

VT-870 Transcription

"The Jewish-Catholic Dialogue After Vatican II: Perspectives
and Prospects". 19 March 1992.

Michael Lukens:

-- Committee, the Killeen Chair of Theology and Philosophy, I want to welcome you to this final program in our series for the academic year 1991-92. I'm Michael Lukens, and we, on behalf of the whole, the faculties of philosophy and religious studies, let me express our gratitude that you're here with us. I want to call now on Father Robert Morneau, Auxiliary Bishop, the Diocese of Green Bay, for our opening prayer.

Robert Morneau:

On Tuesday evening, I was in this auditorium for a tribute to Benny Goodman. An orchestra was here, and it was sweet music to my ears. And this evening, [00:01:00] it is even sweeter music to have a dialogue between the Jewish and Catholic communities. Twenty-seven years ago, in October of 1965, as the Vatican Council was coming to a formal closing, a decree was issued on the dialogue between Catholics and Jews. One paragraph in that statement reads as follows: "Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is so great, this Sacred Synod wishes to further recommend mutual understanding and respect,

which is [a fruit?] above all of biblical and theological studies, and of dialogue."

And in that light, I'd like to offer this prayer, which is common to our two traditions. May God be gracious to us and bless us. And may God's face shine upon us, that your way be known on Earth, your [00:02:00] saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God, let all the peoples praise you. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon Earth. Let peoples praise you, O God, let all the peoples praise you. The Earth has yielded [its increase?], God our God has blessed us. May God continue to bless us. Let the ends of the Earth revere God. Amen.

Michael Lukens:

Dr. Thomas [E.?] Manion, president of St. Norbert College will bring us the greetings of the college. Dr. Manion.

Thomas Manion:

Thank you very much, Mike. [00:03:00] It's certainly a pleasure and a privilege for me this evening to be able to extend official greetings and warm welcome to each and every one of you on behalf of the entire college community. On behalf of the

Killeen Chair and the Jewish Centennial Committee, we offer a special welcome to our honored and (inaudible) guest to the Right Reverend Rembert Weakland, and to Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, whom I'm told will be here before the end of the evening.

(laughter)

The Killeen Chair was established in 1984. And since that time, we've had opportunities to bring nationally and internationally recognized scholars to campus to share their wisdom, and knowledge, and understanding, vision with the entire greater Green Bay community. And certainly, the mission of the Killeen Chair [00:04:00] continues to be filled this evening.

We are particularly pleased -- I think this is a most appropriate time, the Feast of Saint Joseph. It's a very special day for the Norbertine community. And during this season, where both the Catholic and Jewish communities prepare for their High Holy Days for us to have this ecumenical dialogue. And we are very pleased that the program is being sponsored by the college and by the Jewish Centennial Committee. I received a letter last week from Abbott Killeen telling me that he was very sorry that he would not be able to be with us this evening because of health reasons, but he would be with us in spirit and prayer. And I see that something has changed in that, because Abbott

Killeen is sitting here [in his role?]. And I would like to recognize Abbott Killeen. [00:05:00] (applause)

Abbot Killeen, we know you will always be with us in spirit. And it's very nice when you're here in person. Thank you.

We'd like to salute the members of the faculties of the Religious Studies Department, and the Philosophy Department for the continued outstanding work they do [for the?] Killeen Chair. We congratulate the members of the Jewish Centennial Committee for the wonderful, marvelous program that they continue to bring to us throughout this year in the reminder of the many, many contributions that the Jewish community have given to the [entire?] community, to this region. Congratulations, (inaudible). We're delighted to be part of this celebration. So each of you, we extend, again, [00:06:00] a warm welcome. We have a most appropriate topic. We have the most knowledgeable and experienced speakers. We're in the right place together at the right time, and we look forward to a good evening. Thank you. (applause)

Michael Lukens:

As most of you know, this kind of an event takes a lot of planning, has to start long in advance. The discussion of the

committee, at least a year ago, when we talked about this March date, someone always raises the possibility of a problem in terms of the weather. And I actually didn't think anything about that. Woke up this morning and it was gorgeous. Isn't that right? I mean, today was a simply gorgeous day. I wasn't pay attention to the weather outside of this area. It was [00:07:00] brought to my attention mid-morning when Karen [Kezik?], who is the Killeen staff associate, called and said that nothing was leaving the New York area. Rabbi Tanenbaum did make it to Detroit, and we're assuming is in an aircraft between Detroit and Green Bay. We are hopeful [that it?]. So we have to do some adjusting to this program, and we are going to begin this evening as you would expect, given that announcement, with Archbishop Weakland.

It's my privilege to introduce to you the Most Reverend Rembert G. Weakland. Archbishop Weakland entered religious life as a Benedictine novice at Saint Vincent [00:08:00] Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, 1945, and made his solemn profession as a monk in 1949 in France. He was ordained a priest in 1951, pursued an academic career in music, with studies in Italy, France, Germany, as well as the Julliard School in New York. From 1957 to 1963, he taught as part of the music faculty at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, and subsequently served a

number of positions in his order, including Coadjutor Archabbot of Saint Vincent Archabbey, and Abbot Primate of the International Order of Saint Benedict. With his offices in Rome starting in 1967, and was elected to a second term in 1973. In the wider church, his appointments include membership [00:09:00] on the commission for implementing the Vatican II Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. In 1968, he presided at a meeting of monastic superiors in Bangkok. And as he told us in an informal session this afternoon, reminded us this was the meeting at which Thomas Merton was one of the principal speakers, and at which time, Father Merton met his tragic death. And it was Archbishop Weakland who administered the final anointing. In this country, he is best known for serving as the chairperson of the committee which drafted the bishop's pastoral letter on Catholic social teaching and the US economy. In fact, he was one of the featured speakers a few years ago when the Killeen Chair sponsored a special symposium on this pastoral letter. He continues to serve as the chair of the National [00:10:00] Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. And in the dialogue between Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. He has been the Archbishop of the Milwaukee Diocese since 1977, and in such proximity, he has always been a close friend of Saint Norbert College. He is known to us for his strong leadership, his

generous sensitivity. And it's always a great pleasure to have Archbishop Weakland with us. Ladies and gentlemen, I present Archbishop Rembert Weakland. (applause)

Rembert Weakland:

[00:11:00] After that, I'm afraid to open my mouth. (laughter) Abbott Killeen and friends all, when I heard that Marc might be a little late, I thought of that famous story about the pastor who was saying the stations and called out on a sick call. You know that famous story? He was called out in the middle of stations, and he asked the sexton to continue. And when he came back about a half hour later, the sexton was saying, "The twenty-fourth station, Pontius Pilate marries Mary Magdalene." I thought what would happen is that if Marc doesn't get here, I'm going to take my little beanie out and do the second half for [you?]. (laughter)

As Mike was reading my biography, I couldn't but have the feeling that I'm a has-been. [00:12:00] You know, Mike, the great musicians don't die, they just [fade?] away. So I'm in that category now. Where's Robert?

But I'm delighted to be here to talk about the Jewish-Catholic dialogue at this moment. It's an important moment. Twenty-five

years after Vatican II now, it's easy for us now to kind of count our gains in our interfaith dialogues, to say how much has been accomplished in a very short time. And it is short if one looks at the history of Judaism and Catholicism, and then [it kind of coasts?] along into the future. But such an attitude right now would not only be foolish, but it would be very dangerous. And I would like to say a few words first of all about this moment of history before we face that future, and then talk a little bit about some of [00:13:00] the themes that dialogue must pick up. I begin with this moment of history, because it is important. Why is it so important to analyze where we are historically, and thus place our dialogue between Jews and Christians on a firmer footing for that future? The first reason it seems to me is this: that our contemporary historical moment is taking on a rather unusual coloring because the generation of survivors of the Holocaust is dying out. We enter, then, into a new historical moment, where there soon will be no eyewitnesses of those sufferings. Their stories will have to be told in second-hand accounts, or in and through their writings. And the new generation will know only what it has read. It will not have experienced the [00:14:00] emotion of the teller, and the way in which that emotion was communicated.

In the Jewish community, there is a need to keep the intensity of the story alive. As I think about that, I can't help but think that we resemble, in a way, the period when the Gospels were first written. A few decades after the event, and as the survivors of those events began to die out, there was a need to have a perpetual chronicle, and somehow capture what those events meant. The memory must not fade. I am sure that is why there's been a proliferation of Holocaust museums around the country. What if people, and especially us Christians, forget it? Then could it happen again? Memory, in this case, must be [00:15:00] institutionalized. That such a fear is a real one can be seen by the recent revisionist approaches to the whole Holocaust event among the younger generation. I am sure that no one in his or her right mind takes seriously those theories that the Holocaust did not historically take place. But the mere fact that such theories are propounded in our day by some is worse. The increase in anti-Semitic incidents on college campuses gives rise to authentic fears among all of us. Even if there's no denial of the events themselves, their significance and their importance could be diminished by the next generation. As one moves further and further from the historical events, their truth, their impact, their significance, [00:16:00] could get lost amid other, more contemporary experiences.

