

International Interreligious Relations, June 2010 highlights
David Rosen

On June 11th, the 2nd International interfaith conference on "Religion Conflict and Peace" was held at the Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn Michigan by the Common Bond Institute (www.cbiworld.org) in conjunction with the Parliament of World Religions (referred to in detail in my December report) and the Charter for Compassion initiated by the author Karen Armstrong.

My friend (and Detroit AJC board member) Brenda Rosenberg played a central role in the organization and implementation of this event and via video conference I gave the opening keynote on Interfaith Relations in the Holy Land with special reference to the Council of Religious Leaders in Israel and its recent meetings (see:-

<http://www.commongroundnews.org/article.php?id=27007&lan=en&sid=0&sp=0&isNew=1>) and read out the declaration of the Council to which the participants of this conference pledged their support.

See:- <http://www.readthespirit.com/explore/703-karen-armstrong-huston-smith-and-you-coverage-from-relig.html>

The leading Palestinian think tank PASSIA (the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs) held a study day on June 16th for Palestinian scholars, religious leaders and public figures on the subject of Ahl El Kittab, the People of the Book, exploring the nature of relations between religious groups primarily from the Muslim perspective. However both Christian and Jewish perspectives were discussed and presented and I was the Jewish presenter on the subject of Muslims and Christians in a Jewish polity.

On the 22nd I was in Switzerland to meet in Solothurn with Bishop Kurt Koch whose appointment as successor to Cardinal Walter Kasper as the Vatican's "point man" for religious relations with Jewry was announced the following week and welcomed by AJC. (See: <http://www.jpost.com/LandedPages/PrintArticle.aspx?id=180215> ;

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/friday-vatican-potpourri>;

http://www.jerusalem-religions.net/spip.php?page=imprimer&id_article=1423;

<http://rome-with-a-view.blogspot.com/2010/07/rabbi-rosen-welcomes-appointment-of.html>) Accordingly this meeting that preceded the announcement was particularly significant as Koch's first encounter with a representative of an American Jewish organization and an opportunity for him to learn about the Jewish organizational and international landscape with which he now has the responsibility for relating to on behalf of the Holy See. I was accompanied to this meeting by Rabbi Mordechai Piron former chief chaplain of the Israel Defense Forces and former chief rabbi of Zurich.

The Canadian initiative on a vision for collaboration on the future of Jerusalem to which I referred in my April report after the meeting held in Madrid (in cooperation with the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land (www.crihl.org), convened a follow up day seminar on June 24th on the significance of Jerusalem in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The seminar also focused on ways of envisaging practical cooperation between the different religious authorities as well as with and

between the various secular agencies. I was designated as the Jewish presenter on "The historical and religious significance of Jerusalem for Judaism."

On the 30th, representatives from the aforementioned Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land convened with professors Bar Tal and Adwan for an update on the unparalleled comprehensive research on both Palestinian and Israeli text books being conducted under the auspices of the Council and financed by the US State Department. The participants at the meeting received a detailed report on the research process and methods being conducted. It is planned that their research report will be presented to the Council in late September.
