



# NEWS

FILE  
COPY

DATE: June 15, 1983

FROM: William Ryan

O - 202/659-6700

H - 202/686-1824

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## CATHOLIC AND JEWISH SCHOLARS DIALOGUE ON BIOMEDICAL ETHICS

WASHINGTON--The Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and the Inter-religious Affairs Committee of the Synagogue Council of America (SCA) recently conducted a major dialogue on biomedical ethical issues. The symposium was hosted by the Institute of Pastoral and Social Ministry of the University of Notre Dame.

The meeting brought together Catholic and Jewish thinkers to probe the ethical challenges raised for both traditions by recent advances in biomedical technology.

A range of interrelated questions in the areas of genetic engineering, early life and end of life issues "were analyzed in the light of the specifically religious understanding of the meaning of human nature," according to the symposium organizers, Dr. Eugene Fisher of the NCCB Secretariat and Rabbi Walter S. Wurzbarger of Yeshiva University and President of the Synagogue Council of America.

Introductory overviews of traditional approaches in each community to biomedical issues were presented by Rabbi

/more

NATIONAL CATHOLIC OFFICE FOR INFORMATION

1312 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W. • WASHINGTON, D. C. 20005

## 2/Biomedical Ethics

Mordecai Waxman, incoming president of the SCA, and Dr. Ann Neal, vice president of the Health Care Corporation of the Sisters of Bons Secours. Rabbi James Perman, Chairman of the Bio-Ethics Committee of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and Father Benedict Ashley, O.P., of the University of St. Louis, discussed questions surrounding genetic engineering counseling.

Father Kevin O'Rourke, O.P., of the Center for Health Care Studies in St. Louis, and Dr. David Feldman, chairman of the Medical Ethics Committee, New York Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, discussed the ethical issues of early, pre-natal life, while Dr. Fred Rosner, Director of the Department of Medicine, Queens Hospital Center, and Dr. John Collins Harvey, Georgetown University Hospital, took up the issues of when life ends and what are "extraordinary" and "ordinary" means of prolonging life. Dr. Wurzburger and Rev. Charles Curran of the Catholic University of America presented analytic summaries and conclusions.

The organizers hope to edit the papers of the colloquium for publishing. The papers from the first two SCA/NCCB exchanges on social ethics have already been published by the University of Notre Dame Press, edited by Dr. Fisher and Rabbi Daniel Polish under the titles: Formation of Social Policy in the Catholic and Jewish Traditions (1980), and Liturgical Foundations for Social Policy in the Catholic and Jewish Traditions (1983).

# # #

X,ISR