



Nostra Aetate Today

Reflections 40 Years after Its Call
for a New Era of Interreligious Relationships
Pontifical Gregorian University, September 25–28, 2005

Abstracts

(Concurrent Sessions and Pre-Conference Sessions)

Ghulam-Haider AASI

Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the USA Since *Nostra Aetate*: A Muslim Perspective

“The Presentation starts with reflections on the Presenter’s own personal journey and experience of Christian-Muslim dialogue in the USA for the last thirty years. Taking the first course on inter-religious dialogue as a graduate student in the Fall of 1974, the presenter has been engaged in inter-religious dialogue in general and in particular in various capacities as a student, community member, institutional representative, as well as a faculty member teaching courses on Christian-Muslim Relations both as the undergraduate and graduate levels at various universities and seminaries. Describing the Muslims of the USA as diverse groups, without going into their history of origins and arrivals, the presentation analyzes their attitudes and approaches towards Christian-Muslim dialogue and relations. The presentation concludes with highlighting the challenges and opportunities that face the Muslims of the USA in particular after the 9/11 tragedy and its aftermath. Certainly some small steps have been taken to forming trusting friendships and mutual understandings by some Muslim organizations, yet these are still very vulnerable to the strains of general socio-political environments at the time.”

Salah ABOU-JAOUDE

Rethinking Dialogue in the University Context

Dialogue, in its different forms (whether it is the Islamic-Christian dialogue, or the national dialogue or the dialogue of cultures) takes, nowadays, an exceptional importance, in its local, regional, and world-wide context:

1. On a university scale, dialogue is mainly represented by sensitizing students to its significance in its various aspects with regard to their future and the future of their country and the region. This consciousness-raising campaign means clearly to encourage students of all disciplines to choose the studies and the activities that could help them, so that they could:
 - i- better understand the question (on local, regional, and international levels);
 - ii- integrate the principles of dialogue in their life, that is, learn how to make room in their heart for the other by accepting his way of living, thinking, and his political options;
 - iii- recognize religious and cultural pluralism values.
2. It is, first, formal, in a way that it looks only to locate stereotypes, prejudice and discriminations without taking any action. It is, then, limited, because it affects only the few persons directly committed to a psychological task which is rather difficult. It is, finally,

simplistic, because it risks favoring a world vision of confessional and/or cultural colors, as constituted locally or abroad.

3. We should, therefore, go far ahead. The present dialogue, as understood and lived, looks more like a dead letter than dynamism, more like confrontation than a common search for truth and the common good. It must deepen the inspiration, the vision and the “the spirit” which created it during and after Vatican Council II. New ways of dialogue should be found starting with renewing the meaning of life itself, by taking better consideration of religion which creates that meaning for the believers of different traditions, and by learning how to mediate and act in society in order to help diversity, cultural and religious pluralism build the common good.

Isham Pawan **AHMAD**

Two Medieval Attempts at Reconciling Faith to Reason by Al-Farabi and Aquinas on Natural Law

The questions “what is revelation?”, what does revelation tell us and what its implications on man? are important questions for which we are still seeking answers even today. Does revelation gives us knowledge that cannot obtain by ourselves but once we hear it we can understand why it is true because there is some reasoning behind it? Or, does revelation gives us knowledge that we cannot understand? But must accept base on blind faith as true? Does revelation gives us knowledge that is true because God whatever God says becomes the truth?

The answers to these questions would ultimately shape our *Weltanschauung*.

For the Muslim philosophers, its major proponent, al-Farabi, sees revelation as the ultimate culmination of the highest intellectual truths transformed and put into a symbolic language with power to motivate man to right action. Revelation is capable to be understood by all and more importantly to drive and commit them to action. Thus, revelation is an extension of reason, an expression of reason.

Aquinas adds a Christian dimension to this debate on the relationship of revelation to reason through his arguments for natural law. Alasdair MacIntyre argues convincingly that the West today has lost whatever common ethical grammar it once possessed. The need to investigate the relationship of revelation and reason and from this its implications on natural law and the future of the development of ethics has now an added dimension and importance.

Scott C. **ALEXANDER** (Presiding)

Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the U.S. Since *Nostra Aetate*: Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim Perspectives

This panel will explore different perspectives (one Sunni Muslim, one Catholic, and one Protestant) on the history of Christian-Muslim relations in the U.S. since the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* in 1965. Among issues to be explored and critically analyzed will be: the relationship between the genesis of a North American academic discourse on world religions and a discourse on theologies of religious pluralism and interreligious dialogue; the role of Christian and Muslim institutions and organizations in facilitating dialogue; the impact of interreligious dialogue on theologies of mission and *da`wa*; the impact of Christian-Muslim dialogue on the broader U.S. American society; and the state of Christian-Muslim dialogue of action and its peace-building potential.

Scott C. **ALEXANDER**

On Becoming a Converted Outsider

This paper will investigate, through the lens of the category of “converted outsider,” the role of the religious “other” in shaping one’s own religious identity. The questions to be explored in this paper include: What does it mean to talk about ‘conversion of the heart’ and ‘transformation of the self’ in the process of interreligious dialogue? To what degree does a *kenotic* spirituality (see Arinze, “Letter to Presidents of Bishops Conferences on the Spirituality of Dialogue,” 1999) represent the special charism of the Christian in dialogue? To what extent can such a spirituality, as well as such a conversion of heart and transformation of self lead to a compromising of the integrity of one’s own faith or to an enrichment and deepening of it?

Stefano ALLIEVI

The Impact of Religious Pluralism on European Societies

Pluralism, or rather pluralization, is a determining concept in defining the new Europe being built: on the social, cultural and religious level plurality is no longer pathology, but physiology. The increased level of religious pluralization is one of the most visible and debated aspects of this process of pluralization. Its implications touches different aspects of social life, included some political hot issues. I will analyze some crucial changes in the European cultural and religious landscape, that are producing what might be considered a standard situation of pluralism, in which play an important role both internal changes and transnational processes such as immigration. These facts cannot be considered merely quantitative changes, but produces an important qualitative change in and of societies.

Among other things, even the very idea of Nation-State that we have inherited seems no longer either explicative or representative, and perhaps not even descriptive of the social and institutional landscape of the various European countries.

In this framework a kaleidoscope of cultures is taking shape, whose pieces (identities and cultural communities) are in continual movement and transformation, and of which European Islam is an important element, from both the numerical and symbolic point of view. This is however a presence with peculiar characteristics in respect to the Islam of the countries of origin: with “Meccan” rather than “Medinese” characteristics, in which being a minority becomes a constitutive and transformational element. In this situation of ever greater pluralization and hence of inevitable confrontation, reactive identities and conflicts are developing, and play—in this phase—a determining role in the designing of the map of European Islam, but also of Europe itself.

Syafa'atun ALMIRZANAH

When Spiritual Masters Meet: Meister Eckhart, Ibn 'Arabi, and a Matrix for Christian-Muslim Dialogue

This research paper is a study of the role mystical discourse and experience can play in Christian-Muslim dialogue as a subset of interreligious dialogue in general. It will concentrate on the possibility of understanding, sympathizing with, or even “sharing” the spiritual experience of others. The motivating premise of the research is twofold. First, because so much of Christian-Muslim dialogue gets “stuck” on irreconcilable theological propositions, a new matrix for the dialogue is necessary—ideally one that focuses on ways of looking at the cosmos that are rooted in spiritual experience. Second, if practiced with intelligence, sincerity, and care, dialogue and encounter with people of other faiths can significantly enrich the identity of the religious individual as he or she articulates, in a pluralist context, just what it means to a Muslim, a Christian or the adherent of any other religious tradition.

The methodology of the research is an under-explored mode of comparative mysticism which brings into contextualized conversation with each other the thought and related experiences of Meister Eckhart and Muhyi al-Din Ibn 'Arabi. The aim of this methodology is not to reduce or ignore important differences between the two mystics, but rather to identify the ways in which the teachings of each speak to the content, context, and experience of the other. Through such an examination, the ultimate aim of the project is to help identify a new matrix for Christian-Muslim dialogue which will use the connection between mystical discourse and spiritual experience as a new basis for Muslim-Christian understanding.

Jean-Marc AVELINE et Rachid BENZINE

La fécondité de la pensée herméneutique pour le dialogue interreligieux

Mahmut AYDIN

Catholic Church Dialogue activities from a Muslim Perspective

Emilio BACCARINI

Il SIDIC e il dialogo ebraico-cristiano dopo la Nostra Aetate

Per un intervento di questo tipo ci si può richiamare a una sorta di periodizzazione: gli inizi del SIDIC fino agli 'Orientamenti' del 1974; l'impegno del SIDIC nella diffusione e applicazione della Nostra Aetate e degli Orientamenti fino alle 'Note' del 1985 e alla dichiarazione del 1998.

Naturalmente questo lavoro si può fare attraverso l'analisi di quanto ha realmente prodotto il SIDIC con la rivista e con gli incontri di dialogo. Il SIDIC come frutto e come operatore del dialogo ebraico-cristiano.

Judith **BANKI**

NOSTRA AETATE, Chapter IV: The Struggle Within the Church;
the Struggle Within the Jewish Community

Although eventually adopted by an overwhelming majority on the concluding day of the Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate's* fate during the course of the Council was a "cliffhanger." This seemingly straightforward initiative asserting a spiritual bond between the Church and the Jewish people and repudiating a longstanding tradition of hostility toward Jews and Judaism encountered intense opposition -- some of it truly subversive -- on both theological and political grounds.

The struggle polarized elements within the Church. It also polarized the Jewish community. Disagreements about **whether** and **how** to approach the Church, and **who** could represent the Jews revealed deep fissures along religious and organizational lines.

This paper will review the struggle over *Nostra Aetate*, both within the Council and within the Jewish community, particularly around issues of policy and substance. It will conclude with a brief evaluation of the impact on Jewish-Catholic relations.

Elena Lea **BARTOLINI**

Universalismo ebraico-cristiano e prospettive di dialogo a partire da Gerusalemme

Nell'orizzonte del rapporto fra i discendenti di Abramo e le Nazioni che, secondo la tradizione rabbinica, prevede l'accoglienza della rivelazione sinaitica (*Torah*) in prospettiva "duale" (ebraismo e noachismo), è possibile cogliere significative opportunità di dialogo e di impegno comune fra ebrei e cristiani chiamati a testimoniare la salvezza del Dio dell'Alleanza secondo i diversi doni ricevuti: "un'elezione mai revocata" e "l'innesto sull'olivo buono" (Rm 9-11). È in tale prospettiva che la Chiesa giudaico-cristiana delle origini, durante il Concilio di Gerusalemme, ha deciso di fare propria la proposta di Giacomo (At 15,1ss.), ed è anche secondo questa dinamica che può essere interpretata la "dualità" insita nel nome ebraico della Città Santa: *Jerushalajim*, dalla quale, secondo la profezia di Isaia, dovranno "uscire" la *Torah* e la "Parola del Signore" per tutti i popoli (Is 2,3).

