

# CCJU Conference at Auschwitz



Religious leaders and scholars from 12 countries gathered May 18-20, 1998 at Auschwitz, Poland to discuss the role that religion plays in cultivating peace or promoting violence. Representing three faiths, from left, W. Deen Mohammed, leader of the Muslim-American Society; Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore and Rabbi David Rosen, executive director of the Anti-Defamation League of Israel. See Auschwitz Conference Executive Summary beginning on page 7.

*When will you ever, Peace, wild wood dove, shy wings shut,  
Your round me roaming end, and under my boughs?  
When, when, Peace, will you, Peace? I'll not play hypocrite  
To my own heart; I yield you do come sometimes; but  
That piecemeal peace is poor peace. What pure peace allows  
Alarms of wars, the daunting wars, the death of it?*

*O surely, reaving Peace, my Lord should leave in lieu  
Some good! And so he does leave Patience exquisite,  
That plumes to Peace thereafter. And when Peace here does house  
He comes with work to do, he does not come to coo,  
He comes to brood and sit.*

Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Peace"

## Inside this issue of Perspective

### Page 3

*New Director of Conferences and Publications*

### Page 3

*SHU Campus at Stamford*

### Page 4

*The Challenge of Conflict Prevention*

### Page 5

*Dialogue As A Lifestyle*

### Pages 7-26

*CCJU Executive Summary of Conference at Auschwitz*

### Pages 27-30

*Auschwitz Commemoration:  
German and Polish Bishops*

# News and Notes



photo: Leslie Kossoff, CNS

## *Interreligious Consensus*

Helen Alvare of the U.S. Bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities addresses the media July 23 following a House vote to override the President's veto of the partial birth abortion ban. Supporters of the ban gathered with House Speaker Newt Gingrich to express praise for the vote. From left are Sandi Merle, Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz, Helen Alvare, Presbyterian Rev. Robert Norris and Rep. Sue Myrick, R-N.C.

## Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I was visiting a friend and saw the last *CCJU Perspective* on his table and was impressed by the work that the Center is doing. In particular, I was struck by the French Bishops' "Declaration of Repentance." This is a remarkable statement that I am going to share with many people. I noticed that you alluded to the fact that other bishops have released similar statements and that you were sponsoring a major conference in Auschwitz, Poland. Would you please send me a copy of the Polish Bishops' statement? Thank you.

SAMUEL KUCINSKI  
CINCINNATI, OH

[ED. NOTE: Both the Polish and German bishops released statements on January 23, 1995 commemorating the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau. We have included these statements as part of our reflection piece section in this edition of *Perspective*.]

To the Editor:

I read the French Bishops' Declaration and I was deeply touched. I think that the apology was sincere and the journey down the long road of healing has begun.

MICHAEL CANTORE  
CHICAGO, IL

## CCJU PERSPECTIVE

**Volume VI, No. 1, Winter 1999**

Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding  
of Sacred Heart University

Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz, Executive Director  
David Coppola, Ph.D., Director of Conferences  
and Publications  
Berni Capozziello, Office Manager  
and Executive Secretary  
Joan Jackson, Administrative Secretary

*CCJU Perspective* is published tri-annually by The Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University, a not-for-profit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.  
© 1998 Sacred Heart University. All rights reserved.  
Printed in U.S.A.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to  
CCJU, 5151 Park Avenue, Fairfield, CT 06432-1000.  
Tel. 203-365-7592. FAX 203-365-4815.  
E-MAIL: Capozziello@sacredheart.edu.

*Visit the CCJU Home Page at*  
<http://www.ccju.org>

# News and Notes

## *Coppola Named Director of Conferences and Publications*

Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz approved David L. Coppola, Ph.D., for the position of Director of Conferences and Publications at the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding. Anthony J. Cernera, Ph.D., president of Sacred Heart University appointed him to the position on July 1, 1998. Dr. Coppola brings a depth of pastoral, academic, and administrative experi-

## *New Campus at Stamford*

At the Grand Opening of the Stamford Campus on Thursday, August 27, 1998, Anthony J. Cernera, Ph.D., president of Sacred Heart University, said, "This Catholic university is here to stay and to grow. . . . We have a vision [to promote] the dignity and worth of every person who aspires to seek the truth and serve the greater community."

Stephen M. Brown, Ed.D., the Dean of University College, greeted the group of over 100 and the Most Rev. Edward M. Egan, J.C.D., Bishop of the

Diocese of Bridgeport, read the invocation. Remarks were also offered by Diana L. Washington, Community Resource and Grants Coordinator Office of U.S. Representative Christopher Shays; Rosa J. Correa, director of the Governor's Southwestern Office; the Honorable Dannel P. Malloy, mayor of Stamford; and Betty Ruth Hollander, chairman, Omega Engineering, Inc. Mrs. Hollander said, "It is our greatest pleasure to welcome Sacred Heart to our campus. . . . You have our admiration and we pledge our support."

Bishop Egan blessed the building. Ribbons were cut and champagne was poured, followed by tours and light refreshments. Sacred Heart has been offering courses in Stamford for over 15 years. This new facility is equipped to educate students for the new millennium and offers new possibilities for day classes and possible future uses for the CCJU. ♦

---

*"This Catholic university is here to stay and to grow. . . . We have a vision [to promote] the dignity and worth of every person who aspires to seek the truth and serve the greater community."*

---

ence to this new position and will be responsible for coordinating and evaluating all meetings, conferences, seminars and related activities, as well as publications.

Coppola earned his bachelor's degree from Seton Hall University, N.J., a master's degree from St. Mary's, Md., and a doctoral degree from Fordham University, N.Y. His degree work was in Philosophy, Theology, and Educational Administration. ♦



*Bishop Edward Egan and Dr. David Coppola enjoy a light moment at the Stamford campus reception.*

photo: Vin Greco

# The Challenge of Conflict Prevention

## *Kofi Annan: Secretary General to the United Nations*

Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz and Dr. Anthony J. Cernera represented the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding and Sacred Heart University at an Awards Ceremony and Memorial Lecture sponsored by the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding on April 27, 1998. Dr. Georgette F. Bennett, president of the Tanenbaum Center, welcomed guests to

a matter of people—real people with basic needs: food, clothing, shelter, and medical care.”

His address at the Tanenbaum Lecture was entitled, “The Challenge of Conflict Prevention.” Mr. Annan, a national of Ghana, advocated international peace and security through “prevention deployment” and encouraged people to fight discrimination, promote

diversity, and “transcend and ensure that faith becomes an enlightening and unifying reality.”

Mr. Annan compared the values contained in the United Nations Charter with the best of religious

said, and invited the audience to see the United Nations as a tapestry, “not only of suits and saris, but of clerical collars, nuns’ habits and lamas’ robes, of miters, skullcaps, and yarmulkes.” Alluding to Micah 6, Mr. Annan asserted: “A culture of diversity can be ours,” where external expressions of politics, culture, and religion may be different but “at heart we are dealing in universal values: to be kind, to be merciful.”

In closing, he urged people to pray. He said, “One should never underestimate the power of prayer. When we speak up, when we pray, individually and collectively, with one voice or with a multitude of voices, we can overwhelm the sound of war. We can overcome the seeds of intolerance. We can forge the peace and justice that is the birthright of every human being.”

The Tanenbaum Center presented awards to Elie Wiesel, a world-renowned author, Nobel Laureate, and Boston University professor, who has turned his suffering as a Jewish Holocaust survivor into a defense of rights for all humanity; Edward Lewis, publisher of *Essence* magazine and an eminent African-American business leader who works for peace and has built bridges between diverse communities in the U.S. and abroad; and Reverend Ivo Markovic, a heroic Bosnian Catholic who, along with his fellow Franciscans, has risked his life to assist refugees and bring medical and other essential supplies across war lines, while working toward ethnic reconciliation in Bosnia. ♦

---

---

*“We can overcome the seeds of intolerance.  
We can forge the peace and justice that is  
the birthright of every human being.”*

*Kofi Annan*

---

---

the event held at the Park Avenue Synagogue, New York City, while Dan Rather of CBS News was Master of Ceremonies.

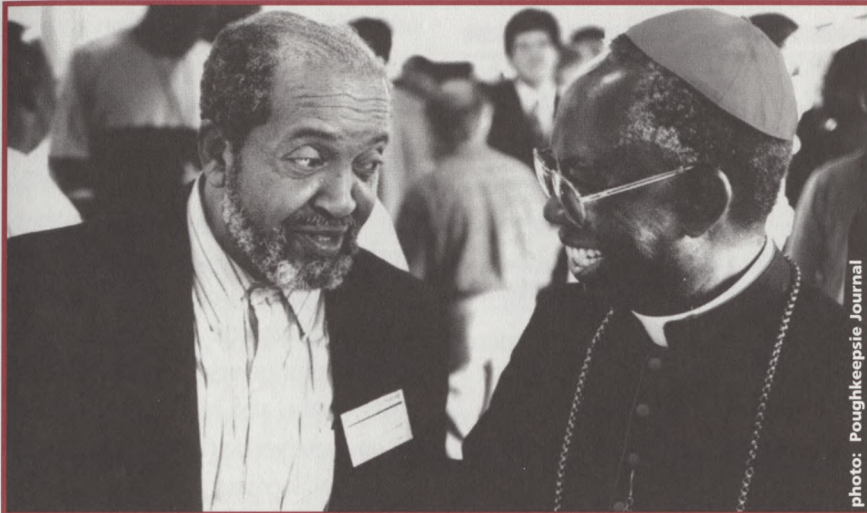
The evening’s featured speaker was His Excellency Kofi Annan, the seventh Secretary General of the United Nations. Mr. Annan is noted not only for his excellent administrative capabilities at the United Nations, but also for his work in refugee issues and peace-keeping measures. In the past, he has stressed the importance of education, interfaith dialogue, tolerance and respect for diversity, and a strong commitment to economic development and social justice. He said in an address to the General Assembly following his appointment, “It is not merely a matter of projects and statistics. It is above all,

values and said that appeals to these values are “more forceful than calls to arms.” He acknowledged that it is difficult for religious values to be perfectly lived out and that religion has been misused in places like Afghanistan, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Northern Ireland, and Uganda. He saw the problem in these instances not with particular faiths as much as with the faithful.

The Secretary General said that conflict prevention happens when people stress what they share in common—“the universality of human aspirations and human rights”—and promote understanding and respect for the diversity of others. “I have come tonight to speak up for diversity . . . for the religious and spiritual dimension of our work at the United Nations,” he

# Dialogue As A Lifestyle

*Imam W. Deen Mohammed and Cardinal Francis Arinze speak about religion, education, peace and social justice.*



*Imam Mohammed and Cardinal Arinze exchange stories of faith and friendship.*

On Aug. 16-17, 1998, David Coppola, Ph.D., represented the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding at a two-day conference, "Dialogue as a Lifestyle," sponsored by The Center for Education in Dialogue of the Focolare Movement, USA at Mariapolis Luminosa, Hyde Park, N.Y., where over 300 people were in attendance.

On the second day, an impressive dialogue occurred between Imam W. Deen Mohammed and Cardinal Francis Arinze. Imam Mohammed, son of Elijah Mohammed, a founder of the Nation of Islam, has been received by Pope John Paul II and was the first Muslim representative to deliver an invocation on the floor of the U.S. Senate. He broke away from the Nation of Islam as a young minister. (Currently the Nation of Islam is led by Louis Farrakhan.) Cardinal Arinze is

president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the Vatican.

Both religious leaders shared their convictions and beliefs in a friendly, humorous, and humble manner. Their separate presentations

both leaders said that religious commitment to God can be a powerful force to overcome the problems of the world, but people need to be open to the voice of God. Imam Mohammed said, "We are all students of Revelation . . . [and] we must call people to the path of God—not just to a church." Cardinal Arinze concurred: "When a Christian and a Muslim meet, they should be looking for the will of God. . . . They should propose their religion, not impose it."

