

The Harold Meyer Memorial Lecture

'The Economic Crisis and Morality: Do we need a spiritual revival?'

Watford, United Kingdom, 12. January 2013



From left to right: Muhammad Abdul Wahhab (Muslim), Chris Rees (Jew), Elected Mayor Dorothy Thornhill MBE, Steve Cardell (Christian) and Inderjit Singh (Sikh).

The Watford Interfaith Association organises every year a lecture in memory of one of its chairmen: Harold Meyer who passed away in 2008. The topics of those lectures are usually related to some current events with an interfaith perspective. A few months ago, at a committee meeting I suggested for the next Harold Meyer Memorial Lecture a discussion on the Economic Crisis and Morality and it was accepted. This topic was often discussed at our home with my husband Patrick. Some members of the WIFA committee including myself (Treasurer of WIFA for over 5 years) visited Elected Mayor

Dorothy Thornhill, patron of WIFA, at the Watford Town Hall. Dorothy is always happy to see us and hear about our activities. She welcomed the topic of: 'The Economic Crisis and Morality' and added to the title: 'Do we need a spiritual revival?' Her enthusiasm was such that she asked to chair the meeting herself.

The Harold Meyer Memorial Lecture took place on January 12 at the Friends Meeting House in Watford. Over 50 people filled the room. Jeff Bateman, Chair of WIFA welcomed everyone. Four speakers from the Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh business community spoke around 10 minutes each. Then the Mayor took questions from the audience. From the start, the speakers kept strictly to the title. They all agreed: Yes, there is an economic crisis, yes, it is connected to morality and the way we behave and yes, we need a spiritual revival! They all decided not to go the route of the blaming game and went directly to the deeper root of our economic situation. All agreed that secularism is dominating our society and that today the word 'God' has become a taboo. They all emphasized the need for a spiritual revival going beyond their own religion and that people of faith should stand up much more for what they believe is right. In business, people of faith should not compromise but keep their principles even though it seems they will lose by doing so. In the long term they will gain a much more stable business. It was very interesting to hear how similar the speakers' views were even though they were coming from different backgrounds. After a very lively discussion answering the many questions from the audience, the Mayor concluded that we would need more time to explore: how to initiate a spiritual revival? A follow up meeting has been planned on January 22. People mingled over refreshments afterwards.

The Mayor was very pleased with the meeting and we heard many positive comments and reflections from those who attended.

Françoise Murphy

P.S. this event took place exactly on the day Patrick finished his 140 days workshop in the spiritual world. It also coincided with the start of 40 days before Foundation Day.