

## CHRISTIANITY &amp; JUDAISM/INTERRELIGIOUS STUDIES

Topic: Evangelization/Christian Mission  
 Convener: Angela Kim Harkins, Fairfield University  
 Moderator: Angela Kim Harkins, Fairfield University  
 Presenters: John Borelli, Georgetown University  
 Francis X. Clooney, Harvard Divinity School

The 2009 meeting of the Christianity and Judaism/Interreligious Studies Consultation was organized as an informal collaboration with the Comparative Theology Group. Instead of a formal call for papers, the Consultation invited two noted scholars, John Borelli of Georgetown University and Frank Clooney of Harvard Divinity School, to discuss how Christian-Jewish relations has informed their work in interreligious dialogue and comparative theology. Both scholars were asked to focus their remarks on the area of Evangelization/Mission, the topic for this year's meeting, in keeping with the convention's theme, "Impasse and Beyond." The organization of this year's session reflects the Consultation's desire to make meaningful connections with other groups at the CTSA, such as Comparative Theology, who have similar interests.

John Borelli began the session with his paper "Mission and Dialogue: A Continuing Impasse for the Catholic Church with Regard to Jewish Relations." His paper was divided into three parts: (1) The Bewilderment of Paul VI; (2) The Dialogue of Salvation; and (3) The Current trajectory on Mission and Dialogue. Borelli sought to show that the complex relationship between mission and dialogue with non-Christians, primarily conceptualized as the Jews, has not always been clearly and consistently formulated by the Church.

Borelli began by describing the roots and the development of the Church's ambiguous understanding of the relationship between mission and dialogue from Vatican II to the present with a vivid account of Abraham Heschel's meeting with Pope Paul VI at the Vatican in 1964. An early draft of what became *Nostra Aetate* describes the union of the Jewish people with the Church as part of the Christian hope. Heschel was clearly distressed over the Church's statement expressing the hope of Jewish conversion. Pope Paul VI's bewilderment over Heschel's reaction made it clear, according to Borelli, that in Paul VI's mind, the Church's mission to non-Christian religions and the hope for their conversion remained central to the Church's mission.

In the second part of his paper, Borelli discussed Paul VI's first encyclical, *Ecclesiam suam*, in which he uses the word "dialogue" some 100 times. For Paul VI, dialogue meant "the dialogue of salvation" where the entirety of humanity and various groups are related dialogically to the Catholic Church in an ever-deepening communion. In his final major statement on this topic (*Evangelii nuntiandi*), however, Paul VI expressed an understanding of "evangelization" that was particularly expansive, moving beyond traditional understandings of missionizing or proclamation. Borelli continued to trace how the Church's formulation of its relationship to non-Christian religions sent a double-message, one hoping for con-

version of the Jews and another acknowledging the existence of more than one covenant of salvation. This tension between mission and dialogue persists into even the most recent interreligious discussions.

Frank Clooney's provocative paper "Rethinking Covenant: Jewish-Christian Light on God's Other Covenants?" explored the idea that the Church's relations with the Jews can offer a model for understanding other non-Christian religions. Clooney's paper was divided into three major sections. After a brief presentation of the comparative theology method applied to *Dei Verbum* and the 14th c. south Indian text, *The Lineage of Teachers*, Clooney offered a series of reflections on Christian-Jewish-Christian relations, and then discussed how these insights from C-J relations may relate to his own work in Comparative Theology.

Clooney offered five reflections on various principles of Christian-Jewish studies and how they may prove instructive for scholars who work with other forms of interreligious dialogue and Comparative Theology. First, those involved in interreligious studies need to commit themselves to understanding the other. Second, they should avoid essentializing the religious other by recognizing the ongoing religious history and experience of other religions. Third, Clooney reflected on recent studies that may blur distinctions that were previously held to be absolute. As an example, he brought to mind recent Hebrew Bible scholarship that seeks to rethink the idea of biblical monotheism. Fourth, Clooney discussed the theology of Vatican II that dispensed with supersessionism. One of the key points here was that theological understandings of salvation history should not be confused with historical facts. Finally, Clooney observed that Jews and Christians have come to agree to disagree with irresolvably different accounts of God's action.

Clooney concluded with some constructive comments about how the insights from J-C relations may prove useful in his own work in Hindu-Christian relations. The most fruitful of these would be to affirm, "by way of analogy, the possibility of other enduring covenants that neither disappear before God's ultimate covenant in Christ, nor diminish the ultimacy of that covenant." Clooney also took care to note that a simple transference from J-C relations to Hindu-Christian relations may not be possible.

ANGELA KIM HARKINS  
*Fairfield University*  
*Fairfield, Connecticut*