
THE CATHOLIC-JEWISH COLLOQUIUM: AN EXPERIMENT IN INTERRELIGIOUS LEARNING

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In 1992 the Lilly Endowment, Inc. awarded a grant of \$142,375 to the Institute for Christian-Jewish Studies in Baltimore for the Catholic-Jewish Colloquium. The Colloquium convened twenty-two professional Catholic and Jewish educators from the northeastern quadrant of the United States for six intensive two-day sessions over a period of nearly three years. This is the story of the project from the viewpoint of those who conceived and directed it. Our account is drawn from transcripts, journals, evaluations and personal communication with the participants, as well as from our own extensive notes.

I. CONVERSATIONS: CONCEIVING A PROJECT

It all began with a conversation ten years ago. Neither of us remembers the specifics very well, only that we talked far beyond the task and time either of us had allotted in our appointment books. From the beginning we intuited that our identity as religious educators created a powerful bond, while the particularity of our religious commitments generated a special energy that enriched our conversations and work. Little did we imagine then this energy would give rise to a life-changing project, the Catholic-Jewish Colloquium, funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc. (1992-1995).

That this initial encounter in 1985—a formal meeting at Boston College set up by a colleague of Sara's at Hebrew Union College for her to brief Mary on an upcoming event—happened at all is no small matter. Sara's experiences of Catholics and the Catholic Church growing up in Boston had not predisposed her to Catholic-Jewish dialogue. Yet in more recent years she had been drawn into interreligious activities in Los Angeles, one of which occasioned her meeting with Mary.

This initiative sparked subsequent conversations, which in turn led to presentations in one another's professional spheres and eventually to joint projects, such as writing complementary pa-

pers for the 1990 convention of the Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education [APRRE] (Boys 1991; Lee 1991). Each project demanded extensive consultation, whether by phone or in person when we traveled to the other's city. The "consultations," however, transcended the boundaries of business as we shared passionate convictions about the status and significance of religious education in our respective traditions—and a vast array of related topics. Over glasses of wine in many places, at the Seder table in Sara's daughter's home in Boston, even during a car accident while in Indianapolis to meet with staff at the Lilly Endowment, we increasingly experienced the intertwining of the personal and professional.

So by the time we sat at a kitchen table in Boston in April 1991 to draft a grant proposal for an educational venture between Jews and Catholics, we could build upon many shared assumptions. Chief among them was our passion for the work of religious education in our communities of faith and our conviction that religious educators play a critical role in the formation of Jewish and Christian identity. Moreover, our opportunities to teach together had revealed that the mutuality we experienced when discussing education was borne out in practice.

We also shared concerns about the role of religion in our largely secular society. It seemed to us that religious pluralism compounds the difficult task of forming people in the identity of a particular religious tradition. A society without substantial historical or religious literacy tends to foster either of two tendencies: an intolerant fundamentalism or a religious indifference. We were convinced that these responses to pluralism were not healthy either for society or for religion. Rather, we believed, faith must be both grounded in the particularities of one's tradition and capable of engaging in conversation across the boundaries of particularism. We thought a serious and sensitive interreligious educational project could stimulate new understandings not simply of another tradition but also of one's own.

Nonetheless, we recognized that each of us came to the table with different issues. Not only are our traditions asymmetrical, but Jews and Catholics have distinctive tasks in relation to each other. We resolved from the beginning to explore our differences rather than minimize them. Obviously, Jews and Christians differ theologically, but we determined to take account of the psychological and spiritual dimensions of our differences.

The Task for Christians

There is simply no way to speak about Christianity without reference to Judaism. Thus, Catholic educators—both teachers and preachers—teach about Jews and Judaism whether they are aware of it or not. Despite the substantial role Judaism plays in Christian self-understanding, few educators have given much thought to accurate portrayals of Judaism in their teaching about Christian life.

Mary, however, had been interested for years in integrating new understandings among Christians toward Judaism—particularly the Catholic Church's changed stance—into the educational realm, and in making scholarship more accessible (Boys 1993). Despite a number of significant church documents, beginning with *Nostra aetate* in 1965, and an impressive array of scholarly studies across the range of theological specializations, no sustained and systematic educational works were available to help educators rework the conventional understandings most had grown up with. Educational resources consisted either of summaries of scholarship, evident in the collaboration of Eugene Fisher and Leon Klenicki (Fisher and Klenicki 1982 and 1990; Fisher and Rudin 1986), or analyses of textbooks (Pawlikowski 1973; Fisher 1977; Cunningham 1995).

Both the summaries and analyses offered a wealth of insights, but, in Mary's view, their exclusively cognitive approach did not suffice for a task that enters so deeply into one's life of faith and religious identity. As the Catholic bishops of France said in 1973, Judaism "poses questions to us Christians that touch on the heart of our faith" (Croner 1977, 61).

What was needed, she believed, was a forum for Catholics to rethink their identity and vocation through a sustained encounter with Judaism and Jews—both the tradition itself and those who embody it. First-hand experience by Catholics with the vitality of Judaism as lived by contemporary Jews would be essential to challenging residual ideas grounded in supersessionism and gaining an understanding of Judaism as a complete and vibrant faith in its own right. She saw educational process as fundamental, because the transformation she believed Catholics were called to involves more than the acquisition of new concepts, as important as those are. To undergo the conversion implied by *Nostra aetate* and the subsequent ecclesial statements necessitates having the

proper context in which one can experience the stimulation and support of study with others, develop the tools for deeper inquiry into the tradition, and cultivate new understandings.

The Task for Jews

Changes advocated in Catholic teaching and behavior, along with the opportunity for mutually respectful dialogue between Catholics and Jews, pose challenges for Jews as well. Many Jews have welcomed the renewed understanding of the Jewish roots of Christianity, the affirmation of Judaism as a complete religion in its own terms, and the growing sensitivity to Jewish concerns, both historical and contemporary. While most Jews believe that a full understanding of Christianity calls for the recovery of its Jewish roots, they do not perceive that understanding Judaism requires a similar integration of the other Western religious traditions. Since Judaism is the first Western, monotheistic religion, Jews regard Christianity (and Islam) as derivative from Judaism. Consequently, most Jews would not see Christianity (and Islam) as integral to the development of Judaism, although the relation between these religions is clearly a subject of great importance in an historical context.

The Jewish historical experience reinforces a view of Christianity associated with violence and persecution. So Jews generally conclude that the belief system of Christianity has been responsible for the victimization of Jews over the centuries. Consequently, contemporary Jews are uncertain how they should react to the recent changes in Church attitude and behavior. This self-perception of Jews, reinforced by the experience of the Holocaust and combined with a lack of understanding and appreciation of Christianity—particularly Catholicism—poses a serious barrier to meaningful dialogue in an interreligious context.

Sara believed that if Jews were to move beyond a singular perception of Christianity as a source of anti-Jewish belief and behavior to a fuller comprehension of Christianity in its historical and theological contexts, it was essential that they learn about Christianity on its own terms. Precisely because Christianity's "teaching of contempt" has loomed so large in the Jewish experience, Jews need a forum in which they can gain a fuller picture of Christian life. Only when Jews have the opportunity to learn about Christianity "from the inside" will they be able to liberate

themselves from a view of Christianity as primarily predicated on rejection and persecution of Jews. Reexamining their historical experience in the light of a deeper understanding of Christianity and the Church will challenge Jews to question a self-understanding that is based to a great extent on being victims. Only when Jews can experience the dynamics of Christian life as lived by contemporary Christians can they come to appreciate its beliefs and practices and to be able to engage in the kind of in-depth conversation that lies at the heart of genuine dialogue.

II. ENDS AND MEANS

Given our assumptions, what did we intend to accomplish in the Colloquium and how would we achieve our purposes?

Without question, "transformation" was the key word in our conversations about the goals of our project. That is, we hoped for significant changes in understanding and attitude on the part of participants in regard both to the other's tradition and their own. So we explicitly set about designing a curriculum that would engender new understandings of the other. Further, we hypothesized that participants' changed perception of the other would alter their own self-understanding.

However, the transformations we thought participants would undergo were not symmetrical. We formulated the transformations this way: *Jews don't so much have to change their theology as they do their self-understanding based on history. Christians have to reconstitute their theology because so much of it is grounded in an inadequate understanding of Judaism.*

These changes, we believed, would most likely happen in people who were *studying in the presence of the other*. We designed the Colloquium to facilitate encounter with *the tradition as embodied in the other*. We wanted to transcend learning *about* the other, as important as that may be; rather, our interest lay in providing ways participants might meet Judaism or Catholicism as *it was lived by informed, committed Jewish and Catholic educators*.

We had a further transformation in mind. If our participants began to think in new ways about the other, their relationship with the other and their own tradition, then ultimately they would be challenged to educate differently. Both the Catholic and Jewish educators would view with a more critical eye how the rela-

tionship between Christianity and Judaism is presented in religious education in their communities. Further, they would be more sensitive to how the tradition of the other is presented or, indeed, whether it is presented at all. We hoped that the participants would emerge from the Colloquium with the knowledge and know-how to make significant changes in the way Judaism and Christianity are taught. That is, we intended that participants would not simply teach more adequately about the other tradition, but also about their own.

Our agenda, we recognize, was ambitious, and to many within our respective traditions, controversial. It also required enormous care. The process of transformation takes time. The transformation we hoped to initiate suggested that duration was a critical factor. We needed to provide participants with occasions to assimilate their new learnings and to integrate them into the ordinary routines and rhythms of their lives. Thus, we chose to schedule our sessions in five intensive two-day segments over an eighteen-month period. Careful stewardship of the funds enabled us to have a sixth session seventeen months later. We kept in touch between sessions through regular mailings and, eventually, a newsletter, *Colloquy*.

