

The Interfaith Alliance and
The Interfaith Alliance Foundation

2004 Annual Report

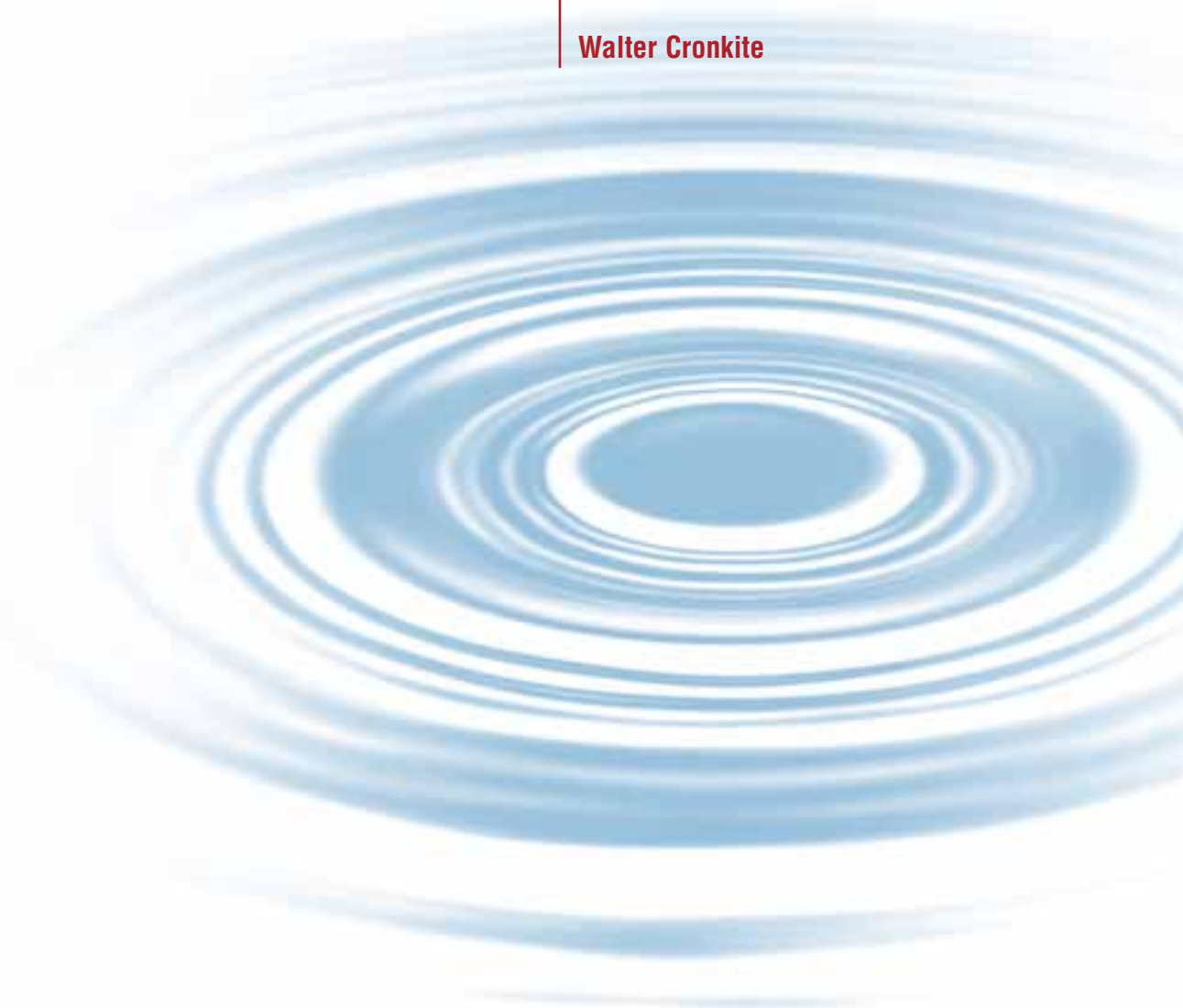


THE
INTERFAITH
ALLIANCE
Foundation

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“...this is family, and as family grows, as we seem to each year, more people are with us, more are dedicating their help to us, for which we are very grateful, of course, we are getting prouder of what Welton and the other founders have brought to the face of the Earth.”

Walter Cronkite






THE
INTERFAITH
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DEAR FRIENDS OF THE INTERFAITH ALLIANCE,

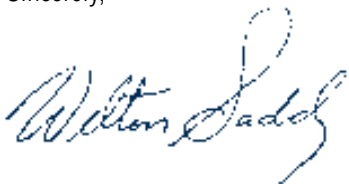
What a year! Seldom, in recent history or if ever before, were so many people intensely focused on the issues that inspired the formation of The Interfaith Alliance a decade earlier and, shortly after that, the launch of The Interfaith Alliance Foundation. Our celebration of the tenth anniversary of The Interfaith Alliance took the form of vigorous work challenging the spiritually arrogant and constitutionally dangerous efforts of those who attempted to endow raw political partisanship with the authority of a divine blessing. We rededicated ourselves to promoting vigorous political debate on substantive issues, the importance of civic education, and the urgency of informed participation in the national elections. Though incredibly wise as well as courageous when beginning this movement called The Interfaith Alliance, founders of this organization could not possibly have envisioned the critical significance that ten years later would distinguish the efforts of this young organization.

