

CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN-JEWISH LEARNING



AT BOSTON COLLEGE

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Center Active in International Christian-Jewish Relations Initiatives

The years 2005 and 2006 promise to be milestones for the Center's work internationally. In September 2005, Boston College was among four Catholic universities that co-sponsored a scholarly conference to study the impact of the Second Vatican Council on interreligious relations over the past forty years. Over 300 participants from dozens of countries gathered at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome for the four-day event. As part of the program, the Center organized a series of afternoon symposia on the implications of the Vatican II declaration *Nostra Aetate* for Christian worship, education, interreligious dialogue, and theologies of Christ and salvation. Many of the symposia papers



*Center's Audrey Doetzel, Ruth Langer and Philip Cunningham in Rome last September as co-sponsors of a major international congress on *Nostra Aetate's* fortieth anniversary*

have been published in the electronic journal *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* (see article on page 4).

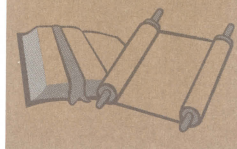
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40th Anniversary of Vatican II Declaration Sparks Interfaith Activities

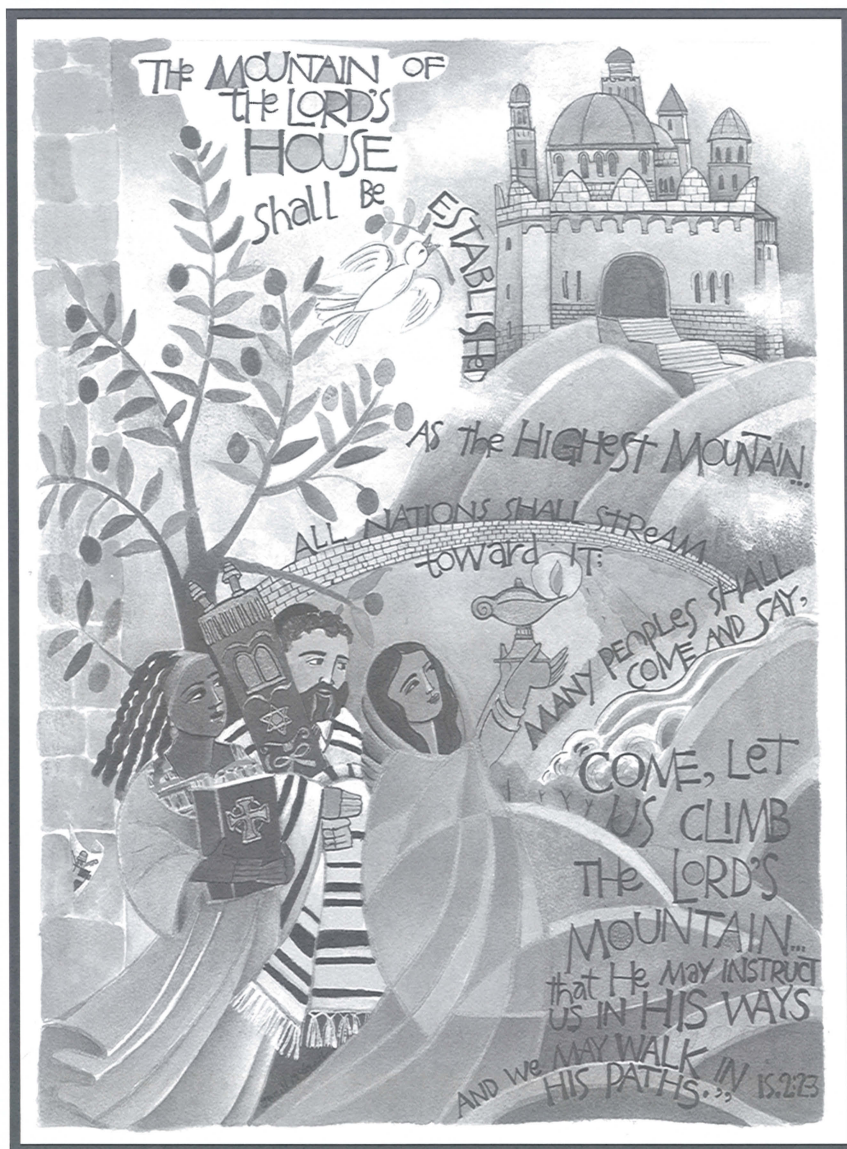
October 28, 2005 was the 40th anniversary of the revolutionary Second Vatican Council Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, known by its Latin title as *Nostra Aetate* ("In Our Time"). Interfaith services and academic lectures and conferences occurred in cities both large and small throughout the United States and around the world to observe the occasion. Indeed, of all the sixteen documents promulgated by Vatican II, it was *Nostra Aetate* whose anniversary was most widely commemorated, probably because of the transformation in relations between Catholics and Jews that has occurred over the past four decades.



The Center marked the anniversary with numerous events throughout the year that are described in the pages of this annual report. Watch for the icon to the left, part of a *Nostra Aetate* painting co-commissioned by the Center, which denotes articles on anniversary-related events.



“In Our Time”



This acrylic painting by Michael O'Neill McGrath, OSFS was jointly commissioned by the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College and the Archdiocese of Boston to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, §4, the Second Vatican Council's Declaration of the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions.

The image depicts the symbolic figure of Wisdom guiding the pilgrim people of the Church and Israel to the New Jerusalem of the Age to Come. For Jews, Wisdom is found in the Torah and its study (e.g., Dt. 6:6-8; Pss. 19 and 119; Sir. 24; Avot d'Rabbi Natan A, addition 2 Ch. 8; Midrash Tanhuma Veyelekh 2), while for Christians, Jesus is the Wisdom of God incarnate, as the New Testament testifies (e.g., Mt. 11:19, 28-30; Jn. 1:1-18; Col. 1:15-20).

Musings on Relations between Christians and Jews by Center Personnel

Our Polarized Climate, the Middle-East, and a Christian Weakness - Philip A. Cunningham

In recent months three events have demonstrated how easy it is for extremists to manipulate controversies to further their own agendas. The anti-Islamic cartoons that appeared in European newspapers, the conflict between the State of Israel and Hezbollah, and the flap over Pope Benedict's unfortunate quotation of a medieval polemical text in an academic lecture on faith and reason all were opportunities for antisemites, Islamophobes, and ideologues on the poles of the political spectrum to attract adherents. The present polarized climate has been depressing for those dedicated to interreligious amity, even at the local level. Participants at a recent interfaith dialogue unanimously reported ricocheting between anger, hopelessness, sorrow, and conflicted sympathies as these events unfolded. I fear that such conflicts have not brought out the best in any of our religious communities.

