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FROM THE

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, Plaza 1-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations

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NEW YORK, January 28...An unprecedented national consultation between Presbyterians and Jews that will examine the moral role of religious leadership in shaping such scientific developments as the breaking of the genetic code, the manipulation of human behavior through drugs and subliminal suggestion, and the test tube creation of life will be held February 8-10 at the Nassau Inn, Princeton, New Jersey.

The conference, which will bring together 30 leading Christian and Jewish scholars from a variety of disciplines, is sponsored jointly by the Interreligious Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee and the Council on Theological Education of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., with the cooperation of the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations (COEMAR).

It is the first national consultation between representatives from the major Presbyterian theological seminaries and from the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform branches of Judaism and Jewish academic institutions.

Announcement of the conference plans was made here by the conference co-chairmen, Dr. John W. Meister, Executive Secretary of the Council on Theological Education, United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., Dr. Raymond V. Kearns, Jr., Associate General Secretary of COEMAR, and Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, National Director of the Interreligious Affairs Department of AJC.

Conference coordinators are: for the United Presbyterian Church, Mrs. Margrethe B. J. Brown, Secretary to the Committee on Studies of COEMAR; and for the American Jewish Committee, Rabbi A. James Rudin, Assistant Interreligious Affairs Director, and Dr. Gerald Strober, Consultant on Religious Curricula Development.

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The conference will open with a public session Sunday night, February 9, 8:00 p.m., at which Dr. Amitai Etzioni, Professor of Sociology at Columbia University, will present a paper on "The Social Sciences View Technological Options." Dr. Etzioni, a nationally prominent social scientist, has written and lectured extensively on the impact of technological developments on the social and cultural value systems of the Western world.

On Monday, February 9, at 9:30 a.m., Dr. Hans-Ruedi Weber of Geneva, Switzerland, Associate Director of the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches, will speak on "A Theological Response to the New Technology." He is the editor of Experiments with Man and The Layman in Christian History. Swiss born and educated, Dr. Weber formerly served as Executive Secretary of the World Council of Churches' Department on the Laity.

On Monday afternoon, 2:00 p.m., Dr. Benjamin Nelson, Dean of the Graduate School of the New School for Social Research, will present a paper on "Contemporary Science and Technology in Historical Perspectives: Continuities and Discontinuities." Professor Nelson, one of the foremost historians of ideas, will examine the present challenges of technology in the perspective of past scientific challenges to the world-views and value systems of the Western religious traditions.

In their joint statement, Drs. Meister, Kearns, and Rabbi Tanenbaum stated:

"Judaism and Christianity have been the historic custodians of moral and spiritual values in the Western world which have constituted the ground out of which contemporary ideologies and technologies have arisen. Present developments in advanced sciences and technology have brought unparalleled promise for human fulfillment, both personal and communal. At the same time, there have emerged developments that are technological Frankensteins and that threaten to destroy man or disfigure him beyond human imagining. We have in mind the breaking of the genetic code, the imminent capacity to create life, the ability to modify or alter radically human behavior through drugs, the telecommunications revolution.

"Many of these developments which began as neutral scientific experiments suggesting high promise and adventure have become fundamental threats to man's nature and his moral destiny. The purpose of this consultation is to try to close the gap between the bearers of moral value systems and scientists with a view toward ascertaining how religious leadership can play a more creative and responsible role in the moral-decision making that is the heart of the future of technological man and society."

The participants in the conference are as follows:

Robert G. Boling, Professor of Old Testament, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill.

Mrs. Margrethe B. J. Brown, Secretary to Committee on Studies, Commission on Ecumenical Mission & Relations, United Presbyterian Church, N.Y., N.Y.

Sarah Cunningham, Editor for Concern Magazine for the United Presbyterian Church, New York, N. Y.

Del Diaz, Administrative Assistant to the Council on Theological Education, United Presbyterian Church, New York, N. Y.

Charles T. Fritsch, Professor of Hebrew & Old Testament Literature, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J.