[Lo?], we see as we get further from the events that there are different memories of the same event. Such a difference was evident in the question of the Carmelite convent near Auschwitz. These different memories can also become very divisive. We saw that in the reactions to the speeches of [Cardinal Glenn?]. We also were aware of these differences in memory during the controversies over Waldheim's earlier years. But there seems to be also the Christian tendency to want to forgive and forget, and move on without analyzing all of the events that led up to the Holocaust. Not only are there different memories developing, but also divergences on who to heal [00:17:00] those memories, but not [use?] their significance. All of these approaches are characteristic now of our day. But the fear remains that much will be glossed over in order to create a new, but not necessarily healthy, irenicism.

Lastly, about the points I want to make about our contemporary scene, I sense that there's been a shift, or a change, of attitude among many of the actors with regard to the State of Israel. This is certainly true in my own Catholic Church. There's also been a shift with regard to our own government in relationship to the State of Israel. And all of these changes are [greadle?] not just split, though, along denominational lines. I would have to state honestly that there seems to be

less sympathy among Christians now [00:18:00] for the cause of the State of Israel than perhaps there was a few decades ago. And this erosion of sympathy among Christians can also have its effects on how one perceives, then, the relationship between the Jewish faith and its attachment to the land. As mentioned, these changes, I think, are affecting both Jews and Catholics. It is often difficult for some in the dialogue -- political and religious -- separate in their own approaches. But the erosion of sympathy for the State of Israel, I think, is with us for a long period. It will not go away soon. And it does affect the dialogue.

I believe our historical moment, then, is one of transition. And for that reason, all transition moments are important ones. [You hate to live?] as [00:19:00] a transition person. We all want to be those who are in a period that is more stable. And yet I'm convinced that people in a transition moment have great, great witness, and have a great responsibility. How we deal with issues, and we lay the ground for attitudes for the future now is going to be most important.

So much for how I see the now. I want to go on now to something about the demands on us Christians for the future. I'm going to direct this specific section to the Christians, and especially

the Catholics, present here. First of all, to the Catholics and the Christians present here, I would like to say that we have not yet finished the task of responding to the Holocaust. The fact that such a horrendous event took place [00:20:00] in our day in a country that was historically imbued with Christian principles, and to the almost total silence of so much of the rest of Christianhood, still demands of us an answer. I am not just referring to an historical analysis of the events that led up to the Holocaust. But to all those aspects of Catholic tradition and teaching, all those presuppositions and attitudes about Jews and the Jewish faith that were the sources of the Holocaust, and that could well still be with us vestigially, if not [patently?], [is still a part?] of Catholic practice. It is true that the Church in Vatican Council II repudiated the whole theory of contempt, but I am not so sure that all the faithful Catholics have accepted that repudiation and made it their own. [00:21:00]

The document of Vatican Council II that dealt with this repudiation is well known, *Nostra Aetate*, promulgated on October 28th, 1965. Two short paragraphs contained this new teaching. I quote them: "But note that there still remains a glimpse of triumphalism [where it came of?] superiority on the part of the Church." Nevertheless, coming after centuries of the teaching of

contempt for the Jews, this text remains extremely remarkable. And I quote: "Although the Jewish authorities pressed for the death of Jesus, still those things which were perpetrated during his passion cannot be ascribed indiscriminately to all the Jews living at the time, nor to the Jews of today. [00:22:00] Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be represented as rejected by God or accursed, as if that follows from Holy Scripture. All should therefore take care that in holding religious instruction and preaching the word of God, they teaching nothing which is not in keeping with the truth of the Gospel, and the spirit of Christ. [Morally?], the Church, which condemns all persecutions against any people, mindful of the common imperatives with the Jews, and motivated not by political considerations, but by the religious charity of the Gospel, deplores feelings of hatred, persecutions, and demonstrations of anti-Semitism directed at whatever time and by whomsoever."

That's a powerful paragraph. But it is [00:23:00] one thing for a church council trying to do away with the deicide charge, but it is another thing to have in place new pastoral practices that implement that vision, and that eliminate the vestiges of past attitudes. We have not yet totally done so. In the USA, the Jewish community has worked well with is in this process of

creating some new guidelines for catechesis, as well as new insights for preaching. One would have to admit, however, that it has not been, and will not be, easy. There are so many passages in scripture that lend themselves to stereotypes that could continue the theory of contempt. All vestiges have not been wiped away.

And although there have been some new and good guidelines for passion plays, [00:24:00] they too continue [older categories?] since such clashes lend themselves to dramatic tension. But at least for the United States, we have been trying to change those texts, and the historical interpretation given to them to avoid the attitudes that led up to the Holocaust, or at least that permitted the consciences of so many to remain silent.

I have said that these things are going on in the United States, but there's much to be done around the world. When the Eastern Bloc opened up, we were all aware that the Church there had not had the same grace that we had had to dialogue for several decades with our Jewish partners. One saw real vestiges of the pre-Vatican II mentality and attitudes everywhere. When I was in Poland, when I was in Russia [00:25:00] a year and a half ago, I bumped into clear vestiges of anti-Semitism everywhere. Meetings have continued to take place to discuss this problem, but it

will take, I think, over a generation to change all those attitudes.

I mentioned, before reading the text from the document of Vatican II, *Nostra Aetate*, a certain triumphalism in the tone of the Church's response to the contempt theory. This attitude is a bit more subtle, and could go under the terms -- I'm going to use [two handsome?] terms here I invented. To go under the term of abrogationism, to define the Church's attitude toward the Jewish community or the Jewish covenant. Or supersessionism -- with an S, all of you worry about how you spell -- supersessionism to describe that same phenomenon from the point of view of the [00:26:00] Catholic community. These attitudes are contained in the belief that the old covenant was abrogated. That's why I used the term "abrogationism." And that the new covenant supersedes, supersessionism. Dr. [Gene Fisher?] on this subject recently said, "The urge among us Catholics to dichotomize falsely between old covenant and new, law and grace, justice and mercy, Jesus teaching and the pharisaical teaching, and so on, remains deeply embedded in the structure of so much Catholic and Christian catechesis. Even with its grosser manifestations removed, as they now have been, [subtler?] forms of antithetical supersessionism can still be read in our textbooks, and especially heard from our pulpits."

[00:27:00] The theological issues involved here is that of the covenant. Is there one covenant, two covenants, many covenants? How are they related? Jesus is quoted as talking about the new covenant in his blood. We hear it every time we say mass. The letter to the Hebrews also states that there is an old and a new dispensation. For centuries, we have spoken of the Old and the New Testament. Since these theological concepts also deal with redemption and salvation, they are not easily dismissed or rapidly changed just for the sake of better relationships. Many do contend, however, that they are the source for a certain exclusivity and a triumphalism on the part of the Catholic Church and other Christians. Has there been any advance made in the use of these concepts? [00:28:00]

The most quoted text in this regard is that of the present pope, John Paul II. In a meeting in [Meitz?], Germany, already in 1980, he talked of the dialogue between Jews and Catholics in these terms: "The first aspect of this dialogue," he said, "namely the meeting between the people of God of the Old Covenant -- which as never been revoked by God--" And he says see Romans 11:29 "-- and the people of God of the New Covenant is at the same time a dialogue within our church between the first and the second part of the Bible." Notice that the pope

said explicitly when he talked of the Old Covenant, "which has never been revoked by God." Here, the pope is certainly saying [00:29:00] that the Jewish people today are still a covenanted people with God. His interpretation of Romans 11:29 is clear: God is never unfaithful to his promises. The covenant [produces?].

Since 1980, books have been written about that quote. We Catholics tend to take sentences from the pope that we like very seriously. (laughter) Perhaps the most noted author who's written in this area has been a Jesuit German theologian by the name of Norbert Lohfink, who just last year in English published a book called *The Covenant Never Revoked*, in which he takes all of these and tests them out; one covenant, two covenants, how many covenants, different [00:30:00] expressions of the same covenant. And ends up by saying what is really most important is not the word "covenant," but the Torah, which survives through them all. It is not my purpose here, though, to describe all the subtleties of the theological debate on this question. But certainly, it has not yet reached the pulpits of our priests, nor the manuals of our theological textbooks. It is important, however, because with that one sentence, the Holy Father changed the course of the dialogue from the Catholic point of view. Until then, it was mostly negative; damage control, one could

call it. Now the dialogue has turned a corner and is pushing on in a more positive way. If God's covenant with the Jewish people from a Catholic perspective has not been abrogated or revoked, then what does that mean for us Catholics today? [00:31:00] How are we to relate to that Jewish community? What do we have in common in that covenant? These do not become historical questions of the past, but become living realities for our relationships today.

