



20 YEARS

MILESTONES ON THE JOURNEY TOGETHER
TOWARDS GREATER INTER FAITH
UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION



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BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The Queen sends her warm thanks to the members of The Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom for their kind message of loyal greetings, sent on the occasion of the Network's twentieth anniversary.

Her Majesty is delighted that the Network has reached this significant anniversary and is full of admiration for its continuing work, and for the important contribution made by Britain's faith communities to the life of the United Kingdom.

The Queen appreciates your thoughtfulness in writing as you did and sends her best wishes to you all in this special anniversary year.

ELIZABETH R.

November, 2007.



THE PRIME MINISTER



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

In its first twenty years the Inter Faith Network for the UK, with its member bodies, has made a major contribution to helping create relationships of understanding, respect and cooperation between people of different faiths in Britain. Its work can only become ever more important in the coming years.

In many ways, the vital work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK encapsulates some of the key issues of our time: the need to respect and work with the distinctive aspects of our identities whilst always seeking our common ground and shared values as a bedrock for our lives together as citizens of our country.

The Inter Faith Network has drawn particular strength from its broad membership, spanning the national representative bodies of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths, as well as inter faith structures at all levels from the grassroots to the national, and educational and academic bodies. This, together with its invaluable engagement with inter faith and faith and public life issues, has enabled the Network to play a key role in developing cohesion and integration at every level within society.

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As a nation, we need to continue to debate and develop a modern concept of what it means to be a citizen of the UK in the 21st century. I look forward to the Inter Faith Network's continuing contribution to this vital work.

Gordon Brown

December 2007

FOREWORD

2007 marks the 20th anniversary of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. At the close of the year, and as we look forward to the coming decade and to new challenges and opportunities, we take this opportunity to look back across the first two decades.

Over these twenty years 1987 to 2007, inter faith understanding and cooperation have moved from the margins to centre stage in the UK.

We believe this has been due in no small measure to the endeavours of the Inter Faith Network for the UK and its member organisations: national representative bodies of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faith communities; inter faith organisations at local, regional and national level; and educational and academic bodies with an interest in inter religious relations.

This progress has also, of course, been due to the extensive work of other organisations – including central and local Government and other secular agencies such as local voluntary organisations, Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education, and Race Equality Councils and the Police as well as chaplaincies in education, hospitals and prisons; bodies, such as the Faith Based Regeneration Network, working to increase faith participation in areas such as regeneration; and academic institutions. Many individuals too have made key contributions.

And we take this opportunity to affirm the importance of the endeavours of all – both within the faith communities and beyond – who have contributed across the last twenty years to building good inter faith relations.

We also want to thank particularly warmly all those who have supported the Inter Faith Network's work through its first twenty years financially or with the gift of time, knowledge and skill: the faith communities of the United Kingdom; inter faith organisations and educational and academic bodies; Government – and in particular the Department for Communities and Local Government; trusts; and many individual donors and volunteers. We thank most warmly also all past Officers, Trustees, staff and volunteers of the Network who have helped it make such a key contribution to building good inter faith relations in the UK.

In the following pages, we look at some of the achievements and trace some of the key stages in our journey together to today's Inter Faith Network and its continuing vital role in working to promote good inter faith relations in the UK. Necessarily, the overview is not exhaustive and we apologise for any omissions but we hope that it gives a picture of some of the significant milestones thus far.

As the Prime Minister has said in his message on the occasion of this anniversary, in the coming years the work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK can only become ever more important. As the Commission on Integration and Cohesion said in its 2007 report: “Religious faith is profoundly important to those whose lives it shapes and is potentially a unifying force within society. At times, though, religious identity can be advanced in divisive ways or can become a factor that separates people from the wider community – for example, in many of the areas where ‘parallel lives’ are most in evidence. We believe that the way that relations between people of different faiths and beliefs develop in the coming years in England’s diverse local areas will be very important to integration and cohesion policy. There has already been much effective work to develop these relationships, but more needs to be done.” We look forward to continuing to contribute to this vital task.

Rt Revd Dr Tom Butler Co-Chair
Dr Nawal Prinja Co-Chair
Dr Manazir Ahsan MBE Vice-Chair
Dr Natubhai Shah Vice-Chair
Dr Indarjit Singh OBE Vice-Chair
Mr Vivian Wineman Vice-Chair

FROM 1987 TO 2007: PROGRESS IN BUILDING GOOD INTER FAITH RELATIONS

- **20 years ago** there was no formal framework in place enabling the representative bodies of the faiths to come together and to discuss matters of mutual concern.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK brought such a structure into being and this opportunity for the faiths to come together continues today, with the Network's Faith Communities Forum and through its wider work.

- **20 years ago**, religious identity and inter faith issues were low on the public agenda and faith communities were rarely consulted on matters of public policy.

Today, the importance of religious identity is widely recognised and inter faith issues are a high priority for both central and local government and in many other contexts. Faith communities are at key policy tables, such as the Faith Communities Consultative Council of the Department for Communities and Local Government, and inter faith issues are to be at the heart of a new strategy being developed within Government.

- **20 years ago** there was inter faith activity of various kinds – for example that of the Council of Christians and Jews; the World Congress of Faiths; Religions for Peace (as it is now named); and the International Association of Religious Freedom; a number of local inter faith groups in cities such as Birmingham and Glasgow, and some faith community committees, such as the inter faith committee of the British Council of Churches. But there was no link between the initiatives to help share good practice across the UK and discuss complementary working.

Today, as for the last 20 years, the Inter Faith Network provides that link between inter faith initiatives to help share good practice across the UK and this is now enhanced by linkages provided by member bodies in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and the English Regions.

- **20 years ago**, only around 30 local inter faith organisations were in place and no regional faith forums.

Today, as the latest edition of the Inter Faith Network's directory *Inter Faith Organisations in the UK* demonstrates, there are over 210 local inter faith bodies involving the key faiths in their areas, as well as 6 English regional faith forums and 2 under development. Where once there were no national inter faith linking structures in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, now there are the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum; the Scottish Inter Faith Council and the Inter Faith Council for Wales. Each is carrying out its own important programme of work. A major part of the Inter Faith Network's work has been helping support new developments with advice, information and opportunities for sharing good practice.

- **20 years ago**, few resources were available to help people wanting to work on inter faith issues.

Today, there are increasing numbers of tools for dialogue and for development of inter faith structures. Many of these, for example *Building Good Relations Between People of Different Faiths and Beliefs* and *The Local Inter Faith Guide: Faith Community Cooperation in Action*, are the fruit of work by the Inter Faith Network and its member bodies, in some cases with public sector partners.

- **20 years ago**, there was little public reflection on what it means for people of different faiths to live together and contribute as fellow citizens to a society where diversity is respected but where common values can underpin a just and harmonious society.

Such issues are now seen as crucial and the Inter Faith Network's 'Values in a Multi Faith Society' and 'Faith and Citizenship' projects, its seminars and publications and work with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on the Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment in the House of Lords at the time of the Millennium have made a key contribution to this.

- **20 years ago**, it was rare to see coverage of inter faith issues in the media.

But now the major broadcasters see this as an area to consider as a matter of course; many local radio stations, such as BBC local radio, have regular discussions on their religion programmes between members of different faiths; and the press is beginning to reflect greater awareness of the inter faith agenda. Understanding by faith groups of the concerns and needs of the media has also grown. The Inter Faith Network has been among those bodies which, together with the media, have contributed to this shift.

- **20 years ago**, inter faith issues were rarely touched on in most classrooms despite the early pioneering work of some practitioners and of the Standing Conference on Inter Faith Dialogue in Education.

Today, learning about inter faith issues is actively encouraged in documents such as the Non Statutory National Framework for RE in England and by local Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education. Increasingly, they are also covered in Citizenship Education. The Inter Faith Network's seminars and reports with partners including the National Association of SACREs, the Religious Education Council for England and Wales, the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education and the Citizenship Foundation have contributed significantly to this shift.

- **20 years ago**, it was unusual to see anyone under 30 in an inter faith meeting or project.

Today, youth faith forums are springing up around the UK and many programmes of work to promote youth inter faith work are being developed.

- **20 years ago**, almost no formal inter faith activity was taking place on campus and the national student religious organisations had little contact with one another.

