

CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH SCENE



SEPT/OCT 2011

NUMBER 85

NCCA SHOULD RECONSIDER BOYCOTT - ACCJ



Australia's most active interfaith body has called on Christians to 'reconsider' a planned boycott of goods produced by Israeli settlements.

The Australian Council of Christians and Jews (ACCJ) President William Clancy said recent resolutions by the National Council of Churches (NCCA) 'could harm relations between Australian Christians and Jews and could have unfortunate, unintended consequences to both Jews and Palestinians.

In a letter to the NCCA and its member Churches Mr Clancy condemned increasing polarization on both sides in the conflict and called for interfaith bodies to intervene in the cause of peace.

'Clearly many justice and security issues confront the people of the West Bank and of Israel today,' Mr Clancy said.

He criticised the boycott idea as

'simplistic' and called on the Churches instead to broker dialogues between Palestinian and Jewish groups in Australia.

The Council criticized the process by which the boycott resolutions were passed and the lack of consultation with the Jewish community and other interfaith networks.

'By passing the boycott resolutions without due consultation and thoughtful deliberations NCCA has, in our view, threatened to undermine its own standing and reputation,' Mr Clancy said.

'We believe that faith-based organisations such as the NCCA and the ACCJ should contribute to the development of peace in Israel by offering appropriate support and encouragement to both sides to find common ground.

'If we are seen to favour one side against the other then we will have no role,' Mr Clancy said.

Mr Clancy said a recent study tour of Israel by members of the Council showed there was cause for hope in relations between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis.

The tour found that there was a relaxed harmonious intermingling of Palestinians, Jews Christians and tourists in the cities and the vast majority are desperate for peace, security and economic stability. 'We recognise that there is a potential for extremists to attempt to derail peace initiatives at any time,' Mr Clancy said.

'The economic well-being of many Palestinians is connected with the economic well-being of Israel,' Mr Clancy said.

'This is another reason why a boycott is a simplistic solution and will only harm the interests of the Palestinians who have suffered enough.' - *J-Wire*

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SZEKELY ELECTED ACCJ CHAIR

NSW CCJ chair William Szekely has been unanimously elected chair of the Australian Council of Christians and Jews. The election comes earlier than expected, due to the retirement of William Clancy. Mr Clancy has served for two terms as Chair, and is stepping down slightly early due to health reasons. Mr Szekely was nominated by long-time member and former editor of *CCJ Scene*, Mr Henry Mendelson, and

seconded by ACCJ secretary Dr Marianne Dacy.

Mr Szekely said he was 'happy and humbled' by his election, paying tribute to his predecessor. 'Bill Clancy has been a stalwart mentor and a quiet achiever and his guidance at the helm will be missed. My fondest memories of him and his wife Liz are from our ACCJ Interfaith tour of Israel last year. We will

be arranging a more formal event for Bill to mark his term.

'I look forward to the new challenge, and to much interaction with the state CCJs and the ACT counterpart, and to seeking to secure a working team to establish CCJ in Queensland,' Mr Szekely said.

AROUND THE TRAPS...



CANBERRA: PROTESTS AGAINST JEWISH SHOP "NOT ILLEGAL"

Demonstrators who protested outside Israeli-owned stores in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane did not breach federal law, consumer watchdog the ACCC has found. Although a number of Melbourne protesters were charged with offences including trespass and assaulting police, the ACCC said that the protests did not have the effect of causing substantial loss or damage to the outlets.

LIMA: NEW CCJ IN PERU

A new Council of Christians and Jews has been established in Peru. ICCJ President Dr Debbie Weissman has congratulated our new members, welcoming our Peruvian colleagues in the worldwide ICCJ family on June 27, 2011. This new Peruvian CCJ replaces the former Inter-Confessional Committee of Peru.

