Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992
WEDNESDAY, MAY 11

10:00 AM  CONCURRENT COMMISSION BUSINESS MEETINGS

A. NATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION  Alvin Room

Presiding
Bruce M. Ramer, Los Angeles

B. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STEERING COMMITTEE  Uris Room

Presiding
Miles Jaffe, Detroit

12:00 Noon  BOARD OF GOVERNORS LUNCHEON  Alvin Room

Presiding
Leo Nevas, Fairfield County

Presentation of Interfaith Medallion
Sir Sigmund Sternberg, Chair
International Council of Christians & Jews

Response
Marc H. Tanenbaum, Director
International Relations Department

3:00 PM  WOMEN'S ISSUES STEERING COMMITTEE (members only)  Palace Room

Presiding
Ruth Septee, Philadelphia
WEDNESDAY, MAY 11

4:00 PM OPENING PLENARY SESSION Ballroom B

Presiding
Steven L. Swig, San Francisco
82nd Annual Meeting Chair

ISRAEL IN THE MIND OF AMERICA

Remarks
Ben J. Wattenberg, Co-Editor
Public Opinion

Discussion
Address
Hon. Shimon Peres
Vice Premier & Foreign Minister of Israel

Video presentation from
WWOR-TV's "Israel at 40"

Presentation of Israel 40th Anniversary
Media Citation to WWOR-TV
Edward E. Elson, Atlanta

Response
Farrell Meisel,
Director of Programming, WWOR-TV

6:00 PM OPENING RECEPTION Mezzanine Foyer
THURSDAY, MAY 12

8:00 AM  PLENARY BREAKFAST  Ballroom A

Presiding
David H. Peirez, Long Island

THE NEW JEWISH POLITICS

Panelists
Leonard Fein,
Founder, *Moment*

Milton Himmelfarb,
Contributing Editor, *Commentary*

The AJC Perspective
David Singer, Director
Information & Research Services Department

10:00 AM  CONCURRENT PROGRAM FORUMS  Ballroom B

A. RELIGION IN AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE

Presiding
Jack Lapin, Houston

Address
Dr. Ronald Thiemann, Dean
Harvard Divinity School

Response
Alan I. Mittleman, Program Associate
Interreligious Affairs Department

Program Implications for AJC
A. James Rudin, Director
Interreligious Affairs Department
THURSDAY, MAY 12

10:00 AM  B. 20 YEARS OF INTERGROUP RELATIONS: ENTERING A NEW ERA  Broadway Room

Presiding
Marcia Lazar, Chicago

Panelists
Birch E. Bayh, Chairman
National Institute Against Prejudice & Violence

Eleanor Holmes Norton, Visiting Fellow
Georgetown University Law Center

Murray Friedman, Vice-chair
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights & AJC Regional Director, Philadelphia

Moderator
Irving M. Levine, Director
National Affairs Department

12:00 Noon  PLENARY LUNCHEON  Ballroom C

Presiding
Leo Nevas, Fairfield County

Invocation
Rabbi Lawrence Grossman

Report of Nominating Committee
Alvin S. Hochberg, Boston

Election of New Officers & Governors

Report of the Board of Trustees
Edward E. Elson, Atlanta

Keynote Address
Bertram H. Gold, Executive Vice President
THURSDAY, MAY 12

2:00 PM  CONCURRENT NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

A. NATIONAL WOMEN'S ISSUES COMMITTEE  Broadway Room
   Presiding
   Ruth Septee, Philadelphia

   ISRAELI & AMERICAN WOMEN: COMPARISONS & CONTRASTS
   Panelists
   MK Shulamit Aloni, Israel
   Michele R. Lord, former Executive Director
   U.S. Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues

   Response
   Lesley Hazleton, author
   *Israeli Women: The Reality Behind the Myth*

B. NATIONAL LEGAL COMMITTEE  Uris Room
   Presiding
   Elliot Goldstein, Atlanta

C. SOVIET JEWS TASK FORCE  Julliard Room
   Presiding
   Richard Maass, Westchester

5:00 PM  APPEAL FOR HUMAN RELATIONS COCKTAIL RECEPTION  Broadway Room
   In honor of Robert H. Haines

6:30 PM  GENERAL RECEPTION  Ballroom B
THURSDAY, MAY 12

7:30 PM  82nd ANNUAL DINNER  Empire State Ballroom

Presiding
Theodore Ellenoff, New York

National Anthem
Steven Zelinger, Washington, D.C.