John G. Harrison, Christian Faith & Higher Education Institute, East Lansing, Mich.

Emily Heine, Writer & Editor, New York, N. Y.

Raymond V. Kearns, Associate General Secretary, Commission on Ecumenical Mission & Relations, United Presbyterian Church, New York, N. Y.

Donald M. McKinzie, Jr., Intern Senior at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J.

Ronald W. McNeur, Study Secretary, General Division of Higher Education, Board of Christian Education, United Presbyterian Church, Phila., Pa.

John W. Meister, Executive Secretary, Council on Theological Education, United Presbyterian Church, New York, N. Y.

William A. Morrison, General Secretary, Board of Christian Education, United Presbyterian Church, Phila., Pa.

Harold P. Nebelsick, Professor of Doctrinal Theology at Louisville Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Robert S. Paul, Professor of Modern Church History, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pa.

William Phillippe, Executive for the Synod of Chesapeake, Baltimore, Md.

Benjamin Reist, Professor of Systematic Theology of San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, Calif.

Eugene TeSelle, Department of Religion, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn.

Lee Underhill, Associate Professor, Philosophy of Religion at Dubuque Technological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa

Kenneth L. Vaux, Professor of Ethics, Texas Medical Center, Houston, Texas
 Preston N. Williams, School of Theology, Boston University, Boston, Mass.
 Amitai Etzioni, Professor of Sociology, Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
 Maurice Friedman, Professor of Religion, Temple University, Phila. Pa.
 Theodore Friedman, Rabbi, Congregational Beth El, South Orange, New Jersey
 Sheldon Isenberg, Professor of Religion, Princeton University, Princeton,
 New Jersey
 Richard J. Israel, Rabbi, Director, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation,
 Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
 Arnold Kaiman, Rabbi, Larchmont Temple, Larchmont, New York, N. Y.
 Max Kaplan, Professor of Sociology, University of South Florida, Tampa, Fla.
 Benjamin Nelson, Dean of the Graduate School of the New School for Social
 Research, New York, N. Y.
 Martin Rozenberg, Rabbi, Visiting Lecturer on Bible, Hebrew Union College,
 Jewish Institute of Religion, New York, N. Y.
 Lionell Rubinoff, Professor of Social Science and Philosophy, York
 University, Toronto, Canada
 A. James Rudin, Rabbi, Assistant Director, Interreligious Affairs
 Department, American Jewish Committee, New York, N. Y.
 Norbert Samuelson, Rabbi, Director, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation,
 Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey
 Seymour Siegel, Rabbi, Professor of Theology, Jewish Theological Seminary,
 New York, N. Y.
 Gerald Strober, Consultant in Religious Curricula, American Jewish
 Committee, New York, N. Y.
 Marc H. Tanenbaum, Rabbi, National Director, Interreligious Affairs
 Department, American Jewish Committee, New York, N. Y.
 Judd Teller, Director, International Programs, B'nai B'rith, Washington, D.C.

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Rabbi Discusses Threat to Judaism

By HELEN PARMLEY

Threats to the survival of American Judaism in the '70s and urgent needs for Jewish-Christian dialogue for betterment of mankind were discussed here Tuesday by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of New York.

National director of the Interreligious Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee, Rabbi Tanenbaum was in Dallas to participate in a 1-day Symposium on Jewish-Christian Relations.

"Increasing conflict with young people is the predominant issue for us to face in our outlook for the '70s," he said.

"Jewish young people are looking for new forms and styles outside the establishment and the existing community. The challenge to the Jewish community is not to accept this fatalistically.

"Intermarriage is an increasingly pressing issue for the American Jews, but one filled with ambiguities," the religious historian and authority on Judaism said.

"In 1969 we experienced the highest rate of conversions in recent years, with 10,000 converting to Judaism without an evangelism program," he said.

The rabbi said, "Claims are being made by young people for greater involvement in domestic social problems, specifically for Jewish contribution to the whole third world of problems of poverty, illiteracy and racism.