In that same quote, you noticed, the Holy Father did speak of the relationship with Christianity between the Old and the New Testaments. Here, the supersessionism is still evident, [the boring terms?] of a question: how are our roots, what are our roots in Jewish law and culture? This question is posed in a good moment in our history as Catholics. We Catholics, by the way -- and I say this to all of you out there, even if you're Catholic -- we Catholics are again becoming a biblical people, in case you didn't know. Since Vatican Council II, our people are hearing the word of God, both the Hebrew and the [00:32:00] Christian scriptures, in a language they understand. And that has caused a whole new renewal of biblical spirituality. Thus within the Catholic tradition itself, the question is being raised of the biblical roots of its attitudes, both those inherited from the Jewish community, and those that come from

the teaching of Jesus Christ. How the living Jewish community today enters into that debate and nourishes it for the living Catholic community is indeed a very positive quest, that I think will be most fruitful.

Among the theological issues that must be discussed today is also that of the relationship between the Jewish people and the State of Israel. I mentioned that in my earlier remarks. But this is also a theological question, and not just a political one. The fact that the Vatican [00:33:00] still does not have diplomatic relations with the State of Israel is often interpreted s meaning that the Holy See is often interpreted as meaning that the Holy See does not want to give wholehearted ascent to the theology of the [lay that is here?] in the Jewish vision. I doubt that this plays a major role in Vatican thinking.

The question of Catholic Arabs and their fears and unrest lay a much greater role in Vatican decision making. In fact, I keep thinking if the Vatican would establish diplomatic relations with the State of Israel, we might have nothing to talk about in our dialogues. It seems to be always the number one issue. I have gone on record many times as stating personally that I wished that that recognition would come and come soon, as I

think it would be very possible then for the dialogues and the continuing dialogue that is necessary in the Middle East.

[00:34:00] On the other hand, Catholics have not taken seriously the whole Jewish position on the relationship of their faith to that particular [man?]. For us Catholics, we lack a category of thought in our religious system where there is any particular parallel, but at the same time, we too claim a certain relationship to Jerusalem, to that place because of historical events that have happened there. And we still have to examine, it seems to me, how those relationships are going to work out. When I visited one of my Jewish friends in Israel not too many years ago, a wonderful woman who had been a student with me at Columbia. She was trying to explain to her children a little bit about all of this. And they weren't getting it. So she said rather clearly, "Well, the problem is really how do people live in the same [00:35:00] house with overlapping rugs?" (laughter) It's a good image.

Now I want to say something about the future. Ecumenism among the Christian denominations, it seems to me, has a clear and ultimate goal namely unity, Christian unity. How that will look is not clear for Christians, but it seems to me that the goal has to be clear and well defined. For interreligious dialogue,

the goals are more fluid. Nevertheless, it is important to discuss what the ultimate aims of such dialogue really are. One must begin, of course, with mutual respect. That should be the aim of all dialogue. This means more than just the toleration of differences. It involves creating attitudes that are positive. Gene Fisher, on this [00:36:00] point, once said -- and I love the images here -- "As the Middle Ages was characterized by the Gothic and the twentieth century by the skyscraper, both soaring heavenward in a monolithic -- one might say Tower of Babel-like -- thrust of self-confidence, is it too much to suppose, for example, that the theological architecture of the twenty-first century will be more akin to the geodesic dome? This would be a structure of tranquility and harmony, not only with the environment, but one which be seen to have many facets, the various world religions, interlocking to create a satisfying wholeness, [shalom?], that does not so much challenge the skies as reflect the unity of Heaven and Earth.

The value of such an image -- I ended that quote -- is that it does not presuppose [00:37:00] a least-common-denominator kind of religion that would be pleasing to no one, but it really implies an acceptance of pluralistic, but not antagonistic, multifaceted kinds of relationships that would respect the wholeness of each.

To arrive, though, at such a position, there's also a need for reconciliation and much more trust. We have come far in this regard. And I have to say here publicly how recent events, so many of the problems that we've had to face together, have shown that that trust has been so important, and has made those difficult moments possible. We have not been split apart as many thought we would. God has been good to us, but that trust now must grow, because the [00:38:00] future that we will have, I am sure, will be one of even more difficulties. Lastly, it is important in any dialogue know that no group is stagnant, and no group is monolithic. Each group has changed according to the demands of the times. Catholicism today does not look like it did before Vatican Council II. And within the Jewish community as well, there are divergences and differences of opinions, and those must be respected.

Each group is changing. I don't know how anybody can dialogue with us Catholics with the rapidity with which we've changed with the past three decades. It's like dialoguing [with a dark?] that's passing in the night. It is not easy. And just when you think you've caught what Catholicism is all about, or what the opinion among Catholics [00:39:00] is all about, you find them

just as divided on everything as the Jews. And that's the way in which it keeps on going.

So during this period, we have to learn to respect the changes that are taking place in other groups, and learn how to live with those changes. That we are dialoguing with living [plants?], not with fossils. And that's so important as we move ahead.

I would like to add one more and one last point. It's one thing to dialogue. It's another thing to live together. We haven't learned at this point how to live together, not just how to dialogue together. One is an emotional, and the other's an intellectual experience. And believe it or not, it's easier to dialogue. It's much easier to get up in front of an audience, to say deep, profound thoughts that you took from somebody else's book, (laughter) [00:40:00] but it's another thing to have to come together and to be able to work together on common causes to make this world a better place in which to live. And sometimes, at that point, we find that the real differences are not that great, are not that important. I want to tell a little story with regard to that. I was, at one time, at a banquet with Archbishop Iakovos, who is the Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church for North and South America. Archbishop Iakovos is 80

years old now, long beard, a wisdom figure. And at the banquet, a young Greek [lay?] came up to Archbishop and said, "Tell me, Your Holiness, what is this *filioque* stuff all about?" Now, *filioque* is what split the East and the West in 1059, as you recall. [00:41:00] The Archbishop tried to explain the *filioque* to this young college boy. When it was all over, the man said, "Well, I guess it's not very important anyway." (laughter)

Sometimes there's a lot of wisdom from the mouth of youngsters, that we, on a academic level, or I on an ecclesiastical level, can get all hot and bothered about many items -- such as covenants and so on tonight -- but sometimes the very practical, living together can escape us. I would say what is important is that we move ahead now to look at all those issues that are so vital for our society. And those issues, we can work together on. One of my great experiences as a Bishop was the ecumenic Pastoral Letter of the Bishops, because we were able to work together, [00:42:00] interfaith, ecumenically, on that letter, and it was powerful to know that everyone could feel within that document that their voice was heard.

What will the future hold? Who knows? But what we must do at this point is create the trust, the goodwill, and the framework within which the dialogues can continue. Thank you.

(applause)

Michael Lukens:

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to ask your patience here for a minute. The program calls for a break. [00:43:00] This is not the break. But I want you to just relax for a few minutes. I think we may have a second [tea?] here, just... (laughter)

[00:43:11-00:44:13] (break, no dialogue) (tape cut)

Well, the Killeen Chair generally delivers. (laughter)

(applause) I introduce my friend, my colleague with whom I team-teach, who is the spiritual leader of the [Kenosis?] Israel Congregation, Rabbi Sidney Weinberg. (applause)

Sidney Weinberg:

Good evening.

Crowd:

Good evening.

