

THE INTERFAITH ALLIANCE  
AND THE INTERFAITH ALLIANCE FOUNDATION



2001 ANNUAL REPORT



People of Faith  
and Good Will

Restoring  
Healthy Democracy

## Dear Friends:

Never have I been more proud of The Interfaith Alliance than I was this past year. September 11 was a horrific day in world history, one that will be remembered with sadness and anger for generations to come. But those of us in the daily practice of spiritual leadership know, too, that we have a unique obligation in such times.

The men and women of The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation are not all clergy; indeed, mine is the only ordination in our national office when our board members are not in town. Our staff reacted to the tragedy as would a pastor, imam, priest, or rabbi, reaching out to lend support and resources to those in pain, working to prevent anti-Muslim and anti-Sikh backlash and to help bring communities together. Our local Alliances and national boards sprang into action as well. Some scheduled unity events, some reached out to Muslims and Sikhs, and some met with political and religious leaders in an effort to gently guide them toward messages of inclusion. All demonstrated in word and deed the positive, healing role of religion in our society.

Although we have grown and expanded our programs significantly since we were founded, we remain very much true to our original calling. We believe the nation and religion are healthiest when religion can express itself without fear of entanglement or encumbrance from the government. We have not wavered in our opposition to abuses or manipulation of religion for partisan political purpose – whether they come from the political right or left.

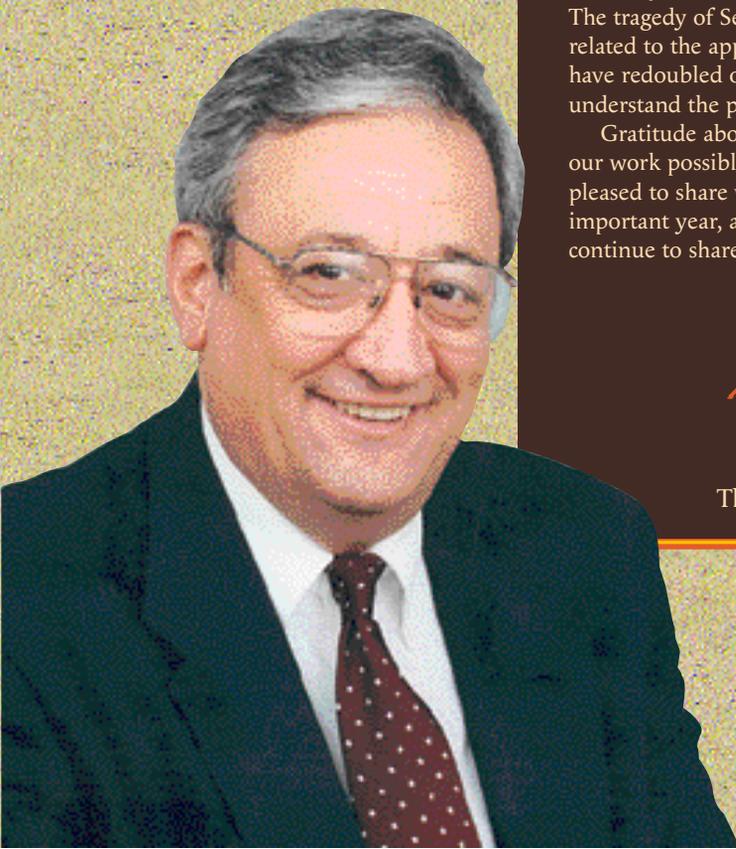
In 2001, we saw dramatic examples of both the power of religion to divide and to hurt as well as to inspire and to heal. Though we sometimes saw the vocabulary of faith appropriated for partisan political purposes, from time to time, we also heard the prophetic voice of faith calling us to our better nature, urging us to feed the hungry and house the homeless.

This year of sharp contrasts instructed, inspired, and challenged us. The tragedy of September 11 focused the public's attention on issues related to the appropriate role of religion in public life. Indeed, we have redoubled our efforts to enable the people in our nation to better understand the proper relationship between religion and government.

Gratitude abounds for all of you whose generous support has made our work possible. We are proud of what we accomplished in 2001, pleased to share with you information on our work during this important year, and eager for you to share in our pride even as you continue to share in support of the mission of this movement.



The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, *Executive Director*



# Introduction

For the world, the nation, the religious community, and for The Interfaith Alliance, 2001 was a year like no other.

As it did for all Americans, the year divided into two distinct chapters: before September 11 and after. Before the horrible events of that world-changing day, The Interfaith Alliance focused all its energies on defending the appropriate role of religion in the public policy sphere and ensuring the full spectrum of religious voices was heard in policy debates. That entailed work on a number of high-profile issues, including campaign finance reform, the Ashcroft nomination, and a still unresolved struggle over the administration's plans to provide more federal dollars to religious institutions as part of its "faith-based initiative."

After the terrorist attacks, The Interfaith Alliance (TIA) and its partner organization, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation (TIF), continued to defend religious liberty and promote the proper role of religion in

public life. But we also took on new and important roles, unique among Washington-based organizations: working to assist clergy around the nation in their post-attack pastoring, communicating a message of inclusion and acceptance for true Islam, and working to ensure the legislative response to September 11 did not harm the liberties Americans hold dear.

