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Documentation



A Shift in Jewish-Lutheran Relations?

The Lutheran World Federation

A Shift in Jewish-Lutheran Relations?

A Lutheran contribution to Christian-Jewish dialogue with a focus on antisemitism and anti-Judaism today

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Edited by

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Introduction

A Long Road: Turning Points

Wolfgang Greive

The essays and country reports included in this publication were first presented at an international consultation of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) at Dobogókö, near Budapest, 9–13 September 2001. They evince a turning point in Jewish-Lutheran dialogue at the global level. The consultation brought together engaged Jews and Lutherans, men and women, from all continents in mutual witness. For the first time, the very diverse experiences and dialogues between representatives of the Lutheran churches and their dialogue partners from the Jewish communities were exchanged, as those involved reported and discussed on the basis of their personal relationships.[1] The worldwide perspective made it possible to overcome the usual Western European and North American dominance in such conversations.

The presence of Dr Gerhard Riegner, former general secretary of the World Jewish Congress, at the 1984 Assembly of the LWF at Budapest led to a new focus on this relationship. It signaled a new start in the dialogue between Jews and Lutherans at the global level, following the tragedy of the *Shoah* and the lamentable effects of Luther's anti-Jewish writings. Riegner's address to and the recommendations of the 1984 Assembly were milestones in Jewish-Lutheran relations. On the basis of conversations held at Copenhagen (1981) and Stockholm (1983), both sides declared jointly, "We affirm the integrity and dignity of both our faith communities." "We pledge to combat all forms of radical [racial] prejudice …."[2] The work at Budapest prepared the way "for an ending of the justifiable bitterness and defensiveness that have plagued Lutheran-Jewish relations."[3] For many Budapest was a breakthrough. The September 2001 consultation was a manifestation of this breakthrough and an exhortation not to forget those common commitments. The nature of the contributions and the common experience of prayer in

[1] Four of the reports could not be presented personally, including Mitri Raheb's who was not granted an exit visa from Israel.

[2] "In Christ – Hope for the World," *Proceedings of the Seventh Assembly, LWF Report No.19/20* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1985), p. 259.

[3] *From Dar es Salaam to Budapest 1977-1984, LWF Report No.17/18* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1984), p. 267.

the aftermath of the terrible terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on September 11 (*cf.* Statement) made this consultation an expression of the turning point which the Assembly had seen as its aim. It is impossible for this book to do justice to the intensity of what was experienced at the consultation.

A special challenge for Lutherans

Jewish-Lutheran dialogue is an integral part of Christian-Jewish dialogue since it deals with fundamental issues pertaining to coexistence and inter-relationships in the light of Christian hostility towards the Jews. Nonetheless, at Budapest Gerhard Riegner expressly underlined the necessity of conducting conversations specifically between Lutherans and Jews. Lutherans are aware of their special responsibility for this dialogue since the Reformer, Martin Luther, called for Jewish schools and synagogues to be destroyed "so that God will see that we are Christians". "Away with the rabbis!" Their teaching is "the work of the devil" (Of the Jews and their lies, 1543, WA 53). If, as Albert H. Friedländer believes, this anti-Jewish spirit was "a component of his [Luther's] thinking from the very beginning" but the "hidden agenda" was "nevertheless a concern for the Jews,"[4] then a clarification of the Lutheran attitude and perspective is required. Responsibility must go hand in hand with a sensitivity which gently seeks dialogue and remains critical of its own interests. Why did Luther with his concern for the Jews[5] hit back "all the more bitterly" when his missionary hopes were disappointed?[6]

After Budapest, efforts at the international level to continue these conversations met with little success because of "a failure to find mutually acceptable topics"[7] and little progress was made in the Jewish-Lutheran dialogue. In the 1990s some Lutheran synods underlined the continued election of Israel and rejected mission to the Jews, and a new, constructive attitude developed in the individual

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[4] Albert H. Friedlander, "Aus der Sicht eines Juden," in Hans Jürgen Schultz (ed.), *Luther kontrovers* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1983), pp. 254 and 255.

[5] "We are brothers in the Bible," *ibid.*, p. 257.

[6] Hermann Greive, *Die Juden. Grundzüge ihrer Geschichte im mittelalterlichen and neuzeitlichen Europa* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992[4]), p.113

[7] *From Budapest 1985 to Curitiba 1989, LWF Report No. 27* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1989), p. 205.

churches. The documents and recommendations from Budapest did not play a special part in this. They were simply part of the overall dynamics in the Jewish-Christian dialogue which progressed in small steps from "contempt to respect for Israel in the church and in theology."[8]

Antisemitism and anti-Judaism today

When engaging in Christian-Jewish dialogue today, the question which must be asked is: "What has really been achieved in 'Christian-Jewish dialogue' when antisemitism and an uncritical condemnation of the state of Israel tend to increase rather than to decrease throughout Europe (and worldwide)."[9]

At the level of world Lutheranism, Jewish-Lutheran relations were first discussed in 1964 at Logumkloster in Denmark. "That meeting made the necessary and overdue statements acknowledging and condemning antisemitism within and outside the church without great difficulty."[10] At the 2001 conference priority was given to the theme "Antisemitism and Anti-Judaism" understood as a contribution to Christian-Jewish dialogue. The consultation sought to clarify the question expressed so clearly and positively in the document of the Institute for Christian & Jewish Studies, *Dabru Emet. A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity.*[11] Has there been a change, an alteration in the course of Christian-Jewish dialogue?

As a consciously confessional yet ecumenical body the LWF is committed to society as a whole, takes up the challenges of the time, and works for clarification and direction through its studies. Addressing the question of whether Christian-Jewish dialogue is at a turning point takes seriously the fact that while a renewed, virulent antisemitism is plaguing the world, a new, deeper awareness of anti-Judaism can be observed in theological research and church practice.

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[8] Martin Stöhr, "Schritte zur Erneuerung der Beziehung von Juden und Christen in evangelischer Sicht," in Hubert Frankemölle (ed.), *Christen und Juden gemeinsam ins dritte Jahrtausend* (Paderborn: Verlag Otto Lembeck in co-production with Bonifatius Verlag), p. 74.

[9] Christina Kurth and Peter Schmid (eds.), *Das christlich-jüdische Gespräch. Standortbestimmungen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000), p. 12.

[10] *LWF Report No. 17/18*, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 263.

[11] **www.icjs.org/what/njsp/dabruemet.html**

At which point do the Lutheran churches find themselves and what insights do they bring to the Christian-Jewish dialogue? What is the message of their Jewish partners? In light of the asymmetry in Christian-Christian relations, careful attention will need to be paid to what can constitute common approaches and challenges. Here, a self-critical approach by the Lutherans to antisemitism and anti-Judaism will be key to any constructive prospect.

The German context

Before I joined the LWF in 1996, I was working at the Protestant Academy of the Lutheran Church of Hanover, a place of dialogue. The academy includes a chapel on whose altar lies a stone from Auschwitz. This stone was a constant provocation for some people attending worship. They were compelled to ask why the stone was on the altar. The stone points to the dimensions of crime and suffering, to the hiddenness of God and the speechlessness, to the shadow and misuse of the cross. A man, once he had grasped the meaning of the stone, asked me, "Must that really be?" Another protested vigorously against this sign on the altar claiming that it was not good theology. My answer was this stone was necessary because it belongs to the history of the Christian churches. There can be no worship in Germany without the shadow of Auschwitz, no confession of sin without profound remorse for the murder of Jewish people, and "good theology" must take Auschwitz into account.

Theology in the LWF is facing up to this challenge. It takes the contextuality of theology very seriously and, in the German context, Auschwitz is part of it like a "tumor in the memory."[12] Very different contexts give rise to very different experiences, and it is important to understand the otherness and to make what is most important to ourselves understandable for others. New approaches require an open dialogue.

Acknowledgements

The Office for Theology and the Church which closely follows matters pertaining to Christian-Jewish relations on behalf of the LWF has been responsible for this project. This study has also involved the Office for the Church and People

[12] *cf.* Emmanuel Levinas, *Eigennamen: Meditationen über Sprache und Literatur* (München: Hanser, 1988), p. 102.

of Other Faiths, the Office for Ecumenical Affairs and especially the Office for International Affairs and Human Rights.

The LWF greatly appreciates the assistance from and involvement of many representatives of the Jewish community. Our special thanks go to Professor Jean Halpérin, the representative of the World Jewish Congress and to Rabbi Dr Leon Feldmann, Executive Secretary of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC). The IJCIC was the LWF's main partner in dialogue at the 1983 Stockholm conference during which the statement on "Luther, Lutheranism and the Jews" was drawn up. This statement enjoyed considerable attention, was gratefully received by the LWF Assembly and recommended to the member churches for study and appropriate action. Jean Halpérin who was also a member of the Stockholm conference has also contributed to this book. It is equally noteworthy that the representative of the World Council of Churches, Dr Hans Ucko, was actively involved both at Stockholm and Dobogókö, as was Chief Rabbi Morton Narrowe from Stockholm. Ecumenical guests were also involved at the Dobogókö consultation.

We owe special thanks to all those involved from the Hungarian host communities: The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hungary and the Union of Jewish Communities in Hungary. The contribution of Dr Jutta Hausmann, professor at the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Faculty in Budapest, was invaluable, as was that of Dr Tamás Lichtmann, professor for history of literature at the University of Debrecen. Both stand for perseverance and sensitivity in the Jewish-Christian dialogue.

A prayer for peace

One cannot write an introduction to a book on this subject at the beginning this new century without urgently praying for peace in the Middle East. In view of the tragic events in Israel and Palestine, we cry out to God, the God of justice and peace, of love and forgiveness.

> Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers." (Ps122: 6-7). Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered (Ps 130: 1-4).

Jews and Christians—Past, Present and the Prospects for the Future: The View of a Hungarian Jew

Tamás Lichtmann

I had the honor of sharing in the preparations for the conference on the theme "Antisemitism and Anti-Judaism Today" as a representative of the Jewish communities in Hungary. There were at least two reasons why Hungary had been asked to prepare the conference and conduct the event. First, it was to honor the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hungary as the host because it has been actively involved in Jewish-Christian dialogue for decades—and especially in the past few years.

Second, Hungary was chosen as the site for this conference because not only the Evangelical Lutheran Church but also the Association of Hungarian Jewish Communities showed great interest in it. The Jews in Hungary form one of the largest communities in Europe today and are certainly the largest Jewish population in Central Europe, with a lively and multi-faceted religious, cultural and academic life.

Third, the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Association of Jewish Communities have had exemplary contacts for many years and engage regularly and successfully in dialogue.

Historical-cultural review

Dialogue, today and in the future, can only be conducted with knowledge and against the background of the historical development. It this context, it is perhaps not superfluous to give a brief outline of the history of Hungarian (and Central European) culture and Jewish involvement in it.

One aspect of the Jewish tradition in Europe is that the Jewish population with its mobility, common history, religion, culture and customs has formed an extremely important link between the peoples of Europe, and hence contributed to cultural contacts.

It is hardly surprising that the first Jewish settlements in Central Europe were already established during the Roman Empire and that the continuous pres-

ence of Jews can be documented. For centuries, the Jews lived in isolation, enclosed in ghettos, oppressed, fearful, persecuted by the secular authorities and the church, repeatedly expelled and often even killed in large numbers and in permanent fear for their lives. Thus, as a despised minority the Jews were forced to live as pariahs, apart from a few exceptions (such as under the financial magnate, Imre Fortunatus, the royal chancellor in the early years of the Turkish wars), up to the time of the Enlightenment when the first efforts at emancipation and assimilation took place.

The entry of the Jews into Hungarian culture can be traced back to the so-called age of Reform in the early nineteenth century. The liberal climate at the time of the Hungarian independence movements, which then led to the bourgeois revolution and the war of liberation against Austria (1848–1849), encouraged efforts towards Jewish emancipation. After the enforced secularization of the Jews under the "enlightened absolutism" of Joseph II (compulsory introduction of the German language, adoption of German surnames), the Jews who had thus already been partly emancipated decided voluntarily and consciously in favor of the Hungarian language and culture, mainly for religious and economic reasons (deliberate opposition to Austrian Catholicism which was much more hostile than the Hungarian Protestantism of the liberal nobility—and against the German middle class in the Hungarian towns which comprised the most important rivals of the Jewish middle class). So the Hungarian Jews became Hungarian and consistently participated in the liberation struggle against the oppressive rule of Austria. One paradoxical consequence was the enormous fine which the Jews were forced to pay for their participation in the revolution; Francis Joseph I then used this money for the construction of a Jewish university which produced the Budapest rabbinical seminary of world renown, the most important center of Hungarian Jewish scholarship. The institution is still today considered the center of Hungarian Jewish learning where great scholars from Ignác Goldziher and Ármin Vámbery to Sándor Scheiber worked.

The first significant writer who embodied the entry of the Jews into Hungarian literature in his own person was József Kiss who claimed for himself a role similar to that of Heinrich Heine in Germany, i.e., he wanted to become an important representative of Hungarian literature. (But in contrast to Heine, he did not dispense with his Jewish identity and remained throughout his life a faithful but culturally assimilated Jew.) He did not become a great writer—of Heine's stature—because he was not similarly gifted, but as the founder and editor of the periodical *Hét* (The Week) he made his mark on literary history as the forerunner and organizer of Hungarian "modernism." In his periodical, which appeared for decades, the first works of the great generation of modern Hungarian literature were published. The other important forerunner of modern times was Sándor Bródy, the most significant representative of Hungarian naturalism, also

an assimilated Jew, who among other things made Arthur Schnitzler known in Hungary when he translated his *Reigen* into Hungarian, wrote an introduction to it and produced it while the play was prohibited in Vienna, Then, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the most important periodical of modern literature *Nyugat* (The West) appeared, published by writers (and financiers) of Jewish origin such as Ignotus, Miksa Fenyö and Lajos Hatvany. In this periodical, Hungarian poets, writers and journalists of Jewish descent also played an important part (Milán Füst, Frigyes Karinthy, Jenö Heltai—Theodor Herzl's nephew, Franz Molnár, Ernö Szép, etc.). The history of Hungarian modernism runs parallel to Viennese modernism and the significant part played by Jews in this phenomenon can hardly be over-estimated and must be seen in a similar way.

Some important representatives of Hungarian literature or culture were bilingual and had grown up in a joint German-Hungarian tradition (the philosopher Georg Lukács, the aesthete and writer Béla Balázs, the social scientist Oszkár Jászi, the patron and writer Lajos Hatvany, the journalist and publisher of the periodical *Nyugat* Ignotus, the other editor and leading industrialist Miksa Fenyö, the avant-garde writer Tibor Déry, etc.).

As Jewish emancipation advanced rapidly and the participation of Jews in Hungarian culture increased, so did antisemitism. Political antisemitism was evident during the last third of the nineteenth century, as almost everywhere in Europe, but, thanks to the strong and energetic resistance of Hungarian liberalism, the only antisemitic political party had no more than a short career in parliament, and the infamous trial of Tiszaeszlár for ritual murder ended with the victory of enlightened thinking and the defeat of the antisemites. In culture and cultural science the *Kulturkampf* (conflict of cultures) began at the turn of the century against cosmopolitanism and liberalism, against the alien spirit of the foreigners considered irreconcilable with the Hungarian tradition—euphemistic expressions all of which undoubtedly referred to things Jewish. At that time, the polarized contrast developed between literature that was genuine—close to the people, so-called "folk" (or even "national") literature—and "town literature" that was alien to the Hungarian "people's soul" and "urban", i.e., the contrast between the literature of the sinful large town and that of the healthy, honest provinces. The writers of Jewish descent mentioned above were also attacked "aesthetically" by being accused of polluting the Hungarian language and introducing a way of thinking alien to its nature and a foreign feeling for life. The representatives of these "national" or "folk" concepts were not all antisemites, but they all considered the Jews as aliens who had never formed an organic part of Hungarian culture, would never do so and were therefore doomed to remain outsiders. And, if they could not be convinced of this peacefully by talking, then they would have to be expelled. The literary scene became more and more polarized and the comparison led to an increasingly broad exclusion of the Jews

from Hungarian culture. This phenomenon was both an intellectual preparation for and an inevitable cultural consequence of the political exclusion and persecution of the Jews. The anti-Jewish cultural policy became so prevalent that the first laws on the Jews were passed shortly after the First World War in the cultural field (the so-called *numerus clausus* law in 1920 which drastically restricted the number of Jews at universities).

In the literature of the period between the wars, a second important generation of the *Nyugat* periodical was growing up and was equally polarized (divided into an urban, cosmopolitan group of authors mostly of Jewish descent and a national group faithful to tradition; they engaged in heated discussions but were in no way hostile to one another). Almost without exception, the second generation of Hungarian Jewish authors came to a tragic end; only very few survived the persecution. In Hungarian literary history, this group is described as the lost generation (Miklós Radnóti, Antal Szerb, Endre Gelléri Andor, Károly Pap). Those who did survive the Holocaust remained silent for decades after the war. After 1945, for four decades the word "Jew" was taboo; neither the Holocaust nor the question of responsibility was dealt with in public debate. (The one exception was the humanist historian and politician, István Bibó.) Shortly before the fall of Communism, starting in the seventies and eighties, literature began slowly to deal with the subject and to face up to the past—also on the Jewish side. Among the first authors who courageously faced up to the tragic past were Imre Kertész, István Örkény and, on the "Christian side", the poet János Pilinszky; later a new generation developed (György Konrád, Péter Nádas, György Dalos, Mihály Kornis, György Moldova, etc.) who appealed in novels and articles for a new, complex—European and Hungarian-Jewish—identity.

Today a writer can (and would want to) admit openly that s/he "is a Jew" and that simultaneously s/he is also "a Hungarian", because these identities are in no way mutually exclusive.

The situation today—and how it came about

The dialogue between Christians and Jews did not start after World War II, but much earlier on. The Christian churches—although not all of them to the same degree—made their protest against the persecution and killing of the Jews by National Socialism and Fascism and even courageously shared in saving Jews—but unfortunately not all the confessions. In Hungary, it was especially the Protestant churches (Calvinists and Lutherans) that expressed solidarity and sympathy, and many of their clergy saved thousands of human lives (more as individuals than as institutions). Naturally, one must not forget the Catholic martyrs who were even prepared to sacrifice their lives. That was really the beginning of the

new dialogue which was taken up again after the war—following a long period of intellectual paralysis—and has been conducted with increasing intensity and developed further up to the present.

In the meantime, the voice of anti-Judaism has also become louder again (for various reasons among which the old religious anti-Judaism is perhaps becoming less important, at the institutional level in any case, but in its place racist and political antisemitism is virulent again, supplemented since the founding of the state of Israel by the "newfangled" anti-Judaism of the Arab nations in the Middle East). For this reason, Jewish-Christian contacts need to be intensified again today in all realms and the dialogue between the Evangelical Lutheran churches and the Jewish communities can make a very important contribution to this.

Tasks and duties for the future

It is very important for Christians and Jews to react together to counteract antisemitism and anti-Judaism in all realms of life: in churches, schools, religious and secular institutions, public life, etc. The churches should take an unambiguous stand and clearly define their attitude to Judaism and Israel. This also includes abolishing theological prejudices (in theology, forms of worship and education) and especially confessing that Christianity has not taken the place of Judaism.

Prejudices can only be combated jointly; that is the only way to counteract antisemitic and anti-Jewish tendencies.

Epilogue

The terrible events of September 11 demonstrated that the "creative imagination" of Satan is inexhaustible. We must not allow ourselves to be discouraged but take up the struggle against such enemies. This tragedy also demonstrated the extremely important significance of the dialogue between world religions and world cultures. That is the only way to safeguard peace and, where it is not yet a reality, to bring peace about. All civilized countries, all cultures and religions have a common responsibility for ensuring that humankind does not plunge again into an abyss of war and self-destruction.

The dialogue between Jews and Christians (and also Muslims where possible) can and must contribute to the worldwide defense of humanist traditions (and a humanist future).

Antimemitism and Anti-Judaism Today

Antisemitism and Anti-Judaism Today: A Human Rights Perspective

Peter N. Prove

In the discussion of issues as difficult and delicate as antisemitism and anti-Judaism, even a hyphen can have an unexpected significance. For my awareness of this fact, I am indebted to Shmuel Almog's note, "What's in a Hyphen?" published in the summer 1989 issue of the Newsletter of the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism.[1] As explained in that note, the hyphenated version of the term "anti-Semitism" is potentially misleading because it conveys the notion of opposition to or hatred of peoples belonging to the Semitic language group, which includes both Jews and Arabs. The non-hyphenated version better acknowledges the reality that both in its original invention by Wilhelm Marr in the 1870s and in its current usage, "antisemitism" is a new term intended to refer specifically to an ancient hatred—hatred of the Jews. In this documentation the non-hyphenated form is therefore preferred.

The two concepts—antisemitism and anti-Judaism—may still require some clarification at the outset, in order to understand the distinction between the two and the necessity of including both in this discussion. Antisemitism, on the one hand, has as its irreducible meaning a dislike of Jews, whether it be on the basis of their race, ethnicity (leaving aside the question of whether the terms "race" and "ethnicity" can be validly applied to a community as diverse as the Jews), religion or any other characteristic, real or imagined. Anti-Judaism, on the other hand, refers to an animus against Judaism as a faith or against Jews as a community of faith. It may arguably be anachronistic to refer to antisemitism before the date of the term's invention, but the antiquity of anti-Judaism is in no doubt. In any event, in practice both attitudes are generally inextricably combined in the individuals who hold them, but the conceptual distinction is important.

Both attitudes, or, rather manifestations of those attitudes, constitute clear violations of fundamental principles of human rights. (From the point of view of human rights, it is important to make the distinction between attitudes and acts.) Antisemitic acts offend against the prohibition against racial discrimination and,

[1] **sicsa.huji.ac.il/hyphen.htm**

in its most extreme manifestations, a whole swathe of human rights up to and including the right to life. Acts based upon an attitude of anti-Judaism offend against the principle of freedom of religion.

The *Shoah* represented the most extreme expression of the denial of these rights as a political creed. It was in large measure due to the international reaction against the genocide perpetrated by the Nazis against the Jews that the political will was found to codify international human rights law in its current form—the foundation of which is the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR).

The preamble to the UDHR speaks of the recognition of the "inherent dignity" and the "equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family" being the "foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world," and refers to "barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind [sic]." The phrase "barbarous acts" is an implicit but clear reference to the Holocaust, which would have been so terribly fresh in people's minds in 1948 when the UDHR was adopted. Among other specific provisions which reverberate with the memory of the Holocaust:

- Article 1 proclaims that, "All persons are born free and equal in dignity and rights"

- Article 2 promises these rights and freedoms to all, "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status"

- Article 3 declares that, "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person," and

- Article 18 insists that, "everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion."

The echoes of the Holocaust have continued to ring through the whole network of UN and regional human rights and humanitarian law treaties which has been built up since the adoption of the UDHR. In these legal instruments, the elimination of racial discrimination, the promotion of freedom of religion, the protection of the right to life, and the prevention of genocide have continued to be recognized and emphasized as key international obligations—even though the terms "antisemitism" and "anti-Judaism" are nowhere to be found in the major human rights treaties.

These issues are also central to the self-understanding of the participants in inter-faith dialogue processes between Lutheran churches and Jewish commu-

nities. The objectives of both partners in these processes need to be understood and taken into account. For most Lutheran churches, the objectives of inter-faith dialogue and the relationship with people of the Jewish faith can generally be related to a desire to understand more deeply the different covenant relationships in the Bible, mixed with their own felt need for atonement for the *Shoah* and for preemptive action against its repetition. For most Jewish participants in such dialogue relationships, however, the objective could, I imagine, be simply and concretely described as the elimination or reduction of antisemitism (and anti-Judaism).

Lutheran churches have often been active advocates against racial discrimination and for freedom of religion. But their heritage in some of the writings of Martin Luther, and the individual histories of some Lutheran churches, contain elements that are contrary to these objectives. It was in Budapest in 1984 that the LWF took the key steps in the process of critically examining this heritage and these histories as they related to the Jewish people and faith, and rejecting those aspects that are not consistent with the fundamental principle of the God-given dignity of every human being and which promoted attitudes of antisemitism and anti-Judaism. This process continues, through dialogue between LWF member churches and Jewish partners the results of which this publication is a first harvest.

In August/September 2001, I represented the LWF at the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban. At this conference and outside it, hate speech and racist ideology were sometimes heard from people claiming to be fighting against racism. Equally, legitimate complaints about racist aspects or effects of certain government policies and practices were generally not heard on their merits because of such complaints being themselves dismissed as racist. The end result was anger, extreme politicization, the triumph of slogans over dialogue, and the further marginalization of all the real victims of antisemitism and of the many other expressions of racism and its related forms of discrimination and intolerance around the world. That was a tragedy.

In their maturing inter-faith relationships, I would hope that Lutheran and Jewish dialogue partners would be able to discuss the issues of antisemitism and its ancient but still flourishing root, anti-Judaism, in a manner which avoids fully conflating these issues with the vexed issue of a resolution of the political situation in Israel-Palestine. I hope that, on both sides of this dialogue, we can recognize that vocal opponents of specific policies of a specific government of the State of Israel can also be committed opponents of antisemitism and anti-Judaism. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that although (as noted by Jocelyn Hellig in 2000) anti-Zionism is not necessarily antisemitism in that criticism of the Government of Israel, or even opposition to the establish-

ment of the secular State of Israel, finds representation among Jews themselves, anti-Zionism may also be seen to be transmuted antisemitism.[2]

In Durban, in a panel discussion on religious intolerance, I emphasized the central role of people-to-people encounters both in promoting religious tolerance and preventing racism. No one who has been welcomed to a synagogue for worship and hosted at a *shabbat* meal, as I was in Durban, could easily thereafter harbor antisemitic or anti-Judaistic attitudes. Nor could anyone who has experienced the hospitality and generosity of Palestinian Muslims, as I have done, readily conceive of the Palestinian people as a nation of terrorists and fanatics.

In encounter and dialogue lie the roots of understanding and reconciliation: hence the critical importance of inter-faith dialogue in a world in which religious diversity is increasingly being manipulated by political and other interests to promote division and conflict. All religious communities are at risk from such manipulation and from the conflict to which it leads. Antisemitism and anti-Judaism are once again being promoted in different parts of the world in the pursuit of political self-interest. Human rights law provides an instrument of accountability for governments who fail to act against those who incite and perpetrate antisemitic and anti-Judaistic acts. The inter-faith dialogues and relationships in which Jews are involved—with Christians and with Muslims—are the key instrument for breaking down attitudes of antisemitism and anti-Judaism and to prevent their resurgence; of not only of addressing the consequences of actions based on these attitudes, but the attitudes themselves.

In the light of their particular heritage and histories, Lutheran churches have a special responsibility to engage in dialogue with the Jewish communities in their midst, and to working together with them against antisemitism and anti-Judaism.

[2] See Jocelyn Hellig, "Antisemitism in Sub-Saharan Africa with a focus on South Africa," *14 Emory International Law Review* (2000), pp. 1197–1248.

Antisemitism and the Struggle for Human Rights

Jean Halpérin

The topic of antisemitism and anti-Judaism today is a most demanding one, prohibiting any form of complacency or trivilization. We must clearly avoid the classical pitfalls of indulging in wishful thinking or sweeping generalizations. We cannot wipe out the heavy burden of the past, or ignore it. The lessons to be drawn from history carry much weight if we want to assess our time properly, and for what has to be devised and done in order to pave the way for a better future. We must aim at a sober assessment of the reality with which we are confronted, in order to try and elaborate a meaningful and imaginative strategy applicable to the world at large.

The struggle against antisemitism and anti-Judaism can be seen as a paradigm for the systematic development of international human rights law. To quote an expert in this field, Louis Henkin, "it was beyond doubt the *Shoah* of the Jews in Europe that provided the drive to make international human rights law a reality."[1]

It is highly significant that when the Charter of the United Nations was being drafted at the 1945 San Francisco Conference, it was deemed necessary explicitly to emphasize no less than eight times (in an otherwise relatively short document) concern for the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It was no mere coincidence that this was done almost at the same time that such ominous places as Auschwitz, Treblinka, Maidanek, Belzec, Sobibor, Buchenwald, Dachau, Ravensbrück, Mauthausen, Bergen-Belsen, Theresienstadt, Struthof and others were "liberated."

This should be interpreted as a solemn commitment, on behalf of the peoples of the United Nations (as well as of the governments) to eradicate, once and for all, the neglect with which human rights and the dignity of human beings had been treated until then.[2]

In the wake of the *Shoah*, this was clearly the starting point of an impressive series of events: the creation of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights;

[1] "Judaism and Human Rights," in International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, *Fifteen Years of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue* 1970–1985 (Rome: Libreria Editrice Lateranense and Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1988), p. 21.

[2] See Jack Bemporad, John T. Pawlikowski and John Sievers (eds.), *Good & Evil After Auschwitz: Ethical Implications for Today* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 2000), 330 pp.

the adoption, as early as December 1948, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Genocide Convention; and the painstaking preparatory work leading sixteen years later to the adoption of the two International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights, followed by a long sequence of specific conventions dealing with racial discrimination and other human rights issues. Had it not been for the dark and tragic years of Nazism, this impressive and ambitious legislative architecture would not have seen the light of day.

The late 1940s and the following two or three decades were viewed by many as a genuine revolution of awareness. It was taken for granted that this new awareness would have a lasting and irreversible impact on the behaviour of individuals, organized groups, political parties and governments themselves. Awareness implies that, having discovered the magnitude of evil and the need to put an end to the indifference and impotence that made it possible, one was no longer allowed to think, speak or act as if nothing had happened. Yet, we are bound to recognize today that the expectations raised half a century ago are in a deep state of crisis, indeed in jeopardy. What can or should be done to revive such expectations? This logically leads us to a set of questions centered on the issue of the link between living faiths and respect for human rights in the world today.

Paradigmatic contemporary thinkers such as Dietrich Bonhoefer, Martin Buber, Abraham J. Heschel, Karl Barth and Emmanuel Levinas point to the intrinsic concern shown by true believers for the sanctity of human life and dignity. We must therefore not underestimate the spiritual (or religious) dimension of the unending and unlimited effort required for the advancement of human rights, including the struggle against antisemitism. To quote Emmanuel Levinas,

> Monotheism is not an arithmetic of the divine. It is the gift, perhaps supernatural, of seeing the human being as absolutely similar to any other human being within the diversity of historical traditions that everyone continues. It teaches xenophilia and anti-racism.[3]

A firm stance for human rights and against antisemitism is therefore a true challenge for all living faiths, and a genuine responsibility incumbent on teachers and preachers—indeed, on every believing human being. It also shows that this could be a major focus for interreligious cooperation and joint action. There is, furthermore, no room for complacency or self-righteousness in this matter. In fact, there is a need for self-critical scrutiny of the way in which each religion lives up to its own principles and commandments.

[3] Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficile liberté. Essais sur le Judaïsme* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1963), p. 204.

We must be fully aware of the fact that antisemitism and anti-Judaism are not only sins, but a far-reaching poison affecting not only the perpetrators, but even the minds of the victims themselves. The churches too have acknowledged belatedly the fact that "antisemitism is a sin against God and man." A significant illustration of this is provided by the consultation between representatives of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations and of the Lutheran World Federation, which took place in Stockholm in July 1983. It certainly is germane to our topic to recall the statement from that meeting, in which the Lutheran participants declared that:

> The sins of Luther's anti-Jewish remarks, the violence of his attacks on the Jews, must be acknowledged with deep distress. And all occasions for similar sin in the present or the future must be removed from our churches ….
>
> Beginning in the last half of the 19th century antisemitism increased in Central Europe and at the same time Jewish people were being integrated in society. This brought to the churches, particularly in Germany, an unwanted challenge. Paradoxically, the churches honored the people Israel of the Bible, but rejected the descendants of those people, myths were perpetuated about the Jews and deprecatory references appeared in Lutheran liturgical and educational material….
>
> Lutherans of today refuse to be bound by all of Luther's utterances on the Jews. We hope we have learned from the tragedies of the recent past. We are responsible for seeing that we do not now nor in the future leave any doubt about our position on racial and religious prejudice and that we afford to all the human dignity, freedom and friendship that are the right of all the Father's children.[4]

This statement was considered at length by the Seventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Budapest one year later, in 1984. The Assembly resolved "to receive with gratitude the statements on 'Luther, Lutheranism and the Jews' and to commend them to the LWF member churches for their study and consideration."[5]

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[4] Jean Halpérin and Arne Sovik (eds.), *Luther, Lutheranism and the Jews*, *LWF Studies* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1984), pp. 9–11. See also, "Ecumenical Considerations on Jewish-Christian Dialogue" (Geneva: World Council of Churches, July 1982), and *WCC Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People*, Report, Sigtuna (Oct.–Nov., 1988).

[5] "In Christ – Hope for the World," *Official Proceedings of the Seventh Assembly*, *LWF Report No. 19/20* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1985), pp. 144–148 and pp. 255–259.

We have reasons to ponder with a sense of satisfaction the journey we made together from Budapest 1984 to Budapest 2001. It is my hope that we will pursue with renewed energy, wisdom and vision our joint effort for the advancement of a cause which remains for all a real and a major challenge.

Some Reflections on the Theme Antisemitism and Anti-Judaism

Hans Ucko

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has since its inception declared antisemitism to be a sin against God and humankind. Church statements on antisemitism issued in recent decades are proof of significant achievements in this area and there is a commitment to ensuring that antisemitism is denounced wherever it appears. Nonetheless, the underlying roots of anti-Jewish teaching have similarly and with equal emphasis to be contended with. Antisemitism can neither be ignored in the Jewish-Christian dialogue, nor can it be separated from anti-Judaism. As the recent Jewish document, *Dabru Emet*, states: "Without the long history of Christian anti-Judaism and Christian violence against Jews, Nazi ideology could not have taken hold nor could it have been carried out."[1] Christian theology gradually became a "teaching of contempt" (Jules Isaac) of Judaism. God had repudiated the election of the Jews and had chosen the church as the new people of God. Out of this grew Christian replacement theology vis-à-vis Judaism and the question of deicide. Antisemitism has its origin in anti-Judaism, which in turn has its roots in the Christian faith tradition. As the Christian tradition developed over the centuries, expressions and phrases in prayers, hymns and liturgical passages as well as in popular piety have changed from this in-built tension between Jewish and Christian faith claims into a general, outright anti-Judaism which then again easily links to antisemitism. Centuries of anti-Jewish teaching have contributed to the endurance of antisemitism in society and to its consequences in the *Shoah*. "Christians cannot enter into dialogue with Jews without the awareness that hatred and persecution of Jews have a long persistent history, especially in countries where Jews constitute a minority among Christians."[2] At its first meeting in Amsterdam, 1948, the WCC declared:

> "We call upon the churches we represent to denounce antisemitism, no matter what its origin, as absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith. Antisemitism is sin against God and man [sic]." This appeal has been reiterated many times. Those who live where there is a record of acts of hatred against Jews can serve the whole church by unmasking the ever-present danger they have come to recognize.[3]

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[1] **www.icjs.org/what/njsp/dabruemet.html**

[2] **www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/j-crel-e.html**

[3] *Ibid*.

The United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Durban, September 2001, got massive media attention, primarily because of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the question of apology and reparations for the slave trade. The preceding NGO conference also got its share of very pointed attention by the press. Nevertheless, some good things were said which should not get lost.

At this point I would therefore like to quote from the World Conference against Racism NGO Forum Declaration in Durban on the question of antisemitism as an undertaking for church and society:

> Ensure that all members of civil society clearly and publicly condemn all forms of antisemitism; recognize the responsibility of public officials to publicly disavow hate mongers, hate speech, and other forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify acts of antisemitism; ensure that appropriate anti-discrimination legislation exists and is adequately implemented to ensure that action is taken against individuals and institutions responsible for discrimination and criminal acts against Jews, and the denigration of Jews; promote concrete actions which will counteract and prevent the increase of antisemitic incidents and hostile action against Jews as well as the rise of radical and violent movements which foster racist ideologies and discriminatory practices against the Jewish community; promote Holocaust remembrance, notably through education and the organization of cultural or media events, including the promotion of national days of Holocaust remembrance. Include the subject of antisemitism in anti-racist education for students and teachers, and in all teaching materials, particularly in history and social science books; introduce measures to eliminate antisemitic propaganda, and antisemitic references in school curricula, textbooks and the media; promote public awareness and tolerance through non-formal education and the media; give Jewish youth an opportunity to take an active role in educating the world about the evil that necessarily results from Jew hatred; promote a voluntary internet code of conduct and other voluntary measures against the purveying of sites that promote racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; encourage the United Nations within the context of the UN Decade of Human Rights Education, to establish a month each year dedicated to promoting responsible use of the internet with a particular focus on the internet.[4]

In denouncing antisemitism Christians should reflect on the significance of Judaism to Christian self-understanding. The Christian claim of being the people of God seems by its very claim to dispossess Jews of their self-understanding, and thus to leave seeds of anti-Judaism present, available and potentially lethal. The self-understanding of the church is not independent from what the church

[4] **www.racism.org.za**

thinks about the Jews. Is it true that, while condemning antisemitism at one level, there are seeds in place at the other, leaving Christians with the paradox of condemning something they theologically justify?

While giving due recognition to the 1948 WCC statement, we should remember that this statement appears in the context of what was called "barriers to be overcome," saying:

> Only as we give convincing evidence to our Jewish neighbours that we seek for them the common rights and dignities which God wills for His children, can we come to such a meeting with them as would make it possible to share with them the best which God has given us in Christ.[5]

While there was a "no" to antisemitism, there was a continued "yes" to a non-stop mission among Jews. The "no" to antisemitism seemed to be an instrumental "no."