“What is the appropriate role of religion in the elections?” If I had a dollar for every time I was asked that question in 2004, the budget of The Interfaith Alliance would be bulging at the seams. The intersection of religion and politics was the place to be in this election year, though it was not necessarily a safe place to be; traffic was heavy and getting trampled was a distinct possibility. Partisan politicians and panicked political parties flocked to this intersection eager to lace political stump speeches with religious rhetoric, to turn houses of worship into campaign outposts, and to court the Religious Right and its political allies. Even high-ranking government officials supported campaign activities that stood in serious conflict with the United States Constitution’s guarantee of separation between the institutions of religion and the institutions of government. At times during this election year, members of minority religious traditions in this nation and people who do not associate themselves with religion were made to feel like second-class citizens.

In the midst of formidable challenges and pressured by constant critique, however, I must say that people involved in The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation rose to the occasion. Never have I been prouder of our work and of the people doing it. From every part of the nation, supporters of The Interfaith Alliance provided the kind of assistance – financial, spiritual, political, cultural, and otherwise – that enabled us to stay the course, to advance our message, and to make contributions of inestimable importance to this national election.

The pages that follow in this Annual Report for 2004 tell the story of the work of The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation in the past year in only the briefest of terms. But the end of that story has not yet been written. The words of Shakespeare, inscribed on a statue that stands outside the National Archives, remind us, “What is past is prologue.” The challenges ahead of us appear as mountainous as those that towered over our past. That is okay. That is why we are here. We are ready for what comes next. With your continued support and involvement, we will continue living out the vision and defending the values that gave birth to this movement that, across the years, thankfully, has brought so many of you to our side.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wilton Gaddy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

THE REV. DR. C. WELTON GADDY

*President, The Interfaith Alliance and
The Interfaith Alliance Foundation*



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“In the most religiously diverse country on the face of the Earth, in order to preserve religious liberty and tolerance, our finest Constitutional traditions, we have to actively seek to learn about each other’s faiths and engage in dialogue with each other.”

Sr. Maureen Fiedler, S.L.

Good Will

People of Faith and Good Will Restoring Healthy Democracy

The year 2004 was like no other in The Interfaith Alliance's history. Perhaps that was because the election was so bitterly contested, or because the campaign season grew so long. Or perhaps it was because the stakes were so very high in this time of domestic and international unrest. Whatever the reason, 2004 saw the issues at the heart of The Interfaith Alliance's mission dominate the public debate.

The use and abuse of religion in campaigning. Religious intolerance, bigotry, and incivility. Attacks on the separation of religion and government. These issues and themes framed all that took place in the nation's political life in 2004. Time and again, The Interfaith Alliance rose to the challenge, defending cherished American institutions, shining a scalding light on intolerance, and calling on Americans to live up to the values that bind us as a nation today, as they have for nearly 230 years.



“...I immediately wished to sign on because it seemed so – we seemed desperately in need of The Interfaith Alliance at that particular juncture in American political life, and we have found since then that with all of our efforts, we can only know tonight that we need to redouble them, that, if you please, the danger out there in the woods somewhere seems to never go away.”

Walter Cronkite

Much of The Interfaith Alliance's work in 2004 revolved around the November elections. Working with its 47 state and local Alliances, and relying on the good will, energy, and resources of its 150,000 members drawn from 75 faith traditions, The Interfaith Alliance and its sister organization, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation:

- fostered the civic participation of people of faith and good will by registering record numbers of Americans to vote;
- provided voters with needed information on issues at the intersection of religion and politics;
- forced candidates to grapple with religious and political issues;
- served as a key resource to national and local news media;
- defended and promoted the participation of minority religions in America's civic life;
- protected religious liberty against a range of Religious Right-led challenges;
- stood up to bigotry and intolerance; and
- invoked the prophetic voice and healing power of faith.

Not all of the organizations' work during the year was directly related to the election, of course. But even battles renewed from previous years took on new urgency in the context of the campaign. Such was the case with the White House's proposal for a federal "marriage amendment," and with congressional efforts to allow religious institutions to spend tax-exempt dollars campaigning for candidates.

Whatever may be said of the outcome of the election, one thing is certain about the road to Election Day: The Interfaith Alliance's work in 2004 made for a richer discussion of the issues, a better-informed electorate, a larger number of voters, a clearer understanding of the tactics of the candidates, and a more vibrant democracy. In 2004, The Interfaith Alliance lived up to its commitment to mobilize people of faith and good will to the task of restoring healthy democracy.

Increasing Meaningful Citizen Participation by People of Faith and Good Will

In a June 2004 address to the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, President of The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation, reminded listeners of the importance of the coming presidential election:

At stake in this year's elections is the fate of virtually every issue of social-moral-political significance to religious communities — civil rights, foreign policy, fair housing, taxation, issues at the heart of the LGBT community, a healthy environment, religious liberty, economic justice, education, poverty, health care, and the future for our nation's children. To be sure, I know that all people of faith and good will do not agree on the specifics of how these issues should be addressed by the government. But, I also know that all people of faith and good will care about these issues and want to see them addressed responsibly and helpfully. The urgency of that interest alone underscores the importance of voting, a civil act that legally cannot take place apart from registering to vote. You need to be registered to vote and you need to be busy seeing to it that your friends are registered to vote.

