

Your name: _____

**High School of Jewish Studies
2008-2009 Spring Semester
Building Bridges Elective**

Session 1: Building Bridges - A Shared Vision – March 4, 2009

Group discussion:

What was it about this course and Cantor Wehle that led you to sign up? What did Cantor Wehle mean by "Building Bridges"? Do you know local people or groups that are trying to building bridges like this?

What types of groups contain people different from you? Do you know anyone who has strong opinions about other religions, ethnic groups, or other people who are "different"?

What is a bridge? Why do we build bridges? Where do we build bridges? How do we know if the bridge is working the way it should? When is it time to expand or tear down an old bridge and build a new one?

How can we make these classes "doings" instead of just "meetings"? How can we continue the shared vision of Cantor Susan Wehle and Mrs. Aasiya Hassan? How can we set an example for others trying to "build bridges"?

Define:

Bridge

Judaism

Israel

Torah

Islam

Jihad

Qu'ran

Christianity

New Testament

Homework:

Choose one organization, investigate how it is trying to build bridges, try to estimate how many people it is reaching. Presentations and discussion next week.

Listing of American Organizations Promoting Interreligious Dialogue between Jews and Muslims

(from ISNA Children of Abraham interfaith guidebook)

Abraham's Vision

www.abrahamsvision.org

Abraham's Vision is a conflict transformation organization that explores group and individual identities through experiential and political education. Examining social relations within and between the Jewish, Muslim, Israeli, and Palestinian communities, we empower participants to practice just alternatives to the status quo.

Auburn Seminary for Multifaith Education

<http://www.auburnsem.org/multifaith/about.asp?nsect=ionid=4&pageid=1>

Drawing people from a wide spectrum of religious traditions, the Center gives participants - both devout and secular - an opportunity to learn with dynamic teachers, engage sacred texts, discuss challenging issues, and experience the thriving ritual life in New York City. Working with groups including attorneys and judges, healthcare professionals, business executives, women, and young leaders, the Center sponsors forums where leaders gain insight into a range of religious perspectives and reach out across traditional boundaries to turn ethical convictions into social action.

Boston Dialogue Foundation

<http://www.bostondialogue.org/>

The Boston Dialogue Foundation is a non-profit organization that was founded in April 2000 by a group of volunteers comprising business people, academics and students. One of the goals of the Boston Dialogue Foundation is to organize various religious, cultural and social activities, and conferences among all types of religious and ethnic groups to support and advance the harmony and cooperation among religions and faith traditions.

Buxton Initiative

www.buxtoninitiative.org

The Buxton Initiative is a nonprofit organization seeking to build bridges between Abrahamic faith communities through friendship and dialogue.

Center for Jewish Muslim Relations

<http://www.jewishmuslim.org/>

The Center for Jewish Muslim Relations hopes to move relations between Muslims and Jews beyond political conflict. The Center's primary goal is to foster a common agenda on how to maintain strong religious and social identities in the pluralistic society of the United States and remove stigmatizing and negative stereotypes of the other.

Children of Abraham

<http://children-of-abraham.org/>

The Children of Abraham is a non-profit organization working to restore a more comprehensive relationship between these two ancient peoples and honor their common heritage, reaffirming the essential principles that lie at the heart of both of their faiths.

Common Ground

www.cg.org

Common Ground is a center for inquiry, study, and dialogue. Their primary concern is the human quest for understanding and the human pursuit of significance. While their endeavor began with the study of world religions and the commitment to inter-faith dialogue, their range of program offerings has been greatly expanded over the past several years.

Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions

www.cpwr.net

The mission of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions is to cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities and foster their engagement with the world and its other guiding institutions in order to achieve a peaceful, just and sustainable world.

Face to Face, Faith to Faith

<http://www.s-c-g.org/facetoface/>

Face to Face - Faith to Faith is a multifaith youth leadership program founded by Auburn Theological Seminary, a leader in multifaith programming, and Seeking Common Ground, a grassroots peace organization with programs for young people. The program goal is to inform participants about how their own religion calls them to engage in public and world issues; nurture an advanced understanding of other religions, cultures and people; and increase their ability to collaborate along lines of religion, culture, class and ethnicity to make a better world.