Sidney Weinberg:

That was good! (laughter) I am very, very honored and thrilled this evening [00:45:00] to be able to introduce to you Dr. Marc H. Tanenbaum. Not only because he is a wonderful speaker and a very, very well-known rabbi in the Jewish community, but because with his arrival here, we have now doubled the rabbinic population. (laughter) (applause) I'm not alone anymore. (laughter)

Dr. Marc H. Tanenbaum, international relations consultant of the American Jewish Committee, has a long and distinguished career in international human rights, world refugee, world hunger, and foreign relations concerns. He has served as director of international relations of the American Jewish Committee from 1983 until 1989. Formerly the American Jewish Committee's national Interreligious Affairs Director, [00:46:00] Rabbi Tanenbaum was designated in a recent national poll as one of the 10 most influential and respected religious leaders in America. A cover story in *New York Magazine* described Dr. Tanenbaum as one of the foremost Jewish ecumenical leaders in the world today. In 1987, he was elected unanimously as chairman of the prestigious International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, which represents world Jewry in relations with the Vatican and other world religious bodies. In May 1988, Rabbi Tanenbaum was awarded the Interfaith Medallion of the

International Council of Christians and Jews for his historic contributions to advancing interreligious understanding of the past 25 years. Dr. Tanenbaum has served as a member of the Human Rights Research Committee of the Foreign Policy Association's study of priorities for the 1980s. In recent years, he has testified before [00:47:00] the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee: Moral Imperatives in the Formation of American Foreign Policy. He has also testified before congressional committees on world refugee and world hunger problems, and played a key role of organizing White House Conferences on foreign aid and energy conservation. President Jimmy Carter invited Dr. Tanenbaum as the American Jewish leader among 10 national religious and academic spokesmen to discuss the state of the nation at Camp David summit meetings in 1979. He was also appointed as a member of the Advisory Committee of the President's Commission on the Holocaust. At the invitation of the International Rescue Committee, he joined delegations of prominent American leaders to carry out three separate fact-finding investigations of the plight of the Vietnamese boat people, Cambodian refugees, which contributed to the saving of tens of thousands of lives of Indochinese refugees. [00:48:00] He has organized many relief efforts for victims of war and conflict, including Kurds, Lebanese, Nigerians, Ugandans, Ethiopian Jews, Haitians, Afghanis, Central

Americans, and Polish refugees. He is a board member of the International Rescue Committee, the Overseas Development Council, the United Nations Association, the Bretton Woods Committee, the National Peace Academy, and the Bayard Rustin Institute. He is a founder and cochairman of the National Interreligious Taskforce on Soviet Jewry, which aids oppressed Jews and Christians in the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In March 1979, he was invited to consult with Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and German parliamentary officials in Bonn on the abolition of the statute of limitations of Nazi war criminals. He is a founder and leading member of the Joint Liaison Committee of the Vatican Secretariat on Catholic Jewish Relations, and the International Jewish Committee for [00:49:00] Interreligious Consultations, and of a similar body with the World Council of Churches. He was the only rabbi at Vatican II, and participated in the first official audience of world Jewish leaders with Pope John Paul II in Vatican City. He was also the first Jewish leader to address 4,000 delegates attending the sixth assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver in July 1983. He has served as a consultant to the NBC nine-hour special *Holocaust*, and earlier was consultant to the special *Jesus of Nazareth*. He is an award-winning weekly commentator over at WINS, Westinghouse Broadcasting, and appears frequently on major network programs. He has lectured at major universities,

seminaries, religious and educational bodies in the United States, Israel, and Europe, and Latin America, and numerous national-international conferences, Rabbi Tanenbaum is the author and/or [00:50:00] editor of several published books and of numerous articles. Whoo! (laughter)

It is indeed my great pleasure and honor to introduce to you at this time Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum. (applause)

Marc Tanenbaum:

If you knew the kind of day I had, (laughter) you'll know that I'll take encouragement from wherever I can find it. (laughter) [00:51:00] It was a very important biblical experience for me today. (laughter) From childhood onward, I went to a Jewish parochial school, and we would study the Book of Genesis. And my rabbinic teachers would tell us about how the first day, stars and lights were created. On the second day, animals were created. The third day -- I'm not doing that in order, because I need the time to sort myself out before I go through the seventh day. But I used to wonder as a child, how could all of that happen each day, filled with so much creativity, generating so much of the universe? And then as I got older, I started rabbinic commentaries, and the rabbis declared that those days were not the kind of days that we mortals were used to,

[00:52:00] 24 hours a day. Each day represents a millennium, if not more than that. Today, I experienced [the first day?] (inaudible). (laughter) (applause) And a good piece of the Exodus as well. (laughter)

When I got up this morning at six o'clock, shortly after that, I was called by American Airlines and told that my flight to Green Bay, Wisconsin was canceled. Here, [it got me?]. I immediately asked them if I could fly on another airline that might take me here, although it seemed to be somewhat bizarre that on the same landing field, LaGuardia Airport, [00:53:00] planes can't take off and other planes can't take off, parting the Red Sea waters. But I tell you why I insisted on coming and keeping this commitment. I've had occasions like this in the past, and I decided to deal with the inevitable. I always have those great bumper stickers, "Man proposes, God disposes." That could have happened today as well. I came here to pay reverence, respect, and homage to one of the genuinely, genuinely authentic, great religious leaders of America, not only [00:54:00] the Catholic community. Archbishop Weakland has been a hero to many of my colleagues and myself, from the earliest days of Vatican Council II. In fact, I remember that one of the first conferences of Catholic and Jewish scholars that was convened after the Council was convened by Archbishop Weakland. I think it was in Latrobe.

And I couldn't believe it. Here was the head of the Benedictine Order, and there we were in a monastery -- I said, "God, I hope my mother doesn't hear about it." (laughter) [00:55:00] My mother always knew I would go in, she was never sure I would come out. (laughter)

But I mean that with utmost seriousness. To be able to be present, even as late as I've come in here -- incidentally, that was a wonderful introduction, Rabbi, and I'm very grateful for it. You read it just the way I wrote it. (laughter) But also in your warm and wonderful spirit, you expressed from the very first days of our contact, I knew you were a friend. The only thing is I think I've lost about 25 pounds today, so you'd only have one and a half rabbis.

But I wanted to be here [simply for the?] privilege of being present. And to say [00:56:00] thank you and God bless you for Archbishop Weakland, for the courage, the moral conviction, and strength that he has displayed on so many vital human moral issues, particularly the leadership he gave from the very beginning, where it was not very popular to be involved in Catholic-Jewish dialogue. (applause)

Now, having said what was really in my heart, I shall proceed to emasculate his talk. In point of [00:57:00] fact, from what I heard in the back of the hall, it is quite remarkable how much consensus he expressed that is felt so widely and deeply in much of the Jewish community. Vatican Council II, in both historic and theological perspective, was without question a turning point in the history of Christianity and Judaism. And here, I want to share with you a personal experience which became, for me, a decisive [00:58:00] reality on what Vatican Council II has meant not only as a matter of theologians sorting out theological doctrines from the historic [past?], but what it has meant and what it can mean and should mean in the real life which we live. As Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, and others, blacks and whites, in the kind of world in which we live.

I was born the child of Russian immigrants who came to the United States from the Ukraine. They came to this country impoverished, with a few kopeks in their pockets. [00:59:00] They had lived a life of poverty, dignified poverty, but poverty nonetheless. And they suffered horribly from pogroms and inquisitions, Cossacks, and murderous peasants who were exploited by the landowners, the aristocracy, as a way of diverting from the real problems of the people. But on the eve

of Passover, we were sitting together -- my father, my mother, bless her memory, my older brother and myself in our living on a Sabbath afternoon. And it was our practice in our family after we came back from synagogue services on Saturday, to sit around. [01:00:00] And my parents [would?] invariably [once recall?] the old country, the old home, what it was like living in the glories of the (inaudible) and the mud piles, and the poverty. And [I've had?] Italian friends who go through this, and Irish friends who go through this. Same poverty, (inaudible) but Jewish [hostility?] was, on this occasion, something [dramatic?] for me.

So on this eve of Passover, and we were on the verge of Good Friday at the time, my father told us this story. It was almost as if we were seized by the story. He and his family lived in a small town called [Diminiska?] [01:01:00] in the Ukraine. His father was called [the starister?], he was the de facto mayor of the town, appointed through the Czar's administration to collect taxes and round people up in the community to do their military service. And on this Good Friday day, as my father told it, they heard a great noise outside of their little home in [Diminiska?]. And as they looked out, they saw the Russian Orthodox priests from the church down the road, marching up the road, holding a staff, his pectoral cross glinting in the sun,

followed by his entire congregation, which by now had become a howling mob. They descended on my father's house. The priest rapped on the door [01:02:00] of my grandfather, Rabbi Akiva, caused the whole family to come out of the house, and then the priest pointed his staff at my uncle, Aaron, who was a poet, who had come from Odessa to visit his family for Passover. And then, there were some words exchanged between the priest and my grandfather, and the whole family was forced to come down to the edge of a lake around which the village was built. And then the rest of the congregation, now a mob, forced the 300, 400 Jews of the village to come down to the edge of the village to stand beside the family. And there, eve of Passover, this priest, [01:03:00] who had apparently worked himself up into a passion, after the Good Friday liturgy, in telling the story of that passion, he screamed out (inaudible) godforsaken Jew, and the members of his congregation, with sticks and rocks, grabbed my uncle Aaron, forced him into the water in the presence of the entire Jewish community, until the water covered his head, and he drowned, before the eyes of the entire village. "This is what we do to a Jew whom we offer up for ransom for the murder of Jesus Christ by the Jewish people!"