Transformation, moreover, is a messy process. We knew from the outset that if the participants engaged in study in the presence of the other, disequilibrium would be inevitable. Beliefs, attitudes and perceptions would be challenged, as participants attempted to explain their own tradition in response to the probing questions of members of the other tradition. Honest confrontations over real differences and, on occasion, over misunderstandings of one another's traditions, were both necessary and unsettling. We sensed as well that not all participants would come with the knowledge base sufficient to enable them to participate confidently in mutual study. Our awareness of the unavoidable cognitive (and affective) dissonance and of the varying degrees of background did not deter us in our determination to fashion a rigorous encounter.

III. COLLOQUIUM PARTICIPANTS

The recruitment and preparation of Colloquium participants posed one of the great challenges to this effort. Religious educators within the Catholic and Jewish faith communities confront a

daunting task as they undertake to educate and socialize Catholics and Jews into their traditions, because both Catholics and Jews are fully integrated into secular American society and are primarily influenced by its values and norms. While appreciative of religious pluralism in America, religious educators often feel that it is a luxury, given the limited amount of time allocated to religious learning, to teach about traditions of faith other than their own or to engage in interfaith activity. Interest in interreligious learning is marginal among educators in both the Catholic and Jewish communities.

Thus recruitment for such an intensive experience as the Catholic-Jewish Colloquium needed to focus on the small group of religious educators who had some prior experience in or commitment to interfaith activity, or who at least could see the value in an interfaith experience as a means to their own intellectual or religious growth. Recruitment of the eleven Catholic and eleven Jewish educators took place through advertisements in appropriate journals and mailings to educators known to the two directors. We asked candidates for the Colloquium to submit an application with essays explaining their interest in and expectations for the Colloquium. A committee of four, including two staff members of the Institute for Christian-Jewish Studies and the two Colloquium directors, evaluated the applications. The committee based its selection on experience with or aptitude for interfaith activity, academic background, professional leadership within the field of religious education in the applicants' respective communities, intellectual curiosity, openness to new experiences, and commitment to carry forward the work of the Catholic-Jewish Colloquium in their professional practice. In submitting a proposal to the Lilly Endowment, we had specified that participants would be drawn from the northeastern quadrant of North America in order to limit travel costs.

Diversity among the participants was a high priority for the directors. While we hoped for gender balance, women greatly outnumber men in the field of religious education. Thus, it was no surprise to us that five men and seventeen women constituted the Colloquium group. The age range, however, was quite remarkable. The group included grandmothers, parents of young children, parents of grown children, unmarried members and three women who gave birth to children during the course of the Colloquium. Participants' professional positions reflected a wide

range of religious educational institutions. Among the members of the group were staff members of diocesan offices of education, diocesan directors of youth ministry, synagogue educators, staff of central agencies of Jewish education, educators in Catholic schools and Jewish day schools, and a member of a religious order who is a doctoral student. One participant was African-American and the others white. The twenty-two participants included four ordained clergy, three rabbis, and one priest. The Jewish participants represented Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform denominations. The variety of life experiences and professional involvements contributed to the richness of the conversation and shared insights.

Once the participants had been selected, we began a process of orientation. Prior to the first session, participants signed letters of commitment regarding attendance at and preparation for each session and indicated their willingness to use the knowledge they gained in the Colloquium in their respective communities. We mailed a set of books and a collection of articles to all participants in order to provide fundamental knowledge about the issues to be discussed. To guide preparation for the first session of the Colloquium, we prepared questions that would assist the participants in introducing themselves in a meaningful way and would challenge them to reflect on core beliefs and values they held as Catholics or Jews.

In retrospect, the careful selection and orientation of participants was a crucial ingredient in the success of the Colloquium. The comments of the participants and the conclusions of the project evaluators attest to the readiness, seriousness, and commitment of Colloquium participants. This is important because ultimately it is the participants who will carry forward the critical work of interreligious learning.

IV. PEDAGOGICAL REASONING AND ACTION

Lee Shulman's useful model of "pedagogical reasoning and action" identifies a flow of six activities in teaching. He argues that teaching should be continuous movement of reasoning and action that includes: (1) the teacher's own comprehension of the subject matter, (2) the transformation of that subject into teachable material, (3) the act of instruction, (4) evaluation of that teaching, (5) reflection of what transpired, and finally, (6) new

comprehension of both the subject matter and the pedagogical process (1987). We followed a similar rhythm of reasoning and action, although it is only in retrospect that we can sort our work so neatly. Five areas of inquiry seem to have directed our planning and action for each session and its follow-up:

- What knowledge about our religious traditions and their relationship is critical for the transformations we hope to engender?
- What educational processes would enable participants to engage this knowledge in a way that would lead to transformation?
- What are the cognitive assumptions and “emotional loadings” participants will bring to this experience? How might we best address them?
- What resources, human and material, will participants need in order to achieve transformed understandings?
- What do we envision participants will do as a result of these transformed understandings?

For the sake of clarity, we will take up each of these questions in turn; in the actual planning, however, we seldom discussed one without reference to the others. In fact, decisions made in response to one question influenced how we responded to others.

Knowledge of Our Religious Traditions and Their Relationship

As in any extended educational endeavor, we wrestled throughout with what to select from the vast array of scholarship on Jewish-Christian relations. Our own study together had underscored the importance of revisiting the first century and of examining the major historical encounters. But we puzzled for a long time over our point of departure. What concepts would serve to frame all the sessions? What fresh lenses might we bring as religious educators? And what other topics impinged upon our goals?

Of course, always our discussion of *what* to teach intertwined with *when* and *how* to teach it. Form and content may be distinguished for purposes of analysis, but they are inextricably linked. Precisely because we recognized that the topics we would study had psychological and spiritual dimensions, we assigned priority to designing appropriate processes. This meant that we covered less ground in an attempt to provide participants with a forum to voice their questions, inferences, misgivings and insights about the material. Participants affirmed this decision, and yet they (and we) felt we never had sufficient time to think together about important topics (e.g., Christology). Time was a constraint in every session. One participant, however, put this limitation in

context: "I feel comfort in the knowledge that difficult questions need not go unanswered, as long as phones and faxes work. . . . I feel I am a member of a permanent team dedicated to linking our two communities for the betterment of both."

The details regarding what knowledge we decided to focus on during the Colloquium make for an excessively lengthy tale. In short, we began with an introductory session that served as a sort of "set induction," then moved historically in meetings two and three. In the fourth meeting we complemented this historical movement with sociological analysis, studying the impact of the North American context in our respective communities. The fifth meeting (the final meeting in the original design) centered on sustaining and extending the Colloquium through educational strategies appropriate for the contexts in which our participants worked. The sixth and last meeting focused on issues around particularism and pluralism. The following chart provides an overview of the major components of each session, and thus serves to outline our curriculum:

Session	Topic
Colloquium I February 21-23, 1993	<i>Exploring Differences as a Means of Establishing Common Ground: The Asymmetrical Character of Judaism and Christianity</i> Emphasis on Scripture as common source and source of division. Discussion of four orienting questions. Participants name texts that play a central role in shaping the way a Jew or Catholic understands his or her tradition. Participants also share texts that have a strong personal meaning for their own understanding as a Jew or a Catholic. Exercises on relation between Testaments. Text study of Genesis 22 (the "binding" or "sacrifice" of Isaac), using Jewish and Christian commentaries illustrative of different interpretative lenses. Boys and Lee explore ways Jews and Christians use similar terms (creation, redemption, revelation), but draw upon them in different ways. Recording of questions that have emerged in the course of the two days and identification of dimensions of the session that elicited resonance, puzzlement, and/or discomfort.
Colloquium II June 22-23, 1993	<i>Jews and Christians in the First Two Centuries</i> Emphasis on protracted, complex and polemical "partings of the ways." Discussion of readings (Cohen and Dunn). Guest scholar Anthony J. Saldarini leads study of two

Session	Topic
Colloquium III October 31- November 1, 1993	Jewish reform movements illustrated by the Gospel of Matthew and the Dead Sea Scrolls. He extends discussion into late second century to show common moves to consolidate, legitimate and institutionalize interpretations (e.g. Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael, Epistle of Barnabas, Didache and Mishnah Berakot). Four participants lead a session on the <i>Amidah</i> (Prayer of the Eighteen Benedictions) and the Eucharistic prayer. Boys and Lee lead orientation to study of history in preparation for next session.
Colloquium III October 31- November 1, 1993	<i>Revisiting the History in the Presence of the Other</i> Emphasis on High Middle Ages and Enlightenment, with initial discussion of the <i>Shoah</i> and Vatican II. Discussion of readings (Saperstein 1989 and Flannery [1965] 1985). Guest scholar Michael Signer leads text studies (Anselm, Nahmanides, Gregory IX and Rashi) and then gives a presentation on the impact of the Enlightenment and Romanticism on Judaism and Christianity. He also leads a discussion of Jewish-Christian relations, using selected church documents from <i>Nostra aetate</i> to the present. Participants engage in peer teaching on sacred time, taking an aspect of the High Holy Days-Succot cycle or of the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany season with which they resonate. Boys and Lee lead an orientation to the next session following participants' wide-ranging discussion on issues and problems in teaching history.
Colloquium IV January 9-10, 1994	<i>Judaism and Catholicism in the North American Context</i> Emphasis on formative role of immigrant experience and on tensions between Jewish/Catholic identity and identity as American or Canadian. Discussion of readings (Moore 1986). Guest scholars John Coleman and Hasia Diner alternate in presentations on immigration, on the interaction between communities of faith and North American culture, and on sociological/historical perspectives on interreligious learning. Participants identify tensions as religious persons in North American society and reflect on implications. Boys and Lee lead discussion on Holocaust and interreligious learning, using their reflections on a visit to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as the focus. They end with mapping educational tasks for next session.
Colloquium V May 1-3, 1994	<i>The Educational Tasks of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue</i> Emphasis on sustaining and extending the Catholic-Jewish Colloquium, with special attention to designing projects

