

# THE PACIS PROJECT IN FAITH-BASED DIPLOMACY

## FIRST YEAR REPORT

### 2008 - 2009

*Narrative* —

#### A. Results

The PACIS Project in Faith Based Diplomacy, a direct and tangible reflection of Pepperdine University's mission statement, is a visionary and innovative enterprise of the Straus Institute of Pepperdine University Law School of Malibu, California and the International Center For Religion and Diplomacy of Washington, D.C. to harness the transcendent power of religion to foster a healing of the broken family of Abraham and to participate in the peace process in the Middle East and potentially elsewhere. The PACIS Project brings an innovative model of faith-based reconciliation as an intentionally religious framework for peacemaking that has borne tangible fruit in other intractable identity-based conflicts such as in Kashmir.

The PACIS Project in Faith-Based Diplomacy began one year ago in July 2008. This report is a summary of the first year's events related to the development of this project. The original goals of the Project remain fourfold.

- 1) To promote the Abrahamic values of faith-based reconciliation as a paradigm for 21<sup>st</sup> century societies; as an alternative to religious extremism and militancy; as a means of healing the broken family of Abraham (Jews, Christians and Muslims); and, as a unique methodology of faith-based conflict intervention.
- 2) To empower indigenous elite, civil society and grassroots leaders with a faith-based approach to peacemaking that seeks to "soften hearts" as a prelude to constructive joint problem solving.
- 3) To create an academic home for faith-based diplomacy while preparing the next generation of faith-based diplomats.
- 4) To foster and effect increasingly complementary collaboration with traditional diplomatic nation-to-nation Track I peacemaking efforts.

In support of these goals, The PACIS Project has achieved the following results:

- Pepperdine University made a bold, entrepreneurial decision to provide seed money to undertake the PACIS Project. Funding began in October 2008 and will continue through 2011.
- Tim Pownall and Brian Cox became the Directors of the PACIS Project. Michael Zacharia became the Co-Director.
- In July, Brian Cox and Tim Pownall participated in the World Conference on Dialogue in Madrid hosted by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and organized by the Muslim World League.
- Conceptual planning began in July 2008 for a core curriculum of five courses that would define a concentration in faith-based diplomacy within the existing Straus Institute Master of Dispute Resolution degree program.

- The process for seeking approval for the academic program began with meetings with law school administration and faculty and university officials.
- The PACIS team participated in a faith-based reconciliation seminar and leadership training for Kashmiri civil and religious leaders from India and Pakistan in Santa Barbara in October 2008.
- The formal agreement between Pepperdine Law School and the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy was signed by Dean Ken Starr and Dr. Douglas Johnston in November 2008.
- The first PACIS Project trip to the Middle East took place in December 2008. Meetings were conducted in Syria, Jordan, Israel and Palestine with government, religious and civic leaders to lay the foundation for the Middle East Faith-Based Reconciliation Project.
- Participated in the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington DC with guests from the Middle East and members of the U.S. Congress in February 2009.
- Met with the Deputy Chief of Mission and with the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Washington DC in February 2009 to lay the foundation for a future visit to Saudi Arabia.
- Lunch with Guilford and Diane Glazer provided an opportunity to explain The PACIS Project to these key university benefactors in February 2009.
- Met with Senator George Mitchell's Chief Deputy in February 2009 to establish relationship with the Obama Administration's senior level Middle East team.
- The second PACIS Project trip to the Middle East took place in April/May 2009. The PACIS team presented seminars and encounter experiences for Israeli and Palestinian groups.
- Participated in four-day long Desert Encounter in Wadi Rum, Jordan in partnership with Musalaha, a Jerusalem-based, faith based non-governmental organization in April 2009, to build bridges of understanding and cooperation while tearing down walls of hostility and tribalism between 24 university Palestinian Muslim and Palestinian Christian leaders.
- Conducted a faith-based reconciliation seminar for leaders of the Parents Circle – Families Forum in Jerusalem in May 2009. This is the renowned organization of Israeli and Palestinian parents and family members who have lost children and family to the conflict. At their invitation the PACIS team addressed issues of healing and forgiveness and living a surrendered life to God.
- Conducted meetings with political and religious leaders, diplomats and negotiators, educators and journalists in Amman, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in May 2009.
- Conducted a two-day faith-based reconciliation leadership retreat for the top leaders of the Southern California Jewish and Muslim communities at the Pepperdine Executive Center in June 2009.
- Launched The PACIS Project website, including trip reports, on the School of Law/Straus Institute website.
- Conducted meetings in Washington DC with Obama Administration Middle East team, members of Congress, Former U.S. Ambassadors in the Middle East, U.S. Institute for Peace, and ICRD senior level officials in July 2009.

