



BOSTON COLLEGE

CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN-JEWISH LEARNING

2009-2011 Bulletin



Encouraging mutual knowledge between Christians and Jews at every level.

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Director's Welcome

I hope that you will find this report on the recent activities of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning to be both informative and encouraging. Thanks to the resources that have been available to us, we at the Center have continued to promote growth in the academic and personal relationships between Christians and Jews. These pages describe some of those activities and mention several fresh initiatives for which I have special hopes. We have established a program of Junior Scholars Research Grants for both graduate and undergraduate students that will facilitate their study of Jewish-Christian interactions. Our new interdisciplinary lecture grants will bring into Boston College classrooms visiting scholars who will relate the themes of particular courses to the broader history of the Jewish-Christian experience.

In commemoration of the late Pope John-Paul II's Beatification, the Center will host an annual lecture in his honor. I was particularly pleased that the Catholic Church celebrated this Pope's witness and brought him a step closer to a formal declaration of sainthood. It recalled for me the cries of "Santo subito" or "Sainthood now," that erupted from the crowds at his funeral Mass in 2005. Although a second miracle will be necessary before he is named a saint, I could not help but think that his ministry of reconciliation between Jews and Christians is the obvious demonstration of his particular sanctity. That papal ministry, symbolically inaugurated in his 1986 visit to the Synagogue of Rome, culminated in his pilgrimage to Israel in 2000. After that visit I asked an Israeli friend, who had been skeptical of the planned pilgrimage, whether the Pope had done well. My friend replied spontaneously, "That was not the work of a man." It was that sense of God's presence that gave a miraculous character so often to his ministry and that the crowds at the funeral recognized.

New academic years are seasons of farewells and welcomes. We said goodbye to former Associate Director Sr. Audrey Doetzel, who has served the cause of interfaith harmony so effectively over the years and who has moved to Kansas City to complete several writing projects and perhaps to teach as well. Prof. Daniel Lasker, our Visiting Corcoran Professor, is returning to his faculty position at Ben Gurion University in Israel after having made important scholarly contributions while at Boston College. I hope that he will continue to visit us in the future. We at the Center look forward to welcoming our third Visiting Corcoran Professor, Dr. Theodore Perry, who will be teaching a course, organizing a conference, and leading a variety of seminars while he is with us.



Camille Fitzpatrick Markey

I am very happy to introduce the Center's new Associate Director, Dr. Camille Fitzpatrick Markey, who has already managed this past year's activities so effectively. She did her undergraduate work at Notre Dame before coming to Boston College for a master's degree in theology. Dr. Markey then stayed on in Chestnut Hill to do a doctorate in education at the Lynch School. Many of you will have dealings with her as she supervises the operations of the Center and serves as the Managing Editor of its journal, *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*.

Photo by Lee Pellegrini



James Bernauer, SJ

As the inaugural Kraft Family Professor, a position generously endowed by that family, I wish to acknowledge another departure, the death of Mrs. Myra H. Kraft. Prof. Ruth Langer and I represented the Center at her July funeral, and we had the privilege of hearing many tributes of her family and friends to her legendary kindness and philanthropy. She is a great loss for the Boston community. May her memory be for a blessing.

James Bernauer, SJ
Kraft Family Professor

2010-2011 Corcoran Visiting Chair: Daniel J. Lasker

Photo by Lee Pellegrini



Daniel J. Lasker

Prof. Daniel J. Lasker, Norbert Blechner Professor of Jewish Values at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, was the 2010-2011 Corcoran Visiting Chair in Christian-Jewish Relations at the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning. Prof. Lasker has numerous publications in the fields of Jewish philosophy and theology, the Jewish-Christian debate, Karaism, the Jewish calendar, and Judaism and modern medicine. His most recent publications include *From Judah Hadassi to Elijah Bashyatchi: Studies in Late Medieval Karaite Philosophy* (2008); *Jewish Philosophical Polemics Against Christianity in the Middle Ages, 2nd ed.* (2007); *El Libro de Nestor el Sacerdote* (1998); and *The Refutation of the Christian Principles by Hasdai Crescas* (1992). He has lectured widely at universities and synagogues throughout North America, as well as at professional conferences throughout the world. During his tenure at Boston College, Prof. Lasker focused his efforts on teaching a graduate level course, organizing an interdisciplinary conference; and making progress in his own research.

Prof. Lasker's Fall 2010 course "Debating Religious Truth: Jews & Christians in the Medieval World" centered on his area of expertise, the Jewish-Christian encounter. The course began with the biblical background of the Jewish-Christian encounter, discussed the separation of the religions and the beginning of the debate between the two, and then proceeded to analyze the medieval polemical literature, including the public disputations and the literature they produced. The course concluded with *Nostra Aetate* from the Second Vatican Council and *Dabru Emet*, a Jewish statement about Christianity issued in 2000.

During the spring semester, Prof. Lasker organized a conference entitled "Are Jews and Christians Living in a Post-Polemical World: Toward a Comparison of Medieval and Modern Christian-Jewish Encounters." He explains, "I believe one of the conclusions of the conference is that the image of the Middle Ages as being a period only of confrontation between Jews and Christians needs to be revised, while the assumption that in the contemporary world the polemical impulses have been overcome is also too facile a generalization."

Prof. Lasker was also a frequent lecturer during his tenure as the Corcoran Chair. At Boston College, he presented to the Jewish-Christian Dialogue Group on "The Changing Face (?) of the Jewish-Christian

Debate” as well as the Boston Colloquium in Medieval Philosophy and Theology on "Philosophical Issues in Medieval Jewish-Christian Debates." He participated in two conferences in Jerusalem and one at Yeshiva University, as well as lectured at a number of synagogues and universities, including York University, Colby College, Brandeis University, and Ohio State University. Additionally, he had numerous articles and book reviews published during his time at Boston College.

The Center was honored to have Prof. Lasker serve as the 2010-2011 Corcoran Chair and is grateful for his fruitful scholarship and dialogical engagement in the field of Jewish-Christian relations.

2011-2012 Corcoran Visiting Chair: Theodore A. Perry



Theodore A. Perry

Boston College and the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Theodore A. Perry to the 2011-2012 Corcoran Visiting Chair in Christian-Jewish Relations. Dr. Perry is Professor Emeritus at the University of Connecticut. He has published and taught prolifically in the areas of comparative literature, the Hebrew Bible as literature, medieval Sephardic (Spanish Jewish) and Spanish literature, religious studies, paremiology, and 16th-century French literature. His most recent books include *God's Twilight Zone: Wisdom in the Hebrew Bible* (2008) and *The Honeymoon is Over: Jonah's Arguments with God* (2006). He was Professor of Comparative Literature at Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Israel, Cardin Chair in Jewish Studies at Loyola

College in Maryland, Visiting Fulbright Professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and Professor of Modern and Classical Languages at the University of Connecticut. Dr. Perry studied at Yale University (Ph.D., Romance Philology; M.A., French Literature), the Université de Bordeaux, France (Fulbright Fellow in French Literature and Philosophy), and Bowdoin College (B.A. *summa cum laude*, French). During Dr. Perry's tenure at Boston College, his research will focus on literary and philosophical exegesis of the Book of Qohelet (Ecclesiastes) based in part on interpretive principles elaborated by philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. In addition to his research activities, Dr. Perry's contributions will include teaching a graduate-level course, organizing a Spring 2012 conference, and offering public lectures.