"Forty per cent of the Peace Corps members are Jewish people with a commitment to social justice and humanism," he said.

While the rabbi commends this action, he also cites it as proof those involved didn't feel they were able to fulfill this commitment through the Jewish community.

Rabbi Tanenbaum, 44, whom Commentary magazine characterizes as "the leading figure among Jewish ecumenists," joined the Rev. Martin Hopkins, associate professor of theology at the University of Dallas, and Dr. Albert C. Outler, professor of theology at Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology, for the symposium at Perkins.



COMMITTEE ON JEWISH LAW AND STANDARDS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1970

Members Present: Chairman, Rabbi Benjamin Kreitman; Secretary, Rabbi Phillip Sigal; Rabbis Max Arzt, Max Davidson, Abraham Ehrlich, David Feldman, Edward Gershfield, Morris Goodblatt, Arnold Goodman, David Gordis, Jules Harlow, Isaac Klein, S. Gershon Levi, Stanley Platek, Wilfred Shuchat

Regional Representatives: Rabbis Amos Edelheit (Connecticut Valley), Joel Klein (New England).

Observers: Rabbis Immanuel Lubliner and Barry Schwartz.

The Minutes of the meeting of September 10 were read. A correction was made in the last line of the second paragraph to change "deleted from" to "corrected for". Moved and seconded by Rabbis Max Davidson and Edward Gershfield to accept the minutes as corrected. So ordered.

The Chairman reported that due to difficulties in getting hotel accommodations at this season and the inconveniences of the Ramah Nyack facilities as well as the short period still available for the preparation of papers, we will postpone our November 16-18 conference to a later date.

The Chairman then reported on correspondence. A colleague sent an offprint of Rabbi Moshe Tendler's article declaring swordfish non-kosher and complained that our committee did not respond to this article. The Chairman replied that we do not engage in polemics and that we had no obligation to respond. He also reported on the fact that a colleague has been under criticism in his congregation for considering sodium casseinate as non-dairy indicating we need a more definitive statement on the subject. Rabbi Klein clarified that while he had originally only commented orally on Coffee Rich because its sodium casseinate is infinitesimal, he believes various considerations would disqualify it as a food agent affecting the Kashrut status of a food. The chairman suggested he arrive at a definitive statement.

The Secretary read a letter of appreciation from Rabbi Lemle of Brazil for the committee's understanding position on mamzerut.

The Chairman then welcomed the President of the Rabbinical Assembly who read a letter to the committee regarding the question of standards related to rabbinic functions. The letter posed two questions:

1. May a Rabbi officiate at the marriage of a Jew to a non-Jew who has undergone no procedure of conversion and whose status as a non-Jew is not in question?
2. May a member of the Rabbinical Assembly conduct a conversion ab initio without tevilah?

COMMITTEE ON JEWISH LAW AND STANDARDS
MINUTES
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1970
PAGE 2

The discussion centered on the question of conversion proceedings. It was indicated that on the basis of our responsum on the mikvah it is tacitly accepted that tevilah is a requirement. Rabbi Shuchat expressed the view that our problem as to whether to accept a convert without tevilah is caused by the fact that we have accepted Reform conversions.

The Chairman felt we should deal with the two questions in order. There was discussion about whether a Rabbi can officiate at a "civil" ceremony. Rabbi Shuchat suggested we reply in the negative in both cases: that a Rabbi cannot marry a Jew to a non-Jew and that he cannot do so in a civil ceremony. Rabbi Gershfield suggested we first inquire into a Rabbi's legal status as a Justice of the Peace. Rabbi Joel Klein expressed the view that we should state as a policy of self-discipline that Rabbis who have magistrate status should reserve their prerogatives only for Jews. Rabbi Isaac Klein felt that no matter what kind of ceremony a Rabbi performs it is interpreted as a Jewish religious service and that we therefore require an unequivocal negative.

Rabbi Morris Goodblatt moved and Rabbi Isaac Klein seconded that a member of the Rabbinical Assembly may under no circumstances officiate at the marriage of a Jew to a non-Jew who has not undergone any conversion process whatsoever and whose status as a non-Jew is not in question.