With Gaddy's charge in mind, The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation renewed its longstanding organizational commitment to fostering meaningful civic participation by people of faith and good will. With a decade's worth of experience applied to the task, the "One Nation, Many Faiths — Vote 2004" project broke new ground, registering record numbers of voters; reaching vast audiences with voter-friendly information about the candidates' views on issues at the intersection of religion and politics; reminding candidates, campaigns, and religious institutions about the importance of respecting proper boundaries; and serving as a resource for national and local media.

Together with state and local Interfaith Alliances, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation registered more than 10,000 new voters in 2004. Many of these registrants followed links on the organization's website; others were identified by local Alliances at events or during door-to-door canvassing. Several Alliances focused their efforts on populations traditionally underrepresented in the electorate. The Interfaith Alliance of Wake County, North Carolina, focused on youth voter registration, for example, while The Interfaith Alliance of Tulsa, Oklahoma, worked to register lower-income voters. Local Alliances also joined forces with other organizations in their communities to conduct registration drives. In Rochester, New York, such collaboration registered 4,000 new voters.

The Interfaith Alliance registered more than 10,000 Americans to vote in 2004. Appropriately, most were registered by state and local Alliance members and volunteers in their respective communities. But the national staff also took to sidewalks and community events in the Washington, D.C. area to practice what it preached.



The Interfaith Alliance Foundation's national office fostered and supported local Alliances' efforts by distributing an election-year kit in late 2003. It included voter registration posters, registration cards, and the organization's 2004 Election Year Handbook, which explained the registration and get-out-the-vote process and reviewed relevant state laws.

Of course, registering to vote is not the same as casting a vote. So The Interfaith Alliance Foundation ran an extensive get-out-the-vote effort in 2004, the first in its history. Aiding the effort was the organization's participation in the Gill Foundation's Democracy Project — a "list enhancement" initiative that allowed several hundred nonprofit organizations across the nation to have their member databases enhanced with information from publicly available data sources. For the Foundation, the result was a significant upgrading of information about the organization's members, including the critical question of whether individual members in 15 states were registered to vote. Armed with that

continued page 10



CIVIC Participation



“We persuade other people of our political views using terms based not on divine revelation, but on our common experience as citizens. This is a crucial role of The Interfaith Alliance. It is difficult work. It is complicated work. Our nation has never needed the Alliance and Welton more than it does now, which is why I am deeply grateful.” **Rev. Dr. Galen Guengerich**

Earlier in the year, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation worked to demystify the Iowa Caucus for Hawkeye State voters. Unlike primary elections in most other states, where voters go to the polls to vote for the candidate of their choice in the privacy of a voting booth, Iowa's Caucus process calls on voters to work their way through an elaborate process that consumes most of an evening. For first-time participants, the method is often a mystery. So, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation conducted a well-attended Caucus training event in January 2004, designed to help citizens of faith and good will to know what to expect on Caucus night.

In addition, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation convened and coordinated a group of several of the nation's largest and most influential interfaith, ecumenical, and denominational organizations in a joint voter registration and mobilization project, entitled "Faithful Democracy." Participating organizations included the National Council of Churches, Council on American-Islamic Relations, Unitarian Universalist Association, Episcopal Church, and Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. Said the Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, President of The Interfaith Alliance Foundation, in announcing the collaboration, "Now more than ever before, it is important for people of faith to participate in our democracy. Religion should be a prophetic voice for inclusion, calling people of all religions, as well as those who affirm no religion, to cast a vote informed by both politics and religion, consistent with the core values of our democracy and our faith."

data, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation worked to maximize the turnout on Election Day of citizens it had registered to vote during the course of the year, as well as its own membership.

Key to that effort was a taped telephone message from broadcast journalist and Honorary Interfaith Alliance chairman Walter Cronkite. In all, 100,000 members and new registrants heard the message, contributing in some measure to 2004's record voter turnout.

Informing and Motivating Voters

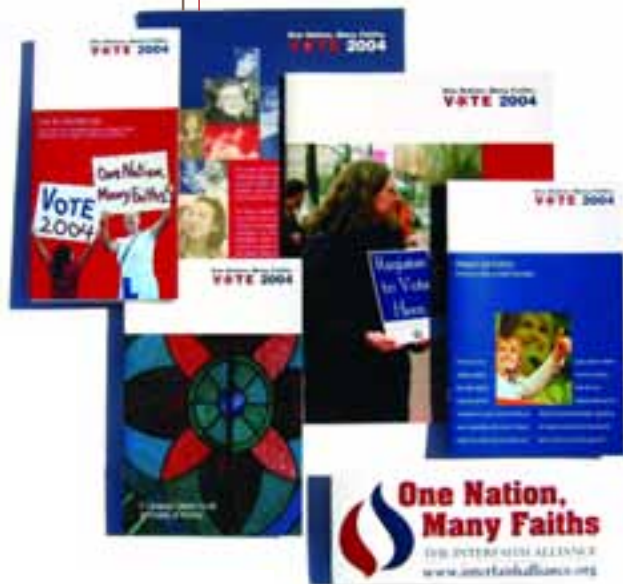
Beyond urging Americans to get out and vote on Election Day, The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation also worked to help voters cast *informed* votes. Naturally, the organizations' work focused particular attention on issues at the intersection of religion and politics. The effort was built on *Five Questions* for candidates:

- What role should and does your religious faith and values play in creating public policy?
- What are your views on the Constitutional guarantee of the separation of church and state?
- What active steps have you taken and will you continue to take to show respect for the variety of religious beliefs among your constituents?
- Should a political leader's use of religious language reflect the language of his/her religious tradition, or be more broadly inclusive?
- How do you balance the principles of your faith and your pledge to defend the Constitution, particularly when the two come into conflict?

