WHAT DO WE WANT THE OTHER TO TEACH ABOUT US?

JEWISH, CHRISTIAN, AND MUSLIM DIALOGUES

Edited by David L. Coppola
WHAT DO WE WANT THE OTHER TO TEACH ABOUT US?

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David L. Coppola

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CONTENTS

Preface
Anthony J. Cernera ix

Acknowledgements
Joseph H. Ehrenkranz x

Introduction: To Teach About The Other
David L. Coppola xiii

PART I
Setting a Context for Dialogue

The Sacred Space of Dialogue
Remi Hoeckman, OP 3

Is There a Moral imperative to Engage in Interfaith Dialogue?
Tsvi Blanchard 13

The Witness of the Monotheistic Religions
Michael Fitzgerald, MAfr 29

For Further Discussion and Study 43
For Action in the Community 43

PART II
What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Theological Traditions?

What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Theological Traditions?
David L. Coppola 47
Contents

What We Want the Other to Know About Us
   Alon Goshen-Gottstein 55

Teaching Christianity as an Abrahamic Faith
   David Burrell, CSC 81

What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Islam?
   Jamal J. Elias 97

For Further Discussion and Study 109

For Action in the Community 110

PART III

What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Historical Traditions?

What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Historical Traditions?
   David L. Coppola 113

Message of Greeting
   Johannes Rau 124

Welcome Address
   Godehard Ruppert 125

Teaching Jewish History as Universal History
   Derek J. Penslar 127

What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Jewish History?
   Michael Dushinsky 151

Understanding and Teaching Jewish History
   David Fox Sandmel 159

What Do Christians Want Jews and Muslims to Teach About Christianity?
   Leonard Swidler 167

God's Own History: The Pastoral Process of Revelation
   Hans-Joachim Sander 183

God's Own History: A Response to Hans-Joachim Sander
   Christoph Heil 203

What Do We Want the Other to Teach About the Recent History of Protestant-Jewish Dialogue?
   Wolfgang Kraus 209
Contents

What I Want the Other to Teach About Islamic History and Faith
   Jamal Badawi 231
For Further Discussion and Study 243
For Action in the Community 244

PART IV
What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Prayer and Liturgy?

What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Prayer and Liturgy?
   David L. Coppola 249
What Do We Want Others to Teach About Jewish Prayer and Liturgy?
   Reuven Kimelman 259
Response to Rabbi Reuven Kimelman
   Tsvi Blanchard 271
What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Catholic Liturgy and Prayer?
   Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini 279
What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Christian Prayer and Liturgy?
   David L. Coppola and Margaret Palliser, OP 285
What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Islamic Prayer and Liturgy?
   Abdul Hadi Palazzi 297
Sufism, the Inner Dimension of Islamic Spirituality
   Ali Hussen al-Badawi as-Siddiqi 309
For Further Discussion and Study 317
For Action in the Community 319

PART V
What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Ethical Traditions?

What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Ethical Traditions?
   David L. Coppola 323
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Ethics: Foundations, Development, and Future</td>
<td>Eugene Korn</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Reflection on Jewish Ethics</td>
<td>Barry Friedman</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Christian Morality?</td>
<td>John L. Elias</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching About the Others' Ethics: A Response to Professor John Elias</td>
<td>Brian Stiltner</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Do We Want the Other to Teach About the Islamic Ethical Traditions?</td>
<td>Asad Husain and Mohammad A. Siddiqi</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Further Discussion and Study</td>
<td></td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Action in the Community</td>
<td></td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Suggestions for Further Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Websites Concerned with Interreligious Understanding and Dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td></td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preface

Thirteen years ago, Sacred Heart University embarked on a program to establish a Center that would seek to bring about greater theological understanding and dialogue between Christianity and Judaism. Our Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding now holds a place of respect in the American Catholic and Jewish communities for its efforts in this regard. As time has passed, we have been able to foster collaboration and friendships with Muslims who seek God's will and greater understanding among religions.

Several years ago, when we were discussing ways to improve and strengthen dialogue, we recognized that there were not available—at least not in English—any books that would assist religious leaders and educators at the local church, synagogue, congregation, or school and to have resources available to help them ask and frame the simple question, "What do we want the other to teach about us?" So, beginning in Jerusalem and then moving on to Edmonton, Canada; Rome; Germany; and concluding at Sacred Heart University, we sponsored a number of international conferences on this theme. Selected papers from these conferences have been gathered into this volume and we hope this initial effort will contribute greatly to the efforts of interreligious dialogue and peace.

On behalf of the entire Sacred Heart University community, I thank all who were part of this dialogue—this search for better understanding—in a world that is so desperately in need of such efforts. By reading and teaching the ideas contained in this volume, all of us are privileged to participate as God's partners in repairing the world in our time.

Anthony J. Cernera
President, Sacred Heart University
Fairfield, Connecticut
The five conferences, "What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Us," held in Jerusalem; Edmonton, Canada; Rome, Italy; Bamberg, Germany; and Fairfield, Connecticut, from 2000 to 2003 were sponsored by the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut, in collaboration with the Elijah Interfaith Institute, Jerusalem; the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action, Canada; the University of Bamberg, Germany; and Sacred Heart University. All of us at the Center remain deeply grateful for the warm hospitality and support we enjoyed with the communities of each of these countries.

These conferences and this volume were made possible in part by the generous support of the Ridgefield Foundation, Connecticut; Mrs. Louella Lieberman, Connecticut; B.L. Manger Foundation, Connecticut; Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Milbank, New Jersey; Rich Foundation, Israel; Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Roxe, Connecticut; Mr. and Mrs. Barry Sternlicht, Connecticut; and Mr. and Mrs. Leo Van Munching, Connecticut.

We are especially grateful to the hundreds of people who encourage the Center's work and have helped to bring this important effort to completion so that we can now begin the vital work of teaching its hopeful message. In particular, we are thankful to the late Pope John Paul II; Cardinal Walter Kasper, president for the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, and his esteemed predecessor, Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy; Dr. Anthony J. Cernera, president of Sacred Heart University; members of the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding's Board of Directors: Dr. Howard Ehrenkranz, Dr. Thomas Forget, Mrs. Louella Lieberman, Dr. Laura Lustig, Mr. Gregory Millbank, Rev. Michael Moynihan, Mrs. Suzanne Newmark, Mr. Vincent Roberti, and Dr. John S. Tamerin; and to the Center's many supporters.
Finally, heartfelt thanks go out to Dr. David L. Coppola, my colleague and associate at the Center, and to all of the scholars whose preparation and participation at these conferences as well as their ongoing commitment to interreligious dialogue is a declaration of hope for the future.

Rabbi Joseph H. Ehrenkranz
Executive Director
Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding
To Teach About the Other

To those involved in religious education on the local level, a common observation is that there does not seem to be enough time to teach young or new members about the essentials of their own faith, let alone learn or teach about another person's faith. To engage in interreligious dialogue and learn about another religion and to teach about those beliefs seems to go beyond what is ordinarily required of a believer. It is no exaggeration to say that, for the first time in two millennia, Jews, Christians, and Muslims have the opportunity to put aside their divisiveness and seek reconciliation and understanding. This is an ideal time to remember the past and renew hopes for the future. An important means to pave the way for reconciliation and change is to learn and educate about the other.

As an academic and research division of Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut, the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding (CCJU) promotes forums for dialogue and study in order to advance greater knowledge, understanding, and harmony among religions. The Center wanted to make the most of this moment in history and proposed five conferences on the topic, "What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Us?" This four-year effort began in 2000 in Jerusalem and Edmonton, Canada, followed by conferences in Rome, Italy (2001), Bamberg, Germany (2002), and Fairfield, Connecticut (2003). These conferences are based on the mission of the CCJU, which advocates a respect for the dignity of all people, acknowledges a special relationship between Jews, Christians, and Muslims and works to further interreligious dialogue by teaching and living the principles outlined in the 1965 Vatican II document, Nostra Aetate, excerpted here:
In our age, when people are drawing more closely together and the bonds of friendship between different peoples are being strengthened, the Church examines with greater care the relation which she has to non-Christian religions. Ever aware of her duty to foster unity and charity among individuals, and even among nations, she reflects at the outset on what people have in common and what tends to promote unity among them. . . . Indeed, the Church reproves every form of persecution against whomsoever it may be directed. Remembering, then, her common heritage with the Jews and moved not by any political consideration, but solely by the religious motivation of Christian charity, she deplores all hatreds, persecutions, and displays of anti-Semitism leveled at any time or from any source against the Jews.

—Vatican II. Nostra Aetate (28 October, 1965).

From this new seed of mutual respect, learning together, and teaching authentically about each other can come a living relationship to serve as a model for all who believe that God desires human beings to live together in friendship and peace. The movement from defensiveness and distrust to friendship built on security and equality is still a long way from being realized, but has its hope of success in dialogue.

A follow-up document to Nostra Aetate, the 1974 Guidelines, published by the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, presents authentic dialogue as a process where each participant a) genuinely wishes to know the other; b) respects the other as the other is; c) respects the other's faith and the other's religious convictions; and d) respects the other's legitimate claim to religious liberty. In more poetic language, Ruel L. Howe writes in his 1963 work, The Miracle of Dialogue (Seabury Press), "Dialogue is to love, what blood is to the body. When the flow of blood stops, the body dies. When dialogue stops, love dies and resentment and hate are born" (p. 3).

As the number of people involved in interreligious dialogue continues to grow, more people need to understand accurately the "others," and they also desire to be understood and presented correctly by the others. Through these conferences and the model employed, the CCJU advocates that the process of dialogue should flow in that order—understanding others to being understood by others. After respecting the genuine needs of the others first, and attempting to understand them on their own
terms, only then, as friendships and relationships mature, as each asks the other sincere questions, will it be important and appropriate to share honestly and reveal one's self and tradition.

