

"Venerated Brothers and Sisters"
A Study of Pope John Paul II on Jews and Judaism
in the Context of Jewish-Christian Dialogue

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and
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There is an old story about someone who asked Frederick II for the evidence of providence and he replied, "the Jews." And Karl Barth, when asked, what is your proof for the existence of God, said, "the Jews."

—Steven T. Katz
The God I Believe In

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—PREFACE—

John Paul II is the first pope of record to make Jewish-Christian reconciliation a major theme of his pontificate. Ignatz Bubis said to him, “You have systematically continued the policy of dialogue and mutual understanding initiated by the Second Vatican Council under Pope John XXIII.”¹ Official Roman Catholic dialogue with Judaism began with part four of *Nostra Aetate*, the Second Vatican Council’s “Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions” (1965). When addressing Jewish groups, John Paul continually refers to this document:

I wish to confirm, with utmost conviction, that the teaching of the Church proclaimed during the Second Vatican Council in the declaration *Nostra Aetate* remains always for us, for the Catholic Church, for the Episcopate . . . and for the pope, a teaching which must be followed—a teaching which it is necessary to accept not merely as something fitting, but much more as an expression of faith, as an inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as a word of Divine Wisdom.²

By setting forth John Paul II’s teaching on Jews and Judaism—his statements, diplomacy and symbolic acts—I will argue the thesis that the teaching of Pope John Paul II is a realistic, relevant and reliable guide to Roman Catholic participants in Jewish-Christian dialogue.

By “realistic,” I mean John Paul focuses on groundwork and step-by-step progress on basic issues; he emphasizes practical initiatives. By “relevant,” I mean that he addresses concerns vital to the dialogue. By “reliable,” I mean that his “track record” proves him to be an intelligent, credible and wise guide; and by “guide,” I mean one who provides direction but does not prohibit

¹ Ignatz Bubis, Chair of the Directorate of the Central Council of the Jews in Germany, on the occasion of the pope’s visit to Berlin, 23 June 1996. Unofficial translation by the Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, *Sidic* 29, no. 2-3 (1996): 57.

² The pope is quoting from his address to a Jewish gathering in Venezuela, January 1985. Here, he is addressing a delegation from the American Jewish Committee, hereafter AJC, celebrating the twentieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, 15 February 1985. Eugene J. Fisher and Rabbi Leon Klenicki, eds., *Spiritual Pilgrimage: Texts on Jews and Judaism 1979-1995 by Pope John Paul II* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 47. Hereafter SP.

individual exploration or dictate the itinerary.

My thesis responds to *Nostra Aetate*'s declaration that it wishes in regard to Catholic relations with Jews "to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit above all of biblical and theological studies, and of brotherly [sic] dialogues."³ As a critical survey of magisterial teaching on Jewish–Christian relations, I intend that the thesis contribute toward fulfilling the need for an assessment in English of John Paul II's still unfinished legacy of teaching on Jews and Judaism. Finally, I intend the thesis to foster among interested theologians and others a deeper appreciation of the progress made during the pontificate of John Paul toward overcoming anti-Judaism, and providing elements for a positive theology of Judaism in the Roman Catholic Church.

I will evaluate the pope's direct and indirect teaching on Jews and Judaism in relation to a selection of key issues in Jewish–Christian dialogue. By "direct teaching" I mean his own words and actions; by "indirect," I mean teachings issued or reiterated during his pontificate; and statements, policies and actions of authoritative church bodies that have his active or passive approval. My focus, however, will be his direct statements, diplomacy and symbolic acts in regard to Jews, Judaism and Jewish–Christian relations. On some issues in the dialogue, church teaching during the pontificate of John Paul has been acclaimed; on other issues, church teaching has been less satisfying to Jews and Christians engaged in dialogue. Thus my critical survey will also highlight issues where the partners in dialogue call for further progress.

In the three chapters of the thesis, I will document that authoritative church teaching is no longer anti-Semitic, anti-Judaic or anti-Zionist; that is, church teaching nowhere supports dis-

³ Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, 4," in *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 665.

crimination of any kind against Jews in regard to these distinct but inseparable dimensions of Jewish identity: their personhood (anti-Semitism), their religion (anti-Judaism) or their homeland (anti-Zionism). Moreover, the teaching of the Church is positive and substantive on these vital aspects of Jewish identity, as well as on important related matters that will be specified in the course of the discussion. John Paul II not only condemns any form of discrimination against Jews. In regard to dialogue with Jews, he urges Catholics “to avoid the misunderstanding of syncretism, the confusion of one another’s identities as believers, the shadow and suspicion of proselytism.”⁴

In regard to discussion that pertains to Jewish understanding and belief, my hermeneutical guide will be the Vatican directive that Christians “must strive to learn by what essential traits Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience.”⁵ Therefore, I will, wherever possible, let Jewish partners in dialogue speak for themselves on the issues.

My method will be to place selected church teachings (statements, speeches, diplomatic and symbolic actions) in relation to issues in Jewish–Christian dialogue. In the course of my history of the dialogue and survey of the issues in chapter one, I will choose three issues for expanded discussion. Chapter two will discuss the teaching of contempt, and the issue of the State of Israel and the status of Jerusalem. Chapter three will be devoted to the Holocaust, the *Shoah*. Chapter three will end with a recapitulation of my entire argument.

Vatican documents make notoriously callous use of exclusive language. If my efforts were successful, my own prose is free of it. Rather than litter quotations with *sic*’s, however, I call at-

⁴ Address to the Second International Catholic-Jewish Theological Colloquium, Rome, 6 November 1986. SP, 81.

⁵ Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration “Nostra Aetate, No. 4,” I, “On Dialogue,” Preamble*, 1 December 1974.

tention to the problem here. I have adjusted only those statements whose rhetorical impact on the reader, in my judgment, is undermined by their exclusive nouns and pronouns. Likewise for quotations from other sources that either because of date or insensitivity use exclusive language.

I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. David Novak of University College for directing this study; to the Bat Kol Institute, its benefactors, and directors Dr. Anne Anderson and Dr. Maureen Fritz of St. Michael's for financing my study at Ratisbonne in Jerusalem; to my teachers, especially at Ratisbonne, and to the administration there; and to Dr. Michael Fahey, then dean of theology at St. Michael's, who encouraged my return to studies and helped me find my way.

John Paul II has made what I call his "mission statement":

In my pastoral concerns, journeys, and meetings and in my teachings during . . . my pontificate, I have constantly sought to develop and deepen our relationships with the Jews, "our elder brothers in the faith of Abraham," and I therefore encourage and bless not only this initiative [the publication of *Spiritual Pilgrimage*] but the initiatives of all those who, in fidelity to the directives of the Second Vatican Council and animated by goodwill and religious hope, foster relationships of mutual esteem and friendship and promote the Jewish-Christian dialogue in the appropriate places and with due theological competence and historical objectivity. The more we try to be faithful in loving obedience to the God of the Covenant, the Creator and Savior, contemplating in prayer his wonderful plan of Redemption and loving our neighbor as ourselves, the deeper will be the roots of our dialogue and the more abundant its results.⁶

When one considers that our troubled relationship had been almost two millennia old, and that official Catholic dialogue with Jews and Judaism is just a generation old, I believe it is hard to disagree with the assessment of Howard I. Friedman. Speaking in 1985 to John Paul, he said:

We wish to acknowledge the act of justice and service to truth represented by that declaration [*Nostra Aetate*], and your own moving pronouncements calling for mutual respect and collaboration between Catholics and Jews in common service to humanity. It is no exaggeration to state that as a result of these far-reaching pronouncements, and the practical actions they have inspired, greater

⁶ John Paul II, letter to Archbishop John L. May of St. Louis, 8 August 1987. SP, 100.

progress in improved Catholic-Jewish relations has taken place during the past two decades than in the past two millennia.⁷

On the same occasion, after acknowledging that “much remains to be done,” John Paul said in response (48):

I am convinced, and I am happy to state it on this occasion, that the relationship between Jews and Christians have radically improved in these years. Where there was ignorance and therefore prejudice and stereotypes, there is now growing mutual knowledge, appreciation, and respect. There is, above all, love between us, that kind of love, I mean, which is for both of us a fundamental injunction of our religious traditions and which the New Testament has received from the Old [cf. Mark 12:28-34; Lev. 19:18]. Love involves frankness and the freedom to disagree in a brotherly way where there are reasons for it.

⁷ Howard I. Friedman, then president of the AJC. Address on behalf of the delegation from the AJC, in Rome to celebrate the 20th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, 15 February 1985. SP, 45.

—GLOSSARY—

Aggadah The opposite, so to speak, of HALAKHAH. As the non-legal part of rabbinic literature, it complements *Halakhah*. I will provide an extended gloss of *aggadah* for the reason explained in the thesis (99). Varied and colorful in content and form, it includes stories, homilies, fables, additions to the stories in the Bible, moral instruction, words of consolation, and ideal visions of the world to come. Its forms include: parable, allegory, song, lament, prayer, biting satire and fiery polemic, dramatic colloquy, word play, word and number symbolism, fanciful letter combinations. And more. But it is not intended to entertain; it has one subject: to teach the way of God. It deals imaginatively, but not systematically, with many philosophical and theological problems. Scattered throughout the TALMUD, the *aggadic* material represents more than a thousand years of Jewish spirituality. It is a triumph of religious imagination.

Akeda The binding of Isaac, a central religious paradigm in Judaism that continues to be interpreted. A symbol of complete devotion to God's will. A large body of MIDRASH on the biblical account exists.

Anti-Judaism Discrimination against Jews on religious or theological grounds.

Anti-Semitism Discrimination against Jews on racial or ethnic grounds.

Ashkenazim Jews of Germany and their descendants in Eastern European and other countries; generally all Jews, about 85%, who are not SEPHARDIM. Their pronunciation of Hebrew and some religious customs differ from that of the *sephardim*.

Haggada The order of service for the Passover Seder. Great freedom is exercised in compiling the text. Many versions exist. Sometimes they are beautifully designed and decorated.

Halakhah The statute on a particular subject as agreed by the rabbis. Also the body of such judgments. As circumstances demand, new *halakhic* opinions are issued by individual rabbis. Great *halakhists* are revered in Judaism.

Judaism, Chassidic Charismatic, pietist movement begun by the Baal Shem Tov (d. 1761) in Podolia. Became a mass movement in Eastern Europe. Much influenced by KABBALA. Great stress on devotion (*Kavvana*) and mystical union with God.

Judaism, Conservative Movement within American Judaism. Permits some modifications of HALAKHAH and the liturgy. Some liberal congregations accept women rabbis.

Judaism, Orthodox Designates those Jews who differ from the Conservative and Reform by insisting on strict adherence to the laws of the SHULKHAN ARUKH, as interpreted by leading rabbinic authorities, and the application of its principles and details to modern living.

Judaism, Reconstructionist Begun in 1934 in the U.S. by Mordecai Kaplan. Teaches that Judaism is not only a religion but a civilization. It calls for diversity in Judaism as well as respect for

traditional forms. Espouses a process philosophy of God; disavows that Jews are chosen. Popular also among secular Jews.

Judaism, Reform Began in Germany as reaction to Jewish emancipation. Believes that Judaism must continuously adapt to its environment. No restrictions on women in most congregations. Does not observe dietary laws or other traditional practices that separate Jews from their neighbours. Most active movement in Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Kabbala Traditionally, a Jew (usually male) does not approach *Kabbala* until aged forty. The mystical religious stream in Judaism much influenced by gnosticism, neoplatonism and theosophy. It became a popular religious movement in the 16th cent. and again, later, in Chassidism. An outstanding modern interpreter of the *kabbalistic* tradition is Gershom Scholem.

Midrash The body or single instance of rabbinic literature that contains homilies and stories that make use of biblical texts to make their points. Finding hidden and new meaning in the biblical text, it tries to answers questions not answered in the text. Many works exist. Term now mainly applied to Midrash AGGADAH.

Mishna The legal code, the first and most important compilation (c. 200 CE) of rabbinic teaching. Traditionally ascribed to Judah Ha-Nasi (the prince, chief), head of the rabbinic court in Palestine. (*Nasi* is the title of the president of the State of Israel.)

Mitzvah Commandment, religious duty. Traditionally they number 613—365 do not's and 268 do's. (Thus *bar mitzvah* and *bat mitzvah*, son and daughter of the commandment.)

Rabbi Religious leader of the Jewish community. In North American, the title is conferred usually by the theological seminary. He or she gives sermons in the synagogue, and performs pastoral, social and educational duties.

Rashi (d. 1105) Rabbi Shlomo ben Isaac (RaShI) is revered for his concise, lucid commentaries on the Bible and the Talmud, and for personal holiness as well. He greatly influenced Nicholas of Lyra and other celebrated exegetes. All editions of the TALMUD contain his commentaries.

Ratisbonne Christian Center for Jewish-Christian Studies, Jerusalem. Affiliated with the University of St. Michael's College and the Institut Catholique de Paris, which have degree programs that include study at Ratisbonne. It is owned by the Vatican.

Sephardim The Jews of Spain and their descendants in other countries; popularly the term describes all Jews, about 15%, who are not ASHKENAZIM, from whom sephardic Jews differ in pronunciation of Hebrew and some religious customs.

Shema Hear. "Hear O Israel . . ." Jewish profession of faith recited twice daily. The three paragraphs are Deut 6:4-9, 11:13-20 and Num 15:37-41.

Shemoneh Esreh Eighteen. The benedictions recited thrice daily in the synagogue. Also known as the *Amida* (standing), *Tefilla* (prayer). Mostly compiled c. 100 CE; some parts date from Second Temple times.

Shulkhan Arukh “The Prepared Table.” The daily guide of life for *halakhic* Jews. Work of Spanish codifier Joseph Caro (d. 1575) who collects the views of previous codifiers of *halakhah* and gives his own decisions on disputed points.

Siddur Order. Term among the ASHKENAZIM for the book of daily services and prayers; the prayerbook for festivals is called the *Mahzor*. The SEPHARDIM call the *Siddur* the *Tefilla* (prayer).

Talmud There are two Talmuds, the Jerusalem Talmud, written in Palestine; and the larger Babylonian Talmud, the more authoritative. It comprises: the MISHNA and the Gemara, voluminous discussions and commentaries on the *Mishna*. The English translation runs to eighteen volumes. While not Scripture as such, it is authoritative and in that sense canonical.

Tanak The common Jewish term for their Bible. It is an acronym of Torah, *Nevi'im* (prophets) and *Ketuvim* (writings), the three divisions of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Teshuva Turning. The Jewish term for repentance. Repentance is a process. Developed by the Rabbis and codified by Maimonides, *Teshuva* has four distinct steps: reformation, resolution, remorse and confession. On the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the holiest day of the Jewish liturgical calendar, the service underlines communal as well as personal sin. Thus one confesses to sins not personally committed because one belongs to a people who sins and thus shares the guilt, a dimension of sin acknowledged in Catholicism but seldom given due emphasis.

Tikkun The medieval kabbalists developed an esoteric doctrine that saw complete restoration, *Tikkun*, as hastening the coming of the Messiah. Chassidism absorbed this teaching and developed a theology of restoration that considers TORAH the pre-existing “blueprint” of originally harmonious creation, a *logos*. Strictly *halakhic* Torah observance, therefore, helps restore all things to God. Reform, Conservative and some Orthodox Jews have broadened this concept to include all work that cooperates with God to heal, restore, the world. Emil Fackenheim names *Tikkun* a prime theological category in his post-Holocaust interpretation of Judaism.

Torah Strictly speaking, the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, traditionally the Books of Moses. Torah circumscribes Judaism as Gospel circumscribes Christianity. Torah is written and oral, the oral codified in the talmudic literature; both were given to Moses at Sinai. Others modify this view and consider the oral lore to be derived, in response to ongoing history, from what is implicit in the Sinai event (as Catholics consider some dogmas to be implicit in Scripture; the dogma of the Assumption of Mary, for example). Torah is also a comprehensive term for traditional Jewish religious life. Torah is “the way.”

Yavneh Ancient Palestinian city. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai, heir to Hillel, established the spiritual centre of Judaism here: he opened an academy, assembled a group of scholars and re-established the Sanhedrin. One of his pupils was the great Rabbi Akiva, one of Rabbinic Judaism’s most revered sages and martyrs.

For these glosses, I have relied principally on relevant entries in *The Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*; the glossary in Michael Hilton, *The Christian Effect on Jewish Life* (London: SCM Books Ltd., 1994), 245–49, and on my own general knowledge.

—CHAPTER ONE—

“VENERATED BROTHERS AND SISTERS”

The terms Jew and Judaism, central to my argument, denote complex realities. Before discussing church teaching on Jews and Judaism, therefore, I will explicate my understanding of the Jews and their religion.

I. Who are the Jews? What is Judaism?

The Christian engaged in Jewish–Christian dialogue soon learns the perils of trying to define Judaism. Jews themselves vary widely in their descriptions and explanations of Judaism. In the available space, I will attempt a general description drawn from a spectrum of Jewish apologetics.⁸ Christian sources can sometimes be helpful too. The American bishops, for example, have expressed succinctly some basic elements of Jewish identity:

In dialogue with Christians, Jews have explained that they do not consider themselves as a church, a sect, a denomination, as is the case among Christian communities, but rather as a peoplehood that is not solely [sic] racial, ethnic, or religious, but in a sense a composite of all these. It is for such reasons that an overwhelming majority of Jews see themselves bound in one way or another to the land of Israel. Most Jews see this tie to the land as essential to their Jewishness.⁹

⁸ Jewish apologetical works abound. The best are not always those intended to inform gentile readers. I have profited more from works intended for fellow Jews. My account is mostly a personal summary from years of reading and reflection. An excellent introduction would be Bernard J. Bamberger, *The Story of Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964). For an education in the similarities and differences among Jewish and Catholic religious concepts, see Fr. Peter Stravinskas and Rabbi Leon Klenicki, *Catholic Jewish Encounter* (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1994). For a fascinating account of contemporary Jewish concepts of God, see Joshua O. Haberman, *The God I Believe In* (Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan Canada, 1994). Fourteen Jews, including a woman rabbi once a Christian, a Chassidic rebbe, and prominent Jews from different walks of life talk about their religious experience and the place of prayer in their lives.

⁹ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Statement on Catholic-Jewish Relations” [20 November 1975], in *Pastoral Letters of the United States Catholic Bishops: Volume IV 1975-1983* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1984), 124.

Thus it is not accurate to say Jew refers to ethnicity, assumed to be Semitic, and Judaism to a Jew's religion. Judaism embraces all Jews, observant, nonobservant, agnostic and atheist. Jewish peoplehood comprises many ethnicities and races; a gentile convert enjoys full membership in the peoplehood of Israel. Even if born of a Jewish mother who had embraced another religion, one's membership in Jewish peoplehood perdures. All Jews are heirs to the Promise.¹⁰

Some general differences between Judaic and Catholic emphases¹¹ deserve mention. Judaism emphasizes orthopraxy. Apart from basic tenets—above all, confessing the oneness of God in the words of the *Shema*,¹² and abjuring all forms of idolatry¹³—orthodoxy is more a matter of behaviour than of theological belief or opinion. Whereas major Christian denominations agree on certain creeds, Judaism has no universally agreed-upon formal creed.¹⁴ In various accounts of the mainstream dialogue, one notes that Jews tend to emphasize, over theology as such, the meaning in covenantal terms of their historical experience; thus Jews will prefer discussing the State of Is-

¹⁰ Contrasting Paul's Jewish point of view with the later "introspective exegesis of the West," Stendahl observes: "In the Rabbinic tradition . . . the righteousness of God is not described . . . as redeeming some and condemning others, but rather as the line of demarcation which goes through the heart of every person. There are two impulses fighting within man: the good impulse, *yetzer tob* and the evil impulse, *yetzer ha-ra'*. Such a concept . . . represents quite a sophisticated development. It is a rather handsome awareness to see that it is somewhat superficial to consider that everyone will be saved, or that some are to be saved and others not. The line thus must pierce through each individual's heart. This is a mature doctrine. But the originators of Christian faith did not benefit from such a higher education in theology." Krister Stendahl, "Paul Among Jews and Gentiles," in *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 33. Jewish apologetics often present the doctrine of *yetzer ha-tov* and *yetzer ha-ra* to counter the Christian doctrine of original sin.

¹¹ "The greatest obstacle for us Christians is . . . our inability to contrast Christianity and Judaism clearly, to mark them off, one from another." Clemens Thoma, "Points of Departure," in *Brothers in Hope*, ed. John M. Oesterreicher (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 159.

¹² Words in bold italic, and other Judaic terms, are defined in the glossary.

¹³ "For the prohibition of idolatry is the most basic *sine qua non* of being a Jew, so much so that the Talmud states that 'whoever denies idolatry is called a Jew [B. Megillah 13a].'" David Novak, *Maimonides on Judaism and Other Religions* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1997), 16.

¹⁴ Maimonides (d. 1204) formulated a creed of "thirteen principles of faith which—Maimonides held—every Jew must accept. . . . The reception accorded to his summary was typically Jewish. The thirteen principles never became an official creed [binding on all Jews]." Bamberger, *The Story of Judaism*, 176–78.

rael, the Holocaust and their history of suffering at Christian hands. (Without Judaism's ancient, traditional emphasis on historical event and memory, we would not have the Jewish Testament¹⁵.) While there is a rich tradition of theological speculation, exemplified by Philo, Maimonides and the *Kabbala* tradition, influential especially among the Chassidim, mainstream Judaism emphasizes practical more than speculative theology.

Peter van der Osten-Sacken argues that Jews and Christians differ in their interpretations of the relationship between humanity and God.¹⁶ While I believe the difference he writes of is one of emphasis (at least among Catholics; Osten-Sacken is Protestant, and his interpretation echoes our differing doctrines of grace), it is instructive to note that:

Christian tradition stresses that because Abraham "goes" in response to the promise, it is a matter of faith or trust. So faith or trust is the behavior that accords with the divine word. And because this trust is effected by the very promise itself, it has its foundation not in human beings but in God himself. Jewish tradition, on the other hand, stresses that the promise cannot be fulfilled unless Abraham *does* what he is commanded to do. Abraham is God's partner in the fulfillment of the divine promise. The background of these two interpretations is a different interpretation of human beings in their relationship to God. . . . On the one side [Jewish], we find a limited degree of independence in relation to God; on the other, unbounded dependence.¹⁷

More pronounced difference between Judaism and Christianity is found, in my view, in the theology of God implicit in early *Aggadah*, the non-halakhic literature of the *Talmud*. In the

¹⁵ I use Jewish Testament and Christian Testament to avoid the supersessionist overtones of Old and New.

¹⁶ "The fundamental 'mark' of Israel is that, from the very moment it appears in biblical history, it is gathered and bound into God's special relationship to it. This means that the theological question about Israel's identity is first of all the question about the One to whom Israel belongs. His characteristics . . . cannot be detached from that fundamental relation between God and his people." Peter van der Osten-Sacken, *Christian-Jewish Dialogue: Theological Foundations* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 22.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 25. For a Jewish treatment of this topic, see David Hartman, *A Living Covenant: The Innovative Spirit in Traditional Judaism* (New York: Macmillan, 1985), especially chapter one, "Assertion Versus Submission: The Tension Within Judaism." Rabbi Hartman also discusses the *Akeda*, a central theme in Jewish theology. In chapter two, "Fundamentals of a Covenantal Anthropology," he explores the complexities of human freedom and autonomy in the context of obedience to *Halakhah*.

course of Judaic studies at *Ratisbonne* in 1996, I researched this “limited degree of independence in relation to God” in *Pekista de-Rab Kahana*,¹⁸ a compilation of homiletic *midrashim*. My primary theme was Israel’s representatives arguing with God to change his mind. Harries said on that topic:

The tradition in Judaism of people willing to argue with God, of being bold enough to bring their own moral standards into the dialogue and to hold God to them . . . is a crucial moral insight. Christianity, with its taken for granted assumption of unquestioning obedience needs to take this on board.¹⁹

Our differing theologies of God, too large a topic for discussion here, still awaits serious theological investigation. My research and pondering continue to draw me closer to the conviction that the main difference is the relevance for Jews and Christians of all godtalk detached from God’s actual historical mutuality with humanity, the Classical God versus the God of Abraham, if you will.²⁰ As for the God of Abraham’s ongoing self-revelation through the Jews: Rabbinic Judaism’s reflection on the mystery of God is most richly expressed in the Talmud, *Midrash* and the ongoing commentaries, not in the Jewish Testament as such.

What of Judaism today? The heir to the religion of Jesus is alive and fulfilling its mission in the form that succeeded Second-Temple Judaism, called Rabbinic Judaism or Judaism of the dual *Torah* (basically the written, the Pentateuch; and the oral, Talmud and Midrash).

¹⁸ William (Gershon Zev) Braude and Israel J. Kapstein, eds., *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana: R. Kahana's Compilation of Discourses for Sabbaths and Festal Days* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1975). The editors argue a fifth-century date. In “Pool of Hope: Israel’s God of Mercy in *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana*,” I also pursued the theme of God’s self-limitation in relation to Israel. I believe this early aggadic material, so coloured by the catastrophe of 70 CE, has much to contribute to a Christian post-Holocaust theology of God.

¹⁹ Richard Harries, “Has Jewish-Christian Dialogue Really Begun?,” *Sidic* 28, no. 22 (1995): 17.

²⁰ Soulen writes: “The God of Israel . . . names the God who is identified by fidelity to the Jewish people through time and therefore by engagement with human history in its public and corporate dimensions. If it is true that the gospel about Jesus is credible only as predicated of the God of Israel, then the integrity of Christian theology after Christendom depends upon bringing traditional forms of Christian thought into a future degree of congruence with the God of Israel.” R. Kendall Soulen, in the preface to his *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), xi.

a) Judaism Today

Contemporary Judaism, like the Second-Temple form we know (partially and not always accurately) from the Christian Testament, is pluralist. Jews speak of Movements: *Orthodox*, *Chassidic*, *Conservative*, *Reform*, *Reconstructionist* are the principal ones. Differences, except for the important ones noted immediately below, are not as theologically significant as those that divide Christianity into denominations.

The chief principle of differentiation among the Movements, as far as I can judge, is the degree of obedience each renders to *Halakhah*, the encompassing code of commandments derived from written and oral Torah that, for the Orthodox and Chassidim, clearly express in their totality God's will in matters of behaviour. The other Movements profess differing degrees of liberalism in regard to *Halakhah*. In my reading of their apologetics, I find just one other decisive difference among the Movements: the role of women. That role ranges from one that is strictly prescribed (in Orthodoxy and Chassidism) to gender equality in all matters (in some but not all congregations of the other Movements, especially Reform).

The traditional canard that Judaism is the religion of law, of introverted works-righteousness, and Christianity the religion of love, grace and service to the world has been exposed as the cornerstone of the Judaism that Jacob Neusner calls a Christian invention:

What Judaism did Christianity invent for itself? The conversation partner fabricated by Christianity hardly presented a worthy opponent for dialogue, or even debate and disputation. On the contrary, once invented, "Judaism" served Christianity as a foil: that alone. Invented for the purpose of polemic and apologetic, "Judaism" was so defined as to form a caricature, a mere anti-Christianity, the opposite, the other, the worst possible choice, by contrast to the best possible choice.²¹

²¹ Jacob Neusner, *Telling Tales: Making Sense of Christian and Judaic Nonsense: The Urgency and Basis for Judeo-Christian Dialogue* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 51.

What, then, is Judaism to Jews? I will turn first to John Paul. It might seem to betray my resolve to follow the Vatican directive that we learn about Jews and Judaism from Jews. But some have been listening, and I am anxious to learn if Catholics are finally getting it right.

John Paul speaks of one or another key to Jewish religious identity in most of his addresses to Jewish groups. He went to the heart of Jewish identity in his address to the Central Council of Jews in Germany: “Based on their calling and their history the Jewish people have been uniquely singled out to make known God’s desire for the salvation of [humanity].”²² (The phrase “singled out” merits comment. In Vision TV’s *Symposium on Being Jewish*, Emil F. Fackenheim said it was his preferred usage. Besides its overtones of superiority, Fackenheim said the dictionary meaning of chosen (selected or marked for favour) suggests that Jewish suffering was somehow God’s gift.) John Paul’s phrase is not meant to dilute Christian belief that the Jews are God’s chosen people. In 1990, addressing a meeting in Rome called to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, he unites a few keys to Jewish religious identity. Taking that “brief but significant document” as his reference point, he credits the strength of the conciliar document to its openness to all people as images of the Creator; then he goes deeper, saying:

[*Nostra Aetate*] is anchored in and takes its orientation from a high sense of the *absolute singularity* of God’s choice of a particular people . . . Israel according to the flesh.²³ . . . You live in a special relationship with the Torah, the *living teaching* of the living God. . . . God, His holy Torah, the synagogal liturgy and family traditions, the land of holiness, are surely what characterize your people from the relig-

²² “Pastoral Visit of Pope John Paul II in Germany—1996,” *Sidic* 29, no. 2-3 (1996): 54. David Hartman is more specific: “God elects Israel for a historical task, that is, to become a holy nation. The holiness is not otherworldly, but entails the establishment of a society that embodies the normative content of revelation.” Hartman, *A Living Covenant*, 25. The establishment of a society will be discussed below under “The Land and State of Israel.”