Faith Beyond Walls

www.faithbeyondwalls.org

Faith Beyond Walls — founded in 1999 by Interfaith Partnership of Metropolitan St. Louis and the St. Louis Clergy Coalition along with St. Louis 2004 — creates opportunities for faith communities to have a meaningful and measurable impact on their quality of life.

The Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington

<http://www.ifcmw.org/>

The Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington brings together 11 historic faith communities to advance justice, nurture understanding and build community. IFC members are the Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Jain, Jewish, Latterday Saints, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Sikh and Zoroastrian faith communities.

Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC)

www.ifyc.org

There are millions of religious young people in the world interacting with greater frequency. That interaction tends either toward conflict or cooperation. Where so many of these interactions tend toward conflict, the Interfaith Youth Core aims to introduce a new relationship, one that is about mutual respect and religious pluralism. Instead of focusing a dialogue in political or theological differences, they build relationships on the values that religions share, such as hospitality and caring for the Earth, and how different religious groups can live out those values together to contribute to the betterment of their communities. The Interfaith Youth Core is creating these relationships across the world by inspiring, networking, and resourcing young people, who are the leaders of this movement. IFYC provides young people and the institutions that support them with leadership training, project resources and a connection to a broader movement.

New Ground Project

<http://www.newgroundproject.org/>

New Ground is a joint Progressive Jewish Alliance and Muslim Public Affairs Council program that engages diverse groups of Muslims and Jews in an innovative community-building process of intra- and inter-faith education and reflection, leadership training and civic engagement. The program utilizes a creative and dynamic new approach to Muslim-Jewish community-building, and is the result of extensive research of previous Muslim-Jewish dialogue efforts conducted in Los Angeles and throughout the country.

North American Interfaith Network (NAIN)

www.nain.org

The North American Interfaith Network is a nonprofit association of interfaith organizations and agencies in Canada, Mexico and the United States. NAIN's programs seek to build communication and mutual understanding among interfaith organizations and diverse religious groups throughout North America. Through its annual conference, newsletter, Web site, member organizations, board and supportive participants, NAIN offers networking opportunities to people of many religious traditions and numerous interfaith organizations. NAIN affirms humanity's diverse and historic spiritual resources, bringing these to bear on contemporary global, national, regional and local issues.

Religions for Peace USA

<http://www.rfpusa.org/>

Religions for Peace - USA gathers representatives of religious communities in the U.S.; promotes multi-religious cooperation for peace and justice; builds on the spiritual, human, and institutional resources of its communities; enhances mutual understanding; and acts for the common good.

Reuniting the Children of Abraham

www.thechildrenofabrahamproject.org

Reuniting the Children of Abraham is a multi-media

toolkit for peace. The first part of the tool kit is a Power Point presentation developed with The University of Michigan of the shared historical roots of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and how prejudice and stereotyping contribute to violence in our world. The second part is a documentary presented by a facilitator of the inspiring story of how Christian, Muslim and Jewish teens replaced ignorance, fear and hate with understanding through a four-step healing process. The documentary is followed by interactive dialogue with audiences on the Power Point and documentary. Also included in the tool kit are support materials on how to organize a community event and information regarding the opportunity to engage in additional workshops.

United Religions Initiative

www.uri.org

United Religions Initiative (URI) was founded in 2000 by an extraordinary global community committed to promoting enduring, daily interfaith cooperation and to ending religiously motivated violence. Today the URI includes thousands of members in more than 65 countries representing more than 100 religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions.

Other Interfaith Resources

Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) Office of Interfaith and Community Alliances

<http://www.isna.net/interfaith/default.aspx>

Through community outreach and interfaith programs, the ISNA Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances (IOICA) strengthens ties between ISNA and local grassroots organizations. The office also functions as an outreach resource for those engaged in politics and government. Such contacts allow ISNA to promote a positive image of Islam and Muslims to the nation's political leaders.

Tikkun

<http://www.tikkun.org/index.php>

We seek to create that alternative. We are a community of people from many faiths and traditions, called together by TIKKUN magazine and its vision of healing and transforming our world. We include in this call both the outer transformation needed to achieve social justice, ecological sanity, and world peace, and the inner healing needed to foster loving relationships, a generous attitude toward the world and toward others unimpeded by the distortions of our egos. Our movement will encourage a habit of generosity and trust, and the ability to respond to the grandeur of creation with awe, wonder and radical amazement.