But the sharing and teaching of knowledge must also remain faithful to the "insider's" understandings. The participants in interreligious dialogue agree to trust and respect each other enough to entrust each other with their sacred stories, experiences, historical events, interpretations, beliefs, mysteries, questions, and uncertainties. Each says to the other: "We trust you enough to share these ideas, insights, and sensibilities." "Do unto others" now means that you will teach about us how you would want us to teach about you—adequately, fairly, and respectfully. We become a mirror to each other where we can recognize our kinship with each other in the mystery of God.

When the question, "What do we want the other to teach about us?" is asked in the context of interreligious dialogue, an answer in the form of a reflection on faith or belief will be given. But that answer or reflection, de facto, becomes an invitation to another question, which generally implies, "Now that you have heard my response, what do you think?" And so a dialogue begins where each trusts the other enough to be honest and say what he or she does not understand. Each perceives the other's faith as a vocation, literally a calling from God who dialogues with humanity.

Jewish, Christian, and Muslim experiences of the Divine all point to God as One who teaches. It is, in turn, expected that followers will study what God has revealed and teach such revelations and commandments to future generations. Dialogue and education are tools for each to approach the other as people in relationship with God first, and not as objects spouting abstract beliefs. Happily, there is some truth to the notion that one learns something well when asked to teach it. In this sense, teaching demands more of a commitment to the other and his or her beliefs, rather than simply knowing or learning about the other. Moreover, to teach teachers is important work because, as Henry Brooks Adams (1838–1918) said so well, "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." In the midst of a society that "teaches" values that are antireligious, xenophobic, hateful, immoral, and violent, the need for good teachers is, indeed, pressing. The result of the dialogue process will need to be as much a pedagogical as well as a theological process.
The topic "What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Us?" comes out of a sustained reflection on how each one of us is "other," 'stranger," or "outsider" to someone else. This awareness of existential otherness gives each partner in the dialogue process the humility to proceed, in the words of Pope John Paul II, by "proposing" one's beliefs, rather than imposing them (Veritas Splendor, 1993, sec. 12, 35, 91, 95, 108, 110). The mutual blessing that arises out of this approach is that each understands himself or herself in a deeper and richer way by understanding and teaching about the other. Different perspectives help each partner in dialogue to clarify his or her own understandings and also help to clarify the other's without demonizing or persecuting the other.

An important feature of this process is that when one authentically teaches what the other wants to be taught, the teacher also communicates through his or her method and example, the convictions of respect, reverence, scholarship, and friendship for the other as a son or daughter of God. By influencing how other religions are taught in each religion's formal educational structures or through prayer and liturgy or by publications about the other or by the deliberate efforts made to include others at festivals or appropriate celebrations, the dignity of all can be affirmed.

This book is a collection of papers by religious leaders and scholars who are actively engaged in interreligious dialogue and are faithful believers in their own religious traditions and who participated in a CCJU-sponsored conference. These essays are meant to inspire continued dialogue and education in synagogues, churches and mosques as well as to be a resource for those who seek understanding and truth, and who work for peace through dialogue. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam teach that it is God's will that all people live in peace with each other. Peace will be advanced only when religious people and religious institutions are involved in intelligent, honest, respectful dialogue with each other and are integral to the processes of social justice in their communities. It is impossible to duplicate the living, breathing, inspiring presence of the other.

Although the papers included in this book are intended to be illustrative of some of the issues and the direction that interreligious dialogue is taking, they are not meant to be official or dogmatically authoritative teachings. Efforts were made to find presenters who could express ideas
from the middle of the road in each religious tradition. However, as the conferences and discussions proceeded, the middle of the road moved with the winding and hilly terrain of different denominations and traditions of religions. Often intrareligious conversations were more challenging than interreligious ones. The ideas and approaches presented are representative and widely held, but they are not exclusively normative. The reader of this collection will most likely take issue with or can nuance at least one aspect presented by a scholar in one's own tradition. This is to be expected and welcomed so that the volume has vitality and can be used with flexibility depending upon each teacher's personal resources and background.

Further, these papers are neither equal nor parallel. It turns out that, although they are all written in or translated into English, the categories and methodologies originally assumed to be broad and inclusive for study and discussion were rightly challenged by the participants as being skewed on the side of western Christianity. The result is that the book is not completely representative (as probably any book attempting this effort would not be). Rather, it is illustrative and ends up being a volume that introduces to both scholar and student some important ideas and issues with suggested ways to wrestle with profound questions of faith and religious practice.

I have included an introduction to each section of the book to set the context of the conferences and the principal ideas discussed. Additionally, each section concludes with connections, observations, and questions meant to spur further study and conversation. The questions are posed as a way to view the papers, but also allow for tailored discussions about both theoretical and practical issues.

It is a great responsibility and a great honor to help influence how the other is taught. This book is best used and discussed in the presence of the other so that he or she can define, clarify, nuance, and situate topics and categories according to his or her natural methods and traditions, as well as his or her own unique life witness. This book is not intended to be a simplified handbook of the other or to substitute for real human interaction and dialogue between religious and ethical people. It is an initial introduction to the other into very important and strongly held beliefs and traditions. When dialoguing with and learning with others, one may also be challenged to look deeper into one's own beliefs and assumptions.
Truth can be found in the experiences of individuals in their journeys towards holiness and wisdom as well as in learned theological teachings. The more one is in the presence of other believers, the more one is invited to strengthen one's religious beliefs and come to know the deeper truths of one's own tradition. It is hoped that such conversations will help to inspire Jews to be better Jews; Christians, better Christians; Muslims, better Muslims, and all God's people to act justly, and walk humbly before their God.

Portions of these papers, as well as interpretive commentary, have been published previously in the semiannual periodical, *CCJU Perspective* and on the Center's website, www.ccju.org.

David L. Coppola, PhD
Associate Executive Director
Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding

Note

i. The *Education of Henry Adams.* (1907). Chapter 4, p. 20.
PART I

Setting a Context for Dialogue
PART II

What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Theological Traditions?
What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Theological Traditions?

On February 8–10, 2000, the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding (CCJU) of Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut, in cooperation with the Elijah School for the Study of Wisdom in World Religions, Jerusalem, sponsored a conference at the Ratisbonne Papal Institute, Jerusalem, entitled, "What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Theological Traditions?" Over 25 scholars from the Middle East, Europe, Canada and the United States were invited to participate at the proceedings with the additional attendance of graduate students from the Ratisbonne Papal Institute and Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Jerusalem, who joined as observers for each of the sessions spread over three days.

One evening of the conference featured a panel discussion on "The Significance of the Pope's Pilgrimage to the Holy Land for the Three Abrahamic Religions," followed by an interfaith concert, at the Museum of Islamic Art, Jerusalem. Participants on the panel included His Excellency, Archbishop Pietro Sambi, Apostolic Delegate to the Holy Land, Jerusalem; Rev. Dr. Remi Hoeckman, OP, executive secretary, Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, Vatican City; Rabbi Shear-Yashuv Hacohen, Chief Rabbi of Haifa; Mr. Daniel Rossing, former director of Ministry of Religious Affairs, Israel; Mr. Ibrahim Sarsur, leader of the Islamic Movement in Israel; and Sheik Abdul Aziz Bukhari, Sheik of the Naqshbandian Religious Method, Jerusalem. Over 250 people filled the Museum of Islamic Art to capacity, and several representatives
from the Israeli press attended. Most of the panel agreed that Pope John Paul II was a man of peace and his pilgrimage would be a positive sign that all people need to move beyond violence and hatred to peace, respect and prayer. Archbishop Sambi said, "The sign value of the papal pilgrimage to the Holy Land can renew our relationships with hope and healing." Several of the panel members said that the time was right to place more time and resources not only into furthering political interreligious dialogue but spiritual interreligious dialogue. One panelist suggested that all parties needed to do more listening and less speaking in order to advance the art and goal of mutual respect and love. These comments by the panelists followed less than a week after Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's widow, Leah Rabin, said in Rome, "When the Pope comes to Israel, we will be very enthusiastic and greatly honored. We consider him a great friend. . . . We do not want to deny anyone access to sacred places."

The format of the conference proper included presentations of papers by noted scholars with prepared responses, followed by discussion, critiques and suggestions by all of the participants. A number of themes emerged from the papers and proceedings and are presented briefly here.

LIST OF INVITED PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Asma Afsaruddin, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana

Rev. Dr. Franz Bouen, White Fathers, Jerusalem

Sheik Abdul Aziz Bukhari, Sheik of the Naqshabandian Religious Method, Jerusalem.

Dr. David Burrel, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana

His Eminence, Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy, Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, Vatican City State

Dr. Anthony J. Cernera, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut

Dr. David L. Coppola, Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut

Dr. Kahlid Deran, Bethesda, Maryland
Rabbi Joseph H. Ehrenkranz, Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut

Dr. Jamal J. Elias, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts

Dr. Alon Goshen-Gottstein, Elijah School, Jerusalem

Rev. Dr. Remi Hoeckman, OP, Commission of Religious Relations with the Jews, Vatican City State

Dr. Barry Levy, Professor, McGill University, Montreal

Reverend Michael McGarry, Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Jerusalem

Mr. Daniel Rossing, former director of Ministry of Religious Affairs, Israel

His Excellency, Archbishop Pietro Sambi, Apostolic Delegate to the Holy Land, Jerusalem

Mr. Ibrahim Sarsur, leader of the Islamic Movement in Israel

Reverend Thomas Stransky, Bethlehem

Mustafa Abu Sway, Al Quds University, Jerusalem

Rabbi Stanley Wagner, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado

Rabbi Shear-Yashuv Hacohen, Chief Rabbi of Haifa
What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Theological Traditions?

There is no single way to teach the theology of another religion, but there is a continuity of identity, religious practice, memory and history that allows for authentic dialogue. One challenge to teaching about another's theology is that religious thought is not an isolated set of abstract philosophical truth statements written by an individual. Rather, theology is based upon important, shared values, rooted in the community's ethical and liturgical relationship with God, and born of revelation and the historical lived faith experience of a community. Accordingly, there are layers of truth in theology that only an "insider" can adequately come to understand. Additionally, there are degrees of separation or otherness that are experienced in intrareligious dialogue which may be perceived as greater than in some interreligious dialogue groups.

