

# Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations

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## *Editors' Introduction*

Ruth Langer and Kevin Spicer

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Welcome to the fourth volume of *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*. As we prepare for the publication of the initial contributions to this volume, the International Conference of Christians and Jews, at its 2009 annual meeting has just released its *A Time for Recommitment: The Twelve Points of Berlin, A Call to Christian and Jewish Communities Worldwide*. As the journal of the Council of Centers in Jewish-Christian Relations, the American signatory to this document, we wish to draw special attention to it and to its proposed agenda for the coming years of dialogue. We hope that SCJR will be a venue for serious ongoing discussion and development of its points. We begin that discussion with our inclusion here of the document itself as well as of two of the papers presented at the Berlin conference: Philip Cunningham's introduction to the document; and Ruth Langer's plenary address on its call in point six for attention to the ways Jewish liturgy discusses the religious other.

The first of the Berlin *Twelve Points* calls on Christians "To combat religious, racial and all other forms of anti-Semitism" by, among other things, "recognizing Paul's profound identity as a Jew of his day, and interpreting his writings within the contextual framework of first-century Judaism." The fifth point calls on Jews "To acknowledge the efforts of many Christian communities in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century to reform their attitudes toward Jews," including "by studying the New Testament both as Christianity's sacred text and as literature written to a large degree by Jews in an historical-cultural context similar to early Rabbinic literature, thereby offering

insight into the development of Judaism in the early centuries of the Common Era."

This issue continues our special topic on the significance of Paul and Pauline studies for Christian-Jewish relations, begun in volume three. Both Jews and Christians are among our authors, contributing to the development of both of these calls. While not the sole source of these essays, appearing both in the "Feature Topic" and the "Conference Proceedings" sections, we are particularly grateful for the contributions of the participants in the conference *Paul of Tarsus: Apostle to the Gentiles in His Jewish Context* held at Boston College in March 2009. The conference was dedicated to the memory of Krister Stendahl whose voice contributed so much to this topic. We include here also tributes to him given at that conference.

Independent of the calls for attention to education embedded throughout *The Twelve Points of Berlin*, we issued a call for papers on "Educating Jews and Christians in an Age of Dialogue." In our initial publication of this volume, you will find three papers on this topic from the proceedings of the 19th Meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, Cape Town, South Africa, in November 2006. Additional contributions are expected.

We are also pleased to present here additional conference proceedings responding to current events in the world of Christian-Jewish relations. In our initial upload, these include Ambassador Mordechai Lewy's

address at Boston College on Vatican-Israel relations and two fora from St. John's University, one on issues of covenant and conversion, the other on the Bishop Williamson affair. We also continue our tradition of presenting book reviews of some of the most important publications in the field.

In all these categories, we invite your contributions, whether articles for peer review (on the special topics or on other topics relevant to Christian-Jewish relations), papers delivered at conferences, or book reviews. Please also visit the "Call for Papers" section on our [website](#). We are soliciting papers on the 2010 special topic, "Boundaries and Border Crossings," which you

will find described there. In the spirit of dialogue, we also invite readers' responses to published materials.

Finally, Audrey Doetzel and Ruth Langer welcome Fr. Kevin Spicer, C.S.C., Associate Professor of History at Stonehill College, as our Christian co-editor. Our editorial board also welcomes Eugene J. Fisher who joins Leonard Greenspoon as Christian book review editor, as we give warm thanks to John Merkle for his dedicated service as the previous Christian co-editor. We wish John well in his growing responsibilities at both the College of Saint Benedict and the Jay Phillips Center for Jewish-Christian Learning.