

THREE FAITHS FORUM



Founders:

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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 board of the World Economic Forum and consultant to its group of religious leaders.

Addressing a meeting of the advisory board of the Three Faiths Forum in the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, this week, Lord Carey found some commonality between the two actions, both of them illustrating the "law of unintended circumstances" and both of them essentially swipes at another faith that 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, enflaming anti-Semitism and encouraging terrorism? Sadly, he reflected, the decision of the Synod profoundly affects what he, Canon Andrew White and others were trying to do through the Foundation for Reconciliation in the Middle East. It would affect the work of the Council of Christians and Jews and the International Council, too.

"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. Lord Carey opened the proceedings with a tribute to the late Sheikh Dr M A Zaki Badawi, a Co-founder of the Three Faiths Forum. Sir Sigmund Sternberg, another Co-founder, announced that Dr Badawi's widow, Maryam, had agreed to join the advisory board and he welcomed her to this, her first, meeting.

Sir Sigmund also welcomed the presence of Sir Iqbal Sacranie, the Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Great Britain. The Three Faiths Forum is joining with the Muslim Council to arrange a memorial meeting for Dr Badawi to be held at the East London Mosque at 4.30 p.m. on Monday, February 27.

The meeting heard from the Rev Martin Turner, the Superintendent Minister of the Methodist Central Hall; Commissioner Shaw Clifton, the Territorial Commander of the Salvation Army; Mrs Flo Kaufmann, a Vice President of the Board of Deputies and, deputising for Manchester's first Muslim Lord Mayor, Mr Henry Gutterman.

Patrons:

HE Cardinal Francis Arinze
Baroness Boothroyd of Sandwell
HRH Dom Duarte Duke of Bragança
Lord Carey of Clifton
Lord Hameed of Hampstead CBE DL
The Rt Hon Baroness Hayman

Rabbi Professor Jonathan Magonet

George Mallinckrodt KBE
The Rt Hon Michael Martin
Prof. Dr Klaus Schwab KCMG
Chief Rabbi M Rene-Samuel Sirat
Alderman John Stuttard
Dr Otto Von Habsburg

Honorary Consultant:

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Advisor

Imam Maulana Shahid Raza

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Mr Sidney Shipton, the Co-ordinator of the Three Faiths Forum, reported on his national and international initiatives on behalf of the Forum and Mr Neville Nagler, the Director of the Sternberg Foundation, welcomed the major grant awarded the Three Faiths Forum by the Home Office to assist in the appointment of an educational officer.

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