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ICCI INSIGHTS & INFORMATION

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Dear friends,

As we begin a new year, we are particularly mindful of our religious responsibility to keep hope alive in a difficult, ongoing conflict situation. We do this by bringing people together to encounter the other, to study each other's religious traditions, and to learn about the possibilities of living in peaceful coexistence, now and for the future.



During this past month, I lectured to several visiting Jewish, Christian and interreligious groups who were in Israel on study tours. In my lectures I often emphasized this point about remaining hopeful by bringing people together, especially young people, who can envision a better future and develop concrete ways to work towards this.

Many of the participants of the visiting groups who met with the alumni of ICCI's youth and young adult Dialogue and Action programs were deeply moved by the commitment and dedication of these young people to the process. And I must admit that I too am impressed again and again by their sincerity and devotion to the message of peace and the method of dialogue in their personal and professional lives. It gives me some hope for the future and confirms my gut feeling that investing our financial and human resources in the youth of our city, Jerusalem, and our region, Israel/Palestine, is exceedingly worthwhile.

One of the ways you can help us invest in the future—and especially for our youth—is through a contribution to our [L'Chaim \("To Life"\) Campaign](#) or through a contribution to our [youth programs](#) via JGooders, which has awarded us \$1000 for our successful campaign in December 2009. Your support of our holy work for peaceful coexistence will be greatly appreciated.

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



“Coexistence in the Middle East” is an initiative that promotes coexistence through the training of future leaders using academic and experiential seminars that allow direct contact with different cultures. ICCI and the **International Institute of Leadership** are currently organizing a joint academic tour program with the **Hebrew University of Jerusalem** for Summer 2010 (June 29 - July 27). This 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, please visit: <http://coexistencetrip.net>.

SPECIAL EVENT

Between Memory and Reconciliation

A special international **Between Memory and Reconciliation** seminar took place in Jerusalem on December 3-8, 2009. The program participants from Israel—Jewish and Palestinian (Christian and Muslim)—were joined for the duration of the seminar by a delegation of Japanese Buddhist students, organized by **Rissho Kosei-Kai** of Japan. The seminar was organized and implemented by **Ms. Avigail Moshe**, ICCI's Director of Youth and Young Adult Programs, and her co-facilitator in this program, **Mr. Wasim Biroumi**. A longer, more detailed report about this event is forthcoming.



In addition, the seminar participants and the general audience had the privilege of listening to a special lecture by **Dr. Michio Tomonobu Shinozaki** (left), President of Rissho Kosei-Kai's **Gakurin Seminary**, on December 6, 2009, at the **Hebrew University of Jerusalem**. The lecture, which revealed a Buddhist approach to peace, focused on the Lotus Sutra as a philosophy of diversity and integration.

ICCI IN THE MEDIA

The **Three Faiths Forum** (www.threefaithsforum.org.uk) published an article by Joshua M. Z. Stanton on December 8, 2009, entitled "Avoiding Meaningless Dialogue". The article highlights the need for raising the quality of interreligious dialogue and broaching "the difficult topics that preclude truly positive interactions, without provoking heated and counterproductive discussions." Additionally, it describes relevant strategies.

http://www.threefaithsforum.org.uk/Newsletter_Dec09_Avoiding.html

The **St. Louis Review** (www.stlouisreview.com) published an article by Joseph Kenny on December 9, 2009, entitled "Interfaith Efforts Making Progress". The brief article includes an interview with Dr. Ron Kronish, in which he states that "*we can now move from 'coexistence' to fostering relations of mutual understanding and respect, based upon knowledge and acquaintance with each other's religions, cultures and histories.*"

<http://stlouisreview.com/article/2009-12-09/interfaith-efforts-ma>

The Star (www.thestar.com) published an article by Rabbi Dow Marmur on December 28, 2009, entitled "Marmur: This Year in Jerusalem". The article discusses interreligious tension in Jerusalem, as well as reconciliation and peace-building efforts, including those of the ICCI.
<http://www.thestar.com/Opinion/article/742688>