The study of Christian-Jewish relations fosters sensitivity to continuing manifestations of Christians thinking about Jews in a collective, corporate sense, as in the now rejected claim that "the Jews" were under a divine curse



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While in Jerusalem in the summer of 2005, I was preparing the response I had been invited to give to Fr. John Pawlikowski's lecture on the state of Catholic-Jewish relations at an upcoming conference in Rome. Perhaps because of my setting, I noted that the Land and State of Israel were hardly mentioned in his remarks and urged that this become a priority in interfaith dialogue.

This summer, I sit in Massachusetts, checking the internet constantly for the latest news as Israel battles Hezbollah in Lebanon. Israel is fighting, for the first time, a well-equipped and disciplined opponent, but, yet again, an enemy whose entire purpose is the destruction of the Jewish state. To quote the 12th century Spanish Jewish poet and philosopher, Judah Halevi, "My heart is in the east, and I am in the uttermost west."

In this context, Fr. Pawlikowski and I have found ourselves again in dialogue (see the Center's website for our exchange), and my call last year for dialogue about Israel has become even more crucial. At least initially, dialogue tends to focus on common categories because this allows both parties to participate more or less equally in the discussions, even when the contents of the categories differ

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When Christians Interdenominationally Encounter Jews and Judaism

Audrey Doetzel

My work in interfaith relations frequently affords me encounters with the people and faith of Judaism. At times these involve only Roman Catholic Christians, but frequently Christians of various denominations are represented. Often Catholic-Jewish encounters leave me with the sense that the Christian component in the encounter is lacking an element which I cannot yet define but which, nevertheless, enables me to probe and appreciate my own Christianity more deeply and uniquely. Simply put: I feel deprived when Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox Christian voices are not accompanying my Roman Catholic voice.

I sometimes wonder whether this is because the "way of life" of the community of women to which I belong, the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, calls us to hold before the world the truth that "the Church is linked to the Jewish people in her origin, in her continuing history and in the final destiny" (Const. 4). It then goes on to summon us with: "Encouraged by the fact that all Christian communities share the same origin and hope, we become involved in the ecumenical movement" (Const. 15.3), the movement for unity among Christians. When Pope Paul VI placed the Church's work with Jews and Judaism, not under the umbrella of non-Christian religions, but in a commission closely linked with the

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Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations: The E-Journal

During the past academic year the Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations successfully launched Volume I (2005-2006) of its electronic journal, *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations (SCJR)*. With Dr. Cunningham (along with Dr. Edward Kessler) as one of the journal's Co-Editors and Dr. Doetzel as its Managing Editor, the Center – a co-sponsor of the E-Journal - is actively involved in its planning and publication. This venture was made possible by the Boston College Library's 2004 initiative to license the technological infrastructure to support the publication of scholarly peer-reviewed open access journals via the Internet. This was in keeping with the trend by many journals increasingly to move toward exclusive electronic publication. Following two publications by the Lynch School of Education, *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* is BC's third E-Journal project. *SCJR* has recently been assigned its ISSN identifier, indicating its registration through the Library of Congress.

Since the publication of Volume I coincided with the 40th Anniversary of the Vatican II document, *Nostra Aetate*, its initial upload featured articles related to this ground-breaking document. Six essays, contributed by authors from Sweden, Italy, Germany, the USA, and Israel focused on post-*Nostra Aetate* developments and challenges in Christology, Incarnational and Covenantal Theology, the Theology of Religions, and the Holy Land. Additional uploads throughout the year featured articles on the Bible, Liturgy, Book Reviews, and Conference Proceedings. Volume II (2007) is currently in the planning stage. Its feature topics will focus on the centenaries of two men of faith whose life and works continue to inspire and challenge Jews and Christians alike: Abraham Joshua Heschel and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and on the 60th Anniversary of the 1947 Seelisberg Conference whose *Ten Points* continue to significantly influence the Dialogue today. In addition to the categories appearing in Volume I, *SCJR* invites scholarly submissions in the fields of: Bible, Christian Theology, Education, History, Jewish Theology, Liturgy, Modern Christian-Jewish Dialogue, and the *Shoah*. In its Book Review section it also welcomes Review Essays.

The contents of the E-Journal volumes can be accessed free of charge at: bc.edu/scjr

To receive notification whenever new submissions are uploaded to the journal, click on *Notify Me of New Contents* (on the Home Page) and enter your Email address. To submit an article, document, or conference proceeding to be considered for publication, simply click on *Submitting an Article to SCJR* (on the Home Page). New submissions are welcome throughout the year.

Center's Website Offers More and More Resources

The constant expansion of the Center's website at bc.edu/cjlearning has not gone unnoticed. One visitor recently wrote: "Your website is amazing – far surpassing any others I have encountered in size and scope," while another praised it as an "incredibly rich source of information and wisdom."

The website's homepage has been designed for ease of accessibility. On top are "Latest Announcements" concerning the Center or Christian-Jewish relations in general, but the main part of the page is a grid with links to Current and Upcoming Events; Past Center News and Events; Center Courses; and Archives of Video Presentations, Articles, News, Documents, and Educational Resources; the electronic journal *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*, and a new feature called "Current Topics" pages. These provide up-to-date information on issues of immediate concern for Christian-Jewish relations. For instance, within hours of the outbreak in July of violence between Hezbollah and the State of Israel, the Center's website provided links to relevant statements from religious bodies together with an online interreligious dialogue about the applicability of "just war" criteria to the situation.

A free subscription service or listserv is provided by the website so that viewers can register to receive e-mail notifications of new postings to the site as they occur. Come to the site regularly to discover its many resources – one visit will not be enough!

Interreligious Learning: Boston College Courses 2006-2007

Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Bible *(Philip A. Cunningham and Ruth Langer, Spring 2006)*

Although Jews and Christians share many of the same scriptural texts (the Christian “Old Testament,” the Jewish “Tanakh”), they often understand them differently. This course explores the ways that Jews and Christians have interpreted key texts, separately and together, over two millennia of learning from and disputing with each other. Students will themselves engage in interreligious learning while learning about ancient Israel’s scriptures and studying methods of biblical interpretation from late antiquity to today.