Teaching about the other's theology requires that the teacher is attentive to the degrees of otherness and highlight the limitations as well as the possibilities to students for understanding in such a context. Further, there are several different layers of understanding, which do not require agreement or acceptance. These range from simple language or symbolic approximations, to analogy, to correspondence, to shared communal meanings, to "knowing" in an existential or intimate way—the latter meaning representing a more invested, committed understanding, tending more toward acceptance, precisely because it is only able to be consistently experienced by insiders. This consistent insider experience of faith is frequently understood on levels beyond one's theology and has
characteristics that are more visceral, artistic, relational and dialogical in
the contexts of familial and communal relationships or worship. The goal
of interreligious dialogue is for the sake of understanding which leads to
mutual respect, trust, harmony and peace.

Another consideration when teaching about the other's theological
tradition is taking into account the insights and limitations of a postmod-
ern worldview and the importance of being attentive and respectful when
using analogies or translating stories and categories across religious tradi-
tions. The historical contexts and cultural lenses in which these stories
are understood can vary greatly. It should be noted also that reading the
Scriptures as a believer or a skeptic has direct consequences on an ade-
quate understanding of the core of another's beliefs. Additionally, there
will necessarily be ideological and theological differences, which cannot
be ignored. Nonetheless, truth can be found in the midst of different and
sometimes contradictory convictions and realities. A common founda-
tional effort that all can work together toward is to restore the central
place of God in the world.

Jews, Christians and Muslims enter into dialogue because God has
chosen to speak with them and to be in relationship with them first.
One possible interreligious theological viewpoint could be to see the
Word of God from the perspective of a history of dialogue, a covenantal
relationship with a God who has chosen to communicate with a recep-
tive, historical community, and invites humans to live faithful and eth-
ical lives in community. Subsequently, Jews, Christians and Muslims
theologize because God has been revealed to them and they want to
interpret and share that message of peace, justice, unity, and compassion
with the present and future generations. Since God's revelation is heard
in many languages, people of faith have a responsibility to share the
truth, wisdom and mercy of God with each other so that all can faith-
fully follow God's will in all of its plurality of expression. That plurality
is expressed within and between each religion in multidimensional, mul-
ticontextual, and multivocal ways due to the influences of historical cir-
cumstances.

A promising theological starting point for teaching about the other is
seeing religious beliefs and teachings embodied in the lives of holy, just,
wise, or righteous people. Religions can have an important role in high-
lighting exemplary human beings especially by celebrating the wisdom
and ethical lives of believers. By remembering the sages, saints, prophets, and holy people, as well as what they said and did, the religion and theology of the other can be taught in a way that is theologically accurate and morally appropriate. In this process, opportunities for discovering parallel teachings between religions emerge as well as the implicit communication of the ongoing vitality of the other religion.

More study will need to be pursued in the areas of the intellectual traditions, scriptures, laws, ethics, and prayer and liturgy of each religion. The advantage of pursuing these areas of study together in dialogue is that each religious tradition continues to illuminate the other by its own reflections. In particular, those who are genuinely concerned with protecting the image of God and the love and wisdom of God found in the moral weave of relationships will make every effort to know and understand the other, in spite of the obstacles that normally would interfere with such a relationship.

Teaching what the other wants to be taught about him or her is a profound act of teshuva (an act of reconsideration and repentance for the past, and an invitation to transformation into a deeper relationship with self, others, and God). This teshuva can bring participants face-to-face in honor and equality into a communion (havurah and koinonia), a communion of spirit and heart. To study others with the intention of trying to teach authentically about them, is not only to understand and know them, but is also a process of self-discovery and of knowing God more intimately. One does not simply teach about the other, but specifically the other-in-faith, the other as a son or daughter of God. This joint reflection leads Jews, Christians and Muslims down God's path of healing.
PART III

What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Historical Traditions?
Although this volume began by presenting ideas to foster interreligious dialogue and cultivate theological exploration and collaboration, perhaps the most important first task at hand is for Jews, Christians, and Muslims to confront together their heartbreaking histories. To remember accurately is necessary in order to deal with the past and hope for the future. Unless people are willing to remember and understand the other's pain and seek to repair the world, there can be no dialogue for reconciliation or peace. In this sense, the 1998 Vatican document, We Remember, is accurate in saying, "there is no future without memory" (p. 6). However, remembrance is never neutral and recalls the choices, actions, and events from the past that are meaningful and essential for a community’s present identity and intended future destiny.

There is an astonishing amnesia on the part of some historians about the collective crimes of the last century, as if these crimes were normal and to be expected in the ordinary course of wars. Such unprecedented violence and cruelty leaves humanity with choices for peace or war, hope or despair, forgiveness or revenge, faith or doubt, and love or hate. A religious and moral memory is essential if Jews, Christians, and Muslims are to realistically shape a safe future. The human community cannot forget the mistakes of religions, nor can such historical memory be removed by improved political governments or rational arguments alone. Rather, intelligent, ethical, honest, and respectful efforts on the part of religious people will help to ensure that peace happens in the future through a
gradual building of trust and understanding through friendships and relationships that will allow healing and a new history to be established.

For these and other reasons, two conferences were sponsored on the topic, "What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Historical Traditions?" one in Edmonton, Canada, and the other in Bamberg, Germany. Selected papers from both of these conferences are included in this volume.

**The Conferences in Edmonton, Canada and Bamberg, Germany**

On March 19–21, 2000, the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding (CCJU) of Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut, in cooperation with the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action (EICEA) Alberta, Canada, sponsored a conference where Jews, Christians, and Muslims participated in a dialogue at Beth Shalom Synagogue. Over 20 scholars from Canada and the United States attended the proceedings with the additional attendance of graduate students from Alberta University and several hundred observers who joined each of the sessions spread over the three days. The conference included presentations by noted scholars with prepared responses, followed by discussion, critiques, and suggestions by all of the participants. Presentation included an examination of the place and tradition of history from the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faith traditions on "What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Historical Traditions?"

Before the conference formally began, a Harmony Brunch was held to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which the United Nations had designated for March 21, the day in 1966 when South Africa's Sharpeville Massacre occurred. Canadian Senator Douglas Roche, OC, and the president of the Canadian Multicultural Educational Foundation, Robinson Koilpillai, CM, were the guest speakers. They both challenged the audience to rise above prejudice and indifference and work to overcome systemic inequality in the world by seeking justice and working for peace, especially through local synagogues, churches and mosques. Later that evening, over 500 people gathered at Edmonton City Hall to participate at an interfaith prayer service to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial
Discrimination. Representatives from 15 religious traditions offered prayers in the forms of readings, song, dance, ringing of bells, lighting candles, and chants. At the conclusion of each prayer, the congregation said together, "We affirm this prayer, celebrate our diversity and may peace prevail on earth." The mayor of Edmonton, William Smith, praised the citizens for working together for social justice and being a model for celebrating religious diversity. He said, "The walls that divide us must come down. The understanding you are building through the arts, religion, culture, knowledge, and commerce will have a global impact."
LIST OF PRESENTERS, EDMONTON, CANADA

Rabbi Lindsey Bat Joseph, Temple Beth Ora, Edmonton
Dr. Jamal Badawi, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
Dr. David Coppola, Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University, Connecticut
Rabbi Joseph H. Ehrenkranz, Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University
Dr. Andrew Gos, University of Alberta, Edmonton
Dr. Adrian Leske, Concordia University College, Edmonton
Neil Loomer, Ritual Director, Beth Shalom Synagogue, Edmonton
Right Reverend Victoria Matthews, Anglican Bishop of Edmonton
Rev. Clint Mooney, St. Matthew's United Church, Calgary, Alberta
Mr. Hasan Nazarali, Al-Waez, Ismaili Muslim Community, Edmonton
Dr. Derek J. Penslar, Samuel Zacks Chair in Jewish History, University of Toronto
Dr. Saleem Qureshi, University of Alberta, Edmonton
Mr. Larry Shaben, president, Muslim Research Foundation, Edmonton
Dr. Leonard Swidler, Temple University, Philadelphia
The Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding also sponsored a second conference in cooperation with the University of Bamberg, Germany, on March 18–20, 2002, where Jews, Catholics and Lutherans participated in a dialogue at the University of Bamberg on the same topic. More than 30 scholars from Austria, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States attended the proceedings with the additional attendance of students from Bamberg University and dozens of observers who joined two of the sessions spread over the three days. The conference included presentations by distinguished scholars with prepared responses, followed by discussion, critiques and suggestions by all of the participants. Presentations included an examination of the place and tradition of history from the Jewish, Catholic, and Lutheran faith traditions on "What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Us?"

Bamberg, Germany, was chosen as the site of this conference because of the warmth and hospitality offered to the CCJU by the University of Bamberg community as well as Bamberg's varied and rich history. The city was founded in the Second Century CE, and in 1007, Bamberg became a bishopric, when the Emperor Heinrich II (973–1024) created an imperial residence. Of special interest to the organizers of the conference was the fact that many crusaders left from Bamberg to fight against Muslims in lands to the south and east, including Hungary and Austria, as well as the more infamous crusades to the Holy Land. Also, on the highest hill of the city is a large cathedral (built 1215–37) called the Dom. It contains both Romanesque and Gothic elements and is rich in sculptures and history. In particular, near the southeast end of the nave of the cathedral is a statue of two women depicting the "Church Triumphant" and the "Synagogue Defeated." A young, richly clad and beautiful woman represents the Christian Church, while a blindfolded, poorly dressed woman holding a broken rod symbolizes Judaism. Also, directly opposite is a statue of a beautiful young woman representing Mary, the mother of Jesus, and her cousin Elizabeth, the latter who is portrayed as a tired old woman. For medieval Christians, these two pair of women symbolized the triumph of the New Testament and Christianity over Judaism and the Old Testament and contributed to the notion that Christianity had superceded Judaism. Additionally, outside the Dom on
its north portal, near the majestic sculpture of the 12 Apostles, who are standing on the shoulders of the 12 Prophets, is a figure in a pointed cap (which in medieval art signified a Jew), with a devil pulling his ears. This derogatory depiction of what was then a contemporary Jew vividly illustrates the contradictory attitude of many Christians toward Judaism. On the one hand, Jews were seen as a devilish people who rejected the Church. On the other hand, Christians realized that the Church was founded on the Jewish religion, without which Christianity would be meaningless.

