



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS (ICCJ)

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 2022

Monday, June 13 and Wednesday, June 15, 2022

Stories We Live By: Relating to the Self and Other

INTRODUCTION TO THE 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 an online conference, to be held on 13 and 15 June 2022, as part of the long-term vision and mission of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ).

During these two days, the event will offer two webinars and three workshops exploring the central theme from various angles and perspectives. The program will employ the narrative approach to investigate such areas as the interpretation of sacred scriptures and traditions, religious self-understanding, interreligious dialogue, 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 looks forward to welcoming you to its 2022 worldwide conference!