The questions were the foundation of a publication created and disseminated by the Alliance, some 200,000 copies of which were distributed nationwide to members, religious leaders, campaigns, the media, and others. Local Alliances and individual citizens were then encouraged to use the questions as a basis for candidate forums, interviews, and a variety of other election-related conversations. Local Alliances responded by hosting events in

their respective communities, putting the *Five Questions* to candidates for public office at the local, state, and federal level. Many Alliances used the *Five Questions* as the basis for candidate debates, including Interfaith Alliances of Southeast Kansas, East Tennessee, Iowa, and Oklahoma. Others, including Interfaith Alliances of Central California and Long Island, mailed the questions to candidates for office requesting responses, and then publicized the results.





“I recently saw a voter brochure from The Interfaith Alliance that I would like to share with my congregation. It was entitled, “Cast an Informed Vote,” and included steps to consider in voting as well as questions for candidates. We have 40 households in our congregation.”

**Pastor Sharon Miller,
Ambler Mennonite Church, PA**

The national office also put the questions to direct use, conducting a series of videotaped interviews with most of the candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination, including the eventual nominee, John Kerry. (The Bush campaign declined an invitation to be interviewed.) The resulting interviews, conducted in January 2004 just days before the first ballots of the presidential primaries and caucuses were to be cast, were extraordinarily revealing. The Interfaith Alliance distributed transcripts to the national media, and posted the digitized interviews on the organization’s website.

Later in the year, The Interfaith Alliance’s *Five Questions* would take on even greater significance, as the result of an unusual political alliance. Early in 2004, The Interfaith Alliance invited Paul Weyrich, a key figure in the growth of the Religious Right, to participate in an election year forum to be held at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Weyrich accepted, and his participation opened a channel of communication with the Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy. As the presidential campaign was at its peak, the two collaborated on a letter to CBS’s Bob Schieffer, moderator of the third and final presidential debate. The letter proposed that the veteran journalist include one or more questions drawn from The Interfaith Alliance’s *Five Question* series in the debate. Schieffer did indeed include such a query, producing an exchange that proved to be one of the more enlightening and personal moments in the campaign.

Using E-Activism to Inform Voters

The Interfaith Alliance also activated its 40,000-strong network of electronic activists during the campaign. Each week, beginning after Labor Day, The Interfaith Alliance sent an email alert covering an important election-related issue

to the network, often calling on recipients to take specific action in response. Messages during those two months reinforced the *Five Questions* campaign, warned about Religious Right led efforts in the House of Representatives to change tax law to permit churches to use tax-exempt dollars to campaign for candidates, reminded recipients about voter registration deadlines, and promoted The Interfaith Alliance’s *Call To a Faithful Decision Weekend* (see below).

A separate set of electronic messages, also distributed to a list that numbered in the tens of thousands, reminded voters and the media about developments related to religion and politics in the campaign. The weekly “Media Roundup” messages included summaries of news stories from national and local outlets, exposing dozens of incidents of abuse of religion in the campaigns.



Another effective means of voter education in 2004 was a series of more than 75 forums conducted by the national office, and by local and state Alliances across the nation. Five national forums spread throughout the year in Washington (twice), Los Angeles, Chicago, and Atlanta were aimed at attracting national media attention, and featured a religiously diverse group of national leaders discussing the role of religion in campaigns. Local and state Alliances took the same approach in their communities, covering issues ranging from gun control, the budget, human and civil rights, religion and politics, and more. For example, the Marion County Interfaith



Gaddy Warns CNN Viewers about Inappropriate Mixing of Religion and Politics

“I don’t trust a religion that causes a person to write people off, rather than want to embrace them. Our future will either be marked by inter-religious cooperation, or a conflict that will weaken the nation and destroy the integrity of religion.... The impact of the religious right has been that you can pass judgment on another person’s spirituality, not by asking the singular question about your relationship to God and your belief in Christ, but where you are on a variety of socio-political issues. I can’t imagine a better way to divide religion in this nation.”

**The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy,
October 24, 2004, CNN**



Alliance (Florida) hosted a forum on democracy and religion, while The Interfaith Alliance of Mississippi co-hosted a dialogue about the independence of the judiciary. The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado hosted monthly forums on a range of issues of interest to voters.

Call To a Faithful Decision

The largest Interfaith Alliance mobilization of the year, however, was the group’s *Call To a Faithful Decision Weekend*, spanning the last two weekends of the campaign. More than 900 congregations, representing the full range of faith traditions in America, dedicated a sermon, homily, or meditation to encouraging their members to vote. This year’s overwhelming response from houses of worship reflected both the unusual intensity of the 2004 campaign, and The Interfaith Alliance’s increased organizing to promote the *Weekends*. The effort was augmented this year by outreach to the Faithful Democracy coalition, a network of national religious organizations whose member organizations contacted their constituents across the nation. In all, The Interfaith Alliance and Coalition members contacted more than 100,000 religious leaders about the *Weekends*.