Until the Second World War, when practically every Jew was imprisoned or killed, the Jewish community in Bamberg had been one of the most flourishing and influential centers in Europe. Recently, a small and slowly growing Jewish community has begun to be formed as Jewish immigrants from Russia settle in the area. After learning of this city's mixed history and observing the concrete reminders of supercessionism, the conference topic, as well as the conference site was judged to be a significant sign of hope for the future of interreligious dialogue.

On one evening of the conference, an interfaith concert by the "Inspiration Choir" was performed for the conference participants and interested members of the town at the 13th century building, Renaissance Hall, which had been newly restored. The concert theme was "Meeting Jewish Music." Nearly all of the members of the group were Christian and had committed themselves to understanding Judaism better by learning and performing Jewish music. The group was chosen by the CCJU as an excellent match for the conference theme because it had dedicated itself to "teaching" about the other by learning and performing the other's music. The evening was filled with warmth and celebration and some of the conference participants also contributed their musical talents by singing and dancing.
LIST OF INVITED PARTICIPANTS, BAMBERG, GERMANY

Dr. Ulrich Bauer, University of Bamberg
Rabbi Gilles Bernheim, Chief Rabbi of Paris, France
Professor Dr. Klaus Bieberstein, University of Bamberg
Dr. David Coppola, Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University, Connecticut
Dr. Jon Gower Davies, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Great Britain
Rabbi Michael Dushinsky, Ostrava, Czech Republic
Rabbi Joseph H. Ehrenkranz, Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding, Connecticut
Mrs. Chriss Fiebig, Bamberg
Dr. Christoph Heil, University of Bamberg
Professor Dr. Alfred E. Hierold, Dean, School of Theology, University of Bamberg
Professor Dr. Paul Hoffmann, University of Bamberg
Professor Dr. Wolfgang Klausnitzer, University of Bamberg
Professor Dr. Wolfgang Kraus, University of Koblenz-Landau, Germany
Ludwig Krempl, Focolare Movement, Nürnberg, Germany
Professor Dr. Verena Lenzen, University of Luzern, Switzerland
Dr. Herbert Loebl, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Great Britain
Reverend Dr. Friedhelm Pieper, Martin Buber House, Heppenheim, Germany
Professor Dr. Martin Rothgangel, University of Weingarten, Germany
Professor Dr. Dr. Godehard Ruppert, President, University of Bamberg
Professor Dr. Hans-Joachim Sander, University of Salzburg, Austria
Invited Participants

Rabbi David Sandmel, Beth Tfiloh Community High School, Baltimore, Maryland
Mrs. Barbara Schmitz, University of Bamberg
Professor Dr. Walter Sparn, University of Erlangen, Germany
Rabbi Bonita Nathan Sussman, Staten Island Rabbinical Association, New York
Rabbi Gerald Sussman, New York Theological Seminary, New York
Professor Dr. Lothar Wehr, University of Bamberg
Professor Dr. Erich Zenger, University of Munster, Germany
For centuries, Jews, Christians and Muslims have mostly disputed. It is no small matter that they can even use the term conversation. They have a history, and it is God's presence that challenges them to show profound respect to one another. Jews, Christians, and Muslims all believe in a God who acts in history and communicates in history through events and people. The story of God's love gives breath, voice, and flesh to the bones of historical events and data. Similarly, God calls believers to discern the present signs of divine providence at work, as well as the ways in which the image of the Creator in humanity has been attacked and disfigured. By sharing what we want the other to teach about our history, we are making a covenant to trust and dialogue with each other.

As was discussed at the CCJU conference sponsored in Jerusalem on the topic of theology, the assumptions of modernity and postmodernity as well as the realities of diversity, pluralism, and relativism are important to understanding an accurate interpretation of history from the contexts of an insider's religious identity, theology, spirituality, aesthetics, and liturgy. The language of history describes important relationships and values for the community in a particular context and representation. The acceptance of many of the views of modernity and its growth in democratic societies has opened the doors for interreligious dialogue that can be based on human rights and mutual respect. Jews, Christians, and Muslims are uniquely positioned for dialogue because of recent reexaminations of each religion's identity in history, such as the Crusades, Inquisition, teachings
of contempt toward the other, and the Shoah. On the other hand, by employing a historical critical method in interpreting faith and religion, one could run the risk of reducing memory and the important ethical insights and wisdom essential to a religious identity to mere historical coincidences.

It is difficult to know whether teachers of the other should emphasize more the teaching of the history of each religion or the history of particular Jews, Christians, or Muslims. Perhaps for children, religious history is best understood through the lives of holy people and how those people added to the presence and understanding of that community's identity and faith. For adults, historians and teachers of the other can act as witnesses to the truth of life as well as for those who have lived a good life following God. Time and space are the paths where God walks and is revealed to all. It is essential for the health and integrity of a faith community to remember and teach about the past in an adequate and respectful way. To remember the past means that adults challenge young people to recognize their part in history, especially their participation in prejudice or discrimination against others. It is also the time to recognize the tendency to fear and mistrust that which they do not understand. Racism, sexism, ageism are still present because of what people say and do, and because of what they do not say and do. An honest examination of conscience is appropriate because the God of History is involved in the events of every human life. This connection of all life to God in history reminds humanity to "reeee," that is, respect, that all peoples are related and have dignity. Remembrance is never neutral and recalls the choices, actions and events from the past that are meaningful and essential for one's present identity and future destiny.

An important aspect to remember when teaching about the other's history is that religious history has not always been historical, at least from a scientific definition based on verifiable evidence and facts. It seems true that one's relationship with a particular religious history is just as important as the history itself since religious history has to do more with the ethical interaction of people and how they respond in justice and compassion to God's call. Thomas Cahill in the 1998 book, The Gifts of the Jews, has wrestled with the idea of expanding the notion of history beyond the simple repeating of facts. Cahill writes, "We normally think of history as one catastrophe after another, war followed by war, outrage
by outrage—almost as if history were nothing more than all the narratives of human pain, assembled in sequences. And surely this is, often enough, an adequate description. But history is also the narratives of grace, the recounting of those blessed and inexplicable moments when someone did something for someone else, saved a life, bestowed a gift, gave something beyond what was required by circumstance" (p. iii).

Religious history of the other is best taught by a model where the other is present and one that is grounded on its own internal affirmations and memory of experiences with God, others, and the world. Such assertions and the contexts and interpretations related to them need to be explained by an insider and compared to interpretations of those from outside the community. In such a process, the histories of all three religions will be broadened and understood through the eyes of the other and will take on deeper significance in the task of repairing the world for each. By honestly teaching about one's own history and the history of the other, it is clear that that religion can be a positive force that can foster unity, a reality that has been achieved too infrequently. Nonetheless, the past can be overcome by the good deeds of the present.
Berlin
5 February 2002
The Federal President
Johannes Rau

Message of Greeting to the International Symposium
"What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Historical Traditions?"
of the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University
and the University of Bamberg
Bamberg, 18–20 March 2002

What do we want others to teach about our historical traditions? That is a
difficult but also an extremely important question. We can only find the right
answers if we ourselves have a clear image of our history and an idea of how
others see us and how we see others.

In history few things have a greater influence than traditions which have
grown over centuries. However, it is also true that in history there are aber-
rations and betrayals which cannot be predicted and which are very difficult
to understand in retrospect, if they can be understood at all.

One can, indeed must, say here in Germany that the Holocaust was such
a brutal betrayal. It was a complete breakdown in civilization. We must keep
the memory of the Shoah alive. But it would be a mistake to regard the
Holocaust as the sum total of German-Jewish history or the sum total of
Jewish-Christian relations. We also want others to pass on the Holocaust as
part of our history. However, we would also like our history before the
Holocaust to be told. Only if Christians and Jews discuss their history in its
entirety and not just parts of it will they have a common future. For this rea-
son, too, meetings such as yours in which we examine our own Jewish and our
own Lutheran and Catholic traditions are so important.

I wish you fruitful talks and encounters in Bamberg which will cause you
to look back with gratitude and to look forward with hope.
I would like to extend a warm welcome to you, both personally and on behalf of the Otto-Friedrich University of Bamberg. We are very pleased that the invitation to this international conference has met with such a good response and that it has brought such illustrious guests to our alma mater; such a fact alone gives rise to encouragement.

After the events of September 11, 2001, little in the realm of international and interreligious relationships is simply the way it was. As representatives of the German universities, we can only react with horror that some of perpetrators involved in this terrible act were graduates from German universities. On the other hand, we must make clear that the university needs to maintain an international character. Academia is, per se, international, and wherever it confines itself to national borders it endangers its ability to produce authentic scholarship. In my opinion, universities have to act as role models for society in the coexistence of people of different origins and different faiths. We have to demonstrate in our daily contact and in our working together with others that this coexistence actually works. In these times, it is more important than ever that German and foreign members of our university should not allow themselves to be divided. I must admit that I am proud of our record in maintaining this international character. The University of Bamberg ranks at the top of the German universities in terms of the percentage of its students who complete part of their studies abroad—a third of our students do so at present.

It also is part of my duty here today to impart some information about Bamberg and the area of Franconia. This campus and area offers an excellent framework for the topic of this conference due to the fact that numerous examples of coexistence from its history are apparent. For example, this is the town that benefited from the most important Jewish community in the whole of southern Germany. It was also famous in the 17th and 18th centuries for its Hebrew printers and its Talmud school and thus served as an example for the peaceful cohabitation of Catholics, Protestants and Jews. The National Socialist regime forced the closure of the university in 1939. The teaching of theology and philosophy began again in October 1945, but teaching was also carried out in the fields of law, political science and the natural sciences, not least because other university towns and cities in Bavaria had more serious
effects of the war to deal with than Bamberg did. In our present day, the Jewish Museum in Schnaittach, founded in 1990, has the most important collection of artifacts from Jewish culture in the rural areas of southern Germany.