This consultation makes a distinction between anti-Judaism and antisemitism and so do many Christian statements. While being adamant on denouncing antisemitism, the question of anti-Judaism is defined in different ways. The United Church of Canada's statement, *Bearing Faithful Witness* makes the following distinction. Anti-Judaism

> can mean intellectual dissent from Jewish precepts (in the same sense as "anti-Christian" or "anti-Christianity"). Or it can have a pejorative connotation, implying not merely an attack on Jewish ideas but on the Jews themselves for other than racial reasons. [6]

Anti-Judaism is therefore sometimes held to be a less lethal position than antisemitism. Anti-Jewish elements are present in the Christian Scriptures, but it would be false to claim that the Scriptures are anti-Semitic. In the fourth century, St. John Chrysostom wrote a polemical work "Against the Jews." He was trained in the schools of classical rhetoric and he pulled no punches. His language was harsh, intemperate and at times crude and insulting. It would certainly not pass the standards of polite or scholarly discourse today, says an Orthodox theologian in defense of Chrysostom and continues,

> St. John Chrysostom was not really writing against Jews, but against Judaising Christians. There were Christians who would attend Jewish services and prayer meetings, and adopt Jewish customs, and say how superior they were to Christian ones.[7]

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[5] **www.jcrelations.net/stmnts/wcc_amsterdam.htm**

[6] **www.united-church.ca/bfw/proposedstatement.htm**

[7] **www.orthodoxy.faithweb.com/antisem.htm**

> Chrysostom tries to show the superiority of Christian beliefs and practices, and their incompatibility with each other. It is quite clear that he thinks Christianity is superior to Judaism, and that Christians should therefore not attend Jewish services and prayer meetings or adopt Jewish customs.[8]

Does such theology justify either pogroms or genocide? Maybe not in itself, but *gutta cavat lapidem* [the drop hollows out the stone].

The most obvious example of dealing with seemingly anti-Jewish statements, such as "His blood be on us and our children," is the way we spiritualize them to say that **we** actually are the crowd shouting, "The crowd is us." When we hear those events from Palm Sunday through Good Friday and to identify with those who shouted "crucify him," with those who derided Christ, with those who judged him, etc., we are saying: we are like the Jews. But the example used has defined Jews as a negative category *per se*.

In a report from a 1999 WCC consultation held in cooperation with the Baltic ecumenical network, Theobalt, we read that:

> When churches are faced with questions regarding their liturgical praxes or theological thought-patterns, there are two ways of reacting. Either there is a defensive attitude, saying that this is part of the revealed truth and therefore not to be given up. Or, there is an awareness of the dangers to the faith and to the sobriety of the society in some of these traditional expressions and consequently a willingness to exchange them for more sound, biblical and healing wordings.[9]

Orthodox Christians and Jews have met in various constellations. I think for the last time with the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) in the late 1990s. One outstanding and complex issue is the question of Orthodox texts containing anti-Jewish prejudices. The reply is usually that any interpretation bearing an anti-Jewish slant is, if possible, avoided and that the hymns have not cultivated a polemical attitude against Judaism. At a meeting under the auspices of the IJCIC and the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1998, the Orthodox Christians said that,

> this is what we can say for now, without this meaning necessarily that is our final word on the matter. Even though these texts are of a symbolic nature, the matter remains uppermost in our mind and is of concern because it is of concern to you. Time may perhaps provide further prospects.[10]

[8] *Ibid*.

[9] Anti-Semitism in Church and Society. A consultation of the WCC and the Theobalt Network, Oct. 1999.

[10] Press release following an Orthodox Christian Jewish meeting in Israel, December 1998.

Another example of the difficulty to distinguish between antisemitism and anti-Judaism is revealed in a recently published book on the Vatican.[11] The report, *We Remember: A Reflection of the Shoah*,[12] published in 1998 acknowledged that certain misguided interpretations of Christian teachings have contributed to centuries of discrimination against Jews in Central Europe. However, the report sought to make a distinction between this older history and the new form of antisemitism that sprang up in the nineteenth century. It was this latter form, drawing on theories of race, and more sociological and political than religious, which culminated in Nazism.

The author shows how distinctions between anti-Judaism and antisemitism fall apart. Jews acquired equal rights in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but under indignant protests from the Vatican. The church did not confine itself to a religious antisemitism; the church played a major part in shaping the modern political form of antisemitism. Jews were not guilty of religious error alone: they were an amoral people, bent on world domination, who needed to be kept in social quarantine. Jews were not only pathetic souls to be saved by conversion but plotting the destruction of all that was holy. Secularism and modernity came from the Jews.

As a result of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, antisemitism and anti-Judaism sometimes go hand in hand. Addressing antisemitism and anti-Judaism remains an issue for the churches in and outside the Middle East. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is so engrained that the local Christians are reluctant, to say the least, to deal with the issue of anti-Judaism lest they be looked upon by Muslims as allies of Israel. Some years ago, Metropolitan Khodr of Lebanon fought an uphill battle when the National Socialist Party of Lebanon [sic] wanted to excise every reference to Israel and Zion from the Bible. Metropolitan Khodr got his fingers burnt badly in that exercise of trying to maintain the inseparable links between the two Testaments of the Bible.

But not everything is antisemitism. The critique of the WCC's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has sometimes been quite harsh and at times even obscene. The WCC is accused of being pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel, and thus antisemitic. This in itself is not new. It has been accompanying the WCC for quite some time and has sometimes caused some problems in the relationship between LJCIC and the WCC. At the 1991 Assembly in Canberra the WCC had spoken out publicly on the Gulf War. It was subsequently immediately accused of antisemitism and, in 1992, the Central Committee of the WCC adopted a policy paper on Jewish-Christian relations. With this statement the WCC wants to make clear that it does not regard the critique of the Israeli government's politics as being antisemitic or anti-Jewish. It says:

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[11] David I. Kertzer, *The Popes Against the Jews: The Vatican's Role in the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001).

[12] **www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_16031998_shoah_en.html**

> In this regard, we assume that criticism of the policies of the Israeli government is not in itself anti-Jewish. For the pursuit of justice invariably involves criticism of states and political movements, which does not imply denigration of peoples and much less of faith communities. Expressions of concern regarding Israel's actions are not statements regarding the Jewish people or Judaism, but are a legitimate part of the public debate. The same holds true for a critique—from within or from without—of states and political movements that claim a Christian foundation for their basic values.[13]

It was interesting for me to read the statement by the Deputy Foreign Minister of the State of Israel, Rabbi Michael Melchior, made at Durban: "To criticize policies of the Government of Israel—or of any country—is legitimate, even vital; indeed as a democratic state many Israelis do just that."[14]

Raw emotions easily come to the fore when discussing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and it is not always easy to remain dispassionate. The WCC welcomed that Durban provided a platform for victims of racism to speak of their experiences and their pain, and to make proposals for change. During the NGO Forum, in keeping with WCC policy, the WCC delegation supported the right of Palestinian self-determination, the right of return and the establishment of a Palestinian state. It affirmed, as has always been the case, the right of the State of Israel to exist, and condemned antisemitism. Some of the statements in the NGO Forum document are outside the WCC's policy framework, and cannot be supported by the WCC, such as: equating Zionism with racism, describing Israel as an apartheid state, and the call for a general boycott of Israeli goods.

I fear that in spite of the press release of the assessment of the WCC delegation to the Durban conference (from which I quoted), the WCC may still, because of emotions ruling the discussions, be accused of being antisemitic and anti-Jewish. We will have to deal with this and maybe find a way whereby Jews and Christians can find common ground. Although antisemitism is a Christian and not a Jewish problem, we might in setting viable parameters together find ways to address antisemitism and anti-Judaism in a responsible way.

Finally, I would like to refer to the French historian, F. Lovsky, who made it abundantly clear that Jewish-Christian dialogue is the pivot of ecumenism. Attempts to redress the Jewish-Christian relationship from a teaching of contempt to a teaching of respect and appreciation could lead to greater Christian unity.

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[13] **www.jcrelations.net/stmnts/wcc_canberra.htm**

[14] Statement by the Deputy Foreign Minister of the State of Israel, Rabbi Michael Melchior, read at the Durban Conference at **www.un.org/WCAR/statements/israelE.htm**

Christology without Anti-Judaism?

Anti-Judaism: A Core Problem of Christian Theology

Leon Klenicki

I would like to begin this essay with a story from my youth, before Vatican Council II, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where my family lived. In the 1950s, we were still overwhelmed by what had happened in Europe, and our powerlessness to get visas for family members who had survived the gas chambers of Auschwitz. Argentina, still very much influenced by Nazism, was undergoing periodical waves of antisemitism, a scourge that has not totally disappeared. Visas were available for Nazis escaping from Germany and Europe, but not for Jews. Every Passion Week the Jewish community was on alert, anxious and concerned. Downtown Buenos Aires was covered with leaflets, with New Testament texts negative towards Jews and Judaism, distributed by a right-wing Catholic group. In them the Jews were portrayed as the killers of Jesus, disregarding the guilty Pilate and the Roman Empire. The leaflets ended with a denunciation: "Just as the Jews killed Jesus, they are now destroying Argentina."

After October 1965, after the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*, Vatican Council II's statement on world religions and Judaism, these leaflets were no longer distributed. Evidently, the Nuncio had advised the right-wing groups to stop distributing their racist pieces.

My knowledge of the New Testament was limited to those episodes, and I believed the gospels to have been written by right-wing or fascist groups. I changed my understanding, somewhat, after reading Shalom Asch's novel about Paul which introduced me to early Christianity. During my studies at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, I read the New Testament. My professor and mentor, Dr Samuel Sandmel, who used to teach New Testament at the seminary, asked me to read the gospels. He was very curious to see how a young Jewish man, coming from a traditional home and an overwhelmingly Catholic society, would react to the New Testament. I came back weeks later and told him that I was surprised by the text. For me it sounded "very Jewish." Sandmel laughed and said that Jesus has been Jewish as had his whole environment, and that he was reflecting on the Judaism of his day. I started carefully to study New Testament exegesis as well as New Testament Greek. I had long conversations with Christian clergy who came to study rabbinic Judaism in order to understand the early Christian milieu and Jesus' vocation. Ironically, in our day, the process has been reversed: we turn to the New Testament in order to understand aspects of the world of rabbinic Judaism in Jesus' day.

For centuries the New Testament has been used to incite antisemitism. Is the text antisemitic? In his book, *Anti-Semitism in the New Testament?*, Samuel Sandmel concludes that the Christian canon of Scripture contains antisemitic elements, adding that:

> It is simply not correct to exempt the New Testament from antisemitism and to allocate it to later periods of history. It must be said that innumerable Christians have indeed purged themselves of antisemitism, but its expression is to be found in Christian scripture for all to read. To what extent does Christianity in general and the New Testament in particular perpetuate and recapitulate the anti-Semitism that so many Christians have come to feel unworthy of all that is so noble in their tradition?[1]

Furthermore he stressed that, "The presence of antisemitism in the New Testament is what presents the occasion for rising above it."[2]

Sandmel's statement was reinforced by James Parkes, a pioneer in the study of early Christianity and Judaism, who wrote in his book, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue*, that, "It is dishonest henceforth to refuse to face the fact that the basic root of modern antisemitism lies squarely in the gospels and the rest of the New Testament."[3]

After considerable study of the sources, I confess an uneasiness about condemning the New Testament text as antisemitic. The text was written in its majority by Jews who declared their alliance to Jesus as the promised Messiah. Some of the texts remind me of internal rabbinic disputations as reflected in the Mishnah and the Midrash. Nevertheless, I recognize that for centuries the text has served as a pretext for fostering antisemitism and separating Jews from society. The antisemitic understanding of the gospel remains a reality in Western society. Recently, when welcoming Pope John Paul II, the president of Syria denounced the Jews as "killers of Jesus." A popular sports personality in the US was quoted in the *The New York Times* as having said that, "Jews were stubborn and had Jesus' blood on their hands." The accusation of deicide is present in the Oberammergau Passion Play in Germany, as well as in similar events all over the world. The accusation of deicide

[1] Samuel Sandmel, *Anti-Semitism in the New Testament?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), p. 143.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

[3] James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue* (New York: Hermon Press, 1974), p. 375.

is in the collective unconscious of the West, and requires a reckoning and a response of repentance.

New Testament scholarship has shown that the text was compiled thirty to forty years after Jesus' death and might, at times, reflect controversies of those days, rather than discussions during Jesus' day. This reality is important in relationship to a text such as Matthew 23:13–33, and the references to scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites. It is necessary to understand the meaning of those categories in order to see how much the compiler of the text, or even Jesus himself, reflected internal matters of the Jewish community. Without knowledge of the first century the reader might have reached a negative interpretation of the text. Such reading creates a theological anti-Judaism that denies Israel's vocations and God's covenantal call, and prepares an atmosphere and the possibilities for social antisemitism.

In 1997, aware of the situation, Pope John Paul II called for a symposium of New Testament scholars to discuss the roots of anti-Judaism in the Christian milieu. The symposium reviewed elements of Christian teaching from the last two thousand years that might have contributed to the disdain for Judaism. In his address to the participants, the Pope said that,

> the erroneous and unjust interpretations of the New Testament regarding the Jewish people and their presumed guilt circulated for too long [and] contributed to a lulling of many consciences at the time of World War II, so that, while there were "Christians" who did everything to save those who were persecuted, even to the point of risking their own lives, the spiritual resistance of many was not what humanity expected of Christ's disciples.[4]

Pope John Paul II's words inspired the publication by the Paulist Press and the Stimulus Foundation of, *The Word Set Free: Preaching and Teaching the Lectionary Without Anti-Judaism*. The studies in this collection focus on the New Testament and the presentation of Jews and Judaism. The authors are Jewish and Christian scholars devoting their attention to each of the books of the New Testament and Judaism. The studies do not aim at changing the text, a sacred one, but at explaining it *in situ*. The different writers try in their commentaries to explain critical texts on Jews and Judaism. One example would be Matthew 23:13–16 with its reference to Pharisees and scribes as hypocrites. The scholars want to demonstrate historically how the text was received and used for pointedly anti-Jewish or antisemitic purposes. Then the text will be deconstructed into four components: What elements of Judaism are present in the text? How

[4] **www.adl.org/Interfaith/Oberammergau/Pope_John.html**

does the evangelist use Judaism positively in developing his own distinctive Christian theology? How could this text be read against the rabbinic literature and Jewish theology of its day? And, How does the evangelist present or use Judaism negatively or positively in developing his or her own distinctive Christian theology?

A rabbinic commentary explaining New Testament references to Pharisees, Sanhedrin[5] and Jewish life in the first century will provide background information on Jesus' Judaism.

Reverend George M. Smiga, Professor of New Testament at St. Mary's Seminary, Cleveland, Ohio, USA, was asked to prepare a commentary on the Gospel of John and anti-Judaism. Professor Dennis McManus and I have added rabbinic comments to clarify the text. Our comments are intended to clarify the text, not to change it. The purpose is to understand the text *in situ*. In the following I will share several examples from *The Word Set Fee*.

John 11: 1–45: The raising of Lazarus from the dead[6]

> 11:1 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 11:2 Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. 11:3 So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." 11:4 But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." 11:5 Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, 11:6 after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. 11:7 Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." 11:8 The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" 11:9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. 11:10 But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." 11:11 After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." 11:12 The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." 11:13

[5] Ancient Jewish court system. The Great Sanhedrin was the supreme religious body in Palestine during the time of the Holy Temple. There were also smaller religious Sanhedrins in every town in Palestine, as well as a civil political-democratic Sanhedrin. These Sanhedrins existed until the abolishment of the rabbinic patriarchate in about 425 CE.

[6] Prepared by Dennis McManus.

Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. 11:14 Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. 11:15 For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." 11:16 Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." 11:17 When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 11:18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, 11:19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. 11:20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. 11:21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 11:22 But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." 11:23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 11:24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, 11:26 and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" 11:27 She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world." 11:28 When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." 11:29 And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. 11:30 Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 11:31 The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 11:32 When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." 11:33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. 11:34 He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." 11:35 Jesus began to weep. 11:36 So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" 11:37 But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" 11:38 Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 11:39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." 11:40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" 11:41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. 11:42 I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." 11:43 When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 11:44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." 11:45 Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

The prayer of the rabbi at the death of his friend

Two important points are evident in a rabbinic reading of this text. First, the entire story presents the death and burial customs of first-century Jews with particular emphasis on the period of mourning known as *shivah*, or the seven days of grieving, which typically follow the day of burial by the immediate family of the deceased. Second, these practices are meant to be the setting against which Jesus offers a distinctive prayer to God for the resurrection of his friend, Lazarus. Further, there is the suggestion that this event takes place under the suspicion that Jesus is a blasphemer, whose own repeated escapes from death will quickly run out.

11:2: "Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair." This event helps to contextualize all the actors in this story within funerary settings. It should be noted that Martha's anointing of Jesus is anachronistically referenced here, not related until later in the Gospel of John 12:1–8. Jewish custom encouraged the use of perfumes and oils for the dead in order to delay, but not prevent decomposition. By contrast, embalming was an Egyptian custom.

11:8: "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and you are going there again?" It is essential to understand that the disciples were anxious for their own safety as well as their leader's. How else can 10:31 be explained except that Jesus had been accused of blasphemy for his portrayal of himself as "one with his Father"? Under the law, stoning was the prescribed punishment for blasphemous assertions. In 10:31ff., Jesus barely escapes this punishment after repeated attempted arrests (10:39). He is then, socially and religiously, clearly labeled as one who has blasphemed. Such suspicion would not be easily overcome and would have followed him permanently by way of reputation. Those who follow his teaching would have been subjected to the same punishment—a fear stated by Thomas (verse16) who is willing to undergo stoning to defend his Master.

11:11: "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." Throughout the Scriptures, the phrase "to sleep" is often a euphemism for "to die" (*cf.* 1 Kings 11:23). The narrative of grieving which follows finds no parallel in Second Temple literature for its portrayal of the inner spiritual and emotional life of Jewish believers**.**

11:21–22 "Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him'." Martha's conversation with Jesus engages the rabbi, as would a disciple

with a Master, expressing perplexity just shy of judgment, but also confidence in the power of his prayer to rectify everything.

11:28: "When she had said this, she went back and called her sister, Mary, and to her privately, 'The Teacher is here and calling for you.'" Mourning for a brother who was otherwise the head of household would have fallen principally to the women of the family. Indeed, women assumed the leading roles on such an occasion since the law prescribed that men and women walk separately in the funeral procession, with women returning to the grave later to begin the period of thirty days of mourning which followed *shivah*.

11:29: "And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him." The usual position for mourners was sitting (Ezek 26:16; Jn 3:6; Job 2:13). Comforting a grieving relative of the deceased would involve taking the same seated position (Job 2:13), offering a consoling word (Isa 40:1–2) and even food to the mourners (2 Sam 3:35; Jer 16:7), but not speaking until the family members began the conversation. This last point helps to explain why the other mourners would have followed Martha and Mary back to the tomb for further public weeping: the wishes of these two women directed the course of the mourning. *Shivah* was conducted in the home of the grieving family, who would not leave the house during this period without an exceptional reason.

11:23: "Your brother will rise again." This statement would have been seen as an example of the "consoling word" mentioned above, offered to comfort Mary's and Martha's spiritual and emotional grieving—a sentiment consistent at the time of Jesus with general Pharisaic belief in the resurrection of the dead.

11:33: "When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved." 11:35: "Jesus began to weep." Here, Jesus is portrayed as deeply affected by the realization of Lazarus' death. The expression in Greek to describe his distress—*en hauto*—is a Semiticism[7] for the voicing of the deepest of human needs. The letter to the Hebrews 5:7 describes a similar scene. Jesus in Gethsemane in which his prayer to God is characterized by "loud cries and tears and supplications." Paul also captures these same elements of Jesus' prayer when he writes to the Romans 8:23 that "we all groan within ourselves" in praying for the redemption of the world. In

[7] A Semiticism is a linguistic form from the Hebrew language used by the writers of Greek in the New Testament. Semiticism is a kind of loan translation. Also pronounced Semitism. Also called Hebraicism.

effect, we have been watching the start of the rabbi's prayer since verse 35, to be re-intensified at

11:38–39 "Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days'." Jesus has called for the stone to be rolled away. Such tombs would have been common in Jerusalem, with the body placed horizontally on a shelf or on the floor. It is important to note the double significance of the number four here. First, it took Jesus four days to reach Lazarus' tomb from the time he first received notice of Lazarus' illness. Second, Jewish belief held that the soul hovered near the body for three days following death, and that on the fourth day death became irreversible. As a result, graves were watched for the first three days following burial to guard against the possibility of "false death" (Sem 8:1).

11:41–42: "And Jesus looked upward and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.'" Jesus offers his remarkable prayer, with the traditional lifting of his eyes to heaven, signaling the start of intensely earnest prayer (*cf*. Jn 17:1; Isa 51:6). Combined with the groaning described above and the request for his Father's intervention, the three elements of Jesus' prayer are brought together in this scene. The uniqueness of his prayer cannot be understated: What Jew would dare to ask that the dead be raised in order to establish his own personal role in the redemption of the world?

Notes on John 2:13-25

> 2:13 The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2:14 In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. 2:15 Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. 2:16 He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" 2:17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." 2:18 The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" 2:19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 2:20 The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" 2:21 But he was speaking of the temple of his body. 2:22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had

said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. 2:23 When he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing. 2:24 But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people 2:25 and needed no one to testify about anyone; for he himself knew what was in everyone.

The money changers in the temple[8]

In this story John presents an important and recurrent theme of many of his stories: the relationship of Jesus to the temple. No fewer than nine separate stories in John link Jesus to the temple in some way (*cf.* Jn 2:13ff.; 5:14; 7:14; 7:28; 8:2; 8:20; 8:59; 10:23 and 11:56). One of these—John 8:20 (*cf.* Mk 12:41ff.)—demonstrates the importance of Jesus' preaching at the site of the temple treasury in particular. In all such stories, Jesus shows a heightened sense of the temple as the place on earth beyond all others where God dwells with his people.

2:13: "The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." Here, Jesus is portrayed as an observant Jew, preparing himself to enter into the annual cycle of sacrifice and prayer held in Jerusalem in honor of Passover. It is against the background of fidelity to his Jewish heritage that his encounter with money changers and sellers is to be understood.

2:14: "In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables." Where in the "temple area" were these men to have been located? Most likely it was in the court of the Gentiles which surrounded the inner barrier leading to the courts of women, men and finally, of the priests, where sacrifices were offered (see Josephus, Bell. Jude 5.5.1–6). In the court of Gentiles, for example, sheep and doves (as the offering of the poor) were sold, while a special tax was collected annually on every Jewish male over the age of nineteen (Ex 30:11–16; Neh 10:33 and Philo, Spec. 1.76.78) for the upkeep of the temple. Such monies—a half-shekel—supplied funds for the endless sacrifices of oxen and incense within the temple. The "money chargers" referred to by John were private individuals whose task it was to convert Roman coins into the special "Tyrian shekel" or official coinage of the temple economy. Roman and Attic coins carried the impression of the emperor and other political persons, the engraving of whose images on coins would have violated Jewish law and made them unsuitable

[8] *Cf.* Mt 21:12ff.; Mk 11:15 and Lk 19:45.

for the payment of sacrificial animals. The half-shekel was worth, relative to Roman coins, two denarii or one didrachma. The role of these money changers or *shulhani* is laid out in Tosef. Shek. 2.13; they were allowed to charge a four percent or greater fee for every coin exchange they made (Shek. 1.6ff.). Many of them also accepted money for investment and paid out interest on it as a loan, in violation of Jewish law (*cf.* Deut 23:20–21, Ex 23:24 and Lev 25:35–38).

2:15–16: "Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!'" Here, Jesus addresses what is presumably a series of abuses by moneylenders, and shows himself a defender of temple purity in the mode of Zechariah, the fiery sixth-century prophet, whose message was the joyful expectation of the rebuilding of the temple in Messianic times. Jesus' statement in verse 16 parallels Zechariah 14:21: "And there shall no longer be any traders in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day." Jesus' action together with his indignation that the temple had been abused by the practices he abhorred, is reflective of earlier prophetic behavior such as is found in Jeremiah 7:11, where temple priests are warned against all corrupt behavior. Other prophetic texts are similarly called to mind here (*cf.* Hag 2:7–9, Mic 3:12 and Sir 36:13–14. 2.18: "What sign can you show us for doing this?" This is meant to ask by which authority Jesus took so publicly an initiative against established custom within the temple precincts. Jesus' answer is typical of a prophet or rabbi who claimed his authority from God. He quotes the Scriptures in what will come to be seen as his distinctive, self-appropriating Messianic style, unheard of in Jewish history.

2:20: "The Jews then said: 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?'" The question refers to the forty-six years taken to build the Second or Herodian Temple, begun by King Herod in circa 22 BCE (*cf.* Josephus, Antiq. 15, 11, 1, 380). Jesus' use of the term "three days" could be intended as a reference to the voice of the prophet Hosea 6.2: "After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him." Such a time sequence—after two days; on the third day—reflects the Jewish belief in the irreversibility of death following the third day after expiration. A parallel can be found in John's account of the death and raising of Lazarus (Jn 11:1–48), in which Martha, Lazarus' sister and Jesus' friend, remarks aloud at the grave: "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days" (Jn 11:39).

Notes on John 9:1–41

9:1 As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. 9:2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 9:3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. 9:4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 9:6 When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, 9:7 saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. 9:8 The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" 9:9 Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." 9:10 But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" 9:11 He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." 9:12 They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." 9:13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. 9:14 Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. 9:15 Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." 9:16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. 9:17 So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet." 9:18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight 9:19 and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" 9:20 His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 9:21 but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." 9:22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. 9:23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." 9:24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." 9:25 He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." 9:26 They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 9:27 He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" 9:28 Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 9:29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he

comes from." 9:30 The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 9:31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. 9:32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. 9:33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." 9:34 They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out. 9:35 Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 9:36 He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." 9:37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." 9:38 He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. 9:39 Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." 9:40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" 9:41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

The curing of the blind man

This story poses a question central in the rabbinic discussion of Jesus' day: Is illness God's punishment for sin? Throughout this story, the relationship of the sinner to God, of illness to sin, and of sin to punishment is explored from several points of view. Jesus' teaching denies that the disability of this particular blind man was caused by his or his parents' sinning. Instead, this blindness is one whose cure signals the arrival of Messianic times. In other gospel stories, Jesus connects sin to self-deception, as well as divine punishment (Jn 5:14). These latter two points were a standard part of rabbinic teaching emanating from commonplace readings of the Scriptures (Ex 20:5; Eze 18:20; Ex 4:11; Deut 28:28).

9:2: "His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'" The question is put to Jesus in its most natural and conversational form. See also Luke 13:2. Some rabbis thought that an infant could sin in the womb (*cf.* Ex 20:5).

9:5: "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." "I am" here would have been taken as a Messianic signal, found in other gospels—John 4:25ff.; 18:6, 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18:5, 8—and developed from Deuteronomy 26:5ff., where "I am" is used to denote the presence of the redeeming God at that moment in Jewish history (*cf.* Haggadah prayers at Seder). See also Isaiah 35:5 and 42.7 for Messianic cure of blindness, as well as the Midrash on Psalms 146:8. Some rabbis thought that in the Messianic times to come, neither fault

nor merit would pass from one generation to another, but each would be accountable solely for his own deeds.

9:6: "When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva, and smeared the mud on the man's eyes." The Talmud is filled with various therapies for the cure of different kinds of blindness (*cf.* Tosafot on Shabbat in 105a, in opposition to Rashi). Spittle of prominent persons was considered especially healing (Rashi, on Numbers 3:12, and Baba Bathra 126b, especially regarding the saliva of the first-born son). A paste created with spittle and wheat flour was a very common remedy (*cf.* Chullin 111b). Jesus' special clay spittle mixture was meant to show that he was not using charms or magic, but was following the practice of his day. However, he is faulted thereby in breaking the Sabbath laws in three ways: (1) mixing clay with spittle was prohibited as a part of the law of observance of the holiness of the Sabbath (Mishnah, Shabbath 7.2.39); (2) in Tal bab Abodah Zorah 28b, Sabbath anointings for the eyes are forbidden explicitly; and, (3) since a man's life was not at stake on the Sabbath, then his cure—like that of anyone with a long-standing condition—could wait until the following day. Another rabbinic option (*cf.* Tal. Her Shabbath 14b and 17f.) says that one could not put the spittle of a person who had been fasting (and was thought thereby to be very powerful) on the eyes of another during the Sabbath.

9:7 "and [Jesus] saying to him, 'Go wash in the Pool of Silaom' (which means Sent). Then he went and washed, and came back able to see." Not unlike Namann and others before him, the blind man is put to the test of faith: to trust the prophet Elijah—or, in this case, Jesus—to go and wash (*cf.* 2 Kings 5:10–14). They summoned the parents of the one who had gained his sight. "Ask him, he is of age; he can speak for himself" (Jn 9:21). His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone acknowledged him as Messiah, he would be expelled from the synagogue. For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; question him"(Jn 9:23). Surely this passage, more than any other in the story, carries with it the possibility of an anti-Jewish reading. When the man born blind is questioned, a legal formula is used in order to guarantee that his answer will be taken under a quasi juridical investigative form by the Pharisees (*cf.* Josh 7:19 and 1 Esd 9:8), suggesting that many were already suspicious of Jesus' miracles. Blind persons who did not witness an act could not be called to testify in regard to it (*cf.* Maimonides, Hilcoth Eduth 9:12, Baba Bathra 128a and Tosefta Sanhedrin 5:4), so that the parents of the blind man, as the most authoritative witnesses of his condition, would be called to give testimony. As for expulsion from the synagogue (*cf.* Jn 12:42 and 16:2), most scholars agree that this is an interpolation of the text, later projected back into this particular story, since expulsion from the syna-

gogues for Christians was not recorded until close to 80 CE. There were three kinds of expulsion: (1) *nezifah* or that lasting one week; (2) *nidduy* or *sammata*, a thirty-day suspension from synagogue attendance; and, (3) *herem* or the full and irrevocable expulsion of someone not only from the synagogue, but from Israel. These kinds of expulsions from synagogues could have been applied even during Jesus' lifetime to anyone who was thought to disturb good civil order, but there is no evidence of such, despite Jesus' warnings to the contrary (*cf*. Mt 10:17, 34; Mk 13:9; Lk 12:11, 21:12).

John 13:1-15

> 13:1 Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 13:2 The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper. 13:3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, 13:4 got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. 13:5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. 13:6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 13:7 Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 13:8 Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." 13:9 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" 13:10 Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." 13:11 For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean." 13:12 After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13:13 You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. 13:14 So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 13:15 For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

The Last Supper

13.11: "For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'not all of you are clean'." This passage highlights the important notions of "clean" and "unclean" in Jewish life. It would appear that Jesus is speaking metaphorically to describe the inner life of Judas Iscariot as "unclean" by his imminent betrayal. But, what does Jewish law mean by the notion of "unclean" so central to

John's description here of the Last Supper? The concept is best found in Leviticus 11:17 and Numbers 19 and describes a condition in which a person or object cannot have contact with the temple or its cult. Such a condition can most often be corrected by ablutions—such as those done by Jesus in this scene from the gospel. Indeed, in this story, John has Jesus apply the notion of impurity to his own disciples and their lack of readiness to participate in his unique Passover meal. Jesus singles out Iscariot as "unclean," i.e., as someone who refuses this important state of inner and outer readiness to accept God's will. Frequently, the name of "Judas" has been used in an anti-Jewish way, most notably, in English, as a synonym for "traitor." It should be remembered, that Judas' personal failure to be loyal to his friendship with Christ—producing this special notion of "impurity" in the teaching of Jesus just prior to his own sacrifice of self for the world—can never be used as a generalization for all Jews, or for Judaism as a religion. The danger of anti-Judaism here arises from the Christian tendency to regard the anger vented against the "unclean" Judas as applying to all Jews who, moreover, are allegedly responsible for Jesus' death.

John 8:1-11

> 8:1 while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 8:2 Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. 8:3 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, 8:4 they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. 8:5 Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 8:6 They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. 8:7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." 8:8 And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. 8:9 When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. 8:10 Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 8:11 She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

8:1. Jesus' presence in the temple at the start of the story would help to give legitimacy to his roles as teacher and judge. It is under these circumstances that the rabbi is then approached with a case on which to pass judgment: a woman has been caught in adultery and her apparent witnesses have brought her before Jesus with the question of whether she should not be stoned to death in punishment, as prescribed by the Law of Moses.

8:3: John remarks that "scribes and Pharisees" are amongst those who have brought this woman to the rabbi. Scribes, as temple officials, would have been involved in such a case routinely; their presence should not be seen as unusual, especially given Jesus' use of the temple precincts. But, what does it mean that "Pharisees" have presented this case to the rabbi? Readers must remember that there were seven different schools of Pharisees in Israel at the time of Jesus, and that his own teaching—in some ways so much like that of certain Pharisees—put him at variance with a number of them. Not all Pharisees were hostile to Jesus; Nicodemus, whom John describes in John 3:1–21, was a Pharisee who was fascinated by Jesus' teachings. Hence, the fact that some Pharisees have brought a case before Jesus should not be seen as a pretext for anti-Judaism, even in the mind of the evangelist.

8:4: "caught in the very act": we are given to understand that the woman was witnessed (as required by the law at Deut 19:5) in an act of unfaithfulness to her husband. In addition, we are told that she was neither raped nor coerced in any way, since Numbers 5:13 and Deuteronomy 22:23–7 would not punish her if she were somehow a victim rather than a consensual partner in an extra-marital sexual act.

8:5: "In the law Moses commanded us to stone such women." Under Jewish law, the wife was considered her husband's possession completely and solely; the wife, had no comparable claim on her husband. As a result, a married man could have a mistress and not be in violation of the law, but a married woman could never take a lover and not expect to break the law. Adultery was forbidden by the law of Moses in the Decalogue at Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17. In Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:21–22, both the man and the woman could be executed for this crime. Death by stoning was prescribed as the punishment for adulterers. It allowed the entire community to participate, since adultery was seen to be a crime which, like blasphemy, threatened communal life or identity. Jesus was similarly threatened by crowds in Jerusalem which had accused him of blasphemy. He escaped from the stoning unhurt by hiding in the temple area (Jn 8:59).

8:6: "They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him." Here we see a long-standing practice of challenging an enemy in the public square: frame a question in such a way that any answer given will indict. These types of questions, often built on what seemed insoluble legal, moral or theological riddles, are found throughout the gospels (*cf*. Mt 12:10–14; 22:23–33; Mk 12:13–17). Jesus uses the same technique (Lk 14:1–6), though his opponents are often left without answers for the rabbi. In the present case, Jesus' challengers want him to choose between confirming the punishment of the law (and thereby refuting his own Torah) or asserting the superiority of his own Torah (and thereby subordinating Jewish law to human authority—all done within

the temple). Jesus, however, refuses to participate, and effectively recasts the central question of the case in terms intended to refocus the issue at hand. In doing so, Jesus shows himself as much a master of this questioning technique as anyone, while at the same time escaping the conundrum posed for him. The entire process is meant to present Jewish practices of public controversy; in no way are these exchanges—sometimes marked by cleverness and harsh repartee—either anti-Jewish or anti-Christian.

8:6: "Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground." What is the rabbi doing here? The best way to understand this is to return for a moment to the setting of the story: Jesus, as a rabbi or teacher, is holding forth in the temple (the seat of true teaching), and is presented with a case by which to demonstrate his own teaching and its relationship to the Torah. While Jesus could be simply doodling in the sand, it is more likely that he was silently reminding everyone present of the text of Jeremiah 17:13: "those who turn away from you shall be written in the underworld, for they have forsaken the fountain of living water, the Lord." Jesus engages in this gesture not once, but twice within this story, as if to underline his meaning as dramatically as possible. Quietly invoking this passage from Jeremiah would be in keeping with Jesus' ability to recast the meaning of the entire scene on his own terms, and subtly to reintroduce into the minds of his onlookers a favorite theme in his own teaching: Torah as living water. Indeed, Jesus is the "Torah of living water" throughout the Gospel of John, as seen repeatedly in stories such as that of the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:1–42). Jesus even equated himself and his Torah as just such a fountain (Jn 4:14), available to all who wish it.

8:7: "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Here, Jesus is alluding to the method of stoning to be followed in such cases as described in Deuteronomy 13:10 and 17:17, where the witnesses to the crime must themselves be the first to cast stones at the adulterer. Jesus' challenging use of these verses from Deuteronomy implicitly asks: Who can be a witness against this woman when God is a witness against every man? This beautiful teaching does not represent a rejection of the Torah, but a merciful way in which to see its application in the circumstances Jesus was asked to judge.

8:10–11: "'Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'" This ending should be compared with Daniel 13:41, 48 and 53, and the trial of Susannah, unjustly accused of adultery. The word found in the Septuagint for condemnation is the same Jesus uses here: in effect, he sets aside any right as a teacher to pass judgment on the accused woman. The entire story, then, begins and ends on the same theme of the rabbi as teacher and judge whose Torah is

put to the test in the practical order. Jesus' refusal to assume the role of judge as offered to him would appear to be intended as a further development of his own unique Torah on the mercy of God towards sinners.

Rabbinic comments

The following examples illustrate the methodology of showing the close relationship of Jesus to his time, first-century Judaism, the rabbinic tradition and the Jewish community.