2010-2011 Center Courses

TH371 Turning Points in Jewish History

Fall 2010 – Ruth Langer

Jewish history stretches from creation to today. This course focuses on the major turning points which shape today's Jewish world, focusing on major intellectual and theological trends, figures, and events from the development of rabbinic Judaism to the twentieth century. Through this, students come to have a basic understanding of the outlines of Jewish religious and intellectual history, of the nature of the Jewish experience as a minority culture in the Christian and Muslim worlds, and of the shapes of contemporary Judaism.

PL416 Living Personally

Fall 2010 – James Bernauer, SJ

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges to contemporary existence is how to live with others and oneself in a personal manner and, thus, overcome western culture's long dominant technocratic approach to human life. This course seeks to uncover the personal as a way of being and of evaluating the spheres of ethics, religion, and knowledge. Major orientations to the personal point of view are provided by readings from John Macmurray, Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, Michel Foucault and major spiritual texts from the Jewish and Christian traditions.

PL456 The Holocaust: A Moral History

Fall 2010 – James Bernauer, SJ

This course explores the issues of good and evil and how human beings succeed or fail to meet the challenge such issues pose. The Holocaust, the tragic series of events which ruptured modern western morality, is examined from a variety of perspectives (literary, cinematic, philosophical, theological, and political). It includes a study of the testimony of both its victims and its perpetrators. A special emphasis on a consideration of the intellectual and moral factors which motivated resistance or excused indifference is performed by a cooperative investigation into the ethical life histories of people from this period. What part of themselves did they think of as primarily concerned with moral conduct? What form of obligation did they think of as specifically ethical? To what training did they commit themselves in order to develop as ethical beings? Why did they desire to be moral or why did they find it troubling to be immoral or amoral? The course concludes with an interpretation of the Holocaust for contemporary morality and of its theological significance for Christians and Jews.

TH/PL547 Jews and Christians in the Medieval World

Fall 2010 – Daniel J. Lasker

The purpose of this course is the examination of the contents and contexts of the arguments used by Medieval Jews and Christians to defend their own religion and to attack the other religion. This debate began at the origins of Christianity and has continued in one way or another to the present. Thus, an examination of the debate can lead to a greater understanding of the Jewish-Christian encounter. Emphasis is on the historical and theological implications of the Jewish-Christian debate and what can be learned from polemical literature regarding the relations between Jews and Christians and Judaism and Christianity. Readings are from primary texts in English translation and major scholarly treatments of these texts.

PL/TH603 German-Jewish Thinkers

Fall 2010 – James Bernauer, SJ

The brilliance and tragedy of German (and Austrian)-Jewish culture is decisive for interpreting twentieth century experience. This graduate seminar examines writings of some of its major thinkers including Arendt, Buber, Rosenzweig, Freud and major representatives of the Frankfurt School. Students are encouraged to develop their own interest in a particular figure (not limited to the ones named here) or aspect of the culture.

TH161-162 Religious Quest: Judaism and Catholicism

Fall 2010 & Spring 2011 – Ruth Langer

This undergraduate Theology core course explores Judaism and Christianity through their points of apparent contact as well as their differences. The fall semester focuses on Exodus and Matthew and their functions as the "master stories" of their communities, shaping self-understandings and ritual lives. The spring semester delves into the creation narratives of Genesis, studying the two communities' interpretations of the biblical text and how it and its interpretations shape people's lives. It considers such topics as birth and death, marriage and reproductive ethics, ecology, economic justice, and the Sabbath.

TH/TM437 Jewish & Christian Interpretations of the Bible

Spring 2011 – Ruth Langer, Thomas Stegman, SJ

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. This course is taught at the School of Theology and Ministry.

TH449 Jewish Liturgy: Its History and Theology

Spring 2011 – Ruth Langer

Embedded in rabbinic prayer is a concise statement of Jewish theology. After an examination of the precursors of rabbinic prayer and of the development of the synagogue as an institution, this course examines the structures and ideas of the prayers themselves as they have been received from the medieval world. This creates a context for a deeper discussion of some key Jewish theological concepts as well as a comparison of Jewish and Christian liturgical traditions.

TH/TM713 Jesus and Paul and Virtue Ethics

Spring 2011 – Daniel Harrington, SJ, James F. Keenan, SJ

This course is a study of the Synoptic Gospels and the Pauline Letters through the lens of Virtue Ethics. Among the topics covered are Kingdom of God, discipleship, Sermon on the Mount, sin, love command, conversion, and communal ethics.

A Student's Course Reflection

Varghese M. Lopez, SJ

I was about thirteen years old when I saw posters in my secondary school which included antisemitic statements related to tensions in the Middle East. This was in the 1980s, in a city about an hour's drive from the capital of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur. I recall standing there and looking at the posters, wondering what exactly was happening, why there was so much hatred against the Jews. This was prior to the internet, and information was limited to government-controlled newspapers. Over the years, the continuous stream of antisemitic sentiments rubbed off onto most of us students, irrespective of our religious or ethnic origins. I, for one, certainly had antisemitic feelings by the time I was in my late teens. Every now and then, one would see a small gathering of street demonstrators (though this is illegal in Malaysia) carrying posters bearing antisemitic sentiments. Most non-Muslims would not be actively involved in these demonstrations and would be indifferent to them—if such a thing is ever possible.

When I took the course "Jewish and Christian Interpretation of the Bible" with Prof. Ruth Langer and Prof. Tom Stegman, SJ, a lot of my prejudices were challenged. I recall entering the class, and as I heard Prof. Langer speak, I sensed my prejudices shedding away; the human face-to-face encounter helped. The more we delved into the course, the more I was shocked with what I had to face in myself. The dark events of the past against the Jews truly gripped me more than ever. I have certainly heard and read of these events from secondary sources and from the movies, but perhaps due to the strong antisemitic influences of my childhood, they never made any great impact on me. But this time around, it was certainly different. I now see myself having to own up to the Christian response (or should I say non-response) to these events. As the great Christian saints edify me in many ways, these actions and inactions move me to review Christian interpretations of the past. I find myself asking, "How and where did we go wrong?" I am not sure if I have the answers, but I certainly now feel that I cannot remain indifferent. The "Day of Pardon" by John Paul II means more to me now.

As the course progressed and as both professors explained the respective liturgies, rites, and traditions, I began to appreciate more the richness of the Jewish tradition and how it has influenced and shaped the Christian faith. The meaning of “Jewish tradition” is no longer the same for me. I now want to know more of it. It dawned on me that perhaps the Asian Church’s desire to acculturate Christianity with our own traditions would progress better if we first appreciate and understand more of our own roots first, the Jewish tradition.

