

**Report Back  
To Derby City SACRE  
From the Jewish SACRE Annual Conference 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2005**

**Overview:** It was an intensive afternoon that was kept strictly to time by our chairman Gabriel Lancaster, Chairman of Kent SACRE. (Personal note, he was an employee of Rolls Royce many years ago so is very interested in Derby City) The theme was informative and they issues from the teaching profession strongly voiced concluding with recommendations for each area SACRE to discuss. The presentation informed us of an opportunity to link religion across the curriculum. Finally there is an offering of sharing of practise from Lewisham SACRE

**Recommendations:**

I would like to propose that Derby SACRE:

- Include faith exhibition and educational material on the away day
- Consider being host the Jewish Lifestyle Exhibition
- Discuss the opportunities to support head teachers offering guidance in collective worship
- Recommend the Facing History and Ourselves to select number of secondary schools

**Three main points were the focus:**

**The venue** was the Jewish Board Of Deputies offices in central London

**The theme** was "Collective Worship" with the guest speaker The Right Honourable Tom Butler, Bishop of Southwark.

**The presentation** was "Facing History and Ourselves"

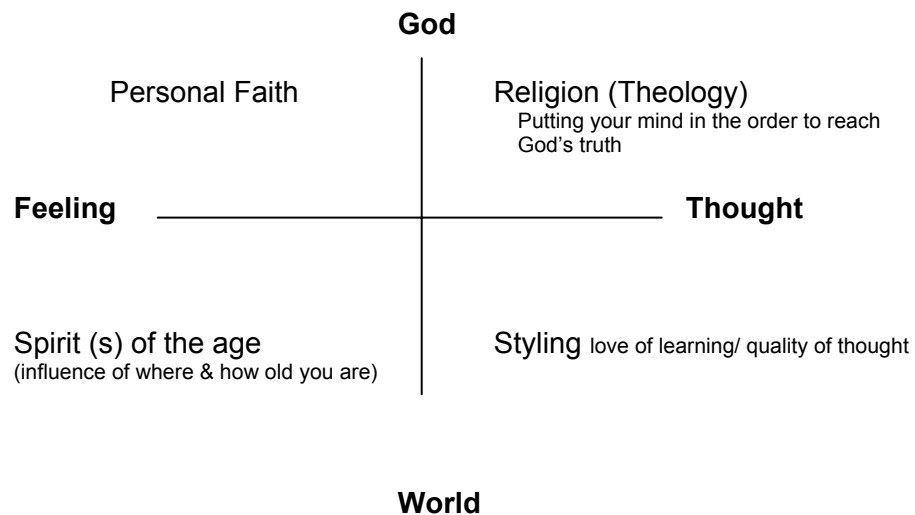
**The venue** – a set of offices staffed by a small staff that have various responsibilities, the most relevant for this report being education. They produce various exhibition and educational material for use by anyone who requests their assistance. I have requested a catalogue list of materials suitable for use in schools.

*Offer of travelling Exhibition* The Jewish Board of Deputies has a Jewish Way of Life exhibition that they would like all areas of the country to host. It is free to SACRE and they request that each school should contribute £20 to cover the costs of the exhibition. They are looking for suitable venues, the Midlands have not hosted it to date.