Combating Inappropriate Mixing of Religion and Politics

The Interfaith Alliance was founded in great measure to respond to the grossly inappropriate, but all too common, melding of religion and politics – the variety routinely practiced by Pat Robertson of the Christian Coalition, James Dobson of Focus on the Family, and other national Religious Right figures. Over the life of the organization, that focus has remained; indeed, it has grown all the more pressing.

The 2004 campaign witnessed a quiet but nevertheless landmark transformation in the way religion and politics are inappropriately mixed at election time. In the past, the great weight of inappropriate activity has come from national Religious Right organizations and their affiliates in the field. Often candidates have been willing beneficiaries of such activity, of course. But what happened in 2004 was something entirely different, and genuinely disturbing. In 2004, the most significant abuse of religion for political purposes was perpetrated by the presidential campaign of George W. Bush. Like none in history, the Bush-Cheney campaign sought to use houses of worship – conservative churches, to be specific – as a home base for political organizing. And they succeeded.

The tip of the iceberg broke the surface in early June, and was immediately the subject of national media attention, thanks to quick work by The Interfaith Alliance national office and the Southeast Pennsylvania Interfaith Alliance. An email from the Bush-Cheney campaign, distributed inadvertently to the campaign’s entire national network of electronic activists, instead of to the intended Pennsylvania distribution list, came into the hands of The Interfaith Alliance. The message called on activists to identify and enlist the support of 1,600 “friendly congregations” for the purpose of recruiting churches to serve

as arms of the Bush campaign. Among the “22 duties” that these churches would take on, according to the email, was turning over church directories to the campaign so that congregants could receive calls, solicitations and letters.

The Interfaith Alliance joined that same day with the Southeast Pennsylvania Interfaith Alliance in a telephone news conference to expose the deliberate and grossly inappropriate manipulation of religion for political gain. The effort touched off a wave of media attention, in which The Interfaith Alliance figured prominently. That attention did little to dissuade the Bush-Cheney campaign from its methods, but it did at least give voters the opportunity to critique on the approach.

Long before bringing the Bush-Cheney campaign’s efforts to public attention, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation had prepared and distributed two publications aimed at preventing, or at the very least exposing, just such instances. The organization’s *Religion and Politics: Running for Office in a Multi-Faith Nation*, an election year guide for candidates, was an affirmation of the important role religion plays in Americans’ lives. It provided candidates and their campaign staff with information on appropriate ways to acknowledge that role, as well as warnings about avoiding inappropriate interplay. Candidates greeted the publication with very positive feedback. Wrote one Indiana candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives, “It is both a moral and an ethical obligation that we respect each other’s religions. It is good that The Interfaith Alliance supports this freedom of choice given to us by the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and by God, Himself.”

A separate *Election Year Guide for Houses of Worship* helped religious institutions identify appropriate and inappropriate ways to participate during the campaign season. It, too, received a warm response. One minister, writing to request more copies, said she was planning a series of church newsletter articles based on the publication; other local religious leaders thanked the organization for its ongoing efforts, and commended the commitment to religious liberty that the publication reflected. That commitment was renewed later in the campaign, when The Interfaith Alliance sent a letter specifically warning religious institutions not to distribute partisan voter guides – like those from the Christian Coalition – at pain of endangering their tax-exempt status.

Throughout the year, The Interfaith Alliance worked to hold candidates and religious institutions accountable for any false steps. A number of candidates – at all levels and from both major parties – stooped to abusing religion to gain political advantage. The Interfaith Alliance consistently monitored candidates’ actions, issuing rebukes to national, state, and local candidates, as appropriate. For example, in addition to taking the Bush-Cheney campaign to task for its June organizing missive, The Interfaith Alliance also criticized the Kerry-Edwards campaign in the fall for using houses of worship to stage campaign rallies.



Gaddy on the 2004 Election

“The comprehensive election year program of The Interfaith Alliance enjoyed unprecedented success. Our voice made a huge contribution. Now we must build on the high level of interest and energy devoted to voting to keep people involved in the political process. We must continue to challenge the manipulation of religion for partisan political purposes, for attempting to shut down major policy debates and for advancing controversial legislation under a cover called ‘moral’ values. We must expand the definition of values driving the moral interests in our nation. We must help to facilitate healing in our communities and in our nation without capitulating to ideas and policies that are harmful to both.”

The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, November 2004

After the Dust Settled

The Interfaith Alliance’s election work did not end on Election Day. The sudden flurry of news stories attributing President Bush’s reelection to heavy support from “moral values” voters – a conclusion based on a misleading exit poll question – helped puff additional wind into the sails of the Religious Right, just as it was beginning to claim credit for the President’s reelection. With an eye toward an honest assessment of the claim, The Interfaith Alliance sponsored a Post-Election Forum on Religion in the 2004 Campaigns. Participants included journalists and leaders of national religious and political organizations. Their analyses challenged the conventional wisdom about the election results, encouraging The Interfaith Alliance to stay the course in advancing a moral-values message very different from the one offered by Dr. Dobson and his Religious Right allies.