Facebook

MySpace

YouTube

Other web sites

Non-Internet resources

Session 2: Building Bridges - Deciding What Bridge to Build 3/11/09

Review of Session 1:

Definitions/Etymologies

Judaism

from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etymology_of_the_word_Jew

The [Jewish ethnonym](#) in [Hebrew](#) is יהודים *Yehudim* (plural of יהודי *Yehudi*) which is the origin of the English word *Jew*. The Hebrew name is derived from the region name [Judah](#) (*Yehudah* יהודה). Originally the name referred to the territory allotted to the [tribe](#) descended from [Judah](#) the fourth son of the patriarch [Jacob](#) ([Numbers](#)). [Judah](#) was one of the twelve sons of [Jacob](#) and one of the [Twelve tribes of Israel](#) ([Genesis](#)). The [Genesis](#) 29:35 [1] relates that Judah's mother — the matriarch [Leah](#) — named him *Yehudah* (i.e. "Judah") because she wanted to "praise God" for giving birth to so many sons: "She said, 'This time let me praise (*odeh* אודה) God (יהודה),' and named the child Judah (*Yehudah* יהודה)." Thus combining "praise" and "God" into one new name. Thereafter Judah vouchsafes the Jewish monarchy, and the [Israelite](#) kings [David](#) and [Solomon](#) derive their lineage from Judah. After the splitting of the united [Kingdom of Israel](#), the name was used for the southern [kingdom of Judah](#), containing not only the land of the [tribe of Judah](#) but also that of [Benjamin](#) and [Simeon](#). With the destruction of the northern [kingdom of Israel](#), the kingdom of Judah became the sole Jewish state and the term *y'hudi* (יהודי) was applied to all Israelites. When the word makes its first appearance in writing (in the book of Esther) its meaning has already expanded to include converts to the Jewish religion as well as descendants of Israelites.

In [Hebrew](#), the name "Judah" (יהודה) contains the four letters of the [Tetragrammaton](#) — the special, holy, and ineffable name of the [Jewish God](#). The very holiness of the name of Judah attests to its importance as an alternate name for "[Israelites](#)" that it ultimately replaces.

Israel

from <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=Israel>

O.E., "the Jewish people," from L. Israel, from Gk., from Heb. yisra'el "he that striveth with God" (Gen. xxxii.28), symbolic proper name conferred on Jacob and extended to his descendants, from sara "he fought, contended" + El "God." As an independent Jewish state in the country formerly called Palestine, it is attested from 1948. Citizens of it are called Israelis; the ancient people are Israelites (1382).

Torah

from <http://jewsandjoes.com/etymology-of-torah.html>

What is the "true sense" or "true meaning" of the word "Torah"? From the Hebrew Scriptures, we know that the [Torah](#) is "Light", "Light that shows the Way of/to Life".

[Proverb 6:23](#) "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching [*Hebrew: Torah*] is light [*Hebrew: Ore*]; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life"

If you were reading the above passage in [Hebrew](#), you would immediately hear the word relationship between "Ore" and "Torah". See also: [Psalms 119:105-115](#); [Isaiah 8:20](#). Hebrew words are formed or derived from two and three letter [root words](#). Looking at root words and closely related words with the same root as "Torah", you'll begin to see the "root meaning" of the word Torah. The word depicts much more than what is generally perceived as just "Law" in the English language.

Ore - "light" (Hebrew: אור - Strongs#:H216)

Yarah - "to shoot, to point, to teach" (Hebrew: ירה - Strongs#:H3384)

Moreh - "archer, teacher" (Hebrew: מורה - Strongs#:H4175)

Torah - "instruction, teaching, law" (Hebrew: תורה - Strongs#:H8451)

Ultimately, the Torah can be defined as this: "the Light (ore) which the Teacher (Moreh) casts in a direction (yarah) for us to walk in". When regarding the Torah given to [Moses](#), [יהוה](#) is Teacher and Giver of the Light, the Torah. He is the One who loves us so much that He wants us to walk in the pathway of Light and safety, not in ignorance and darkness.