Si tratta di riscoprire una prospettiva universale che, attraverso momenti ed eventi particolari, si apre al dialogo rispettando la diversità, attuando quell'orizzonte di "benedizione" per "ogni famiglia della terra" (Gen 12,1-3) nel segno di un rapporto che non "assimila" a sé ma accoglie il dono dell'altro, nel comune impegno affinché si compia la salvezza nel "mondo di Dio".

Rachid **BENZINE** See Jean-Marc **AVELINE**

La fécondité de la pensée herméneutique pour le dialogue interreligieux

Petros **BERGA**

The Role of the 'Other' in the Formation of Christian Identity

The deeply spiritual Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, provides a potential basis for a sound theology of Dialogue. Inspired by the novels of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, he wrestled with the problem of the other self. Guided by meditations on the nature of self and the centrality of language within social life, he believed that we require a dialogical interaction with others before we can develop a coherent image of self and become morally and aesthetically productive. Bakhtin celebrated diversity, tracing how it could be sustained in the utterances and cultural practices of everyday life. He challenged oppressive systems opening a window onto an intersubjective world of co-being. The interreligious dimension of Bakhtin's thought can be clearly demonstrated in the context of Ethiopian Christian -- Islamic relations. The experience of Ethiopia first country where Islam and Christianity interacted vividly shows how local communal identities were formed by the encounter with the religious 'Other'.

Alan L. **BERGER**

Vatican II, The Passion of Christ, and the Future of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue

Catholic-Jewish dialogue has been both empowered and imperiled by two major events of the past fifty years. The Second Vatican Council convened by Pope John XXIII and the controversial Mel Gibson film are each concerned with anti-Semitic stereotype, particularly the ancient and erroneous myth of deicide. Vatican II sought to eliminate the deicide canard. Gibson's film places it at the center of Jesus' passion.

Sixty years after the 'Shoah,' the revival of what Jules Isaac termed the Teaching of Contempt casts doubt on the future of Catholic-Jewish dialogue. Is the dialogue headed for a 'back to the future outcome? Or will the interfaith bridges built over the past half century be sufficient to withstand this recent historical, psychological, and theological assault?

Pierre-Francois **DE BETHUNE** (PRESIDING)

The East-West Spiritual Exchanges and the Emergence of the Dialogue of Spiritual Experience

It is an account of 25 years of exchange of monks, Christians and Buddhists who share for some time the monastic life of the other tradition, in Japan or in Europe.

John **BORELLI** (Presiding)

Constitutionally Sanctioned Religious Pluralism and Contemporary Issues for Catholics in the United States

The U.S. Constitution guarantees that there shall be no favoritism towards any particular church or religious group and free exercise of religious liberty. While the intention was to keep peace among Protestant communities at the founding of the republic, Catholics, like other religious groups, increasing in political influence in subsequent decades, have thrived and even contributed to this environment. Guaranteed religious pluralism forces religious groups to address the condition of equality before the law, to decide how to influence and even change legislated and enacted public policy, and to develop religiously principled positions on the common good. This has not been an easy road for Catholics as the recent 2004 USA Presidential Election reminded us. The reality of religious pluralism, the role of conscience and political compromise are key points in current debates on how to live in sanctioned religiously plural society.

John **BORELLI**

Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the United States since *Nostra Aetate*: A Catholic Perspective

Before September 11, 2001, three on-going, regional dialogues between Catholics and Muslims in the USA were already meeting annually. These theological dialogues and their visible trust and friendship were only the recent evidence of long-term commitments of Christians and Muslims in the United States to cooperation and mutual understanding. National efforts began in earnest in the late 1970s under sponsorship of the National Council of Churches. Catholics participated in these as well as sought to support and to develop relations with Muslims in dioceses. Building upon these cumulative efforts, bishops funded a national interreligious office for ongoing contact with Muslim organizations in 1986. Catholics involved in interreligious relations eventually proposed, sponsored, and developed training institutes for diocesan staff and eventually for bishops on Islam and Catholic-Muslim relations. Drawing from the good will and support of relationships on diocesan levels and through academic institutions, the episcopal conference joined various national organizations in sponsorship of ongoing dialogues beginning in 1996. Theological dialogue is only in its initial stage, and Catholic universities are hiring Muslims and others with doctoral specialization in Islamic studies as well as developing programs of dialogue and study. The dialogue in the future can move creatively in any of several directions.

Mary C. **BOYS**

With Prudence and Charity, Humility and Generosity:
Interreligious Dialogue as Reception of Vatican II

The abundant literature on Vatican II provides considerable commentary on both the event of the council and its texts—though not a consensus on their interpretation. In my reading of *Nostra Aetate* (with emphasis on #4), the council's shortest yet ground-breaking declaration, I will draw upon Ormond Rush's cogent argument that the council should be interpreted through a threefold hermeneutic. The first movement inquires into the "world *behind* the text," that is, what the event of the council and its authors meant. The second interpretational move is analysis of the "world *of* the text," that is, what the texts themselves say, both within each document and in relationship to other conciliar documents. The third movement involves "the world *in front* of the text," that is, how the council and its texts have been received.

It is this third movement, the reception of the Council, that is the principal focus of my essay. I will argue that dialogue is crucial to the reception of Vatican II, not merely in official post-conciliar documents but particularly in the experience of many persons engaged in dialogue. Arising from this experience is a theology of dialogue that offers an important foundation for the education and formation of Catholics.

Gary M. **Bretton-Granatoor**

A Failure to Communicate: Our Different Hermeneutics
Lead to Confusion on Basic Tenets of Faith

Despite the past 40 years of increasingly positive relations between the Jewish community and Christendom, there is a fundamental obstacle that remains before a language of true dialogue can become manifest. This obstacle is caused by our differing hermeneutics, even when we parse our common texts. Words and concepts that seem so integral to our own identity as religious individuals carry entirely different meanings and narratives to our friends in the other religious community.

Perhaps, no word or concept is more basic to each of our religious communities' than COVENANT (*BRIT*), and yet, no one word creates more confusion when employed by the other side. This concept must serve as both starting-point, and exemplar, as we work through words and concepts that we share, and yet understand completely differently.

Alan **BRILL**

Covenant and Self-Understanding: Considering *Nostra Aetate*
from the Perspective of Jewish Theology

In my paper, I wish to place the traditional medieval and early modern attitudes of Judaism toward other religions in dialogue with *Nostra Aetate*. Whereas *Nostra Aetate* used the term Abrahamic faith and the organic metaphors of tree and branches, to express the relationship of Christianity to Judaism, I wish to explore the Jewish equivalents of the metaphors of the relationship. Traditional Jewish texts use the covenants of Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses to explore its relationship to Christianity. And they use a variety of metaphors besides the organic one. This paper will explore the strengths and weaknesses of these Jewish positions as counterparts to *Nostra Aetate* (and subsequent works such as Cardinal Ratzinger's *Many Religions, One Covenant*). This paper will serve as a means of starting a discussion on the topic of using Christianity as a source of Orthodox Jewish theology of other religions that moves beyond tolerance and towards using the other for self-understanding.

Maria **BRUTTI**

Attitudini dell'Ebraismo nei confronti del dialogo interreligioso:
il dibattito intorno alla linea di Soloveitchik

Nel 1964, quando ancora non era uscito il documento *Nostra Aetate*, un articolo del rabbino Soloveitchik, massimo rappresentante dell'Ebraismo ortodosso negli Stati Uniti e capo della scuola rabbinica della Yeshivà University, pose al mondo ebraico il problema del rapporto Ebraismo-Cristianesimo e, più in generale, del dialogo interreligioso. Da questo articolo è nato, in ambito ebraico, un dibattito tra diverse correnti di pensiero che, prendendo come riferimento la "linea" Soloveitchik, si è sviluppato fino ad oggi. La relazione si propone di ripercorrerne le linee principali, allo scopo sia di approfondire la conoscenza del

pensiero ebraico contemporaneo, sia di individuare cosa possa significare per l'ebreo di oggi il tema del confronto religioso.

Cipriano CARINI

Il Contributo Specifico Dei Monaci al Dialogo

Già prima del Concilio, monaci come il Padre Le Saux o Thomas Merton, avevano l'intuizione che i monaci, uomini di silenzio, potevano paradossalmente dare un contributo particolare al dialogo interreligioso. Nel 1978, alla domanda del Cardinale Pignedoli, Preside del Secretariato per i non cristiani, due commissioni furono create, in America e in Europa, per promuovere gli incontri tra monaci cristiani e altri, ma anche per suscitare una riflessione teologica su questo tipo di 'dialogo del esperienza religiosa'.

Proprio nella tradizione di ospitalità benedettina si sono realizzate incontri interreligiosi dentro i monasteri ove monaci di diverse tradizioni hanno vissuto insieme per un tempo. Si è potuto verificare così la profondità di un tale dialogo tra persone di preghiera. Ma ci sono ancora molti altri modi di incontro e di riflessione organizzati dalle commissioni DIM.

L'intervento farà apparire come la pratica del dialogo intermonastico ha reso possibili importanti sviluppi della teologia spirituale del dialogo.

Bruno Marie COLIN AND IONA MISQUITTA

Women's Contribution to the Monastic Dialogue

This is a witness of a woman and a nun involved in the monastic Interreligious dialogue. Dialogue for a monk or a nun is a "going out". In one way, the first step in this spiritual experience is often an encounter "at a distance" in which faith is questioned and experience influenced by faith. In another way, the partners who share spiritual exchange bear witness together, as Mary and Elizabeth. Do the partakers not have, innerly, a specific space of their own tradition where they may receive the other believers?

Spiritual dialogue is not closed. The daily life offers many opportunities to serve in the church, it opens to all the forms of dialogue. Today there is an urgency of "concord". Women have herein a special role to play because they have received what I would call a "grace of kenosis".