²³ From the present context and that of his entire teaching, it seems clear that John Paul does not intend the odious element of the teaching of contempt that juxtaposed “Israel according to the flesh” (merely an ethnic reality) with *verus Israel*, the Church, “Israel according to the Spirit” (a theological reality).

ious point of view. And these are things that constitute the foundation of our dialogue and of our cooperation.²⁴

Without trying to be exhaustive, I would add: Covenant, study, and Shabbat. Judaism's religio-historical *Sitz im Leben* is the Covenant or Pact sealed between Israel and God who chose them.²⁵ Study is first of all Torah study, a religious obligation. The contribution of Jews, out of proportion to their number, to modern sciences, humanities, the professions and the media testifies to Jewish commitment to the intellectual dimension of being human.

Jewish worship centers on personal, family and community observance of the seventh day, the holy time of Shabbat. On Shabbat, observant Jews, by refusing all forms of work, recall and enjoy their freedom from slavery and savor a foretaste of the freedom of the world to come (the Exodus experience is constantly retrieved in Jewish practice). The religious Jew's spontaneous unification of the dimensions of time—the retrieval in the present of past experience of God that points to a promised future experience of God—is one of Judaism's singular gifts to Christian religious consciousness and Catholic sacramental theology.

Judaism as a whole has no central teacher like a pope. As in Catholicism, the beliefs of Judaism are woven into the prayers of the sacred liturgy, *lex orandi, lex credendi*. John Paul frequently speaks of the Jewish roots of Catholic liturgy:

To assess [our common spiritual patrimony] carefully in itself and with due awareness of the faith and religious life of the Jewish people as they are professed and practiced today, can greatly help us to understand better . . . the liturgy whose Jewish roots remain still to be examined in depth, and in any case should be better known and appreciated by our faithful.²⁶

²⁴ Address to Jewish members of the International Liaison Committee, hereafter ILC, meeting in Rome, 6 December 1990. SP, 141. Emphasis added.

²⁵ For a brief, ecumenical discussion of the meaning of the Covenant see Irving Greenberg, "Judaism and Christianity: Their Respective Roles in the Strategy of Redemption," in Eugene J. Fisher, ed., *Visions of the Other: Jewish and Christian Theologians Assess the Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994), 8-13.

²⁶ Address to delegates from episcopal conferences and other experts in Catholic-Jewish relations at a

Worship and devotion center on the prayerbook, the *Siddur*, it includes prayers said by Jesus and early Christians in synagogue worship.²⁷

Jewish spirituality is *imitatio Dei*, for God said through Moses, “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy” (Lev 19:2 NRSV). This principle is related to the passion of the religious Jew to do God’s will and be prepared to die to sanctify the Name (*Kiddush ha-Shem*):

And as it is God’s supreme end that all mankind shall ultimately own and serve him as the true God, so it is the chief end of Israel, to whom he has in a unique manner revealed himself, to hallow his name by living so that men shall see and say that the God of Israel is the true God. This is the meaning of the Kiddush ha-Shem, the hallowing of the name, as the supreme principle and motive of moral conduct in Judaism.²⁸

In a profound sense, therefore, the Jew’s mission is to be Jewish. To be Jewish is to witness to God’s presence in the world—no matter the cost, as Jewish history so clearly demonstrates. Throughout the millennia, Jews have refused to the point of martyrdom to be anything but Jews. In practice, Jewish mission is characterized by the term *Tikkun*, cooperating with God to establish the Reign of God in history and bring creation to perfection.

Most Jews await the Messianic Age and the person of the Messiah (he is not regarded as a supernatural savior; Reform Jews do not expect a messianic person). Most religious Jews await the resurrection of the dead, God’s judgment, and the life of the world to come.

In short, the Judaism John Paul so passionately wants Catholics to dialogue with is not

meeting of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, Rome, 6 March 1982. SP, 19.

²⁷ “We know that Jesus was brought up in a devout home (Luke 2, cf. 4:16); we know therefore that he participated in the liturgical heritage of his people, and consequently we know the prayers which . . . accompanied the man Jesus throughout his life. The three hours of prayer in particular [morning, afternoon, evening] were so universally observed among the Jews of Jesus’ time that we are justified in including them in the comment ‘as his custom was’, which is made in Luke with reference to Jesus’ attendance at Sabbath worship (Luke 4:16).” Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1967), 73.

²⁸ George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), 2:103.

some inferior thing salvaged from the collapse of Temple Judaism, a fiction invented to bolster Christian claims. Despite centuries of the most horrific persecutions and cruel expulsions, the Jews have kept faith with their ancestral commitment to God's call. Among the faith traditions that claim descent from Abraham—Judaism, Christianity, Islam—Judaism would rightly claim the dignity of *primus inter pares*.

II. An Overview of Jewish–Catholic Relations

I will now consider the dialogue between Jews and Christians. As the discussion proceeds, the reader will note John Paul's affirmations of vital aspects of the identity of Jews and Judaism, papal teaching that remains little known among Catholics at large.

The researcher into Jewish–Christian relations encounters a vast body of scholarly material covering two millennia. In addition, there is hardly a significant aspect of this long history free of scholarly controversy, whether in matters of interpretation of the data or of the data *per se*. However, there is one apodictic statement that both sides cannot disagree on: relations between Jews and Christians for two millennia have been troubled and, for the Jews, mostly tragic.

Even Edward Flannery's celebrated *The Anguish of the Jews*²⁹ omits many horrors, especially of the modern period. I discovered this at Ratisbonne when researching a paper for the course in Jewish liturgy.³⁰ Nonetheless, both Jews and Catholics believe that repentance, *teshuva*, is never too late as far as God is concerned. Had Christians also taken to heart in regard to the

²⁹ Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-three Centuries of Antisemitism* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985).

³⁰ For "Teshuvah," a Catholic liturgy of repentance for the Church's history of *anti-Semitism* and *anti-Judaism*, I combed the many volumes of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Ltd., 1971). Although Fr. Flannery (see previous note) did not ignore the topic, I was shocked by the *Encyclopaedia's* litany of canonized saints who were fervent persecutors of the Jews.

Jews that repentance is never too early, countless Jews would have been spared suffering and martyrdom, and Christian conscience spared a deeply troubling inheritance.

Guilt and shame sometimes make Christian accounts of the history of Jewish–Christian relations, especially when evaluated in light of the Holocaust, relentlessly black. More dispassionate historical studies document a more encouraging picture that, while never free of shadow, tells of periods when Jewish–Christian relations were dominated by our common religious affirmations. The overview presented here as a prelude to *Nostra Aetate* will avoid specific stories; more details on the general points that follow will be given in chapter two’s discussion of “the teaching of contempt,” and in chapter three’s discussion of the *Shoah*, the Holocaust.

I will approach this topic with the attitude expressed by Rabbi Mark Tannenbaum, a pioneer in Jewish–Christian dialogue:

In my studies of the interaction between Christians and Jews from the first four centuries onward, even through the Middle Ages, I have found literally hundreds of episodes bespeaking the warmest and most mutually helpful ties between the ecclesiastical leaders of Christianity and Judaism, as well as on a daily level between “the common people.” This is not to minimize for a single moment the tragic fact that the contemporaries of these Christians and Jews were engaged in the most horrible mutual antagonisms and violence, with, *let the record be kept clear*, Jews being the victims in the majority of instances of this sad history.³¹

The first millennium of the Common Era tells many stories of God’s people the Jews suffering at Christian hands. Yet, despite the evolution of anti-Judaic teaching in the Church, the many shameful events, hateful sermons, attempts by rulers to enforce in their domains the mass baptism of Jews, the periodic expulsions and confiscations of property, and attempts by clerics, church councils and synods to forbid free socializing among Christians and Jews, anti-Semitism

³¹ Rabbi Marc H. Tannenbaum, “What is a Jew?,” in *The Star and the Cross: Essays on Jewish-Christian Relations*, ed. Katharine T. Hargrove, RSCJ (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1966), 22. Emphasis added.

and anti-Judaism did not gain popular support in the countries of Europe. Until the First Crusade (1096-99), many groups of European Jews and Christians lived peacefully and productively as good neighbours.³²

Nonetheless, the groundwork had been laid for the rapid development in Europe of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism. The First Crusade begins the pandemic anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism that would poison Christendom and evolve into the demonic racial hatred of the Nazis. Exegesis and theology already depicted the Jews as wanderers accursed by God and Judaism as a corpse of a religion that, having given us Jesus, had served its purpose, its followers lost.³³

Against the background of centuries of negative teaching about them, the second millennium witnessed the most shameful crimes against the Jews—by Christians often acting in the name of Jesus, their brother and our Lord. As various commentators have observed, the Cross held up as a sign of salvation became for many Jews a whipping-post and bludgeon.

III. The Beginnings of Dialogue

Prophetic signs of Christian awakening to the plight of the Jews can be found in the 1930s. Especially notable is the work of James W. Parkes, the Anglican priest-scholar who, in Rousmaniere's judgment, "perhaps more than any other Christian deserves to be called the father of Jewish-Christian dialogue."³⁴ In his still influential *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue*

³² Summarized from Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews*. Hailperin relates that at *Rashi*'s birth (c. 1040) Jews and Christians in numerous European communities had already enjoyed generations of fruitful cohabitation and a remarkable degree of social harmony. *Rashi*'s Christendom was tolerant enough to allow him to publish his firm rebuttal to Christological readings of Hebrew Scripture. Herman Hailperin, "The World of *Rashi*," in *Rashi and the Christian Scholars* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), 15-20, *passim*.

³³ The economic lives of Jews were severely restricted. The Church considered usury gravely sinful; so the work of moneylending was given to the Jews whose souls, it was believed, were lost anyway. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s. v. "Germany."

³⁴ John Rousmaniere, *Bridge to Dialogue: The Story of Jewish-Christian Relations* (New York: Paulist

gogue (London: Soncino Press, 1934), Parkes exposes many of the pious myths and spurious exegeses that still inform Christian anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism. In the 30s, through writing and radio broadcasts in France and the United States, Jacques Maritain argued for a more positive theology of Judaism, and warned against Hitler's National Socialist Party and its anti-Semitic agenda. A Jewish source remarks, "Pius XI (1922-39) . . . took up an attitude of unswerving opposition to Nazi racialism."³⁵ This likely refers to his 1937 encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (with burning concern), usually titled *On the Church and the German Reich*.³⁶

History proves that these and other prophets were not heeded. Concerted Christian efforts to come to terms with anti-Semitism did not gain momentum until 1947. The first notable statement is *An Address to the Churches*, also known as *The Seelisberg Declaration*:

This statement produced [at Seelisberg, Switzerland, 5 August 1947] by the Christian participants at the second conference of the newly formed International Council of Christians and Jews, was one of the first statements following World War II in which Christians [Protestants and Catholics], with the advice and council of Jews, began to come to terms with the implications of the Shoah.³⁷

It is disturbing to realize these words come *after* the Holocaust: "Antisemitism has lost none of its force, but threatens to extend to other regions, to poison the minds of Christians and to involve humanity more and more in a grave guilt with disastrous consequences."³⁸ (John Paul

Press, 1991), 45.

³⁵ *The Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*, s. v. "Popes."

³⁶ Text available from <http://abbey.apana.org.au/official/papal/Pius11/P11brenn.htm>; Internet; accessed 4 November 1997.

³⁷ *Seelisberg Declaration*, the editorial introduction. Available from <http://www.intnet.net/public/abrock/10points.html>; Internet; accessed 21 August 1997. Jules Isaac influenced the document with his eighteen-point dossier on the teaching of contempt. See Claire Huchet Bishop, *How Catholics Look at Jews: Inquiries into Italian, Spanish, and French Teaching Materials* (New York: Paulist Press, 1974), 4. Isaac presented this dossier to John XXIII in 1960 and thereby influenced John to put "the Jewish question" on the Council's agenda.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, preamble.

will utter similar warnings.) Although it lacks *Nostra Aetate*'s deeper theological context,³⁹ the *Declaration's* "Ten Points" anticipate the Council's declaration on the teaching of contempt. (*Nostra Aetate*, on the other hand, merely "decries" anti-Semitism and is silent on Christian persecution of the Jews and on the Holocaust.) The *Seelisberg Declaration* links contempt for Jews and Judaism with the Nazis' hatred of Jews as a people and declares that Nazism's racial doctrine "would have been impossible if all Christians had been true to the teaching of Jesus Christ on the mercy of God and love of one's neighbour."⁴⁰

From the *Seelisberg Declaration* to *Nostra Aetate* until today, slow but steady progress has been made. Numerous national and regional groups dedicated to Jewish-Christian dialogue were founded soon after the Second World War, especially in the United States, where most Jews live. As the various compendia attest, there has been until today a steady stream of joint statements and church documents. (Helga Croner's second collection contains thirty items from various churches, dioceseses, and groups.⁴¹) All the while, scholarly and popular titles on the dialogue proliferated and continue to appear regularly. Yet, Jewish-Christian activities like common worship and pulpit-sharing, popular and effective in the 60s and 70s, are less frequent today.

Official Roman Catholic dialogue with Jews and Judaism is a mere generation old. When

³⁹ *Nostra Aetate*, 4 begins: "As this sacred Synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it recalls the spiritual bond linking the people of the New Covenant with Abraham's stock." Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 663. These two positive statements retrieve the authentic tradition of the Church. Nonetheless, here and elsewhere in the document terms once given a supersessionist interpretation (e.g., "New Covenant") are used without comment. More on this point in chapter two's discussion of the teaching of contempt.

⁴⁰ *Seelisberg*, preamble. In their 30 September 1997 *Déclaration de repentance* for the silence of the bishops of France during the Vichy Regime's execution of the "final solution" in Nazi-occupied France (1940–44), the bishops declare they are motivated to take a new step by the 50th anniversary of the *Seelisberg Declaration*. The bishops' *Déclaration* will be discussed in chapter three.

⁴¹ Helga Croner, ed., *More Stepping Stones to Jewish-Christian Relations: An Unabridged Collection of Christian Documents 1975–1983* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985).

Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate* (1965) and the teaching that immediately ensued alerted the whole Church to the critical importance of reconciliation of Christian with Jew, the general state of Jewish-Catholic relations in the West was such that Catholics hardly knew how to proceed. Yet, ways to dialogue were found. Until now, however, the general preoccupation of the dialogue has been humanistic rather than theological. In the introduction to his superb analysis, from a Christian point of view, of the origins and development of the split between Judaism and Christianity, Vincent Martin, commenting in 1995 on the contemporary dialogue, observes:

This humanistic approach has remained a significant aspect of the Jewish-Christian dialogue for the last twenty-five years. It had to be humanistic because no other frame of reference was available to old spiritual enemies who were seeking some common values to share. The dialogue was intended to heal and not to increase the mutual hurt. But this approach implied serious limitations from the start. These limitations are now becoming more conscious.⁴²

Mordecai Waxman's earlier (1985) assessment, despite progress in the meantime, is still apposite:

It must be recognized that the middle-aged Jewish adult, with memories of the Holocaust and pictures of Catholic and Protestant attitudes and teachings derived from his youth, remains apprehensive that these new Christian perceptions may be temporary or may not siphon down to the local level, no matter how they are viewed in Christian theological circles. It cannot readily be forgotten that the history of Christian theological teaching and Christian persecution of the Jews is eighteen hundred years old while the process of new thinking has barely twenty years behind it.⁴³

Waxman also observes that change in Jewish-Christian relations means "that dialogue can now take place between Jews who authentically mirror the Jewish world and Jewish thought and

⁴² Vincent Martin, *A House Divided: The Parting of the Ways between Synagogue and Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), 1-2.

⁴³ Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, "The Dialogue, Touching New Bases?," in *More Stepping Stones*, 28. Rabbi Waxman at the time was president of the Synagogue Council of America.

Christians who are open, for the first time, to Jewish insights.”⁴⁴ With Vincent Martin and others, Waxman also wants the dialogue to face the tough issues:

A necessary condition of effective dialogue . . . is to reach beyond blandness toward genuine confrontation with the issues on which Jews and Christians agree and disagree, and to feel free to do so without fear of reprisals. After all, intolerance has been for millennia the characteristic posture of the world and of the Christian environment. Tolerance is a new virtue yet to be learned and cultivated.⁴⁵

In an essay that one would like to quote in full, Waxman continues:

Many Jews living in the Christian world are both willing to engage in dialogue and to discuss theology. Let it be observed, however, that by and large they know more about Christianity than Christians know about Judaism. . . . Theological discussion, however, is a task for specialists.⁴⁶

Facing the tough theological issues is not the only problem. I will let Jacob Neusner, an important interpreter of Judaism and significant contributor to the literature of the dialogue, represent a small but very important constituency who maintain that dialogue has not even begun, that partners in Jewish–Christian dialogue have been in monologue with each other. (Rabbi Neusner’s 1994 judgment echoes the Vatican’s 1974 *Guidelines*: “To tell the truth, such relations as there have been between Jew and Christian have scarcely risen above the level of monologue. From now on, real dialogue must be established.”⁴⁷) But Neusner’s understanding of dialogue differs from the one informing the *Guidelines* and, happily, that of some other traditional Jews.

Rabbi Neusner laments that Jews and Christians keep trying to enlarge somewhat specious common ground, and fail to face the real issues. In fact, Neusner believes there is no common theological ground. In *Telling Tales*, he argues that real dialogue can begin only when “the two

⁴⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 31.

⁴⁷ *Guidelines*, I. Dialogue.

religions will recognize the simple fact: they really are totally alien to one another.”⁴⁸

As valuable as Neusner’s critique may be, a more fundamental point needs to be made: Neusner does not espouse the mutual *theological* understanding that most Christians (and many Jews) would consider the core of inter-religious dialogue. Like many traditional Jews, Neusner at least implicitly accepts the ruling of Soloveitchik:

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, the leading halachist of our times, in an article published in *Tradition* 1964, had reminded the Orthodox Jews that the various religious experiences are incommensurable. The inner life of faith is not to be exposed in the public arena; it is a mysterious relationship of the soul with the living God. Dialogue between Jews and Christians can be welcomed only for the solution of the social and political problems encountered by Jews and Christians in the human environment in which they need to live as good neighbors.⁴⁹

This attitude has its Christian counterpart. From certain formal statements and tracts issuing from conservative Christian communities (but not exclusively from such quarters), it seems likely that Hans Conzelmann represents a considerable constituency when he writes:

For Christians, there can be no acknowledgment of the people of Israel as especially holy people, nor of Israel’s law. But instead of attempting to find a basis for religious agreement, it is thoroughly possible to attempt a rapprochement on human grounds, since Christians stand under the commandment of love, which is the end of the law.⁵⁰

Dialogue for Neusner must be based upon understanding how the other feels religiously. Catholics especially will be intrigued by Neusner’s suggestion that the best bridge to Jewish un-

⁴⁸ Neusner, *Telling Tales*, 104. That Neusner is something of a gadfly is suggested by this title and another consulted that hardly differs in content, *Jews and Christians: The Myth of a Common Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 1991).

⁴⁹ Martin, *A House Divided*, 2. This should not discourage Catholics. It is precisely here that John Paul places the goal of dialogue. Not all traditional Jews dismiss theological dialogue with Christianity. See, for example, David Novak, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Jewish Justification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), a systematic argument from Jewish authorities to justify a *halakhic* Jew’s participation in theological dialogue with Christianity. More on Novak’s book in chapter three.

⁵⁰ Hans Conzelmann, *Gentiles-Jews-Christians: Polemics and Apologetics in the Greco-Roman Era* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 133.

derstanding of Christianity is Mary, the mother of Jesus. In Catholic appreciation of Mary, he discerns close affinities with Jewish appreciation of great Matriarchs like Rachel.⁵¹ He also offers ways, usually through story, for Jews to share Christian religious feeling about Jesus as God incarnate, and for Christians to share Jewish religious feeling about the State of Israel.⁵²

Richard Harries offers a fair critique of Neusner's *Telling Tales*. "No doubt," he writes, "Neusner is right in saying that some of our attempts to find common ground are premature or facile." Yet, can we honestly face our differences—"in a way that does not lead to a breakdown in relationships"—if beforehand we have not found "the ground on which we both stand"? In regard to Neusner's Mary-Rachel comparison, he doubts that given "the understanding of Mary that prevails in Christian consciousness . . . it takes him very far into the Christian heart."⁵³ Harries agrees that we must seek heartfelt knowledge of the other "in their terms rather than simply ours"; but he also claims dialogue "involves affirmation, celebrating those areas of faith that we have in common. And it involves sharing . . . deeply held convictions even if they are hurtful to the other." He makes the point indirectly, but Harries discerns in Neusner a fear of the risk of dialogue.⁵⁴

After contrasting Neusner with the more positive and fruitful attitudes of Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Synagogues of the U.K., and Jonathan Romain, a rabbi of the Reform

⁵¹ Neusner, *Telling Tales*, 107.

⁵² Ibid. See chapter seven, "A Judaic Telling of the Christian Tale of Jesus Christ God Incarnate: Judaic Resources for Imagining Christ"; and chapter eight, "A Christian Telling of the Judaic Tale—Christian Resources for Imagining Israel."

⁵³ Harries, "Has Jewish-Christian Dialogue Really Begun?," 15–18. Harries does not compare thoroughly Jewish Miriam and Rachel. He compares the traditional, prevailing, male-fostered image of Mary as submissive to Rachel's boldly standing up to God. Neusner's suggestion will hit closer to the mark when (if?) feminist mariology prevails in Catholic consciousness. Harries is Anglican Bishop of Oxford and chair of the Executive Committee of the British Council of Christians and Jews.

⁵⁴ Frank expression of feeling is more common in the Jewish than in the Christian literature of the dialogue. Neusner admits (not, surely, without irony): "While some of my best friends are Christians, seeing matters as a whole, confessedly, I do find it difficult to love Christianity." *Telling Tales*, 97.

Synagogues of Great Britain, Harries concludes:

And here, I think, we come to the heart of the challenge of any religious dialogue. Truly to understand is to be half persuaded. One's mind and heart have gone out and seen the world through the eyes of another. It is a dangerous and vulnerable position to be in, which is why we do not like it. . . . It is dangerous because, if we are half persuaded [by the other's story], we could be fully persuaded and then where would we be. Genuine dialogue involves living . . . on the borderlands. It means feeling the incursions from both sides. Because it is an exposed position in which to be, we prefer on the whole to keep at a distance.⁵⁵

Renowned scholar Irving Greenberg is a traditional Jew willing to take the risk of theological dialogue. He writes on the complementarity of Judaism and Christianity:

The covenant's dialectical moves of divine grace and human participation provide an example. In Hebrew Scriptures, humans achieve holiness through family and land, within the natural human order. Yet, the very emphasis of the covenant on the natural order leads people to naturalize and to domesticate—and even to defeat—the divine claims. So the temporally and spatially rooted Jewish religion needs the universal, landless church perspective as a corrective.

The focus on life and appreciation of the family as the context for the covenant is distinctively Jewish. But no religion which is strong in one pole of the dialectic is likely to do full justice to the other aspect. To preserve the balance, Judaism needs a religion determined to explore the fulness of death, to explore what it would mean to break out of the family model and create a universal self-defined belief group. Judaism . . . needs a counterpart religion that is prepared to explore the element of grace and transcendence in a more central way. Each tradition, to be faithful to its own vision, needs the other in order to correct and to exemplify the fulness of the divine-human interaction. In this perspective, each one's experience, Jewish covenant peoplehood and the Christian faith community, is not only validated, it is seen as a necessary expression of the plenitude of divine love and the comprehensiveness of the human role in the covenant.⁵⁶

Fritz A. Rothschild has edited a collection of thoughtful and provocative writings of five other great Jewish thinkers of this century who have paid serious attention to Christianity: Leo Baeck, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Will Herberg, and Abraham Joshua Heschel; and he invited a Christian theologian to introduce each Jewish thinker. Rothschild writes:

⁵⁵ Harries, "Has Jewish-Christian Dialogue Really Begun?," 17.

⁵⁶ Greenberg, "Judaism and Christianity," 21.

It seems to me that at this hour in history Jews can no longer afford to treat Christianity with the benign neglect of past generations. Apart from such historical facts as the Holocaust and the crisis of religious faith in the postmodern world, we now face a situation where Christians are, perhaps for the first time, ready to listen to what Jews have to say, and are ready for a fruitful dialogue instead of turning such encounters into occasions for missionary propaganda or mere apologetics.⁵⁷

He goes on to summarize his motive for a book meant in the first place for Jews:

It is my conviction that despite the asymmetry between the two religions a new relationship is developing which, for want of a better term, I shall call "mutuality." The five Jewish thinkers represented in this volume and the five Christian theologians who wrote the individual introductory essays have made important contributions to this stage of mutuality. . . . [These writings] can impel thoughtful Jews to concern themselves with Christianity and to confront it in a serious manner, both critically and sympathetically. And perhaps for similar reasons thoughtful Christians may take a fresh look at Judaism.⁵⁸

Recalling Mordecai Waxman's realistic remarks about Jewish hesitation in trusting the dialogue, one can appreciate Rothschild's cautious, understated approach. Yet, Christian readers of his book will get a good taste of how hard-hitting the Jewish critique of Christianity can be.

The large middle-ground of the dialogue—with its many national and regional organizations, publications, conferences—is populated on the Jewish side mostly with Reform Jews. It is fortunate because some Catholic and Protestant concerns also find much common ground here; thus both streams of Christian ecumenism benefit.⁵⁹

Until now I have not focused on a specific issue in the dialogue for the sake of expressing

⁵⁷ Fritz A. Rothschild, ed., in the introduction to *Jewish Perspectives on Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵⁹ Catholic and Protestant books devoted to issues in the dialogue evince progressive cross-fertilization of ideas and common use of sources over the past thirty years; a good example is Clark M. Williamson and Ronald J. Allen, *Interpreting Difficult Texts: Anti-Judaism and Christian Preaching* (London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989). Yet, apart from various conference papers and statements from official organizations, one seldom finds in the Jewish and Protestant literature of the dialogue (and scarcely more often in the Catholic) any reference to papal teaching.

something of its range, tone and progress. The reader will have seen that Jewish concerns and emphases often differ from those of Catholics. It will also have been noted that the Church lacks an adequate theological vocabulary for discussion of Judaism. John Paul must often revert to terms that have a dark history to express new understandings; thus ambiguity permeates many papal statements. Nonetheless, John Paul is determined to formulate Catholic faith in ways that, while unambiguously loyal to authentic Catholic tradition, do not disregard or denigrate Jews.

I will now survey John Paul's statements and accounts of his actions in relation to specific issues. The issues, which are many, include: anti-Semitism; anti-Judaism; Judaism in Catholic preaching, catechesis and education; the deicide charge; the Jews as cursed by God; supersessionism; Judaism as a living religion; Jesus of Nazareth; Christ vs. Torah; the validity of God's covenant with the Jews; the mission of Judaism; evangelization of the Jews; the land and State of Israel; the status of Jerusalem; Judaism as a people; Jewish foundations of Christianity; Jewish-Christian joint action for peace and justice. The Holocaust. During the pontificate of John Paul II, church teaching has addressed in some measure virtually all issues in the dialogue.

IV. Pope John Paul II in Dialogue with Jews and Judaism

John Paul's first address to a Jewish audience, six months after his election, is warm, hospitable and cautious.⁶⁰ He builds most of his talk, a response to the address of Philip Klutznick, president of the World Jewish Congress, around *Nostra Aetate* ("this solemn mandate") and the *Guidelines* ("whose value I wish to underline and affirm"). His personal commitment to the dialogue is clear: "By pursuing this goal [of mutual understanding] we are all sure of

⁶⁰ Audience for representatives of Jewish organizations in Rome for meetings of the International Jewish Liaison Committee, 12 March 1978. SP, 1-8.

being faithful and obedient to the will of God, the God of the patriarchs and Prophets.”⁶¹

John Paul’s first address to Jews touches on almost all the issues that will dominate and be developed in his future speeches and initiatives. They include Israel, Jerusalem, our troubled past, societal anti-Semitism, Christian anti-Semitism, Judaism in relation to the Church’s identity, Judaism in its own identity, Judaism in Catholic preaching and catechetics, the Church’s mission, the integrity of each partner’s religious identity; mutual understanding and cooperation:

And I am sure that we find in you, and in the communities you represent, a real and deep disposition to understand Christianity and the Catholic Church in its proper identity today, so that we may work from both sides towards our common aim of overcoming every kind of prejudice and discrimination.⁶²

And, as he will do repeatedly, he clearly affirms the Church’s mission, quoting *Ad Gentes*: “In virtue of her divine mission, and her very nature, the Church must preach Jesus Christ to the world.”⁶³ He immediately balances *Ad Gentes* with a quote from the *Guidelines*: “Lest the witness of Catholics to Jesus Christ should give offense to Jews, they must take care to live and spread their Christian faith while maintaining the strictest respect for religious liberty in line with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council [*Dignitatis Humanae*].”⁶⁴ In later statements, he will disavow any proselytizing of Jews. Notably missing is direct reference to any aspect of the teaching of contempt or the Holocaust. Yet, his first public appearance in a context central to the dialogue will be three months later at Auschwitz.

Philip Klutznick opens his warm address to John Paul with the beautiful words Amasai

⁶¹ Ibid., 6.

⁶² Ibid., 5.