Cardinal Arinze pointed out that Jews, Muslims, and Christians can overcome their differences by focusing on their common heritage and belief in God. He told the group that a meeting was to be held in Rome for young people, Oct 24-28, 1999. The purpose of the meeting is to focus on religion as a way to bring people together, but

---

*"We are all students of Revelation . . . [and] we must call people to the path of God—not just to a church."*

*Imam Mohammed*

*When a Christian and a Muslim meet, they should be looking for the will of God. . . . They should propose their religion, not impose it."*

*Cardinal Arinze*

---

addressed the four areas of religion, education, peace, and social justice.

First, speaking about religion,

not to promote syncretism. He said, "Religion is not a forbidden commodity that we must hide."

continued on next page

Turning to the topic of education, Imam Mohammed and Cardinal Arinze said that Christians and Muslims comprise more than 50% of the world and have the responsibility to educate young people to live lives

God." Arinze agreed and said, "Every major religion is endangered by members who promote violence. . . . Religion is not a weapon." Both Mohammed and Arinze appealed to the young people to engage in interre-

said, "Fasting is to live with the poor and needy, not a form of self-centered discipline."

They concluded the afternoon by embracing each other and encouraging everyone to live the ideals that Chiara Lubich advocated when she said: "There is so much that we can practice, and practice together, that would help give back meaning and vigor to truths and moral values. It is in living together these common truths and imperatives, and in sharing with each other in dialogue our experiences of life, that our friendship is reinforced. From this will arise resolutions and acts of solidarity, peace, and justice to the benefits of ourselves and everyone else."

The Focolare Movement began in 1943 and currently claims 100,000 members. As reported in the last *Perspective*, the CCJU welcomed the foundress and many members of the movement to the University's acade-

---

---

*"Islam is a religion of peace and God directs us to follow that path . . . one with the way of Abraham . . . one with the children of God."*

*Imam Mohammed*

---

---

that are moral, religious, honest, and open to dialogue. They acknowledged that education must engage a pluralistic world where interdependence is a fact. Cardinal Arinze said, "We must educate people to accept others. . . . Every religion has a duty to educate its followers to accept other religions."

The first step of the educational process is to meet others, without suspicion, without peer or political pressure, and look back into history to dialogue with unhealed wounds. Dialogue is more than politeness or tolerance, according to Arinze, it is based on deep religious convictions that one must respect others. "Dialogue is not debate, academic argument, or disagreement, but rather, a meeting of hearts, minds, and souls." Mohammed agreed, saying, "We should communicate for better understanding and closeness with our whole lifestyle."

Addressing the topic of peace, Mohammed said, "Islam is a religion of peace and God directs us to follow that path . . . one with the way of Abraham . . . one with the children of

religious dialogue and work for peace.

A final area of discussion was the topic of social justice. In a world where 20% of the population consumes 80% of its goods, Mohammed and Arinze said that consumerism, waste, and pollution is an insult to the poor. Arinze said, "Christians and

---

---

*"Christians and Muslims can come together to work together against negative trends in modern society. . . . If the bread provided at the table is not enough, the answer is not to kill some of those at the table. It is to bake more bread."*

*Cardinal Arinze*

---

---

Muslims can come together to work together against negative trends in modern society. . . . If the bread provided at the table is not enough, the answer is not to kill some of those at the table. It is to bake more bread." Mohammed said that you do not really know someone until you work together to improve the world. He

mic convocation on May 21, 1997, where Chiara Lubich was presented the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, by Sacred Heart University President Anthony Cernera, Ph.D. Both the CCJU and the Focolare Movement are committed to interreligious dialogue, understanding, and human unity. ❖

# Auschwitz Conference

## CCJU Executive Summary

### Background

Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz, executive director of the CCJU, invited scholars, priests, bishops, cardinals, rabbis, Islamic leaders, members of the media, and observers from 12 countries, May 18-20, 1998, to gather to discuss the role that religion plays in cultivating peace or promoting violence. The three-day conference, "Religion and Violence, Religion and Peace" was held at the Catholic Church-operated Center for Dialogue and Prayer, a short walk from the main gates of the infamous Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp where an estimated 1.5 million people, mostly Jews, were killed amid the horror of the Nazi regime during World War II.

Among the conference's participants were the Muslim president of Meshihat of the Islamic Community of Croatia, the chairman of the Council of Imams and Mosques in London, the former Episcopal bishop from Cyprus, the archbishop of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, and representatives from the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. Also present were Cardinals Cahal Daly, former Catholic primate of Northern Ireland; Franciszek Macharski, Archbishop of Krakow, Poland; and William Keeler of Baltimore who chairs the U.S. bishops' committee on Catholic-Jewish relations.

Of particular importance to the CCJU and the inter-religious dialogue movement was the participation of five Orthodox rabbis from Jerusalem, the West Bank Settlement of Efrat, France, New York and Connecticut. Orthodox rabbis have considered inter-faith discussion of religious doctrine to be forbidden, due to practices in the Middle Ages when "disputations" between rabbis and priests frequently resulted in a beaten or dead rabbi. Rabbi Soloveitchik, the revered Orthodox leader of Boston, reiterated the interdiction in 1964 in an article entitled "Confrontation" in which he

discouraged any theological discussions between Jews and Christians as long as Christians treated Jews as either objects of conversion or somehow as inferior.

The CCJU conference at Auschwitz represents the first time that a group of Orthodox rabbis participated in an inter-faith discussion of a theological nature. This event did not go unnoticed by the Vatican. Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy, president of the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, said the Pope welcomed the conference with "strong encouragement." These words were probably euphemistic since the church has been trying to enter a theological dialogue with the full range of Judaism for decades. The Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate* (1965), which called for the revision of all texts and teaching to remove any anti-Jewish bias and repudiate that the Jews

killed Jesus, followed by numerous papal statements on anti-Semitism, the ongoing validity of Judaism, the Holocaust, and the Vatican's recognition of the state of Israel have all led up to this historic conference.

Rabbi Ehrenkranz said, "From a Jewish viewpoint, it is hardly believable that the Catholic Church is still accused of indifference

to Jewish concerns. We realize that more has been achieved in the last 30 years than in the previous 2000, and that we are living in exceptional times."

---

---

*"From a Jewish viewpoint, it is hardly believable that the Catholic Church is still accused of indifference to Jewish concerns. We realize that more has been achieved in the last 30 years than in the previous 2000, and that we are living in exceptional times."*

---

---

*Rabbi Ehrenkranz*

### Summary of the Proceedings and Addresses

The following pages contain brief summaries of the conference proceedings and major addresses given during the CCJU-sponsored Auschwitz conference, "Religion and

Violence, Religion and Peace.” Each major address was followed by a prepared response and time for discussion with the entire group. These summaries are presented to give the reader a flavor of the conference.

The complete texts of the major addresses will be included in the CCJU book entitled “Religion and Violence, Religion and Peace” to be published in the Fall of 1999.

## MONDAY, May 18, 1998

Anthony J. Cernera, Ph.D., president of Sacred Heart University, began the conference at 4 p.m. on Monday, May 18, 1998. He stressed that the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding is a very important way of expressing what Sacred Heart University believes its mission to be as a Catholic university in the modern world. He noted that “many of our societies are being battered by a rampant instrumental reason and by an excess of individualism. Where this is the case, there is an eclipse of concern about our goal as human beings.”

Citing Rabbi Abraham Heschel and Victor Frankl, Dr. Cernera said that he hoped that the conference would provide an opportunity to reflect together on the authentic meaning and purpose of human life where each religious tradition could honestly and humbly “take a small step in the direction of fostering peace and overcoming violence” and contribute to “creating a world of greater justice and peace.”

Following Dr. Cernera, Edward J. Pizek, president of the Liberty Bell Foundation of Philadelphia, a CCJU board member and a leader among the Polish-American community in alleviating world hunger, expressed optimism in his remarks. He said, “This is a great movement forward. It inspires and motivates a person like me by what I believe one day will occur. I think we have an opportunity here to do some great things.”

Mr. Pizek expressed confidence in universities around the world, most of which were founded by religious denominations, to “come together and keep studying and searching for formulas, methods, ways of doing things that have never been done before” so that we can make “substantial improvements in the quality of life for all.”

His Eminence, Cardinal Franciszek Macharski, Archbishop of Krakow, Poland offered some welcoming remarks and said that Auschwitz was not a place one could visit with indifference. He encouraged the participants to

remember that “only religion is able to give us such a comprehensive outlook upon man.” In a soft-spoken voice, he said that religions are not the main sources of conflicts and violence in the world and the history of the great monotheistic religions is marked by life and the sacrifices of those who kept faith with God who is gracious, merciful, and peaceful, as revealed in the sacred books of the Hebrew Bible, the Christian Bible and the Koran.

Cardinal Macharski pointed to Nazi neo-paganism, “those who considered themselves masters of other people’s lives and deaths,” as the reason for the atrocities at Auschwitz, “not believing people.”

He concluded by saying, “Sincere authentic faith in God can be considered to be a factor of peace among people, the best guarantee of peaceful, mutual religions between people. Religions unite people of all beliefs who take deeply into their hearts God’s commandment: Thou shalt not kill.”

Rabbi Ehrenkranz, the main architect of the conference, expressed his gratitude to all of the participants. He said that he was convinced that religion does not breed violence if people seek out their authentic spiritual meaning.



*Two peacemakers, Dr. Anthony J. Cernera and Cardinal Macharski, discuss ideas for future dialogue among religions.*

Acknowledging that people throughout the world were engaged in violence using the name of God, he said, “Nothing could be further from the truth. . . . Our religion demands of us a path of peace and not a path of war.”



## MONDAY, EVENING

Rabbi Ehrenkranz described Dr. Samuel Pizar as a friend and praised his book *Of Blood and Hope* as exciting. He introduced Dr. Pizar as “a man who graduated from Auschwitz and then he was a dropout at Dachau, after which. . . he was graduated from Harvard, and later from the Sorbonne. . . . He's the only man who was granted citizenship of the United States by an act of Congress, unanimously.”

### *"Of Blood and Hope"*

*Dr. Samuel Pizar*

*International Attorney from Paris and New York  
Author and Holocaust Survivor*

Dr. Pizar began by saying that he was not overly enthusiastic about returning to Auschwitz. He remarked that his plane trip to the conference had been a long one because of engine trouble, but it was not nearly as bad as the first time he arrived in a cattle train, which took more than 72 hours and left a third of the captives dead. He also expressed his hesitation to disturb the silence of those Jews, Gypsies, Slavs, and his entire family who perished in Auschwitz. He said, “To return to this altar of the Holocaust, where I had once died so many deaths, suffered so many tortures and humiliations, where everything I had ever loved went up in smoke, is an experience that wrenches the soul. . . . We are in the presence of millions of innocent martyrs and I also believe, I dare say, that if they could make themselves heard, they would let out a clamor towards you, ‘Never again!’”

The address, “Of Blood and Hope,” stressed the theme of never forgetting that “the past can also be prologue.” All of the past ignominies experienced at Auschwitz; namely, fear, despair, hunger, poor health care, forced labor, lack of human rights, terrorism, violence, executions, and ‘final solution’ weapons, have blood-stained this century and continue to plague the modern world on every continent. He said, “Every act of arbitrary justice conjures up in my mind the road back to the abyss . . . [where] Eichmann's grim reality eclipsed Dante's imaginary vision of the Inferno.”

On the other hand, Dr. Pizar said that the past can also be prologue when people do not forget to hope for peace. He cited the Golden Age of the Iberian Peninsula, around the first millennium, when a Jewish, Islamic, and Christian sym-

biosis—all three communities sharing the heritage of Abraham—teemed with scholars, philosophers, poets, musicians and statesmen. It was a short-lived, but noble experience that can provide the inspiration to dream of harmony in the future. He also said that there is “ample contemporary evidence that religious, racial or national divergence does not automatically breed sworn and hereditary enemies forever. Astounding recent events have shown how seemingly hardened, historic hostility can give way to constructive cooperation.”

