



מועצה בין דתית מתאמת בישראל ע"ר
مجلس التنسيق بين الأديان في إسرائيل

The Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel



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ICCI UPDATE

20 Elul, 5767 3 September 2007

20 Sha'aban 1428 A.H.

Dear friends,

At this special season of the year --sacred this year both to Jews and to Muslims in Israel and around the world-- we in the ICCI wish our Jewish friends a *Shanah Tovah u'metukah* ("A Happy and Sweet Year") and our Muslim friends a *Ramadan Kareem* ("May Allah make (your) Ramadan Period Generous"). This is a season of rest and reflection, both internally and communally, with family and friends. As we look back upon the past year—and look forward to the new one—we are grateful for the blessings that we share and mindful of the challenges we face to repair the world, in partnership with God. At this time of year, we are called upon not only to pray for peace, but to act for peaceful coexistence in our communities, in our countries and in the world, as it says in our prayer on the High Holidays, *Va'ya'asu kulam agudah ahat la-asot r'tzonchah b'levav shalem*—"May everyone unite in one human family to do God's will with heartfelt devotion."



Dr. Ron Kronish, rabbi
Director, ICCI

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

SEPT 11TH COMMEMORATION IN COOPERATION WITH YMCA

ICCI will hold a 9/11 Commemoration in cooperation with the Jerusalem International YMCA in West Jerusalem on Sept. 11th at 16:00, with the participation of the Ambassador of the USA Richard H. Jones. The event will take place at the YMCA, located at 26 King David Street in Jerusalem. The ambassador, along with Dorothy Harman, Chairperson of the YMCA, and Dr. Deborah Weissman, Co-chairperson of ICCI, will offer reflections on the meaning of this day. Religious leaders and participants of the various ICCI and YMCA Arab-Jewish coexistence programs will take part in this event.

ICCJ 2008

2008 ICCJ Conference, entitled "The Contribution of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Dialogue to Peace-Building in the Middle East," will take place in Jerusalem 22–25 June 2008. Additional information will be available at <http://www.icci.org.il/iccj2008>.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

KEDEM - Voices for Religious Reconciliation

- July Encounter: Members of KEDEM met on July 9th at Kibbutz Ein HaNatziv in the Beit Shean Valley where they were hosted by Rabbi Eli Kahn, a veteran member of KEDEM and the director of the Young Women's Bet Midrash of the Religious Kibbutz Movement at Kibbutz Ein HaNatziv. At the encounter, a Dvar Torah about Tisha B'Av was presented by Rabbi Ronen Lubitch, rabbi of Nir Etzion (south of Haifa).
- Plans for 2007: plans were made for KEDEM programs for the second half of 2007, including a fall seminar in Seville, Spain, to be hosted by the Tres Culturas Foundation and Fundación Pluralismo y Convivencia, and a Winter Seminar in Jerusalem at the Konrad Adenauer Center in Mishkenot Sha'ananim, to be co-sponsored by ICCI and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.
- KEDEM Educational Outreach—Teachers' Study Session: In the beginning of July, ICCI conducted a study session for Jewish high school teachers, introducing them to the teacher's guide **I'm from... Biram Village and Kfar Etzion - Stories from 1948**. The session, organized by Ms. Jill Levenfeld and Mr. Yigal Aricha, aimed at presenting the booklet as a tool to raise awareness to the humanity of the "Other". The booklet introduces the narrative of two villagers from the Palestinian village of Biram and from the Jewish Village, Kfar Etzion, and the implications of the 1948 war on their lives. A thought-provoking discussion developed amongst the teachers who participated in the seminar. This program is an outgrowth of the Kedem action projects of 2006.



ICCI's Jerusalem Women as Catalysts for Peace

A group of women participating in ICCI's Jerusalem Women as Catalysts for Peace traveled to the Dead Sea for a three day retreat in June. As an addition to the regular meetings, this retreat offered a unique opportunity to continue the life story process, as well as many other experiences - including prayer, meals, song and dance, as well as midnight swims in the Dead Sea. The stories shared by the women raised intense questions about cultural norms regarding the status of women, and highlighted some of the many differences between the two national groups. The group is now concluding the life story process, and hopes to move on to consider the future of Jerusalem later in the year. This program is co-directed by Sarah Bernstein and Fatmeh Kassem.

ONGOING PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

FACE TO FACE/FAITH TO FAITH

The Face to Face group of 2007/2008 spent 15 days at the residential camp facility in New York for the summer program. The program brings together high school students from South Africa, Northern Ireland, the Middle East and the United States and aims at promoting skills necessary for working across lines of difference and building relationships with youth from around the world and in the participants' communities. This program is a partnership between

the ICCI and Auburn Theological Seminary in New York, and is co-facilitated by Ya'ala Cohen and Boseina Awad.

