

CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN-JEWISH LEARNING AT BOSTON COLLEGE

Center Off to a Busy Start in its Inaugural Year

Center Executive Director Dr. Philip A. Cunningham and Judaica Scholar Rabbi Dr. Ruth Langer have traveled many miles during the first full year of Center operations. Separately or as a team they have either offered presentations, participated in panel discussions, or contributed to planning for future growth in Christian-Jewish relations at conferences both around the United States and overseas.

Early in the year, much activity centered on a document from the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, entitled *Dominus Iesus*. The text prompted worldwide discussion about its implications for Catholic-Jewish relations. Both Rabbi Langer and Dr. Cunningham advised various authorities on what steps needed to be taken in response to the issues raised by the document. *Dominus Iesus* has generated a number of theological questions that will require considerable research and dialogue in the future.

A highlight of the end of the year was the 17th meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee [ILC], held in New York from May 1-4. This gathering has served since 1971 as an official point of contact between the Vatican and the worldwide Jewish community. Dr. Cunningham was part of the Vatican's delegation at the meeting, which featured a

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RIGHT Dr. Cunningham
and Rabbi Langer at
Maddingley Hall, Cambridge
University, U.K. for
an international Jewish-
Christian relations
conference in March.



Historic Jewish Document Released

On September 10, 2000 a full page ad in The New York Times declared that due to recent dramatic changes in Christianity “it is time for Jews to reflect on what Judaism may now say about Christianity.” The text was written by a group of Jewish scholars, sponsored by the Institute for Christian & Jewish Studies in Baltimore. Profs. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, David Novak, Peter Ochs, and Michael Signer named their work *Dabru Emet*, from Zech. 8:16, “Speak the truth . . .” Over 200 Jewish scholars and rabbis, including Rabbi Langer, signed the document. This is the first time that so many Jewish leaders have made such a public statement on Christian-Jewish relations.

Dabru Emet made the following eight claims:

- Jews and Christians worship the same God.
- Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book Bible (what Jews call “Tanakh” and Christians call the “Old Testament”).
- Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel.
- Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of Torah.

- Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon.
- The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the world.
- A new relationship between Jews and Christians will not weaken Jewish practice.
- Jews and Christians must work together for justice and peace.

Although some of these points have proven to be very debatable, *Dabru Emet* clearly marks an historic next step in Jewish and Christian relations.

Under the editorial direction of Rabbi David Fox Sandmel, two companion books expand on these points. *Christianity in Jewish Terms* has already been published. *Irreconcilable Differences?: A Learning Resource for Jews and Christians* will appear soon. Rabbi Langer wrote an essay for the first volume and Dr. Cunningham co-authored an essay in the second.

For more information visit the Institute's website at:
www.icjs.org

CENTER WEBSITE RESOURCES

Over the past year, a major site managed by the Center has been gradually coalescing on the Worldwide Web. In addition to information on Center activities, the website also provides a growing library of official documents on Christian-Jewish relations. This library is being linked to an ambitious thematic index that will enable students and researchers to quickly locate texts of interest. The website also offers current news, educational resources, and significant essays on Jewish and Christian relations. Be sure to visit this rapidly developing website and enroll for e-mailed notification of new postings and upcoming Center events at:
www.bc.edu/cjlearning

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substantive exchange on “Repentance and Reconciliation.” The ILC issued important statements on education, protecting religious liberties and holy sites, and the proceedings of the meeting.

The Center’s second invitational scholars’ conference will meet on June 10-11, studying “Liturgical Issues in Christian-Jewish Relations.” Jewish and Christian scholars from the U.S., Canada, and Ireland will discuss key aspects of the worship life of both traditions and how they might shape congregants’ attitudes toward the other religious community.

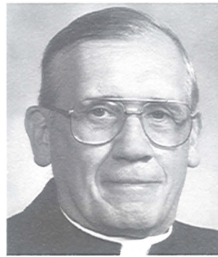
As an example of the regional collaborations that can occur in the future, the Center will co-sponsor a unique learning experience from June 25-28 with the Catholic Diocese of Manchester (NH) and the Jewish Federation of Greater Manchester. During this four-day institute Jewish and Catholic educators will study together the religious roots and implications of the Shoah.

