

*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.*

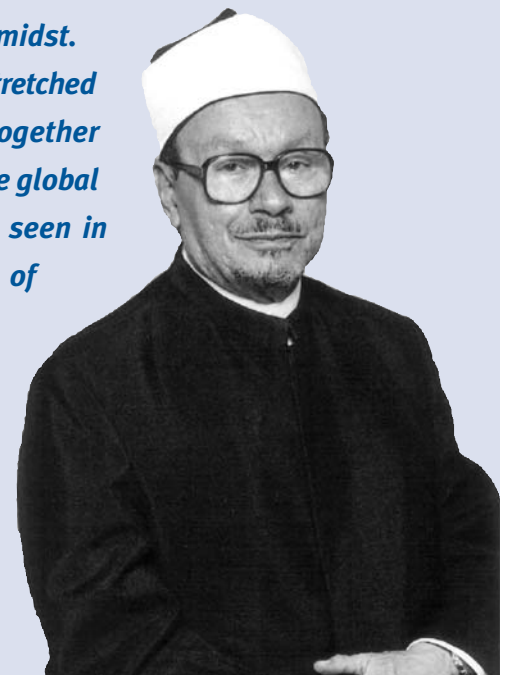
## ***A tribute to Sheikh Dr MA Zaki Badawi***

*“Islam has lost a dedicated leader and spokesman, the world of interfaith endeavour has lost a prime advocate of respectful and purposeful dialogue and I am bereft of a friend and colleague of many years, one who can never be replaced.”  
declared Sir Sigmund Sternberg on hearing of the passing of Dr Badawi.*

*“We were associated in many fields especially that of inter-religious dialogue, many years before we established the Three Faiths Forum in 1997, together with the Rev. Marcus Braybrooke. The Forum itself was our response to the refusal of the then leadership of the Council of Christians and Jews to contemplate the establishment of a Muslim component of that Council.*

*“It is a bitter irony that the establishment of a Christian-Muslim Forum in this country was celebrated on the very day of Zaki Badawi’s passing from our midst.*

*“Our co-operation in interfaith endeavour stretched across many continents and we travelled together in its furtherance to many cities in Europe. The global aspect of his commitment to dialogue was seen in his chairmanship of the Abrahamic Forum of the International Council of Christians and Jews, the umbrella organisation for 36 affiliates on every continent. The steadfast support of his wife, Maryam, was an essential source of his enduring strength.”*



## In brief

Muslim, Christian and Jewish Lawyers were welcomed to the Law Society Hall, by Fiona Woolf, Vice-President of the Law Society, when The Three Faiths Forum Lawyers Group – with Michael Sternberg in chair – was launched in April. The guest speaker, Rafiq Abdulla OBE, legal advisor to the Muslim College, and secretary to Kingston University, spoke about many legal issues relating to racial and religious discrimination and human rights where lawyers of the three Abrahamic faiths could have a joint impact.

“Take religion out of politics,” the Grand Mufti of Syria, HE Sheikh Ahmed Hassoun, told the leadership of the Three Faiths Forum. “Religious parties calling themselves for example ‘Christian’ Democrats and cloaking political action with the words ‘Crusade’ or ‘Jihad’ do not help. Jews, Christians and Muslims all worship one God Who is the Creator of all. Religions should always be a voice for peace and children should be taught the morals and ethics which all great religions affirm.” The Grand Mufti said that he studied the Torah and the New Testament as well as the Koran. “Possibly there was one religion with different interpretations”. He questioned if there really was a conflict of religions. “We must build upon the points on which we all agree,” he concluded



Sidney Shipton has recently spoken at the International Consultation in Sarajevo, an interfaith conference in Qatar and the Marches Branch of the CCJ in Hertford. He has recently been elected to the executive of the London Civic Forum at the Annual General Meeting held at City Hall. The Three Faiths Forum is the only national interfaith organisation represented at the LCF.

# Faiths join in tribute to Zaki Badawi

Many faiths were represented at the condolence meeting for Sheikh Dr MA Zaki Badawi. Organised jointly by The Three Faiths Forum and the Muslim Council of Britain, the meeting took place at the London Muslim Centre.

Judge Khurshid Drabu introduced the speakers after the Imam of the East London Mosque gave a recitation from the Koran.

Sir Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, spoke of the great loss that the Muslim community had suffered and Sir Sigmund Sternberg said that he mourned a friend as well as a colleague, “Who can deny that, with his passing, Islam and the world of Interfaith relations have lost a dedicated leader and spokesman.”