Passover in Midrash and Talmud *(Ruth Langer, Spring 2006)*

Fundamental to any understanding of Judaism is an ability to enter into its formative literature, Midrash and Talmud, the primary texts of Jewish learning. Focusing on texts (in translation) relevant to the celebration of Passover, this course introduces students to the rabbinic approach to Scripture and their means of making it relevant in their (and our) world. This understanding is heightened by comparisons to early Christian modes of discourse on the same themes.

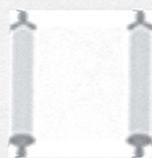
Jews and Christians: Understanding the Other *(Philip A. Cunningham and Ruth Langer, Fall 2006. Course taught at Hebrew College.)*

Interreligious dialogue requires interreligious understanding. This course will build a foundation for genuine dialogue between Jews and Christians by posing fundamental theological questions in a comparative context. Students will gain an understanding of the other tradition while also deepening their understanding of their own, discussing such matters as the human experience of God, the purpose of human existence, the nature of religious community, and the ways that the communities respond to challenges, both contemporary and ancient.

Christ and the Jewish People *(Philip A. Cunningham, Spring 2007)*

In the wake of the groundbreaking conciliar declaration, *Nostra Aetate*, the Catholic Church now authoritatively teaches that the Jewish people remain in eternal covenant with God. This course explores the unfolding implications of this recognition for the Christian conviction that Jesus Christ is universally significant for human salvation by considering relevant New Testament texts, the development of the Church’s Christological tradition, the rise and demise of supersessionism, and various approaches being proposed today.

Center Launches First Online Tutorial



MATTHEW

In April of 2006, the Center collaborated with Boston College’s *C21 Online*, an initiative focused on creating online learning opportunities for spiritual enrichment and faith renewal, to produce a tutorial, “The Death of Jesus: Four Gospel Accounts.” It is a self-paced, interactive learning tool written and narrated by Philip A. Cunningham, the Executive Director of the Center. Through it, participants are able to explore the four different Gospel passion narratives and encounter each evangelist’s unique insights into the spiritual meaning of Jesus’ death. The passion story is analyzed in five different “scenes” – the arrest, before the chief priests, before the Roman prefect, the execution, and the burial. A historical reconstruction is offered for each scene as well.



LUKE



MARK

Since “The Death of Jesus” launched on March 31, 2006, almost 450 visitors have made over 950 visits and accessed over 10,000 pages from the tutorial. Visitors from Australia, Bahamas, Canada, Germany, Italy, Peru, Singapore, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and the United States have used it. “The Death of Jesus: Four Gospel Accounts” will remain on the web sites of both the Center (bc.edu/cjl) and *C21 Online* (bc.edu/c21online) or can be reached directly at bc.edu/passiontutorial. A second tutorial entitled, “The Birth of Jesus: Two Gospel Narratives,” is planned for release at the end of November 2006.



JOHN

Christian and Jewish Experiences of Interreligious Learning

In the fall of 2005, Ruth Langer co-taught with Fr. Bruce Morrill, S.J., an expert in Catholic liturgical theology. Much of the dialogue in the class rose from its diversity, with the students representing a smorgasbord of Protestant denominations, including two Korean Protestants, a Russian Orthodox woman, a Jesuit in training and sundry other Catholics. Philip Cunningham taught a New Testament class, also diverse, including both Christian and Jewish students, including some from Italy and Viet Nam. For this report, each invited a student to reflect on his/her class.

A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

By A. Eric Rosen

Born in 1945, I grew up in Brookline, MA, a town about 50% Jewish and 50% Irish Catholic. The public schools I attended were about 80% Jewish. In the aftermath of WWII, living in an extended three generation family context with my grandmother, an immigrant from Tsarist Russia, I was taught two things: Don't eat non-kosher food and don't trust Gentiles. My contact with non-Jews was at the municipal swimming pool and gyms and in the fields of Little League Baseball. My wariness of Gentiles and the pre-*Nostra Aetate* Catholic perception of Jews and Judaism made our interaction at times tense. Therefore, I had little knowledge about Christians or Christianity.

The 2005 Center course that I took on *The New Testament in Its Jewish Context* with Dr. Philip Cunningham was both a learning experience for me and an opportunity to dialogue with Catholic students. For example, I was not aware that, in the Gospels, Jesus taught that the two most important commandments are the love of God and love of neighbor (Dt. 6:4 and Lev. 19:18). Jesus' embrace of these commandments and their centrality to Judaism emphasized for me the deep connection between Judaism and Christianity. More importantly, I learned about the extraordinary steps that the Catholic Church has taken since 1965 to build and improve relations between the Church and the Jewish People. Pope John Paul's statement that God's covenant with the Jews has never been revoked is remarkable and a major step in reconciliation between Catholics and Jews. We also read the Vatican statement *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*. I cited both these texts in presentations at my temple and at a class at Hebrew College.

In the class and in the weekly online reflections I was able to learn more about individual Catholic views of Jews and current Catholic education. The discussion about reading certain sections of John's passion narrative on Good Friday was candid and illuminating. Two class members, a priest and a seminarian, attended a service at my synagogue and joined us for a Jewish Sabbath dinner. This kind of interaction between Jews and Catholics fosters an increasing positive interaction between our faiths and was made possible by this Center class. It was a challenging and fruitful academic and personal experience which I hope to repeat in the future. I highly recommend such opportunities for interreligious learning to others.

A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

By Rev. Sarah Mount

From my position as an active Christian and Elder in the United Methodist Church I have always been attracted to Judaism. The more relationships I have developed with contemporary Jews and learned about the roots of Christian anti-Semitism, the more passionate I have become about leaving such attitudes behind by learning about how Christians and Jews are connected, and where we diverge. *Liturgy, Seasons and Festivals: Jewish and Christian* was a perfect course to feed my curiosity.

Profs. Bruce Morrill, SJ and Ruth Langer met the challenge of teaching a diverse group of students with a wide range of background knowledge of the topic. The book list was full of excellent choices and the on-line resource *My Jewish Learning*, with multi-level guided learning, remains bookmarked on my web browser. The professors served as models of how a Christian and a Jew can engage in respectful, honest and open dialogue and, while gently correcting our misperceptions and prejudices, they encouraged each of us to join that discussion both in class and in written reflections. Since all the students were Christian, it was particularly helpful to be invited to be participant observers at a Shabbat service in Rabbi Langer's synagogue and at her home during the festival of Sukkot.

