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MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 52, Folder 6, World Council of Churches, 1980-1981.



Michael G. Levine

Judge sets Nov. 18 treat

Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge John L. Angelotta set a hearing Nov. 18 for Michael G. Levine to determine if Levine should continue to be treated at Lima State Hospital where he was committed in September 1979.

Levine appeared before Angelotta yesterday requesting psychiatric examination. Almost from the day

he was committed, Levine has sought to be released from Lima State.

Levine was found not guilty by reason of insanity in the May 1979 kidnap-murder of supermarket executive Julius Kravitz. He was then sent to Lima State.

Angelotta ordered a psychiatric examination of Levine within 30

days. At the Nov. 18 hearing, the judge can rule that Levine be restored to reason, freed, sent him back to Lima State or allow him to be committed to another institution.

Because of a state law which went into effect in May, patients committed to Lima must be referred to the court that committed

Rebuke of Israel was unfair, rabbi says

Church council rapped declaration of Jerusalem as capital

By Darrell Holland
Religion editor

The World Council of Churches should repent for condemning Israel's statement last summer that Jerusalem is its capital, an official of the American Jewish Committee said here yesterday.

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of New York City, national director of interreligious affairs for the committee, was in Cleveland to attend the opening session of a four-day meeting of the committee's national executive council at the Bond Court Hotel.

Tanenbaum said that many Jews and Christians believe that the council's condemnation of Israel was primitive and judgmental and probably written by Arab Christians.

However, the Rev. Allan R. Brockway of Geneva, Switzerland, head of the World Coun-



Rev. Brockway



Rabbi Tanenbaum

cil's work in promoting Jewish-Christian relations, said Jews must understand that the council, like the United Nations, has many members

from Third World and Arab nations.

These representatives, he said, favor the cause of the Palestinians and do not always sympathize with the view that Israel is the persecuted nation in the Middle East.

Tanenbaum said Brockway was invited to address the meeting to keep lines of communication open between Jews and Christians.

In August, the WCC's governing body condemned Israel for its statement, describing the action as contrary to all pertinent U.N. resolutions and charging that it endangers solutions for peace and justice in the Middle East.

Brockway said it was a mistake for Israel to declare Jerusalem as its capital, but he also indicated that he did not entirely agree with the WCC's condemnation of it.

"I wish the council would have been able to express its disagreement in a context that would have retained its theological and historical identity with the Jewish people," he said.

The American Jewish Committee has long worked to promote human and civil rights for Jews and non-Jews. Tanenbaum said that group is committed to justice for both Palestinians and Jews.

He also said the meeting here is expected to endorse a resolution Sunday supporting a unified Jerusalem under Israeli rule and the city as Israel's capital, but also self-determination for Arabs in East Jerusalem. The city is considered holy by Jews, Muslims and Christians.

Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek will speak Sunday morning on the future of Jerusalem.

Struthers man gets \$14,500 on PD puzzle

A 48-year-old barber from Struthers, in Mahoning County, who reads The Plain Dealer every day, plays the Cashwords puzzle game every week and has been trying for years to find the correct solution to the puzzle, saw his faith rewarded yesterday when he learned he had solved last week's puzzle and won \$14,500 as a result.

When told, Frank Centofanti said, "I knew I would win someday. I didn't know when, but I knew it would be someday."

Centofanti did not attach any of the bonus coupons to his entry. Doing so could have increased his prize \$1,000.

The prize will help Centofanti buy a new car to replace his 1972 Volkswagen.

"But I'll pay Uncle Sam first," Centofanti said.

The \$14,500 prize is the largest cash prize awarded in The PD Cashwords puzzle game since it restarted in April 1979. It tops by \$250 the prize won by five contestants last April. Before that, three readers won \$9,500, one won \$6,000, and one won \$3,250.

Each week The Plain Dealer offers readers the chance to win cash prizes starting from \$3,000. Bonus coupons are published Monday

FRENCH REPORT OF THE "COMMITTEE ON THE CHURCH AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE" (FPF)
TO THE CCJP (WCC) 1981

Work in the field of Christian-Jewish relations in France dates back to the immediate post-war period, and was given a new stimulus by the Second Vatican Council. Given the numerical distribution of Protestants who are very much in a minority and Catholics who make up the majority, the most essential aspect of this work lies in its ecumenical character, by virtue of which the French Protestants exercise in this field an influence far greater than their sociological position would warrant.

We may recall here the preponderant role played by the French delegation, including Jules Isaac, in the drafting of the Ten Points of Seelisberg, and the setting up of the "Amitié judéo-chrétienne" affiliated to the ICCJ. This "Amitié" group includes Jews who are often not involved in the practice of their religion; more orthodox Jewish circles have kept away. This is a useful and effective point of contact in the fight against anti-semitism. SENS, the journal of this association which appears ten times each year, is a well-produced publication providing Christians with useful material for reflection.

In 1947 the French Protestant Federation (FPF) set up a Committee on "the Church and the Jewish People" (President: Mr. F. Lovsky; secretary: Pastor B.P. Chavannes). One of the members of the Committee also sits on the Committee on "the Church and Islam". Meanwhile, the Catholic Church has set up an "Episcopal Committee on relations with Judaism" (chairman: Mgr. Elchinger, Strasbourg; secretary: Father Bernard Dupuy, O.P.). This body distinguished itself with a striking text on relations with Judaism (April 1973) which played a part in the preparation of the Roman Catholic GUIDELINES of 1.12.1974 on the basis of NOSTRA AETATE (October 1965), chapter 4. The Episcopal Committee likewise has links with the Episcopal Committee on relations with Islam. To an increasing extent, matters of concern in this area are making themselves felt amongst those working on Jewish-Christian relations, either because, in terms of numbers, Muslims constitute the second religious community in France, larger than both the Protestant and Jewish communities, or on account of the numerous problems arising since 1967 as a result of virulent political anti-semitism; or because theology cannot afford not to reflect on Islamic monotheism and the spiritual conflict between Islam and the Jewish people, and the claims made by Islam in relation to that people.

Although the Order of Our Lady of Sion has stopped producing the "Cahiers Sioniens", the women's section of this Catholic order plays a leading role as regards consciousness-raising and propaganda in the Jewish-Christian field, both in the provinces and in Paris where it has a very useful documentation centre (SIDIC) which distributes a monthly cyclostyled news bulletin. This Centre maintains continuous contact with the SIDIC in Rome which publishes a French edition of its magazine. A Catholic journal 'Encounter-Christians and Jews', founded by R.F. Braun S.J., recently deceased, has found a wide audience and has been well received in Jewish circles. In the Protestant sphere, the Reformed journal "Faith and Life" is preparing the twentieth "Notebook on Jewish Studies" which will deal with the meeting in February 1980 at Liebfrauenberg under the direction of the FPF Commission. This meeting was attended by representatives from fifteen European countries and a few Catholic observers, and took place under the auspices of the ERKKJ (European Regional Conference on the Church and Judaism), of which Pastor Chavannes is the current chairman. The next meeting will take place in Sweden in 1982.

Although the Lutheran magazine VAV, published by "the Church and the Jewish World", is no longer being produced, and the documentation centre has been transferred by the Lutheran Church of Sweden from Paris to Jerusalem, along with Pastor Skoog, the Centre has worked with SIDIC and helped the FPF Commission to produce pamphlets entitled "What Everyone Should Know About Judaism" which are starting to be distributed among French speaking Christians, Catholic as well as Protestant (France, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada). Originally inspired by a Lutheran series, they constitute an entirely new formula.

An increasing number of study groups and seminars on Judaism are being organized with Catholics and Protestants participating as well as initiating. Jewish personalities are often invited to speak and Jews are sometimes members of these groups. There is a growing demand for meetings of this kind, particularly amongst Catholics. Representative of its kind is the case of the little magazine "The Friend of Israel", produced by a mission in Basel, published in Switzerland by the 'Swiss Foundation for the Church and Judaism' for an audience of French-speaking Protestant lay-people and edited by Father Kurt Hruby, a well-known Catholic theologian. With its ecumenical approach, this magazine reached a wide variety of religious circles.

Historians and theologians will find a lasting work of reference in "L'Eglise devant le Judaïsme, 1948-1978" by Father Dupuy and Mr. Th. Hoch (Ed. du Cerf, Paris, 1980), which brings together all the official church texts. The preface has been written jointly by the catholic B. Dupuy and the protestant F. Lovsky.

It is also possible to see the encounter with Judaism as bearing fruit, ecumenically speaking, in the TOB (Ecumenical Translation of the Bible). The Old Testament volume groups the books in the order of the Hebrew bible, makes reference wherever possible to Jewish exegesis and expresses the hope that a version of the Old Testament prepared in collaboration with Jewish scholars may one day be published.

Christians are having to come to terms with a world more geared to dialogue than to proselytism. The Order of Our Lady of Sion has abandoned a formerly proselytizing approach, and the "Church and the Jewish World" came into being when it became impossible for the Swedish mission in Paris to continue along these lines. This has been the line of development of most Protestant churches - though not all - least of all those outside the FPF. Old-style "missions" to the Jews still exist in France supported by foreign churches, with the exception of one French Baptist mission, but these are more circumspect and less active than they were in the post-war period.

The October 1980 attack in the rue Copernic in Paris (4 dead) on one of the only two "reformed" synagogues evoked profound sympathy amongst Christians. This was a spontaneous reaction which proves how radically the situation has changed since 1939. And the nomination of an Archbishop of Jewish origin in Paris has provided food for reflection on relations between Jews and Christians for French people generally, and not merely within the confines of the Catholic Church.

For the FPF Committee on the Church and the Jewish People

Chairman : Mr. F. Lovsky, 5, allée Maurice Ravel, F-38130 ECHIROLLES.

Secretary: Pastor B.P. Chavannes, 8, rue Henry Lebert, F-68000 COLMAR.

DIALOGUE IS NOT (YET) UNDERWAY

A Report from the German Democratic Republic (GDR)

There is as yet no official Christian-Jewish dialogue between the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR with its eight member churches, and the Union of Jewish Congregations in the GDR with its eight regional associations, for two main reasons:

1. Reasons

- 1.1. The Jewish congregations live in a situation of extreme diaspora: they have only about 620 members, the majority of whom are older people, many of them living either in the old people's home belonging to the Jewish community in Berlin or in GDR state institutions. The middle generation is relatively little represented, many having contracted mixed marriages and being largely secularized. Bar Mitzvah celebrations are great exceptions. There is no Rabbi and no Cantor. Worship can only be held regularly in a few of the larger congregations. While the congregations and their members have no material worries thanks to generous help from the government, from the spiritual and religious point of view the little community is still suffering very much from the effects of the Holocaust. Some of the necessary prerequisites for dialogue are thus missing on the Jewish side.
- 1.2. In the Evangelical churches there has been a marked upsurge of interest in Judaism since the commemoration of "Crystal Night" in 1978, which was attended in noticeably large numbers by church congregations and leaders. This interest is no longer focussed one-sidedly on the State of Israel, as it was in the Sixties, but the necessary preconditions for genuine dialogue do not yet exist, for all that. As the Rev. Johannes Hildebrandt, the leader of the study group on "Judaism and Christianity", run by the Evangelical congregation of St. Sophia's church in Berlin, puts it, "We Christians still have a long way to go before we are ready for dialogue. Too many of the necessary preliminary conditions are still missing. Our questions peter out in the one subsuming question: Why are you Jews strikingly different from us in this or that respect? We don't talk and ask questions, we interrogate. But this 'interrogation' is in itself a sign of the newly awakened interest in our congregations and is to be welcomed as a preliminary step towards dialogue."