High priest—temple

The title "High Priest" (*Kohel Ha-Gadol*) has biblical origins: 2 Kings 12:11 or Leviticus 21:10. He is also called "The Anointed Priest," Leviticus 4:3. Josephus called him thus in his *Antiquities of the Jews* 3, 7, 1. Aaron was the first incumbent of the office; Exodus 28:1, 2 and 29:4–5 point out that God anointed him for this function. Later, especially after the exile, the Aaronic succession was a direct line from father to son. Under the Jewish political leadership, the nomination of the high priest changed. The civil authorities took it upon themselves to designate the high priest. Antiochus IV deposed the high priest, naming Jason in his place, who was followed by Menelaus (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 12.5.1; 2 Macc 3:4; 4:23). Herod named no less than six high priests. The Roman legate Quirinius and his successors appointed the high priest. Pilate nominated Caiphas. The succession of high priests and the political background of the nominations are portrayed in the use of the plural in the New Testament and Josephus (*War of the Jews*, 2, 12, 16 and 4.3.7 and 9). In later times, especially under Roman rule, the election of the high priest was closely related to a few powerful and distinguished families (Ketuvim Tractate—Marriage Deeds—13:1–2; Josephus, *War of the Jews*, 6, 2.2). According to a later source, Talmud Yoma 18a, the high priest bought the office from those in power. The high priests changed annually creating a kind of religious and political oligarchy along with their families. With their political and economic power, they tried to control the community at large. Most of the Pharisee leadership reacted negatively to Sadducean priestly power. Tractate Pesachim—Passover—57a or Tosefta Menahot 13:21 says,

> Woe is me because of the House of Boethus, woe is me because of their staves. Woe is me because of the House of Hanan; woe is me because of their whispering. Woe is me because of the House of Kathros; woe is me because of their pens. Woe is me because of the House of Ishmael ben Phiabi; woe is me because of their fists. For they are high priests and their sons are treasurers and their sons-in-law are trustees and their servants beat the people with staves.

The high priest was also the presiding officer of the Sanhedrin, though Jewish tradition shows that the Pharisees were also heads of the Sanhedrin (Mishnah Tractate Hagigah—The Festal Offering—2.2). There was also a division of work. The Nasi or leader was the high priest, while the person in charge of legal religious matters, Av-Bet-Din,[9] was a Pharisee, a scholar. The Pharisees, students and expounders of the Torah, became the spiritual leaders of the Jewish people, supplanting the priests and high priests who were part of the Sadducean party focusing on the administration and the economy of the temple. The main function of the priests and the high priests was the offering of sacrifices in the temple, but sometimes they got involved in legal questions in Sanhedrin trials. Popular derision of the high priest during the Second Temple is found in rabbinic literature (Tractate Pesachim—Passover—57a; Yoma—The Day of Atonement—88b). Quarrels between Pharisees and high priests and their groups were common, as is reflected in rabbinic texts, Tosefta, Yoma—The Day of Atonement—1:8. At the time of the Second Temple, and especially by its end, the high priest was considered a functionary chosen by the Romans and no longer a religious leader. The garments that gave power and splendor to the high priest were in the hands of the Roman procurator, who handed it over to the high priest before important religious celebrations. For this reason, the first measure of the Zealots' capture of Jerusalem was the appointment of a new high priest thus showing spiritual independence from the Romans (Josephus, *War of the Jews*, 4:147ff.).

The death of Christ and the accusation of deicide

The New Testament text clearly shows that Pontius Pilate, the governor or prefect of Judaea, ordered Jesus' death. The response to this as been quite different through the centuries. In his essay, "Who Killed Jesus?" Daniel J. Harrington writes,

> "Who Killed Jesus?" This simple question needs and deserves a careful answer. Throughout the centuries some have responded that the Jews killed Jesus, and therefore they are a "deicide" people. The word "deicide" means to kill God. Since Jesus is divine and since the Jews killed Jesus, therefore they must be a deicide people. This "logic" sometimes gives Christians a rationale and a motive for killing Jews. One result of this tradition was the Nazi Holocaust or *Shoah*. The hideous results of a careless answer to a simple question proved the need for taking the issue with utmost seriousness.[10]

[9] *Av-Bet-Din* is the chair of the court, second only to the *Nasi* on the hierarchical scale within the Sanhedrin.

[10] Daniel J. Harrington, "Who killed Jesus?" in, *Scripture from Scratch* (Cincinnati, March 1999).

This negative view of the role of Jews in the Passion of Christ is evident in European art as well as in the Passion Plays. European cathedrals or palaces often show in vitraux or in sculptures a teaching of contempt and a theological denial of Judaism, proclaiming Jews as Jesus' murderers. In the church in Urbino, Italy, for example, a woman is portrayed stealing the host and handing it over to a Jewish pawnbroker for its destruction. They are discovered and burned at the stake. In a Spanish classic, *Las Cantigas de Santa Maria*, a compilation of poetry and music by Alfonso X of Castille (1252–1284 CE), there are six pictures illustrating a legend about a Jew (under the inspiration of a devil), stealing a picture of the Virgin Mary. A Christian couple find the picture, wash it and give the picture a place of honor in their home where pilgrims come and pay homage to the holy picture.

The Church Fathers transformed the theological teaching of contempt into the deicide accusation.

In his *Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews*, the third-century Church Father Cyprian wrote:

> There is a new dispensation and a New Law with abrogation of the Law of Moses and the Holy Temple. The Man of Righteousness was put to death by the Jews; they fastened him to the cross. Now the peoplehood of the Jews has been canceled; the destruction of Jerusalem was a judgment upon them; the Gentiles rather than the Jews will inherit the Kingdom.[11]

Melito of Sardis, who died circa 190 CE, castigated Israel for its rejection of Jesus in his homily on Pascha:

> For him who the Gentiles worshipped and uncircumcised people admired and foreigners glorified, over whom even Pilate washed his hands, you killed at the great feast. Bitter therefore for you is the feast of unleavened bread … Bitter for you are the nails you sharpened, bitter for you the tongue you incited, bitter for you the false witnesses you instructed ... bitter for you Judas whom you hired, bitter for you Herod whom you followed, bitter for you Caiphas whom you trusted, … bitter for you the hands you bloodied; you killed your Lord in the middle of Jerusalem.[12]

The King of Israel has been put to death by an Israelite right hand. O unprecedented murder! Unprecedented crime!

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[11] Father Cyprian, "Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews," in, *Ancient Christian Writers* (New York: Paulist Press, 1948).

[12] Melito of Sardis, *Homily on Pascha* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 91–93 and pp. 96–97.

In Melito's homily, Pilate disappears from the scene, and the Jewish people take center stage. It is the deicide accusation at its best theological formulation.

More examples of the deicide accusation can be found in Irenaeus (circa 130–202 CE), Origen (circa 182–251 CE), and especially in John Chrysostom (circa 347–407 CE).

Father Harrington writes:

> The best clue toward determining who killed Jesus is the mode of Jesus' death—by crucifixion. In Jesus' time, crucifixion was Roman punishment inflicted mainly on slaves and revolutionaries. Crucifixion was a cruel and public way to die. As a public punishment, it was meant to shame the one being executed and to deter the onlookers from doing what he has done.

and adds that:

> The official who had the power to execute Jesus by crucifixion was the Roman governor or prefect. In Jesus' time the prefect was Pontius Pilate, who held that position between AD 26 and 36. Jesus was put to death "under Pontius Pilate" around AD 30. Although the gospels present Pilate as indecisive and somewhat concerned for Jesus' case, the Alexandrian Jewish writer, Philo, a contemporary of Jesus, described him as "inflexible, merciless, and obstinate.[13]

Even though some Christians continue to blame the Jews for Jesus' death, it is a matter that continues to gnaw other Christians' consciences. It is reflected in the responses of Christian leaders. New Testament scholar, Episcopal Bishop Frederick H. Borsch, commenting on deicide accusations, said that we continue to have a very important task in front of us and that it was one of Christianity's central tasks to turn away from any kind of history which has been antisemitic, or allows that to be promoted in any way.

In the last fifty years Christianity has addressed theological anti-Judaism. The Holocaust is painfully central in such reconsiderations of the Christian soul. Official documents have expressed pain and have asked or forgiveness and reconciliation. Nonetheless, these expressions of sincerest repentance need to be internalized at the congregational level.

In their 1988 document, *God's Mercy Endures Forever: Guidelines on the Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic Preaching*, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops clearly states the need to overcome anti-Judaism and the deicide accusation:

[13] Harrington, *op. cit.* (note 10).

> Because of the tragic history of the "Christ-killer" charge as providing a rallying cry for anti-Semites over the centuries, a strong and careful homiletic stance is necessary to combat its lingering effects today. Homilists and catechists should seek to provide a proper context for the proclamation of the passion narratives. A particularly useful and detailed discussion of the theological and historical principles involved in presentations of the passions can be found in Criteria for the *Evaluation of Dramatizations of the Passion* issued by the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (March 1988).
>
> The message of the liturgy in proclaiming the passion narratives in full is to enable the assembly to see vividly the love of Christ for each person, despite their sins, a love that even death could not vanquish. "Christ in his boundless love freely underwent his passion and death because of the sins of all so that all might attain salvation" *(Nostra Aetate*, no. 4). To the extent that Christians over the centuries made Jews the scapegoat for Christ's death, they drew themselves away from the paschal mystery. For it is only by dying to one's sins that we can hope to rise with Christ to new life. This is a central truth of the Catholic faith stated by the *Catechism* of the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century and reaffirmed by the 1985 *Notes* (no. 30).[14]

This call to reckoning and reconciliation is the best response to the deicide charge requiring a pervasive and systematic educational implementation at the congregational level. This theological implementation would, over time, eliminate the deicide accusation in the minds and hearts of Christians.

Hypocrisy

The charge of hypocrisy was widespread among the Pharisees who accused each other of not following the strict meaning of the Hebrew Bible. People were also accused of vanity in language and dressing. The charge of hypocrisy is widely found in New Testament texts, such as Matthew 23:5–7, or Mark 12:38–40, or Luke 20:46–47. Tractate Sotah—Suspected Adulteress—22b reflects on hypocrisy by criticizing various groups of Pharisees for their lack of religious devotion and hypocrisy. Rabbi Nahman b. Isaac, denouncing the hypocrisy of certain Pharisees, is similar in tone to the charges of Mark 12:38–40 and Luke 20:46 about Pharisees who walk around in long robes. He says: "Let the Great Court call to account those who are wrapped up in a cloak." Pharisaic "peacockery" is criticized in other rabbinic sources. On Ecclesiastes 4:1: "Again I saw all the oppres-

[14] **www.bc.edu/bc_org/research/cjl/Documents/NCCB%20God's%20Mercy.htm**

sions that are practiced under the sun. Look, at the tears of the oppressed—with no one to comfort them" the rabbinic commentary, Ecclesiastics Rabbah says:

> R. Benjamin interpreted the verse as referring to hypocrites in regard to Torah. People supposed that they can read the Scriptures and the Mishnah, but they cannot. They wrapped themselves in cloaks and put phylacteries on their heads. Of them it is written, "Behold, the tears of the oppressed, with none to comfort them." "It is mine to punish," says God, as it is said, "Curse be they who do the work of the Lord deceitfully" (Jer 48:10).

Another text, Pesikta Rabba 22:5, states that, "You are not to put on phylacteries and wrap yourself in your cloak, and then go forth and commit a transgression." The term "hypocrites" in regard to reading and understanding of Torah is expounded in Ecclesiasties Rabbah, the Midrashic commentary, interpreting Ecclesiasties 5:6, "Do not let your mouth bring you into sin"—Rabbi Benjamin interpreted this verse as referring to "hypocrites in regard to the Torah." Different Pharisaic scholars shared John's criticism of Pharisaic hypocrisy. Rabbinic sources accused Pharisees of not practicing what they preached, showing off phylacteries and fringes, wearing cloaks and demanding the first-place setting at dinner, as well as tithing trivial things.

Shemah (Hear Oh Israel)

The *Shemah* is the most important prayer in Jewish liturgy and spirituality. It is recited twice daily, expressing God's unity: "Hear Oh Israel. God is our God, God, the One and Only One." The prayer follows after the first word in Deuteronomy 6:4. The *Shemah* consists of three biblical portions: Deuteronomy 6:4–9; Deuteronomy 11:13–21; and, Numbers 15:37–41. In the morning, two benedictions precede and one follows the recitation of the *Shemah*; in the evening, two precede and two follow the recitation of the *Shemah*. In the temple days, the *Shemah* was a common practice in daily temple ritual. The Mishnah, Tractate Tamid—The Daily Whole-Offering—5:1, indicates that the *Shemah* in all its sections were read together with the Ten Commandments. The schools of Hillel and Shammai discussed the way the *Shemah* should be read. The followers of Shammai took the words of the prayers "When you lie down and when you get up" literally, thus recommending that the evening *Shemah* should be prayed while reclining, while the morning *Shemah* should be recited standing up. The school of Hillel ruled that "When you lie down" refers to the time of reading, i.e., in the evening and the morning, but that no special posture was required. The Mishnah, Berakhot—Benedictions—1:3, indicates that the rabbinic rule follows the school of Hillel. The *Shemah* is recited before retiring. The Talmud, Berakhot—Benedictions—4b, repeats one of Rabbi Joshua Ben Levi's say-

ings: "Though a person has recited the *Shemah* in the synagogue, it is meritorious to recite it again on his/her bed." Tractate Berakhot—Benedictions—5a indicates that this custom relates to the human fear of demons; its recitation drives away diabolical forces. It is not shown, however, that this is the real reason for the custom. The recitation of the *Shemah* in Jesus' day and throughout the centuries was and is an affirmation of God's centrality in Jewish spirituality and history. It opposes polytheism, affirming the oneness and unity of God, the Supreme Being, the partner in the Sinai covenantal alliance. The Midrash, Deuteronomy Rabbah 2:35, the existential-literary interpretation of the biblical word states that the *Shemah's* call to Israel is understood as a reference to the patriarch Jacob, to the long history of the people of God and Israel as God's witness. The *Shemah* was reinterpreted by medieval Christian theologians who understood the *Shemah* as referring to the Trinity, for the prayer mentions God three times. The discussion was part of the medieval disputation and one well-known response came from Rabbi Moise ben Nahman (Nachmanides), of the thirteenth century, who participated in the Barcelona disputation of July 1236. Nachmanides wrotet that,

> Fra Pablo asked me in Gerona whether I believed in the Trinity. I said to him: What is the Trinity? Do three great human bodies constitute the Trinity? No. Or are there three ethereal bodies, such as the souls, or are there three angels? No. Or is an object composed of three kinds of matter, as bodies are composed of the four elements? No. What then is the Trinity? He said, "Wisdom, Will and Power." Then he said, "I also acknowledge that God is wise and not foolish, but He has a will unchangeable, and that He is mighty and not weak. But the term 'Trinity' is decidedly erroneous; for wisdom is not accidental in the Creator, since He and His wisdom are one. He and His will are one. He and his power are one, so that wisdom, will and power are one. Moreover, even were these things accidental in Him, that which is called God, would not be three beings, but one being with these three accidental attributes." Our Lord the King, he quoted an analogy which the erring ones had taught him, saying that there are also three things in wine, namely color, taste, and bouquet, yet it is still one thing. This is a decided error for the redness, the taste, and the bouquet of the wine are distinct essences, each of them potentially self-existent; for they are red, white and other colors, and the same statement holds true with regard to taste and bouquet. The redness, the taste, and the bouquet, moreover, are not the wine itself, but the thing which fills the vessel, and which is, therefore, a body with the three accidents. Following this course of argument, there would be four, since the enumeration should include God, His wisdom, His will, and His power, and these are four. You would even have to speak of five things: for He lives, and His life is a part of Him, just as His wisdom. That's the definition of God who would be "living, wise, endowed with will, and mighty; the divinity would be five-fold in nature. All this, however, is an evident error. Then Fra Pablo arose and said he believed in the unity, which, none-

> theless, included the Trinity, although this was an exceedingly deep mystery, which even the angels and the princes of Heaven would not comprehend. I arose and I said: "It is evident that a person does not believe what he does not know; therefore, the angels do not believe in the Trinity." His colleagues then bade him be silent.[15]

Jewish liturgical matters advised the community that the recital of the *Shemah* is a reminder of martyrdom for the sanctification of God's name and covenant. In his book *Foundations and Roots of Liturgy*, Rabbi Alexander Susskind of Grodno, points out that after reciting the *Shemah*, the worshipers should have the following in mind:

> I believe with perfect faith, pure and true, that Thou art one and unique and that Thou has created all worlds upper and lower without end, and Thou art in past, present and future. I make thee King over each of my limbs that it might keep and perform the precepts of Thy holy Torah and I make Thee King over my children and children's children to the end of time. I welcome and therefore command my children and grandchildren to accept the yoke of Thy Kingdom, Divinity, and Lordship upon themselves, and I will command them to command their children, in turn, up to the last generation to accept, all of them, the yoke of Thy Kingdom, Divinity, and Lordship. [16]

Resurrection

The concept of resurrection confronted Pharisees and Sadducees in the first century. The Sadducees, members of the temple hierarchy, were against the idea of resurrection, a doctrine that became a dogmatic Pharisaic thought. This doctrine incorporated two areas of interest. One was the idea of reward for the community at large, as well as for individuals, and secondly the concept that body and soul are one indivisible unit. The dogma of the resurrection allows the righteous souls to have a share in the world to come. The sophisticated matter of body and soul is portrayed in Tractate Sanhedrin 91a–b that says:

> Antoninus said to Rabbi, "The body and soul could exonerate themselves from judgment. How is this so?" The body says, "The soul sinned, for from the day that it separates from me, lo, I am like a silent stone in the grave." And the soul says, "The body is the sinner, for whom the day that I separated from it, lo, I fly in the air like a bird."

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[15] Disputation in, Cecil Roth (ed.), *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 6 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Ltd, 1972), column 92.

[16] Shemah in, *ibid.*, vol. 14, column 1374.

> He answered him, "I will tell you a parable. To what is the matter likened? To a king of flesh and blood who had a beautiful orchard and there was in it lovely ripe fruit, and he placed two guardians over it, one a cripple and the other blind. Said the cripple to the blind man, "I see beautiful ripe fruit in the orchard. Come and carry me and we will bring and eat them." The cripple rode on the back of the blind man and they brought and ate them. After a while, the owner of the orchard came and said to them, "Where is my lovely fruit?" The cripple answered, "Do I have legs to walk?" Answered the blind man, "Do I have eyes to see?" What did he do? He placed the cripple on the back of the blind man and judged them as one—so also the Holy One blessed one, brings the soul and throws it into the body and judges them as one."

For the rabbis and scholars the idea of resurrection was a clear matter of the body. The rabbis debated whether after resurrection bodies would have the same form as previously? (Tractate Sanhedrin 90b, among other sources). There was a controversy between the schools of Hillel and Shammai. Whereas Shammai said that the dead souls are in their graves, in a "special place," until redemption comes, when the righteous are rewarded with resurrection, Hillel claimed that the souls are punished right away or rewarded after death in heaven or hell, and at the end of time, all are resurrected for a final judgment. The rabbis debated about the nature of resurrection: was it national or universal?

According to R. Simai-Sifre Deuteronomy 306 and R. Hiyya bar Abba—Midrash Genesis Rabbah 13:4, resurrection relates to and is only experienced by the Israelites. R. Abbahu pointed out that only the just people would be resurrected (Tractate Taanit—Days of Fasting—7a. Other sources point out that only the martyrs will be resurrected, as in Tractate II: Yalkut 431). Other rabbis point out that resurrection is for those who died in the Holy Land. Others extend resurrection for those living outside God's Land (Ketuboth—Marriage Deeds—111a). Rabbi Jonathan (Pirkei Rabbi Eliezer 34) said that the resurrection would touch everybody, that it is a universal event. He stressed, however, that the evil ones would die a second death and forever, while the just and honest will be given life everlasting. A similar view can be found in the "resurrection of the just," in Luke 14:14, 20:35; and elsewhere there is a reference to the "resurrection of the dead," in John 5:29; Acts of the Apostles 24:15; and, Revelations 20:45. Rabbinic sources also stressed that resurrection was part of the messianic hope (the biblical sources are Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:2). In defense of Jewish religious law, the martyrs were expected to share in the future glory of Israel through resurrection. This is shown in 2 Maccabees 7:6, 9:23, and the Midrash, 2 Psalm 17:14. The resurrection was believed to take place mainly in the Land of Israel (Pesiktah Rabba) explaining Psalms 17:9, "the land of the living," that is, "the land where the dead will live again." Jerusalem is considered a city of which the dead shall come forth like grass (Ketuboth—Marriage Deeds—111b, commenting on Psalm 72:16). The rabbis also thought that those buried outside the Holy Land would have to creep through

cavities in the earth until they reach the Holy Land (Pesiktah Rabba, with references to Ezekiel 37:13 and Tractate Ketuboth—Marriage Deeds—111a). In rabbinic thought the concept of the resurrection took a more universal dimension. It was stated that it was the act of God that could open the graves (Berakoth—Blessings—15b). Rabbi Eleazar Ha-Kappar (Tractate Mishnah Abot 4:22) says: "As all men [sic] are born and die, so they will rise again." In other rabbinic sources, Enoch 98:10 points out that resurrection will occur at the close of the Messianic time. This is also indicated in 2 Esdras 7:26–36, where we read that death will befall the Messiah, after his four-hundred-year reign, and all humankind and the world will lapse into total primeval silence for seven days, after which the renewed earth will give forth its dead, and God will judge the world and assign the evildoers to the fire of hell and the righteous to paradise, which is on the opposite side. Rabbinic theology points out that the Last Judgment is not upon the heathen alone. All evildoers who have transgressed God's commands or acted unrighteously will be punished. This is said in Tosefta Sanhedrin 13; Midrash Psalm 6:1 and 9:15. All those who have forgotten God, Jews and Gentiles, will be punished to Sheol, hell, as it appears in Tosefta Sanhedrin 13.2. Josephus, following Pharisaic thought, pointed out in *Antiquities* 18.1.3, *War of the Jews* 2, 8, 14, that all righteous of the world will share in eternal bliss and resurrection. All those who denied the fundamental truth of God and religious commitment, heathens and heretics, are excluded from future salvation and resurrection (Pirkei R. Eliezar 38, and the Midrash Psalm 9:5). Liturgy portrays gracefully the belief in resurrection. It comes from Tractate Berakoth—Benedictions—60b:

> O God, the soul which you have set within me is pure. You have fashioned it; you have breathed it into me, and you do keep it within me, and will take it from me and restore it to me in time to come. As long as it is within me, I will give homage to you, O divine Master, Lord of all spirits, who gives back the soul of dead bodies.

Grace

According to biblical theology grace is one of God's attributes. It signifies God's love, kindness, mercy and compassion for the weak and those who sin. Exodus 34:6 says: "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness." The Book of Jonah focuses on the question of grace, and Jonah finds it difficult to find reconciliation between grace and righteousness, teaching us about divine grace in its universal aspect. This idea appears in the rest of the Hebrew Bible. In Deuteronomy, for example, the reality of divine grace is projected as a guarantee that God will keep his covenant with Israel (Deut 4:31) and grace is promised as a result of obedience to God and to the covenantal relationship (Deut 13:18–19). The prophets stressed God's grace and righteousness while also pro-

claiming God's mercy. The prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, while denouncing Judah for its sins, talked about grace and forgiveness (Jer 18:8; Lam 3:32 and Eze 33:11). The Psalms express hope and confidence in God's grace. It is found in the matter of righteousness (Ps 116:5) and mercy (Ps 103:8), as well as compassion (Ps 111:4).

In rabbinic theology, divine grace is described as the "attribute of mercy" in contradiction to the "attribute of justice." Grace is related to the creation of the world, as it is described in Genesis Rabbah 12:15:

> Thus saith the Holy One, blessed be His Name. If I create the world with the attribute of mercy, sin will abound; and if I create it with the attribute of justice, how can the world exist? Therefore, I create it with both attributes, mercy and justice, and may it thus endure.

Rabbinic scholars thought that divine grace is given to those who show mercy to their fellow humans. It appears in Genesis Rabbah 30:3; Tractate Shabbat 151b. It also points out that for those who study rabbinic law, God will bring a dimension of grace in the future world (Hagigah—The Festival Offering—12b). The contrast between human evil and God's grace is shown in Tractate Menahot—Meat Offerings—99b. In Jewish liturgy, the idea of divine grace appears in the main prayers of daily liturgy. For example, in the thanksgiving of Shemoneh Esreh, the 18 benedictions are in the supplication of Ahabah Rabbah ("great love"). God is called a "merciful God," "merciful Father," and "merciful King." The liturgies for the New Year and the Day of Atonement are permeated with the concept of God's grace.

A final reflection

Is the New Testament a deposit of anti-Jewish texts? Yes and no. The majority of the writers were Jews who accepted Jesus as the Messiah. The text can easily become an antisemitic accusation, a diatribe that has badly hurt the Jewish people for millennia and prepared the ground for the Nazi destruction of the Jewish community in Europe. The text was and remains a pretext for racism and persecution. Our moral obligation, especially after the Holocaust, is to explain the text so as to avoid any antisemitic interpretation. This would be the first step toward reconciliation and the respectful acceptance of each other as children of God.

Anti-Judaism – A Problem for New Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Historical Perspective

Wolfgang Kraus

Introduction

In his introduction to Charlotte Klein's *Theologie und Antijudaismus*, Gregory Baum, author of *Die Juden und das Evangelium*[1] writes:

> The anti-Jewish feature is more deeply rooted in Christianity than was initially supposed [here Baum also means himself and his earlier book] … . It is indeed difficult to separate the preaching of the gospel from a negation of the Jewish people. Because, when we proclaim Jesus as the Messiah in whom all the divine promises have been fulfilled, we leave no spiritual room for a religion which does not find it credible to speak about the presence of the Messiah in today's hate-filled, violent world and continues to wait for the messianic age. Therefore it is not easy to proclaim Jesus Christ without this simultaneously including the negation of the Jews. As church, we understand ourselves to be the chosen people which has taken the place of the Jewish people, because that people had cut itself off from the divine covenant by its infidelity. That was already stated in Matthew's Gospel. So can one be surprised that this spiritual negation of Jewish existence developed into a legal and political negation as soon as the church became part of the victorious cultural circles of the classical world?[2]

In his well-known essay, "Christlicher Antijudaismus. Bemerkungen zu einem semantischen Einschüchterungsversuch" [Christian Anti-Judaism. Comments on

[1] Gregory Baum, *Die Juden und das Evangelium. Eine Überprüfung des Neuen Testaments* (Einsiedeln: Benzinger, 1963).

[2] Gregory Baum, in Charlotte Klein, *Theologie und Anti-Judaismus. Eine Studie zur deutschen theologischen Literatur der Gegenwart* (Munich: Verlag Chr. Kaiser, 1975), pp. 8f.

a Semantic Attempt at Intimidation] the now retired New Testament scholar from Münster, Günter Klein, writes that by pointing to the sin of all people in Romans 1–3, Israel is equated with the Gentiles and thus "completely deprived of soteriological significance."[3] Klein recognizes that the Christian hatred of the Jews in word and deed has indescribably distorted the Christian heritage. Nevertheless, he considers that the anti-Jewish elements in the New Testament cannot be abandoned when they relate to the "worldwide solidarity of the godless" where Jews and Christians are equal, but he would not wish this to be denounced as anti-Judaism, "just as the identification of the Gentiles with rebels against God is also not an anti-human act."[4]

Does this mean that anti-Judaism is a question of definition? I do not want to spend much time on questions of definition, but in this essay to give a description of the phenomenon which can then take the place of a definition.

As far as defining anti-Judaism is concerned, I shall, in line with the definition in the Reclam Bible Lexikon,[5] use the term anti-Judaism to mean a religiously based attitude directed against the people of Israel and denying that it is God's chosen people.

Anti-Judaism in classical times

Hostility to the Jews is not a Christian invention; it was a reality before Christianity came into existence and goes beyond the Christian realm. There are examples to prove this in the Septuagint version of the biblical Book of Esther, in writings of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (*Against Apion* 1,26; 2,91–96), of the Roman writer Juvenal (6th Satire, 542ff.) and of many other classical authors.

In the Book of Esther, Chapter 3, we read:

> Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and separated among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are differ-

[3] Günter Klein, "Christlicher Antijudaismus. Bemerkungen zu einem Semantischen Einschüchterungsversuch," *ZThK 79* (1982), pp. 411–450, here, p. 438.

[4] Klein, *ibid.*, p. 414 and p. 450.

[5] Klaus Koch, Eckart Otto, Jürgen Roloff and Hans Schmoldt (eds.), *Reclams Bibellexikon* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987), p. 37.

> ent from those of every other people, and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not appropriate for the king to tolerate them. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued for their destruction, … . Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces, giving orders to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods (Esth 3:8–9; 13).

In the so-called Additions to the Book of Esther, we read,

> This is a copy of the letter: "The Great King, Artaxerxes, writes the following to the governors of the hundred twenty-seven provinces from India to Ethiopia and to the officials under them: "Having become ruler of many nations and master of the whole world (not elated with presumption of authority but always acting reasonably and with kindness), I have determined to settle the lives of my subjects in lasting tranquility and, in order to make my kingdom peaceable and open to travel throughout all its extent, to restore the peace desired by all people. "When I asked my counselors how this might be accomplished, Haman—who excels among us in sound judgment, and is distinguished for his unchanging goodwill and steadfast fidelity, and has attained the second place in the kingdom—pointed out to us that among all the nations in the world there is scattered a certain hostile people, who have laws contrary to those of every nation and continually disregard the ordinances of kings, so that the unifying of the kingdom that we honorably intend cannot be brought about. We understand that this people, and it alone, stands constantly in opposition to every nation, perversely following a strange manner of life and laws, and is ill-disposed to our government, doing all the harm they can so that our kingdom may not attain stability (Additions to the Book of Esther 3,13 a–e LXX).

The Book of Esther contains the festival legend of the feast of Purim dating from about the third century BCE and describes a conflict in Persia. The Septuagint version is more recent; it probably dates from the second–first century BCE. Its historical reliability is limited but, for the purposes of socio-historical exegesis, it reveals concrete grounds for hostility to the Jews in the second-first century BCE.

In the second century BCE there was a marked Hellenisation of Palestine. Under Antiochus IV this led to the anti-Jewish measures reported in 1 Maccabees 1:44–50. The papyrus London No.1912 provides evidence of the persecution of the group of Jews in Alexandria under the prefect Flaccus in the first century CE. Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian, writing at the end of the first century CE, reports in *Contra Apionem* II, 91–96 about the Jews being accused of ritual murder. Tacitus, the first-century Roman historian refers in his comments

on the history of Israel to an account by an Egyptian priest, Manetho. In Tacitus we read that:

> While the East was under the sway of the Assyrians, the Medes, and the Persians, Jews were the most contemptible of the subject tribes. When the Macedonians became supreme, King Antiochus strove to destroy the national superstition, and to introduce Greek civilization, but was prevented by his war with the Parthians from at all improving this vilest of nations [the Jewish people].[6]

The classical pagan evidence shows that anti-Judaism in classical times had religious and social motives. It was mainly the product of the special character of the Jews; they believed in only one God and not in many gods, which was called "superstition;" they kept the Sabbath and rejected Greek customs; they maintained circumcision and refrained from particular foods, etc. It is also characteristic of classical, pagan anti-Judaism that it was not a dominant element. It was not a permanent reality and only occurred sporadically.

Christian hostility to Jews and Judaism is primarily motivated by religion and in contrast to classical, pagan anti-Judaism and, on the whole, constitutes a continuum ever since the second century CE. Christians defined their own identity in contradistinction to Judaism. At the same time, they attempted to demonstrate their superiority over Judaism. The evidence of pagan anti-Judaism was welcome as providing a further argument in favor of one's estimation of oneself.

Looking back on two-thousand years of church history, one has no option but to recognize that, in addition to concrete campaigns for the oppression and persecution of Jews, which led to mass murder and terror long before the *Shoah* (crusades, Spain), the contribution Christianity has made to anti-Judaism consists mainly of having created an anti-Jewish climate. For centuries, Christian theology gave anti-Judaism religious depth, cultural anchorage and sociological breadth. In the process, it produced a naïve rejection of everything Jewish and made it part of the general Christian heritage, coming to light in "thoughtlessness" such as the use of the term "Pharisee" for a mixture of coffee and spirits. Thus, Christianity laid the foundations on which the militant antisemitism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was able to build and perform its frightful deeds. In the process, social-Darwinist racial theories were combined with pseudo-religious, ideological, psycho-social and political motives.[7]

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[6] **classics.mit.edu/Tacitus/histories.5.v.html**

[7] *Cf.* on this question Klaus Haacker, "Der Holocaust als Datum der Theologiegeschichte," in E. Brocke and J. Seim (eds.), *Gottes Augapfel. Beiträge zur Erneuerung des Verhältnisses von Christen und Juden* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986), pp. 137–145.

The question is how such a perversion could come about. How could a religion, which considers the command of love for God and one's neighbor to be central, contribute to fanning hatred and persecution of Jews in the name of Jesus? How could the cross, as the sign of reconciliation, become a sign of bitter persecution? Where are the roots to be found?

The origins of Christian anti-Judaism

The beginnings

The roots of Christian anti-Judaism go back to the beginnings of the Christian faith. Christianity originated in the context of classical Judaism. Jesus was born as a Jew and lived as a Jew. The disciples of Jesus were Jewish people. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, was a Jew and frequently underlined the fact (Rom 11:1; 2 Cor 11:22f.; Gal 1:13f.; Phil. 3:5f.). The Early Church saw itself as a group within God's people Israel—certainly not as a new religion. It was only when non-Jews joined the early Christian community that the situation changed.[8]

Questions such as what their standing should be in the congregation, whether they had to convert to Judaism before they could belong to the congregation, whether they needed to keep the basic Jewish rules (especially food regulations, the Sabbath and festivals), whether they could be considered equal to the Jewish members of the congregation, gave rise to lively debate (*cf*. Gal 2:1–10; 11–15; Acts 15:1–29; Rom 14). As a separate group, recognizably different from the Gentiles and the Jews, early Christianity was found for the first time in Antioch where the followers of Jesus of Nazareth were given the name "Christians" (*cf*. Acts 11:26).

But the life of the communities of people who confessed Jesus as the Messiah continued for several decades within the Jewish realm. The existence and importance of congregations which were predominantly, or at least partly, composed of people who came out of Judaism—namely the so-called Jewish Christians—have been recognized increasingly in recent research, together with its relevance for the history of early Christianity. Thus, the date for the final parting of ways lies closer to the end rather than the middle of the first century—but it also depends on the area in which the congregations were to be found.

The early Christian congregations demonstrate different degrees of closeness to or distance from the Jewish congregations of the time. This is reflected

[8] *Cf*. in this connection Wolfgang Kraus, "Zwischen Jerusalem und Antiochia. Die 'Hellenisten,' Paulus und die Aufnahme der Heiden in das endzeitliche Gottesvolk," *Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 179* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1999).

in the New Testament writings. Practically all the New Testament writers agree that the Christian congregations have their roots in Judaism. The Christians' understanding of themselves is inconceivable without the Jewish background. But, the extent to which this Jewish background is of lasting importance also for "Gentile Christian" congregations and to what extent the people of Israel itself continue to be "God's people," is understood in different ways in the New Testament.

In general, the history of early Christianity in the first century can be understood as the story of its detachment from Judaism and its definition of itself over against Judaism and the Gentiles.

Anti-Judaism as a phenomenon of detachment (identity by delimitation)

When a new religious community comes into existence and detaches itself slowly from its mother religion, this is normally accompanied by polemics, accusations, insinuations and limitations. This can be demonstrated in the relation between the Qumran community and the rest of Judaism (the opponents are called "sons of Beliar," children of the devil) and it also applies to the detachment of Christianity from Judaism. Yet, Jesus himself had no intention of founding a new religious community. By means of his message about the coming sovereignty of God, he wanted to gather Israel as the eschatological people of the twelve tribes. His message therefore was also a call to his contemporaries to turn back to God. While Jesus' call for conversion did not exclude criticism of the circumstances or persons of his time, it was based on a solidarity with Israel which is beyond question. Nowhere did Jesus fundamentally question the election of Israel.

This changed at the moment when the ways of Christians and Jews finally parted. Later, a number of polemical features of Jesus' message were made sharper or presented as fundamental. Similarly, Jesus' partners in debate were presented as ill-intentioned opponents, and the disputations which were normal among rabbis were exaggerated and seen as hostile disputes between Jesus and "the Jews." There is evidence of this in individual texts of the New Testament. It means that certain anti-Jewish statements in the New Testament should be understood as reflecting the phenomenon of detachment.

One example of this is Jesus' conversation with a Scribe in Mark 12:28–34 and its inclusion and expansion in Matthew 22:34–40. What we see in Mark is an amicable conversation between two Jewish rabbis on the Holy Scriptures and a core principle of the Jewish faith. Matthew, who wrote his Gospel about twenty years later than Mark, turned it into a hostile dispute between the Pharisees and Jesus. Jesus was to be condemned for false teaching by means of an intrigue.

"Anti-Jewish" statements as indices of contemporary disagreements (socio-historical exegesis)

One result of New Testament biblical research, socio-historical exegesis, shows that the gospels must be read at two different levels: as the presentation Jesus' story and, at the same time, as an expression of the circumstances in which the congregations were living. Since the evangelists did not simply tell the story of Jesus in documentary fashion, but also included experiences of their own time, many of the texts reflect more the period when the gospel was written than the time of the earthly Jesus. Various statements containing polemics against Jews thus do not genuinely come from Jesus, but constitute a new interpretation of the Jesus tradition at a later time under different conditions. Backward projections of this kind give the impression that Jesus himself was engaged in an irreconcilable conflict with his partners in dialogue.

