

Welcome! The Editors Introduce The Journal.

It began one warm summer morning in 2005 as we chatted over coffee about the state of the world. Given our mutual passion we inevitably agreed that spirituality and religion were fundamental to social change, which left a question about the lack of conferences on this crucial subject. The question only hung in the air for a moment before we decided to convene just such a event.

As we were both in the throes of PhD research we had little idea of how to start beyond booking the venue and putting out a call for papers. But thankfully we seem to have answered a widespread need and followed our successful one day conference in 2006 with a two day event in 2007 that included a youth interfaith day. Both conferences drew presentations from across the world that covered a wide variety of faith-based social change topics. Some papers focussed on religious action for social change while others took a more academic stance; themes included education, gender, environmentalism, interfaith, literature and socio-politics.

Although the conferences exceeded our expectations, we had some concerns. Our delight at attracting so many presentations from overseas was tempered by the inevitable environmental impact while several potential delegates found the expense of attending prohibitive. To help alleviate these problems we have launched this e-journal to accompany our series of bi-annual conferences, the next of which will be held in April 2009. The first two issues of *The Journal* offer extended conference proceedings and aim to provide a flavour of the first two FSSC events. Subsequent issues will publish themed peer-reviewed articles: Issue 3 (November 2008) will explore the relationship between art, faith, spirituality and social change and issue 4 (June 2009) will focus on the political dimensions. Meanwhile we welcome articles on other aspects of faith-based social change and suggestions for journal themes. The 'Reflections' section will include either a debate article to spur discussion or a 'work in progress' report that invites comments to encourage in-the-field faith-based social change projects.

We hope *The Journal* will enable more academics and practitioners to contribute to this growing area of study, especially those unable to attend our conferences for financial and/or environmental reasons. We are sure you will enjoy this exciting new journal, and welcome your comments.

The Editors.