

Report – June 2008

The ICCJ is an umbrella organization for more than thirty national bodies around the world working in the field of Jewish-Christian relations. Its headquarters are in Martin Buber House in Heppenheim Germany – the actual house that Buber lived in and which has been dedicated by the local government to Jewish-Christian understanding and as the HQ of the ICCJ. The ICCJ has held an international conference for most of its almost fifty years of existence and this year was only the third time it was taking place in Israel.

The 2008 conference in Jerusalem entitled The Contribution of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Dialogue to Peace-Building in the Middle East, was opened by keynote addresses from outgoing Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah; Qadi Mohammed Zibdi, the Islamic Judge of the Israeli Jerusalem Muslim courts; and myself . My presentation focused on the Council of the Religious Institutions of the Holy Land (made up of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel; the PA Ministry of Religious Affairs and the PA Shaaria Courts; and the Patriarchates and Bishopricks of Jerusalem).

June in Jerusalem also saw the installation of the new Latin (Catholic) Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Fouad Twal ; and another notable gathering that I also addressed was the World Jurists Association that held its annual conference here on theme closely related to that of the ICCJ – namely, The Pursuit of Peace through then Rule of Law. I shared the plenary with Dr. Mohammed Essawi, president of the Islamic College in Baka El Gharbiya and Archbishop Elias Chacour, the Melkhite Archbishop of the Galilee, on the subject of Religious Responses to the challenge of violent Fundamentalism.