



Dear Woolf Friends,

Religious affairs and world news are never apart for long. At the Woolf Institute, our thinking, research and outputs are prompted and shaped by media stories of issues facing faith communities both in the UK and beyond.

President Macron's so-called "Imams Charter" – an attempt, for better or worse, to tackle extremism and shape French Islam – reminds us that being both Muslim and European is not yet settled. A link to our recent webinar on it is included below.

Ongoing tensions between Hindu and Muslim communities in India, and especially as voters in the state of Uttar Pradesh head to the polls this month, provides yet more evidence for the need for interreligious understanding and dialogue between faiths.

Closer to home, a legal dispute between teaching unions and the Department of Education, over plans to force Catholic schools into academy status, highlights the uneasy peace between public bodies and faith organisations.

How we respond as an Institute is important. A hastily drafted press release expressing concern or disappointment may improve our visibility for a short moment but effecting deeper change takes more. Addressing the messy relationships between religion and wider society, and particularly politics, requires an array of responses.

Sometimes, we need to crunch the latest stats and get work out fast. This week, the Woolf Institute was invited to comment on a recent report by the Community Security Trust highlighting record rises in antisemitic incidents in the UK. Our soon-to-be-published work on Covid-19 takes a similarly reactive approach.

But sometimes the long-view is needed. Our Executive Director Dr Esther-Miriam Wagner's focus on building trust – as featured recently in *The Times* – confirms our commitment to addressing the underlying causes of division and polarisation. Similarly, Dr Katherine O'Lone's current work on forgiveness explores in detail one of the key drives of reconciliation in post-conflict societies.

Whichever approach is taken, we need and welcome your help and support as we continue to build the Institute's relevance in a complex, ever-changing world.

Best wishes,

Dr Julian Hargreaves
Director of Research, Woolf Institute

This Week At Woolf

CLICK ON THE LINKS FOR OUR CURATED
COLLECTION

RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS IN THE NEWS



[REWATCH : HOW TO TALK ABOUT ... THE FRENCH 'IMAM CHARTER'](#)

[READ: HOW TO ACHIEVE A HEALTHY MULTI-FAITH SOCIETY IN BRITAIN](#)

[READ: FORGIVENESS AND FUTURE-BUILDING](#)

[LISTEN: REFLECTING ON LIVING IN HARMONY](#)

READ OUR LATEST BLOG WHEN DEATH BECOMES US



In the spring of 2019 an elderly Jewish man from an ultra-Orthodox community was admitted to a North London hospital with a confirmed case of COVID-19 as well as mild dementia. His admission was in the early days of the pandemic and tight restrictions on hospital visitations had been put in place meaning that he was separated from his family and his community. This separation first provided a communication problem as the patient's mother tongue was not English but Yiddish. However, what became more problematic for staff on the ward was dealing with the intense anxiety felt by his family about his separation from the rituals, observances and practices of his faith...

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE BLOG](#)

THURSDAY 10 MARCH @18:00

ENCOUNTER EVENT



ENCOUNTER EVENT 10 MARCH @18:00

This Encounter event will bring together faith practitioners from different communities to discuss outcomes of the Woolf Institute Qur'an and Bible Reading group, which met during the academic year 2020-21.

Although the relationship of the Torah and the Qur'an is deep and nuanced, members of the group generally agreed on several statements.

Several of these conclusions, which were based on the texts, call for further study concerning the historical development of the interpretation of the texts. They also lend themselves to discussion between faith leaders and practitioners of interfaith dialogue, and it is hoped that this Encounter event will be the first of many to explore these academic findings.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

SPEAKING OF SILENCE

Naked Reflections Podcast x The Woolf Institute

SILENCE IS MUCH MORE THAN THE ABSENCE
OF NOISE OR SPEECH. IT CAN BE
CONTEMPLATIVE, DEFIANT, TRUTHFUL OR
EVASIVE...



PODCAST: SPEAKING OF SILENCE

Silence is much more than the absence of noise or speech. It can be contemplative, defiant, truthful or evasive...

We may not think so, but the idea of silence is deeply embedded in mainstream culture and religion. Silent prayer, the yearly Remembrance Day observation, a one minute silence to mark a death or a tragedy before a football match – all these have great power. And on a more visceral level, silence can create great tension in a block buster movie. Tom Shakespeare and Ajahn Amaro Bhikkhu talk the talk on silence...

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)

COMING SOON

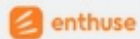
Naked Reflections Podcast x The Woolf Institute

MUSICAL NETWORKS

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