

Archbishop and faith leaders launch 'Inter Faith Week'

Monday 16 November 2009

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, today invited faith leaders and Trustees of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, to Lambeth Palace to launch 'Inter Faith Week'.



Faith leaders and Trustees of the Inter Faith Network for the UK

'Inter Faith Week' is an Inter Faith Network initiative which provides faith communities with a range of local, regional and national opportunities to demonstrate their work together and to highlight the major contributions that religious faith makes to society.

Those who attended the launch, including Dr Indarjit Singh, The Chief Rabbi, Dr Manazir Ahsan, as well as leaders of all other faith communities, signed a statement of common commitment to continue building good inter religious relations and to contribute to the common good from different religious perspectives. The Secretary of State, John Denham, also attended the event and was warmly welcomed by those present.

The Archbishop read a statement of support and encouragement which Her Majesty The Queen which had sent to him. The Archbishop has responded by sending loyal greetings on behalf of the faith leaders present.

The resolution builds on the precedent of the Millennium Act of Commitment, a shared act of reflection and commitment by the Faith Communities of the United Kingdom, in the year 2000.

The Archbishop said at the event: "We're celebrating the breadth and the depth of the involvement of communities of faith across the country, and of the great variety of events and initiatives directed towards the lasting sustainable health of our corporate presence in this country".

The text of the statement read:

"We believe that good inter faith relations are a vital part of a harmonious, just and respectful society.

We pledge, today, to deepen our work to increase understanding about and between our faiths and to strengthen our cooperation on social issues.

We renew our commitment to developing effective and long term ways of dialogue and mutual learning. We shall continue to seek to understand the patterns of engagement of our faith communities – through history and today; to affirm the positive aspects of these patterns; and to heal wounds of misunderstanding where these are found.

While our great religious traditions are distinct in belief and practice, there is much that unites us. We will draw on fundamental values held in common and on the wisdom of our respective faith traditions to continue to work - as individual communities and together - for the wellbeing of our society, our wider global community and the planet that is our home.

Alongside all of good will, we will work to tackle with renewed determination the challenges of poverty, ignorance, injustice, crime and violence, and social fragmentation and to help shape a society where all feel at home; all are valued and justly treated; and all have a chance to thrive."