

## **NJPN Quarterly Meeting and AGM**

**10 May 2008**

This meeting took place back in London at the CAFOD offices in Brixton.

Unusually we opened the meeting with our speaker, Charles Wookey, one of the Assistant General Secretaries of Bishops' Conference. Charles talk, "On being a Christian in a Secular Society", was both informative and stimulating.

He looked at

- the rise of the anti-theist, where those who don't believe in religion feel the need to convert people to their way of thinking and are often vicious in their condemnation and ridicule of those who do believe.
- the rise of scary religion, where religion used to be seen as benign now it is seen as a problem which must be fought. Much of this attitude has come about since 9/11.
- the rise of hard secularism which endeavours to keep religion out of all aspects of secular life as seen in recent moves regarding Faith Schools and Adoption Societies.

This talk was particularly appropriate coming two days after Cardinal Cormac's lecture encouraging us to find the right language with which to engage with the secular world in which we live.

Bruce Kent, present at the opening of our meeting explained the book that he was preparing and encouraged us all to submit J&P 'stories' highlighting some of the more unusual activities which we as individuals or groups take part in. The book is to be published by Kevin Mayhew later this year. Its not too late to still submit such stories. *(approx. 400 words)*

The AGM opened with the Chair's report on the past year. Anne Peacey thanked the Executive and NJPN's Consultants for their work throughout the year and acknowledged the change of Administrator. Ann Kelly taking over from Maureen Matthews. Anne Peacey highlighted the new 3 Year Plan and the extensive upgrading of the website: [www.justice-and-peace.org.uk](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk)

The quarterly meetings are to continue being held at venues around the country and are open to all.

As with all charities, the issues of funding and financial sustainability of NJPN are crucial and it will be increasingly important to increase the number of 'Friends of NJPN'.

A new Executive was elected and Anne Peacey was elected to her fourth term as NJPN Chair.

During our lunch break a presentation was made to Maureen Matthews in recognition of her eleven years as NJPN Administrator.

News of the completion of the new resource "Between the Flood and the Rainbow" was greeted with much interest and thanks were expressed to Ellen Teague for this excellent piece of work. *(See Resources Page for further details).*

As usual at NJPN meetings, the reports from Dioceses and Agencies were one of the highlights of the day. We all learn from these times of sharing and return home with fresh ideas, information and enthusiasm.