The course deepened my understanding of just how Jewish and Christian liturgies are tied together and how they influenced each other throughout history, while also challenging some of my uninformed assumptions. I appreciate that the professors directed my focus to study how each religion speaks of *the other* within its rituals. I continue to ponder the imbalanced relationship caused by a Christian fixation on Biblical Jews (while often blinded to contemporary Jewish neighbors) on the one hand, and the binary aspect of Jewish identity that keeps Jews aware that they are not Goyim.

"Common educational programs on our historical and religious relations ...will truly promote mutual respect."

- Pope John Paul II, Sept. 11, 1987



Catholic and Jewish Holocaust Educators in Dialogue

To mark the 40th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* the Center partnered with Facing History and Ourselves to offer a four-phase program to Catholic and Jewish Holocaust educators from Boston area schools. Given their potential to help shape the next generation of world citizens and leaders, the hope is to enable them to provide leadership in dialogue and interfaith relations in their schools, parishes and synagogues. Audrey Doetzel, Assistant Director at the Center, and Jan Darsa, a Facing History senior staff member, began this project with twenty-four educators on April 30. This six-hour dialogue session began with the teachers discussing their back-

ground and experience in Holocaust education. They were then introduced to *Nostra Aetate* and the main Catholic documents which have further developed its teaching. Following a brief overview of the various stages in the history of the Christian-Jewish relationship, the participants began to develop together a description of their perception of the

present phase in this history, including their vision for the future. (A summary of their statement appears below.) In the course of the new academic year the next three phases of this program will focus on such themes as: The Jewish-Christian-Muslim relationship; The Holocaust and Religious Belief; God and the Question of Evil; Forgiveness and Reconciliation.



J. Darsa and A. Doetzel advising a group preparing for dialogue

Holocaust Educators' Reflections on The Present Stage in Catholic-Jewish Relations

There has been a detente, an easing of strain and tension between Catholics and Jews. Pope John Paul II was key in helping to set this new direction in interfaith relations. Now parents, teachers, pastors, rabbis, and laity must continue to implement and further this development. Hope is instilled by programs like this one as well as by events such as interfaith Seders. More such efforts are needed. Through the Dialogue, Catholics and Jews are beginning to view themselves as on "parallel tracks" moving toward the Age to Come. Replacing an "over against each other" stance is an increasing ability to say: "I have seen the enemy, and it is I." In this developing relationship, based on learning about and understanding the differences between us, there is a newly-emerging emphasis on "partnership" through which we join hands in social action projects for peace and justice. This is creating exciting new partnering possibilities also for our students. For these possibilities to really blossom Jews need to get over a persecution complex and Catholics must stop blaming themselves and get over their guilt.

We perceive a "disconnect" within the Dialogue which calls for a greater connection between what is happening at the leadership/academic levels and the "lay" level. More effective strategizing is needed to move on to "design" and then to implement the significant developments taking place at the academic level. Educators need to develop within students the ability to think critically, to understand their universe of moral obligation, and to make good moral choices. Children, youth and adults are being so bombarded with news and images of violence and suffering, that the tendency is to respond with "That's so terrible!" – and then to move on and and enjoy a great dinner!

We are concerned about an increasingly complacent attitude which thinks the problem of antisemitism has been solved when, in fact, it is increasing - as for example in France and Iran. It is fueled by the current Middle East situation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This highlights the need for the Dialogue to involve all faiths, especially Islam. Also, a sense of fatigue around some issues is eliciting statements of "Enough already....Let's move on!"

Meanwhile, stereotyping is increasing - an indication that the "inhaled history of anti-Semitism" takes a long time to eradicate and that there is no formula to counteract hatred. The "kinder, gentler" teaching of contempt, as in some fundamentalist evangelical statements and writings, is also of concern. The current threats of radical Islam, fundamentalism of every stripe, a more secular society, and the various "isms" (hedonism, narcissism, materialism) are serious challenges at a time when all movements (religious, ethnic, cultural,...) are preoccupied with their own survival and, hence, indifferent towards the others. An attitude of "us" versus "them," so detrimental to humanity, must be nipped in the bud.

In spite of the complexity of the global scene today, our hope is for a dialogical way of life which involves all faiths and cultures. We envision humanity as a united group, facing its fears together and standing together in opposition to persecution and blame.

Boston College and Brandeis University Host Vatican Official



As its local contribution to the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, the Center on March 16 and 17 co-hosted with Brandeis University a two-day interreligious conference titled, *In Our Time: Interreligious Relations in a Divided World*. The keynote speaker for this event, delivering one paper at Brandeis and a second at Boston College, was Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, then newly appointed Papal Nuncio to Egypt and the Arab World after serving for twenty years as secretary and then president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. In both papers, Fitzgerald drew deeply on his personal experience, especially in Christian-Muslim dialogue, to discuss the significance of *Nostra Aetate* and the nature of interreligious dialogue.

At Brandeis, a distinguished panel, consisting of Dr. Hans Ucko of the World Council of Churches, Dr. David Elcott of the American Jewish Committee, and Dr. Abdul Rashied Omar of the University of Notre Dame, responded from the perspectives of their own traditions to the Archbishop's first address, titled *What the Catholic Church Has Learned from Interreligious Dialogue*. In the afternoon, a roundtable discussion representing faculty from Brandeis and Professors Langer and Cunningham from the Center carried this discussion forward, applying it to our current worlds of dialogue. The Archbishop participated in or responded to all the panel discussions.

Archbishop Fitzgerald delivered his second keynote address, *The Promise of Interreligious Dialogue for a World in Conflict* at Boston College that evening, after being welcomed by William P. Leahy, S.J., President of Boston College, and Most Rev. Seán P. O'Malley, OFM Cap, Archbishop (now Cardinal) of Boston. The following morning, two leaders in Comparative Theology, Dr. Francis X. Clooney, S.J. of Harvard Divinity School and Dr. Catherine Cornille of Boston College led a fishbowl discussion about the implications of *Nostra Aetate* in the academy. An afternoon panel of local Protestant and Catholic clergy and educators joined Dr. Shanta Premawardhana of the National Council of Churches, USA and the Archbishop to discuss the pastoral implications of *Nostra Aetate*.