2. New Interest in the Churches

This upsurge of interest is making itself felt in a growing demand for information at various levels. Besides the study group on "The Church and Judaism" run for many years now by the United Evangelical Lutheran Church, under the admirable leadership of the Rev. S. Arndt of Leipzig (with regional study groups in Mecklenburg and Pommern), a local study group on "Judaism and Christianity" has now been formed in Berlin. The Lutheran study group holds in-service training courses for pastors and catechists, while the Evangelical Academy of Berlin-Brandenburg has for a number of years been organizing a special annual conference for lay people. This year the Evangelical Church in the Province of Saxony (Magdeburg) has held a second course of

lectures for pastors, under the leadership of Provost Hinz, to which not only Dr. Ellen Flesseman-van Leer was invited, but also for the first time a Jewish lecturer in the person of senior Rabbi Dr. Posen from Zurich. A member of the council of the Jewish congregation in Magdeburg also took part for the first time. The title of the series of lectures was, "The Bible in conversations between Jews and Christians". (This church has also adopted a similar approach to its study of Islam.) "Aktion Sühnezeichen", the movement for atonement, has increased its work in the field of information with the publication of a series of pamphlets on, "What one should know about Judaism".

3. The Beginnings of Encounter

Besides this work of information going on inside the church there is also practical cooperation between Evangelical and Jewish congregations in a number of ways. This mainly takes the form of information and discussion meetings, visits and personal contacts in neighbourhood help - talks given by members of Jewish congregations at church gatherings, visits to synagogues by church groups, working parties of church youth groups to maintain Jewish cemeteries, help with restoration work, etc. One joint project which deserves mention is a series of lectures in Leipzig planned and held on the joint responsibility of the Jewish congregation and the Evangelical study group and now in its second year, with a growing number of participants. In the Province of Saxony a study group has been formed, with Jewish participants, to prepare an exhibition depicting the history of Jewish-Christian relations in Saxony-Anhalt.

4. Structures

The Secretariat of the Federation of Evangelical Churches has placed Oberkirchenrat Tschoerner in charge of coordinating church activities in this sphere; The Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg has recently also appointed its own secretary to be responsible for conversations with the Jews. He is Pastor Grüber, a son of the famous Provost Heinrich Grüber.

5. Prospects

To keep pace with this growing interest, the talks about the relationship of Jews and Christians is to be given new impetus in the preparations now starting for the celebration of Luther's quincentenary in 1983: the church assemblies planned for 1983 will to some extent form their own study groups and it is hoped to have the assistance and participation of appropriately qualified Jews from the GDR and abroad.

Christfried Berger, GDR.

Jewish Christian Relations in Denmark.

The relationship between Jews and Christians in Denmark is generally good. Danish Jews play a significant role in the Danish society in all kinds of professions and in cultural life. And there is little tension between Jews and Christians even if prejudice against Jews can also be observed. Most Danes accept different religious convictions as they consider it a personal and private matter but they are less tolerant, when people behave in a way which is much different from the "normal".

The experience which Danes had during the German occupation during the war challenged the population to identify themselves with persecuted and threatened citizens, especially the Jews. This has also had the effect on the thinking of Danish theologians. The Holocaust has less been seen as something for which they should feel guilty but more as a problem of the understanding of the nature of man. There is a feeling for the need for a more realistic understanding of the destructive potentialities in human nature, the question of the theodice and of the interrelationship between God's action and human responsibility and cooperation.

While it has frequently been stated that Luther has a great part of the blame for anti-semitic tendencies in Lutheranism this does not quite seem to fit in general into Scandinavian Lutheran theology. But expressions such as "Spätjudentum" and "Phariseism" are still rather common even if there is an increasing awareness of the need for more adequate words and concepts. Especially in educational material considerable improvements have been made due to a rather extensive cooperation with Jews in producing correct information about Jews and Judaism.

The attitude towards the State of Israel has in general been very positive but it is becoming ambiguous. The theologically most conservative tend to be most favourable towards Israel as they see in the creation of the state a fulfillment of the prophecies and a sign that the return of Christ is near. (Does this challenge the findings of the Glock and Stark study?).

Others - and that is probably the majority among committed Christians - tend to consider its creation as a possible act of God, but they are not prepared to consider all the implications to be according to the will of God. While they therefore favour the right of Israel to exist in peace and security they are often also concerned about the unsolved problems of the Palestinians and may at times be rather critical about Israeli policy. Leftists tend to be directly pro-palestinian in a way which has caused concern both among Christians and Jews. And recently the Danish radio has been criticized by Jews for being too one-sided.

In the Jewish Community the Chief Rabbi has been criticized for cooperation with the Danish TV in producing a film on Jewish life in Denmark. The opponents who want to dismiss the Rabbi are of the opinion that such publicity may draw more attention to them and endanger their security and further anti-semitic feelings and stimulate terrorist activities. The Chief-Rabbi is of the opinion that open and factual information will have the opposite effect. He is therefore a frequent and very popular speaker in Christian circles.

It is the general view that the Church has a mission to all nations, including the Jews. At the same time it is understood that with Jews there is a mutuality in the witnessing, listening and seeking together the will of God. But there is little support for the view that there are two ways to the same God. (Börchsenius is an exception). It is, however, very clearly stated that any kind of anti-semitism must be exposed and fought against.

-- Anker Gjerding

A) The organizational aspects

The main Protestant Churches as well as the Roman Catholic Church have each their own committees for the relationship to the Jewish people. These committees are concerned with general social as well as specific theological questions. There are several cooperative bodies of these denominational committees.

1. The boards of four of these committees are together responsible for the so-called Christian presence in Israel. The minister who works in Jerusalem is sent by the Hervormde Kerk. Last year Dr. Schoneveld has left this post; he will be replaced by rev. Cohen-Stuart. Due to family circumstances his departure for Jerusalem is being postponed. The minister working in Nes Amim belongs to the Gereformeerde Kerken. Rev. A.Boersma has recently succeeded rev. S.Schoon. The Christian Reformed Church is responsible for the post in Tel Aviv, which at present is filled by rev. J.Boertjens, and the so-called Free Evangelicals, formerly responsible for medical work in Tiberias, make nowadays merely a financial contribution. Beside their cooperation in the work in Israel these four boards publish a quarterly and maintain contacts with the Israeli embassy, as for instance recently, when they sent a critical letter about the settlement policy of the Israeli government.

2. ICI (Interchurch Commission Israel) is a cooperative body of the 'Israel' committees of all Dutch churches. Under its auspices theological seminaries in Israel are organized each year. ICI has taken the initiative to translate and publish two of the little volumes of the German series "Was jedermann vom Judentum wissen muss", and plans to continue this line of work.

3. The Council of Churches in the Netherlands has set up an advisory committee of its own on "The Church and the Jewish People". This committee is a subsection of the theological section of the Council. The relation of this committee and ICI is not yet fully clarified.

No specific body exists in the Netherlands in which both Jews and Christians are represented, due to the fact that there are only few liberal Jews left in this country, who can be called upon for an inter-religious dialogue. There is, however, a twomonthly periodical, edited jointly by Jews, Protestants and Roman Catholics.

Finally, most theological faculties offer courses in Rabbinica, Judaica or on Jewish-Christian dialogue. In some instances these courses are obligatory.

B) Aspects of the overall situation

Though the group of Christians which is deeply and permanently concerned with Jewish-Christian relations on a more profound level is not very large, general interest in this subject in the congregations is rather widespread.

It is part of the Reformed tradition, which is based on John Calvin, to give considerable attention to the Old Testament in the preaching and teaching ministry of the churches. In our time this traditional interest in the Old Testament has received new impetus, due partly to the present concern for social and political issues, partly to the influence of prof. K.H.Miskotte (died 1976). Especially his notion of the "surplus" of the Old Testament has contributed to this emphasis on the Old Testament in its specificity. Gratifying as this tendency is, the danger is not entirely absent that in stressing this Old Testament "surplus", the "surplus" of the New Testament is minimised. Certain small, but significant circles tend to forget that Jews and Christians together are subject to the same critical authority of the divine Other. Sometimes, for all practical purposes,

Jewish insights receive inordinate attention or are even being identified with final truth.

In many countries two subjects receive a great deal of attention: the 'Holocaust' and the antisemitism in the New Testament. Neither of these subjects plays, generally speaking, a central role in Dutch theology. Auschwitz and all it stands for is certainly not forgotten and it has made Christians and churches here more sensitive to any signs of renewed antisemitism; but the idea of the "Holocaust" as a form of "genitiv-theology" or as revelatory data which necessitates a radical rethinking of Christian theology has received little response here.

The same goes for the problem of antisemitism in the New Testament. It is generally acknowledged that a certain type of exegesis of the past is to be avoided in view of its negative Wirkungsgeschichte, but the theses that the conflict between Jesus and his people as testified to in the New Testament, should be played down or is as such a form or source of antisemitism, is by and large rejected.

We are not sure how to interpret these facts. Are they the result of a certain conservatism and traditionalism of Dutch Christians, or are they a sign that the churches here, minor groups excepted, are not overly susceptible to fashionable trends in theology, which have their day and die away?

Ellen Flesseman-van Leer
Sam Gerssen





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WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

PROGRAMME UNIT ON FAITH AND WITNESS

Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies

Geneva, March 9, 1981.

To: Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People

Dear Colleagues,

In order that everyone may have the same accurate information, here are relevant paragraphs from the meeting of the DFI Working Group of May 1978, which serve as the "by-Laws" of the CCJP:

" The CCJP shall be a network of consultants to the DFI, authorized and appointed by the DFI, such a network to be organically widened to include WCC constituencies beyond Europe and North America.

" As an authorized network of organizations, agencies, and individuals with experience in and concern for Jewish-Christian relations, the CCJP will maintain, strengthen, expand, and implement programmes for Jewish-Christian relations in the Churches and local communities. It will serve as local liaison with and listening-posts for the concerns of the Jewish community.

" To help the Churches to a better understanding of Jews and Judaism and stimulate discussion on issues which are fundamental to the relationship and witness between Christians and Jews;

" To assist the Churches, mission agencies and councils to consult with one another and to clarify their understanding of the nature and content of their witness to Jesus Christ in relation to the Jewish people;

" To foster dialogue between Christians and Jews and to work together in the prevention of any form of racial or religious discrimination, and together with people of different faiths to promote social justice and peace.