My father told that story. I was about four or five years old. I was traumatized. And it became very painful for me to [01:04:00]

reconcile that with other life experiences. We lived in a predominately ethnic Christian neighborhood -- Italians, Poles, Irish. My closes playmates in the street, in the ballpark, were these Christian kids, and we loved each other. And -- but this became an overwhelming context and contradiction with which I could not cope. I have to say this because if we're going to be honest with each other, our feelings must be placed on the table with care and prudence. But for a very long period of time after that experience, I began to feel that most Christians thought the Jews were a deicide people, a god-killing people, a Christ-killing people. As a four- or five-year-old child, I thought that most Christians were a homicide people who specialized [01:05:00] in killing Jews.

October 28th, 1965. Closing days of Vatican Council II. Pope Paul VI rose before the [hall?] in Saint Peter's Basilica, and read the text of *Nostra Aetate*, In Our Time. This Sacred Synod, as it searches the mystery of the church -- and I'm paraphrasing here -- acknowledges its patrimony with the Jewish people. It deplores anti-Semitism by anyone at any time at any place. It called then for joint biblical studies and fraternal [01:06:00] dialogue that would lead to mutual respect between the Catholic Church and the Catholic people and the Jewish people. There were ambiguities in the text, as I gather; [Archbishop Weakland?]

referred to them. I was working in those days very closely with Cardinal Sheen of Baltimore, who was then the chairman of the American Bishops Committee, dealing with those issues. And then with Cardinal [Baya?] in Rome, from my colleagues [Anne Schuster?], who was genius working in Europe in seven languages. But as I stood in Rome, heard those words of Pope Paul VI, expressing the line of the entire magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church, Vatican Council II on the issue of [01:07:00] Catholic-Jewish relations was the greatest creative seminar in Catholic-Jewish relations in 2,000 years of history. The Church faced issues that had been very [and?] distorted, and ignored and denied for much of those two millennia. And the price that was paid was oceans of blood, and worse than that. And I don't mean to be offensive, but it became very difficult for me to understand how it was that Christians who proclaimed a gospel of love could teach a gospel of hatred to the Jewish people.

I want to come back in a few moments to Jesus the Jew, and the early church in early Christianity [01:08:00] in ancient Palestine. The point I want to make is that after I heard Pope Paul VI proclaiming this -- and I had been in touch with many members of the hierarchy in this country, Cardinal St. Louis, Cardinal Cushing in Boston -- whom I love, and is a wonderful Irishman, never lost his Irish qualities and his great Irish

accent, as I'm sure Archbishop Weakland will recall. And I remember once when he came out of the hospital, and I visit him in Boston, and I asked him how he felt. He said, "Rabbi, considering the shape I'm in, I guess I'm in pretty good shape."
(laughter)

The American Catholic hierarchy, to its unbounded credit, played the most important, [01:09:00] creative, and productive leadership role in helping bring about the text of *Nostra Aetate*, which changed the course of history between Catholics and Jews, and Jewish history books, among other history books, will record that forever in unbounded gratitude.

But what did happen, which I think is really critical, is that this was not just another text. Even encyclicals, beautiful encyclicals, powerful encyclicals that I've had the privilege to read from various folks, including this [folk?], and pastoral letters, including the excellent ones that come out of the American Catholic hierarchy, in particular on all kinds of moral, [01:10:00] spiritual, human issues. The danger always with these kinds of texts, that it happens all the time, often. In my community, our community as well, as it does in other [world's?] communities, people invest enormous energy in creating beautiful words and beautiful texts, and they end up on

the library shelves, and no effect on the lives and consciousness, the day-to-day behavior, where people act out their beliefs and their convictions toward one another. The genius of Vatican Council II and the several popes, beginning with Pope John XXIII, whom I believe was especially sent by God, because he called Vatican Council II. And I must take a moment to say something about the impact of his person. [01:11:00]

During World War II, he was an apostolic delegate in the Balkans. I was told this story, confirmed for me by Ira Hirschman, who represented the American government in bringing food and clothing to people at the end of the war. It was learned that Adolf Eichmann was preparing some three, four thousand Jewish children to be rounded up, placed in cattle cars, and sent off to Auschwitz and certain death. And Ira Hirschman, who was a Jew, but an American diplomat, asked then Monsignor Roncalli, could anything be done to save these innocent children's lives? And according to Hirschman, Archbishop Roncalli called in [01:12:00] one of his aides, and instructed him to make out as many Catholic baptismal certificates as were necessary so that these children could be presented to Eichmann as being captives, and therefore not Jews, and not automatically earmarked for extermination. And Pope John XXIII, as he was later to become, literally saved the lives of those several thousand Jewish children. And the chief rabbi, the

late chief rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Isaac HaLevi Herzog, who was the former chief rabbi of Ireland, came after the war to express his personal gratitude for his incredible moral, spiritual acts of love and caring.

Now, the point I want to make is that what is really significant on [01:13:00] several levels during the course of the past year since 1965, is that the Holy Father and the Church, and several of the secretariats of the [curiate?] have set about systematically creating documents and instructions on how to make sure the *Nostra Aetate* does not remain a library document for the archives. So there was in 1974 a set of guidelines created by the Vatican Secretariat on Catholic-Jewish Relations [of the memory of that secretariat, I still am?], and at that time, Cardinal [Wolobans?] presented a set of guidelines which were (inaudible). It said this text is not meant to be simply a matter of literary artifice, but here is how it is to be implemented. You shall not teach about the conflict between Jesus [01:14:00] and the Pharisees as if the Jews all together were the enemies of Jesus. Shall not teach the deicide charge. Textbooks are to be revised so that does not happen. And over the years, as we've been working with Catholic authorities and Catholic publishing houses, one of the concrete achievements -- and this is virtually unknown in the Jewish community, perhaps

in much of the Catholic community is that, to my knowledge, not a single Catholic textbook used today has a single anti-Semitic reference in it. And to compare that to the [Walder?] Catechism of 1937, you can see the light years that were traveled in attitudes, and in change of feeling, and openness, and respect.

And a whole series of documents emerged on that. (inaudible) notes on how to teach about Jews and Judaism, and the Pharisees, [01:15:00] which was adopted by Vatican Secretary, [after a number of joint readings?]. The American Catholic Bishops drafted the first set of guidelines on how to change textbooks, liturgy, homilies to make sure that the spirit of Vatican Council II was not contracted, even accidentally, by preachers, or teachers, or others.

I have to tell you a story that actually happened. It happened in Detroit, that lovely in which I spent half my life (inaudible). (laughter) There were two sisters in Detroit who [had got?] the center called the Pope Pius XII Religious Education Center. And they were seized by the spirit of Vatican Council II on all kinds of issues: religious liberty, human rights, ecumenism. And they prepared a new set of textbooks for elementary, Catholic elementary parochial school. [01:16:00] Doctrinally sound because they shared these with theologians,

and got approval for the Catholic doctrinal side of it. They removed every anti-Jewish reference that had existed almost unconsciously, in many cases, in many of the textbooks. And then they brought in an artist to portray Jesus, [the only church?], Virgin Mary. And they did it because they found that in all of their classrooms with the children, whenever they would talk about who Jesus was in first century Palestine, they always got feedback. They thought he was an Irishman with blond hair and blue eyes. There's no sense of his being a first century Palestinian Jew, or that the church was a first century Palestinian institution, which I want to come back to [01:17:00] in a few moments. So they had this artist portray Jesus as he was historically, humanly. And so Jesus was portrayed wearing a skullcap -- prettier one than I have -- with his skin swarthy as a first century Palestinian may well have been. He was standing in a synagogue with a menorah behind him, the Hebrew phrase on the bottom of it, (Hebrew), "All who listened to him were astonished," which is the language that the early disciples [would have?] understood. And then I said to the sisters, "Sisters, this is magnificent, but I've got a problem with it. This first century Palestinian Jew called Jesus, you have given him a rather large nose." (laughter) I said, "You know, you keep that up, [01:18:00] and the Anti-Defamation League is going to (inaudible) stereotypes of Jesus." (laughter) It was not

corrected. It just is an exquisite book. It's called [*Come, Lord Jesus?*], put out by [Alvin Begin?]. And there are a whole series of things [like that?]. But what is magnificent is the spirit of love and openness. It purified [the book?], cleaning itself of hatred and these traditional images of hostile stereotypes. It made for a loving book which manifested the spirit of the Gospel, as I understand it is to be.

