

## **Are Jews and Christians Living in a Post-Polemical World?**

Toward a Comparison of Medieval and Modern Christian-Jewish Encounters



**2011 Corcoran Chair Conference  
March 28-29, 2011  
Boston College**

Center for Christian-Jewish Learning  
[www.bc.edu/cjl](http://www.bc.edu/cjl)

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**RATIONALE**

Much of the history of the Jewish-Christian encounter includes a vigorous debate in the form of polemics – literature, public disputations, forced sermons, and the like. This debate produced a major body of medieval literature (*Adversus Judaeos* on the Christian side; various *Books of Nizzahon* on the Jewish side) which encapsulates the elements of religious and theological disagreement between the two groups. It was once taken for granted that this literature was produced in the context of Christian attempts to missionize Jews and Jewish attempts to fend off Christian approaches. Christians were invariably the aggressor; Jews invariably the defender. Students of this literature often asked questions such as: which side “won” the debate?

General changes in contemporary Christian-Jewish relations have brought with them changes in perception of this literature, and indeed of the whole encounter. Questions have been raised about the conversionary context of the polemics, and more nuanced views of what the polemicists had in mind have emerged. On the one hand, scholars have begun to pay more attention to internal uses of the polemical literature (especially that of Christians); on the other hand, the Jewish treatises are no longer seen solely as responses to Christian attempts of persuasion. The first part of the conference will be devoted to examining these new approaches to the medieval polemical literature.

The current openness of discussion concerning the past has been attributed to the fact that Christians and Jews now live in a “post-polemical world.” “Dialogue” has now replaced “disputation” as the key descriptor of the new relation, allowing a freer, more objective and less emotional examination of the past as well as a deep and challenging dialogue over difficult issues in the present and of the present. And, yet, the old patterns have not disappeared completely. Some Christian denominations continue with a “mission to the Jews,” and polemical literature continues to be composed by both Christians and Jews. The question thus arises: with all the changes in atmosphere and the emerging dialogue, is our world truly post-polemical? The second part of the conference will be devoted to examining, on the one hand, the elements in the contemporary Christian-Jewish encounter which contribute to an atmosphere in which polemics are now of historical interest only; and on the other hand, those present-day factors which remain reflections of the past. What lessons can be learned about the present Christian-Jewish encounter in light of the historical relationship which was so characterized by polemics?

## CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

### **MONDAY, MARCH 28, 5:30-7:00 P.M.**

#### KEYNOTE ADDRESS

THE HEIGHTS ROOM, CORCORAN COMMONS, CHESTNUT HILL CAMPUS

Welcome: Dr. James Bernauer, SJ, Director of the Boston College Center for Christian-Jewish Learning and Kraft Family Professor of Philosophy

Session Chair: Dr. Daniel J. Lasker, Norbert Blechner Professor of Jewish Values at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and the 2010-2011 Corcoran Visiting Chair at the Boston College Center for Christian-Jewish Learning

#### **“The Shifting Dynamic of the Jewish-Christian Encounter from the Middle Ages to the Present”**

Dr. David Berger, Dean and Ruth and I. Lewis Gordon Professor of Jewish History at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies of Yeshiva University

### **TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 9:00 A.M.-12:15 P.M.**

#### MEDIEVAL POLEMICS

9 LAKE STREET, BRIGHTON CAMPUS – ROOM 100

Session Chair: Dr. Dwayne Carpenter, Professor of Hispanic Studies and Co-Director of Jewish Studies at Boston College

#### **9:00-10:15 A.M. – MORNING SESSION #1**

#### **“The Medieval Jewish Critique of Christianity: In Search of a New Narrative”**

Dr. Daniel J. Lasker, Norbert Blechner Professor of Jewish Values at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and the 2010-2011 Corcoran Visiting Chair at the Boston College Center for Christian-Jewish Learning

#### **“Disputatio: Ambiguous Motivations and Unintended Consequences of a Long-lived Genre”**

Dr. Robin Vose, Associate Professor of Medieval History at St. Thomas University

#### **10:15-10:30 A.M. - BREAK**

#### **10:30-11:45 A.M. – MORNING SESSION #2**

#### **“Beyond the Written Word: Visual, Spoken, and Enacted Polemic between Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe”**

