

Bexhill and Hastings Discuss the 'Story of Stories'

Over 80 people from **CCJ Bexhill and Hastings** heard Rabbi Mark Solomon's inspiring and illustrative presentation of the Passover story. Rabbi Mark related the entire history of Passover based on the Haggadah ('Telling'), also



demonstrating various rituals and showing several traditional items from his own childhood used during the Seder meal. Again Rabbi Mark's cantorial past was brought to the fore and the branch was treated to a fine vocal rendering of several traditional prayers and songs. A truly joyous as well as instructive event!

Peres Centre for Peace Representative talks to CCJ Group



A Group of CCJ members and friends came to Bank Leumi in Central London to hear an encouraging and instructive presentation of the courageous work of the **Peres Centre for Peace** in Israel. Their Development

Director, Yarden Leal-Yablonka, spoke to the group about two intriguing projects: medical care of Palestinian infants with heart defects; and a sports programme for Israeli and Palestinian children participating together. Yarden was forthright, insightful, and strikingly realistic about both the opportunities and challenges the Peres Centre faces in the effort to build a lasting peace 'on the ground' between peoples. Lively discussion of issues raised in the presentation carried on long after the evening came to a formal conclusion.

Yad Vashem AJR Fellows Meet Sponsors

Several 'alumni' from the 2012 **Yad Vashem Seminar** joined a group of Jewish elders at Belsize Square Synagogue in North London and told how they have been affected by their studies at *Yad Vashem*, the Holocaust Education Centre in Jerusalem. In addition to telling their own stories, the group heard moving tales from some members of the **Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR)**. Many had suffered under the

Nazis, been interned or lost loved ones. The AJR works to support them, including offering them a space to gather and socialise. Knowing the value of Holocaust education, the AJR generously supports CCJ's *Yad Vashem* seminars by sponsoring two 'AJR Fellows' each year.



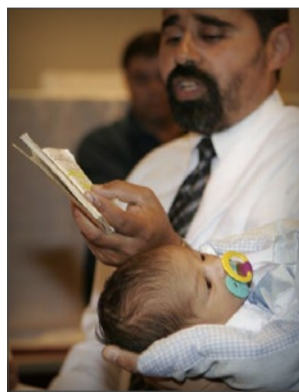
Carol Rossen of AJR said: 'It is a very significant thing for our members to hear Christian clergy speaking about their commitment to good relations with the Jewish community and to educating about the Holocaust. The members found the whole afternoon very interesting and different.'

Fiona Hulbert from CCJ commented: 'It is a privilege to lead these CCJ seminars to Israel and to see the learning Christian leaders undergo while they are there. We are very grateful to AJR for their support.'

The next study tour to *Yad Vashem* is on Oct 28-Nov 7 2013. Contact Fiona in the CCJ Central Office for details.

Circumscribing Circumcision?

CCJ's **Patrick Morrow** recently interviewed Professor David Katz of the Division of Infection and Immunity, University College London, to discuss a meeting during Interfaith Week 2012 of Jewish and Muslim medical students, on male circumcision. Katz explained how and why it is important as a marker of Judaism, and perhaps more significantly, he explained its importance with regard to the Jew's relationship with God.

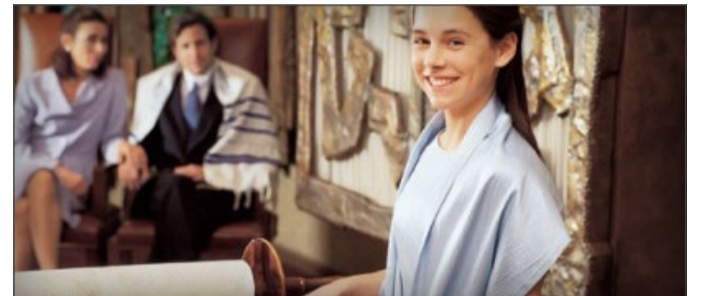


Noting how the issue of circumcision has come into focus in Europe recently, Katz said, 'The major opposition is actually in the Netherlands, where the Royal Dutch Medical Association has taken the view—probably on the same lines as the federal German courts, namely because of anxieties that Muslim circumcision is