This exciting conference demonstrated many of the networks in which the Center operates as it serves the international, national and local contexts of the Catholic Church, as well as dimensions of various Protestant communities, in their search for interreligious understanding. Though the Center's specific focus is Christian-Jewish dialogue, it does not operate independently from Christianity's and Judaism's dialogues with other religions. As a university-based Center, engaged in academic research, it collaborates with other universities such as Brandeis, while also taking seriously its duty to aid the pastoral efforts of the local and wider communities.

2005-2006 Center-Sponsored Events

On Oct. 9, 2005, the Center hosted an event to observe the publication of the Christian Scholars Group book, *Seeing Judaism Anew: Christianity's Sacred Obligation*, at which it also unveiled the painting *In Our Time* (see p. 2). In November 2005 Adiel Schremer from Bar Ilan University spoke on *Estranged Brothers: Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*, Fr. Tom Ryan, CSP, addressed clergy and church leaders on the theme *Evangelizing in a Religiously Plural Society*, and Rabbi Ron Kronish, Director of Interfaith Co-ordinating Council in Israel followed a screening of the film *I am Joseph Your Brother* with observations on *Catholics and Jews: The Unfinished Agenda*.

On April 24, 2006, the Center, the Boston College Department of Theology, and the Weston Jesuit School of Theology co-sponsored the symposium *Fuller Meanings: Christian and Jewish Readings of the Bible*. With Jon Levenson, Harvard Divinity School, and Gary A. Anderson, University of Notre Dame, the symposium participants explored the Pontifical Biblical Commission's *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Hebrew Bible*. Many of these programs can be viewed as streaming videos on the Center's website.

Center Co-Sponsors Noteworthy Centenary Conferences



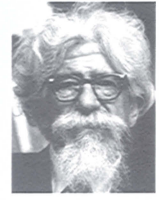
Dietrich Bonhoeffer
1906-1945

CO-SPONSORS' PLANNING MEETING



*V. Barnett, USHMM; O. Rose, HC; A. Katzoff, HC; R. Langer, BC;
M. Heim, ANTS; P. Cunningham, BC; A. Doetzel, BC.*

Abraham Joshua Heschel
1907-1972



DIETRICH BONHOEFFER FOR OUR TIMES: JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES - SEPTEMBER 17-18, 2006

Presented in collaboration with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Hebrew College and Andover Newton Theological School, this event celebrated a resistance figure to the Nazi regime who has become an icon of moral courage and an inspiration to Christians throughout the world. The conference panels were:

BONHOEFFER'S CONTEXT: THE CHURCHES' RESPONSE TO NAZISM



*M. Hockenos, Skidmore College; M. Krell,
U of California; D. Dietrich, Boston College*

FORMATION OF THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIENCE AFTER THE SHOAH: BONHOEFFER'S SPIRITUALITY FOR TODAY



*L. Dahill, Trinity Lutheran Seminary;
M. Krell, U of California; S. Pope, Boston College*

BONHOEFFER, THE JEWISH PEOPLE, AND POST-HOLOCAUST THEOLOGY



*V. Barnett, USHMM;
Stephen Haynes, Rhodes College*

'COSTLY DISCIPLESHIP' & CONTEMPORARY CULTURE: BONHOEFFER AS A MODEL FOR RELIGIOUS ACTIVISM



*O. Rose, Hebrew College; D. Gushee,
Union University; J. Bernauer, Boston College*

SPIRITUALITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE: ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL - DECEMBER 10, 2006

Co-sponsored with Hebrew College and Andover Newton Theological School, this event will celebrate one of the most significant Jewish theologians of the 20th century. Descendent of eminent European rabbis, Heschel escaped from the Nazis and found eventual refuge in New York where he was Professor of at Jewish Theological Seminary from 1946-72. Heschel is also known for his civil rights activism in the USA and his work for freedom for Soviet Jewry. At the afternoon sessions at Hebrew College David Starr and Arthur Green from Hebrew College will address *Abraham Joshua Heschel: A Biographical and Historical Introduction*, and *Heschel and Hasidism: Spiritual Roots*, and Susannah Heschel from Dartmouth College will speak about *Heschel, My Father*. At the evening session at Boston College Cornel West, Princeton University, will consider *Heschel and King: Legacy and Responsibility*. M. Shawn Copeland from Boston College and Or N. Rose from Hebrew College will respond. For details regarding registration, locations and times visit the website: http://hebrewcollege.edu/html/adult_learning/events_lectures.htm.

Center Active in International Christian-Jewish Relations Initiatives

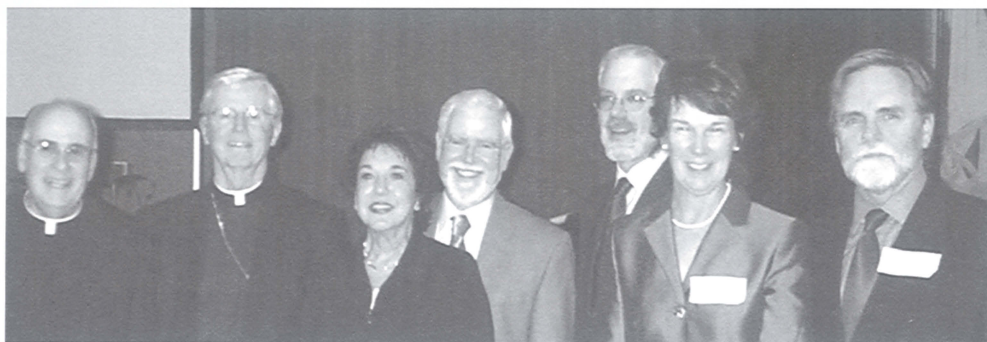
At his address at Boston College several years ago, Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, referred to a “fundamental question which stands between [Christian and Jews],” [to which] “easy answers are not possible.” This question is how Christians should announce their core faith claim that Jesus Christ is the Savior while also affirming the Jewish People’s covenantal life with a saving God. Therefore, in October 2006 the Center will co-sponsor an international theological consultation entitled “Christ and the Jewish People” that will be held for several days near Rome. Twenty-four theologians and biblical scholars from six countries will devote concentrated time on this topic, one made very challenging by the long history of Christian anti-Jewish teaching that is deeply intertwined with much of the church’s thinking about Jesus and salvation. Center executive director Philip Cunningham is one of the initiators of the consultation, which is co-sponsored with the Cardinal Bea Centre for Judaic Studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, the Cardinal Joseph Bernardin Center at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, and the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium.