Invocation

President's Address
Theodore Ellenoff, New York

Presentation of National Distinguished Leadership Award
Response
Robert H. Haines, New York

Greetings from Mayor Teddy Kollek in Jerusalem

Presentation of Israel 40th Anniversary Citation to the Education Corps, Israel Defense Forces
Mimi Alperin, New York

"The Moral Dilemma of the Israeli Army"
Brigadier General Nehemia Dagan,
Senior Education Officer, Israel Defense Forces

Entertainment
The Dudaim, Israel

Benediction
Rev. Edward H. Flannery,
National Conference on Catholic Bishops

10:00 PM  PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION  Ballroom Foyer
FRIDAY, MAY 13

8:00 AM CONCURRENT "ACTION WHERE YOU ARE" BREAKFASTS

A. SOVIET JEWRY Uris Room

Presiding
Richard Maass, Westchester

Special Report
Morris B. Abram, President
National Conference on Soviet Jewry

Panelists
Michael L. Lapin, Orange County
Richard Rice, Chicago

B. FAMILY POLICY: ISSUES & ACTION Shubert Room

Presiding
Rita Greenland, New York

Panelists
E. Robert Goodkind, Westchester
Harriet Kelman, Washington, DC
Lynn Yannick, Westchester

C. YOUTH & BIGOTRY WORKSHOP Alvin Room

Presiding
J. Kent Friedman, Houston

Workshop Leaders
Irving M. Levine, Director
National Affairs Department

Joseph Giordano, Director
Center on Ethnicity, Behavior & Communications
FRIDAY, MAY 13

10:00 AM  PLENARY SESSION  Ballroom B

Presiding
Mimi Alperin, New York

AMERICAN JEWS & ISRAELIS:
DEFINING A COMMON AGENDA

Report of the National Task Force on American Jewish-Israeli Relations
Sholom D. Comay, Pittsburgh

Discussion & Action
Israeli Perspective
Brigadier General Nehemia Dagan,
Senior Education Officer, Israel Defense Forces

Staff Resource
Gary E. Rubin, Director of Programs

12:00 Noon  PLENARY LUNCHEON  Ballroom C

Presiding
Bruce M. Ramer, Los Angeles

Invocation
Rabbi Alan L. Mittleman

ELECTION '88: WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Panelists

Commentator
Michael Kramer, Chief Political Correspondent
U.S. News & World Report

Community Perspective
James M. Friedman, Cleveland
FRIDAY, MAY 13

2:00 PM  CONCURRENT PROGRAM FORUMS

A. AMERICAN JEWS & JAPAN: BUILDING BRIDGES OF UNDERSTANDING
   Ballroom A
   Presiding
   Martin Kellner, Los Angeles

   Panelists
   Isaac Shapiro, Esq.
   Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom
   Dr. David G. Goodman, Associate Professor
   Center for East Asian & Pacific Studies
   University of Illinois
   Future Role for AJC
   David Harris, Washington Representative

B. LEADERSHIP FOR TOMORROW'S AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY
   Ballroom B
   Presiding
   Charlotte G. Holstein, Syracuse

   Panelists
   Shoshana S. Cardin, past President
   Council of Jewish Federations
   Dr. Bernard Reisman, Director
   Hornstein Program in Jewish Communal Service, Brandeis University

   Program Implications for AJC
   Steven Bayne, Director
   Jewish Communal Affairs Department
GRAND HYATT HOTEL:

HEADQUARTERS — Belasco/Broadhurst Rooms
PRESS OFFICE — Brooks Atkinson Room
REGISTRATION — Ballroom Foyer
LEGEND: F = Fire Exit
FRIDAY, MAY 13

4:00 PM  NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP CABINET
          (members only)  Lyceum Room