For: Arzt, Davidson, Ehrlich, Gershfield, Goodblatt, Goodman, Gordis, Klein, Kreitman, Platek, Shuchat, Sigal. Passed Unanimously.

Rabbi Davidson suggested the Chairman assign a paper on ancillary questions such as civil ceremonies, participation as assistant to another officiant, and so forth. The Chairman assigned a memorandum on this to Rabbi Immanuel Lubliner.

The next item on the agenda was the second question raised in the correspondence presented by Rabbi Levi. Rabbi Gershfield gave the committee a report on his cursory examination of the files. There are a number of indications that tevilah is required but no direct statement on the matter.

It was decided, therefore, that we should deal directly with the question. Rabbi Goodman and Shuchat moved and seconded that a member of the Rabbinical Assembly should not officiate at a conversion ceremony where the candidate has not undergone tevilah.

Rabbi Phillip Sigal questioned the "credibility gap" of our intellectual position in which we might require tevilah but will accept the conversion without tevilah performed by a Reform Rabbi. The chairman felt we recognize Reform conversion mipnai darkai shalom but that this had no bearing on our requirements. Rabbi Sigal continued that our desire for shalom does not change the ramifications of the marriage and the status of children with which we are concerned in the matter of maintaining a certain form of conversion, and which is bound up with what has come to be a current issue: "What is a Jew?"

COMMITTEE ON JEWISH LAW AND STANDARDS
MINUTES
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1970
PAGE 3

There was protracted discussion centering on this motion since Rabbi Sigal indicated his intention not to vote for it and thereby brought into question the problem of its not being unanimous. He asserted that he supported, in principle, the requirement and essential nature of tevilah but felt that if we are to have a unanimous decision which morally binds the hands of every member of the Rabbinical Assembly the motion should include some phrase such as "except under extraordinary extenuating circumstances." The Chairman called for comments from every member of the committee. Some felt it more important to protect the requirement than to provide the leniency for the few who may sometime need an exception. It was also indicated by others that it was extremely difficult to pinpoint "extenuating circumstances." Others felt that the Rabbinical Assembly would always be understanding to those who sometimes felt it necessary to violate the motion and that it therefore needed no exception.

The questions of the role of the Law Committee in representing all views or of creating uniform standards in certain areas, the merit of binding all Rabbinical Assembly members to conformity, and similar matters were touched upon.

The basic difference however, remained whether to include some flexibility in this specific motion on the floor. The question was called for on the following: "A member of the Rabbinical Assembly may not conduct a conversion ab initio without tevilah."

For: Rabbis Ehrlich, Gershfield, Gordis, Goodblatt, Arzt, Platek, Schuchat, Goodman, Kreitman

Abstained: Rabbi Max Davidson; Rabbi Phillip Sigal

The Chairman announced that the next meeting will take place on December 2 at 10:15 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted

Rabbi Phillip Sigal

Secretary

Remarks

by Markus Earth, Dec 9, 1970

→ Sidic (Service International de documentation
judéo-chrétienne, Rome 3, 1970,
#2, pp 25-32
00186, Rome, via del plebiscito, 112

The Noorwijkerhout Pastoral Recommendations concerning the "Relations between Jews and Christians" (1970, called in the following, The New Document) excel by far over par. 4 of Nostra Aetate (The Statement on the Jews, issued by Vatican II in the frame of The Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions, 1965). Yet it leaves many things to be desired.

1. Instead of discerning between the Jews as the Stock of Abraham and the Church as the New People of God, the new document recognizes that the Jewish people is the one people of God to whom the promise and covenant of God are given and with whom people of Gentile stock are "connected" and "united" (Introd. 3; part II: part IV spec. point 1). Gratitude for the pagans' insertion and acceptance replaces the proud announcement that we (the Gentile Christians) possess the same patrimony, viz. ^{as the Jews} are the sole and true heirs. Missing is still an unambiguous affirmation saying that only when Christians have peace, harmony, unity in action and suffering with the Jews, they ^{can} become and be the people of God. According to Luke 15 two sons (however unequal their history, prodigality, and reconciliation) belong into the one Father's house. Without the presence of the Jewish people the church which today is predominantly Gentile Christian, cannot give its testimony, ~~not~~ believe, ~~not~~ celebrate, ^{or} find unity.