The course also spurred me to attend talks on Jewish-Christian relations held on campus. I even decided to attend a Jewish-Christian prayer session held at the School of Theology & Ministry chapel. I wish we could have had some encounters with our Jewish “seminarians” and perhaps even attended prayer sessions at the synagogues. Such face-to-face encounters would surely help most of us who would never have such opportunities in our own countries to return home and continue to shed whatever prejudices may remain in our midst so that we can build a more peace-loving society for all.

Scholarship Participation

Conference Attendance

Center Director Prof. James Bernauer, SJ represented the Center at the International Conference of Christians and Jews in Istanbul, June 20-23, 2010. The theme of the conference, which was an outreach to the Muslim world, was “So That You May Know One Another.”

Prof. Bernauer and Prof. Ruth Langer, Center Associate Director, attended the International Conference of Christians and Jews in Cracow, Poland, July 3-6, 2011. The conference’s theme was “Religions and Ideologies,” and it was organized in cooperation with the Faculty for International and Political Studies of the Cracovian Jagiellonian University.

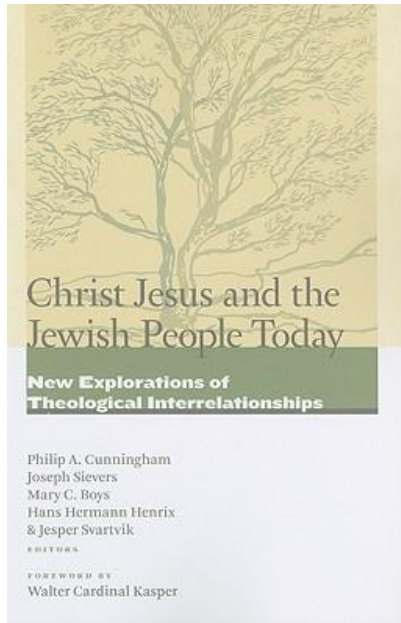


James Bernauer, SJ and Ruth Langer at Aula of the Collegium Novum of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow during the 2011 International Council of Christians and Jews Conference.

Publication Collaboration

Since its inception in 2006, the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning, and in particular Prof. Langer, has supported and participated in the Christ and the Jewish People project. Over two dozen international Jewish and Christian scholars have together probed the meta-question: How should we relate the universal saving significance of Jesus Christ to Israel’s ongoing covenantal life with God? The group’s efforts have recently culminated in the publication *Christ Jesus and the Jewish People: New Explorations of Theological*

Interrelationships (Eerdmans Publishing, 2011), a collection of 17 essays edited by Philip A. Cunningham, Joseph Sievers, Mary C. Boys, Hans Hermann Henrix, and Jesper Svartvik.



“This book opens up new vistas after forty-five years of Catholic-Jewish reconciliation. Not comfortable with resting on prior accomplishments, this work is a bold step forward in Catholic searching for a closer theological bond to Judaism without giving up the differences between the two faiths.... Offers the cutting edge of Christian theological views of Judaism.”

- Alan Brill, Seton Hall University

“Stunning in its scope, erudition, and creativity, this work is without parallel or peer.... A watershed contribution to a new era in the Jewish-Christian encounter, as both communities increasingly take decades of dialogue experience back into their own theological workshops and strive to fashion a more adequate account of God’s work among us.”

- Peter A. Pettit, Institute for Jewish-Christian Understanding, Muhlenberg College

Center Public Programs

Robert Wistrich

Anti-Americanism and Antisemitism: The Uneasy Connection
November 5, 2009

In this public lecture, Prof. Robert Wistrich discussed the connection between anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism. Prof. Wistrich is the Neuburger Professor of European and Jewish history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the head of the University's Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism.



Robert Wistrich

Daniel J. Harrington, SJ, David Michael, Christopher M. Leighton, and Celia Sirois
The Word Set Free: Presenting the New Testament in its First Century Context
January 27, 2010

This colloquium, marking the recent release of *The Synoptic Gospels Set Free: Preaching Without Antisemitism* by Boston College professor of theology Daniel J. Harrington, SJ, explored one of the most important question in Christian-Jewish relations: are the Gospels anti-Semitic? Fr. Harrington's talk was followed by responses from Rev. David Michael, associate director of interfaith relations for the Archdiocese of Boston; Dr. Christopher M. Leighton, executive director of the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies; and Celia



Daniel J. Harrington, SJ

Sirois of New Directions, an interfaith education program sponsored jointly by the Anti-Defamation League and the Archdiocese of Boston.

Michael F. Mach

Freud's "Moses and Monotheism" in its Historical Setting

February 16, 2010



Michael F. Mach

Dr. Michael F. Mach, a lecturer and scholar at Tel Aviv University, gave a public talk contending that Freud's last work "Moses and Monotheism" has remained a puzzling piece even 70 years after its publication. Attempts to solve the riddle by "analyzing" Freud's personal problems may have brought some insights, and yet they do not explain the inconsistencies in "Moses" nor Freud's obsession with it. Dr. Mach suggested that we read it as part of the anti-Facist literature that had brought forth a series of "historical novels" mostly by German writers in exile but also sometimes within Germany as well. Dr. Mach's proposed interpretation is that Freud's text be considered a work of literary fiction with a political aim.

Robert A. Maryks

The Jesuit Order as a Synagogue of Jews

February 24, 2010

On the occasion of the publication of his book *The Jesuit Order as a Synagogue of Jews*, Dr. Robert A. Maryks, a faculty member of the City University of New York's Lehman College Department of History, explained how Christians with Jewish family backgrounds, in less than 40 years, went from having a leading role in the Foundation of the Society of Jesus to being prohibited from membership in it. In his book, Dr. Maryks works at the intersection of two important historical topics—the early modern histories of the Jesuit order and Iberian "purity of blood" concerns. His analysis of pro- and con-verso texts advances our understanding of early modern institutional Catholicism as religious reform interacted with the new racism in Spain and its broader diffusion.



Robert A. Maryks

Susannah Heschel and Kevin P. Spicer, C.S.C.

The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany

April 12, 2010



Susannah Heschel

To commemorate *Yom Hashoah*, Holocaust Memorial Day, the Center held a public lecture given by Prof. Susannah Heschel, Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College. In her lecture, Prof. Heschel addressed the theme of her 2008 book, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany*, in which she examines the membership and activities of the Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Religious Life. Based on years of archival research, Prof. Heschel shows that during the Third Reich this Institute became the most important propaganda organ of German Protestantism, exerting a widespread influence and producing a nazified

Christianity that placed antisemitism at its theological center. Members of the Institute formed a community of like-minded Nazi Christians who remained active in Germany's post-war years. Prof. Kevin Spicer, C.S.C., professor of history at Stonehill College, supplemented Prof. Heschel's remarks with a discussion of several German theologians who attempted to adapt Catholic teachings to National Socialism during the Nazi regime.



