

Faith-based humanitarianism:

The response of faith communities and faith-based organisations in contexts of forced migration

Workshop 22 September 2010

Introductory Session

CHAIR: Professor Roger Zetter

Roger Zetter is Professor of Refugee Studies and the Director of the Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford. He has 30 years research, publication, teaching and consultancy experience in forced migration, refugee and humanitarian issues with funding provided by the EU, UK Home Office, ESRC, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Oxfam, SDA, UNHCR, UNDP, UNFPA, IOM, Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement. From 1988 until, 2001, he was Founding Editor of the *Journal of Refugee Studies* published by Oxford University Press. His research focuses on institutional and policy dimensions of the refugee regime, and the impacts of humanitarian assistance on refugees and asylum seekers.

KEYNOTE PRESENTER: Dr Hany El Banna OBE



Dr Hany El Banna is the founder of Islamic Relief, the largest Western-based Muslim international relief and development NGO. He is also founder and Chairman of various organisations which include: - The Humanitarian Forum which seeks to foster partnerships and closer cooperation among the humanitarian and charitable organisations from Muslim countries and their Western counterparts. - The Muslim Charities Forum (MCF) which aims to act as an umbrella for the Muslim Charitable Sector in the UK. - The International HIV Fund, an organisation that brings Muslim Charities together to combat the pandemic of HIV/AIDS.

After 20 years of humanitarian work, Dr El Banna was awarded, in 2004, the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II for services rendered to the community. In the same year Dr El Banna also received the Ibn Khaldun Award for Excellence in Promoting Understanding between Global Cultures and Faiths (UK). It was also in 2004 that the Egyptian Medical Syndicate awarded him for his services to humanity and medicine. In 2005, he received the Kashmiri and Pakistani Professional Association Award and in 2006, he was awarded the Asian Jewel Lifetime Achievement Award. Acknowledging his worldwide work and influence, the UK Muslim Power 100 awarded him, in 2007, with their lifetime achievement award and the University of Birmingham awarded him an honorary doctorate. He is also a member of the Three Faiths Forum (UK) and was selected to be a member in West-Islamic World Dialogue Council of 100 Leaders group which is part of the World Economic Forum. Born in Egypt, Dr El Banna completed his MBChB Medicine at Al Azhar University, Cairo, where he also obtained a Diploma in Islamic Studies in 1976. Dr Hany El Banna was awarded the Hamilton Bailey Prize in Medicine at City hospital (previously known as Dudley Road) in Birmingham (UK) in 1981. He then went on to further his medical training and completed a Doctorate of Medicine (MD) in foetal pathology from the University of Birmingham Medical School in 1991.

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TITLE: Understanding 'sanctuary': faith and traditions of asylum

PRESENTER: Professor Philip Marfleet

Contemporary notions of asylum and the refugee have emerged from faith-based traditions of sanctuary. These have an ancient lineage: the major religions have long recognized certain spaces as sacred and inviolable, providing security for those seeking refuge within them. How have these beliefs and practices been translated into policies for the modern state – and how do they affect the agendas of religious organizations and movements today? This paper examines the origin of ideas about protection as an institution.

It considers social and political aspects of sanctuary and their role in Classical Mediterranean societies and later in Europe. It examines the increasing importance of the Church as a guarantor of safety and the implications for wider society of ideas about refuge. It addresses key developments in the early modern era, during which secular forces began to develop new notions of asylum. The paper also raises questions about faith-based approaches to asylum today. Are religious bodies and movements reasserting ancient traditions? To what extent have they modified traditional approaches? Why are they playing a leading role in re-animating discussions about refugees and rights?

Philip Marfleet is Professor of Migration and Refugee Studies at the University of East London and Associate Director of the Centre for Research on Migration, Refugees and Belonging. He works on theories of globalization, migration and the refugee experience; racism and exclusion in Europe; and social and political movements in the contemporary Middle East. He has recently written on mass displacement in and from Iraq, urban refugees, and refugees and history. His most recent books are *Refugees in a Global Era* (Palgrave 2006) and, with Rabab El Mahdi, *Egypt: the Moment of Change* (Zed 2009).

Session 1: Faith, religion and humanitarianism: bridging the gap or maintaining the distinction between religious and humanitarian affairs?

