



Message of the Consultation. November 2001

31/01/2002 | Christian-Jewish Consultation in Yaounde, Cameroon

The first Christian-Jewish consultation to be held in French-speaking Africa took place in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 8 to 13 November 2001 under the auspices of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC), with participants from Benin, Burundi, Congo/Brazzaville and Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Israel, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Switzerland, Togo, the United States, and Cameroon.

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I.

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The meeting took place in the facilities of the Protestant Theological Faculty of Yaoundé in a warm and fraternal atmosphere, and dealt with the following topics:

"Shalom and Ubuntu [Humaneness, or Humanity]"

"Memory and the Experience of Violence"

"The Challenge of Peace-Building"

The consultation was distinguished by a combination of deep scholarly research and experiential participation in our respective faiths, including the celebration of the Sabbath and of Christian Sunday worship. Residing together has been a catalyst for authentic and joyful exchanges that have enabled us to appreciate the richness of our differences rather than looking at them with fear and hesitation.

There was evident during the sessions an intense listening and attention, which bore witness to the reciprocal curiosity and mutual respect among the participants.

II.

We have particularly noticed convergences between certain concepts found in our lived traditions and our respective histories:

- Shalom and Ubuntu;
- the role of the word in Judaism and of palaver [discussion, consensus-formation] in African cultures;
- the idea of tikkun (repair) and the theology of reconstruction.

Unhindered by the bilateral disputes underlying the Jewish-Christian dialogue in Europe, our encounter here has been able to establish itself on a positive basis, free from suspicion and resentment, and emphasizing:

- the centrality of the biblical text in the Jewish and Christian traditions of all the participants;
- the convergence of Jewish and African memories.

III. Recommendations:

- Each participant will endeavor to give a media echo to this consultation.
- The participants pledge to transmit the message in their respective religious communities.
- We would like to see the minutes of this consultation published in order to bring it to the attention of a wider audience.
- We envision a study of biblical sources, particularly in Hebrew, that make reference to the African people.
- We propose creating a Jewish-African anthology.
- We would like to meet in the near future in Jerusalem.
- We encourage the idea of itinerant lecturers.
- We will undertake a study of biblical texts that can be used to support concrete struggles such as various social injustices, the condition of women, AIDS, conflicts, etc.
- We propose to set up an Internet forum for the sharing of knowledge, reflections, and information.

Condemning racist and antisemitic prejudices, we pledge to stay together, in our communities and wherever we find ourselves, as artisans of peace.

"Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it." (Psalm 34:14)

Translated from the French by jcrelations.net