Further evidence of this process can be found by comparing the gospels, e.g. the parable of the great dinner (Lk 14:16–24) with the parable of the royal wedding banquet (Mt 22:1–14). One of Jesus' parables which is the background to both is not just recorded here in documentary form but interpreted further. Matthew 22:7, in particular, makes clear that the evangelist has incorporated into his account the events of the year 70 CE, the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem during the Jewish war against Rome, and assessed them negatively as a direct punishment from God on Judaism. This reflects the dispute between Matthew's congregation and the congregation at the synagogue. The Pharisees were the only religious group left after the Jewish war. Their opposition to the Christian congregation is projected by Matthew as enmity back into the time of Jesus. Even though the Pharisees had probably belonged to the group which was closest to Jesus, in Matthew's time they represented the majority of the Jews who rejected the message of the cross and resurrection. The hostile image of them which developed as a result of Matthew's presentation still has its effect today. "Pharisee" has become a derogatory term.

Should Matthew therefore be described as an anti-Judaist? Here I would be cautious. I still see evidence in his views of—at least in his mind—an internal Jewish dispute! As far as the sharpness of the wording is concerned, it can be compared with the polemics used by the supporters of the Essenes against the Jerusalem party.

In addition, Matthew is a Jewish Christian! Behind his attack on the Jews is his disappointment about their rejection of Jesus. He is not someone watching the events objectively from outside.

Jesus came to the people, as Matthew emphasizes in Matthew 1:21, in order to save them, but the people rejected him. Herod and the whole of Jerusalem with him were shocked at the announcement of the birth—an historically bi-

zarre scene which reflects the dispute between Matthew's congregation and its Jewish setting. The person speaking is not uninvolved and keeping a safe distance, but rather a Jew speaking to Jews; a disappointed man whose love has become harsh and unjust.

And, finally, Matthew uses the same sharp wording in relation to Jews as we find in relation to those in his own congregation who do not do the will of the Heavenly Father (*cf.* Mt. 7:15–20; 21–27; 22:1–14; 25:1–13; 14–30).

A decisive expression used time and again in Matthew's Gospel is "bearing fruit," doing the deeds which God demands. The Sermon on the Mount ends with the parable of the house built on sand or rock. The distinction runs right through Matthew's congregation. The broad and the narrow path do not refer to believers or unbelievers, but to the congregation itself. The person who lacked a wedding garment and was cast out to where there was wailing and gnashing of teeth was not an unbeliever, but a member of the congregation who only said Lord, Lord, but did not do what God demanded. Both the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25 stand for people in his congregation. So, even when speaking about his congregation, Matthew does not mince his words.

"Anti-Jewish" statements as a reaction to the events of the year 70 CE

The biblical passages to which we have already referred (Lk 14:16–24 or Mt 22:1–14) refer to a significant problem regarding the relations between the developing church and the Judaism of that time, as well as Judaism itself: the destruction of the temple which deprived Judaism of what, up to then, had been its religious center. As a consequence, what was needed was a new definition of Judaism without a temple. This phase coincided with the final detachment of the Christian community from Judaism. It involved a dual movement—rejection and self-delimitation. Both Jews and Christians understood themselves as the legitimate heirs of the biblical Israel, the people which God had chosen. One exegete has summarized it as follows: "The tablecloth has been severed, the struggle over the inheritance has broken out."[9] In the process, the polemics came from both sides.

A new definition of Judaism has a reverse side. It also means narrowing down the range of what can be accepted as Jewish. This leads to the rejection of those who are felt to be heretics and no longer acceptable. Among those rejected were, for example, Hellenistic Judaism, as can be seen in the writings of the Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, comprising those "Christians" who were of Jewish descent and who considered themselves as still belonging to Judaism.

[9] Hubert Frankemölle, "Jahwebund und Kirche Christi: Studien zur Form- und Traditionsgeschichte des Evangeliums nach Matthäus," *NTA NF 10*, Münster (1974).

The introduction of the *birkat ha-minim*, the so-called "blessing of heretics," into the *Shemone Esre* (18 petition prayer, 12th section) also took place in this context. The wording is directed generally against Jewish heretics and not primarily against "Nazarenes." But it also made it impossible for Jews who believed in Jesus to continue to attend worship in the synagogue. Exclusion from the synagogue community towards the end of the first century is probably also what is behind some statements in the Gospel of John (Jn 9:22; 12:42; 16:2).

"Anti-Jewish" statements to cope with the traumatic experience of division

The Gospel of John goes a bit further in its anti-Jewish polemics than Matthew. At many points in John we find "the Jews" as a united hostile front. Because of John's characteristic way of thinking in absolute opposites (dualism), "the Jews" are placed completely on the negative side because they reject Jesus as the Messiah. They are Jesus' opponents, enemies of the church and representatives of the "world" that is hostile to God. In the violent disputes Jesus conducts with "the Jews" in John's Gospel, the Jews claim to be children of Abraham. The Johannine Jesus responds to this with extreme ferocity: "the Jews" could not be children of Abraham because they were trying to kill Jesus. They could not bear the truth which he embodied and therefore their father was not Abraham and also not God but, on the contrary, the devil (Jn 8:31–47).

> You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him (Jn 8:44).

The historical Jesus never really spoke like this. On the contrary, these words reflect the dispute between the Johannine congregation—which was certainly a minority—and its Jewish surroundings. Even though one can understand what led to the ferocity of the dispute, the sentence used by John had disastrous consequences.

The situation of the Johannine congregation seems to have been very tense. Only in John we read that those who confessed Jesus as the Messiah were excluded from the synagogue (*aposynagogos einai*). The background to this must have been a concrete experience at the end of the first century.

The polemic statements against Jews in John are closely connected with Johannine christology. Jesus alone reveals the Father. Because of John's typical dualism, there can be only yes or no, supporters or opponents, believers or godless. Thus, the Jews who do not believe are on the side of God's enemies.

Must we therefore describe John as an anti-Judaist? Here, too, I would be cautious. I hesitate for the following reasons: (1) There are also some positive

statements, in John, i.e., John 4:22. It is true that negation predominates in John but it is not absolute. (2) John sees himself as an "Israelite" and uses this description as a title of honor: John 1:47 (Nathanael). (3) The sharp polemics used against the Jews are also used—as in Matthew—against other unbelievers.

Different emphases in the New Testament as an indication of an unfinished problem

If one compares the four gospels and their attitudes to the Jews and Judaism, it is striking that the gospels which evidence the greatest closeness to Judaism (Matthew and John) contain the fiercest polemics against representatives of Judaism. The story of Jesus' passion increasingly became a special point of concentration for anti-Jewish statements in the New Testament. The passion stories in the gospels are not legal records, but presentations that pursue clearly theological aims, and therefore sometime merge history and theology to the disadvantage of history. One will also note that the burden is laid more and more on the Jewish side and taken away from Pilate.

The details of the New Testament writings indicate various attitudes to Judaism. In addition to explicit polemics, there are also writings marked by a real "forgetfulness of Israel," such as 1 Peter where Judaism seems virtually no longer to play a part even as an historical background. In almost all the New Testament writings, expressions which had traditionally be applied to Israel have been transferred to the Christian church: people of God (Heb 4:9–11), God's own people (1 Pet 2:9), priests for God (Rev 1:6), etc. This can imply a link, but also an expropriation. The variety in the New Testament is wide and it is impossible to identify a uniform position. In this connection the 1991 study of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) *Christen und Juden II*, rightly observes that, behind the variety of attitudes to Israel and Judaism in the New Testament, "there lies a …problem which has not finally been resolved."[10]

Paul: continuity and change

The New Testament also contains the case of an author who later corrected his earlier statements: Paul. In the first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul suddenly bursts out into fierce polemics against "the Jews." (1 Thess 2:14–16) Behind this lies his concern about his congregation in Thessalonica which is facing persecution like that which he himself and others had imposed on the congregations

[10] *Cf*. EKD-Studie, "Christen und Juden II," Kirchenamt der EKD (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1991), p. 53.

in Judea in the past. He uses the stereotypes found in pagan anti-Judaism: the Jews are the enemies of all people, etc.

The harshest expression in my opinion is when Paul uses a well-known motif of the time—the eschatological measure according to which God never allows his people's sin to reach the highest limit but chastises it first (the Lord disciplines those whom he loves)—and reverses it by saying that the full measure of anger has come upon them.

In Paul's Letter to the Galatians there are also some extremely polemical sentences, especially in the allegory of Sarah and Hagar (Gal 4:21–31). According to what he says there, one could conclude that Paul supported the theory of substitution according to which the church had replaced Israel as the people of God so that there was no positive prospect for Israel any more.

Fortunately, the verses in 1 Thessalonians and what he said in Galatians were not Paul's last word on the Jewish people. On the contrary, in his Letter to the Romans, especially chapters 9–11, Paul spelled out his attitude to Israel in great detail and also corrected his earlier polemics.[11]

Hermeneutical considerations

Historical reminder

One should not forget that, unlike in later times, for the first phase of the history of Christianity, it is significant who is speaking. The polemical statements against Jews in the New Testament were made by people who were Jews themselves. The situation would be different if a Gentile Christian coming from outside were to voice criticism.

Moreover, the Christian congregations in the first century were minorities in every respect. It makes a difference whether a—sometimes oppressed—minority says something polemical, or whether a representative of the majority does so, and then follows up the polemical words with deeds. When Christianity had become a state religion and then thought it could simply quote the polemics of the New Testament in order to describe the Jews, that was more than a serious misjudgment; it was a theological *faux pas* of the highest degree.

The wording of the Bible and the history of its effects

Today—in view of the persecution of the Jews—we face a dilemma when we look at the "anti-Jewish" statements of the New Testament. We are aware of the

[11] For greater detail, *cf.* Wolfgang Kraus, *Das Volk Gottes. Zur Grundlegung der Ekklesiologie bei Paulus*, *WUNT 85* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr Paul Siebeck, 1996), esp. paras. 9 and 12.

disastrous effects of individual statements on the course of history, but we cannot simply delete these texts from the New Testament. Our task is to deal with them critically, as part of the inheritance we have received.

This implies, first, that we must see their temporal limitations, and not understand them as absolute dogmas containing eternal truths. It means, secondly, that we should see them as expressions of disappointed love filled with profound emotion, and not as statements on the essence of Jews and Judaism. Thirdly, we must recognize the interests which people on the church's side had in defining themselves as the true heirs of the Old Testament. Fourthly, as a consequence, we must learn to distinguish which statements in the New Testament can claim greater theological importance, and which little or are essentially problematic.

Is anti-Judaism essential to Christianity—the left hand of Christology?

In a debate with David Flusser in the 1970s, Ulrich Wilckens spoke in favor of considering anti-Judaism inherent in Christianity, indeed as *theologically necessary.*[12]

The New Testament scholar, Günter Klein, followed the same line.[13] Similarly, but with a quite different aim, Rosemary Ruether wrote, "We have recognized that the anti-Jewish myth was neither a superficial nor a secondary element of Christian thinking. The foundations for anti-Judaism had been laid in the New Testament."[14]

Looking at Paul's position, I consider this evaluation inappropriate, indeed theologically wrong. Naturally, one must admit that, in Matthew or John for example, the view of Judaism should be seen as depending on a particular christological approach. But Paul himself shows in Romans that christological argumentation must not necessarily sound anti-Jewish—although I agree that this has certainly been seen differently by the traditional interpretation of Romans. Rosemary Ruether asks, "Is it possible to say 'Jesus is the Messiah' without simultaneously saying implicitly 'and the Jews must be damned'?"[15] And my answer is, yes, it is possible; Paul demonstrated it in the Letter to the Romans.

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[12] David Flusser, "Ulrich Wilckens und die Juden," *EvTh 34* (1974), pp. 236–243; Ulrich Wilckens, "Das Neue Testament und die Juden. Antwort an David Flusser," *EvTh 34* (1974), pp. 602–611.

[13] Klein, *op. cit.* (note 3), pp. 411–450.

[14] Rosemary Ruether, "Nächstenliebe und Brudermord. Die theologischen Wurzeln des Antijudaismus," *ACJD 7* (Munich: Kaiser 1978, engl. ed. Faith and Fratricide), p. 210.

[15] *Ibid.* p. 229.

Demands on Christian theology based on the biblical evidence

A theological decision is required: the continuing election of the Jewish people and not the substitution of the first chosen people of God by the church

In the New Testament, various conceptions of God's people Israel and of its position in the history of salvation exist side by side in an unbalanced way. It is not easily possible to reduce them to a common denominator. On the contrary, they reflect an unfinished problematical issue which was not resolved uniformly even in the New Testament period.[16] Although the question who really were the people of God played a decisive part in early Christianity, the answers given varied.[17] This was related to the history of the development of the New Testament writings referred to above. Paul was the only New Testament author who dealt specifically and explicitly with the question of the relation between the previous people of God, Israel, and the eschatological people of God.

According to Paul, the Gentiles called by Christ have an equal right to belong to the eschatological people of God because of baptism: they are children of God, descendants of Abraham and thus heirs of the promise (Gal 3:26–29; Rom 8:14–17). But for Paul this does not exclude Israel from remaining the people chosen by God rather than being replaced by the Christian church (Rom 9:1–5; 11:1f.; 28f.; 15:7–13). Thus Paul is the only writer in the New Testament who has explicitly done justice to the problem of the people of God in its double form, to the question of the "church" and of "Israel."

In order to get to the solution we find in the Letter to the Romans, Paul too followed highways and byways which are reflected in different arguments in his letters. Even Paul could only find a solution after several attempts.

For Paul the decisive theological problem in the Letter to the Romans consisted in the question: How can the conception of a lasting promise of God to Israel continue to exist alongside the message of the redemption of all people through Christ alone in view of Israel's persistent rejection of Jesus as the Messiah? The doctrine of election against Christology.

We should not underestimate the sensitivity of this problem. The other New Testament authors also recognized the problem. As a rule they assumed that Israel as the people of God had been substituted by the church. That was not Paul's view in the Letter to the Romans.

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[16] *Cf.* EKD-Studie, *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 53.

[17] *Cf.* Wolfgang Kraus, "Paulinische Perspektiven zum Thema 'bleibende Erwählung Israels'," in Wolfang Kraus (ed.), *Christen und Juden. Perspektiven einer Annäherung* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1997), pp. 143–170, here pp. 144 ff.

The special feature of Paul's approach is that it is God's righteousness which was revealed by the Christ event (Rom 3:21) and caused the question of the lasting validity of God's promises to Israel (Rom 9:1ff.; 11:1) to arise. God's righteousness in the sense of his faithfulness to the covenant does not let go of Israel even though Jesus is not recognized as the Messiah by the majority of Israel. In his faithfulness to the covenant, God will lead Israel to the final salvation by means of the "deliverer of Zion" (Rom 11:26f.). In this way the doctrine of justification itself, which is often interpreted as being irreconcilable with the continuing election of Israel, becomes the possibility for maintaining the *solus Christus* at the same time as the validity of the divine promises to Israel.

The conclusion which Paul reaches in the Letter to the Romans thus differs from those in the First Letter to the Thessalonians or in the Letter to the Galatians. Whether one can therefore speak about a development in Pauline theology is controversial. But the point at issue is not the term "development." It is much more important to recognize that compared to the statements in 1 Thessalonians and Galatians what is said in the Letter to the Romans constitutes a conscious correction or withdrawal of arguments.

So the solution of the problem which Paul sets out in Romans is: God's *promissio* to the first chosen people is still valid. Israel is chosen by virtue of the divine promise. This election cannot be readily seen in outward things, but it still really applies because God's promise has the strength to establish reality.

And vice versa: through Christ the church has been chosen to belong to the people of God. This, however, also applies in the mode of a promise, namely from God's side, in the form of *promissio*, and is outwardly not visible. It is valid in the same sense that a promise is a reality.

An expression we find in Paul and which has not yet been given the attention it deserves in the exegetical discussion is that in Romans 15:7–13. It states: the promises, God's επαγγελιαι [epaggeliai] stand firm, they have been confirmed by Christ, because he came as the servant of the circumcised to confirm the promises to the fathers—not to fulfil them! (*cf.* Rom. 15:8).

Lutherans should be particularly attentive at this point, because the term επαγγελιαι used here, *promissio* in Latin, is a central concept in Luther's theology. One can spell out Luther's theology starting from *promissio*.

In my view that approach offers a basis for an appropriate definition of the relationship between the church and Israel, Christians and Jews, which can also contribute to overcoming the anti-Judaism in Christian theology. This would open up the possibility for Christian theology to keep its distance from the theory of substitution, the claim to exclusivity, which is used theologically to dispute Israel's right to exist. Looking at it from the point of view of *promissio*, Christian theology can trust that God has established a lasting relationship with Israel and that in Christ the church simultaneously belongs to God's chosen people.

I believe it would really be desirable—also in systematic, theological reasoning—to spell out the relation between the church and Israel starting from the doctrine of justification understood as promise.

An important—perhaps the most important—theological, critical and hermeneutical problem concerning the doctrine of justification, as it is presented in the Letter to the Romans, is to demonstrate that the Pauline approach found there is an appropriate expression of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and must therefore point the way for our reflection. What is at stake is nothing less than objective theological criticism in the Bible itself.

To put it clearly: by demonstrating that in Romans 11:25–27 Paul is speaking of the saving of "all Israel"—irrespective of whether by a "special way" (a *Sonderweg*) or the "normal way"—only half of the problem has been solved. That all Israel will be saved: Does this perhaps mean the last, possibly psychologically motivated but nevertheless fruitless, attempt in a context rich in divergent approaches (Rom 9–11), somehow still to deal with the problem of Jesus' being rejected by the majority of Israel?[18] Is this then a solution with a sledgehammer? Or, does the conclusion of Romans 11 fit into the overall argumentation of Romans 9–11 and this in turn into the overall approach of Romans 1ff.?

And to continue: Does Romans 9–11 only constitute the discussion of a question which arises in Paul's biography, or is it the peak of what must be said according to the apostle's doctrine of justification? Then these statements would have brought us to the heart of his theology. But, how do Paul's other statements about Israel fit in? And how should we define the relation to other New Testament views where there is no reference to all Israel being saved? And, finally, the Christian Bible comprises the writings of the Old and New Testaments. How should the Pauline statements and the (sometimes contradictory) statements of other New Testament authors be seen in the context of the Bible as a whole?

If the objective theological necessity of the statements in Romans 11:25–27 (and also 11:28ff.; 15:7–13) cannot be demonstrated in the context of the Pauline theology of justification, then there are no conclusive reasons against marginalizing them in a psychological or some other way.

It is then not difficult to unhinge the popularity of this text and the insistence on its statements—which is often found among those involved in Christian-Jewish dialogue. I am convinced that exegetically speaking the heart of the debate is whether Romans 11:25–27 should be seen in the context of the Pauline, New Testament and, generally, biblical statements as an appropriate expression of

[18] *Cf.* in this connection the papers mentioned in Kraus, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 158, note 41 and p. 159, note 45.

the gospel of Jesus Christ, with all the consequences this has for the church and theology. A theological decision is required here which, in my view, can only be: Paul in Romans indicates the criterion for our relation to Judaism; God has not rejected the people which he had previously chosen for his own (Rom11:2). The source of this statement is at the heart of the Pauline doctrine of justification; it is a genuine expression of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A new ecclesiology is required: Israel as an integral part of how Christians understand themselves

Despite their goodwill, the churches find it hard to develop a totally new relationship to Judaism. One of the reasons for this is that Judaism is a permanent challenge to how the church understands itself. I thus see one reason for the defensiveness still found in many quarters regarding a fundamental renewal in the "justified" fear that it may affect us, indeed, that afterwards we might no longer be what we were before.

I can confirm that from my own experience. There are reasons to "fear" that dealing with questions of the Christian-Jewish relationship may not leave those involved unaffected and may in fact change them. It is one thing to recognize that Christianity has Jewish roots. Even this recognition has not come easily to some, but today only an ignoramus would deny it. But it does fundamentally question the Christian identity if it is recognized and admitted that Judaism must constitute an integral component when formulating the church's understanding of itself.

When the church recognizes that God has established a lasting relationship between Israel and Godself, the church must first formulate its own understanding of itself in such a way that Israel's understanding of itself is not demoted.[19] In addition, the church must admit that it does not stand alone as "God's people," and for precisely this reason, Israel must necessarily be included in the description of the Christian identity. The Jewish roots of Christianity can degenerate into a merely historical memory. A real partnership with Israel as the chosen people makes a Christian self-definition which does not include Israel appear inadequate. Here we still have much to learn from Paul (*cf.* esp. Rom 15:7–13). In other words, an adequate Christian ecclesiology can exist only if it also includes the first chosen people of God.

Anyone who has followed the discussion which arose in reaction to the statement of the "Konferenz landeskirchlicher Arbeitskreise Christen und Juden" [Conference of regional churches' working groups on Christians and Jews] on the new orders of worship will understand what problems of Christian self-un-

[19] *Cf.* EKD-Studie, *op. cit.* (note 10), p. 54.

derstanding are involved here.[20] The same applies to the statement on "50-Jahre Berlin-Weißensee," of November 2000.

What is needed is a transformation of the Christian claim to absoluteness into eschatological terminology

Christian theology needs to recognize that it is not sufficient to declaim that salvation has come in Christ. It needs to spell out what that means and in the process it must not try glibly to ignore contemporary experiences of suffering and of the absence of salvation. It must translate its statements about the salvation which has come in Christ into eschatological terms in a way which continues to make the *promissio* character of these statements clear so that they cannot be confused with ontological affirmations.[21] We have been saved—but in hope! (Rom 8:24). Or, as it is expressed in 1 John 3:2: what we will be has not yet been revealed. Outwardly salvation is not yet visible. The assurance of redemption is true in the *promissio* mode.

What was said in Romans 9–11 about the Jews (that election still applies and they will be saved at the end of time) is applied in 1 Corinthians 15:25 to Christ himself: he has been set in his ruling position but he has not yet made his rule prevail. So all the statements about the presence of salvation have the character of prolepsis and anticipation. In this way it is possible to maintain the dignity and integrity of the Jewish way. This does ot mean reducing the salvation which has come in Christ but making it more precise. What is the reality about salvation? Here I would speak like Luther about a "reality in the word," the reality of the promise.

In the biblical message, it is finally a matter of the visible establishment of God's sovereignty, the prevalence and recognition of the divine name. And here the Jewish and Christian traditions are very similar: Zechariah 14:9 …"on that day the Lord will be one and his name one," the final verse of synagogue worship, and 1 Corinthians 15:28, "…God may be all in all," have the same aim in mind. In this eschatological hope Christians and Jews are not far removed from one another.

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[20] *Cf.* in this connection, Arnulf Baumann and Ulrich Schwemer (eds.), *Lobe mit Abrahams Samen. Israel im evangelischen Gottesdienst – Eine Arbeitshilfe* (Heppenheim/Wolfsburg, 1995); Texte aus der VELKD No. 68/1996: *Die Anliegen des christlich-jüdischen Dialogs und der christliche Gottesdienst* (Hanover, 1996). For further comments in the context of this debate *cf.* Hans Hermann Henrix and Wolfgang Kraus, *Die Kirchen und das Judentum II. Dokumente von 1986–2000* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2001), documents E.III.33', 42', 43', 44', 51', 55', 61'.

[21] *Cf.* Gregory Baum, Introduction to Faith and Fratricide, *op. cit.* (note 14), p. 24.

A Shift in Christian and Jewish Relations?

Starting Points in the Encounter between Christianity and Judaism

Anni Maria Laato

Since World War II, Jewish and Christian relations have developed in a positive direction. In many countries, Jews and Christians enjoy good relations; they work together for social justice and the promotion of human rights and engage in dialogue on theological matters. Nonetheless, as we can read in the country reports in this collection of essays, antisemitism and anti-Judaism continue to exist and have, in certain areas, even increased.

A consensus has been reached among Christians on many important points. First, all forms of antisemitism are repudiated by the Christian churches. Further, Christian churches admit that a starting point in the dialogue between Judaism and Christianity is that Judaism must be respected in its own right, as a living religion. Finally, Christians have started to seek the Jewish roots of Christianity, and to understand the Jewishness of Jesus and of the apostles. It has become clear that what unites Jews and Christians is a fruitful starting point, and that from this common ground we can begin to discuss what divides us.

The fact that Jews and Christians have so much in common, has not always been seen as something positive. On the contrary, in the Early Church it was one of the main reasons for anti-Judaism. In my doctoral thesis, I studied one of the earliest anti-Jewish texts, the pseudo-Cyprianic *De montibus Sina et Sion* written in North Africa at the beginning of the third century. The author seeks to prove that Christian people and Jewish people are, in fact, two different entities. He chooses those themes that unite Christians and Jews, for example the Hebrew Bible and the question of the Law of God, hoping thereby to prove that Christians are right and Jews fail to see the truth.

This very early document, although clearly anti-Jewish, describes many more Jewish traditions, than in the average Christian text of that time. Modern scholars have pointed to two reasons for the emergence of early anti-Jewish texts such as this one. In order to understand this archaic treatise correctly we must bear in mind the historical context in which it was written. First, before Constantine, conversion to the Jewish faith or adopting the Jewish way of life was a real option for some Christians. At the time, Judaism was a more established and more respected religion. Pre-Constantinian Christianity formed a minority, often persecuted by the Romans. Second, as there were so many uniting factors

with Judaism, and some people had difficulties to see the differences, many theologians felt that they had to define the Christian faith so that the difference between these two groups should be clear. As a consequence, these uniting factors became themes in anti-Jewish argumentation.

There are two basic ways of understanding and dealing with this development in the Early Church. Some people, such as Rosemary Radford Ruether, claim that anti-Judaism lies at the core of Christianity and that the New Testament contains antisemitic texts. Thus Christianity must be changed, and some or many texts in the New Testament declared as not valid for modern Christians. This, however, would mean abandoning the apostolic tradition.

The other approach is to regard the anti-Judaism so apparent in the Early Church as a development in the wrong direction. Therefore, rather than changing the New Testament, it must be interpreted in its Jewish context. Already in the prophets there is a strong, inner-Jewish criticism, and similar critique is found in the Qumran texts. It is hardly possible to call the prophets in the Hebrew Bible anti-Jewish, even if they criticized their Jewish fellows. Similarly, we cannot say that the Jews at Qumran or the rabbis who formulated strong repudiations of some Jews and their theological opinions, were anti-Jewish. Against this background, it is easy to find parallels to the criticism in the New Testament in other Jewish writings of the time. After all, many authors in the New Testament, if not all, were Jews. It is important to emphasize, as my own church has done in its response to the Leuenberg statement on the relations between Jews and Christians, that the New Testament does not justify any form of antisemitism.

Let me take an example: the image of the "Jews killing the prophets." In 1 Kings 19, the children of Israel are accused of killing the prophets and of abandoning the covenant. The same accusation can be found in Nehemiah 9. The purpose of the criticism is to call the listeners to repentance, which we cannot call anti-Judaism. Exactly the same motif is to be found in the New Testament: Matthew 23:37, Acts 7:52 and Romans 11:3—all texts deeply rooted in biblical and Jewish tradition.

Nevertheless, these and other New Testament texts were unfortunately already at a very early stage interpreted in an anti-Jewish manner. When in the second century Justin uses the above mentioned tradition of "killing prophets" in 1 Apology 47–49, it might still be possible that he tries to call the Jews to repentance, but when Eusebius several centuries later quotes it (*Historia Ecclesiastica* III, 5), his purpose is to disparage the Jewish people. The same is the case in *De montibus Sina et Sion*. The statements of the pre-Constantinian Fathers are, to some extent, understandable in their historical context. Later, when Christians were in power, similar expressions, uttered in a very different historical situation, had severe practical consequences not only directed against Jews but, as we can see from the patristic evidence, also against Jewish Christians.

We must distinguish between (1) religious criticism made by a weak religious minority, and (2) religious criticism combined with political power and persecution. It is clear that the New Testament represents the criticism of the first type, while post-Constantine Christianity the latter type. Similarly, we may argue that the classical Jewish texts also represent religious criticism of the first type.

It is important to recognize that the Early Church, a persecuted minority needing to define itself, made a mistake when it turned its back on Jews and Jewish Christians alike. Doing so, it lost contact with its Jewish roots and with the origins of Christianity.

Today it is possible to take the common points as a positive starting point for the encounter between Judaism and Christianity and for our common work in the world. After all, Christians and Jews share the same Hebrew Bible. We believe in one God, Creator of this world. The concepts of Messiah and the Law of God are important for both, although emphasized in different ways. All this should call Christian churches to realize their historical roots in Second Temple Judaism.

While practical work is, of course, important for the relations between Christians and Jews, we also need theological studies and discussions. It has been recommended that the Christian churches increase their usage of the Hebrew Bible. Perhaps Christians and Jews could work with common biblical texts, discuss our different ways of interpretation and so prepare material for the use of the churches. The purpose would not be to mix these two religions or interpretative traditions, but I think that we could learn something from each other.

Following the Spirit of Dialogue

Evelyn Adunka

The future of Israel, which also means the future of the Jewish people, is in danger. The guerilla warfare and terrorism we have been witnessing since 2000 cannot continue unchecked. According to Ron Pundik, one of the negotiators at Oslo, there is no alternative or military option to peace. This is easier said than done. If, as many people predict, it comes to a war in the Middle East, who knows whether it will be the last war and whether the result will be peace.

Without the establishment of the state of Israel, European Jewry would never have recovered from the wounds of the *Shoah*, from the murder of one third of its people. Therefore, anti-Zionism is such an important and highly sensitive issue. In this context, the silence of many of the churches in Israel is an issue that must be addressed.

It is, moreover, important to strengthen the inner-Israeli opposition to the right-wing politics of violence and aggression. Most of the ultra-orthodox rabbis have failed with regard to the human rights situation in Israel. Orthodoxy has become much more aggressive, intolerant and fundamentalist after the *Shoah*. There are, of course, exceptions such as the organizations "Rabbis for Human Rights" and Oz VeShalom – Netivot Shalom Movement for Judaism, Zionism and Peace.

The orthodox tradition, which was the result of persecution and in today's terms might be called somewhat anti-humanistic, contains remnants of ethical rules which apply only to one's own people. There is a German expression for this, *Binnenethik*, an internal ethics. We have to overcome these traditions and to develop our teachings.

In Protestantism we find Martin Luther's virulent antisemitism on the one hand, and critical academic work on the other: people such as Reichsbischof Ludwig Müller and the famous theologian Gerhard Kittel, who delivered his viciously antisemitic lecture at the University of Vienna on the one hand, and the *Bekennende Kirche* (Confessing Church) on the other. Nonetheless, the late Eberhard Bethge (1909–2000), a close friend and collaborator of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's, told me he felt that the *Bekennende Kirche* had not been sensitive enough to the Jewish question. Protestant and Roman Catholic theologies have had to make a real shift, a paradigmatic change in their attitude towards Jews in particular and human rights in general. Although this has occurred to some extent considerable work remains to be done at the congregational level.

Unlike many other people, I am not claiming that the history and the teaching of Judaism and Christianity are comparable. They are not. The history of Christianity's power and influence, and the history of the oppression of Judaism until 1948, are too different. Therefore, I have never been happy with the term "Judeo-Christian tradition," which the late American writer and thinker, Arthur A. Cohen, repudiated in his book, *The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition* where he writes:

> It is that Christians must learn to speak through Jesus Christ to that in the world which is untransformed and unredeemed and Jews must learn to speak out of Torah with a sagacity and mercy which brings the world closer to its proper perfection. There is a new communication—not of artificial traditions and hypothesized concords, but a communication of friendship in the holy spirit which is an order of love that is born out of faith in the urgency of the request, rather than in the certitude of the discovery.[1]

[1] Arthur A. Cohen, *The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition* (New York: Harper&Row, 1970).

Religion, Power and Dialogue

Abraham Skorka

I would like to begin this essay by focusing on the meaning of dialogue in the Torah. A simple reading of the Bible suggests that the Holy Scriptures could be defined as a testimony to the search of mutual interaction between human beings and God. God's eternal interaction with the human creature is through dialogue.

Even after Adam and Eve had sinned and Cain had killed his brother, God did not leave God's creatures in the loneliness of desperation. To engage them in dialogue God turned to them with rhetorical questions: "And the Lord God called unto Adam … 'Where art thou?' And the Lord said unto Cain, 'Where is Abel thy brother?'" Despite the fratricide, the Lord searched for ways of dialogue.

The prophetic texts are valid as a document of dialogue between God and the prophets, and the efforts to renew a relationship of dialogue between the people of Israel and their Lord. The biblical text is often surrounded by great silences. André Neher demonstrated that these silences are, in essence, a part of the dialogue between God and human beings.[1] One of the harshest punishments the people could suffer for transgressing the Law is depicted in Deuteronomy 31:18 with the words: "And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought." The verse clearly alludes to God's threatened abandonment of dialogue.

According to the Torah, the only way of reaching a dialogue with God is through the relationship with our neighbors. The Ten Commandments begin (as was taught by Martin Mordechai Buber, our common teacher of biblical dialogue in the last century) with God's "I" calling to each person individually, and finishing with the words: "thy neighbor." Between God and our neighbor stands the individual person. It is also clear from the Torah that people were created in God's image and likeness. Thus, the way to honor God is by honoring people, our neighbors. In our neighbor, we must see the partner in our search for God.

All our prophets underwent a process of introspection until God revealed Godself to them. Although the path to God was a lonely one, God always sent the prophets back to their people. Why did God send them back? The greatness the prophets reached in their dialogue with God was meaningless without mutual commitment and a profound impact on society.

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[1] *Cf.* André Neher, *L'exil de la Parole. Du silence biblique au silence d'Auschwitz* (Paris: Seuil, 1970).

The way in which the human being relates to the Creator, passes necessarily through his/her fellow. In Zephaniah 3:9 we read: "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." And in Zechariah's prophesy for the last days, we read: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (Zech 14:9). Both verses can only be understood as an ideal situation, reached through dialogue that allows humanity to serve God "with one consent" and to call God with "one name."

Why does this biblical ideal remain so far removed from human reality? Religion is a matter of passion. Appropriating the name and authority of God, human history registers hundreds of centuries of atrocities, persecutions and murders. Rabbi Levy[2] explains that the reason of Cain assassinating Abel, which is not explicit in the verses, was a controversy as to where the Holy Temple would have to be built. As religion is a matter of passion, it is susceptible to manipulation by demagogues and tyrants.

Religion should be a sincere searching for a deeper and closer relationship with God. Sadly, different rulers have since time immemorial used religion as a tool for control and self-empowerment. Religion was frequently used to declare wars, when the real purposes had nothing to do with God.

The Torah teaches us about the difference between political and religious power. The power of politics is in the hands of the charismatic figures of judges and kings, the power of religion in those of priests and prophets. The prophetic claim and criticism against the kings in the prophetic texts and in the Books of the Kings, are a timeless lesson of how political power and religious leadership have to interact.

The concept of humbleness has never really taken root in the empires, which considered themselves the heirs of the prophets' tradition. Those empires failed to establish morality in the hearts of the people, enabling them to act in accordance with the biblical spirit.

The attempt to establish ethical monotheism in human reality had one of its greatest failures in the atrocities committed during World War II. The dialogue with God was destroyed with the assassination of each one of the millions of victims of this terrible war. The *Shoah* raises the question of whether the pure ethical and transcendental monotheism proposed in the Torah was really understood and practiced. Biblical monotheism requires the respect of one's neighbor, which is reflected in the dialogical relationship with God—all that was destroyed in the atrocities of the twentieth century. Perhaps the atrocities took place because the dialogue never existed at the level and deepness required.

[2] *Bereshit Rabbah* 22:10.

After World War II, the Christian churches made some efforts to change the Christian view and feelings about Judaism. Jacques Maritain, French ambassador to the Vatican (1944–1948), Cardinal Augustin Bea at the Vatican, Cardinal Johannes Willebrands in the Netherlands, and Gertrud Luckner's circle in Freiburg, Germany, as well as different Christian denominational institutions, were among those who felt that Jewish-Christian relations must be revived and renewed. They found brave partners in Abraham Joshua Heschel, Martin Buber and Leo Baeck, among others. Their joint efforts paved the way for the declarations *Nostra Aetate* (proclaimed by Pope Paul VI in 1965) and *Dignitatis Humanae* (promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1965) that emerged from the Vatican II as well as the further declarations of John Paul II, the Vatican's recognition of the State of Israel, and for the approach of the Protestant Churches.

Compelled by the ghosts and horrors of war, many religious leaders felt it to be necessary to act in order to create a turning point in human history. Since World War II, new interfaith dialogues and research have developed in order to try to comprehend how the unthinkable could have happened. Efforts were made to construct new philosophies that include the reality of Auschwitz.

Can we say that a real shift has taken place in Jewish-Christian relations fifty-seven years after the end of the war? To answer this question we must recognize that antisemitism is only one of many faces of intolerance, arrogance and evil expressed in human reality. There where democracy and respect for individual rights reign, antisemitism cannot flourish. There where the mind is open to think and to analyze life with humility and respect, antisemitism cannot flourish.

Let me cite an example from Argentina. Two decades of democratic regimes have resulted in important changes in Argentine society. The media started defending the values of democracy, and one can observe an increased awareness of human rights and human dignity. Nevertheless, undemocratic attitudes persist and the country still has a long way to go before achieving social justice. There still exist social factors and groups which are intolerant, violent and evil; among them those who supported the fanatics who blew up the Israeli embassy and, two years later, the main building of the Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires. Intolerant and antisemitic attitudes prevail, but so-called spiritual barriers, such as the anti-discrimination law, have been put in place to defend society from the atrocities suffered during the dictatorships.

During the military regime, when thousands of people were kidnapped and tortured, the captured Jews were subjected to a "special treatment." In those hours of darkness, rabbis and clergy of different Christian denominations came together, engaged in interfaith dialogue and thus brought light into darkness. Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer, one of the outstanding fighters for human rights in

Argentina, found good partners in the different Christian churches. Their common work for human dignity will inspire the future actions for the improvement of human rights in Argentina.