All of this activity – before and after September 11 – took place amid important organizational growth and development. The Interfaith Alliance's membership grew significantly in 2001, as did the capacity of its network of alliances across the nation. Similarly, the organization began building its National Religious Leaders Network, an assemblage of religious leaders from around the nation who add still more grassroots reach and provide rich religious perspectives.

In all its work in 2001, The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation sought to bring diverse religious voices to the policy arena, so the full breadth and richness of America's faith communities could be appreciated. Too often political leaders mistake the Religious Right political movement, with its vast



*The Honorable David Dinkins and Sarah Weddington*

network of well-organized and well-funded organizations, for the "voice of religion," as if people of faith in America speak with a single, monolithic voice. The Interfaith Alliance proved otherwise in 2001, demonstrating, as it has in the past and will again in the future, the Religious Right cannot claim the mantle of faith for their particular political views alone.



**"The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state and never its tool."**

*Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*



Love  
thy  
neighbor

UNITY

# Mobilizing Faith Communities

America's faith community offers a unique, prophetic vision to the nation, one that is vital to the health of the American political process. Therefore, The Interfaith Alliance works to mobilize communities of faith. Sadly, because the Religious Right sometimes has the loudest and most expensive megaphone, its arguments are mistakenly credited with being "the religious point of view." The Interfaith Alliance knows Americans of faith do not all march in lockstep and regularly reminds political leaders of the rich diversity of thought and belief in the faith community.

In 2001, that effort was particularly important, as a new administration sought to secure passage of "charitable choice" legislation which had profound and disturbing implications for religious institutions, as well as for the appropriate and vital role of religion in public life.

The heart of the president's proposal was a plan to shift government responsibility for providing social services to houses of

worship, thereby allowing for direct funding of religion. The proposal was a key element of candidate George W. Bush's message of "compassionate conservatism" during the 2000 presidential campaign.

## WELFARE REFORM AND CHARITABLE CHOICE

In truth, the Clinton administration's 1996 welfare overhaul had already ushered in the era of charitable choice. But that administration took a far more limited interpretation to the matter, essentially limiting funding to the same religious-affiliated institutions that had always been permitted to apply for federal funds. The Bush administration made clear it had a much more aggressive approach in mind.

Once in office, the new president moved quickly to pursue the initiative, establishing a White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to craft his related legislative proposals. Almost immediately, the initiative faltered. And for good



**“Despite the spin and media attention devoted to charitable choice legislation, there remains a serious lack of substantive information and thus meaningful debate on this issue within houses of worship in this country.”**

*The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy,  
Executive Director, March 16, 2001,  
Washington, DC*

## “Charitable Choice” in Practice

*In June 2001, TIA Executive Director The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, in partnership with TIA-Oklahoma City, participated in an Oklahoma City forum on charitable choice.*

*Oklahoma was the first state in the nation to take advantage of the Bush administration's newly relaxed standards for funding religious groups to provide social services under the 1996 federal welfare law. The state's early experience highlighted some of the problems critics have warned about. Gaddy explained.*

*“Here in Oklahoma, you have distributed \$100,000 to an evangelical Christian organization named as the liaison between the government office and various religions. The rationale behind the action reflected wisdom – a government office will have more difficulty dealing with religious*



*organizations than another religious organization. However, what does that say about the recipients of this money? Why must \$100,000, which could have gone to social services, be used to cover administrative costs? And, which non-Christian religions are likely to be willing to work with an organization whose historical purpose has been not to help them do their work better but to convert them to Christian work?”*

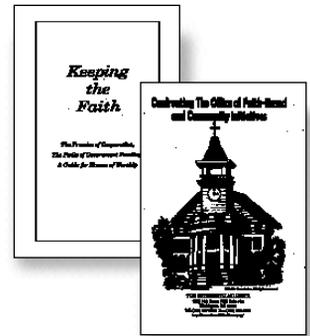
reason: what had been a winning piece of Campaign rhetoric when painted in broad strokes was a well-nettled thicket of complex issues when translated into public policy.

The administration's apparent intention was to minimize debate over the proposal's very significant problems. But the vague "we'll work out the details later" promise was cold comfort to many in the faith community. The Interfaith Alliance led the effort to force a substantive discussion on the proposal's implications.

In March, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation released "Keeping the Faith: The Promise of Cooperation, The Perils of Government Funding: A Guide for Houses of Worship." A collaboration with the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the resource guide offers advice to religious institutions about whether and how to accept public funds or otherwise cooperate with the government. Consistent with The Interfaith Alliance Foundation's roots, the publication did more than present a legal analysis of the matter. Noting that "not everything that is legal is right," "Keeping the Faith" grappled

both with legal and ethical issues, from the perspective of the religious institutions affected.

The guide touched on the full range of concerns about charitable choice, issues emphasized by The Interfaith Alliance Executive Director The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy in his many speaking appearances on the subject. Among them: the threat to constitutional separation of religion and government; the unanswered question of whether religious institutions would be held to comparable regulatory standards for fire and safety, health and more; the danger of employment discrimination by religious institutions receiving federal funds; the challenge to the missional integrity of the religious institution; the problem of competition among religious groups for limited dollars; concerns about government regulators choosing to fund one religious entity over another; and the threat that religious institutions accepting government funding might sacrifice their "prophetic voice" on important policy matters of the day.



