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ICCI INSIGHTS & INFORMATION

February 16, 2010 | 2 Adar, 5770 | 2 Rabi` Al-Awwal, 1431

Dear friends,

A few weeks ago, I was speaking to a group of Christians and Jews from a city on the East Coast of the U.S.A. who were in Jerusalem as part of a study tour to Israel. As part of their visit, they spent 2 hours with me, a Christian colleague, and a Muslim colleague to learn about Interreligious Relations in Israel. In the question and answer period, one of the participants in the group asked me a difficult question that went something like this: "Since there is so much political despair on both sides of the conflict, and since there has been virtually no formal diplomatic peace process for most of the last 9 years, what is the point of bringing young people, religious leaders, woman and educators into dialogue?"



My response to this question was immediate and to the point: "We bring people together to keep hope alive in a complicated situation of ongoing conflict. In so doing, we help people resist despair and enable them to envision a better future."

This indeed is what we believe within the ICCI. We refuse to be trapped in the present morass in which "separation" is the operative modality, rather than the "normalization" that will come with genuine peace. As a result, we continue to educate for a more enlightened future, in which Jews and Palestinians (Muslims and Christians) will live together in peaceful coexistence—with mutual understanding and respect for each other's religions and cultures—within Israel and in the region of the Holy Land, which includes both Israel and Palestine.

L'shalom, in peace, salaam,


Dr. Ron Kronish, rabbi
Director, ICCI

UPCOMING PROGRAM

Coexistence in the Middle East -- Academic Tour in Israel Program, June-July 2010

ICCI and the **International Institute of Leadership** are proud to announce a joint academic tour program with the **Hebrew**



University of Jerusalem for Summer 2010 (June 29 - July 27), as part of the "Coexistence in the Middle East" initiative, which promotes coexistence through the training of future leaders using academic and experiential seminars that allow direct contact with different cultures. The special academic program, which will be coordinated and partially taught by ICCI director Dr. Ron Kronish, is also sponsored by the **Israel National Commission for UNESCO**. To learn more about this initiative and to register, please visit: <http://coexistencetrip.net> and/or read the following document: <http://icci.org.il/summercourse.html>.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

Between Memory and Reconciliation



Following the successful international seminar with the Japanese delegation of the **Rissho Kosei-Kai** organization, which funds the program, the local 'Between Memory and Reconciliation' group has continued its monthly meetings. The participants formed sub-groups dedicated to special topics of interest. Each of these sub-groups, in its turn, is responsible for planning and coordinating an encounter of the full group, revolving around its topic of interest. One such meeting took place in Kfar Etzion, and dealt with the events of 1948 in **Kfar Etzion**, in which the surrendering defenders of the Jewish

village were massacred by the soldiers of the Jordanian legions. The meeting included an encounter with the granddaughter of one of the defenders of the kibbutz and a visit to an exhibition. A second meeting took place in **Lod**, and revolved around the role of religion in the conflict and in daily co-existence in a mixed city, including visits to religious sites and meetings with religious leaders.

The Jerusalem Interreligious Young Adult Forum

The participants of the third cycle (2009-2010) of the Jerusalem Interreligious Young Adult Forum have been meeting bi-weekly in East and West Jerusalem since November. The meetings deal with identity and connection to Jerusalem. The participants are currently working on a joint photography project (see image of JIYAF members Bushra and Roni to the right). On December 22, 2009, the group enjoyed a tour of the Via Dolorosa, guided by **Mr. Eran Tzidkiyahu**, a JIYAF alumnus and a Jerusalem tour guide who focuses in his tours



on the stories and histories of the three main religions in Jerusalem. The final site visited by the group was the **Lutheran Church**, in which they met with **Ms. Christina Khoury**, the church's receptionist and an alumnus of JIYAF. This program is currently funded by grants from the **World Conference of Religions for Peace**, the **Pontifical Mission** and the **Embassies of the U.S.A. and the Netherlands**.

Face to Face/Faith to Faith

Following a long, careful selection process, a new Face to Face / Faith to Faith Middle East group started its activities in January 2010. This 2010 group numbers seven girls and six boys, of which six are Jewish-Israeli, and seven are Palestinians (two Christians and five Muslims). This program is a partnership between ICCI and the **Auburn Theological Seminary** in New York.

On January 7, 2010, the group had its first meeting, in which the participants got to know one another and share their expectations of this year. On January 21, 2010, the group met again, at which time they learned about each other's personal lives. In the second part of this encounter, the participants' parents

joined them for a special activity in which Jewish-Palestinian parent-child pairs told each other about their family's history, later sharing their thoughts and feelings about the activity with the entire group.

Special course about the relations between Jews and Poles

ICCI's special course about "**Encountering Poland: Relations between Jews and Poles – Religious, Historical and Social Dimensions**", a collaboration between ICCI and the **Polish Institute**, with added support from **Ms. Luna Kaufman** of New York, has been ongoing since October 2009. The speakers in the bi-weekly meetings are alternately guest lecturers from Poland and Israeli experts. In recent meetings, **Mr. Alex Dancyg** of **Yad Vashem** spoke about "New meaning of Jewish identity in post war Poland", **Ms. Zuzanna Radzik** of **Warsaw University's** ethnographic archive discussed "Discovering the difficult past within the Polish society" and **Dr. Anna Maria Orla-Bukowska** of **Jagiellonian University**, Krakow, lectured on "Catholics preserving Jewish Memory in Poland". The participants expressed their satisfaction with the presentation of multiple aspects in the course.

