

NOVEMBER 2016

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As I write, in the UK and in many other countries around the world we are in the middle of the "Season of Remembrance". Last Thursday, over 800 young people, veterans, civic leaders, airport management and colleagues came together for our now annual 'Festival of Remembrance' – one of the biggest events of its kind in the airport's calendar, and in the North of England. The event concluded with an Act of Remembrance, and as the clergy arrived at the back of the hangar after the service, it was clear that I was expected to say a final vestry prayer. I started: "*Grant Lord, that what we have sung with our lips...*" and then my mind went blank. I improvised, but my brain was addled and the final prayer may possibly have been less than coherent (it had been a **very** long day). Our guest preacher sympathised by telling me about the time he forgot the words of the Lord's Prayer in front of 400 schoolchildren. Afterwards, of course, I recalled the words of the prayer perfectly:

"Grant Lord that what we have sung with our lips, We may believe with our hearts, and what we believe with our hearts, we may show forth in our lives..." It is the 'Choristers' Prayer' dating from the 1930s, possibly by composer and church musician Sir Sydney Nicholson and/or Archbishop of Canterbury, Cosmo Lang.

Before we entered (what has become known as) the era of 'post-truth politics' a new phrase had already entered public discourse: "***Integrity is the new Authority***". It belongs to the 'post-deference' era in which political leaders can no longer expect to be respected simply for being in power, but need to earn such things.

It is a phrase that applies well to the work and ministry of an airport chaplain - or indeed any ministry to an organisation or company in which one has no 'God-given' right to respect or authority, but must earn those things by managers, colleagues and wider public alike.

I have grown up, and exercised leadership, in churches which set great store by what people believe, sometimes, I admit, to the detriment of practical and social engagement with the local community. As a chaplain, (mostly) I thrive on living out my faith and ministry in what are very often deeply practical ways.

Sometimes, for example, it is a challenge, not just quickly to buy food for someone who is hungry and

homeless, but to take time to sit down and share a meal with them: not just to help someone move on from the airport, but to sit down with them so they can decide on a permanent solution to their situation.

A high spot in my airport ministry so far was to be told by a stranded passenger I had assisted, of a completely different culture, ethnicity, nationality and religion from my own, that they saw (and rejoiced in seeing) God's face in mine. That is truly humbling. If only we could hear such things from one another more often!

Of course, what we believe is incredibly important, but whether we like it or not, what we believe will be seen most clearly by others in how we relate to and engage with those who are different from us.

Recently, our airport police referred to us for assistance a 20-year-old Muslim woman, from another part of the European Union who was escaping the threat of forced marriage. She had travelled by road to Manchester to fly on to another country of refuge. Unfortunately, that country's authorities wouldn't allow her to board and so she was stranded in an unfamiliar city. We found her accommodation, advice and support: Job done! But after two months of being on the run from her very persistent family, she woke up, in what she thought was a safe house far from Manchester, to find her parents and uncle at the foot of her bed - angry and determined to take her home. Perhaps surprisingly, they chose to fly back through Manchester, and so the airport police intervened and again rescued the young woman: and referred her back to the chaplaincy.

In the two intervening months the young woman had reconnected somewhat with her Muslim faith and in our first encounter after two months, she worked hard to convince me about the nature of God, the status of Jesus and the beauty of Islam. It was not my place at that time and in that situation to argue or debate, but to express my Christian faith in doing what was necessary to help her. I fought to find her emergency and longer-term accommodation; I connected her with people I trusted who could help her. I made time to listen to her and to be a friend at a time when she felt she had no one she could trust. When she said she hadn't eaten for three days I sat down with her and made sure she had a nutritious (Halal) meal. I called the paramedic and took her to the pharmacy to address her health problems, and since then, my female Muslim chaplaincy colleague has continued that role of support and encouragement. I received a lovely card from the young woman who wrote: *'I thank the*

Lord for you for you have blessed me.' I can't tell you how much those words mean to me.