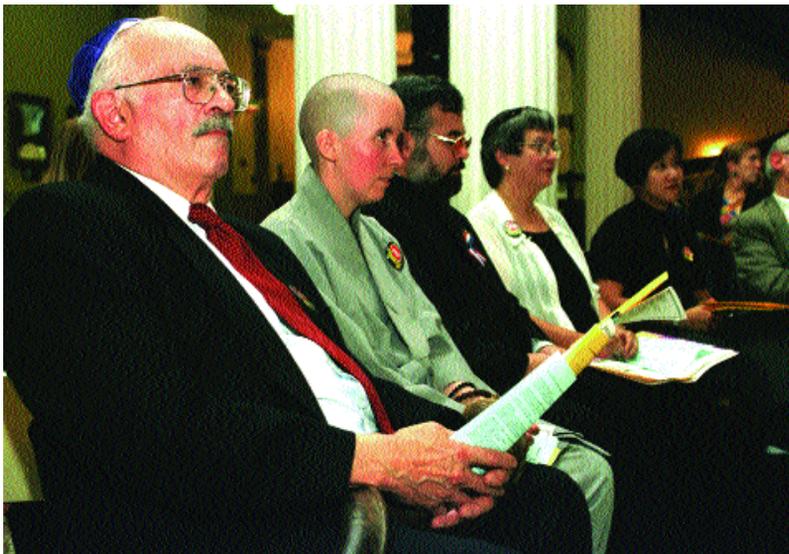
## DEBATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The Interfaith Alliance Foundation and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs distributed guides to 35,000 institutions across the land. But the campaign was only just beginning. There followed a series of TIA-sponsored forums around the country – in Cincinnati, Ohio; Ocala, Florida; Lexington, Kentucky; Waterbury, Connecticut; Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Oklahoma; St. Louis, Missouri, and in the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C. Local Interfaith Alliances sponsored many of these events.

In addition, The Interfaith Alliance joined forces with a host of other religious organizations in launching a grassroots education campaign to engage diverse faith and civic leaders in debate over President Bush's faith-based proposals, as well as the larger issue of how best to serve those in need.

The Interfaith Alliance also published a guide for its local Alliances, "Confronting the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives." Aimed at encouraging Alliances to create thoughtful discussion about the issue, the guide includes practical tips on issues to stress, types of forums to consider, media outreach efforts on the issue, and other important information.

The series of initiatives by The Interfaith Alliance and its allies succeeded in slowing the administration's rush to adopt new standards for funding faith-based institutions, making way for a more thorough dialogue about the proposal's implications. By the end of 2001, the fate of the proposal remained uncertain, and the subject looms large on The Interfaith Alliance's 2002 agenda.



Massachusetts Interfaith Alliance holds the Vigil Against Hate 2001, Boston, MA. Picture courtesy of Marilyn Humphries.





## Religious Affiliations of Supporters

African Methodist Episcopal · African Methodist Episcopal Zion · Alliance of Baptists · American Baptist · American Ethical Union · Anabaptist · Anglican · Animist · Asatru · Baha'i · Buddhist, Theravada · Buddhist, Nichiren · Buddhist, Pure Land (Amitabha) · Buddhist, Zen (Chan) · Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) · Christian Methodist Episcopal · Christian Union · Church of the Brethren · Church of Christ, Scientist · Church of God · The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints · Community Churches · Congregationalist · Cooperative Baptist Fellowship · Eastern Orthodox · Ecumenical Catholic · Episcopal · Evangelical Lutheran · Free Will Baptist · General Baptist · Greek Orthodox · Hindu (various schools) · Humanist · Jain · Jewish, Conservative · Jewish, Orthodox · Jewish, Reconstructionist · Jewish, Reform · Liberal Catholic · Lutheran · Mennonite · Metaphysical Church · Methodist · Metropolitan Community Churches · Moravian · Muslim · National Baptist Convention of America · National Baptist Convention, USA · Native American/Inuit (various) · Old Catholic · Pentecostal · Presbyterian · Progressive National Baptist Convention · Reformed Church of America · Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) · Roman Catholic · Russian Orthodox · Salvation Army · Shinto · Sikh · Seventh-day Adventist · Southern Baptist Convention · Taoist · Theosophist · Unitarian Universalist Association · United Church of Christ · United School of Christianity · Wiccan · Zoroastrian

# Promoting Civility in Public Discourse

**“To those who have lost loved ones in this and other terrorist acts I say I share your grief. I am sorry that you have become victims of senseless violence. But let this sad episode not make you vengeful because no amount of violence is going to bring you inner peace. Anger and hate never do. The memory of those victims who have died in this and other violent incidents around the world will be better preserved and more meaningfully commemorated if we all learn to forgive. Let us dedicate our lives to creating a peaceful, respectful and understanding world.”**

*Arun Gandhi, Founder and Director of the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, Member of The Interfaith Alliance Board of Directors*

America’s political dialogue can be harsh and unforgiving. The healthy sparks of honest policy disagreements are too often fanned into partisan flames. In the midst of all the shouting, the public interest is sometimes lost. In recent years, much of the harshness in politics has turned on matters of faith, as some candidates and political groups have tried to win converts to their political cause by seeking to divide Americans along religious lines. Therefore, The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation work to promote civility in public discourse both as a means to a richer and more substantive policy discussion, and as a way to combat religious bigotry.