unregulated—that consent needs to be obtained from the person being circumcised. This means that circumcision becomes an operation upon someone aged at least 14, who gives consent. So it becomes a medical procedure not required on medical grounds, on a teenage boy, requiring general anaesthetic. That is where the major pressure is coming from.' When asked whether the issue could gain strength here in the UK Katz suggested that, although the UK has the 'longest tradition of regulation, going back to the middle of the eighteenth century', it is nevertheless

possible that a court in the UK might conceivably decide something in a similar way to that of the German courts. Hence he stressed that 'it's the job of the Jewish community to maintain those standards.'

Christian clergy trained by rabbis



CCJ is offering curates-in-training a series of unique 'experiential learning' events. All have involved times with observant Jewish families as a way to encourage face-to-face dialogue. By way of example, curates from the Diocese of Oxford have enjoyed:

- a Sabbath morning synagogue service with a bat mitzvah followed by a leisurely Sabbath meal
- a demonstration Seder at the home of Rabbi Natan Levy, from the Board of Deputies of British Jews, with his family, complete with full festive meal.

Both events offered significant opportunities for dialogue, instruction, and reflection. One participant noted how the experience of the demonstration Seder provided an insight, not only into the Seder itself but also into Jewish faith, thinking and spiritual reflection, especially the deep significance of the Exodus. 'There is so much Christians



can learn about our relationship with God from Judaism,' she said. Another participant reflected, 'The evening affected me emotionally in the welcome and kindness received, making me feel valued.'

Indeed, these events have received such positive feedback that plans to expand their offering to other dioceses are well under way!

CCJ Lincoln's May 'Bible and Bagels' Event: 18th Century Men of Faith

Why not join CCJ Lincoln on at Church of our Lady of Lincoln on **Thursday 16 May**, 7.30pm (on the corner of Cabourne Avenue & Laughton Way: LN2 2HE) in the Parish Hall. The subject will be Learning from Great Characters of our Past, featuring a panel discussion about 18th-century figures Moses Mendelssohn and the Wesleys. The participants include Rabbi Danny Rich and the Revd. Bruce Thompson, and the discussion will be facilitated by Revd. Dr. Claire Potter.



Please help CCJ continue its work of combatting antisemitism and building understanding, tolerance and respect by making a donation **now**. Just fill in and cut out this section of the newsletter along the dotted lines and send it in an envelope to:

The Council of Christians and Jews, 21 Godliman Street, London EC4V 5BD

Cheques should be made payable to CCJ. THANK YOU.

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Important and Relevant 'Jerusalem' Series in Hillingdon

Following the fantastic first event in this three-part series entitled *The Place of Jerusalem in Christianity*, led by Dr. Joy Barrow, the Hillingdon CCJ branch warmly invites you to the second event in the series, which is entitled 'The Place of Jerusalem in Judaism'. The event will be led by Reverend Malcolm Weisman OBE, who is Jewish minister for small communities and a CCJ Trustee. The event will be held at **St. Giles Church Hall, Ickenham (UB10 8BG)**, on **Tuesday 21 May at 8pm**. Entry is £3 (£2 for CCJ Members). The concluding event in the series, 'The Place of Jerusalem in Islam', will take place on 11 June. For more details, go to CCJ Hillingdon's webpage: www.ccj.org.uk/hillingdon



Burial of Mediaeval Citizens of Norwich



The remains of 17 Jewish men, women and children believed to have been murdered more than 800 years ago, were given a proper Jewish burial in Norwich on 19th March 2013.

Excavations had uncovered the skeletons, thought to be Jewish settlers who died as a result of religious persecution.