Today, inter faith groups are being developed in many institutions of higher education and, as the Inter Faith Network/Equality Challenge Unit conference in 2006 demonstrated, 'good relations on campus' is now a key area of work for student bodies; the National Union of Students; chaplaincies and higher education support bodies. The Inter Faith Network has had an important role in encouraging this.

- **20 years ago**, women were largely invisible in many inter faith structures and events.

Today the voices of women are beginning to be heard in an increasing number of inter faith contexts. The Network commissioned report, *Women's Inter Faith Activity in the UK*, found over 40 women's initiatives now operating.

- **20 years ago**, there was little material available about the faith communities in Britain and about their places of worship and their organisations.

Today, *Religions in the UK: A Directory* (first published by the University of Derby with the Inter Faith Network in 1993) provides this overview and it has been joined by a wealth of other publications on aspects of the different communities.

CHRONOLOGICAL MILESTONES ON THE JOURNEY

BEGINNINGS

The project which eventually gave birth to the Inter Faith Network for the UK begins in September 1984, when Brian Pearce, acting on suggestions from a number of people, takes leave of absence from the civil service to explore ways of enhancing the profile of inter faith activity in this country and strengthening the links between those involved in it.

He begins an intensive series of visits across the country, which lead to three major consultative meetings in January and September 1986 and March 1987. These discuss the idea which is by this point emerging of setting up a new networking body, not just to link inter faith initiatives but also to draw the major faith communities into closer engagement with one another.

1987

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is founded. It brings together 60 founder member organisations: national faith community representative bodies; national inter faith

organisations; local inter faith bodies; and educational and academic bodies with an interest in multi faith and inter faith issues. This broad pattern of membership continues today.

Founder Co-Chairs are the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn and the late Bishop Jim Thompson. Founder Vice Chairs are Dr Mughram Al-Ghamdi, Mr Om Parkash Sharma and Dr Indarjit Singh. Brian Pearce is appointed as Director. An Executive Committee reflecting the faiths linked by the Network and the categories of member body is elected and charitable status secured. The Network is formally launched in June at a reception hosted by Sir Sigmund Sternberg at the Reform Club in London.

"We meet today as children of many traditions, inheritors of shared wisdom and of tragic misunderstandings. We recognise our shared humanity and we respect each other's integrity in our differences. With the agreed purpose and hope of promoting greater understanding between the members of the different faith communities to which we belong and of encouraging the growth of our relationships of respect and trust and mutual enrichment in our life together, we hereby jointly resolve: The Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom should now be established..." From the founding resolution

The Inter Faith Network holds its first National Meeting on the theme, 'Tolerance and Acceptance in a Religiously Plural Society'.

'Link meetings' are started to bring together local inter faith organisers in different nations of the UK and regions within England to share news and good practice.

The Inter Faith Network develops its characteristic working pattern and ethos of careful consultation, working wherever possible by consensus, and issuing statements sparingly and only where developments have, or are likely to have, an impact on inter faith relations in the UK.

1988

The Inter Faith Network opens an office in central London.

Two National Meetings are held by the Inter Faith Network on 'The Concept of Inter Faith Dialogue' and 'Faith Communities and the Media'.

A handbook of member bodies is produced, with information about their work in the faith and inter faith fields. This resource is widely used during the late 80s and early 90s and helps many secular agencies make contact, often for the first

time, with national faith community organisations and inter faith bodies.

Across the preceding decade, a number of issues have pointed to the need to work to encourage greater inter faith understanding and also to increase awareness about the importance of religious identity and belief. The controversy over *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie underlines the importance of this.

1989

The Inter Faith Network works with the Commission for Racial Equality to sponsor a seminar on 'Law, Blasphemy and the Multi-Faith Society' as a response to the Rushdie affair.¹

Two National Meetings are held by the Inter Faith Network. At the first of these the then Archbishop of Canterbury, the late Lord Runcie, gives an address reflecting on inter faith relations in Britain and their development during his period in office and underlining the significance of the work of the Inter Faith Network. A second National Meeting in Birmingham has a special focus on 'Birmingham as a Multi Faith City'.

1990

The Inter Faith Network holds a second seminar with the Commission for Racial Equality, 'Law, Respect for Religious Identity and the Multi-Faith Society'². The report on this seminar and on the 1989 seminar prove influential in the ensuing national debate on these issues.

The Inter Faith Network launches its 'Values in a Multi Faith Society' project to look at whether there are values which the distinct historic faiths may hold in common which can contribute to building a strong, shared society. Work on values continues to be a key theme to the present day.

The Inter Faith Network holds a joint seminar with the Women's National Commission at the Cabinet Office, chaired by Mrs Virginia Bottomley MP, then Minister of Health and Co-Chair of the WNC, exploring women's sense of religious identity and their roles within their faith traditions.

The National Meeting in Leicester takes the theme 'Faith For the Future', looking at the challenges facing the different faith communities as they seek to pass on their religious traditions to their children and grandchildren.

1991

The Inter Faith Network inaugurates its 'Faith and Public Life' programme to encourage wider patterns of consultation in the public sector and to raise awareness of the importance of religious identity among policy makers and service providers. The programme continues today.

The Network office begins to receive increasing numbers of requests to help people who want to set up local inter faith organisations and from secular agencies wanting to explore involving a wider range of faith communities in their work. These grow steadily during the 90s.

The Gulf War brings strains and tensions to inter faith relations in Britain. The Network's Officers issue a statement expressing concern over this and stressing that it is even more important in such troubled times to work to foster good relations between the different faith communities in Britain and to draw on the network of relationships of trust which have been established between them. The Statement encourages the holding of local inter faith meetings for people to support and strengthen one another and condemns any attempts to stir up discord between British people of different faiths in the name of beliefs and ideologies. It also condemns the attacks which have taken place on some places of worship.

After a year of discussion among member bodies, the Network publishes its *Statement on Inter-Religious Relations in Britain*³. This is covered extensively in the media.

The Inter Faith Network is consulted by the then Department of the Environment on plans to establish an Inner Cities Religious Council (which is set up the following year) and provides initial contacts and advice. It goes on to work closely with the ICRC.

The National Meeting in Derby looks at mission and evangelism in the context of inter faith relations. A 'Decade of Evangelism/ization' has been declared by the Christian Churches and other faith communities have become concerned about whether the Decade means that their members are to be specifically targeted for conversion.

As part of the 'Values in a Multi Faith Society' project, a residential seminar is held with the University of York on 'Toleration and Integrity in a Multi Faith Society' for faith community members and academics working on the political and legal dimensions of tolerance in Britain.⁴

The Inter Faith Network holds a day conference, 'What are Women of Faith Saying?' for nearly 100 women from all Britain's major faith communities to look at the role that religion plays in their lives and ways that they might help in the task of creating better understanding between the communities.

1992

The Inter Faith Network and the Runnymede Trust arrange a day seminar, 'Race Equality and Religious Identity' to bring together a range of people working in the fields of race relations and inter faith relations to hear about each other's work and to discuss the overlap between issues relating to religious identity and issues relating to ethnic identity.

A National Meeting is held on 'Inter Faith Worship and Prayer: The Current Controversy'. It responds to debate triggered by an 'Open Letter' circulated among Anglican clergy, and signed by some, containing reflections about inter faith engagement which the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, said "played on Christian fears about encounter with people of other faiths [and] was likely to led to an assumption that they were an unwelcome presence in our society."

The destruction of the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya leads to attacks on a number of places of worship in the UK and to some inter community tension in the UK. The Officers of the Inter Faith Network issue a statement condemning any violent action directed at particular communities here or their places of worship and emphasising the need to ensure that tensions and anxieties are not exploited by malicious and unrepresentative individuals.

Discussions take place with inter faith practitioners in Northern Ireland about what goes on to be launched, in 1993, as the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum.