Did I show forth in my life that which I believe in my heart? Or did I bail out by not arguing with her? You're free to decide for yourself, but, with God as my judge, I hope that there is a clear integrity between my prayers, my beliefs and my engagement with others.

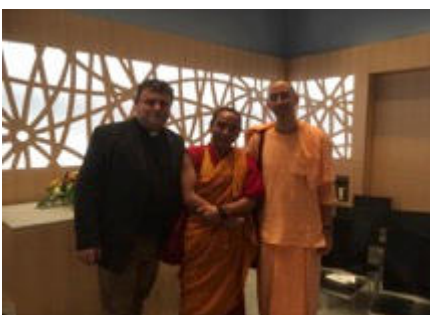
George Burns famously said: "*Sincerity - if you can fake that, you've got it made.*" He has a point. With little or no remaining inherent moral authority, the impression of sincerity (the absence of pretence, deceit, or hypocrisy) and integrity (the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles) can provide the only remaining authority that people still acknowledge: "*I don't agree with all his policies, but at least he tells it like it is!*"

But the second meaning of integrity (the state of being whole and undivided, i.e. integrated) is crucial - what is said reflects what is believed, and our actions will always (consciously or unconsciously) reflect the reality of our beliefs. As Mahatma Gandhi would say: "*Your beliefs become your thoughts, Your thoughts become your words, Your words become your actions, Your actions become your habits, Your habits become your values, Your values become your destiny.*"

At this time of Remembrance, the words of Jesus remind us that the greatest expression of integrity is to love: "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down their life for their friends." To say 'other people's lives matter as much as my own' is a belief which we may have to be called upon to live out one day.

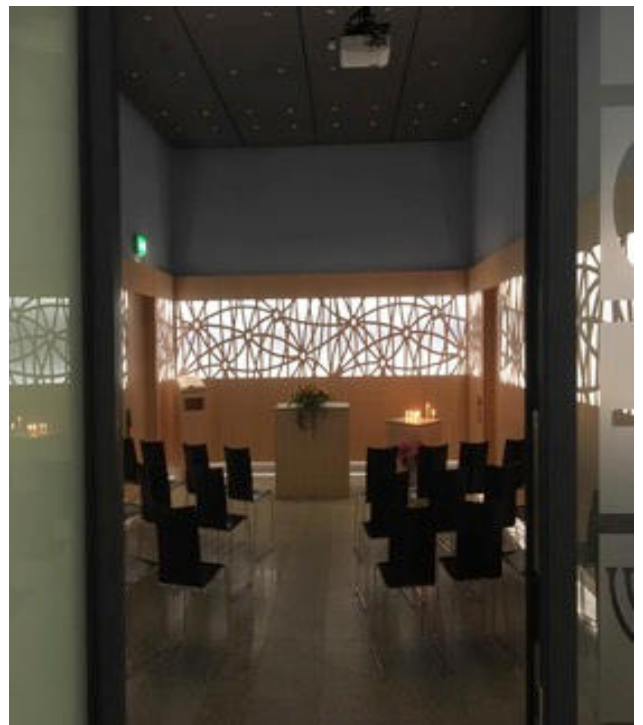
I see inspirational integrity in my airport co-workers - from the very lowliest to the highest tiers of management every day. But I acknowledge that airports airlines and airport companies are also nevertheless, deeply competitive businesses operating in a challenging and highly-demanding sector. Without a solid sub-foundational layer of belief, just as Truth is considered the first casualty of war, so Integrity can be the first casualty of business.

Let us be integrated in our beliefs, words and actions, and, at this time of year, when we remember the witness of countless saints, the sacrifice of servicemen and women, and mark a New Year for our Hindu, Sikh and other sisters and brothers around the world, let us pray with a renewed strength, for true integrity: that what we say, or sing, or pray, or chant with our lips, we may believe in our hearts, and what we believe in our hearts, we may show forth in our lives, in our ministries, and in our professional (and personal) relationships.