CHAIR: Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh

TITLE: Bridging dialogue between the discourses of faith and humanitarianism: establishing partnership through the deconstruction of functional secularism

AUTHORS: Professor Alastair Ager and Joey Ager

PRESENTER: Alastair Ager

This paper argues that the disparate discourses of faith and humanitarianism – and the discomfort in acknowledging the complexities of bridging between them – create a fundamental schism between not only faith-based and non-faith-based humanitarian actors, but also international humanitarian actors and the communities they seek to serve. Of the various potential approaches to the epistemological divide between the language of faith and the dominant liberal materialism of the international humanitarian regime, functional secularism – represented by a presumption of secular public discourse and the legitimization of religious discourse only in the 'private' domain - appears the most prevalent strategy. Such an approach reflects, however, an increasingly rejected view of secularization amongst social theorists. It is also problematic for the humanitarian field. Functional secularism can sanction a divisive exceptionalism on the part of religious organisations that works to exclude religious activity from public scrutiny. It can also encourage extraction of the rich resources of belief on the terms of functional materialism (echoing the patronization of colonial times, albeit with institutional religion now associated with the patronized). Using field reports from a range of humanitarian contexts, we argue that functional secularism serves both to delegitimize dialogue on key issues of religion and to restrict awareness of the articles of faith underpinning the secular humanitarian response. Such dialogue and awareness is crucial in the analysis of issues of humanitarianism, including clarification of core humanitarian values, the retention of a human rights framework able to define and protect human dignity, and appropriate means of addressing religious experience and well-being in the course of humanitarian programming.

Alastair Ager is a Professor of Clinical Population and Family Health and the Executive Director of the Global Health Initiative at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. He has worked in the field of international health and development for almost twenty years, after training in psychology at the universities of Keele, Wales and Birmingham in the United Kingdom. He was head of the Department of Psychology at the University of Malawi from 1989 to 1992, and has also held academic appointments at the universities of Leicester, Tulane and Queen Margaret, Edinburgh. He was a Research Associate with the Refugee Studies Centre from 1998 to 2005. He has international experience across Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Europe, and North America. He is the author of over one hundred scholarly publications, with his current writing focused on assessment and evaluation in humanitarian settings, operationalization of protection and well-being across cultures, and the role of faith in humanitarian and development contexts.

Joey Ager graduated with a BA in Theology from the University of Oxford in 2008. He studied at Wycliffe Hall, with a particular interest in African Theology. In 2007 he worked with religious leaders at the Janani Luwum Theological College in Gulu, Uganda on the development of the proposed Institute of Development Studies to promote awareness of Acholi traditions of peace and reconciliation in the post-conflict era in Northern Uganda. From 2008 to 2009 he worked as an Executive Assistant at Sojourners, a leftist faith-based social justice organisation in Washington DC, and coordinated volunteers for the Mobilization Against Poverty event held there in April 2009. He now works with Ember Arts, a 'socially proactive business' based in San Diego promoting sustainable livelihoods for displaced Acholi women in Kampala by partnering in the fair trade of African jewellery.

TITLE: Between heaven and earth: religion, secularism and humanitarianism

AUTHORS: Professor Michael Barnett, Professor Janice Stein, and Dr Stephen Hopgood

PRESENTER: Dr Stephen Hopgood

This project explores, within contemporary humanitarianism, the secularization of religion and the sanctification of secularism. Faith-based action has become increasingly important to the humanitarian sector, as people are increasingly choosing to express compassion through religious organisations. Yet many of those engaging in faith-based humanitarianism want to do more than share a sense of compassion. They also want to spread their religion, leading to accusations of missionary work and creating suspicion between aid givers and aid recipients.

Consequently, the humanitarian community distinguishes between faith-based and secular organisations. It assumes that Oxfam, International Rescue Committee, and CARE share traits that differentiate them from religious organisations such as Catholic Relief Services, Islamic Relief, and World Vision International. But exactly how do they differ? By their motivations, funding, recruitment, or field operations?

This study finds that: First, religious and secular agencies are looking more and more alike. Second, the categories of religious and secular obscure the presence of different kinds of faith (to put it bluntly, all humanitarian action is faith-based). Third, although this study identifies the secularization of religion and the sanctification of the secular, neither religious nor secular agencies were completely comfortable with the blurring of their boundaries.

Dr Stephen Hopgood is a Reader in International Relations at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. His recent publications include *Keepers of the Flame: Understanding Amnesty International* (Cornell, 2006); 'Saying "no" to Wal-Mart: Money and morality in professional humanitarianism,' in Michael Barnett and Thomas G Weiss (eds) *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (Cornell, 2008); 'Moral authority, modernity, and the politics of the sacred,' in *European Journal of International Relations*, 15 (2), 2009; and 'Dignity and Ennui,' in *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 2(2), 2010.

TITLE: Catholic agencies as transnational responders to humanitarian crises

PRESENTERS: Professor David Hollenbach, Rev Daniel Villanueva, and Dr Maryanne Loughry

The Roman Catholic community possesses several distinctive resources that position it to respond to humanitarian crises. Catholicism has a CONVICTION based on both faith and shared human experience that the peoples of the world form a single human family and a genuinely global community. This conviction gives Catholic agencies a well articulated rationale for efforts to alleviate humanitarian crises.