Dr. Alexandra Cuffel, Independent Scholar

**“Dietary Laws, Physiology, and Illicit Sexuality in Medieval Religious Polemics”**

Dr. Irven Resnick, Chair of Excellence in Judaic Studies at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

**11:45 A.M.-12:15 P.M. – DISCUSSION**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 1:30-4:30 P.M.**

**THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE**

**9 LAKE STREET, BRIGHTON CAMPUS – ROOM 100**

Session Chair: Rev. David Michael, St. Joseph Parish, Needham, MA

**1:30-2:45 P.M. – AFTERNOON SESSION #1**

**“Polemical Remnants, Irenic Ambivalence and Internal Politics: Catholic-Jewish Relations in 2011”**

Dr. Mary C. Boys, Skinner and McAlpin Professor of Practical Theology at Union Theological Seminary

**“Covenantal Possibilities in the Post-Polemical Era”**

Dr. Eugene Korn, American Director of the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation in Israel

**2:45-3:00 P.M. – BREAK**

**3:00-3:45 P.M. – AFTERNOON SESSION #2**

**“Land, Sovereignty, and Jewish Identity: The Patristic Legacy and Contemporary Christian Polemics”**

Rev. Dr. Christopher M. Leighton, Executive Director, and Dr. Adam Gregerman, Jewish Scholar, Institute for Christian & Jewish Studies in Baltimore

**3:45-4:30 P.M. – DISCUSSION**

**4:30 P.M. – CONFERENCE ENDS**

## SPEAKER ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

### **“The Shifting Dynamic of the Jewish-Christian Encounter from the Middle Ages to the Present”**

Dr. David Berger, Dean and Ruth and I. Lewis Gordon Professor of Jewish History  
at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies of Yeshiva University

The Jewish-Christian debate in medieval times was marked by both stability and change. On the one hand, the Scriptural component of the discussion centered on a group of core proof texts that remained largely the same, though even here we find new approaches arising from time to time. On the other hand, arguments based on unaided reason become more sophisticated; Christian use of the Talmud introduces new opportunities and new dangers, and expanded Jewish use of the New Testament provides room for creative approaches to the figure of Jesus as well as new arguments for the abiding validity of Judaism. This debate is hardly confined to abstract intellectual discourse. It both reflects and influences mutual perceptions and behaviors ranging from the growing intolerance toward Jews to Jewish assessments of Christianity as “foreign worship” or a civilized expression of monotheism.

Deep transformations mark the modern age. In the nineteenth century, Christians and Jews debate an issue that was entirely peripheral in the Middle Ages and now moves to center stage: the ethical standing of the respective faiths. And in a post-Holocaust age, genuine rapprochement brings its own set of tensions focusing on challenges both old and new: the limits of dialogue, the abiding validity of the covenant with the Jews, the propriety of Christian missionizing, the Church and the Holocaust, the relationship between religion and the political sphere, and the moral, national, and religious standing of the State of Israel.

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David Berger is Ruth and I. Lewis Gordon Professor of Jewish History and Dean at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Yeshiva University. For many years he was Broeklundian Professor of History at Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He was also co-chair of the Academic Advisory Committee of the National Foundation for Jewish Culture and has served as a member of the Academic Committee of the Rothschild Foundation Europe and of the Executive Committee of the American Academy for Jewish Research, where he is a Fellow. He serves on the Council of the World Union of Jewish Studies and the editorial board of *Tradition*. From 1998 to 2000, he was President of the Association for Jewish Studies.

He is the author of *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages*, which was awarded the John Nicholas Brown Prize by the Medieval Academy of America, and co-author of *Judaism's Encounter with Other Cultures: Rejection or Integration?*, a finalist for the Jewish Book Award in Jewish Thought. His book, *The Rebbe, the Messiah, and the Scandal of Orthodox Indifference*, which has also been published in an updated Hebrew version translated by the author (“*Ha-Rebbe Melekh ha-Mashiach, Sha’aruriyyat ha-Adishut, ve-ha-Iyyum al Emunat Yisrael*”), received the 2003-2004 Samuel Belkin Literary Award. He has written numerous articles on medieval Jewish history, Jewish-Christian relations, antisemitism, contemporary Judaism, and the intellectual history of the Jews. The articles on Jewish-Christian relations have now been collected in *Persecution, Polemic and Dialogue: Essays in Jewish-Christian Relations* and those on intellectual history in *Cultures in Collision and Conversation: Essays in the Intellectual History of the Jews*. He has been a Fellow of the Annenberg Research Institute, a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Jerusalem, and a Visiting Professor at Yale University and Harvard University.