So I think that that is [one of great?] achievements, namely that a new culture has begun to be created by Catholic authorities of the intelligence and wisdom and standing of Archbishop Weakland, and almost every other [01:19:00] Archbishop and Bishop, and many priests and nuns, whom I know all over the country. And, in fact, in Europe, in France, in Germany, in Italy, in Spain, in Brussels, in Belgium, in Latin America. The Brazilian Cardinal and Bishops, the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops have written a magnificent document on Catholic-Jewish relations. And in Argentina. So this has become, in a sense, a universal movement led by the leadership of the Church that is seeking the truth, the authenticity, of the relationship between the early Church and the synagogue of Jesus and the Jews in ancient Palestine.

I think that, and what has since emerged in terms of the scholarship on Catholic-Jewish relations, on Christian-Jewish relations, [01:20:00] is now one of the (inaudible) intellectual achievements of this generation. You look at the books, the studies, the research documents. I just picked this up. This was produced by a Protestant scholar, Dr. James Charlesworth. It has a collection of essays by some of the leading Protestant, and Catholic, and Jewish scholars on almost every aspect of Christian-Jewish relations. The names of the scholars are among the galaxy of intellectual stars in the world today. [Christor Stendel, W.D. Davies?], Raymond Brown, a brilliant Catholic biblical scholar. There's an enormous list of people. And the literature, one cannot keep up with it anymore. And thank God, that is the fruit of *Nostra Aetate*.

[01:21:00] But I want now to turn from what has been achieved thus far in the past, and it's very impressive. And what is also very impressive is that what is happening here today in this college, which as I understand it, has been called together for the sake of honoring the 100th anniversary in the community. And while that is a special occasion, it's important to share with you the knowledge if you don't know it already, that what is happening here is happening in every major city in the United States. And most of the major cities of Europe, including

Germany and Austria. [01:22:00] (inaudible) Christian-Jewish relations is not exactly on the highest record of their performance. But all [over Europe?]. In Latin America, I count among my dearest friends Cardinals of Brazil, Argentina. We embrace each other every time we meet. And then kind of openness and spontaneity in wanting to deal with [hard?] issues in the most constructive way. But beyond that, perhaps one of the most important achievements in which my greatest sense of personal pride is that there is now a network of Christians and Jews, Catholics, Protestants, Evangelicals, Greek Orthodox, increasingly Muslims, blacks, black Christians, black Muslims, and Hispanics who meet together in every major city in the United States. [01:23:00] Doesn't mean we all love each other, there hasn't been instant conversion. But there is now human contact. The practice of stereotypes, the notion of looking at the other as an enemy or as a gargoyle, as a monster, increasingly has begun to be transformed by these [personal human?] contacts.

I want to say a few more words, and all of the points that I had heard Archbishop Weakland refer to [are exactly?] at the heart of the theological transformation that has been taking place. And at the risk of being characterized, as I have from time to time, as a pope lover -- (laughter) [01:24:00] in rougher

moments I'm called a Catholic lover -- (laughter) it's OK, I worked a long time at it. I have read every major writing on Pope John Paul II dealing with Jews and Judaism. I've read many other documents, encyclicals, etc. In all his writings, there are [seven?] themes that emerge as the foundation of Catholic-Jewish relations. One is that Judaism as a living heritage. The second is that of the permanent validity of the covenant of God with Israel, which has not been displaced, as Archbishop Weakland has referred to it. The third is the vigorous [01:25:00] and repeated, repeated condemnation of anti-Semitism, and an insistence of facing the Nazi Holocaust, and what that has meant for the collapse in morality in Western civilization. The fact that the Nazi Holocaust could take place in a country of advanced culture, and indeed of ancient Christian civilization. The Holocaust that was not carried out by crazies, and idiots, but carried out by many PhDs, with most advanced knowledge of the twentieth century. He addresses himself to those issues over and again. And then the pope has made a special point in talking about the land in the State of Israel, its importance to [01:26:00] the Jewish people, and indeed to Christians, and he has said two things, which are worthy of recalling. First of all, in terms of these themes, which include in the final, the fifth and sixth items that he refers to, which he talks about the importance of making the [catechetics?] and

liturgy documents of love rather than separation [and adulation?]. And then, his appeal for joint action between Catholics and Jews, working in a human community.

But one of his earliest statements which captures the spirit of all of these seven themes, Pope John Paul II expressed that new spirit during a February 15th, 1985 [01:27:00] audience with the American Jewish Committee, which I helped arrange at that time. Cardinal [Wiligrands?]. And the pope said the following: "I am convinced that I am happy to state on this occasion that the relationships between Jews and Christians have radically improved in these years. Where there was ignorance, and therefore prejudice and stereotypes, there is now growing mutual knowledge, appreciation, and respect. There is, above all, love between us. That kind of love, I mean, which is for both of us a fundamental injunction of our religious traditions, and which the New Testament has received from the Old." And then in a quite remarkable document that [closes?] all of the public agitation, and conflict, which has appeared around the issue of diplomatic relations between the Vatican, the Holy See, and the State of Israel. [01:28:00] In [Otanko?] in 1980, the pope linked for the first time the Nazi Holocaust and the birth of the Jewish state. And he says these words which I quote: "The Jewish people, after tragic experiences connected with the

extermination of so many sons and daughters, driven by the desire for security, set up the State of Israel." And then, he went on to say in an apostolic letter of April 20th, 1984, (inaudible), "Jews ardently love [their?] Jerusalem, and in every age, venerate her memory. [Dongan as she is?] in many remains and monuments from the time of David, who chose her as the capital. And of Solomon, who built the temple there. And therefore, they turn their minds to her daily when they say, [01:29:00] and point to her as a sign of their nation. The Jewish people who live in the State of Israel and preserve in that land such precious testimonies of their history and their faith. We must ask for the desired security, and the new tranquility that is the prerogative of every nation and condition of life, and of progress for every society." The pope also referred to the importance, which I support, and many other Jews support, of assuring justice and human rights for Palestinian refugees. If anybody understand what it means to be a refugee, Jews have understood that over the past 1,900 years. And for us, the issue is how do we achieve security for Israel, which is constantly threatened by SCUD missiles, and now possibly by nuclear weapons, and intifada? We saw these recent killings. How do you put an end to that killing and move [01:30:00] forward to try to bring some measure of justice and

end to the suffering of the Palestinians? And we are committed to trying to bring about those kinds of balances.

Finally, I want to say on possibly the question of the future of Catholic-Jewish relations, that would not be bad if they simply continued to do more of the same. The kind of scholarship is going on will take us 100 years to absorb the power of its intellectual insight. And its truth. Charlesworth, in his study, [went into great?] detail, and I would encourage you to read one of these books: *Jews and Christians, Jesus's Jewishness*. There are literally thousands of books now, many of them paperbacks, on Judaism and Christianity in early Palestine. [01:31:00] But what emerges out of that is a recognition as emerges out of this study that you really cannot understand Jesus, you cannot understand the early Church you cannot understand all of the ideas and values and beliefs and customs which shape the Church unless you grasp the depth and rootedness of Jesus and the Disciples as first century Palestinian Jews. And according to many of the scholars in this book, including [Wiseman Vermes?], who has a wonderful essay on Jesus the Jew, that in point of fact, the conventional scholarship is not enough. We need to recognize that prior to the year 70 when the Temple was destroyed, that [01:32:00] pre-70 Palestinian Judaism, pre-70

rabbinic Judaism was the mother religion of both early rabbinic Judaism and the mother religion of early Christianity as well.

Jesus prayed in a Hebrew [prayer book?]. That's the only prayer book he knew. Jesus read in the synagogue from the Torah scrolls. That's the only Bible he knew. And many of the ideas and values emerges out of this experience of living with Jewish teachers and commonplace people in Palestine. It's important to have that sense of how the early Church understood itself, and for Jews to understand that as well, because the [early nation?] is that such there's been denial on both sides. It's time [01:33:00] that, on a scholarly basis and on a search for truth and honesty, we come to acknowledge the depth of our bond spiritually, morally, humanly, and a common mother, and how that has affected all of us.