" To encourage the production and circulation of appropriate literature on Christian-Jewish relationships;

" To urge the Churches to engage in biblical and theological study of the meaning of the history and experience of the Jewish people;

" To cooperate with other units of the WCC in carrying out these functions.

" We recommend that the DFI, in its planning of consultations, dialogues and conferences make such use of the CCJP Consultants that would maximize the effective work in the area of Jewish-Christian relations:

(a) encouraging regional or special activities organized by groups of the Consultants;

./...

- (b) by special assignments of studies, consultations, dialogues and experiments to various groups of the Consultants;
- (c) by extensive use of the Consultants in the preparation for and participation in the DFI dialogue programme, both bilateral Jewish-Christian, and trilateral (e.g. Jewish-Christian-Muslim) and multilateral dialogue;
- (d) by meetings of the Consultants according to the needs of the work to be done;
- (e) by scheduling, at least every fourth year, a dialogue or consultation about dialogue in connection with which the CCJP would be able to meet as a body for the purpose of mutual exchange of experience and planning for future work in Jewish-Christian relations.

" We further recognize the responsibilities of the CCJP indicated in the Liaison Planning Committee's statement of January 1976: 'It is noted that within the WCC the CCJP has its special mandate to clarify among the Churches, issues arising from the Jewish-Christian dialogue, in order to prepare the ground for a deeper common understanding of the Jewish people. It will thus play a supportive and advisory role to the Christian members on the LPC'. In the new structure, the Advisory Group will assume primary responsibility in this matter.

" We urge the DFI to realize fully in its thinking and action the fact and necessity of joint work at all levels with the Roman Catholic Church in the area of Jewish-Christian relations."



Allan R. Brockway



NCC
Governing Board

May 19, 1981

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum

Rabbi A. James Rudin

National Council of Churches Governing Board Meeting
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - May 13-15, 1981

The recent Governing Board meeting of the National Council of Churches was notable for its several positive achievements in Christian-Jewish relations.

First, the Board passed a constructive and balanced resolution on Lebanon (see enclosure). It refrained from placing the blame for the current crisis on Israel, and it specifically mentioned Syria, the Palestinians and the Soviet Union as direct parties to the conflict. The resolution urges "reassertion of Lebanese sovereignty over all the land the people of Lebanon," thus, the NCC, in effect, calls for the removal of all foreign troops, i.e. the Syrian "peace keeping" forces from Lebanese territory.

Another important part of the resolution is the section calling for the M.E. arms suppliers to exercise "restraint". Not only is the United States mentioned, but so are the Soviet Union and other European countries. In previous resolutions, especially in 1973, the NCC Board acknowledged that the Soviet Union was shipping arms to the Middle East, but it called for unilateral U.S. action; suspending American arms shipments to the region.

The Lebanon resolution was unanimously passed with no floor debate. NCC Board member Frank Maria of the Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Church an anti-Israel leader, wanted to add a section condemning the western media for "distorting" some aspects of the conflict in Lebanon. His amendment was overwhelmingly defeated.

In an earlier action, the Governing Board adopted a message to President Reagan that was critical of some of the Administration's new domestic and foreign policies. The original text of the message specifically named six "repressive regimes: El Salvador, Guatemala, Chile, Argentina, Korea and The Philippines. Maria offered an amendment to add Israel to that list.

Dr. J. Oscar McCloud of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA spoke in direct opposition to the amendment. Dr. McCloud objected to Maria's contention that Israel is a repressive regime. He does not believe this to be the case, and second, Dr. McCloud does not like to specifically list "repressive regimes." Errors of omission and commission always take place.

Joining Dr. McCloud in opposition to the Maria amendment was Dr. George Telford of the Presbyterian Church in the US. He strongly opposes adding Israel

May 19, 1981

to the list. Maria's amendment was overwhelmingly defeated by a voice vote.

Both McCloud and Telford were members of the NCC's Middle East Panel, and the Interreligious Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee has worked very closely with both Christian leaders over the last two years on a host of issues.

We have had two highly successful meetings with senior staff members of the United Presbyterian Church and Dr. McCloud served with you as the co-chairman of both meetings. Our department has also maintained a fruitful dialogue with Dr. Telford on the Middle East and on a variety of other issues as well. It is clear that such dialogues are useful in interpreting Israel to leaders of the National Council of Churches.

The NCC Interreligious Breakfast is now a permanent part of every Governing Board meeting. This spring it had the largest attendance ever; nearly 70 people. I spoke at the breakfast and outlined the current agenda of the American Jewish Committee as we seek to build positive Christian-Jewish relations. I also spoke at an earlier meeting of the Commission on Regional and Local Ecumenism, and I was the only Jewish representative-observer at the Governing Board meeting.

Finally, the Philadelphia Governing Board meeting marked the debut of Rev. David Simpson, the newly appointed director of the NCC's Office on Christian-Jewish Relations. In an ironic twist, I spent much of my time introducing David to many of our Christian friends and colleagues on the Governing Board.

It seems clear that the National Council of Churches is extremely sensitive to Jewish and/or Israel concerns. In expending an enormous amount of time, talent, and money on the preparation and passage of the Middle East Policy Statement last November, the leaders of the NCC, both staff and Governing Board members, have learned a great deal about Christian-Jewish relations and the vital concerns of Israel. They are much more sensitive to these issues than they have been in the past. In addition, the work of our department has paid extraordinary dividends. Our many contacts with key leaders, our continuing program of maintaining dialogues with the leading denominations within the NCC, and our close cooperation with the NCC's General Secretary, Claire Randall, Rev. Joan Campbell and Rev. David Simpson and the Commission on Regional and Local Ecumenism and the Office on Christian-Jewish Relations, and J. Richard Butler of the Mid East Office, has enabled us to register our concerns directly with all the key NCC leaders. The Philadelphia meeting dramatically confirmed the wisdom of our policy, and of the need to continue building even more positive relations with the NCC in the future.

AJR:FM

cc: Judith Banki
Inge Gibel

Presentation to
The Governing Board
May 15, 1981

Document

K-2

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE USA

Report of the

REFERENCE COMMITTEE

Part III

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS (continued)

Proposed Resolution on "The Conflict in Lebanon"

The Committee considered a proposed resolution on "The Conflict in Lebanon" and proposed amendments which the sponsors accepted. The Committee recommends that the Governing Board adopt the amended proposed Resolution as follows:

1 The Governing Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ
2 in the U.S.A., meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on May 13-15, 1981,
3 EXPRESSES its profound distress and anguish over the continuing
4 suffering of the Lebanese people caught in a conflict now in
5 its seventh year;

6 Noting that the patriarchs, bishops and religious leaders of the
7 Christian communities in Lebanon issued an urgent appeal on April 10,
8 1981 to all Lebanese -- Christians and Muslims -- and to the peoples of
9 the world "to take every step possible to reinstate peace in the hearts
10 and minds of our [Lebanese] people and security throughout the nation
11 in order that the Lebanese people will be able to meet freely in dialogue
12 among themselves", the NCCCUSA

13 URGES the government of the United States of America to con-
14 tinue to pursue vigorously diplomatic solutions to the conflict
15 that will assure Lebanon's continued independence, sovereignty
16 and territorial integrity;

17 Noting further that these same Christian leaders have reaffirmed
18 Lebanon's vocation as a model of religious pluralism in declaring that
19 "the Lebanese people are, in heart and soul, participants in every
20 culture and every civilization", the NCCCUSA

21 DEPLORES any effort to fan the flames of religious sectarianism
22 in Lebanon; and

23 SEES the survival of all communities in Lebanon -- Christian,
24 Muslim and others -- as depending upon Lebanon's unity, and
25 continued assurance of full rights for all Lebanese;

26 Recognizing also that much of the fighting on Lebanese soil is being
27 carried on by non-Lebanese, or at the instigation of non-Lebanese, and
28 that the conflict in Lebanon is related to and affected by other regional
29 and superpower disputes, including those involving Israel, the Palestinians,
30 Syria and the USA/USSR, the Governing Board

31 URGES the government of the United States of America to:

32 a. work for a solution to the conflict based upon a reassertion
33 of Lebanese sovereignty over all the land and people of Lebanon.

34 Such a solution requires a recognition by all combatants in
35 Lebanon of the legitimacy of the Lebanese government, and
36 strengthening the Lebanese Army so that it might fulfill its
37 legal responsibilities in all parts of the country. Until the
38 Lebanese Army can do so, the United Nations role of providing
39 security and aiding in reconstruction in Lebanon should be
40 enhanced;

41 b. work for a solution to the Lebanese conflict that will not be
42 at the expense of Lebanese sovereignty and independence and
43 that will not be contingent upon resolution of the Israel-
44 Palestinian dispute;

45 c. work toward negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians
46 so that this issue is dealt with around a conference table and not
47 on the battlefield;

48 d. provide economic aid as a humanitarian and symbolic gesture of
49 U.S.A. commitment to the survival of the Republic of Lebanon;
50 The Governing Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ
51 in the U.S. A.

52 EXPRESSES its concern and regret that the recent escalation of
53 fighting in Lebanon has been made possible by weaponry purchased
54 from or supplied to the combatants and to neighboring states by
55 the U.S.A., the USSR and other European countries, and
56 URGES restraint by the suppliers of armaments to the Middle East
57 and initiation of negotiations for a reduction of armaments in
58 the entire region;

59 The Governing Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ
60 in the U.S.A.

61 CALLS UPON its member communions to continue humanitarian
62 aid to Lebanon through Church World Service's support of the
63 Middle East Council of Churches' program of relief and recon-
64 struction in Lebanon; and

65 REQUESTS the General Secretary of the National Council of the
66 Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. to communicate this resolution
67 to the General Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches,
68 to the President of the U.S.A. and to the Secretary of State of
69 the U.S.A.

Policy Base: Middle East Policy Statement, November 6, 1980.

SIXTH ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
VANCOUVER, B.C., CANADA

JULY 24 - AUGUST 10, 1983

"JESUS CHRIST - THE LIFE OF THE WORLD"

This paper summarizes plans and preparations being made by the Assembly Preparations Committee and staff, as of March 1, 1981. Fuller details will be available after the meeting of the Central Committee, August 1981.

I PLANNING

The Assembly Preparations Committee, which comprises fifteen persons and is a sub-committee of the Central Committee, is responsible for overall planning. It met in February 1981 and will meet again in August and October. A representative staff group meets regularly in Geneva. In Canada, there is a National Coordinating Committee for Assembly preparations and a Vancouver Planning Committee for local arrangements.

II PREPARATORY BIBLE STUDIES

A series of Bible studies will be published and distributed widely in September 1981 for use in the churches, congregations and Christian groups. These Bible studies will explore the main theme through a series of Biblical images, each of which will be accompanied by a series of Bible texts. A meeting of Bible study persons will be held in June to prepare the studies.