- Over the past year the PACIS Project has established strategic cooperative working relationships with Musalaha (based in Jerusalem), The Parents Circle - Families Forum (based in Tel Aviv), The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East (based in Jerusalem), The Islamic Studies Centre (based in Damascus).

## B. Lessons Learned

While anecdotal, the lessons learned to date from this project would include:

- 1) We are received and respected by diverse leadership groups – government, religious and civil – our message, intentionally inviting God into the process resonates with many groups in the Middle East.
- 2) The PACIS team was struck by the depth of the sense of fatalism and despair surrounding the possibility of peace in the Middle East on the part of both Israelis and Palestinians.
- 3) Our conversations and leadership retreat experiences do effectively ‘soften hearts’.
- 4) Our audiences, once they understand our message, seek to appropriate it, make it culturally more relevant and move to initiate ‘people movements’ based on the Abrahamic reconciliation paradigm.
- 5) In a number of Middle East regimes, we cannot work effectively with civil and religious leaders and other groups without the approval of the government.
- 6) The experiences, training and ‘gifting’ of the PACIS team are surely complementary and strongly directed toward ‘best practices’ and goal outcomes.
- 7) It is imperative to begin mentoring the next generation of faith based diplomats.
- 8) It is advisable to find strategic indigenous, Arabic and Hebrew speaking partners.
- 9) The socio-cultural and religious Jewish and Muslim leadership communities in SoCal are strongly connected to their counterpart communities in the Middle East.
- 10) Increasingly it is clear that the additional faculty selected to teach in the Faith Based Diplomacy concentration must have extensive ‘in-the-field’ experience in addition to their academic credentials.
- 11) Sacred text is a strong anchor in this work that cannot be undertaken effectively without a strategically prophetic prayer and fasting component.
- 12) More funding must be sourced.

## C. Future Plans

Anticipated 2009 – 2010 initiatives will include:

- 1) Training the entire clergy of the Anglican Communion in the Middle East in FB Reconciliation.
- 2) Receiving School of Law and University approval to initiate the Master in Dispute Resolution degree with a Concentration in Faith Based Diplomacy.
- 3) Conducting the second phase of the Abrahamic Reconciliation Seminar Leadership Retreat, in cooperation with Musalaha, for Palestinian Muslim and Christian university leaders from the West Bank.
- 4) Conduct Joint Problem Solving Retreat for the leadership of Southern California Jewish and Muslim communities in October 2009.
- 5) Explore strategic relationships with the similarly minded, faith-based, activist enterprises in the Middle East.
- 6) Conducting a second, larger joint Abrahamic Reconciliation Leadership Retreat with the leaderships of the Jewish and Muslim communities in southern California.
- 7) Continue high-level discussions with Track I diplomats to introduce Track II initiatives in support of official peacemaking efforts such as ‘the Jerusalem question’ (including Amb. Kmiec in the Republic of Malta).

- 8) Continue to interact with internal and external stakeholders on the Jerusalem question for the purposes of becoming an 'honest broker' in the reconciliation process.
- 9) Securing sustainable outside funding

**D. Public Relations**

1. See our website at <http://law.pepperdine.edu/straus/academics/PACIS/>.
2. Create a 'leave-behind' brochure introducing PACIS and Faith Based Diplomacy.
3. Create a Postcard announcement for all U.S. Schools of Law announcing the availability of the Straus Institute's Master in Dispute Resolution with Concentration in Faith Based Diplomacy degree...to be made available also to Embassies/Consulates, State Departments, United Nations, international NGOs, etc., once the program is approved.

In summary, it has been a busy and productive year for the PACIS Project in curriculum development and approval seeking, conducting field projects with Kashmiris, in the Middle East and Southern California and establishing the strategic foundation for a long term faith-based diplomatic presence in the academic world and the Middle East.

The PACIS Project is positioning Pepperdine University, the Law School and the Straus Institute to penetrate a whole new global student base on behalf of its proposed academic program in Faith Based Diplomacy, consisting of future foreign service diplomats, national security officials, religious leaders and executives of humanitarian agencies who seek to understand and implement a faith-based approach to the world's many intractable identity-based conflicts.

The PACIS Project is deeply appreciative of the continuing support of the University and humbled by the encouragement it has received both at home and abroad for the quality and integrity of its efforts in regard to reconciling the broken family of Abraham.