

## **MEMORIAL EVENT WITH DR. JAMES CHRISTIE HELD TO COMMEMORATE THE 68TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ**

*by Rhonda J. Prepes, January 28, 2013*

On International Holocaust Remembrance Day, January 27, 2013, an event called "Flickers of Light" was held to commemorate the 68th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The Freeman Family Holocaust Education Centre of the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada, B'nai Brith Canada, the Shaarey Zedek Synagogue and the Ridd Institute for Religion and Global Policy of the Global College at the University of Winnipeg sponsored the event which was attended by about 65 people.

Belle Jarniewski Millo, Chair Freeman Family Holocaust Education Centre opened the event and said, "On January 27, 1945, Soviet troops liberated what was left of Auschwitz concentration camp. Only 7000 prisoners remained, most of them very ill and dying. Of an estimated 1.3 million men, women and children who had been deported to Auschwitz from all over Europe, at least 1.1 million were murdered."

"In November 2005 the United Nations designated January 27th as an annual international day of commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. This reaffirmed that the Holocaust which resulted in the murder of one third of the Jewish people along with countless members of other minorities will forever be a warning to all people of the dangers of hatred, bigotry, racism, and prejudice."

"Even in Auschwitz in the depths of darkness and of hell there were 'flickers of light'. Yad Vashem in Jerusalem has recognized over 21,000 brave non-Jewish individuals who selflessly risked not only their lives but the lives of their families to save Jews during the Shoah. These are the Righteous Among Nations."

Former Participants from March of the Living who visited Auschwitz read the stories of four Righteous Among Nations "who were indeed Flickers of Light" said Jarniewski Millo – Dr. Adelaide Hautval, Drs. Kurt and Ella Lingens, Jerzy Pozimski, and Lorenzo Perrone.

Keynote speaker Dr. James Christie, director of the Ridd Centre for Religion and Global Policy, Global College, University of Winnipeg and Professor of Dialogue Theology spoke on the importance of remembering the Shoah.

“Unless people like me - Christian, gentile, born in Canada - learn how to remember the Shoah and learn how to remember Auschwitz even though we did not experience them... then the future remains nearly so grim as the past,” Dr. Christie said.

“One of the tasks that Christians and Jews have together is to ensure that our memories, both those which belong to us personally and those which we have inherited provide us with the skill and the determination and the will to create a new reality - one radically different from that which led to the Shoah.”

International human rights lawyer and author, David Matas criticized the inaction of the Attorney General’s office for not prosecuting the author of anti-Semitic posters first found in downtown Winnipeg in September 2012.

These posters were titled “\$hitler’s List”, listed the names of prominent Jewish Winnipeggers and accused them of criminal activity. The Attorney General’s office did not feel the incident warranted incitement for hatred and a prosecution could not be launched.

“We are here today to remember the Holocaust. When we see the way in which the concerns about the Winnipeg posters were handled we seem to have remembered nothing and learned nothing. Surely when it comes to the Holocaust, we in Winnipeg should be able to do better than that,” Matas said disappointed.

A short film, Pigeon, starring Michael Lerner and Wendy Crewson directed by Canadian film maker Anthony Green was screened. Set during World War II and based on a true story, Pigeon reveals a rare and startling act of charity.

The event concluded with a memorial prayer by Cantor Anibal Mass and blowing of the shofar by Bill Weissmann.

Photos to follow:



*Dr. James Christie*  
*photo by Rhonda J. Prepes*



*David Matas*  
*photo by Rhonda J. Prepes*



*Belle Millo*  
*photo by Rhonda J. Prepes*



*Bill Weissmann*  
*photo by Rhonda J. Prepes*