2. Instead of emphasizing historical bonds and links between Israel and the church that exist only in the past and impose themselves upon the present as it were as relics of an antique world, and instead of offering vague utterances on present reconciliation between Jews and Christians and eschatological unity, the new document confesses firmly that Christians are "united forever to the Jewish people, not only historically, but also in continued existence not only in historical origin." (Introd 3, first par.). All

the more it is regrettable that this unity is described by words no stronger than a reference to "many elements held in common" (sec. to last par. of Intr. 3), and some very vague examples.

2. Instead of treating the promise given to the Jews and the faith of the Jewish people as ^{just one more} a religion among the non-Christian religions (as the title of Nostra Aetate clearly indicates), and instead of evaluating the persecution of the Jews (^{for} in which the church has an enormous responsibility) as no more than just another example of the mistreatment of man by his fellowman, the new document emphasizes the particularity of God's firstborn, the Jewish people (I 1-2; II last par.). Still the courage appears to be lacking unambiguously to follow the biblical way from the particular to the universal, e.g., from Golgatha to Auschwitz, or from Auschwitz to Vietnam (which is nothing else but one great My Lai).

4. Instead of "deploring" the causes and results of anti-Semitism (as done in the Vatican document, as though only non-Christians had tortured Jews; or, as though the attitude of an onlooker of a Greek tragedy, as described by Aristotle, were appropriate), the new document confesses the guilt of the church who has committed "unspeakable injustices": "Many Christians have failed" (Intr. 2; ^I 3; IV 1). ^{some} What blindness is, however, still dominating when the Christians' guilt is defined as an act of omission (" the vast number of Christians and Churches hardly raised their voices against a massacre of the Jewish people ^(, 13)), rather than also of commission. The verb "deplore" might have been replaced by the term "condemn ", and it could have made been clear that we Christians condemn ourselves a hundred times more than Tschengican, Hitler, El Fata. Also a pledge that Christians will do all and everything in their power, to prevent a repetition of pogroms subtle and brutal, spiritual and bloody , might have done no harm whatsoever.

5 Instead of bypassing the question of the Promised Land with silence, the new document acknowledges that " the Jews ... consider a particular relationship to the Promised Land ... an indispensable element in their expectation" (I 4; II 2 h). But the reader looks in vain for the slightest elaboration upon the biblical ground, variety, qualification, condition, association and duration of the ~~name~~ expectation. And nothing is said about the responsibility and tasks imposed upon the Christians and the churches by the Old and New Testaments on one hand, and the varying forms of Crusades (Holy Wars) and of Zionism on the other. Christians cannot be unconcerned onlookers and bystanders in all issues concerning the land.

6. Instead of recommending no more than common * or individual " studies and dialogues of Jews and Christians", and instead of relegating the common worship ^{of} the Lord to a remote future day (which need not bother as too much at present), the " link ... mysteriously expressed in public worship" and the preservation of the " Jewish worship in content and form" by the liturgy of the church are boldly mentioned (III 1). But the condescending tipping of the hat to "many spiritual and religious values existing among the Jewish people" (II, sec. to last par.) is an improper attitude toward a brother who worships the same God and depends upon the appearance of the (same) Messiah.

Other points made in the new document in resumption of, but above all in contradiction to, or ^{to} more incisive applications of Nostra Aetate 4 are equally splendid, suggestive, perfectionable, or deficient. E.g., the reference to Salvation History in IV 2 (taken up from the Rome Conference, April 1969) is far too cryptic and resembles far too much a Madison Ave. ^{advertising} for some panacea to convey any solid meaning. But a complete assessment of the new document was not intended in these lines.