Together with Pierre de Maureuil, I was delighted to represent the International Association of Civil Aviation Chaplains and to celebrate with the Zurich Airport Chaplaincy Team, their volunteers, denominational supporters, airport management and friends from a wide spectrum of faith communities, the formal opening and inauguration of their most beautiful chaplaincy facilities – and to affirm the on-going work of the fantastic (and youthful!) chaplaincy team there (there was a constant flow of people through the facilities over the weekend, and a constant flow of humanitarian assistance requests on the chaplaincy team and volunteers)

It was a wonderful privilege to spend the weekend with our colleagues in Zurich, and to receive such generous hospitality and welcome from our friends. The design of the Prayer Room is based on the route maps you often see from point to point across the globe, and reflects the reality of our interconnectedness. I took lots of photos and notes, as Manchester Airport is about to embark on similar terminal building work, including our own chaplaincy facilities. Zurich offers a high-quality exemplar.

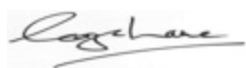


IACAC 2016 Annual Conference

IACAC conferences always remind us how much Airport chaplaincy is appreciated by host airports, their managers and colleagues. Next year we will be celebrating 50 years of airport chaplains meeting together to support one another. I and my colleagues on the IACAC exec board will be extending repeated invitations to you over the next **10 months to** celebrate with us in September 10-15, 2017 at Arlanda Stockholm (And please consider this my personal invitation to you). The theme of the conference will be "Facing The Future", and, despite an apparent resurgence of isolationism and return of nationalism, our global interconnectedness can only continue to

increase, and the role of airports and of airport chaplaincy become more important and significant than ever. Visit <http://iacac.info/index.php/news/iacac-news/693-2017-iacac-annual-conference-stockholm> for more information - and book early!

With every blessing,



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FACING THE FUTURE- IACAC CONFERENCE STOCKHOLM

This will be a very important occasion as it marks the 50th anniversary of the IACAC and many preparations are underway to celebrate our Golden Jubilee.

One such activity will be the compilation of stories of 50 years chaplaincy in airports around the world.

A book was also produced to celebrate the 25th anniversary and that will be reproduced in the first half of 50th anniversary book.



The Rev Unni Franck from Stockholm, who is compiling this commemorative book, asks for the following:

In the first part of your story I would like you to tell the reader about how your chaplaincy has changed or developed during this last 25 years from the perspective of: Has your chaplaincy always been ecumenical or has it become ecumenical during these last 25 years or has it become multifaith or interfaith? Are you working in a team of different denominations and religion? Or, has it changed in another direction, or neither? If you also want to mention how your Airport value your work of course you can do that also. Please make this part short and simple.

The second part of your story is the most exiting one. Tell the reader a story about an ecumenical or interfaith meeting with someone or a few, that made you get goose pimples, a meeting that suddenly became something more and something interesting and wonderful, through the presence of our Lord and God, or if something out of the ordinary has happened that made you change your way of working.

Maybe you can talk about it together in your Chaplaincy team and tell stories to each other and choose one or two that you would like to be presented in this commemorative book.

Please send it to me before the 1st December, to my email unni.franck@svenskakyrkan.se

Make sure you send the story of your chaplaincy. Your story is part of the history of our Association.

NEWS FROM OUR CHAPLAINCIES

Fr Gabriel Feyisten from Laos, Nigeria asks to be remembered to all his friends in IACAC. Happy All Saints Day, may we share in their glory on the last day and may the souls of our loved ones rest in peace.

Jay James from Vancouver, Canada is very excited to share the news that YVR was voted the BEST AIRPORT IN THE WORLD FOR 2016 by CAPA Center for Aviation. He says, "This is a first for a North American Airport.[please spread the word] Plus seven years in a row awards by Skytrax. Rev Howie also contributed to this award with his service at YVR CHAPEL where we both met. Howie then sponsored me to IACAC. Blessings to all and Praise the Lord." H.M.JAY JAMES, associate IACAC. Vancouver BC CANADA YVR

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

You can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him.

James D Miles

Chaplains are invited to send a good short story and photos if possible, about experiences within your chaplaincies.