

going on, and we never really shared how we felt. It's not honest dialogue unless we do."

Two days later, the group's members found themselves—literally—on opposite sides of the street in downtown Chappaqua.

Following the rally, Rabbi Davidson and Khalife designed a dialogue session that invited participants to talk about the present reality in the Middle East. "By asking each [one] to share only what the conflict felt like to him or to her," he says, "we created an environment in which people could speak honestly without challenging the legitimacy of anyone else's pain... Lots of things were said that our members didn't like, and I'm sure their members felt the same way. But that's dialogue. [It's] about sharing your sorrow, and feeling the other's hurt—and recognizing that both, at once, can be true."

While this type of conversation is "not easy," Rabbi Davidson admits, "only honest, open dialogue will resolve the conflict that stands in the way of peace in the Middle East."



In February 2008, five members of Temple Shalom in Dallas (<http://www.templeshalomdallas.org/>) and five from the Islamic Association of Carrollton began an 18-month-long "rigorous dialogue" about religious differences using the "Children of Abraham" curriculum. They met regularly—sometimes every two weeks over an extended period—thereby demonstrating an "authentic commitment," without which, Rabbi Jeremy Schneider (photo #2) says, "trust and relationships will not grow." They refrained from simple dialoguing, which, he says, "doesn't work," because the negative stereotypes both Jews and Muslims hold about the other can create an atmosphere of fear that "allows us to dehumanize each other." To break this pattern of misconceptions, the participants learned about the other's faith before engaging in dialogue.

By Sukkot, the group had established

enough cohesion and camaraderie for the Muslims to feel comfortable conducting their *magrib* (evening) prayers in Rabbi Schneider's living room.

Going deeper, Jewish participants began sharing intimate stories of what Israel meant to them; Muslims spoke of Jerusalem's importance to Mohamed as detailed in the Koran. By the time of the Gaza conflagration in January 2009, "we had already completed 10 months of dialogue about our religious differences," Rabbi Schneider says, "and having framed [the conflict] as political—not religious—we could leave it alone." Azhar Azeez, president of the Islamic Association of Carrollton, also attributes the group's success to "focus[ing] on our similarities and address[ing] our differences in a professional, civilized manner." The dialogue has continued.



Last spring, when news of the plot to bomb Riverdale Temple in New York reached the airwaves, one of the first calls of concern received by Rabbi Robert Nosanchuk (photo #3), then spiritual leader of Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation in Reston (<http://www.nvhcreston.org/>), was from Imam Mohammed Magid, spiritual leader of the neighboring All Dulles Area Muslim Society.

The congregation and the mosque had been partnering in various ways for more than a decade, including, more recently, the bursting-at-the-seams mosque leasing space from the synagogue for *jumma* services.

But the essence of the communities' relationship is much more about "exposing differences and exploring questions in depth," says Rabbi Nosanchuk. The two groups—sometimes in "dialogue" with the Christian community—discuss what each faith teaches about such issues as human rights, women's rights, and their common ancestor, Abraham. In one session, says Rabbi Nosanchuk, Imam Magid shared a *hadith* (a saying from the

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## NOTEWORTHY

rabbis emigrating from Germany in the 19th and 20th centuries brought this new brand of Judaism to communities worldwide.

On July 17 (Shabbat Chazon), congregations throughout the world will celebrate this historic milestone. For more information contact the World Union for Progressive Judaism, [www.wupj.org](http://www.wupj.org).

**A Siddur for the Southern Hemisphere:** This summer the CCAR Press will issue



*Mishkan T'filah—The World Union Edition*, a new prayerbook for Progressive congregations in the Southern

Hemisphere with editorial contributions from WUPJ leaders in Australia, New Zealand, Asia, and South Africa. This distinctive version of *Mishkan T'filah*, reflecting the more traditional rituals practiced by Progressive Jews in the Southern Hemisphere, includes the full classical version of the *Sh'ma* in the weekday morning service; a full four-page version of the *Birkat Hamazon*; and an extended *Yizkor*, which can be used as part of an evening *minyán* service.

References to weather have also been changed. In the original *Mishkan T'filah*, the prayers for wind and rain are meant to be said in the winter months, and dew in the summer months. Because the seasons are the opposite in the Southern Hemisphere, the weather in the Land of Israel is referenced or a general prayer offered ("Mashiv haruach u'morid ha gashem, mazriach hashemesh u'morid ha'tal"—[We praise God] Who causes the wind to blow, the rain to fall, the sun to shine and the dew to fall"), which can be used in any part of the