## SEPTEMBER 11

Not surprisingly, much of the organizations’ work in this area in 2001 was related to the events of September 11. Almost immediately following the attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, speculation began that they were the handiwork of “Muslim extremists.” It became instantly clear to The Interfaith Alliance leaders that the potential for a hateful backlash against American Muslims was strong.

“We knew we had several important roles to play after September 11,” said Executive

Director The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy in reflecting on the organizations’ work several months later. “We had to help religious leaders minister to their flocks. We had to send a message of acceptance to Muslims, making clear that we understood the difference between Osama bin Laden’s twisted interpretation of Islam and the interpretations observed in mosques across the United States and most of the rest of the world. And, we had to do what we could to make sure our national leaders sounded the right tones on this issue – that they were sensitive to the Muslim community here in America. Frankly, the president had not until that time demonstrated particular sensitivity to the diversity of faith in the United States, and we were worried. I’m pleased to say he got it exactly right, and we commended him for it when he did. But at the time, it was a matter of great concern.”

The organizations’ work began the night of the terrorist attacks. By chance, several Interfaith Alliances around the nation had planned public outreach events that evening, on such topics as the Religious Right and charitable choice. But that night they were transformed into opportunities for communities to share their sorrow and to renew their commitment to the principles of diversity and pluralism.



*The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado joined an estimated 3000 participants, representing 40 different religious traditions, to encircle the Islamic Center mosque as a show of support for Denver’s Muslim community.*

## LOCAL ALLIANCES SWING INTO ACTION

The next morning, The Interfaith Alliance issued a statement extending its condolences to those touched by the attacks. It called on Americans to “hold fast to the core values” of the nation’s great religious traditions, and in so doing to deter hateful stereotyping and vengeful attacks on Muslims and Islamic centers of worship.

A number of local Alliance affiliates moved quickly as well. The Denver Interfaith Alliance sponsored a human chain of more than 1,000 people holding hands, surrounding a local mosque, as a symbol of the community’s embrace. So many supporters showed up, the mosque was encircled three times. The Interfaith Alliance of Wake County, North Carolina immediately scheduled a meeting with their mayor to talk about possible backlash problems and to help plan preventive and healing measures. Government offices called on TIA affiliates in many cases to lead “STOP the HATE” events, ecumenical services or other local vigils – in Peoria, Illinois; Rochester, New York; Marion County, Florida; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Brevard County, Florida; Nashville, Tennessee; Wake County, North Carolina; Boston, Massachusetts; Saratoga, New York; and Pittsburg, Kansas.

## ON THE INTERNET

The national office of The Interfaith Alliance Foundation began piecing together a unique Internet resource designed to help clergy pastor their flocks in the days immediately following the disaster. It included practical suggestions for easing community tensions, prayers for peace from each of the major religions, a rich array of resources for people wanting to learn more about Islam, and a host of sample sermons from around the country on the topic. Another feature was a message board for inspiration and support, which allowed website visitors to read or add uplifting messages. In the days and

## The Interfaith Alliance Uses the Web to Heal Wounds of Division

“We struggled with how best to use our web resources after September 11,” says Kaaryn Sanon, webmaster of [www.interfaithalliance.org](http://www.interfaithalliance.org). “We wanted to be a resource for religious leaders and a source of comfort for those Americans in search of spiritual understanding of September 11. But we also wanted to document the scope of the challenge – to capture in some way the very real backlash taking shape against Muslims and, for that matter, Sikhs and Arab-Americans.”

“Our solution was to divide the 9/11 portion of the site into two groupings – one under the headline ‘Coming Together,’ where we provided

resources and related stories of how the tragedy was uniting Americans of faith; and the other under the heading, ‘Torn Apart,’ where we faithfully documented the wrenching costs of the backlash of hate.”

“We eventually came to understand our little editorial choice as a metaphor for the larger struggle at play in America in the days and months following the attacks. Religion was, for most Americans, a source of unity and comfort. But for an unfortunate few, it was an excuse for ugliness. That is an eternal challenge we face: to allow faith to unite us even where our religious practices differ and to not use those differences as a pretext for violence.”

weeks following September 11, people, looking for a spiritual response, could be seen in the three-fold increase of visitors to our site.

Later, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation devoted its entire fall issue of *Interfaith Insights* to the subject, including essays from religious leaders of diverse traditions.

In all their post-September 11 activity, The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation worked to communicate a message that has ever been at the heart of the organizations’ work: America’s religious diversity must be respected and cherished, not used as grounds for division and hate. “September 11 was the source of untold agony,” Gaddy concludes. “We felt a genuine obligation to make a significant contribution by educating leaders and citizens about America’s rich diversity and by serving as a clarion voice for tolerance and unity. I’m proud that we rose to the challenge.”



Walter Cronkite Faith & Freedom Award Selection Committee member and 2001 Luncheon Guest Speaker Bill Moyers

## Raising Questions for Ashcroft

“It is our concern that Senator Ashcroft, as Attorney General, would be hostile to the vigorous defense of ... vital precedents. For example, at a 1998 gathering of the Christian Coalition, Senator Ashcroft said of these precedents, ‘A robbed elite have taken the wall of separation built to protect the church and made it a wall of religious oppression....’ [W]e have grave concerns about the application of these beliefs in his position as the nation’s top legal authority.”

