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

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 14, Folder 8, Chicago Catholic-Jewish Conference, 1964-1965.

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September 1, 1964

David Danzig, Marshall Sklare, Rabbi Irving Rosenbaum
Marc Tanenbaum

RE CHICAGO CATHOLIC-JEWISH CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 1965

On August 24 I met with Msgr. George Higgins, Director of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference at his office in Washington. You will recall that Msgr. Hagarty, Vice-Chancellor of Cardinal Meyer's Chancery, had suggested that it would be useful to involve Higgins in some of the planning for the Chicago meeting.

Hagarty had written to Higgins two days prior to our meeting and had requested a list of names of potential invitees to the conference. Higgins had replied with names. Most of these people are known to us as active participants in the "ecumenical circuit" - Phil Scherper, Jim O'Garra, William Ball, Father Campion, etc.

Apparently Higgins had not read the memorandum describing the purpose of the conference and therefore did not propose names of social scientists or other Catholic specialists. After reviewing in some detail the objectives, Higgins then proposed the following names:

Father Potvin, Catholic University, Washington, D. C.

Father Joseph Schuyler, Jesuit Seminary, Shrub Oak, N.Y.

John Dunnivan, Boston

Father Joseph Fichter, Loyola University, New Orleans, La.

Father Andrew Greeley, Chicago

Father Gerard Sloyan, Catholic University, Wash., D. C.

Father Theodore Stone, Asst. Director, CCD, Chicago

Higgins said he had given this further thought and would propose other names that occurred to him.

In reviewing the purposes of the conference, which he warmly endorsed, Higgins felt that a useful purpose would be served if one or two survey papers would be prepared by either a Catholic or Jewish social scientist, or jointly, surveying what we know and what we don't know about the research in the inter-action between Catholics and Jews as outlined in the memorandum.

Higgins said that there would be great usefulness in doing a study of the social action of the three faith communities - a descriptive inventory of the kind and scope of social action being carried out by Catholics, Protestants, and Jews; an analysis of the impact and effectiveness of these programs.

Also, Higgins said in passing, that Walter Reuther and the UAW-CIO were making a concerted effort to keep alive the coalition of religious groups and the civil rights and labor groups that cooperated in support of the civil rights legislation to back the anti-poverty campaign. He mentioned that Reuther's union had put up something like a million dollars plus for this purpose.

Higgins then stated that he would accept an invitation to participate in an advisory capacity on the Steering Committee of the conference, but could not play an active role because of his other heavy obligations, including his being in Rome from September through November.

At the same time, he mentioned that we should check out a conference scheduled in New York by the Center for Democratic Institutions to be held in February based on an examination of "Pacem in Terris."

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August 20, 1964

Monsignor George Higgins
Director
National Catholic Welfare Conference
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear George:

It was good speaking with you. I look forward with pleasure to seeing you next Monday morning.

One of the matters that I would like to talk to you about is a proposal for a conference on Catholic-Jewish relations that we should like to sponsor cooperatively with an appropriate Catholic group in Chicago around February 1965. We feel that a serious consultation that will seek to explore in depth and with genuine competence a broad spectrum of issues that influence relationships between our communities would be of particular importance in the wake of the Ecumenical Council.

I am enclosing a very rough outline of the kind of meeting that we have in mind. I am sending it to you in advance in the hope that you might be able to find the time to look at this before we meet. Also enclosed is a copy of a proposal from Father Andrew Greeley to Marshall Sklare regarding a joint inter-faith religious research project. Marshall and I feel that this is an excellent idea and could well be one of the important projects that could emerge from the consultation that we are proposing.

We have already explored this consultation idea with a foundation which is extremely interested and has already pledged principle a substantial budget for such a conference if it can

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be held under the right kinds of auspices.

With warmest good wishes.

Cordially,

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, Director
Interreligious Affairs Department

MT:fb

Encl.

CC D.D., J.S. M.W.

M. Shale



August 10, 1964

Marc Tanenbaum
Marshall Sklare

Letter from Fr. Andrew Greeley

I will be on vacation when you return later this week, but I thought that the attached letter from Fr. Greeley would be of considerable interest to you.

I am going to be in touch with him about this matter and perhaps it would be good if you too contacted him later in the week, especially about points 2, 3, and 4. You could, of course, also discuss with him point 1 -- I shall make a few suggestions to him along these lines.

I am sending a copy of Greeley's letter to Dave Danzig as well so that he may know about this development.

