

*The Aims of the Three Faiths Forum • To encourage friendship, goodwill and understanding amongst people of the three monotheistic faiths in the UK and elsewhere • To promote support for and public recognition of the importance of groups where people of the Muslim, Christian and Jewish faiths meet and share common interests and experiences • To encourage respect for religious differences between the three faiths on a basis of equality and exploring and enjoying those differences where appropriate • To promote training of ministers of religion of the three faiths in their common roots, understanding of their differences and encourage respect for each other on a basis of equality.*

## Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II receives Interfaith Gold Medallion

**Leaders of the nine major faiths were present at Buckingham Palace on 18th May 2007 when HM Queen Elizabeth II was presented with a specially struck Interfaith Gold Medallion with diamond. The award was conferred in gratitude for the lead The Queen has given personally in the search for mutual tolerance, respect and brotherhood.**

The traditional Jewish blessing upon meeting with Royalty was recited by Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks. Sir Sigmund Sternberg then presented the award, making reference to Her Majesty's 2006 Christmas message in which she said, *"it is very easy to concentrate on the differences between the religious faiths and to forget what they have in common."* This, he said, summed up what the gathering on this occasion represented.

Imam Moulana Raza of the Muslim College read out the accompanying scroll in which the leading members of the major faith communities placed on record their deep and sincere appreciation of the lead The Queen has given to the nation *"in the promotion of respect and understanding for minority faiths and in seeking to include new communities as natural components of this society."*

Those present also included Bandula Venerable Tawalama, Sir Lankan Sangha Sabha of Great Britain; Mrs Rits Barlett, National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is; Rev. Esme Beswick, Joint Council for Anglo-Caribbean Churches; Mrs Farmida Bi of the Three Faiths Forum Legal Group; Revd. Dr Marcus Braybrooke, co-founder of the Three Faiths Forum; Bishop Tom Butler, Church of England; Revd. Mark Fisher, Free Churches Group; Archbishop Kevin McDonald, Catholic Church; Mrs Mandana Moavenat, Zoroastrian Community; Mr Brian Peace, Interfaith Network for the UK; Dr Natubhai Shah, Jain Community; Mr Om Prakash Sharma, Hindu Community, Mr Stephen Shashoua, Director, Youth and Education Department of the Three Faiths Forum; Mr Sidney Shipton, co-ordinator of the Three Faiths Forum, Dr Indarjit Singh, Network of Sikh Organisations (UK).

## Three Faiths Forum celebrates 10 years of dialogue success

*"I am delighted to be able to send my best wishes and warmest congratulations to the Three Faiths Forum on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of their founding. It was a work of inspiration on the part of the co-founders to establish such a body, at a time when the importance of inter faith dialogue was by no means so widely recognised as it is now. Indeed, the fact that such dialogue is now seen as vital is in no small measure a tribute to the Forum's work over the last decade. I know too that the Forum has exciting ideas for future work. I hope that these come to fruition and I send all those involved my best wishes for the future and my thanks for the important contribution which they are making to the well-being of this country."*

THE RT HON TONY BLAIR MP

*"A child of ten is well launched into life and is on the runway for quick growth in the most important years of life. As the Three Faiths Forum celebrates its tenth anniversary, I join it in looking back at the ground covered and in surveying the road ahead. It is good news for humanity that Jews, Christians and Muslims strive more and more to understand one another, to give witness to willingness to live in harmony, and to posit symbolic actions that help build reconciliation, justice, cooperation and peace. The world needs more and more of such bridge-builders."*

FRANCIS CARD. ARINZE

*"(The Three Faiths Forum's) history and service are remarkable, transcending borders and uniting people across the world. It brings aspiration to many in terms of understanding one another and in offering peace through justice, fellowship and reconciliation. Its very essence is a message of hope..."*

THE RT HON MICHAEL J MARTIN MP

*"You have through this organisation done an enormous amount of good work for the benefit of not only the three Abrahamic Faiths but also other faiths represented within the United Kingdom. Your message teaches the world to live in peaceful coexistence as good neighbours. It is salutary and requires as much publicity as possible for the good of our country, the world and future generations."*

DR KHALID HAMEED CBE

# Three Faiths Forum marks its 10th Anniversary

Nearly 200 people gathered at the National Portrait Gallery in May to celebrate the achievements of the Three Faiths Forum in its first decade which saw the consolidation of its status as a nationally functioning and nationally recognised organisation.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, in a message read out by Cannon Guy Wilkinson, spoke of the need for a continuing commitment to address the challenges of the future in creative ways. "It will be very important," he said, "that all the different structures and the people committed to working within them, work co-operatively towards the same aims of mutual understanding, respect for each other, and a heartfelt desire for the common good. In this way, wider society will know and acknowledge that the religious perspective is a vital source of harmony and creativity."