1993

Religions in the UK: A Multi Faith Directory is published by the University of Derby in partnership with the Inter Faith Network. It is the first ever directory of the organisations and place of worship of all Britain's major faith communities. It includes material on the traditions developed in consultation with the communities themselves. Two further joint editions are published in 1997 and 2001.⁵

The Inter Faith Network's member bodies develop a code of conduct on *Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs*.⁶ This is the first such code to be published at national level in Britain and goes on to be widely used in the UK and in many other countries, with nearly 60,000 copies distributed to date. The Network also publishes, following consultation with its members, a document on *Mission, Dialogue and Inter Religious Encounter*.⁷

The Inter Faith Network arranges, at the request of Lambeth Palace, the first of ten annual opportunities for the Archbishop of Canterbury to meet, at Lambeth, with representatives of

different faith communities. At this first meeting, participants discuss the roots of prejudice and intolerance and the ways the communities can work to combat these. These Lambeth meetings in later years go on to discuss a range of issues from prison and hospital chaplaincy to community relations.

Two National Meetings are held. The first focuses on the idea of the 'good' or 'virtuous' life and what it means to live out one's faith well and to implement its values in society today. The second looks at 'Faith Communities and Public Life'.

1994

From 1991 to 1994 the Inter Faith Network makes a special effort to reach out to members of the media to offer them more contacts and assistance with developing programme concepts which reflect the religious diversity of the population. Its Autumn National Meeting in 1994 take stock afresh and finds there has been a significant improvement in multi faith coverage.

The Inter Faith Network's National Meeting in Leicester on 'RE and Collective Worship in Schools' looks at the impact of the 1988 Education Act and the new 'model syllabuses' published by the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority – produced with the involvement of the different faith communities.

1995

The Inter Faith Network holds a joint seminar with the Inner Cities Religious Council of the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions to look at the current pattern of local inter faith work.

The Inter Faith Network arranges a meeting for teenagers at Lambeth Palace to discuss with the Archbishop of Canterbury their experiences of tolerance and intolerance. The Autumn National Meeting looks at improving inter faith relations in schools and universities; local inter faith group youth initiatives; youth forums; and other ways that young people might train to become the 'inter faith bridge builders' of the future.

The Inter Faith Network's code, *Building Good Relations with Different Faiths and Beliefs*, is circulated to Vice Chancellors of all the UK's universities and to the National Union of Students and a range of individual student unions. The Network begins discussions with relevant bodies about how ways can be found to increase support on campus for students of different faiths and of developing good relations on campus.

The National Meeting focuses on practicalities and politics of provision for community places of worship and spaces for worship or meditation in shared public areas such as prisons and hospitals.

The Inter Faith Network, in cooperation with the Religious Press Group convened by Sir Sigmund Sternberg, hosts a 'by invitation' seminar for editors and senior journalists of community newspapers, religious correspondents of the daily press and faith community leaders to look at the challenges of covering faith community affairs in the UK.

1996

The Network's newsletter, *Inter Faith Update*, is launched. As today, it offers a round up of news on inter faith activity and also on new legislation and other developments in public policy of concern to faith communities.

The Network holds a 'by invitation' seminar on 'The Quest for Common Values'. It brings together key national voices in the debate about what values can underpin our increasingly diverse society. It is opened by Sir Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth with contributions from Lord Parekh and others.⁸

The Inter Faith Network's National Meeting, with the theme of 'Britain's Faith Communities: Equal Citizens?', takes up the questions of how to respond to religious discrimination and to encourage good practice among service providers.

The Inter Faith Network joins with the Religious Education Council for England and Wales and the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education in a project to explore the complex and sensitive issues surrounding collective worship in schools. It begins with specially commissioned research drawn together in a report, *Collective Worship in Schools*, sponsored by All Saints Trust and published by the Culham Institute.⁹

1997

The Network funds and supports early planning meetings to develop an inter faith consultative structure in Scotland.

The Network's code, *Building Good Relations*, is put into 40,000 packs going to schools as part of a National RE Festival.

A tenth anniversary celebration is held at Lincoln's Inn with contributions from the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey; Hilary Armstrong MP, then Minister for Local Government and Housing and Co-Chair of the Inner Cities Religious Council; Inter Faith Network Officers and young people of different faiths.

The Inter Faith Network helps initiate meetings between the Office for National Statistics and faith community representatives on the

possibility of including a question on religious identity in the 2001 Census. It helps to establish a Census 2001 Religious Affiliation Group on which the Network and the faith communities are represented. In 1999 a White Paper includes a proposal for inclusion of a question and in 2001 such a question is asked for the first time in the Censuses of England, Scotland and Wales, enabling data to be gathered which leads to a better picture of the religious diversity of the population and helps policy makers and service providers respond more effectively to need.

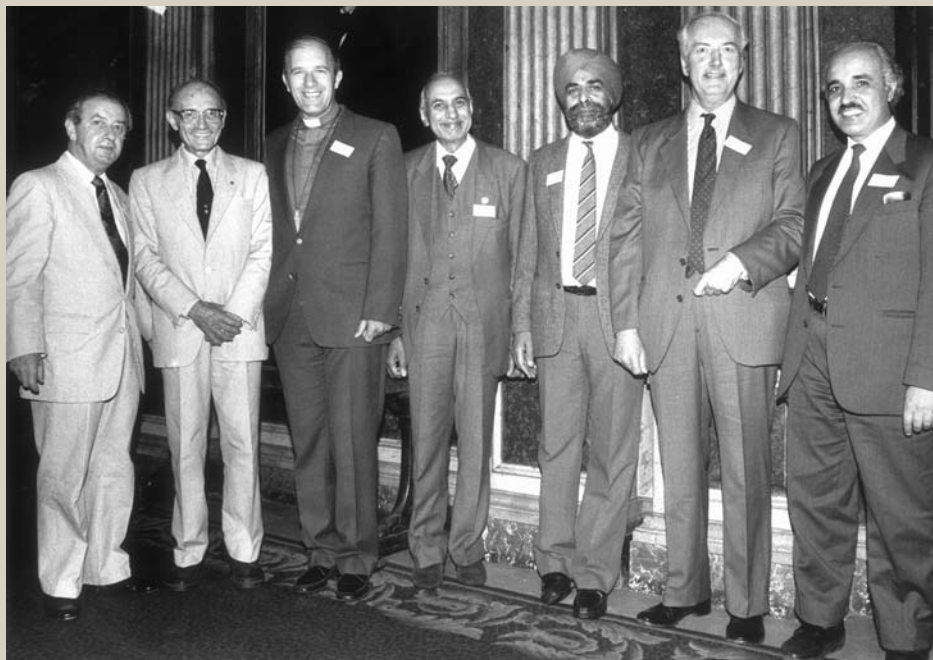
Preparations for the Millennium gear up. The Network office is represented on the Churches and Other Faiths Subgroup of the Government's Millennium Coordinating Group, or 'Lambeth Group'. The Group discusses plans for the Millennium celebrations including the development of what becomes the 'Faith Zone' at the Dome and develops a statement on the values which should underpin Millennium project planning.

The Inter Faith Network, with the Religious Education Council for England and Wales and the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education, holds three one day conferences to explore how far broad agreement can be reached on a pattern of collective worship for schools and what changes, if any, to the present statutory framework might be required to bring this about.¹⁰



20
YEARS
IN PICTURES

1987 LAUNCH OF THE INTER FAITH NETWORK IN JUNE



Left to right

The late Rabbi Hugo Gryn,
Sir Sigmund Sternberg,
the late Bishop Jim Thompson,
Om Parkash Sharma,
Dr Indarjit Singh, Brian Pearce
and Dr Mughram Al-Ghamdi