HE Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor, Archbishop of Westminster, spoke of Dr Badawi, as a “a lovely man who was gifted and believed in unity in diversity.”

The Bishop of Fulham, The Rt. Rev. John Broadhurst, spoke on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury and said that Dr Badawi would be sadly missed by all faiths and by those of none. He was impressed

by his understanding and honesty. Rabbi Dr David Goldberg, Emeritus Rabbi of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, said that he was proud to have known Dr Badawi as a friend for some 30 years. “He was a great Muslim leader and a citizen of the world.”

Mrs Badawi spoke of the passing of her husband and thanked those who had spoken so well of him. His work for interfaith relations was not only confined to Britain, it was also valued in the high religious councils of Egypt, Pakistan, and Malaysia.

Memorial prayers in the traditions of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity (both Catholic and Protestant) were followed by a prayer for peace by the Imam of the East London Mosque and thanks by Dr Mohammed Abdul Bari, the Chairman of the London Muslim Centre, who read a message of condolence from the Duke of Edinburgh.

**“A great Muslim leader and a citizen of the world”**

## Lord Carey counts cost of Synod, Danish cartoons

Nothing demonstrated the need for the deepening of dialogue and understanding more than the recent uproar over the Danish cartoons and the call by the General Synod of the Church of England for “disinvestment” from certain businesses operating in Israel, according to Lord Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, a member of the Foundation board of the World Economic Forum Foundation and adviser to its component of religious leaders.

Addressing a meeting of the Advisory Board of the Three Faiths Forum in the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, Lord Carey found some commonality between the two actions, both illustrating the “law of unintended circumstances” and both essentially criticisms of another faith that could only deepen conflict and open fresh wounds.

Applying the “law of unintended circumstances” to the Danish cartoons, Lord Carey asked if the papers would have printed the cartoons if they knew at the time that some people would lose their lives, others would be wounded, property destroyed and Muslims scandalised? He doubted it.

Similarly, he wondered whether the delegates

to the General Synod were aware that their “disinvestment” call would be seen in Israel as calling its very legitimacy into question, inflaming anti-Semitism and encouraging terrorism. Sadly, he reflected, the decision of the Synod profoundly affected what he, Canon Andrew White and others were trying to do through the Foundation for Reconciliation in the Middle East. It would also affect the work of the Council of Christians and Jews and the International Council.

“Let us all hope and pray that instead of negative fall-out in the days to come, people of goodwill will be even more determined to create better understanding,” he said.

## In brief

The Three Faiths Forum and Interfaith Action recently launched an Interfaith Society at **Queen Mary, University of London**. Distinguished interfaith advisors including John Battle MP, Board of Deputies of British Jews Interfaith Advisor, Miriam Kaye, and Fiyaz Mughal, Chair of the Ethnic Minority Lib Dems and Director of Faith Matters discussed why Queen Mary should play a major role in Interfaith Dialogue. From the gathering, a core group of students are being assembled to work together on a student intercultural/interfaith magazine called *Interact*, as well as do volunteering in the local community together, and organise future events for the newly dubbed 'Inter-Soc'.



Professor Klaus Schwab, founder and chairman of the **World Economic Forum** in Davos was recently honoured with a KCMG (Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George). Over the past 5 years, Klaus Schwab has invited over 200 religious leaders to the World Economic Forum in Davos to participate in discussions to bring a faith dimension to global issues and community building. Lord Carey and Sir Sigmund Sternberg played a pivotal role in promoting the religious component of the World Economic Forum. The religious contingent is now well integrated into the programme, to which it makes a distinctive and appreciated contribution.

The Three Faiths Forum recently attended the **2nd World Congress of Imams and Rabbis** in Seville, Spain. *"Bringing together 350 Imams, Rabbis and experts for a conference such as this was a mammoth task,"* said Sidney Shipton. He added that, *"the deliberations of this Congress must percolate to the grass roots, otherwise an important opportunity would be wasted."*

# Forum awarded Home Office grant for education project

**The Three Faiths Forum has been awarded a grant of £50,000 from the Home Office's new Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund.**

The grant will be used to develop the Forum's educational activities. It will enable the Forum to appoint an Education Officer for the coming year to extend its work in schools and colleges. The aim of the project is to promote interfaith understanding and dialogue among older children in schools in those areas where there are sizeable communities of Muslims, Jews and Christians. The focus will be upon the values and traditions which the three Abrahamic faiths hold in common. The new officer will also work on university campuses to help to ease tensions and encourage more harmonious relations among the three faith communities.