Kevin Spicer, C.S.C.

Patrick Desbois

**The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest's Journey to Uncover the Truth
Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews
September 26, 2010**



Fr. Patrick Desbois

The Center, in collaboration with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, hosted Fr. Patrick Desbois, a French Catholic priest and president of the Yahad-In Unum Association who has devoted his life to confronting antisemitism and furthering Catholic-Jewish understanding. He spoke about a historic undertaking he has led since 2001: Working closely with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, whose archives are aiding his search, Fr. Desbois and his team have crisscrossed the countryside in Ukraine in an effort to locate every mass grave and site at which Jews were killed during the Holocaust.

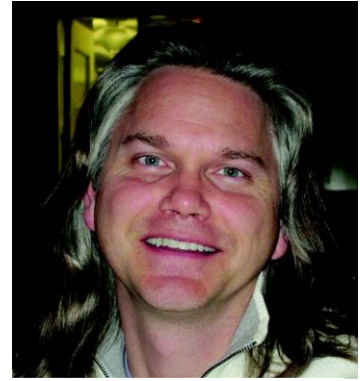
To date, they have identified 800 of an estimated 2,000 such locations. They are also collecting artifacts and, most significantly, recording video testimonies from eyewitnesses—many of whom are speaking publicly for the first time. Fr. Desbois' book about this endeavor, *The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest's Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews*, is the winner of the 2008 National Jewish Book Award.



Fr. Desbois and his team of researchers by a mass grave in the Ukraine

Jayme Stayer, SJ
T. S. Eliot and Anti-Semitism
October 25, 2010

Dr. Jayme Stayer, SJ, an expert on the work of the 20th-century poet and critic T. S. Eliot, gave a public lecture on recent developments in the scholarship on rhetorical analysis of anti-Semitism in the work and letters of T. S. Eliot. In his lecture, Dr. Stayer explained that with the recent publication of Eliot's letters, an exponentially larger amount of information is now available about the writer, and a careful examination of the newly available writings reveals more evidence—in addition to what was already available—of Eliot's anti-Semitism. Dr. Stayer is finishing a book project, *Becoming T. S. Eliot: The Rhetoric of Voice and Audience in Inventions of the March Hare*. He serves on the Board of Directors of the T. S. Eliot Society, and he is currently a student at the Boston College School of Theology & Ministry.



Jayme Stayer, SJ

Co-Sponsored Events

Jesuits and the People of the Book: The Society of Jesus, Jews, and Muslims (1540-1773)
March 24-25, 2010

This conference, co-sponsored by the Center and the Boston College Jesuit Institute at Boston College, focused on how Jesuit priests interacted with Jews and Muslims during the early period of Jesuit history, dated in between 1540 and 1773, the latter date indicating when the Jesuits were initially abolished. A key goal of the conference was to stress the complexities of Jesuit interaction with Jews and Muslims during the first two hundred years of the order's existence. Paul Shore, a visiting fellow at the Jesuit Institute, gave the conference's keynote lecture. Other featured papers drew on previously unpublished archival records and on literary works by Jesuits of the era who sought contact with Jews and Muslims in places such as Malta, Spain, North Africa, and Hungary.



Paul Shore

Jerusalem: A City of Two Peaces
May 5, 2010



Jordi Savall

The Center co-sponsored this concert at Sanders Theatre in Harvard University. The multicultural musical program, featuring renowned viola da gambist Jordi Savall, drew on music and texts from the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian traditions which chart the history of Jerusalem from 1200 BC to the present day.

Jewish-Christian Dialogue Group

The Center and the Boston College Jesuit Institute continued their co-sponsorship of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue Group. The group is composed of faculty and graduate students that meet throughout the year for a series of talks and discussions based on designated readings.

During the 2009-2010, academic, year, the Jewish-Christian Dialogue group met four times. During its first meeting, the group discussed the volume of essays *Anguished Hope: Holocaust Scholars Confront the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict* (2008). Prof. Raymond Cohen, the inaugural Corcoran Chair in Christian-Jewish relations, led the group's second meeting, a discussion of the current state of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the State of Israel. For the group's third meeting, Ben Birnbaum, Office of Marketing Communications Executive Director, spoke on the continuing obstacles blocking any facile dialogue between Christians and Jews. Dr. Robert Maryks facilitated the year's final meeting, a discussion on the prominent Italian Jesuit Tacci Venturi's efforts to rescue Jewish lives in Fascist Italy.

Daniel J. Lasker

The Changing Face (?) of the Jewish-Christian Debate

October 23, 2010



Daniel J. Lasker

Prof. Daniel J. Lasker, the 2010-2011 Corcoran Visiting Chair in Christian-Jewish Relations at the Center, led a discussion with the interdisciplinary Jewish-Christian Dialogue Group on the "Changing Face of the Jewish-Christian Debate." The discussion was based on two readings: "The Book of Nestor the Priest," a Jewish polemical text from the Middle Ages, and *Jews and Jewish Christianity* (1978) by David Berger and Michael Wyschogrod, a contemporary and consistently respectful Jewish text.

Richard Blake, SJ

Street Smart: New York City's Woody Allen and Martin Scorsese

November 17, 2010

Prof. Richard Blake, SJ, co-director of the film studies program at Boston College, led a discussion with the Jewish-Christian Dialogue Group based on his book *Street Smart: The New York of Lumet, Allen, Scorsese, and Lee*. Prof. Blake compared and contrasted the stories, character portrayals, and themes of the quintessentially New York filmmakers Woody Allen and Martin Scorsese.



Richard Blake, SJ

Susannah Heschel

Revolt of the Colonized

March 16, 2011



Susannah Heschel

Prof. Susannah Heschel led a discussion with the Jewish-Christian Dialogue Group based on her article "Revolt of the Colonized: Abraham Geiger's *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as a Challenge to Christian Hegemony in the Academy."

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Seminar

The Center-sponsored Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Seminar is a non-partisan interdisciplinary reading group and lecture series revolving around the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict offered throughout the academic year at Boston College. The reading group meets twice a month to discuss texts illuminating the Israeli and Palestinian narratives and prepares participants for an encounter with leading academics whom the group welcomes as guest speakers through the academic year. Its aim is to create a balanced forum in which a historically informed and morally productive discussion can take place. The seminar is led by two Ph.D. students from the Boston College Philosophy Department, Sarit Larry and Evan Clarke. Its participants are graduate students from across the university.

The Group's Mission Statement

In a context of highly charged partisan confrontation concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that manifests itself in the media and on campuses around the world, the need for a calm and rigorous academic discussion that takes into consideration historical facts and the full range of interpretations that could be applied to them is much needed. Our seminar is a response to this need: its aim is to provide an educated and interested audience with the historical facts constituting the conflict and outline their most prevalent interpretations from which the heated debate ensues. Underlying our account is the belief that the Israeli-Palestinian debate allows for no simple clear-cut answers and that an understanding of the multi-faceted nature of this conflict is a necessary condition for its resolution. Against the polemical monologues that monopolize Israeli-Palestinian discourse, we propose a dialogical approach that avoids both mere "objective" factual accounts and interpretational soliloquies that fail to reflect on and acknowledge their mirror counterparts. The seminar will thus be conducted by two philosophy graduate students whose long reflection and different backgrounds accord them a certain familiarity with several narratives. Interrogating the gap between these narratives and supporting them with the historical events from which they emerges will allow, we hope, for a well-rounded understanding of the tensions, frustrations, hopes and fears that stoke the Israeli-Palestinian struggle.