The University and its surroundings offer historical advantages and contemporary opportunities. In this era of globalization, we experience the strengthening of regions as a side effect of the ongoing globalization shaped by the economy and politics. This development points out the necessity of knowing the roots and traditions of the respective other party. Similarly, the Otto-Friedrich University of Bamberg represents both aspects in its present range of courses in teaching and research: research on ethnic and cultural studies of the regions and participation in the intercultural and interreligious dialogue, as well as in the international dialogue in the economic and social sciences.

I have often told students at the start of their studies that I hope they realize that stadium in its range of meanings does not only mean "eagerness." In my opinion, one's studies should be a dialectical relationship of effort as well as leisure with friends. Bamberg offers the best conditions for both. I hope that you will experience something of this and that and wish you a successful and pleasant conference in Bamberg and at our university.
PART IV

What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Prayer and Liturgy?
What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Prayer and Liturgy?

Conference in Rome, Italy

On March 13–15, 2002, the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding (CCJU) of Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut, sponsored a conference at the Dionesian Center at Villa Piccolomini, Rome, entitled, "What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Prayer and Liturgy?" The conference began with remarks by Dr. Anthony J. Cernera, president of Sacred Heart University, and Rabbi Joseph H. Ehrenkranz, executive director of the CCJU. Rabbi Reuven Kimelman, professor of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts; Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, Archbishop of Milan; and Sheikh Professor Abdul Hadi Palazzi of the Cultural Institute of the Italian Islamic Community, Rome, presented papers to an audience of more than 200 people. Papers included philosophical, theological, and liturgical considerations from the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith traditions on "What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Prayer and Liturgy?" At the end of the lectures, each presenter was given the opportunity to respond to questions.

The format for the following day of the conference included responses to the papers by noted scholars followed by discussion, critiques and suggestions by a group of 30 scholars and participants from Europe and the United States. Graduate students from several universities in Rome,
as well as representatives from the Sisters of Sion and the Focolare Movement joined for each of the sessions.

On one evening of the conference, the film, Desperate Hours, directed by Victoria Barrett, was shown. About 40 people joined the conference participants at the Villa Piccolomini, and several representatives from the Italian press attended. The film documented how the government and the people of Turkey helped to save the lives of European Jews by giving them citizenship papers as well as places to resettle during World War II. At a public reception that followed, Dr. Coppola facilitated a discussion that lasted two hours.

LIST OF INVITED PARTICIPANTS

Rabbi Tsvi Blanchard, Director of Organizational Development, CLAL, New York
Professor Giovanni Bonsanti, Esq., Office for Islam, Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre
Dr. Anthony J. Cernera, Sacred Heart University, Connecticut
Dr. David L. Coppola, Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University, Connecticut
Khadija Rosaria De Maria, Council of Muslim Women, Italian Muslim Association, Rome
Mrs. Istina Di Corte, Focolare Movement, Rome
Rabbi Dr. Riccardo DiSegni, Chief Rabbi of Rome
Rabbi Joseph H. Ehrenkranz, Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University, Connecticut
Rev. Dr. Joseph Farias, Drew University, New Jersey
Avv. Guglielmo Guerra, Italian Muslim Association, Rome
Sheikh Dr. Ali M. Hussen, Italian Muslim Association, Rome
Kalim Karim Hussien, Federation of Muslim Students, Italian Muslim Association, Rome
Cardinal Walter Kasper, Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, Vatican City

Farid Naimi Khan, Italy-Afghanistan Fellowship, Counselor for Asia, Italian Muslim Association, Rome

Rabbi Dr. Reuven Kimelman, Brandeis University, Massachusetts

Rabbi Joseph Laras, Chief Rabbi of Milan

Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, Archbishop of Milan

Marzuk Marzio Mostarda, Italian Muslim Association, Office for Islam Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre

Sheikh Professor Abdul Hadi Palazzi, Cultural Institute of the Italian Islamic Community, Rome

Dr. Margaret Palliser, OP, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut

Lisa Palmieri-Billig, Anti-Defamation League, Italy, Rome

Rev. Dr. Charles Parr, Catholic University, Washington, DC

Rabbi Abraham Piattelli, Rabbi of the Great Synagogue, Rome

Dr. Ombretta Pisano, Sidic Center, Rome

Rabbi David Rosen, International Council of Christians and Jews, Jerusalem

Lucy Thorson, NDS, Sister of Sion, Rome

Mechthild Vahle, NDS, Superior General, Sisters of Sion, Rome
Introduction to Part IV

What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Prayer and Liturgy?

To understand the prayer life of a vibrant religious tradition, one would have to read about, experience, and understand the two narratives of public prayer and individual spirituality. Of all the topics in this volume, prayer and liturgy is the most difficult to understand and to teach about the other. This difficulty is not due to an unwillingness on the part of believers to share prayer or to pray for each other, nor is it that Judaism, Christianity, or Islam practices incomprehensible, esoteric rituals. Rather, the experience and reality of prayer and liturgy is only completely known by the "insiders," those who know and believe what they are praying from an intellectual, emotional, cultural, and moral perspective. These complex and beautiful layers of encounter with God individually and in community impel people to choose with whom they share their lives and what direction their lives take. The papers that follow in this section are helpful for setting the stage for further exploration into the mystery of prayer, but much more joint study needs to be pursued in the areas of prayer and liturgy, aesthetics and the Scriptures of each religion. Several additional themes emerged from the conference.

First, in one sense, prayer and liturgy are a conversation, a relationship and relating of God's people to God, the world and others. This conversation asks about and reflects an individual's and a community's destiny and meaning in response to God's revelation. Participants during the conference on prayer and liturgy critically examined how ideologies have separated us from seeing the other as someone who conscientiously prays
with God. In the past, by acting as if God did not listen to the prayers of the other, or was only focused on one particular group, this has diminished a fuller experience of the presence of God's apprehension in every worshipping community. Instead of worshipping God as the One who is above all, the effect of claiming God exclusively for one community's prayer has had the unfortunate result of seeking to domesticate and control God and God's capacity for revelation.

Second, in addition to inspiring faith, liturgical symbols can also prevent us from praying more deeply, especially if those symbols evoke feelings and actions that are immoral, such as anger, prejudice, haughtiness and violence. The cross, for example, is a paradox and a stumbling block to some, as well as the central symbol to inspire prayer in others. One participant said, "Symbols, images, art, music, beauty, are beyond the rational. They are visceral and are lodged in our marrow." The worship setting and the liturgical context of symbols are powerful remedies to counter the secular abuses of religious symbols throughout history and at present. Also, it was noted that the placement of a building within a community as well as its specific architecture are symbols that speak to the hearts of believers. The participants agreed that prayer is fostered through a building's attention to sanctuary, holiness, reflection, community, hospitality, liturgical movement, pilgrimage, beauty, transcendence, light, and educational elements (statues, stained glass, inscriptions etc.). However, it was also pointed out that historical circumstances have led to many places of worship being built as fortresses and overbearing monuments to particular leaders. Such symbols remain, but contemporary religious symbolic communication to the community has the opportunity for a renaissance. For example, when a religious community builds a house of prayer in conversation with the other religions of a city, rather than proceeding with the intention of "outdoing" or overwhelming the other houses of prayer, then all will benefit from such cooperation.

Third, the Shema Israel: "Hear O Israel: the Lord our God is one, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:4-5), can be a starting point for prayer. This prayer helps the person in prayer to focus on the proper relationship of humans to God in a God-human partnership to repair and perfect this world. The Abrahamic faiths all believe in the oneness of God and God's desire for unity and peace among all people.
Such belief has potential for praying for each other as well as coming together to pray.

Fourth, Catholics need to pay attention to the visceral impact of liturgy on Christian formation, especially since the Mass is the context in which most Catholics are able to engage their faith tradition most regularly. Christians have often asserted the dictum lex orandi, lex credendi. However, it is also important to remember that the Church's lex credendi (rule of belief) may require changes in the lex orandi (rule of prayer), especially as Christians have come to understand their relationship with others and God more deeply. This is particularly important in the growth of the Church's relationship with the Jewish people, which was articulated in the corrective and reformatory efforts of the 1965 Vatican II document, Nostra Aetate. The document calls Christians to celebrate their "intrinsic bond" with the people and faith of Judaism and their respect for Muslims. "Sounding the depths of the mystery" that is rooted in these "spiritual ties," Nostra Aetate (# 4 ) suggested that Catholics revisit their liturgy in this new light. Some of the Catholic participants noted that it was probably a fair criticism that Catholic liturgical documents are slow in coming to reflect this deeper understanding of the Catholic-Jewish relationship. Without adequate catechesis in the Catholic community, for example, the traditional "Reproaches" employed in some Good Friday services, the "O Antiphons," some liturgical hymns, as well as the liturgical usage of polemical New Testament texts, such as Matthew 27:25 or the Apostolic speeches in the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, may be construed as a denigration or supersession of the Jewish people. While acknowledging the differences in the leadership structure of Catholics from Jews and Muslims, the participants of the conference agreed that it would be of great value to furthering the dialogue process if additional efforts, suggestions and encouragement also came from Jewish and Muslim faith communities.

Fifth, several people raised the importance of each person's being nourished in his or her own community of faith. When or if guests join a congregation to pray together, it is not appropriate to tinker with that faith community's integrity and traditional worship by watering it down. Certainly one's sensitivity is heightened and an authentic sense of hospitality is rightfully extended but the presence of the other serves as an
invitation to be authentic in one's worship of God. When we are secure in our commitments, we can be open to those of other faiths. For example, at the start of the World Day of Prayer for Peace at Assisi in October 1986, Pope John Paul II said that he was "a believer in Jesus Christ and in the Catholic Church, the first witness of faith in Him, but... it is in fact, my faith conviction which has made me turn to you."