The project co-ordinator, Neville Nagler, commented: *"We are thrilled by this award, which underlines the Government's support for the important work which we are doing. We are deeply appreciative of the role of the Community Develop-*

*ment Foundation in recommending this grant under the new Home Office programme to support the work of faith communities and interfaith relations."*

Sir Sigmund Sternberg added: *"The work of interfaith dialogue, understanding and reconciliation has never been more important to our society.*

*The Government has shown its commitment by making funds available to help organisations working in this field, and we greatly look forward to developing the Forum's new education project for the benefit of all sections of British society."*

The Reverend Dr Marcus Braybrooke, also commented: *"This is an extremely important initiative. Work in schools has always been a major component of the Forum's work, and it is most encouraging that we can now build up this activity with the help of the grant from the Home Office."*

***"the work of interfaith dialogue, understanding and reconciliation has never been more important"***

## Indonesian Delegation visits Three Faiths Forum

The Three Faiths Forum recently hosted a delegation from Indonesia visiting the UK under the auspices of the British Council. The Nahdlatul Ulama is Indonesia's largest Muslim organisation with a membership of more than 40 million people and the delegation were visiting the UK on a fact-finding tour.

They visited North West London Reform Synagogue where they were welcomed by Rabbi Tony Bayfield and the Three Faiths Forum. This was their first visit to a synagogue and they expressed great interest in the Passover service.

At the head office of the Three Faiths Forum they met interfaith workers including Sydney Assor, chair Surrey Three Faiths Forum who gave them a

briefing on how to establish a local group and how it works. The visitors asked many questions on the success of the Three Faiths Forum and were keen to set up a similar group in Indonesia. They also met Dina Gold of the Board of Deputies of British Jews who explained the interfaith work of the Board.

The Three Faiths Forum drew their attention to the importance of examining the school textbooks in Indonesia and expressed great desire for future co-operation in interfaith activities in their country.

The work of the World Economic Forum in Davos promoting interfaith dialogue was mentioned and it was suggested a symposium should be held in Indonesia in the near future.

# Proposed Law Against Terrorism

In a statement the Three Faiths Forum expressed its deep concern over the proposed legislation to allow detention and questioning of suspect terrorists for up to three months.

The Forum suggested that the views of certain leading lawyers to the effect that holding suspects without charge for three months would be a breach of Article 5(3) of the Human Rights Convention, must be considered carefully and taken into account.

The Three Faiths Forum considered it imperative that all communities and their respective leaderships must co-operate and work closely together to ensure the effectiveness of all proposed and existing anti-terrorism legislation.

*“Terrorism in all its aspects must be fought vigorously, but not at the expense of a weakening of democracy and human rights,”* The Forum’s leaders said.

## Mrs Maryam Badawi joins Advisory Board

**Mrs Maryam Badawi has accepted an invitation to serve on the Advisory Board of the Three Faiths Forum.**

Announcing this, Sir Sigmund Sternberg said he could think of nothing more encouraging to its work of promoting interfaith dialogue and understanding than for the Forum to have the support, encouragement and advice of the widow of the late leader of British Muslims.

Mrs Badawi, a chartered educational psychologist with wide knowledge of Muslim societies in Singapore, Malaysia, Nigeria and the UK, has lectured and worked in educational institutions from universities in the Far East and West Africa to the Schools

Psychological Service in the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA).

Brought up in a family which had wide contact with people of many faiths and origins, she had latterly helped her late husband in his work as Principal of the Muslim College in London.

Rev. Marcus Braybrooke added that nothing could give him more satisfaction than the knowledge that the Badawi legacy of interfaith endeavour would continue to benefit the Forum and its work.

## Forum honours Sir Anthony Figgis

**Sir Anthony Figgis was honoured recently with the presentation of The Three Faiths Forum’s Interfaith Gold Medallion.**

The Rt Rev. Richard Chartres, the Bishop of London, commended Sir Anthony for his involvement with The Three Faiths Forum and presented him with the Gold Medallion. The Bishop of London also paid tribute to the late Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi KBE, *“whose passing we all mourn,”* he said. He was pleased that Mrs Maryam Badawi was present.

