



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS (ICCJ)

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE – BRATISLAVA 2020

BILINGUAL ENGLISH - SLOVAKIAN

June 28 – July 1, 2020

Stories We Live By: Relating to the Self and Other

IN COOPERATION WITH

Association of Christians and Jews in Slovakia

CALL FOR WORKSHOPS

In addition to plenary sessions, keynote papers, and visits to local sites, the ICCJ also puts a great emphasis on the interactive workshops that occur during its annual conferences.

The ICCJ invites proposals for workshops touching on the topics of and issues related to the annual conference theme (see below). Additionally, proposals for workshops on the current state of Jewish-Christian, and Jewish-Christian-Muslim, dialogue on the international or local scenes are also invited.

Proposals of no more than 250 words are due by January 31, 2020 and are to be sent to: Petra Grünewald-Stangl (gruenewald-stangl@iccj.org). Applicants will be notified of the status of their proposals by March 2, 2020.

Guidelines for preparing workshop proposals:

1. Workshops are expected to be interactive, involving the participants as much as possible; they are not meant to be lectures or academic papers delivered to passive audiences. They can be panel presentations, in which case having Jews and Christians (and Muslims) as discussants is preferred.
2. Workshops are to be conducted in the languages of the conference (i.e., English and/or Slovak).
3. Workshop presenters are expected to respect the given time frame (90 minutes).
4. If relevant and/or possible, workshop presenters are encouraged to provide handouts to participants.
5. Workshop presenters are kindly asked to cover their expenses related to the conference as no bursaries are available. Thank you for your understanding.

There is a limited number of workshop slots available. The conference program committee will select from the proposals it receives on the basis of their relevance to the conference theme and/or the significance of the topics proposed. Proposals on related topics may be grouped together.

CONFERENCE THEME

Our societies today are in deep search for answers and understanding related to existential and ethical challenges. Different traditions meet, and occasionally clash. This is visible in many parts of the world today, not least due to climate changes, political turmoil, and the increased movement of people across borders. It often results in the tensions between various groups of people, including Christians, Jews, and Muslims. To foster better communication and provide a basis for common understanding and tolerance, we aim to offer a platform for wide-ranging discussion and a Jewish and Christian voice to contribute to the contemporary quest for responses to existential, social, and ethical issues.

Human life can be rendered as a story. Story represents a means that helps construct human identity. Each one of us, both individually and communally, has their particular story. In many fields, both academic and more practice-oriented contexts, story has proven to be a helpful tool to reflect on various areas of human existence. It is a teaching tool with a powerful explanatory potential. But story's primary strength lies in its structural resemblance with human life. Such reflection, however, should not end up with reinforcing what can become just another cliché.

Rather, the narrative approach to human existence ought to lead us to asking serious questions about the nature of being human:

- How does "my" own story relate to the stories of other members of my social/religious/ethnic/cultural group?
- In what ways do the founding story/stories of a certain community enable or disable relationships between that community and others who do not share the same story?
- How does one's transformed self-understanding change the way one tells and relate to the other's story?
- How can we avoid lethal stories and, instead, nurture life-affirming ones?
- What positive role(s) can stories play in conflict resolution and the building of interreligious and intercultural relations?

This programmatic vision is expressed in the design of a conference, to be held in Bratislava, Slovakia, on 28 June – 1 July 2020, as part of the long-term vision and mission of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ).

During its three and a half days, the event will offer keynote lectures and plenary sessions on the theme as well as a number of interactive workshops. The program will employ the narrative approach to investigate such areas as the interpretation of sacred scriptures and traditions, religious self-understanding, interreligious dialogue, the coming to terms with one's past and present both in Slovakia and the wider Central and Eastern European region, and the disappointment from false hopes/prophecies.

The conference will strive to provide a better understanding of commonalities, individually and communally. It will offer a framework for societies and communities to strengthen their resolve in responding to the way common stories are abused/dishonored by political leaders who seek to encourage racial hatred and ethnic divisions.

The ICCJ Executive Board, together with the ICCJ General Secretary and the Co-chairs of the conference planning committee - ICCJ Vice President Dr Pavol Bargár and the President of the Association of Christians and Jews in Slovakia Ms Lucia Faltin - look forward to welcoming you to Slovakia in 2020!