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INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH-CHRISTIAN STUDIES

**The Kieval Institute  
for Jewish-Christian Studies  
at Siena College**



***Dabru Emet and A  
Sacred Obligation:  
Can We Talk Seriously  
to Each Other About  
God?***

Twenty-third  
Annual Colloquium  
October 28-29, 2007  
Siena College



The Kieval Institute for  
Jewish-Christian Studies at Siena College  
Rabbi Bernard H. Bloom, Chair  
Peter S. Zaas, Director  
Rabbi Hayyim H. Kieval ז"ל,  
Founding Director

***Dabru Emet and A Sacred Obligation***

It is customary to speak of the three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, with the tacit assumption that "we all believe in the same God." But how accurate is this premise? "Monotheism" is defined as the belief that there is only one God, but this mathematical statement in no way says anything about what attributes each of the three faiths assign to the God they worship.

Historically, Christians maintained that theirs is a God of love while Jews worship a God obsessed with law – that Judaism's is a punitive God of vengeance, where Christianity's God is compassionate and merciful. From the Gospel of John to the Second Vatican Council, however the various churches differed in their teachings regarding God's nature and agenda for humanity, they were united on one fundamental belief: the Jewish understanding of God was so flawed that He had rejected them in favor of Christianity.

For Judaism the doctrine of the Trinity was seen as incompatible with the belief in the divine Unity, especially the basic Christian tenet that the God of the universe had taken on a material human body in the person of Jesus. After the Second Vatican Council Jews welcomed the declaration of the Roman Catholic Church acknowledging the continued validity of the Covenant between God and "the Israel of the flesh." Now the question is raised, can Judaism reciprocate by acknowledging the validity of Christianity's New Covenant between God and "the Israel of the spirit?"

Two recent documents—"Dabru Emet" by Jewish scholars and "A Sacred Obligation" by Christian scholars—provide a unique basis for meaningful dialogue in our time. Dabru Emet, released in September of 2000, was eventually signed by scores of prominent Jewish thinkers, including Dr. Langer. It acknowledged a new era in Jewish-Christian relations, marked by a Christian desire for understanding.

Two years later, the Christian Scholars Group on Christian/Jewish Relations responded with a comparable statement, expressing its sense of the "Sacred Obligation" on Christians to rethink Christianity's relationship to Jews and Judaism. Both statements have met with both broad approval and sharp controversy. Both urge Jews and Christians toward serious talk with each other about God.

Rabbi Bloom

## Program

### 1. Sunday, October 28, 2007, Key Auditorium (Roger Bacon Hall, Room 202--NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE)

2:30 p.m. **Remarks**  
Dr. Peter S. Zaas  
Director, Institute for Jewish-Christian Studies,  
Siena College

#### Welcome

Fr. Kevin Mullen  
President, Siena College

### 2:45 p.m. **Lecture**

Rabbi Ruth Langer  
Boston College

### 3:45 p.m. **Lecture**

Professor Elena Procario-Foley  
Iona College

### 4:45 p.m. **Discussion**

### 2. Monday, October 29, 2007, Serra Hall West Dining Room

#### Siena College

### 10:00 a.m. **Brunch and Discussion**

Professor Procario-Foley  
Professor Langer  
Rabbi Bernard Bloom, Presiding

### 12:00 a.m. **Greetings**

Bishop Howard Hubbard  
Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany



**Ruth Langer** attended Bryn Mawr College and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, from which institution she received, her MHL in 1985, her Rabbinic Ordination in 1986, her Master of Philosophy in Hebraic and Cognate Studies in 1990, and her PhD in 1994. The majority of her teaching experience has been at Boston College, where she is currently Associate Professor of Theology.

She was instrumental in the establishment of BC's Center for Christian-Jewish Learning, and is presently its Academic Director. She is the author of two books, *To Worship God Properly: Tensions between Liturgical Custom and Halakha in Judaism* (1998) and *Liturgy in the Life of the Synagogue: Studies in the History of Jewish Prayer* (ed., with Steven Fine, 2005), and numerous articles in Rabbinic literature, Jewish-Christian relations, and issues in Jewish liturgy. She holds the distinction of being the first Second-Generation-Kieval-Institute-Scholar-in-Residence—her father-in-law, Nahum Sarna ז"ל, was one of our distinguished Scholars-in-Residence in 1991's Colloquium, "Do We Share the Same Bible?"



**Elena Procario-Foley** came to Iona College as Associate Professor of Religious Studies in 1998, and quickly was named as the prestigious Br. John G. Driscoll Professor of Jewish-Catholic Studies a year later. She received her undergraduate degree at Fordham University, and her MA and PhD from the University of Chicago where

she worked closely with David Tracy, one of our Kieval Scholars-in-residence in 1988. Her publications reflect her interest in modern Catholic theology and Christology, ethics, and in Catholic-Jewish relations, including two entries in the *Encyclopedia of Religious Rituals*. She has been active in many professional organizations, and is currently Chair of the Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations, of which the Kieval Institute is a charter member.

## Registration Form

### *Dabru Emet and A Sacred Obligation: Can We Talk Seriously to Each Other About God?*

\_\_\_\_ I shall participate in the Colloquium

Events are free and open to the public.

Would you like to contribute to the work of our Institute?

Make check payable to:

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**Loudonville, NY 12211**

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