Islam

from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam#Etymology_and_meaning

The word *Islam* is a [verbal noun](#) originating from the [triliteral](#) root *s-l-m*, and is derived from the [Arabic verb](#) *Aslama*, which means "to accept, surrender or submit." Thus, Islam means acceptance of and submission to God, and believers must demonstrate this by worshipping him, following his commands, and avoiding [polytheism](#). The word is given a number of meanings in the [Qur'an](#). In some verses ([ayat](#)), the quality of Islam as an internal conviction is stressed: "Whomsoever God desires to guide, He expands his breast to Islam." [12] Other verses connect *islām* and *dīn* (usually translated as "religion"): "Today, I have perfected your religion (*dīn*) for you; I have completed My blessing upon you; I have approved Islam for your religion." [13] Still others describe Islam as an action of returning to God — more than just a verbal affirmation of faith. [14] Another technical meaning in Islamic thought is as one part of a triad of *islam*, [imān](#) (faith), and [ihsān](#) (excellence); where it represents acts of worship ([`ibādah](#)) and Islamic law ([sharia](#)). [15]

Jihad

from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam#Jihad>

Jihad means "to strive or struggle" (in the way of God) and is considered the "[Sixth Pillar of Islam](#)" by a minority of Sunni Muslim authorities. [58] Jihad, in its broadest sense, is classically defined as "exerting one's utmost power, efforts, endeavors, or ability in contending with an object of disapprobation." Depending on the object being a visible enemy, the devil, and aspects of one's own

self, different categories of Jihad are defined. [59] Jihad when used without any qualifier is understood in its military aspect. [60][61] Jihad also refers to one's striving to attain religious and moral perfection. [62] Some Muslim authorities, especially among the Shi'a and Sufis, distinguish between the "greater jihad", which pertains to spiritual self-perfection, and the "lesser jihad", defined as warfare. [63]

Qu'ran

from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qu'ran#Etymology_and_meaning

The original usage of the word *qur`ān* is in the Qur'an itself, where it occurs about 70 times assuming various meanings. It is a verbal noun (*maṣ dar*) of the Arabic verb *qara`a* (Arabic: قرأ), meaning "he read" or "he recited", and represents the Syriac equivalent *qeryānā* which refers to "scripture reading" or "lesson". While most Western scholars consider the word to be derived from the Syriac, the majority of Muslim authorities hold the origin of the word is *qara`a* itself. [24] In any case, it had become an Arabic term by Muhammad's lifetime. [2] Among the earliest meanings of the word Qur'an is the "act of reciting", for example in a Qur'anic passage: "*Ours is it to put it together and [Ours is] its qur`ān*". [25] In other verses it refers to "an individual passage recited [by Muhammad]". In the large majority of contexts, usually with a definite article (*al-*), the word is referred to as the "revelation" (*wahy*), that which has been "sent down" (*tanzil*) at intervals. [26][27] Its liturgical context is seen in a number of passages, for example: "*So when al-qur`ān is recited, listen to it and keep silent*". [28] The word may also assume the meaning of a codified scripture when mentioned with other scriptures such as the Torah and Gospel. [29]

Christianity

from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity>

(from the word Χριστός "Christ") is a monotheistic religion [1] centered on the life and teachings of Jesus as presented in the New Testament. [2]

New Testament

from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament#Etymology

The New Testament (Greek: Καινή Διαθήκη, *Kainē Diathēkē*) is the name given to the second major division of the Christian Bible, the first such division being the much longer Old Testament. The New Testament is sometimes called the Greek New Testament or Greek Scriptures, or the New Covenant.

Presentations/Discussion

Choose one organization, investigate how it is trying to build bridges, try to estimate how many people it is reaching.