Democracy is having the right to shout, “Present”—not in a concentration camp—but in free societies where silent majorities must speak out and never surrender to political power or demonic forces that seek to dehumanize the dignity of the human person. He commented that there

---

---

*“I remember, as a young boy thinking that, if the Lord Jesus Christ had lived in my time, he, his mother Mary, his siblings and all the 12 apostles, would have been with me here at Auschwitz.”*

*Dr. Pizar*

---

---

were one-and-a-half million children among the six million Jews who died, including the 500-odd children of his own school, of which he is literally the sole survivor. “These were the children who never learned, the teachers who never taught, the scientists who never discovered, the poets who never wrote, these were the children who would have so enriched our world if they had lived.”

And religion must not remain silent, either. Dr. Pizar confessed that there were moments when, in his childish innocence and despair, he raised a clenched, blasphemous fist toward the Almighty, wondering if anyone cared. He said, “I remember, as a young boy thinking that, if the Lord Jesus Christ had lived in my time, he, his mother Mary, his siblings and all the 12 apostles, would have been with me here at Auschwitz.”

He hoped that a myriad sermons and deeds inspired by this “cursed and sacred place” and the shared religious values that the conference would confirm, would “lead humanity to

*continued on next page*

greater compassion, tolerance and peace.” Out of respect for each other’s faith, Christians, Muslims and Jews must beware of what they preach and teach to their respective flocks, because “we are what we teach,” and because fundamentalism, fanaticism, all ideologies that despise the human being, can push our societies toward “a new delirium of violence.”

He concluded by saying that the survivors are now disappearing one by one and soon “history will begin to speak, at best, with the impersonal voice of researchers, academics and novelists; at worst, with the malevolent voice of revisionists and falsifiers.” He praised the work of the Roman Catholic Church, especially John XXIII and Pope John Paul II, as well as many Episcopal conferences and he encouraged those present to spiritually arm the children and grandchildren of the world “against the tragedies, the hypocrisies, the false gods of history.”

## Response

*Dr. Elizabeth Maxwell*

*International Lecturer, London, England*

Dr. Maxwell described herself as an educator and disseminator of information. She responded to the address by her long-loved and revered friend, Samuel Pisar, with a “*mea culpa*” in many languages. Criticizing the inaction of the British Secret Service, the failure of the Allies to bomb the railway lines which led to Auschwitz, and the deafening silence of the Church, she said that the only way people can tread the earth of Auschwitz is to bear the responsibility of their own creeds and examine with honest hearts what went wrong. “This is truly no place for politics or

polemics,” she said. “It is the time and place to search our conscience, to repent and seek God’s guidance and blessing on our deliberations.”

Dr. Maxwell remembered her recently-deceased mentor and friend, the

Christian theologian, Roy Eckhard, as a man of integrity and a model of moral and intellectual courage. He said that Eckhard was largely responsible for leading her to a “reformed and enlightened Christianity,” which had no place for anti-Semitism or supersession. Quoting Eckhard, Dr. Maxwell said, “The challenge is not whether to be labeled a Christian or non-Christian, it is

how to be human, how to be responsible. Just do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord. To accomplish the task you have set for yourself, you need anger and you need courage.”

Alluding to the recent Vatican document, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* (March, 1998), she said that the balance of our relations with the Jews over the past 2,000 years has been “quite negative.” She also added that anti-Jewish prejudices imbedded in most Christian minds and hearts through the teaching and false interpretations of the gospels spread by some of the early Church fathers, resulted in Christians not offering every possible assistance to those being persecuted. Quoting the *Shoah* document, she said, “We wish to turn awareness of past sins into a firm resolve to build a new future in which there will be no more anti-Judaism among Christians, or anti-Christian sentiment among Jews; but rather a shared mutual respect as befits those who adore the one Creator and Lord and have a common Father in faith, Abraham.”

Turning to the Muslim participants, she expressed her eagerness to understand them better and said that she



*Rabbi Ehrenkranz (left) described Dr. Samuel Pisar as a friend who “graduated from Auschwitz and then he was a dropout at Dachau, after which . . . he was graduated from Harvard, and later from the Sorbonne. . . .”*

refused to accept “the myths and stereotyped teachings which have done the world so much harm.” She asked for their help in changing the “demonic perception of the world of Islam that Christians and Jews alike now have . . . and to change the equally demonic perception of the Jewish world which has made its way into the Arab world.”

Dr. Maxwell concluded by saying that the 20th century has inaugurated a new era in human self-awareness and human possibility, an era capable of producing unprecedented destruction or unparalleled hope.

## Discussion

A discussion followed Dr. Maxwell's presentation initiated by Rabbi Ehrenkranz. He asked for “a word of encouragement” from the participants whether or not religion can do something to prevent violence. Episcopal Bishop John Brown noted that despite a growing coalition of people who are working to make a positive and peaceful difference, the developing countries are still receiving weapons of destruction from the governments of wealthier countries. For this reason, religious leaders have the responsibility to dialogue with fundamentalists and extremist believers who foster violence and destruction. Amira Abdin agreed and reflected on the biblical story where God dialogues with evil after Adam had been persuaded to disobey God. She noted that God did not kill evil, God dialogued with evil.

Professor Abdul Hadi Palazzi said that the first murder recorded in the Bible—when Cain killed his brother Abel—was probably due to religious disagreement. Others cited the Inquisition, the Crusades, the Thirty Years War, and the situation in Northern Ireland as examples where religion was and is the major cause of violence. Rabbi Arthur Schneier stressed that everyone must make sure that educators and religious leaders teach that all people are God's children. Amir Al-Islam said that faith, the power of belief found in religion, can empower people to work against the odds. He said that the Koran empowered him to be practical and make changes for peace.

---



---

*And they shall beat their swords into  
plowshares, and their spears  
into pruning hooks: nation shall not  
lift up a sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war  
any more.*

---



---

*Isaiah 2:4*

## “Religion Can and Does Make Peace”

*Rabbi Arthur Schneier*

*President of Appeal to Conscience Foundation, New York*

The conference resumed the next morning and Rabbi Schneier began by describing his childhood memories of Vienna where he experienced anti-Semitism. He watched his synagogue burn and the sacred scrolls incinerate while the fire department stood by to make sure that the fire did not spread to other buildings. He said, “When you burn synagogues, books, and scrolls, it is not long before you burn people. . . . Auschwitz is a graveyard without a grave to visit. This place is where my grandparents died 54 years ago when they were told that they were to be ‘resettled.’ To resolve conflict we must remember and forget.”

The beginning point for religion to make a contribution towards promoting peace is accepting the principle that all are made in God's image. God is the parent of all people or none. He said that we are all strangers and must treat others well. Fear of the stranger—the other—is the root cause of violence and the true barometer is “how the majority treats the minority.”

Rabbi Schneier spoke about the coalitions and cooperative efforts that his organization and many others have been involved in to advance human rights. In a world threatened by nuclear tests and environmental pollution, where too many people use democratic processes to bring about undemocratic values, people can no longer be silent. He said that “the best hope for religious freedom and human rights is democracy.” He said that signed documents are good but not enough. He added that good deeds can sanctify God's name and “we must always condemn acts of violence.”

He closed by inviting people to celebrate the rainbow as a symbol for interreligious dialogue—diversity and beauty in unity.

continued on next page

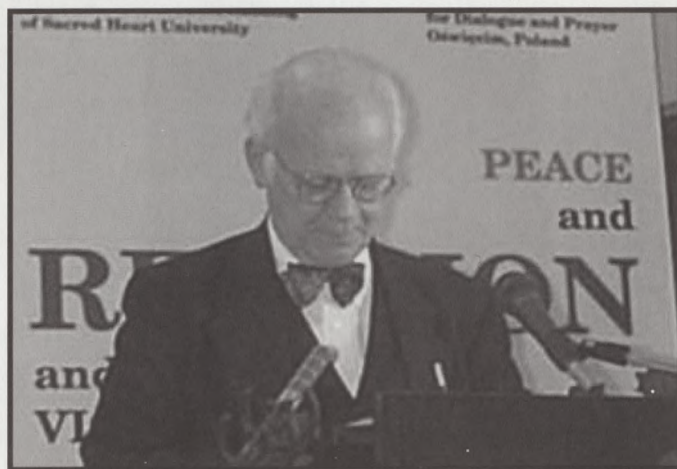
## *“Fundamentalism As a Precursor to Violence”*

Dr. Martin Marty

Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor  
University of Chicago

Dr. Martin Marty discussed fundamentalism and how it can be a precursor to violence in the keynote address. His presentation highlighted three areas: 1) clarifications of the word fundamentalism; 2) under what circumstances fundamentalism can function as precursor to violence; and 3) what are some of the reasons why it does so, as a step toward addressing the problems such a relation brings.

First, Dr. Marty described fundamentalism as the phe-



Dr. Martin Marty spoke about religious fundamentalism as a precursor to violence.

nomenon born in North American Protestant controversy in the 20th century. Until recently, fundamentalism was seen positively by people as “a badge of honor” around which they rallied to “do battle for the Lord.” There are different movements that “bear family resemblances to fundamentalism,” but fundamentalisms have little in common that substantively joins them. Protestant fundamentalism tends to be doctrinal, Catholic fundamentalism focuses on magisterial teaching, Jewish fundamentalist movements concentrate on story, and Islam accents the law and the literal application of laws in *shari’ah* (the body of law that appears as a commentary on the Qur’an).

Second, fundamentalism occurs when a group is confronted with modernity and modernization. The group may

react in a militant fashion, especially when the influences of modernity are the occasion for increased “pluralism, relativism, moderation, and attendant corruptions of the ideal, especially leadership.” The essential and selective elements of doctrine, story, and law are retrieved “for use as defense against enemies of the movement or for aggression where

---

---

*“Great numbers of fundamentalists are simply ordinary citizens, going about their business in the laboratory, the computer center, the supermarket, or the polling place without manifesting features such as even potential expressions of violence.”*

Dr. Marty

---

---

the movement would expand.” Insecurity, danger, and distrust may also cause groups or peoples to withdraw into themselves, protecting and fortifying what they believe is fundamental and essential to their cultural and religious identity. Fundamentalism then becomes the fuel that indirectly or directly leads to violence. Dr. Marty said that violence, in turn, “can create civil disorder and uncivil conduct in nonlethal forms that can take a toll on personal and communal health. Words kill. Dismissal of ‘the stranger’ from the circles of civil conversation is distracting and destructive, as is demeaning or devastating ‘the other’ in a community—be it familial, religious, social, or political.”

Most fundamentalist movements “see themselves as chosen, as elect instruments to carry out divine purposes as they have been instructed to do in sacred writings.” The fundamentalist reacts to “the others” whose opposing views of God and the social order are perceived as an attack to this election. These “others” may be seen as wrong, ignorant, or even demonic, thereby deserving of [in the mind of the fundamentalist] ridicule, humiliation, or even military violence.

Third, what is it about religion, and especially fundamentalism, that it can serve both to heal and to kill? The place to begin is to recognize that “great numbers of fundamentalists are simply “ordinary citizens, going about their business in the laboratory, the computer center, the supermarket, or the polling place without manifesting features such as even poten-

tial expressions of violence.” Religion in intense forms is born of some sense of awe. That experience of awe, whether from the heart’s cues, or stimulated by a charismatic leader, or a confrontation with a scripture, leads to some sort of break with normal everyday reality and strongly impacts the ego. Frequently the one who has experienced awe and revelation seeks to share these experiences in a community that empowers him or her to resist the attempts of a modern, pluralistic society to domesticate God. Dr. Marty said, “Thus fundamentalist (and other!) Christians have had no trouble finding legitimation in New Testament texts for violence alongside the great calls for peace and reconciliation. The books of Joshua and Judges include texts that call for more than genocide. The Qur’an, which like the New Testament and Torah, includes passages of great beauty and benignity, along with other basic Islamic texts, also licenses and impels militant action. Omnicide, jihad, crusade, inquisition: these are locked into stories revelatory of the deity.”

The fundamentalist, not uniquely but in distinctive ways, is more prone than others to be a precursor to the violent. According to Dr. Marty, the moderate, the liberal, and the modernist negotiate with modernity, pluralism, and relativism on more open terms than does the fundamentalist who, in literalist fashion, “adheres to and expresses sides of the myth and tradition that turn out to be lethal.”

