

WORLD & NATION

Jewish scholars urge attitude change

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Saying that "Christianity has changed dramatically" in its views of Jews and Judaism, 170 Jewish scholars have urged Jews to adopt a corresponding change in attitude toward Christians.

"Jews and Christians worship the same God" and "Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of the Torah," the statement says.

Published as a full-page ad Sept. 10 in *The New York Times* and *The (Baltimore) Sun*, the 1,000-word statement is titled "Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity."

"Dabru Emet," Hebrew for "speak the truth," is an instruction from the Lord in the Book of Zechariah.

Rabbi Irving Greenberg, chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, called the religious transformation underlying the statement "mind-boggling."

A signer of the statement, he said in an essay on the Internet. "This week, for the first time in more than 1,900 years, important leaders in Judaism and Christianity face each other, seeing each other as servants of the same God, even as members of a covenanted people, what-

ever the unresolved differences between them."

In addition to saying Christians and Jews have the same God and share the moral principles of the Torah, the statement says:

- "Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book — the Bible."
- "Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel."
- "Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon."
- "The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world as promised in Scripture."
- "A new relationship between Jews and Christians will not weaken Jewish practice."
- "Jews and Christians must work together for justice and peace."

Noting that the Catholic Church and many Protestant bodies in recent decades have officially reformed their teaching and preaching about Judaism and the Jewish people, the statement says, "we believe these changes merit a thoughtful Jewish response."

"We believe it is time for Jews to learn

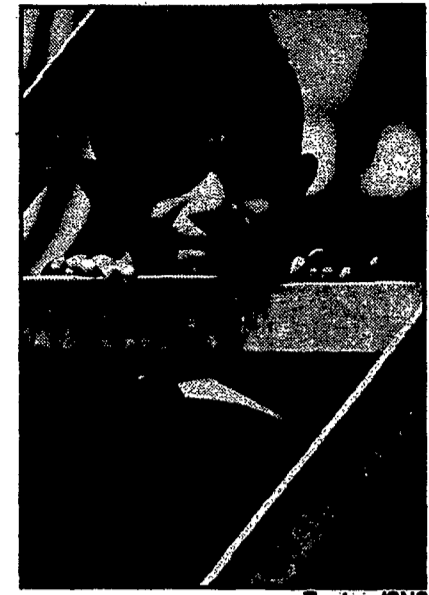
about the efforts of Christians to honor Judaism," it adds. "We believe it is time for Jews to reflect on what Judaism may now say about Christianity."

Chief authors of the statement and organizers of the effort to gather signatures from other Jewish leaders were Tikva Frymer-Kensky, professor of Hebrew Bible at Chicago University Divinity School; Rabbi David Novak, professor of Jewish studies at the University of Toronto; Peter W. Ochs, professor of modern Judaic studies at the University of Virginia; and Rabbi Michael A. Signer, professor of Jewish thought and culture at the University of Notre Dame.

The four began the project as a result of discussions they had in the mid-'90s as participants in the Jewish Scholars Group of the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies in Baltimore.

That group had only temporary funding and no longer exists, but the institute continued supporting the efforts of the authors through its National Jewish Scholars Project.

The ad in *The Times* and *The Sun* also invited others to read the statement and participate in an ongoing discussion of it on the Internet at www.beliefnet.com.



Reuters/CNS

Helpless

An East Timor child peers through a fence at the Atapukan refugee camp in West Timor Sept. 11. The U.N. warned that thousands of refugees left helpless in West Timor by the evacuation of foreign aid workers were running out of food.

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