The Center has also been involved in a project, sponsored by the Elijah Institute in Jerusalem and its director, Dr. Alon Goshen-Gottstein, to develop a Jewish theology of the religious other for our time. Ruth Langer attended and spoke at a three day conference held in Scranton in June 2005, a reprise of the conference at the World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem last August, and is currently involved in preparing the papers for publication.

The Center’s website is also an important component of the Center’s work internationally, being increasingly utilized as a resource by people overseas. For instance, a recently created online tutorial on the Gospel passion narratives has in only a few months already been utilized by viewers in ten countries (See pp. 4 and 5 for separate articles). As the Center pursues its mission to “encourage mutual knowledge between Christians and Jews at every level,” the growth of the international dimension of its activities will likely continue in the years ahead.

Experiencing Exodus Together

The 5th Annual New Hampshire Jewish-Catholic Seder was co-sponsored by the Center, the Diocese of Manchester, the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire, and the Patrick and Kendra O’Donnell Family Foundation. The seder uses a specially developed haggadah that provides as close an experience as possible of a traditional Passover meal. This year’s observance began with a viewing of “Season of Freedom, Season of Rebirth,” an episode of the Center’s video series on Christian-Jewish relations, *Walking God’s Paths*.



Pictured are (l to r):
 Rev. Robert Biron, diocesan ecumenical officer; Most Rev. John McCormack, Bishop of Manchester;
 Judith Wolff, Federation Vice President for Community Relations; Center executive director Philip Cunningham;
 Rabbi Louis Reiser, who presided at the seder; and philanthropists Kendra and Patrick O’Donnell

for the crucifixion of Jesus. This kind of “group-think” is currently running rampant. It is easier to vent one’s emotions about “the Jews,” or “the Muslims,” or “the Zionists,” or “the Islamic world” than to confront the difficult reality that *all* communities are diverse and have checkered histories. It is especially hard to resist the temptation to slide into group-think when one’s own community has legitimate grievances or is beset by understandable fears.

Everyone committed to interreligious amity needs to be ever more alert to the dangers of group-think. But as a Catholic theologian, I also want to draw attention to a particular weakness that confronts Christians concerning the Middle-East, a weakness that has become very obvious in our polarized climate. In recent years some Christian churches, organizations, and prominent Christians (including Roman Catholics) have issued opinions about conflicts involving the State of Israel. Some of these, it seems to me, are dangerously unbalanced – an imbalance that is partially caused by a certain lack in Christian theological traditions. Christians should recognize that we have no positive theological precedents to draw upon regarding the centrality of the Land of Israel for Jews. Not until after the *Shoah* did Christians begin to critique the pervasive “doctrine” that Jews were divinely cursed to wander without a homeland of their own. This widespread notion is evident in the name of a common houseplant: the wandering Jew. Even though today many churches teach that God’s covenant of love with the Jewish people thrives, we do not have handy theological tools to relate this belief to the importance of the Land of Israel in Jewish covenantal self-understanding. It is this lack

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that enables Christian biblical literalists (who may be found in all churches) simply to equate the religious significance of the Land of Israel (*Eretz Israel*) with the modern political State of Israel (*Medinat Israel*) and so to support as God’s will the rights of Israeli citizens over those of all others in the region. This Christian perspective applauds any draconian initiatives of this or that Israeli government, an action that is echoed by Jews who are also biblical literalists. Critics of such policies can be labeled false Christians, false Jews, or antisemites.

On the other hand, the lack of a coherent Christian theology of “the Land” can also engender the opposite viewpoint; namely, a dismissive attitude toward the visceral centrality of *Eretz Israel* for Jews. This demeaning attitude (which can also be found in all churches) perpetuates in new forms the old “divine curse” theology. It causes, for instance, the travails of the Palestinian people to be attributed only to Israeli policies with no consideration of the roles played by the changing roster of superpowers over the past century, by neighboring states, by Palestinian leaders themselves, and by powerful forces that would like to see the State of Israel cease to exist. To my mind, recent statements from some Christians about divestment from Israel fall into this trap. Developing sound Christian theological understandings of Judaism includes engaging the centrality of the Land of Israel for Jews. It is part of the mission of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning to continue pursuing these and similar tasks in the years ahead with Christian and Jewish colleagues. In the meanwhile, I would urge my fellow Christians to become more alert to how our various traditions and histories shape our thinking about the modern State of Israel and everyone to be sensitive to the injustices of group-think.

BOSTON COLLEGE DISSERTATIONS IN CHRISTIAN-JEWISH STUDIES

In the past year doctoral degrees were awarded to two Boston College students whose research produced dissertations in the field of Christian-Jewish studies. Center associate director Ruth Langer directed theology doctoral student Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, whose dissertation is titled *The Maccabean Martyrs in Medieval Christianity and Judaism*. He is now assistant professor of Church History at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, in the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA. Center executive director Philip Cunningham and Ruth Langer both served on the dissertation committee of Theresa O’Keefe, a doctoral student at the Institute for Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry. Her study, *Conversation Across Difference: The Catholic-Jewish Encounter as an Educational Movement*, examined the impact of interreligious dialogue on Catholic and Jewish participants in an extensive program in Springfield, MA and recommended several strategies to increase the effectiveness of such experiences. Dr. O’Keefe now serves as an Adjunct Assistant Professor, Youth and Young Adult Faith and Program Coordinator for Contextual Education at the IREPM. Congratulations to both Dan and Theresa!

Council for promoting Christian unity, he was giving structural expression to *Nostra Aetate's* emphasis on the "spiritual ties" between Christianity and Judaism – "ties" lying at the heart of the Church's "mystery." Karl Barth's words, following his attendance at Vatican Council II, resonate with a similar understanding: "The ecumenical movement is clearly driven by the spirit of the Lord. But we must not forget that there is finally only one great ecumenical question: our relationship with Judaism."

Therefore, it seems imperative that the relationship between Judaism and Christianity form an integral part in the internal, interdenominational conversation accompanying divided Christianity's search for reconciliation and unity. What is happening (or not happening) to this internal Christian conversation when we *do* engage together in dialogue and action with Jews and Judaism? This question recently prompted me to probe the experiences of more than 200 Christians representing a variety of denominations, countries and professional backgrounds. I hope to distill from these diverse experiences some insight into my assumption that significant interdenominational dynamics are at work – though mainly unconscious and receiving minimal attention – and that they differ in nature from developments occurring through formal ecumenical efforts for visible Christian unity.