⁶³ Ibid., 5. *Ad Gentes* is the “Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity.” See Abbott, *The Documents of Vatican II*, 584-630.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 5. The *Guidelines* refers to *Dignitatis Humanae*, the “Declaration on Religious Freedom.” *The Documents of Vatican II*, 675-96.

spoke to David: “Peace, peace be unto you, and peace be to your helpers’ [1 Chr 12:18].” He affirms the fruit of *Nostra Aetate*, the subsequent establishment of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, and the formation of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee: “The result has been a significant improvement in Catholic-Jewish understanding and friendship, based on the affirmation of a shared reverence for sacred Scripture, the condemnation of anti-Semitism, support of religious liberty and joint social action.”⁶⁵

Klutznick’s address, in sum, touches on almost all the issues that will dominate and be developed in future Jewish exchanges with John Paul: anti-Semitism, the Holocaust—“Your Holiness experienced firsthand the demonic consequences of religious and racial hatred which resulted in the immense human suffering of World War II and culminated in the Holocaust of European Jewry”⁶⁶; religious liberty, our common search for social justice and peace. Israel: “In the Jewish self-understanding, the bond of people of the covenant to the land is fundamental.”⁶⁷ He also tells John Paul: “We have welcomed the progressive elimination of references unfavorable to Jews and Judaism from Catholic teaching materials and the removal of unfavorable stereotypes from Jewish teaching materials.”⁶⁸ Notably missing is any reference to the theological questions that preoccupy the Christian partner in dialogue or any motive for the dialogue beyond the humanistic. They will appear, but not as central concerns, in later Jewish statements and addresses to the pope.

This first formal encounter between Jews and the first teacher of Christianity’s largest church is undeniably promising. One need only recall Theodor Herzl’s meeting with Pius X to ap-

⁶⁵ SP, 2.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 3.

preciate the progress made in Jewish-papal relations. In 1904 Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, sought papal support for a Jewish homeland. Pius, in refusing him, said:

We are unable to favor this movement. We cannot prevent the Jews from going to Jerusalem—but we could never sanction it. The ground of Jerusalem has been sanctified by the life of Jesus Christ. As head of the Church I cannot answer you otherwise. The Jews have not recognized our Lord. Therefore we cannot recognize the Jewish people.⁶⁹

From this point forward, I will survey the growth of the encounter chronologically under seven general headings that encompass all major issues in the dialogue.

a) On Dialogue between Catholics and Jews

In the preface we saw that John Paul considers *Nostra Aetate* “a word of Divine wisdom”; and immediately above we saw that he clearly considers work for Jewish-Christian reconciliation to be obedience to God’s will. Thus, he places the dialogue within the most encompassing and profound religious context. As I survey his teaching on the dialogue, I will quote, given limited space, just a few of John Paul’s many relevant statements:

If Christians consider themselves [brothers and sisters] of all [men and women] and behave accordingly, this holy obligation is all the more binding when they find themselves before members of the Jewish people! In the *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church with Judaism* in April of this year, the bishops of the Federal Republic of Germany put this sentence at the beginning: “Whoever meets Jesus Christ, meets Judaism.” I would like to make these words mine too.⁷⁰

He goes on to outline three dimensions of the dialogue. After affirming “the first dimen-

⁶⁹ As quoted in John T. Pawlikowski, *What Are They Saying about Jewish-Christian Relations?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 2.

⁷⁰ Address to the Jewish community, Mainz, West Germany, 17 November 1980. SP, 14. He adds later in his talk (16): “It is my eager desire that this declaration should become the spiritual property of all Catholics in Germany.” Nonetheless, the bishops’ statement is weak on anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. See “The Church and the Jews: German Bishops’ Conference, Bonn 1980,” *More Stepping Stones*, 124–45. (In 1259, the synod of the archdiocese of Mainz ordered that all Jews within its borders must wear the yellow badge. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. “Germany.”)

sion of this dialogue”—the *Guidelines*' admonition “to understand better everything in the Old Testament that has its own, permanent value . . . since this value is not wiped out by the later interpretation of the New Testament”⁷¹—John Paul continues:

A second dimension of our dialogue—the *true and central one*—is the meeting between present-day Christian Churches and the present-day people of the Covenant concluded with Moses. It is important here “that Christians—to continue the post-conciliar directives—should aim at understanding better the fundamental elements of the religious tradition of Judaism, and learn what fundamental lines are essential for the religious reality lived by the Jews, according to their own understanding.” The way to this mutual knowledge is dialogue. I thank you, *venerated brothers and sisters*, for carrying it out, you too, with that “openness and breadth of spirit,” with the “tact” and with that “prudence” which are recommended to us Catholics by the above-mentioned directives.⁷²

Motivation for and practical aspects of the third dimension of the dialogue, Jewish-Christian cooperation, will be discussed below.

Jewish addresses and responses to the pope typically exude warmth and respect. Dr. Victor Goldbloom told John Paul:

For some years now, notably since (and as a result of) the Second Vatican Council, we have been experiencing a new era in Christian-Jewish relations, an era of undeniable progress.

It has been a reciprocal learning process, and one of the most significant lessons we have derived from it is that the growth of harmony, understanding and mutual respect has in no way diminished the religious integrity and vitality of Judaism or of Christianity—quite the contrary—nor weakened the commitment of any Jews or of any Christian to his or her faith tradition.

What is deeply appreciated is the readiness of the Church, under your leadership, to review liturgy, to revise catechism, to reassess and reinterpret history, to recognize that teachings and policies in the past have erected barriers and indeed led to persecutions.

What is also deeply appreciated is the sense of mutual respect and equal partnership which pervades today's relationships.⁷³

⁷¹ In his address to the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, 22 March 1984, he will add: “And as the two parts of the Bible are distinct but closely related, so are the Jewish people and the Catholic Church . . . The more we know each other, the more we learn to assess and respect our differences.” SP, 31-32.

⁷² Ibid., 15-16. Emphasis added.

⁷³ Victor Goldbloom, president of the International Council of Christians and Jews. Papal audience for a

As speaker for Jewish concerns, Dr. Goldbloom characteristically goes on to emphasize the third dimension of the dialogue, cooperation for justice and peace. He also illustrates another feature of several Jewish addresses to the pope—a boldness seldom found among Catholics:

We submit with respect . . . that it is not enough for pronouncements to be made on the highest level; they must be heard and heeded in every parish as well. . . . We ask you . . . to reinforce the work of the Vatican Commission on [Religious] Relations with the Jews: to upgrade the commission; to give it more scope, initiative, and authority.⁷⁴

Whereas an advance copy of a Jewish leader's address is evident in numerous papal replies (he usually reads from a prepared text), it is also typical of the pope simply to ignore internal and politically sensitive issues raised by the Jewish partner. It sometimes happens that a later papal address will offer a delayed, careful response to previously expressed Jewish concerns; but granting more autonomy to the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews is not a case in point.

In a meeting that John Paul called "a new, important step on the path of dialogue between the Church and Judaism,"⁷⁵ Rabbi Mordecai Waxman told him:

As the largest Jewish community in the world, we have developed close and respectful ties with many Roman Catholics, both lay and clergy, and we value these warm relationships and treasure these friendships. . . . In almost every place where Catholics and Jews live in the United States, we relate to each other in some organized fashion. We constantly exchange views and opinions and, as Jews and Catholics, we often share our positions, sometimes agreeing, sometimes disagreeing, but always striving for a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.⁷⁶

Ten years later, as we examine distinct issues in the dialogue, we will note that, while general expectations have not changed, the state of the issues has changed, usually for the better, thus

delegation of the executive committee, Rome, 6 July 1984. *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁷⁵ General audience, Rome, 23 September 1987. *Ibid.*, 114.

⁷⁶ Meeting with Jewish leaders, Miami, 11 September 1987. *Ibid.*, 110.

the goals of the dialogue continually, if in small steps, draw closer to fulfillment.

b) The Evil Twins: Anti-Semitism and Anti-Judaism

In the wake of Naziism and the Holocaust, anti-Semitism became the first issue in Jewish-Christian dialogue to receive widespread attention. The unequivocal condemnation of anti-Semitism by virtually all denominations of the Church henceforth make it impossible for any Christian anti-Semite to claim scriptural or theological support. "No valid theological justification could ever be found for acts of discrimination or persecution against Jews," John Paul said to Jewish leaders in Australia.⁷⁷ He repeatedly warns of the consequences for the whole world of Christian passivity in face of "the oldest hatred." Whereas *Nostra Aetate* "decries" it, John Paul places anti-Semitism in a theological context:

In the face of the risk of a resurgence and spread of anti-Semitic feelings, attitudes, and initiatives, of which certain disquieting signs are to be seen today, and of which we have experienced the most frightful results in the past, we must teach consciences to consider anti-Semitism, and all forms of racism, as *sins against God and humanity*.⁷⁸

Rabbi Leon Klenicki notes: "In such progressive interpretations, one can see the positive development of church teaching today."⁷⁹

At the meeting in Miami cited above, Rabbi Waxman said:

We are encouraged by your vigorous leadership in denouncing all forms of anti-Semitism, and by the Church's recent teachings. The Church's repudiation of anti-

⁷⁷ Address to Jewish leaders, Australia, 26 November 1986. *Ibid.*, 83.

⁷⁸ Address to Jewish leaders, Budapest, 18 August 1991. *SP*, 158. Emphasis added. The last phrase is found as early as "The Christian Approach to the Jews," a 1948 statement of the first assembly of the World Council of Churches: "We call upon all the churches we represent to denounce anti-semitism, no matter what its origin, as absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith. Anti-semitism is sin against God and man." World Council of Churches, *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People: Statements by the World Council of Churches and its Member Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1988), 6.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, introduction, xix.

Semitism is of critical importance in the struggle to eradicate this virulent plague from the entire human family. Anti-Semitism may affect the body of the Jew, but history has tragically shown that it assaults the soul of the Christian world and all others who succumb to this ancient, but persistent, pathology.⁸⁰

I will turn now to anti-Judaism, the evil twin that rejects the Jews on religious grounds. Here, I will present the basic orientation and some foundational elements of John Paul's thought on Judaism. Eugene J. Fisher notes that "wherever the pope goes, he seeks out those communities [Jewish] to reach out to them in reconciliation and affirmation of the infinite worth of Judaism's continuing proclamation of the name of the One God in the world." Fisher argues that "one can discern in the pope's addresses a growth and development in understanding of and appreciation for how 'the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience.'"⁸¹

In his first address to a Jewish audience, discussed above, John Paul had said "our two religious communities are connected and closely related at the very level of their respective identities." Later, celebrating the twentieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, he said:

The Catholic Church is always prepared with the help of God's grace to revise and renew whatever in her attitudes and ways of expression happens to conform less with her own identity. . . . [*Nostra Aetate*] affirms, with great precision, that it is while delving into [her] "mystery" that she, the Church, "remembers the spiritual link" between herself and "Abraham's stock." . . . This "link" can be called a "sacred" one, stemming as it does from the mysterious will of God.⁸²

During what he called his "most significant action of the year," his visit to "our elder brothers in the faith of Abraham in their Rome Synagogue,"⁸³ John Paul said:

The Jewish religion is not "extrinsic" to us, but in a certain way is "intrinsic" to our own religion. With Judaism, therefore, we have a relationship which we do not

⁸⁰ SP, 111-12.

⁸¹ Eugene J. Fisher, "A Commentary on the Texts," *Ibid.*, xxi.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 55-56.

⁸³ *National Catholic News Service*, 31 December 1986. As quoted in SP, xxii.

have with any other religion. You are dearly beloved [brothers and sisters] and, in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brother.⁸⁴

Later, “in a certain way” becomes more emphatic: “We can, and indeed we must, affirm that the Jewish people is ‘our elder brother.’”⁸⁵ Fisher notes:

For many Christians over the ages . . . the use of the term *elder brother* applied to the Jews would have conjured images of apologetic interpretations of the younger/elder brother stories of Genesis in which the younger brother takes over the heritage or patrimony of the elder (e.g., Esau and Jacob). . . . Here, *as in so many other ways*, however, the pope has sought to reinterpret ancient apologetics and to replace negative images with positive affirmations.⁸⁶

John Paul’s affirmations of specific aspects of Jewish religious identity will be discussed in chapter two. Here, I will illustrate with a final quotation from John Paul his fundamental attitude towards Judaism. One year into his pontificate, in the address to the Jews in West Germany already cited (23 n. 70), still quoting the German bishops’ *Declaration* and its affirmation of “the spiritual heritage of Israel [Judaism] for the Church,” John Paul adds one word. He immediately adds to the bishops’ statement “a *living* heritage, which must be understood and preserved in its depth and richness by us Catholic Christians.”⁸⁷ With it he “removed any possible ambiguity and opened up a new area of theological reflection.”⁸⁸

c) The Holocaust

During my first careful reading of *Spiritual Pilgrimage*, I supplied one thing lacking in that otherwise superb edition: an index. It is telling that, of the forty-seven key words of my topi-

⁸⁴ Address to the congregation in the Synagogue of Rome, 13 April 1986. *Ibid.*, 63.

⁸⁵ Address to representatives of the Jewish community, Mexico City, 9 May 1990. *Ibid.*, 135.

⁸⁶ Fisher, “A Commentary,” *ibid.*, xxiv-v. Emphasis added.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 14. Emphasis added.

⁸⁸ Fisher, “A Commentary,” *ibid.*, xxiv.

cal index, John Paul's references to Holocaust (*Shoah*) far outnumber all but *Nostra Aetate*, always his compass. Given the importance to Jewish-Christian dialogue of this singular event in world history, I will devote chapter three to the Holocaust. Here, I will give an overview of John Paul's virtual preoccupation with an event whose theological significance has yet to enter the preaching and teaching of the Church.

On 7 June 1979 John Paul visited Auschwitz, the deathcamp virtually a synonym for the Holocaust. While he paid tribute to all victims of the camps, he made special reference to the Jewish martyrs:

In particular, I pause . . . before the inscription in Hebrew. This inscription awakens the memory of people whose sons and daughters were intended for total extermination. . . . The very people who received from God the Commandment, "thou shalt not kill," itself experienced in a special measure what is meant by killing. It is not permissible for anyone to pass by this inscription with indifference.⁸⁹

In addition to references in many occasional statements, John Paul observes the fortieth and fiftieth anniversaries of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (1983, 1993); he visits Mauthausen concentration camp (1988); his apostolic letter on the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of World War Two (1989) pays special attention to the fate of the Jews: "Among all these antihuman measures, however, there is one which will forever remain a shame for humanity: the planned barbarism which was unleashed against the Jewish people."⁹⁰ John Paul intervenes on behalf of Jewish concerns in the controversy over the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz (1993); he arranges the beautiful concert at the Vatican to commemorate the Holocaust (1994). The spectrum of John Paul's response to the Holocaust in the context of the dialogue will be discussed in chapter three.

⁸⁹ Homily at Auschwitz, 7 June 1979. *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹⁰ Rome, 27 August 1989. *Ibid.*, 131.

d) The Land and State of Israel and the Status of Jerusalem

When Israel declared independence in 1948, the Vatican refused to recognize the new State. The *Osservatore Romano*, not an official organ of the Vatican but a vehicle for Vatican views, editorialized: "Modern Zionism is not the authentic heir of biblical Israel, but constitutes a lay state. This is why the Holy Land and its sacred places belong to Christianity, the veritable Israel."⁹¹ John Paul has transformed the Vatican's initial position and repudiated the theological tradition from which it springs. Jewish understanding of people-land-State-mission and its implications for Christians, as well as the status of Jerusalem, will be discussed in chapter two.

e) Judaism in Catholic Preaching, Teaching and Catechesis

In 1965, *Nostra Aetate* declared: "All should take pains . . . lest in catechetical instruction and in the preaching of God's word they teach anything out of harmony with the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ." Part three of the 1974 *Guidelines*, "Teaching and Education," after reviewing certain facts about Judaism that counter elements of the teaching of contempt, concludes that "information concerning these questions is important at all levels of Christian education. Among sources of information, special attention should be paid to the following: catechisms and religious textbooks, history books, the mass media." It goes on to comment on the formation of instructors "in training schools, seminaries and universities," and to encourage research on problems "bearing on Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations . . . among specialists, particularly in the fields of exegesis, theology, history and sociology."

In fact, Jews, Protestants and Catholics in the United States and Europe began serious

⁹¹ As quoted in Pawlikowski, *What Are They Saying*, 120.

study in the late 1950s of how their various textbooks presented other religious groups. Professional researchers and doctoral students examined the topic in literature, social studies and religion. John T. Pawlikowski published his study in 1965.⁹² Claire Huchet Bishop based her valuable 1974 report on studies done on French materials at Louvain, and in Rome at Pro Deo (the papally chartered International University of Social Studies) on Catholic materials in Italian and Spanish.⁹³ In 1985, the Vatican's *Notes* appeared. The impact of these and a number of other major documents and studies is reviewed by Eugene J. Fisher in his 1994 article, "Update on Catholic Education on Jews and Judaism."

Fisher's direct concern is English language materials. The scope of issues is almost identical to that of the present thesis. Progress in the evolution of teaching materials mirrors progress in the dialogue. Everywhere there is progress—a little, or some, or a lot—but everywhere problems remain. Progress in Holocaust education is a particular bright spot: "This is an area that has seen significant development in the last few years." Fisher notes the promise inherent in the proliferation of joint educational programs initiated by various Jewish, Protestant and Catholic institutes, associations, centres, and seminaries.⁹⁴

The greatest problem has been and remains the Christian Testament. It will always have the greatest impact on Christian understanding of Jews and Judaism. Because of its relation to the teaching of contempt, the Christian Testament in relation to Catholic preaching, teaching and catechetics will be discussed in chapter two.

⁹² John T. Pawlikowski, *Catechetics and Prejudice* (New York: Macmillan, 1965).

⁹³ Claire Huchet Bishop, *How Catholics Look at Jews: Inquiries into Italian, Spanish, and French Teaching Materials* (New York: Paulist Press, 1974).

⁹⁴ Eugene J. Fisher, "Update on Catholic Education on Jews and Judaism," *Sidic* 27, no. 3 (1994): 24-30.

f) Jesus of Nazareth

Passages in *Veritatis Splendor* (1993), John Paul's encyclical on moral theology, according to Fisher, "illustrate how the Church's 'first teacher' has attempted over the years to integrate into his overall teaching the insights he has derived from his contacts with Jewish leaders and his continuing meditation upon the meaning of Jewish tradition for Catholic thought." Fisher notes that "he consciously breaks down old stereotypes that would hold . . . God's Law as expressed in the Hebrew Scriptures and God's Law as expressed by Jesus . . . to be contradictory." Commenting on the encyclical's treatment of "the relations between Law and Love within the dynamic of Catholic doctrine, which holds both to be central to a life of faith lived according to the Gospel," he calls the pope's approach a "creative model of how to turn an ancient 'either/or' dichotomy into a more accurate 'both/and.'"⁹⁵ I chose this approach to the question of Jesus, God's instrument for the salvation of the gentiles, because the traditional Christian attitude pits him against Torah, God's instrument for the salvation of the Jews.⁹⁶

The person of Jesus of Nazareth is not, strictly speaking, a central issue in Jewish-Christian dialogue. As the risen Christ, he is for Christians that defining difference, as Torah is for Jews, that partners in dialogue accept and respect in each other. Just as Jews appreciate our growth in appreciating Torah and its meaning for them, Christians appreciate the growth in appreciating Jesus found in Jewish scholarship. As for John Paul, he never suggests that Jewish redemption hinges on their having faith in Jesus Christ.

While some regret the pace of development in magisterial teaching on the sensitive issue

⁹⁵ Fisher, "A Commentary," *SP*, xxxix.

⁹⁶ *Veritatis Splendor* also has more than its share of phrases that should have tempered Fisher's high praise. Jews might be forgiven their seeing supersessionism redux in such phrases as: "Jesus, the new Moses" and "What was given through Moses is a figure of the true Law. Therefore, the Mosaic Law is an image of the truth."

of Christ-versus-Torah, Christian exegetes and theologians continue to reinterpret Paul to fruitful effect. Their contributions are almost certain, eventually, to help mature a Christian identity no longer rooted in opposition to Torah. Whatever form mature Christian identity should take, John Paul's final word on Torah will not contradict it: "When we consider Jewish tradition we see how profoundly you venerate sacred Scripture, the Miqra, and in particular the Torah. You live in a special relationship with the Torah, the *living* teaching of the living God."⁹⁷

Jews, of course, are free to make what they will of the gospels' portrait of the Jewish life lived by Jesus of Nazareth. The ecumenical problem emerges with christology. The issue is not a christology acceptable to Jews. "What is required is a christology which allows legitimacy and respect to post-Christian Judaism. One may even hope, beyond this, for a christology that Jews can understand as meaningful, while not assenting to it as truthful."⁹⁸ This central issue will reappear in chapter two's discussion of the teaching of contempt.

g) Jewish–Christian Cooperation

Happily, Jews and Christians have an almost effortless accord on mission. Ironic, too, that it should be here at the heart of our distinct identities in Torah and Jesus that Jew and Christian find common ground for *Tikkun*. For Jews, the God-given instrument of universal restoration is Torah; for Christians, the person of the risen Christ. Yet, for both Jew and Christian, restoration, *Tikkun*, means cooperating with God's grace in the work of, to borrow Bernard Lonergan's happy phrase, healing and creating in history. The defining difference does not divide us. We have a

⁹⁷ Address to the ILC, Rome, 6 December 1990. SP, 141. Emphasis added. With the dual Torah in mind, he continues: "You study it with love in the Talmud Torah, so as to put it into practice with joy."

⁹⁸ Monika K. Hellwig, "From the Jesus of Story to the Christ of Dogma," in *Anti-Semitism and the Foundations of Christianity*, ed. Alan T. Davies (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 120.

common mission. John Paul continually speaks on the theme of Jewish–Christian cooperation:

As Christians and Jews, as children of Abraham, we are called to be a blessing for the world [cf. Gen. 12:2ff] especially by our witness in faith to God, the source of all life, and by our commitment to work together for the establishment of true peace and justice among all peoples and nations. Taking up the way of dialogue and mutual collaboration, we deepen bonds of friendship and trust among ourselves and offer to others a sign of hope for the future.⁹⁹

The Jewish position, an integral part of virtually every formal address to the pope, was succinctly stated by Rabbi Mordecai Waxman at the same meeting John Paul called “a new, important step on the path of dialogue between the Church and Judaism” (25 n. 76):

A basic belief of our Jewish faith is the need “to mend the world under the sovereignty of God” . . . *L’takken olam b’malkut Shaddai*. To mend the world means to do God’s work in the world. It is in this spirit that Catholics and Jews should continue to address the social, moral, economic, and political problems of the world. Your presence here . . . affords us the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the sacred imperative of *tikkun olam*, “the mending of the world.”¹⁰⁰

The wider dialogue is rich in studies of Jewish–Christian cooperation for peace and justice. Given the space available, I will look at two, one published shortly after the Council, one a year old. In the first, Jews and Christians can celebrate great moments of cooperation, especially in the achievements of the labor, the anti-war, and the civil rights movements in the United States. Yet, there is evident groping for common theological ground, and the two relevant essays in the book are highly academic and abstract.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, the fruit of a generation of evolution in post-conciliar Catholic self-understanding and Jewish–Christian dialogue is clearly apparent in

⁹⁹ SP, 27.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 111.

¹⁰¹ Rabbi Marc H. Tannenbaum, “The Role of the Church and Synagogue in Social Action,” in *Torah and Gospel*, ed. Philip Scharper (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966), 165-96; and John F. Cronin, S.S., “The Church, the Synagogue, and the World,” ibid., 197-211. Rabbi Tannenbaum offers a superb historical overview of the evolution of Christian social teaching, and celebrates the Council’s grounding of renewal in the Bible.

*Jews & Christians in Pursuit of Social Justice.*¹⁰² Here, insecure assertion of identity and the search for common ground is replaced with a markedly more confident and mature dialogue that celebrates our differences as well as our now firmly established theological accord on mission. Our common *Tikkun* is no longer a novelty. *Jews & Christians* articulates a broad vision of the *Tikkun* to be done, our reasons for doing it, and the goal to be achieved.

While the agenda is not comprehensive, the first six chapters of *Jews & Christians* discuss what Jews and Christians are doing together and what needs to be done under the headings: marriage and family, religious liberty, racism (including anti-Semitism) and civil rights, war and peace; Jews, Christians and Muslims; economic justice and ecology. A Canadian would broaden the interfaith dialogue to include Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs, add immigration policy, health care. Curiously missing from the American agenda is concern for women's equality and the education of youth.¹⁰³ In Canada, Jewish-Christian cooperation on these issues is commonplace.

In their seventh, final chapter, "Jewish and Christian Ethics in the Light of God's Promises," Falk and Harrelson argue eloquently from Scripture that obedience to God motivates our common mission to work for peace and justice in our wounded world. God's will for history is made plain to us through the prophets of Israel, Jesus among them. Harrelson writes:

The Hebrew prophets and Jesus make it entirely clear that this coming day of the fulfilling of God's purposes affects every member of the covenant community in a special way. If this is the kind of world that God is bringing, then God wants us to join in the bringing of that world. The prophetic visions and Jesus' portrayal of the kingdom of God are invitations to the believing community to join God in the realization of the vision. The community committed to God's cause is to live now, in

¹⁰² Randall M. Falk and Walter J. Harrelson, *Jews & Christians in Pursuit of Social Justice* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996).

¹⁰³ An expanded discussion would explore the present global context of Jewish-Christian *Tikkun*. Apart from the rising dangers of materialism, secularism, militarism, nationalism and abuse of human rights, there is the stark fact that Christian and Jewish numbers are shrinking in relation to world population, even in the West.

company with God and with God's help, as a community committed to the kind of world that God is bringing to birth.¹⁰⁴

Rabbi Falk writes: "To be a member of the Jewish community, therefore, is to bind ourselves to be partners with God, ushering in God's kingdom of righteousness on earth through obedience to the moral Law."¹⁰⁵ Harrelson concludes: "'Follow me!' is a command from our Lord that is of immense power for the moral life, for we want to be like Jesus."¹⁰⁶ Like him, Jesus the Jew.

V. Conclusion of Chapter One

By now the reader surely will have noted the vast territory occupied by the Jewish-Christian dialogue. Almost every point relates to a cluster of issues, each with a huge bibliography. For more than eighteen-hundred years, Christianity had virtually ignored Judaism as a living religion; concerted efforts to make up for lost time are little more than a generation old. In that light, the progress made, in my estimation, clearly shows the presence of divine assistance.

In the three chapters of this thesis, I hope to convince the reader of the soundness of Eugene Fisher's assessment:

The ongoing papal reconsideration and redefinition of ancient theological categories represent the fruits of a painstaking effort, supported by the efforts of thousands of Catholics and Jews in dialogue throughout the world . . . to articulate anew the mystery of the Church in the light of a positive articulation of the abiding mystery of Israel. The results, as the patient reader will discern, are as breathtaking as they have been painstaking.¹⁰⁷

Rabbi Leon Klenicki says of the dialogue:

Christians and Jews are, for the first time, together in history, together to discover for themselves their own proper vocations in a time of radical change. It is a time

¹⁰⁴ Falk and Harrelson, *Jews & Christians*, 162.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 161-2.

¹⁰⁷ Eugene J. Fisher, 'A Commentary on the Texts,' *SP*, xxi.

to look closely at each other, to overcome the teaching of contempt and memories, and to see the other as a part of the covenant of God. It is a new time of reckoning, renewal, and prophetic response.¹⁰⁸

He goes on to highlight the other aspect of the teaching of contempt, anti-Semitism, and topics of intense Jewish concern:

Along with the Church's fundamental probing of the mystery of God's people—Israel—two questions require the serious consideration and reflection of the Catholic people of God today. Pope John Paul II has paid attention to both of them. One is the question of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, and the other is the reality of the State of Israel.¹⁰⁹

Because they are central Jewish concerns, chapter two will address the teaching of contempt, and two related issues that I believe must be considered together, the land and State of Israel and the status of Jerusalem. Chapter three will be devoted to the Holocaust.

Ronald B. Sobel will have the last word on this overview of the dialogue. Speaking twenty years after *Nostra Aetate*, Rabbi Sobel's remarks are imbued with the realistic, religious hope that permeates most official exchanges between the partners in dialogue:

Though we are not unaware that what has transpired between the Jewish people and the Church in the past twenty years is but the beginning of a process that will lead, God willing, into the long and distant future, we are . . . fully cognizant that the past two decades have been the witness to nothing less than a modern miracle . . . wherein, within a period of one score years, two thousand years of our previous relationship have been reversed. Truly, this is God's doing. . . . In and through our dialogue, we look forward to the day when Rome and Jerusalem, this Eternal City and the place where heaven touches earth, will embrace in the fulness of fraternal love and recognition. . . . We are grateful and remain hopeful, for if we continue what we have begun, it may be that history will record that thirty-three centuries after the Exodus and two thousand years after Calvary both Christians and Jews allowed their hearts to be opened by God in new and wondrous ways.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Rabbi Leon Klenicki, in the introduction to *SP*, xviii.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Rabbi Ronald B. Sobel, address to the pope, Jewish-Christian colloquium, Angelicum, Rome, 19 April 1985. *SP*, 50-51.

