

Round Table Discussion 4 - Responsibility

Questions to Cover

What is the responsibility of a person of faith towards involvement in politics?

- Is it possible to square religious views with party politics?
- Should we stay 'outside', or get 'inside' and try to change things?
- What criteria should a person of faith use when voting?

What is the responsibility of a person of faith towards involvement in the local community?

- Who has the responsibility for needs in the local community
- If there is a need, should we nag the local council, the MP, the police etc?
- Should a faith community simply see a need and get on with it?
- Should community work be done by the church, mosque, temple or gurdwara?
- With so much needing to be done, how do we choose what to do?

What is the responsibility of a person of faith towards use of money and resources?

- Is our money our own? Is someone else's money their own?
- As everyone has limited resources, how can we maximise our gifts?
- Should you give money to the faith community, or a charity?

If there are prostitutes in the churchyard or beggars at the gates of the mosque, what is the faith community's response?

- Close the doors and protect the people inside?
- Open the doors and help the people outside?

Where does corporate responsibility end and personal responsibility begin?

- What needs to be organised by the faith community?
- What should a person of faith just get on and do?
- How can individuals mobilise their community to action?
- Does personal responsibility have anything to do with faith?

Quotes

"Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men dread it."
George Bernard Shaw

"I must do something" always solves more problems than "Something must be done." (*anon*)

"God sometimes does His work with gentle drizzle, not storms." *John Newton*

Our belief that every life has equal value is at the core of our work at the foundation ...

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation principle

US Faith Groups initiative on water

With more than 1 billion people in developing countries lacking readily available safe drinking water and 2.6 billion without access to sanitation, faith groups at home are stepping up efforts to push for clean and accessible water. The faith-based Water Working Group is pressuring Congress to increase spending on sustainable water and sanitation efforts by \$500 million

"There is a growing realization in most of the mainline churches and faith-based groups that the environment is part of God's creation, and humans have a responsibility to sustain it," said Dennis Warner, a water specialist at Baltimore-based Catholic Relief Services. "In a sense there has to be a partnership between the creator and human beings to sustain the environment.... It's a moral pact, it's a moral responsibility."

Excerpt from Communalism - Indian anti-extremist website 2004

The report begins by thanking those who donated to ongoing Tsunami relief efforts, and continues ... However, our responsibility does not end with giving. It is also our combined responsibility to ensure that our funds do not end up in sectarian hands, and that this tragedy does not turn into another opportunity for communal groups to gain foothold in our plural society.

... Many of us are also members of a variety of linguistic, regional and cultural associations. Because of their social and cultural affinities, such organizations are well equipped to intervene in on the ground activities. Precisely because of these reasons, sectarian groups try to use them as vehicles to advance their own agendas. We therefore urge you all to not only take an active part in the fund raising activities of these organizations but also be involved in discussions on how and where the funds are to be used. Disasters of this kind are occasions when we should be on high alert to keep social justice at the top of the agenda.

Starbucks and the Fairtrade Foundation

announced details of the company's industry-leading support for small-scale coffee farmers. This commitment means that 100% of the espresso coffee sold – both whole bean and espresso-based beverages – in Starbucks stores in the UK and Ireland become both Starbucks™ Shared Planet™ and Fairtrade Certified by the end of 2009. Starbucks espresso-based coffees include its Cappuccino, Caffè Latte and other espresso-based beverages, this represents the vast majority of Starbucks beverages.