SYDNEY: CCJNSW MUSIC EXCELLENCE AWARD

The family of the late Cantor Michael Deutsch has accepted an offer by CCJNSW to inaugurate a new award for excellence in interfaith liturgical music, to be named in honour of Cantor Deutsch. The **Cantor Michael Deutsch Award** and a selection panel to determine recipients, is yet to be publicly announced.

ONLY IN AMERICA: FACEBOOKING JESUS

Who's the most popular celeb on Facebook? By one measure, it's not megastar Justin Bieber — or any other entertainment star, for that matter. It's Jesus. According to the NYTimes, the "Jesus Daily" Facebook page has accrued more likes, comments, and shared content



than any other page on the social network. Jesus Daily has more than 8.4 million fans, and last week it had a whopping 3.4 million interactions (a measure of Facebook users' combined likes,

shares, comments, and more). By contrast Justin Bieber (who admittedly has 35 million fans) had only 630,000 interactions during the same period.

LOL! *

JERUSALEM: FACEBOOK AND HOLOCAUST DENIERS

The Online Antisemitism Working Group of the Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism has called on Facebook to treat Holocaust denial as incitement to hatred. Facebook has as one of its terms of service that "You will not post content that is hateful ... ". Facebook has however made an exception for Holocaust denial for a number of years.

ICCJ announces new online forum – members only!

As from September 1, the new forum for ICCJ member organizations is on line. This virtual meeting place is accessible for board members of ICCJ and ICCJ member organizations only.

In order to be part of this ICCJ members network you MUST

- a. Be registered under MyICCJ to get a user name and password (if you have not done that so far)*
- b. Let ICCJ know your e-mail address (to be recognized when entering the forum)*
- c. Log in on www.iccj.org using your user name and password and*
- d. Click the button "Forum" in the main menu and here you go!*

**Laugh Out Loud!*

Editorial

The recent election of William Szekely to the position of ACCJ chair is to be welcomed. Mr Szekely follows the distinguished William Clancy AM in the role, and may be expected to build on the strengths Clancy established. Szekely is a person of intellect and energy, and will undoubtedly bring vigour to the presidency and thus to the CCJ movement in Australia.

Australians tend to be sceptical toward religion. Religion must, therefore, review and reconsider what it is seeking to do and how it is seeking to do it. Not to do so risks religious organisations becoming irrelevant.

This includes the CCJ. In the past there has been a tendency to focus on re-educating Christian religious leadership about Christianity's Jewish roots. This project has achieved some success. But we must engage in better planning for the future, to ensure that when the Holocaust generation is gone, there is a new generation sensitized to the interfaith project. Relevance requires leadership, income, respect (and thus 'reportability') from the wider society, and action which responds to the times. All these factors should translate into membership, the other vital requirement for relevance. In William Szekely, the Australian Council of Christians and Jews has Chair with the ability to increase our relevance in the public discourse. It is our job to help him to do it.

U.S JEWISH, CHRISTIAN CLERGY DENOUNCE ANTI-MUSLIM BIGOTRY



WASHINGTON: Three days before the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, religious leaders gathered to remember the victims, foster interreligious unity and speak out in defense of religious

freedom. The event was held by **Shoulder to Shoulder**, a national coalition of 26 faith groups formed a year ago in response to a rise in anti-Muslim sentiment following debates over an Islamic center near Ground Zero and a Florida pastor's threats to burn the Quran.

"If we cower in the face of fanatic minorities, we are lost. This is true for Muslims and it is true for us all," said Rabbi Eric Yoffie, the outgoing head of the Union for Reform Judaism.

Leaders from Jewish, Christian, Muslim,

and Sikh communities joined in the event at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, just blocks from the White House.

The meeting recognized the families of Muslim victims of the 9/11 attacks, particularly Shakila Yasmin Miah and Nurul Haq Miah, the only married couple who died in the attacks.