While the Pope's declarations gave a new impulse to interfaith activities, the real work still lies ahead of us. According to the Scriptures, peace will exist in the world only when Zion is at peace. The State of Israel is much more than an adventurous undertaking of a group of Jews who had no better place to go than Palestine. Zionism has revitalized the Hebrew language, and made the prophecies of transforming the desert into a garden come true. For the first time, after 2,000 years of wanderings, during which the hope and dream of return were transmitted from generation to generation, Jewish culture is flourishing in modern Israel. To help bring peace to Zion, Jews and Arabs must be committed to Jewish Christian dialogue.

Interfaith dialogue means something much deeper than meetings between rabbis and clergy, or the brief encounters between the Jewish and Christian communities. It means working in each church, temple and community to create an environment of tolerance. It means solving the Jewish-Christian problem, as well as the problems of hate, intolerance and egotism.

Jewish-Christian dialogue is not a subject of theology. In the Middle Ages, theological disputes were a contradiction to the core of Jesus' teachings**.** Imagine for one moment Jesus, who according to the gospels came to give his teachings exclusively to his beloved people of Israel,[3] hearing the arguments between those who spoke in his name and his brothers' descendents. How do you suppose he would feel about Jews and Christians, instead of seeing the ethical norms they share, fighting about theological differences far removed from the spirit of the Torah? "The decisive thought in the message of the Torah," explained Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, "is not the presence of God to man [sic] but rather the presence of man [sic] to God. This is why the Bible is God's anthropology rather than man's [sic] theology."[4]

When the holiness, which according the Scriptures must be the spirit of human behavior, was put aside in the organized religions, shades of paganism arose within them, even in the pure monotheistic and metaphysical cosmovisions. According to the interpretations of Rabbi Ishmael, the great sage of the second century CE, the Torah was given, first of all, to cast away paganism from

[3] Mt 15:24; 10:6; Mk 7:27; Geza Vermes, *La religión de Jesús el judío* (Barcelona: Muchnik, 1980), p. 30.

[4] Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1955), p. 412.

human reality,[5] and one of the worst types of paganism is the belief of the human person in itself. The Rabbi of Kotzk, Menachem Mendel (Halperin) Morgenstern, taught:

> there is an old problem: both sons of Adam, Cain and Abel, brought offerings to God. Abel's offering was "respected" by God, not so Cain's. Why? In the case of Abel says the verse: "**he** also brought" (Gen 4:4), "he" means that he brought himself as an offering to God.[6]

To worship God means to sacrifice a part of the ego. In Deuteronomy 5:5 it is written: "I stood between the Lord and you." Rabbi Jechiel Michael, the sage of Zloczow,[7] explained the verse saying that "the 'I' stands between God and us. When a person says 'I' and encroaches upon the word of his Maker, s/he puts a wall between her/himself and God. But s/he who offers her/his 'I', there is nothing between her/him and her/his Maker."

Once the different cultures of the different peoples and communities around the world share the idea and belief that the only real "I" is God, who calls to the thou of each human with the same intensity, and that the challenge for each human being is to help their fellow to perceive God's call, then the dialogue will take place in its dignity.

To set the world right—*tikkun olam*—is a Talmudic expression that defines all kind of measures the sages took in order to uproot incorrect or unjust procedures from their society.[8] They are simple laws and norms to be applied in order to put more justice and morality into daily reality. In a very famous invocation from the time of the Talmud which since then has been recited in several prayers, *Aleinu leshabeaj*, appears the expression: *letakken olam BeMalkhut Shaddai* to set right the world under God's kingdom. Ultimately, Judaism and Christianity aspire to achieve a reality without paganism in which God, as the only one, reveals Godself to humanity. But the way that conducts to *tikkun olam BeMalkhut Shaddai* is paved by the *tikkun olam* of the details from simple daily life.

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[5] Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Torah min ha-Shamayim ba-Aspaklaryah shel ha-Dorot*, I, 33–35; Rambam, More Nevujim, III, chap. 29.

[6] Mendel of Kotzk, *Emet VeEmuna*, 1940, p. 363.

[7] Maor Vashemesh, Bo, Levov, 1859, 67, b. Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim*, *Early Masters* (New York: Schocken Books, 1947), p. 149.

[8] B. Ketuvot 56,b; B. Gittin 3,b; 32,a; 33,a; 34,b; 40,b; 45,a, b; 46,a; J. Demai 5:4; Sifrei 113 D"H: *Et.*

Religious leaders are challenged to do their utmost to create a new awareness and instill a new conscience in our communities. God's revelation is a matter of Godself and also of each one of us. I would like to conclude this essay with Martin Buber's words:

> When I was a child I read an old Jewish tale I could not understand. It said no more than this: "Outside the gates of Rome there sits a leprous beggar, waiting. He is the Messiah." Then I came upon an old man whom I asked: "What is he waiting for?" And the old man gave me an answer I did not understand at the time, an answer I learned to understand only much later. He said: "He waits for you." [9]

[9] Martin Buber, *On Judaism*, edited by Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Shocken Books, 1966).

A New Era in Lutheran-Jewish Relations?

Peter Pettit

There are some who have suggested that the document published in 2000 in the US, entitled *Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*, represents a new era in Jewish-Christian relations. The prologue to the document discusses the fact that, for nearly two millennia, Christians have characterized Judaism as a desiccated relic from the past, a religion that fell under God's wrath for rejecting Jesus' identity as Messiah and Lord. But, say the authors of the statement, in the decades since the Holocaust Christianity has changed dramatically. Many Christians may not realize that an increasing number of official church bodies, Roman Catholic and Protestant, have made public statements of their remorse about Christian mistreatment of Jews and Judaism, declared the need for more accurate and sympathetic teaching and preaching, and indicated that theology can and must be reformed. Yet our Jewish colleagues say, "We believe these changes merit a thoughtful Jewish response."

I agree that *Dabru Emet* marks a new era. It indicates that the apology, the repentance, of the church has been heard. It suggests that the changes the church has attempted to undertake so far have been acknowledged. It says that the door is now open.

North America enjoys a very distinctive situation with respect to relations between the Jewish and Christian communities. The status of the dialogue is quite different there than in many other places in the world. Therefore, all of my discussion here about a potential shift must be very clearly situated in the North American context.

Not everyone would agree that we should take *Dabru Emet* to be the mark of a new era; not everyone sees it signaling a landmark shift in Jewish-Christian relations. One could debate the significance of its content, yet, it seems to me that the fact of its publication is evidence of a new reality. When the Jewish community in North America can publish "a statement on Christians and Christianity" on page A38 of the Sunday edition of the *New York Times* and in the first section of the *Baltimore Sun*, with no outcry of Christian protest, there is a new reality. My colleague at Muhlenberg College, Alan Mittleman, has described that reality as one where, in this society at least and at last, Jews are not marginal. He argues that, in North American society, the Jewish community has integrated itself and been substantially received into the centers of power in every sense and dimension. That does not mean that there is no antisemitism in the US;

what it means is that the Jewish community is no longer systematically marginalized. That fact, together with the testimony of the four Jews who wrote *Dabru Emet* and nearly 300 more who have formally endorsed it, suggests that a shift has indeed taken place and the stage is set for a new era.

The shift implies that the Jewish community is no longer the primary audience for a repentant church. Those concerned with Christian-Jewish relations have been heard. What we have attempted to do over the last fifty years, in opening a dialogue and in articulating a new posture of the church, has been received and respected and now begins to receive a thoughtful response. That does, I believe, mark a profound shift in Lutheran-Jewish relations. But, if Jews are no longer the Christian church's primary audience in this endeavor, if we might suggest that Jews have become partners in the endeavor, then the question is, "Who now is the audience?" To whom do we speak about Christian-Jewish relations, if not as Christians speaking to Jews?

I want to profile three audiences in answer to that question. Our first audience is our own uninitiated—those within our own church communities who are as yet uninitiated in this wonderful encounter. Educating them and raising their awareness is still a basic task ahead of us. There is a need for materials for education, preaching, and the interpretation of lectionary texts and New Testament texts. It is crucial that we pass on to others all that has benefited us and shown us a new dimension of the news.

Our second audience is society at large. This too is a substantial task, but one Jews and Christians can address together on the basis of a common commitment to human rights and in solidarity about "truth-telling." This "truth-telling," especially from the Christian standpoint, must include a clear repudiation of the historic anti-Jewish libels, and a clear repudiation of the newest anti-Jewish libel, that Zionism equals racism. We can be clear and we can stand together in demanding that the world tell the truth about Jews and Judaism.

Our third audience, like the first, is in a sense more internal, even as it is one shared by the Jewish and Christian communities. This is the audience of posterity—those who will come after us. This is the audience that calls us to reformulate Christian theology from its very roots, and to integrate the changes into the curricula of our churches and theological institutions. Posterity may call for a similar reformulation and educational transformation in our Jewish communities. In the Christian realm, the works of Friedrich Marquardt and Paul van Buren, Clark Williamson and Mary Boys, and certain contemporary projects such as Wolfgang Kraus' call, begin to approach the theological reformulation of which I speak.[1]

[1] *Cf.* Wolfgang Kraus, in this publication.

If these are our three new audiences—our own uninitiated, society at large, and the posterity that will follow us—how do we address these audiences together, as Jews and Christians? As Lutheran churches seeking to address our own uninitiated, we must do all we can to invite Jews into our churches for our uninitiated to meet them. Whenever and wherever and however possible, we must make every effort to do whatever is necessary. We know that person-to-person encounter remains the best invitation to learning about the other. We can anticipate a willing, even an eager response from our Jewish colleagues and neighbors. So, let us issue the invitation and facilitate the face-to-face encounter. As Frank Sherman, my predecessor at Muhlenberg College, affirms: in interfaith encounter, it is not primarily Judaism that we seek to understand, but first and foremost it is Jews.

Secondly, as we address society, what will we see in this new era of Lutherans and Jews together? In this case it is especially important that the church learn from the Jewish community. The Jewish witness and impact on society at large, especially in the Western democracies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has been far greater, far more prophetic, perhaps far more effective than the church's witness. Perhaps that is so because the Jewish community has felt itself to be marginalized. They did not have as much to lose by confronting the larger society on issues of peace and justice. The danger in North America is that, with the Jewish community no longer marginalized as it once was, its voice in society may become muted, just as the church's voice has been muted over the years because of its interests in power and position. In contrast, I would suggest that the church needs to learn from the Jewish community the courage of the marginalized, so that we learn to speak together with power to the powers of society.

Finally, as we address posterity together as Jews and Christians, what will it look like? I believe it looks like the whole people of God, together in its two historical embodiments and in its two theological traditions—or are there 2,000 if we count them all?—exploring together what it is that God speaks to God's people as a whole people. This is not just the niceties of the pluralism of religion, but a recognition that the people of God who are chosen as God's special possession have a special relationship to one another in discerning God's word and will for the world. This is more than publishing interfaith calendars, although they continue to be necessary and useful, but it may in fact mean coordinating calendars with one another so that we recognize that the people of God live together, literally, in the same time. Reference has been made in other essays in this collection to Martin Buber's vision—or was it an audition?—of a new language when Jews and Christians meet together. I suggest that the new shift demands that we begin to develop precisely such a language. Not that we will create a merger of Judaism and Christianity, but that we will recognize and ar-

ticulate changes in the method and object of our theology, because we have fundamentally reoriented our understanding of who we are in relationship to God and to one another. As Wolfgang Kraus suggests, that needs to be worked out in dogmatics, liturgics, and every aspect of the church's life.

This joint effort by Jews and Lutherans, Jews and Christians, to hear the Word of God, perhaps one of the most challenging and important agenda items will be hermeneutical. We will have to hold on to a hermeneutic beginning with God's self-revelation to us in Scripture and through our communities, but we will have to formulate it in such a way that does not recreate the same hermeneutical hell for the rest of the world that Christianity has created for Judaism over the last 2,000 years. Christians alone have not been especially creative or successful in this regard. Perhaps together we can find a way of holding on to biblical revelation as our hermeneutical key, and yet be sure that we do not thereby exclude from God's salvation all the rest of humanity except us "Jolly Jews and Contented Christians." There is a shift that lies ahead of us. It can be a profound shift for both the Jewish and the Christian communities.

Facing Antisemitism and Anti-Judaism Today: Country Reports

Argentina

Ricardo Pietrantonio and Abraham Skorka

Introduction

Throughout history, the relationship between Christians and Jews in Argentina has been ambiguous. The Jewish community in Argentina is fairly sizeable, with immigration having largely taken place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Attitudes towards Judaism have been strongly influenced by European Christianity, and congress is still debating the question as to whether to grant religious groups, other than the Roman Catholic Church, absolute equality before the law. Until today, Roman Catholicism alone is regarded as guaranteeing the ethical values underlying the republic.

Already in the mid-eighteenth century it was recognized that religious tolerance was indispensable if learned émigrés from Europe were to be attracted. As a result the Constitution was amended in 1853, thereafter guaranteeing religious freedom. Nonetheless, the Constitution merely guaranteed religious tolerance, not total equality. This was partly rectified in the 1994 constitutional amendment.

On the basis of this albeit restricted freedom, the first wave of Jewish immigrants arrived in Argentina in the nineteenth century and established the Israelite Congregation of the Argentine Republic. In 1881, the government appointed José María Bustos as agent to promote the immigration of Russian Jews to Argentina. The first contingent arrived on the ship *Weser* in 1889, and a structured immigrant community of Jews coming from oriental Europe and, to a lesser extent, from the Middle East was established. Over the years, the Jewish community has become a force to be reckoned with, and with its own cultural institutions contributes significantly to Argentine society.

Today, antisemitism manifests itself in various ways in Argentina. The government's investigations into the attacks against the Israeli embassy in 1992 and Buenos Aires' AMIA Jewish Center in 1994, have still not been concluded. Nobody so far has been tried, or even arrested. Jewish cemeteries continue to be profaned and anti-Jewish graffiti can be found in the cities.

Despite great scientific and technological achievements the twentieth century has, in human terms, turned out to be one of the biggest failures: the *Shoa*, Kosovo, two world wars, numerous regional wars, genocide and slaughters constitute the lamentable landmarks of this century.

Neither the Jewish, nor the Christian community, have been indifferent to this state of affairs. The 1960s saw the founding of the Superior Institute of

Religious Studies which was supported by the Latin American Rabbinical Seminar, the Lutheran Faculty of Theology and the Roman Catholic Church. Efforts have been made, at the institutional and congregational level, to study the relationship and common roots of Judaism and Christianity as well as the ethical values both communities espouse. Carrying out combined Hanukkah-Christmas and Easter-Pesach celebrations are ways of stressing the common roots of both communities.

Established in 1981, the Confraternidad Judeo-Cristiana is now a part of the International Council of Christians and Jews. It is hoped through dialogue based on equality and mutual respect to underpin a pluralistic, democratic society with spiritual values.

Australia

John Levi and David G. Stolz

Until 1945, Lutheranism in Australia was largely confined to the rural areas while Jews lived mainly in the principal cities. This has meant that until recently there as been little opportunity, or need, for the two communities to relate to one another. Many Lutherans and Jews would not have met in anything more than a most cursory way. In part, this can be explained by the fact that both communities lived out their lives—including their faith—separate from the rest of the community.

In the 1990s, the Lutheran president of the State of Victoria, David G. Stolz, was invited to become the honorary president of the Council of Christians and Jews, Victoria (VCCJ). Prior to this there had been some clandestine involvement of various members of the Lutheran church with this organization. Stolz's accepting this position caused some degree of unrest among Lutherans in various parts of Australia, and it thus became clear that antisemitism and anti-Judaism were very much alive in some Lutheran circles. Luther was quoted, and misquoted, to justify antipathy at best, and the shameless expression of hate and rejection at worst.

Membership of the VCCJ brought these two honorary presidents, Rabbi Levi and Dr Stolz, into direct contact. VCCJ's work has been the major vehicle of dialogue between Jews and various Christian churches (notably the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Uniting Church, and the Lutheran Church of Australia). At the same time, its work has been a significant catalyst for each denomination to rethink and reexamine its attitudes towards the Jews. This has been facilitated in three ways: (1) *GESHER* , the Council of Christians and Jews' official journal—an annual publication; (2) the Council's public forums; and (3) other publications—most notably the "Guidelines for Religious Education Teachers – Rightly Interpreting the Word of Truth" (1995) and "Re-Reading Paul" (2000).

VCCJ's publications and public forums gave rise to further comment and concern from within Lutheran circles in Australia. As a result, in September 1996 the College of Presidents of the Lutheran Church of Australia released a statement to the church, which has given rise to a healthy debate within the church and to a growing appreciation of Jews and their faith. Jews in Australia have warmly received the statement. It must be acknowledged that the fundamentalist right wing of the churches, spurred on by the fundamentalist political right wing within Australia is still given to antisemitic and anti-Jewish attacks.

Because of the size and geographical location of the two communities, it is unlikely that specific and regular dialogues will be arranged outside the inter-

faith dialogues facilitated by the VCCJ and other Councils of Christians and Jews (South Australia and New South Wales) in which Lutherans have membership.

Australian society in the twenty-first century is made up of many faiths and peoples of many ethnic origins. The traditional "tyranny of distance," which kept the world's most ancient continent isolated, has disappeared and there is now considerable interaction with South East Asia. Within Australia itself, there is now a significant exchange between the adherents of different faiths and traditions. There is no doubt that, in the future, shared involvement in theological education will become increasingly important. Many young people are now educated at community sponsored schools that teach religious studies at the secondary level. This gives rise to the hope that religious knowledge will lead to a new and more thoughtful approach to matters of faith and tradition. Together, we look forward to the relationship between Jews and Christians acquiring a deeper and positive significance.

Austria

Evelyn Adunka

The Jewish community in Vienna and the problems it faces today

Until it was so cruelly destroyed during the Nazi period, the third largest European Jewish community, with around 188,000 persons, made its home in Vienna. The meeting of Eastern and Western Judaism gave rise to a particularly pronounced Jewish creativity, which has been forgotten today. Many famous Jewish institutions and rabbis were established in Vienna, which became the birthplace of Zionism. During the *Shoah*, about 65,000 Austrian Jews were murdered and 120,000 expelled.

By 1945, only around 2,000 Viennese Jews had survived, mostly as partners in mixed marriages or in hiding. A few were employed by the Jewish Council of Elders, which had been put into place by the Nazis in 1942 (under the leadership of Josef Löwenherz), as the successor organization of the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde (IKG). Most of those who returned after 1945 came from the concentration camps, Shanghai or Palestine, in poor health, traumatized and impoverished. A larger group, consisting of Socialists and Communists, returned from Great Britain, ready to take part in building a new, democratic Austria. After 1945, the IKG never had more than 9,000 members, reaching its lowest point in the 1980s with 6,000 members. Since then, it has somewhat recovered.

Before 1938, the largest groups represented on the board of the IKG included the Zionist parties and the anti-Socialist and anti-Zionist Union of Austrian Jews. In 1932, Vienna was the first of the larger Jewish communities to elect a Zionist president, the lawyer Dr Desider Friedmann. After 1945, the majority on the board was formed by a group close to the Communist Party of Austria (up to 1948, and again in 1950–51) and the Jewish Workers' Federation which was associated with the Socialist Party of Austria (1950 and 1952–1982). In the 1930s, Dr Emil Maurer, a lawyer and IKG president from 1952 to 1963, had been governor (Bezirksvorsteher) for Vienna's Neubau district. He had renounced religious Judaism and stated with regard to restitution which he insisted should take into account the years between 1934 and 1938, that "I cannot throw fifty years of party work out of the window just because the Jews want that." His successor, Dr Ernst Feldsberg, a bank employee, had been president of the board of the Union of Austrian Jews from 1932 to 1938; a survivor of the Theresienstadt concentration camp, he was a religious man of great integrity.

It was only in 1948 that there again was elected a chief rabbi in Vienna: the Hungarian, Akiba Eisenberg, a fervent Zionist, served until 1983 and was succeeded by his son, Paul Chaim Eisenberg.

By 1945 the infrastructure of the IKG had been destroyed, its members impoverished and its number decimated. The subsidies received from the American Joint Distribution Committee were discontinued in the 1960s. While the Austrian government funded the renovation of the City Temple, the inside of which had been destroyed in the pogrom of 9 November 1938, it did not fund the proposed Jewish community center. To cover its annual deficit, the IKG had to sell most of its real estate including properties received in restitution. In total, two-thirds of the Jewish community's holdings were sold. Today it is known that as the opposition in the IKG board, led amongst others by Simon Wiesenthal, was already saying at the time, the prices paid for these properties, mainly by the city of Vienna, were far below market value.

The city of Vienna and the Republic of Austria were only in the late 1970s willing to support financially institutions such as the Jewish Community Center, the Zwi-Perez-Chajes School, the Lauder-Chabad School, the Jewish Vocational Training Center, the Maimonides Center, the Sephardic Center, Esra (the therapy center for Holocaust survivors), the Jewish Welcome Service, the Jewish Adult Education Institute and the Vienna Jewish Museum.

The IKG remained demographically and psychologically weakened, an aging community many of whose younger members were emigrating, surviving only due to immigration from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. At the end of 1998, there were 7,892; in February 2002, 6,610 members.

The future of the IKG in Vienna is anything but secure. No new immigrants are arriving, and the inevitable emigration, although it has slowed down, hinders growth; the schools are not operating at full capacity. There is still hope that this situation will change with the eastward expansion of the European Union.

The wounds inflicted by antisemitism and National Socialism are still psychologically present. Emigration continues even though the infrastructure has been rebuilt, and there is need for a therapy center for *Shoah* survivors and their descendants. The blatant signs of antisemitism and the struggle for reparations have always been fundamental themes in the Jewish newspapers. It is estimated that Austrian Jews and the IKG have received, in reparations, 2–3 percent of the assets which were confiscated between 1938 and 1945.

In the 1960s, the IKG had no recourse other than powerless protest against vandalism in cemeteries and the acquittal of war criminals. It tried in vain to obtain a reform of criminal law so that persons with a proven Nazi past would be excluded from jury service. In the 1970s, when the Social-Democratic Jewish Workers' Federation had a majority on the IKG board, the community was subject to increased conflicts of loyalty. The opposition groups were especially radical

and militant, but also got the first relief programs carried through when immigrants from Soviet Russia began to arrive. In the 1980s, IKG president, Paul Grosz, began taking much more severe action against the antisemitic attitude of Richard Nimmerrichter, columnist of the *Kronen Zeitung*. When the latter wrote: "Those who have defeated Mr Hitler will also survive Mr Grosz." Grosz sued, and won in the first court, but lost the appeal.

The present IKG president, Dr Ariel Muzicant, elected in 1998 by a narrow majority, embodies the self-confidence of a new generation. He is one of the most successful real estate agents in Austria, and the first IKG president to be born after 1945, in Haifa. In contrast to some of his predecessors, he has few personal ties to the historical Jewish community in Vienna. Because of the shrinking IKG membership, he has frequently launched, as yet unsuccessful, appeals to politicians to change the strict immigration laws.

During the negotiations on looted Jewish property, Muzicant called for the restitution in kind of the value of all "Aryanized" possessions that are now public property. While the conservative government refused this request as well as "debt relief" for the IKG, it was, in contrast to previous governments, willing to pay reparations to individuals. President Muzicant conditionally agreed to the agreement reached between the Austrian government and the representatives of victims. He is continuing negotiations on behalf of the properties of 600 associations, 110 foundations and 34 Jewish communities all over Austria, to which the 5 Jewish communities existing today are the legal successors.

In the meantime, the former chairman of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), a coalition partner in the present government, and governor of Carinthia, Dr Jörg Haider, said "I cannot understand how somebody named Ariel (referring to the brand name of a washing powder) can have so much dirt hidden away…." Muzicant sued him for these and other remarks; in one case the court issued a temporary injunction against Haider. It was finally settled out of court with apologies offered by Haider.

Every time latent antisemitism emerges in virulent forms, it raises the level of anxiety in the Jewish community, especially among the older people. The IKG has set up its own forum against antisemitism, and there are also Christian and leftist groups trying to educate the public and show solidarity through protest marches, public events and publications. Christian-Jewish dialogue is being carried out especially by the Jewish-Christian Coordinating Committee formed in the mid-1960s, a working group of the official Roman Catholic lay organization and Protestant educational institutions such as the Protestant Academy. The Coordinating Committee maintains its own information center and publishes the journal *Dialog*. It does not receive as much support from the Roman Catholic Church as does, for example, the Contact Office for World Religions. In contrast to its early years, Christian-Jewish dialogue has suffered more recently

from a lack of interest by qualified Jewish dialogue partners. The quality of Christian-Jewish dialogue has improved due to basic theological study and the commitment of a few groups to it. This is still not the case for ordinary people, or even for all liberal, reform-oriented circles.

There are few ties between the IKG of today and the community which existed before the war. Those of its members who remembered its greatness and importance, and conveyed it through a tradition of Jewish journalism which no longer exists as it once did, are now dead. There is scarcely any effort to preserve continuity with the past. What remains is limited to the remembrance passed on by historians.

The commentator, Albert Sternfeld, who was born in Vienna as the son of an Orthodox Jewish community leader, and who returned in 1966 to the city of his birth, wrote in 1989: "In 20 to 25 years there will be a Neo-ghetto in Vienna, on the one hand, and on the other hand, a far-reaching defection from that which was once Vienna's Jewry. A sad prospect."

Austria

Othmar Göring

Cooperation between Christians and Jews

According to two recent studies, there have been a relative increase in tolerance and a decrease in antisemitic prejudices. Christians and Jews cooperate in a number endeavors devoted to peace, justice and well-being (shalom) for all people such as: the Austrian Coordination Committee for Christian-Jewish Cooperation with its center in Vienna and branches in the federal states; Christian-Jewish cooperation for example between local Protestant and Jewish congregations; and the Austrian Christian-Jewish Bible Week (since 1982, held in Graz).

The theological/hermeneutical question: Although to varying degrees, all Christian churches are products of a history in which the Passion Narratives have been understood as assigning guilt for Jesus' death collectively to the Jews. This is no longer the case; on the contrary, preaching, teaching, religious education and the writings of theologians in weekly comments or their contributions to TV broadcasts, clearly deny a collective responsibility of the Jewish people.

***Practical questions*:** The new Protestant hymnbook and the Lutheran worship book are in use in Austria. Generally, liturgies and hymns have as yet not been examined with regard to the image of Jews and Judaism that they convey. Markus Himmelbauer (Austrian Coordination Committee for Christian-Jewish Cooperation) and Roland Ritter-Werneck (Lutheran pastor) have published a study on this subject, *Israel und Erstes Testament in den Gesangbüchern der Kirchen*[1] (Israel and the First Testament in the churches' hymnbooks) citing numerous negative examples and suggesting amendments.

The Lutheran church in Austria is a member of the "Lutheran European Commission on the Church and the Jewish People" which is preparing a document on "Christian—especially Lutheran—worship and Judaism."

Teaching materials used for religious education in schools are being examined in order to see how Jewish people and Judaism are portrayed. Careful attention is being paid to this when new schoolbooks are published for use in

[1] **www.jcrelations.net/articl2/lieder.htm**

primary and secondary schools, where Judaism and antisemitism are being specifically addressed.

At the Protestant faculty, the Hebrew Scriptures are treated as a Jewish document and exegesis takes the Jewish tradition of interpretation into account. Also here, conscious efforts are being made to counteract antisemitism. The Protestant Academy in Vienna organized lectures and congregational seminars on Judaism.

There is growing support for and cooperation with Jewish congregations and their cultural centers with increasing attention being paid to how Judaism is presented. There have been public expressions of solidarity following antisemitic attacks such as the desecration of Jewish cemeteries and anti-Jewish graffiti. Assistance has been forthcoming in building a Jewish school (Vienna) and a synagogue (Graz). Lutheran churches hold *Shoah* commemoration services and January 17th had been designated the "Day of Judaism."

Bavaria, Germany

Heinrich Bauer

This essay is based on my experience of serving for nine years as a pastor of the Protestant Church of Reconciliation at the concentration camp memorial at Dachau. Mine is not a detailed account of Jewish-Christian or Jewish-Lutheran dialogue in Bavaria, nor am I in a position to give a precise description of anti-Jewish activities, sentiments or the mental predispositions which lead or can lead to them. My essay is limited to what I have experienced and sensed at the concentration camp memorial.

Sentiments hostile to Jews

With annually approximately 800,000 visitors from Germany and abroad, the concentration camp memorial has thus far only once been the scene of open, right-wing, anti-Jewish expressions or activities. Personally, I have encountered express glorification of National Socialism only once while accompanying a young person. He was the grandson of an SS-man who had been executed, and had been condemned by a juvenile court to a personal guided tour of the concentration camp memorial for singing Hitler songs.

I rarely sense anti-Jewish reservations among the visitors who come of their own volition. Rather, I have experienced much openness to listen and to reflect, especially when it is a question of becoming aware of the anti-Jewish poisoning of Christianity in the course of history, and the consequences thereof in National Socialism.

The atmosphere can be slightly different when guiding school classes, groups of soldiers or police who have been recommended or ordered a visit to the concentration camp memorial. After some initial skepticism, the tour of the memorial becomes a discovery. Nonetheless, I sometimes sense that reservations remain, the roots of which only come to light in remarks such as, "Didn't the Jews also … (do this or that bad thing)?" Generally, I consider the chances of making even these kinds of groups aware of the enormity of the state's racist crimes between 1933 and 1945 as being quite good. It is important to sensitize those who are not actively malicious nor deliberately indifferent, so that they cannot be abused [again], and that when it comes to questions of life or death, they will stand firmly on the side of respect for all human life.

Jewish-Lutheran dialogue

I need not here speak about the misuse of the cross of Jesus as a weapon against the people to whom he belonged. Nor do I need to refer to the structural en-

tanglement of the regional Lutheran churches with the authoritarian national state, or their hesitation to side with the persecuted, a result of their desire for self-preservation which had politically fateful and disastrous consequences. We are all aware of our betrayal of our defenseless Jewish relatives in the faith. As a Christian, I am looking for a basis on which a dialogue could develop.

The Lutheran Reformation in particular, with its axiom *sola fide*, again took seriously that the God who devotes himself to humankind is simultaneously completely beyond our control, and is and remains the Holy One. We know that Judaism was first to be aware of this—ever since Moses' experience at the burning bush and on Horeb. But, especially Luther's theology of the cross, referring to the hidden God on the cross, clearly directs our attention to this element (*cf.* Luther's interpretation of Ex 33).

My question is: Is the respect—where it exists—for the Holy One, essential to both traditions, reflected in the common respect for the mystery of the different paths of synagogue and church which we human beings cannot solve? Must not Lutherans, precisely because of the core of the Reformation confession, respect the living sign of the inviolably holy in the continued existence of the synagogue? As a result of believing in the Crucified One, is not the Christian response to Judaism respectfully to stand still before its existence, because God's future which is still to come is a matter of faith and therefore beyond human and Christian control and anticipation?

I have experienced something of this momentous respect over the years in many encounters between Jews and Christians at Dachau, former prisoners and younger people, at events or simply together on a tour through the concentration camp grounds. Franz Hämmerle's wooden statute, *synagoga et ecclesia*, standing in the Church of Reconciliation depicts the dead crucified figure, who is the origin of the church, as in a pietà. Naturally, this is an internal, Christian word to the church, not to the synagogue, and it says: Child, respect your mother even if you go your own way. That could at least be the Christian prerequisite for a dialogue.

Bavaria, Germany

Abi Pitum

To this day, the behavior of most Christians during the persecution of the Jews has remained a traumatic experience. With only very few exceptions, there were no protest against the persecution and deportation of Jews. Only a few, isolated members of the clergy had the courage to speak up, while the official church leadership remained silent in the face of the annihilation of millions of Jews. The acceptance of this mass murder stands in conspicuous contrast to the help many church offices offered to Nazi war criminals escaping after the war.

Since the end of World War II, especially since the revelation of the unique crime against humanity suffered by the Jews, the *Shoah*, Christian churches are increasingly trying to combat anti-Jewish prejudice. Christians have remembered that Jesus of Nazareth belonged to the Jewish people, and had he lived in our times, he would have been sent to the gas chambers.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria declared the year 1997 to be focused on "Christians and Jews—Invitation to a New Beginning," and at its 1998 synod meeting in Nuremberg, Germany, adopted a declaration which included the following points:

> 1. The Common Roots of Judaism and Christianity
>
> … These elements in common have through centuries been forgotten and denied by Christians and misapplied and misinterpreted. For this reason, too, there came about the frightful persecutions and murders of Jewish persons, in which Christians participated, which were initiated by Christians or tolerated by Christians.
>
> 2. The Importance of the *Shoah*
>
> … It belongs to the historical development of centuries of an old anti-Jewish tradition, which also presents a total Christian problematic. This tradition helped to prepare the ground for the crimes against the Jews in the twentieth century. The Lutheran Church of Bavaria has a share in this guilt -as Lutheran and as German.
>
> 3. Luther and the Jews
>
> … It [The Lutheran church] has to distance itself from every [expression of] anti-Judaism in Lutheran theology.

4. The Unrevoked Promise to Israel as People of God

Judaism and Christianity went different ways, and despite common roots they represent two different communities of faith. Nevertheless, Israel remains, according to statements of the New Testament (Rom 11: 1), God's elect people. Its election is not canceled through the election of the church from the Jews and pagans. The Christian faith holds fast to the unrevoked election of Israel. Its reason for this rests in the faithfulness of God to keep God's promises.

5. The Responsibility of Christians toward the Jews

Therefore, it belongs to the most essential tasks of the church to separate from all enmity toward the Jews, to resist it wherever it appears, and to work for a relationship to Jews and to the Jewish religion that is shaped by respect, openness, and readiness for dialogue.[1]

During the drafting of this declaration, I was able to make a number of suggestions, all of which were taken up. In my opinion, the declaration is satisfactory and adequate. Critique calling for stronger formulations is a topic for discussion within the church, not one which concerns the relationship between Christians and Jews.

I am especially optimistic because Dean Dr Johannes Friedrich, the moderator of and driving force behind this process, was elected bishop of the church in 1999. Nonetheless, the fact that the church leadership has taken such a decision does not mean that all antisemitic prejudice on the part of the clergy and church members has been eradicated. I have had to listen to statements full of resentment. While it is easy to tell people to be virtuous, it takes a long time until it actually comes true.

Prejudices are persistent and it is no longer possible to distinguish between antisemitism based on xenophobia, and antisemitism based on old Christian motives. What is decisive is that anti-Jewish prejudices have taken root in many people's subconscious and those who perpetuate these antisemitic clichés are virtually unaware of doing so. Before Hitler, it was not considered especially defamatory to maintain and to proclaim anti-Jewish positions. Since the crimes of the *Shoah*, antisemitism has become less overt in the enlightened parts of Western society, especially in the mass media. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the prejudices have disappeared. Rather, people hang on to them, considering them legitimate opinions rather than antisemitism.

[1] **www.jcrelations.net/stmnts/luth-bavaria.htm**

How else can one explain that while nearly 90 percent of the German population reject antisemitism, 44 percent believe that "the Jews" have again acquired too much power. Just under 50 percent believe that "the Jews exploit" the Holocaust for their own purposes. Martin Walser's speech at St. Paul's in Frankfurt did vast amounts of damage. The author said that he could no longer bear to look at reports of the crimes committed against the Jews, and protested that the guilt of the Germans was being used against them. Walser knew exactly where he was going, for well over 50 percent of the German population wants "closure" with the past. That means that they want to be released from responsibility for the genocide.

Antisemitism is a sickness symptomatic in society and hardly ever appears in isolation. Prejudices are very closely interwoven. God is the master of charity. God commands us to love our neighbor. Those who take their Judaism or Christianity seriously must begin with this commandment to love. The struggle against prejudices, the continued example of caring, the engagement for justice, peace and human dignity in every part of society are areas where Christians and Jews can work together.

Some Jewish congregations in Germany are shortsighted, avoide dialogue and only wake up in the event of concrete antisemitic attacks. Christians must understand the fear of being taken over and avoid asking too much in theological intellectual discussions. The dialogue between faith communities should not be an abstract ritual, but take place in real encounters.

The fact that Jewish life in Germany is increasingly reaching normality is illustrated by the inner-Jewish discussion about hanging a crucifix in every classroom. According to Bavarian law, a crucifix must be put in all public primary and secondary school classrooms. This was challenged by an adherent of anthroposophy who brought the case before the Federal Constitutional Court. The court ruled that the law was unconstitutional. At the time, the Jewish community was divided. Whereas one might have thought that religious Jews would condemn the crucifix as a symbol of thousands of years of persecution, and that "lay" Jews would accept the crucifix as symbol of a common Western culture, the contrary was the case. Many religious Jews, including rabbis, felt that the crucifix embodies the basis and values for living together, and should therefore remain in the classrooms as a symbol. Most non-religious people welcomed the court's ruling, as did the majority of the "secularized" Germans, seeing it as sign a neutral state which has finally decided against Christian tradition and hoping for a further reduction of Christian privileges.

The attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001 made visible the fragility of our common civilization. It is to be hoped that our politicians search for strategies to further our common civilization, and are wise enough

not to destroy the cultural basis built upon tolerance, freedom and democracy. Otherwise, the terrorist mass murderers would have won.

Brazil

Michel Schlesinger and Rolf Schünemann

Two very sensitive issues influence the relationship between Jews and Lutherans in Brazil. The first concerns the association of the religious with the ethnic; the second the fact that any critique of the politics of the State of Israel is considered as an expression of antisemitism. Until the 1960s, the Lutheran church was known as the Igreja dos alemães (Church of the Germans). In light of the atrocities committed against the Jews during World War II, this association prevented any form of rapprochement between the two religious groups.