—CHAPTER 2—**"THROUGH DIFFERENT BUT FINALLY CONVERGENT WAYS"**

The first topic of this chapter is church teaching today in relation to the centuries-old Christian teaching of contempt for Jews and Judaism. As we saw in chapter one, the teaching of contempt comprises a cluster of distinct teachings. The researcher will discover important studies—exegetical, theological, historical, sociological—devoted not only to each distinct teaching but to various aspects of them: origins, content, development, consequences and remedies. And there is scholarly controversy on virtually every important point. Happily, however, Christians are virtually unanimous on repudiating teaching that has not only had tragic consequences for the Jews but has also distorted and betrayed the Gospel.

I. Christian Teaching of Contempt for Jews and Judaism

As the relevant categories of my bibliography attest, works on the teaching of contempt range from analyses of the anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic attitudes of the cultures of pre-Christian antiquity (Egyptian, Greek, Roman) to critical studies of contemporary Christian teaching and preaching materials. To simplify discussion, I have divided the material under five headings.

a) Dimensions of the Teaching of Contempt

The teaching of contempt has five general dimensions that will be discussed in the following order:

1) *Origins, Content, Development and Consequences:* I will give an overview of the extrascrip-

tural origins of the teaching of contempt before discussing at greater length the scriptural record, the core elements of the teaching, the main developments of the teaching of contempt from the patristic period to modern times, and some consequences of the progressive inculturation of anti-Judaic myths.

2) *Remedy*: Discussion of the fifth dimension of the teaching of contempt will be in three parts: first, a brief discursus on authentic and inauthentic tradition in church teaching; second, a brief account of *Nostra Aetate*, the beginning of the Catholic Church's remedial action; third, church teaching today, focused on the teaching of John Paul II.

i. Origins, Content, Development and Consequences

Pre-Christian, “classical” sources of the anti-Judaic content of the Christian Testament have been the subject of numerous studies.¹¹¹ The real question, according to John C. Meagher, is the use made of the facts by Christian apologists. Meagher calls “classical” a false epithet:

The falsity of the epithet is implicit in the undiscriminating way in which various forms of European ‘Renaissance’ tended to leave Europeans with the impression that there is something especially authentic in whatever the culture of Greco-Roman society did, or something especially inauthentic in whatever it failed or disdained to do. The question of antisemitism in the ancient world has accordingly often held a concealed but important wild card. If the story of anti-Jewish attitudes can be founded in non-Christian Greco-Roman society, then to some observers these attitudes are legitimated in a particularly authoritative way: they become, in effect, classical . . . [and] the responsibility of pre-Christian peoples, and Christian perpetuation of them becomes doubly excused as both innocent perpetuation of established custom and a faithful adherence to a “classical” discernment.

¹¹¹ Meagher recommends Marcel Simon’s *Verus Israel* (Paris: Boccard, 1948), and J.N. Sevenster, *The Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism in the Ancient World* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975). John C. Meagher, “As the Twig Was Bent: Antisemitism in Greco-Roman and Earliest Christian Times,” in *Antisemitism and the Foundations of Christianity*, ed. Alan T. Davies (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 24 n. 2. In the most recent major study of the period, Conzelmann agrees with Sevenster (and implicitly with Meagher) that “it was the Jewish law that provoked the most opposition in ancient ‘anti-Semitism,’” but maintains that Sevenster’s “[theological] perspective is somewhat one-sidedly that of the Gentiles.” Conzelmann, *Gentiles-Jews-Christians*, 7.

Yet, Meagher continues, the “polemical counter-story gains accordingly if it can wrest responsibility away from the pagans and place it essentially in Christian hands. History . . . offers a more equivocal and less story-like alternative to both these versions.”¹¹² It is due to what Meagher calls her “polemical counter-story” that, in assessing “classical” anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism, I have avoided Rosemary Radford Ruether’s account in *Faith and Fratricide*¹¹³ in favour of Meagher’s analysis. While he often praises her scholarship, he writes:

Ruether blurs the distinction between [history and ideology], and that, in arguing that a false Christian historicizing begot a false Christian antisemitic ideology, she substitutes a false history of her own, primarily as a support for a reverse ideology that is not really more correct and constructive than its predecessor.¹¹⁴

Meagher suggests that “a more discriminating analysis will suggest a greater continuity between the forces of pagan anti-Semitism and those of its Christian counterpart than Ruether is disposed to see.”¹¹⁵ Ruether claims “the fundamental roots of Christian anti-Judaism lie, not in gentile ‘antisemitism,’ but in . . . originally intra-Jewish religious sectarianism.” The sects, the Jesus Movement among others, claimed to be the “true” Israel in opposition to normative Temple Judaism. “[Christian anti-Semitism] is the Christian version of the clash between the True Israel and the unresponsive Wicked Priest of the Jewish establishment.”¹¹⁶

Historian Meagher shuns ideology and polemic, and focuses on the documentary evidence; thus his argument is more persuasive than Ruether’s in assessing pagan influence on Christian

¹¹² Meagher, “As the Twig Was Bent,” 3.

¹¹³ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1974).

¹¹⁴ Meagher, “As the Twig Was Bent,” 14.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹¹⁶ Rosemary Radford Ruether, “The *Faith and Fratricide* Discussion: Old Problems and New Dimensions,” in Davies, *Antisemitism*, 232. For her, “classical” anti-Judaism is more influential in the patristic period.

anti-Judaism.¹¹⁷ Nor is he afraid to discuss Jewish persecution of Christians: "They were persecuted for abusing Torah. . . . And it is to the point that they were persecuted. The fact should not, I think, be in dispute."¹¹⁸ Meagher and Ruether meet on the issue of Torah versus Christ, *the* decisive issue because each term became exclusive to Jewish and Christian identities.¹¹⁹

So it is not, finally, the inculcated anti-Judaic attitudes of the ambient culture and of pagan converts to the Jesus Movement but bedrock theological differences that contribute most to the anti-Judaic content of the Christian Testament. On this critical point, theologian Ruether is more incisive than historian Meagher and will be cited below. (In "Preliminary Remarks," Conzelmann notes in regard to his sources: "And it is precisely these theological points of view that must serve as the foundation for the whole presentation [of pagan anti-Semitism]."¹²⁰)

Meagher summarizes his account of the extrascriptural sources of Christian anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism in the Christian Testament:

I only wish to claim, out of my own assessment of the evidence, that when we (as I dearly hope we shall) move from a polemical to a more detached assessment of the evidence, we shall discover that there is little righteousness in either the Christian or the Jewish part in the story—that it has been a bad piece of business on both sides. The hostility of both is understandable: each contended with a rival religion that made (unlike the more modest pagan cults) total claims on human life and human destiny, each seemed to the other a gross parody of the truth. Their mutual intolerance was as inevitable as historical eventualities can be said to be. The

¹¹⁷ Conzelmann's assessment of the extent of pagan anti-Semitism is more moderate than Meagher's and Ruether's. Conzelmann argues: "An anti-Jewish 'movement' existed in antiquity only from time to time, and in certain localities. There was no such thing in antiquity as a continuing anti-Semitic stream, but rather the continuity of the Jewish people with their consciousness of being an elected people, which included the readiness to accept the consequences of such self-understanding. . . . Even today this Jewish consciousness cannot be encroached upon by any attempt at Christian-Jewish rapprochement." Conzelmann, *Gentiles-Jews-Christians*, 132-33.

¹¹⁸ Meagher, "As the Twig Was Bent," 20.

¹¹⁹ The anti-Torah polemics of Christian anti-Judaism are rooted in interpretation of Paul. Stendahl argues that when he asserts (against Ernst Käsemann and Günther Bornkamm) that "Paul's argument about justification by faith neither grows out of his 'dissatisfaction' with Judaism, nor is intended as a frontal attack on 'legalism' . . . I am striking at the most vicious root of theological anti-Judaism." Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*, 127.

¹²⁰ Conzelmann, *Gentiles-Jews-Christians*, 7.

Christians came into power and worked their will. The record of Jewish treatment of and attitude towards Christians in the meantime does not establish confidence that the results would have been edifying had the power gone the other way.¹²¹ But as it happened, the Christian side amassed far more demerits than the Jews had opportunity for. I do not think that sound argument can fault Reuther's conclusion that the scattered seed of pagan anti-Jewish dispositions had to fall upon Christian soil before it could bear such thirty-, sixty-, hundred-fold fruit.¹²²

In her reply to Meagher, Ruether gives her gift for polemic wide berth:

Against Meagher's claim that I overvalue ideology, I would have to enter the contrary objection that he undervalues it. Between a pagan who objects to Jews because they are funny-smelling orientals who refuse to assimilate into Greek ways and absurdly regard their God as the only true one, and the Christian who rejects Jews as the apostate Israel who has refused to recognize her messiah, there is a gulf that is more than rhetoric.¹²³

James Parkes, the eminent pioneer in the scholarship of Christian anti-Judaism, shares Meagher's mixture of censure and praise of *Faith and Fratricide*:

As a book it is written too hastily, and as a scholarly work, it is too slipshod. It is not surprising that its enemies can have a lovely time, pointing out these failings. But the courageous challenge that she issues is unaffected by them. And the truth of her challenge they cannot deny. It is dishonest henceforth to refuse to face the fact that the basic root of *modern* antisemitism lies squarely on the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament.¹²⁴

Ruether clearly exonerates Jesus of the Gospels from any anti-Judaic teaching, maintaining: "Jesus' critique of the Judaism of his day seems to me to stand within [the] prophetic tradi-

¹²¹ Meagher notes that "one need look no further than the well-known twelfth benediction of the *Shemoneh 'Esreh* [or *Amida*, recited in the weekday liturgy] with its plea that the Christians perish and be damned." *Ibid.*, 26 n. 43. The benediction, generally accepted as originally directed at Christians, reads: "And for slanderers let there be no hope; and may all wickedness perish in an instant; and may all Your enemies be cut down speedily. May You speedily uproot, smash, cast down, and humble the wanton sinners—speedily in our days. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who breaks enemies and humbles wanton sinners." Rabbi Nosson Scherman and Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz, eds., *The Complete ArtScroll Siddur* (New York: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 1995), 107. There are, in fact, nineteen elements (*shemoneh-esreh* means eighteen). "With the introduction of a solemn curse on minim [sectarians, heretics] into the Amidah prayer, the Jewish community finalized its breach with Christianity." *The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion*, s.v. "Christianity."

¹²² *Ibid.*, 22.

¹²³ Ruether, "The *Faith and Fratricide* Discussion," 233.

¹²⁴ James Parkes, in the preface to *Antisemitism and the Foundations of Christianity*, xi. Emphasis added.

tion.”¹²⁵ She goes on to say:

At the point where the Church regarded the covenant with Abraham as superseded by a New Covenant in Jesus, requiring modes of faithfulness that no longer required adherence to the Torah as the “way” to the future promise, the Church became anti-Judaic.¹²⁶

For Ruether, to believe in Jesus is to be anti-Judaic.¹²⁷ The evolution of the Church’s christology preserved in the Christian Testament required defining the Jews as the people who rejected all that the Church accepted. In her famous dictum, anti-Judaism is the left hand of christology. Her assertion is not unchallenged.¹²⁸

Whatever fertility the anti-Judaic soil of gentile culture provided, the anti-Judaic elements of the Christian Testament grew from the internecine battles of the two emerging religions, Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism, as they forged their identities from religious conviction and reaction to each other. Add to this: the struggle within the Jesus Movement between Jewish Christians and the increasing number and influence of gentile converts; and within Judaism as it forged from the pluralist movements of Temple Judaism the identity of Rabbinic Judaism.¹²⁹ As if this weren’t

¹²⁵ Ibid., 235.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 235-36.

¹²⁷ In her earlier work, Ruether writes: “There is no way to rid Christianity of its anti-Judaism, which constantly takes social expression in anti-Semitism, without grappling finally with its christological hermeneutic itself.” *Faith and Fratricide*, 116. Hare attempts “to present a hermeneutic by means of which anti-Judaism of this kind can be acknowledged exegetically while negated theologically.” Douglas R. A. Hare, “The Rejection of the Jews in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts,” in Davies, *Anti-Semitism*, 27.

¹²⁸ Ruether’s position is challenged in: John M. Oesterreicher, *Anatomy of Contempt* (South Orange, NJ: Seton Hall University Press, 1974); T. A. Indinopoulos and R. B. Ward, “Is Christology Inherently Antisemitic?” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 45 (1977): 193-214; *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Donald A. Hagner (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993). Johannes Cardinal Willebrands, “Are the New Testament and Christianity Antisemitic?,” in *Church and Jewish People* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 77-94. (“Is the New Testament antisemitic? . . . This question has been answered in the affirmative, and, it is only honest to say, more by Christians than by Jewish scholars.” Ibid., 79.)

¹²⁹ The most illuminating history of the period that I read was Vincent Martin’s *A House Divided*. Not professional theologian or exegete but social scientist, Martin summarizes the scholarship of the previous thirty years to reconstruct, as best he can from sometimes scanty sources, the human story of the mutual rejection of Synagogue and Church, the growth of mutually exclusive identities, and the effect of this history on the formation

enough, the last half of the first century CE saw the dislocation and chaos caused by Jewish revolts, the destruction of the Temple in 70, the expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem, the destruction of the city, and growing Roman persecution of Christians. All the while Jews and Christians were at each other's throats: Jews loyal to Torah alone, Jewish Christians loyal to both Torah and Jesus, Jewish and gentile Christians loyal to Jesus alone. The prophet Jesus had said:

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household.¹³⁰

Acrimony and division inspire the anti-Jewish polemic in the Christian Testament. Norman

A. Beck distinguishes three types. The first is christological:

It is not inherently an expression of the teaching of contempt, and it should not in any way be repudiated by Christians. . . . We have the right to perceive Jesus as the Christ raised from the dead . . . just as Jews and people in every other religion have the right to develop their own particular perceptions of God Active in History.¹³¹

Beck claims this first type of anti-Jewish polemic with its absolutist christological claims led to the second, Supersessionism. Since God in Jesus effected universal salvation, Judaism no longer had a mission; by implication, and notwithstanding Paul's teaching,¹³² God had revoked the

of the Christian Testament. Alone of all the long and short studies I consulted, Martin's captures the pathos and tragedy of the parting of the ways and the eventual demise of Judaic Christianity.

¹³⁰ Mt 10:34-36 (NRSV)

¹³¹ Norman A. Beck, "The New Testament and the Teaching of Contempt: Reconsiderations," in *Jewish-Christian Encounters over the Centuries: Symbiosis, Prejudice, Holocaust, Dialogue*, ed. Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 88. Beck is more helpful for my purpose, but Hare's "three kinds of anti-Judaism which are evidenced in early Christian literature" have a broader scope. They are *Prophetic Anti-Judaism* with its two forms, Jesus' chastisement of the people and challenge to religious authority; *Jewish-Christian Anti-Judaism*, which adds to the first "the crucial importance for salvation history of the crucified and risen Jesus"; and *Gentilizing Anti-Judaism*, promoted by gentiles and "Jews and proselytes who have renounced their Jewish identity." It takes over the other forms and "adds thereto . . . that God has finally and irrevocably rejected his people." Hare, "The Rejection of the Jews," 28-32. He argues that only the third form is christological.

¹³² "As regards election they are beloved, for the sake of their ancestors; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11:29, NRSV). This text will be a cornerstone of *Nostra Aetate's* repudiation of the teaching of contempt.

Covenant with the Jews, Torah had served its purpose. Eventually, Church replaces Synagogue.

Beck calls the third type “the vicious, name-calling, defamatory polemic, that we usually associate with the terminology ‘the teaching of contempt.’” He states its foundational elements:

This is the type of anti-Jewish polemic that is present consistently throughout Acts of the Apostles and in many places in the four gospels in which responsibility for the arrest, torture, and crucifixion of Jesus was transferred from the oppressive Roman occupation forces in Galilee and Judea and from the few among Jesus’ own people who cooperated fully with them to “the leaders of the Jews” and in some instances to “all the Jews.” It is this cruel, crucial distortion of a vital segment of history . . . accompanied by the vicious, defamatory, damaging epithets, that constitutes the most virulent form of the teaching of contempt in the New Testament.¹³³

When the Church became part of, indeed guardian of, the status quo in the Roman Empire, when it became effectively gentile in self-understanding and outlook, a still more virulent form of anti-Judaic polemic, spawned from the ascendancy of Beck’s third type of anti-Judaism, entered Christian theology and homiletics. The sermons of Chrysostom (d. 407), their venomous rhetoric unmatched until Luther¹³⁴ (d. 1546), are classics of a genre that helped give the patristic *adversus Iudeos* tradition an enduring home in Christian worship, myth and self-understanding.

Efroymson praises Ruether’s treatment of the subject, calling “The Negation of the Jews in the Church Fathers” in *Faith and Fratricide* “one of the stronger sections. . . . She has demonstrated that the anti-Judaic myth was there, was operative, and was ‘neither superficial nor a secondary element in Christian thought.’”¹³⁵

¹³³ Ibid., 88.

¹³⁴ “Those who study and admire Luther should acknowledge unequivocally that his anti-Jewish writings are beyond any defense.” From the 1974 statement “The American Lutheran Church and the Jewish Community,” in World Council of Churches, *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People*, 67.

¹³⁵ David P. Efroymson, “The Patristic Connection,” in Davies, *Anti-Semitism*, 98. He focuses on the context of individual writings, a subject Ruether had to bypass. Efroymson demonstrates how Tertullian’s *Adversus Marcionem*, a defense of the Jewish Testament and its God against Marcion’s negation, is also anti-Judaic.

Belief that the Jewish people then and thereafter incurred blood guilt for the death of Jesus—in its ugliest form, “Christ killers”¹³⁶ and guilty of deicide—spawned an especially blasphemous teaching: God had rejected the Jews, cursed them to wander and suffer until, at the end of history, it pleased God to bring a remnant to faith in Christ. Causing Jews to wander and suffer; to humiliate, expel, persecute and massacre them was not held, even by canonized saints,¹³⁷ to be “sin against God and humanity” as the Church now teaches. Christians who acted thus, it was piously held, were instruments of God’s chastisement of those who had rejected and killed God’s only son, an attitude reinforced by the popular belief that Jesus had rejected his own people.

The medieval period would plunge this hate propaganda into a still more resilient, darker mythology that demonized the Jews. Here arise the myths of blood libel and Host desecration.¹³⁸

These accusations were to cost many Jewish lives, to cause Jews much anxiety and anguish, and to bring about further deterioration of their image in the eyes of their Christian neighbors, who now came to regard them as corrupt beings, capable of the most abominable crimes.¹³⁹

The line between theological rejection, anti-Judaism, and racial rejection, anti-Semitism, became, in practice, virtually invisible. When the sixteenth century came to a close, popular cul-

¹³⁶ By the fourteenth century, Jews became easily identifiable in Christian art because they were painted wearing the distinctive clothing they were obliged to wear, especially the Jewish hat. In depictions of the Crucifixion Jews, not Romans, are shown driving the nails into the body of Jesus. Christians saw that the executioners of Jesus wore the same costumes as their Jewish neighbours and drew the obvious conclusions.

¹³⁷ St. Ambrose of Milan (d. 397) “incited his congregation to burn down a synagogue when he described it as ‘a house of impiety, a receptacle of folly, which God himself has condemned.’” Martin, *A House Divided*, 49. Everywhere St. John of Capistrano (d. 1456) preached he tried to incite the people, to get rulers to revoke any privileges the Jews enjoyed and to impose restrictions, including wearing the badge. In Poland he set off a train of anti-Jewish violence. See *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. “Capistrano, John (Giovanni) of.”

¹³⁸ In 1731, thirty-one men, women and children in Blois France, the entire Jewish community, were burned at the stake on trumped-up charges of blood libel. The blood libel claims that once each year the Jews have to sacrifice a Christian child to get blood for the Passover ritual, that the Jews hold a council to decide the site of the sacrifice and the victim. Host desecration: this grotesque accusation—that the Jews steal the consecrated bread so they might recrucify Jesus—is still part of the arsenal of anti-Semites. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. “Blood Libel,” “France,” “Host Desecration.”

¹³⁹ Ibid., s.v. “Germany.”

ture in Europe through its art, literature, folklore and mystery plays was thoroughly imbued with the image of the Jew “as a usurer and bloodsucker, as the Christ-killer and reviler of the Virgin Mary, as associate of Satan and ally of the Turk.”¹⁴⁰ As “classical” anti-Judaic attitudes had helped prepare early Christian anti-Judaism, so the second millennium’s more concentrated and virulent Christian tradition of anti-Judaism helped prepare Europe for the Holocaust.¹⁴¹

ii. Nostra Aetate: Beginning the Remedial Action

The dramatic change in traditional Catholic teaching begun with *Nostra Aetate* continues to develop. Given the centrality of tradition in Catholic teaching, it seems to me worthwhile to call attention to the vital difference between authentic and inauthentic traditions in regard to church teaching on Jews and Judaism. The Church’s repudiation of the teaching of contempt retrieves the authentic Apostolic Tradition. During the nearly eighteen centuries between the Church’s loss of its disposition (and ability) to read the Christian Testament in its Jewish context and the conciliar declaration *Nostra Aetate*, the inauthentic tradition became full-blown. However, during these centuries which brought such terrible suffering to the Jews, the continuity of the authentic tradition was not utterly broken. I offer two examples.

A seldom noted element of the authentic tradition expressed in the creeds of the Church relates directly to the core of the teaching of contempt. That core maintains that all Jews who lived then and thereafter are guilty of the crucifixion of Jesus, a crime usually called by the theologically absurd term deicide. The perdurance of the “element of the authentic tradition” in regard

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, s.v. “Germany.”

¹⁴¹ For details and well-documented stories of this period, I recommend Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews*. Reading it is harrowing. First published in 1965, it provides a necessary education in the history of Christian anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism. It is of special Catholic interest because Flannery is a priest.

to the death of Jesus can be noted in seventeen patristic, conciliar and papal professions of faith from Hippolytus (c. 215-217) to Paul VI (1968). They contain no suggestion that the Jews were or are responsible for the death of Jesus. Whenever the seventeen doctrinal documents mention human agency in the crucifixion, the Church professes only that Jesus “suffered” under the Roman governor, “Pontius Pilate.” The most familiar example of the phrase is found in the Apostles’ Creed, recited for many centuries and still today by most Christians in their various liturgies.¹⁴²

The second example is directly related to the first but less a *vestige* of the Church’s authentic understanding of responsibility for the death of Jesus; it is the remarkable but, until Vatican II, largely overlooked teaching of the *Catechismus Romanus*, the catechism of the Council of Trent (1566). Jules Isaac, the eminent pioneer in Jewish-Christian dialogue, argued from this catechism in the dossier he presented in 1960 to Pope John XXIII.¹⁴³ (Some historians of Vatican II credit that famous audience with inspiring John to put “the Jewish question” on the Council’s agenda.) In regard to its teaching on the fourth article of the creed—“he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried”—John Oesterreicher comments: “Since it was drawn up at an express resolution of the Council and advocated by many Popes, it must be treated as a pronouncement of the magisterium, despite the little use that has been made of it.”¹⁴⁴

Among the numerous apposite statements in the catechism’s lengthy commentary on the

¹⁴² J. Neuner, S.J. and J. Dupuis, S.J., eds., *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church* (New York: Alba House, 1981), 3-29.

¹⁴³ “He gave the Pope a dossier in three parts: . . . 3. An extract from the catechism of Trent which . . . emphasized the guilt of all sinners as the fundamental cause of Christ’s death . . . and thus, in Isaac’s view, proved that the accusation of deicide raised against the Jews did not belong to the true tradition of the Church.” John Oesterreicher, “Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions: Introduction and Commentary,” in vol. 3, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1968), 2.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

fourth article of the creed, these stand out:

Anyone seeking . . . the principal reason [for the sufferings of Christ] will come upon sin . . . all the possible sins which men have committed from the very beginning right up to the present . . . to the end of the world. . . . Gentiles and Jews were the instigators, authors and executors of his sufferings. Judas betrayed him, Peter denied him, and all abandoned him. . . . And this is a crime which would seem greater in our case than it was in that of the Jews; for the Jews, as the same Apostle [Paul] says, “would never had crucified the Lord of glory if they had known him” (1 Cor 2:8). We ourselves maintain that we do know him, and yet we lay, as it were, violent hands on him by disowning him in our actions.¹⁴⁵

Trent, unfortunately, does not explicitly counter the popular notion that “the Jews” bear collective guilt for crucifying Jesus, the inauthentic tradition not formally repudiated until *Nostra Aetate*. Pastorally, Trent’s rightful emphasis—had it been taken to heart by apologists, catechists and preachers—might have gradually but effectively exorcised the teaching of contempt from popular Catholicism and thereby helped spare the Jews centuries of suffering.

Historical scholarship and biblical criticism, and the increasing influence of Jewish thought on Catholic theological reflection, are little by little restoring our capacity to read the Christian Testament in its Jewish context. Catholic retrieval of the authentic tradition through a refreshed reading of Scripture also warns against the disastrous effects when inauthentic tradition takes hold of Christian minds and hearts. This point brings us to the teaching of contempt itself.

“On the Jews,” the popular title of part four of *Nostra Aetate*, was the most contentious part of the Council’s “Declaration on Non-Christian Religions.” Yet, the final vote, on 28 October 1965, found 2312 bishops for and only 88 against (and some of these expressed dissatisfaction that the Declaration did not go far enough). Any reader of the history of the document would concur with John M. Oesterreicher: “Whoever had witnessed all the crises and vicissitudes of the

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 2-3 n. 2.

Declaration on the Jews from close by could only regard the triumph of that day as a miracle.”¹⁴⁶

In some respects much weaker than earlier drafts, the final document has proved to be a watershed in Jewish-Catholic relations. Taken with *Notes* and *Guidelines*, the teaching of John Paul II, and the anticipated Vatican document on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism,¹⁴⁷ most of the main objections to *Nostra Aetate* 4 will have been addressed (notably: its failure to mention the *Shoah*, the State of Israel, its tepid condemnation of anti-Semitism, and its failure to express any contrition for the Church’s history of persecution of the Jews).

First and foremost *Nostra Aetate* repudiates the core of the teaching of contempt:

True, authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ (cf. Jn. 19:6); still, what happened in His passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God,¹⁴⁸ the Jew should not be presented as repudiated or cursed by God, as if such views followed from the holy Scriptures.¹⁴⁹

Repudiation of the core of the teaching of contempt does not mean the teaching has disappeared from Christian preaching, teaching, catechetics and attitudes. As well, derivative teachings are still issues in the dialogue: Supersessionism versus Judaism as a living religion; Jews as an

¹⁴⁶ Oesterreicher, “The History of the Text,” *Commentary*, 129. The statistics are Oesterreicher’s.

¹⁴⁷ “In order to understand even more deeply the meaning of the *Shoah* and the historical roots of anti-Semitism that are related to it, joint collaboration and studies by Catholics and Jews on the *Shoah* should be continued. . . . And as we affirmed in the important and very cordial meeting I had with Jewish leaders in Castel Gandolfo on September 1 [1987], a Catholic document on the *Shoah* and anti-semitism will be forthcoming, resulting from such serious studies.” John Paul II, *SP*, 107-8. The 1994 report on a draft of the awaited document will be discussed in chapter three.

¹⁴⁸ An example of key phrases in texts relating to the Church’s self-understanding that, even in context, give rise to misunderstanding: “the Church is the new people of God.” While no supersessionist or replacement theology is intended, we must wait for several years after the Council for explicit magisterial affirmation of the validity of contemporary Judaism, and any papal statement that Judaism is good in itself and not just good in relation to the Church. John Paul, echoing *Nostra Aetate*, frequently quotes Paul’s teaching that the gentiles are in no position to boast but are saved by adoption. Paul refers to “the good olive tree [the Israel of God] onto which have been grafted the wild olive branches, those of the gentiles” (Rom. 11:17-24 NRSV). In Krister Stendahl’s phrase, Christians are “honorary Jews.” *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 37.

¹⁴⁹ Abbott, *Documents of Vatican II*, 666.

elect people; Christ vs. Torah; the validity of God's covenant with the Jews; Christian response to the Holocaust; the ongoing mission of Judaism; evangelization of the Jews. Elements of the teaching of contempt also affect Christian attitudes towards the land and State of Israel.

II. John Paul II: "Through different but finally convergent ways . . ."

Citations from John Paul, the *Guidelines* and the *Notes* in the preface and in the overview of his teaching in chapter one, and his reiterated repudiation of the key elements of the teaching of contempt, have already established his positive approach to Jewish-Christian dialogue and its many dimensions. Throughout the years 1979-1997, he affirms again and again the validity of Judaism and its mission.