"Fear-based politics and discrimination against Muslim Americans and those perceived to be Muslim disgrace the memories of those who perished on September 11, and desecrate the core values that make our nation great," said a joint declaration issued at the meeting. – *This Christian Century*

DANDENONG LEADS THE INTERFAITH WAY

Interfaith action is thriving in south-east Victoria, with tours of places of worship so popular that local Dandenong councillors met recently to manage growing demand for the tours.

On the 20th July last, the City of Greater Dandenong Interfaith Network, in partnership with City of Greater Dandenong Council, hosted a Half-Day Forum for faith representatives and Council Staff from its seven neighbouring municipalities in south-east Victoria.

Representatives from the cities of Casey, Cardinia, Frankston, Kingston, Knox, Monash, and Mornington attended to

network and share ideas and to collaborate on the effective management and sustainability of the growing numbers of Tours to Places of Worship requested which have specific impact on the City of Greater Dandenong. The Tours have been run by the Dandenong Interfaith Network since 1989.

The Interfaith Network, which claims to be the first interfaith network in Australia, covers faith communities in the Springvale, Dandenong, Keysborough and Noble Park areas. The Network strives to achieve the vision of 'Many Faiths, One People'.



ACCJ SECOND INTERFAITH TOUR OF ISRAEL



The ACCJ is pleased to announce a second Interfaith tour of Israel, tentatively scheduled from 7th June to 17th June 2012.

Travelling to many different sites in Israel, CCJ members and others will be visiting ancient religious places that give a taste of the biblical and historical sites that have created faith and conflict.

The tour will start in Jerusalem. Members will visit religious and historical sites that are relevant to Judaism, Christianity and Islam and include the Dead Sea, Massada and the Qumran. Lectures and tours will at times accommodate 'first time visitors' and more experienced travellers to the Holy Land separately.

Package including accommodation, professional educators and guides, travel within Israeli breakfasts and some meals, will be \$2850.00. Members will need to pay \$100 per person to secure a place before October 30. For further details please contact Dr Philip Bliss philipbliss@philipbliss.com

Please send initial deposit ASAP to the CCJ office with names and contact details: Australian Council of Christians and Jews 326 Church Street Richmond Victoria 3121

Tel 03 9429 5212 or email ccjvic@bigpond.net.au

AGED CARE: INTERFAITH PERSPECTIVES

Aviva Lipman, speaking at CCJWA Aged Care seminar, 14 June 2011



CCJWA members and friends gathered last June in Subiaco to hear Ms Aviva Lipman from Maurice Zeffert Home, and Revd Julie Barrett-Lennard, speak on Jewish and Christian approaches to aged care. CCJWA Chairperson Charles Waddell introduced the event by reflecting on ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’ from Hebrew scripture, and ‘Who is my neighbour?’ from the Christian scripture, opening the question: How do we respectively take care of our weaker members?

Our first speaker, Aviva Lipman, acknowledging input from Rabbi Solomon and Rabbi Apple, cited Leviticus 19, where we find that we should rise before the elderly out of respect, followed by Maimonides, who had this become a mitzvah: we should stand before the elderly in a manner to honour them. We should honour persons, not simply due to learning, but as worthy for their many years of life. In Psalm 71:9 we find “do not cast me off in my old age”, and in Proverbs 20:29, that the glory of the young is their strength, the glory of the old, their age. In bygone times the elderly held social

and political power; in our time we see them disempowered, as objects of ‘welfare’.

Commenting on Maurice Zeffert Home, now celebrating its 50th anniversary, Ms Lipman drew our attention to the influence of Edna Luber-Smith. Taken aback by the scene of an elderly woman, who had kept kosher her whole life, being given a ham sandwich for dinner, Edna took it upon herself to change this so that others would not have to suffer this loss of religious freedom. Ms Lipman posed the problem of how we measure care. While the government makes high demands in terms of standards before a licence is issued to an aged care residence, it offers little financial help.