          Presiding
          Jerry H. Biederman, Chicago

7:30 PM  ONEG SHABBAT  Broadway Room

          Presiding
          Maynard I. Wishner, Chicago

          TIES OR TENSIONS?: DIALOGUE WITH EMERGING
          ISRAELI LEADERS

          Discussants
          Ilana Dayan, Israel
          Richard Goodman, Orange County
          Sherry Merfish, Houston
          Gil Samsonov, Israel

9:00 PM  OPENING OF ZELIG SEGAL  Shubert Room
          JEWISH CEREMONIAL ART EXHIBIT

          Personal appearance by the artist

          Dessert Reception
SATURDAY, MAY 14

7:30 AM  CHAPTER PRESIDENTS & OFFICERS BREAKFAST  Broadway Room

Presiding
Eleanor S. Lazarus, Cincinnati

9:00 AM  SHABBAT SERVICE  Shubert Room

Led by Rabbi Debra Cantor.

10:30 AM  SHABBAT FORUM  Shubert Room

Presiding
Alfred H. Moses, Washington, DC

ISRAEL & AMERICAN JEWISH IDENTITY

Keynote Address
Leon Wieseltier, Literary Editor
The New Republic

Response
Lisa Blum, Israel

Concluding Remarks
Robert S. Rifkind, New York
SATURDAY, MAY 14

12:30 PM  PLENARY LUNCHEON  Ballroom C

Presiding  
Howard I. Friedman, Los Angeles

Invocation  
Rabbi A. James Rudin

TO MEND THE WORLD:  
THE LEGACY OF THE HOLOCAUST

Presentation of Akiba Award  
Howard A. Gilbert, Chicago

Response & Keynote Address  
Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis,  
Valley Beth Shalom

2:30 PM  INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN PLURALISM  Shubert Room

FILM SHOWING  
"Minority on Minority:  
The Psychodynamics of  
Black-Jewish Tension"
SUNDAY, MAY 15

8:00 AM
PLENARY BREAKFAST
Ballroom B

Presiding
Ronald G. Weiner, New York

CONGRESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES
ON U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONS

Panelists

10:00 AM
CLOSING PLENARY SESSION
Ballroom B

Presiding
Robert S. Jacobs, Chicago

STRATEGIC & POLITICAL REALITIES
IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Panelists
Judith Kipper, Guest Scholar, Brookings Institution
Aryeh Naor, former Israel Cabinet Secretary
Michael Widlanski, Middle East Correspondent, Cox Newspaper Syndicate

12:00 Noon
ADJOURNMENT
82nd Annual Meeting

*Steven L. Swig, Chair*

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Howard A. Gilbert  Jewish Communal Affairs Commission
Eleanor S. Lazarus  Community Services Committee
Walter F. Gips, Jr.  Budget Committee
Benedict M. Kohl  Management Committee
Jerry H. Biederman  National Membership Cabinet
Ruth Septee  National Committee on Women's Issues
Charlotte G. Holstein  National Committee on Anti-Semitism and Extremism
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Alfred H. Moses  Advisory Board of the Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations
Howard I. Friedman  Commentary Publication Committee
Lawrence Goldmuntz  Energy Committee
E. Robert Goodkind  Present Tense Advisory Board
Newton N. Minow  William E. Wiener Oral History Advisory Board
HOLD THE DATES . . .

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 27-30, 1988
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

83RD ANNUAL MEETING
MAY 17-21, 1989
WASHINGTON, DC

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

82nd Annual Meeting
May 11-15, 1988

Grand Hyatt, New York City

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Shula Bahat

Program Coordination
Marsha Turken

Meeting Arrangements
Nancy Merjos
Phyllis Booth

Headquarters
Brenda Rudzin

Registration
Sadye Olivieri

Stockroom Services
Mario Nunez

Press Room: Overall Charge
Morton Yarmo
Radio & TV
Haina Just
Print Media
Joyce Kaplan

Photographers
Janice Hyman
Eileen Foster
Adam Simms

Please note: All sessions will be recorded professionally. Cassettes may be purchased at the conclusion of each session.
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JOHN SAWSON
The American Jewish Committee