Of a population of nearly 170 million, approximately two million are Lutherans while the Jewish community comprises some 120,000 members, the majority of whom live in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre. Lutherans are mainly concentrated in the southern states, counting some 20,000 members in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

The relationship between Jews and Lutherans needs to be located within the overall Christian-Jewish dialogue. In the 1960s, a Christian-Jewish fraternity that included representatives of several Christian denominations was set up in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. In a spirit of mutual respect and consideration, the fraternity organized seminars and meetings on the most diverse topics.

From 1963 to 1967, the Evangelical Academy convened persons for debates on certain topical issues. The academy tried to attract intellectuals—Roman Catholics, Protestants and Jews—by broaching existential and ethical subjects. In the light of the growing identification of Lutheran church with Brazilian culture, the academy, which had been run by a pastor from Germany, stopped its activities.

Since the 1980s, there has been joint participation in public inter-religious events, and anti-Jewish manifestations in Brazilian society have been strongly condemned. Representatives of the Jewish community of Porto Alegre participated at a theological week at the School of Theology at São Leopoldo, RS.

In 1992, the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil under Reverend Dr Gottfried Brakemeier issued an official document condemning racism entitled, *Deus não é rascista* (God is not a racist). It was received with appreciation by the president of the Rabbinate of the Congregação Israelita Paulista in São Paulo, Rabbi Henry Sobel.

At an event organized by the B'nai B'rith Association in São Paulo Brakemeier spoke on the subject the Lutheran church and neo-Nazism, stressing the need to reinforce the struggle against all forms of racism and antisemitism, and strongly condemning the profanation of Jewish cemeteries and anti-Jewish attacks.

Until today there is no formal, institutionalized Lutheran-Jewish dialogue and nobody has been officially nominated to participate in the local conversations. Informal conversations always take place on the basis of to ad hoc invitations and local interests.

Canada

Glen Nelson

Introduction

First, it must be noted that the Lutheran church is a relatively minor presence on the Canadian religious scene. With about 975 congregations across the country and a membership of 283,600 Lutherans account for roughly 1 percent of Canada's population. Since in places where there is a substantial Jewish population (the larger cities) the Lutheran population is relatively small, Jewish/Lutheran relationships at an institutional level are limited. Dialogue takes place primarily through ecumenical groupings and, at the local level, at the initiative of individual congregations and/or clergy.

Institutional initiatives

At the national level, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) participates in the Canadian Christian Jewish Consultation in which representatives of the member churches of the Canadian Council of Churches and the Canadian Jewish Congress meet two or three times a year to discuss matters of concern. In addition, the Eastern Synod of the ELCIC is an active member of the Christian Jewish Dialogue of Toronto. In both, there have recently been forthright discussions about the conflict in Israel, and the airing of concern about church statements perceived to be unfairly critical of Israel.

At its biennial convention in 1995, the ELCIC adopted a Statement to the Jewish Community in Canada in which the church expressed regret for the historic anti-Judaism and antisemitism, acknowledged "with pain" and rejected Martin Luther's "anti-Judaic diatribes," and affirmed its desire "to live our faith in Jesus Christ in love and full respect for the Jewish people." [1] Four years later, a second resolution called on the church leaders to pursue conversations with Jewish leaders, a process which has since been initiated.

[1] **www.jcrelations.net/stmnts/luth-canada.htm**

Local initiatives

In cities where there is a sizable Jewish community such as Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Calgary, Lutheran congregations and clergy participate in local interfaith efforts. Examples of this are: the fall dialogue event and regular dialogue breakfasts in Calgary sponsored by the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews; participation in Holocaust education week; an annual Christian service in memory of the Holocaust in Toronto; and many dialogue programs between Christian congregations and Jewish synagogues.

Antisemitism in Canada

In recent years, there have been a number of high-profile cases. Holocaust denier, Ernst Zundel, was brought to trial for spreading hate against an identifiable group. While he is reportedly no longer living in Canada, his propaganda efforts continue. In a few communities (e.g., James Keegstra case, Alberta, 1984[2]), teachers have been disciplined for teaching denial of the Holocaust. There is concern about the rapid growth of antisemitic Web sites—now numbering in the hundreds in Canada alone.

Like many other places in the world, Canada has experienced a significant rise in antisemitic incidents since the return of the Palestinian *intifada* in 2000. One report identified fifty antisemitic incidents in the months of October and November alone, including arson, hostile graffiti, broken windows, vandalism, threats against individuals and groups, telephone harassment, personal abuse and a few physical assaults. Against such occurrences, Canada has developed over the past fifty years a body of social values and human rights jurisprudence based on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.[3] There is an embracing of multiculturalism and pluralism as special and treasured characteristics of Canada.

In interfaith organizations, one senses a growing reserve and carefulness in the interactions between Christians and Jews since the return of the *intifada* and the escalating conflict in Israel. Relations are complicated not just by sympathy for the Palestinian people as a whole, but also by the fact that there are Christians among them and church groups that appeal for support. Fortunately, the reserve of trust and goodwill built up over decades allows

[2] **canada.justice.gc.ca/en/justice2000/128mile.html**

[3] **laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/**

these feelings to be aired within the dialogue structures. This has been true, for example, in recent meetings of the Canadian Christian Jewish Consultation; there has been high tension, but also open and honest talk and an agreement to keep on talking.

Finland

Gideon Bolotovsky and Anni Maria Laato

Introduction

With over four million members, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF) accounts for about 85 percent of the population. The Jewish community with 1,500 members is rather young compared to that in other European countries. Most Finnish Jews are descendants of Russian soldiers, who were allowed to settle in Finland after 1858; before, Swedish and Russian legislation prohibited Jews from living in Finland.

Today, relations between the Jewish community and the Lutheran church are good. There are several organizations dealing with Christian and Jewish relations at the religious and cultural levels. Whereas historically there has been considerable sympathy for the State of Israel, critique has increased and taken on antisemitic forms.

Antisemitism and anti-Judaism in Finland

Criticism of the Jewish people is frequently connected to politics and the State of Israel, or directed against traditional Jewish customs such as ritual slaughter and circumcision. Both practices have been discussed widely in the Finnish media in the last years.

The *Shoah* was officially remembered in 2000, with the dedication of a monument to the memory of the eight Jews who were shipped from Helsinki to Poland during World War II and of whom only one survived. On this occasion, the Prime Minister, Paavo Lipponen, officially apologized on behalf of the Finnish people.

Development and common projects over the last ten years

The ELCF is a member of Lutheran European Commission for Christians and Jews and has actively participated at several international congresses and projects. In 2000, the General Assembly of the church discussed the relationships between the church and the Jewish people. Whereas the church has made no official statement, it has accepted the statements made at Budapest and Driebergen. It recognizes that more education of theologians as well as the laity is needed.

In 1977, the ELCF established a working group on "The Church and the Jewish People" of which the Jewish community has been a member since 1993. Both communities have cooperated in addressing such issues as antisemitism, and have been working towards increased common understanding. This cooperation has taken place at the practical level, and no organized theological discussions have taken place.

The activities of the working group include: the publication in 1995 of a book on Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations today, *Ikkuna juutalaisuuteen* (A Window to Judaism), which is being used in the universities and a second revised edition of which is planned for 2002; the organization of common seminars in Tallinn (1996) and in Stockholm (1998) at which the history and current Jewish life in Finland and the Baltic countries have been discussed; the publication of several books and articles on Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations; participation in discussions in the Finnish media; working on some specific issues in society and legislation, such as ritual slaughter and whether shops should be open on Sundays.

The church has helped organize an Anne Frank exhibition, which toured in several Finnish cities in 2001–2002. Especially school classes have visited the exhibition. Moreover, the ELCF established contacts with Messianic Jewish communities in Israel.

Forthcoming projects

The working group has chosen the following main items for its work in the next years:

- Monitoring of and participating in the discussion on Judaism and Jewish and Christian relations in Finland
- Producing new material on these matters both in print as well as on the church's Web site
- Checking of schoolbooks regarding how are Judaism and Christianity and their mutual relations are presented in schoolbooks, including those used in the Jewish school
- Planning of and participating in the education of pastors and other theologians.

While at present antisemitism is only a rather marginal problem in Finland, there is always the danger of its increasing, especially if there is not enough knowl-

edge about Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations. Therefore, the working group prioritized the production of educational material and takes part in discussions in society. Experiences at the seminars and of the cooperation in the working group have been positive. To some extent, it has even been possible to influence public opinion and legislation. One example is that the working group's book is out of print and that there is considerable demand for a new edition. There are, of course, different views on Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations among both Christians and Jews in Finland, such as the whole question of Christian mission among the Jews.

France

René Gutman

"For they have dealt with the Jews as if they were dogs and not men." Martin Luther

The fates of Judaism and Christianity are intertwined. The recognition of our status as Jews and Lutherans, the legitimacy of our survival, is possible only in a world in which the God of Abraham is revered. As Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929) wrote in his seminal work, *The Star of Redemption*, "Before God, then, Jew and Christian both labor at the same task." He cannot dispense with either. The truth, the whole truth, thus belongs neither to them nor to us, and thus we both have but a part of the whole truth. But, we know that it is in the nature of truth to be imparted, and that a truth in which no one had a part would be no truth. The "whole" truth, too, is truth only because it is God's part, and a direct view of this whole truth is granted only to him or her who sees it in God.

Nazism yesterday, antisemitism today, both in their very roots a rebellion against the Bible, against the God of Abraham. Realizing that it was Christianity that implanted attachment to the God of Abraham and involvement with the Hebrew Bible in the hearts of Western men and women, Nazism resolved that it must both exterminate the Jews and eliminate Christianity, and bring instead a revival of Teutonic paganism.

Nazism has suffered a defeat, but the process of eliminating the Bible and the Jewish heritage from the consciousness of the Western world continues. Jews and Lutherans are called upon to work together. We must realize that in our age antisemitism is anti-Christianity and that anti-Christianity is antisemitism.

Unfortunately, the "voice of Israel" is at best heard in the world only as the voice of a precursor, as the voice of the "Old Testament," which—to use Martin Buber's phrase—the rest of us who are Jews have no reason to consider either a testament or old, or something to be situated in the perspective of the new; the voice of the "older brother." There is also another way of exposing and understanding Judaism. I have named the oral tradition of exegesis which crystallized in the Talmud and its commentaries. The manner in which this tradition is instituted, constitutes rabbinic Judaism. This orientation is made up not of privileges, but of responsibilities. It is a spiritual and intellectual nobility based not on royalties or a birthright conferred by a divine caprice, but on the position of each human "I." Each one, as an "I," is separate from all others to whom the moral duty is due. I am not the equal of the other. This, said Emmanuel Lévinas, applies in the very strict sense. I see myself (as a Jew—as a Lutheran) with respect to the other; consequently I am infinitely more demanding of myself

than of others. "The more just I am, the more harshly I am judged," states one talmudic text.

From then on, there is no moral awareness that is not an awareness of this exceptional position, an awareness of being chosen as a Jew, or as a Christian, for, to quote Franz Rosenzweig, "Before God, then, Jew and Christian both labor at the same task." Are Judaism and the Lutheran church ready to face the challenge?

When we speak about the radiance of the "voice of Israel," we mean an openness to God's presence in the Jewish destiny. The supreme issue today is the promise underlying both religions: Is there a pathos (I refer here to Abraham Joshua Heschel) a divine reality concerned with the destiny of humankind which mysteriously impinges upon history – even if it is the tragedy of the *Shoah*? As Jews, as Christians, we share the same perils and the same fears. We stand on the brink of the abyss together. We are all involved with one another. Any spiritual betrayal on the part of one of us affects the faith of all of us. Should religions insist on the illusion of complete isolation? Should we refuse to be on speaking terms with one another and hope for each other's failure? Or, should we pray for each other's health, and help one another to preserve our respective legacies by preserving a common legacy?

The purpose of interreligous dialogue is not to flatter nor to refute one another, but to help one another share insights and learning—What is Talmud? What is Lutheran theology?—, to cooperate in academic ventures on the highest scholarly level and, what is even more important, to search in the wilderness for wellsprings of devotion for treasures of stillness, for the power of love and care for human beings.

What is urgently needed are ways of helping one another in the terrible predicament of here and now by the courage to believe that the Word of the Lord endures forever as well as here and now, to cooperate in trying to bring about a revival of mutual conscience, to keep alive the divine sparks in our souls and faithfulness to the living God.

Hanover, Germany

Wolfgang Raupach-Rudnick

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover is one of the only regional churches in Germany to have a full-time clergy post for "The Church and Judaism." The incumbent also manages the *Evangelisch-Lutherischer Zentralverein für Begegnung von Christen und Juden* [Evangelical Lutheran central association for Christian/Jewish encounter] which was founded in 1871 as an association for "mission to Israel." Today, it is an umbrella organization for the associations and working groups in the German Lutheran churches wanting to renew their links with the Jewish community and providing a broad educational program. The largest members are the association in Bavaria and the association of Lower Saxony comprising the regional churches of Hanover, Brunswick, Schaumburg-Lippe and Oldenburg; both associations have appointed pastors as study directors. There are other members and working groups in North Elbia, Pomerania and Saxony. The picture of the Lutheran churches in Germany would be incomplete without the work of the central association and its members. The association is a member of the Lutheran European Commission on the Church and the Jewish People.

As the current officer for church and Judaism, my work primarily aims at encouraging and accompanying a process of renewal in the church in an ongoing dialogue with the Jewish congregations. We are in phase of transition. While we have learnt to recognize anti-Jewish opinions and, as a rule, to avoid them, there remains some uncertainty as to how we should formulate the relationship between the church and Jewish people and Judaism in a theologically positive way and how this should be lived out.

It must be remembered that because of Germany's history, the subject of Judaism is still subject to certain taboos, so that some dialogue partners may not necessarily express their true convictions openly. Therefore, an atmosphere of "political correctness" often imposes constraints on the discussions.

The 1995 resolution "Church and Jews" of the regional synod pointed the way[1] for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover (ELCH) which was the first large Lutheran church in Germany to adopt such a resolution.

[1] Hans Hermann Henrix and Wolfgang Kraus (eds.), *Die Kirchen und das Judentum*, vol. 2, Dokumente von 1986–2000 (Paderborn: Bonifatius; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2000), pp.730ff.

The synod acknowledged the guilt of the ELCH under National Socialism, giving concrete examples. It referred to the anti-Jewish prejudices in the history of the Christian churches. The statement:

- Mentions and rejects the accusation that "the Jews were guilty of Jesus' death;" the false opinion that "the Jews do not belong to us, they have been rejected by God"; and the wrongly understood doctrine of two kingdoms which claims that "it is up to the state to decide how it will treat the Jews, and no business of the church."

- Emphasizes the continuing link between Jews and Christians. "God has not cancelled his covenant with Israel, nor has he rejected his people; his election is still in force."

- Calls for a renewal of the whole church, including active resistance to all forms of open and latent antisemitism, and provides a list of practical tasks, especially education, further training and worship.

- Expresses the hope of good neighborliness between church and synagogue congregations. Thus the ELCH identifies with the renewal process in the church as a whole, as expressed, for example, in the studies of the Evangelical Church in Germany[2] of 1975 and 1991, or in the declaration by the Lutheran European Commission on the Church and the Jewish People of Driebergen[3] in 1990. The synod expressly refers to these three documents.

In the congregations, the picture is more diffuse. Although the majority probably are prepared to renew their links with Judaism, this will repeatedly come up against obstacles: on the one hand, a limited knowledge of Judaism which repeatedly results in sweeping or false judgements; on the other, an absolute claim to truth present in Christian doctrine itself.

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[2] Rat der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, *Christen und Juden. Eine Studie des Rates der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1975). Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, *Christen und Juden II. Zur theologischen Neuorientierung im Verhältnis zum Judentum. Eine Studie der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1991).

[3] *Op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 448ff.

There is great openness, indeed curiosity, to learn something about Judaism, but the perception of Jews continues to be distorted by stereotypes. Examples of these stereotypes are:

- Traditional images of Jewish spirituality, often marked by a nostalgic view of the world of Eastern European Jewry which has been destroyed. This can lead to disappointment that not all Jews correspond to this image of spirituality. For example, a comment after an address by a Jewish speaker talking about children's education in connection with Jewish festivals: "There was nothing specially Jewish about that; it was quite normal!"

- A lack of nuances in the perception of the policies of the State of Israel giving rise to an image of "the Jews" which can certainly include antisemitic elements. Jews who are German citizens are identified unthinkingly not only with the State of Israel, but also with whichever government is in power.

People find it hard to draw theoretical and practical conclusions from the recognition of "God's uncancelled covenant with Israel," although they agree with the principle. Anxieties arise about the identity of their own faith. It is apparently difficult to distinguish between one's own specific relation with Christ in discipleship—which is exclusive (Jn 14:6)—and the exclusivity claimed for Christianity or Christian doctrine—which cannot be exclusive.

Judaism is often seen as a "special" issue, and hence as requiring extra work from the staff of the local church congregations which they would prefer to delegate to competent specialists. There is a failure to recognize that the Christian faith's "relationship to Israel" is not an addition to other subjects, but rather a central criterion for all issues of faith and church decisions, so that "Judaism" cannot just be the hobby of a few specialists.

The juxtaposition of official positions, positive attitudes to renewal, ignorance and latent stereotypes can be seen, for example, in the following phenomenon. In religious education textbooks, as a rule, few objections can be made to the explicit presentation of Judaism. Nevertheless, in the implicit presentation of Judaism, such as on subjects like "the Old Testament" or "Jesus and the Commandments," we continue to find the old, false anti-Jewish judgements. This demonstrates how superficial the renewal of relationships has been so far, and how little a conceptual (and factual) reference to Judaism as a living entity can be taken for granted.

The formulations used in many prayers are imprecise; they can be understood along the traditional lines of disinheritance. We need to learn to state more exactly what we mean in each case when we refer to the "covenant" (cov-

enant with Abraham, Sinai covenant, covenant with David), to "God's promise", "God's people", etc., so that we neither dominate Judaism in our prayers nor deprive the Jews of their own inheritance.

Torah is translated almost exclusively by the dogmatic term "law." In order to do justice to the diversity of the New Testament attitudes to the Torah, it would be more appropriate to speak, not of "law," but of "precepts," "commands" or the "Pentateuch."

The prayers almost completely lack a reference to the Jews living today. The most that we find—and even that is inadequate and unclear—is intercession for peace in the Middle East. A feeling of superiority based on religion and the view that the others are outdated" or inferior, in short, that they are not living in the "truth," is one of the causes of antisemitism. To overcome this pattern of religious prejudice is a task for Christians themselves.

The strategic contexts for changing this are education and worship. That is why I have placed so much emphasis on working for liturgical renewal. It is pointless to preach against antisemitism and then, in the next hymn, to reinforce the old pattern of superiority. Spirituality is influenced by liturgy, prayers and hymns more strongly than by any teaching. That is where attitudes and convictions are rooted deeply in individual peoplfor better or for worse. This continues to be a task in the future.

Hungary

Steven Doman

Antisemitism and anti-Judaism manifest themselves in many different guises. The increase in antisemitism over the last few years is inexplicable, especially since the usual motives do not exist. The economic climate in Hungary is improving: the national currency, the Forint, is getting stronger, production is increasing and unemployment is declining.

Nevertheless, newspapers and periodicals report alarming incidents: in football stadiums, the mob shouts slogans from the Nazi period; banners with the text, "The train departs for Auschwitz!" are suspended from the grandstand. The fact that neither the police nor the government interfere, encourages the neo-Nazis to take more and more liberties. The opposition parties are also to blame for this; when they were in power they would have had the opportunity to stop the right-wing mob that was openly instigating against the Jews. Instead, they kept silent and claimed the Constitution did not allow for firm action to be taken. With a 72 percent parliamentary majority at the time, they could have easily amended the Constitution.

Similarly, neo-Nazis are encouraged by the fact that István Csurka's virulently antisemitic Hungarian Truth and Life Party (MIEP), can openly promote hatred against the Jews in parliament. They can do so with impunity since the government often has to rely on their votes.

The second man in Csurka's party, Lorand Hegedus Jr., a Calvinist minister and son of Bishop Lorand Hegedus, has had the audacity to suggest that parliament pass sentence on Jews who go to Israel for work or study. According to Hegedus, they are traitors to Hungary, because they help Israelis shoot Palestinian children. As far as we know, his father, the bishop, has so far not condemned him.

It is a disgrace that when the Pope asked forgiveness from the Jews for the historical crime committed by the Roman Catholic Church, Gyulay Endre, bishop of Szeged-Csanád, responded in the name of the Hungarian Roman Catholic bishops that, "The Hungarian Roman Catholic bishops do not need to do that." He made this statement in spite of the well-known fact that in the spring of 1944, during the Nazi era, Cardinal Justinian Seredi, head of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary, had prevented Roman Catholics from joining the Protestant churches' protest against the deportation of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz.

Growing antisemitism has gone hand in hand with increased chauvinism and nationalism. Today, the government uses the slogans used by Niklas Horthy's government between the wars. Horthy came to power in 1920 and the ensuing so-called "white terror" led to the imprisonment, torture and execution without

trial of Jews, Communists, socialists, leftist intellectuals and sympathizers with the Karolyi and Kun regime**s.**

While the government has been trying to struggle against antisemitism by disseminating information, books from the Nazi era, even Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, are being published in Hungary today.

The Christian churches should be at the forefront of the struggle against antisemitism and anti-Judaism. Relations between the Lutheran church and the Jews have always had good. Many Jewish students, among them Nobel prize winners, studied at a Lutheran high school which enjoys worldwide fame and, even during the hardest times, remained very democratic and tolerant.

The Lutheran church set a good example during the Holocaust when it entrusted Gábor Sztehló with establishing an asylum for persecuted children. Many Jewish children were saved in this institution. It is to be hoped that the Lutheran church of today will follow the example set by its great forebears and, as a result, strengthen people's sense of democracy and be at the vanguard of the struggle against prejudice.

Hungary

Imre Szebik

Jews settled in Hungary in the twelfth century and have since then often occupied important positions such as, for example, Imre Fortunatus, a general in the army of King Matthew. Many Jews adopted Hungarian nationality while retaining their religion and, during the rule of Maria Theresa and Joseph II in the eighteenth century, changed their Hebrew names to German-sounding names, which are largely still being used today. The Jews shared in the economic boom of the nineteenth century.

The persecution, suffering and death camps of the twentieth century constitute the most tragic chapter in European history. The Hungarian parliament held a special session to commemorate these painful events, which we hope will never be repeated. Holocaust days organized in schools serve as a reminder of this tragic past and, it is hoped, provide an impetus to greater tolerance and acceptance.

Following recent political changes, two organizations were established to promote Christian-Jewish relations: the Christian-Jewish Society and the Christian-Jewish Council. The first is led by the bishops of the historical Christian churches (Roman Catholic, Reformed and Lutheran) and leading members of the Central Council of Jewish Congregations in Hungary, and concentrates on making known traditions with common Jewish and Christian roots, as well as educating the public about the nature of Jewish festivals. This common encounter provides a good opportunity for discussing various questions, forging friendships and sometimes participating in the other partner's festivals or special events. The activities of the society, taking place in Budapest and in other large Hungarian cities, attract much interest.

The second organization, again founded by the historical churches, is also a member of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ). Its annual conference and assembly provide a good opportunity for obtaining a comprehensive picture of international Christian-Jewish relations and the life of Hungarian Jewry, and for exchanging information.

More or less one third of Hungary's 100,000 Jews practice their religion. Many recall the way in which some church representatives supported the Jewish community in the 1940s, in particular, the Swedish diplomat, Raoul Wallenberg, and the Hungarian Lutheran pastor, Gábor Sztehló, who saved thousands of Jews during the war.

Today, the Roman Catholic, Reformed and Lutheran churches together with the Central Council of the Jewish Congregations are direct partners of the Hungarian government in negotiations on political or religious issues. A highly successful and

lively cooperation exists between the theological faculties of the various church universities and the Jewish Rabbinical Seminary and teacher's college.

Antisemitism continues to exist in Hungary and unfortunately sometimes also in individual churches. The church is doing its utmost to deal with this and is aware of the importance of education in order to combat prejudices. Increased attention is therefore being given to Jewish traditions as well as latent expressions of antisemitism and anti-Judaism in the education of pastors and teachers of religious knowledge. The future lies with human decency, mutual respect for others and the mutual acceptance of Christ's humanity. Theological dialogue which leads to a better understanding of the Bible, and the insights gained from contemporary history can help to strengthen, honor and value the faith of others.

Let me conclude by quoting Psalm 133: "How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity! …there the Lord ordained his blessing.…"

Israel

Deborah Weissman

If the levels of antisemitism and anti-Judaism have decreased in certain parts of the world, then I believe this to be due in part to the establishment and continued existence of the State of Israel. I would have felt rather optimistic and confident about the worldwide situation of the Jewish people at the turn of the century. Unfortunately, partly because of the renewed hostilities in the Middle East, I cannot be as sanguine as I might have been before.

The distinction between antisemitism and anti-Judaism is not as clear-cut as it might seem. Since I see the religious and ethno-cultural aspects of the Jewish people as being deeply intertwined, the separation is sometimes an artificial one. Today the most dangerous source of hostility towards the Jewish people and its national expression in the State of Israel comes from certain elements within radical Islam. Not all the radical Muslims are Arabs—for example, the Iranians. It is difficult to call Arabs antisemites, since they themselves are semitic. Many of them mix their Islamic fundamentalism with Palestinian or pan-Arab nationalism. The struggle becomes a political-national-religious conflict, sometimes with mythical overtones. I had hoped that Jews, Muslims and Christians could unite in a joint effort to eradicate all manifestations of antisemitism and racism, including the anti-Arab and anti-Muslim stereotypes and prejudices prevalent in many parts of the Western world.

Fortunately, many Christian churches and denominations are engaging in a serious process of soul-searching vis-à-vis their attitudes toward the Jewish people and their religious culture. With these important changes or re-interpretations taking place, perhaps most profoundly within the Roman Catholic Church, the Lutheran church and other Protestant movements, one of the central sources of historical antisemitism has been eradicated. Another source, the Soviet Union, no longer exists. Nonetheless, the rise of neo-Nazi groups in many countries is not only alarming, but also incomprehensible.

Jews must also engage in their own soul-searching. The issue of educating about the "other" is one of the key problems facing Israeli society whose very existence may depend on coming to terms with several very significant others. Unfortunately, most Israeli youngsters know very little about the culture and religious traditions of their neighbors. I would like to suggest three reasons why knowledge of the other is so crucial:

- According to the great twentieth-century theologian, HaRav Kook, the grandeur of God is revealed in the tremendous diversity of human culture and

experience. The greatness of God would seem lessened if God could only be worshiped in one way. As David Hartman said, the God of creation is a universal God. God is infinite, but people are not. So, when the infinite God chooses to communicate with finite human beings, revelation assumes a particularistic character. The Creator reveals Himself to human beings through particular religions, cultures, histories, traditions and languages. By knowing more about religions and cultures, we know more about God.

- In the case of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, learning about the other helps us to learn and understand more about ourselves. A study of the origins and development of Christianity, for example, helps us to understand more about first- and second-century Judaism (and vice versa). It is amazing to what extent Arabic and Hebrew are similar and contain many cognates. The three monotheistic faiths with their origins in the Holy Land have interacted throughout history, have influenced and been influenced by one another.

- The most important function of learning about the other lies in seeing her or him as a human being, which is the first step toward a more empathic relationship. When we encounter each other as people, we begin to communicate at a human level. A process of humanization, rather than demonization, can occur. This will hopefully, at the very least, stop us from killing each other and, at best, provide the basis for the mutual recognition of our legitimate needs and rights, such as self-determination and security.

In the early 1990s, I learned from Reverend Dr Mitri Raheb the important concept of contextualizing the study of Scripture. Dr Raheb helped me to develop an insight I wish to share at this point: the soul-searching done by Jews ought additionally to focus on traditional Jewish sources, the way they portray relations with non-Jews and the way they inform behavior. I would like to recommend Professor Moshe Greenberg's wonderful article, "A Problematic Heritage: The Attitude Towards the Gentile in the Jewish Tradition—An Israel Perspective."[1] The reason, I believe, that not enough of this type of soul-searching is taking place among Jews today is related to antisemitism. In other words, Jews are reluctant to criticize themselves openly fearing that they will be "playing into the hands of their enemies." If the Jews felt more secure about their standing in the world, they could be more open and critical of themselves and their

[1] *Conservative Judaism*, vol. 48, no. 2 (Winter 1996), pp. 23–35.

traditions, some of which are not useful and may even be detrimental to building a more humane society.

Dr Raheb and I met for the first time in March 1990, at the height of the first *intifada*. Nevertheless, a group of half a dozen or so Israelis and Palestinians, Jews, Christians, and Muslims managed to put together a joint statement - a kind of covenant for peace and justice. It is no less relevant today than it was then. It says:

> We, as representatives of three religions from our common Holy Land … seek to derive from the prophetic and liberating values of our traditions and faiths a way to fulfill the national aspirations of both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples in peace with justice …we commit ourselves to work for the following goals…:
>
> An end to the violation of human rights.
>
> No further building of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.
>
> Mutual recognition and self-determination for both peoples through negotiations…
>
> Sovereignty for both peoples through the recognition of a Palestinian State in the Palestinian homeland alongside the State of Israel.
>
> We call upon the churches to foster dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis and to combat anti-Arab and anti-Jewish stereotypes. We also call upon the churches to encourage peace initiatives and to join us in our common prayers and deeds for peace.

I will conclude this essay with verses from Isaiah 65:18–25: " 'For behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy, …And the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her…They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,' says the Lord," and with a hearty "*amen*," "*insh'allah*," "*lu yehi*!"

Italy

Jürg Kleemann

Letter to Amos Luzzatto

Dear Amos,

When presenting some ideas from the perspective of the Lutheran minority scattered between the Brenner Pass and Sicily, I shall rely on our common experience of dialogue at Venice, the city in whose history our two congregations have a special place. The ghetto is a place that has become proverbial throughout the world. Here your congregation first settled in the sixteenth century. At the same time a Lutheran congregation was being founded among traders at the German trade center, the Fondaco dei Tedeschi on Rialto. Personal courage, the courage of one's ecumenical convictions and individual names are characteristic of Jewish-Christian cooperation. I am thinking of Jules Isaac, whose decisive encounter with Pope John XXIII was made possible by Maria Vingiani who had links to the Pope going back to his time as patriarch of Venice. The Secretariat for Ecumenical Action (SAE) which she founded has supported our dialogues in Venice, and the summer conferences remain a unique context for inter-religious encounter today, including Islam. Here, the emphasis on lay participation is significant despite the involvement of prominent Roman Catholic bishops (such as A. Ablondi, C. Martini) and theologians (such as L. Sartori). Among the many laboratories for treating anti-Jewish insanity one will find church communities such as Sant'Egidio and the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion in Rome, or lay movements such as Biblia led by Agnese Cini and Paolo de Benedetti. Their seminars and conferences have won new readers of the Bible as both a Jewish and Christian document. In 1950, Jules Isaac, author of the famous book *Jesus and Israel* founded the first Italian association "Jewish-Christian Friendship" in Florence[1] along the lines of the "10 points of Seelisberg."[2] Pioneering work is being done in Ancona,

[1] The first Jewish-Christian Friendship association was founded in Lyon, France in 1942.

[2] **www.jcrelations.net/stmnts/10points.htm**. The statement was produced by the Christian participants at the Second conference of the newly formed International Council of Christians and Jews in 1947. It was one of the first statements following World War II in which Christians, with the advice and counsel of Jews, began to come to terms with the implications of the *Shoa*.

Cuneo, Udine, Turin, Naples, Milan and Rome as well as in the encounters in the Camaldoli monastery at Florence.

Let us not forget that our minute church bears a double burden because of its Lutheran and German speaking origins. It is constituted of German and Habsburg congregations abroad which came together to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy (ELCI) in 1948. It was a combination fraught with tensions: refugees from Germany with a problematic past; former collaborators; those who had to face their guilt and their unresolved antisemitism; individuals and German consular staff who had given shelter to German Jews. Following in Bonhoeffer's footsteps and in line with a new awareness in a number of Protestant synods and faculties and the Lutheran World Federation (Budapest 1984), the younger pastors opened up new possibilities for encounter. The ELCI joined the Lutheran European Commission for the Church and the Jewish People (LEKKJ); one pastors' convention was organized (1988) in the form of a "synagogue"; in Florence, Milan and Naples (Pastor Diekmann) there was continuous work within the "Jewish-Christian Friendship"; in Rome the Lutheran pastor went with teachers of the German school to visit members of the Jewish congregation for informative conversations; in Venice, the Presbyter, Frithjof

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"Remember that One God speaks to us all through the Old and the New Testaments.

Remember that Jesus was born of a Jewish mother of the seed of David and the people of Israel, and that His everlasting love and forgiveness embraces His own people and the whole world.

Remember that the first disciples, the apostles and the first martyrs were Jews.

Remember that the fundamental commandment of Christianity, to love God and one's neighbour, proclaimed already in the Old Testament and confirmed by Jesus, is binding upon both Christians and Jews in all human relationships, without any exception.

Avoid distorting or misrepresenting biblical or post-biblical Judaism with the object of extolling Christianity.

Avoid using the word Jews in the exclusive sense of the enemies of Jesus, and the words 'the enemies of Jesus' to designate the whole Jewish people.

Avoid presenting the Passion in such a way as to bring the odium of the killing of Jesus upon all Jews or upon Jews alone. It was only a section of the Jews in Jerusalem who demanded the death of Jesus, and the Christian message has always been that it was the sins of mankind which were exemplified by those Jews and the sins in which all share that brought Christ to the Cross.

Avoid referring to the scriptural curses, or the cry of a raging mob: 'His blood be upon us and our children,' without remembering that this cry should not count against the infinitely more weighty words of our Lord: 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.'

Avoid promoting the superstitious notion that the Jewish people are reprobate, accursed, reserved for a destiny of suffering.

Avoid speaking of the Jews as if the first members of the Church had not been Jews. "

Roch, who was active in dialogue, organized a conference of the LEKKJ to which you and other Jewish partners contributed.

During the Jubilee Year, Jewish and Protestant congregations jointly protested against the beatification of Pope Pius IX and the doctrinal statement, *Dominus Iesus*.[3] The Jewish and Protestant congregations have a good reputation as a moral force. Efforts on the part of the government to strengthen religious liberty and religious pluralism (since about 1984) contrast with a revival of racist tendencies in society: in parliament (although the nationalist party got less than 4 percent at the 2001 elections); in slogans at football matches; among teachers and clergy (including cardinals).

The Roman Catholic Church in Italy has clearly indicated that more radical programs are needed. It is a matter of educating the churches and Christians to respect the "beloved older brother, "a formulation used by Pope John Paul II on his visit to the Roman synagogue in1986. Diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Israel were established in 1993 and the Italian Bishops' Conference proposed to devote January 17th, the day before the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, to Jewish-Christian dialogue. Unfortunately, the Ecumenical Assembly at Graz in 1997 was not prepared to adopt this suggestion. The Protestant congregations are happy to participate in this now traditional form of Jewish-Christian encounter, theologically undergirded by their only faculty in Italy, the Facoltà Valdese di Teologia in Rome.

At the historic moment of the emancipation (17 February 1848), the Waldensians kept their distance from their fellow Jewish sufferers under the Catholic regime. While their common marginalization under fascism hardly changed anything, the experience of resistance and persecution nevertheless created new political and personal ties. But theologically the faithful biblical or christological approaches, even in the practice of worship, catechetical instruction and parish life, continued to be determined by the anti-Jewish paradigms expressed most fatefully in the Roman Catholic liturgy for Good Friday.

Europe is learning that its identity is also derived from its Jewish roots as well as the stories of the God of Abraham. This is the focus of the "day of Jewish culture in Europe" where the Italian Jewish congregations inform about Jewish history which has for so long been suppressed in Europe. I find it remarkable

[3] Declaration *"Dominus Iesus"* on the Unicity and Salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the church, at **www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html**

that you derive from this the commitment to fight for the rights of Muslim immigrants. We as Lutheran minority could learn from this. It is to be hoped that we find common ways of dealing with common problems.

Yours sincerely,

Jürg

Italy

Amos Luzzatto

Reply to Jürg Kleemann

Dear Jürg,

Your report on Christian-Jewish relations in Italy pleased me very much. First, because of its content and completeness, and secondly because you referred to the persons who have been and are involved in these relationships.

I believe that we should guard against the error of quasi personifying our religions, by allowing them to become the "actors" in the dialogue. In fact, in spite of their limitations, the actors are always the women and men who see these religions as their own.

Why do I insist on this distinction? Precisely because we are faced with two possibilities which I shall try to describe briefly.

Two "religions in dialogue" lead us to envisage a closed and serious meeting of theologians examining documents, analyzing dogmas, checking historical data, and finally jointly signing another document which endeavors to underline what they have in common and to water down the antagonisms between the religions involved.

"Persons in dialogue," on the other hand, must of necessity speak to one another in order mutually to confess their own doubts, their own dilemmas and the contradictions they do not know how to solve. When they do that honestly, they become friends and, finally, together look for ways of helping one another. If they are honest and believers, they will ask why there is still so much evil in this world, why people kill and why so many seek refuge in drugs. They will ask why military uniforms and battles are still glorified, instead of giving pride of place to works of solidarity, efforts to help the starving and to "wage war" against HIV/AIDS.

We can think of Job, who had plenty of doubts, while his friends had none at all. While he wanted dialogue, his three friends responded with monologues full of reproaches. At the end of the book, God is pleased with Job's honesty. He succeeds, with great effort and despite his friends' reproaches, in finding his faith again. In contrast, God condemns the friends' exaggerated certainties, which were really a cloak to hide the profound uncertainty of which they were themselves afraid.