ICCI IN THE MEDIA

HaShabbat, the special Sabbath newsletter of **Tzohar Rabbis** (<http://www.tzohar.org.il/>) published an article by **Rabbi Bnayahu Bruner**, on 18 Kislev, 5770 (December 5, 2009), entitled "Is Muslim Agreement to a Third Temple Conceivable?" Rabbi Bnayahu writes on original questions (Will there be a prayer area allocated to Muslims alongside the Third Temple?), meeting with Muslim religious leaders (including his experiences in ICCI's KEDEM program), and the importance of such encounters.

ICCI ABROAD

ICCI Director in the U.S. in January 2010

ICCI director, Rabbi Dr. Ron Kronish, was in the U.S. in January of 2010. He visited Philadelphia, South Florida, and Louisville, Kentucky, where he met with the following people:

- **Mr. S.A. Ibrahim** (right), Chief Executive of **Radian Group, Inc.**, who pledged support for ICCI for this year on behalf of the **Ibrahim Family Foundation**
- **Mr. Theodore Young**, Executive Vice President and General Counsel for **Right Management** and an old friend of ICCI
- **Ms. Ann Bussel**, of the **Shepard Broad Foundation**, in Miami, Florida, who is helping ICCI network with various institutions and individuals in cooperative partnerships
- **Mr. Norman Lipoff** of the **Robert Russell Memorial Foundation** and the **June Baumgardner Gelbart Foundation**, who has been a friend and supporter of ICCI for many years via various foundations
- **Ms. Luna Kaufman** (right), of New York City and Watchung, New Jersey, who supports ICCI's Polish-Jewish Dialogue and Education Programs
- **Professor Alan Berger**, who holds the Raddock Family Eminent Scholar Chair for Holocaust Studies at **Florida Atlantic University** in Boca Raton, Florida, who hosted Dr. Ron Kronish for 2 lectures-- one over lunch with leaders in the community on the theme of "Interreligious Dialogue in Israel in the Service of Peace" and one public lecture in the evening for over 100 people on "Is Arab-Jewish Coexistence in Israel still Possible?"
- **Rev. Dr. Jay Rock, Rev. Gradye Parsons, Mr. James (Randy) Ackley, and Ms. Aleksa Smith**, of the professional staff of the **Presbyterian Church U.S.A**, over lunch in Louisville, Kentucky. The PCUSA has been supporting ICCI in recent years in its work in peace education via Interreligious dialogue
- **Mr. Owsley Brown II** (right, 1) and **Ms. Christina Brown** (right, 2), Civic Leaders, **Mr. Turney Berry** (right, 3), Chairman of the



Board, and other board members of the **Center for Interfaith Relations (CIR)** in Louisville, Kentucky, to explore ways and means of cooperation between CIR and the ICCI this year and in the future.

VISITING GROUPS & PEOPLE

The following groups have recently taken part in ICCI's educational programs for groups visiting from abroad:

- the **Jewish Community Relations Council Philadelphia Interfaith Mission** to Israel, on a study tour sponsored by the **Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia**, led by **Rabbi David Strauss** (right), the senior rabbi of **Main Line Reform Temple** in Philadelphia
- a diverse group (including representatives from Jewish, Muslim, Catholic, Evangelical, and Hindu religious communities) of 11 people who were visiting Israel on behalf of the Indianapolis-based **International Interfaith Initiative (III)**, in collaboration with the **Village Experience**, led by **Mr. Charles Wiles**
- a group of Jews and Christians from Raleigh, North Carolina, led by **Rabbi Lucy Dinner** (right) of **Temple Beth Or**
- a group students from Australia, New Zealand, the U.K., and the U.S.A. ,who are in Israel for 5 months on an **Israel Experience** program



You too can be involved in such a program when you come to Israel. For more information about ICCI Center for Interreligious Encounter with Israel, please contact **Ophir Yarden**, education@icci.org.il.

ICCI was additionally pleased to welcome some international friends in January:

- **Ms. Barbara Crook** of Ottawa, Canada, who hosted Rabbi Kronish and Kadi Zibdeh in Ottawa last October
- **Fr. Wieslaw Dawidowski**, the co-chairperson of the **Polish Council of Christians and Jews**, who met with Avigail Moshe, Dr. Ron Kronish, and ICCI's Polish student intern, Zuza Radzik, to plan future cooperative programs

NEWS FROM ICCI MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS



On February 9, 2010, **The Association for Jewish-Arab Co-Existence in the Judean Hills** held a special evening in **Kiryat Anavim** (a kibbutz in the Judean Hills). The gathering, which included the kibbutz elders, a group of **Abu Ghosh** elders, members of the association and other guests,

was dedicated to telling and hearing stories from the early days of friendship and good neighborly relations between Kiryat Anavim and Abu Ghosh, since the establishment of the kibbutz in 1920.

Support ICCI via PEF/NIF: <http://icci.org.il/support.html>



or online, via JGOODERS:

ICCI's L'Chaim Campaign - <http://www.jgooders.com//ProjectCard.asp?ProjectID=613>
ICCI's young adult programs - <http://www.jgooders.com//ProjectCard.asp?ProjectID=1053>