Maurice Zeffert Home’s charter of 21 rights and 4 responsibilities may be summarized as a goal of serving the residents’ dignity and self-determination. Residents are given choice over whether to take medication, whether to eat, and, via the ‘advanced wish directive’ (to ensure they are legally respected), are able to indicate the manner in which their last days will be lived, but, to honour a typically Jewish environment, the dining room offers kashrut alone. Overall, a holistic model is taken, which avoids medicalizing the residents, but is concerned with whether persons feel joyful and respected. A new program, “spark of life,” has been implemented, which ensures a *haimish* (homelike) environment, and celebrates, amongst other things, Jewish music and food culture. Chagall prints brighten the walls, and visitors, such as children from Carmel school, are invited.

Christian presenter Rev Julie Barrett-Lennard then noted that Christians

are advised in 1 Timothy 5, in tune with Jewish biblical references, not to speak harshly to an older man, to treat the older woman as one would a mother, and to honour the elderly with the best seat. Further, the older woman is encouraged to pray as her physical contribution falls away.

Rev Barrett-Lennard commented that today we tend to look to the government to do what we used to do ourselves, and revealed some interesting facts. At present, surprisingly, only 7% of our elderly live in nursing homes; in 25 years’ time people aged above eighty years will rise from 4% to 8%. Often, today, both partners of a couple work, and sometimes there exists a ‘sandwich generation’ where, due to longer life spans, two generations need care. Few house-bound elderly are visited by parish representatives. These problems, which the Christian Scriptures (New Testament) do not address specifically, pose as ministry opportunities to overcome — the loss of what the elder person once gave, and the sense of negativity which society in general now associates with the elderly.

Through her research into the phenomenon of aging, Rev Barrett-Lennard advocated a positive attitude to age rather than disparagement, inviting the elderly to engage in a self-chosen contribution to society whereby they would maintain their sense of value as part of it.

In his vote of thanks, CCJWA executive member Eric Schneider offered a summary of the two approaches, concluding that work is to be done to change the societal perception that the elderly have nothing to offer. A discussion followed involving moral issues, such as, does a person (in either tradition) have the right to decide whether to continue life based on whether they feel useful, raising the question ‘What constitutes our sense of dignity?’ This augured a future discussion on how ‘dignity of life’ is to be interpreted.

Judith Schneider

Committee Member, CCJWA Inc.

The Quiet Death of Interfaith Activity?

By Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein

Israel must find its friends among religious individuals of all faiths, abandoning the so-called Christian leadership to its moral mediocrity.

What important bonds of friendship were formed in six decades of Jewish-Christian interfaith activity? Judging from Christian indifference after last month's Hamas attack on Israel, probably none.

Silence, more than anything else, moved Christians and Jews closer in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Church leaders, coming to grips with the enormity and bestiality of Hitler's Final Solution, had to deal with guilt. They understood the role that church-inspired anti-Semitism played in the centuries before the Holocaust, and they felt some long-distance guilt. Greater, local guilt came from their own silence. They had watched Hitler promise to exterminate the Jews, and observed each step toward the crematoria of Auschwitz. They spoke up in horror only when it was too late—after six million had been murdered.

They knew that they had slept on their moral watch. They had let God down in their responsibility to innocent human beings, and they had failed the Jewish people—despite the deep roots of Christianity within Judaism. They called for affirmative action to improve relations between the sister religions. The effort was sincere, and much good came of it. But they could not provide what Jews may have need-

ed the most: genuine friendship and caring. When you care, you don't remain silent when your friend is in mortal danger.

Last month, Israelis and Jews around the world watched in horror a significant escalation in the campaign of Hamas—acting on direct orders from Iran, according to political analysts—to bring an end to the State of Israel. Over one hundred rockets were launched at civilian targets—not at "settlements," but at Israel's pre-1967 heartland. One million citizens—Jews, Christians, and Mus-



lims—had to hunker down as death came hurtling toward homes, schools, and places of worship. A series of coordinated terror attacks killed more than a dozen, as a bus was ambushed, and anti-tank weapons struck civilian passenger cars. A fragile cease-fire—almost certainly temporary—was put together after a few days. Now only a few rockets each day are heading toward Ashdod, Beersheba, and Ashkelon. Is that supposed to be tolerable? Life, though, has changed for another million citizens of Israel, who now have firsthand experience with the seriousness with which Hamas and Hezbollah will pursue their goal of ridding the Middle East of all non-Arab presence and influence.