Session	Topic
Colloquium VI November 12- 13, 1995	<p>for interreligious learning. Guest scholar Celia Deutsch leads a text study of Matthew 17:1-8. Participants work on one of three tasks (projects for developing an in-service program for teachers, a high school course on the other tradition, and on creating receptivity for programming about the other tradition in a central agency or diocese). Participants engage in peer teaching on texts and spirituality. Panelists Deutsch, Don Goor and Elizabeth Losinski reflect on the story of their involvement in Catholic-Jewish dialogue. Boys and Lee explore the colloquium as a model of learning and lead discussion about establishing a network to continue relationships.</p> <p><i>Religious Educators and the Work of Interreligious Learning</i></p> <p>Emphasis on particularism and pluralism in integrating the Colloquium into educational work. Participants reconnect to Colloquium through commentary on a cluster of quotations taken from evaluation and transcripts. Boys and Lee use a contemporary icon ("Mary the 'Captive Daughter of Zion'" by Robert Lentz) as a case in point of the complexity of their respective symbol systems. Participants share a practice, text or belief from their tradition they understand differently because of the Colloquium. Participants engage in text study around issues of particularism and pluralism (Kogan 1995; Eck 1993) and analyze strategies for action. Boys and Lee lead final session on relationship between Colloquium and the fundamental tasks of religious education with help from visiting scholar Dorothy C. Bass.</p>

Figure 1

However helpful the chart may be in outlining the general contours of our project, it is deceptive insofar as it may suggest that we progressed in linear fashion. To the contrary. Although we were clear on some components from the outset (e.g., the importance of revisiting history), others we decided upon only through the process of leading the sessions and subsequent reflection. For instance, after session one, the participants indicated a strong desire to "get inside" the other's tradition of faith. Their articulation stimulated us to pay more attention to ways of inviting the other into the depths of one's tradition—to transcend the rational and to give the other a feel for the "soul" of Catholicism

and Judaism through sharing of practices. We consider this decision one of our wisest—thanks to the insight of our participants.

Some inherently difficult issues challenged us and even now leave us unsure we decided rightly. We pondered for many months how to approach the topic of the Holocaust (*Shoah*). Obviously, any Christian-Jewish encounter of substance had to confront this topic. At one juncture, we decided to devote a day of our third session to a group visit to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in nearby Washington, D.C. In the end, however, we decided that such a visit would give undue focus to the *Shoah*, and thus decided not to take the group. We wanted to avoid having the *Shoah* dominate the Colloquium to such an extent that we reinforced a Jewish reading of history as a succession of persecutions and caused Christians to be paralyzed with guilt. We did encourage participants, however, to take advantage of the proximity to the Holocaust Museum, and most did visit it on their own.

In planning with guest scholar Michael Signer for Colloquium III, we situated the *Shoah* in the context of the historical study. Time constraints, however, meant that we gave insufficient attention to it. To compensate, we devoted one evening in the fourth session to the implications of the Holocaust for interreligious learning. We began that session by presenting our own reflections from the day the two of us had spent together at the Holocaust Museum several months previously. We then posed two questions to the group. First, we asked the Jewish participants: "Given the centrality of the Holocaust to contemporary Jewish identity, what do you want to convey to Catholics that might help them to gain new insights about its significance?" Second, we asked all of them: "What does all this mean in terms of conversation between Catholics and Jews?"

Those questions did not "work," insofar as the discussion moved along much more diffuse lines. In hindsight, perhaps we should not be surprised that even a group of Jews and Catholics who had grown to trust and care for one another over eleven months would find it difficult to discuss the *Shoah*. Some moments were especially poignant, such as guest scholar Hasia Diner's observations as the daughter of a survivor (a fact we had not known). We all left the room that evening aware that our words had been inadequate.

Yet, however incomplete the discussion, some important

breakthroughs seemed to have happened. A Jewish participant said the next day that our historical study and then the discussion of the *Shoah* meant we could now get off the “medieval battlefield”—a battlefield to which the Holocaust bears terrible witness. One of the Catholic participants said a number of months later that our presentation based on our day together at the Holocaust Memorial Museum was one the most memorable moments of the entire Colloquium. It led to the realization that “the Jews in the room could have been those victims. Putting names to the faces—no longer was the Holocaust just a group of anonymous faces, but real people. It was a personal experience of transformation.”

Similarly, another Catholic participant phoned Mary several weeks later. She had just been to see *Schindler's List*, and simply needed to talk. As she wrote in her journal:

“Schindler's List” and the aftermath—The theater was packed, but silent at the end. I have read about the Holocaust and seen some documentaries dealing with it. Some were more graphic [than “Schindler's List”], so it took me by surprise to be affected as I was. For a full ten minutes my body was wracked with sobbing. I could not walk or talk at all. What was the reason? I had put names on those faces on the screen, and their names were Edelstein, Aft, Tornberg, Diamond, Lehmann, Vogel, Joselow, Reich, Dickman, Ray, Elster [Jewish participants in the Colloquium]. How could we have allowed this to happen to people who were just like my colleagues with whom I've studied, discussed, laughed, cried, for the past year? What can I do to make sure this never happens again? Do I have a moral duty to engage others in learning and discussion which will lead to understanding (or at least tolerance) of others so this will not, cannot, be repeated?

Although we never felt sure about our decision to confront the Holocaust as honestly as possible without devoting large blocks of time to it, at least some of the participants seemed to sense the importance—and difficulty—of moving beyond the identity of the Jew as “victim.” One participant mused during a discussion: “. . . [M]any Jews come to Christian-Jewish dialogue in order to protect themselves from the potential of a future Holocaust, a future pogrom, or some future outbreak of the mobs.”

Such comments illustrate the value of revisiting history in the presence of the other. As one person put it in a memorable if inelegant phrase: “You can't study history adequately with your own kind.”

Educational Processes

Our goal throughout was crafting ways of working with participants that fostered their *engagement* with the resources: readings, guest scholars, and one another. Study was central. We purchased seventeen books for each person (see “list of works consulted”), and prepared a booklet of readings. Typically, we followed each distribution of books or essays with a series of questions that became the focus for an extended discussion at the beginning of each session. Participants, in turn, committed themselves to careful preparation for each session and to full involvement in all exercises and discussions.

We consider this emphasis on study through preparation and discussion to be crucial to the transformational process. Too often, in our view, dialogue is reduced to a sharing of opinions and uninformed perspectives. Or it is a largely passive meeting in which people listen to a speaker for whom they have neither proper preparation nor subsequent opportunity to pursue the presentation in one another’s presence. We ultimately named our approach *interreligious learning* as a way of accentuating the centrality of knowledge and study in structuring conversation across religious boundaries.

Implicit in the importance we accorded study is our confidence in the participants’ ability to learn. They varied in background; some had considerably more academic preparation than did others. Some held positions that required constant study, whereas others served in leadership roles that permitted little leisure for study. Early on, a participant who heads a major educational bureau quipped: “It’s such a pleasure to think. Let’s face it, the people who pay our salaries want us just to put on programs.”

Stimulating people’s thinking was indeed key for us, although we did not always succeed in finding appropriate educational strategies for the varied learning styles of our participants. Some felt overwhelmed at various points by the complexity of the material and by the intensity of the discussions.

Central to the way we taught was the careful crafting of questions. We often spent hours of planning time trying to fashion just the right question. But spontaneity also played an enormous role. The participants’ candid observations, questions and comments often moved discussion in ways we had not anticipated. In the first instance, we exercised considerable control

over the process by selecting foci and structuring discussion. In the second, someone's forthright response, whether in a formal session or in the many informal discussions during breaks or late into the night, animated new ways of reflection. A few examples of each will illustrate the importance of both the planning and the spontaneity.

In posing questions, we sought to involve participants both cognitively and affectively—a distinction that, like form and content, may be held only in the abstract. For example, we opened the second session with an opportunity for people to respond to this query: "Is there anything that's happened to you since February that is indicative of some changing perspectives?" We followed this with an extended period of discussion of the preparatory readings, two scholarly works, Shaye Cohen's *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* and James D. G. Dunn's densely argued *The Partings of the Ways*. We framed the discussion of Cohen and Dunn with three questions sent in advance to participants:

1. In what way was your understanding of this period expanded or advanced?
2. What elements of their work created a cognitive dissonance in terms of your previous understanding?
3. What are you rethinking in regard to (1) the nature and transformation of Judaism in the Second Temple period; and (2) the emergence of Christianity?

After participants responded individually (initially in small groups so that all could participate, then with groups recording their responses for a general discussion), we followed with questions for each table: (1) What resources (concepts, data, insights) from Cohen and Dunn inform your rethinking? (2) In teaching this period in your own community of faith, what do you see as the major educational issue or challenge?

These questions, typical of the way we framed the discussion of readings at the start of each meeting, challenged participants to synthesize even as they identified facts and concepts that engendered disequilibrium. We varied the questions, sometimes stimulating participants to think analytically about the reading, other times inviting them to share personal perspectives or teasing out educational challenges. We had been helped in formulating the questions by comments made by participants in casual encounters. For instance, a participant happened to call Mary

shortly after beginning her reading of Dunn. "Am I the only one who doesn't know all this?" she asked [she wasn't]. "It's a bombshell on every page." Such remarks confirmed our sense that Dunn and Cohen would upset everyone's conventional wisdom about Christianity's emergence from Judaism, so we posed our questions in ways that invited participants to articulate what was "percolating" in their own minds.

On other occasions, someone's remark would simply catch all of us off guard. Most memorable, especially for the Catholics, was the moment when, during a rare silence, a Jewish participant spoke: "Why do you need Jesus? Why can't you talk directly to God?" Stunned, one of the Catholics finally responded, "It isn't that we *need* Jesus. He just is." Participants are still talking about that exchange.

