

News

Sivan/Tammuz 5761 • June 2001 Volume I Number 4



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RABBIS
אחדות הרבנים בין-לאומי

Second Annual IFR Conference helps rabbis tackle tough issues

Beginning Sunday evening, March 4 and continuing through Tuesday, March 6, an enthusiastic group of modern rabbis - the rabbis of the IFR - held their second annual conference at the Duncan Center in Delray Beach, Florida.

Rabbi Dr. Joseph Gelberman, Head of the Rabbinical Seminary International (RSI) in New York City offered the keynote address which emphasized the revitalization and restructuring of synagogue life. As founder of the New Synagogue, Gelberman emphasized the need to find creative ways to encourage Jews back into synagogue and to create warm, interactive services and relevant programs designed to keep them there.

And that's just what the Second Annual IFR conference was all about. Responding to Gelberman's call to action, conference organizers offered an innovative program designed to help rabbis meet the challenges of Jewish life in the new millennium.

Because intermarriage is a crucial issue for rabbis the world over, IFR offered a stimulating workshop on the topic. "Premarital Counseling for Interfaith Couples," led by four rabbis - Richard Allen, Monte Sugarman, Gary Golbart and Yaakov Nerenberg, offered a variety of perspectives on the modern-day challenge.

Participants discussed the use of detailed questionnaires to help couples understand and make the most of their differences as well as a variety of counseling techniques that allow couples to learn more about each other's religious background. The rabbis presented ideas for co-officiating the marriage ceremony with other

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clergy, and ways to help potential parents share religious heritage and traditions with their children.

As a rabbi I want to make it possible for the next generation to be Jewish," says Rabbi Gary Golbart, "so I help interfaith couples see that children need an identity to help them travel life's path. I show them how to give their children a Jewish identity." Other rabbis shared the view of the presenters that an interfaith ceremony can be seen as G-d's formula for a world of peace.

Other workshops included "Continuing Education for Rabbis in Modern Times," presented by Rabbi David Roller (CA) and another panel presentation by Rabbis Barbara Aiello (FL), Gary Golbart (NV) and Larry Winer (FL) on Innovative Worship Services. The rabbis focused on creative ideas that work in the synagogue -- from new ideas for Tot Shabbat, involvement of

B'nai Mitzvah students in the planning and leading of services, songs in sign language and the gearing of the D'var Torah to modern life. Each rabbi profiled her/his synagogue and offered an imaginative tour of what a prospective member might find there. Other events included a program on innovative music for synagogue and life cycle events as well as a Kaballah class led by Rabbi Gelberman who introduced participants to the "spiritual mikveh."

Our mission is a modern one," says Rabbi Lewis Solomon, IFR president, and author of the best selling book, "Jewish Spirituality." "We need to work actively to revitalize synagogue life, modify worship services and reach out to unaffiliated Jews so that our Jewish way of life continues to grow."

V

Mark Your Calendar and Save the Date ...

Third Annual IFR Conference

Monday -Wednesday,

March 3-6 2002

Las Vegas, Nevada

- *Exciting Workshops*
- *Kosher Catered Buffet*
- *Free Shuttle to Town*

For more information contact Rabbi Gary Golbart, Conference Coordinator. Details in next newsletter.

Send submissions for IFR NEWS to
rbaiello@gate.net

For further information about
IFR, see our Web Site at
www.intfedrabbis.org



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Photo by Rabbi Suzanne Carter

"The Spiritual Mikveh"

Rabbis Zev Wellins, Irving Luchans, Ilana Rosansky and Monte Sugarman join their IFR colleagues to learn "the spiritual mikveh," -- an innovative synagogue meditation technique developed by Rabbi Joseph Gelberman. This photo, along with an accompanying article appeared in a number of Jewish newspapers nationwide.

IFR Rabbis make news around the nation

From Florida to Las Vegas to upstate New York, IFR rabbis are in the news.

Rabbi Roger Ross and Rev. Deborah Steen were featured in a **New York Times** article on the changing face of American Jewry.

Roger and Deborah were pictured at the Interfaith ceremony in which they were married.

Rabbi Suzanne Carter was the recipient of the Police Chief's Administrative Excellence Award for creating, designing and maintaining the Delray Beach Police Department's web site for the last four years. This award has been presented only three other times during the Chief's ten

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year tenure. Rabbi Carter along with Rabbi Yaakov Nerenberg were recently profiled in the ***Palm Beach Post*** for their work as chaplains for the Police Department .

● Rabbis Anna and Monte Sugarman were featured in the ***Saratogian*** (Saratoga Springs, NY) for their work as teachers and spiritual leaders in their Jewish community.

● Rabbi Zev Wellins (AZ) was awarded a degree as Doctor of Divinity from the ***Rabbinical Academy*** in New York City.

● Rabbi Barbara Aiello, rabbi for Temple Beth El in Bradenton, Florida also received an enhanced s'mecha from the ***Rabbinical Academy*** on June 14. In addition, she has appeared as a guest editor for the ***Bradenton Herald*** (FL) where she recently wrote an editorial on "The Jewish View of Jesus."

● Rabbi Gary Golbart (NV) performed the marriage ceremony for comedian David Brenner on stage at a Las Vegas hotel. The wedding was broadcast on Brenner's ***HBO*** television special.

● Rabbi Larry Winer, founder of Congregation Amchah in Ft. Lauderdale, FL was featured in the local Jewish News as well as the ***Ft. Lauderdale Sun Sentinel***.

● The IFR Conference was featured in Jewish newspapers around the US -- among them, ***Boston's Jewish Advocate***, the ***South Florida Sun Sentinel***, ***The Sarasota (FL) Jewish Chronicle***, ***The Jewish News*** (FL, CT) and several other publications as well.

Have you been In the News? We want to know. Share your story with IFR.

Coming next issue ...

Continuing Education

Community Outreach

Membership Update

2002 Conference Preview