In his response, Sir Anthony said. *“My personal contribution has been extremely modest...I attended*

*Sheikh Zaki’s funeral at the Regent’s Park Mosque,”* he continued, *“For a Christian, it was a moving and unforgettable experience...the dispelling of ignorance about the religion of others and his respect for the different beliefs and traditions of other faiths... summarised what I believe the Three*

***“I feel deeply privileged...”***

*Faiths Forum is all about and I feel deeply privileged if I have played any part in helping its work.”*

# Arab-Jews?

**Stephen Shashoua explains why there is no contradiction between his Jewish faith and Arab ethnicity Originally published in March/April 2006 Edition of Sharq: The UK's Premier Arab Lifestyle Magazine – [www.sharq.co.uk](http://www.sharq.co.uk)**

*In calling myself an Arab Jew, I am not trying to rouse any negative sentiments, but simply employing terminology which may seem to some to be an oxymoron. To be specific, I am a Canadian born Jew of Iraqi origin.*

*The term Arab Jew, like Arab Christian and Arab Muslim create a harmony of adjectives and nouns – inshallah [God willing] that harmony will be realised on “the ground” and not only on paper). Yes this is about “words, words, words” but at most times words are all we have to go on. Religion and geography have always raised difficult and interesting questions for us all, and they continue to do so.*

*Do we look at Britain and think merely Christian? Do we look at Israel and think merely Jewish? Do we look at the “Arab” countries and think merely Muslim? Conversely do we look at Muslims and think merely Arab?*

*If we do, then we are oversimplifying our view of the world, by looking at the majority population as the only example of what is that country's socio-cultural fabric. In so doing, we discount each country's rich multiculturalism.*

*The reasons for these stereotypes could be based on ignorance, fear, politics or a combination of the three. It promotes an ‘us and them’ mentality, which unfortunately is good for some agendas.*

*This is much like the stereotypes created for Jews and Muslims, both interfaith and intra-faith. We must understand that these classifications are based on need wrapped around conflict; be they East vs West, Israeli vs Palestinian, haves vs have-nots, majority vs. minority etc.*

*There are many Jews from Arab countries who would scoff at the idea of being called Arabs. It is true, as so-called dhimmis (non-Muslims, where Islamic law is implemented), Christians and Jews would want to differentiate themselves from the majority.*

*But does this attitude come from a feeling of embitterment? Are there Muslims, Christians, and Jews among minority groups around the world who do not consider themselves countrymen of the nation*

*of which they live? Not to idealise the situation of Jews as dhimmis, but although there were various problems, Jews lived quite comfortably in the Muslim world. In Syria, Tunisia, Iraq, Morocco and Egypt, among others, they became members of legislatures and judiciaries, and played a strong economic role. Would my great-grandfather admit to being an Arab when life for his family in Iraq was “good”?*

*My question is, what is “Arabness”? And what are the criteria for getting into the club? My family speaks Arabic; we have grown up eating Arabic food; we have listened to the music, danced to the dances, etc. There are obvious religious differences, but like Christian Arabs, for our families who have lived in the Arab world for millennia, do we not get a seat at the table?*

*Another question must be asked: What is a Jew? Nazi Germany had a stereotypical two-fold answer for Jews in Europe in their propaganda films – a bearded man with a black coat and large hat, and the other who wore Western dress. Both were branded as racially inferior through the applied eugenics pseudoscience.*

*Would all Arabs have had a similar fate as Jews, Roma, and others had they lived in Europe? Is modern Eastern and Western society also guilty of stereotyping its minority groups? An enemy is easily defined, and support is easily generated with such stereotypes. The boxes created need widening, or ideally, destroying.*

*Through my work with The Three Faiths Forum, Muslims, Christians, and Jews come together to learn more about each other. Exploring answers to the questions raised in this article, learning of the many similarities that exist between the “People of the Book”, and destroying stereotypes and the ‘us and them’ mentality is what the Three Faiths Forum is committed to.*

*There are so many parts of all of us that need to be explored and celebrated, let us discover them together in peace.*

**“Do we look at Britain and think merely Christian? Do we look at Israel and think merely Jewish? Do we look at the ‘Arab’ countries and think merely Muslim?”**

**FACT: BEFORE 1948, AN ESTIMATED 900,000 JEWS LIVED IN ARAB STATES. SINCE THEN, THE VAST MAJORITY HAVE LEFT, BRINGING THE TOTAL DOWN TO FEWER THAN 8000.**

# AROUND THE REGIONS

## EAST LONDON

### ***The Bishop of Barking and the Rt. Rev David Hawkins light Hanukkah candles***

With well supported activities in the last 6 months, we have organised a visit of 30 local former members to the three places of worship and two public meetings on *Multiculturalism, Wealth and Charity*, and on *Martyrdom*.