Many significant exchanges took place outside the formal sessions. For instance, at Colloquium I we did an exercise on the relationship between the Testaments ("The First Testament is to the Second Testament as 'x' is to 'y'") that had brought out differences in the two traditions in a quite vivid way. Catholics especially were taken aback. Many had come with the assumption that the New Testament fulfilled the Old Testament—and suddenly *in the presence of Jews* formulating metaphors grounded in that assumption sounded presumptuous, leading some, as they later confessed, to censor their thinking. When one of the Jews suggested that the relationship to him was that of "apples to oranges," the Catholics were even further undone. One person described this as a time when the "smiles of many of the Catholics slipped off their faces and onto the floor in disbelief." We then took a break, and two of the women met in the lavatory. The Catholic member of this pair describes their encounter:

I thought I'd smooth over the tension arising from the different perspectives of Jews and Catholics around the question by assuring her that we read *her* texts on Sunday, etc. I thought this would be supportive. Her response triggered rethinking many of my perceptions when she said, "But how are you interpreting them?"

Later, we realized that the analogy exercise would have been better worded: "The first part of the Bible is to the second part of the Bible as 'x' is to 'y'." Yet we knew, even as we spent enormous amounts of time wording questions, that the questions themselves were simply openings. What happened in conversa-

tion often went beyond what any of us had imagined. One participant wrote Mary after Colloquium II:

Reflecting on these conversations now, I think that the reason I was astounded by these exchanges is that when I thought about the colloquium prior to attending, I *never imagined* (her emphasis) participating in such dialogue. My lasting impression . . . of this past weekend is that these thoughts [their discussion] were not 'agenda items' that anyone brought to the conversation [but] rather emerging multi-level realizations (cognitive, emotional, practical) that what we share is deeper than what divides us.

At times the emphasis on process increased the level of frustration. When asked about some belief, ritual, or practice, participants realized that their own grasp was often not adequate. They realized, sometimes with considerable pain, that they didn't know their own tradition as well as they had thought. They also experienced how difficult it can be to address a question that presumes an entire context or that has a considerable degree of "affective attachment." One participant reported after Colloquium I:

It struck me—almost as a bolt out of the blue—that this experience of the Colloquium promises (threatens?) to be life-changing. As I look at the roots of what I have believed and professed for all my life there are some very problematic areas which emerge. The time and energy that go into the Colloquium itself promise to be only the beginning of the time and energy I will personally be forced to spend on a more introspective study. This is, in many ways, frightening, threatening, uneasy, and at the same time exciting, challenging and perhaps a new beginning.

Although we did not name it as such in the beginning, we knew that the transformation we intended as the goal of our project had to be achieved through what might be termed "transformative learning," that is, the "process of examining, questioning, validating, and revising" our perceptions of our experience (Cranton 1994, 26; Mezirow 1991). A transformed understanding of the other's tradition and of one's own requires processes that foster transformative learning. Otherwise, transformation is achieved through manipulation.

Cognitive Assumptions and Emotional Loadings

This inquiry immediately elicits consideration of the psychological and spiritual dimensions of the Colloquium. We sensed

that participants would come to the initial session with a considerable level of discomfort, if not fear (Charlesworth 1992). They were, after all, committing themselves to a project they knew relatively little about, and some knew no one else in the group. More significantly, history hovered over our gathering: We were convening two traditions with, as historian Amos Funkenstein has said, an “astonishing symmetry of ambivalence.” “I know of no other two religions tied to each other with such strong mutual bonds of aversion and fascination, attraction and revulsion” (1993, 170). The conflictual character of the history means that Jews have little reason to trust Christians in general, and Christians typically come to encounters with Jews with ambivalence and guilt.

Such emotional loadings suggested to us the importance of fostering a safe atmosphere. Consequently, we selected a neutral site, the Mt. Washington Conference Center in Baltimore, so that no one needed to feel uneasy with another’s religious symbols. Further, we provided opportunity for participants to voice their anxieties, to let their feelings become part of the curriculum. For example, we began the first session of Colloquium I with four orienting questions that had been sent ahead of time to the participants: (1) What intrigued you about taking part in this project? (2) What hopes do you bring in terms of your self-understanding as a Jew or a Catholic? (3) What hopes do you bring about developing a greater understanding of the other? (4) What concerns, issues, and anxieties do you bring to your participation in this project?

We also shared our own hopes and anxieties. Moreover, the high degree of trust and honesty that had developed between us and our obvious enjoyment of one another suggested to participants that serious engagement with “the other” was not only possible but enriching.

The final module of Colloquium I provided participants with an opportunity to record their moments of puzzlement or discomfort, as well as resonance with the topics we had confronted. We also solicited written evaluations at all the sessions and encouraged participants to write or call us with any concerns that arose.

As we had anticipated, it was particularly in revisiting history that we witnessed the interplay of cognitive assumptions and emotional loadings. We brought our own cognitive assumptions

to this history. In preparing participants for Colloquium III, we wrote the following to share with participants:

We need to look at the question of history and identity, that is, what happened to Christians and Jews on the basis of their interaction. For Jews, history has entailed constant interaction with Christians (and the Church) as a minority (an often disenfranchised minority), and this has profoundly shaped self-understanding. For Christians there is less apparent shaping by its relation with Judaism, yet that relation has also been a preoccupation (witness John Chrysostom, the Crusades, blood libel charges, etc.). Perhaps this is to oversimplify, but one way of getting at the fundamental contours of our historical relationship is to say that for Jews, Christians and the Church have been (and are?) the problem. For Christians, Judaism itself is the problem; Judaism's continued viability challenges supersessionism.

This framework for the study of history suggested that each tradition had reason to be apprehensive. "We all carry scripts," said one participant, "and to stop seeing ourselves and the other in those ways is to start out on a journey that has no script and that really is frightening, and that on some very basic level . . . is a recrafting of the whole sense of self."

Not surprisingly, revisiting history evoked guilt among the Catholics. In a discussion among themselves toward the end of Colloquium III, they talked at length about repentance as a necessary prelude to reconciliation. But their conversation revealed a number of other "emotional loadings," including disappointment and chagrin that their own education had included so little historical study—and that it had been a history in which the Jews were largely absent. And now that they had begun to experience the significance of conversation with Jews, they manifested growing frustration with the lack of importance accorded the Jewish-Christian dialogue in the Church.

Resources Needed to Achieve Transformed Understandings

We did not lack for excellent resources, either human or material; our difficulty lay in selecting resources appropriate to the background of our participants and the time available for study. We had laid out a generous line for resources in our grant proposal, and we believe that the seventeen books we provided participants both encouraged their preparation for the sessions and gave them a basic library in Jewish-Christian relations.

Cognizant of the vast sweep of scholarship that Jewish-Christian conversation has produced in the past thirty or so years, we

relied on specialists to guide us through key topics. We worked to integrate the presentations of our five guest scholars (Anthony J. Saldarini, Michael A. Signer, John A. Coleman, Hasia Diner, and Celia Deutsch) into the flow of each session. Typically, they listened in on the participants' discussion of their preparatory readings before beginning their presentations, and we worked with each scholar so that his or her lectures were complemented by significant time for discussion.

Our guest scholars were outstanding. Each came superbly prepared and entered wholeheartedly into the process. In retrospect, however, we think we may have given the guest scholars too much of a role in view of the participants' desire for more time to process what they were learning.

Participant Action

One of the terms of agreement between us and those selected to participate in the Colloquium was their willingness to disseminate what they learned by means of new curricula, staff development, educational materials and publications. We ourselves, however, did not have a detailed design in mind—only the more general sense that a serious educational venture with educators should be manifest in their work.

We discovered through the formative evaluation in Colloquium III that participants felt considerable anxiety about how to translate what they had learned. They articulated the need to become familiar with existing materials, programs, and models and to receive some “political” advice regarding integrating their learning into the agenda of their respective institutions. In response, we commissioned a project bibliography (part of which is included in this issue) and established a structure for participants to design specific models that would be a major focus of the fifth meeting.

In preparing participants for Colloquium V, we proposed the following heuristic:

Educational Tasks of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue

To Inform	To Transform	To Influence
<p>Mode 1. Teaching Catholics about Judaism and the Jewish people</p>	<p>Mode Interreligious learning: study in the presence of the other.</p>	<p>Mode Advocacy and networking in order to create responsiveness to dia-</p>

(Continued)

Educational Tasks of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue

To Inform	To Transform	To Influence
2. Teaching Jews about Christianity/Catholicism and the Church. 3. Teaching aspects of Judaism in the course of teaching Christianity. 4. Teaching aspects of Christianity in the course of teaching Judaism.		dialogue between Jews and Christians in an institution or agency.
Goals and rationale , including consideration of context and relevance.	Goals and rationale , including consideration of context and relevance.	Goals and rationale , including consideration of context and relevance.
Characteristics of audience for program and assumptions about this audience.	Characteristics of audience for program and assumptions about this audience.	Assumptions about the agency the group is attempting to influence.
Resources required (human, material, fiscal).	Resources required (human, material and fiscal).	Resources required (human, material and fiscal), including formation of coalitions.
Description of the program structure and content, and of the use of time.	Description of the program structure and content, and of the use of time.	Strategies for achieving goals.

Figure 2

With this map in hand, we identified tasks illustrative of the sorts of activities appropriate to each and asked participants to come prepared to work on two of the tasks. Figure 3 summarizes this:

Information	Transformation	Influence
Develop an in-service program for teachers, teaching them about the tradition of the other, with consideration for how that tradition relates to their own.	Develop an interreligious learning experience for educational leaders from both faith communities in a particular locale.	Design a way of creating receptivity for programming about the other tradition or interreligious learning in a diocese or central agency.
Develop a high-school course on the other tradition.	Develop an interreligious learning experience for adolescents from a parish and synagogue.	

Figure 3
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Our purpose in devoting considerable time to the five tasks outlined above was not so much to develop ready-to-use programs or strategies—though ultimately participants did produce models to share with the group—as it was to involve participants in *thinking through with one another* how to proceed in this largely unexplored terrain. We worked alongside the participants and experienced with them just how complicated it can be to plan and execute programs and strategies of this sort.