1992 FIFTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS



Photo: Peter Fisher

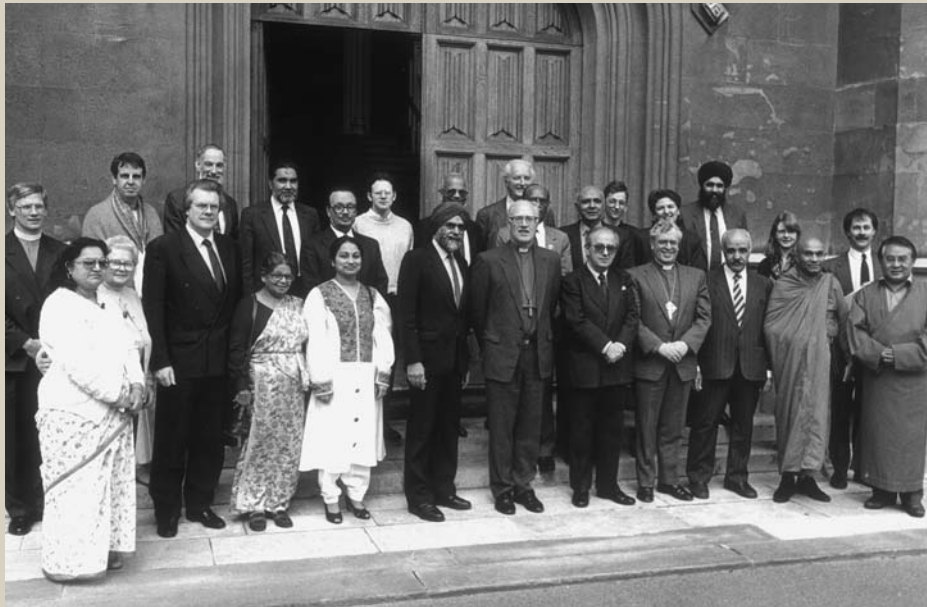
Left to right: The late Rabbi Hugo Gryn, the late Lord Weatherill,
Raman Sharma, Dr Kanwaljit Kaur Singh and Arifa Raza

1993



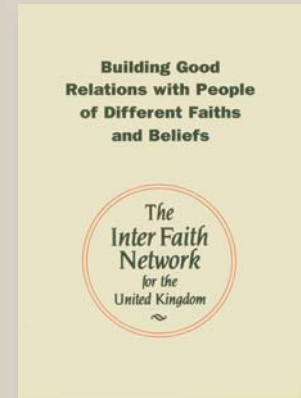
Moulana Shahid Raza, the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn and Dr Indarjit Singh

1993



Keith Ellis

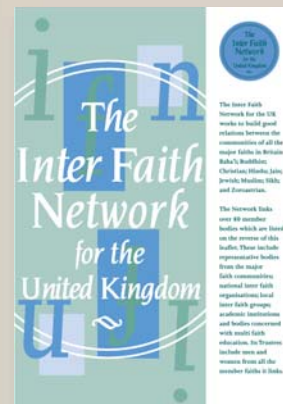
Faith leaders on the steps of Lambeth Palace with Lord Carey, then Archbishop of Canterbury



1996



Dr Natubhai Shah, Rosalind Preston, and Bhupinder Kaur Bagga of the Programme Subcommittee that worked on the planning of the Network's 10th Anniversary celebrations



Treasurer Ramesh Shah

1997

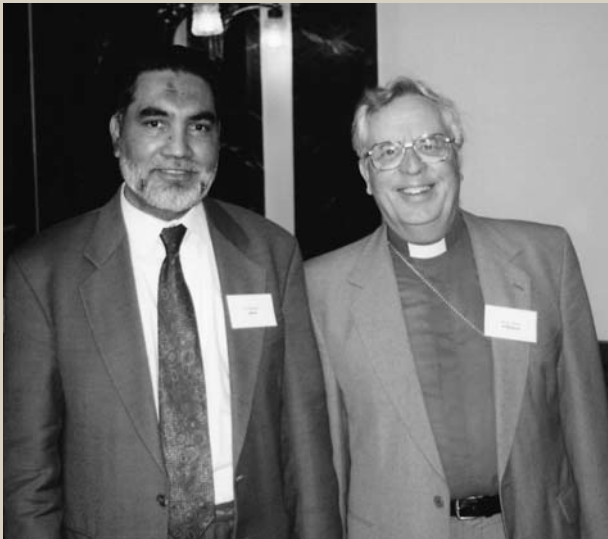
John R. Rifkin



The late Cardinal Basil Hume and the late Most Ven Dr Vajiragnana at the Network's 10th Anniversary celebrations



1998



Dr Manazir Ahsan and Bishop Roy Williamson



Hon Barnabas Leith and Rosalind Preston in conversation with a fellow participant at the National Meeting held in Birmingham

2000

Images from the Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment



Photos: E.B Duggan/Picture This

Faith community representatives leading the Shared Act of Commitment



Musicians from Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, London



Sir Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, with Rev Baroness Kathleen Richardson

2001



Brian Pearce and Bhupinder Singh with Peggy Morgan, Michelle Wolfe, Professor Paul Weller, Professor Jonathan Powers and Eileen Fry at the launch of *Religions in the UK 2001-2003* at the Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby



Baroness Uddin speaking at the Inter Faith Network and NASACRE seminar

2002



Jehangir Sarosh, the late Bishop Charles Henderson and Jean Potter



HRH Prince of Wales speaking to participants in the Young People's Faith Forum for the Golden Jubilee

PA Photos

2003



Planning group for Connect: Different Faiths, Shared Values



Paul Seto and Ayub Laher



Regina O'Callaghan and
Jagjiwan Singh



Om Parkash Sharma and John Battle MP at the Network
National Meeting



Rabbi Jacqueline Tabick and Alfred Agius

2004



Dr Fatma Amer speaking to Bhupinder Singh



Rev Daniel Otieno – Ndale and Chas Raws



Photo: Scottish Inter-Faith Council

Glasgow youth participants Haroon and Fariha Ahmed and Jagtar Singh on their way down to the National Meeting in Coventry



Bishop Tom Butler and Fiona Mactaggart MP, Media and Multi Faith Society conference

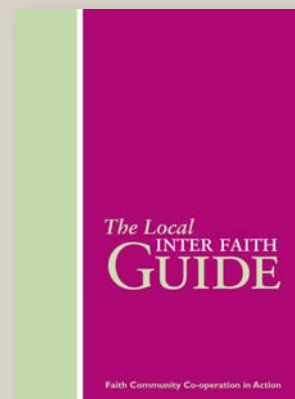
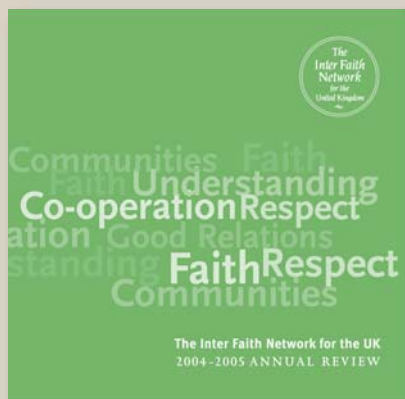
2005



Dr Harriet Crabtree (centre) with Rosemeen Jaffer and other participants at an Interfaith MK women and faith event



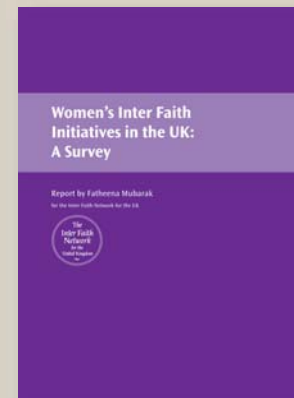
Alan Schwartz speaking at the Network National Meeting



2006



Network National Meeting: Venerable Bandula, Venerable Pematana and Atul Patel of the Department for Communities and Local Government



Participants at the meeting of the Inter Faith Network and national linking inter faith bodies of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales at St Mungo's Glasgow



Participants at the Inter Faith Network and Equality Challenge Unit seminar on Building Good Relations on Campus

2007



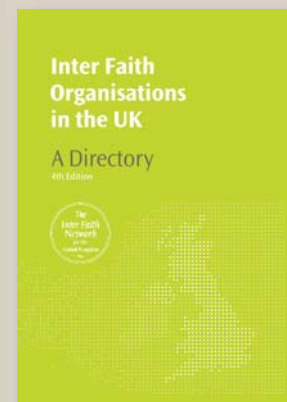
Network staff members: Urmi Raval, Gaylina Nguyen, Hannah Mercer and Stella Opoku-Owusu



Dr Elizabeth Harris, Dr Nawal Prinja and Canon Andrew Wingate



Manjula Sood, Pramila Kaur and members of the Network Executive Committee cutting the cake at the Network's 20th year celebration at the national meeting



The National Meeting theme is 'Developing an Inter Faith Strategy: A Priority Task for Britain's Faith Communities'. The meeting looks at the inter faith work which faith communities need to undertake directly through their own organisations.