American media paid little attention to the scope of the attacks—at least until Israel took out a handful of terrorist leaders. Perhaps they were too preoccupied with Wall Street, Libya, and Katy Perry.

Church leaders, however, read the news carefully, even on weekends. The liberal churches—the ones who had initiated interfaith activity after the Holocaust—have been unanimous in their silence. It matters not in the slightest whether crying out in protest would make any difference. From genuine friends, you expect genuine concern and commiseration. Decades of interfaith activity have yielded photo-ops and high-minded rhetoric . . . but not friendship.

Talk show host Jay Leno may have said it best. "Go through your phone book, call people and ask them to drive you to the airport. The ones who will drive you are your true friends. The rest aren't bad people; they're just acquaintances." If "interfaith partners" will not even cry out in outrage as others try to pound you to oblivion, what good are they?

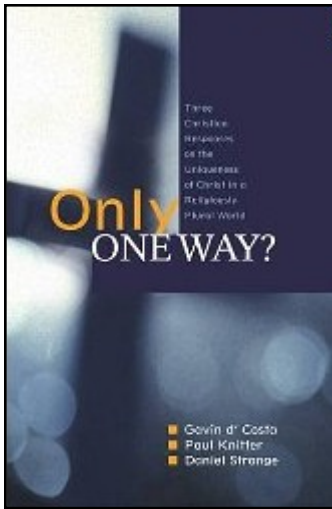


Yitzchok Adlerstein is an Orthodox rabbi who directs interfaith affairs for the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and chairs Jewish Law at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles. He is hopelessly addicted to the serious study of Torah texts.

BOOKS

ONLY ONE WAY?

GAVIN D'COSTA, PAUL KNITTER, DANIEL STRANGE; SCM PRESS, 2011 \$35.99



This book presents three different, influential and representative theological approaches towards the world religions. Students are not only introduced to the field, but get three passionate and intelligent 'takes' on what is at stake. By means of a response to each of the primary essays, the authors are put into interaction with each other, and are also engaged with the most contemporary scholarship in the field of theology of religions. This sustained and high level critical inter-

action between the authors provides a feature that is not to be found in any other current work in theology of religions. The three views represent: conservative Roman Catholic Christianity (D'Costa), Reformed evangelical Christianity (Strange) and liberationist liberal Christianity (Knitter). This book will therefore appeal to a very wide theological market from all sections of the theological spectrum.

PALESTINIAN CHRISTIANS IN ISRAEL:

STATE ATTITUDES TOWARDS NON-MUSLIMS IN A JEWISH STATE

UNA MCGAHERN, ROUTLEDGE, 2011 PPB PRICE TBA



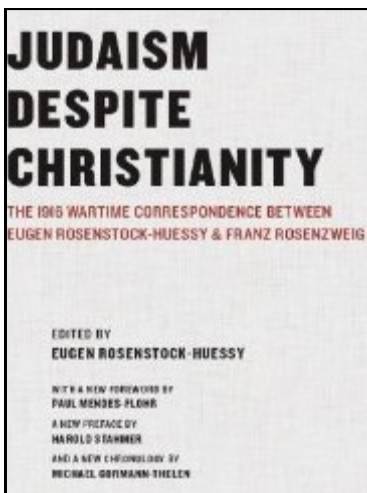
Although Christians form a significant proportion of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel, little research has, until now, been undertaken to examine their complicated position within Israel. This book demonstrates the limits of analyses which characterise state-minority relations in Israel in terms of a so-called Jewish-Muslim conflict, and of studies which portray Palestinian Christians as part of a wider exclusively religious-based transnational Christian community. This book locates its analysis of Palestinian Christians within a broader un-

derstanding of Israel as a Jewish ethnocentric state. It describes the main characteristics of the Palestinian Christian community in Israel and examines a number of problematic assumptions which have been made about them and their relationship to the state. Finally, it examines a number of intra-communal conflicts which have taken place in recent years between Christians and Muslims, and between Christians and Druze, and probes the role which the state and various state attitudes have played in influencing or determining those conflicts and, as a result, the general status of Palestinian Christians in Israel today.