On 13 July, the Parent's Group held a meeting in Herodian, an archaeological site 12 km outside of Jerusalem, which comprises the ruins of a palace-fortress built by Roman-era King Herod. The trip provided another opportunity for Israelis and Palestinians to listen to one another's perspectives on the past. As they drove to the meeting, Palestinian participants told stories about the Arab villages surrounding Herodian while the Israeli participants spoke of the Jewish settlements.



Jerusalem Interreligious Young Adult Council (JIYC)

Following a founding conference that took place in the beginning of June, JIYC met in July and August to study the significance of Jerusalem for both Palestinians and Jews. The July session, which focused on the historical perspectives, was held at ICCI, and the August session, which focused on the political aspects, was held at Palestinian Vision. For most of the participants, these meetings were the first time that they visited each other's side of Jerusalem. In September, they will meet in one of the student's homes in Abu Ghosh to discuss the Muslim month of Ramadan and the Jewish month of Tishrei and will share in the *iftar* (traditional break-the-fast during Ramadan). JIYC, which is a partnership between ICCI and Palestinian Vision, is supported by a grant from the Religions for Peace.



ICCI and Rissho Kosei-Kai Sponsor Conference on Reconciliation

From August 19th to August 23rd, ICCI hosted an inspiring conference focusing on the Palestinian and Israeli narratives and on ways for both sides to bring about reconciliation. Participants included nine Palestinian Israelis, 9 Jewish Israelis, as well as 11 Japanese students and 7 staff members from RKK. The students grappled with difficult

and thought-provoking topics such as Palestinian Israelis' perspectives of the Naqba (The catastrophe of 1948) and the commemoration of the Shoah in Israeli society, and participated in frank and open discussions that furthered their understanding of each others' narratives.

Prior to the conference, the Israeli and Palestinian Israeli participants attended a preparatory seminar at Neve Shalom/Wahat El Salaam on August 2nd-3rd, where they engaged in lectures and discussions about relating to the other and attended special briefings about Japanese culture, religion and history. This program is a partnership between ICCI and the Japanese Buddhist organization Rissho Kosei-Kai (RKK) and is facilitated by ICCI's Avigail Moshe and Mariam Khatib.

VISITING GROUPS

Delegation visits Muslim Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem

On July 19th, ICCI director Dr. Ron Kronish, took a group of 25 Jewish students to the Muslim Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem to meet with ICCI members on the theme of "Prayer and

Spirituality in Different Religions". The group was part of a special seminar in Israel organized by Congregation Kol Haneshamah of Jerusalem and the Salz Center of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. On this special study tour, they met with members of the Sisters of Zion at Ecce Homo on the Via Dolorosa—Sisters Trudy Nabuurs, Rita Kamemeyer and Bernadette Lynch—and with Sheikh Aziz Bukhara in his Uzbek Cultural Center, also on the Via Dolorosa, for meaningful experiential study sessions on the theme of the seminar.

Temple Emanuel Delegation to Israel

Members of Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills, California—led by Rabbi Laura Geller and Acting Executive Director Richard Siegel—met with ICCI director Dr. Ron Kronish and Mr. Ziad Halaila, a high school teacher and facilitator for ICCI, in his Israeli Arab village of Sachnin. In a wide ranging lively discussion, the congregants had the opportunity to ask many questions about Arab-Jewish relations in Israel. It was a unique opportunity for them to learn first-hand about both the challenges and the cutting-edge programs in Arab-Jewish Coexistence Education conducted by ICCI in the Galilee and other parts of Israel

ICCI PEOPLE SPEAK ABROAD:

- **ICCI director Rabbi Dr. Ron Kronish** spoke on "Facing Evil in the World Today, a Jewish Perspective" on June 28th at an International Symposium on Jewish-Christian Relations hosted by the Focolare Movement at their Mariapolis Center in Castel Gandolfo, the summer residence of the Pope, one hour from Rome. The conference was attended by 50 Jewish and Christian scholars from many different countries from all over the world. Following the conference, Ron and Amy Kronish were the guests of the Focolare Movement in their small town of Loplano, near Florence, where they met veteran members of the town and learned about the message and method of the Focolare. In addition, on June 29, Dr. Kronish met with Fr. Norbert Hoffman, secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with Jews, to plan the visit of Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the commission, to Israel in October 2007.

- **Dr. Deborah Weissman, one of ICCI's co-chairpersons**, attended the annual conference of the ICCJ held in Sydney, Australia from July 8-11, preceded by a women's conference July 6-8. Two former officers of ICCI were at the big conference: Sister Patricia Watson and Rabbi Ehud Bandel. The general theme of the conference was "Healing the Fractured Earth,"



- and Debbie spoke on a panel on interreligious dialogue in the Middle East as a form of healing. At the AGM on Thursday, July 12th, the plans for the 2008 conference, to be held in Jerusalem, were approved unanimously, and the meeting ended with a rousing rendition of "L'shanah haba'ah biyerushalayim--Next year in Jerusalem"!

