

## **CTA Symposium 2009**

### **Multi-faith walks, rambles and pilgrimages – Revd Derek Seber**

Hi thanks for the introduction. For those who don't know me I have been involved in industrial mission since 1977 and working on inter-denominational and multi-faith projects since 1989. I got into it because I was concerned to give practical expression to my faith in the face of multiple deprivation poverty and unemployment in my inner-city Manchester parishes. I realised that if faith communities **worked together** to benefit local people, then we could bring about real change.

Tourism is one of the few industries where faith communities can have a direct influence. We don't make cars or run banks Thank God. But we do open our places of worship to all. And we make pilgrimages to places which benefit from our visits. Since setting up the NW Multi Faith Tourism Assn in 2000. I have now moved on leaving it in Malcolm Stonestreets capable hands. I am now involved in creating multi-faith inter-denominational walks of faith, rambles, pilgrimages, hikes anything to get faithful people off their backsides and into our glorious landscape, walking and talking together.

For me the working , walking and writing together provides the space for discovery of self, the other, and God. And it is a means to keep healthy in body, mind and spirit.. Thus working on a new diverse route and discussing where to go and not go, where to sleep and eat enables folk to cooperate on planning an adventure. Then going on the route (The action) meeting each other and others on the Way and interacting with the diversity of God, and Mans creations, landscape and buildings, earth and sky. And then reflecting together on the events, writing them up to share, displaying the photos to others in public spaces so they can benefit people. And then using the reflection to move forward to the next inspirational journey.

If this can be done in an inter-faith, inter-denominational, open and inclusive way then we have a model for co-operative work on other things such as the relief of poverty and the improvement of the health and quality of life in a local community.

The driving force behind the inspirational walks we have promoted so far is Ian Ball He is the one who has led over 40 pilgrimages and written them up for others to learn from and use. Ian and I will be available if you want to chat after todays sessions. Our hope is to create a long distance multi-faith pilgrimage route from Wales to Scotland taking in footpaths, canals, cycleways, bridle paths and ancient trackways through towns and cities villages and hamlets. Thank you.

[Two papers by Ian Ball are also available via the CTA website: 'Pilgrimage notes', and 'Brief Engagements flier']