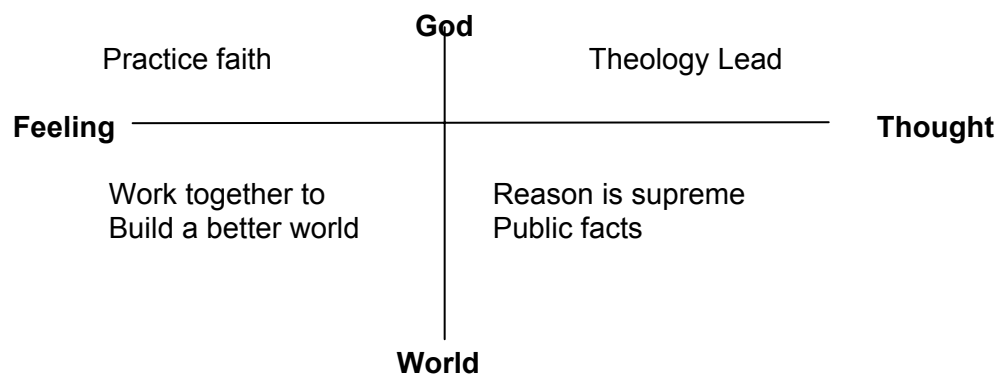
**The theme: Collective Worship**, speaker The Right Honourable Tom Butler, Bishop of Southwark co-chair of interfaith for UK and Ireland, served on the first ILEA SACRE

The talk was given around a series of maps:

The vertical axis shows two great realities and the horizontal axis shows how we respond



We were then taken through the differences over the years. In the 1950's the view of collective worship in British schools followed broadly Church of England



Then came the changes;

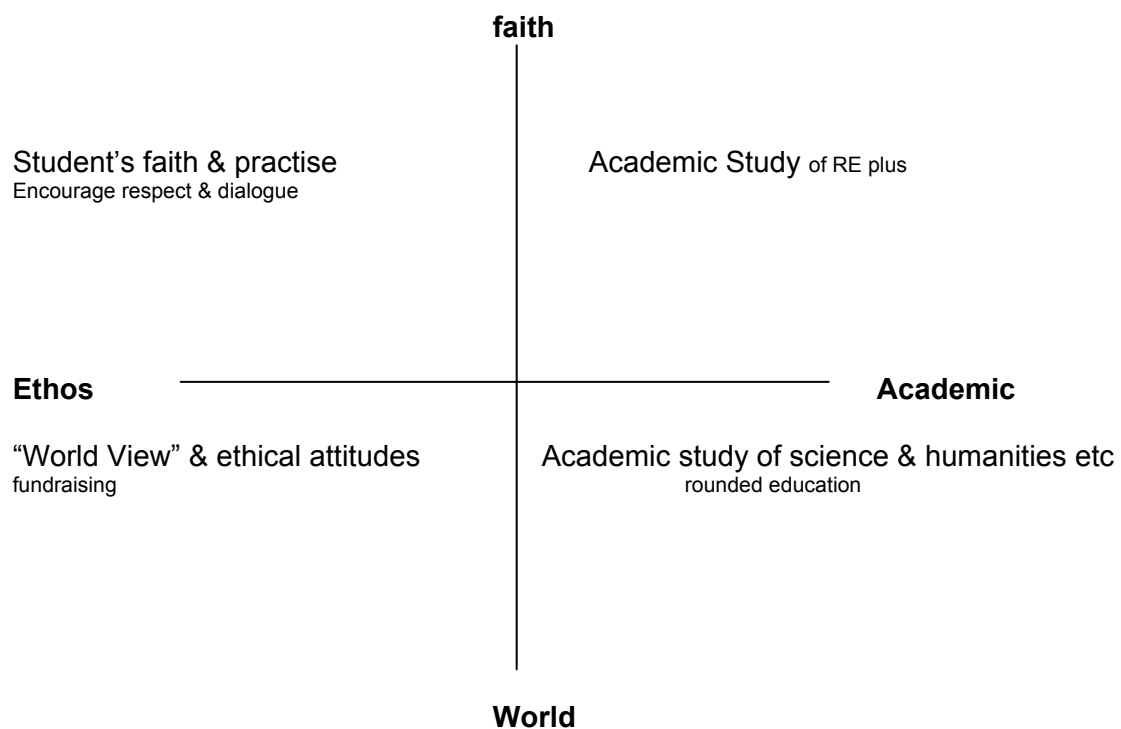
The first quadrant of Faith comes only at times of crisis, otherwise called “daylight atheism”. Other options in the quadrant is Fundamentalism / New Paganisms / pick & mix Spiritualities