ANNUAL MEETING

REGISTRANTS

May 11-15, 1988
Grand Hyatt Hotel
New York City
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<td>Abrams, Bernard &amp; Jane</td>
<td>Laguna Hills, CA</td>
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Kahn, Charles, Jr.
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Kaminsky, Barbara
Kaufman, Stephen & Ann
Kaufmann, Richard & Manette
Kellner, Martin & Dorothy
Kempner, Harris & Peaches
Kerson, Lise
Kohl, Ben & Linda
Kohn, Rik & Nancy
Kohn, Mrs. Robert
Kornreich, Morton & Jo Anne
Kupperman, Mr. & Mrs. Abner
Kurtz-Phelan, James

Lapin, Jack & Susan
Lapin, Michael
Lautin, Susan
Lazar, Marcia
Lazarus, David & Eleanor
Leet, Glen & Mildred
Levine, Irving
Levine, Sally
Levit, Janice
Levy, Mont
Loeb, Milford
Loewenstein, Benjamin & Eleanor
Lowenthal, Mort & Eleanor
Lyttle, Hanna

Milwaukee
Atlanta
New York City
Houston
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Los Angeles
Galveston, TX
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Metro NJ
Cleveland
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Harrison, NY
Greenwich, CT
Denver

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New York City
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Cincinnati
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Boston
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New York City
St. Louis
Kansas City
Philadelphia
Stamford, CT
New York City
Maass, Richard & Dolly
Mabo, David & Terry
Markstein, Donald & Judith
Melcher, Lucille
Mendelson, Cathy
Merfish, Sherry
Merians, Melvin & Elaine
Meyer, Louise
Meyerowitz, Jerome
Miller, Bernard & Ruth
Minden, Dr. & Mrs. Percy
Miron, Stephen & Stephanie
Mirowitz, Saul & Barbara
Monasebian, Dennis
Morse-Stone, Diana
Moses, Alfred

White Plains, NY
Cincinnati
Springfield, NJ
Los Angeles
Beverly Hills
Houston
Larchmont
Westport, CT
New York City
Princeton, NJ
LaJolla, CA
Greenwich, CT
Creve Coeur, MO
New York City
Delray Beach, FL
McLean, VA

N

Nevas, Leo
Ninburg, Daniel
Nisenson, Ellen

Westport, CT
Anaheim, CA
Dallas

Arlington, VA
Newton, MA

P

Paul, Joel
Peirez, David & Elizabeth
Pellettieri, Ruth
Pelz, Robert
Petschek, Charles & Elaine
Preuss, Mr. & Mrs. Kurt
Price, Fran
Price, Michael & Jo-Ann

Bala Cynwyd, PA
Garden City, NY
Princeton, NJ
Scarsdale, NY
New Jersey
New York City
Chester, CT
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May 5, 1988

Rabbi Tanenbaum
c/o The American Jewish Committee
165 East 56 Street
New York, N.Y. 10022-2746

Dear Mark:

A long ago scheduled meeting in Washington pertaining to major issues concerning U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum will prevent me from joining you on May 11 when you will be presented with the International Interfaith Medallion.

Throughout the years you have worked hard for the cause of interfaith relations; and you are truly deserving of this award.

Please accept my warmest wishes and congratulations on an honor so well deserved.

Give my best regards to Sir Sigmund Sternberg, and Lady Hazel. My wife Chris and I would like to hear from them.

Regards,

Miles Lerman

Please direct any reply to: 1138-B Chestnut Ave.

Vineland, NJ 08360
Dear Marc,

What a disappointment not to see you on this trip, but above all I am grieved to hear about your health difficulties. And what worry for your wife!

Please rest assured that you are both in my thoughts and prayers. May this forced "menuhah" be, in the end, a blessing.

As ever,

Claire

Mme C.Huchet-Bishop
107 rue de Vaugirard
75006 Paris. France
CONGRATULATIONS ON RECEIVING THE INTERNATIONAL INTERFACE MEDALLION. WILL BE IN ENGLAND ON MAY 11 AND CANNOT BE PRESENT TO SHARE IN SUCH A MEMORABLE OCCASION.