David L. COPPOLA

Program for Seminarians and Rabbinical Students

I would propose to present a paper on the structure and pedagogical processes of the 3-Day Institute for Seminarians and Rabbinical Students that has been sponsored by the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding for five years at Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut. The evaluations, reported learning outcomes, and continued meetings and interactions of the 140 past participants will be presented in the context of how "the other" has been instrumental in the religious formation and identity of the participants. Suggested best practices will be included for those interested in more modest programs, as well as the initial progress that has been made in dialogue and education in parishes, synagogues and universities by the participants of this group.

Philip A. CUNNINGHAM

A Covenantal Christology: Jesus Christ as Universal Savior in a Post-Nostra Aetate Church

Published on-line: <http://escholarship.bc.edu/scjr/vol1/iss1/6/>

One of the major theological questions confronting the post-Nostra Aetate Church is how to relate the Christian conviction in the universal saving significance of Jesus Christ with the affirmation of the permanence of Israel's covenanting with God. The meanings of covenant, salvation, and the Christ-event are all topics that must be considered. This paper will propose that covenant, understood in a theological and relational sense as human sharing in God's life, provides a useful Christological and soteriological perspective. Jesus, faithful son of Israel and Son of God, will be presented as covenantally unifying in himself the sharing-in-life between God and Israel and the essential relationality of God. The Triune God's covenanting with Israel and the Church will be seen as drawing humanity into an ever-deepening

relationship with God through the Logos and in the Spirit, with both Israel and the Church having distinct duties in this relational process before God and the world.

Manfred DESELAERS

Auschwitz and the Renewal of Christian-Jewish Relations

Following *Nostra Aetate* the renewal of Christian-Jewish relations went through various difficult stages. One of the painful maybe was the conflict about the Carmel Convict in Oswiecim near the Auschwitz Memorial. The conflict showed, how deep would are and how difficult it may be to understand one another.

In the result, there have been enormous efforts to find ways to renew dialogue and trust. From the perspective of the new Catholic Centre for Dialogue and Prayer in Oswiecim, I would try to describe: some of the most important difficulties, efforts of dialogue that helped find a way of understanding, renewed self-understanding of Christian/Catholic presence at the edge of Auschwitz including the Christian martyrs and the obligation of “teshuwa” in relation to the Jewish people, experiences at the Center of Dialogue and Prayer, and the perspectives for the future with a concentration on the last three points.

Maria A. DE GIORGI

Buddhist Jinen (Nature) and Christian Creation – Suggestions for a Deeper Dialogue between Japanese Buddhism and Christianity

Thinking back to the 40 years past since *Nostra Aetate* and to the development that the Theology of religions and Interreligious dialogue have achieved since, I try to read and interpret my own personal encounter with Japanese Buddhism in the light of the Conciliar Declaration. The approach of *Nostra Aetate* to the religions of the world is concrete and a posteriori. It builds on patient and loving mutual knowledge as a condition for a fruitful dialogue, but also for an honest theological appraisal of the particular religions. From this standpoint the paper dwells on the Buddhist notion of *jinen* (nature) and the Christian idea of creation considering the deep difference between these two religious views. The implications and challenges coming from these differences are not seen as mere obstacles to, but as further steps towards, that dialogue of salvation which the Church must enter into with all men and women (Cf. DA 20).

Amanullah DE SONDY

Philanthropy and Social Justice: A Thematic Approach for Interreligious Dialogue

This paper will explore the relationship and deep concern that faith communities, in particular the monotheistic faiths Islam and Christianity, have in seeking social justice philanthropy in mainstream societies. The three faiths have deep concern for charitable giving as this act has two merits. Firstly, as a means to promote, develop and alleviate suffering in mainstream society and secondly as a way of building a close spiritual relation to God. Charity for Muslims is a mandatory pillar of Islam. Charity for Christians is an attitude expected to develop towards God and neighbor. A new era in interreligious relations necessitates the value of what we do in common in addition to our common beliefs. Dialogue must be physically manifested through common actions bringing together unity amongst faiths on a common and important issue through diversity, as it is not enough to merely tolerate other faiths.

Donald J. DIETRICH

Nostra Aetate and the Contemporary Catholic Conversation on Human Rights

Roman Catholic social ethics has traditionally been grounded in moral objectivity, in common moral goods, and in progressive social reform. Increasingly, ethno-political conflict makes intercultural discourse about socio-political change both urgent and simultaneously problematic. The real dilemma of social ethics is whether as well as how it can extend the community’s sphere of solidarity to its historical victims. *Nostra Aetate* has provided the theological justification and the warrant for the search for a “common good” as the basis for universal rights.

My paper will briefly trace the Church’s path to Vatican II’s perspective on human dignity as well as on the impact of *Nostra Aetate* on the human rights’ conversation. After Vatican II, the Church found itself able to engage in conversations with other religious traditions in order to uncover the nuanced meanings of

human dignity in other cultures. Such dialogues have led increasingly to the attempts to delineate universal system of human rights. These dialogues have been focusing on how the particularist self-understandings of the religious communities of the world can be fused into a standard of universal human rights.

My paper will conclude that Catholic moral theology may be taking a risk by entering the world of marching soldiers, but that the risk is worthy of a Church that articulated that all persons have an intrinsic dignity because they are humans. *Nostra Aetate* has helped nurture this dialogue on human rights by committing the Church to look for God's revelation in all religious traditions.

Audrey DOETZEL

Branches of that Good Olive Tree: 21st Century Liturgical Challenges and Possibilities

Taking seriously *Nostra Aetate's* call to the Church to search into its *mystery* by *remembering the bond that spiritually ties* it to the Jewish 'other', Catholic post-Conciliar efforts almost immediately focused on Liturgy. While this attention was primarily on *the existing links between the Christian and the Jewish liturgy* (Guidelines, 1974) and on problematic areas such as the liturgies of Lent and Holy Week and the interpretation of biblical texts in preaching, the past four decades have seen few attempts to explore creative liturgical possibilities which would express aspects of this 'sibling' relationship in a more creative and positive manner.

This paper acknowledges that it is primarily through our liturgical experiences that our Christian identity is shaped, nurtured and affirmed with an innate capacity for inclusion of and reverence for the 'other', or with an innate propensity for exclusion and triumphalism. Following a brief overview of some of the church's creative responses at key historical moments, it proposes that the richness, depth and vitality of our corporate worship experience today—which actively interfaces with theology, catechesis, spirituality and ethics/morality—is in large part due to the church's ability to balance fidelity to tradition with responsible creativity.

Suggesting that the beginning of the 21st century is one of these key historical moments, the paper begins to explore new liturgical possibilities by focusing on: the significance of Jesus' incarnation within a specific people and culture; the understanding of prophets and prophecy; and lessons Christianity is learning from the *Shoah*. These explorations are done primarily in relation to the liturgical year itself and to the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany cycle.

David M. ELCOTT

Five Introspective Questions for 21st Century Jews

The Christianity that most Jews recognize does not reflect Vatican II. By the end of the historic Second Vatican Council, called by Pope John XXIII in 1962 and ending in 1965, the Roman Catholic Church had promulgated remarkable changes in its doctrine. Most significant for Jews, in *Nostra Aetate*, the Church definitively rejected contemporary Jewish culpability in the death of Jesus and called anti-Semitism a sin. Roman Catholics, therefore, do not see *Nostra Aetate* as a concession to Jews but rather understand it as a higher realization of Christian faith. Indeed, many Catholics today believe that Christians and Jews share a sacred covenant of God's love.

Many Jews, however, assume that the Christianity they know (the best example of which was *The Passion of the Christ*) reflects what Christians really believe. The Jewish community does not know about these fundamental transformations in Christianity. Very few Jews have read *Nostra Aetate*, nor do they understand the historical context in which it was decided. Fewer yet have ever read *Dabru Emet* or think about the theological or psychosocial implications for Jews of a relationship with the Church and its parishioners. Most Jews, including rabbis and community leaders, have been trained based on historical memory to look for signs of anti-Semitism in all their encounters with Catholics. In this way, many Jews have created a self-validating system in which, whatever their response, Christians are victimizers and Jews are victims.

There are at least five distinct challenges uniquely confronting Jews committed to interreligious dialogue that grow out of this condition, five questions that speak to our engagement with the world and, fundamentally, to our own faith. These are internal questions that ignore, for the purposes of this paper, the obvious critiques of those Catholics who choose to ignore *Nostra Aetate*. There is anti-Semitism in the world and Jews must remain vigilant to protect ourselves and our community. Yet Jewish theology and public voice must take into account the radical shifts in the Catholic Church if we are to engage as people of faith sharing a religious journey rather than as victims and victimizers. We need to ask ourselves five questions:

- Do we as a Jewish community relate to Catholic believers and their theology in other than political terms ?
- Can we, in light of our history, trust our Christian neighbors? What is the cost of not trusting?
- What unique voice do we as Jews have to contribute to the dialogue of faith taking place around the world?
- In light of our critiques of the Catholic Church, does Judaism nourish sacred narratives that could foster hatred or incite violence?
- Are we prepared to stand theologically together with people of good faith to fight against religious polarization and in support of religious pluralism?

Menachem **FISCH**

Beyond Dialogue: Method and Promise in Pluralistic Society

For abstract see Peter A. **PETTIT** below.

Paolo **GAMBERINI**

*Sincera cum observantia: The Christological Perspectives of
Interreligious Dialogue in the Declaration of *Nostra Aetate**

Published on-line: <http://escholarship.bc.edu/scjr/vol1/iss1/3/>

Attraverso l'enucleazione di tre momenti - metodologico, teoretico e pratico - il mio intervento vuole presentare una prospettiva cristologica per il dialogo inter-religioso. Ripercorrendo la dinamica degli Esercizi Spirituali di San Ignazio nel primo momento svilupperò il *praesupponendum* come capacità di ascoltare l'esperienza religiosa dell'altro; la *contemplatio ad amorem*, in quanto riconoscimento dell'azione dello Spirito, sapendo distinguere l'esperienza religiosa di Dio dalle sue formulazioni teoretiche e traduzioni

pratiche; il *magis*, l'ulteriorità di Dio come *Deus semper maior*.

Nel secondo momento identificherò questa differenza di Dio come relazionale, in quanto Dio *di Gesù Cristo*, mostrando così che l'umanità di Dio costituisce il luogo per un corretto dialogo inter-religioso.

Nel terzo momento articolerò l'alterità intrinseca di Dio (*trinità*) nel divenire altro da sé (*incarnazione*), mostrando come la prassi evangelica del credente che si fa tutto a tutti sopporta nel vissuto, piuttosto che nella teoria, la tensione escatologica tra *il già e il non-ancora* che caratterizza il dialogo tra le religioni.