Neil Caplan

Bi-Nationalism in Palestine/Israel: Origins and Evolution of an Idea

January 26, 2011

In this public lecture hosted by the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Seminar, Dr. Neil Caplan, a faculty member at the History Department of Concordia University and a Scholar-in-Residence at Vanier College, situated the origins of bi-nationalism as an idea proposed by Zionist dissidents who during the 1920s came to view the original Zionist plan for a Jewish state as unjust or unworkable. He discussed the circumstances under which the idea was periodically proposed, since those days, as a solution to the latent or overt conflict between Jews and Arabs over sovereign control of the disputed land of Palestine and Israel. Dr. Caplan concluded with a brief summary of the debates over one-state versus two-state solutions to today's impasse between Israel and the Palestinians.



Neil Caplan

Jeremy Pressman

The Two-State Solution: So Close Yet So Far Away

March 31, 2011

In his public lecture hosted by the seminar, Prof. Jeremy Pressman, a political science professor at the University of Connecticut, spoke about the United States' and others' continued push for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict nearly 44 years after the start of the Israeli occupation. While he argued that such a solution is not impossible, he emphasized that complicating factors have grown in recent years. Prof. Pressman examined general political issues as



Jeremy Pressman

well as offered a review of positions on the core issues, including borders, Jerusalem, refugees, security, and settlements.



Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Seminar participants

Junior Scholars Research Grants

In an effort to encourage and support young scholars in the field of Jewish-Christian relations, the Center established the Junior Scholars Research Grants program. Through this program, Boston College undergraduate and graduate students pursuing research that is of value to the field of Christian-Jewish relations are provided financial support and an opportunity to share their final products. Grant recipients engage in scholarship under the guidance of a faculty member while conducting research and producing publishable articles, book sections or chapters, conference presentations, digital materials, translations, or other scholarly resources. This year, six recipients were awarded \$1,000 grants.

2010-2011 Academic Year Winners

Matthew Kruger, Boston College Theology Ph.D. Student

Kruger developed an article which he hopes to have published, "Fear, Love, and the Law: The Spiritual Nature of Judaism and Christianity in Aquinas and Bonaventure." Kruger hopes his article helps address the dearth of research on the subject, stating "Filling in this void is essential to filling out the picture of the medieval Christian perspective towards the Jewish religion."

Jeffrey C. Witt, Boston College Philosophy Ph.D. Candidate

Witt designed a detailed course syllabus on "Jewish and Christian Medieval Approaches to Philosophy of Religion." He explains, "There are few resources for how to approach medieval Jewish-Christian relations and intellectual debates from the perspective of a mainstream philosophy course... I hope to provide other philosophers with an example of how they might incorporate both Christian and Jewish sources in their courses in a more extensive way."

2011 Summer Winners

Steven Candido, Boston College Junior

Candido traveled to Berlin to conduct research for his history thesis "Youth is Not an Excuse: A Study of College-Aged Resisters in Nazi Germany." His thesis will focus on the non-Jewish youth resisters during the Holocaust. He explains, "It is a vastly understudied field that deserves more research and recognition, especially in the quest for improving Jewish-Christian relations."

Rosemary Chandler, Boston College Sophomore

Chandler developed a publishable article "The Downfall of Synagoga: A Study of the Dynamic Allegory in Italian Renaissance Art." She combined her interests in European artwork and Jewish studies to research a "lesser studied subject of Italian Renaissance art: Judaism and the 'Jewish' Old Testament, and what depictions of this subject matter reveal about Christian attitudes towards Judaism and the position of Jews in Italian society."

Caitlyn Duehren, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry M.T.S. Student

Duehren developed a publishable article that addresses a gap in feminist Jewish-Christian theology. Her research focuses on the place of women in Second Temple Period Judaism, recovering movements or tendencies within Judaism that were "liberative in nature, upon which Jesus, the Jew, likely drew." Duehren explains that exploring this is "an attempt to move beyond the dualistic Jesus verses Judaism, which is denigrating to both Judaism and Jesus." She states, "I hope to bring together Christian and Jewish feminist theology and eradicate the inauthentic proclivity towards anti-Judaism often found in Christian feminism."

Nicholas Wagner, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry M.T.S. Student

Wagner developed a publishable historical and literary analysis of Pauline texts as well as other relevant primary sources. His article aims at "exploring both Paul's Hellenism and how, if at all, it influenced anti-Judaism for early Christ-believers." He intends his research "to provide a fuller understanding of the historical realities facing Jews and Christ-believers in the first century" as well as "aid contemporary scholarship in demystifying Paul's anti-Jewishness."

Annual Corcoran Chair Conferences

Was there a Golden Age of Christian-Jewish Relations?

2010 Corcoran Chair Conference

April 14-15, 2010

In this two-day international conference organized by Prof. Raymond Cohen, the 2008-2010 Corcoran Chair in Christian-Jewish Relations, twelve Jewish and Christian scholars, in a series of panels, explored historical periods which might be considered "Golden Ages" during which Jews and Christians lived together harmoniously. The Most Reverend bishop Richard J. Sklba, Archdiocese of Milwaukee, delivered the keynote address, "Is This the Golden Age of Christian-Jewish Relations?"



Most Rev. Richard J. Sklba

Conference Presenters

- "A Golden Age of Christian-Jewish Relations in the Middle Ages: Would We Know It When We See It?"
Jonathan Elukin, Trinity College, Hartford, CT

- “The Cathedral of Bourges: A Witness to Judeo-Christian Dialogue in Medieval Berry (1195-1235)”
Margaret Jennings, Boston College
- “A Golden Age of Christian-Jewish Relations? The Movement of Dialogue and Rapprochement in the 1960s-1970s”
Yaacov Ariel, University of North Carolina
- “Bright Beginnings: Jewish-Christian Relations in the Holy Land, AD 400-700”
Eliya Ribak, Birkbeck College, University of London
- “Whose Golden Age? Some Thoughts on Jewish-Christian Relations in Medieval Iberia?”
Jonathan S. Ray, Georgetown University
- “Rethinking the ‘Golden Age’ in Pre-Modern Poland: ‘A State without States’?”
Magda Teter, Wesleyan University
- “Jewish Prague, Christian Prague, and the Castle in the City’s ‘Golden Age’”
Hillel Kieval, Washington University in St. Louis
- “Sharing Scripture? Jews, Christians, and the Protestant Reformation”
Debra Kaplan, Yeshiva University
- “Out of the Ghetto? Jewish-Christian Relations in 18th Century Livorno”
Francesca Bregoli, Queens College of the City University of New York
- “‘Liberty of Conscience’ and the Jews in the Dutch Republic”
Miriam Bodian, University of Texas, Austin
- “Golden Age or Gilded Age? The English Jews and the Myth of Early Modern Religious Toleration”
David Katz, Tel Aviv University