The Catholic church has GLOBAL INSTITUTIONAL REACH that distinctively positions it to respond to crises that are global in nature, and go beyond the capacities or willingness of individual states. This capacity for global transnational action can be usefully illustrated by considering the structure and activity of the Jesuit Refugee Service. Humanitarian actors associated with the Catholic community have a DISTINCTIVE MODE OF RESPONDING to humanitarian crises because of their religious commitment to respect the dignity of those they serve.

This presentation will therefore address the following interlinked topics to develop an understanding of Catholic agencies as transnational responders to crises: A) The Roman Catholic RATIONALE for response across borders: grounding in faith, ethics, and human experience; B) TRANSNATIONAL STRUCTURES for faith-based action: JRS as a case study; and C) DISTINCTIVE MODES of faith-based transnational action: linking accompaniment, service, and advocacy in forced migration.

Professor David Hollenbach, S.J., holds the University Chair in Human Rights and International Justice and is Director of the Center for Human Rights and International Justice at Boston College. His research interests are in the foundations of Christian social ethics, especially human rights in the context of humanitarian crises and the displacement of refugees, as well as the role of religion in political life. He received a Ph. D. in Religious Ethics from Yale University in 1975. He was President of the Society of Christian Ethics between 1995 and 1996. In 1996 he received a Fulbright Fellowship and was Visiting Professor of Social Ethics at Hekima College of The Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Kenya. Professor Hollenbach has also taught at the Jesuit Philosophy Institute in Vietnam and the East Asian Pastoral Institute in the Philippines. He serves as a consultant to the Jesuit Refugee Service on the human rights of displaced persons. He is a Catholic priest and a member of the Jesuit order. His most recent books include *Driven from Home: Protecting the Rights of Forced Migrants* (2010); *Refugee Rights: Ethics, Advocacy, and Africa* (2008); and *The Global Face of Public Faith: Politics, Human Rights, and Christian Ethics* (2003). He is on the Editorial Boards of the *Journal of Religious Ethics* and of the review *Political Theology*.

Rev Daniel Villanueva, S.J. is a Spanish Jesuit who works at the “Entreculturas – Fe y Alegria” foundation. He began work with this organisation in Valladolid, and is now the coordinator of its Africa Department. He holds a Computer Science Engineering degree from the University of Valladolid (Spain), and a degree in Theology from Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Boston (Massachusetts, USA). Fr. Villanueva has worked with the Jesuit Refugee Service in Liberia and Kenya, and today is part of the JRS international formation team. His interests are in the frontier between the Development-Humanitarian world and the social work of the Society of Jesus, always from an organisational and structural view. He has developed papers and talks about transnational religious institutions, advocacy networks, and the global transformation of the mission of the Society of Jesus. He wrote a thesis titled “The Jesuit Way of Going Global” where he outlines a model for transnational responses of the Society of Jesus in a globalized world in the light of lessons learned from the Jesuit Refugee Service.

Dr Maryanne Loughry RSM, AO is a Sister of Mercy and Associate Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Australia. Dr Loughry has been associated with JRS since 1986, working in the Indochinese refugee camps in the Philippines (1988) and the Vietnamese Detention Centres in Hong Kong (1990, 1992–93) as a psychologist and researcher. Dr Loughry is a visiting research scholar at the Centre for Human Rights and International Justice, Boston College and the Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford. Prior to this she

was the Pedro Arrupe tutor at the University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre for over seven years (1997–2004). Her doctoral work explored the impact of detention on unaccompanied Vietnamese children.

Dr Loughry is a member of the Australian Government's advisory Council for Immigration Services and Status Resolution and serves on several international boards including the academic board of the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme and the Governing Committee of the International Catholic Migration Committee. She has conducted research and programme evaluation in numerous refugee and conflict settings including Syria, Northern Uganda, Afghanistan, Kenya, Palestinian Territories, Kosovo, Indonesia, and Timor Leste. She has also conducted humanitarian trainings in Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Thailand, Kenya, Cambodia, Vietnam, and the UK. Currently she is researching the psychosocial effects of climate induced displacement in the Pacific.

Session 2: “Using” faith, religiosity and spirituality: practical and psychosocial strategies in the lives of people affected by crisis, conflict and forced migration (Case studies from the UK, Kenya, Algeria and Syria)

CHAIR: Professor Phil Marfleet

TITLE: Spiritual dimensions of forced migration and the inner spirals of youth transition: towards an integral critical heuristic understanding and response to young people in crisis

PRESENTER: Loul Bereket

This paper aims to offer a better understanding of the lived transition experiences of young refugees, and how their religiosity/spirituality function in making sense of and adapting to major life changes associated with forced migration. The paper draws the bulk of its empirical data from ongoing doctoral research looking at religion's role for the spiritual, psychosocial and practical wellbeing of young refugees and asylum seekers. The paper is informed by and reflects on encounters and exchanges with young people from different backgrounds that share similar experiences of being dislocated, unemployed, homeless and facing the disorienting uncertainties of the future.