1998

Following the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's announcement of a review of the school curriculum, the Network commissions a report from Lat Blaylock of the Professional Council for Religious Education, *Inter Faith Issues and Religious Education*.¹¹ This emphasises the valuable role RE can play in helping to fulfil the widely shared aim of enabling children and young people to develop those attitudes which are needed for harmonious living in a religiously plural society. It argues that the QCA should offer encouragement, guidance and support for those who produce syllabuses which facilitate more clearly the consideration of inter faith issues in RE.

The Lambeth Group develops a short set of guidelines, in consultation with the Inter Faith Network, *Marking the Millennium in a Multi-Faith Context*. This seeks to balance the recognition of the distinctive significance for Christians of the Millennium, as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus, with the need for an inclusive approach to national and local community celebrations.

The Network's National Meeting takes the Millennium as its theme

Lottery money becomes a principal source of funding for Millennium projects. The Network presses Government to find other sources of money for those who object to lottery money for reasons of principle.

1999

The first edition of *The Local Inter Faith Guide: Faith Community Cooperation in Action* is published by the Inter Faith Network in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). The text is developed through its circulation in draft to all member bodies and other relevant bodies. Local groups provide examples of their projects and the issues they are facing. The guide gives advice on how to find out about initiatives in the reader's own area; start an inter faith group or council; run successful events; and make helpful connections with local and regional government structures. It becomes one of the Network's most widely used resources, helping people across the country (and abroad) develop local inter faith initiatives.¹² Copies of *The Local Inter Faith Guide* are sent by DETR to all local authorities in England and by the Inter Faith Network to all known local inter faith initiatives.

The Inter Faith Network's website goes live, bringing a new resource for those wanting to find out about inter faith issues and to develop inter faith structures and projects.

A four month research project on 'Higher Education and Student Religious Identity, in cooperation with the University of Exeter, culminates with the publication of a report by Dr Sophie Gilliat-Ray.¹³ This looks at university policies on responding to student religious identity (covering matters such as provision for worship and dietary needs and respectful interaction between religious groups); how chaplaincy arrangements are being developed in multi faith contexts; the emergence of inter faith organisations on campus; and how national faith communities are developing structures to help their students. Copies are sent by the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals and the Standing Conference of Principals to all institutions of higher education in the UK to enable sharing of good practice and a chance for developing strategies appropriate to multi-faith campuses. Copies also go to the National Union of Students and all the national student religious organisations.

The Inter Faith Network's National Meeting looks at the changing political landscape, including the development of regional governance structures, and the implications of this for faith and inter faith bodies.¹⁴

The Inter Faith Network assists the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in developing, as part of the official Millennium celebrations, a Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment by the faith communities of the UK. This is planned to complement the Millennium Church Services

held in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London. It is a major part of the Network's work in this year, involving working with the faith communities to create the wording of the Act of Commitment and to draw together, with DCMS, the programme and participants.

2000

The Shared Act of Reflection by the Faith Communities of the United Kingdom takes place in the Royal Gallery in the Houses of Parliament on the morning of 3 January 2000 as part of the First Weekend Millennium celebrations. It is broadcast live by BBC television. The occasion has major significance as an expression of commitment to an inclusive society which recognises the contribution which all the faiths make to national life.

The event is hosted on behalf of the Government by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, (DCMS) and the opening welcome is given by its then Secretary of State, Rt Hon Chris Smith MP. It is held in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester and attended by the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary and the Speaker of the House of Commons together with faith community representatives and other distinguished guests. Some 45 speakers and musicians from all parts of the UK take part in the programme. Towards

the end of the event, leading faith community representatives invite the audience to join them in the Act of Commitment.¹⁵ The event concludes with reflections from the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair. He later writes to say:

“The role of religious faith in any society is of vital significance. In today’s United Kingdom it is vitally important that there are positive relationships of mutual respect and understanding between the different faith communities. I commend the valuable work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK which has done so much to foster these. In particular, I recall with pleasure participating in the Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment which took place in the Houses of Parliament at the beginning of the year and I am grateful to the Network for its part in organising such a moving and important event. It was an impressive celebration of the values which the great faiths have in common. We can draw on these to build, together, a better society in the new Millennium.”

And Sir Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, writes in *The Times*, 21 January 2000:

“Far away from the crowds, the fireworks and the razzmatazz of the Millennium celebrations was an event that, in its quiet way, was one of the most remarkable of recent times ... it could not have happened in any previous era, nor even now in many other parts of the world ... In that conversation of many voices in the Royal Gallery I sensed a rare epiphany of hope.”

The Inter Faith Network holds a conference, in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council (ICRC), to look at how local government and faith communities can work together to ensure the development of local inter faith structures which can promote harmonious and co-operative relationships and provide a reliable pattern of contacts for consultation and partnership; how faith communities can play an appropriate role in relation to the work of local authorities, regional structures and other public bodies and services; and at some of the challenges facing faith communities and inter faith bodies as they seek to develop representative and adequately serviced responses to invitations to contribute to the formation and implementation of public policy.¹⁶ Arising from the conference, the Local Government Association invites the ICRC, the Active Community Unit of the Home Office and the Inter Faith Network to work with it on the development of guidelines for local authorities working with faith communities and on local inter faith structures.

The Scottish Inter Faith Council comes into being

The Inter Faith Network begins a series of conversations which continue to the present with contacts in the English regions about developments towards regional faith forums.

The National Meeting in London focuses on ‘Inter Faith Relations in the UK: The Next Decade’.¹⁷

2001

The first annual 'category' meeting for national inter faith bodies in membership of the Inter Faith Network for the UK is held to enable sharing of news of their work and discussion of possible areas of cooperation.

The Inter Faith Network and the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education hold a joint conference, with the support of the Shap Working Party on World Religions, to look at how inter faith issues are, or might be, handled in the school curriculum.¹⁸

The Network's Executive Committee looks at the problem of the use of religious symbols by advertisers to sell their products and writes to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) about the hurt that misuse of sacred symbols can cause. A meeting is held with the Director General and Director of Investigations at the ASA to discuss the issues and the need to apply the Code of Advertising in a way which respects the sensitivities of different faiths. The ASA later develops further advice on this.

The Network's National Meeting in Birmingham focuses on faith and service to the community, highlighting the value of faith-based social initiatives in the UK; faith based overseas aid work; serving the community through one's profession; and links between faith and volunteering.¹⁹

Disturbances in a number of northern cities prompt reflection and debate about how to increase community cohesion. The Cattle report and the Denham Report, *Building Cohesive Communities*, together with the Clarke and Richie reports, signal the beginning of renewed and increased focus on community cohesion. This will go on to have a significant impact on levels of interest in inter faith issues.

Terrorists attack the Twin Towers and the Pentagon in the US. The UK's faith communities unite in their condemnation of the attacks. In the days following the attacks there are many incidents reported of harassment and attacks on Muslims and their places of worship, as well as isolated attacks on Sikhs and on a Hindu temple. The Inter Faith Network keeps in close touch with local contacts over steps being taken to respond to the difficulties and to commemorate the dead. A press release is issued together with a longer document from the Executive Committee, *Reflections on Recent Events*.

2002

The Network is invited by the Prime Minister's office to help plan a reception at Number 10 in January for faith community representatives. The Prime Minister mentions that this is the first such inter faith gathering at No 10 and indicates his pleasure at hosting it. He thanks all those who, in recent years, have been working for inter faith understanding.

The Inter Faith Network is invited to assist the Golden Jubilee Office of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in planning for a Buckingham Palace reception for faith communities and for a Golden Jubilee Young People's Faith Forum. The Forum takes place at St James's Palace on 10 June and has as its theme 'Faith and Service to the Community'. A specially picked team of Religious Education teachers helps lead the young people's discussions. HRH The Prince of Wales provides a video message for the event and meets with the young people. That evening the young people join older members of their faith communities at a Golden Jubilee reception for the faith communities, hosted by HM The Queen and HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, at Buckingham Palace. Towards the end of the event, leaders of the nine faith communities present a collective message of loyal greetings to HM The Queen.²⁰

The Local Government Association, in association with the Inter Faith Network, the Active Community Unit of the Home Office and the Inner Cities Religious Council, publishes *Faith and Community*, guidelines designed to help local authorities work with faith groups and inter faith structures. Helping develop these is a key part of the Network's work during the year.