Dr. Marty offered three suggestions for those engaged in interreligious dialogue as ways to enhance the part of religion that heals and minimize the part which kills. The first important step to genuine interreligious dialogue is to “listen carefully” in order to portray the fundamentalist accurately. Such listening will demand at least “a minimal expression of respect for the other, not in mere condescension but as part of an effort to understand the stimuli to fundamentalist responses and the reason for fundamentalist worldviews and expressions.”

The second step is to speak; that is, to address “the addressable features of experience that plausibly occasion a fundamentalist response. One expects that religious voices inspired to provide alternatives to fundamentalism cannot be noncommittal, semicommitted, or merely tolerant.”

A third step is to believe and demonstrate that commitment to religious beliefs does not necessitate a response of persecuting or exiling “the other.” Dr. Marty said that there are “good reasons for understanding more of the commitment by the faithfully generous, including some of the recent

popes, any number of post-Holocaust Jewish leaders, the Gandhis, Martin Luther Kings, and Dietrich Bonhoeffers, all of them flawed—but all of them capable of retaining commitment and community while rejecting the impulse to demonize the other.”

## Response

Rev. Marcus Braybrooke  
President, World Congress of Faiths  
London, England

Rev. Braybrooke stressed the need for repentance, especially for the ways that religions have been exclusive of others. Religious leaders are called to have and share a prophetic and healing moral conscience. It is uncertain how much influence religious leaders have, but they do make a difference. Words and actions can heal or hurt and need to be consistent. Disputes between religions and within religions is a scandal and need not continue. Rev. Braybrooke asked, “Must we ever use violence to preserve faith? There is so much more that unites people than divides them.”

Citing several Church statements including *Nostra Aetate* (1965), the Church of Scotland report on Antisemitism in the World Today (1985), the American Episcopal Church’s Guidelines (1987) and the Lambeth Conference (1988) as examples which speak of dialogue and

---

---

*“Change is possible. Forgiveness is difficult, but necessary. Faith is possible after Auschwitz but requires a risk on everyone's part. It is the only way to build trust. It is a shared responsibility. History cannot be changed, but it can be faced with courage and moral leadership.”*

Rev. Braybrooke

---

---

encourage the work of all religions to reach peaceful consensus, Rev. Braybrooke said, “Interrelations between religions can lead to a higher understanding and new appreciation for all religions. Consensus has been reached on many fronts and can continue. . . . Faithfulness to religion is faithfulness

continued on next page

to God and can lead all people to a new synthesis and unity. Change is possible. Forgiveness is difficult, but necessary. Faith is possible after Auschwitz but requires a risk on everyone's part. It is the only way to build trust. It is a shared responsibility. History cannot be changed, but it can be faced with courage and moral leadership."

## Response

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Chief Rabbi of Efrat, Israel

Rabbi Riskin, formerly the rabbi of Lincoln Center, New York City began by addressing the group, "My masters, my teachers, my friends." He related stories from the Bible including Moses who killed the Egyptian who was striking the Hebrew slave and Pinkas who killed the Hebrew cohabitating with the Mideonite. Rabbi Riskin said that Elijah is described as a zealot for God, but God is not found in fire, thunder, and wind; God is found in the soft silence. "The God of loving kindness, not the God of violence and extravaganzas is the God of the Hebrew Scriptures."

People who have a commitment to civility sometimes are too civil in their commitments. Jonah is the son of truth. He does not know how to handle forgiveness and compassion.

Rabbi Riskin agreed with Dr. Marty and said, "Soft silence is necessary to hear others." He also asserted that peace was more important than truth. He said that peace is a way of life and should be the goal of every religion, but there is never only one way. He said that the religion of peace must be open to multi-dimensional truth because "peace is more than a single truth."

Rabbi Riskin said, "We are one in our commitments to peace. We are all brothers, related." Arabs share the same story with different names about the call of God to Abraham and discontinuing the sacrifice of his son. Peace is more important than individual perspectives of the truth.

Rabbi Riskin also believes in sharing the land in Israel and that fences make good neighbors. He said, "I must take personal responsibility to stop violence. I must try to understand the other."

## TUESDAY AFTERNOON

Rev. Dr. Remi Hoeckman, Secretary of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, introduced

Chief Rabbi Rene-Samuel Sirat. He commented on the sacredness of space and that the room had been rearranged so that the participants could more comfortably share and meet. Fr. Hoeckman said that where there is not religious space for the other, then there is soon no space at all for the other. Quoting John Paul II he said, "The world is waiting for a word of peace."

## *"The Roots of Peace in the Torah"*

Chief Rabbi Rene-Samuel Sirat

Chief Rabbi Emeritus of Europe

Rabbi Sirat described how difficult it was for a rabbi and a Jew to speak at Auschwitz, especially when asked to speak about justice, peace, confidence, and quietness. He wished a long life to the Holocaust survivors who were present at the conference but also acknowledged that 50 years have elapsed since the *Shoah*, and now humanity is moving from a time of memory to a time of history. He then publicly thanked Cardinal Marcharsky for helping to resolve the difficulties surrounding the Auschwitz crosses and convent with him.

Rabbi Sirat said that he came to Auschwitz because he believed that it was his duty to make a triple declaration for peace to the 1) Jewish people with God; 2) Jewish people with each other; and 3) Jewish people with the nations.

Rabbi Sirat confided that it has been a difficult road for the Jewish people to make peace with God. He said, "For 50 years, it is true that we have been indicting God, the God of love and of mercy, for allowing the horror of the *Shoah* to occur. And I, an ordinary Jew among Jews, I would be tempt-

---

*"There is no such thing as a holy war in Christianity, nor in Islam, nor in Judaism. Only peace is holy, for peace is the name of God. Only the beautiful word of Shalom, peace, salam constitutes the greeting through which, when brothers meet, they call out the divine blessings. Shalom is the name of God. Salam is one of the ninety-nine names of Allah."*

Rabbi Sirat

---



Dr. Filianovsky, Rabbi Sirat and Mr. Al-Islam address the conference.

ed to say: 'Well, Lord, return the whole of Creation to the original state of chaos.'" Now that some time has passed, however, Rabbi Sirat said that a feeling of compassion for God must dwell within the hearts of the Jewish people. He said, "I know that what I am saying here in Auschwitz may appear sacrilegious. But I believe with all the force of my conviction that for the Jewish people this is actually a sign of a very great quality of faith and love for God, even if we continue to be bruised, to weep for those who are no longer with us, to be devastated to the very depths of our being by the *Shoah*..."

If it has been difficult for the Jewish people to make peace with God, it is even more true that they must make peace with each other. Rabbi Sirat lamented that brotherly feelings are not currently the order of the day. Despite the fact that the State of Israel was established 50 years ago, he said, "Brotherly dialogue—whether in the Knesset, Israel's parliament, or outside the Knesset, or in the media—no longer exists." He expressed his disappointment at the divisions between religious and non-religious circles and said that it was wrong for people to constantly hurl insults at each other which leads to physical violence—as was the case with Israel's Prime Minister who was assassinated after being verbally attacked for months.

Rabbi Sirat said that a consensus of values to be shared by all people is necessary and warned that democracy can be harmful when all values are placed on an equal, relativistic plane—especially those negative values which are totally opposed to the most basic moral standards. He said, "It is important for the rabbis to rediscover their real vocation, which is, like Moses our Teacher, to seek out lost sheep and

bring them back to the flock, and not express abhorrence, rejection, or biting criticism of those who do not belong to the same religious group..."

Lastly, Rabbi Sirat said that it is important for the Jewish people to be reconciled with the nations which is especially difficult after the *Shoah*. Nonetheless, he said that it is essential to continue a Jewish-Christian friendship and promote a Jewish-Muslim friendship that is based on the "absolute respect that we owe each other." Practices of syncretization or proselytizing are no longer acceptable and war must be outlawed. He said, "There is no such thing as a holy war in Christianity, nor in Islam, nor in Judaism. Only peace is holy, for peace is the name of God. Only the beautiful word of *Shalom*, peace, *salam* constitutes the greeting through which, when brothers meet, they call out the divine blessings. *Shalom* is the name of God. *Salam* is one of the ninety-nine names of Allah."

## Response

Dr. Igor Filianovsky  
Secretary for Church and Society  
Department for External Church Relations, Moscow

Dr. Filianovsky said that interreligious dialogue is a new phenomenon in Russia, and in the midst of the numerous political challenges religious leaders need to be messengers of hope and peace. He said, "The active search

---

*The wolf also shall dwell  
with the lamb, and the  
leopard shall lie down with  
the kid; and the calf and the  
young lion and the fatling  
together; and a little child  
shall lead them.*

*Isaiah 11:6*

---

for compromise is especially relevant today for Russia and all countries of the former Socialist camp whose disintegration has been marked with numerous inter-ethnic, interreligious and other conflicts."

Dr. Filianovsky stressed that it is important for people to be engaged in analyzing the biblical roots of peace and violence in the hearts of individuals and nations. He said that the Orthodox Church must draw on the insights and tradition of the scriptures and Fathers especially the understanding that all humanity is called to be the family of God.

continued on next page

Christians have forgotten their teaching when they attempt to settle their differences by wars. He said, "Violence is a curse against human dignity and humanity's calling. God is not a God of violence and enmity, but the God of peace, harmony and beauty."

He concluded by saying that there is a promise of peace in the scriptures but we must seek and pursue peace. Peace is not only an eschatological promise, it is also a mission, a dynamic process requiring considerable efforts and a responsible approach. Turning to Rabbi Sirat, Dr. Filianovsky said, "Yes, peace must be for all people, not just Christians. Peace is the calling of all humanity. . . . As the Orthodox Saint

can only come from God because God says in the Koran "I know what you know not." Humans can try to understand God's actions but in the end God knows best.

Second, reconciliation between brothers and sisters is necessary in Judaism but is also essential in the Islamic tradition. Mr. Al-Islam said that if someone conducted a statistical analysis, they would probably conclude that "Muslims have probably killed more of each other throughout history than all of the 'infidels' combined." He praised Imam W. Deen Mohammed of Chicago, who was present at the conference, for his efforts at reconciliation with Jews, Christians, and within African-American Islam itself.

Third, Mr. Al-Islam confessed that many obstacles still face Muslims in the United States. He said that it was necessary to demythologize Muslim radicals, stop the demonization of Muslims and the discrimination against black people, and work to foster truth in a society that often creates a false image that all Muslims are terrorists, fundamentalists, anti-women, anti-democracy, and anti-modernity. He said that Muslims have

many gifts, especially faith and peace, to offer the West. And whatever the challenge, Muslims must not remain silent. "We cannot be silent in the face of human misery and suffering. We must speak truth to power. . . ."

---

---

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as  
the world gives do I give to you.  
Let not your hearts be troubled, neither  
let them be afraid.*

*John 14:27*

---

---

Raphim taught, we must seek peace in our own soul and thousands around us will be saved."

## *Response*

*Amir Al-Islam  
Secretary-General*

*World Conference on Religion and Peace, USA*

Amir Al-Islam said that he was honored and humbled to be in Auschwitz in the presence of the "noble souls, those innocent men, women and children who died as martyrs." He said that he believed it was important for the 7-8 million African-American Muslims in the United States to speak out against all those who might demonize the Jewish community. He then addressed three points where the African-American Muslim community and the Jewish community share common struggles.

First, why is it that innocent people are harmed and maimed? African-Americans have endured slavery, racism, discrimination, marginalization and demonization. Why does God allow violence and disease to plague the African-American community? Mr. Al-Islam said that reconciliation

## *Discussion*

Rev. Dr. Hoekman moderated the discussion that followed which primarily focused on the question of whether or not there is something inherent in religion that fosters violence. Most of the participants said that violence is not a problem confined to religion. The problem, as expressed by the participants, was two-fold. First, there is the reality of evil which all people must encounter. Several people expressed the belief that there is within human nature a weakness and the potential for evil. Second, conditions such as poverty, oppression, discrimination, and injustice create situations where people make violent choices out of desperation, frustration, anger, ignorance, or ethnic pressure. Prejudice is a product of ignorance and competition of interests which fuels violent actions.