Examples:

[Facebook - Interactive Interfaith - common interest group - 21 members](#)

(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=be71349a3a4feea57e6e1baa14fb6797&gid=3617575577>)

[Facebook - Interfaith Alliance 2 - student group - 25 members](#)

(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=be71349a3a4feea57e6e1baa14fb6797&gid=14528864719>)

[Facebook - Interfaith Alliance - religious organization - 111 members](#)

(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=8f3d6fc3aa67c213fb5076382b494001&gid=44584539154>)

[Facebook - Interfaith Connections - common interest group - 72 members](#)

(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=be71349a3a4feea57e6e1baa14fb6797&gid=2205086208>)

[Facebook - Interfaith Inventions - religious organization - 298 members](#)

(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=be71349a3a4feea57e6e1baa14fb6797&gid=21238812230>)

[Facebook - InterFaith - common interest group - 68 members](#)

(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=be71349a3a4feea57e6e1baa14fb6797&gid=3466714795>)

[Facebook - Project Interfaith - cause - 195 members -](#) (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Project-Interfaith/9147697529>)

[Project Interfaith](#) (<http://www.projectinterfaithusa.org/>)

[Welcome to the Interfaith Alliance](#) (<http://www.interfaithalliance.org/>)

Identification of Interfaith Friends/Discussion

Group discussion:

How do we decide what bridge to build?

What is the process in building a bridge?

Do people need to understand their own religion before building bridges to others?

Homework:

What bridge would you like to build?

Session 3: Building Bridges – Start Building the Bridge 3/18/09

Review of Session 2: Presentations/Discussion

Choose one organization, investigate how it is trying to build bridges, try to estimate how many people it is reaching.

<http://jewishmuslim.org/> (Zoey B., Jordan G., Evan P., Rachel S., Zack S.)

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INTERRELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS - An Opportunity for Dialogue and Networking

Sunday, March 15, 2009 - 2:00–8:30 p.m. - Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center - 100 Malcolm X Blvd. - Roxbury Crossing

Suggested donation: \$20 - Includes supper and materials

The greater Boston community can take pride in the work of numerous groups, both official and unofficial, that have been outspoken in their commitment to the furtherance of interreligious understanding between the three Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Whenever voices of bigotry have been raised or acts of violence and inflammatory characterizations directed at one faith or another, they have been met with determined responses.

Yet there have been few opportunities for the leadership of these groups, many unknown to one another, to come together to share ideas and hopes, as well as express fears and concerns and explore the potential for future networking and cooperation. To bridge that gap, the ICPL has arranged a gathering for an exchange of views on the perils and promises of interreligious dialogue and what participating groups should anticipate as they go forward. Invitations to participate have been extended to leaders of interreligious organizations throughout the Boston area. Those attending have been asked to bring with them examples of projects appropriate for inclusion in a program fair from which everyone can benefit.

In planning this event, it was felt that there would be no clearer illustration of the commitment to the ideal of interreligious understanding than to convene at the Islamic Society Cultural Center in Roxbury, which has graciously agreed to host the event.

Schedule

2:00 p.m. Tour of the Mosque and Cultural Center

3:00 Muslim Worship

Registration

3:30 Welcome: Why We Have Come Together

3:45 The Perils and Promises of Interreligious Relationships: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Perspectives - Moderator

Diane Kessler, Board of Trustees, Interreligious Center on Public Life - Keynote

Speakers - David Gordis, President Emeritus, Hebrew College - Nick Carter,

President, Andover Newton Theological School - Mohamed Lazzouni, Visiting

Scholar of Islamic Studies, Boston College

4:30 Questions and Discussion

5:00 Program Fair

5:30 Prayer and Meditation: Jewish, Christian, Muslim

6:15 Informal Buffet Supper

Breakout Sessions

Topics For Discussion: Recognizing nuances in interreligious exchanges that

stereotype and offend the "other": What has worked and why, programmatically?;

Establishing "response teams" to denounce messages of hate in the public arena;

Internal challenges facing each faith community when engaging in interreligious

conversation, including who actually speaks for the community.

7:45 Planning for Future Networking - David Dolev, Co-director, Center For

Jewish-Muslim Relations

8:30 Benediction and Adjournalment

For more information - Rabbi Sandy Seltzer - sseltzer@hebrewcollege.edu -

617.559.8639

Other Examples:

[Facebook - Interfaith Council - religious organization - 111 members](#)

(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=8f3d6fc3aa67c213fb5076382b494001&gid=44584539154>)

[Facebook - Interfaith Inventions - religious organization - 298 members](#)

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[Facebook - Project Interfaith - cause - 195 members - \(http://www.facebook.com/pages/Project-Interfaith/9147697529\)](#)