GERALD W. LYNCH, PRESIDENT
JOHN J. COLLEGE

1304 EST

IPM40NY NYK B
BEST WISHES TO ALL IN ATTENDANCE AS YOU HONOR MARC TANENBAUM FOR HIS YEARS OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE. BUILDING BRIDGES OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN FAITH AND NATIONS IS NOT AN EASY TASK AND MARC HAS CONTRIBUTED MUCH OVER THE YEARS, WORKING WITH COMPASSION AND DEDICATION, AS WELL AS WITH SUCCESS.

MAY HE CONTINUE TO GO FROM CHAIL TO CHAIL. WITH EVERY GOOD WISH.

ABRAHAM H FOXMAN NATIONAL DIRECTOR ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF B'NAI B'RITH
623 UNITED NATIONS PLAZA
NEW YORK NY 10017

0836 EST

0851 EST

IPM40NY NYK A
AGENDA FOR INTERFAITH AWARD TO BE GIVEN TO RABBI MARC TANENBAUM BY SIR SIGMUND STERNBERG, CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS ON MAY 11, 1988 AT THE GRAND HYATT HOTEL, IN NEW YORK CITY

1) Welcome and Introduction of Sir Sigmund Sternberg - Leo Nevas

2) Sir Sigmund's Presentation of Award to Marc Tanenbaum

3) Marc Tanenbaum's Response

5/10/88
NEW YORK, May 11... The International Council of Christians and Jews awarded its Interfaith Medallion today to Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, director of international relations of the American Jewish Committee.

The award was made by Sir Sigmund Sternberg of London, chairman of the International Council of Christians and Jews, at a meeting of AJC's Board of Governors just prior to the agency's 82nd Annual Meeting, scheduled through Sunday at the Grand Hyatt Hotel here.

The Council honored Rabbi Tanenbaum, asserted Sir Sigmund, "in recognition of the pivotal and often historic contributions that he has made during the past 25 years to the advancement and mutual respect between every major branch of Christendom and world Jewry, as well as to human rights and the relief of world refugee and world hunger problems."

An internationally known leader in interfaith affairs for over 25 years -- currently as AJC's international relations director and before that as its interreligious affairs director -- Rabbi Tanenbaum has been a key figure in efforts to advance relationships between the Jewish community and the Christian and Muslim communities.

Since last December he has been chairman of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC), which coordinates relationships between major Jewish groups and the Vatican, the World Council of Churches, and other international religious bodies; and he was one of the nine-member delegation of IJCIC leaders who met last summer with Pope John Paul II and Vatican authorities in Vatican City and Castel Gandolfo.

Rabbi Tanenbaum was the only rabbi invited as guest observer at Vatican Council II, and participated in the first official audience of world Jewish leaders with Pope John Paul II in Vatican City.

/more/

Theodore Elenoff, President; Leo Nivis, Chair, Board of Governors; Robert S. Jacobs, Chair, National Executive Council; Edward E. Elson, Chair, Board of Trustees

Bertram H. Gold, Executive Vice President

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South America hq. (temporary office): 165 E. 56 St., New York, NY 10022-2746 • Mexico-Central America hq.: Edificio Nacional 520/302-303, Mexico 55, D.F.

CSAE 1707
He has a long and distinguished career in international human rights, world refugee and hunger problems, and foreign relations concerns. He has served as a member of the prestigious Human Rights Research Committee of the Foreign Policy Association's Study of Priorities for the 1980s and as consultant to the Council of Foreign Relations. He is a member of the executive board of the International Rescue Committee, the Overseas Development Council, the Breton Woods Committee, the National Peace Academy, and the American Jewish World Service.

Rabbi Tanenbaum serves as a member of the Advisory Committee of the President's Commission on the Holocaust, and is a founder and former co-chairman of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry.

Rabbi Tanenbaum has directed the landmark religious research studies examining intergroup content in Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish teaching materials in the United States, Italy, Spain, French-speaking countries, Germany and South America. These studies have been the basis of the revision of negative stereotypes in the textbooks produced in the 1970s.