My last word is this. Pope John Paul II refers in one of his documents to the importance of Christians and Jews joining hands together to create a community of compassion in the world. [If you're an adult, the person?] (inaudible) I have spent a good part of the past 30 years in a parallel career [to that on?] Jewish-Christian relations, namely working on the problem of the world refugees, world hunger, and international development. I cannot begin to tell you the scandal of what it means to live

[01:34:00] in this kind of world today where there are 16 million refugees in the world, six million of them in Africa, there are three million of them in Pakistan. I belong to a group called the International Rescue Committee. We've sent people, we have 3,000 people working in the field, we send people to every refugee center in the world, every conflict, in order to relieve suffering and contain the deaths. The conflicts in the Middle East are terrible, but in a month, 10,000 Croatians, and Slovaks, and Slovenes were massacred. In Lebanon, probably more than 150,000 people were destroyed. How long can a world go on with that kind of destruction, and remain almost virtually unknown to so much of the rest of the world?

But I must tell you, in my experiences of going into refugee camps, [01:35:00] [getting these?] boat people, the Cambodians, throughout Southeast Asia, and then in large parts of Africa, and then in Latin America, the barrios of Brazil and Venezuela, and Argentina. One of the most heartening signs [that occurs to me?] when I feel like some days that it's impossible to cope with this, in every refugee camp I entered into, the first people I met were Christians, and some Jews. Priests, nuns, protestant ministers, nurses, evangelical people, some Greek Orthodox. And the ministry of self-giving, [01:36:00] of seeking to save human lives, which is grounded in our prophetic

tradition in the Bible, these people [may come alive?] today. They give hands and feet, they give life to many of the abstract pronouncements, liturgical phrases we recite, and then pass by. We [now have?] Jewish community, some years ago, organized American Jewish World Service, which is an overseas development program in third world countries for people who will never become Jews. But we see that as our mission of self-giving, self-emptying out in order to uphold the central thesis of both of our traditions, namely that every human being is created in the sacred image of God, every human [01:37:00] being. Black, white, colored, brown. They're all created in the sacred image of God. They are brothers and sisters in the family of God. And we, if we're faithful to our traditions of the Torah and the Gospel, must find ways of joining hands, not only to give life to what happened in Vatican Council II, but to give life and meaning to all of those affirmations which we recite every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. They're not simply liturgical passages for nice voices. They are marching orders from God through His prophets, and through Jesus of Nazareth. And I hope that these experiences together will help us join hands in this [01:38:00] life-affirming work, which we in the Jewish tradition call *tikkun olam*, the healing and repair of a broken world that desperately needs our brotherhood and our love and compassion and caring, not only for each other, but for so many other

members of God's family. Thank you, and God bless you.

(applause)

Michael Lukens:

We're going to have a dialogue and a period of discussion between Archbishop Weakland and Rabbi --

(break in recording)

Sidney Weinberg:

We're going to continue now with a few moments of dialogue between Archbishop Weakland and Rabbi Tanenbaum, and we will begin with Archbishop Weakland.

Rembert Weakland:

At the beginning of my talk, I mentioned the fact that one of the peculiarities of our age is that the generation that experienced the Holocaust is dying out. I'd like, Rabbi Tanenbaum, to reflect a bit on what's going to happen when the generation that created Vatican II begins to die out. I was elected a superior, became a major superior in the Catholic Church in 1963. [01:40:00] I don't think there's anybody who has survived now 29 years like I have as a major superior. The generation who were superiors, who created Vatican II, the names

you mentioned, Sheehan, these people -- are all gone. I feel like a real old-timer, (laughter) functioning after 29 years. What could happen if that spirit of Vatican II, that created Vatican II, and the people involved in Vatican II, die out? How are we going to perpetuate Vatican II?

Marc Tanenbaum:

I think it's a very real problem, and that is also a problem in the Jewish community. We had, after all, one of the people we work most closely with in connection with Vatican Council II, is the late Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, who was my teacher, and practically my father. [01:41:00] I regarded myself as his disciple. And we worked with him and Rabbi Louis Finklestein [at the seminary?]. (inaudible) and others. And one after another, as they reached their eighties and nineties, they pass away, and a very large chapter of history --

Crowd:

Can you speak louder? Closer to the microphone?

Marc Tanenbaum:

[I'm starting to yet?]. (laughter) [This may be my throat?]. (laughter) I'm glad you woke me up. We have a parallel problem in the Jewish community. When agreed with the late Cardinal

[Baya?], who was then president of the Vatican Secretariat on Christian Unity, and also the president of Catholic-Jewish Relations, that we would collaborate in as fraternal way as we could. And because he needed certain information from us, and we tried to be as responsive as we could. And we brought together some of the leading Jewish scholars in the world. We worked on three documents the Cardinal Baya asked for, and every one of those documents was submitted to these people for their response. And they all became enthusiastically long. Well, as they passed away, there are no substitutes for that. I'm just saying on another level -- although I don't mean it as a pessimistic note -- I think there's a real issue [01:43:00] altogether in general public life as well as religious life, this is very difficult to fathom. Somehow, the age of giants seems to have disappeared. When I think of some of the people in the early days, of Heschel, and Reinhold Niebuhr, and Paul [Tellick?]. And so there's Baya, and then (inaudible) extraordinary people, including yourself. Thank God you're still young. But it is a serious challenge of leadership training.

Now, there are some younger scholars who have entered into the field with real energy and commitment --

(pause in recording)

Marc Tanenbaum:

-- [01:44:00] less young every day -- [looks younger?]. But, I mean, there are people like that in every community. And one simply, somewhere there has to be some center where somebody pays attention to that, and works in cultivating those kinds of centers of energy.

Rembert Weakland:

I have one more observation for the rabbi, and then another question. My observation is this. You probably didn't know that there is a theory out there that Jesus was Irish. (laughter) The reasons are this: that the age of 30 --

Marc Tanenbaum:

That sounds like blasphemy to me.

Rembert Weakland:

At the age of 30, he was still living at home taking care of his mother. (laughter) (applause) And he thought he was God. That's my observation.

Marc Tanenbaum:

[01:45:00] Can I tell you my Irish-Jewish observation?

(laughter) I'm more careful than you are. But there is a theory backed up by some scholarship that the Irish are one of the 10 Lost Tribes of Israel. (laughter) And part of the evidence for that theory is that -- first of all, some linguistic, there's grammatical evidence that some of the grammatical forms in the Celtic language are derived from the Hebrew language. For example, the name Donovan is regarded as a joining together, a conflate of the words *don ovan*, the judge of sin. But the real clincher for the making the case is that the theory is that the Blarney Stone is one of the stones from the Western Wall of the Temple that the Celtic tribes [01:46:00] took with them when they were still a tribe of Israel. (laughter) Of course, both Jews and Irishmen have obviously kissed the Blarney Stone. They both talk too much.

Rembert Weakland:

Thank you. (laughter) My next observation or question, would be this, Rabbi Tanenbaum. We've mentioned both of this, how much today the Catholic and the Christian community is learning about its Jewish roots, and how proud we are of that, and how we have become -- I said we Catholics are again a biblical people, and how important that is. But how much does the Jewish community know about Christ and Christianity?

Marc Tanenbaum:

That's a very good question from Green Bay, Wisconsin. No, it's an important question. To respond to it, [01:47:00] briefly, there has probably been more honest, sensitive scholarship on the part of Jewish scholars probing the meaning of Jesus, Christianity, and Christians for Jews and Judaism during the past 50 years than at any time prior to that. There are now studies, I mean, literally now, every couple of weeks by some important Jewish scholars in very honest ways. Part of that has to do with the fact that increasingly, Jewish scholars are coming to the conclusion that Christian scholars have come to, namely that both rabbinic Judaism, the early rabbinic Judaism prior to the year 70, and early Christianity, [01:48:00] were essentially brother or sister religions who were almost indistinguishable at the beginning from each other. Their belief in God, their attitudes towards human dignity, their belief in the observances, Jesus observed the Sabbath. He observed the Jewish festivals. What happened afterwards with Easter came after the period of 70 and certainly the third century. But my point is that I just got a book from a friend, a colleague of mine from my own seminary, the Jewish Theological Seminary, that's [Gertz Rothsaw?] on Jewish perspectives on Christianity, which is a very deep, philosophical, and theological analysis of

what some of the best minds in the Jewish community, in the twentieth century, beginning with Martin Buber, Leo Beck, Franz Rosenzweig, [01:49:00] Abraham Joshua Heschel, have written in order to dismantle the old stereotypes and look at it in as honest a way as Christians are looking at it. I'll mention just one other thing; when I was working on the American Jewish Committee, I simulated a study of curricula in all the Jewish seminaries of what Jews teach about Christians and Christianity. And it really was quite interesting. All of our major seminaries, except for the Orthodox seminaries -- Orthodox seminaries taught essentially that Christianity, in historic terms, not theological terms, and that wasn't exactly a great history. And the study's available. [01:50:00] Fascinating to see how increasingly, as seminarians are being introduced to those studies. And even more interesting is that every Jewish seminary -- and even in some ways, the Yeshiva University -- has now record of meetings going on between Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Greek Orthodox seminarians, and Jewish seminarians. I organized [a meeting of the?] Southern Baptists in Dallas. I knew it was going to be difficult. I didn't realize how difficult it was going to be to get out of Dallas. But it turned out to be a remarkable meeting. And you can feel the [scales fall from the eyes?] of the students as they began to see each other as persons and not as abstract stereotypes. So there is

more going on. But the truth of the matter is, at least my own approach has been from the beginning, [01:51:00] that this cannot be undertaken with a view of tradeoff. You know? You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. It must be a genuine search for truth, knowledge, and understanding, as the information is available through the best minds in our communities. It's only with that kind of integrity that any of that scholarship would have any impact on our people.

