

AJC International Interreligious Affairs – August 2010 highlights

AJC co-hosts African Muslim and Christian leaders, August 2-5

AJC co-hosted a groundbreaking delegation to Israel of Muslim and Christian leaders from six sub-Saharan African countries. The program held in cooperation with the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs focused on religious leadership and development, seeing, learning and exchanging best practices, on a variety of social initiatives for the betterment of society. In addition, the African religious leaders met with President Shimon Peres and the Chief Rabbis of Israel as well the Patriarchs of Jerusalem (see <http://www.jerusalem-religions.net/spip.php?article1631>) and Muslim leaders in Jerusalem and in the Galilee.

In addition to the manifold successes of the mission was the fact that it brought together African leaders who had not known one another or about their respective activities beforehand. Among the outcomes of the visit are plans to provide trainings for African leaders in a number of social initiatives that have been pioneered in Israel. See <http://www.jpost.com/JewishWorld/JewishNews/Article.aspx?id=183702>

South African tour, August 26-30

Below is the report of Mrs. Wendy Kahn, the Executive Director of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies.

RABBI DAVID ROSEN IN SOUTH AFRICA, AUGUST 2010

Cape Town

On 26 August, the Cape Board held its second General Meeting under the banner of its 'in touch forum'. As guest speaker, Rabbi Rosen addressed a packed IA Hall (some 330 souls) on the topic "Is religion the problem or the solution?" His address was truly enlightening, challenging many commonly held stereotypes and prejudices.

The following day, a most successful packed Open Hearts Open Minds interfaith meeting organised by Cape Deputy Director Gwynne Robins was held with Rabbi Rosen, Imam Rashied Omar and Father Roger Hickley on "Voices of Reconciliation affirming the Dignity of Difference". Former *Cape Times* editor John Scott, in his article on the evening "Three wise men all agree that tolerance is not enough" (*Cape Times*, 26/8), called it "one of the most stimulating evenings I have ever attended."

Durban

The Rosens' Durban trip, with Mrs. Alana Baranov from the SAJBD accompanying them, included an interfaith luncheon with prominent figures in SA religious and political life, such as Cardinal Napier and the new Indian Consul-General to SA, as well as a very interesting and engaging community meeting with the Durban Jewish community.

Johannesburg

The Gauteng Council conference on 28-9 August was a resounding success, with excellent speakers and plenty of lively debate. The highlight of the well-attended opening night, held in the beautiful and historic Great Park Synagogue, was unquestionably Rabbi Rosen's eloquent, thought-provoking address. He was a panelist in the following day's opening session, entitled 'Interfaith Interface'.

While in Johannesburg Rabbi Rosen, accompanied by SAJBD staff members, met with ANC Chief Whip and head of its Religion portfolio, Mathole Motshekga, and with the leadership of the Jesuit Institute and various prominent figures in the Catholic community, at Holy Trinity Church, Braamfontein. The latter featured a lengthy, informal discussion about Catholic-Jewish relations, and his hosts were delighted to engage with a Rabbi with so broad a knowledge of Vatican affairs and who had been honored by the Pope. The SAJBD and SA Union of Jewish Students arranged for Rabbi Rosen to speak on Wits campus to students, with Deputy Vice-Chancellor Yunus Ballim being amongst those in the audience.

Rabbi Rosen further addressed numerous Jewish gatherings, which included speaking and delivering various shiurim over Shabbat at the Sandton Shul.

In the media sphere, Rabbi David Rosen was interviewed on the 702 Kate Turkington Show (Sunday), Chai FM (Tuesday), SAFM (Thursday) and by the *Natal Witness*.

For print media coverage, see:-

http://www.sajewishreport.co.za/pdf/latest_issue/interfaith.pdf

[http://www.witness.co.za/index.php?showcontent&global\[_id\]=46792](http://www.witness.co.za/index.php?showcontent&global[_id]=46792)

<http://www.jesuitinstitute.org.za/en/node/262?page=1>

http://www.rabbidavidrosen.net/press/Cape_Times_August_26_2010.jpg