*The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, in testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee, during consideration of John Ashcroft’s nomination to be Attorney General, January 17, 2001, Washington, DC*



# Building a Movement to Stand Against Intolerance & Manipulation of Religion

American history is the story of an ever-broadening circle of inclusion. Slowly – often too slowly – but surely, Americans have put aside prejudices and looked beyond differences. The Interfaith Alliance was founded to combat intolerance in the name of religion and in 2001, continued the steady work of building a movement to counter religious political extremism.

Such excesses have come to be almost routine for the Religious Right. But one development in 2001 was anything but routine: Pat Robertson's announcement that he was leaving the helm of the Christian Coalition. Precisely what the move will mean to the Christian Coalition remains to be seen. One thing is certain, however, the political might the Christian Coalition lent to the Religious Right, and particularly to its standing within the Republican party, will not change anytime soon, no matter what Robertson does.

## THE ASHCROFT NOMINATION

Indeed, it was with that very constituency in mind, no doubt, that President George W. Bush, only just victorious and presumably eager to project a centrist image, nevertheless reached to the far right wing of his party to nominate Religious Right favorite John Ashcroft to be Attorney General of the United States.

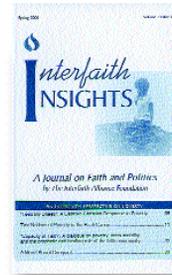
The Interfaith Alliance recognized immediately that the appointment raised serious questions about how or whether an Ashcroft-led Justice Department would enforce religious liberty and the separation of religion and government. As Executive Director The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy noted in testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee weighing the nomination:

*[T]he United States Department of Justice will play a defining role in determining to what extent our country is committed to the principles of religious diversity and tol-*

*erance. We believe that the Judiciary Committee needs to investigate the very real possibility, based upon prior public statements by Senator Ashcroft, that the institutional wall between religion and government could be weakened – and further, that the federal government's commitment to neutral treatment of all religious traditions could be challenged by his assumption of the office of Attorney General.*

The Interfaith Alliance also worked to involve a diverse group of religious voices in the call for a thorough examination of the Ashcroft

nomination, once again playing a unique role in an important national debate. At a Washington press conference in mid-January, leaders of Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, and Sikh communities joined The Interfaith Alliance in voicing concerns over the nominee's record. And The Interfaith



Alliance spokespeople conducted numerous media interviews on the subject, including a network television appearance on ABC.

## GROWING INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTH

In these and other efforts throughout the year, The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation were able to call on an ever-growing network of organizations, religious leaders and activists. In addition to its highest ever member-

## Among the notable examples of religious intolerance in 2001:

- The Revs. Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson blamed the September 11 attacks on “abortionists and the feminists and the gays and lesbians.” “God continues to lift the curtain and allow the enemies of America to give us probably what we deserve,” Falwell told a television audience as Robertson quickly agreed. Both later sought to distance themselves from their words, without actually issuing retractions or apologies.
- Earlier in the year, Falwell unwittingly demonstrated one of the likely hazards of the president's plan to greatly expand “charitable choice,” saying that with respect to funding to Muslim groups, “Islam should be out the door before they knock.”
- State after state in 2001, extremists' organizations pushed legislation to mandate the posting of the Ten

Commandments in schools and other public buildings. To skirt the obvious separation of church and state problem and concerns about religious diversity – posting the Ten Commandments is plainly intended to advance, and would in fact, promote religious beliefs – supporters typically assert that they are instead interested in the Commandments for their “historical” significance.

- In Congress, the Religious Right's allies pushed legislation that would turn Americans' desire for meaningful campaign finance reform on its ear. Their legislation would permit churches, synagogues, mosques, and other religious institutions, under color of tax exemption, to endorse political candidates and to spend up to 20 percent of their revenues on lobbying activities.

ship of 150,000, the organizations have harnessed technology to create fast and efficient methods of communication and activism.

The organizations' Interfaith Internet Community Action Network (ICAN), accessible via The Interfaith Alliance website, has attracted an impressive 12,000 members and activists to its listserv. Participants receive periodic action-alert emails directing them to specific action opportunities on issues related to their expressed interests. Recipients frequently forward the messages to their friends, colleagues and allies, multiplying their reach. Between the website, the listserv and local forwarding, several

of the alerts in 2001 generated more than 10,000 emails and faxes to Capitol Hill, all targeted to specific members of Congress at moments when their action was most needed.

For local Alliances and affiliated organizations, the website now features an activists-only, password-protected area that includes how-to resources, activism tips, downloadable versions of speeches and statements by The Interfaith Alliance leaders and board members, a media relations handbook, a master calendar of events as reported by local Alliances, and more.

The 2001 launch of the National Religious Leaders Network combines

print and electronic outreach in a most promising way. The more than 2,000 members of the Network receive a variety of services from The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation, including the print version of the organizations' scholarly journal on faith and politics, *Interfaith Insights*. The organizations regularly post sermon ideas and customized information on upcoming Congressional action. Over the course of 2001, The Interfaith Alliance called on the leaders to take part in a handful of activities – a local event, signing onto a letter to a decision-maker, distributing Interfaith Alliance materials to their own networks, or other specific effort. Work in 2002 will be built on the accomplishments of 2001, as the Network seeks to play a key role in monitoring local campaigns' compliance with the Alliance's guidelines on legal and ethical ways congregations can and should participate in the electoral process.

