something spiritual.
- A member of the group spoke of his father who became a church minister, he (his son) has been a Christian Scientist for 60 years, his brother is RC and daughter takes Humanist Funerals.
- For many there is an importance of ritual even though they have rejected mainstream faith.

5<sup>th</sup> March 2009  
Scottish Churches House

## **APPENDIX 1: Faiths and Denominations Represented**

<b>Church of Scotland</b>	Andrew Sarle Colin Brownlea Nancie Mclean Elizabeth Templeton Joan Craig
<b>Sikh Community</b>	Satwant Singh Multani
<b>Jewish Community</b>	Nancy Morris
<b>Muslim Community</b>	Salah Beltagui
<b>Scottish Episcopal Church</b>	Nancy Adams Sara Salveson Bruce Cameron Elaine Cameron Mary Hall
<b>Quakers</b>	Margaret Boland
<b>United Reformed Church</b>	Linda Rice
<b>Methodist</b>	Lily Twist
<b>Christian Science</b>	Charles Scott Margaret Scott Valerie Mitford
<b>Subud</b>	Magdalene Sacranie
<b>CARE</b>	Alastair Noble
<b>Scottish Churches House</b>	Carol Stobie
<b>ACTS/Recorder</b>	Joan Pennycook