I am convinced that, as Christians respond to the post-*Shoah* imperative to right the wrongs of Christianity's history of triumphalism and "teaching of contempt" in relation to Jews and Judaism, the transforming power of this *metanoia* (change of heart; conversion) cannot be limited to Christianity's relationship with Judaism. Will its dynamism not 'spill over' these parameters and penetrate also the divisions among those who

profess belief in Jesus the Christ? A "new heart" for the Other is emerging as Christians and Jews together take up Cardinal Augustin Bea's motto of "doing the truth in charity" by striving to fulfill its first imperative: to eradicate historical prejudice by facing hostility in truth. The transforming power of *metanoia* does not differentiate between prejudices originating in the first century C.E. and those rooted in the fifteenth century!

An initial cursory overview of responses to my research affirms that, within the Christian-Jewish dialogue context, Christians frequently sideline denominational differences and together profoundly confront issues related to: historical truth; biblical hermeneutics, moral/ethical dilemmas, and theological questions concerning covenant, ecclesiology, Christology, and soteriology. Divisive historic issues, institutional structures and dogmatic traditions appear to shrink in importance when viewed through two prisms, one of which provides a clearer perspective of our historic roots, and the other focuses on the destructive potential of absolutist attitudes of exclusivity and triumphalism.

Is this new bonding across denominations and religious traditions happening more on the personal than on the institutional level? Are ideological commonalities and differences forging new allegiances across denominational lines? Recent responses to issues raised by Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* and by Christian institutional social and economic policies vis-à-vis the State of Israel would appear to affirm this. Though the allegiance realignments in the two instances have different configurations, the dynamics are the same.

With these and other questions in mind, I continue my research aware that our interfaith efforts hold before us our shared responsibility for past horrors and future hope. Perhaps our differences pale in light of this task.

A MEETING OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS GROUP



The Christian Scholars Group, an ecumenical gathering of about twenty Christian scholars, has been studying topics pertinent to Jewish-Christian relations for more than thirty years. The CSG currently meets semi-annually under the auspices of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning.

significantly. Thus, Jews and Christians can compare their approaches to and understandings of social justice issues easily.

Even more theological topics like the nature of God or covenant allow for fruitful dialogue around differences because both traditions use related ideas. But the Land of Israel has not been an easily approachable topic in Christian-Jewish dialogue, even without the present violence. While early Christians sometimes called themselves the “New Israel,” this was a designation without ethnic or geographical boundaries.

As a community that understood itself as ideally international and universal, these factors were not elements of people’s Christian identity. Therefore, there really is no Christian cognate to the centrality of the Land or State of Israel for Jews. Also making things difficult is the long-lived Christian idea that Jews had no rights to a land of their own because of the crucifixion of Jesus. There is no positive tradition about Jews and the Land for Christians today to draw upon.

Jewish peoplehood (one aspect of “Israel”) can be approached by comparisons to Christian understandings of the religious community, but this fails to engage with the ethnic or familial aspects of “the People Israel” or “the Children of Israel,” the native Hebrew designations for the people the rest of the world calls “Jews.”

These are the aspects that become most important when considering the historical and covenantal relationships of this community to a

particular geographical entity, known in Jewish tradition as the “Land of Israel.”

Without having discussed such matters in their dialogue to date, Christians and Jews face some challenging questions: How does Christian theology teach Christians to respond to the current situation?

How do Christian teachings about “just war” apply to the current conflict, and what are the implications of their application? Could Israel live by them and survive?

What are the equivalent Jewish teachings and to what extent do they determine Israel’s military decisions? Does it matter to Christians that the State of Israel survives?

Many Christians cannot articulate why it should matter that Israel survives, yet they may have expectations about Israel’s behavior as a Jewish state that they don’t have for other nations. Therefore, Israel can be condemned for human rights abuses or racism while its neighbors’ worse abuses are passed over in silence. Israel can be accused of war crimes for civilian deaths in Lebanon while Hezbollah’s choice to locate its facilities in the midst of those civilians and aim its rockets at Israeli civilians goes unremarked.

Muslim anti-Judaism and anti-Zionism, some borrowing directly from models developed among Christians in Europe, responds negatively to Israel as a Jewish state, but receives no comment. It is allowed to set the international agenda, making Israel a pariah backed almost exclusively by the United States. For good or for bad, the world does not distinguish between Jews, Judaism, and Israel, and theology too must admit this nexus.

Does it matter to Christians
that the State of Israel
survives?

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WE’RE GRATEFUL

The Center wishes to thank all
who have contributed to its
activities in the past year.

We are very grateful
for your support.

Center Personnel

PHILIP A. CUNNINGHAM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- In the past year Dr. Cunningham's writing included:
"Nostra Aetate and Catholic-Jewish Relations: The Work that Still Remains" in *Commonweal*, July 2006; "A Response to Michael S. Kogan concerning "Reflections on Covenant and Mission," forthcoming in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*; "A Covenantal Christology" in *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*; "Nostra Aetate: A Catholic Act of Metanoia," for a forthcoming volume from Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT.
- He favorably reviewed books by Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, *The Last Week: A Day-by-Day Account of Jesus' Final Week in Jerusalem* (forthcoming in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*) and by Michael Wyschogrod, *Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations* (in *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*).
- He presented a plenary paper, "Fashioning New Theological Wineskins for the New Wine of Post-Conciliar Catholic-Jewish Relations," at the conference "Nostra Aetate Today: Reflections 40 Years after Its Call for a New Era of Interreligious Relationships," at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He gave other *Nostra Aetate* presentations at Brandeis University, Regis College, Gordon College, Hebrew Union College in New York, the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement, Salve Regina University in Newport, RI, and St. Mary Seminary in Houston.
- His presentations at local events included: "The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth," at the Hebrew College Rabbinical School; "The Springtime Rituals of Jews and Christians," at the Boston Latin School; "Reflections on the 2001 Pontifical Commission Study and Its Implications for the Christian Religious Imagination," at the Boston College symposium "Fuller Meanings: Christian and Jewish Readings of the Bible"; "Interpreting Scriptural Texts that are Problematic for Interreligious Amity," Hebrew College/Newton Clergy Association; and "A Catholic Observes Yom Hashoah," at Temple Adath Yeshurun in Manchester, NH.

Dr. Cunningham continues serving as Secretary-Treasurer of the Council of Centers in Jewish Christian Relations, as co-editor of *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*, and as a member of the Advisory Committee on Catholic-Jewish Relations for the U.S. Catholic Bishops. He serves on the Boston Archdiocesan Catholic-Jewish planning committee, the Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs Commission of the Diocese of Manchester (NH), and participates in the dialogues of the Jewish-Christian Interfaith Partnership of NH and that of the Mass. Council of Churches, AJC, and the Boston Archdiocese.

