

International interreligious affairs monthly highlights, July 2011

Krakow

The International Council of Christians and Jews (see: <http://www.iccj.org/About-us.2.0.html> , of which I am a past President and now one of its Honorary Presidents) is an umbrella body for member organizations promoting Jewish-Christian relations in some thirty two countries. It holds an annual conference in a different country which this year was held in Krakow, Poland, July 3-6 on the subject of Religion and Ideologies

(see :-http://www.iccj.org/Cracow_Conference_successful.3331.0.html?)

I gave a plenary presentation on the concluding day on the theme of "Justice, Justice, shall you pursue"

(text at:-

http://iccj.org/redaktion/upload_pdf/201107131102440.Rosen%20-%20Justice%20-%20ICCJ%20conference%20Krakow%202011.pdf ,

and video at :- <http://www.iccj.org/Media.3325.0.html>) and also presented on a panel on "Relations between Religion and State – the Israeli paradigm".

Rome

On July 12th, I held meetings at the Vatican, accompanied by Lisa Palmieri Billig and Sid and Ruth Lapidus, with Cardinal Kurt Koch, Bishop Brian Farrell and Father Norbert Hofmann of the Pontifical Council for Religious Relations with Jewry; Monsignor Alberto Ortega, Director of Mediterranean and Middle East Policy at the Vatican's Secretariat of State; Ambassador Motti Lewy, Israel's Ambassador to the Holy See, and Professor Miguel Diaz, the USA's Ambassador to the Holy See.

AJC mission re Christian Communities in Israel

July 17-20, AJC's Interreligious Affairs held its groundbreaking fact finding mission on Christian communities in the Holy land. This first ever AJC interreligious affairs mission held high level meetings with Christian leaders in Israel to learn about their situation first hand. The mission was born out of AJC's genuine care for the wellbeing of the Christian communities in Israel and in the region as a whole; to be able to use our special standing with the Israeli authorities to advocate on behalf of the Christian communities; and above all, to be able to discuss matters pertaining to the latter with our interlocutors (and their sister churches) in the US and around the world from positions of greater knowledge and credibility.

The mission participants also met with Israeli political, diplomatic and civic leaders as well as with Muslim leadership.

http://www.lpj.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1463%3Alamer



Major presentations and meetings in Israel during July.

Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- At the initiative of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the Ambassador of South Korea in Israel, I held a luncheon meeting with the heads of the four major streams of S.Korean Buddhism who were in Israel together with the Nirvana Korean dance and music presentation
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also asked me to address their diplomatic seminar for young Jewish leaders (see:- http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/About+the+Ministry/Structure+and+departments/Diplomatic_Seminar_for_Young_Jewish_Leaders_July_2009.htm) on interfaith relations globally in relation to the Jewish People and the State of Israel.

Council of the Religious Institutions of the Holy Land

- As the honorary interfaith advisor to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, I serve on the Council of the Religious Institutions of the Holy Land , which recently gave its support to a declaration from the Religions of the Holy Land on the challenges of Climate Change, initiated by the Jerusalem based Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development. An event hosted by the latter to highlight the environmental teachings and responsibility of religions, was addressed by three representatives from the Council with me being the Jewish speaker , received international press coverage (e.g. <http://www.jerusalem-religions.net/spip.php?article3445> , <http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/en/homepage/world-news/detail/articolo/cambiamenticlimaticiclimatic-change-cambio-climatico-6046/>)
- At the initiative of the Prime Minister of Slovenia, a delegation of the Council met with him to discuss how the Religions may contribute to promoting peace in the region, at which the Prime Minister indicated that Slovenia is interested in placing its recent historical achievements in local peacemaking and reconciliation as well as its modest resources at the disposal of the Council and religious leadership in Israel and the PA in order to engage religious leadership to this end.
The participants included Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar, Oded Wiener (the DG of the CR) and myself from the Jewish side; the PA Minister of Waqf and Religious affairs, Sheikh Mahmoud Habbash and his Deputy Minister Haj Salah Zuheika; and Bishop William Shomali from the Latin Patriarchate and Archbishop Aris Shirvanian of the Armenian Patriarchate.



International Interreligious affairs staff

This month was particularly demanding for the staff of the International Interreligious Affairs Department beyond the regular demands of the offices.

In Jerusalem, it was reflected in the planning and operation of, as well as the follow up to the AJC mission to the Christian communities in Israel, principally conducted by Avril Promislow.

In Rome, AJC's liaison to the Holy See was involved in the preparation and implementation of the various meetings at the Vatican (in addition to the adjacent AJC leadership mission to Italy.) Furthermore this month Lisa spoke on the significance of Nostra Aetate on an interreligious panel hosted by the Province of Marino near Rome, as well as on an interreligious panel at the Italian Senate (introduced by the President, Senator Renato Schifani) on the occasion of the presentation of a new book on the founder of the Focolare Movement, Chiara Lubitch.