Passing through challenging life experiences and displacement crises tends to push some young people further down the abyss of social exclusion into hopelessness, mental resignation and self-rejection. Well meant policy and practical interventions to support young people in crisis often fall short of achieving their intended outcomes. This paper finds that for some youth, interventions were felt to be elitist, patronizing and disempowering. Most faith-based and secular 'humanitarian' responses seemed to perceive the circumstance and external predicament of the youth as the total actuality of their experience. Young people were often viewed as helpless and passive victims fouled by their social background and/or a deficient system of care and support. Responses overlooked young people's personal values, beliefs, aspirations, motivations, intentions, and visions in framing and responding to existential life challenges. This paper argues that those inner qualities or spiritual dimensions, if thoroughly understood and properly tapped, can leverage effective, efficient, and ethical humanitarian responses.

Loul Bereket is a PhD candidate at Leeds Metropolitan University. His doctoral research focuses on the intersection between religion/spirituality and the forced migration experiences of young refugees and asylum seekers. His research project is funded by the joint AHRC/ESRC *Religion and Society Research Programme*. Bereket has diverse professional experience in the fields of international development, community mental health development (with refugees and asylum seekers), leadership development, management consultancy, research and journalism.

TITLE: By the rivers of Babylon: the role and significance of faith and faith based organisations in the lives and experiences of internally displaced persons in Kenya

PRESENTER: Dr Parsitau Seleina

African communities, governments, international bodies and other stakeholders increasingly recognize that Faith Based or Faith Inspired Organisations are important actors in the field of development. In areas ranging from education to healthcare, human rights to conflict resolution and management, and the provision of humanitarian services to persons in situations of crisis such as conflicts and forced migration, FBOs and FIOs have pioneered innovative ways of addressing these deep-seated challenges. What is largely unknown are the critical roles played by faith or communities of faith and religious convictions and practices, and how these serve to integrate displaced persons into their new circumstances. This paper explores the intersection of faith and FBOs/FIOs with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Kenya by interrogating the roles that faith and religiosity played in their lives and experiences during and after the post election violence. Specifically, it interrogates the practical and psychological impact of faith and religious beliefs on the forging and formation of religious identities and belongings in IDP camps. It further explores how these vulnerable and disadvantaged groups recreated and reinvented metaphors of survival from religious texts and used them as critical tools and spiritual resources to reaffirm themselves and their dignity, reject their vulnerability and make sense of their crisis, and comfort and empower themselves. Based on ethnographic research carried out in three IDP camps in the Rift Valley Province in Kenya, the paper attempts to understand the contribution of faith to the human psyche, to the provision of psychological and emotional support and comfort, and to coping in the face of tremendous stress, tension, fear and uncertainty.

Dr Parsitau Seleina is a Lecturer in African Christianities at Egerton University in Kenya. Her doctorate thesis is titled *Neo-Pentecostalism in Kenya: Its Civic and Public Role*. Her current works focus on the impact of Post Election Violence on Internally Displaced Persons, particularly women and children. She specifically focuses on ways in which Faith Based/Inspired Initiatives shaped the lives of internally displaced women during and after the violence. Her articles have appeared in such journals as *Africa Today*, *Missionalia-Southern Africa Journal of Missiology*, and *Studies in World Christianity Series* (Edinburgh University and Brill). Together with a group of feminist theologians from Kenya and the US, she conducted ethnographic research and a collaborative service project with IDP camps in Kenya's Rift Valley Province in 2009. Two articles documenting the experiences of displaced persons have appeared in the journals *Concillium* and *Practical Matters* in 2010. A co-edited volume titled *Weaving the Future Together: Doing Collaborative Post Colonial Feminist Theologies* is underway.

TITLE: The pragmatics of performance: putting 'faith' in aid in the Sahrawi refugee camps

PRESENTER: Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh

Since their birth in 1975, the Algerian-based Sahrawi refugee camps have been characterized by high degrees of inter-religious contact and dependence, with Sunni Muslim Sahrawi refugees' survival contingent upon the provision of humanitarian and political support by "Christian" groups (including American Evangelists) and European (especially Spanish) organisations which variously purport to be "Catholic" or "secular" in nature. Drawing on Goffman's theatrical analogy pertaining to the Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, I will use the notions of front-stage and back-stage performances of self to explore three main levels of faith-based representation(s). Firstly, donors' Evangelical, Catholic and secular performances in the refugee camps; secondly, front-stage representations of the Sahrawi as the "secular brothers and sisters" of Western donors; and thirdly, refugees' back-stage performances of "religious normality" and ambivalence towards their Christian aid providers. I argue that the hyper-visible "secular" performative strategies enacted by Sahrawi refugees, and their concealment of public references to Muslim identity and practice when interacting with Christian audiences in the camps, are ultimately components of what I refer to as the Sahrawis' "politics of survival."

Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh is a Departmental Lecturer in Forced Migration at the Refugee Studies Centre where she lectures on the MSc course 'Research Methods in Forced Migration' and convenes the MSc option 'Gender, Generation and Forced Migration.' Elena's research focuses in particular on gendered experiences of forced migration; Middle Eastern and North African refugees and asylum-seekers in the MENA region, Europe and the Caribbean; the intersections between gender- and faith-based conditionalities of humanitarian aid; and refugees' educational migration. She has conducted multidisciplinary research with and about forced migrants in Algeria, Australia, Cuba, Egypt, France, Spain, South Africa, Syria and the United Kingdom. Her work has been published in the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *Interventions: international journal of postcolonial studies*, the *Journal of North African Studies* and *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, in addition to appearing in a number of edited collections.

From February 2009 to September 2010 Elena was Senior Teaching Fellow in Development Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, where she convened MSc options in 'Issues in Forced Migration' and 'Migration and Mobility in the Middle East and North Africa.'

TITLE: The mobilisation of religion as a cultural resource

PRESENTER: Tahir Zaman

Conflict induced violence and forced migration are key contributors to social transformation, community fragmentation, economic resource usurpation and destruction, and the re-examination and re-interpretation of traditional ways of life. Krulfeld & Camino (1994: ix) posit: "the refugee experience is a complex process characterized by loss and regeneration." Thus, with every fragmentation comes a re-imagining of community; with the destruction of economic resources come changes in livelihood strategies; and with the re-examination of traditional social structures are born new perceptions of identity and belonging. This paper examines the cultural capital that the displaced bring with them with a particular focus on Islamic traditions of asylum, sanctuary, and protection as a cultural resource. It argues that Iraqi forced migrants are able to mobilize non-material 'religious resources' to help gain access to further material resources by virtue of positioning themselves in relation to existing religious institutions and networks. With this in mind, it critically examines the utility of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice to better understand the role of religious traditions, networks, and institutions in relation to the practices and decision-making of Iraqi refugees in Syria. It suggests that rather than merely consuming religious goods, social agents challenge the passivity assigned to them in the religious field by Bourdieu and engage in the production of religious goods, competing against institutions which are regarded by Bourdieu as the predominant producers of religious goods.

Tahir Zaman is a second year doctoral candidate at the Centre for Research on Migration, Refugees and Belonging at the University of East London. He successfully completed a Masters in Refugee Studies at UEL in 2007 where his dissertation "Keeping the Faith: Islamic perspectives on forced migration" explored the role of Islam and the mosque in the lives of the Somali Diaspora in London. He is currently conducting fieldwork in Syria on how Iraqi forced migrants in Damascus mobilize religious traditions while in exile.

Session 3: Narratives of practice: views from the global south (Case-studies from Thailand/Burma, Egypt and Sri Lanka)

CHAIR: Richard Haavisto

Richard Haavisto is the Pedro Arrupe Tutor for the MSc in Forced Migration. He has taught introductory anthropology courses along with "African Societies and Cultures", "World Ethnography", "Race and Ethnic Relations" at the National University of Rwanda (Rwanda), the College of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania (United States). His research interests include: the construction and negotiation of

heterarchical identity markers, political violence and post-repatriation issues (transitional justice the restitution of housing, land or property and transformations in returnee's social identities, organization, socio-economic practices, expectations, and social-life strategies). Prior to coming to the Refugee Studies Centre, Richard worked as a researcher for Amnesty International in the Great Lakes region.

TITLE: Faith-based humanitarian organisations at the Burma-Thailand borderland: the example of the Christian Karen Baptists

PRESENTER: Dr Alexander Horstmann

This paper explores the role of religion and practices of faith-based, especially Christian, humanitarian organisations and churches in refugee camps at the Thailand/Burma border, evaluating religious activities designed to improve the life chances of refugees. Placing the experiences of the Karens in the centre of the analysis, it examines the possibilities of developing a distinctive Karen Christianity in political exile. The Karen Baptist Convention, their churches, NGOs and evangelists have woven close and inter-dependent links with humanitarian organisations.

The paper traces the historical background to the first contacts of Karens and American Baptist missionaries and outlines how the missionaries initiated the Karens' coception of being a nation: Kawthoolei. The paper argues that humanitarianism is a continuation of this process and that Christian Karens emerge as Evangelists in the Burma/Thailand borderland, supported by churches and advocacy networks. This partial engagement of humanitarian organisations is problematic in terms of inclusion and exclusion, and for reconciling the position of the Karens in a federal Burmese union.