Sixth, one participant said that there is a rich Christian liturgical heritage that needs to be cautious about misappropriating Jewish celebrations or creating syncretistic rituals. This is especially difficult for Christians who grew out of a Jewish milieu and Jewish prayer tradition. The challenge remains for Christians and Jews to neither cloud their differences nor overreact by objectifying each other by placing the other on pedestals. At the same time, numerous points of connection between Jews, Christians, and Muslims were raised, particularly with regard to prayer, piety, fasting, wisdom, the unknowable mystery of God, and prophecy as a gift. Also, liturgical expressions that are common to all cultures and religions—processions, preaching, times of silence, chanting, music, art, gestures and body movements, liturgical vestments, liturgical environment, incense, light, dance, bells—have different meanings depending on the context of the prayer, but they are all "dialects" in the human vocabulary used to worship God that may be shared.

Seventh, the three Abrahamic traditions share a substantial common Scripture. In Judaism and in Islam, the Word of God is primarily revealed in the Torah and the Qur'an, while in Christianity that same Word is understood in the person of Jesus Christ. There is the natural predilection towards the metaphysical when explaining the Word, whether as eternal, preexistent ruah, dabar, Wisdom, prophecy, or the Word made flesh, or the Word made Book. These understandings surface the need for a more textured theory of revelation in relationship to the ways we teach about each other's prayer and liturgy. In particular, interreligious dialogue might uncover more points of concurrence by focusing on the response of the faith community in prayer and social justice, more than on the Word, per se. This proper response to God of the community could, in turn, lead to deeper prayer and enlivened liturgy.

Eighth, a further opportunity for study and prayer is the cooperative exploration of a more extensive interreligious theology of one's life as a journey or pilgrimage of prayer. The conference participants noted that
prayer and pilgrimage are enduring themes for all three faith traditions and a common theological backdrop and religious experience leading to God. At Jerusalem, Rome, Mecca, and many other destinations, one leaves his or her place of security, journeys to a sacred place, despite danger and risk, and experiences a feeling of equality with other pilgrims. The pilgrim comes before God's presence in a new way and performs a sacred duty or celebration that transforms him or her. It was noted by the participants at the conference that Psalms 120–134 are hymns of pilgrims walking up to Jerusalem where they were greeted by the residents, "Blessed are you who come in the name of the Lord!" It was also suggested that Torah is a pilgrimage, belief is a pilgrimage. For the Christian participants, pilgrimage is also a model for life and the Christian journey focused on Jesus. Prayer and contemplation is a pilgrimage towards God, whether God's Holy Mountain, or internal Seven-Storey Mountains, or the journey of prayer that one may take on one's prayer carpet. Finally, it was pointed out by one of the participants that for many people, pilgrimage becomes real in their witness of social justice and serves as a remedy for exaggerated, overspiritualized faith.

Ninth, one participant reminded the group that it was God's presence that challenges all religions to show profound respect to one another. As such, God's presence challenges us to seek further understanding on many important questions that still remain. Examples include: Does the wideness of God's mercy call into question our own narrowness? Because the Abrahamic faiths take history seriously, there are often strong connections between culture, faith, and civilization. Can we begin to eliminate the elements of supersessionism in our prayers and liturgies while remaining faithful to our beliefs? Can prayer unite us? How many ways are there to the One and only God? Does God distinguish between our prayers? Is there still a place in our faith traditions for prophetic prayer? Is there a unity that transcends our particularity that can be expressed in prayer and liturgy? Do we gather together and pray, or gather to pray together? Whatever we decide in our local and universal faith communities, have we forgotten in our newness of this relating, the time and place for silence and contemplation together? Can we allow time to reflect, to be quiet, to listen to inspired readings, to sing?

Finally, it is clear that individual prayer is a necessary preparation for authentic dialogue and study to take place, especially if one's prayers are
fundamental individual and communal processes that remember and cele-
brate who an individual is and who we are called to be as people of faith. As such, prayer is about responsible relationships. Through prayer and meditation, we open ourselves to God and each other. Prayer and meditation help to bring to the surface transcendental values, which can inspire ethical action for justice and peace that counters materialism and disrespect for life. Prayer leads us to recognize the other as an equal, perhaps even a sibling. In short, there is a divine dimension to the dialogue process and if entered with reverence and respect, dialogue can be a sacred encounter pleasing to God.
PART V

What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Ethical Traditions?
What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Ethical Traditions?

The Conference

The Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding (CCJU) of Sacred Heart University sponsored a symposium March 31–April 2, 2003, at Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut. The conference, "What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Ethical Traditions?" is part of CCJU's ongoing work to promote dialogue and understanding. This was the final of five conferences with Jews, Christians and Muslims focusing on the topic, "What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Us?" Forty scholars and religious leaders agreed to participate in this symposium. Papers were presented, after which there were prepared responses and general discussion by all of the participants. Presenters included Rabbi Eugene Korn, Rabbi Barry R. Friedman, Dr. John Elias, Dr. Brian Stiltner, Dr. Asad Husain, Dr. Mohammad A. Siddiqi, and Imam Dr. Kareem Adeeb. In addition to the participants, several faculty, staff, and students from Sacred Heart University attended one or several of the sessions.

In addition to the sessions led by the scholars and religious leaders, there were two events that were also open to the public. First, Rabbi Tsvi Blanchard, Director of Organizational Development at the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership (CLAL), New York, spoke about the necessity and importance of interreligious dialogue. His lecture was followed by a reception in the lobby of the Pitt Center where a
cultural exhibit, "World Religions, Universal Peace, Global Ethic," was being featured. The exhibition invited the viewer to explore the spectrum of world religions to have a better understanding of the importance of their ethical messages for present-day society. With the help of short text panels, quotations, photographs and other illustrations, the exhibition introduced principles for a global ethic through which world religions could better understand each other and bring them closer together.

On Tuesday, April 1, the Fairfield County Jewish Chorale of Fairfield, Connecticut, offered a moving performance of religious music that was followed by a rousing concert by the Newark Boys Chorus. The Newark Boys Chorus School, founded in 1969, is a private school located in Newark, New Jersey. Known as Newark's "Musical Ambassadors," the Chorus has been heard throughout the world and its interreligious message rang clear and true that evening.

LIST OF INVITED PARTICIPANTS

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Dr. Adena Berkowitz, New York

Rabbi Tsvi Blanchard, National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership (CLAL), New York

Dr. John Clabeaux, St. John's Seminary College, Massachusetts

Dr. David L. Coppola, Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University, Connecticut

Rabbi Joseph H. Ehrenkranz, Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University, Connecticut

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What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Ethical Traditions?

Most people seem to be able to agree broadly about what the good society would be, what the good life in that society would be, and what it would mean to be a good person. Certainly, there are intra- and interreligious disagreements on some levels, but strong consensus is found among religious and nonreligious people that humans share "common sense" conceptions of morality based on some form of the golden rule. For Jews, Christians, and Muslims, shared ethical themes include the invitation to love God and neighbor, to act with justice toward others, to follow God's commandments, and to be responsible stewards of creation, among others. For those who have embraced the Noahide Laws and Mosaic covenant, the cry of the other cannot go unheeded, which makes the pursuit of justice in this world crucial. The ethical revolution by the Abrahamic faiths in defense of the weak, poor, widow, orphan, and stranger has changed the face of human history and the way history is contextualized, told, and judged.

Although Jewish, Christian, and Muslim ethics developed out of common foundational experiences of revelation from God who invited humans into covenantal living (ethical monotheism), each has its unique history of development of ethical traditions, as well as distinct methodologies and prioritizing of authoritative sources employed in ethical decision-making and action. Even the universal religious command to love one's neighbor or brother, for example, would have different nuances,
understandings, and narrative expressions in each religious tradition that cannot be immediately and simplistically equated.

Jews, Christians, and Muslims communicate ethical traditions because God has chosen to be in relationship with them and such a relationship by its very nature requires an appropriate response. Over time, as this covenantal relationship developed, the responses of communities have taken on a classic and normative status that allows future generations to deepen and expand its relationship and identity. It would seem, for example, that ethical reflection, dialogue, and the common pursuit of social justice are all shared elements of a fundamental and necessary process that illustrates who each person is in relationship to his or her community of faith as well as the community itself. How one acts, communicates, thinks, and feels is the substance of personal identity. For the individual believer to respond to God's invitation and say, "Here I am," is to stand in line with Abraham, Moses, and the many prophets who helped to shape a common ethic from which Judaism, Christianity, and Islam drew inspiration and guidance. In a sense, this response is an act of conscience and is a process of consciousness of one's identity and unlimited value in the eyes of God. Similarly, ethics and morality are inextricably interwoven in a community's conceptualization of its identity and the recognition of the sanctity of human life as the starting point of ethics.

Religious identity that is based on notions of the good society and the moral person in relationship with God is often expressed in terms of law. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam acknowledge the need for law in common, but also see the need to remain faithful and consistent to their own revelations and convictions. At the core of law and the religious values contained in law is that community is a place where virtuous lives can be lived; and there are those who are chosen to speak for the community as leaders and authoritative voices of interpretation. Laws help to put into service a normative ethic that supplies the values or standards by which persons are to live their lives while balancing freedom, responsibility, right judgment, choice, growth, justice, and mercy.

At the ultimate conclusions of each religion, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam assert truth claims that are mutually exclusive. And yet, if each community refrains from triumphal expressions about its witness of the truth, then other cooperative efforts can be pursued together, especially on the level of ethics and social justice, working together for peace and
justice. Jews, Christians, and Muslims can learn to respect each other in principle based on their common recognition of one supreme God who calls them to ethical living in covenantal community.

