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***Could the Holocaust Have Been Prevented?* CHILD HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR, RAISED CATHOLIC, REFLECTS ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NOSTRA AETATE**

Owings Mills, Md. – Never before has a story of one woman’s journey through religious divides and a transformative pursuit of global harmony been so extraordinary and unique. In the 1940s Lucia Weitzman, a Jewish child born during the Holocaust,, was placed with a Polish-Catholic family by her parents in a desperate attempt to save her life. The next years of her life begin to shape her incredible journey being raised Catholic, yet known in her hometown as Jewish, in an often hostile environment. Lucia’s journey continued well into her adult life with a challenging transition back to her Jewish heritage, becoming widowed at a young age, and embarking on a spiritual quest exploring how we are all connected.

On October 28th, 1965, while Lucia was living in the United States as a young mother, the Vatican issued a Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate* [“In Our Time”], a landmark document that rejects the charge that the Jews of Jesus’ time or those alive today are collectively guilty of Jesus’ death.

Mitchell Weitzman, Lucia’s son, knew his mother had seen a life full of loss and pain, yet she emerged steadfast in her focus on faith and love. His mother’s pursuit of living life on her authentic terms, transcending religious labels and divisions, after overcoming insurmountable obstacles is a story that is sure to inspire others faced with difficult personal choices. For twenty years Mitchell and Lucia worked together to develop *The Rose Temple* [2016 release], Lucia’s remarkable story and a compelling call to action promoting religious tolerance.

Expressive, thoughtful and energetic, Lucia Weitzman has immediate availability to discuss:

- Her experiences in church, at school, and in her neighborhood where she grappled with questions, guilt, taunts, and knives as the only remaining Jew (though practicing Catholic) in her post war Polish hometown.
- Her reaction to the *Nostra Aetate* Declaration in 1965, only a few years removed from her escape from Poland and transition to Judaism
- Her thoughts on how we can overcome religion-based barriers and violence prevalent around the globe today?
- Her thoughts on whether a *Nostra Aetate* Declaration prior to the Holocaust could have prevented it?
- Is *Nostra Aetate* still relevant to her (and to all of us) today? Why?
- From the Catholic Church back to her Jewish heritage: What were her biggest challenges and how did she overcome them?

SUBJECT: Lucia Weitzman was born in Bochnia, Poland in 1940. Her Jewish parents perished in the Holocaust and she was raised by a Catholic couple. After escaping detention by Communist authorities in 1961, she immigrated to the United States, married Herman Weitzman, a Holocaust survivor and businessman raised in a traditional Jewish family. She currently resides in Florida and New York and is working on a book that explores the mystical meanings of some of Judaism's most sacred artifacts.

AUTHOR: S. Mitchell Weitzman is an attorney working with the Food and Drug Administration. He is a graduate of New York University and the George Washington University Law School. He was a longtime columnist for the Washington Jewish Week and has written for several peer-reviewed and consumer health care publications. He and his mother, Lucia, wrote *The Rose Temple* over the course of two decades.

BOOK: *The Rose Temple: A Child Holocaust Survivor's Vision of Faith, Hope and Our Collective Future*, by S. Mitchell Weitzman with Lucia Weitzman, will be published in spring 2016. For more information, visit <http://therosetemple.com>.

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