MS:RGB

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
5720 Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago 37, Illinois
Plaza 2-6444 Area Code 312
PETER H. ROSSI, Director

August 7, 1964

AIR MAIL - SPECIAL DELIVERY

Dr. Marshal Sklare
American Jewish Committee
165 E. 56th Street
New York, New York

Dear Marshal:

In a conversation with Cardinal Meyer that I had yesterday I mentioned that I felt that a climate was growing up for joint religious research across major (Protestant-Catholic-Jewish) ecclesiastical lines. I pointed out almost casually that I thought that one of the problems in launching such research was that Protestant and Jewish groups did not know who the proper authorities were with whom to establish contact on the Catholic side of the line.

The Cardinal expressed great interest in the whole area and said immediately that he felt that the proper contact would be the new Bishops Commission on Ecumenism (of which he is the chairman). Indeed without any prompting on my part he indicated that he would be willing personally to support the idea of a joint research center.

As a first step he asked me to prepare a memo which he could submit to the Commission on Joint Religious Research. I hardly need point out that if Cardinal Meyer approves of such a memo, no one is likely to fight it.

The difficult part of the thing is that I must get this memo ready by the end of August, so he can take it to Rome with him, since the Commission is going to meet in Rome during the Council.

Could I, therefore, impose on you to write me a letter in which you would address yourself to the following points:

- 1) What kinds of social research do you think could be done across ecclesiastical lines?
- 2) How would such research be organized and financed?

Dr. Marshal Sklare

- 3) How could the Bishops Commission on Ecumenism best make known its willingness to begin this kind of cooperation?
- 4) What sort of organizational structure should exist on the Catholic side to facilitate joint research projects (I speak here of national structure)?

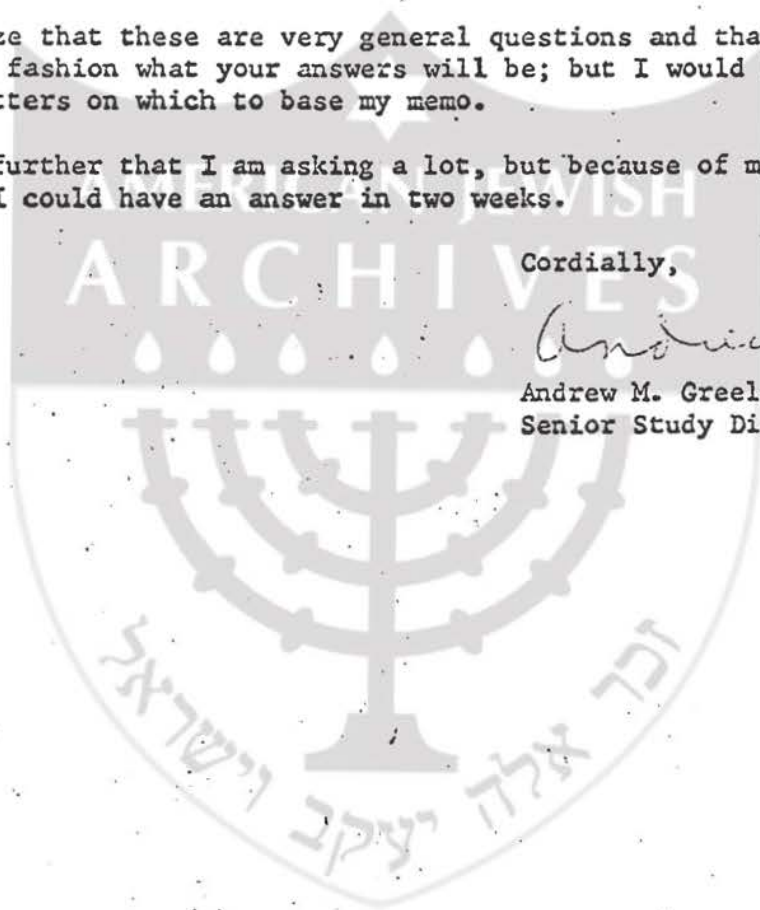
I realize that these are very general questions and that I probably know in some fashion what your answers will be; but I would like to have a file of letters on which to base my memo.

I know further that I am asking a lot, but because of my time problem, I wonder if I could have an answer in two weeks.

Cordially,

Andrew M. Greeley
Senior Study Director

AMG/so



PROPOSAL FOR NATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS

CONFERENCE IN CHICAGO

I. OBJECTIVES

In the light of changes in relationships that are developing as a result of the ecumenical movement, our purpose is to explore the interaction of the Catholic and Jewish communities in America on the many levels on which this interaction takes place: As specific religious communities, each with its traditional teachings and religious attitudes regarding the other group; as cultural-ethnic communities, with old world memories and suspicions about one another, and as socio-political groups concentrated in American urban communities, sharing the experience of immigrant groups in big-city life.