We are all afraid and, sooner or later, we all feel alone. Dialogue between persons is the only tangible weapon we possess in order to win friends. Through dialogue we bring people closer to one another and lead them beyond their own

particular membership of individual religious communities which no one wishes to see disappear.

Our experience in Italy cannot be measured in figures. There are only a few of us, whether Jews or Lutherans. Since the day when I first came to speak at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Venice, I have seen the audience grow and I have found new friends. I would say that of you, Jürg, of my friend Roch, of Diekmann and of dear Spur who has remained a friend even after his return to Germany. If I were to try and summarize, I should suggest the following formula: from dialogue to friendship in order to work together. "Together" as the title of your magazine puts it.

Wishing you success in your work,

Amos

The Netherlands

Judith Frishman and Willy Metzger

Introduction

According to its Constitution the future United Calvinist-Lutheran Church of the Netherlands (two Calvinist churches and one Lutheran church are in the process of uniting) "is called upon to give expression to its unrelinquishable bond with the people of Israel." This bond is to be expressed, for example, in the practical implementation of article 3, which states that the synod should, *inter alia*, promote knowledge about antisemitism and work toward preventing it.

The Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Netherlands (ELCN) does not establish a link to Israel at the level of ecclesiastical law, nor does it refer to the church's responsibility to counteract antisemitism. Thus the ELCN will in future be following the Reformed tradition, which already in 1991 included combating antisemitism in its Constitution. The ELCN has participated in the Overlegorgaan van Joden en Christenen in Nederland (OJEC)[1] since its foundation in 1981. The aims of this body are the following:

> The OJEC tries to encourage a relationship of trust between Jews and Christians and to provide mutual insight into one another's motives. The OJEC tries to find solutions within the relation between Jews and Christians by discussing these together. The OJEC tries to combat prejudices and supports activities in this connection. The OJEC wishes to react promptly to antisemitism, anti-Judaism, fascism and racism. The OJEC tries to form a central source of information within the field of Jewish-Christian relations and activities. The OJEC organizes humanitarian activities.

These aims were reformulated in 1998, and now call for the "removing [of] mistrust of one another and working for a bond of trust between Jews and Christians."

[1] **www.xs4all.nl/~ojec**

The general situation

The Centrum Informatie en Documentie Israel (CIDI)[2] publishes information on antisemitism in the Netherlands. In its annual report of 2000, CIDI stated clearly that the number of antisemitic incidents has increased considerably compared to 1999, and that their nature was becoming much more serious. Several cemeteries and synagogues have been defaced and desecrated, and CIDI has noted a clear connection between these antisemitic expressions and the contemporary political situation, including the repayment of Jewish savings and the situation in the Middle East, especially since the outbreak of the second *intifada*. In this context the numerous antisemitic expressions from the ranks of the Moroccan community in the Netherlands were striking. The CIDI also warns against subtle expressions of antisemitism to which Dutch society is becoming accustomed.

Main issues in the internal church discussion and the Christian-Jewish dialogue

The inclusion of the improperia and the traditional liturgy of the three Easter days in the new worship book for the three uniting churches

The improperia (God's accusations) which were incorporated into the Good Friday liturgy in the traditional translation of the Latin missal, were included in the draft joint book of worship published in 1998 by the two Calvinist churches and the Lutheran church of the Netherlands. While this has led to a very profound, and for the Jewish side in particular, extremely painful discussion, the second draft of the worship book continues to contain this wording although alternative wording had been provided.

In its reaction to the joint worship book in 1998 the OJEC clearly stated that it did not doubt the integrity of the worship book editors and that there were no grounds for accusing the Dutch liturgical movement, of which the editors are a part, of anti-Judaism. Nonetheless, the objections concerning the accusation of having murdered God were dealt with in great detail. In 1999, the OJEC organized a conference in cooperation with the theological departments of the three churches, at which the perspectives of the Jewish and the Christian sides were presented. While unfortunately this conference has not led to much more than a juxtaposition of viewpoints, it constitutes a first attempt to deal with the problem in greater

[2] **www.cidi.nl**

depth, and to face up to a very painful and embarrassing chapter of church history related to the celebration of Good Friday. Whether it was necessary for the three uniting Protestant churches to incorporate the "accusations" into the Good Friday liturgy remains doubtful. The inclusion of blank pages would have been more appropriate than the translation of the traditional wording from the Latin missal.

In an article in the Dutch daily, *Trouw*, on Easter Saturday, 2001, the Jewish journalist, Carl Friedman underlined the continuing relevance of this issue. Dealing in detail with the improperia and their traditional inclusion in the worship book, Friedman informed Christian readers that, from a Jewish perspective, it is impossible to exclude the accusation of murdering God from the wording of the improperia. This is all the more true since Good Friday was a day for pogroms in Europe precisely because of this accusation of having killed God.

The committed participation of the OJEC's Jewish members in a theological examination of this Christian liturgical issue shows how seriously the whole matter is being taken, and offers the churches the opportunity to develop a more dialogical way of reading the Bible. The whole discussion on the improperia also shows the difficulty and sensitivities involved when attempting to implement the progress made in Jewish-Christian dialogue. Worship and the reading of the Bible are emotionally charged subjects. Nonetheless, if nothing can be changed, then dialogue is no more than empty words.

The future of Jewish-Christian dialogue

It is important that the church is regarded as a trustworthy partner. This can be achieved in such small steps as listening carefully to what is important to the Jewish dialogue partners. In his book, *Onopgeefbaar verbonden* [Unrelinquishably linked], Prof. Dr Simon Schoon, former chairperson of the OJEC, pointed out that when one is dealing concretely with a dialogue between Jews and Christians, there is a very clear asymmetry regarding what is to be discussed. For the Jewish participants such issues as combating antisemitism and racism, assisting in removing misunderstandings over key questions relating to Jewish identity such as Torah, Halakhah (Jewish law), Jewish festivals and customs, and keeping the three dimensions of land, people and state in mind in connection with Israel, are the main points to be included on the dialogue agenda. For the Christian side the main emphases are, traditional messianism and the messianity of Jesus, and the different ways of reading the Scriptures held in common, the TeNaK (for Jews) and Old Testament (for Christians).[3]

[3] *Cf.* Simon Schoon, *Onopgeefbaar verbonden. Over de verhouding tussen de kerk en het volk Israel* (Kampen, 1996), pp. 260f.

Careful attention to the wishes of the Jewish partners in dialogue and a modest attitude are first steps in the right direction. In the education of pastors, a prominent place should be given to Judaism, its history and theological concepts, which also includes clear expressions of solidarity such as recognizing that Israel, as people, land and state, forms an unrelinquishable part of Jewish identity. Only when this dimension of the State of Israel has been recognized are we entitled to voice critical questions about the State of Israel. It is precisely this matter that has been neglected in the ongoing discussion.

One-sided solidarity makes dialogue more difficult

The future United Calvinist-Lutheran Church will not only participate in the OJEC but also in the Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad (IKV). In an article in the Dutch daily, *Volkskrant*, the IKV's president appealed for Jewish identity to be separated from the State of Israel in order to reach a quick solution to the problem of Palestinian refugees.

The OJEC protested against this firmly without losing sight of the terrible fate of the Palestinian refugees. "Injustice," as the OJEC stated in its reaction, "continues to be injustice at all times." The OJEC called for a public debate least within church circles on this issue to which the IKV was invited. The dilemma of the peace process will certainly not be solved in Europe, or by one-sided expressions of solidarity; it can, as the OJEC went on to say in its explanation, "at the most be supported by solidarity with all the initiatives undertaken by people on the spot irrespective of the religious and political dividing lines." The church authorities of the future United Calvinist-Lutheran Church have clearly disassociated themselves from the views of the IKV.

Future prospects

Jewish dialogue partners often sense a Christian impatience about a certain reticence on behalf of the Jewish participants. Nonetheless, the effects of a 2000-year-long history of anti-Judaism and the resultant antisemitism cannot simply be changed in thirty years of dialogue. Repeated expressions from the Christian side which build confidence are necessary and important.

In future, in addition to broadening the actual scope of dialogue in order to reach individual congregations, it will be important to include Muslim representatives in the dialogue. This is especially necessary in light of recent expressions of antisemitism in the Netherlands. The OJEC has also taken initial steps in this field resulting in a conference in November 2000, organized jointly with the Theological University of Kampen, under the theme, "Making place for one another – a theological challenge."

Palestine

Mitri Raheb

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan is one of the founders of Christian-Jewish dialogue in the Middle East. In the late 1980s, feeling a real need to establish a contextual dialogue in Israel/Palestine, a few Christian theologians, rabbis and lay leaders began meeting in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. It had been their impression that the Christian-Jewish dialogue was a Westernized dialogue, dominated by West European and North American theologians. With the Holocaust as its hermeneutical key, this post-Auschwitz dialogue did not dare constructively and evenhandedly to address the issues of peace and justice in the cradle of Judaism and Christianity. At the same time, in the context of the Middle East, where the concern for the "orthodoxy" of religion was so dominant, dealing with one's own heritage critically was not fully developed.

This spontaneously established dialogue in our region is slowly becoming more organized. The first *intifada* achieved very much in this respect. From the Palestinians it eliminated two fears: the fear of resisting and the fear of talking to the "enemy." Never before in their history had the Palestinian people been more ready to resist the Israeli occupation as during the *intifada*. Yet, never before had so many Palestinians talked with Jews and Israelis. At the same time, Israeli and Jewish intellectuals as well as religious leaders, mainly reformed and conservative, started to question Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and started reaching out to the Palestinians.

The dialogue attempts are continuing at several levels, although the collapse of the peace process, the continuation of the occupation and the second *intifada* have led to a major set back. Deborah Weissman[1] is one of a few orthodox Jews who has been active in this dialogue since the beginning.

As an Arab Palestinian Christian, living in Bethlehem/West Bank, a region that has been occupied for some thirty-five years, I have been engaged in the Christian-Jewish dialogue for the last thirteen years and advocate critical thinking and compassionate action. I would like to raise some of the issues that are not normally dealt with.

Within certain Christian traditions there are anti-Judaic elements that are caused by the following. Christianity is a post-Judaic religion and the first Christians were Jews who were persecuted by their "people" for believing in Christ as the Messiah. Neither religion was capable of developing an inclusive sense of identity or a means of communication critical of its own tradition.

[1] See Deborah Weissman's country report on Israel in this publication.

Anti-Judaic traditions became highly dangerous when and wherever they were combined with military and political power, as well as with national or racial ideologies, such as during the Byzantine era, in Medieval Europe and Nazi Germany. As Christians, we have to confess that we have provided a certain basis for totalitarian regimes to persecute and "cleanse" people of other faiths, in particular people of the Jewish faith. We have to confess that we did not resist these regimes enough. It is our duty to rethink our traditions, and to examine where and why we have failed. We cannot but deal with these traditions responsibly and there is a very clear call to repentance and remembrance.

As a Palestinian, I cannot but add the following questions to my Jewish brothers and sisters: Do you not think that the time has come to start questioning some of the Jewish attitudes towards the pre-Israelite cultures and people? Think of Canaan, Ham, Ishmael, Esau, the Philistines and others who were excluded from the promise and driven out in the name of God. Do you not think that the time has come to rethink the dangerous trinity of certain Jewish traditions combined with Israel military power and certain Zionist ideologies? Is there a real resistance to someone like Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, spiritual leader of Israel's ultra-orthodox Shas Party, who compared the Arabs and Ishmaelite to vipers, saying that, "It is forbidden to be merciful to them. You must send missiles to them and annihilate them. They are evil and damnable. … The Lord shall return the Arabs' deeds on their own heads, waste their seed and exterminate them." [2].

I wholeheartedly agree with Deborah Weissman in that our Jewish friends can help us to be redeemed from our own traditions, and that we as Palestinians can help Israel to be redeemed from itself. In this sense, we have a common commitment to move toward a self-critical and open dialogue, toward an inclusive understanding of identity and towards a true reconciliation.

[2] **news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/1270038.stm**

Poland

Stanislaw Krajewski

The overwhelming majority of the Polish population is Roman Catholic. The Jewish community in Poland is rather small, and while the Lutheran community is the largest among the Protestant communities, the Protestant churches together comprise no more than 150,000 members. Minorities share some social and psychological characteristics, which are a result of the experience of being viewed with suspicion by the majority. This is why there is a certain fellowship between Jews and Protestants in Poland.

At some government sponsored events Jewish and Lutheran representatives sit side by side. The same is true of some Roman Catholic events, such as during the "Day of Judaism of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland," where not only Jews but also Lutheran and Calvinist ministers addressed the gathering in Lodz.

The Union of Jewish Religious Communities maintains regular contacts with the Roman Catholic Church and the Polish Ecumenical Council, which includes the Lutheran, as well as other major Protestant churches and the Russian Orthodox Church. So far, there has been no specific cooperation between the Lutheran church and the Polish Jewish community at the national level.

An interesting interfaith cooperation was organized in Wroclaw, where the local Jewish community (led by Jerzy Kichler, president of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities) is working together with the nearby Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox churches to form "the district of tolerance." Visits and joint events are organized.

Contacts are furthermore facilitated by the activities of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews. The Council, affiliated to the International Council of Christians and Jews, organizes several annual events in Warsaw: common prayers of Christians and Jews on Simchat Torah,[1] participation in Yom Ha'Shoah[2] by organizing a prayer-march following the steps of martyrs of the Warsaw ghetto; "Man of reconciliation,"—the title given to people particularly devoted to the Jewish-Christian dialogue (in 1999 it went to Ms Towa Ben Zwi, an Israeli singer singing psalms in Polish churches); co-organization of the Day of Judaism in the Roman Catholic Church.

[1] Literally: "Joy of the Torah." Holiday marking the conclusion of the yearly cycle of Torah readings and the beginning of the new cycle.

[2] Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The absence of Roman Catholic representatives at the official event commemorating the Jews of Jedwabne who had been murdered by their Polish neighbors in 1941 is noteworthy. The ceremony was attended by President, Aleksander Kwasniewski, Lutheran bishop, Ryszard Borski, as well as the Reformed and Methodist bishops. While Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek did not go to Jedwabne, he hosted the concert in the afternoon in the Lutheran church, of which he is a member. In the future, more cooperation is needed, especially with respect to the struggle to overcome antisemitism and the still prevalent concept that the "genuine Pole" must be Roman Catholic.

Poland

Zbigniew Paszta

Lutheran-Jewish relations have a long tradition. For both communities the last chapter of history, the twentieth century, has been a tragic one: the extermination of the Polish Jews and the virtual destruction of Polish Lutheranism. It is important to mention that during the war a number of Lutherans remained in solidarity with the Jews. *Zegota*, an underground organization helping Jews,[1] worked on the border of Warsaw ghetto, on the Lutheran cemetery. An inscription in Polish, German and Hebrew commemorates the place where the Lutheran hospital in Warsaw, which was burned down in 1943, once stood. It reads as follows: "It was a stronghold of mercy, humanity and faith. During the times of Nazi extermination, it was faithful to its mission and saved Jewish people from the vanishing ghetto."

A great number of Polish Lutheran clergy died in the Nazi camps next to Jewish prisoners. After the war, both communities emerged as tiny minorities. Today there are 75,000 Lutherans in Poland. While the Lutheran church in Poland has supported Jewish-Christian dialogue for some time, the first official statement was made only in March 2000. In its statement, the synod of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland declares that,

> … God is present at the beginning and at the end of time … this God who revealed himself to Abraham and later called the people of Israel, connecting with him promises of salvation. Even if we (Christians and Jews) interpret the Holy Book of Jews differently, it is the same Book. We are conscious that the Church of Jesus Christ and Israel grew up from the same root of faith. Called by the love of Jesus Christ and embraced by God's Spirit we must not remain insensitive to the symptoms of intolerance and hatred towards Jews.
>
> The last century in the history of the Christian church is replete with examples of intolerance, hatred and disdain as well positive, compassionate and respectable examples. The negative evidence culminated in the extermination of the Jewish people during WW II. In the face of God's love which we learn anew from Jesus of Nazareth, remembering the evil which happened, we confess our sins and we ask

[1] ZEGOTA—Council for Aid to Jews in Occupied Poland (1942–1945) Zegota was the cryptonym for the clandestine underground organization in Nazi-occupied Poland that provided assistance to the Jewish people.

forgiveness and for new life. God's love which impresses us, Christians through Christ, is a vibrant source of the new beginning, renewal and building a community in this spirit.

The cross is not a fault of the Jews, but a fault of human, sinful nature, which God wants to redeem in his unutterable grace.

As representatives of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession we in no way feel bound to the Martin Luther's anti-Jewish writings: they belong to the past. We express a profound sorrow and great regret, if these anti-Jewish statements have inspired hatred and persecution of Jews by Protestants in Poland or anywhere else in the world.

Russia

Vadim G. Katselnik

Lutherans have always been a minority in Russia. Despite their relatively favorable social position compared to other small ethnic groups, they have often suffered nationally or religiously based discrimination. Lutherans have always represented a Western trend within Christianity in Russia and, from the perspective of representatives of the Russian Empire, Lutherans were and are seen as carriers of Western European thinking and theology.

We must bear in mind that with the outbreak of World War I, Lutherans in Russia immediately experienced full-scale oppression because of their religion and nationality. This persecution continued throughout the twentieth century and included the closing of churches, arrests, exile and execution by firing squads. At first only pastors and church members were affected, but later, from the beginning of World War II, this treatment was extended to entire ethnic groups such as the Tartars of the Crimea, the German settlers along the Volga, the Chechens and the Ingush.

It must be emphasized that for all practical purposes the entire, more than 420-year-long history of Lutherans in Russia has never included any incidents of antisemitism. In other words, there was no explicitly negative attitude towards Judaism. However, among Lutherans as in the Russian population at large, a latent everyday antisemitism is fairly widespread. This is expressed in hostility towards and suspicion of strangers, anyone whose national customs and way of life are different. This latent antisemitism is in itself perhaps not so very dangerous. The real danger comes from recent attempts by particular political parties and movements to exploit these prejudices for their own purposes in order to gain political power. This has become commonplace in recent years.

In his novel *Life and Fate*, Vassily Grossmann defines antisemitism according to five criteria. Written in the 1940s and published in the 1980s, Grossmann definition of antisemitism has lost none of its relevance. According to Grossman antisemitism:

- Is never the end, but rather the means, the measure of unresolvable contradictions
- Is a reflection of the inadequacy of individual persons, societal structures and government systems
- Can develop within democratic societies manifesting itself in the actions and ideologies of isolated reactionary groups

- In totalitarian countries where public opinion does not exist, it can only appear in the form of government policy. Such antisemitism begins with discrimination; as it develops further, it leads to the systematic extermination of the Jews

- As a rule, accuses the assimilated Jewish population of secret national and religious intrigues; it makes the organic part of Jewry, those who run small businesses and work as laborers, responsible for those who are conspicuous as revolutionaries, leaders of industry or founders of corporations.

On the basis of the above, we shall analyze the condition and the growing dynamism of nationalism in Russia today, taking first of all its radical forms which verge on national socialism or fascism. The objective and subjective reasons causing the growth of nationalism need to be investigated.

One objective reason is the collapse of the Soviet Union, once a unified and totalitarian state holding together many peoples. Another is the collapse of a construct, a Communist dictatorship, built on the Soviet version of Communist ideology, which having monopolized this ideology and prohibited the rise of any other, prevented nationalistic thinking in society.

The subjective causes are linked to the fact that the new Russia is a pseudo-democratic, "liberal" state, in which many prohibitions have been lifted. This facilitates the rise and spread of both liberal and radically nationalistic views previously suppressed or kept secret by the state authorities.

The decay of the USSR led to a permanent personal crisis for ordinary Russians, expressed in the descent of a large part of society into poverty and misery, and in polarization. Russians (and not only Russians) have been repressed and humiliated. Many of the actions of other states, both near and far, are felt to be aggressively hostile.

At the same time, the self-confidence of Muslim communities, comprising about 25 million people, is growing. In some cases, these developments are leading to extremist excesses and have led to armed conflicts and even civil wars in Russia and other CIS states, for example in Chechnya.

Inevitably, all this leads to the rise of nationalism. From the first four of Grossman's five theses, it can be concluded that antisemitism and militant nationalism in Russia today reflect the contradiction arising from the crises in state and society themselves.

Antisemitism in Russia has three reasons: (1) anti-Judaism; (2) hatred of the Jews as a form of xenophobia; and (3) the myth of an "international Jewish conspiracy." If we examine the influence of these on the development of antisemitism in Russia today, we can make the following observations:

- Anti-Judaism is one of the cornerstones on which antisemitism is based. However, in the former Soviet Union and the Russia of today, the role of

true anti-Judaism has been infinitesimal, due to the relatively low level of religious education within all denominations.

- Although xenophobia still has its place in today's Russia, it is in general not directed against Jews, since members of the Jewish community today do not differ in lifestyle, language, outward appearance, political leanings or antipathies from others.

- Therefore, we must conclude that the third point must be taken as almost the only reason for antisemitism—the concept or paradigm of a worldwide conspiracy on the part of the Jews. This myth is currently blossoming among the Russian nationalistic élite. Russia's economic problems are being transformed by ideology and made part of a mystical, medieval system. The ancient myth of a "worldwide Jewish conspiracy," sometimes in the variation of a "conspiracy of Jews and Freemasons," is being brought back to life.

The analysis shows that antisemitism is directed against a virtual entity, not the Jews themselves, whose numbers are decreasing steadily. In ten to fifteen years time they will probably account for less than 0.1 percent of the population (that would mean about 50,000 to 100,000 people). The objects of this "new antisemitism" are supposedly some secret agents who are directing the great "worldwide conspiracy." In fact, they are those Russian liberals and Westerners who are trying, more or less successfully, to bring about reform in Russia.

Saxony, Germany

Matthias Werner

Since the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, there has been a marked increase in fascist thinking in East Germany, the former GDR Numerous studies have been conducted as to why neo-Nazis propaganda continues to appeal. Reasons given are among others the promises made, but not kept, by West German politicians, unemployment and a loss of orientation. The power of the former GDR government has been replaced by Nazi symbols as well as the fear of anyone who is different, of foreigners and thus ultimately of the Jews. The latter has been a recurring fact throughout German history.

Generally, the East German population does not lean to the extreme right, nor is it anti-Jewish. This is true of only a small minority. Much more serious though is the ignorance and indifference of a many Germans; this applies to the German people as a whole.

Societies for Christian-Jewish cooperation, some of whose recent activities are outlined below, exist in a number of towns.

Zwickau: On 21 January 2001, Yom Ha'Shoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day), the film *Schindler's List* was screened, followed by a commemorative march to the police headquarters, formerly the assembly point for the deportation of Jews. The General Secretary of the German Coordinating Council, Rudolf Siersch, concluded the event with a speech on the project, racism-free schools.

Görlitz: In remembrance of the outbreak of World War II, an annual "bridge" procession takes place along the Polish border on September 1. A brief prayer service is held at the site of every bridge destroyed during the war, and at the two that remain intact. In 1999, Polish and German bishops participated in this event. On 9 November 2000, in remembrance of the pogrom conducted throughout the German Reich, the annual worship service was followed by a candlelight procession to the former synagogue, now used as a center for intercultural meetings. This was followed by a play about the persecution of the Jews, performed by school children. Before the worship service, the Democratic Socialist Party (PDS) held a demonstration, marching from the Jewish cemetery to the Church of Our Lady. The exhibit "*Juden und wir*" (Jews and us) was shown in Görlitz.

Dresden: In November 2001, a book of remembrance for the Jews of Dresden who were expelled or murdered during the Nazi period was presented to the

Jewish congregation on the occasion of the dedication of the newly restored synagogue. A weeklong German-Polish youth event was held on the theme of "encounter with Judaism" and regular trips are organized to Auschwitz, Prague and Budapest. The participation at these events which center on meetings with local Jews is excellent. Youth groups of Protestant churches in Saxony have founded the *AG Rechts* (working group on right-wing extremism) which offers advice to local congregations on actions against right-wing extremism, and provides help to victims of terrorist attacks.

"Reaching understanding with Israel," another Protestant youth initiative, has existed since 1995. Their video, *Schmetterlinge gibt es hier nicht* (There are no butterflies here), features encounters between Jews from Israel and the USA. This video is available for use by local congregations and schools. In addition, regular meetings are held in Auschwitz and in Krzyzowa, Poland.

Chemnitz: There is no Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation here, but a German-Israeli Society (DIG). Together the Protestant Forum and DIG organize the "Jewish Cultural Days," in which right-wing extremism and enmity towards Jews are central themes. Lectures offered are on a wide range of topics such as: Violence and civil courage; education since Auschwitz; everyone becomes an Adam—a Jewish reading of Genesis 3; memories of a forgetful person. There is a well-functioning network against right-wing extremism. In July 1998 the local government organized a human chain in opposition to right-wing extremism and subsequently established an information office on right-wing extremism.

Slovakia

Juraj Bándy

The small number of Jews living in Slovakia today is to be explained by their persecution during the war years when the Slovak Puppet State (1939–1945) voluntarily handed the Jews over to the Nazis. Because of this, there is hardly any interaction between the Christian and the Jewish communities. During the annual meeting of the Lutheran European Commission on the Church and the Jewish People (LEKKJ) in Bratislava, May 2001, the evening worship on the Sabbath had to start late because at the beginning there were fewer than ten people present. The meeting provided a good opportunity for participants to acquaint themselves with the history and present situation of Judaism in Slovakia.

The Society of Christians and Jews established following the political changes in November 1989 has organized a number of conferences to deal with subjects considered taboo during the Communist regime. Many books, such as Jaroslav Franek's, *Judaism*, Ivan Kamenec's, *Po stopach tragedie* (Tracing a tragedy) and Peter Salner's, *Zidia na Slovensku. Medzi tradiciou a asimilaciou* (Jews in Slovakia – Between tradition and assimilation) were published after 1989 in order to make up for the lack of information during the Communist era. Unfortunately, this society has gradually become rather passive.

Various Protestant churches in Germany celebrate the so-called Israel Sunday. It has been suggested that an Israel Sunday be introduced in Slovakia.

Slovakia

Tómas Lang

The period since November 1989 has been a time of significant changes in the life of Slovakia's Jewry. The new social conditions have made possible a renascence of Jewish religious, social and cultural life. Two major religious communities—those of Bratislava / Pozsony and Košice / Kassa—and nine minor ones, are active. The latter are those of Galanta / Galánta, Nové Zámky / Érsekújvár, Dunajská Streda / Dunaszerdahely, Komárno / Komárom, Nitra / Nyitra, Zilina / Zsolna, Banská Bystrica / Besztercebánya, Prešov / Eperjes, and Michalovce / Nagymihályin. Unfortunately, the number of religious communities is decreasing, and in the last decade the formerly renowned congregations of Trnava / Nagyszombat and Lucenec / Losonc have ceased to exist. The reason for this was partly the shrinking number of the faithful and, most of all, the unnatural age composition of the Jewish community, which has become seriously superannuated.

The work of two rabbis, contracted from abroad, has the lion's share in the furthering of religious life. In Bratislava, an American rabbi, and in Košice, a Slovakian-born rabbi, recontacted after fifty years, respectively, took up their posts. The relations to the international Jewish organizations have significantly improved and the division of the country in 1993 has had no negative effect on relations with the Jewry of the Czech Republic. It is noteworthy that a large proportion of the Jews in the Czech Republic originally came from Slovakia.

In the context of the cooperation with international Jewish organizations, humanitarian aid, as well as restitution and indemnification activities have played a significant role in the improvement of the living conditions of Holocaust survivors. Unfortunately, the restitution law ratified in 1999 by the Slovak parliament does not apply to those brothers and sisters of ours who suffered personal injury and whose property was damaged, not under the jurisdiction of the wartime Slovak state, but in the territories occupied in November 1939 by Hungary, following the Second Vienna Decision.

In spite of the positive aspects evident in the social life of Slovakia, nationalism, antisemitism and xenophobia—expressions of rejection and hatred of that which is different—persist. Allow me to list some recent examples.

Every year around the middle of March, the anniversary of the proclamation of the Slovak wartime state in 1939, the heirs and admirers of Slovak fascism come to the fore. In 1999, Ján Slota, mayor of Zilina, and at the time chair of the Slovak National Party and today still a member of parliament, engaged in a base diatribe against the Hungarian people and the state of Hungary. In his rather incoherent remarks, delivered under the influence of alcohol, he called on his

followers to overrun Budapest with tanks, and maligned the then US Secretary of State Albright, in the presence of the press and representatives of the Movement for Democratic Slovakia. He was censured by the then party president, Ms Maliková, also a member of parliament, but in her own speeches, she outdid even him by saying that, "… the Jews and the Hungarians will not be able to falsify Slovak history …." None of this must be swept under the carpet. During a regularly broadcast popular TV debate program, Ján Slota received the highest number of viewers' approval votes, when one of his opponents was the very cultivated Pál Csáky, deputy chairman for human rights and minorities, of Hungarian nationality.

It must be added that, in spite of the fact that since the present government has taken over the attitude of the heirs of fascism has undergone a significant change, their general tendency has proved vigorous and durable. The philosophy of Slovak fascism is cultivated with devotion by Matica Slovenská, originally organized in the nineteenth century to promote national culture and national heritage, which today enjoys significant financial support from the powers that be. It organizes so-called "scientific conferences," and provides a stage for Holocaust deniers, convicted war criminals and nationalists. At its festivals and cultural programs it features such notorious "historians" as Milan Durica, the monk, who teaches at the Catholic University of Padua. The minister of education, a Slovak National Party member of government, distributed his pseudo-scientific trash entitled "Slovakia and the History of the Slovaks" to the schools as an additional textbook. Another "professor of history," Frantisek Vnuk, who resides in Australia, claims that "Slovakia had good reason to deport its Jews." A member of the same group, Stanislav Kirschbaum, who after liberation was in absentia condemned to death for war crimes, to this date moves freely in Slovakia in some sort of legal vacuum. Another prominent voice is that of Ján Bobak, a former high-ranking Communist official, who is an enthusiastic spokesperson for Tiso-Slovakia.

It must be emphasized that the government refrains from sending representatives to any of such gatherings and that the present Slovak Republic is neither heir to, nor legal successor of fascist Tiso-Slovakia. Today's Slovak Republic traces its legal continuity, as a member of the anti-fascist Slovak national uprising and anti-fascist coalition, to the Czechoslovak Republic, as reformed in 1945.

Much could be said about the dilatory workings of Slovak justice, which impedes the acknowledgement of an ethnic bias at the root of crimes committed, especially to the detriment of the Romany. In a case where skinheads after yelling, "Let's go and beat up on some Gypsies," beat the sleeping mother of eight to death, the court ruled that such a crime cannot be considered as racially motivated, "because the Gypsies belong to the same Indo-European race as the rest of the Europeans." There is only one incident where the court recognized a rac-

ist motive, and that was when the victim was a Chinese diplomat. Repeated attacks on the rabbi of Bratislava by skinheads were not sufficient for declaring it a racist crime. The court found the perpetrators guilty merely of prankish misappropriation of the rabbi's hat. In light of the foregoing, the six-year law suit brought by Professor Traubner, honorary president of the Central Union of Jewish Communities in Slovakia against AGRES, the antisemitic publisher in Bratislava, in defense of his reputation, would seem just hopeless.

The above reflects but a few significant episodes, on the grounds of which I cannot agree with the evaluation that "although there are, here and there, antisemitic manifestations in Slovakia, their societal effect is only marginal." Unfortunately, not so. They are considerably more than marginal.

South Africa

Newton Brandt and Paddy Meskin

Introduction

The term antisemitism was first used in the nineteenth century by a German, Walter Marr, who used it to mean "hatred of Jews and Judaism." Marr actually misused the term Semitic, which does not refer to a group of people, but a group of languages including Arabic, Aramaic, Amharic and Hebrew. The term antisemitism continues to be misused to mean anti-Jewish feeling and actions.

Antisemitism and anti-Judaism did not begin with Christianity. The Greeks and Romans who worshiped many Gods, were offended by the Jewish people's unbending belief in one God. The Early Church treated the Jews extremely harshly, blaming them for the death of Jesus Christ who was born, lived and died as a Jew.

During the Middle Ages the armies of the first Crusaders marching across Europe to liberate the Holy Land from the Muslims, exacerbated Christian antisemitism and anti-Judaism and many Jews were murdered as "unbelievers" with zeal by the Crusaders.

Between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, Jews were tolerated as business people and craftsmen in most European Christian communities, mainly because their businesses rendered essential services. Nonetheless, rumors and hate campaigns persisted and by the fifteenth century, Jews who refused to convert fell victim to the Spanish Inquisition, which set out to cleanse Spain of all "unbelievers." Blood libels throughout Europe were fueled by the belief that the Jews used the blood of a Christian to make the *matzah* used at the festival of Passover. The fact that Jews tended to keep to themselves and that only a few understood or knew anything about Jewish tradition further aggravated the situation.

This hatred persisted during the Protestant Reformation. Some Protestant groups were more tolerant than others, notably those in Holland who were willing to accept the Jews who had fled from Spain during the Inquisition, as well as those who fled from England and many other European countries.

Jews were forced to live in ghettos, and it was only after the French Revolution, during the Enlightenment, that Jews began to achieve political and social freedom, very often at the cost of assimilation and giving up their traditional religious observances.

Nineteenth-century Europe was more tolerant, but towards the end of the century and in the early twentieth century, antisemitism and anti-Judaism once again became more prevalent. Using documents such as the Protocols of the

Elders of Zion and other trumped-up scientific evidence that made a mockery of science, supposed experts stated that the Jews were an inferior race.

In many countries, nationalists eagerly embraced these racist theories regarding Jews as "lesser" beings and not full citizens compared to the "pure" French, German or Russian citizens. In Eastern Europe, hundreds of thousands of Jews were victims of pogroms.

Throughout the centuries, antisemitism and anti-Judaism, often based on economic worries, fueled suspicions that Jewish families were responsible for all kinds of problems, especially material ones. Coupled with this, the church's continuing attitude that the Jews were "God-killers," and therefore murderers, set the stage for someone like Hitler. Hitler managed to convince the German nation, including the clergy and even the pope, that destroying the Jewish people was not wrong.

Rising antisemitism in Europe resulted in hundreds of thousands of Jews emigrating to the new worlds of America and South Africa where they quickly established community structures, such as welfare societies for the poor and burial societies, as well as synagogues and schools.

South Africa then and now

Although there are references to Jews at the time of Van Riebeck (1652) and it is said that there were Jews on board the ships used in the Dutch East India Co., the first community was established in 1862 in the Cape.

From the beginning, the South African Jewish community was very active and involved, always taking care of its own people. As in Europe, many people were suspicious of them because of their religious rituals and customs. Despite this, the Jewish community has contributed greatly to every aspect of life in South Africa.

During the Anglo-Boer War, Jews participated on both sides. In the early years of South Africa, many Afrikaners regarded the Jews as the People of the Book and they were revered by many. In the early years, there was probably more anti-Judaism and antisemitism coming from Anglo-Saxons than Afrikaners, particularly in the rural areas.

With the rise of Nazism in Germany, antisemitism reared its ugly head in South Africa in the 1930s. It came in the form of the "quota system" introduced by the government of the time in response to the request of the thousands of Jews who applied to enter South Africa as a result of the rise of Hitler and Nazism. Only Jews who had first-degree relatives, or who were coming to marry someone in South Africa, were allowed to enter.

When the Nationalist party came into power in 1948, their message was very clear. The white race was superior to all others and under the system of apart-

heid, Jews were classified as white. Therefore, they needed to be wooed for membership and support of the party.

The Nationalist government was openly supportive of the State of Israel and allowed the Jews of South Africa to support the State of Israel. In fact, there were many Jews who were unhappy with the open support of the South African government, because it seemed as though the State of Israel was supported by the hated apartheid regime. However, when Israel supported the UN declaration on apartheid, the South African government suspended the permission of the Jewish community to send money to the State of Israel.

On many occasions statements were made, in and out of parliament, indicating that had the situation been different, Jews would not have been welcomed into the party. Although there were no overt expressions of antisemitism or anti-Judaism from the South African government during the years that they were in power, there were incidents of latent antisemitism.

Much of the antisemitism came from the pro-Palestinian community manifesting itself in incidences such as the placing of a pig's head outside the Durban Jewish Club and on the steps of two synagogues, as well as the bombing of a synagogue in the 1980s. Similarly, clashes between students at university were also usually Judeo-Muslim clashes. Antisemitism of Christian groups was more covert.

Other antisemitic incidents are undoubtedly related to the conspiracy theory according to which the Jews were endeavoring to take over the world, particularly the financial world. The fact that many of the top industrialists in South Africa happened to be Jewish merely "corroborated" that theory.

The Nationalist Party's attitude of separating all communities in terms of race, culture and religion, kept these antagonisms alive, although as early as the mid-1970s one finds outreach programs between Jews and Christians.

In 1984, the religious communities of South Africa joined together to start a chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP). WCRP was established to provide a vehicle for religious leaders of all communities to join in the struggle against apartheid. Leaders from all the major religions in South Africa marched together for justice, democracy and peace.

With the establishment of the new democracy in South Africa, the outreach among many of the religious organizations has greatly increased. This was given a great boost in 1997 when President Nelson Mandela called upon all religious leaders to come together to form the National Religious Leaders Forum (NRLF) in order to find a solution to the horrific violence which had continued to beset South Africa since 1994. The NRLF on which all major religions are represented suggested a code of conduct for organizations, and the *ubuntu* pledge for individuals. WCRP is endeavoring to promote both throughout the country.

In Kwazalu Natal, the province worst affected by violence, the KZN Ukuthula Peace Challenge has been established to promote peace and understanding, and most reli-

gious organizations give support to this initiative. All these initiatives have helped to control the attacks of antisemitism and anti-Judaism. Today most attacks are generally linked to the Israel-Palestine clashes although a certain prejudice, particularly with regard to the socio-economic situation of the Jewish community, persists.

