

In Support of Local Encounter between Christians and Muslims

We write this letter as a group of around 50 Christians and Muslims (both women and men) in positions of responsibility in our respective communities. We met together at Lambeth Palace on 15 July 2010, at an event convened and hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, organised by the Christian Muslim Forum and run in partnership with the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) and Churches Together in England (CTE).

We are keen to share our experiences of meeting, sharing, understanding and working with each other more widely, both with other leaders and members of worshipping congregations. We therefore make this joint and shared commitment:

- We pledge, as members of both faiths, to *live up to the best* of our traditions by respecting, welcoming and being hospitable to our neighbours of other faiths.
- We will *speak generously of other faiths*, scriptures and worshippers with our own congregations, while recognising we have some critical theological differences.
- We will *engage openly and honestly* with each other about our own faith and scriptures, other faiths and all issues of concern, including sensitive or painful issues*. We are open to being challenged by each other.
- We will make a point of *developing and sustaining friendships* with leaders and members of other faiths in our neighbourhoods and regionally and make such friendships public.
- We see this as a very important part of the *wider networks* of relationships between people of different faiths.
- We will encourage members of our communities to *meet each other*, learn about each others' faiths, enjoy hospitality and share each others' joys and struggles.†
- We will explore areas where we can *work together locally* on issues of shared concern, including international issues with local impact, and encourage practical partnerships between our two traditions. We will show solidarity with each other at times of distress
- As Christians and Muslims we shall *offer our engagement* to other faiths and the wider community, including common engagement with issues of social justice, equality and discrimination.

This event was a national recognition of the work of the Christian Muslim Forum (and its partners: the St Philip's Centre, Leicester; Karimia Institute, Nottingham; East Midlands Faith Forum; West Midlands Faith Forum, Bradford Churches for Dialogue and Diversity) in bringing together leaders of both faiths since 2006. These events have been funded by a variety of Christian and Muslim funders. Nearly 200 leaders, including some of us, have taken part in these events aimed at creating, encouraging and strengthening local inter faith relationships. The programme has also sought to celebrate and publicise the good work being done in chaplaincies, between mosques and churches and in local dialogue groups.

www.christianmuslimforum.org

*Some of these issues are covered in the Christian Muslim Forum's Ethical Witness Guidelines http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/downloads/Ethical_Guidelines_for_Witness_v9.pdf

† Some suggestions for doing this are contained in the Christian Muslim Forum's booklet 'Local Christian-Muslim Friendship' http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/downloads/4CF_Christian-Muslim-Friendship.pdf

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