Details of these and other Center activities during the past year can be found on the Center website at:
www.bc.edu/cjlearning

Center Sponsors Spring Speakers Series



Dr. Alan L. Berger



Fr. John Pawlikowski

The Center sponsored or co-sponsored several events on Christian-Jewish relations during the spring semester of 2001.

Prof. Ithamar Gruenwald, of the Department of Jewish Philosophy, Tel Aviv University, was the Center's guest on February 8. He discussed "The New Testament and First Century Judaism," showing how these Christian texts provide important insights into Jewish life at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple.

On April 19, as part of Boston College's observance of Yom Hashoah, the Center hosted Prof. Alan L. Berger, the Raddock Eminent Scholar of Holocaust Studies at Florida Atlantic University. He spoke about his research into the ways "Holocaust Memory" is shaped by the descendants of survivors and perpetrators. While both groups

were raised in silence about the Shoah, Jews seek to connect with their vanished families but children of perpetrators must confront the guilt of their parents' generation.

The Center sponsored a visit to Boston College by James Carroll, author of the best-selling *Constantine's Sword* on April 26. In a private afternoon conversation with theology department students and faculty and in a public evening panel discussion, Mr. Carroll explained the purposes and meaning of his book. Although important criticisms of certain aspects of the volume were raised, all agreed that the pursuit of positive relations between Christians and Jews must be a major priority for the church in the new century.

Rev. Dr. John T. Pawlikowski, OSM, an internationally recognized leader in Jewish and Christian relations, will conclude the speakers' series on June 11 with reflections on "Mutual Understanding or Serial Squabbling: Christians and Jews in the 21st Century." The deepening of the relationship between the two traditions in the future will partially depend on how well each community is able to appreciate the workings and sensibilities of the other.

Bishops Issue Shoah Education Document

In February 2001 the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a booklet entitled *Catholic Teaching on the Shoah: Implementing the Holy See's We Remember*. It offers guidance for providing education on the Shoah in the U.S. Catholic elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities.

Dr. Cunningham and Rabbi Langer spoke about the document at an April meeting of representatives of the Bishops Conference and the National Council of Synagogues. They had helped draft portions of the text, including these "Goals for Shoah Education in a Catholic context."

- To provide Catholics with accurate knowledge of and respect for Judaism, the eternal covenant

between God and the Jewish People, and the spiritual bond of kinship between Jews and Christians.

- To encourage a positive appreciation of Jews and Judaism and the ongoing role of the Jewish People in God's plan of salvation.
- To promote the spirit of repentance and conversion called for by We Remember.
- To arm Catholics for the ongoing fight against traditional anti-Judaism and modern anti-semitism, by studying the causes and conditions for genocide in order to prevent such atrocities from happening to Jews, or any other group in the future.

The booklet is available from the USCCB at 800-235-8722, or go to the Conference website at: www.nccbuscc.org



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LEARNING** AT BOSTON COLLEGE

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ABOUT THE CENTER

The Center for Christian-Jewish Learning is devoted to the multifaceted development and implementation of new relationships between Christians and Jews that are based, not merely on toleration, but on full respect and mutual enrichment. This defining purpose flows from the mission of Boston College and responds to the vision expressed in Roman Catholic documents ever since the Second Vatican Council.

The building of new, positive relationships between Jews and Christians requires sustained collaborative theological research. Therefore, under the Center's auspices, scholars and thinkers representing diverse Jewish and Christian perspectives engage in

intense and ongoing study of all aspects of our related yet distinct traditions of faith.

Educationally, we are committed to the goal that "Jews and Judaism should not occupy an occasional and marginal place in [Christian religious education]; their presence there is essential and should be organically integrated" (*Notes*, 2). We are convinced that Jews and Christians enrich and deepen their respective religious identities by joint educational endeavors. The Center is thus dedicated to conducting educational research and to offering programs, both in the university and the wider community, in which Christians and Jews explore their traditions together.

When the Center team is fully established, the executive director, the Judaica scholar, and professors holding one visiting and two permanent chairs in Christian-Jewish relations will pursue these tasks. In short, the Center applies the scholarly resources of a Catholic university to the task of encouraging mutual knowledge between Christians and Jews at every level (*Notes*, 27).

[*Notes* = Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Teaching in the Roman Catholic Church*, 1985.]