## **“The Medieval Jewish Critique of Christianity: In Search of a New Narrative”**

Dr. Daniel J. Lasker, Norbert Blechner Professor of Jewish Values at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and the 2010-2011 Corcoran Visiting Chair at the Boston College Center for Christian-Jewish Learning

The old narrative of the Jewish critique of Christianity was simple: Jews criticized Christianity as a reaction to the Christian mission to the Jews; if Christians had not attempted to convince Jews to convert to Christianity, there would have been no reason for Jews to say anything negative about the majority religion. Judaism is a religion of tolerance, at least towards members of other religions, and, therefore, it was not a Jewish concern how Gentiles worshipped. But as medieval Christians tried more and more to convince Jews to convert, Jewish thinkers answered this challenge by developing arguments to be used against Christian doctrines.

In light of recent research, this narrative, as comfortable as it might be to Jews, is no longer tenable. Jews criticized Christianity even in the absence of a Christian missionary threat, such as in Muslim countries. Furthermore, not all Christian anti-Jewish polemic should be understood as part of a conversionary campaign. Thus, there is a need for a new narrative to explain the proliferation of Jewish critiques of Christianity. This talk will discuss the various considerations at play in the search for that new narrative.

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Daniel J. Lasker is the Norbert Blechner Professor of Jewish Values in the Goldstein-Goren Department of Jewish Thought at Israel's Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, in Beer Sheva. His areas of interest are medieval Jewish philosophy (including the thought of Rabbi Judah Halevi, Maimonides, and Rabbi Hasdai Crescas), the Jewish-Christian debate, Karaism, and selected issues in Jewish theology and law. Prof. Lasker has authored five books and over 175 other publications.

In the 2010-2011 academic year, Prof. Lasker is the Corcoran Visiting Chair in Christian-Jewish Relations at Boston College. In addition, he has also taught at Yale, Princeton, Ohio State, and Yeshiva Universities; University of Toronto, University of Texas, University of Washington; Queens and Kirkland Colleges, and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

## **“Disputatio: Ambiguous Motivations and Unintended Consequences of a Long-lived Genre”**

Dr. Robin Vose, Associate Professor of Medieval History at St. Thomas University

From ancient to modern times, Jews and Christians alike have understood the rhetorical effectiveness of using polemical attacks on theological “others” in order to convey religious messages to members of their own communities. In medieval times, such attacks occasionally took the form of staged two-way disputations in which Jewish spokesmen were pitted against Christian preachers with a more or less clear understanding that the performance could have but one outcome: a public claim of victory for the side whose representative was backed up by force of arms. After the removal of Jewish communities from most of western Europe, such live debates could no longer be formally staged, yet for centuries Christian sermonists continued to vehemently condemn imagined “Jewish” interlocutors as if this were not the case. The polemical genre thus continued long after it had ceased to have even the potential of directly impacting those it identified as the “enemy,” perhaps confirming that edification of believers was rather the intention all along.

Yet while actual engagement with religious opponents may not have been the polemicists’ main intention, their efforts did not go unnoticed by the other side. Christians anxiously sought access to the latest in Rabbinic discourse as well as to *Hebraica veritas* and Talmudic wisdom, just as Jewish scholars took pains to examine and rebut their opposite numbers’ messianic and supercessionist exegetical arguments in a wide variety of internally-circulated writings. Such unintended theological exchanges—dialogues of a sort—resonated long after the flames of medieval pogroms and inquisitorial autos-de-fe had been extinguished, and to some extent their echoes remain with us today. While clearly marred by negativity of tone and often lamentable political consequences, they also represent a historical legacy of serious interfaith engagement which should not be ignored amid general shifts toward “toleration”.