Chester **GILLIS** (PRESIDING)

Soteriology since *Nostra Aetate*

Numerous approaches to soteriology have arisen since the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*. Doing Christian theology in a context and consciousness of other religions has influenced how theologians interpret or construct Soteriology. Some theologians have explored a pneumatological approach, claiming that the Spirit functions across religions. Others take a Christological approach. Still others take a theological approach that interprets salvation as coming from God without attending to Christological or pneumatological options. Some argue for a Soteriology that only recognizes the privilege of Christians for salvation. Others believe that people of other world faiths are also saved by the merits of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Some have argued that Christ is not necessary in the salvific process. These many approaches have given rise to considerable dialogue among theologians and between church officials and theologians. This paper identifies, chronicles, and assesses approaches to Soteriology since Vatican II.

Frederik **GLORIEUX**

Does Interreligious Dialogue Imply a Pluralistic Theology?

Putting John Hick in the Perspective of *Nostra Aetate*

Through its document *Nostra Aetate*, the Second Vatican Council encouraged Christians to engage in dialogue with other religious traditions and to foster positive relations with their respective followers. This

intention is also shared by the so-called pluralistic theologians who argue for the relative parity of both the different world religions and their respective founders.

In the first part of my paper, I will reflect on the relationship between *Nostra Aetate's* call for a fruitful dialogue between Christianity and the other religions, and the call to dialogue that is found in the work of one of the founding fathers of pluralistic theology, the English theologian and philosopher, John Hick.

In the second part, I will evaluate Hick's contribution in the light of one specific, but very central phrase of *Nostra Aetate*, namely "that the catholic church rejects nothing that is true and holy in other religions" (N.A., nr. 2).

The aim of this paper will be to suggest that Hick, in his concern to promote Interreligious dialogue, fails to do precisely this, i.e., to do justice to what is true and holy in the other religions.

Alexander GÖRLACH

The Interreligious Dialogue Between the Holy See and Muslim Institutions in Turkey, Egypt, and Iran

In the following of *Nostra Aetate* the Holy See established a Secretariat for the Non-Christians, later transformed in a higher ranking Pontifical Council. This institution is in constant contact with all religions in the world, it is based on the Councils doctrine seeing dialogue as a obligation given in the Gospel.

My point of examination is this dialogue in concrete; the dialogue between the Church of Rome and Muslim institutions in Turkey, Egypt and Iran. In Egypt, I studied with the personal support of S.E. Archbishop Fitzgerald at the oldest Muslim University, Al-Azhar. In Turkey I visited Ankara University and several institutions in Istanbul. In both countries I was introduced in the Nunciatures work, in Egypt I even stayed for a month in the Nunciature. While being in Egypt I made a trip to Israel in order to get to know how the diplomatic delegation of the Holy See in Jerusalem evaluates the situation of Christian in this region. My stay in Iran is ahead and scheduled for late July/early August this year. In a speech during the Conference on 40 years of *Nostra Aetate* I would like to speak on the structures in which dialogue is held, how the societies in Turkey, Egypt and Iran see this contact with Christianity, how the mentality towards other religions is in genera, and would the outcomes of the dialogue are.

Jonathan GORSKY

The Old People of God: Roman Catholic Perceptions of Judaism Since *Nostra Aetate*

The paper will critically examine perceptions of Judaism in Vatican documents from Vatican II onwards. It will look at questions of essentialism and ask to what extent it is possible to assess one faith from the theological standpoint of another. It will question the process of dialogue, enquiring as to whether perceptions change as a result of interaction or whether theological commitment means that this is not possible.

The main burden of the paper will address the notion of a people of God. It will offer a scriptural reassessments of the concept as it appears in Hebrew Scriptures, again challenging essentialist ideas in the light of developments and diversity in the primary source material.

Alon GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN

Towards a Jewish *Nostra Aetate*

The document *Nostra Aetate* provides an important example for other religious traditions regarding the type of theological work that needs to be done with regard to developing a theology of other religions. In fact, the Christian community, with Catholics taking an important lead in the process, is at the forefront of engagement in the theological reflection upon how other religious traditions should be regarded. The development of interfaith relations globally mandates other religions engage in similar internal processes of reflection. Such processes are not only an exercise in how to view the religious other, but ultimately function as a means of focusing their own self understanding and thus lead to fresh statements regarding the ultimate meaning and message of the religious tradition, engaged in such reflection.

This paper has two purposes. The first is to report on such a process of reflection, that has started within the Jewish theological community, organized by the Elijah Interfaith Institute, as part of its work of creating theological resources to support interfaith dialogue. Two conferences, in Scranton and in Jerusalem, have

brought together about 30 leading figures to discuss core issues in Judaism's attitude to world religions. A brief report on these conferences will be offered.

The bulk of the presentation will be devoted to spelling out what are the core issues and challenges that face the creation of Jewish Theology (ies) of world religions. Briefly, they can be summed up under the following four rubrics: The Challenge of Idolatry; Understanding Religious Truth; the Legitimacy of World Religions; The Threat to Identity.

Leonard J. GREENSPOON

Ancient Words for the Modern World

Recent decades have seen an unprecedented increase in the number and variety of Bible translations within the Roman Catholic and Jewish communities, among others. I propose to focus on successive editions of the New American Bible and the New Jerusalem Bible, on the one hand, and the JPS Tanach and ArtScroll Tanakh, on the other, to determine, describe, and evaluate the degree to which the enhanced status of interreligious dialogue as a result of *Nostra Aetate* has influenced these versions in terms of text and notes. I will suggest specific ways to formulate modern-language versions of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament so as to further their ecumenical use. At the same time, I will urge both translators and users of contemporary Bibles to be sensitive to distinctive features within different exegetical traditions. Wherever appropriate, I will refer to relevant Catholic documents, such as the 2001 PBC study, and to Jewish sources.

Hanspeter HEINZ with Michael SIGNER

Building for the Future: Jewish-Christian Dialogue in Cultural Context

A new era of Jewish-Christian relations began with the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* in 1965. For the first time in its history, the Catholic Church removed significant barriers to dialogue with the Jewish people and encouraged a deeper exploration of the relationship between the two communities. However, the authors of this paper propose that dialogue takes place between persons and not between religions. It is only in the human encounter with its difficulties of language, expression, gesture and narrative that dialogue may occur.

The years immediately after the Council were filled with enthusiasm in the United States. However, most of the Catholic world in Europe was either under Communist regimes or had suffered the horrors of the *Shoah*. From the perspective of Jews in America both Germany and Poland were hardly of immediate concern. Even in the 1970's the Jewish community in Germany did not express identification with Germany or German culture. Therefore, it was difficult to find partners for dialogue. Our papers will focus on the period since 1990 until the present and the development of educational seminars that bring together Jews and Christians from the United States of America, Germany (mostly Bavaria), and Poland.

The initial section of each paper will describe the unique problems of dialogue between Christians and Jews in their country. How do Jews and Christians come to know one another? What are the difficulties of building educational programs that focus only on one culture? What are the particular gifts that each country brings to the dialogue?

In the second part of each paper we will describe the educational model for our programs that have taken place at the Centre for Dialogue and Prayer near the Auschwitz Concentration Camp, in Krakow, and in Nuremberg, Germany. We have built upon the basic model developed by Fr. Manfred Deselaers at the Center for Dialogue and Prayer and elaborated upon it. In particular, we conclude our seminars with a strong emphasis on the study of two documents that we believe are foundational for the next decades of dialogue: *Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*, and *A Sacred Obligation*. These documents provide the rubrics for significant areas of future discussion between our communities.

Our papers will conclude with our individual observations on areas of success and those where the program needs to develop.

Hans Hermann **HENRIX**

The Reality of the Incarnation: Christology in the Context
of the Reception of the *Nostra Aetate*

Published on-line: <http://escholarship.bc.edu/scjr/vol1/iss1/4/>

In reflecting on the Christological statements in *Nostra Aetate*. Article 4, and on their implications, it has become clear to Christian theology that, together with the strongest link between Christians and Jews, the deepest difference in the two faiths has also become apparent: that the crucified and risen Jesus Christ is the Messiah and over and beyond that, the incarnate Son of God, is not only incomprehensible for Jews, but they also deny this. The Jewish objection has caused Christian theology to ask whether it is possible for it to say something positive as regards Jewish hope in the Messiah, a hope which says no to the Christians' faith in Christ. The Pontifical Biblical Commission picked up this question in a positive way in its text of the year 2001, *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*. And Jewish criticism of the Christian idea of incarnation, not least through its interjection concerning the *shittuf*, has brought a new awareness of the importance of a Chalcedonian hermeneutic for Christian-Jewish dialogue.

Elizabeth Boddens **HOSANG**

Establishing Boundaries: Christian-Jewish Relations in Fourth-Century Council Texts

Since the nineteen-sixties research on Christian-Jewish relations in the fourth century has mostly focussed on patristic texts. Thanks to Marcel Simon, the view previously stated by Harnack was redirected from the traditions 'supersessionist lachrymose theory' to a more vital Judaism, post-70. Historians such as Louis Feldman have gone even further and see an actively proselytizing Judaism as the cause for third and fourth century Christian concern, as voiced in the writings of, amongst others, John Chrysostom. On the other hand, authors such as Myriam Taylor have translated this concern by the church fathers into a theological discussion, directed towards a 'Judaism in the mind'. It may be that the truth lies somewhere in between.

Fourth century council texts provide additional information, referring to specific situations which must be avoided. Together with information gleaned from archaeology, the writings of the church fathers, and these council texts we may attempt reconstructing a more complete picture of the situation in the fourth century in both the eastern and western parts of the Mediterranean world.

Michael **IPGRAVE**

Nostra Aetate and Anglican Attitudes to Inter Faith Relations

This paper will reflect on the significance of *Nostra Aetate*, and of subsequent documents of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, for the development of a theology and praxis of inter faith relations in Anglican Christianity. It will pay special attention to the Church of England, and to contemporary developments in the inter faith engagement of the international Anglican Communion.

