

Scholar examines Christian-Jew relationships

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ment exponents were writing harsh attacks against fellow Jewish Christians "rather than Jews as a whole," Galambush says.

Both sides believed the Jesus movement was authentically Jewish and didn't conceive of a separate faith called Christianity. "The New Testament authors fought, ultimately in vain, to maintain their legitimacy as Jews," she writes.

In her view the New Testament, if read authentically as a Jewish book, depicts the beginnings of the "reluctant parting" when Christians per-

manently ceased being part of the Jewish people. But later churches were wholly Gentile, so believers lacked that basic understanding and the scriptures appeared "simply to condemn Jews as Jews" — a lethal mistake.

The bulk of Galambush's study examines the New Testament writings, book by book.

Paul's epistle to the Galatians is pivotal. It was written in the A.D. 50s following the summit meeting (depicted in Acts 15) where Jewish followers of Jesus accepted Paul's plea to free Gentile converts from the circumcision rule.

Galatians is polemical, likening Torah versus Gospel to curse versus blessing or slavery versus freedom. Paul removes all earthly markers of status and ethnicity, writing that "there is no longer Jew or Greek" and no male

and female, no slave and free-man.

Paul sought to free Gentiles from what he saw as "a false sense of obligation to Torah," Galambush writes, but later Gentiles misunderstood this as "a wholesale condemna-

tion of Jewish ritual observance as practiced by Jews." Instead of Paul's righteous anger against fellow Jewish Christians he disagreed with, later Gentile Christians mistakenly read his words as anger against Jews in general.

When read as originally intended, she concludes, the New Testament becomes "unfamiliar ... demanding, even threatening," for Christians and Jews alike.

Inmate prevails in prayer feather lawsuit

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. — A man who was held for 18 months in the Benton County Jail has prevailed in a lawsuit he filed to force jailers to give him access to a prayer feather.

Jailers objected to the feather on security grounds, but a federal judge has ruled that Billy Joe Wolfe Jr. of Jay, Okla., demonstrated that the feather was necessary for him to practice his religion.

U.S. District Judge Jimm Larry Hendren accepted most of a magistrates' report that said denying use of the feather was not reasonably related to the goal of jail security. The report noted that inmates had toothbrushes and other items that could be used as weapons.

Wolfe, a member of the

Cherokee tribe, pleaded guilty in July to capital murder and kidnapping for the slaying of Chetlee Janes in 2003 in Maysville. He is now serving a sentence of life without parole in the state prison system.

Hendren turned away a magistrate's assertion that plaintiffs Sheriff Keith Ferguson and jail administrator Hunter Petray should pay a token \$1 damage award. The judge said Ferguson and Petray have qualified immunity. Ferguson and Petray argued that even if they did violate Wolfe's right to religious freedom their immunity was established at the time.

Hendren agreed with the defendants that there has been little guidance for courts and judges on the issue. He

said there was no evidence in this case that "a reasonable officer" in Benton County would know about Wolfe's particular religious beliefs or the related ritual objects.

In a friend of the court brief filed in the case, the American Indian Heritage Support Center urged that Wolfe be given the feather.

"It is tantamount to suggesting that the Christian cross or rosary could be used

as a weapon or for sexual gratification, which we submit would be insulting to most Christians. Hypothetical situations should not be conjured up and passed as fact," the group argued.

Attorney Mike Rainwater for the Association of Arkansas Counties says the organization has researched the issue of who is entitled to a prayer feather and under what circumstances.

All For One Youth Choir practices

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February 12

All For One Youth Choir will resume practices at 3:30 p.m. at Western Avenue Baptist Church, located at 1206 Museum Road, Statesville. New members will be accepted through Feb. 19.

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