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Robin Vose studied History and Middle East Studies at McGill, Haifa and the University of Toronto before completing an interdisciplinary PhD at the University of Notre Dame’s Medieval Institute in 2004. He is currently associate professor of History at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick (Canada) where he lectures on medieval and early modern history with a focus on Christian, Jewish and Muslim populations of the Iberian peninsula. His first book, *Dominicans, Muslims and Jews in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Cambridge 2009) is a study of interfaith relations in the western Mediterranean during the first century of the Dominican Order’s proselytizing and inquisitorial activity. He is currently working on a large-scale survey and analysis of source materials for the study of inquisition history worldwide, while continuing to nurture an interest in the impact of Christian mendicant activity along the Spanish Mediterranean frontier and related regions. A side project involves analysis of crusade, jihad and other forms of religious conflict in modern film; due to the perversities of Canadian media funding rules, he even managed to serve as historical consultant and talking-head for a recent Discovery Channel special on Mongol warfare.

## **“Beyond the Written Word: Visual, Spoken, and Enacted Polemic between Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe”**

Dr. Alexandra Cuffel, Independent Scholar

While explicitly polemical documents, whether cast in the form of a dialogue or debate between members of different religious communities or embedded in hagiographical, poetic, or historical texts, are extremely important for understanding of theological differences between and attitudes toward other religions, they are far from the only, or even, the most important form of polemic in the Middle Ages. In this paper I will explore non-written forms of polemic between medieval Jews and Christians, focusing primarily on Western Europe in the twelfth – thirteenth centuries. Specifically, I will examine the audiences and functions of church sculpture, both external and internal, manuscript illumination, acts of scorn on the part of Christians and Jews for one another’s holy spaces or objects, forms of public punishment, renaming objects, places, or people holy to the religious other to demonstrate their lack of worth, songs, sermons, and oral tales. I argue that these forms of polemic served several potential purposes: as quotidian reminders that the religious claims of those outside the community were unworthy, even laughable; as outlets of scorn and anger for the religious other when such emotions could not be expressed in more direct ways due to danger of reprisal or church sanction; as (quasi-) public reminders of each community’s sacred story and the other’s immorality; and finally, in the case of punishment, as public of humiliation in the face of the Christian majority’s power. All worked in various ways to maintain community boundaries and reminders of difference in the face of regular social, economic, and even religious interactions between Jews and Christians. Because many of these forms of polemic were frequently repeated or seen and required little to no learning or active effort to grasp, they, much more than the written polemical disputations, reflected and had the potential to shape the interactions and religious attitudes between medieval Jews and Christians at multiple levels of society, from the illiterate to very specific, educated audiences, such as the Christian clergy who used the choirs and choirstalls decorated with sculpture with anti-Jewish symbolism.

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Alexandra Cuffel received her Ph.D. in medieval history from New York University in 2002. She is the author of *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* published by University of Notre Dame Press, along with various articles on medieval Jewish, Christian, and Muslim relations. She is currently working on a second monograph, *Shared Saints and Festivals among Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Medieval Mediterranean*, for which she received an ACLS grant and a Women’s Studies in Religion Fellowship at Harvard Divinity School, and next year she will be on fellowship at Ruhr University, in Bochum Germany, starting a collaborative book with Adam Knobler of The College of New Jersey on Jewish, Christian, and Muslim imaginings of the ten lost tribes of Israel in the medieval and early modern periods. Alexandra Cuffel is an independent scholar.



## **“Dietary Laws, Physiology, and Illicit Sexuality in Medieval Religious Polemics”**

Dr. Irven Resnick, Chair of Excellence in Judaic Studies  
at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

In the religious debate between Jews and Christians, the biblical dietary laws come to illustrate important assumptions concerning the “other.” Early medieval Christians asserted that Christians were not bound by the dietary laws and tended to explicate them allegorically or figuratively. Although the biblical dietary laws prohibit many foods to Jews, as pork became a more important part of the medieval diet, the prohibition against swine’s flesh became central to the debate. Christians will assert not only that the consumption of pork proclaims a correct messianic theology, but also that the Lord, like a good physician, ordained a special diet for the Jews because they—and not Christians—have a corrupt bodily nature that is subject to deleterious influences from pork that incline Jews to gluttony and wantonness. Therefore, when a Jew converted to Christianity, the consumption of pork became a sign of his transfer from one religious community to another, as well as a sign of a physical, intellectual, and moral transformation.

