



For immediate release

CCJ WIDEN PRESIDENTS' COUNCIL TO INCREASE JEWISH REPRESENTATION

London, 12th February 2009

The Council of Christians and Jews is delighted to announce a widening of the Presidents' Council with the appointment of three new Presidents from across the Jewish religious spectrum. Rabbi Dr. Abraham Levy, Spiritual Head of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation, Rabbi Danny Rich, Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism, and Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg, Senior Rabbi of the Assembly of Masorti Synagogues, will join the Chief Rabbi, Sir Jonathan Sacks and Rabbi Tony Bayfield as representatives from the Jewish Community.

The new appointments are a result of a recent internal review of CCJ carried out by the new Vice Chair, Maurice Ostro. Amongst other opportunities, this review highlighted the benefits of having greater diversity of representation at CCJ's Presidential level.

Maurice Ostro, co-Vice Chair of CCJ, commented: **"The work of CCJ, bringing Jewish and Christian communities together to promote mutual understanding, has recently become ever more urgent with increasing antisemitism and interfaith tension. By creating a more inclusive Presidential Council, we believe that these religious leaders from the Jewish community will significantly enhance and broaden CCJ's work in promoting religious and racial harmony between Jews and Christians, and just as importantly, providing a template for fostering good relations between other faiths."**

Rabbi Abraham Levy commented: **"As a Gibraltarian, I was brought up in a religious community where Christians and Jews had deep respect for each other and worked amicably for many worthy causes."**

I look forward to becoming President of the Council of Christians and Jews to continue in the tradition of my birth."

Rabbi Danny Rich commented: **"I am delighted that, following the review by Maurice Ostro, it has been agreed to expand the number of Presidents and I shall use this new opportunity to enhance my commitment to, and work for, the Council of Christians & Jews."**

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg commented: **"The CCJ has a long history of invaluable work in fostering understanding and sharing between our faiths. Now is a critical time for the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, requiring the widest engagement and participation. I feel honoured to be asked to be a President of this excellent organisation."**

David Gifford, Chief Executive of CCJ, commented: **"The CCJ is active in nearly all Jewish communities across the country, and thus the widening of Jewish representation is**



extremely important as we move forward to address some very serious and worrying trends and challenges in the UK today.”

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Editor's Notes:

Full list of CCJ Presidents

Movement for Reform Judaism, Rabbi Tony Bayfield MA
The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor
The Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain, Archbishop Gregorios
The Spiritual Head of Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation, Rabbi Abraham Levy
The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, The Right Rev David Lunan
The Free Churches Moderator, Commissioner Elizabeth Matear
The Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism, Rabbi Danny Rich
The Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, Sir Jonathan Sacks
The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams
Assembly of Masorti Synagogues, Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg

Council of Christians and Jews

The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) was established in 1942 to:

1. Promote religious and cultural understanding between Christians and Jews
2. To work for the elimination of religious and racial prejudice, hatred and discrimination particularly anti-Semitism
3. To promote religious and racial harmony on the basis of the ethical and social teachings common to Christianity and Judaism

CCJ encourages and organises encounter and exchange between Christians and Jews at all levels – to listen, to learn, to grow and develop.

CCJ operates nationally through a network of branches which meets regularly in social, cultural and thought-provoking meetings and discussions, but also through projects with schools, students at university, ordinary people in local communities, theological colleges and with the media.

Our work today is with young and old, women and men, Jews and Christians and sometimes other faiths; encountering and engaging one another, all growing in faith and making our communities and societies a better place for everyone.

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