The ultimate objectives is to bring together for the first time in one place the significant research which has been done by both the Jewish and Catholic groups over the entire area of Catholic-Jewish relations so that we may have a foundation for constructive future programs for improving Catholic-Jewish relations in America.

Although there has been an enormous increase in Catholic-Jewish interaction, understanding and cooperation in recent years and much significant sociological and related research has been done,

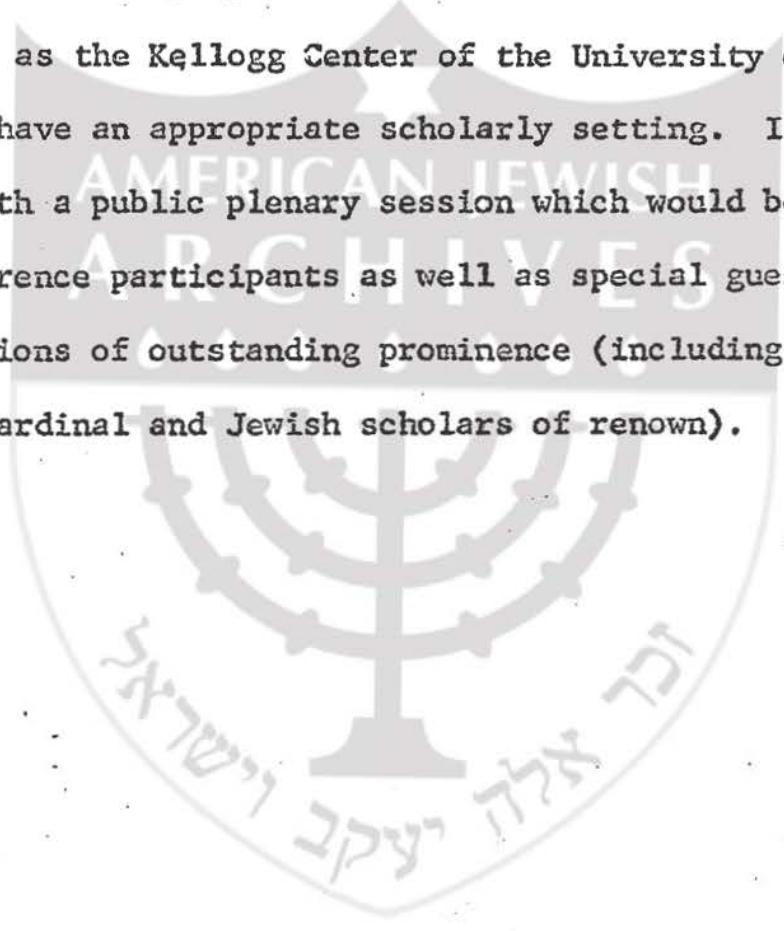
the fruits of Catholic-Jewish experience and research have not been drawn together and evaluated for their practical implications. We are urgently in need of a vehicle to gather together all existing research in Catholic-Jewish relations, with a view to stimulating and coordinating future activities, and also for bringing together the key individuals in both communities responsible for teaching, programming, communications and social science research. The purpose of the conference is to achieve these ends.

II. METHOD

We envision a two or three day conference to investigate the entire range of Catholic-Jewish interaction and attitudes about one another. Significant research papers will be prepared in advance and presented at the conference covering such subjects as: (1) How Catholics and Jews perceive each other as groups (inventory of existing attitude studies, polls, existing sociological literature, etc.); (2) What Catholics and Jews teach about each other in their religious schools (textbook surveys, analysis of sensitive themes in religious education, such as the Crucifixion, the Crusades, polemic Jewish histories, etc.); (3) Specific political and social issues which cause tension and misunderstanding between Catholics and Jews (birth control, censorship, religion in public education, etc.); (4) Methods and channels which have been developed for resolving misunderstanding and increasing cooperation between Catholics and Jews.

III. OTHER FACTORS

Whether the Protestant group should also be included remains to be decided. On the basis of the Catholic and Jewish groups only, we plan a conference of approximately 50 people - including Protestants, about 75 people. The conference would be held in such a place as the Kellogg Center of the University of Chicago in order to have an appropriate scholarly setting. It would be concluded with a public plenary session which would be attended by the conference participants as well as special guests who occupy positions of outstanding prominence (including hopefully, a Catholic Cardinal and Jewish scholars of renown).



August, 1964