RUTH LANGER, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Dr. Langer is increasingly combining her work as a Jewish liturgist and her work in Jewish-Christian relations, which is expressed in her speaking and publishing as well as in her service on the Academy Committee of the North American Academy of Liturgy, a largely Christian organization. Her publications and lectures this year in Jewish-Christian relations (or about Judaism for Christian audiences) include:

- *Nostra Aetate* Anniversary related: Response to Fr. John T. Pawlikowski's plenary address on Catholic-Jewish relations, Conference on "Nostra Aetate Today: Reflections 40 Years after Its Call for a New Era of Interreligious Relationships," Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome; Response to Bishop Richard Sklba, "Nostra Aetate in Nova Aetate," Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, Washington D.C.; "Forty Years after Nostra Aetate: Assessing a Revolution in Jewish-Christian Relations," as Scholar in Residence, Kemp Mill Synagogue, Silver Spring, MD.; Panelist on "Issues and Challenges in the Interreligious Encounter" at the Boston College-Brandeis University conference, "In Our Time: Interreligious Relations in a Divided World"; "The Christian-Jewish Dialogue: Where Do We Go From Here?" with Philip A. Cunningham, Touro Synagogue Foundation's "Journey to Freedom Public Lecture Series" Newport, RI.
- Liturgy related:
"The Bible in Jewish Prayer," at "Transitions in Jewish and Christian Liturgy," Aachen, Germany. Revised version presented at the North American Academy of Liturgy meeting, San Diego. Paper will be published in the Aachen conference volume. - "Hanukkah: A Holiday of Witness" in *Preach* (November/December 2005): 24-26. - In A

Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations, edited by Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn (Cambridge University Press, 2005), entries on Amidah, Birkat Hamazon, Birkat Haminim, Bread, Candle, Intercessions, Wine.

- Other presentations:

“Walking God’s Paths” Introductory Session for a community dialogue, with Philip A. Cunningham, New Brunswick, Maine; Panelist, “What Difference Does the Effort to See Judaism Anew Make?”, celebrating the publication of *Seeing Judaism Anew: Christianity’s Sacred Obligation* by the Christian Scholars Group affiliated with the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning; Panelist, “Fuller Meanings: Christian and Jewish Readings of the Bible,” Boston College; Panelist: “Jewish Civilization in the World,” Inaugural event for Boston College’s Jewish Studies Program; Comparative Theology Lunch, “The Role of Israel in Christian Theologies of Judaism”; “Judaism on One Foot,” St. Susannah’s Parish, Dedham, MA; as Scholar in Residence, Rabbi Philip Kieval 38th Annual Kallah, Temple Reyim, West Newton, MA. 3 lectures: “Illuminating Jewish Women’s Spirituality: Yiddish Prayers for Candlelighting”; “Words, Not Sacrifices?: The Evolution of the Prayer Book”; “Languages of Jewish Prayer”.

- Other publications include:

Book: *Liturgy in the Life of the Synagogue*, co-edited with Steven Fine (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2005).
Article: “Sinai, Zion, and God in the Synagogue: Celebrating Torah in Ashkenaz,” in *Liturgy in the Life of the Synagogue: Studies in the History of Jewish Prayer*, 121-159.

Review: “Eric Caplan, From Ideology to Liturgy: Reconstructionist Worship and American Liberal Judaism,” in *American Jewish Archives* LV:2 (2003): 59-62.

Dr. Langer serves on the boards of the Jewish Studies Program at Boston College, the Hillel Council of New England, and the North American Academy of Liturgy and is now convenor of the Comparative Theology Area of the graduate faculty of Boston College’s Theology Department.

AUDREY DOETZEL, NDS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR PROGRAMS

- This past year Dr. Doetzel’s publications included:

- Eleven entries in *A Dictionary of Christian-Jewish Relations* (Cambridge U Press, 2005) on: Cardinal Joseph Bernardin; Cardinal Edward Cassidy; Christmas; Confession of Faith; Evil; Institutions for Jewish-Christian Relations; Msgr. John Oesterreicher; Roman Catholicism; Sainthood; Sisters of Zion;
- “‘Branches of that Good Olive Tree’: 21st Century Liturgical Challenges and Possibilities,” in *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*, Vol. 1, 2005-06;
- “Nostra Aetate, #4, The Rabbis, and the Messianic Age,” an essay in *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*, Vol. 1, reviewing *The Way into Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World)*, by Elliot N. Dorff (2005), *There is No Messiah and You’re It: The Stunning Transformation of Judaism’s Most Provocative Idea*, by Robert N. Levine (2003), and *To Heal a Fractured World: The Ethics of Responsibility*, by Jonathan Sacks (2005).

- Her paper presentation and speaking engagements included: the paper “Branches of that Good Olive Tree: 21st Century Liturgical Challenges and Possibilities,” presented at the Rome “Nostra Aetate Today” co-sponsored conference; a presentation on “Judaism: Past and Present” at the Church of the Advent, Boston; an Advent presentation on “The Jewishness of Jesus” at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, Sharon, MA; a lecture on “Reconciliation and Understanding in the Jewish-Christian Relationship” at the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement.

- Her other professional initiatives included: launching a four-phase program with Facing History and Ourselves for Catholic and Jewish Holocaust educators which will extend over the next academic year; initiating a liturgical critique and review process with two parishes in view of the Church’s revised teaching on Jews and Judaism; beginning a field research and writing project on “The Dynamics and Developments Within the Inter-Christian Relationship as We Engage Together with the People and Faith of Judaism.”

- Along with her Center administrative responsibilities - which include conference programming, coordinating publicity, networking and collaborative ventures - Dr. Doetzel continues as Managing Editor of *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*. She serves on the Advisory Committee on Catholic-Jewish Relations for the U.S. Bishops’ Secretariat of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, on the Board of the National Catholic Center for Holocaust Education at Seton Hill University, and on the Boston Archdiocesan Christian-Jewish planning committee. She is a member of the Catholic-Jewish Dialogue sponsored by the Boston College Jesuit Institute, and the Dialogue co-sponsored by the Mass. Council of Churches, AJC, and the Boston Archdiocese.

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 associate director, and professors holding two 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.]



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