

International Interreligious Affairs, monthly highlights October 2009
David Rosen

Prague, Oct.11-13

President Vaclav Havel's annual conference in Prague, known as Forum 2000, has an annual theme and takes the form of panels on major contemporary political challenges and realities from a variety of perspectives. This year's theme was on the subject of Democracy and Freedom in a Multipolar world (see:- <http://www.pressweb.cz/zprava/20370-13th-forum-2000-conference-democracy-and-freedom-multipolar-world>)

The Forum program includes a special interfaith plenary that addresses the theme from religious perspectives and accordingly the focus this year was on the question of the relation between religion and democracy. In addition to myself, the panel included renowned professors Michael Novak and William Cook; Said Al-Touraihi, director of Iraqi Kufa Academy for Oriental Studies; and Prince Norodom Sirivudh of Cambodia. A summary of the proceedings may be found at:-

<http://www.forum2000.cz/en/about-us/news-archive/detail/religion--democracy-and-regional-security-discussed-on-the-final-day-of-the-forum-2000-conference/>

In addition, the Forum organized a special interfaith program in cooperation with the Prague Academic Council that was held at the historic church of Saint Saviour. The participants were Prince Norodom and myself and the meeting was chaired by Professor Monsignor Thomas Halik one of the most famous of Czech religious leaders and a former prominent dissident during the period of Communist rule.

Haifa Oct. 18-21

A few days later I participated in the Elijah Interfaith Institute's biennial conference of its Board of World Religious Leaders on which I serve (see <http://www.elijah-interfaith.org/programs/board-of-world-religious-leaders.html>) that took place for the first time in Israel, in Haifa (the previous meetings took place in Amritsar, India; Taiwan; and Seville, Spain) hosted by the Chief Rabbi of Haifa Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen, together with Haifa University and the Bahai World Center. The gathering was also hosted by the Domus Galilaeae in Corazin and the Druze community at its holiest site of Nabi Shuaib.

The meeting on the theme of The Future of Religious Leadership, focused on the meaning of and challenges for religious leadership and was attended by some fifty religious leaders and scholars from around the world.