In our time, there are many moral issues that affect millions of people, such as hunger, disease, homelessness, injustice, lawlessness, discrimination, and oppression. However, probably the most important ethical issue, inasmuch as its negative effects are exponential, is the issue of war and its use to initiate or resolve conflicts. The complexities of historical and cultural circumstances, the struggles against military oppression, and the ambiguities of wars for national liberation or proposed manifest destiny have significantly increased the urgency of interreligious dialogue for the sake of peace. Although each tradition promotes peace as a primary ideal ethic, and the scope of influence for each tradition has been unequal, each has been involved in violence and wars and has sought to find a rationale for an ethical or just war, usually in the context of self-defense or of defending the weak. Many pacifists contend that, in a nuclear age, it is impossible to meet the conditions for a just war. For an in-depth treatment of strategies to achieve peace through interreligious dialogue see Religion and Violence, Religion and Peace (2000), and Religion, Violence, and Peace: Continuing Conversations and Study Guide (2004), both published by Sacred Heart University Press.

Finally, Jews, Christians, and Muslims are immersed in secular cultures that idolize the secular. Such cultures have the effect of nullifying values or preferences of truth claims in the public forum. In response to secularism, members of each faith tradition need to develop together appropriate theological, philosophical, humanistic, and political ethics that advance the common good in ways that do not exclude the other traditions and maintain the distinctiveness of its own.
INDEX

Abraham, 82, 89, 134, 235, 336, 348–349, 402
Abrahamic faith, 81–95, 177–179, 235–237
Abu Bakr, 393
Adams, Henry Brooks, xv
Adeeb, Kareem, 323
Agudat Yisra’el, 146
Akiva, Rabbi, 334
Alma University, 114
al-Ghazali, 95, 304
al Hallaj, Husayn b. Mansur, 312
al-Jurayri, Abu Muhammad, 310
Alliance Israelite Universelle, 145
Al-Munqidh min-al-Dalal. See Rescuer from Error
al-Rudhbari, Abu’ Ali, 311
American Jewish Committee, 20, 145
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 146
Amichai, Yehuda, 148
Amidah, 268–269
Anawati, Georges C., 92
Angelicum Colloquium, 10–11
Ansari, Abdul Haqi, 393–394, 401
apologetics, 68–74
Apostle’s Creed, 292
Aquinas, Thomas, 95, 357, 377
Arinze, Francis, 8
Aristotle, 357
Arnaldez, Roger, 92
Ashkenazic Jews, 140–142
Asmara, Ethiopia, 153
as-Shafi‘i, Imam Muhammad Ibn Idris, 303
Auschwitz, 143, 153
Bamberg, Germany, xiii, 117–118
Barrett, Victoria, 250
Barth, Karl, 207, 368
The Beatitudes, 288
Beekun, Rafiq, 402
Bellah, Robert, 370–371
Berdyaev, Nicholas, 374
Bernardin, Joseph, 20, 24
Bernard of Clairvaux, 92
Bet Jalla Latin Patriarchate Seminary, 57
Bible, interpretation of, 203–204
Biblical Realism, 367
bin al Qassab, Muhammad, 310
Blanchard, Tsvi, 323, 386
body and soul, 259–262
Bor, Yugoslavia, 153
Bosnia, 99
Brandeis University, 249
Buddhism, 23, 177, 179, 234
Bukhari, Abdul Aziz, 47
Bultmann, Rudolph, 369
Burrell, David, 92
Bustami, Bayazid, 310
Cahill, Thomas, 122–123
Calvin, John, 365
Canadian Multicultural Educational Foundation, 114
Cassidy, Edward, 5–6
Catechism of the Catholic Church, 279
Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding (CCJU), xiii, 10, 38, 47, 114, 117, 151, 249, 323, 347
Cemera, Anthony J., 248
Charlemagne, 139
Cheever, John, 374
Chenu, Marie-Dominique, 185
Chesterston, Gilbert Keith, 364
Index

Christianity, 4, 225–226, 235–237
dialogue, interfaith, xiv–xv, 341, 402403
ethical traditions, 353–389
Diaspora, 132, 148–149
historical traditions, 167–181
dignitetis Hgunanee. See "Declaration on
prayer and liturgy, 285–295
Religious Liberty"
theological traditions, 81–95
divine ounty, 31–31
Christianity in Jewish Terms, 161
Divino Afflante Spiritu, 185, 203
Christian Realism, 369–371
Dogmatic Constitution on Divine
Christology, 171–173, 223–224
Revelation (Dei Verbum), 3, 203
Chrysostom, St. John, 374
dogmatic Constitution on the Church
"The Church in the Modern World"
(Gaudium et Spes), 175, 186, 187–188
(Cumen Gentium), 29, 186–187, 195
Cicero, Marcus Tullius, 357, 374
Dray, Abdullah, 401
cicero, bernard, 331
cicero, thomas, 369
cicero, with, 386–387
CLAL. See National Jewish Center for
cloning, 386–387
Learning and Leadership
Cohen, Herman, 338
colonialism, 98–99
Commission for Religious Relations with
competition, moving away from, 13–16
the Jews, 47
congar, yves, 185
Conservative Jews, 145
council of the reformed Churches, 214
criticism, 68–74
Cyril of Alexandria, 83–84
crusades, 89, 91–92, 98–99, 139, 141
divine unicity, 31–31
Cyprian, 91
diuino Afflante Spiritu, 185, 203
cyriil of alexandria, 83–84
Cultural Institute of the Italian Islamic
"Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on
Community, 249
Christians and Christianity," 159, 165, 225
cyril of alexandria, 83–84
Dante, 98
diaspora, 132, 148–149
darwin, 185
dkiye, michael, 159–162
dawwani, 401
dworkin, ronald, 69
day of pardon, 198
dworkin, ronald, 69
dead sea scrolls, 65, 66, 162
Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education
'declaration on Religious Liberty" and Action (EICEA), 114
(dignitetis Hgunanee), 175, 198
Ehrenkranz, Joseph, 38, 151, 249, 347, 354
Council of the Reformed Churches, 214
Ethics, 354–357, 372–376
criticism, 68–74
Ehrenkranz, Joseph, 38, 151, 249, 347, 354
council of the reformed Churches, 214
Enlightenment, 14–15, 190
Cyril of Alexandria, 83–84
Cultural Institute of the Italian Islamic
Community, 249
Cyprian, 91
cyriil of alexandria, 83–84
Christian perspective, 353–389
duality, requirement for peace, 3940
ethics, 354–357, 372–376
Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education
and Action (EICEA), 114
EICEA. See Edmonton Interfaith Centre
eight, 68–74
Enlightenment, 14–15, 190
Cultural Institute of the Italian Islamic
Community, 249
cyprian, 91
cyriil of alexandria, 83–84
'Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on
Christians and Christianity," 159, 165, 225
dante, 98
darwin, 185
dawwani, 401
day of pardon, 198
'declaration on Religious Liberty"
German Protestant Church Congress, 215
Germany, 140, 141
Ghazzali, Iman, 309
The Gifts of the Jews (Cahill), 122
Gladden, William, 369
God, 30-31, 33, 262-267, 285-287
Graetz, Heinrich, 145
Greenberg, Irving, 5, 24
Guide for the Perplexed (Maimonides), 66, 162
Guidelines, xiv
Guroian, Vigen, 372, 375
Gustafson, James, 356, 366
Haacker, Klaus, 209–210
Hacohen, Shear-Yashuv, 47
hadith, 309, 311, 313, 314, 400, 401
haggadah, 89
The Hail Mary, 291–292
halacha, 66–67
Halevi, Yehuda, 66
ha-Nagid, Shmuel, 140–141
Harakas, Stanley Samuel, 372, 373–375, 378
Haring, Bernard, 363
Hasidic thought, 61, 131, 142, 275–276
Hasidic Zaddik, 61–62
Haskalah. See Jewish Enlightenment
Hasmoneans, 135
Hauerwas, Stanley, 368
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 159
Heinrich II, 117
Hindus, 37, 177, 179, 234
historical traditions, 111–126
  Catholic perspective, 203–207
  Christian perspective, 167–230
  Islamic perspective, 231–241
  Jewish perspective, 127–165, 209–230
History of the Jews (Graetz), 145
Hodgson, Marshall, 129
Hoeckman, Remi, 47
Holocaust, 128, 140, 142–144, 147, 148–149, 210–211
"The Holocaust as a Date in the History of Theology" (Haacker), 209
Howe, Ruei L., xiv
Hromádka, Josef, 223
human rights and plurality of religions, 198–199
Hunter, James Davison, 385
Husain, Asad, 323
icons, 375–376
I j m., 394
Imago Dei. See Tzelem Elohim
Inferno (Dante), 93
Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies, 159
interfaith dialogue, moral imperative to, 13–28
International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 114–115
International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, 7
"The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church." 203
interreligious dialogue. See dialogue, interfaith
Isaac, 89, 134, 402
Ishmael, 402
Islam. See also Muslim
  ethical traditions, 391–404
  historical traditions, 231–241
  prayer and liturgy, 297–315
  theological traditions, 97–107
Islamic Movement in Israel, 47
Israel, 37, 66, 132–137, 146–147, 155, 222–223, 331
Iwand, Hans Joachim, 223
Izutsu, Toshihiko, 401
Jacob, 89, 134, 135, 402
Jerusalem, xiii, 47–49
Jesus, 32, 40, 83, 89, 189–194, 280, 285, 287–290, 356. See also Eucharist; Yeshua of Nazareth
Jewish Colonization Association, 146
Jewish Enlightenment, 145
Jews, 6344, 219–222
jihad, 240–241
John of Damacus, 375
John of Segovia, 92
John Paul II, xvi, 5, 6, 8, 10–11, 37–38, 4041, 48, 198, 356, 361, 363, 377, 388
John XXIII, 3940, 41, 175, 196, 377
Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, 207

Judaism

ethical traditions, 331–351
prayer and liturgy, 259–278
theological traditions, 55–80

