



International Council of Christians and Jews

Jerusalem, January 2011.

Dear friends and colleagues,

It has been some time since I have written a general letter to our member organizations. We have been busy on an international level, with many issues. I would like to inform you of some developments.

- 1) Our much-appreciated Secretary/Assistant in the Heppenheim office, Ms. Barbara Fruth, is leaving us after four and a half years of devoted service. We wish her much success in all her future endeavors. We also welcome her successor, Ms. Uta Knorr, and wish her well.
- 2) Our hearts go out to the residents of Sri Lanka and the Philippines who have suffered in the recent floods. But even more closely, we wish to express our solidarity with people in two countries where we have member organizations—Australia and Brazil. The global climate changes we are experiencing have wreaked havoc with many communities and caused enormous loss of life and property. This makes Point no.12 of our Berlin Document all the more poignant.
- 3) As you probably know, we have a brand new Web site. There have been some glitches in the beginning, but I feel certain that they will be worked out shortly and ask for your patience. Please encourage all of your members, friends, colleagues, etc. to register at the site. This will enable you/them to receive periodic news updates about our work and about new features of the site. We would like the site to be as interactive as possible.
- 4) The last few months have been a terrible time for inter-religious relations in many parts of the world. There have been violent attacks on Christians in places including Iraq and Egypt; expressions of both anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in many parts of Europe; Jewish racism and anti-Gentile writings and demonstrations here in Israel. It's difficult internationally to keep up with all of the phenomena that require condemnation. We sincerely hope that our member organizations will respond on a local level in meaningful and appropriate ways. We in the ICCJ try to monitor these events to the best of our ability. One of the means we have to deal with the bleak reality we see reflected in the media is to make known some of the positive things that go under-reported: I recently (Jan. 17th) participated in a very moving Judaism Day service in Vienna; I know that similar things went on in Italy and in Poland.

I believe it was the theologian Hans Kung who stated that “there will be no peace among peoples until there is peace between religions.” Let us all continue to pray and work for peace among the religions.

Best wishes, Dr. Deborah Weissman, ICCJ President.