Sir Sigmund Sternberg sought a wider basis of support in order to build further on what had been achieved so far. He praised the committed and enthusiastic multi-faith team of young people of its Youth and Education Division, drawn from the three Abrahamic faiths.

Stephen Shashoua, Project Director of the Youth and Education Division of the Three Faiths Forum, talked about the development of *Tools 4 Dialogue*, the text-based schools and universities programme based on the practice of Scriptural

Reasoning. He also referred to the Undergraduate 'ParliaMentors' programme, teaming together Muslim, Christian and Jewish students of politics with MPs and peers as mentors, working on a project of social action together.

Other speakers included Mr. Sandy Nairne, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, whose initiative it was to hold a photographic exhibition of the leaders of the major faith communities at the Gallery; The Rev. Dr. Marcus Braybrooke, a co-founder of the Three Faiths Forum, who had just returned from the Fifth Doha Interfaith Conference (with Sidney Shipton), where he saw encouraging evidence of the world-wide growth of

interfaith co-operation. Mr Henry Grunwald, QC, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, assured the Three Faiths Forum of continuing support in its endeavours to strive vigorously to further enhance relations between faiths.

Mr Faris Badawi, Administrator of the Muslim College, and son of the late Sheikh Dr. Zaki Badawi, the third co-founder of the Three Faiths Forum, invoked his late father's memory in his words of support for the Forum's activities.

***"religious perspective is a vital source of harmony and creativity"***

## Argentines meet the Three Faiths Forum

Minster Osvaldo Jauregui, Head of Chancery at the Argentine Embassy, Carolina Pòrez Colman, responsible for Institutional Relations at the Argentine Embassy and Elio Kapszuk, representatives of the Argentine Jewish Association AMIA visited Sir Sigmund Sternberg, at the Forum's office to discuss the forthcoming exhibition on the history of the Jewish community in Argentina, which is the largest in Latin America.

The exhibition will be held at University College London (Sir Sigmund is a fellow of UCL) in collaboration with its Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies from 12–16th November 2007. A lecture

held on the day of the opening will complement the exhibition, which will show aspects of the Jewish community, from the 19th Century to present and its contribution to the construction of the Argentine cultural and national identity today.

Sir Sigmund, who has been decorated in 1999 with the Order de Mayo al Merito by the Argentine Government, has visited Argentina several times and is close and well acquainted with the Jewish community in that country. "I am pleased," said Sir Sigmund, "that my suggestion as to a Wallenberg Memorial in Buenos Aires was accepted in principle."

## In brief

**The Three Faiths Forum is pleased to inform you of its recent activities:**

A seminar was held with the Institute of Education on Faith Schools and Social Cohesion: *Help or Hindrance?*

**A consultation on *Sacred Voices: convergence and contrast in the music of the Abrahamic faiths* was held in St Georges House, Windsor Castle. Participants included St Georges House, The Institute of Ismaili Studies, The Festival of Muslim Culture, The Jewish Music Institute and the Three Faiths Forum. During this unusual and possibly unprecedented conference a concert of music from the three Abrahamic traditions took place in St Georges Chapel and was virtually a sell out.**

A reception was held at the Romanian Embassy hosted by the Charge d'Affaires Mrs Raduta Matache, and Sir Sigmund Sternberg to mark the accession of Romania to the European Union.

**A presentation was made by Sidney Shipton to the annual meeting of the Royal United Services Institute Homeland Security and Resilience Department for Defence and Security at its Politics and Terrorism annual conference held at their Headquarters in Whitehall in February.**

Our text-based programme and *Tools 4 Dialogue* were delivered to five universities in and around London, as well as to the British Library for its Sacred exhibition. Together with St. Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation and with the Cambridge Interfaith Programme, the Scriptural Reasoning programme is being delivered as both a civic and youth practice at the British Library.