The Rt. Revd. David Gillett, of the CCJ Board of Trustees, who gave an address at the burial, afterwards told ITV reporters: 'This was an obvious time in which to say as Christians, we are repentant about that story and rejoice in the fact that that would never happen today, because our friendship as Christians and Jews together is solid and secure.'

CCJ Berkshire to Meet the 'Loose Canon'



CCJ Berkshire is hosting a talk which will be given by the ever-colourful and provocative Reverend Giles Fraser, the former Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Church, who resigned over the way the Occupy group were treated.

He currently serves as Priest-in-Charge of St Mary, Newington, near Elephant and Castle. He is also a regular broadcaster on BBC Radio 4's *Thought for the Day* and *The Moral Maze*, as well as writing for *The Guardian*. Canon Fraser will give a talk on 'The Theology of Money and its Impact on Jewish-Christian Relations' at **Maidenhead Synagogue, Grenfell Lodge, Ray Park Road, Maidenhead, SL6 8QX** on **Wednesday 22nd May at 8.00pm**. It will be followed by questions and refreshments, along with a chance to talk to him personally. All are welcome.

Contact: admin@maidenheadsynagogue.org.uk or call 01628 673012

Interfaith Celebratory Concert



Over 300 people attended the **Merseyside CCJ 70th Anniversary Concert** at the King David Campus in Liverpool recently. Tayo Aluko, the award winning

international baritone, sang a collection of songs ranging from the classic to the modern.

CCJ planned the concert in partnership with the Phoenix Concert Orchestra, under the direction of Jill Hyde, former Director of Music at King David High School. The King David link ran throughout the concert with former Headteacher, John Smartt, returning as the Presenter, and many former students from the past 30 years playing in the Orchestra.

Bring Out More Chairs



CCJ Bournemouth is well known for its huge attendances but just prior to the start of their March event, there were around 60 people gathered in the Menorah Suite to listen to and to ask questions from a panel on *Antisemitism Today...* And then they started pouring in! Soon every available chair was in use to accommodate an estimated 140 people, Jews and Christians, from Bournemouth and farther afield.

The panel was expertly chaired by the Reverend Ian Terry, Vicar of Bournemouth and a committee member of Bournemouth CCJ. Also joining the panel was the Reverend David Gifford, the CEO of CCJ nationally and an expert on contemporary anti-Semitism. There were presentations from the panel which also included Andrew Kaye from CST, representatives of Dorset police and the Reverend Werner Oder who voiced strong support for Israel.

Most gratifying was to see a large number of people engaged in animated discussion which went on for long after the panel had finished. A large crowd is also expected on May 30th to hear a presentation on the *Kindertransport*.

CCJ Oxford Gathers for annual Chanukah and Advent Film Evening

On 12 December 2012, the Oxford CCJ branch gathered to enjoy a festive evening of wine, food and film. The film, entitled *Noodle*, told the inspiring story of an El Al flight attendant whose well-regulated existence was suddenly turned upside down by an abandoned Chinese boy whose migrant-worker mother had been summarily deported from Israel. The film was a touching comic-drama in which two human beings—as different from each other as Tel Aviv is from Beijing—accompanied each other on a remarkable journey, one that took them both back to a meaningful life.



Jews and Christians Learning Together in Bristol



CCJ Avon will gather to discuss the views of the provocative and illuminating French social scientist René Girard on the Bible's role in reducing human violence and scapegoating. The discussion will be led by **Richard Johnson**, a lecturer at the Open University.

René Girard (born December 25, 1923) is a French historian, literary critic, and philosopher of social science. His work belongs to the tradition of anthropological philosophy. His writings cover many areas and there is a growing body of secondary literature that uses his hypotheses and ideas in the areas of literary criticism, critical theory, anthropology, theology, psychology, mythology, sociology, economics, cultural studies, and philosophy.

The event will be held on **Monday 20th May 2013**, from **7:30–9:00pm**, at the **Multifaith Chaplaincy at the University of Bristol, 1 Woodland Road, Bristol BS8 1AU**