The reader will recall that I include in church teaching statements that receive John Paul's active or passive approval. A case of passive approval merits attention. At the 1983 bishops' synod on "Our Mission of Reconciliation with the Jewish People," Cardinal Etchegaray said:

The great, nay the inevitable question which is put to the Church is that of the permanent vocation of the Jewish people, of its significance for Christians themselves. It is not enough to discover the riches of our common patrimony. Little by little, following the Second Vatican Council, the Church, without losing anything of its originality, is becoming aware that *it is all the more flourishing in proportion as it lives from its Jewish root*. The perpetuity of the Jewish people does not only carry, for the Church, a problem about external relations which need improving, but an internal problem which touches on its own definition. . . . Is not this connection, which can only be lived in a peaceful tension, one of the elements of the dynamism of the history of salvation?¹⁵⁰

He goes on to underscore the critical importance of his point, saying:

We must advance on a level of exegesis that is difficult to explore. If not, this Judeo-Christian dialogue will remain superficial and full of mental reservations. In proportion as Judaism remains exterior to our history of salvation, we shall be at

¹⁵⁰ Roger Cardinal Etchegaray, "Intervention of Roger Cardinal Etchegaray of Marseilles at the Plenary Session of the Synod of Bishops on Reconciliation, Rome, October 4, 1983 [from SIDIC]," in *More Stepping Stones*, 61.

the mercy of anti-semitic reflexes. We must consider the break between Israel and the Church the first schism, the “prototype of schisms” (Claude Tresmontant) in the heart of the people of God.¹⁵¹

Cardinal Etchegaray goes on to call for repentance, a “duty of justice”:

Let us learn how to ask forgiveness of the Lord and of our [brothers and sisters] who have so often been overwhelmed by the “teaching of contempt” (Jules Isaac) and plunged into the horrors of the Holocaust. Let us set to work so that all may be repaired that must be repaired.¹⁵²

In his fruitful address to the pope already cited (24 n. 73), Dr. Victor Goldbloom paid tribute to Cardinal Etchegaray, “whose remarkable statement we regard as a landmark and a beacon.” Whereas the context of *Nostra Aetate* is ecclesiological—it opens with the words, “As this Sacred Synod searches into the mystery of the Church”¹⁵³—and affirms the permanent validity of God’s covenant with the Jews, it does not mention Judaism’s ongoing mission. Etchegaray seems to argue that “the permanent vocation of the Jewish people” must become a foundational element of the Church’s soteriology. (A less attractive form of this attitude, found in both Jewish and Christian writings, is captured in the phrase Christianity is Judaism for the gentiles.¹⁵⁴) But Etchegaray is clearly aware (“without losing anything of its originality”) that our distinct identities are not contrary to the will of God. The healing of the proto-schism, from the Catholic side, lies in our making our Jewish roots—rediscovered from the ancient sources and from living Judaism—a living part of Catholic identity and theological reflection.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 61-62.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁵³ It is in the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* that one finds this reference to the Jews: “On account of their [ancestors], this people remains most dear to God, for God does not repent of the gifts he makes nor of the calls he issues [cf. Rom 11:28-29].” Abbott, *Documents of Vatican II*, 34.

¹⁵⁴ This model, with its double covenant, was made famous by Franz Rosenzweig in *The Star of Redemption* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971). Will Herberg argues the two-covenant theory, that both communities participate in the divine plan, in “Judaism and Christianity: Their Unity and Difference,” in Rothschild, *Jewish Perspectives*, 240-55. Christian scholars in this school include Parkes, Ruether, Van Buren.

John Paul, especially in the first years of his reflection on the relationship between Judaism and the Church, frequently repeats *Nostra Aetate*'s phrase "the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews." But, like Etchegaray, he does not stop there. On the other hand, his approach, ironically, is more Jewish than Etchegaray's; that is to say, he emphasizes orthopraxy more than orthodoxy in regard to healing the proto-schism. While he continually encourages scholars, theologians and exegetes in their work of uncovering, describing and explaining the Church's Jewish heritage, he is more likely to stress that appreciation of our common spiritual patrimony forms a basis for common action. Obviously, albeit less explicitly than Etchegaray does, John Paul sees Jewish-Christian detente and cooperation within the context of soteriology:

It is ultimately on such a basis that it will be possible to establish—as we know is happily already the case—a close collaboration toward which our common heritage directs us, in service to man and his vast spiritual and material needs. *Through different but finally convergent ways* we will be able to reach, with the help of the Lord who has never ceased to love his people [cf. Rom 11:1], this true brotherhood in reconciliation and respect and to continue to a full implementation of God's plan for history.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ John Paul II, address to the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, Rome, 6 March 1982. SP, 20. Emphasis added. The phrase "finally convergent" refers to Paul (Rom 11:26 NRSV): "all Israel will be saved." Krister Stendahl understands Romans to reflect Paul's struggle between his Jewish identity and his call to be apostle to the gentiles. "The question is the relation between two communities and their coexistence in the mysterious plan of God." Stendahl continues: "It should be noted that Paul does not say that when the time of God's kingdom, the consummation, comes Israel will accept Jesus as Messiah. . . . It is stunning to note that Paul writes this whole section of Romans (10:18-11:36) without using the name of Jesus Christ. This includes the final doxology (11:33-36), the only such doxology in his writings without any christological element." *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*, 4. Rom. 11:1 reads: "I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means!" (NRSV) Clemens Thoma is more astringent in regard to scenarios of future Jewish-Christian reconciliation that imagine some sort of blending of the two traditions: "Such conclusions overstep the limits of Christian hope because no one can know when and how God will make his promises come true. Concerning the time and way of a universal eschatological reconciliation, the words of Paul are hardly more intelligible than earlier prophetic utterance (see Ez 40:1-4; 43:1-9; 47:1-12; Zach 14: 6-21). Let us not forget that all these efforts and devices harbor the danger of religious syncretism. It is very much to the credit of postbiblical Jewish history that, in the long run, Jewish faithfulness has always proved stronger than any attempts at hobnobbing by syncretists." Thoma, "Points of Departure," 168.

c) Summary of Church Teaching against the Teaching of Contempt

It is difficult to understand why the plain sense of so many passages of Scripture did not centuries ago kill the teaching of contempt. (The question arises: What effect do contemporary ideologies have on our reading of Scripture?) Now, we witness an about-face. *Nostra Aetate* declares that “the Church keeps ever before her mind the words of the Apostle Paul about his kinsmen: ‘to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs.’”¹⁵⁶ The document goes on to affirm the Jewish foundations of the Church. The about-face carries with it a haunting guilt. Nonetheless, guilt and shame for the past cannot deplete our energy and resolve to change. John Paul gives guilt its proper emphasis: “Guilt should not lead to self-agonizing thoughts, but must always be a point of departure for conversion.”¹⁵⁷

The spirit of conversion in regard to church teaching on Jews and Judaism does not seem to have captured the minds and hearts of those who compiled and edited the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. While not a throwback to preconciliar days, it clearly has problems. The *Catechism*, formally approved for publication (first in a French edition) by John Paul II in 1992, has been widely criticized for its treatment of Jews and Judaism. An article in *Tribune Juive* remarks:

Towards the end of the catechism we read “The Law confided to Israel has never sufficed to justify those who were obedient to it” (p. 512). Such theological assurance is surprising, if not shocking. We expected not to find these disparaging formulae any longer, which have no theological justification. . . . Further on “The Torah remains a law of slavery” and more serious, we Jews do not have “the grace of the Spirit to fulfil it.” Is that the renewed teaching of the Church on Jews and Judaism? If so, it is without hope.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ As quoted by John Paul, general audience, Rome, 26 Sep. 1990. *SP*, 138. The translation is superior to that found in Abbott, *Documents of Vatican II*, 664.

¹⁵⁷ Address to the German ambassador to the Holy See, Rome, 8 Nov. 1990. *Ibid.*, 138.

¹⁵⁸ Michael de Saint Chernon, “A Jewish View,” *Sidic* 27, no.2 (1994): 23. *Sidic*’s translation of “Les

It would be difficult, however, to supersede the sharp critique of the Central Committee of German Catholics; I have included extracts from their statement in the appendix. The *Catechism*, in John Paul's words, is "a sure norm for teaching the faith"; it is meant "to support ecumenical efforts . . . for the unity of all Christians" and "to encourage and assist in the writing of new local catechisms."¹⁵⁹ Thus, the German document concludes, the *Catechism*'s "significance for the church of the present is not be underestimated."¹⁶⁰ The *Catechism* is undergoing revision; it remains to be seen how much of the critique will still be relevant when the changes are published.

The *Catechism* notwithstanding, church teaching since *Nostra Aetate*, while not a systematic approach to the meaning of Jews and Judaism in themselves¹⁶¹ and in relation to the Church, nonetheless evinces steady growth in the Church's positive attitude towards the key elements of Jewish identity; and a growing awareness of the truth of Cardinal Etchegaray's claim (51) that the Church "is all the more flourishing in proportion as it lives from its Jewish root."

As we saw in chapter one, affirmation of Judaism entails affirmation of people, land and religion. John Paul has oriented Catholic thinking towards a positive and ever fuller theological exposition of these aspects of Jewish identity. Should John Paul's successors as well as Catholic theologians, exegetes, and scholars continue to build upon the legacy of the present pontificate, there is clear reason to hope that, step by careful step, a coherent Catholic theology of Judaism will emerge that carries the weight and enjoys the influence of the central teaching authority of the

limites du dialogue: A propos du nouveau catéchisme," in *Tribune Juive*, 17 Dec. 1992.

¹⁵⁹ John Paul II, *Fidei Depositum*, 3, "The Doctrinal Value of the Text," apostolic constitution, Rome, 11 October 1992. Found in every edition of the *Catechism*.

¹⁶⁰ See the appendix, 115.

¹⁶¹ A Waldensian pastor criticizes the *Catechism*'s "ecclesiastical concentration that is typical of Roman Catholicism," its preoccupation with the way Israel is related to the Church. He asks: "Why not tackle the question (among others) of the manner in which the Church is related to Israel?" Daniele Garrone, "On the New Roman Catechism; an Ecumenical Reflection," *Sidic* 27, no. 2 (1994): 20.

Church. (It goes without saying, in my view, that church teaching on Jews and Judaism should in the future make explicit use of official statements issuing from the World Council of Churches and its member churches.) Some problems that remain will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

III. The Land and State of Israel and the Status of Jerusalem

John Paul affirmed the basic tenet of Zionism when he said, “It is necessary to understand that the Jews, who for two thousand years were dispersed throughout the world, have decided to return to the land of their ancestors. It is their right.”¹⁶²

I call upon Rabbi David Hartman to establish a context—Jewish, religious, realistic yet hopeful—for my discussing the State of Israel. Philosopher-theologian Hartman, although a disciple of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik (see page 16), “does not presuppose the belief in Jewish Messianic triumphalism.”¹⁶³ He claims that a positive attitude towards ‘the existence of other faiths in their own right need not be a violation of our covenantal faith commitment, but rather the very presence of a dignified other can create within the Judaic spiritual life an enhancement of our covenantal consciousness.’¹⁶⁴ These remarks are apropos of his experience as an Israeli, a traditional Jew confronting the pluralist reality of the State of Israel, as a religious man in dialogue with modernity, who believes that “the State of Israel is a catalyst for a new covenantal understanding.”¹⁶⁵ His observations on the state are vivid and true:

Nowhere is the tension between tradition and modernity to be felt more strongly than today in the State of Israel and above all in its capital Jerusalem. One senses

¹⁶² As quoted by Shmuel Hadas, first ambassador of Israel to the Holy See, in his first address to the pope. SP, 199. Original context unknown.

¹⁶³ Rabbi David Hartman, “Judaism Encounters Christianity Anew,” in *Visions of the Other: Jewish and Christian Theologians Assess the Dialogue*, ed. Eugene J. Fisher (New York: Paulist Press, 1994), 67.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 70.

in Jerusalem that something radically new is being demanded of the Judaic spirit. It is hard to articulate it clearly, but a Jew living there can feel that something explosive is beginning in the new reality of the ingathering of exiles. . . .

On one level, Jews from everywhere have come home. . . . Yet only in the home to which we have returned do we find that we are actually so divided. . . . The most serious question in Israel is: Could the chronic dissension turn into a civil war? The polarization between religious and secular is great and increasing.¹⁶⁶

Hartman goes on to relate a number of incidents of conflict, and concludes:

The reader may be thinking that I am telling a fairy tale but I am talking of lived reality. Anger, cynicism and intense levels of polarization arise over these burning issues between brothers and sisters who have come home after praying so long for the ingathering of exiles.¹⁶⁷

In addition to internal Jewish conflict, there is the ethnic and religious pluralism of Israeli society, the problems of Arab claims to the land, the Palestinian problem, the hostility of Israel's neighbours; these are realities. Hartman, nonetheless, sees beyond these realities:

Our return to the land is the greatest testimony to our people's belief in God's dream. My understanding of prophecy is that it was the intuition of Moses to hear God's prayer that Israel shall be a holy people. Moses heard that prayer and we are burdened forever with trying to translate it into the concrete. Election is not a description of ontological uniqueness, as Judah Halevi¹⁶⁸ claimed, but the principle of God's dream and prayer for history.¹⁶⁹

Yet, Hartman says, whereas the Diaspora and the ghetto "allowed Jews to define themselves in their own language without having to meet otherness . . . cultural monism is no longer a psychological option in our situation."¹⁷⁰ The State of Israel and the Spiritual Ghetto, part two of his article, concludes on a note that is hopeful for inter-religious dialogue:

Therefore, part of the very return of the Jewish people to Israel is the challenge to rethink messianic triumphalism. The very meaning of our return is not to find a ha-

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 73.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 74.

¹⁶⁸ Highly influential Spanish Hebrew poet and religious philosopher (d. 1141).

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 75.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 75-6.

ven against antisemitism, but a new way in which the other, the different one, may enter into our consciousness with love rather than suspicion. . . . For me, at any rate, return to the State of Israel entails surrendering the belief that there is one universal scheme for redemption in history.¹⁷¹

After Torah, the religious significance of the land and State of Israel remains the aspect of Jewish self-understanding least understood by Christians. *Nostra Aetate* fails to mention the State of Israel. From his examination of the speeches of Cardinal Bea, the document's "shepherd," Anthony Kenny concludes, "For Bea, and thus for the Declaration, the return of the Jews to their ancient homeland and the rebirth of the Jewish nation in the State of Israel held no religious significance. It was a totally political phenomenon."¹⁷² Likewise for Bea's attitude towards Zionism. Commenting on the record of the entire debate on *Nostra Aetate* as presented by Oesterreicher (50 n. 146), Kenny observes:

Whenever Zionism or the State of Israel is raised it is always as a political issue and never in any way with religious overtones. There is a total absence in this work of any idea that Zionism or the State of Israel has any religious significance whatever for Jews. . . . This, along with the avoidance of any political troubles, would explain the document's silence on the State of Israel.¹⁷³

The 1974 *Guidelines* also ignores Israel. Finally, during the pontificate of John Paul II, an official church document on Jewish-Christian dialogue, the 1985 *Notes*, mentions Israel. Its careful wording illustrates that the political and religious dimensions of the State of Israel are distinct but, in practice, very difficult to separate. On the religious dimension, *Notes* states:

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁷² Kenny, *Catholics, Jews, and the State of Israel*, 47. Rabbi Rosen notes: "The immediate Jewish religious response to Zionism was overwhelmingly negative from both sides of the spectrum." David Rosen, "The Holy and the Profane," *Sidic* 29, no. 1 (1996): 20. His article recounts the evolution of Zionism until today. Perhaps Bea was influenced by the earlier history. The ultra-Orthodox, the *haredi*, remain opposed to the state.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 47. Among the "political troubles": the opposition of a group of Middle Eastern prelates, the threat of schism, and vicious anti-Semitic pamphleteering in Rome. The fascinating story is vividly told in Oesterreicher, "Commentary," 112, *passim*.

The history of Israel did not end in the year A.D. 70. It continued, especially in a numerous Diaspora which allowed Israel to carry to the whole world a witness—often heroic—of its fidelity to the one God and to “exalt God in the presence of all the living” (Tobit 13:4), while preserving the memory of the land of their forefathers at the heart of their hope (*Passover Seder*).

Christians are invited to understand this religious attachment, which finds its roots in biblical tradition, without, however, making their own any particular religious interpretation of this relationship.¹⁷⁴

Eugene Fisher is among those who interpreted the last phrase to be a veiled caveat against the kind of Christian apocalyptic that reads the Jews’ return to the land as a sign of imminent Parousia,¹⁷⁵ and against biblical fundamentalists who set the boundaries of the state according to this or that scriptural passage.¹⁷⁶

On the political dimension of the State, *Notes* says: “The existence of the State of Israel and its political options should be envisaged not in a perspective which is in itself religious but in their reference to the common principles of international law.”¹⁷⁷ Widely interpreted as a tacit recognition of the State, this attitude was welcomed by Israelis who want their country to be considered a normal political society subject to the same standards as every other sovereign state. That being so, Christians concerned with social justice thus claim the freedom exercised by many Israelis to be critical of Israel’s policy towards the Palestinians—without implying lack of support for the State itself. John Paul’s apostolic letter *Redemptionis Anno* contains a more explicit, albeit unofficial, recognition of the State:

For the Jewish people who live in the State of Israel and who preserve in that land such precious testimonies of their history and faith, we must ask for the desired se-

¹⁷⁴ *Notes*, “Judaism and Christianity in History,” VI. 25. The language of “heroic witness” is normally reserved for Catholic talk about the lives of the saints.

¹⁷⁵ Eugene J. Fisher, “The Holy See and the State of Israel: The Evaluation of Attitudes and Policies,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 24, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 201.

¹⁷⁶ Eugene J. Fisher, “Implementing the Vatican Document *Notes on Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis*,” *Living Light* 22, no. 2 (January 1986): 110.

¹⁷⁷ *Notes*, VI. 25.

curity and the due tranquillity that is the prerogative of every nation and of progress for society.¹⁷⁸

Kenny comments: "This statement constitutes an outright, clear, unambiguous affirmation of the right of the Jewish State to existence and security. It is a unique statement among all of the pope's statements."¹⁷⁹ Ten years later John Paul resolved the issue that was for so long a source of bitterness among Jews; in 1994 full diplomatic relations were established between Israel and the Holy See. National chair of the Anti-Defamation League, David H. Strasser, said to John Paul in regard to his historic initiative:

Yours has been a distinguished record of enlightenment. We believe that history will say that one of the crowning achievements of Pope John Paul II was the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel. This recognition will not only affect the people of Israel; *it is a covenant* whose scope is global, and it sets a moral tone for the rest of the world.¹⁸⁰

The Vatican is a unique state; therefore the *Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel* has unique features. As Eugene J. Fisher observed:

[The *Agreement*] was not just a moment of international diplomacy between two tiny Mediterranean states. It was a theologically significant moment in the nearly two-millennia-long history of the relationship between the Jewish people and the Catholic Church.¹⁸¹

Fisher goes on to quote from the preamble, which I shall do here:

The Holy See and the State of Israel, mindful of the singular character and universal significance of the Holy Land; aware of the unique nature of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people, and the historic process of reconciliation and growth in mutual understanding and friendship between Catholics and Jews . . . realizing that such Agreement will provide a sound and lasting

¹⁷⁸ John Paul II, *Redemptionis Anno*, apostolic letter, 1984. As quoted in SP, xxxiii.

¹⁷⁹ Kenny, *Catholics, Jews and the State of Israel*, 56.

¹⁸⁰ Papal audience with a delegation from the ADL immediately following the presentation of credentials by the first ambassador of Israel to the Holy See. SP, 202. Emphasis added. On that occasion, Strasser presented the pope with the manuscript of the Hebrew translation of Gianfranco Svidercodchi's *Letter to a Jewish Friend* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), an account of John Paul's lifelong friendship with Jerzy Kluger.

¹⁸¹ Fisher, "A Commentary," SP, xxixii.

basis for the continued development of their present and future relations . . . agree upon the following Articles.¹⁸²

The full text of this unique and important *Agreement* can be found in the appendix.

a) Israel in Jewish and Christian Thought

Marcel Dubois notes: "Leaving exile in order to return to the land of Israel is a central motif in all of Jewish liturgy."¹⁸³ The texts of Judaism's liturgical cycle are permeated with the hope of return. The liturgy kept Jewish hope alive during the centuries of Exile. Indeed, many Psalms in the liturgy express hope of return from the first Exile. The two most solemn holydays of the year, Passover and Yom Kippur, climax in the proclamation: "Next year in Jerusalem."

Charlotte Klein's admonition echoes the *Guidelines* in regard to Christians' learning Jewish identity from Jews: "Never again . . . must Christians impose upon the phenomenon of Israel their preconceived notions as to the meaning of its destiny. The Jewish people are capable of being their own interpreters."¹⁸⁴ It is not possible here to present the great diversity of Jewish interpretation of the significance and destiny of the State of Israel for Jews. Besides the spectrum of thought that runs from pure secular-Zionist nationalism to fervent religious-Zionist messianism, we have the spectra of thinking that divide along "denominational" lines, Orthodox, Conservative,

¹⁸² *Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel*, preamble, 13 Dec. 1993, 16 Tevet 5754. SP, 203-04. The agreement was signed, in fact, in a classroom at Ratisbonne.

¹⁸³ Marcel Dubois, "Israel and Christian Self-Understanding," in *Voices from Jerusalem: Jews and Christians Reflect on the Holy Land*, ed. David Burrell and Yehezkel Landau (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 58. Dubois, a Dominican friar, is the first Christian to win the prestigious Israeli Prize.

¹⁸⁴ Charlotte Klein, "The Theological Dimensions of the State of Israel," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 10, no. 4 (1971): 701. The term Israel requires some comment: Still today, Christian apologists will refer to the Church by the unscriptural term New Israel. "Most Christian theologians concerned with Jewish-Christian relations agree that whether or not the state of Israel is afforded theological significance, use of the term 'Israel' must not be divorced from the present reality of the Jewish people—that is, it must include an affirmation of 'the Jews' as the people of 'Israel,' and Judaism as the form of life and worship given these people by God." Stephen R. Haynes, *Prospects for Post-Holocaust Theology* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 14.

Reform and Reconstructionist. As Kenny observes:

Those who would inquire of Jewish sources in order to understand how Jews interpret the State of Israel become immediately aware of a serious problem when listening to Judaism's inner dialogue. The problem is Judaism's inner diversity represented in the broadest terms by both the secular and the religious spheres.¹⁸⁵

Kenny's valuable study goes on to say:

The fact that there has been no attempt by any sector of Judaism to alter the messianic expression of the liturgy to align it with the contemporary events of Jewish history is itself significant. It is a fact that parallels the state of the internal Jewish dialogue on Israel among religious Jews.¹⁸⁶

Pinchas Hacohen Peli, writing about Israel and Jewish self-understanding based on the Talmud, says that “[in the Talmud] in general, the rabbis speak of redemption and the messiah from the point of view of halakhic reality.”¹⁸⁷ David Hartman gives an overview of the theologies of several prominent *halakhic* thinkers. They range from Yeshayahu Leibowitz, for whom the return from exile has no religious significance whatever, to Soloveitchik, who gives a positive interpretation to the secularism of the State; to Kook and Heschel who situate the State in the tradition of messianic hope.¹⁸⁸ Most religious Jews, however, would agree with the minimum formula: The State of Israel is the beginning of the dawn of redemption, *reshit tzemihat geulatenu*.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ Kenny, *Catholics, Jews, and the State of Israel*, 92. See Lawrence A. Hoffman, ed., *The Land of Israel: Jewish Perspectives* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), an excellent history of the concept of the land through biblical, hellenistic, tannaitic, medieval and modern periods. Of the book's essays, especially informative on the diversity of contemporary attitudes is Arnold M. Eisen, “Off Center: The Concept of the Land of Israel in Modern Jewish Thought,” 263-96; and Uriel Tal, “Contemporary Hermeneutics and Self-Views on the Relationship between State and Land,” 316-38. Hoffman expressly considers his book to be a contribution to Jewish-Christian dialogue. See his “Introduction: Land of Blessing and ‘Blessings of the Land’,” 1-4, *passim*.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 111.

¹⁸⁷ Pinchas Hacohen Peli, “Israel and Jewish Self-Understanding,” in *Voices from Jerusalem*, 46.

¹⁸⁸ David Hartman, “Perceptions of the State of Israel in Modern Halakhic Thinkers,” *Immanuel* 22/23 (1989): 7-24.

¹⁸⁹ “This return is being realized: Those who escaped from the Nazi death camps have found in the land of Israel a refuge and a new life in regained liberty and dignity. It is for this reason that their return has been called by our teachers ‘the beginning of the coming of redemption—Reshit tzemihat geulatenu.’” Chief Rabbi Eliyahu Toaff,

In my discursus on Jews and Judaism, I quoted Hartman's statement that the Jewish people was chosen for "the establishment of a society that embodies the normative content of revelation" (6 n. 22). Peoplehood, land and mission are inseparable. There is not space here to examine the five strands of thought that Manfred Vogel discerns in the literature of Judaism's relationship to the land.¹⁹⁰ Vogel's conclusions are important, for they link peoplehood, land and mission. John T. Pawlikowski comments: "Overall, Professor Vogel's research shows that the preponderance of modern Jewish formulations of self-identity do affirm the category of the land as central." Pawlikowski continues:

There is one aspect of Professor Vogel's analysis that especially needs to be highlighted. The basic category for most of the Jewish writers on Zionism was peoplehood, not land. Essential to the notion of Jewish peoplehood was the sense of working toward redemption, of seeing the consummation of that redemption in the dimension of time. The category of land entered the structure of Jewish faith secondarily and derivatively, by what was implied in the meaning of peoplehood. In order to fulfill its redemptive vocation, the Jewish people need sovereignty—the power to regulate its life both internally and externally. Without the possession of sovereignty, the freedom to decide and direct the life of the community, the category of peoplehood cannot possibly carry out the redemptive task that is its burden. . . . But sovereignty can be attained only by people in possession of a land. . . . As far as its redemptive vocation is concerned the category of the land is no less essential than the category of peoplehood.¹⁹¹

Jewish society in the State of Israel, then, is important for Christian faith "because the process of human salvation in Christianity is deeply rooted in the process of human history."¹⁹² In their writings, biblical scholars Walter Brueggemann and W. D. Davies insist on the importance of

address to the pope, Great Synagogue of Rome, 13 April 1986. *SP*, 68.

¹⁹⁰ Manfred Vogel, "The Link between People, Land and Religion in Modern Jewish Thought," *Sidic* 8, no. 2 (1975): 15-32.

¹⁹¹ John T. Pawlikowski, *What Are They Saying*, 113-14.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 116.

the biblical land tradition for Christians.¹⁹³ Brueggemann blames the existentialist approach of scholars such as Bultmann for our loss of the sense of place. Pawlikowski comments:

It mistakenly tried to free the New Testament from the biblical land tradition in favor of personal meaning for the individual believer acquired through instantaneous and radical obedience. It is obvious that such a Christian approach would have little sympathy with current Jewish reflection on the meaning of the State of Israel.¹⁹⁴

John Paul's repeated affirmation of the centrality of the land in Jewish self-understanding has been noted. He does not, however, advance theological understanding of the meaning for Christians of the biblical land tradition beyond love and reverence for its sacred character as the setting for so much of salvation history. Nonetheless, the essential element for such advance, his wholly positive teaching on the Jews' return to Zion, and his affirmation of Judaism's permanent election and mission, offer foundations for Catholic theologians to respond to Brueggemann's insistence, in Pawlikowski's words, that "a truly believing Christian will need to make land a principal category of his or her belief system every bit as much as a faithful Jew."¹⁹⁵

Perhaps it is not inappropriate in the context to offer the opinion that here is a topic deserving of a dissertation: Jewish and Christian understanding of the people, land and State of Israel and the implications for Jewish–Christian dialogue. The reader will recall from chapter one (16–17) Jacob Neusner's assertion that dialogue must be based upon understanding how the other feels religiously. I wrote (16) that he "offers ways, usually through story . . . for Christians to share Jewish religious feeling about the State of Israel."

¹⁹³ Ibid., 115–20.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 117. See Walter Brueggemann, *The Land* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977); W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 117.

b) The Status of Jerusalem

It is impossible to separate the distinct political and religious dimensions of the problem of the status of Jerusalem. A sample of recent (1995-96) titles from my bibliography suggests the dimensions of discussing the Holy City: *Jerusalem: Battlegrounds of Memory*, *Jerusalem: The Endless Crusade*; *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths; To Rule Jerusalem*. In *Redemptionis Anno*, John Paul writes of Jerusalem:

Jews ardently love her and in every age venerate her memory, abundant as she is in many remains and monuments from the time of David who chose her as the capital, and of Solomon who built the Temple there. Therefore, they turn their minds to her daily, one may say, and point to her as the sign of their nation.¹⁹⁶

Yet, he continues, Jerusalem "is the homeland of the hearts of all the spiritual descendants of Abraham who hold her very dear. . . . The Holy City . . . strongly urges peace for the whole human race, especially for those who worship the one, great God. . . . But it must be acknowledged that Jerusalem continues to be the cause of daily conflict, violence, and partisan reprisals." The issue of Jerusalem is complex. Whereas the Church does not qualify its support of the State of Israel, the status of Jerusalem is one issue in the dialogue with the Catholic Church where the desire of the Jewish partner—support for Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel—is unlikely to be met.¹⁹⁷ The Secretariat of State of the Holy See recently stated:

The Holy See's attitude with regard to the territorial situation of Jerusalem is necessarily the same as that of the international community. The latter could be summarized as follows: the part of the city militarily occupied in 1967 and annexed and declared the capital of the State of Israel, is occupied territory, and all Israeli

¹⁹⁶ Text available at www.al-bushra.org/; Internet; accessed 15 October 1997.