We were fortunate in having Colloquium VI to sort through the success and failures of what the participants attempted between May 1994 and November 1995. We found that relatively few participants had been able to mount major programs, but that virtually all had found significant ways to integrate their experiences in interreligious learning into their educational work. A number had written brief articles for educational publications and many had led study sessions or participated in panels. One participant reported that the Colloquium enabled him to “find resources in myself I didn’t know I had.”

Even more important to us was the extent to which participants came to feel personally involved with the ideas and issues we had studied. We knew not everyone was in the position to integrate the Colloquium experience immediately into his or her professional sphere, but we did hope that every single participant would be motivated and prepared to draw upon what they had learned in creative ways. Participants voiced their deep connection to one another and to the work of the Colloquium in the final meeting in November 1995. The eighteen-month hiatus, they told us, enabled them to bring their experience “back home” and to integrate it into the rhythms of their daily lives.

V. STORIES AND VOICES: PARTICIPANTS’ PERSPECTIVES

There is no single story or description that can embrace the range of experiences, emotions, and learning that Colloquium participants encountered. While we structured a program that we hoped would touch the minds and the hearts of participants in profound ways, we could not anticipate the ways in which thinking and feeling about one’s own tradition, or about the tradition of the other, would change. Nor could we imagine what the impact of such changes would be. As the program unfolded, the nature and magnitude of these changes emerged in the course of conversations, discussion of issues posed by the curriculum of

the Colloquium, ongoing evaluation, and the sharing of “memorable moments” as a centerpiece of the closing celebration of Colloquium V. From this resource, which we preserved and transcribed, we are able to reconstruct stories and voices of the participants as they describe the process and impact of this transforming experience.

The area of change in which we anticipated there would be the strongest impact initially was the way in which Catholic participants would come to view Judaism and Jewish participants would come to view Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular. For Jews the movement was often from some sense of alienation and even discomfort in regard to Christianity to a recognition of the spiritual power of Christianity as a lived faith. Several Jewish participants talked about their awkwardness in approaching the Second Testament (NT), which participants were required to purchase and which we used in the first two sessions. One Jewish participant shared as her “memorable moment”:

Before the Colloquium began, there was the task of purchasing a Bible, not my own. And then there was the holiness which developed in the room as we began to study the scripture text. First, from the books which we share, and then from the Christian scriptures, a foreign—almost forbidden—book. How inadequate I was even to find the page!

Another Jewish participant reflected similar feelings when he wrote:

My second memory comes from the first Colloquium: Jews and Catholics studying the scriptures. When I study Torah, I recite a blessing over the study of God’s word. As we studied the Christian scriptures, I felt a need to say a blessing, as well. The traditional blessing would not have been appropriate. But I felt sad that I had no blessing to say.

Other concerns that Jews brought to the Colloquium related to the Jewish historical experience with Christianity and the residual anxiety that Jews feel as they approach Christianity. The encounter with Christians in this unique shared learning context led one Jewish participant to reflect: “I had grown up with anti-Semitism and persecution. When I heard someone Catholic acknowledge that ‘we were the perpetrators’ during the Second World War, it freed me from having to assert that I was the victim.”

The difficulties, however, of transcending the emotional bar-

riers posed by the troubled history of Jews with Christianity and the Church is captured in this reflection of a Jewish participant in the context of the study of history in Colloquium III:

One of the things we were talking about in terms of the Jewish-Christian dialogue is that we, as Jews, will often come to a dialogue and we will expect that if any dialogue is going to take place, that the Christian person must be asking forgiveness from us, from Jews. . . . It's actually, I think, somewhat of a pathology for Jews and Judaism today . . . and I think it's a major barrier to more active dialogue.

As the experiences of the Colloquium built upon one another, however, new insights into and appreciation of Christianity emerged for the Jewish participants. One said, "I've learned a way to approach issues. I learned a vocabulary of spirituality. I've become more comfortable about the word 'faith' and talking about God as a result of confronting faith issues here." Reflecting on an evening in which participants shared aspects of their liturgical and festival cycle, a Jewish participant observed: "It provided me with an insight into the power and beauty of Catholic spirituality that was incredibly inspiring."

Many Jewish participants grappled with the meaning and import of Jesus for Catholics and particularly the significance of Jesus as Jew. In this area there were major shifts in thinking, reflected in the following two comments:

Listening to several insights about Jesus was especially memorable. Though I had thought about Jesus as a historical figure. . . . I had never been able to relate to or really understand the spirituality of Jesus. In fact it was something I felt quite uncomfortable with. Listening to my new colleagues that day brought an "aha" of both understanding and appreciation, which was both exhilarating and scary.

Another participant remembered:

In a context which I do not remember clearly, I asked the question, "Why do you need Jesus? Why can't you talk directly to God?" A Catholic colleague answered, "It isn't that we *need* Jesus. He just is!" This was a real shock to me. I believe that this moment of surprise enabled me to hear and understand Christian faith and spirituality in a very different and more open way.

The change in understanding and insight regarding Christianity was indeed profound, but when all was said and done many questions remained. During the evaluation interviews one Jewish participant reminded us: "We were not able to confront post-Holocaust theology. The Catholics felt guilty and the Jews felt

bad. For both communities it has implications for what the concept of God means.”

While no two Jewish participants would describe their journeys in quite the same way, these stories and voices capture some of the common themes that run through their transformed perceptions of and feelings about Christianity.

Catholic participants entered the Colloquium conversation with a perspective on Judaism shaped in the main by their understanding of the historical evolution of Christianity from ancient Judaism. Accordingly, two areas of discussion stimulated a significant shift among Catholics in their perception of Judaism. The first was the study and discussion of the first two centuries of the Common Era and the parting of the ways, leading to a fuller understanding of the interconnectedness between the Jewish and Jewish/Christian communities over a protracted period of time. The second was the confrontation with Judaism as it is lived and practiced by contemporary Jews. By the end of Colloquium V, one Catholic participant stated:

I examined my own thought patterns and recognized my prejudices. . . . I had an appreciation of Hebrew Scriptures, but not of people. . . . I now see Jesus more as a Jew through knowing Jewish people.

Reflecting on how history is taught in the Catholic context, one participant remarked:

I'd like to say in terms of our history with the Jews. . . I think by and large if we were honest what we would say is that in terms of our programs, after Jesus died and we spent a little time with Paul and the Acts, we just ignore them. . . . It's like in our post-New Testament the Jews just vanished from the face of the earth in terms of our consciousness.

For some the change in perception was radical. One Catholic participant reported in her evaluation interview:

I had no background in interfaith work and little contact with Jewish families. I experienced here a paradigm shift of major proportions, both for how I understand Jews and Judaism and my own faith. I now have a window into understanding survivalist thinking and the Jewish attitude toward intermarriage and the richness of the Jewish faith. I don't talk to people the same way.

The shared learning of the Colloquium meant confronting the Jewish tradition as it manifests itself in the life of the Jewish

participants. The impact of encountering contemporary Jews and Judaism is reflected in the statement:

Having the two groups face-to-face, it was possible to check out what the other believed, not what you guess they believe. It is important to touch the faith embodied in a living, active, conscious individual, not just knowledge about something. It broke down the stereotypes when I saw the difficulty that three Jews had in choosing a common prayer.

Confronting Judaism in its own right, while recognizing the relationships between Judaism and Christianity, also meant that Catholic participants were sometimes challenged by difficult issues. One Catholic participant, commenting on the ongoing discussions about the nature and role of Jesus, shared the observation:

It prompted some discomfort within me that the Jesus whom I love so much was not accepted, and I did not know how to resolve it. When one of our Catholic guest speakers [Elizabeth Losinski] shared her feeling about her teacher, a rabbi—"How could he know so much about Jesus and not accept him?" resonated within me. The rabbi's response to her was a gift/grace/blessing to me: "Faith is a gift. You have your gift and I have my gift."

The changed perceptions of Judaism and the appreciation of the richness of Jewish tradition led one participant to express the concern:

I'm desperate to find a way to teach about Judaism without portraying the Jews consistently as victims. I'm coming up against the fact that I don't know enough about the richness of the [Jewish] tradition except through this Christocentric lens.

The new perspectives Catholics developed posed other teaching challenges as well.

I want to screen my textbooks more closely to see how Jews are presented. . . . I want to screen more carefully how I talk about scripture and the texts . . . it's a very important thing to me to present Jesus as a Jew and as continuous with that community in some way.

Catholic participants, therefore, emerged from the Colloquium experience with a clearer understanding of the totality of Judaism, an appreciation of Judaism as a living tradition, and a deeper understanding of the way in which differing interpretations of Scripture and the nature of Jesus represent serious boundaries between our two traditions.

Since we had hypothesized that a changed perception of the other would somehow alter the way a Catholic or Jew looked at

his or her own tradition, it is illuminating to hear the ways in which that transformation actually took place. As we said at the beginning of this case, “Jews don’t so much have to change their theology as they do their self-understanding based on history. Christians have to reconstitute their theology because so much of it is grounded in an inadequate understanding of Judaism” (above, p. 425). It is therefore significant that while Jewish participants did not change their theology, many were moved by their experience with Catholics to discover new ways of seeking and connecting with spirituality and God within their own Jewish tradition. Several participants took note of this need when they observed:

- The Catholics seemed to be more spiritual and faith-oriented than the Jews. Jews equate study with prayer. I need to look further into prayer and its relationship with spirituality. The Jewish God has become more abstract. The challenge is how to set up a feeling relationship to an abstract God.
- Jews have particular ways of talking about their religious experiences. Catholics are more overtly religious. I found myself comfortable describing my religious experience in their terms. I used to look askance at this religiosity—mysticism. It’s still not my way but I don’t feel discomfort expressing it this way.