***Iraq in Common* – a network of young people of Iraqi origin living in London – held a meeting at Chatham House with Patrick Cockburn, author of *The Occupation*.**

# Dialogue in Davos

**Over 100 Jewish delegates to the World Economic Forum in Davos attended Friday night prayers and a Shabbat dinner followed by a discussion led by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, and Rabbi David Rosen on *Relations between the Jewish, Muslim and Christian Worlds at the Seam of Civilizations*.**

Mr Kevin Steinberg, director of the Forum's New York office, and Sir Sigmund Sternberg, member of the Forum's Council of 100 leaders, welcomed participants including Israel's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Mrs Tzipi Livni, and Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres MK.

The C-100 is a community of business, political, religious, media and opinion leaders that promotes dialogue and understanding across different segments of society in the West and Muslim world.

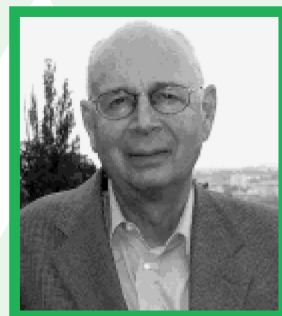
Created in 2004, the C-100 identifies innovative and pioneers projects in key areas such as training for intercultural awareness in the business context, teaching about other faiths, training of religious leaders, offering scholarship for future leaders on West Islamic exchange and promoting better understanding of religious values and institutions. It is currently preparing an annual global assess-

ment of the state of West-Islamic dialogue, and is supporting educational work that advances good citizenship and intercultural and interfaith awareness with particular impact on West-Islam relations.

Professor Klaus Schwab, KCMG, the President and founder of the World Economic Forum, was praised for his vision in creating the Religious Leaders Group and later the C-100, which became an integral part of the Forum, with over 100 religious leaders participating in the main programme of the World Economic Forum over a period of five years.

Ninety sovereign nations were represented at the Forum, many of them by their heads of state. A conversation was held between British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Professor Klaus Schwab on innovative solutions to tackle the key challenges of the 21st century.

## Three Faiths Forum welcomes Professor Klaus Schwab as newest Patron



Professor Klaus Schwab has been dedicated for more than thirty years to improving the state of the world.

He is the recipient of numerous international and national honors for initiatives undertaken in the spirit of entrepreneurship in the global public

interest and for peace and reconciliation efforts in several regions. His work at the World Economic Forum has been providing a collaborative framework for leaders of the world to address global issues, engaging particularly its corporate members in global citizenship.

### STOP PRESS...

**Mr John Battle MP, the Prime Minister's envoy to all the faith communities, has joined the Three Faiths Forum as an honorary consultant.**

*Read more in our next Issue.*



*Ranin Boulos and Noam Shuster (pictured left with Sidney Shipton) recently visited the Three Faiths Forum at Star House. Ranin and Noam, one of whom is Jewish and the other a Palestinian Arab, grew up together at the Village Neve Shalom-Wahat al-salam-Oasis of Peace and are the greatest of friends.*

# Forum meets Moroccan Theologians

**Sir Anthony Figgis, HM Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps, welcomed a delegation from the Council of Theologians of the Muslim Faith of the Kingdom of Morocco, and its Secretary General, Mr. Mohammed Yessf at St. James's Palace. The occasion was a seminar organised on the initiative of the Moroccan Ambassador in London.**

Sir Sigmund Sternberg welcomed HH Princess Lalla Joumala Alaoui, together with Ambassador of Morocco, HE Mohammed Belmahi, and the Moroccan Ambassador to Germany. Mr Yessf then gave the key note speech on Religion and Youth. He spoke of the importance of the Moroccan theologians' council and referred to the large number of Muslim female scholars who took an active role in the decisions made by the Council. Those present in London were undergraduate and postgraduate students of both sexes. He added that the newly introduced Moroccan national curriculum now included learning about other faiths than Islam. Both Morocco and the UK were traditional countries, which protected their traditions, but in which tolerance also plays a significant role.

The president of the Moroccan Jewish community spoke of the welcome given by the Moroccans in 1492 to Jews fleeing from the Inquisition in Spain. He noted that there were one million Moroccan Jews spread around the world.