Sidney Weinberg:

I think at this point, we are going to open up the floor for questions. Now when I say "questions," I mean questions. Please try and keep your questions brief, that way we'll be able to hear from more of you, and we open the floor. Yes.

M1:

This question could be addressed to either Archbishop Weakland [01:52:00] or the Rabbi. I was wondering if you feel along the lines of timeframe if that things are moving along fast enough, the understanding and so on?

Crowd:

Could you repeat the question?

Sidney Weinberg:

The question was --

Marc Tanenbaum:

Do you want to come up front? (laughter) I'm serious!

(inaudible) difficult hearing, I think if he came a little bit up front, then it might make it easier.

Sidney Weinberg:

The question was --

Marc Tanenbaum:

Not too close. (laughter)

Sidney Weinberg:

The question was about the timing of the understanding between the two faiths. Is it moving fast enough?

Rembert Weakland:

The hardest thing, I think, in ecumenism is not how fast it goes, it's whether everybody's on the train. And my problem right now is that maybe we need a little time to get everybody on board. [01:53:00] So it's going fast enough for me, but I don't know if it has everybody as it should going fast enough.

There would be nothing worse than the lag, and then you have divisive things. So I think it's going fast enough. Maybe not everywhere in the world, but certainly the United States, it's been going fast.

Marc Tanenbaum:

Well, when you consider what Christian-Jewish relations were like prior to Vatican Council II, what has happened since then in terms of some things that Archbishop Weakland and I have been talking about, in a certain sense, we have moved light years away from that prior history. To read some of the Vatican texts, the statements of the pope, statements of the Cardinal, individual bishops, [01:54:00] addresses by Archbishop Weakland. This is not an unusual thing for him. He speaks before many audiences around the country, and is [loudly?] respected for his point of view. There is a great receptivity. But I guess there are two things to say. As I said earlier, I think the fact that Christians and Jews are meeting literally in every major city in the United States today -- and in Europe, in Paris, and in Marseilles, and Rome, and Milan, and I mean, there are Jewish-Christian dialogue groups literally all over the world. There's one in Israel, which is quite remarkable, and they're trying to bring Muslims into the dialogue, [the Rainbow?] group and others. So I think that network of human relationships,

[01:55:00] where people come to know each other as human beings, with their hopes and their fears, and respond to each other with care and compassion when they need each other, I think that's a very significant achievement. At the same time, I must say that that I think as Archbishop Weakland has said earlier, there is a logical diversity in each community. We have people in the Jewish community, in liberal branches, in conservative, reform, and constructionist, who are deeply committed to dialogue with Christians who really welcome so much that is going on. We have some people in more traditional parts of the community. Oh, but I must say, there are also some liberal persons who mistrust [01:56:00] certainly the generation of Jewish survivors that Archbishop Weakland referred to, are filled with distrust as to what all of these loving gestures mean now. Because they lived through a period of time where someone was [saved by?] Christians, but the overwhelming majority of them were [handed over to the?] Nazis by Christians. And that upsets deep scars. And I'm distrusted in parts of that community. They don't know what I'm up to, and they think that I am somehow not being sensitive enough to their traumas of the Holocaust. And I try to deal with them, and I think that's an extremely important issue.

And finally, I would make this point. While I think I share the Archbishop's hope for movement forward, [01:57:00] it is

important to recognize, you know, from the point of view of the history of ideas, the dynamics, the mechanism of ideas, certainly in Western Civilization. As an important study by [Stuart Hughes?] declares, "Ideas always begin in the minds of a few people who think great and important thoughts." That's what happened in Vatican Council II, it happened with Pope John XXIII, and those around him, Cardinal Baya. But then it takes a period of time for those ideas, in a sense, to percolate down to other levels of society and culture. And that cannot happen overnight. So that it goes through high culture, middle-ground culture, and then, in a sense, low (inaudible) culture. To use somebody else's terms, I would never say it. So the point is one has to expect [01:58:00] there's need for a certain urgency, and constantly keeping it moving forward, but also to recognize that there's not going to be instant redemption, going to take time. But given what has happened in the past 50 years, I think it's remarkable. And beyond that, I really think it's inspiration and the work of the Lord in our midst.

Rembert Weakland:

Could I bring something up about this and ask marc a question about it? We're all worried about the vestiges of anti-Semitism in the Eastern Bloc. The dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow about a year and a half ago. I was amazed at

the kind of things still being taught. And so I wonder if it's not important at the moment not just to go through all the catechesis, and the textbooks, and the seminary things of the United States, but if somehow or another we shouldn't [01:59:00] also work together with regard to what's being taught in the Russian seminaries? I felt with the professors from Sigorsk were far advanced -- or were far behind the rest, while the professors from Leningrad -- now St. Petersburg -- were far ahead. But most of what was happening there was the kind of theology we would have taught in the 1930s. Does the Jewish community have any prospects, or any possibility, of opening up that whole area and the seminaries in Russia?

Marc Tanenbaum:

Yeah, it's a source of considerable concern to us. In the late 1970s, together with Archbishop Iakovos, whom you referred to, who's a very dear friend, and in many ways, a very great man. I mean, literally, almost singlehandedly helped establish the Greek Orthodox Church as one of the major churches in America. We organized together [02:00:00] a Greek Orthodox-Jewish dialogue, which a lot of people in both communities approach with some suspicion. It turned out to have been an incredible love affair with scholars [who then?] sharing ideas, but also acknowledged the difficulties you referred to liturgy and

homilies and that sort of thing. Textbooks. We produced a book together, which Archbishop Iakovos and I co-edited. The whole world of Russian Orthodox and Eastern Europe are of very great concern to us, and I must say that one of the important encouragements for us is that people in the Holy See understand that concern, share it with us, and are working together with us to cope with it, because there are also very grave concerns there for the Catholic Church [02:01:00] and Eastern European Christianity. Actually, two weeks ago, a joint delegation of the Vatican that was authorized by [Cardinal Cassidy?], who's president now of the Vatican Secretariat on Religious Relations with the Jews, sent a small delegation to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary. Earlier last year, in September, we had an extraordinary meeting of Catholic and Eastern European scholars and leaders, and Jewish leaders in Prague. And it was wonderful how people consciously worked to unpack all the old, vicious, hostile stuff that was repeated all the time by rote, as if that was the essence of the thing, or the essence of culture. [02:02:00] [I'm seldom?] very brief about this. What has been happening in the Polish Catholic hierarchy is little short of phenomenal. Even with the Cardinal [Gleb?] episode, which was handled, I think, [better?] on both sides, who I call reciprocal paranoia, [turned out to be?] monsterizing on both sides, which incidentally is key to understanding an awful lot

of religious ethnic conflict. Reciprocal paranoia, when one group begins monsterizing the other, and the other responds by monsterizing in turn. And then you get what the Germans call *Totentanz*. They get wrapped up in each other, and they dance until they die. And a way must be found to break out of that *Totentanz*. Why, in Poland, the Polish Catholic hierarchy, with [all of their problems?], adopted a pastoral letter which Cardinal [Grant?] himself approved, which is a magnificent statement of confession, of repentance, [02:03:00] of *teshuvah*, repentance for what happened with so many Polish Christians during the Nazi Holocaust. It acknowledged, as it must be acknowledged, the suffering of the Polish people, the suffering of the destruction of much of the Polish Catholic Church. But what happened to the Jews was unique in Poland is that they were the only people singled out for total and complete extermination. And there were Polish Catholics [away from?] this old tradition [who were willing?] to participate in that, or who were forced to participate in it. In any case, the Polish Catholic heirar--

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