¹⁹⁷ Some Jews accept dividing the city between Jews and Palestinians, some accept the position of the international community; but most Jews in Israel and the Diaspora want Jerusalem to be recognized as the undivided capital of Israel.

measures which exceed the power of a belligerent occupant under international law are therefore null and void.¹⁹⁸

While a student at Ratisbonne, I heard Emil Fackenheim lecture on the status of Jerusalem. Fackenheim placed the Catholic Church's policy on Jerusalem within the centuries-old anti-Judaic tradition exemplified by Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*. He made no allusion to any other claim on Jerusalem; and he did not acknowledge any issue of justice relevant to Jewish claims to exclusive sovereignty over the city. Nor did he acknowledge the Church's formal recognition of the State as a countersign of supposed Catholic "anti-Semitism." (Flannery, Maritain and Eckard link anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism, but only in regard to opposition to the State.¹⁹⁹) Fackenheim represents the extreme view within Israeli society—no compromise; yet he illustrates how difficult it is to address the issue of Jerusalem free of the obfuscating factors of supposed Christian or specifically Catholic anti-Semitism, anti-Judaism and anti-Zionism.

I have included in the appendix the full text cited above of *Jerusalem: Consideration of the Secretariat of State*. The statement details the Vatican's policy and the reasons for it. John Paul sums up the essence of Vatican policy in *Redemptionis Anno*:

Indeed, there should be found, with good will and farsightedness, a concrete and just solution by which different interests and aspirations can be provided for in a harmonious and stable form, and be safeguarded in an adequate and efficacious manner by a special Statute internationally guaranteed so that no party could jeopardize it. I also feel it an urgent duty, in the presence of the Christian communities, of those who believe in the One God and who are committed to the defense of fundamental human values, to repeat that the question of Jerusalem is fundamental for a just peace in the Middle East.

¹⁹⁸ *Jerusalem: Considerations of the Secretariat of State*, Vatican, May 1996. Available at www.al-bushra.org/; Internet; accessed 15 October 1997. Included in the appendix.

¹⁹⁹ Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews*, 267-69. See also Jacques Maritain, *Antisemitism* (New York: Longman Green, 1939), 20. A. Roy Eckardt, "Antisemitism is the Heart," *Christian Jewish Relations* 17, no. 4 (1984): 43-51, *passim*.

Is a solution acceptable to Israel and the international community possible? Short of that, it does not seem at present that any solution to the problem will be forthcoming. The status of Jerusalem remains a difficult, divisive issue in Jewish-Catholic dialogue.

IV. Conclusion of Chapter Two

I believe I have established beyond doubt the sincerity and substance of Roman Catholic resolve to repent, be converted and reconciled to our Jewish brothers and sisters. I credit overall progress to the commitment and teaching of Pope John Paul II. As I have noted, he has provided foundational elements for a Catholic theology of Judaism. Cardinal Willebrands, then president of the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, said on that score:

I see [the internal Catholic effort to elaborate a proper theological vision of Judaism] as one of the major tasks of our theological faculties around the world. Not only should they study Judaism and Jewish sources, but it is to be hoped that they will study them at first hand as an indispensable and elementary departing point. But beyond this, our task is to face adequately, study and try to solve, in all fidelity to Catholic normative tradition (which we accept and cherish and are called to transmit to those who follow us), the questions that a renewed vision of Judaism poses to many aspects of Catholic theology, from christology to ecclesiology, from the liturgy to the sacraments, from eschatology to the relation with the world and the witness we are called to offer in it and to it, or rather to the men and women living here with us, Catholics and Jews.²⁰⁰

One implication is astonishing: Judaism, after nearly two millennia of (at best) Christian indifference, is to be once again our teacher.

While formidable problems remain, they should not, in light of John Paul's example, discourage a Catholic's hope for continual progress towards resolution. The chief problem, in my view, is twofold and chronic: apparent anti-Judaism in the Christian Testament and its companion,

²⁰⁰ Willebrands, "Nostra aetate: A Catholic Retrospective," in *Church and Jewish People*, 27-28.

exclusive christology. The former requires that liturgical reading of relevant texts be accompanied by explanatory teaching drawn from the still too little known, ever-evolving positive teaching of the Church. Obviously, that requires a serious commitment from the educators of ordained ministers and catechists to adapt curricula accordingly.

The not unrelated problem of exclusive christology is thornier. Many agree with Jacoba Kuikman that “the christological question is the key issue in Christian anti-Semitism and . . . the need to reformulate christology is therefore at the very heart of Jewish-Christian relations.”²⁰¹ Although I would not give that weight to the christological problem, many do. I found her dissertation very enlightening and hopeful. The reader will recall Monika Hellwig’s opinion (33) that the issue is not a christology acceptable to Jews; rather, the Church requires “a christology which allows legitimacy and respect to post-Christian Judaism.” On a practical level, I believe progress towards a more open Christian mentality could be made by popular *imitatio Christi*, that is, by our imitating the religious focus of Jesus in the gospels. His passion was to do the will of, and lead us to, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

John Paul and the State of Israel have laid foundations for a solid, lasting relationship. Yet, John Paul’s unqualified support of the legitimacy of Israel, of Jews and Judaism is not always reflected in the Jewish media. Eugene J. Fisher explores this problem at some length in his commentary on the texts of *Spiritual Pilgrimage*. He provides several examples of Jewish reaction to controversial papal words and actions to conclude that “to Catholics . . . much of what Jews have said about our Holy Father during these controversies is all but indistinguishable from the anti-

²⁰¹ Jacoba H. Kuikman, “Christology in the Context of Jewish-Christian Relations: Unresolved Issues and the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx,” *Toronto Journal of Theology* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 76. This is basically an abstract of her dissertation, “Christology in the Context of Jewish-Christian Relations: The Contribution of Edward Schillebeeckx” (Ph.D. diss., University of St. Michael’s College, 1993). Kuikman offers an excellent critique of several contemporary attempts at an ecumenical christology, especially the work of Van Buren and Pawlikowski.

Catholic bigotries of the old Protestant nativist movements in [the U.S.] of the pre-ecumenical days." It is not just a question of good manners. Much more is at stake:

The question, in terms of the judgment of history, is not just what a particular incident meant to Jews, however valid were Jewish concerns, but what it meant for Catholics (the latter being the more relevant when it comes to determining papal intent). More basically, Catholics and Jews need to develop the habit of listening to each other tell their versions of such events to their own respective communities. It can be surprising and illuminating to discover that in many cases they will sound as if two different events involving entirely different people have occurred. But I submit, the days when we had the luxury, if ever we did, to attempt to tell each our own versions of our common history in isolation from the other are, or should be, over. Nothing in the long run is more dangerous or more likely to lead us into problems than that. The stakes are too high today.²⁰²

The polity of Judaism does not allow the issuing of common statements on the dialogue or on Christianity. Indeed, one must comb Jewish sources for any *substantial* affirmation of Christianity as it is in itself. Assessing the dialogue in 1994, Irving Greenberg (his seminal thinking on the Holocaust will be cited in chapter three) concludes:

As Jews work with Christians, they will discover the ethical power of Christianity, the religious depth of its liturgical life, and the extraordinary effects of its religious models, even the models that are most remote from Jewish perceptions of the past 1,800 years. In doing so, Jews will begin to discover the positive aspects of Christian "otherness." Jews will have to fight the patronizing tendency to discover Christianity as a wonderful religion only because it is so similar to Judaism. A more searching understanding of Christianity needs to be developed and articulated by the Jewish community today.²⁰³

In sum, one can safely assert that there is hardly a dimension of human nature, human endeavour, and of human history that is irrelevant to Jewish-Christian dialogue. In this chapter I have dipped below the surface of just three issues. The next chapter will have the single topic upon which all dimensions of the dialogue converge: the Holocaust.

²⁰² Fisher, "Commentary," *SP*, xxxvii.

²⁰³ Greenberg, "Judaism and Christianity," in *Visions of the Other*, 18.

—CHAPTER 3—

“RACHEL IS CRYING FOR HER CHILDREN, THEY ARE GONE”

This chapter will examine church teaching on the Holocaust, the *Shoah*,²⁰⁴ especially the words and actions of Pope John Paul II, in the context of Jewish–Christian dialogue. On the link between *Nostra Aetate* and the *Shoah*, Stephen Haynes observes:

Between the end of the World War II and the convening of the Second Vatican Council, there were only a few, mostly forgotten, examples of attempts to come to terms with the theological meaning of the Nazi Holocaust. . . . Although it appeared twenty years after the liberation of the Nazi death camps, [*Nostra Aetate*] found its impetus in the tragedy of the Holocaust, the church’s teaching about and attitudes towards Jews throughout its history, and the Vatican’s relationship with the German Reich. . . . Since the late 1960s, many Catholic and Protestant theologians have displayed a deep concern for the Holocaust and its implications which exceeds the precedent set by “*Nostra aetate*. ”²⁰⁵

In “Conclusion of Chapter Two,” I asserted that all issues in the dialogue converge on the *Shoah*; in like manner, questioning the *Shoah* inevitably leads to all issues in the dialogue. Yet, as event, the *Shoah* remains an unintelligible abyss, a black hole. Alan T. Davies is probably right: “The *Shoah*, in the final analysis, simply defeats theology and philosophy. Its evil remains a mystery.”²⁰⁶ Emil Fackenheim writes, “We cannot comprehend [the *Shoah*] but only comprehend its

²⁰⁴ *Shoah* (שׁואַה), ruin, destruction, devastation; cf. Zeph 1:15), is the preferred, but not exclusive, usage of John Paul. Cardinal Willebrands wrote: “If I personally prefer the term *shoah* and use it rather than *holocaust*, this is essentially for a religious reason. . . . In the Bible [*holocaust*] indicates ‘a sacrifice to God of an offering wholly consumed by fire.’ Under no circumstances can the extermination of the Jews in Europe between 1939 and 1945 be considered as ‘a sacrifice to God’ offered by the persecutors.” Willebrands, “The Impact of the Shoah on Jewish–Christian Relations,” *Church and Jewish People*, 159. See also Zev Garber and Bruce Zuckerman, “Why Do We Call the Holocaust ‘the Holocaust’? An Enquiry into the Psychology of Labels,” in Vol. 2, Proceedings, *Remembering for the Future: The Impact of the Holocaust on the Contemporary World* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988), 1879–92. I will use both terms.

²⁰⁵ Haynes, *Prospects*, 5.

²⁰⁶ Alan T. Davies, “Evil and Existence: Karl Barth, Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr Revisited in Light of the *Shoah*,” in *Contemporary Christian Religious Responses to the Shoah*, ed. Steven L. Jacobs (Lanham, MD:

incomprehensibility.”²⁰⁷ Nonetheless, men and women, especially those who profess that God is God of history, continue to probe the mystery of this “orienting event” (Greenberg), “tremendum” (Arthur Cohen), “interruption” (Fiorenza and Tracy), “epoch-making event” (Fackenheim).

I. Approaching the *Shoah*

I will approach the *Shoah* within the theological horizon articulated by Emil L. Fackenheim in an influential essay on faith. Whereas, as we shall see below, Fackenheim later modified his thinking, he would likely agree that his earlier views on contemporary faith are still held by the majority of religious Jews and Christians.

Arguing within our common biblical tradition, Fackenheim states: “Biblical faith—and I mean both Jewish and Christian—is never destroyed by tragedy but only tested by it; and in the test it both clarifies its own meaning and conquers tragedy. Here, precisely, lies the secret of its strength.” Fackenheim considers Jeremiah:

[He was witness to] the destruction of the Temple, of Jerusalem, of the whole national existence of Judah. He does not deny the tragedy or seek to explain it away. But neither does it occur to him that God’s existence has now been refuted, or that He can no longer be conceived of as just, or as loving His people, Israel.

Consider Job: “His faith is reduced to utter unintelligibility, yet he persists in it.” Likewise for the Psalmist who suffers the supreme agony: the sense of abandonment by God. “Yet even in this most extreme of all crisis situations—God having ‘hidden His face’—the Psalmist never loses his faith.” (Christians will recall the agony of Jesus on the cross: “‘Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?’” Mk

University Press of America, 1993), 30. This volume also has recent essays by pioneers like Alice Eckardt, McGarry, and Ruether.

²⁰⁷ Emil L. Fackenheim, *To Mend the World: Foundations of Future Jewish Thought* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982), 238. This is his first published attempt at a systematic post-Holocaust interpretation of Judaism.

15:33; cf. Ps 22:1 NRSV.) Fackenheim concludes: “Put radically, this means there is no experience, either without or within, that can possibly destroy religious faith.”²⁰⁸

Fackenheim will later argue in *To Mend the World*, his foundations for a reinterpretation of Judaism, that certain basic assumptions of traditional faith need rethinking. This later thought of Fackenheim’s, so radical in its implications, is influential among liberal Jews and Christian theologians,²⁰⁹ so I have chosen him to paint the broad Jewish strokes of the context of my discussion. (The spectrum of Jewish views on the Holocaust parallels the broad spectrum of Jewish views on the State of Israel discussed in chapter two.²¹⁰)

a) A Jewish View: The Holocaust as Rupture and Epoch-Making Event

Fackenheim’s thought is not a Holocaust theology “for there cannot be such a discipline. There is only a theology that is threatened by the Holocaust and that, spurning escapism, saves its integrity by self-exposure to it.”²¹¹ That “self-exposure” to the Holocaust moves Fackenheim to lay foundations for a reinterpretation of Judaism drawn from “a direct encounter with the ‘naked’ [an allusion to Rosenzweig] biblical text, side by side, or even at odds with, the mediating tradition of an earlier epoch [Rabbinic Judaism].”²¹²

²⁰⁸ Emil L. Fackenheim, “On the Eclipse of God,” in *The Star and the Cross*, 227-28.

²⁰⁹ Even within my small circle of acquaintances in Jerusalem, there were two Christians, Catholics, writing dissertations at Hebrew University on Fackenheim’s “theology” of the Holocaust.

²¹⁰ For an overview of this topic, see Steven L. Jacobs, ed., *Contemporary Jewish Religious Responses to the Shoah* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993).

²¹¹ Fackenheim, introduction to *To Mend the World*, 11.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 17. During a class at Ratisbonne on rabbinic *Midrash* (I had not yet read Fackenheim) I asked the rabbi if a contemporary Jew, seeking to understand normative Judaism, could go directly to the biblical text without the mediation of the Rabbis. His answer was a swift and definite “No.” To get a sense of Fackenheim’s radicality, one might consider that a Jew today bypassing normative Rabbinic Judaism and approaching the “naked” Scripture for Fackenheim’s purpose, is comparable to a Catholic bypassing normative Catholicism and approaching the “naked” Christian Testament to reinterpret Catholic faith. *Dei Verbum*, Vatican II’s “Dogmatic

The notion of epoch-making event (the meaning is clear, I believe, from the quotations that follow) is key to Fackenheim's argument. He believes the faiths of normative Christianity and Judaism are invulnerable to historical events:

On its part, what may be called normative Christian thought affirms one epoch-making event so momentous but already long actual, as to create doubt whether, ever since, there can be any others. As for its Jewish counterpart—the “normative” thought of rabbinic Judaism and its ‘Midrashic framework,’²¹³ this is generally thought to affirm that nothing decisive has occurred, or can occur, between Sinai and the Messianic Days. Not one of these “points of view” is vulnerable to the challenge of epoch-making events that are situated, not in the past or future, but here and now.²¹⁴

Fackenheim acknowledges the risk he is taking:

No Jewish thinker can take lightly the stance of rabbinic Judaism, or dissent from it without facing unforeseen, perhaps unforeseeable, consequences. Yet simply to embrace it (as, up to a point, I once had) would be to prejudge rather than face what we have called the central question for post-Holocaust thought: to make Judaism *absolutely* immune to *all* future events except Messianic ones is *a priori* to dismiss the challenge of contemporary events, rather than risk self-exposure.²¹⁵

For Fackenheim, then, the *Shoah* is an epoch-making event. As such, it requires a refounding of Judaism comparable to the creative response of the Rabbis to the destruction of the Temple. Here the deeper levels of *Tikkun*, mentioned in chapter one, come into play, for the task be-

Constitution on Divine Revelation, 8” declares: “It is clear . . . that sacred tradition, sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God’s most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others.” Abbott, *The Documents of Vatican II*, 118.

²¹³ Fackenheim explains: “[Rabbinic Judaism] for all its immense internal varieties . . . is both unified and authoritative enough to be considered ‘normative.’ . . . That, for all its internal varieties, the rabbinic Midrash is unified enough to form a ‘framework’ I have argued in [God’s Presence in History (New York: New York University Press, 1970), Chapter 1].” *Ibid.*, footnote, p. 16.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 15-16. His remarks on “Messianic Days” seem to beg the question. The reader will recall from chapter two’s discussion of the State of Israel that many, perhaps most, religious Jews across the spectrum of normative Judaism would accept that Israel represents—at least—“the beginning of the dawn of redemption,” the beginning of Messianic Days. Fackenheim avoids linking Holocaust and Israel in a Messianic context. The Messianic Days are also awaited by Christians as an epoch-making event.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 16. Emphasis in original.

comes healing the rupture between God and humanity and, perhaps, within divinity itself.²¹⁶ The notion of God is central to Fackenheim's foundations, the point where his thought links up with the mainstream dialogue on the *Shoah*. Fackenheim quotes Irving Greenberg:

The Holocaust poses the most radical counter-testimony to both Judaism and Christianity. . . . The cruelty and the killing raise the question whether even those who believe after such an event dare to talk about God who loves and cares without making a mockery of those who suffered.²¹⁷

Church teaching on the *Shoah* nowhere calls into question the "God who loves and cares," although numerous Jewish and Christian theologians do so. It is likely that Stephen Haynes is right, "the majority of Christian churchpeople and theologians do not perceive theology or history to be 'ruptured' to the extent that traditional beliefs and forms of expression must be discarded."²¹⁸ As we have seen and will observe again below, so far few Christians understand that some traditional Christian beliefs and forms of expression have already been discarded and the work is not over.

b) Christian Views on the Holocaust

What made it possible that humanity's greatest crime against God's people happened in the heart of Christian Europe? The question is implicit in the disquieting challenge of Abraham J. Peck, a challenge echoed in numerous other Jewish and Christian sources:

And you must explain to me how we can speak about an authentic Christianity or an authentic Christian until Christians understand that the Holocaust was a 'Christian' catastrophe, and how in its wake, the killers and the bystanders could still call themselves Christians.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Fackenheim, "Rupture, Teshuva, and Tikkum Olam," *Ibid.*, 250.

²¹⁷ Irving Greenberg, "Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and Modernity after the Holocaust," in *Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era?*, ed. E. Fleischner (New York: Ktav, 1977), 9-11. As quoted in Fackenheim, *To Mend the World*, 11.

²¹⁸ Haynes, *Prospects*, 7.

²¹⁹ Abraham J. Peck, "The Very Depths of Our Pain," in *Unanswered Questions: Theological Views of Jewish-Christian Relations*, ed. Roger Brooks (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 184.

As we have seen, the Christian attitudes implicit in Peck's challenge were bred into the fabric of European culture through centuries of often outrageous anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic teaching, folklore and custom; much of this tradition still survives, especially in Eastern Europe. Inculturated attitudes sometimes called by the ugly name "Jew hatred" were especially virulent in Lutheran Germany, homeland of the instigators and most of the executioners; and in Catholic Poland, homeland of most of the Jewish victims.²²⁰

In regard to preparing Europe for the *Shoah*: Jewish and Christian opinions vary on the extent of the causal relationship; but all mainstream interpreters agree that, without a Christian culture of anti-Judaism, and widespread Christian support, especially in Germany, of nineteenth-century theories of Jewish racial inferiority—anti-Semitism—the Nazi assault on the Jews could not have met with such widespread Christian collaboration or acquiescence or indifference. Rabbi Waxman tries to strike a balance:

The "teaching of contempt" reaped a demonic harvest during the *Shoah* in which one-third of the Jewish people were murdered as a central component of a nation's policy. The Nazi Holocaust (*Shoah*) brought together two very different forms of evil: on the one hand it represented the triumph of an ideology of nationalism and racism, the suppression of human conscience, and the deification of the state—concepts that are profoundly anti-Christian as well as anti-Jewish. On the other hand, the *Shoah* was the culmination of centuries of anti-Semitism in European culture for which Christian teachings bear a heavy responsibility.²²¹

We Christians must face the basic existential question of the *Shoah*—How could it happen? We must integrate the answer with our identity and our history of the Church if we are to overcome indifference or move beyond guilt. In Flannery's memorable phrase, "those pages of

²²⁰ The cross-referenced articles dealing with specific countries in *The Encyclopedia Judaica* are convenient sources of information on this matter. Especially chilling in regard to anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism today are the articles on Russia and Poland, where even the Blood Libel remains a living part of Christian folk culture.

²²¹ Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, response to the pope's address, Miami, 11 Sept. 1987. SP, 112.

history that Jews have committed to memory are the very ones that have been torn from Christian history books.”²²² Significant awakening is apparent from the documents of the dialogue and the agendas of Jewish-Christian groups. John Paul has observed: “The terrible persecutions suffered by the Jews in different periods of history have finally opened the eyes of many and appalled many people’s hearts.”²²³

“One of the most significant movements in contemporary Christian scholarship and theological reflection is the one which sees, in the words of Johann-Baptist Metz, that ‘Christian theology does not know whereof it speaks’ unless it recognizes that it speaks ‘after Auschwitz.’”²²⁴ What does it mean to speak after Auschwitz? There is already a vast Christian, Catholic and Protestant, bibliography of theological reflection in light of the *Shoah*.

Stephen R. Haynes writes of the “searing indictments of the Holocaust theologians,” the early Holocaust theologies of the late 60s and 70s by Franklin Littell, Gregory Baum, A. Roy and Alice Eckardt, Michael B. McGarry, Rosemary R. Ruether and others. Looking back over the Christian literature of the past thirty years, Haynes discerns in the last decade “a shift away from the radical and critical mood of early Holocaust theology. In Christian circles, this shift can be seen in growing efforts at making practical changes in the church’s doctrine and teaching, as well as in concerns to construct systematic Christian theologies of Judaism.”²²⁵

Haynes discerns six emphases in Christian Holocaust theology. Variously, the theologian

²²² Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews*, 1.

²²³ John Paul II, address of 6 March 1982. *SP*, 18.

²²⁴ Williamson and Allen, preface to *Interpreting Difficult Texts*, vii. See Johannes Baptist Metz, “Facing the Jews: Christian Theology After Auschwitz,” in *The Holocaust as Interruption*, ed. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and David Tracy (Edinburgh: T. Clark, 1984), 43–52.

²²⁵ Haynes, *Prospects*, 7.

emphasizes:

1. The singularity of the event, “an event that precipitates a radical hermeneutical shift in history and theology”; also “the inadequacy of traditional theodicy,” and theology of God;
2. Anti-Judaism in Antiquity, the Christian Testament, theology, history and its effects. The teaching of contempt;
3. Our extricating Christian theology from anti-Judaism. Analyses of christologies;
4. Our terminating the Christian mission to the Jews “argued for on the basis of the indefensibility of a proselytizing mission in view of Christian complicity in the Holocaust”; the necessity of assuring Jewish survival.
5. “Holocaust theology argues that the revelatory significance of the Holocaust, and the events of contemporary history in general, be taken more seriously as criteria for theology.”
6. “Holocaust theology attempts to identify the theological and social conditions necessary for a new Jewish-Christian solidarity.”²²⁶

I believe Haynes’s discernment is verified in the spectrum of materials I have examined in the course of my argument. No matter what the emphasis, however, permeating most of the Christian literature of the post-Holocaust period is the call for repentance. *Teshuva* is the priority. Jewish and Christian partners in dialogue, and church teaching on the *Shoah* developed by John Paul II, concur that Christians must take the four steps of repentance “developed by the Rabbis and codified by Maimonides: reformation, resolution, remorse and confession.”²²⁷ They are also the steps to repentance in the Catholic sacrament of Reconciliation. In the words of John Paul:

²²⁶ Ibid., 6-7.

²²⁷ Rabbi Mark L. Solomon, “*Teshuvah*,” *Sidic* 29, no. 1 (1996): 3. See also in the same *Sidic* Henri Bourgeois, “Repentance—A Christian Understanding,” 7-10.

For Christians the heavy burden of guilt for the murder of the Jewish people must be an enduring call to repentance; thereby we can overcome every form of anti-Semitism and establish a new relationship with our kindred nation of the Old Covenant. . . . Guilt should not oppress and lead to self-agonizing thoughts, but must always be the point of departure for conversion.²²⁸

Answering the basic existential question has led to this concrete form of *teshuva*. The effects of the teaching of contempt dominate Christian response to the *Shoah*; or, stated positively, Christians more and more see the Church's need to combat social and ecclesial anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism, and to develop a theology of Judaism. Yet, active awareness of the historical and contemporary effects of Christian anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism, while significant, has yet to enter grassroots Christian spirituality to become integral to our examination of conscience.

On 30 September 1997, the bishops of France issued their *Déclaration de repentance* for the general silence of the bishops during the Vichy Regime's execution of the "final solution" in Nazi-occupied France (1940-44). It was read by Olivier de Berranger, bishop of Saint-Denis, at the memorial to Jewish victims at Drancy. The bishops declared they were motivated to take a new step ("accomplir un pas nouveau") by the 50th anniversary of the *Seelisberg Declaration*, and the 57th anniversary of the Pétain government's first law against the Jews, 3 October 1940.²²⁹

"French Apology for Genocide Rings Hollow"²³⁰ headlined Rabbi Jordan Pearson's opinion piece in the *Toronto Star*. His response to the bishops' *Déclaration* provides a good example of the nitty-gritty of Jewish-Christian dialogue. He wrote: "As one who is dedicated to the process of reconciliation, I have trouble with the idea of an apology on this level. One apologizes

²²⁸ Address to the new ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, 8 November 1990. *SP*, 138.

²²⁹ Text available, along with that of the response of the Jewish representative, at <http://www.cef.fr/FR/html/comm11.htm#haut>; Internet; accessed 1 October 1997.

²³⁰ Jordan Pearson, "French Apology for Genocide Rings Hollow," the *Toronto Star*, 25 October 1997, sec. L, p. 17.

for scratching a fender. How does one apologize for not resisting the murder of one's neighbours and their children?" Pearson's remarks beg the question. The *Déclaration* is not, of course, apology but *repentance* underpinned by proven commitment to combating anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism in French society. Pearson's remarks are unfortunately marred on two more counts.

The first is an instance of the kind of hurtful commentary that Fisher deplored earlier in this discussion. Pearson comments on the silence of Cardinal Lustiger, born a Jew. It was not in this instance the place of the primate of the Church in France to comment (he has made forceful statements on the topic elsewhere²³¹). But ignorance of church polity is not enough to excuse Pearson's remark: "What could he have said to the world? 'I apologize on behalf of the tradition which, by acts of commission and omission, contributed so clearly to the death of my mother?'"

The second instance raises the question of whether Pearson read the *Déclaration* or just media reports of it. "What would I have preferred? A considered formal salute to those saintly souls who did resist—the nameless Catholic heroes who risked everything to save the helpless. The Franciscans of Assisi risked their lives, monasteries and possessions to save Jews. Set them as examples." In two paragraphs that obviate any need to cite foreign examples, the *Déclaration* does "salute . . . saintly souls who did resist." In his response to the *Déclaration*, Henri Hajdenberg, president of the Conseil représentatif des institutions juives de France, pays similar tribute to the nameless *Justes*²³² but also names Protestant and Catholic groups and individuals, bishops among them, who risked everything to save thousands of Jews from death.

Hajdenberg goes on to say of the *Déclaration*: "Your expression of repentance, by which

²³¹ Notably in Jean Marie Lustiger, *Le Choix de Dieu* (Paris: de Fallois, 1987).

²³² Jewish memorials to the victims, notably Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, honor the *Tzaddik ummot ha-olam*, the righteous of the nations, many by name.

the Church begs the forgiveness of God and the people affected, represents a major turning point. It is a solemn moment. Your declaration will mark our times. After the heavy silence of the War, the long post-War silence is broken.” For him the force of the *Déclaration* lies in its lack of compromise or concession (“elle est sans compromis, sans concession”) in repudiating the teaching of contempt and acknowledging the role of the French Church in the process that led to the death of so many Jews. Hajdenberg concludes: “Your examination of conscience is fundamental and salutary. . . . Without a doubt, the historic significance of your declaration clears new paths in the field of Jewish-Christian relations.”²³³

It goes without saying that expressions of repentance, while welcome, do not suffice. Jews will measure the depth of Christian *teshuva* by two criteria: progress in rooting-out of every Christian heart every vestige of the teaching of contempt, and Christian solidarity with Jews in combating contemporary anti-Judaic movements and threats to Jewish survival—including Israel.

II. John Paul II, the *Shoah*, and Jewish-Christian Dialogue

In my overview in chapter one of John Paul’s response to the *Shoah*, I noted that, in addition to references in many occasional statements, John Paul also commemorates the *Shoah* in a number of symbolic actions. Here, selections from the chronological list in chapter one will punctuate a more detailed account of John Paul’s response to the *Shoah*.

