



An appeal to Yorkshire MPs: Religious Education and the English Baccalaureate

As senior church leaders and representatives of West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council (WYEC), we are concerned that Government's proposals for an English Baccalaureate do not include Religious Education (RE) as one of the core humanities subjects. As a result, we are writing to Members of Parliament across the WYEC region of West and North West Yorkshire, urging our MPs to sign Early Day Motion 1375 on 'Religious Education and the English Baccalaureate'. This is a cross-party EDM, reflecting the breadth of public concern about this issue.

This is not about the churches protecting their own interests, nor is it about the wider role of RE for those not undertaking it as an assessed academic subject. Well taught – and the academic discipline of Religious Studies is increasingly well taught in our schools – RE can inform young people in their spiritual awareness, development, identity and fulfilment. RE can provide the tools necessary to understand all the major faiths, the diversity of our society, and the complex issues involved in integration and building harmonious communities. More than that, as many people of no religious faith have recently testified with regard to the King James Authorised Version of the Bible, RE is essential for understanding the historical and literary basis of this country, and for the underlying ethical code upon which our society is based.

Therefore, Religious Education should be at the heart of many young people's broad, rigorous, academic experience. It should most certainly be included in the academic disciplines included within the English Baccalaureate. We request and encourage the Members of Parliament of West and North West Yorkshire to sign Early Day Motion 1375.

The Revd. Dr. Liz Smith, Chair, Leeds Methodist District; Chair of WYEC
The Revd. Kenneth Evans, Chair, Yorkshire District of the Moravian Church
Major Bill Heeley, Yorkshire Divisional Commander, Salvation Army
The Rt. Revd. Walter Jagucki, Bishop Emeritus of the Lutheran Church of Great Britain.
The Rt. Revd. John Packer, Bishop of Ripon and Leeds
Pastor Anthony Padmore, Chair, West Yorkshire African Caribbean Council of Churches
Eva Pinthus, Representative of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers in Yorkshire)
The Rt. Revd. Stephen Platten, Bishop of Wakefield
The Rt. Revd. Tony Robinson, Bishop of Pontefract
The Rt. Revd. Arthur Roche, Catholic Bishop of Leeds
The Revd. Kevin Watson, Moderator of the Yorkshire Synod of the United Reformed Church
The Revd. Ernie Whalley, Regional Minister for Ministry, Yorkshire Baptist Association
The Revd. Peter Whittaker, Chair, West Yorkshire Methodist District

27th April 2011.

BAPTIST CHURCHES members of Yorkshire Baptist Association
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND Bradford, Wakefield, Ripon & Leeds
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
THE METHODIST CHURCH Leeds District, West Yorkshire District
THE MORAVIAN CHURCH Yorkshire District

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH Diocese of Leeds
THE SALVATION ARMY Yorkshire Division
THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS Yorkshire General Meeting
THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH Yorkshire Synod
WEST YORKSHIRE AFRICAN CARIBBEAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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