



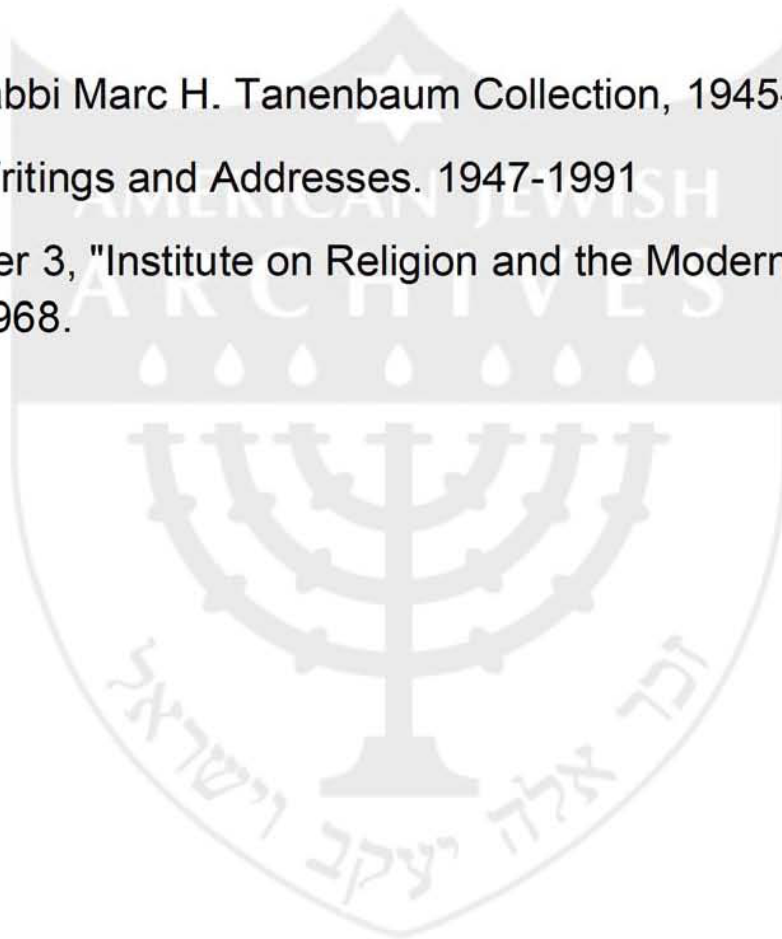
THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Preserving American Jewish History

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

Series A: Writings and Addresses. 1947-1991

Box 2, Folder 3, "Institute on Religion and the Modern World", 25-28 March 1968.



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ST. MEINRAD SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY - AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
INSTITUTE ON RELIGION AND THE MODERN WORLD
March 25-28, 1968

Remarks by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, Director of Interreligious
Affairs of the American Jewish Committee, at Opening Session

The dialogue between a leading Catholic and a Jewish scholar devoted to a searching examination of the relationship of Christianity and Judaism to the modern world has meaning beyond the inherent value of their intellectual probings. It demonstrates that both Judaism and Christianity, confronted by common challenges of secular modernity, have profound insights to contribute out of their respective and differing histories and traditions which are mutually complementary as well as mutually corrective.

That eminent Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish scholars and religious leaders have come together to uncover a pluralist vision of the people of God, and that takes seriously the claims to truth and value of the major historic religions of mankind, may well become another critical step forward in reconciling one of the major contradictions that is currently at work in certain tendencies of Christian ecumenism. While growing centers of Catholic and Protestant thinkers are seeking to recover the origins of Christianity in the sitz im leben of Judaism, almost simultaneously some Christian ecumenists on an institutional level appear to be moving in an opposite direction. On university campuses, some Catholic and Protestant youth movements are joining forces in Christian unity movements as though Jewish youth are

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marginal to university life. Joint Catholic and Protestant social action bodies on national and international levels are being created at a mounting pace, as though Jews and others are irrelevant to planning for society's social and economic reconstruction. Joint Christian mass media bodies are being created at a proliferating rate, as though Jews have no substantive contribution to make in a religious message through the media.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am not charging Christian ecumenists with anti-Semitism. On the contrary, harmonious relationships between Christians could well become an effective antidote to anti-Semitism, since conflict between Christians in the past often led to the scapegoating of Jews who were caught between the milestones of inter-Christian rivalry. Jews also have a great stake in the securing of peace and justice in the social order and to the degree that Christians join forces to advance such social stability Jews assuredly must welcome such efforts. Jews also recognize that ecumenism as a Christological phenomenon obviously have every right to work out its destiny and its ecclesiastical problems without the interference of any who do not share the presuppositions of the Christian participants.

But is there not a question to be raised about such strong centripetal tendencies toward what can only be seen from the outside as pan-Christian exclusivism, replacing a former Roman Catholic or Protestant denominational exclusivism that prevailed for so long and represented such a serious challenge to pluralism? Should not serious people, committed to democratic values and the vision of an open society, begin to ponder on the consequences of a galloping ecumenism which may lead to a global tribalism, which excludes millions of human beings who are non-Christians, rather than include them in a community of solidarity and mutual interdependence while each holds to the revelation which is his own?