A religious historian and authority on Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations, he has written and lectured extensively on the history, theology, and sociology of Judaism and Christianity.

In response, Rabbi Tanenbaum said he was grateful to the American Jewish Committee for making it possible for him to participate in history-shaping events such as Vatican Council II, together with his colleague and mentor, the late Zachariah Shuster, as well as in laying the foundations for opening the new world of Evangelical-Jewish relations with his friend, Dr. Billy Graham, and the Southern Baptist Convention, and strengthening ties with mainstream Protestants.

He lauded the AJC for supporting his participating in life saving mission on four separate trips to Southeast Asia between 1978 and 1980, which helped save thousands of lives of Vietnamese boat people, Cambodian, ethnic Chinese, and Laotian refugees.

While these have been dramatic highlights in his 25 years with AJC, Rabbi Tanenbaum said, perhaps the most enduring contribution of which he is most proud is helping organize networks of Christians and Jews in every major city in the United States, Western Europe, Central and South America, and Israel. "Jews and Christians coming together month after month, knowing each other as persons and not caricatures, collaborating on major humanitarian and social justice issues, is the richest fruit of the Jewish-Christian dialogue movement. And the best is yet to come as Jews and Christians face together a world of violence, poverty, denial of human rights and nuclear threat," he said.

The American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization. Founded in 1906, it combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people everywhere.
LIST OF GUESTS FOR THE PRESENTATION OF MEDALLION TO RABBI MARC TANENBAUM 
BY SIR SIGMUND STERNBERG, CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL 
COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS, WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 1988 
GRAND HYATT HOTEL NEW YORK AT A 
LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Banki, Paul Tanne, Mr & Mrs. Andrew
Bennett, Sir Sigmund Sternberg, Chairman of the International Council of Christians and Jews, Wednesday, May 11, 1988

Banki, Judith
Bromberg, Charney

Bennett, Dr. Georgette Bishop, Claire - What

Bondi, Jennifer Crystal, Mr. & Mrs. Lester

C.1. Early, Tracy
Ehrmann, Mr. & Mrs. Ralph
Farkas, Ervin
Freund, Tibor
Gallop, Ben

Geller, David
Gruen, George
Kovadloff, Jacob
Liskofsky, Sidney
Reznik, Rita
Rothman, Marilyn
Wolf, Gary

Goldberg, Rosalie
Kelman, Wolfe - Rabbi, Kehilath Kushner
Loweth, Elizabeth
Michelman, Henry - Syngap, Council of America
Overlander, Mr & Mrs. Fred
Patterson, Dr. & Mrs. David - Oxford Univ.
Pearlman, Louis
Phillips, Mr & Mrs. Gary

Schneier, Rabbi Arthur
Schonfeld, Moses
Sternberg, Sir Sigmund
This would be a meaningful and moving moment in my life under normal circumstances. Given my recent hospitalization, this event -- the receiving of the prestigious "Interfaith Award" of the International Council of Christians and Jews in the midst of your presence -- assumes a very special, even a rare quality of grace.

I must confess that an element of its specialness derives from the fact that this is one of the few events in my life that I did not have to arrange myself. That adds to why I am so touched and grateful for today.

Sir Sigmund Sternberg, one of the most distinguished leaders of British Jewry and a statesman of the Jewish People, and the International Council of Christians and Jews, perhaps the most representative body devoted to the improvement of relationships between Christians and Jews internationally, quite spontaneously informed me several months ago that I had been selected for this distinction in recognition of my more than 25 years of service in the advancement of Jewish-Christian understanding. That spontaneity lends the luster of authenticity to this tribute.

With your permission, I should like to take just a few moments to reflect on some of the meaning of this occasion and award to me. It is most effectively synthesized for me in the writings of Dr. Ernest Becker, a brilliant but neglected cultural anthropologist. In his book, The Denial of Death, Dr. Becker states that human beings do not in fact fear death. What people fear is dying in insignificance. That is the real terror of death. He proposes that all of us -- at least most of us -- have a need to live our lives in a way that makes a difference, significant lives that give meaning to human existence. That is our immortality, Becker writes.
All our art, literature, music, culture, even religion are ways of making a statement, leaving a landmark that we have not simply endured as animal life endures, but that we have lived lives of purpose and meaning. In short, Becker asserts, each of us has a powerful need to make a difference through our living, to help ennoble the human condition. That, he says, is true immortality.