In endorsing this approach, the Committee noted some features which commend it:

- the use of "images" opens doors for varying cultures to identify with the imagery and to speak out of their understanding;
- the "images" and texts allow for detailed study, but also provide points for the issues and concerns of the world (and the Assembly) to be seen in the light of the theme;
- the 'visual' approach has within it rich potentialities, which have been appreciated in Christian iconography for many centuries, for mental, spiritual and aesthetic nourishment and understanding that a purely 'mental' approach is unable to convey.

The following images have been suggested; others are also being considered:

THE WAY OF LIFE or THE WAY TOWARDS LIFE

Deuteronomy 30: 15-20
Matthew 7: 13-14
John 14: 6

THE WATER OF LIFE or SPRINGS OF LIVING WATER

Ezekiel 47: 1-12
John 4: 7-15
Revelation 22: 1-2

BIRTH OF LIFE *

Proverbs 8: 1-31
I Corinthians 1: 20-24
John 1: 1-18
John 16: 12-24

BREAD OF LIFE

Exodus 16: 1-18
Matthew 4: 1-11 or Mark 8: 1-10
John 6: 35-51 or 35-71

RESURRECTION OF LIFE or REBIRTH OF LIFE

Ezekiel 37: 1-14
Luke 24: 1-11
John 11: 17-53 or Revelation 1: 17-18

III PROGRAMME OF CONSULTATIONS AND VISITS

1. Introduction

An Assembly is the gathering of all member churches of the WCC through their delegated representatives. It is a place where the promises, hopes and joys of the gospel are celebrated, where issues and problems present in the lives of the churches are reflected upon, where programmes of the WCC are assessed, where new policies are developed and where a common Christian commitment is strengthened and inspired. It is a place of worship and work, of anticipating in obedience and joy the unity in Christ and the unity of all humanity we all desire.

* The purpose of this image is to draw out the relationship between women and life; to recognize the link between 'Haiim' (life) and 'Havah' (woman). In Genesis 2: 18-24 woman was created as a partner for man; only with this "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh" can man create community and escape from isolation, alienation and loneliness.

Fundamentally, the Assembly is an event of the churches themselves, and they must participate in the broadest way possible, in reflecting on the theme, in preparing the agenda, in suggesting style and process of the Assembly. Aware of the limitations of communication and consultation among an international community, based in different local situations, which make this difficult to achieve, the Central Committee in 1980 gave attention to designing the Assembly in the most participative and consultative style. It decided that the Assembly should begin with an extensive programme of consultation and visitation as an integral part of the Assembly. Therefore it can be said that the WCC will begin to gather in Assembly already in 1982.

2. The purpose of visits

The basic purpose of the visits and consultations is to enable churches to be more directly and more comprehensively involved in the Assembly than is possible through their delegates alone. The visits and consultations are an invitation to the membership of all our churches to share in the common life and witness of member churches from all parts of the world which their delegates will experience in the Sixth Assembly at Vancouver.

In order to accomplish this purpose, the visits should provide opportunity for:

- i. reflecting on the meaning of the theme and the major concerns deriving from it in the particular situations of member churches and for sharing the problems, hopes and joys of both the churches visited and visiting;
- ii. learning how the WCC serves as an instrument of the shared life and witness of the churches and for listening for ways in which it may better serve these purposes.

3. The nature of visits

Visits and encounters are not new in the ecumenical movement, but for a long time have been a most immediate and most effective means of communication. Many member churches, often on a confessional basis, have their own programmes of visitation and consultation. The WCC itself has arranged a number of ecumenical team visits. All staff travel can be seen as part of a visitation process, although often such visits are to specific meetings or constituency groups and not officially to member churches.

It is essential to this pre-Assembly process that the churches be visited, and that all churches be included in some way. While team visits (of at least two persons) would be most effective, in some cases a visit may be made by one individual.

We do not discourage visits within confessional families, but emphasize that the process of pre-Assembly ecumenical visitation presupposes the crossing of confessional lines and urge that in the next two years confessionally organized visits take this into account.

Ecumenical visits may be arranged:

- i. in conjunction with events already planned by churches, national or regional bodies, or the WCC;
- ii. by the WCC in response to requests from churches in a particular country or (sub)region;
- iii. by the churches themselves in a given area/country (with or without WCC assistance) on the invitation of other churches.

Models for visits

A few examples are offered. They should not be seen as limiting but rather as illustrative.

A team might meet with the leaders of the churches in a given country along with the delegates to the Sixth Assembly and the leaders of the national council and as many other people of the churches as possible, which might be responsible for arranging the visit. The visiting team should also make some provision for involvement with local congregations. If the team were large enough, it could divide for these local visits.

Visits might also be related to denominational gatherings either in official assemblies or in lay or pastors' gatherings. In such cases the team visit should, wherever possible, be more than a presence but rather an integral part of the event which might make use of Assembly Bible study materials, provide opportunity for dialogue with the visiting team, etc.

Other possibilities include special events in the life of the churches, special historical celebrations, etc.

Participants

As indicated by the Central Committee, the following can be considered a "pool" from which to draw visitors:

- suggestions from the churches
- Vancouver delegates
- Nairobi delegates
- members of Central Committee
- members of Commissions and Working Groups
- persons active in WCC-related networks
- former Bossey students/participants
- WCC staff.

4. Local preparation

Inviting churches should be prepared to cooperate on an ecumenical basis with each other in planning the visit. It is not envisaged to send a team to visit one member church in a given country, and not the others! It is hoped that national councils will facilitate planning and participate as may be appropriate in their country.

Considerations should be given to opportunities for involvement, participation or contacts with non-member churches and church-related movements as may be appropriate in a given situation. It is also to be expected that fraternal organizations will share in the visitation and planning in appropriate ways.

A cross-section of the membership of the church(es) being visited should be involved for the widest possible participation. Visits should not only continue and strengthen communication with church leadership, but enlarge the network of those having personal contacts with the WCC, offer possibilities for ecumenical education at the level of local congregations, and lead to further local ecumenical relations and work. Exposure periods in local congregations and ecumenical groups, and not only in official conferences and synods, etc., are therefore desirable.

It will be the responsibility of the church(es) receiving visitors or a team to plan the local programme and arrangements. The WCC will develop guidelines and criteria to assist the churches in this local preparation.

Staff preparation

Major staff cooperation will be necessary to implement the plan and to organize a number of visits. Coordination will be the responsibility of the Assembly office, but there are several ways other staff will be able to share in planning:

- a sub-unit could take responsibility for the organization of one or more visits as part of its own programme;
- one or more sub-units could assign/second staff to work as a team in planning a visit, free of other duties for a limited time;
- a regional task force could assume responsibility for organizing or planning one or more visits.

The content and agenda for a visit will be determined in dialogue between sub-units participating and the church(es) to be visited. A holistic approach to the WCC and its work is assumed, even if the concerns of one or more sub-units may figure more prominently in a visit because of the area to be visited and the concerns proposed by the churches to be visited.

5. Sub-unit participation in 1981

Some sub-units, e.g. Education, Renewal, CMC, Church and Society, are planning "pilot" visits in connection with their Commission, Working Group, Officers or Executive Committee meetings in the areas where meetings will be held.

All Commissions and Working Groups will discuss Assembly preparation as part of their agenda, with a view to defining their particular contributions and the nature of their cooperation in the process.

Some sub-units and task forces (e.g. CCPD, CWME, Orthodox Task Force) will organize Bible studies and reflections on the theme.

IV ASSEMBLY PROGRAMME AND STRUCTURE

1. The theme will be the focus of worship and Bible study, and will be presented in plenary sessions.. Two or three sessions should be set aside for plenary presentations on the theme: one for a strong biblical presentation, and one or two for a comprehensive interpretation of the meaning of the theme for contemporary life.
2. The Assembly will also give attention to three or four "major concerns" (a term preferred to "sub-themes") which derive from the theme, rather than from the structure or work of the WCC. Specific concerns are not yet formulated but are to be elaborated through a wider process of consultation involving members of Central Committee, Commissions and Working Groups, staff and others. Some examples of the types of concerns being considered are:

Faith in Christ and life in the Church

Life in Christ and the life of the whole human family

Life in the midst of death

New life for the individual and new life in community

The quality of life and life-style today

God's gift of life and threats to life

The meaning and mystery of life

The unity of all life

The sacrifice/laying down of life for others

Respect for life and the manipulation of life

Present-day agony about life

3. The other area of Assembly deliberations will be the "issues", matters which derive from the work of the WCC, which have been "already discussed within the WCC and the member churches and are ripe for action by the churches" (Central Committee 1980). They are not necessarily related to the theme. A maximum of ten such issues will be dealt with; reports and recommendations would be expected for action by the Assembly. Sub-units have been requested to propose issue priorities for discussion in staff, by Commissions and by the Assembly Preparations Committee.
4. Work groups will have a basic role to play throughout the Assembly. Approximately 50 groups of ca. 25 persons each are foreseen. They are the "home base" from which participants go out to other activities and groupings, and to which they return to share their insights. They can be a place for worship and Bible study as well as discussion and personal sharing. In the first phase of the Assembly programme, they will fill major blocks of time during which participants will discuss the theme and major concerns as presented in plenary.
5. After adequate discussion, work groups will come together in "clusters" (e.g. 8 clusters of 6 groups or 150 people) to receive, digest and sift the results of discussion in work groups who have discussed the same major concern, for eventual contribution to the Assembly witness to the theme.
6. During the second phase of the Assembly, work groups will continue, but meet less frequently. Major blocks of time would be spent in issue groups and committees (meeting simultaneously). Approximately 200 persons would be involved in the usual committees required for Assembly business; the others would be assigned to issue groups on the basis of preferences expressed in advance.

V PARTICIPANTS

1. The following is the present estimate of Assembly participants:

Delegates	900
Fraternal Delegates	100
Associate member churches	
Christian Councils	
Christian organizations	
Christian World Communions	
Observers	60
Non-member churches	
Other councils and organizations	
	<hr/>
	1060

(brought forward)	1060	
Advisors	90	(maximum)
Guests	50	
Retiring C.C. members (not appointed as delegates)	15	
	<hr/>	
	1215	
Stewards	175	
Staff	150	
Coopted staff	150	
	<hr/>	
	1690	
Accredited visitors	600 - 1000	
Accredited media representatives and technicians	1000	

2. Member churches have been asked to send in the names of their delegates by September 1981.

VI COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

A comprehensive plan for publications, audio-visual projects and other events is being developed by the Communications Department. Some of the elements envisaged for 1981 are as follows:

Illustrated brochure on the Assembly	(April)
Poster contest	(April - October)
Press kit	(June)
Bible studies	(September)
Report on WCC work since Nairobi	(November)
Theological studies and testimonies related to the theme	(December)
Filmstrip on WCC	(December)

VII FINANCES

A. Programme of Consultation and Visitation

Central Committee in 1980 agreed that each sub-unit should re-allocate a substantial portion of its regular budget for staff travel and meetings/consultations in 1982 and 1983 to finance this programme, to be made "available on a Council-wide basis, for individual or team visits, on the authority of the General Secretary".