It is well known that John Paul experienced the Nazi occupation of his country:

[He] experienced personally the malignancy of the ancient evil of Jew-hatred. . . . From the intensity of his own experience, the pope is able to articulate both the

²³³ “Votre parole de repentance par laquelle l’Eglise implore le pardon de Dieu et des hommes constitue un tournant majeur. L’instant est solennel. Votre déclaration marquera son temps. Après le lourd silence de la guerre, le long silence de l’après-guerre est rompu. . . . Votre examen de conscience est fondamental et salutaire. . . . Sans mal doute, la portée historique de votre déclaration fraye des chemins nouveaux dans le champ des relations entre Chrétiens et Juifs.” My translation. Text available with the *Déclaration*. See note 227.

uniqueness of the Jewish experience of the Shoah while at the same time revering the memory of all of Nazism's millions of non-Jewish victims. The pope would, it may be appropriate to say, agree unreservedly with the formulation of Elie Wiesel: "Not every victim of the Holocaust was a Jew, but every Jew was a victim."²³⁴

The reader will recall chapter one's account of John Paul's 1979 visit to Auschwitz. The following year, in Paris, he met with representatives of the "vigorous Jewish community of France." After paying tribute to "the theologians, exegetes, philosophers, and personages of public life who have distinguished [the community] and still distinguish it," he adds:

It is true also, and I make a point of mentioning it, that your community suffered a great deal during the dark years of the occupation and the war. I pay homage to these victims whose sacrifice, we know, has not been fruitless. It was from there that there really began, thanks to the courage and decision of some pioneers, including Jules Isaac, the movement that has led us to the present dialogue and collaboration, inspired and promoted by the declaration *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council.²³⁵

Also in 1980, in a controversial homily addressing the conflicts in the Middle East, John Paul for the first time links the *Shoah* and the State of Israel: "The Jewish people, after tragic experiences connected with the extermination of so many sons and daughters, driven by the desire for security, set up the State of Israel."²³⁶ Except for this powerful passage from Irving Greenberg, I will have to bypass fuller discussion of the link between *Shoah* and Israel:

The real point [of Israel] is that after Auschwitz, the existence of the Jews is a great affirmation and act of faith. The recreation of the body of the people, Israel, is renewed testimony to Exodus as ultimate reality, to God's continuing presence in history proven by the fact that his people, despite the attempt to annihilate them, still exist.²³⁷

On the fortieth anniversary of the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto, in his general audi-

²³⁴ Fisher, "A Commentary," *SP*, xxvii-xxviii.

²³⁵ Meeting with Jewish representatives in Paris, 31 May 1980. *Ibid.*, 10.

²³⁶ John Paul II, homily at Otranto, 5 October 1980. *SP*, 12.

²³⁷ Irving Greenberg, "Cloud of Smoke," 49.

ence of 13 April 1983 and again on the 25th, he said “that horrible event of history”—the uprising that led to the ghetto’s destruction—was “a desperate cry for the right of life, for liberty, and for the salvation of human dignity. Paying homage to the memory of these innocent victims, we pray. May the Eternal God accept this sacrifice for the well-being and the salvation of the world.”²³⁸

John Paul’s prayer touches a sensitive point. Jewish commentary is not without linkage of Jewish suffering in the *Shoah* to the “Suffering Servant,” a theology developed by Rashi in response to the Church’s exclusively christological reading of Isaiah.²³⁹ Understandably, there is Jewish resistance to Christian explanation of Jewish suffering. However, in this context, the pope is careful not to link Jewish suffering to the Cross, as he always does when commemorating the millions of Christian victims of the Nazis. Here his theology is, perhaps deliberately, Rashi’s. John Paul will later deepen his reflection on this theme in his talk to Jews in Warsaw.

Most Catholics are perhaps unaware of how welcome papal statements on the Holocaust are to Jews. Rabbi Ronald B. Sobel said to John Paul at the Angelicum colloquium (37 n. 110):

It was with particular gratification, Your Holiness, that the Jewish people noted that in your Easter Message to the City and to the World, you made reference, with deep sensitivity, to the unparalleled inhumanity of Nazi brutality against the Jewish people. We shall never forget this, and it is and shall remain a source of comfort to us to know that you shall help the world to remember as well.²⁴⁰

In 1985, on the twentieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, John Paul comments on the newly

²³⁸ SP, 28.

²³⁹ I explored this topic in “Who Was Rashi and What Did He Do?,” a paper for the course on Rashi at Ratisbonne. Rashi argues that the Suffering Servant is the corporate person of Israel, not Jesus. My paper espoused a both/and view. Rashi says: “This prophet [Isaiah] speaks always of the whole people of Israel as of one man, as ‘Fear not, O Jacob my servant,’ (44:2) and ‘Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant’ (44:1); and here also, ‘Behold my servant shall prosper’ [the prophet] speaks with reference to the house of Jacob . . . But now we perceive that not because of his own depression did [suffering] come to him: [Israel] suffered in order that by his sufferings atonement might be made for all other nations. . . . he was chastised in order that the whole world might have peace.” Hailperin, *Rashi and the Christian Scholars*, 58-59. Emphasis added.

²⁴⁰ Rabbi Ronald B. Sobel, SP, 50-51.

published *Notes*. He hopes “they will greatly help toward freeing our catechetical and religious teaching of a negative or inaccurate presentation of Jews and Judaism in the context of the Catholic faith,” and calls on the Church to develop Holocaust studies in Catholic schools. He then adds a deeper dimension, linking theological reflection on the *Shoah* to two terms, the dead victims and the victims still living, the entire people:

I would even say that for Catholics, as the *Notes* [25] have asked them to do, to fathom the depths of the extermination of many million Jews during World War II and the wounds thereby inflicted on the consciousness of the Jewish people, theological reflection is also needed.²⁴¹

John Paul became the first bishop of Rome of record to enter and pray in the Synagogue of Rome. When he said in 1990, “No dialogue between Christians and Jews can overlook the painful and terrible experience of the *Shoah*,”²⁴² he might have recalled, from his visit to the Synagogue of Rome in 1986, that on that subject dialogue itself can be painful.

The first to greet him was Prof. Giacomo Saban, president of the Jewish Community of Rome. “I greet you on behalf of the most ancient Jewish community of the Diaspora,” he said. Prof. Saban immediately relates the history of a community older than the papacy, one almost two centuries old when Peter and Paul came to Rome. His talk is a wonderfully concise history that did not spare papal feelings:

In September of 1553, hundreds of copies of the Talmud were burned not far from here. . . . After the accession of Paul IV, with the bull *Cum nimis absurdam* . . . of July 14, 1555, the ghetto of Rome was established precisely where we find ourselves today. The measures introduced, harshly restrictive with regard to study and worship, as well as normal everyday activities, reduced the inhabitants of the ghetto to economic and cultural misery, depriving them of some of their most fundamental rights.

²⁴¹ Address to the ICL on the twentieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, Rome, 28 October 1985. *Ibid.*, 56.

²⁴² John Paul II, address to the ILC, Rome, 6 December 1990. *Ibid.*, 142.

Limitation of every sort and lack of freedom were thus the lot reserved to Roman Jews for a period of more than three centuries. It was only 115 years ago that this complex of restrictions, enslavement, and humiliations came to cease.²⁴³

Prof. Saban anticipates the pope's later remarks on the *Shoah*. John Paul will offer a very weak acknowledgment of the history of Jewish suffering in the Rome of the popes, and then he will remark on the *Shoah*:

The Jewish community of Rome . . . paid a high price in blood. . . . And it was surely a significant gesture that in those dark years of racial persecution the doors of our religious houses, of our churches, of the Roman seminary, of buildings belonging to the Holy See and of Vatican City itself were thrown open to offer refuge and safety to so many Jews of Rome being hunted by their persecutors.²⁴⁴

But Prof. Saban's preemptive acknowledgment of what John Paul will call "a significant gesture" delivered a stinging rebuke to the wartime papacy:

It does not fall to us to judge what took place in Rome during those years [of the Holocaust], as we are too near in time to those days. What was taking place on one of the banks of the Tiber could not have been unknown on the other side of the river, nor could what was happening elsewhere on the European continent. Nonetheless, many of our brethren found help and refuge through courageous initiatives precisely within those convents and monasteries that they had learned to fear for so many centuries.²⁴⁵

Chief Rabbi Elio Toaff, who spoke after Prof. Saban, expressed to John Paul his "intense satisfaction at the gesture you have wished to carry out today, visiting a synagogue for the first time in the history of the Church. This gesture is destined to be remembered throughout history." In a moving passage he also paid tribute to the untold number who suffered and died, including victims of the *Shoah*, the cloud of witnesses, the martyrs who "serenely faced death for the sanctification of God's name. Theirs is the merit if our faith has never wavered and if fidelity to the

²⁴³ Giacomo Saban, Great Synagogue of Rome, 13 April 1986. *Ibid.*, 71-72.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

Lord and his Law has not failed in the long course of the centuries." Despite this history and his admission that "we cannot forget the past," Rabbi Toaff pledges:

Today we wish to begin, with faith and hope, this new historical phase, which fruitfully points the way to common undertakings finally carried out on a plane of equality and mutual esteem in the interest of all humanity.²⁴⁶

As it happened, pope and rabbi took a liking to each other and are said to see each other fairly often. I shall return to John Paul's synagogue address in "Concluding Argument." On New Year's Eve 1986, John Paul said of his visit:

There is one other event which transcends the limits of the year, since it is measured in centuries and millennia in the history of this city and of this Church. *I thank Divine Providence* that I was able to visit our "elder brothers" in the faith of Abraham in their Roman synagogue! Blessed be the God of our fathers!²⁴⁷

In 1987, in Germany for the beatification of Edith Stein, John Paul spoke in Cologne to the Jewish Central Council:

Your communities are particularly significant in view of the attempt of the National Socialists in this country to exterminate the Jews and their culture. The existence of your communities is evidence of the fact that God, who is "the fountain of life [Ps. 36:9], and whom the psalmist praises as "Lord, Father and Master of my life" [Sir. 23:1], does not allow the power of death to speak the last word.²⁴⁸

He goes on to speak of Edith Stein "a daughter of Israel who remained faithful, as a Jew, to the Jewish people, and, as a Catholic, to our crucified Lord Jesus Christ." Fisher, commenting on this case of Catholic-Jewish misunderstanding, notes that whereas "the pope took the occasion to acknowledge the uniqueness of the *Shoah* for the Jews and to urge Catholics to greater sensitivity to the trauma suffered by the Jewish people . . . the Jewish press expressed concern over what they

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 66-67.

²⁴⁷ John Paul II, homily at Mass, 31 December 1986. Ibid., 87. Emphasis in original.

²⁴⁸ I May 1987. Ibid., 90. (Sirach or Ecclesiasticus is not, of course, in the Jewish canon.)

saw as the possibility of a new wave of proselytism." Later, in reaction to his visit to Mauthausen (24 June 1988) and his honoring the saints and blessed of the Church who were victims of the camps, the same charges are made. Fisher continues: "The point being made here is not to adjudicate between the two versions of John Paul II's pontificate that are emerging in the Jewish and Catholic communities, but simply to note the fact that there are two."²⁴⁹

In 1987, in a spontaneous address to Jewish leaders in Warsaw, John Paul makes theological points that merit a lengthy quotation:

The threat against you was also a threat against us; this latter was not realized to the same extent, because it did not have the time to be realized to the same extent. It was you who suffered this terrible sacrifice of extermination. One might say you suffered it also on behalf of those who were in the purifying power of suffering. . . . I think that today the nation of Israel, perhaps more than ever before, finds itself at the center of the attention of the nations of the world, above all because of this terrible experience, through which you have become a loud warning voice for all humanity, for all nations, all powers of this world, all systems and every person. More than anyone else, it is precisely you who have become this saving warning. I think that in this sense you continue your particular vocation, showing yourselves to be still the heirs of that election to which God is faithful. This is your mission in the contemporary world before the peoples, the nations, all of humanity, the Church. And in this Church all peoples and nations feel united to you in this mission.²⁵⁰

Eugene Fisher comments:

This is startlingly unprecedeted language to hear from a Christian, no less from the Pope himself. The Church's saving proclamation "united" to that of another people, another proclamation, another saving witness? Yet the Pope has reaffirmed this Warsaw statement, referring to it time and again since then. He means it. We Catholics should, I believe, attend carefully to it.²⁵¹

In his letter to Archbishop John L. May of St. Louis, the source of John Paul's "mission

²⁴⁹ Fisher, "Commentary," *Ibid.*, xxxvi.

²⁵⁰ John Paul II, address to Jewish leaders, Warsaw, 14 June 1987. *Ibid.*, 98-99.

²⁵¹ Eugene J. Fisher, "Mysterium Tremendum: Catholic Grapplings with the *Shoah* and Its Theological Implications," in Jacobs, *Contemporary Christian Religious Responses*, 77.

statement" in my preface, he recalls his Warsaw meeting and adds:

Before the vivid memory of the extermination, as recounted to us by the survivors and by all Jews now living, and as it is continually offered for our meditation within the narration of the Pesah *Haggadah*—as Jewish families are accustomed to do today—it is not permissible for anyone to pass by with indifference. Reflection upon the *Shoah* shows us to what terrible consequences the lack of faith in God and a contempt for [humanity] created in his image can lead. It also impels us to promote the necessary historical and religious studies on this event which concerns the whole of humanity today. . . .

There is no doubt that the sufferings endured by the Jews are also for the Catholic Church a motive of sincere sorrow, especially when one thinks of the indifference and sometimes resentment which, in particular historical circumstances, have divided Jews and Christians. Indeed, this evokes in us firmer resolutions to cooperate for justice and true peace.²⁵²

After an informal meeting that "took the form of a free and open conversation among those present," delegates to a meeting at Castel Gandolfo of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, and the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, issued a joint press communiqué that stated: "Citing the Exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt as a paradigm and a continuing source of hope, the pope movingly expressed his deep conviction that, with God's help, evil can be overcome in history, even the awesome evil of the *Shoah*."²⁵³ Ten days later, in his address in Miami already quoted, he makes a statement that will surely be foundational to any attempt to develop John Paul's teaching into a Catholic theology of Judaism:

Considering history in light of the principles of faith in God, we must also reflect on . . . an attempt that resulted in millions of victims . . . exterminated only because they were Jews.

Considering the mystery of the suffering of Israel's children, their witness of hope, of faith, and of humanity under dehumanizing outrages, the Church experiences ever more deeply her common bond with the Jewish people and with their treasure of spiritual riches in the past and in the present.²⁵⁴

²⁵² John Paul II, Letter to Archbishop May, 8 August 1987. SP, 101.

²⁵³ 1 September 1987. Ibid., 104.

²⁵⁴ Miami, 11 September 1987. Ibid., 106-07.

In his apostolic letter on the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of World War Two, John Paul pays special attention to the fate of the Jews:

Among all these antihuman measures, however, there is one which will forever remain a shame for humanity: the planned barbarism which was unleashed against the Jewish people.

As the object of the "Final Solution" devised by an erroneous ideology, the Jews were subjected to deprivations and brutalities that are almost indescribable. Persecuted at first through measures designed to harass and discriminate, they were ultimately to die by the millions in extermination camps.

The Jews of Poland, more than others, lived this immense suffering. The images of the Warsaw Ghetto under siege, as well as what we have come to learn about the camps at Auschwitz, Majdanek, and Treblinka, surpass in horror anything that can be humanly imagined.²⁵⁵

It is moving to read, given the horrors inflicted on the Jews in the *Shoah* and throughout history, the observations of Cardinal Martini of Milan:

I think very few feel and understand the open wound in the flesh and heart of a people who had lived in Europe for two millennia. . . . Perhaps it is precisely now . . . that the time has come to repeat more forcefully that the duty of healing those wounds is incumbent on us. . . . If we are ready for this radical change of heart, then we will be open to conversion—*Teshuva*—and reconciliation.

We will be able to look at Israel with new eyes; that people painfully humiliated, deprived of six million lives, one million of them children. Yet, what is surprising is that *this people, so wounded, did not cry out for vengeance, did not hassle Europe with demonstrations, did not sow bloody terrorism.*²⁵⁶

Limitations of space demand that, before summarizing this significant body of teaching, I attend to just three more notable examples of John Paul's teachings on the Holocaust. John Paul's intervention on behalf of Jewish concerns in the controversy over the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz throws light on several issues in the dialogue, especially the problem of "the two versions of John Paul II's pontificate that are emerging in the Jewish and Catholic communities," as

²⁵⁵ Rome, 27 August 1989. *Ibid.*, 131.

²⁵⁶ Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, "How to Speak of Reconciliation after Auschwitz," *Sidic* 29, no. 1 (1996): 17. Emphasis added.

Fisher phrased it above. That bitter controversy, thank God, has been peacefully resolved. The two remaining examples are the beautiful concert John Paul arranged at the Vatican to commemorate the Holocaust, and his last statement of 1995.

Catholicism, it hardly need be said, is a religious culture of abundant symbolic objects and actions within which a pope's symbolic acts are more widely read than his statements. Catholics who couldn't utter a coherent sentence on Orthodox-Catholic dialogue, for example, would feel they know all they need to know in recalling the image of the historic embrace in Jerusalem of Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras. When Paul VI donated to charity the triple tiara that for centuries crowned the popes, it came as no surprise to Catholics that his successors should renounce that anachronistic symbol in favor of the pallium, a modest neckpiece, the most ancient symbol of episcopal office. This Catholic noted, for example, that the three chairs that accommodated John Paul, Rabbi Toaff and Prof. Saban at the concert were identical and on the same level, as were the seats of pope and rabbi in the sanctuary of the Synagogue of Rome. Vatican protocol once dictated that in any gathering the pope's thronelike chair had to be on a dais at least five centimeters higher than any other in the room.²⁵⁷ Trivial? On the contrary. These symbolic objects and gestures are meant to teach.

A tape of the concert, held on the day Jews throughout the world remember the victims of the *Shoah*, has been broadcast on public television several times. The magnificent symphonic and choral music, Jewish prayers, the numerous images of survivors in the audience anguished and weeping create a powerful, indelible experience. Many survivors attended the concert:

²⁵⁷ I was unable to trace the exact source. It comes from a book published in the pontificate of Pius XII, read some twenty-three years ago, on the subject of Vatican protocol. I have never forgotten my fascination when reading of this and similar papal protocols that Pius enforced to the letter.

Among those who are with us this evening are some who physically underwent a horrendous experience, crossing a dark wilderness where the very source of love seemed dried up.

Many wept at that time, and we still hear the echoes of their lament. We hear it here too; their plea did not die with them but rises powerful, agonizing, heartrending, saying, "Do not forget us!" It is addressed to one and all.

Thus we are gathered this evening to commemorate the Holocaust of millions of Jews. The candles lit by some of the survivors²⁵⁸ are intended to show symbolically that [the Vatican's audience hall] does not have narrow limits. It contains all the victims: fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, friends. In our memory they are all present, they are with you, they are with us.²⁵⁹

In the last text of *Spiritual Pilgrimage*, an excerpt from his traditional Sunday address before praying the Angelus with pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's square, John Paul said:

The fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of the prisoners of Auschwitz reminds us of one of the darkest and most tragic moments in history. . . . In particular, the children of the Jewish people, whose extermination had been planned by the Nazi regime, suffered the tragic experience of the Holocaust. It was a darkening of reason, conscience, and the heart. Recalling the triumph of evil cannot fail to fill us with deep sorrow, in fraternal solidarity with all who bear the indelible scars of those tragedies. . . . God forbid that tomorrow we will have to weep over other Auschwitzes of our time.

Let us pray and work that this may not happen. Never again anti-Semitism! Never again the arrogance of nationalism! Never again genocide! May the third millennium usher in a season of peace and mutual respect among peoples.²⁶⁰

Unfortunately there has not been space to examine in more detail the teaching on the *Shoah* found in *Guidelines* and *Notes*, and to review the several significant episcopal statements on the subject, especially those from the German, Polish and American bishops. The anticipated Vatican document on the *Shoah* and anti-Semitism (50 n. 145), however, must get, albeit brief, attention. If McGarry is correct, we should have the document soon: "And we look forward to

²⁵⁸ Earlier in the day John Paul met with Jewish leaders and the organizers. He said, "The candles which will burn as we listen to the music will keep before us the long history of anti-Semitism which culminated in the *Shoah*." SP, 190.

²⁵⁹ John Paul II. *Ibid.*, 188-89.

²⁶⁰ Angelus address, Rome, 29 January 1995. *Ibid.*, 209.

the document from the Holy See on antisemitism and the *Shoah* which Pope John Paul II promised in his 1987 address to Jewish leaders in Miami. Currently [1993], meetings between Catholic and Jewish scholars are taking place in preparation for this long—perhaps ten-year—project.²⁶¹

A critical report on a draft of *Anti-Semitism, Shoah and Church* made by the German Bishops' Conference Work Group was translated for publication in *Sidic* in 1994. Unfortunately, the translation is frequently incoherent and the German original is not given. The report quotes only the draft's "express confession of guilt" and critiques the remainder of the draft indirectly. The report contains these passages from the draft:

If the German and the Polish Church, in view of the Jewish fate during the years of National Socialism seek forgiveness, then they already give the answer to the question of co-responsibility and guilt of the Church for the Shoah. What the two particular churches have said is adopted by the Church as a whole. She confesses that she bears co-responsibility for the Shoah and that she has burdened herself with guilt. . . .

The Church acknowledges a connection between the long advocated "teaching of contempt" towards Judaism and the brutal anti-Semitism in modern Western society. The history of failure and guilt towards the Jewish people forms part of her. This is a fact which the Church bemoans. She feels shame and repentance and recognizes the need for conversion. In view of the failure of the Church and of the faithful towards the Jewish people we confess in the witness of St. John: "If we say, we have never sinned, we make him [God] a liar and his word finds no place in us" (I John 1:10). We invoke God to grant us forgiveness and we request the Jewish people to hear this word of conversion and will of renewal.²⁶²

The difficulties involved in the ten years, so far, of preparatory work, summed up by Hans Hermann Henrix, the author of the report, afford a glimpse of the human struggle that often lies behind statements we might think are products of polite, detached conversations:

In conclusion of this report I would like to point out the trouble and distress the work group experienced in accomplishing this task we were faced with.

²⁶¹ Michael McGarry, "Nostra Aetate: The Church's Bond to the Jewish People: Context, Content, Promise," in Perry and Schweitzer, *Jewish-Christian Encounters*, 396.

²⁶² "Documentation: Fifteenth Meeting of the International Vatican-Jewish Liaison Committee Held in Jerusalem 23-26 May 1994," *Sidic* 27, no. 3 (1994): 22. Emphasis in original.

More than once we had to admit that we were at a loss for an answer to the question under consideration and thus we were forced to grow silent. Often enough our personal judgments were so different and even opposite that, as a consequence, our relationship as colleagues and friends was sorely tried in this controversy. This left us not only with the impression of inability and impotence to master the challenge of the Shoah but the question also arose whether in this theological and existential examination of the questions relating to the Shoah the deadly power of Auschwitz grasps at us from afar. This power wants to drag us down to its unfathomableness and to its destruction of life, belief, of speaking and of thinking and consequently to its silence.²⁶³

III. Conclusion of Chapter Three

I asserted at the beginning of this chapter that all issues in the dialogue converge on the *Shoah*. In my citations of church teaching and John Paul's personal responses to the *Shoah* I have demonstrated links between the *Shoah*, *Nostra Aetate* and the beginnings of Jewish-Catholic dialogue itself (his remarks in Paris); links to anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism today and in the past; to Catholic education; to various aspects of the teaching of contempt; to theological reflection, Jewish mission, Jewish election, soteriology, ecclesiology, Christian *teshuva*, Jewish-Christian reconciliation, Jewish-Christian cooperation for *Tikkun*. In regard to the *Shoah* as event: John Paul's efforts to commemorate and remember along with his call to all Christians to do likewise—so precious to Jews; his insistence on the singularity of Jewish suffering and sacrifice, and its saving witness for Christians; he links the *Shoah* to the Exodus and the State of Israel. The quotations I provided are taken in most cases from carefully constructed and worded speeches wherein he makes interconnections explicit.

Finally, words from Cardinal Willebrands present a holistic image that brings awareness of the *Shoah* back to the emphasis of this chapter: human suffering, the particularity of Jewish suffer-

²⁶³ Ibid., 23.

ing, and John Paul's role in Jewish-Christian dialogue:

At the root of this attitude of delicate attention . . . there undoubtedly lies the painful personal experience of the young Karol Wojtyla who, in a Poland smarting under Nazi oppression, witnessed the martyrdom of the Jewish people, as also of his own people. Often the pope has recalled the shoah with accents of great emotion. . . . One can hardly think of these [his visit to Auschwitz, a poem from a Jewish victim of Auschwitz] and the memories they evoke without recalling also the heart-rending notes of Ani Ma'amin ("I believe") struck up by the concentration camp survivors in Rome's synagogue on April 13, 1986 when—for the first time after twenty centuries—the pope came to visit the very ancient Jewish community of Rome.²⁶⁴

I will now proceed to a final summation of the material I have presented to demonstrate my thesis that Pope John Paul II is a realistic, relevant and reliable guide to Roman Catholic participants in Jewish-Christian dialogue.

²⁶⁴ Willebrands, "John Paul II and the Jews 1978-1988," in *Church and Jewish People*, 65-66.

IV. Concluding Argument

To demonstrate that John Paul II is a vitally engaged partner in Jewish–Christian dialogue, I first placed him within an overview of the history until today of relations between Jews and Christians. Then, to strengthen my argument, I rendered an account of his thinking on three issues central to Jewish–Christian dialogue. Throughout that account, I demonstrated that he continually meets with Jewish and Christian groups and individuals; his direct contact and engagement, I believe, keep John Paul’s contributions to Jewish–Christian dialogue realistic and relevant. The category of reliability refers to the substance of his contributions, principally an intrachurch concern. Carefully, methodically working within the tradition, continually warning against “any syncretism and any ambiguous appropriation” (see below), John Paul, as I believe the texts and summaries of the three chapters attest, leads the Catholic conscience wisely to authentic and informed *teshuva*, the necessary starting-point of dialogue. Finally, I structured the account of his engagement in the dialogue chronologically to demonstrate his continuously developing and deepening theological reflection on Judaism and its relationship to the Church.

John Paul does not use his immense authority and prestige to dictate the agenda of dialogue or to silence opposing Catholic views; humbly, patiently, he listens and responds to the concerns, especially the Jewish concerns, of the wider dialogue. Principal Jewish concerns—the teaching of contempt, anti-Semitism, freedom of conscience, human rights, proselytism, the State of Israel, Holocaust denial, remembering the *Shoah*—are precisely those issues in the dialogue that have received his greatest attention. John Paul also leads: Continually (and wisely, in my estimate) he emphasizes cooperation for the common good as the surest means of overcoming the centuries of alienation and mistrust between Jews and Christians; and he continually calls upon

theologians, exegetes and scholars to serve the dialogue by probing the difficult issues. John Paul II's way of proceeding in Jewish-Christian dialogue is exemplary of papal ministry.

The primary responsibilities of the papal office are guarding the tradition, teaching on faith and morals, and jurisdiction over church polity, practice and discipline. Catholics know John Paul II as deeply conservative in discharging these responsibilities. In that light, it seems to me all the more remarkable that he should be so progressive in teachings on Judaism that bear on fundamentals of the Church's tradition, a "deposit" as sacred to Catholics as Torah is to Jews.

As the dialogue evolves and sifts the strengths from the limitations of the *Guidelines*, the *Notes* and this or that papal position (this has already happened), one can reasonably expect similar official documents and papal statements that will reflect progress in the dialogue. *Nostra Aetate* itself will remain an anchor and compass²⁶⁵—"As this sacred Synod searches into the mystery of the Church"; yet, *Nostra Aetate* is not dogma but doctrine. It is reasonable to expect further doctrinal expressions of the Church's understanding of its essentially Judaic identity, and its evolving theology of Judaism. To quote Msgr. Mejia's delightful essay:

If the Catholic Church is slow and proceeds by careful steps in arriving at any major decision, implying some measure of change of former attitudes, once such decisions are arrived at, it clings to them in a way which can well be qualified as tenacious.²⁶⁶

John Paul must also be realistic, relevant and reliable on another front: some aspects of the dialogue directly concern his first priority, the inner life of the Church he leads. I have noted that he has called for more scholarly probing of the links between Jewish and Catholic liturgies, the

²⁶⁵ Haynes, a Protestant, observes: "It is difficult to overestimate the lasting influence which 'Nostra aetate' has had on Catholic doctrine, liturgy, official policy, religious instruction, and theology." *Prospects*, 5. See also Maureen Fritz, "Nostra aetate: A Turning Point in History," *Religious Education* 81 (Winter 1986): 67-78.

²⁶⁶ Msgr. Jorge Mejia, "The Catholic Style: A Reflection on the Documents," *More Stepping Stones*, 7.

vital centres of both religions.²⁶⁷ He also calls for development of foundations for a Catholic theology of Judaism based on dogmatic and doctrinal elements of key Council documents:

Although the Catholic teaching concerning Jews and Judaism is summarized in article four of [*Nostra Aetate*], many of its fundamental elements are also present in other documents of the Council. References to the same topic can be found in *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* and on *Divine Revelation*[,] in the *Declaration on Religious Freedom*, in the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, and in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*. Perhaps the time has come . . . to make a systematic study of the Council's teaching on this matter. We would do well to pursue this as part of our dialogue.²⁶⁸

Doctrinal development in the Catholic Church does not depend upon direction from the magisterium; the dialectic between members and officialdom that led to Vatican II illustrates this well. Before Vatican II, theologians, exegetes and many other Catholics calling for reform were often silenced or, at best, worked under a cloud of suspicion. Suddenly "John the Good," as some Jewish commentators call Pope John XXIII, convoked the Council, and the *placets* of the worldwide episcopate vindicated the pioneers. In the present case, the roles are somewhat reversed; but a similar resolution of the dialectic is required. Jewish-Catholic dialogue is not a popular movement. If John Paul did not have such a heartfelt commitment to it, I doubt if Jewish-Catholic reconciliation would be on the shortlist of church priorities. Not for want of good will. More on this point later.