Are Jews and Christians Living in a Post-Polemical World? Toward a Comparison of Medieval and Modern Christian-Jewish Encounters
2011 Corcoran Chair Conference
March 28-29, 2011



Organized by Prof. Daniel J. Lasker, the 2010-2011 Corcoran Chair in Christian-Jewish Relations, this two-day conference brought together nine scholars from the fields of theology, philosophy, history, and art, to examine, compare, and contrast the Jewish-Christian relationship in medieval and contemporary contexts. The presenters explored the question of whether our world is truly post-polemical given all the changes in atmosphere and the emerging dialogue in Christian-Jewish relations. The first part of the conference examined medieval polemics while the second part of the conference focused on the contemporary scene.

Conference Rationale

Much of the history of the Jewish-Christian encounter includes a vigorous debate in the form of polemics – literature, public disputations, forced sermons, and the like. This debate produced a major body of medieval literature (*Adversus Judaeos* on the Christian side; various *Books of Nizzahon* on the Jewish side) which encapsulates the elements of religious and theological disagreement between the two groups. It was once taken for granted that this literature was produced in the context of Christian attempts to missionize Jews and Jewish attempts to fend off Christian approaches. Christians were invariably the aggressor; Jews invariably the defender. Students of this literature often asked questions such as: which side “won” the debate?

General changes in contemporary Christian-Jewish relations have brought with them changes in perception of this literature, and indeed of the whole encounter. Questions have been raised about the conversionary context of the polemics, and more nuanced views of what the polemicists had in mind have emerged. On the one hand, scholars have begun to pay more attention to internal uses of the polemical literature (especially that of Christians); on the other hand, the Jewish treatises are no longer seen solely as responses to Christian attempts of persuasion. The first part of the conference was devoted to examining these new approaches to the medieval polemical literature. The second part of the conference was devoted to examining the elements in the contemporary Christian-Jewish encounter which contribute to an atmosphere in which polemics are now of historical interest only; and on the other hand, those present-day factors which remain reflections of the past.

Conference Presenters

Keynote Address

- “The Shifting Dynamic of the Jewish-Christian Encounter from the Middle Ages to the Present”
David Berger, Dean and Ruth and I. Lewis Gordon Professor of Jewish History at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies of Yeshiva University



David Berger

Session on Medieval Polemics

- “The Medieval Jewish Critique of Christianity: In Search of a New Narrative”
Daniel J. Lasker, Norbert Blechner Professor of Jewish Values at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and the 2010-2011 Corcoran Visiting Chair at the Boston College Center for Christian-Jewish Learning
- “*Disputatio*: Ambiguous Motivations and Unintended Consequences of a Long-lived Genre”
Robin Vose, Associate Professor of Medieval History at St. Thomas University



Daniel J. Lasker and Robin Vose



Irven Resnick and Alexandra Cuffel

- “Beyond the Written Word: Visual, Spoken, and Enacted Polemic between Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe”
Alexandra Cuffel, Independent Scholar
- “Dietary Laws, Physiology, and Illicit Sexuality in Medieval Religious Polemics”
Irven Resnick, Chair of Excellence in Judaic Studies at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Session on the Contemporary Scene

- “Polemical Remnants, Irenic Ambivalence and Internal Politics: Catholic-Jewish Relations in 2011”
Mary C. Boys, Skinner and McAlpin Professor of Practical Theology at Union Theological Seminary
- “Covenantal Possibilities in the Post-Polemical Era”
Eugene Korn, American Director of the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation in Israel
- “Land, Sovereignty, and Jewish Identity: The Patristic Legacy and Contemporary Christian Polemics”
Christopher M. Leighton, Executive Director of the Institute for Christian & Jewish Studies in Baltimore and Adam Gregerman, Jewish Scholar at the Institute for Christian & Jewish Studies in Baltimore



Adam Gregerman and Christopher Leighton



Eugene Korn and Mary Boys

Christian Scholars Group 2011 Spring Meeting



The Center hosted the Christian Scholars Group’s annual spring meeting at Boston College April 8-10, 2011. The Group, formed in 1969, is composed of Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox scholars engaged in Christian-Jewish studies, both historical and current. During their visit, the group hosted a public forum on interreligious dialogue, “Competing Discourses: Jewish-Christian Dialogue in a Multifaith World,” which included panelists Dr. Catherine Cornille, Dr. Peter Pettit, Dr. Jennifer Peace, Dr. Mary Boys, and Dr. Jean-Pierre Ruiz. In addition to the group’s public forum, the group engaged in scholarly working group sessions as well as shared their own research. The group also invited several speakers to present their recent scholarship. Rev. Dr. Demetrios Toniais presented his paper “Abraham in John Chrysostom’s Views of Jews and Judaism” and Dr. Joy Galarneau presented her paper “Identity in Dialogue: Methodological Insights from Feminism and Jewish-Christian Dialogue for Christian Theology in a Pluralistic World.” Christian Scholars Group member Dr. Robert Cathey also shared his experiences living in Lebanon in his presentation “Nesting in Beirut: Reflections from the Near East School of Theology (NEST) on Presbyterian-Jewish Relations.”



Christian Scholars Group members at their 2011 annual spring meeting at Boston College

Boston Inter-Religious Dialogue Students at Boston College

During the 2010-2011 academic year, the Center sponsored the newly formed Boston Inter-Religious Dialogue Students (BIRDS) group at Boston College. BIRDS is a student-led group consisting of Boston College graduate students from the School of Theology and Ministry whose hope is to engage in interfaith dialogue and learning. While rooted in their Christian faiths, group members hope to expand beyond their theological horizons to learn more about colleagues of other faiths. Jeffrey Joseph, the group's initiator, explains, "Members recognize the obvious and pressing need to reach out to others to form a more understanding and helpful community of believers, especially those in the Jewish community given the often painful and sordid past Christians have had with Jews." Group activities this year included reading-based discussions, a guided tour of the Dura-Europas exhibit at the Boston College McMullen Museum of Art, attendance at and discussions on cultural events such as plays and lectures, and planning and hosting an interfaith spring prayer service, "Moving Toward Reconciliation: From Painful Past to Hopeful Future."



Members of BIRDS at Boston College attend the play "My Name is Asher Lev" in hopes of understanding some of the cultural struggles of Hasidic Jews living in the United States.