The Bishop of Barking, The Rt. Rev David Hawkins, came and lit Hanukkah candles at Rabbi Hulbert's home.

## SOUTH EAST LONDON

### ***London's South East offers a program with real variety***

What is the meaning of life? That was the question that began the discussion at the latest meeting of the Three Faiths Forum in London South East. Over thirty people participated in lively, sensitive and informative discussion sharing their understandings of the commonalities and differences in the ways Muslims, Jews and Christians answered that question.

The evening was a part of the series of events and discussions held regularly by the Forum in the South East over the last three years. The group is growing and gradually gaining in confidence as we learn more of each others faith. We have discussed rituals and art and beliefs, we have reflected on films and picnicked in Greenwich Park.

On the Spring bank holiday (May 28th) we will all be off for another picnic at Greenwich Park. In July we will join together in a 'faith walk' visiting the mosque, both synagogues, St Lawrence's Anglican Church and the Holy Cross Catholic Church. In September we will meet again for small group discussion on 'Ethical Issues'. The planning for these events is given to a Steering Group comprising two representatives from each faith group who meet together on a regular basis. They draw programme ideas from the larger forum meetings and are seeking to encourage small, informal, local groups of friends to continue the development of better understanding between members of the 3 Abrahamic Faiths.

## KENSINGTON

### ***The importance of passing on the value of tolerance to our children***

We have had two meetings of the Kensington Three Faiths Forum. The first was held at Brompton Oratory. There we discussed our views of Faith and Tradition, and the importance of passing on the value of tolerance to our children, presided over by Father Charles Dilke.

We followed that up with a lively and well-attended discussion at Westminster Synagogue. We focused the meeting on the theme of 'Building Bridges' and the importance of understanding traditions, including how we all view the Ten Commandments and how different branches of Judaism, Christianity and Islam view each other. Rabbi Rebecca Qassim Birk spoke about Judaism as a multi-faceted religion and gave a history of the independent congregation at Kent House.

We ended the evening with a tour of the exhibition of the Czech Scrolls, a collection of Torah scrolls that had been confiscated by the Nazis and which Westminster restored, cared for and distributed to synagogues around the world.

## CARDIFF

### ***Can we live with our differences?***

We have begun to plan a series of meetings for the year ahead the theme of which is expressed by the question 'Can we live with our differences?'

These four meetings will include:

1. A symposium of politicians from the faith communities and the four political parties represented in the National Assembly.
2. A discussion of how our faith perspectives can be shared in respect to medical and faith issues.
3. A consideration of the implication of the Alexandria Process for the relations between faith communities both globally and nationally.
4. A reflection by the Catholic Archbishop on the Christian understanding of how we share life together on our planet and in our communities.

## HAMPSHIRE

### ***An act of goodwill in the Muslim, Jewish and Christian communities***

Under the title of 'A Time To Reflect,' leaders and members of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities came together in Winchester in an act of goodwill to share with each other a message of peace and reconciliation from the Hebrew Scriptures, the Christian Gospel and the Qur'an in a time of quiet, of listening, of mutual respect and of support for one another.

About one hundred people of the three faiths from around the region crowded into the community centre at Badger Farm for a meeting chaired by Rev'd Tim Selwood.

The Muslim community was well represented by members of the Winchester Muslim Cultural Association chaired by Mr. Ahmed Moon as well as Dr. Redwan El Khayat from the Southampton Muslim Council. Rabbi Neil Answych of the Reform Synagogue attended with members of the Jewish community. Reverend Ian Johnson of the Southampton City Centre Parish and Wanda Nash, a prominent Christian writer and speaker from Winchester, joined with them, all contributing insights from their differing faith perspectives into that which unites rather than divides our faith communities.

The meeting was called at short notice to express an alternative point of view from the insults and angry demonstrations which have threatened community relations following the publication of provocative anti-Islamic cartoons in some European newspapers.

Messages of support were also received from many who were unable to attend. "There was a really wonderful atmosphere," a spokesman said. "After the readings refreshments were laid on and the hall was alive with people sharing with each other across the faiths. Its all about making friendships and learning from each other really. Once you've done that you will naturally be careful not to insult or offend each other."

There are so many parts of all of us that need to be explored and celebrated, let us discover them together in peace.

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***A DVD outlining the work of the Three Faiths Forum  
and our contribution to interfaith dialogue is now available.  
Call or email us for more details.***