

Christians, Jews begin dialogue

By **DEBBIE BRELAND**
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There has been more positive movement in Jewish-Christian relations in the past 20 years than in the past 2,000 years, Rabbi Alan L. Mittleman said here Thursday.

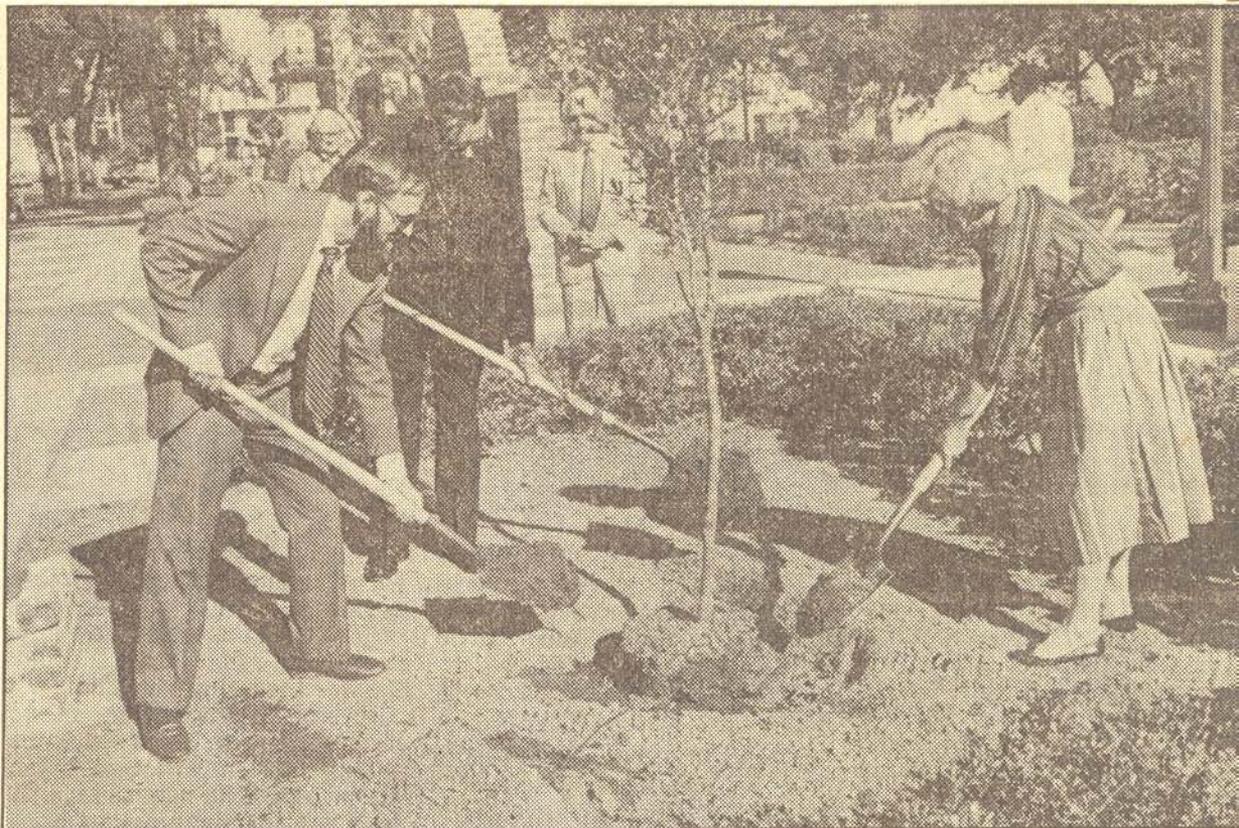
Mittleman, in the inter-religious affairs department of the American Jewish Committee in New York, along with Mobile's Archbishop Oscar H. Lipscomb opened the Mobile area Jewish-Christian Dialogue's 11th season Thursday afternoon with a tree-planting ceremony in Spanish Plaza.

"I hope this tree will be a symbol that the dialogue will continue ... for dialogue is the basis for the success of anything," Mobile Mayor Arthur Outlaw said as a young oak tree was planted in the park.

Lipscomb said that Jewish-Christian relations, compared to 30 to 40 years ago, "have immensely improved. So have Catholic-Protestant relations. It's a different world."

Mittleman said that because Judaism and Christianity are two different religions, there is a natural gap between them that should not be closed.

"We're not out to close any gaps," Mittleman said. "But



SYMBOLIC TREE — A young oak tree was planted in Spanish Plaza on Thursday to commemorate the 11th year of the Mobile Area Jewish-Christian Dialogue. From left are Rabbi Alan Mittleman of the American

Jewish Committee in New York, Mobile Archbishop Oscar Lipscomb and Mary Filben, a founder of the area Jewish-Christian Dialogue. (Press Register photo by Jay Ferchaud)

giant steps have been taken toward overcoming anti-Semitism by the Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox communities."

Mittleman said that the greatest factor in precipitating the revolution in Jewish-Christian relations was a document compiled in the early 1960's by the Second Vatican Council, which sparked "a radical rethinking of Christianity's

relationship with the Jewish people."

He said the document called for "a bold new era of mutual respect and understanding, dialogue, mutual esteem, and it called upon Christians to appreciate the Jewish roots of their faith.

"Since this path-breaking document, most of the major Catholic communities in the world have issued their own

documents and have opened offices of Catholic-Jewish relations, and they have embarked on social projects involving the Jewish communities," Mittleman said.

Mittleman spoke at the Dauphin Street Synagogue Thursday night on "The Current Revolution in Catholic-Jewish Relations," and Lipscomb responded to the address.