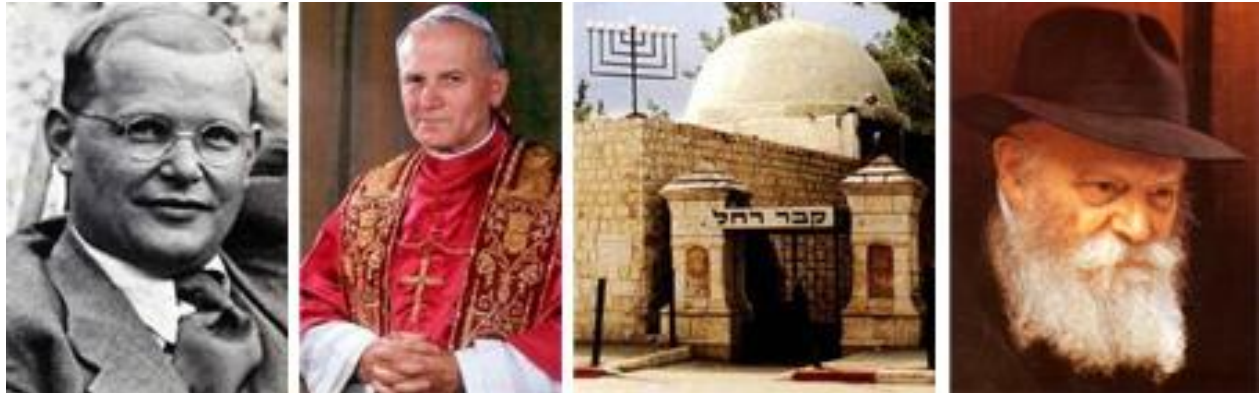
Studies in Christian-Jewish Relation, the Journal

Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations, the peer-reviewed journal of the Council of Centers on Christian-Jewish Relations, is published at the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning. Center Associate Directors Prof. Ruth Langer and Dr. Camille Fitzpatrick Markey serve on the journal's editorial board, respectively as Co-Editor and Managing Editor. The feature topic of Volume 5 (2010) of *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* was "Boundaries and Border Crossings." Articles examine the construction of boundaries and concern about those who cross or question those boundaries. These aspects of the Christian-Jewish encounter have been present since its beginning and are still relevant in today's multi-cultural society, with its emphases on individual identity, spirituality, and its questioning of organized religion which challenge our received approaches to boundary construction in many ways.



The journal is open-access and available at www.bc.edu/scjr.

Volume 6 (2011) Feature Topic: "Constructing Saints and Heroes"



A recurring issue in Catholic-Jewish relations has been the beatification and canonization of men and women who, from the perspective of those involved in dialogue, have had questionable qualifications for this elevation. Given that humans of all religious traditions identify certain individuals as heroes who served and serve as sources of blessing to the world in various ways, Volume 6 (2011) explores this phenomenon from any relevant perspective. What qualifies a person to be considered a saint or tzaddiq or religious role model in Judaism or Christianity? To what extent does (or should) that person's evaluation by other denominations or religions play a role? What sorts of issues require clarification for inter-religious understanding on these issues?

2011-2012 Inaugural Programs

In hopes of encouraging further interdisciplinary scholarship in the field of Jewish-Christian relations, the Center has established the following programs and events.

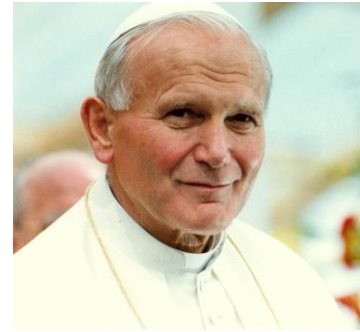
Jewish-Christian Relations Lecture Series



The Center established this interdisciplinary lecture series by inviting Boston College professors teaching a course with connections to Jewish-Christian relations to apply for sponsorship of a guest lecturer for his or her course. Up to ten visiting lecturers will be sponsored each academic year.

John Paul II Lecture Series

On the occasion of John Paul's Beatification on May 1, 2011 in Rome, the Center established an annual John Paul II lecture in Christian-Jewish relations. The lecture honors John Paul's many efforts to overcome the divisions between Christians and Jews.



Pope John Paul II

International Conference on "The Tragic Couple": Encounters between Jews and Jesuits July 9-13, 2012



St. Ignatius of Loyola

The Society of Jesus has been a leader in the Church's efforts at dialogue with Jews, including the role the Jesuit Cardinal Augustin Bea played in hammering out the groundbreaking declaration *Nostra Aetate* during Vatican II. Yet, the history of the relationship of this "tragic couple" has been often filled with bias and animosity, even though the Jesuit founder, Ignatius of Loyola, declared that he would consider it God's special grace to be of the same Jewish lineage of Christ and even though Jesuits of Jewish ancestry had played a crucial role in the foundation and development of the Jesuit Order. Driven by a desire for deepening the understanding and friendship between the Jewish people and the Society of Jesus, the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College is organizing an international conference on the history, nature, dynamics, and current status of the relation between Jews and Jesuits. It aims to bring together scholars of different backgrounds to converse on this topic from an interdisciplinary perspective: biblical exegesis, history, literature, philosophy, theology, and spirituality. Inquiries, topic suggestions, and paper proposals may be sent to Prof. James Bernauer, SJ (bernauer@bc.edu) or Dr. Robert A. Maryks (robert.maryks@me.com).

Director's Academic Report
James Bernauer, SJ
Kraft Family Professor
Director, Center for Christian-Jewish Learning

While serving as Director of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning, the major academic activities I have pursued as Kraft Family Professor may be divided into four areas: Holocaust Studies, Jewish Culture, Christian-Jewish relations, and, finally, the historical interaction between Jesuits and Jews. The most important undergraduate course I teach is "The Holocaust: A Moral History" and, of all my courses, it regularly attracts the largest number of Jewish students so that we have a very vital Christian-Jewish dialogue in the classroom. I call it a moral history because the class focuses on the intellectual and ethical forces that motivated either indifference to the plight of others or a spirit of resistance and caring. My work in this area has been greatly assisted by research trips to several centers for Holocaust study: Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the United States Holocaust Museum, assorted libraries in Berlin and, in the summer of 2010, an important archive in Paris. Students come away from this course with a good historical understanding of the tragedy of European Jewry during the Holocaust but also a philosophical grasp of how individuals are able to shape themselves as moral beings in even the darkest of times. Two presentations in particular were based upon this research and were given this year in Florida and Boston. The first was at Florida Atlantic University, where I spoke on some Christian sources for Nazi anti-Jewish rhetoric. The second was a commentary I gave on a panel, "German Catholics Negotiate National Socialism," which was presented at this past December's American Catholic Historical Association Meeting.

Most students do not have a good understanding of the riches of Jewish cultures, either historical or contemporary. To confront this weakness, I have shifted some of the focus in my teaching in order to convey better knowledge of Jewish culture. For example I have established a new seminar on the German-Jewish experience in which we study such brilliant thinkers as Martin Buber, Hannah Arendt, and Franz Rosenzweig. My interest in this extraordinary culture goes back to the years of my youth when I was growing up in upper Manhattan which, in the nineteen fifties, had the largest concentration of German Jews in the world. They left an indelible impression on me and I am pleased to share the wealth of the culture they created in Germany with our students. One of the fruits of this type of course is that it leads to mentoring students in more extensive investigations of Jewish culture. My hope is that some of these students go into academic careers that will be particularly appreciative and knowledgeable of Jewish experience.