Dr Alexander Horstmann is a senior research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, contributing to Professor van der Veer's project on the globalization of religious networks, with a project on the competition of Christian missionary movements and charismatic Buddhist movements in mainland Southeast Asia.

He studied Social Anthropology, Sociology of Development, Political Science, and Southeast Asian Studies in Berlin, Paris and Bangkok. He taught Anthropology and Southeast Asian Studies in Bielefeld, Berlin, Münster, and Passau and was a research assistant in the research group on Islam and modern society, directed by Dr Georg Stauth. Dr Horstmann is author of *Class, Culture and Space: The Construction and Shaping of Communal Spaces in South Thailand* (transcript, 2002); co-editor (with Günther Schlee) of *Integration through Diversity*, co-editor (with Reed L. Wadley) of *Centering the Margin: Agency and Narrative in Southeast Asian Borderlands* (Oxford, 2006). He has published in numerous journals, such as *Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, *JSEAS*, *CSSAM*, *Studia Islamica*, *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asian Studies*, *SOJOURN*, *Sociologus* and *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*.

TITLE: Christian-based humanitarianism in complex situations: 'Faith' challenges and opportunities in refugee outreach in Cairo

PRESENTER: Raymond Wung

Paradoxically, the only faith-based refugee assistance organisations in Egypt are Christian organisations. In providing refugee assistance, these agencies strive to meet their goals in fairly complex circumstances given that Egypt is a predominantly Islamic country. Does this pose any challenges? The refugee population in Egypt is a mixture of Muslims and Christians, even more, of different Muslim leanings and different Christian orientations. What are the implications or challenges of outreach to beneficiaries with such diversity of religious orientations; are there any conflicts of substance or perception? On legal and policy issues, how do faith agencies react to the persistent violations of refugees' and asylum seekers' rights contrary to Egypt's obligations in international instruments?

This paper seeks to highlight the complex terrain in which Christian-based refugee outreach agencies operate in Cairo, and more importantly, the role of faith and extent to which faith is employed in the operation of

their humanitarian work and the implications/challenges encountered due to faith or such extent of faith. It studies the ways in which these agencies attempt to deal with these challenges and their relative outcomes.

Raymond Wung is a graduate in international human rights law and forced migration and refugee studies from the American University in Cairo (AUC). His research interests are in human rights in Africa and the socio-legal issues of migrants and refugees. Prior to his graduate studies, he obtained an LLB from the University of Buea, Cameroon in 2004, served as research assistant, and wrote short papers on human rights issues in the Cameroons. In 2007 he received an African Graduate Fellowship from AUC and obtained an MA in international human rights law.

During his time at AUC, he presented conference papers on *Pentecostal Humanitarianism in Nigeria and the Cameroons* (Cairo, 2008) and *The Legal Issues of Migrant Sponsorships in the Middle East*, and participated in a panel discussion on *Migration in International Law* (London, 2009). While in Egypt, Ray has worked for AUC's International Human Rights Law Outreach Project, the Cairo Office of the International Organisation for Migration, and AUC's Center for Migration and Refugee Studies. Beginning in Fall of 2010, he will be studying at Harvard Law School and participating in the Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinic.

TITLE: Humanitarian interventions and the suspicion factor: the case of FBOs in Sri Lanka

AUTHORS: Rajith W. D. Lakshman and Rev. Pinnawala Sangasumana

PRESENTER: Rev Pinnawala Sangasumana

This paper analyses a faith related episode in Sri Lankan humanitarian history. Nearly three decades of civil war in the country between the government forces and the LTTE had justified concerted and widespread interventions from both local and international NGOs. The 2004 tsunami strengthened these justifications and led to a manifold increase in the number of NGOs present in the country. This attracted much public attention toward NGO activities in Sri Lanka led by allegations of abuse of funds, failure to deliver, lack of coordination, etc. A foremost allegation is the conversion of Buddhists using unethical methods. Allegations of such abuses of the Christian faith led to protests, creating trying conditions for all humanitarian actors in the country, not just FBOs.

Suspicion of FBO activities exploded in the final phase of the civil war with further allegations that some FBOs were siding with the LTTE. These developments had some sway among the Buddhists who account for 70 percent of the population. The paper flags conversion as the primary concern that soured the way Buddhists in Sri Lanka perceive FBO activities. Using the anti-conversion bill tabled in the parliament of Sri Lanka as a case study, it analyses how the ethno-religious cleavages of the wider community could be used to gain political ends in faith community activities. In addition the study looks into the recent agitations against FBOs within the country. The paper sheds light on certain costs of faith based humanitarianism to the public, the humanitarian community, and most importantly the at-risk populations.