The question of history and Jewish self-understanding is clearly a central one. To challenge a self-understanding strongly grounded in a sense of being “victim” is not easy in light of the reality that Jews were frequently victims through out their history, and in particular victims of persecution emerging from Christian “teaching of contempt.” Yet some Jewish participants achieved significant breakthroughs in this perspective, revealed in the following statement:

When we say we Jews read history as victims, we are still coming from the perspective that we are victims and that Christians are potential perpetrators . . . if I view myself, a Jew, as victim, then I actually practice Judaism differently. It takes on the role of a weight that I have to try and get out from under, so that I can be someone who is free from the slings and arrows of outrageous misfortune.

Confronting history together not only challenged Jewish self-understanding, but also created some disequilibrium for Catholics regarding the very theology of Christianity.

- What I find threatening, and I think the Christian community does, is that we may have to redo our Christology in some radical way . . . we would have to think of Jesus differently than the way we have histori-

cally thought about him. . . . If the Jews have not accepted Jesus as the Messiah and continue to flourish as a community despite incredible odds, well, what does that say about Jesus as the Messiah, as a part of the Trinity?

- I think I find this fundamentally disturbing. . . . How is it that a Jew remains a Jew in light of what I claim to be? . . . [I]t challenges what claims I want to make about what is fundamental to my faith tradition and therefore my identity. If there were no Jews, or if all Jews converted to Christianity, there'd be no question. But, both the history of our communities and the persistent fidelity of the Jewish people is all tied up in how I think about who I am.

In sharing her story of transformation, one Catholic participant shared the following powerful conviction:

I have become a better Christian because, in some small way, I have become more Jewish. These eighteen months with my Jewish friends have convinced me that Christianity has become truncated because we have cut ourselves off from the living tree of Judaism.

Inevitably the studying of the troubled history between Christianity and Judaism led Catholic participants to view their own tradition and history with a more critical eye.

[Our history] calls for repentance. . . . What does that mean for us collectively as Christians . . . I think until we at least address or look at what repentance means in this context, it's hard for any of us to get beyond it.

To achieve transformation in one's own self-understanding and the understanding of one's tradition poses a daunting challenge. In retrospect, attaining new insights and understanding of the other and his or her tradition was an exciting task with tangible rewards. Reformulating one's own religious identity was fraught with uncertainty. One participant captured the anxiety, even fear, related to this task in the following words:

And to stop seeing ourselves and the other in those ways is really to start out on a journey that has no script and that really is frightening. . . . [O]n some basic level you understand it is recrafting a whole sense of self. And perhaps recrafting a sense of self in relationship to the other in ways that you do not know is. . . .

The absence of an ending to this statement is, on some level, a metaphor for the Colloquium experience and the task of transformation. The Colloquium participants' journeys, reflected in these voices and stories, do not have a predetermined end in sight. They continue. The journey takes unexpected twists and turns because it is one of both self-discovery and discovery of

the other. At the same time, we and the participants have learned much thus far, raising new questions and posing new challenges for the enterprise of interreligious learning.

VI. CONTINUING CONVERSATIONS

The Colloquium has given us a great deal to ponder. As “embedded inquirers,” our experience has provided us with new convictions and challenging questions. A sampling:

Conviction #1: *Our commitment to educational process, particularly to study in the presence of the other, was the key to transformation.* By emphasizing study, we sought to show respect both for the depth of knowledge the Christian-Jewish encounter demands and for the complex character of the work of religious educators. By structuring the study so that it happened in the presence of the other, we enabled participants to construct a common body of knowledge at the same time they were hearing diverse interpretations.

We also paid attention to the *formative dimension of the educational process*, including community-building and occasion for sharing the depth of a faith tradition. Had we gathered the same group simply to hear lectures—even brilliant ones—the effect would have not been the same. Content is inert without process. The transformation happened *through dialogue for which there was preparation and support*; it happened through experiencing Judaism or Catholicism *as embodied in the other*, whether in the formal study sessions or at table or in late-night conversations.

As guests to the Colloquium have noted, the twenty-two participants achieved a remarkable degree of community for people who have only met together six times over thirty months. Whatever element of a “grace note” may be at work in their synergy, clearly the participants discovered something vital in learning about and *with* the other—so much so that the “other” was present to them even when geographically removed. Consider the following excerpts from participants:

- A lot of times when I’m reading something I write “Colloq” in the margins, wanting to talk about things with Catholics from our group. So I talk about them with Catholics I know, [but] it’s just not the same. Frustrating. We need a forum for ongoing discussion. Once a month?
- There is probably not more than a day that passes when I do not reflect upon an aspect or an individual from the Colloquium project. . . . Par-

ticipation in this colloquium has encouraged continuous reflection which tends to push the papers aside or allow a brief prayer even in a rush.

- In a very real way the Colloquium participants were in my mind and in my heart and in my prayer all of Holy Week and Easter Week. How different they seem these past two years.
- My husband and I were asked to serve as lectors for Palm Sunday liturgy . . . We (along with the deacon) read Mark's account of the Passion. Because of the Colloquium, I think about this very differently than I ever have. I hear the Gospel in a new way. I wonder about two things. Will/did my reading of the Gospel further anti-Jewish/antisemitic thinking? How do you participate in the church and yet not be complicit in promoting anti-Judaism?
- Passover 1994. On the day of Passover, I feel compelled to remember by recalling each name and face of each Jewish member of the Colloquium as she or he gathered with family and friends to commemorate a night different from all other nights. Passover is now different for me.

At Colloquium VI visiting scholar Dorothy Bass suggested that the deep bonds that had developed among participants had significance beyond the group itself. The virtues constitutive of friendship—patience, hard work, humility, “holy envy” (experiencing something so profound in the beliefs, rituals or practices of another tradition that one wishes his or her own community of faith also had or practiced it; see Boys, Lee and Bass 1995, 273)—are virtues that serve the public good. In a highly mobile society where it is difficult to sustain religious ways of life, friendships between members of different religious traditions is vital. Such friendships result in each tradition intending the good of the other. For participants in the Colloquium, the ties of friendship meant a serious investment in the health of the others' faith tradition. When Jews come to care about the vitality of Catholicism, and Catholics about the vitality of Judaism, they enhance the role religion can play in society.

Moreover, friendships of the nature developed by the participants ameliorate two unhealthy characteristics of religious diversity in North America: individualism and fundamentalism. Individualism ultimately defines religion as a simple preference and leaves an ethical vacuum in the common life. People lose the help they might gain from a tradition; they have little to bring to the public square because they are unable to draw upon the symbols and stories of their community of faith. Fundamentalism reduces religion to propositional truth and breeds intolerance of other perspectives. People replace the complexities of historical experience with a shallow story line. But those who en-

gage with the other in serious study can be neither individualists nor fundamentalists. They have learned how people who are different from one another might find ways to work for the common good.

Conviction #2: *Team-teaching with the other whom one trusts is a crucial dimension of interreligious learning.* A critical component of this interreligious learning experience was the team-teaching leadership by a Catholic and a Jew. Team-teaching in any context depends on mutual respect, common goals, joint preparation and collegial teaching. In the particular context of an experimental interreligious program, where both leaders and participants must deal with the strangeness of the other and the other's tradition, trust, honesty, and willingness to support one another are critical issues.

We, the leaders, were fortunate in having known each other for six years and in occasionally having taught together before launching this project. Thus, we had already experienced being a "team." Our continuing conversations had affirmed that it was acceptable, even desirable, to ask "hard" questions about one another's tradition and contemporary community. Our conversations underscored the importance of honesty in interreligious learning. When opportunities to enter one another's "particular" religious space presented themselves, we felt comfortable doing so *accompanied by the other*. Mary not only attended Lee family seders, but participated in a conference of 3000 Jewish educators held on a campus in rural Georgia, and later in a conference of the National Association of Temple Educators. Sara visited Boston College's Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry with frequency, progressively feeling more and more at home, as she later did at Union Theological Seminary after Mary's move in 1994. On one occasion Sara was the only Jew at a Eucharist celebrated at a conference, but Mary's presence by her side enabled her to feel comfortable.

The ability to enter into one another's particular religious space, not just neutral space, was both an outgrowth of trust in one another and a contributing factor to increased trust. These experiences enabled us to incorporate not only the principles of effective team teaching into our direction of the project, but also the crucial qualities of honesty, trust and support of one another in our differences.

A number of participants have commented on the importance

of our friendship in directing the Colloquium. As grateful as we are for our close relationship, we do not consider intimate ties to be fundamental to such a project. Rather, what seems to us essential is that the leaders are themselves committed to their own religious tradition (including having a critical perspective on it), know something about the other's, share assumptions about educational process, and, possess a shared perspective on the importance of educational processes in supporting such a dialogue.

In an environment such as the Colloquium, where trust must be established early in the experience and where honesty and hard questions must be supported, the presence of two leaders strongly committed to their own faith traditions, while open to the other and questioning of their own, was critical. Because for us religious conviction demands openness, and commitment to one's tradition embraces questioning and criticism, we ourselves had confidence that the transformation of interreligious learning enhanced religious identity. Thus, both Catholic and Jewish participants felt they had a mentor from within their own tradition who could support them as they struggled with this transforming experience.

Conviction #3: *Interreligious learning that seeks to be transformational affects many aspects of an individual's religious self-understanding and identity in ways that cannot readily be anticipated.* Earlier in this narrative we stated, "Jews don't so much have to change their theology as they do their self-understanding based on history. Christians have to reconstitute their theology because so much of it is grounded in an inadequate understanding of Judaism." We grounded our hypothesis in the assumption that participants from each of the traditions had different issues to address. The interreligious learning experience would, we thought, have its greatest impact on that issue of religious identity most challenged by confrontation with the other tradition and its faithful members. Catholics, in encountering a vibrant Judaism, affirmed and lived by Jewish participants in the Colloquium, would have to address serious questions about the validity of a supersessionist theology. Jews, for whom Christianity posed no apparent theological challenge, would need to confront how much of Jewish identity had been shaped by seeing oneself as a victim, particularly of Christian persecutions.