These funds were intended to be the WCC share of the total cost of the visitation programme, and do not take into account expenses to be borne by member churches or national/regional bodies.

In December 1980, the Officers further agreed that each sub-unit should be allowed to retain SFr 20,000 for an Officers' or Executive Group meeting in 1982 (total SFr 300,000) in addition to funds for staff travel necessary to maintain on-going work.

The amounts that have been allocated and approved are:

1982	SFr 1,266,055
1983	SFr 1,085,630
Total:	SFr 2,351,685 =====

B. Assembly

Central Committee in 1980 authorized approaches to member churches for an amount of SFr 5.5 million for funding of the Assembly out of a total estimated budget of approximately SFr 6.9 million.

VIII SUB-UNIT AND STAFF PARTICIPATION

1. Sub-unit participation

Conversations with sub-units have helped them understand the preparatory process of visitation as a different way of communicating their agenda and concerns, rather than an unrelated programme. A clearer definition and plan for the programme of visitation and consultation including more specific information about dates, places, programmes, etc. will make it easier for the sub-units to see how their ongoing programmes are integrated in the pre-Assembly process and to plan their own participation. All sub-units are willing to cooperate, but their priorities need to be reflected in the preparatory programmes and events.

The distinction between "operational" and "relational" activities of sub-units needs further clarification in order to see how much staff time and resources can be re-directed to pre-Assembly work. It is clear, however, that an increasing amount of staff time will be required for Assembly preparations and the visitation programme. We have been discussing whether one person in each unit could be set aside for special pre-Assembly tasks, and whether each sub-unit should set aside a certain amount of staff time for these responsibilities. More specific plans will be formulated in the next few months.

The pre-Assembly process is one in which there will be certain shifts of emphasis in the style of staff work and in the usual pattern of relationships with sub-unit constituencies. There will be more emphasis on relationships with member churches and less on specific programmes; more emphasis on regional strategy and less on sub-unit operations; more emphasis on staff representing the whole WCC when travelling rather than only one sub-unit. Staff travel will have to become part of an overall, coordinated schedule in the programme of visitation. As from now, all staff travel needs to be seen as part of the pre-Assembly process of preparation, interpretation and listening in relation to the member churches.

2. Regional Task Forces

The regional task forces, traditionally advisory staff groups, will have an enlarged mandate and function in relation to the visitation programme. They will have a major responsibility in monitoring the preparatory process in their region and will play an important role in helping plan travel to the regions as part of the visitation programme and coordinating the feedback from visits.

(Excerpted from the Report of the Assembly Preparations Committee to the Executive Committee, February 1981.)

GUIDELINES FOR JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People
World Council of Churches

Historical Note

At its meeting in Jerusalem, June 20-23, 1977 the CCJP began the drafting of Guidelines for Christian-Jewish dialogue. The Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People (CCJP) had at that time drafts and study papers from various study groups in various countries from which a joint document was prepared by a committee. This document became the basis for further work and revisions. The International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) was invited to submit comments and did so at the Liaison and Planning Committee (LPC) meeting in Geneva in February 1979. An Ad Hoc Committee of the CCJP gave further attention to the draft in March 1980. In order to produce a more coherent document the present draft has been restructured, but incorporates the basic content of the earlier drafts.

During this process WCC Guidelines on Dialogue (1979) were commended to the member churches "for their consideration and discussion, testing and evaluation, and for their elaboration in each specific situation" (Central Committee, Kingston, Jamaica, January 1979). The following document is a Draft of Guidelines, constituting such an elaboration for the specific tasks of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

PREFACE

- 1.1 "One of the functions of dialogue is to allow participants to describe and witness to their faith in their own terms. This is of primary importance since self-serving descriptions of other peoples' faith are one of the roots and prejudices, stereotyping, and condescension. Listening carefully to the neighbours' selfunderstanding enables Christians better to obey the commandment not to bear false witness against their neighbours ... (WCC Guidelines III:4, p.17-18).
- 1.2 This groundrule for dialogue has particular and specific implications for Jewish-Christian dialogue, due to the way in which Christianity emerged out of Judaism. Thus Christianity came to define her own identity overagainst that of Judaism. In the process the Church developed her own definitions, understandings and terms for what she had inherited from Jewish traditions. Thus the need for seeking in and through dialogues the answer to the question how the Jews understand themselves becomes more urgent.
- 1.3 Due to this process the average bible-reading and worshipping Christians often believe that they "know Judaism" since they have the Old Testament and records of Jesus' debates with Jewish teachers and the early Christian reflections on Judaism of their times.

- 1.4 Thus, no other religious tradition is as thoroughly "defined" by the Church, as is Judaism. Therein lies the special need for Jewish-Christian dialogue, i.e. the seeking and the listening to how the Jewish community "describe and witness to their faith in their own terms".
- 1.5 In Jewish-Christian dialogue it often becomes clear that, in a certain sense, an understanding and interpretation of Judaism is an integral part of Christian theology. But, from a Jewish perspective, a theological understanding of Christianity is not of essential or integral significance. This lack of congruity between these two communities of faith must be recognized in Jewish-Christian dialogue. It cannot surprise us that Jews resent Christian theologies in which they as a people are assigned to play a negative role in the schemes of Christians. The step is not long from such patterns of thought to overt acts of condensation, persecution, and worse - as history demonstrates over and over again.
- 1.6 Central to the specific relationship and the different self-definitions of Judaism and Christianity is the fact that what is the Bible to the Jews is also the Bible to Christians - but not the whole Bible. To them it is the Old Testament to which the writings of Evangelists and Apostles have been added as the New Testament. Thus the Bible of the Jews and the Old Testament of the Christians are the same and yet different. The Christian terminology came to dominate Western scholarship, also in the term "intertestamental literature", or in the term "Spätjudentum". This latter term ("Late Judaism") has the unfortunate connotation that Judaism comes to an end with Christianity and the Post-Biblical time from 150 BCE - 150 CE is the end of Judaism, as far as Christians are concerned.
- 1.7 It is important for the dialogue to aim at a terminology - scholarly and otherwise - which does not bear the marks of the interpretation of one of the partners. Toward that end - and for the purpose of consciousness - raising - we shall use in this document terms like The Hebrew Bible, the period of the Second Temple, BCE/CE.

2. ANTISEMITISM

- 2.1 Christians cannot enter into dialogue with Jews without ashamed awareness of Christian antisemitism and its long and persistent history. The WCC, in the Assembly at which it was constituted (Amsterdam 1948) condemned antisemitism: "We call upon all the churches we represent to denounce antisemitism, no matter what its origin, as absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith."

Antisemitism is sin against God and man". This appeal has been reiterated many times. The WCC Assembly in New Delhi (1961) stated clearly that in Christian theology the responsibilities for the Crucifixion of Jesus "must fall on all humanity, not on one race or community. Jews were the first to accept Jesus, and Jews are not the only ones who do not yet recognise him".

- 2.2 It is necessary that Christians face honestly the tragic history with regard to the Jews - a history which includes events like Crusades, Inquisition, Pogroms and Holocaust. It is only by facing this history that Christians come to understand the deep-rooted suspicion that many Jews up to today hold against Christians and Christianity while Jews remember with gratitude acts of compassion from Christians, the persistent potential of Christian antisemitism remains a threat. It is a lamentable fact that large parts of Christendom have been guilty of antisemitic attitudes and acts. Christians are called upon to fight, with all the resources at their disposal, antisemitism, especially since it shows increase in many parts of the world.
- 2.3 Christians in parts of the world that have had little Jewish presence recognize the importance of the Hebrew Bible for Christian faith and life. They do not wish to be burdened by the weight of Western history and theology, but rather want to explore in their own ways the significance of Jewish-Christian relations, from the earliest times to the present, for their life and witness. Evenso, those who live in the parts of the church which have a record of anti-semitic acts feel duty bound to make known to all Christians the history of anti-judaism and antisemitism.
- 2.4 We must be especially attentive to those traditional convictions which have furthered antisemitic stances and attitudes on the part of Christians. Attention should therefore be given to the following points: Judaism should not be presented as a kind of anachronism after the coming of Christ: the Jews are a living people, very much alive in our present time as, for instance, the establishment of the State of Israel shows. Neither should the impression be given that the Church has superseded the Israel of old. The Jewish People continues to be God's People, for God is not unfaithful to those whom he has chosen (Rom. 11:29). As long as Christians regard Israel only as preparation for Christianity, as long as Christians claim the validity of God's revelation to them by negating the validity of God's revelation to the Jewish People, Judaism is denied any theological validity, and it becomes impossible to maintain a common ground for our common hope.
- 2.5 The Christian reponse to the Holocaust must be a resolve that it will never happen again. Christian teaching of contempt for the Jews and Judaism was spawning-ground for the evil of the Nazi Holocaust. We must ask ourselves: In what specific ways can the lessons of the Holocaust be taken

seriously by Christian churches and theologians? We must learn so to preach and teach the Gospel as to make sure that it will never again be used by the enemies of the Jewish People. The Christian churches must be in the forefront of any efforts to prevent any conditions which might lead to another slaughter of the people with whom God formed the covenant.

The Holocaust must lay to rest forever the Christian fable that the sufferings of the Jewish People are a judgment of God. The time has long since come for the Church to cease passing judgments on other faiths and people by holding an absolutist tradition or theology that in any way appears to sanction persecution of others. God's love and compassion do not permit us to attribute to him the wounds of body and mind that have been inflicted on the Jews.

If the above misrepresentations and misunderstandings are to be counteracted, a constant critical review of all church teaching, preaching and liturgy is necessary. Some churches have done such reviewing, others not yet.

3. UNDERSTANDING OF JUDAISM

- 3.1 Dialogue is a meeting with "the other". There is no substitute for Christians meeting with Jews and understanding them in their distinctiveness as Jews. Such knowledge is by far the best safeguard against antisemitism, old and new.
- 3.2 Dialogue is a programme for relationships. Christians have to listen to Jews defining themselves - listening as equal partners in a conversation from which the power dimension has been removed. The disputations of mediaeval times between Christian and Jewish theologians, which were organised from time to time, were never held on a footing of equality.
- 3.3 The often total ignorance among otherwise welleducated Christians about the history of the Jewish People after the fall of the Temple of Jerusalem (70 CE) has contributed to the feeling that Judaism dried up when Christianity entered the scene of history. But Christians should be aware of the vibrant and continuing development of Judaism in post-biblical times. Between the first century and today there has been an enormous output of Jewish religious and philosophical literature and commentary. European Jewry was virtually destroyed by the Nazis; it is little short of miraculous that the destruction of six million Jews should have been followed by the reconstruction of Jewish life with its special points of focus in Israel, America, and to a certain extent in Western Europe.
- 3.4 Knowledge of Jewish history and spiritual achievements together with the meeting with contemporary Jews will make us better able "to compare equal with equal". Just as Christianity has a long history of development so has

Judaism. We should not compare contemporary Christianity with our image of ancient Israel.

