

Involvement by Jews and Christians sought on issues of social justice

Mobilians attend national meet

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Religious leaders, while seeking to avoid "mixing church and politics," must be concerned about social justice, according to Rabbi Irwin Cutler, spiritual leader of Dauphin Street Synagogue.

The rabbi said the point about clergy involvement in social-justice issues was made by Monsignor Geno Baroni, assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), during a National Workshop on Christian-Jewish Relations in Los Angeles.

Cutler and two other Mobilians have returned from the workshop. Also attending were Paul and Mary Filben, members of Holy Family Catholic Church and the Mobile Catholic Diocese's Ecumenical and Interreligious affairs Commission.

According to the Mobile rabbi, a point made by the HUD official was that "those in the clergy are more attuned to problems in the community than those in political fields — or they should be." The clergy should be taking action to help resolve problems of

social justice and human rights within communities.

Mrs. Filben added, "Sometimes issues that are called political really are moral issues, and they should be a primary concern of the church."

While the HUD leader talked about involvement in communities in the United States, another speaker at the national workshop "widened the outlook to a global concern," according to Filben. That speaker was Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum of New York, who is director of interreligious affairs of the American Jewish Committee.

Tanenbaum told how U.S. religious leaders have worked together in presenting foreign-aid needs to the U.S. Congress. Said Mrs. Filben, "Religious leaders banding together can change things."

Another point made at the workshop, Filben said, was that worship by Christians and Jews should not become selfish. Making the point was Dr. Krister Stendahl, dean of the Harvard University Divinity School.

Said Filben, "Many times worship serves the

pastor, the rabbi or the congregation rather than God."

Mrs. Filben added, "Worship should help us serve others."

Giving an example, Mrs. Filben said the roots of anti-Semitism on the part of Christians can be traced to the early church when its leaders "were panicking because the Jews were getting most of the converts then. Scare tactics were too often used to achieve the aims of the church."

Said Mrs. Filben, "Dr. Stendahl was saying love of God exists for its own sake. We should worship because we love and love because we worship."

Monsignor Baroni, Rabbi Tanenbaum and Dr. Stendahl were three of numerous speakers, according to the Mobilians. Among the other speakers were Dr. Glenn Englehart, a Southern Baptist leader from Atlanta; Dr. Carl W. Segerhammar, president emeritus of the Pacific Southwest Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, based in Los Angeles; and the Rev. Jesse Jackson, director of the Chicago-based PUSH (People United to Save Humanity).