The election’s impact on progressives at the grassroots level was much easier to interpret than the elections themselves. In the days following November 2, continuing through to the end of the year and into 2005, The Interfaith Alliance has been flooded with requests from activists across the nation seeking to form new local Interfaith Alliances. The national office’s field staff anticipates that the groundswell could result in the formation of as many as 25 to 30 new activist groups across the country.





LIBERTY

Religious

“This is a time in our nation when we need people from varied religious backgrounds who believe in tolerance to get together and say, ‘we’re not going to let you make this nation an intolerant and unfriendly place to live.’”

Sumeet Kaur Bal

Defending Religious Liberty

“Much of the criticism that I offer — constitutionally, politically, and even more specifically related to the president — are about what his way of treating religion ultimately does to undercut the authority, the uniqueness, the power of religion. Every time that religion has identified itself or entangled itself with a particular political movement or a particular government, religion has been harmed by that. I see religion as a powerful positive healing force for this nation and the world. But that force is blunted, weakened, compromised inestimably, if we turn religion into a tool for advancing political strategy; if we make it a matter of how to win political office; if we treat it as anything other than a sacred part of life from which we ought to draw sustenance and values and strength for living courageously as good citizens.”

The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, President, The Interfaith Alliance, PBS’s Frontline, “The Jesus Factor”, April 2004

In addition to its efforts in defending religious liberty on the campaign trail, The Interfaith Alliance also worked to expand our presence on Capitol Hill.

The Interfaith Alliance fought two separate legislative initiatives in 2004 that threatened the traditional separation between the institutions of religion and government. The first, the “Houses of Worship Political Speech Protection Act,” sometimes called the “Jones bill,” after its sponsor, Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC), would have lifted federal tax-code restrictions on the political activities of houses of worship, permitting them to engage in partisan political activity with tax-exempt dollars. During 2004, The Interfaith Alliance mounted a major outreach effort to encourage the various denominations to examine the bill on the merits, adopt positions, and issue public statements. The campaign was wildly successful: Every mainline American denomination, with the exception of the Southern Baptists, issued a statement opposing the bill.

The second proposal was the “Safe Harbor for Churches” provision. It would have allowed houses of worship to endorse or attack political candidates up to three times per election year without triggering an IRS investigation. It would have been a major boon to political campaigns that manipulate churches to reach out to potential voters, while coaxing them onto a slippery slope of partisan activity. As it did with the Jones bill, The Interfaith Alliance reached out to a broad range of organizations representing minority faith traditions to weigh in on the measure. In addition, The Interfaith Alliance sent an email alert to its 40,000 e-activists, asking them to contact House Appropriations Committee Chairman Bill Thomas to urge him to keep the provision off of an upcoming bill. Some 700 members flooded the chairman’s office with phone calls in a single day, prompting Thomas’ staff to plead with The Interfaith Alliance to halt the barrage.

Neither provision was adopted, although Hill experts expect both proposals to return in some form.



Opposing Bigotry, Promoting Unity

Breaking down barriers to inclusion and acceptance in American society has always been at the heart of The Interfaith Alliance's work. In this time of heightened tensions, the product of fear of terrorism and war, this challenge has taken on even greater proportions.

The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation have taken two fundamental approaches to fighting intolerance and bigotry: first, sponsoring a series of proactive events aimed at turning Americans away from division and intolerance; and second, shining a spotlight on specific incidents, in the conviction that darkness gives way to light.

Turning Away from Hate

Begun in 1999, The Interfaith Alliance's STOP the HATE vigils have become an annual fixture for a great many state and local Alliances. In addition to commemorating victims of hate violence in ways that draw on the healing rituals of diverse faith traditions, the vigils have led to specific social action or change, including programming about tolerance in local school districts and support for local and national legislation to adequately prosecute hate violence. In 2004, The Interfaith Alliance and its local Alliances continued the tradition, sponsoring events in cities across the nation, including in Illinois, New York State, Oklahoma, and Tennessee.

The national office of The Interfaith Alliance initiated a similar vigil nationwide, this one in response to 2004 revelations of atrocities committed by U.S. soldiers against Iraqi prisoners at the now-infamous Abu Ghraib facility. Thousands of Americans participated in the "Lights for Human Dignity" vigil, turning on lights in their homes and houses of worship in a symbolic gesture of respect for human dignity over the 2004 Memorial Day weekend.

The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy took that same message of respect and reconciliation to the World Conference on Religions for Peace in 2004, an international organization working to promote peace through the international faith community. He traveled to Jordan to participate in conversations with Iraqi religious leaders about how best to foster peace and understanding in the aftermath of the U.S.-Iraq war. He carried a similar message to the meetings of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, and to a New York meeting of the Women Religious Leaders for Peace of the United Nations Millennium Fund, where he joined in calls for greater involvement for women in peacemaking.

Excerpts from 2004 Statement of The Interfaith Alliance Board of Directors on the "Federal Marriage Amendment"

The Interfaith Alliance honors and respects the sovereignty of individual faith traditions to determine what they choose to recognize as a religious marriage. This is, in our view, consistent with our primary mission of upholding and strengthening religious liberty.