Two separate meetings for faith community representative bodies in membership of the Network are held. This begins a process leading to the creation of the Network's Faith

Communities Forum the following year. A new Inter Faith Council for Wales is set up by the National Assembly of Wales to bring together political and faith community leaders.

The Inter Faith Network's National Meeting is on the theme of 'Community Cohesion: A New Agenda for Inter Faith Relations'. Guest speakers include Alan Smith, Team Leader of the Community Cohesion Unit in the Home Office and Councillor Laura Willoughby of the Equalities Executive of the Local Government Association.²¹

The Inter Faith Network Office is invited to initial conversations which lead to the formation of the Equality and Diversity Forum, which brings together a wide range of voluntary sector organisations with attenders from Government, statutory bodies and business. There continues to be regular participation in its meetings from the Inter Faith Network office.

2003

The Inter Faith Network's National Meeting in Coventry takes the theme 'Time to Talk: Faiths at the Table of Dialogue in Today's UK'. It focuses on how to deepen dialogue between people of different faiths and includes presentations from a youth perspective by pupils from the Bluecoat School in Coventry and closing reflections from John Battle MP, then Prime Minister's Envoy to Faith Communities.²²

The Inter Faith Network establishes a Faith Communities Forum which provides a structured opportunity for discussion between member faith communities at national level on issues of common concern to them.

A meeting is held of the representatives of educational and academic bodies in membership of the Network. In addition to an exchange of views there is a review of the work which the Network can usefully undertake on educational and academic issues.

The Inter Faith Network office carries out, with the help of a grant from the Home Office, a major survey of local inter faith activity across the UK designed to collect and share examples of good practice. Survey forms are sent to all known local and regional inter faith initiatives; national faith communities and inter faith organisations; inter faith contact points for the different Churches and other faith communities; One World Week groups; CVSs; Race Equality Councils; SACREs; and local authorities. The resulting report, *Inter Faith Activity in the UK: A Survey*, provides the first in depth picture of how local inter faith work is developing, including local authority engagement with this.²³

The Inter Faith Network publishes *Partnership for the Common Good: Inter Faith Structures and Local Government* in association with the Local Government Association, the Home Office and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. This

outlines good practice in developing inter faith structures at local level. It goes on to be widely used by local authorities in England and Wales, which are all sent copies by the Local Government Association.²⁴

The Royal Commonwealth Society holds a young people's faith forum in March assisted by the Home Office and the Inter Faith Network.

The Inter Faith Network is invited to join with the Local Government Association, the Home Office, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Commission for Racial Equality in drawing up *Guidance on Community Cohesion*. This gives guidelines for local authorities and local public agencies to help them review their existing policies and practices to contribute to more cohesive communities. It includes a section on working with faith communities which further increases the amount of attention paid to this by local authorities.

The Inter Faith Network office contributes to discussions with other voluntary sector organisations in the Equality and Diversity Forum and with Government on proposals for a new equality body. These discussions become an important part of its work across the following period.

The Inter Faith Network moves its offices in London from Tavistock Place to charity premises in Lower Grosvenor Place.

2004

The Inter Faith Network publishes, in association with Timebank and the National Youth Agency, a colourful inter faith action guide for young people aged 16-25 called *Connect: Different Faiths Shared Values*.²⁵ Some 15,000 copies are printed and distributed around the UK to schools, colleges of further education, youth organisations and universities. The National Union of Students sends copies to every university student union.

The report of the Home Office's Review on *Working Together: Cooperation Between Faith Communities and Government* is published. The Inter Faith Network, with its member bodies, contributes extensively to the process which creates this important document looking at arrangements for consultation by central government of faith communities and their representation at national events.

The Local Government Association publishes *Community Cohesion: An Action Guide*, building on the guidance issued in 2003 and offering practical advice to local authorities on how to build and strengthen cohesive communities. Work on this is an important part of the Inter Faith Network's programme during the year. The document is published in association with the Audit Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Home Office, the Improvement and Development Agency, the Office of the Deputy

Prime Minister and the Inter Faith Network. It includes a section underlining the importance of work with faith communities and inter faith structures for community cohesion.

The Network office contributes through the year to the work of the Safe Communities Initiative launched by the Commission for Racial Equality.

The Inter Faith Network helps establish a Religion and Belief Consultative Group to bring together representatives of faith community representative bodies, the British Humanist Society and the National Secular Society to discuss issues of equality and human rights.

Following discussion by its Executive Committee, the Inter Faith Network submits a response to the Government's consultation document on *Strength in Diversity: Towards a Community Cohesion and Race Equality Strategy*.

The Inter Faith Network's National Meeting on 'Inter Faith Relations: The UK and Europe', looks at the possibilities and challenges presented by being part of Europe and at how best to engage with its structures, influence policies and legislation and to develop links with faith communities and inter faith bodies in other parts of Europe. Among the guest speakers is Mr Mike O'Brien, Minister of State for Trade, Investment and Foreign Affairs.²⁶

The Inter Faith Network publishes the first edition of *Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A*

Directory. The Directory gives details of organisations working to promote good inter faith relations at UK-wide, national, regional and local level. This, with its subsequent editions, becomes a standard reference tool for faith communities, inter faith organisations, media, Government departments, and other agencies.²⁷

The Inter Faith Network works with the Media Trust and Respect (an initiative of Timebank and the Prince's Trust) with support from Tolerance Ltd on a joint conference, '*The Media and a Multi-Faith Society*'. This looks at how the media and faith communities can contribute to shaping a society in which people of different faiths live together in a spirit of co-operation, mutual respect and understanding.

2005

St Mungo's Museum in Glasgow is the location of what becomes the first of annual meetings bringing together participants from the Inter Faith Network office, the Scottish Inter Faith Council, the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum and the Inter Faith Council for Wales. Wales goes on to host the next meeting at the Welsh Assembly buildings in Cardiff.

A meeting is held by the Inner Cities Religious Council in partnership with the Home Office and the Inter Faith Network to enable participants from different regional inter faith structures

in England to reflect on their roles and share experience.

The Inter Faith Network publishes a second, revised and expanded edition of *The Local Inter Faith Guide*.²⁸

The Inter Faith Network's National Meeting in Coventry takes as its theme 'Connecting for the Future: Young People and Inter Faith Relations in Britain'. This provides a chance to reflect on the challenges of this vital area of work and to hear from, and talk with, some of the UK's younger contributors to building good inter faith relations.²⁹

In July, suicide bombers strike three tube trains and a bus in central London killing 56 people and injuring 700. The following day, the Inter Faith Network rapidly clears and issues a document which has already been under preparation: *Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of our Faith Communities*.³⁰ It gives practical guidelines for faith communities to respond jointly to such problems as attacks on their places of worship and encourages the building of strong and effective inter faith links at local level. The summer issue of the Network's newsletter, *Inter Faith Update*, carries extensive coverage of the many ways in which people of different faiths and backgrounds around the country come together immediately following the bombings to remember the dead, pray for the injured and commit themselves to maintaining and strengthening community relations.

Across recent years, there has been increasing focus on what it means to be a citizen – for example about the nature of citizens’ rights and responsibilities; and how the different aspects of our identity contribute to and shape our sense of belonging and citizenship. The Inter Faith Network launches a new project, ‘Faith and Citizenship’ and a special meeting of the Faith Communities Forum is held to discuss this topic.

The Inter Faith Network assists the Home Office and the Community Development Foundation (CDF) in development of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund. It goes on to act in a general advisory capacity. The Fund, administered for Government by CDF, is the first to support capacity building of faith groups and inter faith initiatives to increase their ability to contribute to community cohesion. All applicants in the first round are sent by CDF a pack which includes a number of publications to help with work on capacity building and inter faith work. Among these are the Inter faith Network’s publications *The Local Inter Faith Guide*; *Connect*; and *Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs*.

2006

The Inter Faith Network and the Faith Based Regeneration Network organise a first meeting of representatives of the different regional faith forums in England with a view to developing and strengthening the links between them.

The Inter Faith Network launches a new ‘local inter faith zone’ for its website, bringing *The Local Inter Faith Guide* on line and adding resources and images to assist local inter faith bodies and to showcase their important grassroots work.

