



International Council of Christians and Jews

2022 Virtual Conference

***Stories We Live By:  
Relating to the Self and Other***

**WEBINAR & WORKSHOP PROGRAM**

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## **THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS (ICCJ)**

After a first international post-war meeting of Jewish and Christian leaders in Oxford, UK, in 1946, another so-called 'emergency conference' as a reaction to the Holocaust, the Shoah, was held in Seelisberg, Switzerland in 1947. At that gathering a resolution was adopted that "in view of the world-wide nature of the task, it is mandatory that the suggestion of the Oxford Conference of August 1946 to establish an International Council of Christians and Jews should be implemented without delay, and that the Continuation Committee then appointed should take energetic action to organize and establish in as many countries as possible Councils of Christians and Jews linked with the International Council."

In the aftermath of this conference in Seelisberg, the International Council of Christians and Jews was founded, and it continues to serve today, nearly 70 years later, as the umbrella organization of 35 national Jewish-Christian dialogue organizations world-wide.

The ICCJ together with its member organizations has been successfully engaged in the historic renewal of Jewish-Christian relations over the last seven decades and brought theologians, historians, educators as well as grassroots initiatives into its work.

In more recent years, the ICCJ and its members increasingly joined in the Abrahamic dialogue among Jews, Christians and Muslims. The ICCJ's efforts to promote Jewish-Christian dialogue provide models for wider interfaith relations, particularly dialogue among Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Through its annual conferences and other consultations, the ICCJ offers a platform where people of different religious backgrounds examine current issues across national and religious boundaries, enabling face-to-face exchanges of experience and expertise.

The international headquarters of the ICCJ is located in Heppenheim, Germany, in the house where the great Jewish thinker Martin Buber and his family lived until Nazi persecution forced him to flee Germany.

## Mission Statement

According to its constitution the ICCJ

- **promotes** understanding and cooperation between Christians and Jews based on respect for each other's identity and integrity;
- **addresses** issues of human rights and human dignity deeply enshrined in the traditions of Judaism and Christianity;
- **counters** all forms of prejudice, intolerance, discrimination, racism and the misuse of religion for national and political domination;
- **affirms** that in honest dialogue each person remains loyal to his or her own essential faith commitment, recognizing in the other person his or her integrity and otherness;
- **coordinates** worldwide activities through a programme of carefully structured conferences held regularly in different countries. The participants examine current issues across national and religious boundaries, enabling face-to-face exchanges of experience and expertise;
- **encourages** research and education at all levels, including universities and theological seminaries, to promote interreligious understanding among students, teachers, religious leaders, and scholars;
- **performs** outreach in regions that so far have little or no structured Jewish-Christian dialogue, such as Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Far East;
- **provides** a platform for wide-ranging theological debate in order to add a religious choice to the contemporary search for answers to existential and ethical challenges.

## Jewish-Christian Relations Net

The ICCJ owns and maintains the online platform *Jewish-Christian Relations Net* (<https://www.jcrelations.net>), which is devoted to fostering mutual respect and understanding between Christians and Jews. It publishes and translates articles, reviews, reports, official statements, and study resources on Jewish-Christian relations from all over the world, making them available in English, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, and Russian.

## WEBINARS

**Webinar 1: June 13, 2022, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m .UTC**

### *STORIES OF THE SELF AND THE OTHER: RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES*

This webinar will explore how people of religion, particularly Jews and Christians, express their religious identities as the overarching story of their community and how their history shapes the way they speak of the people of other religions, both positively and negatively. Specific attention will be given to strategies to avoid lethal and destructive stories and to nurture life-affirming stories instead. Furthermore, the speaker will reflect on the process of revising one's sacred stories in the light of deeper interreligious understanding. In other words, how does the new relationship between Jews and Christians affect the interpretation and embodiment of one's "master narratives"?

Speaker: Prof. Willie James Jennings (USA)

Moderator: Dr Debbie Weissman (Israel)

**Webinar 2: June 15, 2022, 7:00 – 8:30 a.m. UTC**

### *FALSE PROPHECIES, FALSE PROPHETS, FALSE HOPES*

At the start of the third millennium we see our world changing at an accelerated pace. New technologies allow for the high-speed circulation of information and create new families of thought seemingly outside the realm of space and time. Sectarian views and even lies motivated by ideologies are spread in a ubiquitous and instantaneous manner. Truth often becomes relative, reality does not seem to matter anymore. One of the major questions that arises from this reality is, What is truth? Is there an absolute truth? Can anyone claim to hold it? What factors shape the ways we relate to the other and the world as legitimate and "true"? Is it "source," or "tradition"? If some stories bring about separation, disruption, and enmity, can they be held as true today? Our religions can provide us with resources to address these questions as religious stories

seek to establish some form of truth that relies on tradition and transmission. However, these stories themselves need to be explored critically. This is what this webinar will strive to do. Ultimately, it will explore how the stories we hold as foundational and sacred can inform us about the world we live in and, even more importantly, how they can inform an increasingly secularized world, so that we do not fall prey to false prophets and false prophecies.

Speakers: Prof. Judith Frishman (The Netherlands)  
Prof. Pavel Hošek (Czech Republic)  
Rev. Dr Michael Trainor (Australia)

Moderator: Rev. Jenny Chalmers (New Zealand)

## **WORKSHOPS** (in chronological order based on UTC)

### **Workshop 1: June 15, 2022**

**10:00 – 11:30 a.m. UTC**

***JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE IN WIDER CONTEXTS: TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION***  
*(ICCJ THEOLOGY COMMITTEE WORKSHOP)*

*Facilitators: Sr Dr Celia Deutsch (USA), Rev. Patrick Morrow (UK)*

Jewish-Christian dialogue takes place on a variety of levels – formal, semi-formal, and informal (academic, congregational, circumstantial). We, Celia Deutsch and Patrick Morrow, members of the ICCJ Theology Committee, are also engaged with people with pressing painful existential needs, especially immigrants, racial minorities, and prisoners. We are convinced that *this* dialogue and *these* needs can be and are connected. But we both struggle to find the best language for this different “meeting”. In this workshop we will experiment with new language, and we will ask for your help.

### **Workshop 2: June 15, 2022**

**12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m. UTC**

***DECONSTRUCTING ABRAHAM: THE MEANINGS OF ABRAHAM IN THE “ABRAHAMIC” RELIGIONS*** *(IAF WORKSHOP)*

*Facilitators: Prof. Reuven Firestone (USA), Rachel de Boor (Germany), Elena Dini (Italy), Dr Heidi Hadsell (USA), Dr Mohammad Hannan Hassan (Singapore), Prof Frederek Musall (Germany), Abdallah Khlifat (USA), Prof. Morteza Rezazadeh (Iran)*

Abraham is a prominent figure in the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament and the Qur’an, and Jews, Christians and Muslims all share what we often think is a common story of Abraham. But is the Abraham we know the same Abraham they know? In this workshop we will read some of the central scriptural verses in which Abraham appears, according to a

method of reading called “Scriptural Reasoning.” This approach enables participants to deepen their understanding of both the shared and discordant scriptural portrayals of our common forbear.

### **Workshop 3: June 15, 2022**

**5:00 – 6:30 p.m. UTC**

#### ***EUROPEAN RESONANCES OF AND REACTIONS TO THE WAR IN UKRAINE***

*Facilitators: Dr Ursula Rudnick (Germany), Dr Debbie Weissman (Israel)*

This work-shop is an invitation to share the different reactions in Europe to the war in Ukraine. Ursula Rudnick will begin, by throwing some spotlights on the differing reactions in Germany and contextualize them. Debbie Weissman will moderate the group.