- 3.5 The negative image of the Pharisees found in much Christian preaching and writing remains one of the gravest distortions of Judaism prevalent in Christianity and spread by Western literature into many other parts of the world. It was from the Pharisees that Jesus learned the Golden Rule, from them comes the belief in resurrection.

Pharisaism was a dynamic religious movement that brought renewal to Judaism in the time of the Second Temple. The Pharisees were the only ones who had the religious vitality necessary for surviving the catastrophe of the fall of the Temple and to build the structures by which the Jewish People could survive 2000 years of exile.

Jesus' debate with the Pharisees is a sign that they were the ones he took seriously, to them he addressed - like the prophets of old - his critique of the foibles of any religious establishment, a critique which has many parallels within Pharisaism itself and within its heir, Rabbinic Judaism. Whatever the Pharisaic movement was - it was not an empty, legalistic system, but a dynamic and creative movement - as the later history of Judaism has shown.

- 3.6 In reading and interpreting the New Testament we must constantly remember that Jesus was a Jew. He lived and taught among the Jews. His teaching belongs to the Judaism of his time. Therefore, the conflicts and controversies reported in the New Testament must be seen as taking place within a framework which he not only shared with fellow-Jews, but by which he identified with his people. When the words of Jesus were used by Christians who did not identify with Israel but used them against "the Jews", they became weapons in anti-Jewish polemics, and thereby their original intention was distorted.

- 3.7 We must guard against tendencies to portray Jews or Jewish groups as negative models. The truth and beauty of Christianity cannot be enhanced by setting up Jews or Judaism as false and ugly. Likewise the witness of the Hebrew Bible should not be portrayed as less authoritative or normative than the New Testament. It is central to the tradition which our Lord accepted as his own and which he reaffirmed as He interpreted it in his life, work and thought. The judgment and the redeeming love of God should be presented as existing from Genesis to Revelation.

- 3.8 We both believe in the one God, Creator of all that is, bound to humankind in grace and love. We both believe in the one God who has made his will for us known to us and who wants that all turn to God, know God and worship God.

We both believe that God has created men and women as crown of creation, that as such they are called to be holy, are

given stewardship in God's name over the creation and are accountable to God for the way they exercise this stewardship.

As Christians and Jews we are taught by our scriptures to know ourselves responsible for our neighbours, especially for those who are weak, poor, persecuted.

Christians and Jews have a common hope, looking forward to the fulfilment when this earth will be renewed, all suffering be done away with and God's will shall be victorious in all realms and respects. In this ultimate hope they work here for greater righteousness, trusting that all deeds of justice will not be in vain.

- 3.9 For us Christians the gifts that we have received from God through the Jews include Jesus Christ our Lord. It is through him that we are linked to this common faith in God, this obedience to God's revealed will, to common hopes for a redeemed world in justice and love.

In the history of the Church as it became for all practical purposes a Gentile community, we have learned to express our gratitude to Jesus Christ in ways that strike the Jews as strange. In our dialogue with the Jews we shall attempt to understand better what we so confess, as we are equally reminded of our common faith in the one God whom both we and they call upon in daily prayers as Father.

4. AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN WITNESS

- 4.1 Proselytism, as distinct from Mission or Witness, is rejected, in the strongest terms by the WCC: "Proselytism embraces whatever violates the right of the human person. Christian or non-Christian, to be free from external coercion in religious matters, or whatever, in the proclamation of the Gospel, does not conform to the ways God draws free men to himself in response to his calls to serve in spirit and in truth." (Ecumenical Review 1/1971, a study document of the Joint Working Group between the R.C. Church and the WCC, p. 11).

We now realise more than ever before that the world in which we live is a world of religious pluralism. This demands from us that we treat those who differ from us with respect and that we strongly support the religious liberty of all.

- 4.2 This rejection of proselytism and our advocacy of respect for the integrity and the identity of all peoples and faith communities is the more urgent where Jews are concerned. For, as stated above, our relationship to the Jews is of a unique and very close character. Moreover, the history of antisemitism among Christians and forced baptisms of Jews in the past makes it understandable that Jews are rightly sensitive towards all religious pressures from outside and all attempts at proselytising.

- 4.3 We reject proselytism both in its gross and more refined forms. This implies that all triumphalism and every kind of manipulation are to be abrogated. We are called upon to minimize the power dimension in all encounters with the Jews and to speak at every level from equal to equal. We have to be conscious of the pain and the perception of the others and have to respect their right to define themselves.
- 4.4 We are called upon to witness to God's love for and claim upon the whole of humankind. The witness to Christ as Lord and Saviour, however, is challenged in special ways where Jews are concerned. It has often become discredited as a result of past behaviour on the part of Christians. We therefore are seeking authentic and proper forms of Christian relations with Jews. Some of us believe that we must bear witness also to the Jews. Some among us are convinced that the Jews' faithfulness and obedience to God do not depend on their acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Some of us maintain that as a separate and specific people the Jews are an instrument of God with a specific God-given task and, as such, a sign of God's faithfulness to all humankind on the way towards ultimate redemption.
- 4.5 Through the history of the Church there have been communities of Jewish Christians/Christian Jews who see themselves called to a specific witness to Christians, to Jews and to the world. They retain their identity with Jewish Law and calendar, language and liturgy while affirming Jesus Christ as their Messiah and Saviour. Their claims have raised questions both among Jews and Christians. According to Rabbinic Law they are not accepted as Jews. Among Christians they have been accused of not recognizing fully the oneness in Christ of Jews and Gentiles.

Other Christians of Jewish origin have chosen to identify with the Church without such specific identification with Jewish tradition. Among them some consider themselves part of the Jewish people which they hold in high esteem, but give their witness to Jesus Christ without distinction from their Gentile sisters and brothers.

It is important for Jewish-Christian dialogue that both of these perspectives be recognized as part of the full Christian spectrum.

5. THE LAND / STATE OF ISRAEL

- 5.1 We are reminded again of the World Council of Churches' "Guidelines on Dialogue", which state that "one of the functions of dialogue is to allow participants to describe and witness to their faith in their own terms". We recognize that this guideline is of particular significance with reference to a feature of Jewish self-awareness which is often misunderstood by Christians: the indissoluble bond between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, which has in the present time, after

many centuries of exile, found social, cultural, economic and political expression in the reality of the State of Israel. Failing to acknowledge the right of Jews to return to the Land prevents any fruitful dialogue with them. Christians are, therefore, called to examine their theology and history of their own faith on this point during any serious Jewish-Christian dialogue on the meaning of the State of Israel.

5.2 Although this Land has also special significance for Christians, as it was here that Jesus Christ was born and lived, worked and taught, suffered and died and was resurrected, and thus has a quality of holiness for them as well, they often find it difficult to fully grasp the validity of the Jewish attachment to this land. Not seldom they depreciate this attachment as "particularistic", contrasting it with the "universalistic" thrust of the Christian message. Such a view does neither justice to the particular nor to the universal elements in Jewish no less than in Christian understanding of the Holy Land. Too easily Christians, particularly of Western traditions, take their own distinctions between faith and nationality, church and state, religion and politics for granted and expect Jews to subscribe to them, thus creating a hindrance to a genuine understanding of the significance of the State of Israel for Jews both in Israel and in Diaspora. That Jews disagree among themselves as to the meaning of this significance, only emphasizes the Christian need to enter and maintain serious dialogue with representatives of all shades of opinion in contemporary Jewish life. Such dialogue may prevent Christians from falling into false stereotypes about the Jewish people, the Zionist Movement and the State of Israel.

5.3 We believe that the claims of the Jews to the Land of Israel can be reconciled with the claims of others, especially Arabs, who know this land as "Palestine", and that a solution can and must be found which does justice to both nations.

6. FUTURE WORK

6.1 We are aware that the questions dealt with in this statement do not cover the whole area of Jewish-Christian encounter. We express our hope, moreover, that contributions to work in the future will increasingly come from Christians in Africa and Asia. We are very much aware that the differences of opinion among us demand further study.

6.2 Our dealing with these issues will show that in our thinking about Israel and the Jews very important and vital tenets of our Christian faith are at stake. Is it too much to hope that Christians and Jews may live in creative tension, enriching and encouraging each other, despite the appalling record of the relationship between the two communities over the centuries?

6.3 Consultations between Jews and Christians should be encouraged

in which the basic convictions and differences of their respective faiths are discussed not merely in the hope of a better understanding of the faith of our partners and an enrichment of our own faith, but also in the hope of reaching a common understanding of the nature of divine revelation and thus healing the breach which exists between the Jewish People and the Church.

- 6.4 Christians and Jews share with other believers the conviction that all people, regardless of race, religion or nationality are equally God's children and equally precious in His sight. This conviction is based on a concept of God as Creator of the universe, who continues to care for his creation, whose mercies are over all His creatures. Such common concept of God should unite believers in trying to understand each other and in caring for God's creation, including nature and all creatures.
- 6.5 The past has all too often been a time of alienation, even bitterness. Happily today we have entered into a new stage of conversation. The present contains seeds of hope that under the same one revealing God, Jews and Christians will fulfill God's purpose of bringing justice, peace and holiness to the whole human family.



News

RABBI HAILS PLAN BY CHURCH GROUP

New York (JTA) — A plan to develop a comprehensive policy statement on the Middle East for the National Council of Churches, which includes sending a fact-finding group to the Middle East early in 1980, has been hailed by a Jewish spokesman as "a constructive, responsible and statesman-like approach for dealing with the Middle East issues in all their complexity."

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, inter-religious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, in praising the plan, also said it constituted a rejection by the National Council general board, which held its semi-annual meeting here recently, of a "one-sided, strident" resolution, "scapegoating Israel" as the so-called "unique" violator of human rights in the Middle East which was offered by the Antiochian Christian Archdiocese of New York and All North America.

Continuing, Tanenbaum said the resolution, which called for the suspension of all U.S. aid to Israel, "stubbornly avoided making a single reference to the flagrant denial of human rights of Christians, Jews, and Kurds in Iran; of Copts in Egypt and Ethiopia; of Christians and Jews in Libya, South Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon, in which the PLO has played its consistently destructive and violent role."

Meanwhile, the Antiochian church abandoned a plan to seek to add Zehdi Labib Terzi, the Palestine Liberation Organization's observer at the United Nations, to its list of proxies on the governing board.

Tanenbaum said that some weeks ago, a special Middle East panel of 16 influential leaders of the main Protestant and Orthodox denominations in the National Council was set up. The Antiochian resolution was turned over to the special panel. Its extremist position was found unacceptable by many National Council members.

Tanenbaum said the special panel was assigned a series of tasks, one of them involving the projected fact-finding trip to the Middle East late February and early March. Basically, the panel will seek to organize a series of discussions and meetings with Christian and Jewish leaders, both in the United States and in the Middle East, to develop approaches for the projected comprehensive Middle East policy.

