

**16 November 2003 - Speech at St James' by B Chaudhry**

**A message from RoadPeace,**

**UK's national charity for road traffic victims**

This year we are celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of this Special Remembrance Day, on which we remember those killed and injured on our roads and their families and friends, also the police, ambulance and fire and rescue services, as well as the many others who are affected by road death and injury.

The day was initiated by our charity to provide to the huge group of road victims and bereaved families acknowledgement of their loss and suffering, which were largely ignored by society until then.

From only 3 church services in 1994, their numbers rose quickly, to 20 by 1999, and some 30 special services each year since then. Many other places of worship also remember road victims in their prayers, and schools in their assemblies in the week leading up to this Day.

RoadPeace introduced the idea of a common Remembrance Day to the European Federation of Road Traffic Victims, which we joined in 1993. This was taken up enthusiastically, and from 1996 the day was observed as European Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims in many countries in Europe.

Because road deaths and injuries are a global disaster, with a shocking 1.2 million people killed and 50 million injured worldwide each year, our Remembrance Day has now spread beyond Europe and has, starting with today, become **World Day of Remembrance and Hope for Road Traffic Victims!**

**So today, our sadness and despair, and hope for an end to this preventable carnage, are shared by millions of people across the globe.**

And there is a basis for hope - there are signs now that the personal suffering and struggle of victims, and the 12-year efforts of our charity to change attitudes, have not been in vain.

The great support at this service and at the many others today, is one of those signs.

**Another** is a very public event next Tuesday, linked to today's Remembrance Day, namely a projection of images of road victims and of road crash statistics onto the City Hall building from 5pm to

midnight. This unique event is sponsored by the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor of London, and we are very glad this is taking place and hope it will be seen by many people and receive wide publicity.

**Another** sign is the fact that the World Health Organisation has begun to address this huge public health disaster and that it is dedicating its anniversary day on 7 April next year to Safer Roads. Even the slogan for this day - **Road Safety is no accident!** is **another** sign – together with the fact that the World Health Organisation invited six Advocacy NGOs, RoadPeace among them, to a 2-day seminar in Geneva in September to discuss plans for cooperation.

Yet **another** sign is the adoption by the United Nation's General Assembly of a resolution on the **GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY CRISIS**, to which the Secretary General Kofi Anan replied with a 12 page report. Here is a brief quote from this report:

**“Road traffic injuries are a global problem affecting all sectors of society. To date, road safety has received insufficient attention at the international and national levels. This has resulted in part from a lack of information on the magnitude of the problem and its preventability; a fatalistic approach to road crashes; and a lack of the political responsibility and multidisciplinary collaboration needed to tackle it effectively. However, much can be done to reduce the problem of road crashes.”**

Kofi Anan also said “Improving road safety requires strong political will on the part of Governments” and “Strong political advocacy is required”. Not once was the word “accident” used in his report.

RoadPeace would like to remind this congregation that our helpline is available every day of the year, to anyone who needs it. We also offer other opportunities for public recognition and tributes to loved ones – with our Internet memorial site, which we launched one year ago today and which had just had its hundredth memorial entered yesterday, with planting a tree at the RoadPeace Wood, which is part of the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, and with our REMEMBER ME roadside memorials and a new REMEMBER ME book initiative, which will be launched at City Hall on Tuesday. We hope that the Remember Me initiatives will both draw attention to the feelings of families and the impact on them, as well as help raise much needed funds to ensure our charity will be able to continue its important work.

**Leaflets for all of these are available here today, together with information about the work of RoadPeace and on how to join and work with us.**

**We are grateful to everyone who has contributed to this service and to everyone supporting it today – Many thanks to all!**