

**United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

(542)

**UNITWIN/ UNESCO Chairs Programme**

**Progress Report**

**Period of activity: August 2007- July 2008**

**UNESCO Chair in Interfaith Studies**

**Report established by:** Professor Jonathan Webber, UNESCO Chairholder, University of Birmingham

**I. Activities**

**1. Academic activities**

***Education***

During the 2007-2008 activity year, the UNESCO Chair offered courses on:

Title: *Anthropological Approaches to Religion*

Target group: undergraduate students

Title: *Anthropology of Islam*

Target group: undergraduate students

Title: *Classic Problems in the Philosophy of Religion*

Target group: graduate students

Title: *Ethnographic Methods in the Study of Religion*

Target group: graduate students

Title: *History of Christian–Muslim Relations*

Target group: graduate students

***Training***

Title: *“Making Sense of the Holocaust: Auschwitz in European Cultural Memory”*

Target group: participants in the intensive summer program “European Heritages and Collective Memories” for the Erasmus Mundus Consortium of European Universities at Jagiellonian University, Cracow

Title: *“Religion in Contemporary Global Politics”*

Target group: Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows, Cumberland Lodge

## **Research**

Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology

Faith Communities and International Institutions

Traces of Memory: The Surviving Post-Holocaust Jewish Heritage in Southern Poland

## **2. Conferences/ Meetings**

Title: *Text, Tradition, and Identity: Issues of Interpretation in Christian–Muslim Engagement*

Place: University of Birmingham

Title: *The UN System and the World(s) of Religions and Cultures*

Place: Academic Council on the United Nations System

Title: *UNESCO Museum of World Religions, Birmingham*

Places: Glasgow and Birmingham

Title: *Globalization and Spiritual Traditions*

Place: Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan

Title: *Remembrance, Awareness, Responsibility*

Place: Auschwitz State Museum, Poland

## **3. Partnerships/ Interuniversity Exchanges**

United Nations' Alliance of Civilizations

University of Birmingham, United Kingdom

World Council of Churches, London, United Kingdom

Archbishop of Canterbury, United Kingdom

World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland

Monash University, Melbourne, Australia

Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran

## **4. Publications**

### **Books**

Title: "Religions, Civil Society and the UN System: Exploring Strategies to Enhance Interfaith Cooperation towards Sustainable Peace"

Author: J. Boehle

Book: *Conference on Interfaith Cooperation* (Proceedings)

Year: 2007

Publisher: Foreign Service Institute, Department of Foreign Affairs

Title: *Contemporary Practice and Method in the Philosophy of Religion: New Essays*

Author: D. Cheetham, R. King, eds.

Year: 2008  
Publisher: Continuum

Title: “Chatting with Gran at her Grave: Ethnography and the Definition of Religion”  
Book: *God at Ground Level* (P. Crutchley-Jones)  
Author: M.D. Stringer  
Year: 2008  
Publisher: Peter Lang

Title: *Contemporary Ethnography and the Definition of Religion*  
Author: M.D. Stringer  
Publisher: Continuum  
Year: 2008

## **II. Impact**

The UNESCO Chair promotes the understanding of other faiths, the study of the relations between them and their interdependence. The Chair has offered important resources for interfaith education, encouraging international networking and academic exchange. The Chair has made significant progress towards the creation of a UNESCO Museum of World Religions in Birmingham.

## **III. Forthcoming activities**

The UNESCO Chair in Interfaith Studies is currently preparing an international conference on “Interreligious Hermeneutics” to be held in Salzburg in 2009. The project of a Museum of World Religions is part of the forthcoming activities envisioned by the Chair. Research and development for the creation of the Museum form part of the ongoing agenda of the Chair for the next years.