

FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 1978

Temple University Professor Reflects On "The Holocaust"

"We speak of the Holocaust to save life," said Dr. Franklin Littell, director of the National Institute on the Holocaust at Temple University, in his talk at the April 6 Jewish-Christian Dialog held in the Springhill Avenue Temple, Mobile.

Stating that "We perhaps should keep silence and be still as a tribute to the dead rather than speak on this major pathological event of the 20th Century," the Methodist minister-

scholar said that he spoke with hesitation since the Holocaust raises most grave credibility questions about the authenticity of Christianity.

"After 19 centuries of listening to the Sermon on the Mount, why and how could six million Jews be murdered in the heart of Christendom, in the heart of the Reformation?"

"The foundations of the Holocaust were laid for centuries before it happened,"

he said. "Many of our classical Christian teachings about the Jewish people are wrong and wicked."

What puzzled him especially, Dr. Littell said, was that the Holocaust was engineered by well educated products of the best schools in the world.

He excoriated especially the Christian theologians who justified the extermination of the Jews as ordered by Hitler. And he lamented the teachers who turned out janissaries for the concentration camps.

"What have we learned from this?" he asked. "What do we turn out of our educational institutions every year but technically competent barbarians who will work for whoever will pay them?"

Turning to the spectators who did and said nothing, Dr. Littell said the Hitler seduced his followers from Christianity by claiming that he was building a bulwark against Bolshevism.

Dr. Littell warned against taking lightly the upsurge of the new anti-Semitism as advocated by American Nazis and the new Ku Klux Klan. He likened these to the "harmless, booted thugs" of 1923 when Hitler was making his first violent bid for power.

Among the things he recommended were: 1) the elimination of anti-Semitism from church publications and sermons; 2) the making of a common cause with fellow Jewish Americans against the new anti-Semitism; 3) improving Christian thinking and teaching about the Holocaust and its meaning, instead of forgetting it.

"If Christians were to understand the meaning of the Holocaust, they would mourn it more than the Jews," he said. And the audience was urged to watch the NBC mini-series on the Holocaust scheduled for four nights, April 16, 17, 18, and 19.