In reality, while the changes we predicted did take place, we are more surprised by the other changes in self-perception that

occurred. Colloquium participant Joanne Chafe makes an important observation in her essay: "Jewish and Catholic participants also began to think like each other with respect to their conceptualization of the relationship between the two traditions. Jews, who had previously stressed difference, now began to talk of connection. Roman Catholics, who had stressed links, now spoke of the distinctiveness of Judaism." *Learning about the tradition of the other in the presence of the other led to both a sharpening and a diminishing of similarities and differences between the two traditions in the perception of the participants.*

Jews, for whom we believed historical perspective was the critical issue, faced serious theological questions as well. Participant Cynthia Reich asks in her essay, "What would my understandings of God and Judaism be like if I thought and felt differently about the divinity of Jesus? What would my relationship with God be like?" In commenting on the need for reconceptualizing the relationship between Christianity and Judaism, Shira Lander and Daniel Lehmann write: "God, whose love knows no bounds, is certainly capable of entering into a unique relationship with each and every child that does not diminish the sacredness and uniqueness of the other. The problem is not in God but in our own failure to understand that God loves different people equally."

Catholics, for whom we believed theological issues were critical, found that there were serious questions about their knowledge and understanding of history that had implications for their Catholic identity. Addie Walker writes, "On the positive side, the selection of *The Parting of the Ways* by James D. G. Dunn was life-changing for me. Just reading the book changed my uncritical acceptance of some Christian interpretations of first-century events and Jesus' role or presence in that context." Joanne Chafe reports in her essay, ". . . my understanding of the relationship between the two [religions] has been influenced by how we [Catholics] have been a source of tragedy to the Jewish people. The information in the Flannery book [*The Anguish of the Jews*] has been a major contribution to this. We are connected as a result of the negative impact we have had on their history and their psyche."

It should come as no surprise that there were an abundance of unanticipated changes in understanding and feeling among the participants, and yet the depth and nature of some of these

changes are rather startling. We can learn from this that questions raised in serious interreligious encounter are by no means predictable, and that such questions challenge people of faith in unsettling ways. *Interreligious learning, in an environment of study, support and sharing, promotes religious growth in the face of these questions, not a crisis of faith.*

Conviction #4: *Interreligious learning offers a way of deepening one's particularity while simultaneously providing a ground for pluralism.* In retrospect we recognize that we have been involved in a delicate and necessary tension between fostering "responsible ambiguity" and "responsible identity." A pluralist society requires an "education for paradox": that is, fostering religious commitments that are clear *and* ambiguous, rooted *and* adaptive, particular *and* pluralistic (Boys, Lee and Bass 1995).

On the one hand, by exploring the close and complicated historical links between Judaism and Christianity, we were challenging the conventional views most had been brought up with, and thus fostering a "responsible ambiguity" in our participants' religious identity. It was not so much that "ambiguity" was our aim as it was an inevitable outcome of the mutual study: Certain long-carried conclusions about their own origins and development had to be dislodged, and participants had to adapt. One Jewish participant offered a striking analogy for this. His parents had divorced when he was quite young, and though it was an acrimonious separation, he had learned to live with it. Some years later, however, his parents reconciled (though never remarried). Their reconciliation, he told us, threw him off balance—not unlike the dizzying effect the Colloquium was having on his identity as a Jew as he discussed the Jewishness of Jesus, the partings of the ways and recent Christian documents.

On the other hand, we hoped that participants would leave the Colloquium with a deepened commitment to their own tradition—to have their own identity strengthened by sustained relationship with the other. Diana Eck, whose book we read in preparation for the sixth meeting, says: "The challenge for the pluralist is commitment without dogmatism and community without communalism. The theological task, and the task of a pluralist society, is to create the space and the means for the encounter of commitments, not to neutralize all commitments" (1993, 195). Our participants expressed this in more personal terms:

- Sensitivity to my “c/Catholicity” and an enormous appreciation for my own faith has also been one of the outcomes of my participation in the Colloquium.
- I remember the evening we shared our liturgical and festival cycle. It provided me with an insight into the power and beauty of Catholic spirituality that was incredibly inspiring. . . . I was truly moved by the presentations about my own tradition and the Catholic tradition—each in its own unique way, each with its own distinct character. I found I could live my own religious tradition, and another’s as well. And then I thought: If I could live this way, how much more so, God?

In Colloquium VI, in which we took up questions of particularism and pluralism in a more systematic way, we devoted substantial time to discussion of an article by scholar Michael Kogan (1995). Kogan argues that Christianity’s encounter with Judaism in the past thirty years has altered Jewish self-understanding because it has transformed the context in which Jews live. Although the encounter with Christianity has not changed Jewish belief or practices, it has shown that Jews can now pursue Torah and witness within an entirely new understanding of the surrounding world. For the first time since the “partings of the ways,” Kogan claims, Jews can envision Christians as *partners* in witnessing to, building up, and waiting for God’s kingdom.

While the specifics of Kogan’s arguments were vigorously debated among the participants, his article provided a powerful articulation of their own experience as partners in the work of witnessing to, building up, and waiting for the fullness of Divine Presence in the world.

Consideration of the work by Eck and Kogan led participants to list educational challenges implicit in pluralism:

- We need to develop a new language to teach for diversity. Our language now locks people into exclusivist models.
- We need to complement our Western ways of thinking with the Eastern mode of entertaining “both/and.”
- We need greater attentiveness to God as mystery rather than answer.
- We need to include more occasions for reflection and dialogue in our educational work.
- We need to teach more about the pluralism and ambiguity within our own traditions. By so doing, we will open doors to the “other.”

Conviction #5: *Interreligious learning has the potential to educate people of faith simultaneously to affirm religious pluralism and to deepen their religious particularity.* The Catholic-Jewish Colloquium brought together two highly particularistic religious

groups, each grounded in a rich textual tradition, distinct sacraments and rituals, and a system of norms that govern everyday life. These two traditions, however, share a relationship to one God, Scripture (*Tanakh*/Old Testament), and a larger society in which they coexist. They also emerged from a shared history.

When these traditions come into conversation with one another, mediated through committed Catholics and Jews, there are two almost contradictory outcomes. On the one hand, there are the inevitable questions: "If you are you and have a relationship to this God, then who am I?" "If your religion is true, then how can mine be?" "If you read the binding of Isaac (Genesis 22) one way and I read it another, which is correct?" Such questions generate confusion, ambiguity and disequilibrium about one's faith. On the other hand, explaining one's tradition to the other in response to questions never asked before or sharing one's traditions with others of a different faith leads to a deepening and strengthening of religious beliefs. Thus, theological humility and religious particularity are held in tension with one another as a result of this interreligious learning.

The capacity to embrace theological humility and religious particularity within the same faith is critical in a religiously pluralistic society. Unfortunately, religious pluralism in North America appears to have generated two responses, neither of which affirms pluralism. In a society in which individualism and privatism reign supreme, one response to pluralism is an ideology of relativism. That ideology translates into the blurring of differences between religious traditions, a tentativeness about religious commitment, and religious self-definition that is separated from the past and from a collective religious identification. The other response to pluralism is escape into the certainty and clarity of fundamentalism. When the ambiguity inherent in religious pluralism does not provide the definitive answers one wants, it may be reassuring to turn to a system of belief that can provide those answers.

Pluralism cannot flourish when it is grounded in either relativism or fundamentalism. Affirmation of pluralism demands the capacity to deal with the tensions that an experience such as the Catholic-Jewish Colloquium generates, where theological humility and religious particularity coexist. In a context of ongoing learning, mutual respect, and openness to change, these tensions can be not only tolerated, but growth producing. Interreligious

learning, then, may be an important asset in preparing Americans of faith for life in a truly pluralistic society.

Question #1: *To what extent is the model of learning we developed for the specifics of a Catholic-Jewish encounter replicable across other boundaries of difference?* If Catholic-Jewish dialogue is complex, then dialogue between Jews and Christians across the spectrum of denominations is complexity squared. The annotated bibliography at the end of this volume offers an idea of the status of the dialogue between Jews and varying Protestant denominations and Orthodox Christians.

Moreover, not all Christians—for instance, African Americans—bear in the same way the legacy of European Christianity's oppression of Jews; dialogue between blacks and Jews involves a different agenda (Lerner and West 1995). Yet black Catholics also inherit the legacy of Catholic teaching that has caricatured Judaism and at times resulted in persecution of Jews.

Nevertheless, Judaism and Christianity have a unique historical relationship—the latter emerging from the former—that provides for the common ground. When Islam joins the dialogue, complexity is raised to the n^{th} power. And when two traditions without historical links or some shared texts dialogue, different sorts of complications arise, not in the least establishing a basic vocabulary for conversation.

Such complexities notwithstanding, Leonard Swidler has formulated ten ground rules for “interreligious, inter-ideological dialogue” that can be categorized under goals, prerequisites, and practices. The goal, he argues, is to learn, to change, and to grow. In order to achieve this, participants must be at least minimally self-critical about themselves and their own religious or ideological tradition, and they must come to the dialogue with honesty and sincerity and with no absolutist notions about points of disagreement. The dialogue will work only if it takes place between equals; if all participants define themselves (and recognize themselves in the other's interpretation); if they compare their own ideals with the other's ideals and their own practices with the other's practices; if they are willing to dialogue not only with the “other” but with their own community of faith or ideology, attempting to experience the other's religion or ideology “from within” (1987, 14–16).