Among the topics discussed will be:

Radius veritatis – the significance of *Nostra Aetate* for Anglicans

'Sharing One Hope'? – the Church of England and Jewish-Christian relations

Worshipping one God – Anglicans and Muslims on the revelation of God

Colloquium and *collaboratio* – dialogue and shared action

'Dialogue begins when people meet' – beliefs and believers

Fidei defensor revisited – an established church in a religiously plural society

'Wider ecumenism'? – interreligious dialogue and intra-Christian dialogue

Kamar Oniah **KAMARUZAMAN**

Religion as a Mechanism for World Peace: the Rudiments of
Interfaith Dialogues and Engagements

Of late, the notion to see religion as a mechanism for world peace is getting more and more accepted worldwide. Indeed, interfaith initiatives are on the move. However, many people are still not quite sure of what interfaith works, namely interfaith dialogues and engagements, are all about, and how to go about it and are therefore quite nervous about participating in them. This presentation looks into the basics of what interfaith effort is all about, and the essential etiquette for the efforts, in the hope that with clear understanding and guidelines, no misgivings will creep. In brief, interfaith dialogues and engagements are

the coming together of the various world religious communities to work together for a common cause, in particular for world peace and the well-being of all. It should never be made into a platform for conversion, nor the dilution of faith. All are to be given space as they are and no pressure should be put whatsoever on anybody, or any religion, to loosen up its teachings; it is a status of equal meeting equal. Resolutions and decisions of the discourses and deliberations should be such that all the religious communities feel comfortable with, and so they can comfortably carry them out.

Jamal **KHADER** See David **NEUHAUS**

Joan **KIRBY**

Experience of the Consultation for Interfaith Education

Experience of the ritual, music, art and meditation practice of different religious traditions can deepen understanding and commitment to one's own tradition. This deeper understanding is best fostered through education. The mission of the Consultation for Interfaith Education is to encourage religions to understand and define their tradition in the face of globalization and to negotiate the space between the particularist and universalist tendencies in order to educate truly global citizens.

Pluralist models and best practices including a number of traditions as well as models informed and enriched by intrafaith awareness have been considered. We are exploring the educational imperative presented by the justice and peace issues of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. How do religions educate for global solidarity? Is interfaith education better positioned to safeguard the common ground where the dignity and equal value of all people is respected.

Eugene **KORN**

The Implications of *Nostra Aetate* and Post-Vatican II Statements for Jewish Theology and Jewish-Catholic Dialogue

Section IV of *Nostra Aetate* began a transformation in formal Catholic teaching toward Jews and Judaism. This sea change has been amply documented, yet there has been insufficient systematic attention paid to the implications of these changes for Jewish theology and for the dynamics of Jewish-Catholic dialogue—both theological and practical.

The proposed paper will systematically analyze the logical, theological and phenomenological implications for Judaism of various elements of the new Catholic teaching regarding Judaism.

The paper maintains that significant aspects of traditional Jewish legal and theological positions toward the Church have been affected by the internal Catholic changes toward Judaism. The change in Catholic doctrine opens possibilities for a new Jewish theological evaluation of Christianity as a faith, and can lay the foundation for fruitful theological dialogue between Catholics and traditional Jews. There is now no theological bar for Jews to engage in this dialogue under a positive human dynamic in which Jews and Catholics mutually acknowledge the integrity of each religious tradition.

Michael C. **KOTZIN**

The Catholic-Jewish Scholars Dialogue Of Chicago: A Model Of Interreligious Dialogue

Catholics and Jews have reached notable levels of cooperation, understanding, and mutual respect in the city of Chicago, and Chicago's Catholic-Jewish Scholars Dialogue has been a cornerstone of that achievement.

Founded over twenty years ago, the Dialogue is co-sponsored by the Archdiocese of Chicago on the one hand, and the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago and Chicago Board of Rabbis on the other. Participants include academics, parish priests, congregational rabbis, and officials of the sponsoring entities.

Dialogue sessions focus on religion-related matters such as the nature of prayer in the two traditions and alternative ways of interpreting specific biblical texts. The group also discusses current topics of interest and relevance to Catholic-Jewish relations, and on certain occasions it has issued public statements on matters of particular concern.

The purpose of this paper would be to review the history of this dialogue structure; to analyze the significant impact it has had on its participants and more broadly; to place it within the overall framework of Catholic-Jewish relations in Chicago; and to look at it as a touchstone for considering the evolving nature of relations between Catholics, Jews, and Muslims.

Ron KRONISH

Central Challenges Facing Jewish-Christian Dialogue Today-A Jewish Point of View

One of the most amazing things about all the changes that were wrought with Vatican II was the central role assigned to the dialogue with Jews and Judaism in the process. Pope John XXIII's well-known response to the Jewish historian Jules Isaac (in June 1960), who traced the Church's anti-Semitism to the Gospels, was to charge those who were responsible for preparing Vatican II to take up the issue of the Church's relations with Judaism as a matter of priority. And the simple gesture, accomplished by Pope John XXIII, when he greeted a Jewish delegation to the Vatican in June 1962, by saying "I am Joseph Your Brother" was accompanied by the Pope's descending from his throne to sit with the Jews in simple chair. Indeed, according to historian James Carroll, "the council's mandate to reform the Church was rooted in the history of its relation with Jews."

This history has been long and torturous. But, since Vatican II –i.e. since the beginning of the Dialogue (between Christians and Jews and between the Church and all other major world religions), I would argue that we are clearly in a New Era. We might call this "the new era of Dialogue." We have move from persecution to partnership, from confrontation to cooperation, from helplessness to hope.

Unfortunately, the results of the New Era of Dialogue—and the revolutionary changes that have taken place between Jews and Christians in our lifetime—are not well-known enough in the world. This is why our organization in Israel—The Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel produced a one hour documentary film two years ago entitled "I am Joseph Your Brother" which documents this process and awakens us to the challenges for the future.

My proposal is to screen the film "I am Joseph Your Brother" at the conference and to offer personal Jewish reflection after the screening on how the critical challenges facing Jewish-Christian Dialogue now and for the future on 4 topics: combating the problem of ignorance through education, obstacles to the dialogue, how to move forward, and common action/Tikkun Olan—how do we move from dialogue to action?

Justo LACUNZA BALDA

Leo D. LEFEBURE

Conflict, Chaos, and Cooperation: The Changing Historical Context of Religious Pluralism in North America

Chaos theory provides a model for viewing religious traditions as intimately related both positively and negatively. Boundaries are crucial to the identity of a religion, but they are always relative and in constant process of development and change. From colonial times to the present, religions in North America have been in conflictual relationships, with repeated efforts to establish one religious tradition as dominant in "a Christian America." There have, however, also been continual struggles for religious toleration and cooperation, with the goal of making North America a welcome home for a variety of different religious practices. Both tendencies are still at work in the present: the flowering of interreligious dialogue is counterbalanced by efforts to exclude and marginalize.

Carol Ann MARTINELLI

The Challenge for Jewish Catholic Relations Posed by the *Nostra Aetate* (No. 4) Affirmation that the Church is the "New People of God"

Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate* became the basis for the Church's new relationship with the Jews, acknowledging God's unrevoked covenant with the Jewish People based upon God's love of God's chosen people. Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium*, however, simultaneously recovered the concept of the "People of God" as a basis for a new ecclesiology, adopting an exclusive application of the concept for the Church,

defining the relationship of both the Church and the Jewish People to God. *Nostra Aetate* affirmed the teaching of *Lumen Gentium* - that the Church is the “new People of God.”

Supersessionist theology is inherent in a teaching that the Church is the new People of God and the heir to the election of the Jews, but does not have an acceptable place in a church that is building religious relations with the Jewish People. The Church’s recognition of the Jewish People as a present People of God, a living covenant partner in flesh and spirit with God, would support the vital bond between Catholics and Jews and a rejection of supersessionism. Unambiguous and non-supersessionist Church teaching on the significance of God’s living covenant with the Jews would allow both Catholics and Jews, “People of God,” to be in authentic relationship with each other. The concept of the “People of God” as recovered at Vatican II and reaffirmed with *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* warrants official study and renewal to allow the seeds planted in *Nostra Aetate* to achieve their potential.

John D’Arcy MAY

The Politics of Dialogue: *Nostra Aetate* in Interreligious and International Relations

Forty years ago, interreligious dialogue was relatively new and was seen primarily as a theological problem. But at Vatican II it was also realised that Christian dialogue with Jews must confront European Christianity’s history with the Jews, while the dialogue with Muslims led the Vatican into uncharted diplomatic territory. Dialogue is unavoidably ‘political’, although it is often accused of being a distraction from the ‘real’ political task of practical reconciliation in situations of religious conflict.

Religious stances are now seen to be *political* factors, even where the conflict is not ‘about’ religion. Such situations are complicated by the ‘ambivalence of the sacred’: the religions’ claims to represent absolute truth are perceived as a potential for violence, but their capacity for transcendence is seen as a way of transforming conflict.

A practical ‘ethics of dialogue’ would test the validity of religious claims in the process of dialogue itself; an ethical ‘politics of dialogue’ would transpose the non-violent quality of interreligious communication to the conduct of interethnic and international relations. The paper advocates neither mere *Realpolitik* nor the ‘soft option’ of liberal tolerance, but the practice of dialogue as non-violent communication.

Jane Dammen MCAULIFFE (PRESIDING)

The New America: Religious Pluralism in the USA

The United States, like many countries in Europe, is well launched on a dramatic demographic realignment. For the last forty years, the most rapidly-growing portions of the population have been Asian-Americans and Hispanic Americans. In 1965 Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act (Hart-Celler Act). By abrogating the national origins quota system of earlier laws, this 1965 legislation changed both the percentage and the profile of foreign-born in the population. In just one decade of the last quarter century, i.e., from 1980-1990, the Latino population increased by 53% and the Asian by 96%. Asian-Americans profess several different faiths but the largest number is Muslim and, combined with African-American Muslims, they have made Islam the fastest growing religion in the United States. This presentation will provide a brief visual overview of the contemporary American religious landscape.

Kathleen MCGARVEY

Muslim and Christian women and dialogue: the case of Nigeria

Northern Nigeria is a region plagued by poverty and is characterized by the existence of two dominant religions, Islam and Christianity with small scattered pockets of traditional religion still surviving. Political power in Nigeria has generally been used as a tool for personal and ethnic economic power and in the North political power has always had a religious-ethnic colouring.

Women have not been very directly involved in the power game in the region but they have, alongside the men, suffered the effects of poverty and of the struggles for political domination. They have also suffered the consequences of the violent outbursts of (religious) conflict which increased in the North during the 80’s and continue to occur today at any time and in any place. Like men, women want peace and they want to be alleviated of the burden of poverty.