As I have thought about my past 27 years with the American Jewish Committee, I experience feelings of deepest gratitude for AJC’s having made possible opportunities for living a life of such high meaning, enabling contributions to be made in many areas of importance to the Jewish People and to society at large -- in some cases contributions, I trust, of lasting, even transforming value.

In retrospect, it is remarkable that AJC’s lay leaders and professional leadership supported activities literally in every decade during which I have been associated with AJC, that helped change the course of history for the better.

In the 1960s, AJC made possible the participation of my beloved colleague and mentor, Zachariah Shuster, and my precious teacher, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, both of blessed memory, and myself, in Vatican Council II. The Council was a transforming event which has radically changed the course of 1900 years of Catholic-Jewish relations, much of it now for the better. In the 1970s, we were able to pioneer with Dr. Billy Graham and the Southern Baptist Convention in opening a new world of Evangelical-Jewish relations which continues to this day.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, AJC enabled my taking part in four separate International Rescue Committee missions to Southeast Asia that literally resulted in the saving of thousands of lives of Vietnamese Boat People and Cambodians, and led to the resettlement of a half-million hapless refugees in the United States. Earlier in the mid-1960s, we were able to engage in similar life-saving roles in the Nigerian-Biafran conflict, and then in Ethiopia, and in the drought-ridden Sahelian zone of West Africa.
In the 1980s, we were able to make significant gains with major European countries -- both West and East -- particularly in West Germany through the excellent work of William Trosten and his predecessors, as well as in Latin America, led by Jacobo Kovadloff and Sergio Nudelstejer, that require further serious, responsible cultivation. And now in 1988, we are beginning to explore the possible importance to Jews and Israel of Japan and the Pacific Rim in light of their powerful geo-political and economic presence in America and in the world.

While these were the dramatic and historic highlights, we conjured with those challenges while concentrating much of our energies on the priorities of Israel, Soviet Jewry, endangered Jewish communities in Ethiopia, Iran, Syria, Yemen, Central America and elsewhere. We visited Oberammergau several times to bring about changes in their Passion Play. We implemented religious textbook studies, and we sought to combat teaching of contempt against Jews and Judaism in cooperation with friends such as Mme. Claire Huchet-Bishop, a great Christian lady who graces us with her presence.

I will never be able to thank adequately, Dr. John Slawson and Bert Gold, who put up with my idiosyncrasies and mishigas, my specialized shtiks, but also gave me the freedom and support to do what I thought had to be done in our common interest. They instilled in me one crucial motto -- which is the motto of AJC at its best -- be effective, know the facts and do it right.

Ted Ellenoff, Leo Nevas, our AJC officers, our eminent former presidents, our professional colleagues -- for me especially those in interreligious affairs and international relations -- our chapter leaders, our area directors -- that is the moral and human framework without which none of this history could have been made, decade after decade. And I am confident that under Ira Silverman's leadership as Executive Vice President that tradition of significant accomplishment will continue and expand.
In truth, I feel deeply that this award is to be shared with the American Jewish Committee, the ICCJ, and those thousands of extraordinary Christian and Jewish leaders who collaborated with us throughout the United States and in other parts of the world to bring about this "revolution of mutual esteem." There are few greater personal satisfactions for me today than that of being embraced as friend and colleague by these Christian and Jewish leaders in virtually every major city in the United States and in many parts of the world.

There is a Hebrew phrase acharon, acharon chaviv -- "the last is the most beloved." My magnificent, beautiful, and brilliant wife, Georgette, has saved my life in many ways. It is difficult to imagine that any human being can give more to another than my wife has given to me. During our years together, Georgette has made me possible.

Sir Sigmund, ICCJ, AJC, and my family of friends, for this memorable day, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.