

B’Nai Sefardim of Colorado Symposium
Denver, Colorado
September 10, 2006

Guillermo Lazo Abstract

Guillermo Lazo is an author and poet who has resided in Colorado since the 1980’s. Originally from Chicago, IL his parents are respectively from Guanajuato, Mexico (father) and Las Vegas NM area (mother). He is a CU graduate and has worked in the telecommunications and currently in the insurance industry. He has also taught high school, middle school and elementary school – most recently in Jefferson County and Denver Public Schools.

Guillermo was active in **Synagogue 2000** has been active in Kulanu since approximately 1998. **Kulanu** is an organization which reflects the community of interests of individuals of varied backgrounds and religious practices dedicated to finding and assisting lost and dispersed remnants of the Jewish people

During the course of Jewish history, large segments of the Jewish community were 'lost' as a result of war, exile and forced conversions. The greater part of the Jewish people were 'lost' in the eighth century B.C.E., when the ten northern Israelite tribes were conquered by Assyria and the captives were forcibly resettled. Today the descendants of these Ten Lost Tribes can probably be found in India, Burma, Afghanistan, Pakistan and China.

Another large group of Jews was 'lost' during the period of forced conversions to Christianity in Spain and Portugal starting in the 15th century. Many of these so-called 'Marranos' continued to practice Judaism in secret. Today their descendants can be found in Brazil, Mexico, the southwestern United States, and Majorca, as well as mainland Spain and Portugal.

Kulanu's activities concern these dispersed groups, including research, contacts, education, donation of religious books and articles, facilitation of conversion when requested, and help with relocation to Israel if desired.

Why? If your forebears were forcibly abducted, would you not fervently welcome them with open arms if they wished to return? Or would you simply abandon them to their abductors?

Guillermo will speak on the connections between the mainstream Jewish community and the emerging communities in Mexico and the US Southwest. Guillermo has worked with Amichai Heppner Kulanu VP for Mexico affairs and has previously served as VP for Mexico within Kulanu. A number of communities exist in Mexico today in places such as Veracruz, Venta Prieta, Puebla, Tijuana and most recently in Mexicali.

Talking points:

- How do the Anousim “return” to mainstream Judaism?

- How do Anousim repair their Jewish status?
- Conversion - Is it necessary?
- Streams of Judaism: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform.
- What are they? How do the different streams interact with Anousim / Sefardi communities?
- How significant is Jewish ancestry?
- Recent Developments in Denver.
- Kulanu_Mexico list serve. [mailto: Kulanu_Mexico@yahoogleroups.com](mailto:Kulanu_Mexico@yahoogleroups.com)

Guillermo Lazo partial publication list:

Confessions of a Marrano – (<http://www.cryptojews.com/Lazo.html>) 2003

Bathers of the Med Sea – Baculite Publishing 1996

Surround Me as Burlap – Pueblo Poetry Project 1980

Ching Poems – Baculite 1984

Columnist / Journalist for following publications:

Chicago Daily Defender

Latin in NY Magazine

Urban Spectrum

Guillermo with wife Judy published Denver's literary magazine: *Rocky Mountain Arsenal of the Arts* from 1985 until 1991