Preparation of a detailed outline of issues, development of issue papers, a series of forums to discuss the issue papers both inside and outside of the National Council, and review and drafting of a new policy statement are among the basic tasks assigned to the special panel.

In January and early February, the panel will hold open

on the proposed policy statement at which representatives of concerned organizations may request time to speak. Tanenbaum said the AJCommittee had been offered and had accepted an invitation to appear at one of the open hearings.

Also scheduled are informal discussions by the panel with selected groups concerned with the Middle East, such as Jewish, Arab Christian or Palestinian representatives.

During the Middle East visit, the panel will seek to meet with Arab Christians and Moslem religious, cultural and political leaders. The visit will focus on human rights, the PLO, the security needs of the peoples in the region, policy related to the holy places, and the extent of the exodus in the region due to "religious, cultural and economic oppression" in the countries of the region.

Tanenbaum said that it would include examination not only of charges of Christian Arabs being driven from Jerusalem, but also Jews being forced out of Arab countries.

The panel also will seek opportunities to discuss its concerns with government leaders in the Middle East and will develop recommendations for consideration by the governing board on such issues as National Council recognition of the PLO, human rights violations "or other issues assigned to it or deemed essential."

The panel is under instructions to assimilate all of its findings before April 1 and to advise the National Council policy development work group as it writes its final draft for a first reading in May at the next general board meeting.

PASSION PLAY STILL SHOWS ANTI-SEMITISM

San Francisco (JTA) — Despite a serious effort by officials of Oberammergau in West Germany to cleanse the 350-year-old Passion Play of its anti-Jewish polemic and prejudice, the drama remains "structurally anti-Semitic." It continues to malign Jewish law, to depict the Judaism of Jesus' time as corrupt and punitive, and to dramatize those Gospel sources which cast the most negative light on Jewish motives and actions.

These conclusions emerge from the latest line-by-line analysis of the revised 1980 Oberammergau Passion Play published by the Interreligious Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee. The findings of the study, entitled "Oberammergau 1980 — Progress and Problems," were made public here recently at a meeting of the AJCommittee's



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WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

PROGRAMME UNIT ON FAITH AND WITNESS

Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies

Geneva, July 21, 1981.

AB/IM

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
American Jewish Committee
Interreligious Consultations
165 East 56th Street
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022
U.S.A.

Dear Marc,

Just a note to tell you again how much I appreciate your extremely helpful contribution to the guidelines discussion in London. We have a much better document because you and Bernie were so willing to help us through some sticky places. I have sent the text to the members of the drafting committee for their approval. As soon as that has been received, I'll get the "official" version out to you.

I would be most interested to know what you think of the suggestion that perhaps the time might have arrived for IJCIC to think of developing Jewish-Christian guidelines also. I hesitate to appear in any way pushy about that suggestion, so please understand that I raise it again in a purely personal fashion and "off the record". I know you are aware that I would be ready to co-operate in any way that should seem helpful. Perhaps we could talk at Milwaukee in October.

Cordially,

Allan R. Brockway
Christian-Jewish Relations

SEVEN ARTS FEATURE SYNDICATE
WORLDWIDE NEWS SERVICE
165 W. 46TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10036

REL: JULY 24, 1981

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES SPEAKS
ON JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS
By Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

(A SEVEN ARTS FEATURE)

(Rabbi Tanenbaum was one of two official Jewish observers
at the WCC meeting in London, June 22-25.)

It will come as a surprise - a welcome one, indeed - that the World Council of Churches' Committee on the Church and the Jewish People has adopted a far-reaching set of "Guidelines on Jewish-Christian Relations" that could well become a turning point in the troubled history between the WCC and the world Jewish community.

As a result of pressures and threats from the PLO and some Third World nations, the World Council has generally supported extreme, one-sided, anti-Israel positions.

Thanks to the brilliant leadership of Prof. Krister Stendahl of Harvard University, and committed friends of the Jewish people such as Prof. Paul van Buren of Temple University and Dr. J. Coos Schoneveld of Holland, the WCC commission adopted a comprehensive statement that deals sympathetically with virtually every aspect of Jewish-Christian relations.

Thus, the Guidelines reject "the false perception that Judaism dried up when Christianity emerged;" it acknowledges that Judaism today "constitutes one of the major resources for religious life and thought in the world;" it repudiates "the negative images of the Pharisees" as a grave distortion; it condemns anti-Semitism and calls on "Christians to fight anti-Semitism with all their resources;" it repudiates proselytizing; and, most significantly, calls upon world Christendom to understand "the indissoluble bond between the Land of Israel and the Jewish People."

If this extraordinary document can be preserved from tampering by anti-Jewish forces, the WCC Guidelines may well have as historic an impact as did the Vatican Declaration on Catholic Jewish Relations.



Ecumenical Press Service

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DIALOGUE GUIDELINES: NO
'COERCIVE PROSYLETISM'

August 6, 1981

Geneva (EPS) - The international Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People (CCJP) has unanimously approved Jewish-Christian dialogue guidelines which reject "coercive proselytism", that is, "whatever violates the right of the human person to be free from external coercion in religious matters".

The CCJP is an agency of the World Council of Churches, headquartered here. The guidelines were released in August after being discussed and approved at a consultation meeting in London at the end of June.

"Christians are called to witness to their faith in word and deed", the guidelines affirm. "The church has a mission and it cannot be otherwise".

But, they continue, "Christians have often distorted their witness by coercive proselytism". They call "steps towards assuring non-coercive practices... of highest importance".

Beyond the rejection of coercion, however, the guidelines note Christian disagreement on "what constitutes authentic forms of witness", towards non-Christians in general and Jews in particular.

The document urges Christians to "face honestly the tragic history of antisemitism" and "to fight antisemitism with all the resources at their disposal, the more so since there are disturbing signs of new and increased antisemitism in many parts of the world...".

"The church must learn", the guidelines add, "so to preach and teach the gospel as to make sure that it cannot be used against the Jewish people".

In a section on "the land", the guidelines say "the need for the state of Israel to exist in security and peace... is of paramount importance in any dialogue with Jews". They urge Christians in such dialogue to "also recognize the need of Palestinians for self-determination and expression of their national identity".

The document notes that "many Christians find it difficult to grasp this essential nature of the Jewish attachment" to the "land of the fathers and the land of promise". It asks Christians to "examine their theology and the history of their own faith on this point in any dialogue with Jews concerning the meaning of the land".

The guidelines call it a "short... step from Christian theologies in which Judaism play a "negative role" to "overt acts of condescension, persecutions, and worse". They urge "Christians to listen... to ways in which Jews understand their history and their traditions... 'in their own terms'".

Consultation moderator is Krister Stendahl, professor and former dean at Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass., USA. Other consultants came from France, Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Soviet Union, USA, Canada, Argentina, India, and Israel (including two Arab Christian ordained ministers). Jewish and Roman Catholic observers were also present.

GUIDELINES FOR JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

Adopted by the Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People of the sub-unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies, World Council of Churches, on 26th June, 1981, at London Colney, England

PREFACE

- 1.1 "One of the functions of dialogue is to allow participants to describe and witness to their faith in their own terms. This is of primary importance since self-serving descriptions of other peoples' faith are one of the roots of prejudice, stereotyping, and condescension. Listening carefully to the neighbours' self-understanding enables Christians better to obey the commandment not to bear false witness against their neighbours, whether those neighbours be of long established religious, cultural or ideological traditions or members of new religious groups. It should be recognized by partners in dialogue that any religion or ideology claiming universality, apart from having an understanding of itself, will also have its own interpretations of other religions and ideologies as part of its own self-understanding. Dialogue gives an opportunity for a mutual questioning of the understanding partners have about themselves and others. It is out of a reciprocal willingness to listen and learn that significant dialogue grows."

(WCC Guidelines on Dialogue, III.4)

- 1.2 In giving such guidelines the World Council of Churches speaks primarily for and to its member churches as it defines the need for and gifts to be received by dialogue. People of other faiths may choose to define their understanding of dialogue, and their expectations as to how dialogue with Christians may affect their own traditions and attitudes and may lead to a better understanding of Christianity.
- 1.3 In Jewish-Christian dialogue it is of special importance to allow for a certain asymmetry between these two communities of faith. For example, an understanding of Judaism in New Testament times becomes an integral and indispensable part of any Christian theology. For Jews, a "theological" understanding of Christianity is of a less than essential or integral significance, although neither community of faith has developed without awareness of the other.
- 1.4 The relations between Jews and Christians have unique characteristics because of the ways in which Christianity historically emerged out of Judaism. Christian understandings of that process constitute a necessary part of the dialogue and give urgency to the enterprise. As Christianity came to define its own identity over against Judaism, the Church developed its own understandings, definitions and terms for what it had inherited from Jewish traditions, and for what it read in the Scriptures common to Jews and Christians. In the process of defining its own identity the Church defined Judaism, and assigned to the Jews definite roles in its understanding of God's acts of salvation. It should not be surprising that Jews resent those Christian theologies in which they as a people are assigned to play a negative role. History has demonstrated over and again how short the step is from such patterns of thought in Christianity to overt acts of condescension, persecutions and worse.

- 1.5 Bible-reading and worshipping Christians often believe that they "know Judaism" since they have the Old Testament, the records of Jesus' debates with Jewish teachers and the early Christian reflections on the Judaism of their times. Furthermore, no other religious tradition has been as thoroughly "defined" by preachers and teachers in the Church as has Judaism. This attitude is often enforced by lack of knowledge about the history of Jewish life and thought through the 1,900 years since the parting of the ways of Judaism and Christianity.
- 1.6 For these reasons there is special urgency for Christians to listen, through study and dialogue, to ways in which Jews understand their history and their traditions, their faith and their obedience "in their own terms". Furthermore, a mutual listening to how each is perceived by the other may be a step toward overcoming fears and correcting misunderstandings that have thrived on isolation.
- 1.7 Both Judaism and Christianity comprise a wide spectrum of opinions, options, theologies, and styles of life and service. Since generalizations often produce stereotyping, Jewish-Christian dialogue becomes the more significant by aiming at as full as possible a representation of views within the two communities of faith.

2. TOWARD A CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF JUDAISM

- 2.1 Through dialogue with Jews, many Christians have come to appreciate the richness and vitality of Jewish faith and life in the covenant and have been enriched in their own understanding of God and the divine will for all creatures.

In dialogue with Jews, Christians have learned that the actual history of Jewish faith and experience does not match the images of Judaism that have dominated a long history of Christian teaching and writing, images that have been spread by Western culture and literature into other parts of the world.

- 2.2 In the understanding of many Christians, Judaism as a living tradition came to an end with the coming of Christ and with the destruction of the second temple of Jerusalem; the Church replaced the Jews as God's people, and the Judaism that survived is a fossilized religion of legalism.

In this view the covenant of God with the people of Israel was only a preparation for the coming of Christ, after which it was abrogated. Judaism of the first centuries before and after the birth of Jesus was therefore called "Late Judaism". The Pharisees were considered to represent the acme of legalism, Jews and Jewish groups were portrayed as negative models, and the truth and beauty of Christianity were thought to be enhanced by setting up Judaism as false and ugly.