In the Spring semester of 2012, Prof. Ruth Langer and I will present a course on "Jews and Christians: Understanding the Other." This will be the first time that we offer this course which will examine from our different faith perspectives such topics as covenant and community, the land of Israel, sin and repentance, suffering, as well as redemption and salvation. This course possesses a particular potential because we now have at Boston College the School of Theology and Ministry that prepares religious leaders and educators. Our hope is to make a significant contribution to their education on the profound relationship that links Judaism and Christianity.

Finally, a special desire of mine has been to enhance the bonds between Jesuits and Jews. Their encounters over the centuries have been inadequately studied and, thus, poorly understood. That motivated my planning of a conference on the theme of Jesuits and Jews that will take place in July, 2012. The announcement of the conference has met with much enthusiasm and we already have commitments from scholars in Asia, Europe, Israel, and the United States who will be coming to Boston for a week of presentations and conversations. They will discuss major historical moments as well as directions for their current interaction. Although the relationship between Catholics and Jews has flowered in recent decades, there is still need to deepen those connections by continuing research and exchange among the various groups that make up these different communities. I have high hopes for the contribution that this conference will make to the strengthening of the relationship between Jews and Jesuits. My own

presentation will focus on the activities of some of the French Jesuits who have been honored by Israel's Yad Vashem Institute as among the Righteous who risked their lives to save Jewish lives during the Holocaust.

Announcing the forthcoming publication of Ruth Langer's *Cursing the Christians?: A History of the Birkat HaMinim* (Oxford University Press, December 2011)

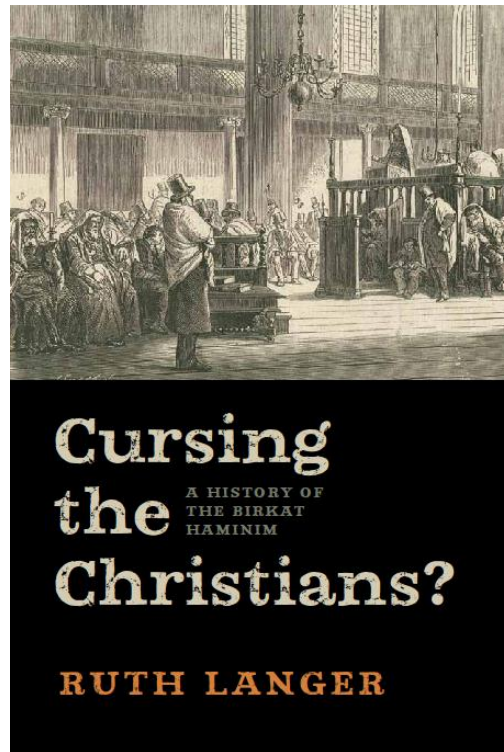
Tracing the shifting liturgical texts and polemics and apologetics surrounding the *birkat haminin*, Prof. Ruth Langer describes its transformation from a medieval Jewish prayer that cursed Christians, through its early modern Church censorship, to its modern transformation inside the Jewish world into a petition that God remove abstract evil from the world.

Prof. Langer, Associate Director of the Center, spent the 2009-2010 academic year in Jerusalem, writing her book on the *birkat haminin* (the malediction of the sectarians), to be published with Oxford University Press in December 2011. While in Israel she gave numerous lectures in university and dialogic contexts. Since the completion of the book manuscript, she has lectured across the United States as well, from Boca Raton to Seattle to Milwaukee, where it was a particular pleasure to give the inaugural lecture for the Richard Lux Center at the Sacred Heart Seminary, the only Center devoted to Christian-Jewish relations in a seminary context.

One of Prof. Langer's lectures, at Providence College, will be published in expanded form in a memorial volume for Rabbi Leon Klenicki, one of the early leaders of our contemporary dialogue. The Providence program was a public dialogue with Bruce Morrill, SJ, on the role of memory in liturgy. It is excerpted below:

Historical consciousness and its attendant memory are quite central to Jewish identity—which is best described as a national and ethnic, with a role for religion. For all traditional forms of Judaism, the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, the subsequent exile, and the consequent loss of any ability to fulfill God's biblical commandments for sacrificial worship formed and forms the central existential crisis. A key message of the resultant liturgy is that we are living in a world in desperate need of divine messianic intervention. Regular elements of the liturgy voice a memory of crisis in the past that shapes an understanding of the present and articulates as well a "memory" of the future. The rabbis layered this response to their personal situation onto a daily memorialization of key elements of the pentateuchal narrative as well: God's actions as Creator, Redeemer, and Revealer of Torah in the past but also continually. Many understand these to be the three pillars of Jewish theology.

Non-Jews find presence only in the liturgy's reflection on later history. The rabbis decreed that all statutory prayers must always be recited in the first person plural reflecting the entire community of Israel. Therefore, liturgically, for Judaism, the "other" cannot be another Jew, but must be those outside the Jewish community. In statutory prayers, these "others" mostly remain unnamed. They name neither Esau nor Rome, the oppressors of the time.



There is thus a major tension in Jewish liturgical memory. On the one hand, the “sacred memory” of the biblical and particularly pentateuchal narrative is very present, yet, as framed, it largely ignores the other. On the other hand, Jews are, in general, very conscious of the history in which they live. How do these two elements merge?

This tension finds expression c. 500 CE. While Babylonian rabbis gave central stage to the statutory prayers that avoid specific historical information, synagogues in Byzantine Palestine developed ways of enriching and even replacing some of these prayers with liturgical poetry (*piyyut*). This poetry became a vehicle, not just for creative study of Scripture (its primary role), but also for response to current realities. It was later similarly employed in Christian Europe, including in laments recalling specific persecutions. Much of these were lost, though: Jews were forced to forget their specific local memories as their communities were destroyed by expulsions and Christian censorship purged their prayer books of anti-Christian sentiments.

However it is important to note that these laments focus on descriptions of what the Jews themselves endured instead of on their persecutors’ crimes. Indeed, the persecutors remain unnamed. Designed to bring the worshiper to join in the poet’s grief, these texts communicate immense pain. They generally conclude by petitioning God to exact justice; perhaps because it was useless in their world, they never elicit an activist response.

How does this apply to today’s world, to our constructing a memory of the Holocaust? In the aftermath of the Crusades, the Crusaders did not repent. Nor did the Christian perpetrators of other atrocities suffered by Jews throughout the centuries. The repentance of today’s Christian world is thus a radically new situation that challenges the reflexes of Jewish memory. Mourning for the lost individuals, communities, and civilization is still necessary, but because of the repentance of the perpetrators, we can now remember while also leaving room for rebuilding relationships. The tension between memory and forgetting in Jewish life is thus not theoretical. It has real implications for Jewish relations with the “others” of our world today.

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