Jung, Carl, 88

justice, requirement for peace, 3940

Kabbala, 61, 78
Kant, Immanuel, 23, 393
Karaism, 131
Kavannah, 272
Keeler, William, 347
Kemal, Mustafa, 299
Kennedy, John F., 174
kerygma, 89
Khomeni, Ayatolla, 181
Kierkegaard, Soren, 86, 336, 349
Kimelman, Reuven, 249, 271–278
Kingdom of God and Jesus, 189–194, 204, 369
Klein, Gunter, 218
Koilpillai, Robinson, 114
Kook, Abraham Isaac, 60–61
Korn, Eugene, 323
Kraus, Wolfgang, 209
Kung, Hans, 207
Kuzari (Halevi), 66

Law Empire (Dworkin), 69
Lehmann, Paul, 368
Leibowitz, Yeshiyahu, 148
LEKKJ. See Lutheran European Commission Church and Judaism
Leo the Great, 83
Leo XIII, 361
"A Letter on Some Aspects of Christian Meditation," 280
Levine, Amy-Jill, 161
Lewis, Bernard, 91
Lewis, C. S., 374
liturgy. See prayer and liturgy
Lord's Prayer, 280, 282, 288–289
love, 3940, 262–267
Lubac, Henri de, 185
Maccabees, 135–136
Macharski, Cardinal, 347
The Magnificat, 294
Maimonides, Moses, 66–89, 156–157,162, 340
Malits, Ellen, 92
Martini, Carlo Maria, 25–26, 249, 290
Marxism, 93, 179
Mbarara, Uganda, 82
Mecca, 102
Micah, 32
Middle Ages, 137–142, 156
Miracle of Dialogue (Ruel), xiv
Mishna, 66
mitzvah, 78, 333
mitzvoth, 71, 333
monotheistic religions, witness of, 2941
moral imperatives, 14–16, 21–23
morality, 353–376
Moral Man in Immoral Society (Niebuhr, Reinhold), 370
Moses, 32, 91, 135, 136, 265, 312, 402
Moudoodi, Abul Ala, 398
Muhammad, 91, 98, 102, 231–239,
297–301, 307, 309, 311, 313, 314, 392–400
Muqarrabun, 314
Murray, John Courtney, 361
Muslims, 4, 37, 233–234. See also Islam

Naqshabandian Religious Method, 47
Nasr, Hossein, 402, 403
National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership (CLAL), 323
natural law morality and teaching church, 357–364
Nazism, 142–143, 153

Lumen Gentium. See Dogmatic Constitution on the Church
Luria, Isaac, 141–142
Luther, Martin, 225
Lutheran European Commission Church and Judaism (LEKKJ), 214
Lutherans, 179–180
Lutheran World Council, 207
Lutheran World Federation (LWF), 212
Index

Neusner, Jacob, 65, 161, 364
Niebuhr, H. Richard, 368, 369
Niebuhr, Reinhold, 369–371, 377
Noachide Precepts, 154
normativity, 65–68
Nostra Aetate, xiii–xiv, 4–5, 10, 33, 93
Nuri, Abu'l Hassan, 310
O’Connor, John, 347
Okumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar series, 206
The Orthodox Church, 372
Orthodox Jews, 146, 333
Otto-Friedrich University, 126
Ottoman Empire, 141
Pacem in Terris, 3940, 41, 377
Paisley, Ian, 181
Palazzi, Abdul Hadi, 249
Palestine, 37, 60, 135, 146–147, 153, 331
Palliser, Margaret, 285
Passover Haggada, 67
Paul VI, 169, 176, 181
peace, 36–41
Pentateuchal narrative, 134
Percy, Walter, 374
Peter the Venerable, 92
phronema, 373
pilgrimage, 256–257
Pius XII, 185
pluralism, 198–199, 237–240, 361
Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, 35–36
pope, authority of, 196–197
prayer and liturgy, 253–258
Catholic perspective, 279–284
Christian perspective, 285–295
Jewish perspective, 259–278
Islamic perspective, 297–315
Protestant-Jewish dialogue, 209–226
Psalms, 90, 257, 265, 282
Qiyas, 394
Qumran sectarians, 65
Qushayri, Iman, 309
Rabbinic Judaism, 130–131, 136, 144–145, 266
Rabin, Leah, 48
Rabin, Yitzhak, 48, 181
Rahman, Fazlur, 402
Rahner, Karl, 93–94, 185, 190
Rakospalota, Budapest, 153
RaMBa'M. See Maimonides, Moses
Ratisbonne Papal Institute, 47, 57
Rauschenbusch, Walter, 369
redemption, 268–269
Reformation, 184, 190
Reform Jews, 145
Reform Judaism/Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, 10
Religion and violence, Religion and Peace, 329
Rescuer from Error (Ghazzali), 309
Revelation, pastoral process of, 183–201
Roche, Douglas, 114
Rosenzweig, Franz, 267
Rossing, Daniel, 6, 47
Ruether, Rosemary, 218
Rumi, 310, 313
Sa’adia Gaon, 337
Sabbatean movement, 66
Sacks, Jonathan, 7, 8–9
sacraments, 291
Sacred Heart University, xiii, 5, 10, 38, 47, 114, 117, 151, 249, 323, 347, 351
sacred space of dialogue, 3–12
St. Augustine, 87, 91, 190, 290, 353, 377–378
St. Basil, 374
St. Bernard, 377
St. John, 83–84, 90, 172
St. Matthew, 89
St. Peter, 203
Sambi, Pietro, 47, 48
Sander, Hans-Joachim, 183
Sandmel, David Fox, 383
Sanheriv, King, 339
Sarsur, Ibrahim, 47
Scholasticism, 185, 190
Scholem, Gershom, 74
Second Vatican Council, 3, 29, 89, 93, 174, 175–176, 193, 203
Seleucid Greeks, 135
Sen, Amartya, 396
Sephardic Jews, 141–142
Shahada, 105, 397
Sharifah, 394
Sharpeville Massacre, 114
Shmu’el Be’eri-Stein, Shmu’el, 153
Shoah, 122, 124, 153, 211
Shofar, 71
Shulchan, Aruch, 66
Siddiqi, Mohammad A., 323, 396
Siddur, 67
Sisters of Sion, 250
Smart, Ninian, 58
Smith, Huston, 58
Smith, William, 115
Social Gospel Movement, 369
Society of Biblical Literature, 206
Socrates, 355
Solomon, 134
Soloveitchik, Joseph B., 335
soul, 259–262
Spinoza, Baruch, 131
"A Statement on Christians and Jews, 50 Years after the Declaration of Weilensee," 209
Stein, Breindil Brachah, 153
Stiltner, Brian, 323
Stuttgart Confession, 211
subjectivity, 65–68
Suenens, Cardinal, 186
Sufism, 303, 305, 309–315, 401
Sukka, 71
Sundah, 392–394, 400, 401, 402
Swidler, Leonard, 167
Szighet, Transylvania, 153
Talmud, 332–339
Tamils, 37
Tantur Ecumenical Institute, 47
Taqwa, 397–398
Tertio Milknio Adveniente, 6
Tertullian, 337
theological traditions, 44–53
  Christianity perspective, 81–95
  Jewish perspective, 55–80
  Islamic perspective, 97–107

Index

theosis, 375
Three Messengers for One God (Amaldez), 92
Tolstoi, 347
Torah, 78, 91, 264–266
Toward Transfigured Life (Harakas), 373–375
Trinitarian reflection, 85, 172
trinity, 286–287
truth, 3940, 302
Tsadok, 135
Tzelem Elohim, 335–337, 342

Union Theological Seminary, 364
Unitatis Redintegratio. See "The Decree on Ecumenism"
United Churches, 214
United Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD), 212
United Nations, 114, 147
universal redemption, 23–26
University of Bamberg, 117
University of Paris, 366–367
University of Pennsylvania, 159
Updike, John, 374

Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with Jews, xiv
Vatican II. See Second Vatican Council
VELKD. See United Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Germany
Veritatis Splendor, 363
Volkov, Shulamit, 143

Wahhabism, 304–305
Ware, Timothy, 372
WCC. See World Council of Churches
Wellhausen, Julius, 223
"What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Ethical Traditions?" conference, 323–325
"What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Historical Traditions?" conference, 113–120
"What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Prayer and Liturgy?" conference, 249–251
"What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Our Theological Traditions?"
conference, 47-48
"What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Us?" conferences. See specific conferences
Wilckens, Ulrich, 218
witness, 31–32
women, oppression of, 99–101
"Word of Darmstadt" 211
World Council of Churches (WCC), 378
World Day of Prayer for Peace, 5, 37–38, 256

Yahya, Sidi, 311
Yannaras, Chrestos, 372
Yerushalmi, Yosef Haim, 137
Yeshua of Nazareth and Christianity, 170-173. See also Jesus
Yoder, John, 368

Zaroug, Abdullahi Hassan, 396, 401, 402
zero sum games, moving away from, 13–16
Zionist ideology, 61, 66, 131–132, 146–147
Of Related Interest

Edited by David L. Coppola, Ph.D.

Continuing the conversation that began with the 1999 volume, Religion and Violence, Religion and Peace, this thought-provoking collection of essays also offers a Study Guide that explores the questions of violence and peace faced by people of the Abrahamic faiths. The essays in this work were presented by Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders and scholars at the 2003 conference, “Pathways to Peace in the Abrahamic Faiths,” sponsored by the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut.


RELIGION AND VIOLENCE, RELIGION AND PEACE (1999)
Edited by: Rabbi Joseph H. Ehrenkranz and David L. Coppola, Ph.D.

The papers presented at the 1998 Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding’s (CCJU) conference held in Auschwitz, Poland, have been gathered into a book entitled, Religion and Violence, Religion and Peace, by Sacred Heart University Press. The papers from this conference address the roots of peace in the Torah, the New Testament, and the Qur'an. Additionally, several authors warn in their essays that religions still have the potential to incite wars and, as such, have a grave responsibility to foster a spirituality committed to preserving life and cultures of justice.

This timely work reflects the thoughts of notable leaders in interreligious dialogue and peace-making efforts, including papers from three cardinals. In 2000, members of the Center were invited to the Vatican to present a copy of the book to Pope John Paul II, who enthusiastically encouraged and congratulated the CCJU for its "scholarly, uniting and important efforts at promoting interreligious understanding and peace."