Another important outreach vehicle is the Alliance's National Leadership Gathering. Held in late March in 2001, the annual event brings together the leaders of local Alliances for issue discussions and training on grassroots organizing, fundraising, local media, and more. The 2001 session attracted more than 50 core local leaders – the highest attendance in the sessions' five-year history. In the estimation of Interfaith Alliance grassroots organizers, the 2001 session's success played an important role in both the quality and quantity of local affiliate activity in 2001 – much of it focused on charitable choice. 

## On Religious Diversity and Public Policy

*Think of the power that is ours when our consensus on policy positions - whether it is poverty relief or civility or education or human rights - emerges not from a single-minded agreement on politics, but from the often divergent paths we each follow to do what is right and faithful in the context of our unique commitments. Think of the difference between saying, 'America, we, your citizens, agree to search for your promise in our faith,' and 'America, we have searched our faith and agree - you are the promise of your citizens.' ... Our responsibility is to remind our government constantly*

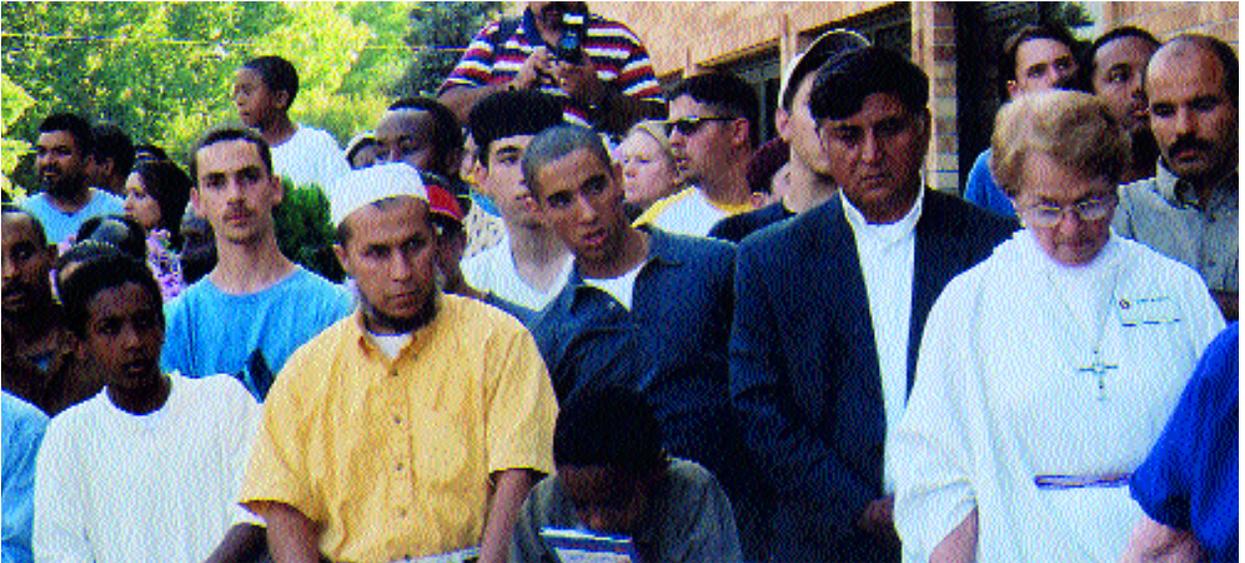
*that care for the vulnerable, for the needy, for the tired, poor and huddled masses yearning to breathe free cannot be accomplished by throwing money at programs, or even by subcontracting those programs to caring religious communities... Good government, our government must be our partner in the goal to provide a better life for all Americans, not only, but especially for the poor, the vulnerable, the under served.*

*Rabbi Jack Moline, at The Interfaith Alliance's National Leadership Gathering, March 25, 2001, Washington, DC*

*The Interfaith Alliance and the American Assembly co-sponsor the Religion in Houston Public Life Assembly, Houston, TX.*



# Embracing and Giving Voice to Diversity



*An interfaith prayer vigil in Denver, CO.*

The Interfaith Alliance celebrates America's diversity, particularly its rich variety of faith traditions. Only by embracing diversity can our differences be a source of national strength.

In practical terms, The Interfaith Alliance's embrace of diversity takes the form of tireless work to ensure every faith community's voice is heard in the political dialogue, not just the voices of the Religious Right. By building genuine bonds of trust with the leaders of America's minority and majority religions, The Interfaith Alliance has become one of the few organizations in the nation that can quickly and effectively reach out to the full spectrum of religious thought.

One important initiative in this regard in 2001 was The Interfaith Alliance's work to bring voices of faith into the ongoing dialogue over campaign finance reform. For some, the connection between faith and campaign cash may seem distant. The Religious Right certainly did not see it that way. A variety of extremist organizations weighed in, claiming along the way to be the true voice of faith in America.

Not surprisingly, the Religious Right's view on campaign finance appeared to be largely the product of movement leaders' desire to protect their partisan political agenda. They opposed reform proposals, echoing arguments made

by GOP leaders. But in the absence of other clearly articulated voices of faith in the debate, the danger that the Christian Coalition and its allies will be mistaken for legitimate messengers is acute.

The Interfaith Alliance's interest in campaign finance grows not just from the desire to balance the Religious Right's participation in the dialogue, but also from a deeper concern about the corrosive effect the current finance system has on the practice of democracy.

