

IACAC

International Conference 2014

The recent conference was hosted at Schiphol Airport Amsterdam on the topic of 'The added value of airport chaplaincy'.

The conference was somewhat overshadowed by the recent air disaster of MH17 which had resulted in the Schiphol Chaplaincy team being heavily involved in the aftermath which I am sure continues at the present time and will continue for the foreseeable future.

In mentioning these, the conference was a very successful event which focused on the added value to all those who work and use the airport for various reasons.

The opening service was held The Oude Kerk (The Old Church) dominates over the Red Light District. Although originally built as a Catholic place of worship, today the Oude Kerk is one of the unique buildings expressing the national character of Dutch Protestantism. Through its exceptional architecture, high windows full of light, beautifully sculpted misericords in the choir, impressive old granite gravestones on its floor, as well as through its omnipresent in the building, the **Oude Kerk** symbolizes the tradition and the present-day of Amsterdam.

The service was followed dinner hosted by the "Not For Sale" Group who spoke about the work in human trafficking. This was also looked at in some depth by the Border Police and how it imposes a great loss of freedom to the victims.

The focus of the conference 'The Added value of airport chaplaincy was' was presented by Marcel Elsenaar, who discussed the awareness of the importance and benefits of chaplaincy, including relationships with staff and the development of partnerships with local, regional and international bodies.

Conference also looked at once again KLMs Emergency plan, looking at KLM Royal Dutch Airlines' response procedures and immediate actions according to their Corporate Emergency Plan.

These are a couple of the highlights of the time we spent at Schiphol airport along some time learning about and visiting the city of Amsterdam.

As a foot note, following the HM17 disaster the Chaplaincy team at Schiphol airport appeared to the overwhelmed with the press and other parts of the media requesting interviews etc.

This can be very stressful and it may be something that in consultation with the media people at our airports we are able to have them involved in a major way in the event of any disasters.