All were in agreement that religious leaders cannot be silent and that mutual respect, education, and communication were essential in order to overcome prejudice, ignorance, and violence. Others emphasized that there is a need for people to come together in coalitions, congenial environments for dialogue, and consensus about the important values for society. Some said that attention to global ethics, moral education, and shared values can allow peace to happen from the ground up.

## TUESDAY LATE AFTERNOON

The participants visited the Auschwitz and Birkenau Nazi death camp in the late afternoon. This was, as Dr. Pizar had said the night before, "a cursed and sacred place," "the modern Golgotha." The visitors were stunned to silence and reverence as the shoes of children and the hair of countless women, small scraps of extinguished human lives called out, "Never forget!" One participant reached down and pulled up a hand full of earth from one of the burial fields and uncovered several small pieces of human bone. It was gruesomely apparent that these were not only the remnants of martyrs, these were the remains of murders. The holy and the horror, the Holocaust and *Shoah* were understood in the universal language of compassion and all were reduced to their essential humanity. Standing on the site of a destroyed crematorium, the only possible response by the participants was prayer. Hebrew, Arabic, English, and Spanish prayers proclaimed the fundamental truth that all people are God's creation, all life is sacred. Cardinal Daly later shared, "In union with my Jewish brothers, standing in front of those three pillars of stone at the crematorium in



CCJU conference participants pause to pray at the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial.

Birkenau, I was praying *de profundis*: "Out of these depths, Lord, we cry to you."

## TUESDAY EVENING

### *"The Roots of Peace in the New Testament"*

*Cahal B. Cardinal Daly*

*Cardinal Emeritus, Northern Ireland*

Cardinal Daly began by saying that it was difficult for him to speak following his afternoon visit to Auschwitz and Birkenau. He confided that he felt "contaminated by the stench of evil. . . . I felt shame at what evil we've done, fear for what evils we're capable of . . . [because] every human being is implicated in the evil of the Holocaust."

He continued, "And yet, we must speak of the things that we have seen and heard. We must speak." He said that there must be hope for people of faith and, only then, could Auschwitz and Birkenau be the valley of bones of which

Ezekiel spoke, where the spirit of God can create out of skeletons new life, new hope; "hope for a new Israel of God, hope for a new Islam, hope for a new humanity."

Cardinal Daly praised the Pope John Paul II for accepting the full Catholic share of guilt for the Holocaust and went on to speak of the deep and mysterious union, a com-

mon spiritual heritage of love and faith, that the Church shares with the Jewish people. He said, "There is a unique degree of scandal about Catholic anti-Semitism, given the very special bonds that bind us with the chosen people of Israel, given the patrimony which we Catholics have received from them and share with them." One must understand the

continued on next page

gospels, the Christian gospels, by knowing the Torah which "has always been firmly held by the Christian Church to be the Word of God for all times; no less valid and no less necessary for salvation in the Christian era than in the times before Christ." He confessed that one of the saddest images that he retains from his visit to the Washington Holocaust Museum was the sight of the desecrated and half-burned scrolls of the Torah from the days of the infamous *Kristallnacht*. Cardinal Daly said, "And I felt, and feel as revolted by that scene as a Jew would be, for the Torah is my sacred scripture, too."

Turning to the topic of "The Roots of Peace in the New Testament," Cardinal Daly said that peace is one of the dominant themes of the New Testament. The word peace occurs 92 times in the Christian scriptures and is found in almost every book of the New Testament. Jesus came to bring peace and died for that peace to begin. He explained that the word "peace" in the Christian Scriptures carries all the rich resonance of the Hebrew "*shalom*," meaning not only the absence of war, but also the fullness of spiritual, mental, and physical well-being, the proper relationships between man and woman and God, and respect for God's plan for human flourishing and for the whole of creation. He continued,



Dr. Anthony J. Cernera, Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz, Rabbi Samuel Sirat, Episcopal bishop John Brown and others walk through the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp.

"New Testament peace, like *shalom*, is much more than a human condition with a merely horizontal dimension. It has an inseparable vertical dimension; it comes down from God.

Peace is God's gift, not our unaided making only. It depends on right relations with God. And when these relations have been violated by sin, peace demands their reparation, by

---

---

*"New Testament peace, like shalom, is much more than a human condition with a merely horizontal dimension. It has an inseparable vertical dimension; it comes down from God. Peace is God's gift, not our unaided making only. It depends on right relations with God."*

Cardinal Daly

---

---

repentant seeking of God's forgiveness under reconciliation with him."

Unfortunately, these same scriptures of peace have been incorrectly interpreted to promote agendas of violence. Christians living in a Hellenistic and Roman culture and the post-Apostolic generations read the Passion narratives in the light of the Jewish/Christian versus Gentile/Christian divisions of their own time, and misread the gospels as justifying their own anti-Jewish prejudices. Cardinal Daly said, "The so-called cursing of the Jewish people is a misreading of the gospel account itself, because Jesus himself acquits the Jews of blame. He says, 'Father forgive them, they do not know what they are doing.' In fact, I suggest, the tragic and shameful story of Christian anti-Semitism is, in part, a story of how people who have hostile attitudes towards other nations or other

racess always seem to manage to find in their own sacred writings, religious reasons for their own racist prejudices and their scandals, and so-called holy wars." Cardinal Daly

added that the cross was intended to be a sign of reconciliation for the world, not to be perverted as a badge for the so-called Christian crusade against enemies.

The first step towards achieving the peace promised in the New Testament is a heightened sensitivity and conversion in the use of religious language that will contribute to conditions of change in relationships. Cardinal Daly said, "If words can dehumanize and demonize, if words can kill, indeed, so also, words can evoke love, words can effect reconciliation. . . . If we seriously were to set about changing the names we use about others, about changing the jokes we tell, about changing the songs we sing, we'd have taken an important step towards changing relationships between peoples."

Cardinal Daly concluded by saying that Christians and Jews share a common heritage which includes veneration of the Holy Scriptures, confession of one living God, love of neighbor, a prophetic witness to justice and peace, and confident expectation of the coming of God's kingdom. As a result, people can effectively work together in promoting the dignity of every human person and in safeguarding human rights, especially religious freedom.

## Response

*Rev. Varsanofios Doroszkiewicz*  
*Secretary to Archbishop Jeremiasz*

Rev. Doroszkiewicz, an Orthodox Catholic priest, read a paper prepared by Archbishop Jeremiasz, who was delayed in his travel. Agreeing with Cardinal Daly, Fr. Doroszkiewicz asserted that peace is a gift of God and a way of life rooted in the truth taught by Jesus and the Church. The way of peace is rooted in the way of love that Jesus lived and died for and is inclusive and loving of all people. He related that in the Orthodox prayers, the priest prays for "those who are present in the church, for the monks who are in deserts, mountains, caves, for the authorities, for good and evil people, for old and young people, for the fainthearted, for those who surrendered to frauds, for those possessed by demons, for those who are forced into labor and those who love us and those who hate us."

Despite this ideal of peace and love, Fr. Doroszkiewicz said that Jews and Christians have suffered from ideology

gone astray. The Gulag is the product of an ideology which hated Christians, the Church, and Jesus. Massive destruction of Orthodox churches was a result of this ideology. He said, "Auschwitz is like the chain of violence directed against Christianity and against every form of faith in God." Christians need to take responsibility for their part in fostering distortions of the gospel and the "ideas that made it possible for the ideologies which produced Auschwitz to come into being."

Fr. Doroszkiewicz concluded by saying that peace and love are key words in the New Testament. Where there is not enough love, peace is thwarted. No one who cares about peace will break God's commandments about the love for every human being. In the face of the persecutions of the 20th century, Christians and Jews share their "faithfulness to God, of the Fathers, and of the purity of faith."

---

---

*Blessed are the  
peacemakers, for  
they shall be  
called the sons and  
daughters of God.*

*Matthew 5:9*

---

---



*A meeting of the "Orthodox": Fr. Doroszkiewicz, His Eminence Jeremiasz and Rabbi Ehrenkranz.*

## Response

*Dr. Nabil Marshood*  
*Professor of Social Science, Hudson County*  
*Community College, New Jersey*

Dr. Marshood expressed his concern and fear for the destiny of the human race where terror, hunger, and violence are

*continued on next page*

common occurrences in the world. He said, "We are stuck, somehow, in our traditions, in our old values and in our traditional and tribalistic roots. . . . We have advanced technologically and scientifically, but not socially or spiritually." Dr. Marshood remembered his friend, the recently deceased, Seif Ashmawy. Dr. Marshood described Ashmawy as "a proud Muslim," who dedicated much of his life to promoting peace and cooperation among the three Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. His son, Omar, was present, representing his father who was scheduled to attend the conference.

Speaking as a social scientist, Dr. Marshood said, "Religion is not a causal determinant of violence, or of peace; but it has been strongly connected with violence and less with peace." According to Dr. Marshood, religion, like all other social institutions, is in a state of interdependency and has a socializing effect on personal conduct and on human arrangements. The relationship between religion and violence, as well as that between religion and peace, is a complex matter. Violence often requires religious justification, because war is negatively valued as undesirable. Non-violence also is accompanied by religious justification because it is frequently negatively valued as ineffective. Dr. Marshood said that religion must choose between disassociating itself from violence, or taking an active role in promoting peace. "Certainly, one of the challenges of humanity in the new millennium is to find ways to form a civilization that is inclusive, in which all human groups have an equal status, where the otherness is no longer needed."

*His Eminence, Jeremiasz*

*Archbishop of Wroclaw and Szczecin, Poland*

Archbishop Jeremiasz arrived and was invited to say a few

---

---

*Now has a light and a clear Book come to you from God, by which God will guide him who shall follow after His good pleasure, to paths of peace, and will bring them out of the darkness to the light, by His will: and to the straight path will He guide them.*

*Sura 5:18*

---

---

words. He apologized for being late and said that he was very happy to be at the meeting. He said that it was the first time he had ever been at a meeting with Christians, Jews, and Muslims all in the same place. He saw the conference and the work of the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding as very important for the future of all people.

## *Discussion*

There was a short discussion about whether or not God is One or should God be understood more from a pluralistic perspective. Several people noted that God has many religious expressions and apparently, even the *Shema* ("Here O Israel") is a plural noun. However, the verbal consensus of the group was that religions should not seek a forced "integration" or unity that would synthesize all of the religions into a new one. Rather, unity can be found in the rich diversity of different religions and the respect offered to each.

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 1998**

## *"The Roots of Peace in the Koran"*

*Amira Shamma Abdin*

*Professor of Islamic Culture*

*Leo Beck College, London, England*

Amira Abdin began by saying, "Peace be upon you and God's Mercy and His blessings," the obligatory form of greeting in Islam. She said that Islam is not only a theology, it is also a framework of a socio-political identity. She explained that the Qur'an is a book of faith from which Muslims derive their laws, ethics, and theology that they need in order to define the type of human society that God desires. "The Qur'an is believed to be, literally, the Word of God. Hence, the Word was made Book. The Qur'an in Islamic thought is comparable to Jesus in the Christian tradition, in the sense that both are perceived as the central revelations of God. The Sunna's (the reported sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad) position could be compared to the Bible's position in Christianity."

The Arabic word for surrender is 'Islam' which comes from the root SLM, from which also comes the word 'salam' or 'peace.' As such, the name of the religion Islam combines the meanings of surrendering to God and peace. Mrs. Abdin said that God has ordained that there be different religious

communities on earth and that they must all respect one another. Discrimination is forbidden on any basis including religion, because it is God's will that there be different religions on earth until the last day. A Muslim must believe in the brotherhood of humans which must be protected by the moral values of equality, justice, and honest and fair dealings as stipulated in the Qur'an—even between enemies or those one dislikes.