Since the organizations' earliest days, the conduct of political campaigns has been an important priority. That experience has led to the inescapable conclusion that the system's failings are directly responsible for the enormous public cynicism about the political process. Americans hold politicians in generally low esteem, perceiving that they spend more time raising money from wealthy donors than addressing their constituents' true concerns.

As national religious organizations that hear regularly from people in mosques, synagogues, churches, and other worship centers across the nation, The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation recognize the importance of campaign finance reform. It is not merely a technical tinkering with election regulations, but an issue that goes to

## A Mainstream Reaction to Religious Political Extremism

**“Over the years, Falwell and Robertson have gained considerable influence. Their tactics are shrewd. They twist the traditional healing role of religion into an intolerant, political platform. But using religion as a tool to push their personal political beliefs – especially in a time of national tragedy – not only insults people of faith, but it also diminishes the positive healing role religion can play in public life.”**

*Walter Cronkite, March 2002*

the essence of the ethical and moral life of the nation, involving the core values that unite us: honesty, integrity, and fairness.

## PEOPLE OF FAITH AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM: DETAILED SURVEY RESEARCH

With generous support from the Pew Charitable Trusts, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation, in coalition with Colby College, set out in 2001 to understand how people of faith think about campaign finance reform. We contracted with the Gallup Organization to conduct a public opinion poll and ten focus groups on the subject, gauging separately the views of self-identified people of faith and of clergy.

The findings affirmed the view that people of faith regard the current campaign system as contrary to their core values, and it undercut the Christian Coalition's repeated assertion that people of faith opposed campaign finance reform in general, and restrictions on last-minute, interest-group advertising in particular. The Interfaith Alliance Foundation released the final report on the Gallup research at the National

Press Club in Washington, D.C. on September 6, 2001.

While the Gallup research was ongoing, The Interfaith Alliance also worked to compile and share the views of the various faith traditions on reform. Here again, the purpose was to counter Christian Coalition and its allies' claim that they speak for people of faith. Indeed, 14 religious organizations, representing practically the entire spectrum of faith in America, furnished statements supporting meaningful reform. The Interfaith Alliance distributed the statements to members of Congress and other key decision-makers. In addition, the statements, the poll results and a range of resource materials became the basis for [www.callforreform.org](http://www.callforreform.org), an election and campaign finance reform website, maintained by The Interfaith Alliance Foundation.

## FINDING RELIGION'S VOICE

Two other important 2001 initiatives of The Interfaith Alliance Foundation sought to embrace and give voice to diversity. First was a series of three gatherings at major American seminaries – in Atlanta, Chicago and Berkeley. The topic for

conversation: How to more effectively address the need for sustained attention to public theology among the next generation of religious leaders in the United States. The organization's interest in the issue sprang from feedback from clergy who said they felt ill-prepared by their divinity school experience to encourage responsible civic participation or to respond to divisive public debates. The three resulting events nicely complemented the ongoing work of the National Religious Leaders Network, generating forthright and creative conversation.

With the assistance of theological administrators and educators in [each](#)



*The Interfaith Alliance President and Bishop of Washington, Pro tempore, Jane Holmes Dixon*

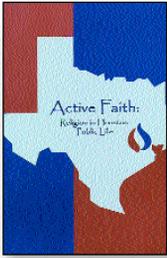




### Campaign Finance Reform and People of Faith

“These polls emphasize the strong beliefs that people of faith and clergy have concerning campaign finance reform and free speech, and these groups, collectively, are highly motivated to make a difference. While many of those surveyed are unsure of how they can effect change on an individual level, we can play a vital role in mobilizing clergy to educate their congregants about taking action on campaign finance reform.”

*The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy,  
Washington, DC*



site, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation brought together administrative personnel, faculty members, students, and local religious leaders for vibrant and thoughtful discussions about the relationship between personal faith, interfaith communities, and political participation, both in current seminary education and in the present realities of local parish ministry. The conversations will serve as a springboard for future work on the subject.

Finally, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation forged a new partnership in 2001 with The American Assembly. The Assembly

works to encourage thoughtful discussion on pressing matters of public policy, as well as to create new dialogue among opinion leaders. The organization’s method makes it truly unique: A typical Assembly event would unite several dozen men and women of national repute in a multi-day conversation on a given subject, leading to a consensus report from the group.

One of several subjects The American Assembly has tackled is the role of religion in public life – a conversation encompassing charitable choice, religion in the schools and more. The Assembly’s events have included participants from around the nation. But in August of 2001, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation and the Assembly collaborated on a dialogue specific to Houston. By one participant’s account, they “sought to identify those values shared among



the many religions in Houston. Where differences emerged, they were openly discussed, without divisiveness, in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The intention behind these efforts was to examine how the shared religious values could help resolve non-religious issues.” The result was a series of enlightening conversations, and a shared consensus that reflected flexibility and compromise on the part of the participants. 

## Civil Rights, Minimum Wage, Civil Liberties

While most of The Interfaith Alliance’s legislative work in 2001 dealt with “charitable choice” and campaign finance reform, other issues demanded the organization’s attention as well.

■ During debate over reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the federal government’s chief funding vehicle for public education, Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) introduced an amendment to prohibit federal funding to school districts that barred the Boy Scouts of America from using school facilities because of the group’s overtly anti-gay policies. The Interfaith Alliance worked to oppose the amendment and to mobilize organizations of faith to oppose it as well. Helms succeeded nevertheless.