JUDAISM DESPITE CHRISTIANITY:

THE 1916 WAR TIME CORRESPONDENCE

EUGEN ROSENSTOCK-HUESSY (EDITOR), UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS, 2011 \$22.50



Before they were both internationally renowned philosophers, Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy and Franz Rosenzweig were young German soldiers fighting in World War I, corresponding by letter and forming the foundation of their deep intellectual friendship. Collected here, this correspondence provides an intimate portrait of their views on history, philosophy, rhetoric, and religion as well as on their writings and professors. Most centrally, Rosenstock-Huessy and Rosenzweig discuss, frankly but re-

spectfully, the differences between Judaism and Christianity and the reasons they have chosen their respective faiths. This edition includes a new foreword by Paul Mendes-Flohr, a new preface by Harold Stahmer along with his original introduction, and essays by Dorothy Emmet and Alexander Altmann, who calls this correspondence "one of the most important religious documents of our age" and "the most perfect example of a human approach to the Jewish-Christian problem."

COMING UP...

ROSH HASHANAH

SUNSET SEPTEMBER 28 - NIGHTFALL SEPTEMBER 30



Rosh Hashanah marks the start of a new year in the Hebrew calendar. Jews believe Rosh Hashanah represents either figuratively or literally the creation of the World, or Universe. The Talmud provides three central ideas behind the day: sovereignty of G-d, remembrance of G-d and the Shofar, through which prayers rise to G-d (*malchuyot, zichronot, shofrot*). Rosh Hashanah celebrates the

‘coronation’ of G-d as King of the universe in preparation for the judgements that will follow. These judgements are ‘written’ into a Divine book of judgements, that then hang in the balance for ten days waiting for all to repent.

THE FEAST OF ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

SEPTEMBER 29 (MICHAELMAS)

Michaelmas, the feast of St Michael the Archangel (also the Feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, the Feast of the Archangels, or the Feast of Saint Michael and All Angels) is a day in the Western Christian calendar which occurs on 29 September. Because it falls near the equinox it is associated in the northern hemisphere with the beginning of autumn and the shortening of days. Michael is the greatest of all the archangels and is honored for defeating Lucifer. The Archangel Michael is one of the principal angelic warriors, seen as a protector against the dark of night, and the administrator of cosmic intelligence. Michaelmas has also delineated time and seasons for secular purposes as well, particularly in the United Kingdom and Ireland.



The Eastern Orthodox Churches do not observe Michaelmas. The Greek Orthodox honour the archangels on 8 November instead.

SCENE NUMBER 85



NOT YET A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS?

The Councils of Christians and Jews are a vital part in the combined Christian-Jewish effort to foster social harmony. We aim to combat all forms of religious, racial and social discrimination using the powerful insights of Judaism and Christianity.

JOIN TODAY!

I hereby apply for an annual membership of the Council of Christians and Jews:

Standard member: 3 yrs membership
Married couple: 3 yrs membership
Pensioner couple:
Single Pensioner/student/unemployed:
Educational Institution: 3 yrs membership
Religious Body: 3 yrs membership
I enclose cheque: Visa Mastercard Expires __/__/__

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____ Post Code _____ Email: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

“When two people relate to each other authentically and humanly, God is the electricity that surges between them.”

Martin Buber

THANK YOU! TEAR OFF AND SEND TO YOUR CCJ STATE BRANCH:

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