



**INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL ON  
RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE  
21 July—4 August 2010  
Nicosia, Cyprus / Jaffa, Israel**

**TOGETHER AND APART: DIVIDED CITIES**

The International Summer School on Religion and Public Life (ISSRPL) is a unique, global initiative providing an annual international, inter-religious summer school of approximately two weeks. Each year the school explores critical issues around religion and society that impact the nature of community. Participants include a diverse group of religious and civil society leaders, business executives, as well prominent academics and educators from different countries.

The 2010 ISSRPL will be held in (and compare) two Mediterranean cities: Nicosia, Cyprus and Jaffa, Israel. Both are ancient cities—Cyprus was populated in the Neolithic period, when Jaffa was already a thriving port—and both are in successor states to the Ottoman Empire. Both are characterized by ethnic and religious diversity, contestation and conflict. In the case of Nicosia, this led, with the Turkish military intervention of 1974, to the physical division of the city and the displacement of its populace (with Turkish Muslims moving to the northern part of Cyprus and Greek Orthodox to the southern part of the island.) Jaffa, a mixed city, saw its Palestinian population flee and expelled in 1948 to be replaced by both refugees from other areas of Palestine and, at the end of the Israeli War of Independence (what Palestinians refer to as the Nakba), the settlement of large groups of Bulgarian and North African Jewish immigrants. More recently, Jaffa has seen the development of “gated communities” of the very rich, as well as an influx of ideologically committed, extremely right-wing and religious Jews determined to oust the remaining Palestinian population. All this makes for a very volatile mix.

The growth of such mixed cities and contested urban space is more and more a global phenomenon, characterizing cities from Birmingham, England to Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina; from Yogyakarta, Indonesia to Istanbul, Turkey. Nicosia and Jaffa present two very different modes of accommodating such difference. We look forward to learning from the experience of each through the unique ISSRPL pedagogy of bringing together an international cohort of fellows and combining academic lectures, with site visits (what we term “practicums” or “embodied knowledge”) with shared reflection on the time spent in both locales.

Our local hosts for the 2010 program, **Together and Apart: Divided Cities**, are: Academic College of Tel Aviv—Jaffa, University of Nicosia, University of Cyprus, and PRIO-Cyprus Center.

As in the past, the ISSRPL combines pluralistic perspectives on religious thought with social scientific research on tolerance, civil society and an open, dialogic, approach to pedagogic practice. Its goal is to transform both the theoretical models and concrete practices through which religious orientations and secular models of politics and society engage one another. Its guiding principle is that in order to build relations of tolerance and understanding between groups and to shape a civil society, the perceived barrier between secular, modern and more traditional religious values must be broken down. Political orientations and social practices must be developed that will draw on both religious traditions and the insights of secular modernity in new and creative ways. The program is centered on three academic courses together with intense processes of group building and the construction of working relationships across religious and ethnic identities. The didactic goals of the conference are social as well as cognitive. It is expected that, as a result of attendance at the school, fellows develop and operationalize programs in their home countries.

In 2003 the ISSRPL met in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia to study *The Role of Religion in the Conflicts of ex-Yugoslavia*. In 2004 it met in Bosnia and Herzegovina to study *The Muslim Question in Europe*. In 2005 it met in Israel, focused on the problem of *Religion, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism: The Challenge of Coexistence*. In 2006 it met in both Stolac, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Boston, USA and was focused on *Religion and Civil Society: A Comparative Perspective*. In 2007 it met in Istanbul, Turkey to study comparative perspectives on *State, Ethnos, Religion: The Legacy of Empire and the Nation-state*. In 2008 the school met in Birmingham, England around the theme of *The Good City: Living Together Differently*. In 2009 it met again in Birmingham, one of two major English cities likely soon to have an “ethnic minority, majority”. There we engaged with the emergent norms of life in multi-confessional, multi-ethnic and hence, global cities. We explored these norms on the micro-scale of neighborhoods, and so that year’s title was *The Language of Neighborhood and Practices of Public Life*.

We look forward to a small but select group of international fellows who may include, religious elites, NGO leaders, school teachers, major actors in the non-profit and third-sectors, as well as political leaders and members of the business communities of different countries. Fellows will be joined by an international faculty and so comprise a cohort from the Americas, the Balkans, Central and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Western Europe and elsewhere. The success of the school has always depended on the wide range of people, commitments and views presented. It is through the intense encounter with the truly different that we are forced to rethink our fundamental assessments and so break-through to new ways of knowing, thinking, feeling, and hence, acting.

Please join us.

The deadline for receiving applications is 15 April 2010, with application material found at <http://www.issrpl.org/programs/application.html>.