Some interreligious encounters of women have been realized in Northern Nigeria. In my paper I will give a brief overview of some of these and will look at how the interreligious dialogue of women could be further developed as a means through which their religions, social and community hopes could be better realized.

Alberto MELLONI

The Nostra Aetate Generation and the Historical Significance of Their Effort

There is still so much work to be done about the history of Nostra aetate: of course the theologian's role is to take the text of the 1965 declaration as a document marking the most sharp discontinuity in ecclesiastical practice and teaching about religions, all to be taken "on the same foot". The role of the historian is a bit different: he/she is asked to explain why, how (and possibly also something about the meaning) of the origin and the development of NA. The declaration is an act marking a positive rupture in the Jewish-Christian relations, and from this specific point, which I read as a discovery of otherness, a new vision of religious pluralism and its challenges.

For the historian the task is a wide one: as everybody knows the text's history usually comes from the reconstruction of one of the most important theologians involved in the process: John M. Österreicher. His accuracy and insight have been largely sufficient for a first stage of research, but at least two tasks must be accomplished. On one side, we need a more detailed analysis of evidences coming from private archives as well as from the archive constructed by the General Secretariate which is now available into the Secret Vatican Archive in Rome. On the other side, Giovanni Miccoli's work in the History of Vatican II, directed by Giuseppe Alberigo, needs a continuous follow up in order to put the rupture of Nostra aetate in the general history of Christian-Jewish relations and to frame the steps of this story in the general flow of the second Vatican council. Research on both directions are in progress, and hopefully some results will come out of the conference to be held in Jerusalem in October 2005. However we already have evidence that must be presented and understood about "who" returned NA - a list of names which as far as I may see confirms that the Jewish-Christian (or Christian-Jewish) relations is not simply the occasion which originated NA, but its genetic code. We may put them in a chronological order, as they may appear on the stage of Vatican II: John XXIII, Jules Isaac, John M. Oesterreicher, Leo Rudloff, Gregory Baum, Augustin Bea, Johannes Willebrands, Amleto G. Cicognani, Maurice Fisher, Nathn Ben Horin, Yves Congar, Charles Moeller, Rolf Hochhuth, Julius Döpfner, Giovanni battista Montini, Golda Meier, Pericle Felici, Joseph Ratzinger, Pierre Duprey, Giacomo Lercaro, Franz König, One might probably add also the names of those - sometimes offering a witness of theological clarity, sometimes with the weight of a blatant antisemitic prejudice - addressed the Council, speaking in St. Peter's Basilica: Bueno y Monreal, Ruffini, de Castro Meyer, Lercaro, Leven, Cushing, Ritter, Šeper, Méndez Arceo, Elchinger, Heenan, and so on. But the first list is the most important because it is the list of those who deliberately decided to take on the issue, to present and to defend it in front of the second Vatican Council.

Specific stories were merged into the origin and the core's origin of NA: but it is too easy to say that behind their story the real event which dominated the stage was the Shoa: not the attitudes nor the faults, not heroism nor silence - but the Shoa, which changed forever life, faith and the vision of those that had the heavy task of being there. For them the academic discussion about the general uniqueness of the Shoa was far or useless. It was something definitely "unique" for them and it urged them to take a position. This paper will sketch out how different experiences made different actors so similar in their strong commitment for the approval of Nostra Aetate.

Ruben MENDOZA

"Ray of Truth Which Enlightens All": *Nostra Aetate* in the Documents of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences

The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) holds that other religions are part of God's plan of salvation. Because of this conviction, the FABC considers interreligious dialogue as integral to the life and mission of the Asian churches. Dialogue provides a means in and through which these churches actualize their being church and fulfill their evangelizing mission in Asia. The FABC has endeavored to discern the "rays of truth" that are present in peoples of other faiths and has shown a deep appreciation and respect for the "elements of truth and goodness" found in them. Particularly significant in the churches' dialogue with others is the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in them. The Holy Spirit appears to serve as a key in understanding and relating with the religious other. The basis, impetus and inspiration for this theological and pastoral enterprise is *Nostra Aetate's* call to dialogue and collaborate with other religions.

Thomas MICHEL

Speaking of Christ Crucified in a Muslim Environment

Donald W. MITCHELL

The Promise and Challenge of Buddhist Spirituality

First, this paper will explore the kinds of traditional Buddhist spiritualities (Zen, Theravada and Tibetan) that have become popular in the West in recent years. Second, we will examine both the promise and challenge that persons of the Catholic faith find in these forms of Buddhist spirituality. Here, the questions arise as to what attracts Catholics to their promise, and how the pursuit of such a promise affects their lives and their faith. Exploring these transition questions takes us to the third and final part of the paper, namely, the challenges to faith and practice that Catholics encounter in the actual pursuit of Buddhist forms of spirituality.

Marianne MOYAERT

Interreligious Dialogue and the Tension Between Openness and Commitment

Though the first historical Interreligious encounter dates from 1893 with the gathering of the First Parliament of World's Religions, the definitive impetus for the Interreligious dialogue came from the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and more specifically from the document *Nostra Aetate*. This document stands for the beginning of the so-called dialogical era. Since the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* various theological approaches to the contemporary situation of religious diversity have been developed. Usually three models are distinguished, namely, exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. Within the theology of religions the pluralistic theology presents itself as the only adequate model for Interreligious dialogue. Various pluralistic authors claim that due to the contingency of our religious identity, we should acknowledge the relativity of all truth claims and distance ourselves to all exclusivistic and inclusivistic judgements. Interreligious dialogue is only possible when the participants become open for each other's religious convictions. According to the pluralistic authors, the call for openness can only be realized if the dialogue partners accept each other's religious traditions as of equal worth. Such statements are prompted by the felt need to become more open for the worth and value of the various religious traditions. Exclusivists and inclusivists reproach the pluralistic theologians, that they do not take the issues of commitment and religious identity serious enough. Lacking in the theological discussion between exclusivists, inclusivists and pluralists, however, is a fundamental reflection on the question of the relation between identity and otherness.

In this paper, we claim that it is only by developing an anthropological reflection on the concepts of identity/commitment and openness, that we can gain insight in the possibilities and limits of the Interreligious dialogue. In this paper we search for an adequate response on the question of relation between identity and alterity. We develop our reflection in two phases. In first instance, we will briefly show how this discussion tends to serve the pluralistic agenda, thereby leaving some of the most fundamental questions regarding the premises of Interreligious dialogue unresolved. In second instance, we are inspired by the hermeneutical anthropology of Paul Ricoeur and especially by his work *Soi-meme comme un autre*. Though Ricoeur does not write on Interreligious dialogue, his hermeneutic philosophy and his thoughts on identity and alterity form a challenging perspective to think the dialogical tension between openness and identity through. The title *soi-meme comme un autre* implies from the beginning a bond between identity and alterity, so intimate that the one is unthinkable without the other. After all, Ricoeur's hermeneutic is marked by the search for ways to make it possible to talk about oneself, our identity and our own stories with a feeling of self-esteem and with respect and openness for otherness. We will show how these more anthropological reflections on the relation between identity/commitment and openness can form a new perspective on the theological reflection between exclusivists, inclusivists, and pluralists and as such shed new light on the future of the Interreligious dialogues, which was first started with *Nostra Aetate*, forty years ago

Stephen B. **MURRAY**

The Encounter with the Religious “Other” as Identity Formation
in Christian Theological Anthropology

In this paper, I explore what it means to be and to become a Christian person in a world of interreligious encounter. As human interactions become increasingly global and escalatingly inter-religious, we bear a heightening consciousness of how religious identity affects interpersonal relations and international politics. However, the dimension of this encounter that often is ignored is the way by which one’s encounter with the religious “other” informs, transforms, and clarifies one’s own religious identity. In this sense, I ask how it is that Christian definitions of what it means to be a human being in a theological perspective might be influenced by the encounter with other religions. What does the Christian theologian understand humanity to be when one is confronted by the ontologies and theological anthropologies of other religions? Using the work of Paul Tillich, Miroslav Volf, and Karl Rahner, I argue that interreligious encounters serve as a catalyst toward sharpening the Christian theologian’s priority for understanding what human nature is, in the light of the comprehensions of human nature articulated by other religions.

David M. **NEUHAUS** and Jamal **KHADER**

A Holy Land Context for *Nostra aetate*

Together with the entire Catholic Church, the Catholic Church of the Holy Land celebrates the fortieth anniversary of *Nostra aetate*. As with all documents formulated at the level of the Universal Church, local churches must put the teaching into practice within the circumstances of the local reality. In the Holy Land, the Christians are a small group within a society that is predominantly non-Christian (Muslim or Jewish). Furthermore, the Christians here are predominantly Arabs and have lived for centuries within an Islamic culture. However, what contributes to the uniqueness of the situation of these Christians is that they live as a minority face to face with a Jewish majority (in Israel), under Israeli military occupation (in the Palestinian territories) or confronting a regional economic and military super power (in Jordan). We will analyze documents from the Church in the Holy Land that contextualize the teaching of *Nostra aetate* in the present reality and present a vision of inter-religious dialogue

Joseph **NDI OKALLA**

Old and New Attitudes of African Cultures and Religions: From a
Missionary Synod for the German Cameroon (1915) to the Issues of
Nostra Aetate, Assumption and Perspectives

Dealing with the Encounters of the gospel and the cultures and religions of mankind, this paper intends to offer a sketch of an attitude who reveals in an earlier period (1914-1918) of a missionary work, 50 years before *Nostra Aetate*, an unusual positive (although critical) evaluation of the cultural and religious heritage of the people to be evangelized. With the German missionary, Cameroon Bishop Frances Hennemann (1907-1918) and his synod (1915) we meet the urgency of the issue of “culture” and “religion” in dialogue with the Christian Revelation. “How far can the Church really enter into a consistent and comprehensive dialogue with African Culture and Art?”

Martin **NKAFU**

Nostra Aetate and interreligious dialogue between Christianity
and African traditional religion

In base alla raccomandazione del documento *Ecclesia in Asia*, e alla domanda quale possa essere la struttura e i cardini di questa religione che possono essere trasmessi, oltre mediante la vita anche attraverso l’insegnamento, questa relazione intende articolare e presentare un percorso di tale religione tradizionale africana, riconoscibile anche oltre il territorio africano di esperienza religiosa. La RTA si offre così come un valore universale alla conoscenza del mondo accademico, aprendosi al dialogo interreligioso con il cristianesimo ed altre religioni del mondo.