Mr Karsten van Sander and Ms Nazli Ali, Education Officers of the Three Faiths Forum, presented the Scriptural Reasoning and *Tools 4 Dialogue*, two programmes that engage Muslim, Christian and Jewish students in both schools and universities. Themes of these Abrahamic reading workshops include 'Rebellion', 'Equality', 'Freedom of Choice' and 'Modesty'. Given the success of these two programmes in the UK, both expressed the hope that their work could be used as a model in Morocco and elsewhere.

Mr. Yahya Birt, Director of City Circle, which was set up in 1999 to bring young British Muslim professionals together on a regular basis, said they sought to assist the process of community cohesion and integration by building bilateral strategic alliances between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Working closely with the Three Faiths Forum, he hoped that young British Muslims would learn to further respect their traditions but also to believe in being open minded to the world.

# Forum meets Uzbekistan's religious leaders

**Religious leaders from Uzbekistan gave an encouraging picture of interreligious co-operation in their country at a seminar held at the end of May at the Embassy of Uzbekistan. Participants were welcomed by the Ambassador, HE Mr Tukhtapulat Riskiev, and by Sir Sigmund Sternberg.**

Hajji Azizjon, Vice Chairman of Uzbekistan Board of Muslims, spoke of Islam's teaching of respect for other believers and the long tradition of religious tolerance in their country. *"There has been a revival of religion since independence from Soviet rule,"* he said. *"Today people of all religions have equal rights. In 2007 Tashkent was declared one of the four capitals of Islamic culture by UNESCO."*

*"The government is committed to restoring historical religious sites,"* Dr Siddhart Saxena, Chairman of Cambridge Central Asia Forum emphasised, when speaking about religious life

in Bukhara where he had lived for some time.

Father Sergey Statsenko, Vice-Chancellor of the Tashkent Orthodox Christian Seminary and Dr Roman Bensman, Vice-Chairman of the Tashkent Jewish religious Community both spoke of the recent renewal and growth of their respective communities. In 1996 a Tashkent grammar school which provides for the study of Hebrew and Jewish traditions was opened. Jewish holidays are publicly celebrated. Two synagogues in Tashkent have been reconstructed and the old synagogues in Samarkand and Bukhara have been largely restored.

# Extremism or Fundamentalists?

“I prefer to use the word *extremist* rather than *fundamentalist*,” said Sidney Shipton when he addressed a meeting of the International Federation of Women Against Fundamentalism and for Equality on 13th February 2007 at the House of Lords under the chairmanship of Elizabeth Sidney OBE. “There is no doubt that the *Three Faiths* is for equality and dialogue,” he continued.

Mr Shipton said that the Three Faiths Forum

is working more and more with other like minded organisations and he praised the Women Against Fundamentalism and for Equality. He said that the Three Faiths Forum wanted more women to be involved at leadership level and remarked how pleased he was that Mrs Maryam Badawi was playing an active role following the death of her late husband Sheikh Dr. MA Zaki Badawi, with Sir Sigmund Sternberg and the Revd. Dr Marcus Braybrooke.

**“There is no doubt that the Three Faiths is for equality and dialogue”**

## Triologue isn't all talk... it's about empowerment

**Responding to the cry “Education, Education, Education”, the Three Faiths Forum launched a youth and education department last summer. Its motivation was the belief that the promotion of faith-based dialogue in schools, colleges and universities would provide the dynamism so often lacking in religious education and generate a better understanding of the beliefs of “the other”.**

Using the best skills available, we developed *Tools 4 Triologue (T4T)*, a religious text-based educational programme inspired by the methodology of *Scriptural Reasoning (SR)*.

Like *SR*, *T4T* uses texts from the Tanakh, Qur'an, and New Testament to bring Jews, Muslims and Christians to an understanding of each other through their own written teachings while focussing on themes that are relevant to young people today. These include: *Bling: Modesty, Beauty, and Clothing*, *Rebellion: Rebel with a Cause?* and *Family Relations: We are Family?*

It was religious philosopher Martin Buber who said, “*The true struggle is between education and propaganda.*” *Tools 4 Triologue* encourages students to discover for themselves the truth about the ‘other’ without the baggage of bigotry.

Our purpose is not merely to provide

information about the religions, but to impart the sort of knowledge which will inspire students to probe them more deeply, to ask questions and to get answers.