- **Yael Yechieli**, who coordinates and facilitates the new Jerusalem Interreligious Young Adults Council for ICCI, attended the annual conference of the YLC (Youth Leadership Council) of the International Council of Christian and Jews (ICCJ) in North Hampton,

England, 14-19 August. Thirty-six young Christians, Jews and Muslims, who came from twelve countries, learned more about each other's faiths and worldviews. According to Yael, "the most fascinating aspect of the conference was meeting Muslims from Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Sudan. Spending Shabbat with the participants was also an incredibly memorable experience. Men, women, Muslims, Christians and Jews, all lit candles until the whole room was filled with their light."

- **Avigail Moshe** will be attending the Asian Youth Summit of Religions for Peace a regional meeting in Singapore focusing on the work of Asian religious youth leaders. She will participate in a panel entitled "Global Challenges and the Power of Interreligious Cooperation" where she will share her experiences of working with Palestinian youth.

NEWS FROM MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

IJCIR Public Symposia

- The Israel Jewish Council for Interreligious Relations (IJCIR) will be hosting Walter Cardinal Kasper, President of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with Jewry, for a public symposium on Wednesday 31 October on the topic: "The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible".
- In addition, IJCIR, together with the Jerusalem Institute of Israel Studies, is planning a lecture series for October–November on issues related to Israeli Jewish Attitudes to Muslims and Islam.

Yad Vashem Honors Sister Gemma Del Duca

Yad Vashem honored Sister Gemma Del Duca and the National Catholic Center for Holocaust Education on July 1, 2007. Sister Gemma, the former chair of the history department at Seton Hill University in Greensburg, PA, who has been leading seminars for Holocaust education with Yad Vashem for two decades, is the first non-Jew and non-Israeli to receive Yad Vashem's Award for Excellence in Holocaust Education. The seminars, which began on her initiative, are intended for groups of Catholic educators and clergy, primarily from the United States. According to Yad Vashem, hundreds of educators have taken part in the seminars.

Exhibit at Bible Lands Museum on Symbols of Monotheism

The Bible Lands Museum opened a new ecumenical exhibition, dedicated to the symbols of the three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. On display are architectural elements, jewelry, ritual objects and more ranging from the 3rd–13th Centuries CE. The exhibition reveals the great similarities in how each religion represented itself to the outside world. In conjunction with this exhibition, the museum will host a scholarly symposium, "The Concept of One God" on 17 October from 17:00–21:00. The symposium is conducted in cooperation with The Center for Study of Christianity and The Nehemia Levtzion Center for Islamic Studies at Hebrew University. Moderated by Dr. David Satran, Director for the Center for the Study of Christianity, the panel features Prof. Rachel Elijor, Prof. Moshe Sharon, Dr. Sara Sviri and Prof. Justin Taylor.



WELCOME TO NEW STAFF & INTERN

ICCI welcomes two "Rebecca's" to our staff:

* Rebecca Keys, who began as a student intern this summer and now will serve as Development and Communications Coordinator, is studying for an M.A. in Jewish History at the Hebrew University. A native of Baltimore, Maryland, she is a graduate of McGill University in Montreal

* Rebecca Zimmerman, a graduate of Columbia University, who worked in public relations in Washington D.C. and is spending this year in Israel studying at the Pardes Institute with her husband, will be serving as an volunteer with ICCI in Public Relations and Communications this year.

ICCI STAFF

Rabbi Dr. Ron Kronish, Director

Sarah Bernstein, Director of Women's Programs

Fatmeh Kassem, Co-Director of Women as Catalysts for Peace

Ophir Yarden, Director of ICCI's Center for Interreligious Encounter with Israel

Avigail Moshe, Director of Youth and Young Adult Programs

Yael Yechieli, Project Coordinator and Facilitator, JIYC

Ya'ala Cohen, Project Coordinator and Facilitator, Face to Face

Boseina Awad, Project Coordinator and Facilitator, Face to Face

Mariam Khatab, Administrative Assistant and Translator

Rebecca Keys, Development and Communications Coordinator

Rebecca Zimmerman, Communications and Marketing Intern

ICCI serves as the Israel chapter of Religions for Peace (WCRP) and is a member of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ).

ICCI's SPEAKERS' BUREAU provides briefings, lectures, site visits, half-day and full-day seminars and 1-2 week study tours to Israel. With the burgeoning of Jewish, Christian and Interreligious Groups coming to Israel, ICCI has prepared a catalogue of educational opportunities for groups coming to Israel to enrich and enhance their educational experience in the Holy Land. This catalogue is available on the ICCI website www.icci.org.il

To book a program, contact education@icci.org.il

INVEST IN PEACE – SUPPORT ICCI

To support the groundbreaking and innovative programs of ICCI which bring people together from many sectors of Israeli and Palestinian society to learn to live together in peace, to engage in reconciliatory dialogue and education, and to prepare the way for a better future for all citizens of Israel and the surrounding region,

Send a donor-advised donation to:

The PEF ISRAEL ENDOWMENT FUNDS
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The New Israel Fund, 1101 14th St. NW, 6th Floor, Washington D.C. 20005-5639

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