[Project Interfaith \(http://www.projectinterfaithusa.org/\)](http://www.projectinterfaithusa.org/)

[Interfaith Alliance – 185,000 members - \(http://www.interfaithalliance.org/\)](#)

Network of Religious Communities <http://www.religiousnet.org/> - 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209-2496 - Phone:

(716) 882-4793 e-Mail: nrc@religiousnet.org - The Network of Religious Communities (NRC) is an interreligious/ecumenical organization of denominations, congregations, and religious organizations located in Western New York State, U.S.A. and the Niagara Peninsula of Southern Ontario, Canada. Co-Presidents (2008): Ms Marlene Glickman & Rev Dr Kenneth Neal. Our purpose is to: foster interreligious, ecumenical, and interracial understanding, dialogue, and cooperation; facilitate collaboration in areas of common concern and in response to the needs of the residents of our region; and promote justice, peace, and the common good — as expressed in the faith traditions of our members.

Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) Office of Interfaith and Community Alliances - <http://www.isna.net/interfaith/> -

Through community outreach and interfaith programs, the ISNA Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances (IOICA) strengthens ties between ISNA and local grassroots organizations. The office also functions as an outreach resource for those engaged in politics and government. Such contacts allow ISNA to promote a positive image of Islam and Muslims to the nation's political leaders.

Tikkun - <http://www.tikkun.org/> - We seek to create that alternative. We are a community of people from many faiths and traditions, called together by TIKKUN magazine and its vision of healing and transforming our world. We include in this call both the outer transformation needed to achieve social justice, ecological sanity, and world peace, and the inner healing needed to foster loving relationships, a generous attitude toward the world and toward others unimpeded by the distortions of our egos. Our movement will encourage a habit of generosity and trust, and the ability to respond to the grandeur of creation with awe, wonder and radical amazement.

Bridges TV – <http://www.bridgestv.com/> - info@bridgestv.com - (716) 961-3140 – Time Warner Cable Ch. 270 -

<http://www.youtube.com/user/BridgesTVdotcom>

Identification of Interfaith Friends

Rachel Siva's friend, Dr. Shibly's students

Group discussion: How can YOU use your personal beliefs, interests, or work to build bridges? What bridge can you commit to building TODAY?

Homework: Start building your "bridge"

Session 4: Building Bridges – Repairing the World
3/25/09

Session 3 research:

Network of Religious Communities <http://www.religiousnet.org/> - 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209-2496 - Phone: (716) 882-4793 e-Mail: nrc@religiousnet.org - The Network of Religious Communities (NRC) is an interreligious/ecumenical organization of denominations, congregations, and religious organizations located in Western New York State, U.S.A. and the Niagara Peninsula of Southern Ontario, Canada. Co-Presidents (2008): Ms Marlene Glickman & Rev Dr Kenneth Neal. Our purpose is to: foster interreligious, ecumenical, and interracial understanding, dialogue, and cooperation; facilitate collaboration in areas of common concern and in response to the needs of the residents of our region; and promote justice, peace, and the common good — as expressed in the faith traditions of our members.

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Bridges TV – <http://www.bridgestv.com/> - info@bridgestv.com - (716) 961-3140 – Time Warner Cable Ch. 270 - <http://www.youtube.com/user/BridgesTVdotcom>

Points to Ponder/Group Discussion

What if someone said to you: “You’re Jewish? Really? No, you can’t be Jewish” or “You’re Muslim? Really? No, you can’t be Muslim”?

“What do human beings contribute to the world? How does Judaism and Islam regard “repairing the world”?

Interfaith Seder
4/2/09

Participant: The struggle for freedom, for the elusive rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of justice, is a constant one. In every age, some new freedom is won and established, but there are still some enslavements requiring liberation. The victory over the first Pharaoh foreshadows of all the emancipations that were to follow, and which will yet follow in the days to come. *Mitzrayim* means the narrow place – the place that squeezes the life out of a human soul and body. We are all still enslaved in *Mitzrayim*, because we are still struggling to be free. We are duty bound to retell and expand upon the story of our Exodus from *Mitzrayim* to remind us to work for the time when all the Pharaohs of the world will be vanquished, when right will conquer might, when God alone will rule, and all people will enjoy peace and freedom.