VISITING GROUPS

Day on "Interreligious Relations in Israel" held for students at the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem



A day on "Interreligious Relations in Israel" held for students at the **Hebrew Union College** in Jerusalem was organized and implemented on December 23rd by ICCI. Following an introduction by ICCI director, **Rabbi Dr. Ron Kronish**, these 40 rabbinic and cantorial students from North America and Europe, currently studying at the Hebrew Union College, walked to the **Armenian Patriarchate**, where they met with **Archbishop Aris Shirvanian** of the Armenian Patriarchate, **Sr. Trudy Nabuurs** of the **Sisters of Sion** and **Rev. Dr.**

Martin Vahrenhost, Director of "**Studium in Israel**" on behalf of the **Protestant Church in Germany**, for a discussion about Jewish-Christian dialogue in Israel. In addition, the group was privileged to visit the **St. James Cathedral** (left) and to observe afternoon prayers led by the students of the Armenian seminary. Following this, the students returned to the Hebrew Union College campus for a panel discussion on Jewish-Muslim dialogue in Israel today, with **Prof. Muhammed Dajani** of **Wasatia** and **Sheikh Ghassan Manasra** of the **Anwar il-Salaam** Sufi center in Nazareth. The day was concluded with a moving panel discussion with young adult graduates of ICCI's youth and young adult programs about the achievements, challenges and obstacles in genuine interreligious dialogue in the context of the conflict in Jerusalem in recent years. Gratitude is hereby expressed to ICCI interns Brandon Bernstein and Bethie Miller, who are rabbinic students at HUC this year, for helping to organize this special program.

ICCI leaders meet with Westchester Reform Temple Family Mission

On Sunday, December 27th, ICCI leaders Rabbi Dr. Ron Kronish (Director) and Issa Jaber (co-chairperson of the board of Directors) met with a group of 60 men, women and children who were on a Family study tour to Israel from **Westchester Reform Temple** (Scarsdale, New York), led by **Rabbi Jonathan Blake** (right). The session took place at the community center in Abu Ghosh, an Israeli Arab town just west of Jerusalem. They were also joined by **Haya Abdulrachman**, the director of the community center and by **Salem Abdulrachman**, a graduate of ICCI's youth and young adult programs, for a lively discussion on Israeli-Arab-Muslim-Palestinian identity in Israel. ICCI has a long-standing special relationship with Westchester Reform Temple, led by **Rabbi Richard Jacobs**, who has visited Abu Ghosh often and who has invited people from Abu Ghosh to visit his community in Scarsdale, New York, just north of New York City.



National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East 's delegation to Israel

An interreligious delegation of American Jewish, Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders travelled to Jordan and Israel to meet Jordanians, Israelis and Palestinians on the ground who are working for peace. As part of their program, they heard from **Rabbi Dr. Ron Kronish** of ICCI and **Rabbi David Forman** of **Rabbis for Human Rights** about grass-roots peace-building programs on a special panel. This panel took place on the campus of the **Hebrew Union College** in Jerusalem on December 21st,

where they were welcomed by the new dean, **Rabbi Naama Kelman**, an activist in interreligious dialogue in Israel and abroad.

Teachers from Los Angeles learn about Education for Peace through Dialogue

A group of public school teachers from Los Angeles who were in Israel on a study tour in late December under the auspices of the **Jewish Community Relations Council of Los Angeles** met with ICCI director **Dr. Ron Kronish** for a session on Educating for Peace via interreligious dialogue in Israel on December 29th. The group was accompanied by **Dr. David Zissenwine**, professor of Education (retired) at **Tel Aviv University**.



Temple Sinai of Brookline, Massachusetts, visits ICCI

A congregational study tour from **Temple Sinai of Brookline, Mass.**, led by **Rabbi Andrew Vogel**, visited ICCI on December 30th for two presentations on "Interreligious Relations in Israel"—one by **Rabbi Ron Kronish** and the other by **Professor Muhammed Dajani** (left), who teaches American Studies at **Al Quds University** in Jerusalem and is the founder and leader of Wasatia (<http://www.wasatia.info>), a new movement for religious moderation in Palestine.