Mrs. Abdin identified "religious particularism" and "exclusivism" as two of the main reasons for intolerance and violence. She said that the notion of equality within pluralism should not pose a threat to one's own beliefs and absolute truths. Believing in one's truths does not mean that one is disrespectful toward the other's truths. She said, "In my experience, the more I understood about the truths of others, and how they view them, the clearer my own truths became, and the more I understood my beliefs." Unfortunately some people are threatened by modernity and selectively and narrowly justify their violent actions by quoting the Qur'an. Mrs. Abdin said, "There are 14 levels of jihad. The highest level and the 'Greatest Jihad' is the exertion of effort against one's own evil or sinful inclinations. The next 11 levels are all directed towards peaceful exertion of effort against the ills of society, using peaceful methods such as the jihad of the tongue and the pen. The 'Smallest Jihad' as it is legally defined, is the jihad with the sword, which is only permitted as a last resort in defense of freedom of belief and in defense of one's homeland when it is threatened."

Mrs. Abdin then discussed the problem of texts,

---

---

*"Religious people must be careful not to indulge in selective literalism when they are dealing with their texts, otherwise they might risk falling into the trap of misguided interpretations, as is the case with hard line extremists and all those who use religion as an excuse or an umbrella for violence and for their political agendas."*

Mrs. Abdin

---

---



Muslim scholars, Abdul Palazzi and Amira Abdin respond to questions.

hermeneutics, and selective readings of the Qur'an by some people to justify violence, alcohol consumption, and gambling. She pointed out that a responsible interpretation of any text should be one that takes into account the full understanding of the underlying unity of the text and the totality and essence of its message. She said, "Religious people must be careful not to indulge in selective literalism when they are dealing with their texts, otherwise they might risk falling into the trap of misguided interpretations, as is the case with hard line extremists and all those who use religion as an excuse or an umbrella for violence and for their political agendas." With this in mind, Mrs. Abdin said that the concept of pluralism and living in peace with others is so fundamental in Islam that God has interwoven it into the most sacred of Islamic institutions, the nuclear family. Muslims are permitted to marry non-Muslims and are allowed to eat the food of non-Muslims and to befriend them as in-laws, relatives, and friends. She concluded by saying that in many periods of Islamic history, the socio-political situation had overridden the possibility of applying the pluralistic and peaceful ethos of Islam. However, putting this Islamic ethos of pluralism and peaceful coexistence into practice is now possible.

## Response

Professor Abdul Hadi Palazzi

Cultural Institute of the Islamic Community of Italy

Professor Palazzi spoke about the challenges of interpreting history and highlighted the relationship between religion

continued on next page

and politics. He said that government should be based on the consensus and choice of the people. He believes that a mutual consensus is the best path for respect and peace, which is why a mufti is a judge, and a Kalif is a leader. Islam did not intend for the leaders to be separated from the state.

Professor Palazzi then spoke of the conditions for a jihad. Much like the Christian "Just War Theory," a jihad of war must be defense, proportionate, and a last resort when all ideas for peace have been exhausted. He said that at one time Muslims believed that they should expand Islam to the whole world. The modern interpretation is to coexist and cooperate with other peoples and religions. He said that in order to cultivate values and peace, religious leaders must strengthen the family, community, and religious values. Muslims must be prudent in their actions and civil war is always most undesirable—even if there is a cruel sultan. He agreed with the other Muslim speakers who had stressed that the Koran outlawed all violence. He said, "The atrocities committed in Algeria have no relation whatever to authentic Islam."

The main issue for Islam, according to Professor Palazzi, is religious freedom, more than possession of land. He said that Muslims place a high priority on improving relations with all human beings as the prophet Mohammed demonstrated when he established a polity on the Arabian peninsula at Medina.

## Response

*Rev. Dr. Hans Ucko*  
*Executive Secretary, World Council of Churches*  
*Office on Interreligious Relations*  
*Geneva, Switzerland*

Rev. Dr. Ucko warned that religions still have the potential to incite wars, and, as such, have a grave responsibility to "foster a spirituality for life and cultures of justice." He said that religious language becomes twisted in politics and people must try to keep proper interpretation of sacred texts in the context of the whole scripture.

Addressing the phenomenon of violence, he said that it seems true that violence is a part of human nature and human interaction. It is equally true, however, that violence comes from structures and societies that keep people from having their genuine needs being met. Therefore, he said, "Leaders must build peace through justice and not use reli-

gion to legitimate oppressive structures." He outlined six ways to build justice and peace: 1) Admit personal and communal failures; 2) Seek authentic justice as the foundation for peace; 3) Believe that peace is practical and possible; 4) Foster local and national communities of creativity and holistic trust; 5) Foster a spirituality for life where a culture of justice, openness to the other, trust, and art can flourish; and 6) Remember that things which people can do together, they should not do alone.

## Discussion

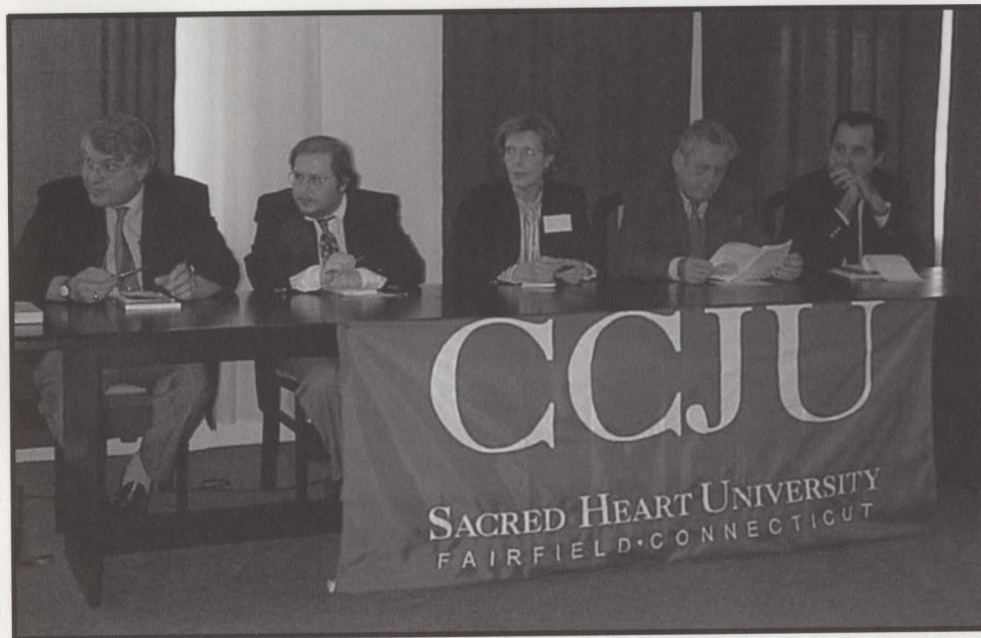
Bishop John Brown, Episcopal bishop Emeritus of Cyprus and the Gulf, chaired the morning session. The discussion focused around the need for respect for others as the basis for interfaith dialogue that would allow a theology of peace, truth, and justice to prevail. All agreed that since nations have been in dialogue for 50 years, there can also be a dialogue between religions. The group also concurred that peace is not only the cessation of war but the authentic heritage of those who follow God. Recalling Cardinal Daly's paper, several participants said that God's peace is a gift and it is radically different from a secular, pacifist agreement in both intention and result. Racism, sexism, ignorance, oppression, injustice, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and abortion were all mentioned as obstacles to God's gift of peace becoming a reality.

## WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

### *"The Media and Its Role in the Promotion of Violence or Peace."*

*Richard Chesnoff: Chair*  
*Senior Correspondent, U.S. News and World Report*  
*New York, USA*

A roundtable discussion with media people from Argentina, Europe, and the United States occurred Wednesday afternoon. A lively exchange ensued between journalists covering the event and the religious leaders. Richard Chesnoff, reporter for U.S. News & World Report and a columnist for the New York Daily News chaired the news and media session. He and his colleagues were ready and willing to engage in the discussion that was both critical and informative. It



Richard Chesnoff, U.S. News and World Report (far left), chairs a session on the media and its role in the promotion of violence or peace.

tion of news becoming nothing more than a “factoid;” that is, are commentary and facts getting so blurred and distorted when re-reported by others, that nothing is reliable?

All of the media people agreed that there is a difference between what is public interest and what is of interest to the public. They also said that it is their primary responsibility to never intentionally or knowingly mislead others and to state events as objectively as possible despite the constraints that some editors place on them.

When the panelists were asked how to get more accurate and sympathetic media coverage, the panel responded that it might be necessary for religious leaders to employ media specialists or public relations firms to advance their message and causes.

was clear to everyone that the media has the difficult task of presenting news in a balanced way, especially when the market seems to be calling for sensationalism. As one reporter said, “Religion doesn’t sell as well as scandal or violence. We all try to be responsible in the handling of information, but unfortunately, newspapers, television, and the like are owned and operated by people other than reporters and journalists, who want to see a profit.”

Several complex issues were discussed which resulted in questions that will need further study and dialogue. A summary of those questions follows:

- Is a “balanced” report a valid way of communicating the story? For example, if 400,000 young people are very happy with a certain march and four are not, is it appropriate to give those four people the same amount and kind of time and attention on television?
- Should all speakers on a particular topic or at a particular event be afforded the same consideration, even when there is wide disparity in their expertise?
- Are religious and moral values sifted out of the media to reduce negative impact by the public, or are they militantly excluded?
- How objective can the media be with the trend in news to be packaged and programmed to sell?
- Is the passing on of information and communica-

## WEDNESDAY EVENING

### *Summary Presentations*

*Imam W. Deen Mohammed*  
 Leader, Muslim/American Society  
 Chicago, Illinois, USA

Rabbi Jack Bemporad, Director of the Center for Interreligious Understanding at Ramapo College, N.J., chaired the evening and introduced Imam Mohammed as “a strong, gentle man.” Imam Mohammed said, “In a place where the human soul has plummeted so low, we are gathered and have risen so high. This is truth, to know, love, and respect God in each other.”

Imam Mohammed expressed his convictions that this conference was a success because it brought the participants closer to their essence and original identity as God’s family and God’s people. In order to be a part of God’s people an individual must soften his or her demanding self with love, overly-critical self with hope, and violent self with faith. The

*continued on next page*

---

---

*“If your Jewish identity does not lead you to a love of the other who is not a Jew, and to the love of universal humanity, then your Jewish identity and your understanding of what it means to love your Jewish identity and love a fellow Jew, is fundamentally flawed; it's not authentic.”*

Rabbi Rosen

towards others not just on the basis of the universal principle of our common humanity, but also out of recognition and respect for our different particularities.”

William H. Cardinal Keeler  
Archbishop of Baltimore, Maryland  
Cardinal Keeler said that people must not lose their beautiful religious identities or hope. Religion can and must restore hope. He said the world youth days were

---

---

Imam said, “The world is a beautiful and joyful place when we accommodate the soul and let it reside at home with peace. . . . This conference has better prepared my soul and I am happy about that.”

Rabbi David Rosen  
Executive Director of A.D.L., Israel

Rabbi Rosen began by speaking about the subjectivity and objectivity of scriptural texts. He warned of the socio-cultural and political influences of the dark side of religion and the selective reading of texts and invited the participants to “move beyond the smaller circles of our identities to the wider circles of commonality.” He said that the consistent teachings of Israel must be for peace and that all people must be included in the promise of peace because peace is an absolute commandment of God.

Rabbi Rosen said that universalism makes sense in our particularity because every human life is created in the divine life. He continued, “If your Jewish identity does not lead you to a love of the other who is not a Jew, and to the love of universal humanity, then your Jewish identity and your understanding of what it means to love your Jewish identity and love a fellow Jew, is fundamentally flawed; it's not authentic.”

Rabbi Rosen concluded by saying that the challenge for religious leaders is to create feelings and situations of security and openness to the other. “Without security and an openness to the other, there will be fear, scapegoating, stereotyping, and demonizing—not the true peace promised Jerusalem. . . . ‘The other’ is the litmus test of religion. Insecurity breeds minimalism and revenge. . . . Real peace will only be accomplished when “our religions teach respect

magnificent attestations of hope and faith and that he found personal encouragement from the example of Pope John Paul II who travels all over the world to bring peace and hope to others.