The second shows competition faith views. Impatience with spiritual faith and rigor, the “now” generation wonders why study – give me the answers

The 3<sup>rd</sup> is clouded and crowded with WW1 & 2; the Holocaust; Nuclear Bombs; Globalisation; Death of Princes Diana; AIDS/ BSE/GM; September 11<sup>th</sup>  
All of these shock and re-shape thoughts and perspectives

The 4<sup>th</sup> Showed post-modern fragmentation – suspicion of all authority and new irrationality, children will now believe anything (magic/ witchcraft)

Hope for any school



This last chart is the school – collective worship is more often an assembly given by senior teaches (often head teacher) with no specific training and minimal guidance. They are told to aim to:  
Encourage principles (do's & don'ts)  
Confirm ethos & values of school  
Add to school awareness & inclusivity of community  
Shared experience that reflects elements of faith; promotes development of pupils – spiritually and morally; reflect quietly & are often used as a “thought for the day”

In conclusion the Bishop said that the collective worship is falls to untrained teachers with various or no religious background to deliver the aims without offending any religion.

The discussion lead to the following single recommendation:

*That each SACRE should consider if they should and could offer training to non-faith schools*

As an example of current practise discussed: Manchester SACRE visit schools in groups attending collective worship and then discuss options for change with the head teacher.

After a short break we moved onto

**The presentation** was "Facing History and Ourselves"

Three teachers who all belong to one school, the head of history, art and literature presented this. Based on a not-for –profit organisation that is now functioning in the UK as a charity. Founded in the mid 1970's to develop holocaust teaching moving it on from dry history facts to looking at the history and looking and individual responsibility & creating a better society looking at the holocaust, other genocides and other "difficulties".

This is not a pre-packaged program, but a source of methodology and resources. The program takes 16 weeks and as different faculties include it the effects on the pupil's perception deepens. The starting point is looking at where prejudice comes from (e.g. gay as a taunt in a boys school)

The program training is a weeklong training program for the teacher leading the program either in the school or group of schools. It has extensive support mainly on line and worldwide networks as well as tutors. The aim is look at history and students moral choices today. Ability to reflect on behaviour starting with positive and then takes small steps to deeper understanding, returning to this at the end of the 16 weeks. It uses readings of prose and poetry e.g. what does it mean to belong/ not to belong. Looking at personal identity and how to define yourself and how others define you. Leads to making judgements, examining memory & legacy and choosing to/ not to participate. A large part of the work is in classroom activities. Plenary session – each session is wrapped up, and concluded, enabling them to go on to the next lesson. Results monitored quickly: Improves complexity of answers. Takes history back to the personal

The sessions move across the curriculum and are fit for key stage 4

Many schools have found that pupils who follow this program have enhanced Holocaust Memorial day. They pupils have had an increase of self-awareness, critical thinking and moral judgement.

When questioned the teachers gave examples of positive feedback from parents. Concern was raised about non-Jewish children being immersed in the holocaust for 16 weeks. It was explained that the history is used for wider understanding of all history and reflection on how history is being created now. Other atrocities are discussed and how to learn from the past is a major goal.

I have the publicity pack for all to look at. The course co-ordinators have bursaries on a first come – first received basis to cover the costs. Previous years have had the weeklong training across Europe, this year it is in the City of London.

Is there anyone who would be right to take this course in Derby City? It is ideally suited for a head of department / faculty.

More information on [www.facinghistory.org](http://www.facinghistory.org)

**Other SACRE ideas:**

**Lewisham** – have written, “Supporting the needs of students and staff practising their religious beliefs in school”. Their representative brought copies for us all to take and consider for our own areas. This is the first of a series. It covers the introduction and the Jewish faith; other faiths will be added over the next few months.

Other SACRE feedback will be circulated with the official meeting minutes.