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Irven Resnick has a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia and holds the Chair of Excellence in Judaic Studies. He has been with the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga since 1990. He has been a Corresponding Fellow at the Ingeborg Rennert Center for Jerusalem Studies at Bar-Ilan University (Israel) since 1996, and a Senior Associate at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies (England) since 2003. In 2006 he was elected a faculty associate at Oxford University's Oriental Institute. For fall semester 2006, he was a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at Queen Mary, University of London. In 2003, 2006, and 2010, Professor Resnick directed a five-week NEH summer institute for college and university faculty, "Representations of the 'Other': Jews in Medieval Christendom"; in summer 2008 he co-directed the NEH summer institute for college and university faculty, “Holy Land and Holy City in classical Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.” His recent publications include *Albert the Great's On the Causes of the Properties of the Elements (Liber de causis proprietatum elementorum)* (2010), *Albert the Great's Questions Concerning Aristotle's "On Animals"* (2008), and *Petrus Alfonsi's Dialogue Against the Jews* (2006).

**“Polemical Remnants, Irenic Ambivalence and Internal Politics:  
Catholic-Jewish Relations in 2011”**

Dr. Mary C. Boys, Skinner and McAlpin Professor of Practical Theology  
at Union Theological Seminary

Although anti-Jewish polemics have not disappeared in the Catholic Church, at the official level an “irenic ambivalence” is more characteristic. Vatican II announced a church open to dialogue with the religious other, and *Nostra Aetate* is still frequently cited. Nevertheless, subsequent documents and decisions reveal considerable caution, even wariness, lest something be learned through the process of dialogue that might challenge long-established teaching. Scholarship that undergirds replacing the “teaching of contempt” with a teaching of respect is not always viewed favorably within the hierarchy of the church because it necessarily involves critical examination of Catholic teaching and behavior.

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Mary C. Boys has been the Skinner and McAlpin Professor of Practical Theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City since July 1994. Prior to that appointment she taught for many years at Boston College. Among her books is *Has God only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding*. She is a member of the Sisters of the Holy Names.

## “Covenantal Possibilities in the Post-Polemical Era”

Dr. Eugene Korn, American Director of the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation in Israel

Christian theology has always laid claim to the biblical covenant between God with the Jewish people. Judaism has always rejected this claim. With many Christian theologians now rejecting hard supersessionism and accepting the continuing role of the Jewish people in God's covenant, can Jewish theology see a role for Christians in the biblical covenant, and if so, how?

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Eugene Korn is a scholar and teacher in the fields of Jewish ethics and law, theology and Jewish-Christian relations. His specific interests are the interface between Jewish law and ethics, covenantal theology and Jewish-gentile relations. He earned a doctorate in moral philosophy from Columbia University and was ordained by the Israeli Rabbinate.

Dr. Korn is currently the American Director of The Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation in Israel, where he co-directs the Center's Institute for Theological Inquiry with Robert Jenson, and is the editor of the online journal, *Meorot—A Forum for Modern Orthodox Discourse* (formerly *The Edah Journal*). He also teaches Medieval Jewish Thought for Boston Hebrew College's *Me'ah* program and is a Senior Research Fellow at Beit Morasha of Jerusalem in its Institute for Religion and Society. He has taught at Columbia and Yeshiva Universities, and was previously the Executive Director of the Center for Christian Jewish Understanding at Sacred Heart University, Director of Interfaith Affairs at the Anti-Defamation League and Director of Leadership Education at the Shalom Hartman Institute of Jerusalem.

Dr. Korn is doing research for a book on the significance of *Tzelem Elokim* (Image of God) in Jewish tradition. He is editor of *Covenant and Hope: Jewish and Christian Reflections* to be published by Eerdmans Press in 2011 and *Jewish Theology and World Religions*, to be published in 2012 by Littman Library of Jewish Civilization. He has recently written a chapter on American Jewish interfaith relations for *The Future of Judaism in America*, which is part of Columbia University's series on religion in America. He authored a popular book, *The Jewish Connection to the Land of Israel—A Brief Introduction for Christians*, published by Jewish Lights, and has co-edited two books, *End of Exile* by James Parkes and *Two Faiths, One Covenant?* (Rowman and Littlefield), and authored a monograph, *Land and Covenant: The Religious Significance of the State of Israel*. Dr. Korn has published numerous scholarly essays on Jewish ethics and law, Jewish-Christian relations, Jewish attitudes toward non-Jewish cultures, Israel and religious tradition, pluralism, religious extremism and Jewish values, and business ethics. He also writes book reviews on theological works and op-ed essays that have appeared in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Jerusalem Post*, *America Magazine*, *Religion News Service*, *National Catholic Reporter*, *the Bergen Record*, *The (NY) Jewish Week*, *The Forward*, *The New Jersey Jewish News*, and *The Bergen Jewish Standard*.