Cardinal Keeler also expressed hope for the year 2000 and the future. He said, “The work for the jubilee year is

---

---

*“And I believe that these days have been another sign to me. As you people of faith, openness, and trust have reached out to each other, please God, may they be bridges that will bear a lot of traffic.”*

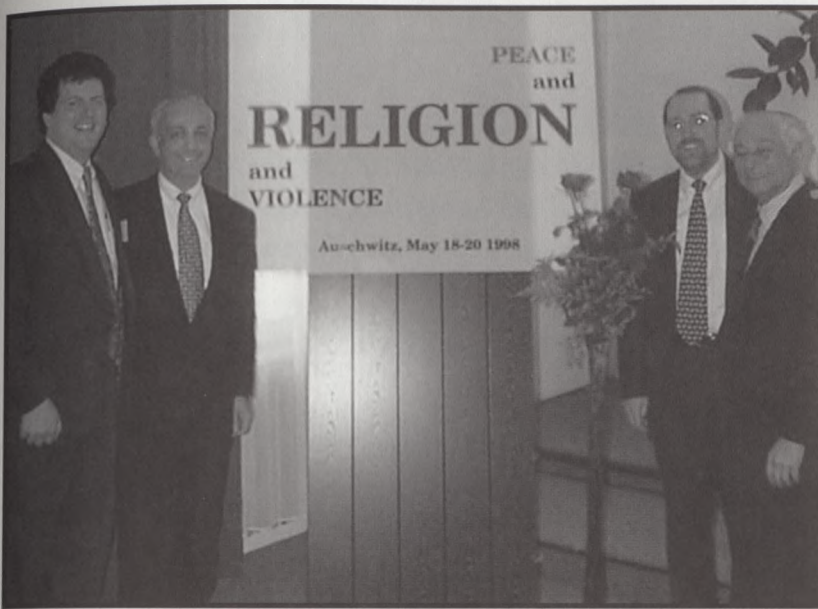
Cardinal Keeler

---

---

building social justice and peace in the world.” To accomplish this, people of faith should repent of their failings and “move beyond triumphalism to our true identity as God's people.” Cardinal Keeler said that there are problems of religious indifference, loss of transcendence, ethical confusion which negatively impacts identity and family, confusion over the content of faith, and violation of human rights by totalitarian governments. However, he asserted that the jubilee can be a new beginning marked by humble companionship, forgiveness, and releasing those in bondage. He also encouraged the collaboration of art and music for interreligious activities.





*The completion of a successful conference: Dr. Coppola, Dr. Cernera, Dr. Forget, and Rabbi Ehrenkranz enjoy a relaxed moment.*

## *Looking Forward*

One does not expect monumental accomplishments at a three-day conference. However, it was clear that new friendships had been formed and trust had been strengthened through honest dialogue. Archbishop Jeremiasz said that this was the first time he had been at a meeting like this where people of different faiths could share ideas and break bread in peace. Cardinal Cahal Daly called the conference an "important step" toward better interfaith relations. He said that Muslims who often felt left out of interreligious dialogue had been a "special presence." Dr. Samuel Pizar said, "This conference was a solid step forward in building trust. The time was right for sowing the seeds of friendship."

The Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding will use the proceedings of this Auschwitz conference, as well as supplemental

papers, as a teaching tool when it offers other conferences around the world. Rabbi Ehrenkranz said, "All genuine religious leaders are trying to bring their people toward a peaceful understanding of their faith. We can help."

## *Acknowledgments*

The conference "Religion and Violence, Religion and Peace," held in Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland on May 18-20, 1998 was sponsored by the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding and the Center for Dialogue and Prayer in Auschwitz, Poland, in association with Casa Argentina in Jerusalem; Inter-America, New York; and Interfaith International, Buenos Aires and Jerusalem; with the endorsement of International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, Chicago; Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, New York; Three Faiths Forum, London; and The World Conference of Religion and Peace, USA.

The conference was made possible in part by the generous support of The Rich Foundation, Israel; Mr. and Mrs. Barry Sternlicht, Connecticut; Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Roxe, Connecticut; Mr. Edward Pizek, Pennsylvania; B.L. Manager Foundation, Connecticut; Mr. and Mrs. Mauro C. Romita, New York; Castle Oil Corporation, New York; The Jerome Belson Foundation, New York; and Mr. Stephen J. Sweeney, New York. ❖

Finally, Cardinal Keeler expressed hope in the recent signs of more people turning to God in prayer for guidance and joining with other believers to work for peace and justice. He mentioned John Paul II as a model who embraced the rabbis last year at the Eucharistic congress in Poland as a sign that we must all be bridge builders. Cardinal Keeler concluded by saying, "And I believe that these days have been another sign to me. As you people of faith, openness, and trust have reached out to each other, please God, may they be bridges that will bear a lot of traffic."

### *Rabbi Ehrenkranz*

Rabbi Ehrenkranz concluded the conference by expressing his gratitude to all of the participants, especially to his wife, Sandra Ehrenkranz and Fr. Piotr Wrona of the Center for Prayer and Dialogue, for all of their hospitality and efforts in facilitating the food and accommodations. He said, "I've expanded my friendships and this has been a marvelous experience. I believe that one giant step has been begun here now and I hope that we will all run with the ball. As the years go by, we'll meet together in the knowledge that we've taken a second, and a third, and a fourth step. Who knows how many miles we will travel together? With God's blessing, I know we will see a better world."

---

---

*I have come and I kneel on this Golgotha of the modern world, on these tombs, largely nameless like the great Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I kneel before all the inscriptions that come one after another bearing the memory of the victims of Oswiecim in the languages: Polish, English, Bulgarian, Romany, Czech, Danish, French, Greek, Hebrew, Yiddish, Spanish, Flemish, Serbo-Croat, German, Norwegian, Russian, Romanian, Hungarian and Italian.*

*In particular I pause with you, dear participants in this encounter, before the inscription in Hebrew. This inscription awakens the memory of the people whose sons and daughters were intended for total extermination.*

*This people draws its origin from Abraham, our father in faith (cf. Romans 4:12), as was expressed by Paul of Tarsus.*

*The very people who received from God the commandment 'thou shalt not kill' itself experienced in a special measure what is meant by killing.*

*It is not permissible for anyone to pass by this inscription with indifference.*

*Homily of Pope John II, Auschwitz, June 7, 1979.*

---

---



*Conference participants pause for prayer before a meal at the Center for Dialogue and Prayer of Auschwitz.*

# Auschwitz Commemoration

## German and Polish Bishops

### *German Bishops: Re-examine Relationships with the Jews\**

This issue of the *Perspective* features a reflection piece by the German and Polish bishops. Their statements commemorate the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Poland. The German and Polish bishops had hoped to issue a joint statement, but in early January canceled that plan and instead decided to issue separate statements.

*“Auschwitz faces us Christians with the question of what relationship we have with the Jews and whether this relationship corresponds to the spirit of Jesus Christ,” the German Catholic bishops’ conference said in a Jan. 23 statement commemorating the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland. “Today the fact is weighing heavily on our minds that there were but individual initiatives to help persecuted Jews,” the bishops said. “Christians did not offer due resistance to racial anti-Semitism” during the time of the Third Reich. “Many times there was failure and guilt among Catholics. Not a few of them got involved in the ideology of National Socialism and remained unmoved in the face of the crimes committed against Jewish-owned property and the life of the Jews,” and others “paved the way for crimes or even became criminals themselves,” the bishops said. “In the church there must not be any room for or consent to hostility toward Jews.” Respecting the autonomy of Judaism, the church must also “learn anew that she is descended from Israel and remains linked to its patrimony concerning faith, ethos and liturgy.” The statement follows, translation provided by the German bishops’ conference.*

**I**n January 27, 1945, the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Auschwitz-Birkenau were liberated. Numerous people were murdered there in a terrible manner: Poles, Russians, Rom and Sinti people as well as members of other nations. The overwhelming majority of prisoners and victims in this camp consisted of Jews. Therefore Auschwitz

has become the symbol of the extermination of European Jewry, which is called *Holocaust* or—using the Hebrew term—*Shoah*.

The crime against the Jews was planned and put into action by the National Socialist rulers in Germany. The “unprecedented crime” which was the *Shoah* (Pope John Paul II, June 9, 1991) still raises many questions which we must not evade. The commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz gives German Catholics the opportunity to re-examine their relationship with the Jews.

At the same time this day recalls the fact that Auschwitz is also part of the Polish history of suffering, and burdens the relationship between Poles and Germans.

**I**l Already during earlier centuries, Jews were exposed to persecution, oppression, expulsion and even to mortal danger. Many looked for and found refuge in Poland. However, there were also places and regions in Germany where Jews could live relatively untroubled. Since the 18th century, there was a new chance of a peaceful coexistence in Germany. Jews decisively contributed toward the development of German science and culture. Nevertheless, an anti-Jewish attitude remained, also within the church.

This was one of the reasons why, during the years of the Third Reich, Christians did not offer due resistance to racial anti-Semitism. Many times there was failure and guilt among Catholics. Not a few of them got involved in the ideology of National Socialism and remained unmoved in the face of the crimes committed against Jewish-owned property and the life of the Jews. Others paved the way for crimes or even became criminals themselves.

It is unknown how many people were horrified at the disappearance of their Jewish neighbors and yet were not strong enough to raise their voices in protest. Those who rendered aid to others, thereby risking their own lives, frequently did not receive support.

Today the fact is weighing heavily on our minds that there were but individual initiatives to help persecuted Jews

continued on next page

---

---

*In the church there must not be any room for or consent to hostility toward Jews. Christians must not harbor aversion, dislike and even less, feelings of hatred for Jews and Judaism. Wherever such an attitude comes to light, they have the duty to offer public and express resistance.*

---

---

and that even the pogroms of November 1938 were not followed by public and express protest; i.e., when hundreds of synagogues were set on fire and vandalized, cemeteries were desecrated, thousands of Jewish-owned shops were demolished, innumerable dwellings of Jewish families were damaged and looted, people were ridiculed, ill-treated and even killed.

The retrospect on the events of November 1938 and on the terror regime of the National Socialists during 12 years visualizes the heavy burden of history. It recalls "that the church, which we proclaim as holy and which we honor as a mystery, is also a sinful church and in need of conversion" (statement by the German and Austrian bishops' conferences on the 50th anniversary of the November 1938 pogroms).

The failure and guilt of that time have also a church dimension. We are reminded of the fact when quoting the witness given by the joint synod of dioceses in the Federal Republic of Germany:

We are that country whose recent political history was darkened by the attempt to systematically exterminate the Jewish people. And in this period of National Socialism—despite the exemplary behavior of some individuals and groups—we were nevertheless, as a whole, a church community who kept on living their life in turning their back too often on the fate of this persecuted Jewish people, who looked too fixedly at the threat to their own institutions and who remained silent about the crimes committed against the Jews and Judaism. . . . The practical sincerity of our will of renewal is also linked to the confession of this guilt and the willingness to painfully learn from this history of guilt of our country and of our church as well" ("Our Hope," resolution of Nov. 22, 1975).

We request the Jewish people to hear this word of conversion and will of renewal.

# III

Auschwitz faces us Christians with the question of what relationship we have with the Jews and whether this relationship corresponds to the spirit of Jesus Christ. Anti-Semitism is "a sin against God and humanity," as Pope John Paul II has said many times. In the church there must not be any room for or consent to hostility toward Jews. Christians must not harbor aversion, dislike and even less, feelings of hatred for Jews and Judaism. Wherever such an attitude comes to light, they have the duty to offer public and express resistance.

The church respects the autonomy of Judaism. Simultaneously she has to learn anew that she is descended from Israel and remains linked to its patrimony concerning faith, ethos and liturgy. Wherever it is possible, Christian and Jewish communities should cultivate mutual contacts. We have to do everything in our power to enable Jews and Christians in our country to live together as good neighbors. In this way they will make their own distinctive contributions to a Europe whose past was darkened by the Shoah and which, in future, is to become a continent of solidarity.