Rev Pinnawala Sangasumana is a senior lecturer at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka. Currently he is finalizing his PhD undertaken within the Sida/SAREC Research Cooperation Project between the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and Uppsala University, Sweden. This research examines the relationship between the concept of 'inbetweenness' and the transformation of the conflict-induced displaced. His research interest in conflict and displacement derives from his long-time experience in teaching and research in Human Geography. As a Buddhist monk, he is keen to apply Buddhist concepts to the behavioral spaces determined by conflict and vulnerable situations. He was awarded a Masters degree for his research on patterns and processes of protracted internal displacement caused by the armed conflict in Sri Lanka. In addition, he is coordinating some relief and charity programmes directed at the marginalized populations of the country. He has several publications in edited volumes and conference proceedings.

Session 4: Narratives of practice: views from the global north (Case-studies from the UK, the USA and Australia)

CHAIR: Dr Alana Harris

Dr Alana Harris is the Darby Fellow in History at Lincoln College, Oxford. Her research interests encompass the intersection of gender, migration and religious pluralism in twentieth-century Britain, as well as theoretical issues related to the practice of oral history, narrative and memory studies and the performance of religion. She co-authored and co-edited 'Redefining Christian Britain: Post-1945 Perspectives' (2007) and is currently preparing for publication 'Faith in the Family: Transformations in English Catholic Spirituality & Popular Religion, 1945-82' (MUP 2012) and a co-edited volume entitled 'Rescripting Religion in the City: Migration, Modernity and Religious Identity in Global Cities' (2012).

TITLE: Comparing left-wing and religiously-motivated asylum activist organisations: the importance of attitudes towards the state (UK based)

PRESENTER: Dr Nick Gill

The paper compares the cases of two asylum seeker activist organisations in the UK: a left-wing, radical, secular organisation and a collective of Christian churches and other religious organisations. It is argued that different understandings of the state between these organisations produce very different activist strategies. Drawing upon detailed interviews and participant observation it demonstrates that the former tends towards an adversarial, distrustful view of states and their employees while the latter tends to be more open to working with state actors to foster dialogue. This exposes the former to the risk that valuable alliances with actors within states may be forgone and that the state itself is reified. However, it also exposes the latter to risks of co-optation. Drawing upon state theory that emphasizes the importance of individuals in the production of states in an era of devolution and governance, the article concludes that strategies that facilitate dialogue, such as those exhibited by the religious collective, are displaying more potential for change 'from below' and 'from within'. This is caused by general changes in the exercise of state power and governance that render bureaucrats more responsible and thereby more discretionary, powerful, and capable of effecting change - including in the area of asylum sector management. To not engage these pivotal front-line state actors in dialogue is to disengage from key sites of struggle for allegiance to subjugating practices that affect migrants.

Dr Nick Gill has studied and taught at the London School of Economics, Bristol University and Lancaster University. Dr Gill is now a lecturer in human geography at Exeter University. He has research interests in state theory, asylum sector activism and migration, with a specific focus on forced migration. He has published widely on these subjects in journals such as *Environment and Planning A*, *World Development*, *Political Geography*, and *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. He is currently undertaking ESRC funded research that seeks to share best practice in activism between religious, radical, legal and health-orientated asylum advocacy organisations in the US and UK (project website at <http://asylum-network.com>).

TITLE: The faith community's role in refugee protection, resettlement, and advocacy

PRESENTER: Jessica Eby

While US humanitarian agencies are often viewed as a source of funds and programming oversight for assistance to forcibly displaced persons abroad, the US is also home to resettled refugees who are served by national faith-based humanitarian agencies and local faith-based community groups. Faith-based organisations have a strong legacy of support for refugee assistance and in advocating for refugees' access to resettlement as a durable solution. Before the US Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) was consolidated

and supported by government funds, churches and synagogues took on up to 100% of the financial, logistic and social responsibility of resettling refugees. In today's public-private partnership model, faith-based voluntary agencies and faith-based community organisations continue to be instrumental in resettling refugees from a broad range of geographic, ethnic and faith backgrounds. Faith-based groups, both professionals and volunteers, bring many strengths to refugee assistance in the United States, including a long-term community presence; a network to mobilize for advocacy on humanitarian issues; and a strong motivation, beyond remuneration, to carry out service to those in need. This paper will discuss the historic significance of faith communities in early refugee resettlement and advocacy in the United States, the ways in which that history has shaped the current nature of the program, and how faith-based organisations continue to respond to meet the needs of refugees. While the paper will reference the contributions of a variety of faith communities to refugee resettlement and advocacy, it will highlight the perspectives and experience of Church World Service staff, affiliates, partners and denominations.