There are a number of Christian and Jewish interfaith programs and initiatives focusing on concerns such as poverty and the terrible HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Commitments

While antisemitism and anti-Judaism in the Judeo-Christian world are not what they were twenty years ago, they do persist. Both violate human rights; any violation of human rights is a sin against God, and consequently, a sin against humanity.

- We need to fight together against all prejudice, racism, bias and discrimination. As long as one person is deprived of his or her human rights, we must continue to work towards the elimination of that deprivation.

- We need to commit ourselves to be vigilant, to act against any manifestations of antisemitism or anti-Judaism, as well as any acts of prejudice, racism, discrimination or bias.

- We cannot be authentically Christian or authentically Jewish if we engage in any of the above, and we dare not be found wanting as we were, both during the Holocaust and apartheid.

- We dare not fail to speak out, as many failed to do under the Nazi regime and during apartheid. For even if one did not actively support either Nazism or apartheid, by doing nothing one supported the status quo.

- We need to work together to deepen the spirit of cooperation, mutual understanding and reconciliation, goodwill and common goals, and let them replace the past suspicions of resentment and distrust.

- We need to ensure ongoing dialogue between Jews and Christians, as well as other religious communities.

- We need to acknowledge that God's Covenant with the Jewish people is also the heritage of the Christian community, for the Hebrew Scriptures are an integral part of the Christian Bible.

- We need to work together in supporting any legislation against discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion or any form of prejudice.

- We need to support educational programs which include curricula that impart knowledge and respect for different religions, cultures and civilizations.

- We need to ensure that all racial, religious or cultural prejudice is eliminated from all textbooks and that material taught in schools is conducive to creating an harmonious and understanding society.

- We need to ensure that in all seminaries a spirit of tolerance is engendered by the teaching of other beliefs and that an exchange of ideas takes place.

- We need to remember that we all believe in one God, seek authority from the same Book and accept the same moral precepts as set out in the Torah.

- We need to remember the words of the prophet Micah, who when asked what the Lord requires of us, replied: "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."

If we follow all the above, we shall see the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah

> In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa 2:2–3).

Sweden

Morton H. Narrowe

The Swedish government under Prime Minister Göran Persson is one of the most philo-semitic ever. It has not only established an annual Holocaust Day on 27 January, the anniversary of the liberation from the Auschwitz concentration camp, but also contributed generously to the Paideia Institute in Stockholm, an institute for EU students wanting to study Jewish religion and culture.

While antisemitism is not a major problem in Sweden, there are nonetheless reasons for concern and wakefulness. The various small Nazi groups in Sweden are internally divided and largely ineffectual, except for their production of "white power" music. The old and timeworn antisemitic citations collected and reworked by the seventeenth-century antisemite, Johann Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judentum*, are being spread on the Internet and in printed form. These selections from the Bible, Talmud and Midrash are largely authentic, but taken out of context and interpreted in an antisemitic fashion. Notations of sources have, in the course of three hundred years, often become corrupted.

Many Swedish schools invite death camp survivors to speak to students about antisemitism in their homelands before the Nazi invasion, and then to relate their experiences during the Holocaust. Several of them have reported unpleasant challenges by Muslim students. Koran schools are teaching Holocaust denial, a source of confrontation between the visiting survivor and the students who openly challenge them as liars. Local imams, often influenced by propaganda about the conflict in Palestine, especially the lies spread by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and other religious leaders in the Holy Land, are teaching that since no Jewish temple ever existed in Jerusalem, Jews have no historical claim to the land of Israel. These lies are, naturally, in addition to the old Muslim theological claim that Jews and Christians have falsified the Holy Scriptures, an argument that proves the Koran to be authentic and "correct" whenever it disagrees with the Bible.

Muslims are founding private day schools giving rise to the fear that these schools will intensify Holocaust denial and provide the Muslim youth with an even more radically antisemitic education. The imams currently teaching in the Koran schools, will, naturally, teach in the Muslim private schools as well.

The Swedish government annually grants a "guaranteed income" to outstanding artists whose contributions to Swedish culture is of major importance. A special committee selects the laureates who are then automatically confirmed by the government. Among the recipients in 2001 was Lars Hillersberg, a leftist cartoonist who made a reputation for himself in the 1968 student revolts. His

most famous cartoon depicts the "crucifixion" of the relatively well-known antisemite, Ahmed Rami. Rami, who was sentenced to a short prison term for "agitating against a folk group," has been making radio programs and publishing books. He is still active, now using the Internet. This cartoon depicts long-nosed Jews celebrating in pointed hats and in gowns decorated with six-pointed stars as the antisemite, Rami, is hanging on the cross, in imitation of Jesus. Of Hillersberg's antisemitic cartoons, the best known are: "Kissinger, the Jew"; the Jewish businessman selling used, worthless battle tanks "cheaply" to Sadddam Hussein; and, to my mind the most nefarious, the "cruel" act of circumcision, where the man sharpening his knife is saying (in Swedish) "Skar om," a play on the Swedish word for cut and either the Hebrew "shalom" or, Prime Minister Ariel "Sharon." The choice of Hillersberg has been widely debated and even attracted comments from outside Sweden. Appeals have been made to the government not to renew the guaranteed income, a step that the authorities seem reticent to take since it would constitute a precedent.

As in several other European countries, the issues of circumcision and Kosher (and Halal) slaughter have been publicly debated. At present, the Swedish government appears to have no intention of reconsidering the laws limiting the practice of Kosher and Halal slaughter. Numerous newspaper and magazine articles, seminars, TV and radio programs have discussed the rights of the child versus those of the parents. Some doctors have claimed that the pain inflicted on male babies by an "unnecessary medical operation" is contrary to United Nations and EU declarations. This government will shortly promulgate a new law on circumcision, specifying certain medical requirements. Sweden is not planning to prohibit, or to restrict the male circumcision, but will make anesthesia mandatory (local for very young babies, general for older boys). Sweden will also raise the requirements concerning the medical competence demanded of the specialist performing the act of circumcision. After the age of two months, a boy must be circumcised by a certified medical doctor. The intensity of the public debate has led to several writers suggesting that Jewish and Muslim parents love their children less than "real" Swedes or that Judaism and Islam are barbaric religions that have retained barbaric rites.

Sweden

Jesper Svartvik

In 1999 the Church of Sweden published a semi-official document on Jewish-Christian relations entitled, *Guds vägar: Judendom och kristendom* (The Ways of God: Judaism and Christianity). The thirteen-page document was prepared by the official theological committee of the Church of Sweden and the reference group for Jewish-Christian relations and deals with the following topics: common heritage; God's covenant(s) (including replacement theology; the parallel covenants; the ways which are joined in the end of days); God's mystery; guilt; the land; Christian testimony; repentance. The full text is available at www.svenskakyrkan.se/SVK/Gudsvagar/index.htm.

The Right Rev. Björn Fjärstedt, one of the authors of the document, subsequently commented on the document in his article, "God's Ways: Struggling with a Document on Jewish-Christian Relations in a Swedish Context."[1]

The document is the Church of Sweden's first, semi-official text on Jewish-Christian issues. Its tenor and tone are that of mutual respect, and accordingly it makes a number of theological assertions of major significance, such as:

- The introduction states that God's covenant with the Jewish people has never been cancelled and, thus, is still valid today. This is the most important theological assertion of the entire document.

- Furthermore, it clearly states that the terms "the Jewish People" and "Judaism" are not descriptions of ancient, historical phenomena, but refer to the Jewish people today and the religion they practice. The document thereby emphatically abandons the powerful influence of Wilhelm Bousset's legacy and his terminology, "*Spätjudentum*" ("Late Judaism").

- In the brief discussion of "replacement theology," according to which Judaism is an immature and incomplete stage of religion which the church has taken over and adapted, the document affirms that it is illogical to contrast two covenants and to invalidate the former. Replacement theol-

[1] Björn Fjärstedt, "God's Ways: Struggling with a Document on Jewish-Christian Relations in a Swedish Context," in Michal Bron Jr. (ed.), *Jews and Christians in Dialogue II : Identity – Tolerance – Understanding* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2001), pp.59–66.

ogy is therefore rejected. Its claims are unacceptable when the New Testament is understood in its entirety.

- In the central paragraph, which considers "God's mystery," the document states that every religion has its mysteries, which no human being can fully grasp. Understanding this truth is basic to all endeavors to establish true inter-religious dialogue. In the long run, this is far more important than the many attempts to delineate the differences and similarities between the various religious traditions.

The document *The Ways of God* has attracted the interest of many readers and was approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Sweden in 2001. Being an official document it constitutes a major step in distancing the Church of Sweden from the theological antisemitism once so prevalent and apparent within Christianity.

United States of America

Judith Banki and Peter A. Pettit

Introduction

The present report will highlight activities of interest in the field of Lutheran-Jewish relations among laity, clergy, congregations and other entities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Jewish community in the United States. Several visible, exemplary, and churchwide activities will be profiled, as a window into the world of Lutheran-Jewish relations in the USA. (A number of factors make it very difficult to offer a complete picture, among them: the size and diversity of both the Jewish and the Lutheran communities in the US; the lack of any centralized, comprehensive Jewish interfaith office, such as a national chief rabbinate; and, the lack of systematic reporting.) While the authors cannot say that there is an extensive network of similar activities taking place in every part of the US, we do know that there are important activities taking place in some areas that are not included here. By lifting up some activities here, we do not mean to overlook or to diminish the importance of others, but to encourage and affirm them along with those included in this report.

After sketching some of the background to current activities in significant public developments of the 1990s, we will describe the preparation for a churchwide study process, activities involving an ELCA-affiliated institute, local dialogues and study groups, developments on the seminary scene, publication of new resources, and collaborative work undertaken with other denominational groups. We will also identify several of the areas in which we are not presently engaged to any significant degree, or in which there are problematic relations between the ELCA and Jewish communities.

Churchwide statements and publications

In response to a synodical memorial brought to the 1993 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA's Consultative Panel on Jewish-Lutheran Relations, a unit of the Department for Ecumenical Affairs, drafted and the Church Council adopted, in April 1994, a declaration to the Jewish community that repudiates "Luther's anti-Judaic diatribes and the violent recommendations of his later writings against the Jews." With oblique reference to prior Lutheran World Federation documents, the Council in its statement "particularly deplore[s] the appropriation of Luther's

words by modern antisemites" and "recognize[s] in antisemitism a contradiction and affront to the Gospel." It expresses an "urgent desire" for Christian faith lived out "with love and respect for the Jewish people," and pledges the ELCA "to oppose the deadly working of such bigotry [antisemitism]."

This statement was widely hailed by the Jewish community for its forthright confrontation and repudiation of Luther's harshest anti-Jewish language, although some respondents argued that it did not go far enough, in particular in identifying and repenting of the part that Lutherans played in the *Shoah*. It probably received greater notice and generated more response in the Jewish community than it did throughout the ELCA.

In following up the commitment expressed in the statement to develop more loving and respectful relations between Lutherans and Jews, the Consultative Panel over succeeding years drafted and in 1998 published *Guidelines for Lutheran-Jewish Relations*. This is a fifteen-point list addressing such topics as dialogue meetings, reciprocal worship visits, shared and public prayer, so-called "Messianic Jews," intermarriage, and preaching stereotypes, as well as the communal/cultural factors that should be considered in any Lutheran-Jewish encounter. It also highlighted the need for the Lutheran church to educate about Jews and Judaism among its laity and clergy, and especially in seminaries. These were published in text form, together with the 1994 statement, and distributed to every congregation and professional leader in the ELCA. In 2000, the panel republished them in a more attractive format and continues to make them available freely upon request, in addition to posting them on the Web site[1]. Among other responses, they elicited a formal and appreciative statement of seven paragraphs from the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, recognizing them as "a powerful corrective to long-entrenched teachings of contempt" and making "a distinctive contribution" in their references to Jewish concern regarding communal survival and so-called "messianic Jews."

These two documents, together with the Consultative Panel that generated them and continues to promote their distribution and use throughout the church, represent the most visible public involvements of the ELCA in responding to antisemitism and anti-Judaism over the past decade. Several synodical memorials to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in recent years have called for continuing study and a comprehensive statement on Lutheran-Jewish relations. The Consultative Panel has this year developed a set of eight "talking points" on critical topics in the field, intending to stimulate study, reflection, and discussion on those elements of such a comprehensive statement that would be most likely to provoke conflict within the church. Its work took strong encourage-

[1] **www.elca.org/ea/interfaith/jewish/index.html**

ment and input from a March, 2001, conference at Gustavus Adolphus College, where leading Jewish and Lutheran scholars presented and debated in-depth research and challenging proposals on several of the talking-point topics.

One synodical memorial to the 2001 Churchwide Assembly would commit the ELCA to develop resources to assist clergy and other rostered leaders in working more effectively with the Revised Common Lectionary—by calling attention to and counteracting its anti-Jewish elements. The staff recommendation is that this memorial be approved and the assignment given to the Consultative Panel for implementation. This would undoubtedly take place in coordination with the initiative already underway to develop an Internet-based, lectionary-oriented preaching journal. That initiative is part of the strategic plan of the Institute for Jewish-Christian Understanding (IJCU) of Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA, and projects a first "issue" in time for the beginning of Advent, 2002. The journal will focus especially on providing both textual exegesis and topical homiletical resources from the rabbinic tradition, as well as addressing some of the classic challenges that confront Christian preachers in handling certain texts and types of texts.

ELCA-affiliated institute

Inaugurated in 1989, the IJCU remains the only formal organization for Lutheran-Jewish relations associated with a seminary or college of the ELCA. As such, it maintains a strong research and collaborative relationship with the ELCA Consultative Panel, which is chaired by a former director of the Institute. In its own work, the Institute: provides coursework in Jewish-Christian relations through the Muhlenberg College Department of Religion; coordinates study tour opportunities for the six-college consortium of the Lehigh Valley; promotes and supports lay dialogue using the Interfaith Circles curriculum; encourages and provides for continuing education toward Jewish-Christian understanding among religious professionals; conducts topical forums and sponsors relevant speakers on issues in Jewish-Christian relations; and, conducts two annual student workshops on prejudice.

These workshops, accommodating up to 800 students each at the middle and high school levels, use a media vehicle to introduce students to the history, images, and issues of the *Shoah*. In facilitated small group sessions, they then debrief the film, meet and converse with a *Shoah* survivor, and identify those elements of prejudice and discrimination that they can see in their own social settings. Working with the group facilitators, college students, and their own teachers, they draft an action plan for responding to prejudice where they have identified it. The students use resources from the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith

and the Southern Poverty Law Center in drafting their plans, which have included passive awareness components like automobile bumper stickers, interpersonal activities such as discussion groups and anti-bias clubs, and organized political action with local school and community leaders.

Two further developments from these workshops have also focused on antisemitism and anti-Judaism. A grant from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum Foundation in the mid-1990s funded a project that sought to identify and counter hate groups that recruit and operate in the several counties surrounding Allentown. Those grant funds also helped sponsor the Muhlenberg College campus visit of Brent Scarpo with his anti-hate film, "Journey to a Hate-Free Millenium." Scarpo was the featured speaker both at a public evening screening of the film and at a regular luncheon discussion group of the IJCU.

Also, during the spring of 2000, students in the Department of Theatre and Dance created an original, one-act drama based on Hungarian refugee testimony from the *Shoah* era. The play has toured more than a dozen middle schools in the Lehigh Valley over the past two years, playing to approximately 4,000 students. Each performance includes discussion between the college-age performers and their younger peers in the audience, which draws out the dynamics of prejudice, anti-Judaism and hate that drove the Nazi persecution and continue to threaten contemporary society.

Local dialogue

The IJCU is only one of several sponsors of local dialogue groups in North America. These groups bring laity and clergy from the Lutheran and Jewish communities into conversation and shared study, leading to greater mutual understanding and, sometimes, joint initiatives on social issues of common concern. Two such groups have taken shape in the Chicago, IL, area. In 1991, the American Jewish Committee and the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA began a dialogue involving some twenty participants. It became a sounding board for the development of Lutheran documents on interfaith relations, as well as a discussion forum on topics such as: basic tenets of the two faiths; similarities and differences in Christian and Jewish theology (particularly regarding land); personal reflections on religious beliefs; and, Israel. In 1994, the dialogue organized and hosted a national convocation honoring the publication of the ELCA Declaration to the Jewish People.

In Evanston, IL, an ecumenical and interfaith clergy group has met continuously for nearly two decades, including the pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church and the rabbis of the Beth Emet and Jewish Reconstructionist congregations. The group has hosted worship visits to one another's services, studied together,

organized a citywide interfaith Thanksgiving worship service, joined in a solidarity protest against the Ku Klux Klan in neighboring Skokie, IL, and taught in one another's education programs. The work of this group was profiled and published, together with the ELCA documents of 1994 and 1998, as the featured cover story on the magazine of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

ELCA seminaries

The level of attention to Lutheran-Jewish relations is increasing among ELCA seminaries, where several developments indicate growing awareness. In Columbus, OH, Trinity Seminary has erected a striking sculpture commemorating the suffering and death of 6 million Jews in the *Shoah*. The sculpture dominates the street intersection at the entrance to the seminary campus and has become a visual focal point for the seminary community. The seminary is also co-sponsoring a weeklong Chautauqua seminar on "Paths to the Holy" for Jews and Christians in August 2001. In St. Paul, MN, Luther Seminary has recently arranged for a rabbi and scholar from the neighboring University of St. Thomas and its Jay Phillips Center for Jewish-Christian Learning to teach a course in the seminary curriculum on Judaism.

Similar courses have been taught by rabbis from time to time at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, PA. The seminaries in Philadelphia, Chicago, IL, and Berkeley, CA, all participate in consortial arrangements of one sort or another that include Jewish schools and the opportunity for cross-registration in their courses. In Los Angeles and in the northeastern United States, Lutheran seminary students have the opportunity to participate in dialogue with Jewish counterparts through the interseminary programs of the National Conference for Community and Justice.

New resources

An important new resource for combating the anti-Judaism of the New Testament has emerged from the Lutheran community, as Prof. Norman Beck of Texas Lutheran University has published *The New Testament: A New Translation and Redaction*.[2] Sensitive to now-discredited stereotypes of both Jews and women, the translation seeks to counter the effects of such stereotypes both by careful translation and by typographical convention: passages that are "the most vi-

[2] Norman A. Beck, *The New Testament: A New Translation and Redaction* (Lima, OH: Fairway Press, 2001).

ciously anti-Jewish and the most blatantly sexist" are printed in smaller type. A full-length screenplay by Beck, entitled "Jesus, The Man," also emphasizes accurate portrayal of Jesus' Jewish identity and context; Beck is seeking to interest a producer in developing the script.

Broader involvement

In addition to specifically Lutheran initiatives, several ecumenical ventures have drawn Lutheran participation and support around the US. Most notable among these, probably, is the September 10, 2000, publication of *Dabru Emet* in the *New York Times* and the *Baltimore Sun*. This "Jewish statement on Christians and Christianity," written by four and signed by more than 225 Jewish scholars, articulates and elaborates on eight statements of "what Judaism may now say about Christianity," as "a thoughtful Jewish response" to the "dramatic and unprecedented shift in Jewish and Christian relations," and especially to the fact that "Christianity has changed dramatically." God, Scripture, land, Torah and the *Shoah* are among the topics addressed.[3]

Particularly in the Baltimore, MD, area, where the statement originated in the Jewish scholars group of the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies, local Lutheran clergy have been involved in study groups with authors of the statement and its companion volume, *Christianity in Jewish Terms*. Often in the US, interfaith study, dialogue and action are undertaken in an ecumenical context in which Lutherans are but one of several denominations represented in a broad-based community setting. Thus, many Lutherans participate in the National Workshops on Jewish-Christian Relations, which is held approximately every two years and was co-chaired by a Lutheran in 1987 in Minneapolis.

Points of continuing concern

Despite all these initiatives and the many more that they represent around the country, there remain several points of concern in addressing anti-Judaism and antisemitism in the USA. We must admit that seminary training does not yet integrate teaching about anti-Judaism and antisemitism into the core curriculum as it could. Individual courses, cross-registration options, and scattered conferences or lectures raise awareness for a limited time and offer insights for some students. Still remaining to be done is the reshaping of core curriculum

[3] For the full text, see **www.jcrelations.net/stmts/njsp_dabru_emet.htm**

syllabi in systematics, worship, history, education, homiletics, and the like, that will recast the most fundamental ways in which Jews appear in professional Lutheran theological training.

There remains, too, within the ELCA a strong voice that is dominantly anti-Israel, centered in those offices and constituencies whose primary concerns are justice and peace, and whose models are drawn from liberation theology. It is also informed by generations of personal narrative and experience by missions personnel who have worked side-by-side with Palestinians in development and relief efforts. This voice is more often heard in public than is the one that would affirm Israel's significance for Christianity and the world, and that would acknowledge more directly the anti-Judaism and antisemitism that are core components of Arab and Palestinian nationalist rhetoric. In a development labeled "shocking" by at least one national Jewish leader, even the recent abominable invocation of the deicide charge by Syrian President Bashar Assad, together with his call for a concerted Christian and Muslim holy war against Israel and the Jews, did not bring any public ELCA response or repudiation. We know of no forum in which the issue may have been debated. It is clear, though, that such a response could emerge as part of a balanced and well-integrated churchwide posture only if the church will work to build greater mutual understanding and better dialogue among those on each side of this divide.

Finally, it must be noted that most of the work undertaken by the church addresses anti-Judaism and antisemitism within church structures, organizations, and activities. We do not have strong examples of leadership in countering the antisemitism that pervades certain marginal and, especially, conservative elements of American culture. The proliferation of Web sites devoted to neo-Nazi hate themes, the acquiescence of many Americans to the ideology of these groups, even when explicit membership is not embraced, and the even broader pattern of ignorance about Jews and Judaism throughout America have hardly been touched by ELCA initiatives. We are beginning to address the elements of our own church culture that cry out for remediation, and we can respond more or less effectively to incidents of antisemitic violence, but much remains to be done to fulfill the 1994 pledge "… to oppose the deadly working of such bigotry, both within our own circles and in the society around us."

Statements

Statements from the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Consultation, Stockholm, 1983

The following three statements from the consultation between representatives of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) and the Lutheran World Federation held in Stockholm, Sweden, July 11–13, 1983, is reprinted from *Luther, Lutheranism, and the Jews.*[1] The LWF delegation was authorized to speak to but not in behalf of the LWF and its constituency. The IJCIC is the joint agency of the five major Jewish organizations: The World Jewish Congress; the Synagogue Council of America; the American Jewish Committee; the B'nai B'rith-Antidefamation League; and the Jewish Council in Israel of Interreligious Consultations.

Statement by Lutheran participants

We Lutherans take our name and much of our understanding of Christianity from Martin Luther. But we cannot accept or condone the violent verbal attacks that the Reformer made against the Jews. Lutherans and Jews interpret the Hebrew Bible differently. But we believe that a christological reading of the Scriptures does not lead to anti-Judaism, let alone antisemitism.

We hold that an honest, historical treatment of Luther's attacks on the Jews takes away from modern antisemites the assumption that they may legitimately call on the authority of Luther's name to bless their antisemitism. We insist that Luther does not support racial antisemitism, nationalistic antisemitism, or political antisemitism. Even the deplorable religious antisemitism of the 16th century, to which Luther's attacks made an important contribution, is a horrible anachronism when translated to the condi-

[1] Jean Halpérin and Arne Sovik (eds.), *Luther, Lutheranism, and the Jews, LWF Studies* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1984), pp. 9–11.

tions of the modern world. We recognize with deep regret, however, that Luther has been used to justify such antisemitism in the period of national socialism and that his writings lent themselves to such abuse. Although there remain conflicting assumptions , built into the beliefs of Judaism and Christianity, they need not and should not lead to the animosity and the violence of Luther's treatment of the Jews. Martin Luther opened up our eyes to a deeper understanding of the Old Testament and showed us the depth of our common inheritance and the roots of our faith.

Many of the anti-Jewish utterances of Luther have to be explained in the light of his polemic against what he regarded as misinterpretations of the Scriptures. He attacked these interpretations, since for him everything now depended on a right understanding of the Word of God.

The sins of Luther's anti-Jewish remarks, the violence of his attacks on the Jews, must be acknowledged with deep distress. And all occasions for similar sin in the present or the future must be removed from our churches.

A frank examination also forces Lutherans and other Christians to confront the anti-Jewish attitudes of their past and present. Hostility toward the Jews began long before Luther and has been a continuing evil after him. The history of the centuries following the Reformation saw in Europe the gradual acceptance of religious pluralism. The church was not always the first to accept this development; yet there have also been examples of leadership by the church in the movement to accept Jews as full fellow citizens and members of society.

Beginning in the last half of the 19th century, antisemitism increased in Central Europe and at the same time Jewish people were being integrated in society. This brought to the churches, particularly in Germany, and unwanted challenge. Paradoxically, the churches honored the people of Israel of the Bible but rejected the descendants of those people, myths were perpetuated about the Jews and deprecatory references appeared in Lutheran liturgical and educational material. Luther's doctrine of the Two Kingdoms was used to justify passivity in the face of totalitarian claims. These and other less theological factors contributed to the failures which have been regretted and repeatedly confessed since 1945.

To their credit it is to be said that there were individuals and groups among Lutherans who in defiance of totalitarian power defended their Jewish neighbors, both in Germany and elsewhere.

Lutherans of today refuse to be bound by all of Luther's utterances on the Jews. We hope we have learned from the tragedies of the recent past. We are responsible for seeing that we do not now nor in the future leave any doubt about our position on racial and religious prejudice and that we afford to all the human dignity, freedom, and friendship that are the right of all the Father's children.

Statement by the Jewish participants

On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther, representatives of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) have met for three days in Stockholm with representatives of the Lutheran World Federation to examine the theme: "Luther, Lutheranism and the Jews."

During this year, members of the world Lutheran family have been reviewing the teachings and actions of Luther and their religious, social, and political implications. The teachings of Luther have profoundly affected the course of Jewish history, especially in Europe. We are aware of the exploitation of Luther's anti-Judaism by the Nazis to sanction their genocidal campaign against the Jewish people.

In recent years, Lutheran leaders in Germany, Scandinavia, the USA and elsewhere, have made significant efforts to uproot these teachings of contempt that emerged in the writings of Luther in the 16th century. We are heartened by the affirmative direction of the Lutheran-Jewish relationship as manifested in our dialogue in Stockholm.

The Jewish participants welcome the commitment of the Lutheran partners in dialog to respect the living reality of Judaism from the perspective of Jewish self-understanding and their undertaking that Lutheran writings will never again serve as a source for the teaching of hatred for Judaism and the denigration of the Jewish people. This heralds a new chapter in the relationship between Jews and Lutherans, which should find practical expression in teaching, preaching and worship as well as joint activities for social justice, human rights and the cause of peace.

We pledge ourselves to collaborate with our Lutheran colleagues in facing these common challenges. We trust that this year of Martin Luther observances will thus prove a turning point leading to a constructive future between Lutherans and Jews throughout the world.

Joint statement

On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Luther's birth, representatives of the world Jewish community and world Lutheran community have met in Stockholm, July 11–13, 1983, for their second official dialogue.

Meeting in Stockholm, we are mindful of the compassionate response of Scandinavian Christians to the plight of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution forty years ago. This spirit renews our faith in the human capacity to confront evil with courage and determination.

The deliberations on the theme of "Luther, Lutheranism, and the Jews" were informed by an openness of views and a spirit of mutual respect for the integrity

and dignity of our faith communities. The discussions revealed a depth of mutual understanding and trust.

a) We affirm the integrity and dignity of our faith communities and repudiate any organized proselytizing[2] of each other.

b) We pledge to combat all forms of radical [racial] and religious prejudice and express our solidarity with all who suffer the denial of full religious freedom.

c) Sharing in the common patrimony of the Prophets of Israel and inspired by their vision, we commit ourselves to strive for a world in which the threat of nuclear warfare will be ended, where poverty and hunger will be eradicated, in which violence and terrorism will be overcome, and a just and lasting peace will be established.

We welcome this historic encounter, which we prayerfully hope will mark a new chapter, with trust replacing suspicion and with reciprocal respect replacing prejudice. To this end, we commit ourselves to periodic consultations and joint activities that will strengthen our common bonds in service to humanity.

[2] A speaker noted that "the term proselytizing is often misunderstood. It is important that we all understand the word the same way, and it is not equated with what in the Christian church is called evangelizing. In the World Council of Churches and in ecumenical groups in general, proselytizing is understood to mean the use of pressures–social, economic, institutional–that may induce people to change institutional allegiance without a real change of mind." Attention was called to a definition in a document prepared by a joint World Council of Churches/Roman Catholic commission: "Proselytism embraces whatever violates the right of the human person, Christian or non-Christian, to be free from external coercion in religious matters, or whatever, in the proclamation of the gospel, does not conform to the ways God draws free men to himself in response to his calls to serve in spirit and in truth." ("Common Witness and Proselytism: A Study Document," *Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, January 1971, p. 11; see also pp. 15–17). Footnote added by editor.

Report of the Assembly Committee on the Church and the Jewish People[1]

The Assembly voted to receive the following report from its special Committee on the Church and the Jewish People. Boxes have been used to highlight actions taken by the Assembly on the basis of the report of this Committee, the recommendation of the Assembly's Business Committee, and the subsequent discussion in plenary.

The Committee on the Church and the Jewish people notes with appreciation that during the period under review the LWF has for the first time undertaken direct and fruitful conversations with representatives of the world Jewish community and that studying and sharing of information has also been intensified.

A full account of these developments is to be found in *From Dar es Salaam to Budapest*[2] which is commended to you for review. The report of the international consultation held in Bossey, Switzerland (1982) has been published under the title, *The Significance of Judaism for the Life and Mission of the Church*[3] and the report of the consultation between the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) and the LWF, Stockholm, Sweden, 1983, under the title *Luther, Lutheranism, and the Jews*.[4]

We do not ant to leave unspoken our recognition of the very extensive and helpful work in Lutheran/Jewish relations that has taken place in our member churches, particularly in the USA and in Europe. The chief coordinating agencies have been the European Lutheran Commission on the Church and the Jewish People in Europe and the Lutheran Council in the USA.

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[1] Excerpted from "In Christ Hope for the World," *Proceedings of the Seventh Assembly, LWF Report No. 19/20* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1985), pp. 255–256.

[2] *From Dar es Salaam to Budapest, LWF Report No. 17/18* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1984), pp. 263–267.

[3] *The Significance of Judaism for the Life and Mission of the Church, LWF Studies* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation).

[4] *Luther, Lutheranism, and the Jews, LWF Studies* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation).

The three statements prepared by the Stockholm consultation, "Luther, Lutheranism, and the Jews" are to be found on the following pages.[5] To many who were there, as well as to many others, this meeting and the statement it agreed upon marked a historic breakthrough in Jewish/Lutheran relationships, for it spoke to the most critical problem in our common history, and it did so in a spirit of reconciliation and hope.

The Seventh Assembly RESOLVED:

14.1 To receive with gratitude the statements on "Luther, Lutheranism, and the Jews."

14.2. To commend them to the LWF member churches for their study and consideration.

The work of the LWF and of our member churches on this subject is by no means completed. The consultations upon which we have reported have each produced thoughtful observations and recommendations for work, by both the LWF and its churches. These recommendations deal with study matters, consultations, and conversations, as well as with coordination and the sharing of information.

The Seventh Assembly RESOLVED:

14.3 To recommend that the LWF Executive Committee give consideration to the following in setting priorities for the next period:

14.3.1. That the Department of Studies be asked to continue its work of study, coordination, and the sharing of information.

14.3.2 That periodic consultation with our Jewish partners be held, and that future consultations come to a clearer understanding on the question of proselytism and evangelism.

14.3.3. That the member churches be asked to support this work.

[5] On the previous pages in this publication.

Antisemitism and Anti-Judaism Today. A Contribution to the Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Consultation of the Lutheran World Federation

Some fruits of the Jewish-Lutheran dialogue

This message is a working paper, which comes out of an ongoing discussion. Its purpose is to stimulate the continuing Jewish-Christian Dialogue. The full context of this document is to be found in the contributions of the participants at the consultation in Dobogokö, Hungary, in 2001.

Over a three-day period, we representatives of Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches have met with members of the Jewish community from fifteen countries at a consultation on *Antisemitism and Anti-Judaism Today. A Lutheran Contribution to the Jewish-Christian Dialogue*, September 9-13, 2001 at Dobogokö near Budapest, Hungary. Our encounter has been intensive, mutually respectful and enriching. On the basis of our encounter, and in consultation with our Jewish colleagues and ecumenical observers, we wish to express our gratitude to those who have preceded us in establishing the Jewish-Lutheran dialogue and exploring the issues raised by and in it. We have gathered to assess the status of dialogue in member churches of the LWF, and to explore the directions in which our response to antisemitism and anti-Judaism must move from now on in light of new and continuing challenges.

We use "anti-Judaism" to name specifically theological formulations that denigrate Jews and their faith. Looking at the roots of anti-Judaism in Christian theology it can be understood as a phenomenon of the separation of the church from Judaism. Later on, other motives (social, political, economic, racist) became dominant and led to exclusion and persecution of Jews through centuries. By "antisemitism," we refer to a broader reality: the hatred of and hostility toward Jews, in reality and in rhetoric, that denies Jews legitimacy among the peoples of the world. This hatred and hostility is to be understood within the

larger issues of racism, and is countered by the affirmation of human rights that has been part of our heritage for more than fifty years.

Today we can see that in many countries Jews and Christians work together for social justice and respect for human rights, and engage in dialogue on theological matters. Our consultation has been an example of this. Increasingly Christians have been exploring the Jewish roots of Christianity and seeking to understand the Jewishness of Jesus and of the apostles. It has become clear that our common heritage—all that unites Jews and Christians—is a fruitful point of departure for our dialogue. In this dialogue antisemitism and anti-Judaism are key issues. The LWF and the World Council of Churches have repudiated all forms and expressions of these attitudes.

Antisemitism and anti-Judaism are present in every church and society represented in this consultation. The expressions are many, and the roots are several. Intolerance of difference and the absence of respect for the dignity of others are essential to these expressions and are the soil in which these sins take root. We therefore the encourage member churches of the LWF to undertake appropriate action and education to protect the rights of all people, especially minorities, to build appreciation for difference, and to teach and guard respect for the dignity of others.

Such action and education will take different forms and have different goals in the various member churches. The religious, political and social circumstances of each church, together with its own experience, will shape the responses that are possible. Within the communion of the LWF, each member church retains the autonomy for addressing these concerns in accordance with its own discernment of the gospel in its particular context.

Yet all share in the heritage of biblical Israel that establishes the church's bond to modern Jews and Judaism. In faithfulness to their calling in the gospel, churches will seek to discern the significance of this bond for the life and mission of the church. What we affirm is the validity of God's covenant with the Jewish people, which has never been superseded.

We acknowledge the importance of the land of Israel to the Jewish people and its central place in the promises of God. We therefore affirm that the connection of the Jewish people to the land is not a racist ideology, but a central element of the Jewish faith. In solidarity with the Jewish people, and in the spirit of the biblical prophets, the church will seek to understand the proper role and calling of the State of Israel among the nations of the world.

We are deeply concerned about the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and the sufferings of the Israelis and the Palestinians, including the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan. We urge the State of Israel and the Palestinian leadership to seek all possible ways to end the violence and to resume negotiations seeking a just agreement between these two peoples.

We affirm the legacy of the dialogue that is already ours in research, statements, and insights, and encourage the LWF and the member churches to build on this legacy to produce materials that counter anti-Judaism in the church's theology and liturgy. These materials should be addressed to every area of the church's life: lay and theological education, worship, mission, service and organization. We call on the individual member churches to inform the LWF of any such materials that they may produce, so that these can be shared with other LWF member churches and other ecumenical partners.

We encourage the member churches to create and support opportunities for their members to learn about Jews and Judaism, and the heritage we share. Trust and common understanding must be nurtured beginning with the young and through face-to-face encounter.

We encourage the member churches to advocate for adequate legal proscriptions and remedies against racist and antisemitic activities, using the legal tools of human rights in this effort.

We encourage the member churches to raise their voices against antisemitism and anti-Judaism wherever they appear and actively to support Jewish communities in maintaining their traditional observances.

We affirm the cooperation that has grown between Jews and Lutherans in work for peace and justice, social relief and community development, and we encourage all who are engaged in such work to continue.

We encourage the LWF to continue its support of Jewish-Lutheran dialogue in the member churches. We especially encourage the engagement of younger leadership in the dialogue, to help assure its continuation and its relevance to contemporary culture.

We encourage the LWF and member churches to convene theological consultations to pursue the theological, exegetical, missiological and pastoral issues that have been raised in and by the dialogue and our own plenary sessions.

We express our gratitude to the LWF for its leadership in this consultation and in the promotion of Jewish-Lutheran understanding. We call for patience and perseverance by all who share this goal, until the long-term process of change on which we have embarked is brought to fruition by the one God of Jews and Christians.

A Letter from the Consultation

We, Lutherans and Jews of many countries gathered in Dobogokö near Budapest, Hungary for an LWF Consultation on "Antisemitism and Anti-Judaism Today," express our deep abhorrence at the enormous atrocity that was perpetrated in the USA on Tuesday, 11th September 2001.

We totally condemn all terrorist activities.

We mourn the loss of the victims and express our sympathies to the families of the victims and to the people of the USA.

We see this attack as a crime against humanity.

In this dark hour, we pray that God will guide the leaders to make wise decisions and to lead the peoples of the world towards justice and peace.

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