## *Poland's Bishops: The Victims of Nazi Ideology\**

*"Extermination, called Shoah, has weighed painfully not only in relations between Germans and Jews, but also to a great extent in relations between Jews and Poles, who together, though not to the same degree, were victims of Nazi ideology," the bishops of Poland said in a statement Jan. 23 for the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, located in Poland. The statement of Poland's bishops was signed by Bishop Stanislaw Gadecki, chairman of the bishops' Commission for Dialogue With Judaism. The statement said. "Seeing the Nazi extermination of the Jews, many Poles reacted with heroic courage and sacrifice, risking their lives and that of their families," it said. "Unfortunately," it added, "there were also those who were capable of actions unworthy of being called Christian." The statement said that "the creators of Auschwitz were the Nazi Germans, not Poles. Everything that symbolizes this death camp is a result of a National Socialist ideology that was not born in Poland." It said, "There probably isn't a Polish family that hasn't lost someone close at Auschwitz or at another camp." And it said the only way to guarantee that the hatred symbolized by Auschwitz will*

*not have the last word in this world "is to educate future generations in the spirit of mutual respect, tolerance and love." The following translation of the text is based on the translation provided by the Polish bishops' conference.*

Half a century has passed since the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp on Jan. 27, 1945. Once again our attention is drawn to the painful reality and symbolism of this camp, where more than 1 million Jews, Poles (70,000-75,000), Gypsies (21,000), Russians (15,000) and other nationalities (10,000-15,000) found an atrocious death.

Only a few months into the war, in the spring of 1940, the Nazi Germans created the Auschwitz concentration camp on occupied Polish territory annexed to the Third Reich. At the beginning of its existence, the first prisoners and victims were thousands of Poles, mainly intelligentsia, members of the resistance movement as well as clergy and people representing almost all walks of life. There probably isn't a Polish family that hasn't lost someone close at Auschwitz or at another camp. With great respect we bow our heads before the infinite suffering which was often accepted in a deep Christian spirit.

An eloquent example is the heroic figure of Father Maximilian Kolbe, who sacrificed his life for a fellow prisoner in August 1941. He was beatified by Pope Paul VI and canonized by Pope John Paul II. His victory, motivated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, bears witness to the power of love and goodness in a world of outrage and violence.

Almost from the beginning, Polish Jews were sent to this camp, as part of Polish society, to be destroyed. Since 1942, the KL Auschwitz-Birkenau complex, as well as other camps in occupied Poland, as a result of the Wannsee Conference became extermination camps to realize the criminal ideology of the "final solution," in other words, the plan to murder all European Jews.

The Nazis transported to the death camps Jews from all European countries occupied by Hitler. Not only Auschwitz, but also Majdanek, Treblinka, Belzec, Chelmno and others were located in occupied Poland by the Germans as places to exterminate Jews, because this was where the majority of European Jews lived and, therefore, such a Nazi crime could be better hidden from world public opinion in a country totally occupied and even partly annexed to the Third Reich.

It is estimated today that more than 1 million Jews died at Auschwitz-Birkenau alone. Consequently, even though members of other nations also perished at this

camp, nevertheless, Jews consider this camp a symbol of the total extermination of their nation. "The very people who received from God the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill,' itself experienced in a particular way what is meant by killing" (Pope John Paul II, homily at Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, June 7, 1979).

Extermination, called *Shoah*, has weighed painful not only in relations between Germans and Jews, but also to a great extent in relations between Jews and Poles, who together, though not to the same degree, were the victims of Nazi ideology. Because they lived in close proximity, they became involuntary witnesses to the extermination of Jews. Regretfully, it has to be stated that for many years Auschwitz-Birkenau was treated by the Communist regime almost entirely in terms of an anti-fascist struggle that did not help to convey the extent of the extermination of Jews.

It must be underlined that Poles and Jews have lived in this country for centuries, and although now and again conflicts did arise, they considered it their homeland. Driven out of western Europe, Jews found refuge in Poland. Consequently, Poland often had the reputation of being *paradisus Judaerorum* ("a Jewish paradise"), because here they could live according to their customs, religion and culture. Contrary to many European countries, until the time of World War II, Jews were never driven out of Poland. About 80 percent of Jews living in the world today can trace their descent through their parents and/or grandparents to roots in Poland.

The loss of Polish independence and Poland's partition by Russia, Austria and Prussia—which lasted more than 120 years—brought about, in the midst of other dramatic consequences, a deterioration in Polish-Jewish relations. In the period of time between World War I and World War II, when Poland, after regaining her independence in 1918, sought to find forms of her own identity, new conflicts arose. Their underlying factors were of psychological, economic, political and religious nature but never racist. Despite the anti-Semitism of some circles, shortly before the outbreak of World War II, when Hitler's repressions intensified, it was Poland that accepted thousands of Jews from Germany.

Seeing the Nazi extermination of Jews, many Poles reacted with heroic courage and sacrifice, risking their lives and that of their families. The virtues of the Gospel and solidarity with the suffering and the persecuted motivated almost every convent in the general government to give

*continued on next page*

Jewish children refuge. Many Poles lost their lives, in defiance of threats of the death penalty with regard to themselves and their family members, because they dared to shelter Jews. It should be mentioned that, as a consequence of giving refuge to Jews, the rule of common responsibility was applied to Poles. Often whole families, from children to grandparents, were killed for harboring Jews. In acknowledgment of this, thousands were awarded with medals "righteous among the nations of the world." Nameless others also brought help.

Unfortunately, there were also those who were capable of actions unworthy of being called Christian. There were those who not only blackmailed, but also gave away Jews in hiding into German hands. Nothing can justify such an attitude, though the inhumane time of war and the cruelty of the Nazis caused at times that Jews, themselves tormented by the occupier, were forced to hand over their brothers into the hands of the Germans. Once again, we recall the words of the Polish bishops' pastoral letter that was read at all Catholic churches and chapels on Jan. 20, 1991, which stated: "In spite of numerous heroic examples of Polish Christians, there were those who remained indifferent to

---

---

*Unfortunately, there were also those who were capable of actions unworthy of being called Christian. There were those who not only blackmailed, but also gave away Jews in hiding into German hands. Nothing can justify such an attitude, though the inhumane time of war and the cruelty of the Nazis caused at times that Jews, themselves tormented by the occupier, were forced to hand over their brothers into the hands of the Germans.*

---

---

that inconceivable tragedy. In particular, we mourn the fact that there were also those among Catholics who in some way had contributed to the death of Jews. They will forever remain a source of remorse in the social dimension."

The creators of Auschwitz were the Nazi Germans, not

Poles. Everything that symbolizes this death camp is a result of a National Socialist ideology that was not born in Poland. Another totalitarian system, similar to the Nazi, which was communism, gathered many millions in a harvest of death. Nazism also meant trampling on the dignity of the human being as an image of God. There existed a dramatic community of fate between Poles and Jews in constraint and ruth-

---

---

*The half century that has passed since the liberation of KL Auschwitz-Birkenau obliges us to express a clear objection to all signs of disregard for human dignity such as racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and anti-Polish attitudes.*

---

---

less extermination. However, it was the Jews who became the victims of the Nazi plan of systematic and total liquidation. "An insane ideology decided on this plan in the name of a wretched form of racism and carried it out mercilessly" (Pope John Paul II, beatification of Edith Stein, Cologne, Germany, May 1, 1987).

The world in which the cruelties of Auschwitz were carried out was also a world redeemed and at the same time a world of challenge, even after the *Shoah*, from where arises the message to all Christians that they should reveal God in their actions and not contribute to the questioning of his presence. God was and continues to be everywhere. What is satanic and represents hatred never originates from God but from man, who submits himself to the influence of the Evil One and doesn't respect the dignity of the human being or God's commandments.

The half century that has passed since the liberation of KL Auschwitz-Birkenau obliges us to express a clear objection to all signs of disregard for human dignity such as racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and anti-Polish attitudes. Living in a country marked with the burden of a horrible event called *Shoah*, with Edith Stein, who died at Auschwitz because she was a Jew, with faith and total confidence in God, the Father of all humanity, we emphatically

repeat: "Hatred will never have the last word in this world" (John Paul II's message prior to visiting the Federal Republic of Germany, April 25, 1987).

The only guarantee of this is to educate future generations in the spirit of mutual respect, tolerance and love

according to the recommendations contained in the Vatican's "Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Catholic Church" (June 24, 1985). ❖

\*Reprinted with permission from *Origins*.

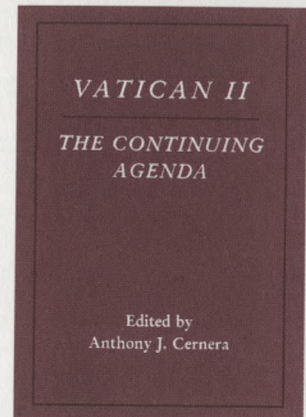
## Vatican II: The Continuing Agenda

Edited by Anthony J. Cernera, Ph.D.

*Vatican II: The Continuing Agenda*, takes up the task of examining the spirit of Vatican II at work during a period of rapid changes and profound transitions within the global community.

Contributing authors are:

- ▶ John Borelli, Ph.D., Director, Institute for Interreligious Leadership
- ▶ Anthony J. Cernera, Ph.D., President, Sacred Heart University
- ▶ Brigid Curtin Frein, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Scranton
- ▶ Jeffrey Gros, Ph.D., Associate Director, Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, National Conference of Bishops
- ▶ Jan Michael Joncas, S.L.D., Assistant Professor of Theology, University of St. Thomas
- ▶ James F. Keenan, S.T.D., Associate Professor of Moral Theology, Weston Jesuit School of Theology
- ▶ Georgia Masters Keightley, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Theology, Trinity College
- ▶ H. Richard McCord Jr., Ed.D., Executive Director, N.C.C.B. Secretariat for Family Laity, Women and Youth
- ▶ William C. McDonough, S.T.D., Assistant Professor of Moral Theology, St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity and University of St. Thomas
- ▶ Oliver J. Morgan, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Counseling and Human Services, University of Scranton
- ▶ David O'Brien, Ph.D., Loyola Professor of Roman Catholic Studies, College of the Holy Cross
- ▶ Margaret A. Palliser, O.P., S.T.D., Director of Mission Effectiveness, Sacred Heart University



278 pp 6x9 Hard Cover ISBNI-888112-02-6 \$23.00

Please process my order for *Vatican II: The Continuing Agenda*

First Book @ \$26.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Additional Books @ \$24.00 / Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*\$23.00 hard cover, plus shipping and handling (\$3.00 1st book; \$1 each additional book)

Mail this form, with payment to:

**Sacred Heart University Press, 5151 Park Avenue, Fairfield, CT 06432-1000**

Check enclosed (Make checks payable to *Sacred Heart University Press*)

Ship to Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business/Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

## Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University

Board of Directors Winter 1999

Dr. Anthony J. Cernera, Chairman of the Board

Mr. Amir Al-Islam  
Mrs. Renee Beningson  
Mr. Richard J. Concannon  
Dr. Howard Ehrenkranz  
Rabbi Joseph H. Ehrenkranz  
Mr. Jack Eisner  
Dr. Bernard W. Gamson  
Mrs. Roslyn Goldstein  
Mr. Joel Greenblatt

Dr. Lauren Kampton  
Mrs. Louella Lieberman  
Mr. Gregory Milbank  
Mr. Stephen Osman  
Mr. Edward J. Piszek  
Mr. Mauro C. Romita  
Rev. David Spollett  
Mr. Barry S. Sternlicht  
Mr. Baruch Tenenbaum

---

### Advisors

Mr. William Flynn  
His Eminence, John Cardinal O'Connor  
His Eminence, William Cardinal Keeler

Rabbi Mordecai Waxman  
Mr. Jeffrey S. Maurer  
Professor Elie Wiesel

This publication was made possible by the generous contributions of the Rich Foundation, Tel Aviv, Israel

**CCJU**

The Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding  
of Sacred Heart University  
5151 Park Avenue  
Fairfield, Connecticut 06432-1000

**Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Sacred Heart  
University**

**Return Service Requested**