The role of *Tools 4 Triologue* and the other projects being delivered by the youth and education department is to give young people an informed voice on a vital aspect of the society in which they live, a forum in which to express their ideas and a place where they will be helped not just to talk but to act together positively.

We seek to empower them constructively.

*Tools 4 Triologue* is currently being piloted across the country in colleges, universities and schools (some of them single faith schools which have been linked by the programme).

For more information please visit our website [www.3ff.org.uk](http://www.3ff.org.uk)

**“The true struggle is between education and propaganda”**

# Friends of the Three Faiths Forum established

A new support and outreach group, the Friends of the Three Faiths Forum, has been established to mark the 10th anniversary of the Forum.

In 1997, Sir Sigmund Sternberg, the late Sheikh Dr M A Zaki Badawi, KBE, and the Rev. Dr Marcus Braybrooke set up the Three Faiths Forum with the purpose of bringing Christians, Muslims and Jews together in a spirit of respectful dialogue based on their shared Abrahamic heritage.

Since its founding, the Forum has made great strides, not only in bringing Muslims, Christians and Jews together at the leadership level but also in involving grass roots communities.

With a representative advisory board, medical and legal affiliates and local and regional groups, the Three Faiths Forum has built up good

relations with religious organisations at local, national and international level. It is currently extending its work to universities, schools and colleges.

Building on its achievements to date, the Three Faiths Forum has in this 10th anniversary year decided to expand its activities so as to encompass relations with other faiths.

The Friends of the Three Faiths Forum is the instrument for this expansion. The chairman of the Friends is Mr Raj Loomba, industrialist, philanthropist and a member of the council of Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

## AROUND THE REGIONS

### EAST LONDON

**The Imam of the South Woodford Mosque and Revd. Stephen Day of the Society of Ordained Scientists discuss Religion and Science**

Three meetings have so far taken place in 2007. The first was a lively discussion on *Religion and Science*, led by the Imam of the South Woodford Mosque, Dr. Mohammed Fahim, and Revd. Stephen Day of the Society of Ordained Scientists. The second was the AGM, at which a Constitution was adopted and Qadir Bakhsh spoke on *The Etiquette of Interfaith Dialogue*, based on his long experience in the field.

In March, we met at the Ilford Islamic Centre to discuss *Holy Scripture*, a meeting timed to coincide with the major exhibition at the British Library. April's meeting, at the Froud Centre, Manor Park, will be on *Caring for the Earth*, and in May we shall meet at the Ilford Synagogue to again discuss the ideas and practice of prayer in each of the three faiths. Details of our forthcoming meetings should appear on the 'Forthcoming Events' area of the Three Faiths Forum website. If you live close to Redbridge, Walthamstow or Forest Gate, you would be most welcome to join us.

### EAST LONDON

**The Bishop of Brentwood and the Rt. Rev. Thomas McMahon speak at the Ilford Islamic Centre**

The East London Three Faiths Forum has continued with its programme of regular and very well-supported meetings.

On September 2006, just after the new Pope spoke in Regensburg, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Brentwood, the Right Reverend Thomas McMahon, came to speak at the Ilford Islamic Centre, his first visit to a mosque.

Although he was billed to speak on *What Prayer Means to Me*, he used the opportunity to discuss the position of the Roman Catholic Church regarding Islam, and he apologised for any unintentional offence the Pope's words may have caused to Muslims.

### HANTS & DORSET

**Regular meetings promote dialogue and trust in Bournemouth**

Following a meeting last Autumn where sixty people came together to consider the three faiths viewpoint on *Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil*, the Bournemouth and District Jewish Representative Council hosted a meeting on the theme of *Truthfulness* on 11th March at the Reform Synagogue in Bournemouth. The programme we have adopted for our meetings has been simple but effective. The hope is that each of these meetings is hosted by one of the three faiths, an informal basis of dialogue and trust will be built up with the emphasis on listening to others rather than promoting our own viewpoint.

Meetings tend to take place on a Sunday afternoon from 3-5.30pm. For further information about future meetings, call Rev'd Tim Selwood on 07971 869 197 or email at tim\_selwood@btinternet.com.

## Make a donation

**We have established a base on which to build the work of dialogue – but now we need your help in creating, expanding and reinforcing the structure. Your financial assistance, whether by way of donation or grant, is your vote of confidence in the work we are doing. PLEASE HELP TODAY.**

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\*Deceased