■ In response to the release of a report on the disturbing incidence of hate crimes, The Interfaith Alliance

joined with other religious organizations in March in calling for passage of a Hate Crimes Prevention Act. Bills in both houses of Congress remained bottled up in committee.

■ In July, the Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy issued a blistering statement, criticizing the Bush administration’s support for language in prospective charitable choice legislation to permit the Salvation Army to discriminate against gays and lesbians while accepting federal funding. In exchange, news reports said, the administration won the Salvation Army’s support for the administration’s initiative.

■ In June, The Interfaith Alliance joined other religious leaders in a coalition push for an increase in the minimum wage. “If we strive to be a fair and just society,” said the Rev. Dr. Gaddy in announcing the organization’s support, “then we have a moral obligation to address the

appalling gap between the haves and have-nots in our nation.”

■ In the wake of September 11, as Congress considered fast-track legislation drastically restricting defendants’ rights, The Interfaith Alliance joined a diverse group of religious leaders, urging that cooler heads prevail. Said The Rev. Dr. Gaddy: “It is incumbent upon Congress to not let the actions of September 11 cause us to ignore our fundamental civil liberties and civil rights as we seek to deal with issues of national security.”

■ During the fall of 2001, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation strengthened our relationships with the advocacy organizations affiliated with the Muslim and Sikh community, as violence and bigotry toward these communities escalated. We worked together on several cooperative ventures, including addressing religious and racial profiling at airports.

# Recognizing Faithful Servants



2001 Walter Cronkite Faith & Freedom Award recipients, Chet Edwards and Rabbi Steven Jacobs



Twice during the course of 2001, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation paused to honor the contributions of important colleagues and allies. In May, Bill Moyers joined the organization to award its third annual *Walter Cronkite Faith & Freedom Award* to U.S. Rep. Chet Edwards of Texas and to Rabbi Steven Jacobs of Temple Kol Tikvah in Woodland Hills, California.

Representative Edwards was honored for his longtime role as an advocate of religious freedom and defender of liberty. In particular, Representative Edwards has played an important role in raising awareness among fellow members of Congress on the hazards of “charitable choice.”

Rabbi Jacobs has compiled an impressive record, creating positive

community change in times of crisis. He has worked to build interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Jews, to promote racial justice and labor rights, both nationally and in his community of Los Angeles.

On March 25, The Interfaith Alliance Foundation presented its first annual Bishop P. Francis Murphy Memorial Local Activism Award to the Interfaith Alliance of Central California (IACC) at a dinner ceremony in Washington. Since 1998, IACC has worked in Fresno to foster interfaith dialogue, while creating opportunities for meaningful civic participation. The Alliance has been particularly active protecting public education; promoting diverse, interfaith inclusion in civic events; and cultivating unprecedented dialogue between the local Jewish and Muslim communities. The IACC was chosen as the first to receive the award because their past year’s work most embodied the mission of promoting the positive role of religion in public life.



The Interfaith Alliance honors outstanding local activists.



# Faith & Freedom Circle

The Interfaith Alliance and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation would like to thank the following dedicated individuals and institutions who have contributed \$500 or more in 2001.

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# Financial Statement

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the year ending December 31, 2001	The Interfaith Alliance	The Interfaith Alliance Foundation
<b>Revenues</b>		
Events	3,025	106,521
Foundations	–	774,517
Leadership Donors	29,280	57,155
Membership	2,089,393	–
Other Institutional Support	5,035	2,800
Other Sources of Income	140,206	31,303
Gain on Disposal of Fixed Assets	3,506	–
Net Assets Released from Restriction		
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$2,270,445</b>	<b>\$972,296</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Program Services:		
Grassroots Organizing, Religious Outreach and Issue Advocacy Education, Research and Civil Discourse	1,551,585	–
Education, Research and Civil Discourse	–	787,057
Support Services:		
Management and General Operations	142,639	93,407
Fundraising	647,788	172,423
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$2,342,012</b>	<b>\$1,052,887</b>
Change in Net Assets	( 71,567 )	( 80,591 )
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	363,948	534,233
Net Assets, End of Year	\$292,381	\$453,642

## STATEMENT OF POSITION

December 31 2001	The Interfaith Alliance	The Interfaith Alliance Foundation
<b>Assets</b>		
Current Assets		
Cash	157,549	213,435
Certificates of Deposit	200,000	248,000
Due from The Interfaith Alliance	–	9,239
Property and Equipment, Net of Accumulated Security Deposits	27,527	20,578
Security Deposits	3,899	–
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$388,975</b>	<b>\$491,252</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	87,355	37,610
Due to The Interfaith Alliance Foundation	9,239	–
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$96,594</b>	<b>\$37,610</b>
Net Assets, Unrestricted	292,381	383,625
Net Assets, Temporarily Restricted	–	70,017
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>292,381</b>	<b>453,642</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$388,975</b>	<b>\$491,252</b>

Full audited statements available on request from the national office.

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### The Interfaith Alliance Mission Statement

The purpose of The Interfaith Alliance is to promote the positive and healing role of religion in public life through encouraging civic participation, facilitating community activism, and challenging religious political extremism.

### The Interfaith Alliance Foundation Mission Statement

The mission of The Interfaith Alliance Foundation is to promote the positive and healing role of religion in public life through education, research, and civil discourse.



THE  
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Phone: 202.639.6370  
Fax: 202.639.6375  
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