Dr Fatheena Mubarak is commissioned by the Inter Faith Network to carry out a survey of women’s inter faith initiatives in the UK. Her report on this is widely distributed and contributes to increasing interest in developing these types of initiative as well as broadening participation in general inter faith initiatives to draw in more effectively the voices of women.³¹

The Inter Faith Network’s National Meeting, ‘Challenge and Opportunity: Changing Patterns of Inter Faith Engagement in the UK’ explores the developing and complex terrain for inter faith work at national, regional and local level in the UK. Speakers include Meg Munn, Parliamentary Under Secretary in the new Department for Communities and Local Government with responsibility for faith matters.³² The Inter Faith Network sets in progress a review of membership structures.

As part of its ‘Faith and Citizenship’ project, the Network organises a seminar in February, in association with the Citizenship Foundation, on ‘Faith Identity and Belonging: Educating for Shared Citizenship’. This brings together a range of key practitioners in Religious Education and Citizenship Education and members of faith

communities to explore how schools can best help in preparing young people for life in a multi faith and multi cultural society.³³

Dr Harriet Crabtree, then the Network's Deputy Director, is among the fourteen members appointed, on a personal basis, to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion charged with reporting in the summer of 2007 to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. She is asked by its Chair, Darra Singh, to lead on the Commission's engagement with the faith sector.

The Government creates a Faith Communities Consultative Council bringing together work previously undertaken by the Inner Cities Religious Council in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and by the Steering Group of the Home Office's Working Together Review. Early work on the Council is taken forward by the Home Office. It holds its first meeting in April and in May, following machinery of government changes, becomes the responsibility of the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Council has representatives on it from the nine faith communities in direct membership of the Inter Faith Network, together with representation from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and from the offices of the Inter Faith Network and the Faith Based Regeneration Network.

The Network office contributes to conversations with Government and other interested voluntary

sector bodies on planning for the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights. It continues to contribute to the work of the Equality and Diversity Forum and the Religion and Belief Consultative Group.

In November the Inter Faith Network, in association with the higher education Equality Challenge Unit holds a consultation meeting on "Building Good Relations on Campus". This brings together representatives of national student religious bodies; Universities UK and GuildHE; and inter faith bodies carrying out work with young people to look at how to ensure that good relations on campus are developed and strengthened.³⁴

2007

As part of its ongoing Faith and Citizenship project the Network's office works with its Executive Committee and member bodies on a reflection document, *Faith, Citizenship and Shared Life in Britain Today*.³⁵

Across the last year, a debate has taken place about the wearing in public of items of religious dress and of religious symbols in a religiously diverse society like Britain. This has sometimes been marked by a lack of appreciation of the reasons why religious dress and symbols are significant to the wearers or by an inappropriate assumption that a person is somehow less 'British' or less of a full

member of this society because of the practices they follow. The Network's Executive Committee publishes a guidance document on *Wearing of Religious Dress and Symbols*.³⁶

In May a statement on building good relations is agreed by national student religious bodies with the support of the Inter Faith Network, following meetings across the preceding 18 months. It highlights the desire of their bodies to strengthen their mutual links in order to discuss together issues of common concern and to work to promote good relations on campus.³⁷

The Inter Faith Network publishes the fourth edition of *Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory*. It lists 263 organisations including 25 national, 14 regional and 217 local inter faith bodies as well as 7 educational and academic institutions with a particular focus on inter faith issues. It notes, as well, the existence of nearly 50 branches of the Council of Christians and Jews and groups of the Three Faiths Forum. So 2007 sees well over 300 inter faith bodies working to promote good inter faith relations at every level in the UK.

Further meetings are held by the Inter Faith Network and the Faith Based Regeneration Network of the new link between regional faith forums in England. It is decided to name this the English Regional Faith Forums Network.

The Inter Faith Network's National Meeting on the theme of 'The Inter Faith Network for the

UK: 20 Years of Working Together for Inter Faith Understanding and Cooperation' reflects on past achievements and explores future challenges.³⁸ It is also the occasion for thanking Brian Pearce for the 20 years for which he has served, full time on a voluntary basis, as the Network's first Director.

In September, Dr Harriet Crabtree, who joined the Inter Faith Network's staff in 1990, is appointed as its second Director.

The Commission on Integration and Cohesion publishes its report, *Our Shared Future*, which contains a range of recommendations which relate to faith communities and to inter faith work. The Inter Faith Network is involved in conversations about the Government's consultation on the development of an 'inter faith strategy', announced in the letter from Hazel Blears, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, to the Commission's Chair, Darra Singh, giving her preliminary response to the report.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission opens its doors in October and the Inter Faith Network begins engagement with its work.

The Inter Faith Network takes steps to initiate a project to explore relations between those within society who understand themselves to be 'religious' and those who do not with a view to promoting a more constructive dialogue between them.

A meeting is held for personnel within the faith community bodies linked in membership by the Inter Faith Network to explore how their communities are developing inter faith work and to share learning and good practice. It is also an

opportunity to feed into early thinking of the Department for Communities and Local Government about the Government's development of an 'inter faith strategy'.

INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK: OFFICERS AND PERSONNEL 1987 – 2007

Officers

Dr Manazir Ahsan MBE
 Dr A Mughram Al-Ghamdi
 Ven Tawalama Bandula
 Rt Revd Dr Tom Butler
 Mrs Saraswati Dave
 The late Rabbi Hugo Gryn CBE
 The late Mrs Ivy Gutridge MBE
 Hon Barnabas Leith
 Mr Neville Nagler
 Mrs Rosalind Preston OBE
 Dr Nawal K Prinja
 Dr V P Narayan Rao
 Mr Jehangir Sarosh
 Mr Kantilal Shah
 Dr Natubhai K Shah
 Mr Ramesh Shah
 Mr Om Parkash Sharma MBE
 Dr Indarjit Singh OBE
 Mr Jagjiwan Singh
 The late Rt Revd Jim Thompson
 The late Most Ven Dr Medagama Vajiragnana
 Rt Revd Roy Williamson

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Ms Anne Breivik
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 Dr Harriet Crabtree
 Ms Judith Ellis
 Mrs Pauline Gallivan
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 Dr Fatheena Mubarak
 Ms Gaylina Nguyen
 Miss Stella Opoku-Owusu
 Mr Brian Pearce OBE
 Ms Urmi Raval
 Ms Carol Reid
 Miss Henny Rolan
 Mrs Harsha Shah
 Mr Bhupinder Singh
 Dr Paul Weller
 Ms Fiona Wynne

Student Interns

Ms Sarah Barnett
 Mr William Hopkinson
 Mrs Miriam Feldmann
 Ms Neha Kapashi
 Ms Beverley Maron

* Through ProspectUs

JOURNEYING FORWARD TOGETHER

As we stand at the start of the next stage of the journey, we recall the words of the Act of Commitment by the Faith Communities of the United Kingdom developed by the faith communities with the Inter Faith Network for the Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment which took place at the House of Lords on 3 January 2000.³⁹

An Act of Commitment

In a world scarred by the evils of war,
racism, injustice and poverty,
we offer this joint Act of Commitment
as we look to our shared future.

We commit ourselves,
as people of many faiths,
to work together for the common good,
uniting to build a better society,
grounded in values and ideals we share:

- community,
- personal integrity,
- a sense of right and wrong,
- learning, wisdom and love of truth,
- care and compassion,
- justice and peace,
- respect for one another,
- for the earth and its creatures.

We commit ourselves,
in a spirit of friendship and co-operation,
to work together alongside all who
share our values and ideals,
to help bring about a better world
now and for generations to come.

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- 20 A full report on the day can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/publications
- 21 *Community Cohesion: A New Agenda for Inter Faith Relations*, Inter Faith Network 2002. www.interfaith.org.uk/publications
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- 33 *Faith, Identity and Belonging: Educating for Shared Citizenship*, Inter Faith Network, 2006. www.interfaith.org.uk/publications
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- 36 *Wearing of Religious Dress and Symbols*, www.interfaith.org.uk/publications
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- 39 See above at pages 20 – 21 for a description of this event.