Homework: Let me know if you can go to the Interfaith Seder by **TOMORROW** (email me at drstall@stallgeriatrics.com). Continue building your “bridge”.

Session 5: Building Bridges – Led by Jewish Students
4/1/09

Session 6: Building Bridges – Led by Muslim Students
4/22/09

Session 7: Building Bridges – Yom Ha'atzma'ut – "Unsettled"
4/29/09

Session 8: Building Bridges – The Home Stretch I
5/6/09

1. Review - sessions so far:
 - a. 3/4/09 Session 1: Building Bridges - A Shared Vision
 - b. 3/11/09 Session 2: Building Bridges - Deciding What Bridge to Build
 - c. 3/18/09 Session 3: Building Bridges – Start Building the Bridge
 - d. 3/25/09 Session 4: Building Bridges – Repairing the World
 - e. 4/1/09 Session 5: Building Bridges – Led by Jewish Students
 - f. 4/22/09 Session 6: Building Bridges – Led by Muslim Students
 - g. 4/29/09 Session 7: Building Bridges - Yom Ha'atzma'ut – Video "Unsettled"

2. Discussion – "Unsettled"

From the video's official press release:

"...it is not just an Israeli story – it is a story about trying to find peace by combating extremism at home – perhaps the only strategy that will ever break endless waves of attack and reprisal. Conflicts between a moderate, tolerant majority and a vocal, fundamentalist minority are seen throughout the world – rarely are such conflicts resolved peacefully. Israel is only one of many places where the first battle for peace must be fought at home..."

What thoughts went through your head as you watched the video?

3. Discussion – Deborah Lipstadt, Dosberg Speaker 4/30/09, "The New Anti-Semitism"

<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/antisemitism/voices/transcript/index.php?content=20070315>

"Holocaust denial is a form of antisemitism. It is nothing but antisemitism. Because, if you think about it, the Holocaust has the dubious distinction of being the best-documented genocide in human history. So you have so much evidence from all sides, that you have to then ask, if all this evidence exists, why would these people deny? What is in it for them to deny? The only reason to deny the Holocaust is to inculcate and foster antisemitism."

What can you do about it anti-Semitism, or prejudice in general?

4. Quote: "The only remedies against race and prejudice are enlightenment and education. This is a slow and painstaking process."

What do you think about this statement by Einstein?

5. How should we spend our remaining time together?

Session 9: Building Bridges – Lessons From the Past
5/13/09

1. Review - sessions so far:
 - a. 3/4/09 Session 1: Building Bridges - A Shared Vision
 - b. 3/11/09 Session 2: Building Bridges - Deciding What Bridge to Build
 - c. 3/18/09 Session 3: Building Bridges – Start Building the Bridge
 - d. 3/25/09 Session 4: Building Bridges – Repairing the World
 - e. 4/1/09 Session 5: Building Bridges – Led by Jewish Students
 - f. 4/22/09 Session 6: Building Bridges – Led by Muslim Students
 - g. 4/29/09 Session 7: Building Bridges - Yom Ha'atzma'ut – Video "Unsettled"
 - h. 5/6/09 Session 8: Building Bridges – Home Stretch I
2. Viewing & Discussion – Starbucks Logo Youtube video
3. Reading & Discussion – Prejudice Against Jews (April 5, 1890 NY Times article)

Session 10: Building Bridges – Where Do We Go From Here?
5/20/09

1. Review - sessions so far:
 - a. 3/4/09 Session 1: Building Bridges - A Shared Vision
 - b. 3/11/09 Session 2: Building Bridges - Deciding What Bridge to Build
 - c. 3/18/09 Session 3: Building Bridges – Start Building the Bridge
 - d. 3/25/09 Session 4: Building Bridges – Repairing the World
 - e. 4/1/09 Session 5: Building Bridges – Led by Jewish Students
 - f. 4/22/09 Session 6: Building Bridges – Led by Muslim Students
 - g. 4/29/09 Session 7: Building Bridges - Yom Ha'atzma'ut – Video "Unsettled"
 - h. 5/6/09 Session 8: Building Bridges – Home Stretch I
 - i. 5/13/09 Session 9: Building Bridges – Lessons From the Past