Jessica Eby is a Protection Officer for Church World Service's (CWS) Immigration & Refugee Program, based in Washington, DC. She was the lead author of CWS's manual "Putting Safety and Dignity First: A guide to protective action in programming," which she has used to facilitate workshops with staff and partners in Kenya and the US. She currently represents CWS on the Action by Churches Together Protection Advisory Group, and is the co-chair of the InterAction Protection Working Group. Before joining CWS, Jessica was in the Protection Unit of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Ecuador throughout 2008. Prior to that, she worked for the Washington Office on Latin America advocating on US foreign policy, human rights and humanitarian issues. She has also worked with women's rights organisations in Chile and conducted research in Peru. Jessica holds a BA in Anthropology and International Relations from Washington University in St. Louis.

TITLE: Much to be proud of but much to be done: Faith-based organisations and the politics of asylum in Australia

PRESENTER: Dr Erin Wilson

Little has been written about the activities of faith-based organisations in Australia and their engagement with humanitarian issues in Australian politics and society. Yet, as this paper outlines, faith-based organisations have been a critical part of advocacy for and service to asylum seekers. The fact that FBOs have taken on this role is significant, given that the asylum seeker issue in Australia is highly divisive. The paper provides a brief general overview of faith-based organisations in Australia and recent government policies towards asylum seekers and refugees. These policies were in many cases the catalyst for FBOs forming or engaging with asylum seekers. The paper then discusses critical features of FBO engagement in issues surrounding asylum seekers in Australia. The information discussed is drawn largely from interviews conducted in August-September 2010 with members of FBOs working on this issue. The paper notes that FBOs have in many ways been at the forefront of providing critical social services to asylum seekers that have kept many out of destitution. FBOs have also played a central role in advocacy on behalf of asylum seekers and campaigning for policy change. Finally, the paper examines FBO responses to a recent government proposal that church-based organisations should house asylum seekers and considers the potential that such a proposal could be implemented as an alternative to current state-based mandatory detention, which is in general inadequate and inhumane. Ultimately, the paper argues that FBOs in Australia have, as one interviewee said, 'much to be proud of' about their work with asylum seekers in Australia, but, considering current public opinion and government policies towards asylum seekers, there is much more that needs to be done.

Dr Erin K. Wilson is a Research Fellow in the Globalism Research Centre and Global Cities Institute at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. Her main areas of research are religion and its relationship with different aspects of politics, global justice, and violence, with an article on religion and global justice appearing in *International Studies Quarterly*, later this year. She is also interested in the world of NGOs and

social activism, regarding the rights of vulnerable people in global politics. Her involvement in the Oxfam Australia exhibition *Refugee Realities* is the subject of her article published in *Global Society*. Dr Wilson has been involved with community service and campaigning on the rights of refugees and asylum seekers and this has led to a research interest in this area. She has a number of book chapters forthcoming focusing on refugees and asylum seekers in Australia and in relation to religion. Dr Wilson is currently completing work on her book manuscript *Beyond Secularism: An Alternative Approach to Religion for International Relations* with Palgrave Macmillan.

Evening Lecture and Reception

CHAIR: Dr Dawn Chatty

Dr Dawn Chatty is University Reader in Anthropology and Forced Migration and Deputy Director of the Refugee Studies Centre. A social anthropologist with long experience in the Middle East as a university teacher, development practitioner, and advocate for indigenous rights, Dawn Chatty has taught at the University of California at Santa Barbara, the State University of California at San Diego, the American University of Beirut, the University of Damascus, Sultan Qaboos University and at the University of Oxford. She has worked with the regional offices of various international agencies including UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, IFAD, and USAID. Dr Chatty's research interests include nomadic pastoralism and conservation, gender and development, health, illness and culture, and coping strategies of youth and their care givers in prolonged conflict and forced migration.

TITLE: Improving responses: distinctiveness, partnership and professionalism

PRESENTER: Dr Elizabeth Ferris



Dr Elizabeth Ferris is Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy and Co-Director of The Brookings Institution – University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement in Washington, DC, where her work encompasses a wide range of issues related to forced migration, human rights, humanitarian action, the role of civil society in protecting displaced populations and the security implications of displacement. Prior to joining Brookings in November 2006, Dr. Ferris spent 20 years working in the field of humanitarian assistance, most recently in Geneva, Switzerland at the World Council of Churches. There she was responsible for the Council's work in humanitarian response and long-term development. In this capacity, she worked with many local, national and international non-governmental organisations to support capacity building and to advocate for protection of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other populations affected by conflict. She has also served as the director of the Church World Service's Immigration and Refugee Program, the Research Director for the Life & Peace Institute, a Fulbright Professor at the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico. Her teaching experience has included positions at Lafayette College, Miami University, and Pembroke State University. She has written articles for *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, the Middle East Institute's *Viewpoints* series, *Forced Migration Review*, *New Routes*, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, and the *International Review of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*. Her most recent book, *The Politics of Protection: The Limits of Humanitarian Action*, will be published by Brookings Institution Press in late 2010. She was educated at Duke University (BA 1971) and the University of Florida (MA 1972, PhD 1976).



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