Isadore NWANAJU

Nostra Aetate and the effect of segregation on the attitude of children: a call for a dynamic re-evaluation of pedagogical policy in a pluralist society

Since it is a known fact that the *point de depart* of *Nostra Aetate* is the recognition of diversity, pluralism, and inclusiveness in its declaration forty years ago, it is the aim of this paper to point out the pedagogical problems and difficulties underlying the continued and intentional segregation of children from the same or within the same society, especially in line with the noble intention of the same document as we prepare to celebrate its forty years of existence to enhance mutual relations with other non-Christian religions. There are two ways of looking at this: from the point of view of the type of education given to children and young ones in the name of religious beliefs and from the type of social attitudes they are meant to exhibit, which cuts them off from normal interaction with other children. The conclusion of the paper will point to the type of danger associated with this kind of segregation or isolation, leading to discriminative behaviour - especially as it works against the dynamic principles of social behaviour, based on openness and moral values. The paper, whose approach is interdisciplinary, also shows that religion when mishandled, could be a major instrument of social disruption, especially in pluralist society, thus working against the very purpose of writing *Nostra Aetate* by the Second Vatican Council Fathers.

Sebastian PAINADATH

An Indian Paradigm of Spiritual Integration for a Culture of Dialogue:
A Reflection on *Nostra Aetate* 2, Hinduism

Nostra Aetate offers in No. 2 a succinct description of the core of Hindu spirituality: "With sincere respect" for the Hindu "ways of conduct and life" the Declaration esteems the "philosophical enquiry, search for liberation, ascetical practices, deep meditation and a loving, trusting flight towards God" as basic elements of Hindu spirituality. This makes the Hindu dialogue partner feel that he/she is understood and respected by Christians.

In the paper, I would like to reflect on these spiritual elements in terms of the classical Indian paradigm—"*devotional surrender, contemplative introspection and liberative action.*" The experience of dialogue between Christians and Hindus in the last 40 years shows that this triadic perspective of spirituality offers a paradigm of spiritual integration for seekers of different religions. This could therefore be interpreted as a basic frame for a theology of inter-religious harmony. In the paper (i) the meaning of this threefold notion will be clarified with classical Hindu texts, (ii) its significance for spiritual integration will be described, (iii) its value for understanding the basic dynamics of Christian spirituality will be clarified, and (iv) the scope of a spirituality of harmony will be explored.

Margaret A. PALLISER

Regional Cooperative Efforts toward Interfaith Understanding among Youth

The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, Connecticut, in collaboration with Sacred Heart University and Fairfield University, has sponsored a series of programs and events to further understanding among diverse groups of young people, including local Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities. Over the past six years, the Bridge Building Initiative has brought together hundreds of youth—aged 14 to 25—for discussions and prayer, fostering foster understanding and dialogue. Religious traditions represented have included Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, Lutheran, Congregationalist, Baptist, Evangelical, and Pentecostal. This paper would explore how this uniquely pastoral model of youth dialogue and prayer has the potential to impact the formation of adult communities of faith, as well as bringing their clergy, religious pastors and leaders into fruitful interaction and dialogue.

Michael PEPPARD

The Roman Catholic Sunday Lectionary and Jewish-Christian Relations

The document *Nostra Aetate* issued a specific challenge for the Catholic Church to reconsider its relationship to Judaism, to recall "the spiritual bond linking the people of the New Covenant with Abraham's stock" (*Nostra Aetate*, 4).

This paper will analyze the role that the Sunday Lectionary, revised after Vatican II, plays in the Catholic Church's presentation of Jews and Judaism. It is clear that the presentation of Jews and Judaism in the Lectionary is a vast improvement over what preceded it. However, there is still much work to be done in

order to bring the Lectionary in line with official Catholic teachings on the Old Testament and the Jews. For example, the Lectionary continues to use the Old Testament as a hermeneutical "other" against which to exhibit the New Testament. Furthermore, the Lectionary's pattern of Old Testament lections often emphasizes a stereotypical image of Judaism.

These and other aspects of the Lectionary are not helpful for the future of Jewish-Christian relations.

This paper will be in constant dialogue with the recent document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, "The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible" (2001).

Mauro PESCE

Transformation of Catholic Theology regarding the Interpretation of the Old Testament in Light of the New Testament

Centrale nella riflessione cattolica sull'ebraismo è la relazione tra Antico e Nuovo Testamento. Il documento dei "Sussidi per una corretta presentazione degli Ebrei e dell'Ebraismo" ha suscitato un dibattito sul permanere della tipologia come strumento interpretativo, mentre "L'interpretazione della Bibbia nella chiesa" propone il cosiddetto "dinamismo dei testi". J.Fitzmyer ha presentato uno schema alternativo e più insistente si fa la critica delle cosiddette "origini" giudaiche del cristianesimo (J.Neusner). Anche un documento dell'episcopato francese propone una via alternativa per una lettura cristiana dell'Antico Testamento.

La riflessione cattolica sull'ebraismo subisce tuttavia un'influenza indiretta da parte dell'evoluzione della teologia cattolica in tre ambiti diversi: la revisione dei rapporti con la modernità, le relazioni ecumeniche, il dibattito sull'interpretazione della Bibbia.

Il paper intende mostrare come le tesi teologiche sull'ebraismo abbiano subito una trasformazione dai tempi della Nostra Aetate a causa dell'interferenza di alcune modificazioni teologiche che non hanno tenuto conto della questione ebraica.

Peter A. PETTIT and Menachem FISCH

Beyond Dialogue: Method and Promise in Pluralistic Society

Nostra Aetate paved the way in the Roman Catholic church for an era of dialogue in which many Jews and Christians have taken part. In the 1980s, David Hartman and Paul van Buren undertook a new venture that moved beyond dialogue, as van Buren vetted his research for the third volume of his *Theology for the Jewish-Christian Reality* in a seminar at the Shalom Hartman Institute. The model they pioneered brought Jews and Christians together to study their respective sacred texts with "the other" present. It continues to be embodied annually at the Institute's theology conference. As the influence and concerns of Islam have increasingly become significant for both Jews and Christians, the dialogue model has been strained. By contrast, as this presentation will demonstrate, the Institute's shared-study model has successfully accommodated the inclusion of Muslims and Islamic texts, with rich and fruitful interchange deepening participants' insights about both their own and others' faith traditions.

Peter A. PETTIT

From Sour Grapes to Sacrament: Jews as the Other that Christians Encounter

In October 2002, Cardinal Walter Kasper spoke of the Jewish community as "a sacrament of every otherness" that the church encounters. This presentation comprehends the relationship of the church and Judaism across 2000 years as a function of otherness, noting how the character of that otherness has taken different form in various eras and settings. The 20th-century Christian-Jewish rapprochement challenges the Christian imagination to understand the Jews as other in a new sense. *Nostra Aetate* itself suggests that the otherness cannot be complete, since it is in "sounding the depths of the mystery which is the church" that we come to engage our relationship with the Jewish people. Yet the otherness remains, and Cardinal Kasper's gesture toward otherness itself as sacramental is one approach that both respects and dignifies Jewish otherness. It recalls the insights of Rudolf Otto that the essential character of holiness, and hence of God, is otherness. How we might build on these insights in Christian theology in the 21st century will be the presentation's concluding contribution.

Peter C. PHAN

Cultural Diversity and Religious Pluralism in Asia and the Church's Mission

The paper explores how in Asia cultural diversity and religious pluralism are deeply intertwined with each other, historically and theologically, the one determining the other. In light of this connection, it is argued that the Christian church's mission in Asia must take the form of dialogue with both cultural diversity and religious pluralism.

Christopher PRAMUK

Hagia Sophia: The Unknown and Unseen Christ of Thomas Merton

From the late 1950s to his sudden death in 1968, Trappist monk and spiritual writer Thomas Merton was reaching out with "an almost frightening intensity of purpose" to practitioners of all the major religions. What is not always appreciated is the christocentric character of Merton's openness to the other, his "personal communication with Christ at the center and heart of all reality." When much of the debate today in the Christian theology of religions centers on Christology, it is fruitful to ask: Who is this Christ that so deeply grounded Merton's dialogue and friendship with non-Christian contemplatives? In this paper, Merton's encounter with Zen provides a lens for exploring the features of Merton's complex Wisdom Christology. With special attention to "Hagia Sophia," the "unknown and unseen Christ" at the heart of Christian contemplation, the author looks to Merton as a signpost for a vibrant Catholic theology of the religions today.

Douglas PRATT

Exclusive Religion and the Invalidation of Variety: The Contemporary Challenge of *Nostra Aetate*

The phenomenon of religious exclusivism increasingly confronts peoples of faith and goodwill who wish only for peaceful co-existence in equality and freedom with their religious neighbour. But there is more than one variety of religious exclusivism. This paper will show that there are at least three variants of religious exclusivism, namely: open, closed and extreme. Further, inasmuch as exclusivism indicates a posturing of religious identity as over against the 'other', then it will be argued that the variant exclusivisms themselves reflect a continuum of ideological stance that is taken toward the concept of variety, as represented by the religious 'other', *per se* ranging through antithetical acknowledgement, enactive ignorance, and the intentional invalidation of variety. It is the issue of the invalidation of otherness, or of the variety of otherness which, I contend, constitutes the severe problem of religious exclusivism *in extremis* and which, through an exploration of examples and possible responses, this paper seeks to address.

Christian M. RUTISHAUSER

The Jewish-Christian Dialogue and the Theology of Religions

Published on-line: <http://escholarship.bc.edu/scjr/vol1/iss1/7/>

From a historical point of view, the new understanding of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people was the catalyst for the Council Vatican II to elaborate a declaration on the non-Christian religions. This is not a mere accident. The Jewish-Christian relation does, even from a systematic point of view, play a paradigmatic, critical and corrective function for a Christian theology of religions. It has a character *sui generis*, for Judaism constitutes the Other within a Christian identity. The Jewish-Christian relationship helps to formulate the meaning of the particular in the discussion on the universal Christian claim of truth and salvation facing other religions. Furthermore, it prevents a theology of religion to slide into abstract, non-historic and pure speculative definitions. Normally, Christology and especially the theology of incarnation guarantees it, but they have to be linked themselves back to the messianic idea of Judaism and the history of salvation where the Church declares itself for the unrevoked covenant between Good and Israel. Only a theology of religions which recognizes the lasting challenge of the Jewish faith for the Christian identity will have overcome anti-Judaism at its roots.