Swidler's rules, with which we agree and which we attempted to honor in practice, might appropriately be complemented by

attention to the specific characteristics of those engaged in dialogue and of the power issues in their relationship. We wonder, for instance, if those involved in interracial/interethnic conversations might want to consider using processes we attempted in order to move beyond the victim/oppressor dichotomy—not to deny anti-Semitism or white racism, for example, but to confront it in ways that move beyond the limits of victimization/guilt. Conversely, we recognize that the literature on interracial relations may be of significance to us as we continue our work. An entry from the journal of an African-American participant illustrates this point:

We Black School Sisters of Notre Dame [a Roman Catholic congregation of women] continue to struggle with how to be how we are in the midst of the strong Irish and overwhelmingly German influences of our congregation. It occurs to me that something of what I'm learning in the Colloquium can be a helpful process for us: learning about the other in the presence of the other, clarifying my own identity in the presence of the other and allowing the other to learn about me in my presence.

Question #2: *How might we have more adequately drawn upon a variety of learning experiences and taken better account of the differences in the ways Catholics and Jews learn their traditions?* We struggled throughout to find resources and to design exercises that all participants, regardless of academic background, could profit from, but we underestimated the difficulty of this task. We tended to teach as we ourselves learned—even though both of us are keenly interested in the issues often placed under the rubric of “learning styles” and “multiple intelligences.” As our project evaluators, Drs. Adrienne Bank and Kathleen Chesto, wrote:

The colloquium felt to both of us like the best kind of university class, with a high level of discussion and a wide variety of pedagogic techniques. . . . People who previously thrived in the university setting felt challenged and excited about being back in such an intellectually rich environment. As educators working with children, many participants felt hungry for this kind of intellectual stimulation and felt honored to have been included. Others felt honored but either overwhelmed or out of their element. Some participants felt like they were in an advanced graduate class and hadn't yet taken the introductory class in comparative religion.

Just as people carry “scripts” of their religious identity, so, too, do they bring with them scripts about their own history as

learners. One participant reported to us that when one of the guest scholars started calling on people to provide answers in an exercise that was beyond her background, she hid her name tag by draping her scarf over it. Perhaps inevitably, some were intimidated by others' expertise. Although we ourselves never put anyone on the spot—at least consciously—we needed to have given more attention to artistic and imaginative activities so as to honor the diverse ways in which people learn.

The intertwining of the scripts of religious identity and history as learners raises a number of intriguing issues. Our evaluators phrased it as follows:

Comfort with the intellectual and academic atmosphere of the Colloquium not only differed among individuals, depending on their academic prowess, but also seemed to be distinctive between Jews and Catholics. For the Jews, study—even if not at such a sustained, intense level—was a common and familiar way of accessing and connecting with the roots of their tradition. For the Catholics, this was less so. Many of the Catholics felt keenly the absence of prayer and attention to the lived faith as a way of accessing and connecting with the roots of their tradition. They were not easily able to put into words what else they really wanted in the Colloquium.

What some participants seemed to be saying was they would have liked some parts of the program to have felt more like a retreat than a class. As we listened to them, they said they wanted more time for reflection, a slower pace, more time spent on personal sharing of religious experiences, more stories about struggling with faith issues, being sustained, living a life grounded in spiritual reflection.

Their observation needs to be carefully explored, lest we oversimplify. We think it is fair to say that Jews and Catholics differ in their educational socialization, in large measure because of different ways of doing theology. Much Jewish learning flows from the dialectic of questioning, whereas Catholic thinking tends to be grounded in systematic exposition. Our participants had been shaped by their own years of study, the Jews tending to be more at ease with inquiry and more knowledgeable about history, while the Catholics were more at home with connections to spirituality and more concerned about the adequacy of their understanding of doctrine. Moreover, as our experience (not simply in the Colloquium) teaches us, Christians are typically more comfortable with “God talk” than are Jews. Journalist Paul Wilkes, who spent months studying a Conservative congregation in Worcester, Massachusetts, bears this out in the epilogue of his book:

As I looked back at my time at Beth Israel, I realized that God's name must have come up so rarely that I could not remember a specific time I had heard it outside of formal prayer. Christians talk about seeking God; Jews, it seemed, assume God—and go on to practice or spurn the life and rituals He has set down. It was a simple, yet amazing revelation to me (1994).

How, then, do we best establish a ground for conversation, given these variant patterns of socialization? Moreover, if Jews find prayer in interreligious settings problematic—indeed, even among themselves as Orthodox, Conservative and Reform—and Catholics desire it, how do we proceed with sensitivity to both?

In hindsight, we see how on the matter of worship we violated our own rules of educational process. Because we knew how problematic common prayer could be, we simply announced at the outset that the differences between our two traditions meant that we should not attempt to worship together. Rather, we should have constructed an exercise that would have helped them identify the issues and perhaps even propose a solution we had not imagined. Thanks, however, to prompting from participants, we wrote a simple blessing before meals, and used Psalm 19:4 as a blessing before our study sessions: "May the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and redeemer." By Colloquium VI it was clear that all of us felt ready to worship together, so we closed our sessions with a service of praise and thanksgiving that the two of us composed.

One vignette suggests that although we never satisfactorily resolved the issue of worship, participants were mindful that their experiences had a transcendent dimension. As a Catholic participant noted, "One of the first memories that comes to mind is the incredible sense that I had of the holy as present among us during the scripture sharing session at our first meeting." She had not been alone—a Jewish participant said to her after that session: "Did you feel the Light in that room?"

Question #3: *What issues did we need to consider in contemplating how participants might translate their learning into educational activities in their communities?* In retrospect, we realize we had been clearer about what we believed people needed to know than what they needed to do. We share some of the participants' frustration in not knowing how to integrate what they had learned into their own educational work.

The first challenge that participants typically confronted is general apathy toward interreligious concerns and activity. Because religious educators are already challenged by the task of religious formation within their own faith communities, education about other religious traditions or across religious boundaries appears to be a luxury at best, and dangerous at worst. Thus they generally experience little support or encouragement for efforts to introduce interreligious concerns into the educational agenda of their institutions. Or they encounter resistance based on skepticism about the outcomes of conversing across religious boundaries. If the purpose of such conversations is perceived to be “enlightenment” of the other, serious doubt about the willingness or capacity of the other to be “enlightened” may arise. If the outcome of the conversation is perceived to be a change in understanding another religious tradition that also results in a changed understanding of one’s own tradition, resistance or even opposition may occur. To prepare participants to overcome apathy and resistance in their own communities and institutions, we openly confronted the problem and discussed some strategies that might be useful. To effect change in these attitudes toward interreligious concerns, however, is a process lengthier and more complex than we were prepared to deal with.

The question of institutional change is also an issue that challenges efforts of participants to translate their learning into educational activities. Introducing a new way of teaching about one’s tradition, let alone other traditions, can create dissonance within religious educational institutions. If our Colloquium participants, for example, introduced their new knowledge into a curriculum otherwise grounded in many of the same concepts they had reconceptualized, confusion and even contradiction would inevitably result. Mere insertion of new knowledge without consideration of its systemic dimensions can be destabilizing, thereby making a negative impact on an institution. How to change institutions is the formidable question that must be addressed if religious education is to be transformative.

It is our conviction that interreligious learning—its knowledge and sensibilities—animates and provides depth to religious commitment. If, however, interreligious learning is to make a difference in the life of religious institutions, those who experience it must acquire the knowledge and skills required to effect institutional change.

VII. EPILOGUE

On a cold winter evening in New York City in mid-February of 1996, we linger over Shabbat dinner in Mary's apartment, continuing a conversation begun over a decade ago. The Catholic-Jewish Colloquium has generated questions we could not have imagined during our first conversations. The power of the experience compels us to probe these new questions and to carry forward the work we have started.

When we originally conceptualized the Colloquium, we intuited that educational processes were critical for our goals. Because of the centrality of educational process for us, we determined that the Colloquium would differ from other models of interreligious exchange. As it evolved over the months, we realized that our design offered a new model for this type of encounter: *interreligious learning*. Having described the characteristics and outcomes of this model in our narrative, we now leave it to our guest commentators to take up various dimensions of interreligious learning.

As we sit across the table from one another with this project nearly complete, we realize how much passion we have to pursue the questions the Colloquium has raised for us. What is the potential for interreligious learning as a model of crossing boundaries through educational process? What more do we need to learn about it and how will we ourselves go about such learning? What significance might this model have beyond the particulars of our project?

We know with new force how important it is to educate for both particularity and pluralism, and to do so with deep appreciation for the power of all faith traditions, not only our own. We also know how complicated this is, and we wonder whether such education can be achieved within our particular faith communities. Such education calls for rethinking not only what we teach, but how we teach it. It calls for deepening every individual's knowledge of his or her faith tradition. It demands teachers who themselves are comfortable with the ambiguities that such education would inevitably produce. How, we ask, will religious educators in our faith communities respond to these enormous challenges? What do we need to understand about religious education as it is currently structured that would reveal the steps essential to reconfiguration? How would such a reconfiguration take place?

We started this project with the conviction that if religion is to play a significant role in promoting the common good in our society, people need to learn how to converse across religious boundaries. This is all the more important when they confront serious issues about which they disagree. At present religious questions and insights must often be bracketed in conversations about social issues because people do not have the language, knowledge, or skills to engage in healthy and productive discussions among individuals of different faith commitments. Thus the voice and wisdom of religion are lost—at great cost for our society. We ponder what have we learned in the Catholic-Jewish Colloquium: have we developed a model for teaching people how to converse across religious boundaries? What more do we need to understand about the dynamics of public discourse among people of different traditions of faith? What is the distinctive contribution that intelligent religious discourse can make to the common good of American society?

We confront these questions with both hope and humility. We are hopeful because our experience together over these past ten years demonstrates the energy that is unleashed when two people of faith engage in sustained dialogue in which they imagine a reality different from the status quo, venture out into unexplored territory, and commit themselves wholeheartedly to what they know as religious educators. We are humble because the task is so great, the consequences so vital to the common good, and our capacity for the work so subject to our finitude. We draw on the wisdom of Rabbi Tarfon in the “Sayings of the Fathers” (2:21): “You are not required to complete the work, but neither are you at liberty to abstain from it.” Having finished the Colloquium, our work has just begun—and it has been life-giving in ways neither of us imagined. *L’chaim!*

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