

# STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS

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## Editor's Introduction

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Welcome to issue two of the 2007 volume of *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*. The two feature topics of this issue mark two significant events: the centennial year of the birth of Abraham Joshua Heschel, and the sixtieth anniversary of the 1947 Seelisberg International Conference on Anti-Semitism.

Several noted Heschel scholars pay tribute to him as “one of the preeminent witnesses to God in the twentieth century” (Merkle). Their presentations highlight “his distinctive approach to religious diversity” (Kasimow), his ability to associate “mystical experience and contemplative prayer with prophetic action” (O’Hare), and his affirmation of “the all-embracing presence” of the One God of the *Sh’ma* (Merkle).

Though few today, whether Jewish or Christian, fail to recognize Heschel’s name and contributions, as a scholar and as an activist, many have little or no awareness of “a benchmark in the history of interreligious relations” – the 1947 Seelisberg *Address to the Churches* (Barnett). We are grateful to the three scholars featured in this issue for sharing their research on this little-known event which spoke so eloquently to its times in the immediate aftermath of World War II. There is no question that this International Emergency Conference on Anti-Semitism, and especially its ten theses, served as the foundation of the new relationship developing since then between Christianity and Judaism. Christian Rutishauser, SJ, provides a comprehensive overview of the conference’s inception, a detailed presentation and analysis of its proceedings, and a perspective on the continuing relevance of its message sixty years later. Robert Ventresca introduces us to the highly regarded European thinker, Jacques Maritain. Though unable to attend the conference, Maritain contributed to its vision and proceedings through the urgent tone of his

writings, a tone that was rooted in his awareness of “the place of anti-Semitism in the authoritarian and racist ideologies of interwar and wartime Europe.”

We are also pleased to present here a rich selection of additional articles, conference proceedings, and book reviews, representing some of the best work in our field.

The publication of this issue also marks a transition period in the history of this journal. At its Sixth Annual Meeting on October 21-22, 2007, the Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations appointed as journal co-editors: Ruth Langer, associate professor of Jewish Studies in the Theology Department at Boston College, and John Merkle, professor of theology at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University. The entire membership of the Council of Centers expresses its gratitude to the out-going co-editors, Philip A. Cunningham and Edward D. Kessler, whose creative vision and diligent enthusiasm were responsible for the quality of the first two volumes of this journal. For me, as managing editor, it was a privileged opportunity to work with two extraordinary scholars deeply committed to the field of Christian-Jewish studies and relations.

As we welcome Ruth Langer and John Merkle to the editorial board in the capacity of co-editors, I look forward another enriching and challenging experience, confident that the journal will continue to develop in a relevant and scholarly manner. As the new editorial team we have already chosen to recognize the sixtieth anniversary of the State of Israel as the feature topic for the 2008 volume and have put out a call for papers on this theme. It is our hope that this will enable scholars on an international level to engage in an exploration of theologies of the land and/or State of Israel. For more details on this call for papers, see: [Call for Papers](http://escholarship.bc.edu/scjr/vol2/iss2/) .