Patrick J. **RYAN**

Amen/Amin: Faith and Beliefs, Christian and Muslim

David Fox **SANDMEL**

The Christian Reclamation of Judaism

Through much of history, Christianity strove to differentiate itself from Judaism. Thus, Jesus was seen over and against Judaism, the God of the Old Testament was harsh and vengeful compared to the New Testament's God of love, and those perceived as advocating Jewish practices were labeled "Judaizers." Recently, the combination of critical scholarship and interreligious dialogue has led to a radical reorientation in the relationship of Christianity to its Jewish roots. The publication of *Nostra Aetate* in 1965 is both an example of, and a catalyst in, the phenomenon of the modern reclamation of Judaism by Christians. This manifests itself in Christian scholarship on Christian origins, in official church proclamations (both Roman Catholic and Protestant), and even in ritual and liturgy (at least in North America). This paper will examine the roots and characteristics of this phenomenon and explore its implications for Jewish-Christian relations.

Giuseppe **SCATTOLIN**

Il sufismo e il dialogo interreligioso

Le religioni sono presentate nel *Nostra Aetate* come risposte alle domande fondamentali dell'esistenza umana. Anche l'umanità del nostro tempo è di fronte a gravi problemi; in particolare: la situazione di globalizzazione totale e i suoi conflitti tra marketing globale, atomismo etico e tribalismi culturali-religiosi; e il pluralismo religioso con le istanze che pone. Le religioni devono dare la loro risposta a tali quesiti.

La mistica, cuore di ogni esperienza religiosa, è pure il cuore dell'esperienza umana nella ricerca della sua identità e del suo rapporto col Mistero Assoluto. A tale livello il dialogo interreligioso trova la sua dimensione più profonda.

Ci sono alcuni spazi in cui le diverse esperienze mistiche possono e devono incontrarsi:

- > l'essere umano e la sua identità 'umana'
- > l'essere umano e il suo ambiente: l'universo
- > l'essere umano e il suo fondamento e il suo fine ultimo: Dio

Il sufismo, insieme alle altre mistiche, può e deve dare il suo contributo positivo per rispondere agli urgenti interrogativi dell'umanità del nostro tempo.

Eileen **SCHULLER**

The Influence of the Dead Sea Scrolls on Jewish-Christian Relations

I would like to explore the various and diverse ways in which the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 has had an effect on Jewish-Christian relations over these past fifty-plus years. I am interested in exploring both issues related to content (the discovery of new texts, new information which has revitalized the scholarly study of Second Temple Judaism) as well as some of the more intangible and indirect ways that issues surrounding the Dead Sea Scrolls have had an impact both positively and negatively (issues regarding rights of access and of publication, importance of cooperative research between Jewish and Christian scholars).

Donald **SENIOR**

"The Impact of *Nostra Aetate* on Catholic Biblical Interpretation"

This proposed paper will analyze the 2002 statement of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, The Jewish People and Their Scriptures in the Christian Bible, as a prime illustration of how profound has been the influence of *Nostra Aetate* on Catholic biblical interpretation, particularly in the area of Catholic-Jewish relations. The Biblical Commission's statement, in effect, helps complement work in other areas of the Church's teaching and practice such as reform of the liturgy, theology, and catechesis. The Commission's text is comprehensive in scope, acknowledging the extent of Judaism's influence on the content of the Christian Bible, noting areas of similarity and difference, and addressing the question of whether or not the New Testament is inherently anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish.

Noel **SHETH**

Buddhist Metta or Maitri and Christian Agape

This paper makes a comparative theological study of the Buddhist and Christian understanding of altruistic love (*metta* or *maitri* and *agape*). Both go to the extent of loving one's enemy and even sacrificing one's life for another.

Christians love others because God has loved them, but in Theravada the motivation is different, since there is no Supreme Being. In Christianity the person loved has intrinsic worth, but in Theravada every person is a mere series of momentary aggregates and in Mahayana does not really exist. Christian love is more spontaneous and personal while Buddhist love is more sedate and detached. Unlike Christian love, Buddhist love is extended not only to human beings, but to all beings. Mahayana love is more altruistic than Christian love since the ideal is to even delay one's salvation for the sake of others.

These differences with regard to the presuppositions, the motivation and the expression of love spring from their different world views.

William **SKUDLAREK**

The Evolution of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue in North America

Over the past twenty-five years Monastic Interreligious Dialogue in North America (originally known as NABEWD: North American Board for East West Dialogue) has involved itself in an exchange program with Tibetan monks and nuns, organized two major conferences with Buddhists, one on spiritual practice, the other on suffering, and commissioned as reflection on the Rule of Benedict by four Buddhists that was published as *Benedict's Dharma*. At the present time, it is engaged in exchanges with Buddhist monks and nuns who live in contemporary America. All activities of MID have been reported on in its *Bulletin* and are now available on a newly designed and expanded website, www.monasticdialog.com. Fr. William Skudlarek, O.S.B., Executive Director of MID, will demonstrate the content and capabilities of MID's new website and comment on the evolution of monastic interreligious dialogue in North America over the past twenty-five years.

Jesper **SVARTVIK**

Forging an Incarnational Theology Two Score Years After *Nostra Aetate*

Published on-line: <http://escholarship.bc.edu/scjr/vol1/iss1/2/>

Surveying how Christology is formulated in the wake of *Nostra Aetate*, this paper will concentrate on three models: (1) *The man became words, words, words*; the quest for the historical Jesus has often emphasized the—alleged unique—teachings of the Nazarene. Its main problem, however, is that the contemporaries of Jesus are no longer presented as his historical context but as his theological contrast. (2) *The word became fleshwounds*; due to Mel Gibson's movie *The Passion of the Christ* one single Greek word (Mk 15:15; *fragellosas*, i.e., "after having flogged") has been at the centre of the Christological discussion during 2004. His version of the medieval passion plays highlights its particular problems. Having first described the flaws of these two models, the paper will seek to explore how—two score years after the declaration *Nostra Aetate*—the Johannine statement that *the Word became flesh* could be articulated today.

Ismael **TASPINAR**

Interreligious Dialogue in Turkey

Liam **TRACEY**

The Liturgical Implications of *Nostra Aetate*

The aim of this paper is twofold: to explore possible implications on the liturgy of the Roman Catholic church stemming from the promulgation of NA and secondly, to suggest what possible implications may stem from taking the conciliar document seriously in the ongoing process of liturgical revision and renewal. Some of the main books of the recent liturgical reform will be examined in the light of NA. Attention will

be paid to the liturgical principles undergirding the liturgical reform and how some of the issues that have emerged in the Jewish-Christian encounter are treated will be examined and explored.

Suna UMARI

The Rothko Chapel

The ecumenical movement, the artistic “sacred modern” phenomenon initiated by Fr. Couturier, and the *Nostra Aetate* proclamation helped defined the Rothko Chapel’s mission by its founders John and Dominique de Menil, devout lay Catholics. In February 1971, The Rothko Chapel was solemnly dedicated by Christians (Orthodox, Catholic: Cardinal Willebrands, Protestants), Jews, and Muslims.

Although the spiritual experience and silent worship are its fundamental vocation, there is another important aspect. It is the search for togetherness, the building of communities of the heart, on the sister paths of ecumenism and human rights. It is an effort to expand the soul. It does not imply a loss of identity or tradition, on the contrary, sacred texts and holy men and women invite us to this conviviality. It is the place where people of faith or no faith, can express a passion for justice, call for the collective responsibility for the earth, and can cultivate our humanity so that we never lose our ability to hear the silent anguish of the world.

Harold VOGELAAR (see ALEXANDER)

Andrew WINGATE

Nostra Aetate as a Theological and Practical Inspiration Towards Dialogue with Muslims

Pope John Paul II said, on December 3rd 1994:

The second Vatican Council’s declaration *Nostra Aetate* gives clear indications that inspire the Church for interreligious dialogue. They are mainly: respect for one’s personal conscience, rejecting all forms of coercion or discrimination with regard to faith, freedom to practice one’s own religion and give witness to it, as well as appreciation and esteem for all genuine religious traditions.

There is much talk about dialogue, but few sustained long term examples. I have been involved in teaching, writing and practical engagement at local, national and international level, with Muslims and Hindus, for the last 25 years; in India, Sri Lanka, Birmingham and Leicester. I have been the co-convenor, of ecumenical dialogue groups, in Birmingham and Leicester (over ten years) and been part of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Initiative, involving listening to Muslims and Christians in five cities.

My paper will examine how the experience of these groups can be evaluated, in the light of the theological and practical framework of NA.

Peter ZAAS

Authority in the Jewish-Catholic Dialogue

Karl Rahner once made the poignant observation that truth lies only in inter-communication, a clear echo of Buber. In the four decades since the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*, Jews and Catholics have tested Rahner’s proposition in the face of their distinct notions of religious truth. People of good will have entered into dialogue on any number of vital topics, on Israel, on Scripture, on interfaith worship, on social justice. Despite their evident good intentions, however, Jews and Catholics have seen any number of conversations founder on the hidden shoals of their drastically different understanding of religious authority.

Rahner made his comment in the course of his article “Magisterium” in *Sacramentum Mundi*. Judaism lacks a notion of magisterium, a concept central to Catholicism, and this structural distinction between Jews and Catholic Christians affects religious dialogue on the deepest levels. Paradoxically, the lack of central doctrinal authority in Judaism allows each Jew to speak with authority for all, while the presence of this concept in Catholicism makes it difficult for most Catholics to speak for any. Jews and Catholics need to raise this structural disparity to consciousness: “Authority” itself needs to become a topic of dialogue.

Kornel ZATHURECZKY

Overcoming Supersessionism: A Question of Trinitarian Discourse

Nostra Aetate opened up the possibility to explore the meaning of Christian supersessionism in relation to the continuing existence of Jewish messianic faith. This paper proposes to uncover the roots of supersessionism and Christian anti-Judaism within the Trinitarian language of the Church. Subsequently, it reconceives the logic and practice of Trinitarian discourse through a confrontation of the logic of Jewish messianic discourse. The retrieval of the messianic logic of Christian Trinitarian discourse is achieved by comparing the political theology of Jürgen Moltmann and Johannes Baptist Metz and the utopian messianism of Walter Benjamin and Franz Rosenzweig. Consequently, a specific vision of Christian Trinitarian discourse is outlined which is grounded in Jewish messianism's insistence on the concrete, and the marginal. With this move, the insularity of Christian Trinitarian language from the language of Jewish messianism will be overcome and the linguistic grounds of further dialogue between the two traditions will be provided.