Respecting the rights of those in our diverse communities of faith who deem same-gender marriage to be consistent with their religious creed ensures that the United States will continue to be the most religiously pluralistic country in the world. We firmly believe that it is not the purview of our government to enshrine in our laws the beliefs of one particular faith tradition over others.

Finally, our call to unite the nation under the banner of mutual respect for human dignity requires us to ensure that all Americans are protected equally under the law. Any amendment to our Constitution that denies some Americans the same rights as afforded their neighbors demeans us all.

We urge the United States Congress to retain religious freedom and dignity for all and defeat this unnecessary and divisive Constitutional amendment.

The organization continued its groundbreaking Congregational Partnership initiative, aimed at the critical lack of popular understanding of Islam and other minority faith traditions. Made possible by a grant from the Ford Foundation, the project paired specific congregations of differing faiths in the same metropolitan area for locally devised dialogues and activities. The effort focused particularly on women and youth, in an effort to gain access to nontraditional power structures within the various faith traditions. The goals of the project include building cross-faith understanding and acceptance, and a means for joint civic action in the future.

Shining a Bright Light on Intolerance

The organization's affirmative efforts to promote tolerance notwithstanding, the past year saw more than its share of intolerance and bigotry. In 2004, The Interfaith Alliance responded with public statements and other actions to a number of incidents, including:

- In February, The Interfaith Alliance challenged Rep. Peter King (R-NY) for remarks he made on Sean Hannity's radio program. King said that no Muslim in America has assisted law enforcement in the fight on terrorism; that "extremists" control 85 percent of the mosques in America; that 85 percent of Islamic religious leaders are "the enemy living amongst us"; and that he has been "walled out" when he has tried to talk with them. The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy rebuked King for his inflammatory attacks, and offered to break down the supposed "wall" by convening a meeting for him to dialogue with Muslim leaders.
- In early October, The Interfaith Alliance challenged an effort by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency of the Department of Homeland Security for its coordinated "voluntary interview" effort aimed at Muslim Americans during the holy month of Ramadan. The Interfaith Alliance's statement observed that the effort could intimidate Muslims and discourage them from voting: "The nation would be outraged if this were to happen to Jews or Christians during Passover or Easter, for any reason," Dr. Gaddy said.
- In late October, The Interfaith Alliance condemned Religious Right broadcaster James Dobson for comments he made in an Oklahoma newspaper, in which he accused Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) of being a "God's people hater."
- In December, Dr. Gaddy criticized television networks NBC and CBS for refusing to air a television advertisement from the United Church of Christ that emphasized the denomination's embrace of gays and lesbians in their houses of worship.



State and local Alliances also confronted instances of intolerance in their communities as well. For example, when FBI agents began visiting local mosques in Woodland, Idaho, to



“They have [TIA] raised their voices time and time again speaking out against any type of religious bigotry or targeting or profiling of the Muslim community and that’s the beautiful thing about the relationship of the Muslim community as with The Interfaith Alliance. It is truly and example of justice for all.”

Imam Mahdi Bray

interrogate local Muslims – what amounted to a fishing expedition likely to intimidate law-abiding citizens in an election year – controversy ensued, with The Interfaith Alliance of Idaho’s Pam Baldwin taking a lead role in condemning the tactic. Her work eventually succeeded in persuading the local chief of police to speak out against the FBI’s methods, and in uniting a number of faith groups together in defense of the local Muslim community.

The Interfaith Alliance of Alabama found itself in an uncommon coalition with the national Christian Coalition in support of a ballot initiative to repeal a blatantly racist 1950s provision in the Alabama state constitution, aimed at denying African-American children the right to an education. Tellingly, the state Christian Coalition parted company with its national organization, opposing the initiative, on the dubious grounds that it would have permitted “rogue” federal judges to order tax increases to fund better schools statewide. The Interfaith Alliance of Alabama’s work on the issue remains unfinished; the initiative was rejected by voters on a slender margin – testimony to the ongoing power of bigotry.

Religious Bigotry in the Campaigns

In September, The Interfaith Alliance confronted two separate instances of religious intolerance committed by the Republican National Committee. The first was a flyer distributed by the committee to Arkansas and West Virginia churchgoers accusing “liberals” of wanting to ban the Bible.

The flyer pictured a Bible with the word “banned” imprinted across its cover, and warned that “this will be Arkansas if you don’t vote.”

Separately, the Republican National Committee launched a series of anti-Kerry websites aimed at specific religious constituencies. The site’s URLs tell the story: www.kerrywrongforcatholics.com, www.kerrywrongformormons.com, and www.kerrywrongforevangelicals.com. Indeed, months after the election, web surfers who tried to visit these sites found themselves transferred to the homepage of the national Republican party.

Both efforts to use religion and manipulate the faithful richly deserved The Interfaith Alliance’s condemnation. Said Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy of the West Virginia and Arkansas flyer, “No political party can claim that it holds the monopoly on religious morality, much less that it has received divine endorsement. We call on President Bush and Republican National Committee Chair Ed Gillespie to denounce these divisive tactics and to support the appropriate healing role of religion in this nation. Manipulation of religion for partisan purposes has no place in a democracy that is founded on the Constitutional guarantee of the freedom of religion.”



Recognizing

FAITHFUL

“The Interfaith Alliance has to become an ongoing sustaining and powerful movement whose interest is to prove that religion has a healing side as well as a killing side, and that democracy is the consequence of conscience fought for by men like Thomas Helwys and so many others.”