FODIP interreligious group of Jews, Christians and Muslims visit Israel and Palestine

ICCI hosted a very special interreligious study tour sponsored by the **Forum for Discussion of Israel and Palestine (FODIP)**, entitled 'QUESTIONS WITHOUT BORDERS' from 27th December 2009 – 5th January 2010. The group, comprised of Muslims, Christians and Jews from various cities in the UK, was led by FODIP director **Ms. Jane Clements** and coordinated by ICCI's Director of the **Center for Interreligious Encounter with Israel**, **Mr. Ophir Yarden**. Among the many intensive and interesting encounters the group had in Israel were sessions with women of ICCI's **Women as Catalysts for Peace** program and with young adults who are graduates of ICCI's youth and young adult dialogue groups with Jews and Palestinians. A full report of this special seminar will appear in next month's newsletter.

As you can see from the above, ICCI is doing more and more programs for visiting groups from abroad. 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.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS OF THE ICCI STAFF

ICCI welcomes the new co-coordinators/facilitators of the "Face to Face / Faith to Faith" program, **Ms. Maisa Zoabi** and **Ms. Alex Kusner**.

Maisa (right) holds a B.A. in Education and Chemistry as well as a Teacher's Certificate from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is currently a graduate student of Educational Administration and Leadership at the Hebrew University. She has been guiding and tutoring youth for several years.



Alex (left) holds a B.A. in Social Work from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. She is the graduate of several facilitator training workshops as well as a pre-military training program for social leadership. Alex has a rich experience in working with youth, both individually and in groups, since 2001.

For a full list of ICCI staff and current interns, see our website: <http://icci.org.il/staff.html>

NEWS FROM ICCI MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS



Al-Qasemi Academy recently hosted a joint study-day on Thursday, December 12, 2009 in cooperation with **Mossawa** and the **Friedrich-Ebert Fund** on "The Challenges of Education for Human Rights in the Arab Society". **Dr. Mohammad Essawi**, President of Al-Qasemi, **Mr. Ralph Haxel**, Director of Friedrich-Ebert Fund and **Ms. Edella Bayadi**, Vice President of the Mossawa Center, spoke on the significance and challenges of education for human rights. The day was divided into three main sessions: "Modern Experiences and Challenges of Educating for Al-Qasemi Academy", "The Reality and Status-quo of Arab Minority Human Rights in Israel", and "The Impact of Social Conflicts on Human Rights' Values". The study day was concluded with possibilities for creating partnerships among the participating organizations for the promotion of human rights in the Arab society in Israel.



The **Sisters of Zion** have opened 2010 with several activities. A group of Sisters of Zion from many parts of the world, forming the Sisters' new Jewish-Christian Relations Team, met in England at the beginning of January 2010. The purpose of the meeting was to explore ways to continue Jewish-Christian dialogue after the termination of the Sisters of Zion's SIDIC publication. Additionally, **Prof. Jackie Feldman** from the **Ben Gurion University** in the Negev led a delegation of students to **Ecce Homo** on January 7th, in order to learn more about pilgrimage and the history of both the sisters of Zion and Ecce Homo. Finally, the Sisters of Ecce Homo are preparing for the upcoming English Biblical Program, which will begin on February 2, 2010. The program focuses on the study of the Bible through researching and studying the scriptures, as well as through excursions in the land.



ICCI congratulates **Rabbi David Rosen, CBE** (left), an ICCI Founder and Director of the **American Jewish Committee's** Department for Interreligious Affairs and the **Heilbrunn Institute for International Interreligious Understanding**, for the honor bestowed on him by Her Royal Highness the **Queen of England**. Rabbi Rosen has recently been awarded the title Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in the International category, "for services to interfaith relations both in the Middle East and between the UK and Israel."

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>