**“Land, Sovereignty, and Jewish Identity:  
The Patristic Legacy and Contemporary Christian Polemics”**

Rev. Dr. Christopher M. Leighton, Executive Director, and Dr. Adam Gregerman,  
Jewish Scholar, Institute for Christian & Jewish Studies in Baltimore

The Church Fathers offered polemical interpretations of the destruction of the Second Temple that have endured for centuries. The status of the Jews as disenfranchised wanderers and exiles provided empirical evidence to support Christian supersessionism. With the re-emergence of a sovereign Jewish state in 1948, Christians have had to re-examine fundamental theological assumptions about Judaism and the Jewish people. We will consider whether this ancient Christian polemic continues to find expression today. In particular, we will focus on selected critiques from across the religious spectrum and assess their compatibility with broader changes in Christians' views of Jews in the post-Shoah period. We will study the continuing challenges that Christians face when they respond to and critique Jewish political sovereignty after centuries of viewing Jews in largely symbolical terms. It is essential to examine the polemical contexts (e.g. Christians criticizing Christians; Christians criticizing Jews; Jews criticizing Christians) and potentially multiple audiences. This is especially urgent in cases of overlapping inner-Christian and Jewish-Christian disputes.

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Christopher M. Leighton is an ordained Presbyterian minister who has served as the Executive Director of the Institute for Christian & Jewish Studies in Baltimore, Maryland since its inception in 1987. Dr. Leighton is a graduate of the Princeton Theological Seminary and Columbia University, where he did his doctorate in Philosophy and Education. He has studied at the Baltimore Hebrew University, the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, and Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. In addition to his work at the ICJS, he has been an Adjunct Professor at the Johns Hopkins University and the Ecumenical Institute of Theology at St. Mary's Seminary and University. He has edited numerous books including *Talking About Genesis* and *Irreconcilable Differences* and contributed articles and book chapters on diverse topics in Jewish-Christian relations.

Adam Gregerman is Jewish Scholar at the Institute for Christian & Jewish Studies. He has a Ph.D. in Religion from Columbia University. He focuses on the complex relationship between Jews and Christians from antiquity through the present. His articles have appeared in journals such as *Interpretation*, *Cross Currents*, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, and *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* and in various edited books on Jewish and Christian polemics, mission and conversion, rabbinic theology, and Christian attitudes toward Israel. He is also an Affiliated Faculty Member of the Theology Department at Loyola University Maryland and Adjunct Professor at the Ecumenical Institute of Theology at St. Mary's Seminary and University. He is book review editor for Boston College's journal *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*.



The Center for Christian-Jewish Learning is devoted to the multifaceted development and implementation of new relationships between Christians and Jews that are based not merely on toleration but on full respect and mutual enrichment. This defining purpose flows from the Mission of Boston College and responds to the vision expressed in Roman Catholic documents ever since the Second Vatican Council.

The building of new, positive relationships between Jews and Christians requires sustained collaborative academic research. Therefore, under the Center's auspices scholars and thinkers representing diverse Jewish and Christian perspectives engage in intense and ongoing study of all aspects of our related yet distinct traditions of faith and culture.

Educationally, we are committed to the goal that "Jews and Judaism should not occupy an occasional and marginal place in [Christian religious education]: their presence there is essential and should be organically integrated" (*Notes*, 2). We are convinced that Jews and Christians enrich and deepen their respective identities by joint educational endeavors. The Center is thus dedicated to conducting educational research and to offering programs, both in the university and the wider community, in which Christians and Jews explore their traditions together.

In short, the Center applies the scholarly resources of a Catholic university to the task of encouraging mutual knowledge between Christians and Jews at every level (*Notes*, 27).

[*Notes* = Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Teaching in the Roman Catholic Church* (1985).]

### **CONTACT THE CENTER**

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