

# RELIGION AND HANDGUN CONTROL

BY RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM

A unique demonstration of the collective power of religious leaders to help save lives took place in recent weeks in Evanston, Ill.

Alarmed by the growing number of lives lost through senseless killings by handguns, Beth Emet Synagogue called together religious and lay leaders of Evanston's Catholic and Protestant churches and Jewish houses of worship. They studied and discussed handgun control for a number of months. After they had mastered the subject, the religious leaders organized to win a total ban on handguns in Evanston.

They organized an Interfaith Coalition Against Handguns and worked together for eight months to rally support of large numbers of people in their churches and synagogues. The Christian and Jewish clergymen urged their congregations to circulate petitions supporting the handgun ban. The lay leaders sent resolutions to the City Council. And both clergy and laity spoke out forcefully at public hearings of the Police Service Committee demanding an end to the availability of lethal weapons.

The effect of that cooperative interfaith

activity is that Evanston has become the third U.S. municipality to ban totally the possession of handguns by the general citizenry. Many religious leaders now hope that the Evanston experience will become a model for similar legislation in other states and finally on the national level.

Eliminating handguns from criminal use is a sure way of making real the Rabbinic teaching, that "He who saves one life is regarded as if he saved an entire world."

## CHANCELLOR SPEAKS WITH JEWISH LEADERS

NEW YORK (WNS) -- Helmut Kohl, leader of the Christian Democratic Union that took office last September said here that he intends to "strengthen and intensify his country's relations with Israel."

In a meeting here with a delegation of Jewish leaders headed

by Julie Berman, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Kohl said "I fully support the Camp David process..." With respect to his government's relations with the Arab countries, Kohl said Germany traditionally

had close cultural and scientific links with the Moslem world and would continue to maintain those ties. He hinted that he would be prepared to play an intermediary role in any confidential Israeli - Arab dialogue.


Recalling his recent meeting in Bonn with Knesset Speaker Menachem Savidor on the occasion of the convention of the German-Israel Friendship Association, the Chan-

cellor observed that while seeking closer relations with the Jewish State, "We cannot back everything that Israel does." But he was emphatic in stating his position on the PLO. "You know my position. I refuse to recognize or receive the PLO unless fundamental changes occur on the Arab scene -- changes

which I cannot now foresee," he told the Jewish leaders.

TEL AVIV (WNS) -- Defense Minister Ariel Sharon told reporters in Beirut that he stands by his offer to give temporary refuge in Israel to any Palestine Liberation Organization fighters now in West Beirut who can prove they have not participated in terrorist acts against Israel. He did not say what would constitute such proof. The PLO reportedly rejected the offer.

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