Bill Moyers



Recognizing Faithful Friends

The Interfaith Alliance capped the year-long celebration of its tenth anniversary in October with its 7th annual *Walter Cronkite Faith & Freedom Award Gala* in New York City. The 2004 awardees:

Recognized in 1996 by *Newsweek* magazine as one of the 12 “most effective preachers” in the English-speaking world, and designated as one of “America’s greatest black preachers” by *Ebony* magazine in 1984 and 1993, *The Rev. Dr. James Alexander Forbes Jr.* is the first African-American and fifth Senior Minister of The Riverside Church in New York City.

Judith Davidson Moyers is president of Public Affairs Television, Inc., an independent production company. Her insightful and visionary production work supports the civic dream she shares with her professional partner, Bill Moyers. Her commitment to creating thoughtful, provocative, and inspiring television programs reflects the value she places on public discourse that challenges, inspires, and educates the public on civic responsibility.

The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences declared *Bill Moyers* to be among the ten most influential journalists in television news. As one of the most recognized and respected journalists in America, Moyers uses his powerful voice of faith and reason from the platforms of television, books, and speeches for incisive commentary, probing documentaries, and considered reflections on ethics and morality in American life.

At its October meeting, the Board of Directors of The Interfaith Alliance took two steps to recognize the vital role journalist Walter Cronkite has made to the cause of freedom – naming him to be honorary chair of the organization, and establishing the Walter Cronkite Legacy Giving Program through which supporters can leave bequests to the organization. Upon creation of the fund, Alliance board Chair, Rev. Dr. Gwynne Guibord and her life partner, Dr. Lo Sprague, made an inaugural pledge with the promise of \$100,000.



In February 2004, The Interfaith Alliance presented its 4th Annual Bishop P. Francis Murphy Local Activism award to The Interfaith Alliance of Hawai'i, with local Alliances in Oklahoma and Colorado selected as first and second runner-ups. In just its first year, the Hawai'i Alliance became a catalyst for cooperation among a number of community organizations, while pursuing work on issues of campaign finance reform, anti-gambling, housing discrimination, juvenile justice, and alternatives to youth incarceration.

The first runner-up for the award, The Interfaith Alliance of Oklahoma, took the lead in the state in educating the public, and even some state legislators, about the effects of President Bush's faith-based initiative on religious freedom. Oklahoma has been a pilot state for funding faith-based organizations, and TIA Oklahoma co-sponsored two public forums on the real-world impact of the initiative. The events raised sufficient concern that the state legislature established a study commission to ensure accountability.

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado, winner of the second runner-up award, was honored for its work on behalf of hate-crimes prevention legislation and civility in political campaigns, and for its educational policy forums to promote awareness and concern about the faith-based initiative, school vouchers, and the Patriot Act.

Sadly, Interfaith Alliance of Hawai'i's founder Jerry Chang passed away not long after accepting the Bishop Murphy Award on behalf of the Alliance. In addition, Margaret Ennis, president of The Interfaith Alliance of Mississippi, passed away in 2004. Both interfaith leaders left records of public service that serve as models of citizenship and compassion.



In recognition of his leadership in condemning intolerance and building interfaith dialogue, Dr. Gaddy was a proud recipient this past year of the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund's Dorothy Height Coalition-Building Award for his leadership to promote healthy interaction between religion and government.



Financial Statement

Statement of Activities

For the year ending December 31, 2004	The Interfaith Alliance	The Interfaith Alliance Foundation
Revenues		
Events	\$-	\$174,937
Foundations	\$-	\$533,330
Leadership Donors	\$59,585	\$127,716
Membership	\$4,160,209	\$-
Other Sources of Income	\$10,627	\$30,159
Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets	\$(1,174)	\$-
Total Revenues	\$4,229,247	\$866,142
Expenses		
Program Services:		
Grassroots Organizing, Religious Outreach and Issue Advocacy	\$2,092,886	\$-
Education, Research and Civil Discourse	\$-	\$654,223
Support Services:		
Management and General Operations	\$353,537	\$71,387
Fundraising	\$1,538,178	\$144,409
Total Expenditures	\$3,984,601	\$870,019
Change in Net Assets	\$244,646	\$(3,877)
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$(257,940)	\$131,763
Net Assets, End of Year	\$(13,294)	\$127,886

Statement of Position

December 31, 2004	The Interfaith Alliance	The Interfaith Alliance Foundation
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$197,464	\$187,022
Donations Receivable	\$10,400	\$111,364
Due from The Interfaith Alliance	\$150,176	\$-
Property and Equipment, Net of Accumulated	\$66,069	\$27,217
Security Deposits	\$116	\$-
Total Assets	\$424,225	\$325,603
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$437,519	\$47,541
Due to The Interfaith Alliance	\$-	\$150,176
Total Liabilities	\$437,519	\$197,717
Net Assets, Unrestricted	\$(13,294)	\$127,886
Total Net Assets	\$(13,294)	\$127,886
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$424,225	\$325,603

The work of The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation would not be possible without the contributions of tens of thousands of members and supporters whose contributions range in size from \$1 to \$10,000. We would especially like to thank the following individuals who have contributed \$500 or more in 2004:

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