

# WORLD FAITHS DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE

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## **David Bryer appointed as Executive Director of the WFDD**

We are very pleased to tell you that David Bryer has been appointed as the Executive Director of the new World Faiths Development Dialogue (which will probably change its name!). David is an Orthodox Christian, who has also studied Muslim theology and has had a lot of contact with the Muslim faith. He is, at present, the director of Oxfam in Britain.

Oxfam is a non-governmental development agency, which gives financial support to projects and emergency situations all over the world. It also campaigns on topics such as trade and international debt etc. David thus knows a great deal about grass-roots development and advocacy work, as well as having his roots firmly in the religious world.

He will join the WFDD in May, when the office will move from Oxford to London. He will then start gradually to build up a team of staff, which, over the next two years, is expected to reach a number of about 10 or 12 people.

With a clearer institutional framework and more people, we hope that the Dialogue will be able to gather up more support, tackle more international policy issues, work in an increased number of countries and make a greater contribution towards bringing about positive changes in favour of the most impoverished people in our world. However, none of this will be possible without your continued support. The WFDD *is* the network of the people and organisations behind it!

## **Cultures, Spirituality and Development Paper**

We are sending you the first draft of a paper, written by Thierry Verhelst of the Network Cultures Europe and author of *No Life without Roots* (Zed Books, London, 1989).

In the same way as we did with our Comment on the *WDR 2000* in 1999, we are writing to ask you for your comments. We shall incorporate these to the best of our ability into the final text, so that it emerges truly as a WFDD publication.

**Comments on the contents:** Are there things in the paper with which you disagree or with which you very much agree? (If your opinions are based on an experience, it would be very interesting to hear about it.)

**Examples:** Have you examples of grassroots development programmes/government policies, which have either benefited by taking seriously the culture and spirituality of the people involved, or have been rendered less useful by a lack of consideration for these dimensions? We urgently need case studies which show that spiritual, religious and cultural values and institutions do have an influence – and how the success/failure of programmes is judged.

**Use of the paper:** We would value your suggestions as to how we can use this paper in the best possible way. Have you outlets where it might be published? Have you ideas as to how we might revise it to make it more accessible as an educational tool?

Wendy Tyndale