- 2.3 Through a renewed study of Judaism and in dialogue with Jews, Christians become aware that Judaism in the time of Christ was in an early stage of its long life. Under the leadership of the Pharisees the Jewish people began a spiritual revival of remarkable power, which gave them the vitality capable of surviving the catastrophe of the loss of the temple. It gave birth to Rabbinic Judaism which produced the Mishnah and Talmud and built the structures for a strong and creative life through the centuries.

- 2.4 Jesus was born a Jew, born into this Jewish tradition. In this setting he was nurtured by the Hebrew Scriptures, which he accepted as authoritative and to which he gave a new interpretation in his life and teaching. In this context Jesus announced that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and in his resurrection his followers found the confirmation of his being both Lord and Messiah.

Christians should remember that some of the controversies reported in the New Testament between Jesus and the "scribes and Pharisees" find parallels within Pharisaism itself and its heir, Rabbinic Judaism. These controversies took place in a Jewish context, but when the words of Jesus came to be used by Christians who did not identify with the Jewish people as Jesus did, such sayings often became weapons in anti-Jewish polemics and thereby their original intention was tragically distorted. An internal Christian debate is now taking place on the question of how to understand passages in the New Testament that seem to contain anti-Jewish references.

- 2.5 Judaism, with its rich history of spiritual life, produced the Talmud as the normative guide for Jewish life in thankful response to the grace of God's covenant with the people of Israel. Over the centuries important commentaries, profound philosophical works and poetry of spiritual depth have been added. For Jews the Talmud is as central and authoritative as the New Testament is for Christians. Judaism, like Christianity, is more than the religion of the Scriptures of Israel. What Christians call the Old Testament has received in the Talmud and later writings interpretations which for Jewish tradition share in the authority of Moses.

- 2.6 Christians as well as Jews look to the Hebrew Bible as the story recording Israel's sacred memory of God's election and covenant with this people. For Jews, it is their own story in historical continuity with the present. Christians, mostly of gentile background since early in the life of the Church, believe themselves to be heirs by grace of this same story. The unique relationship between the two communities, both worshipping the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is a given historical fact, but how it is to be understood theologically is a matter of internal dialogue among Christians, which takes on increased seriousness as a result of dialogue with Jews.

- 2.7 Both commonalities and differences between the two faiths need to be examined carefully. In finding in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments the sole and ultimate authority sufficient for salvation, the Christian Church shares Israel's faith in the One God, whom it knows in the Spirit as the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. For Christians, Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father, through whom millions have come to share in the love of, and to adore, the God who first made covenant with the people of Israel. Knowing the One God in Jesus Christ through the Spirit, therefore, Christians worship that God with a trinitarian confession of the incarnate presence, liturgical language foreign to Jewish worship.

Christians and Jews both believe that God has created men and women as the crown of creation and has called them to be holy and to exercise stewardship over the creation in accountability to God. Jews and Christians are taught by their Scriptures to know themselves responsible to their neighbours, especially to those who are weak, poor and oppressed. In various and distinct ways they look for the day in which God will redeem the creation. In dialogue with Jews many Christians come to a more profound appreciation of the Exodus hope of liberation, and pray and work for the coming of righteousness and peace on earth.

- 2.8 As more and more Christians of different traditions enter into dialogue with Jews in local, national and international situations, they will come to express their growing understanding of Judaism in other language, style and ways than has been done in these guidelines. Such understandings are to be shared among the churches for the enrichment of all.

3. AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN WITNESS

- 3.1 Christians are called to witness to their faith in word and deed. The Church has a mission and it cannot be otherwise.
- 3.2 Christians have often distorted their witness by coercive proselytism - conscious and unconscious, overt and subtle. Referring to proselytism between Christian churches, the Joint Working Group of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches stated: "Proselytism embraces whatever violates the right of the human person, Christian or non-Christian, to be free from external coercion in religious matters." (Ecumenical Review, 1/1971, p.11)
- 3.3 Such rejection of proselytism, and such advocacy of respect for the integrity and the identity of all persons and all communities of faith are urgent in relation to Jews, especially those who live as minorities among Christians. Steps toward assuring non-coercive practices are of highest importance. In dialogue ways should be found for the exchange of concerns, perceptions and safeguards in these matters.
- 3.4 While Christians agree that there can be no place for coercion of any kind, they do disagree - on the basis of their understandings of the Scriptures - as to what constitutes authentic forms of mission.

There is a wide spectrum, from those who see the very presence of the Church in the world as the witness called for, to those who see mission as the explicit and organized proclamation of the gospel to all who have not accepted Jesus as their Saviour.

There is further disagreement where Jews are concerned. There are Christians who view a mission to the Jews as having a very special salvific significance, and those who believe the conversion of the Jews to be the eschatological event that will climax the history of the world. There are those who would place no special emphasis on a mission to the Jews, but would include them in the one mission to all who have not accepted Christ as their Saviour. There are those who believe that a mission to the Jews is not part of an authentic Christian witness, since the Jewish people finds its fulfilment in faithfulness to God's covenant of old.

Dialogue can rightly be described as a mutual witness, but only when the intention is to hear the others in order better to understand their faith, hopes, insights and concerns, and to give, to the best of one's ability, one's own understanding of one's own faith. The spirit of dialogue is to be fully present to one another in full openness and human vulnerability.

- 3.5 In dialogue with Jews it should be remembered that, according to rabbinic law, Jews who confess Jesus as the Messiah are considered apostate Jews. But for many Christians of Jewish origin, their identification with the Jewish people is a deep spiritual reality to which they seek to give expression in various ways, some by observing parts of Jewish tradition in worship and life style, many by a special commitment to the well-being of the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Among Christians of Jewish origin there is the same wide spectrum of attitudes toward mission as among other Christians, and the same guidelines for dialogue and against coercion apply.

4. ANTISEMITISM - A CONTINUING CONCERN IN THE JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

- 4.1 Christians cannot enter into dialogue with Jews without the awareness of antisemitism and its long persistent history, especially in countries where Jews constitute a minority among Christians. The World Council of Churches Assembly at its first meeting in Amsterdam 1948 condemned antisemitism: "We call upon the churches we represent to denounce antisemitism, no matter what its origin, as absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith. Antisemitism is sin against God and man." This appeal has been reiterated many times.
- 4.2 Christians must face honestly the tragic history of antisemitism, which includes the Crusades, the Inquisition, pogroms and the Holocaust. It is only by facing this history that Christians can understand the deep-rooted suspicion that many Jews even today have of Christians and Christianity. Christians are called upon to fight antisemitism with all the resources at their disposal, the more so since there are disturbing signs of new and increased antisemitism in many parts of the world. Those who live in parts of the world where there is a record of antisemitic acts are duty bound to unmask for all Christians the ever-present danger they have come to recognize in anti-Judaism and antisemitism.

- 4.3 One Christian response to the Holocaust must be a resolve that it will never happen again. Teachings of contempt for Jews and Judaism in certain Christian traditions were a spawning ground for the evil of the Nazi Holocaust. The Church must learn so to preach and teach the Gospel as to make sure that it cannot be used against the Jewish people. The Christian churches must be in the forefront of any efforts to prevent conditions which might lead to further persecution and another slaughter of the Jewish people.
- 4.4. Discrimination against and persecution of the Jewish people have deep-rooted socio-economic and political aspects. Religious differences are magnified to justify racial hatred in support of vested interests. Similar phenomena are evident in many inter-racial conflicts. Christians should oppose all such religious prejudices, whereby people are made scapegoats for the failures and problems of societies and political regimes.
- 4.5 Christians in parts of the world with little or no Jewish presence do not wish to be conditioned by the experience and shortcoming of those who brought the Gospel to them; rather, they explore in their own ways the significance of Christian-Jewish relations from the earliest times to the present, for their life and witness.

5. THE LAND

- 5.1 The words from the World Council of Churches' Guidelines on Dialogue that one of the functions of dialogue is to allow participants to describe and witness to their faith "in their own terms" are of particular significance for the understanding of the indissoluble bond between the Land of Israel and the Jewish people. This bond has, after many centuries of dispersion, found expression in the State of Israel. The need for the State of Israel to exist in security and peace is fundamental to Jewish consciousness and therefore is of paramount importance in any dialogue with Jews.
- 5.2 When Christians enter into dialogue with Jews they also recognize the need of Palestinians for self-determination and expression of their national identity. It is important to hear Palestinians - Christian and Muslim - express their special bonds with the Land "in their own terms". There must be a place in God's plan for all to live in security and peace.
- 5.3 The Land is holy for the three monotheistic religions - yet understood in different ways. They have all maintained a presence in the Land from their beginnings.

For Muslims the Land has special significance and, with its holy places, has been an integral part of the Muslim world, symbolic of God's universal promises to all the children of Abraham.

For countless Christians the Land has special significance. It is the Land of the Bible. It was in this Land that the Lord Jesus Christ was born, worked and taught, suffered, died and was raised from the dead.

But for Jews the relation to the land is of an essential nature. It is the Land of the Fathers and the Land of promise.

- 5.4 Many Christians find it difficult to grasp this essential nature of the Jewish attachment to the Land. They find it "particularistic", contrasting it with the "universalistic" thrust of the Christian message. Such a view does justice neither to the particular nor to the universal elements in Jewish, no less than in Christian understandings of the Land. Christians are therefore called to examine their theology and the history of their own faith on this point in any dialogue with Jews concerning the meaning of the Land.
- 5.5 Different understandings among Christians of the distinctions between faith and nationality, church and state, religion and politics, often hinder a genuine understanding of the significance of the Land for Jews, both in Israel and the diaspora. They also hinder an understanding of the significance of the Land for Palestinian Christians and Muslims.
- 5.6 These attachments to the Land only emphasize the need for sustained dialogue with Jews. In such dialogue, consideration should be given to finding ways to promote mutual respect and reconciliation among Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Middle East and elsewhere as a contribution to the common welfare of all members of God's human family.

* * * * *



Potter
→ meeting folder 7/1/83

May 2, 1983

CABLE:

DR. PHILIP POTTER
GENERAL SECRETARY
OIKOUMENE
GENEVA

BOTH PLEASED AND HONORED TO ACCEPT YOUR KIND INVITATION FOR
PARTICIPATION IN WCC. ASSEMBLY. LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE FOLLOWS.

REGARDS,

RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

CALLLED IN MAY 2, 1983

rpr

cc: Libby Rosen
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1-002239C118 04/28/83 ICS IPMMVIP MVN NYAA
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UWNX HL CHBX 028
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URGENTLY REQUEST ACCEPTANCE OF RECENT INVITATION FOR WCC ASSEMBLY
RESPONSIBILITIES PLEASE CABLE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE
GENERAL SECRETARY PHILIP POTTER

NNN

0545 EST

06:02 EST

MGMCOMP