THE INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK TODAY

The Inter Faith Network for the UK was founded in 1987 to promote good relations between people of different faiths and to 'advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in Britain, including an awareness both of their distinctive features and of their common ground'.

Its member organisations include national representative bodies of the Baha'i; Buddhist; Christian; Hindu; Jain; Jewish; Muslim; Sikh; and Zoroastrian communities; national, regional and local inter faith organisations; and academic institutions and educational bodies concerned with inter faith issues.

The Inter Faith Network works with its member bodies to help make the UK a place marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. It:

- links, shares good practice between, and supports with advice and information the growing pattern of inter faith initiatives in the UK at national, regional and local levels
- provides a trusted neutral, non-denominational framework for people of different faiths to discuss issues of shared concern, reflecting on both the distinctive aspects and the common ground of their individual traditions
- in cooperation with the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh national inter faith linking bodies and the English regional faith forums, fosters local inter faith co-operation and offers advice on patterns of local inter faith initiatives suitable to particular local areas as well as helpful contacts
- assists member organisations and other agencies, such as local authorities and other public bodies, to help strengthen their inter faith programmes and good practice
- runs a helpline and publishes resources to help people working to promote good inter faith relations
- helps make the inter faith work of its member organisations better known and raises public awareness about inter faith issues to encourage more people to get involved
- works with member organisations and other agencies to increase the opportunities for people of all ages to learn more about the importance of good inter faith relations – in schools, within faith communities and in society more widely
- fosters joint working by the faith communities on social issues

- arranges seminars and conferences and carries out research to pursue particular issues in greater depth, such as building good relations on campus, educating for shared citizenship, and women's inter faith initiatives.

The Network's way of working is firmly based on the principle that dialogue and cooperation on social action can only prosper if they are rooted in respectful relationships which do not blur or undermine the distinctiveness of different religious traditions.

Further information about the Network can be found on its website: www.interfaith.org.uk or by writing to Dr Harriet Crabtree, Director, The Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2007-08

Co-Chairs

Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler
Dr Nawal K Prinja

Vice-Chairs

Dr Manazir Ahsan MBE
Dr Natubhai K Shah
Dr Indarjit Singh OBE
Mr Vivian Wineman

Treasurer

Mr Ramesh Shah

Executive Committee

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Ven Tawalama Bandula
Mr Sudarshan Bhatia
Rev Peter Colwell
Ms Aviva Dautch
Professor Brian Gates
Mr David Gifford
Ms Pramila Kaur
Mr Ayub Laher
Mr Shabbir Lakha
Hon Barnabas Leith
Mr Yann Lovelock
Mr Dorab Mistry
Mrs Ravinder Kaur Nijjar

Mrs Ann Noonan
Mrs Regina O'Callaghan
Rev Daniel Otieno-Ndale
Mr Nitin Palan
Rabbi Alan Plancey
Dr Narayan Rao
Moulana M Shahid Raza
Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid
Mr Resham Singh Sandhu MBE
Mr Alan Schwartz MBE
Ms Priti Shah
Mr Jagjiwan Singh
Rabbi Jacqueline Tabick
Rev Guy Wilkinson

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS OF THE INTER FAITH NETWORK 2007–08

Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (UK)
 Baha'i Community of the United Kingdom
 Board of Deputies of British Jews
 British Muslim Forum
 The Buddhist Society
 Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations
 in Scotland
 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
 Churches Together in England
 Committee for Other Faiths, Catholic Bishops'
 Conference of England and Wales
 Council of African and Afro-Caribbean
 Churches (UK)
 Friends of the Western Buddhist Order
 Hindu Council (UK)
 Hindu Forum of Britain
 Imams and Mosques Council (UK)
 Islamic Cultural Centre, Regents Park, London
 Jain Samaj Europe
 Jamiat-e-Ulama Britain (Association of
 Muslim Scholars)
 Muslim Council of Britain
 National Council of Hindu Temples
 Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)
 Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)
 Quaker Committee for Christian and
 Interfaith Relations
 Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha of GB
 Swaminarayan Hindu Mission
 Unitarian and Free Christian Churches
 Interfaith Subcommittee
 Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK)
 World Ahlul-Bayt Islamic League
 World Islamic Mission (UK)
 Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

Inter Faith Organisations
 Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum
 Scottish Inter Faith Council
 Inter Faith Council for Wales/Cyngor
 Cyd-Ffydd Cymru
 East of England Faiths Council
 Faiths Forum for the East Midlands
 Northwest Forum of Faiths
 South East of England Faiths Forum
 South West Council of Faiths
 West Midlands Faiths Forum
 Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum

Alif Aleph UK
 Christian Muslim Forum
 Christians Aware Interfaith Programme
 Council of Christians and Jews
 East of England Faiths Agency
 Interfaith Foundation
 International Association for Religious
 Freedom (British Chapter)

International Interfaith Centre
 Joseph Interfaith Foundation
 London Society of Jews and Christians
 Minorities of Europe Inter Faith Action
 Programme
 Religions for Peace (UK Chapter)
 St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace
 and Reconciliation
 St Philip's Centre for Study and Engagement
 in a Multi Faith Society
 Three Faiths Forum
 United Religions Initiative (Britain and Ireland)
 Westminster Interfaith
 World Congress of Faiths

Educational and Academic Bodies
 Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme
 Centre for Christianity and Interreligious
 Dialogue, Heythrop College, University of
 London
 Centre for the Study of Islam and
 Christian-Muslim Relations
 Community Religions Project, University of Leeds
 Institute of Jainology
 Islamic Foundation
 Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby
 National Association of SACRE's
 Religious Education Council for England and Wales
 Shap Working Party on World Religions in
 Education
 Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter
 Woolf Institute of Abrahamic Faiths

Local Inter Faith Groups
 Altrincham Inter Faith Group
 Barnet Multi Faith Forum
 Bedford Council of Faiths
 Birmingham Council of Faiths
 Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council
 Blackpool Faith Forum
 Bolton Interfaith Council
 Bradford Concord Interfaith Society
 Bradford District Faiths Forum
 Brent Inter Faith
 Brent Multifaith Forum
 Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group
 Bristol Inter Faith Group
 Burnley Building Bridges
 Calderdale Interfaith Council
 Cambridge Inter-Faith Group
 Canterbury and District Inter Faith Action
 Cardiff Interfaith Association
 Coventry Multi Faith Forum
 Crawley Interfaith Network
 Derby Open Centre Multi-Faith Group
 Forum of Faiths for Derby
 Dudley Borough Interfaith Network

Gateshead Inter Faith Forum
 Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action
 Greenwich Multi-Faith Forum
 Harrow Inter Faith Council
 Horsham Interfaith Forum
 Hounslow Friends of Faith
 Huddersfield Interfaith Council
 Islington Faiths Forum
 Keighley Interfaith Group
 Lancashire Forum of Faiths
 Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship
 Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum
 Leicester Council of Faiths
 Loughborough Council of Faiths
 Luton Council of Faiths
 Faith Network for Manchester
 Medway Inter Faith Action
 Merseyside Council of Faiths
 Middlesbrough Council of Faiths
 Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes)
 Moseley Inter Faith Group
 Newham Association of Faiths
 Newcastle Council of Faiths
 Newham Faith Sector Forum
 North Kirklees Inter-Faith Council
 North Staffordshire Forum of Faiths
 Northampton Faiths Forum
 Nottingham Inter Faith Council
 Oldham Inter Faith Forum
 Oxford Round Table of Religions
 Building Bridges (Pendle)
 Peterborough Inter-Faith Council
 Portsmouth Interfaith Forum
 Preston Faith Forum
 Reading Inter-Faith Group
 Redbridge Council of Faiths
 Redbridge Faith Forum
 Rochdale Multifaith Partnership
 Rugby Inter Faith Forum
 Sheffield Interfaith
 South London Inter Faith Group
 Southampton Council of Faiths
 Southwark Multi Faith Forum
 Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource
 Swansea Faiths Forum
 Tameside Interfaith Network
 Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Group
 Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum
 Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum
 Wandsworth Multi-Faith Network
 Warrington Council of Faiths
 Watford Inter Faith Association
 Wellingborough Multi-Faith Group
 Westminster Faith Exchange
 Whalley Range (Manchester) Inter Faith Group
 Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group
 Wycombe Sharing of Faith