Vatican II inspired the Church to, as it were, "go back to the future," to recreate the Church in light of its origins. The often painful process has meant sifting authentic tradition from attitudes, practices, idols and downright errors that subverted Catholicism's ability to dialogue

²⁶⁷ See Eugene J. Fisher, ed., *The Jewish Roots of Catholic Liturgy* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990). Kavanagh writes: "The more closely we examine the origins of Christian worship, the more we see them begin to merge into Jewish tradition both in structure and in detail." Aidan Kavanagh, OSB, "The Tradition of Judeo-Christian Worship: Our Debt to Each Other," in *Torah and Gospel*, 47.

²⁶⁸ John Paul II, address to representatives of the AJC, Rome, 16 March 1990. SP, 133-34.

with the real world, other Christians and other religions. Going back has revitalized the Church through, by and large, rediscovering Scripture and the long-neglected treasures of the patristic era. Renewal in the generation since the Council, however, has left virtually intact the gentile identity of the Church.

I believe the Holy Spirit who inspired the renewal of the Catholic Church has a more profound, still unfinished, agenda. The evidence, to my mind, is clear, compelling and disarming. To repeat the judgment of Cardinal Etchegaray (51): "Little by little, following the Second Vatican Council, the Church, without losing anything of its originality, is becoming aware that it is all the more flourishing in proportion as it lives from its Jewish root."

This Jewish root, according to Vincent Martin, goes deeper than Rabbinic Judaism and the Jewish identity of Jesus and the first Christians. Moreover, I believe it likely that even Martin's challenge, if met, will prove to be a stop along the way back to future renewal:

Jews and Christians, for different reasons, will have to make serious efforts to reconstruct objectively the life of their spiritual ancestors. From where they now stand, they could try using a method successfully developed by phenomenology to probe into their own collective consciousness, putting in parenthesis one historical element after the other until they reached the period of Early Judaism [after the Exile]. If at the end of this process of reduction they could agree on the same objective memory, they would have found a well-articulated frame of reference which could offer a basis for a genuine religious dialogue. [The exiles who returned to Jerusalem with Ezra were] the source, the fountainhead . . . which in time would part into Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity. . . . Neither can deny that today, as tomorrow, they are and will be carrying a common heritage in the many facets of their religious personality.²⁶⁹

Rabbi Klenicki, acknowledging the Jewish Testament as our common patrimony, but less specific than Martin in regard to the common patrimony that predates Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism, has expressed this view:

²⁶⁹ Martin, *A House Divided*, 10.

In the first century two branches were grafted into the tree of the Hebrew Bible. One was the rabbinic explanation from the Pharisaic movement that created rabbinic theology, and the other was the branch of Jesus toward the world. Naturally, this is not an idea that can be accepted by my Orthodox brothers and sisters . . . It was the first century for us, because we went from biblical Jewish experience to rabbinic Judaism by the expounding of the meaning of the Hebrew Bible for that period. And also, there is . . . Jesus and his vocation to the world.²⁷⁰

Jewish-Christian dialogue is a bi-directional evolution; we go back to go forward. The historical termini are the beginning of Judeo-Christian faith and the end, the promised Great Day of the Lord. Koheleth is wrong: there is something new under the sun. God is accomplishing a work only God can do: healing, with our necessary cooperation, the enmity between followers of Christ and Torah. Jewish-Christian dialogue is also paying an unexpected dividend: Because of the scholarly demands of the dialogue, Catholics and Protestants (and slowly but surely the Orthodox) are bringing to interchurch dialogue new perspectives on theological issues that divide the Church. Jewish-Christian dialogue is becoming integral to the quest for Christian unity.

I do not share the anxiety expressed by many that the dialogue is not moving fast enough or is not facing the tough issues. I don't agree with them. When I read the literature, I am frequently flabbergasted at the range of issues dealt with and the steady progress made in resolving them. Progress is evident in every sphere of the dialogue but one: Communication is lagging behind. What can be done about it?

It is a truism that no mass movement can succeed without engaging the imaginations of the rank and file. In the present case, I know of no better way to engage Catholic imagination, to lure it into practical appreciation of Judaism, to whet the popular appetite for more, than the rabbinic Midrash and other *aggadic* materials of the Talmud. Written by the people who gave us the

²⁷⁰ Father Peter Stravinskas and Rabbi Leon Klenicki, *A Catholic-Jewish Encounter* (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1994), 31-32.

first part of our Bible, the *Aggadah* is a triumph of religious imagination. Jewish spiritual writing is direct, concrete, using story, often humorous, to engage the listener-reader. Use of this vast corpus—a treasurehouse of spirituality, wisdom and sacred story—in catechesis, homiletics and, indeed, in private devotion would help the Catholic community appreciate, as Neusner would have us do, Judaism as a felt (and hardly alien) religious experience. Because space prohibits my developing this point, I have included an extended explanation of *Aggadah* in the glossary. I believe it will give the reader an adequate sense of what I mean.

Jewish-Catholic dialogue is now a generation old. Public statements meant to inspire and be a point of reference for ongoing *teshuva* continue to stream from the churches; yet, public evidence of positive acknowledgment and trust from the Jewish partner has been meager. As counterpart to the communication I proposed for the Catholic community, I would propose that the Jewish community begin in earnest to teach a more positive understanding of Christianity and a more balanced history of Jewish-Christian relations. Where to begin?

In his controversial *The Christian Effect on Jewish Life*, Rabbi Michael Hilton provides solid material for countering the myth, generally held among Jews, that the identity of Rabbinic Judaism owes nothing to Christianity. He writes:

Scholars are falling over themselves to prove that Christianity has authentically Jewish roots. Yet the number of books which attempt to show how Jesus and his followers affected Judaism can be counted on the fingers. This is the first attempt at a comprehensive survey covering the whole period of the relationship between the twin faiths.²⁷¹

Hilton's study will enlighten Jews and Christians unaware of the unbroken symbiosis between our faiths. Today's intense concern for Christian affirmation of Judaism overlooks the se-

²⁷¹ Michael Hilton, introduction to *The Christian Effect on Jewish Life* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1994), 11.

cret desire of every concerned Christian heart that Jews affirm Christian faith. Hilton concludes:

For dialogue to work, it has to be conducted on a basis of equality between the two faiths. David Novak points the way forward in his book *Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Jewish Justification* [16 n. 49]. He raises the question of what function Christianity could have in Jewish life and he proceeds to discuss the question of the theology and morality which the two faiths share. What needs to be added to the discussion is the extent of the influence that the two faiths have had on each other. Jews should become as aware of the Christian aspects of their heritage as Christians are of their Jewish roots. For it could well be argued that the mutual influence is so great that it is no longer possible to conceive of either Judaism or Christianity developing alone: in other words, that each will continue to follow its own path, but at a distance it measures from the other.²⁷²

Rabbi Tarfon said, "It is not thy duty to finish the work, but thou art not at liberty to neglect it."²⁷³ John Paul is aware that the dialogue is just beginning. (Indeed, its stages parallel those of Christian ecumenical dialogue.) In his address to the Synagogue of Rome, John Paul said:

It is not of course because the differences between us have now been overcome that I have come among you. We know well that this is not so.

First of all, each of our religions, in the full awareness of the many bonds which unite them to each other, and in the first place that "bond" which the Council spoke of, wishes to be recognized and respected in its own identity, beyond any syncretism and any ambiguous appropriation.

Furthermore, it is necessary to say that the path undertaken is still at the beginning, and therefore a considerable amount of time will still be needed, to remove all forms of prejudice, even subtle ones, to readjust every manner of self-expression, and therefore to present always and everywhere, to ourselves and to others, the true face of the Jews and of Judaism, as likewise of Christians and of Christianity, and this at every level of outlook, teaching and communication.²⁷⁴

²⁷² Ibid., 244.

²⁷³ Avoth 2:16. Judah Goldin, ed., *The Living Talmud: The Wisdom of the Fathers* (New York: New American Library, 1957), 116. The *Perke Avoth*, a tractate of the *Mishna*, is a collection of "the sayings and religio-ethical teachings of the sages from the 3rd cent. BCE to the 3rd cent. CE." *The Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Avoth."

²⁷⁴ John Paul II, Synagogue of Rome. SP, 64.

—APPENDIX—**I. *Nostra Aetate*²⁷⁵****“Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, 4”**

4. As the Sacred Synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that spiritually ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock.

Thus the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ—Abraham's sons according to faith (6)—are included in the same Patriarch's call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles (7). Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ Our Peace reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making both one in Himself (8).

The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: “Theirs is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the law and the worship and the promises; theirs are the fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh” (Rom. 8, 4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. She also recalls that the Apostles, the Church's main-stay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people.

As Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation (9), nor did the Jews, in large number, accept the Gospel; indeed not a few opposed its spreading (10). Nevertheless God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or of the calls He issues—such is the witness of the Apostle (11). In company with the Prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and “serve him shoulder to shoulder” (Soph. 3, 9) (12).

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this Sacred Synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as fraternal dialogues.

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ (13); still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new People of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the

²⁷⁵ Text available at <http://listserv.american.edu/catholic/church/vaticanii/nostra-aetate.html>; Internet; accessed 8 December 1997.

Word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.

Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.

Footnotes:

(6) Cf. Gal 3:7 (7) Cf. Rom 11:17-24. (8) Cf. Eph 2:14-16. (9) Cf. Lk 19:44. (10) Cf. Rom 11:28. (11) Cf. Rom 11:8-29; cf Lumen Gentium, AAS, 55 (1965), 20. (12) Cf Is. 66:23; Ps 65:4; Rom. 11:11-32. (13) Cf. John 19:6.

II. Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar

Declaration "Nostra Aetate"²⁷⁶

The Declaration "Nostra Aetate," issued by the Second Vatican Council on 28 October 1965, "On The Relationship of The Church to Non-Christian Religions" (n. 4), marks an important milestone in the history of Jewish-Christian relations. Moreover, the step taken by the Council finds its historical setting in circumstances deeply affected by the memory of the persecution and massacre of Jews which took place in Europe just before and during the Second World War. Although Christianity sprang from Judaism, taking from it certain essential elements of its faith and divine cult, the gap dividing them was deepened more and more, to such an extent that Christian and Jew hardly knew each other. After two thousand years, too often marked by mutual ignorance and frequent confrontation, the Declaration "Nostra Aetate" provides an opportunity to open or to continue a dialogue with a view to better mutual understanding. Over the past nine years, many steps in this direction have been taken in various countries. As a result, it is easier to distinguish the conditions under which a new relationship between Jews and Christians may be worked out and developed. This seems the right moment to propose, following the guidelines of the Council, some concrete suggestions born of experience, hoping that they will help to bring into actual existence in the life of the Church the intentions expressed in the conciliar document. While referring the reader back to this document, we may simply restate here that the spiritual bonds and historical links binding the Church to Judaism condemn (as opposed to the very spirit of Christianity) all forms of anti-Semitism and discrimination, which in any case the dignity of the

²⁷⁶Text available at Web: <http://www.ewtn.com>; Internet; assessed 10 August 1997. Provided courtesy of Eternal Word Television Network.

human person alone would suffice to condemn. Further still these links and relationships render obligatory a better mutual understanding and renewed mutual esteem. On the practical level in particular, Christians must therefore strive to acquire a better knowledge of the basic components of the religious tradition of Judaism; they must strive to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience. With due respect for such matters of principle, we simply propose some first practical applications in different essential areas of the Church's life, with a view to launching or developing sound relations between Catholics and their Jewish [brothers and sisters].

I. Dialogue

To tell the truth, such relations as there have been between Jew and Christian have scarcely ever risen above the level of monologue. From now on, real dialogue must be established. Dialogue presupposes that each side wishes to know the other, and wishes to increase and deepen its knowledge of the other. It constitutes a particularly suitable means of favoring a better mutual knowledge and, especially in the case of dialogue between Jews and Christians, of probing the riches of one's own tradition. Dialogue demands respect for the other as he is; above all, respect for his faith and his religious convictions. In virtue of her divine mission, and her very nature, the Church must preach Jesus Christ to the world ("Ad Gentes" 2). Lest the witness of Catholics to Jesus Christ should give offense to Jews, they must take care to live and spread their Christian-faith while maintaining the strictest respect for religious liberty in line with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council (Declaration "Dignitatis Humanae"). They will likewise strive to understand the difficulties which arise for the Jewish soul—rightly imbued with an extremely high, pure notion of the divine transcendence—when faced with the mystery of the incarnate Word. While it is true that a widespread air of suspicion, inspired by an unfortunate past, is still dominant in this particular area, Christians, for their part, will be able to see to what extent the responsibility is theirs and deduce practical conclusions for the future. In addition to friendly talks, competent people will be encouraged to meet and to study together the many problems deriving from the fundamental convictions of Judaism and of Christianity. In order not to hurt (even involuntarily) those taking part, it will be vital to guarantee, not only tact, but a great openness of spirit and confidence with respect to one's own prejudices. In whatever circumstances as shall prove possible and mutually acceptable, one might encourage a common meeting in the presence of God, in prayer and silent meditation, a highly efficacious way of finding that humility, that openness of heart and mind, necessary prerequisites for a deep knowledge of oneself and of others. In particular, that will be done in connection with great causes such as the struggle for peace and Justice.

II. Liturgy

The existing links between the Christian liturgy and the Jewish liturgy will be borne in mind. The idea of a living community in the service of God, and in the service of men for the love of God, such as it is realized in the liturgy, is just as characteristic of the Jewish liturgy as it is of the Christian one. To improve Jewish-Christian relations, it is important to take cognizance of those common elements of the liturgical life (formulas, feasts, rites, etc.) in which the Bible holds

an essential place. An effort will be made to acquire a better understanding of whatever in the Old Testament retains its own perpetual value (cf. "Dei Verbum", 14-15), since that has not been canceled by the later interpretation of the New Testament. Rather, the New Testament brings out the full meaning of the Old, while both Old and New illumine and explain each other (cf. "Ibid.", 16). This is all the more important since liturgical reform is now bringing the text of the Old Testament ever more frequently to the attention of Christians. When commenting on biblical texts, emphasis will be laid on the continuity of our faith with that of the earlier Covenant, in the perspective of the promises, without minimizing those elements of Christianity which are original. We believe that those promises were fulfilled with the first coming of Christ. But it is none the less true that we still await their perfect fulfillment in his glorious return at the end of time. With respect to liturgical readings, care will be taken to see that homilies based on them will not distort their meaning, especially when it is a question of passages which seem to show the Jewish people as such in an unfavorable light. Efforts will be made so to instruct the Christian people that they will understand the true interpretation of all the texts and their meaning for the contemporary believer. Commissions entrusted with the task of liturgical translation will pay particular attention to the way in which they express those phrases and passages which Christians, if not well informed, might misunderstand because of prejudice. Obviously, one cannot alter the text of the Bible. The point is that, with a version destined for liturgical use, there should be an overriding preoccupation to bring out explicitly the meaning of a text, (1) while taking scriptural studies into account. The preceding remarks also apply to introductions to biblical readings, to the Prayer of the Faithful, and to commentaries printed in missals used by the laity.

III. Teaching and Education

Although there is still a great deal of work to be done, a better understanding of Judaism itself and its relationship to Christianity has been achieved in recent years thanks to the teaching of the Church, the study and research of scholars, as also to the beginning of dialogue. In this respect, the following facts deserve to be recalled. — It is the same God, "inspirer and author of the books of both Testaments," ("Dei Verbum", 16), who speaks both in the old and new Covenants. — Judaism in the time of Christ and the Apostles was a complex reality, embracing many different trends, many spiritual, religious, social and cultural values. — The Old Testament and the Jewish tradition founded upon it must not be seen against the New Testament in such a way that the former seems to constitute a religion of only justice, fear and legalism, with no appeal to the love of God and neighbor (cf. Deut. 6, 6, Lev. 19, 18, Matt 22, 34-40). — Jesus was born of the Jewish people, as were his Apostles and a large number of his first disciples. When he revealed himself as the Messiah and Son of God (cf. Matt 16, 16), the bearer of the new Gospel message, he did so as the fulfillment and perfection of the earlier Revelation. And, although his teaching had a profoundly new character, Christ, nevertheless, in many instances, took his stand on the teaching of the Old Testament. The New Testament is profoundly marked by its relation to the Old. As the Second Vatican Council declared: "God, the inspirer and author of the books of both Testaments, wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old and the Old be made manifest in the New" ("Dei Verbum", 16). Jesus also used teaching methods similar to those employed by the rabbis of his time. —With regard to the trial and death Of Jesus, the Council recalled that "what happened in his passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor

upon the Jews of today" ("Nostra Aetate", 4). —The history of Judaism did not end with the destruction of Jerusalem, but rather went on to develop a religious tradition. And, although we believe that the importance and meaning of that tradition were deeply affected by the coming of Christ, it is still nonetheless rich in religious values. —With the prophets and the apostle Paul, "the Church awaits the day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and serve him with one accord" (Soph 3, 9)" ("Nostra Aetate", 4).

Information concerning these questions is important at all levels of Christian instruction and education. Among sources of information, special attention should be paid to the following:

- catechisms and religious textbooks
- history books
- the mass media (press, radio, cinema, television).

The effective use of these means presupposes the thorough formation of instructors and educators in training what best to do on the pastoral level, research into the problems bearing on Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations will be encouraged among specialists, particularly in the fields of exegesis, theology history and sociology. Higher institutions of Catholic research, in association if possible with other similar Christian institutions and experts, are invited to contribute to the solution of such problems. Wherever possible, chairs of Jewish studies will be created, and collaboration with Jewish scholars encouraged.

IV Joint Social Action

Jewish and Christian tradition, founded on the Word of God, is aware of the value of the human person, the image of God. Love of the same God must show itself in effective action for the good of mankind. In the spirit of the prophets, Jews and Christians will work willingly together, seeking social justice and peace at every level—local, national and international. At the same time, such collaboration can do much to foster mutual understanding and esteem.

Conclusion

The Second Vatican Council has pointed out the path to follow in promoting deep fellowship between Jews and Christians. But there is still a long road ahead. The problem of Jewish-Christian relations concerns the Church as such, since it is when "pondering her own mystery" that she encounters the mystery of Israel! Therefore, even in areas where no Jewish communities exist, this remains an important problem. There is also an ecumenical aspect to the question: the very return of Christians to the sources and origins of their faith, grafted on to the earlier Covenant, helps the search for unity in Christ, the cornerstone. In this field, the bishops will know what best to do on the pastoral level within the general disciplinary framework of the Church and in line with the common teaching of her magisterium. For example, they will create some suitable commissions or secretariats on a national or regional level, or appoint some competent person to promote the implementation of the conciliar directives and the suggestions made above. On 22 October 1974, the Holy Father instituted for the universal Church this Commission for Religious Rela-

tions with the Jews, joined to the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. This special Commission, created to encourage and foster religious relations between Jews and Catholics—and to do so eventually in collaboration with other Christians—will be, within the limits of its competence, at the service of all interested organizations, providing information for them, and helping them to pursue their task in conformity with the instructions of the Holy See. The Commission wishes to develop this collaboration in order to implement, correctly and effectively, the express intentions of the Council.

Issued by the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. Given at Rome, 1 December 1974. Johannes Card. Willebrands

III. Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church²⁷⁷

Preliminary Considerations

On 6 March 1982, Pope John Paul II told delegates of episcopal conferences and other experts meeting in Rome to study relations between the Church and Judaism:

“...you yourselves were concerned, during your sessions, with Catholic teaching and catechesis regarding Jews and Judaism We should aim, in this field, that Catholic teaching at its different levels, in catechesis to children and young people, presents Jews and Judaism not only in an honest and objective manner, free from prejudices and without any offenses, but also with full awareness of the heritage common” to Jews and Christians.

In this passage, so charged with meaning, the Holy Father plainly drew inspiration from the Council Declaration “Nostra Aetate”, par. 4, which says:

“All should take pains, then, lest in catechetical instruction and in the preaching of God’s Word they teach anything out of harmony with the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ”; as also from these words: “Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred Synod wishes to foster and recommend mutual understanding and respect”

In the same way, the “Guidelines and Suggestions for implementing the conciliar declaration Nostra Aetate” (par. 4) ends its chapter III, entitled “Teaching and education”, which lists a number of practical things to be done, with this recommendation:

“Information concerning these questions is important at all levels of Christian instruction and education. Among sources of information, special attention should be paid to the following:

- catechisms and religious textbooks;
- history books
- the mass media (press, radio, cinema, television).

²⁷⁷ Text available at <http://www.ewtn.com>; Internet; assessed 3 September 1997. Taken from the July 1, 1985 issue of “L’Osservatore Romano.” Provided courtesy of Eternal Word Television Network.

The effective use of these means presupposes the thorough formation of instructors and educators in training schools, seminaries and universities" (AAS 77, 1975, p. 3). The paragraphs which follow are intended to serve this purpose.

I. Religious teaching and Judaism

1. In "Nostra Aetate", par. 4, the Council speaks of the "spiritual bonds linking" Jews and Christians and of the "great spiritual patrimony" common to both and it further asserts that "the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to the mystery of God's saving design, the beginning of her faith and her election are already found among the patriarchs, Moses and the prophets".

2. Because of the unique relations that exist between Christianity and Judaism—"linked together at the very level of their identity" (John Paul II, 6 March, 1982)—relations "founded on the design of the God of the Covenant" (*Ibid.*), the Jews and Judaism should not occupy an occasional and marginal place in catechesis: their presence there is essential and should be organically integrated.

3. This concern for Judaism in Catholic teaching has not merely a historical or archeological foundation. As the Holy Father said in the speech already quoted, after he had again mentioned the "common patrimony" of the Church and Judaism as "considerable": "To assess it carefully in itself and with due awareness of the faith and religious life of the Jewish people 'as they are professed and practiced still today', can greatly help us to understand better certain aspects of the life of the Church". It is a question then of "pastoral" concern for a still living reality closely related to the Church. The Holy Father has stated this permanent reality of the Jewish people in a remarkable theological formula, in his allocution to the Jewish community of West Germany at Mainz, on 17 November 1980: "...the people of God of the Old Covenant, which has never been revoked . . ."

4. Here we should recall the passage in which the "Guidelines and Suggestions" (1) tried to define the fundamental condition of dialogue: "respect for the other as he is", knowledge of the "basic components of the religious tradition of Judaism" and again learning "by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience" (Introd.).

5. The singular character and the difficulty of Christian teaching about Jews and Judaism lies in this, that it needs to balance a number of pairs of ideas which express the relation between the two economies of the Old and New Testament:

Promise and Fulfillment, Continuity and Newness, Singularity and Universality, Uniqueness and Exemplary Nature.

This means that the theologian and the catechist who deals with the subject needs to show in his practice of teaching that:

- promise and fulfillment throw light on each other;
- newness lies in a metamorphosis of what was there before;

- the singularity of the people of the Old Testament is not exclusive and is open, in the divine vision, to a universal extension;
- the uniqueness of the Jewish people is meant to have the force of an example.

6. Finally, “work that is of poor quality and lacking in precision would be extremely detrimental” to Judaeo-Christian dialogue (John Paul II, speech of 6 March 1982). But it would be above all detrimental—since we are talking of teaching and education—to Christian identity (*Ibid.*).

7. “In virtue of her divine mission, the Church” which is to be “the all-embracing means of salvation” in which alone “the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained” (“Unit. Red.” 3), “must of her nature proclaim Jesus Christ to the world” (cf. “Guidelines and Suggestions”, I). Indeed we believe that it is through him that we go to the Father (cf. In 14:6) “and this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent” (In 17:3).

Jesus affirms (*Ibid.* 10:16) that “there shall be one flock and one shepherd”. Church and Judaism cannot then be seen as two parallel ways of salvation and the Church must witness to Christ as the Redeemer for all, “while maintaining the strictest respect for religious liberty in line with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council (Declaration ‘*Dignitatis Humanae*’) (“Guidelines and Suggestions”, I).

8. The urgency and importance of precise, objective and rigorously accurate teaching on Judaism for our faithful follows too from the danger of anti-Semitism which is always ready to reappear under different guises. The question is not merely to uproot from among the faithful the remains of anti-Semitism still to be found here and there, but much rather to arouse in them through educational work, an exact knowledge of the wholly unique “bond” (“*Nostra Aetate*” 4) which joins us as a Church to the Jews and to Judaism. In this way, they would learn to appreciate and love the latter, who have been chosen by God to prepare the coming of Christ and have preserved everything that was progressively revealed and given in the course of that preparation, notwithstanding their difficulty in recognizing in Him their Messiah.

II. Relations between Old and New Testament

1. Our aim should be to show the unity of biblical Revelation (O.T. and N.T.) and of the divine plan, before speaking of each historical event, so as to stress that particular events have meaning when seen in history as a whole—from creation to fulfillment. This history concerns the whole human race and especially believers. Thus the definitive meaning of the election of Israel does not become clear except in the light of the complete fulfillment (Rom 9-11), and the election in Jesus Christ is still better understood with reference to the announcement and the promise (cf. Heb 4: 1-11).

2. We are dealing with singular happenings which concern a singular nation but are destined, in the sight of God who reveals his purpose, to take on universal and exemplary significance.

The aim is moreover to present the events of the Old Testament not as concerning only the Jews but also as touching us personally. Abraham is truly the father of our faith (cf. Rom 4:11-12;

Roman Canon: "patriarchae nostri Abrahae"). And it is said (I Cor 10:1): "Our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea". The patriarchs, prophets and other personalities of the Old Testament have been venerated and always will be venerated as saints in the liturgical tradition of the Oriental Church as also of the Latin Church

3. From the unity of the divine plan derives the problem of the relation between the Old and New Testaments. The Church already from apostolic times (cf. I Cor 10:11; Heb 10:1) and then constantly in tradition resolved this problem by means of typology, which emphasizes the primordial value that the Old Testament must have in the Christian view. Typology however makes many people uneasy and is perhaps the sign of a problem unresolved.

4. Hence in using typology, the teaching and practice of which we have received from the Liturgy and from the Fathers of the Church, we should be careful to avoid any transition from the Old to the New Testament which might seem merely a rupture. The Church, in the spontaneity of the Spirit which animates her, has vigorously condemned the attitude of Marcion (2) and always opposed his dualism.

5. It should also be emphasized that typological interpretation consists in reading the Old Testament as preparation and, in certain aspects, outline and foreshadowing of the New (cf. e.g., Heb 5:5-10 etc.). Christ is henceforth the key and point of reference to the Scriptures: "the rock was Christ" (I Cor 10:4).

6. It is true then, and should be stressed, that the Church and Christians read the Old Testament in the light of the event of the dead and risen Christ and that on these grounds there is a Christian reading of the Old Testament which does not necessarily coincide with the Jewish reading. Thus Christian identity and Jewish identity should be carefully distinguished in their respective reading of the Bible. But this detracts nothing from the value of the Old Testament in the Church and does nothing to hinder Christians from profiting discerningly from traditions of Jewish reading.

7. Typological reading only manifests the unfathomable riches of the Old Testament, its inexhaustible content and the mystery of which it is full, and should not lead us to forget that it retains its own value as Revelation that the New Testament often does no more than presume (cf. Mk 12:29-31). Moreover, the New Testament itself demands to be read in the light of the Old. Primitive Christian catechesis constantly had recourse to this (cf. e.g., I Cor 5:6-8; 10: 1-11).

8. Typology further signifies reaching towards the accomplishment of the divine plan, when "God will be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28). This holds true also for the Church which, realized already in Christ, yet awaits its definitive perfecting as the Body of Christ. The fact that the Body of Christ is still tending towards its full stature (cf. Eph 4:12-19) takes nothing from the value of being a Christian. So also the calling of the patriarchs and the Exodus from Egypt do not lose their importance and value in God's design from being at the same time intermediate stages (cf. e.g. "Nostra Aetate", 4).

9. The Exodus, for example, represents an experience of salvation and liberation that is

not complete in itself, but has in it, over and above its own meaning, the capacity to be developed further. Salvation and liberation are already accomplished in Christ and gradually realized by the sacraments in the Church. This makes way for the fulfillment of God's design, which awaits its final consummation with the return of Jesus as Messiah, for which we pray each day. The Kingdom, for the coming of which we also pray each day, will be finally established. With salvation and liberation the elect and the whole of creation will be transformed in Christ (Rom 8: 19-23).

10. Furthermore, in underlining the eschatological dimension of Christianity we shall reach a greater awareness that the people of God of the Old and the New Testament are tending towards a like end in the future: the coming or return of the Messiah—even if they start from two different points of view. It is more clearly understood that the person of the Messiah is not only a point of division for the people of God but also a point of convergence (cf. "Sussidi per l'ecumenismo" of the diocese of Rome, n. 140). Thus it can be said that Jews and Christians meet in a comparable hope founded on the same promise made to Abraham (cf. Gen 12:1-3; Heb 6:13-18).

11. Attentive to the same God who has spoken, hanging on the same word, we have to witness to one same memory and one common hope in Him who is the master of history. We must also accept our responsibility to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah by working together for social justice, respect for the rights of persons and nations and for social and international reconciliation. To this we are driven, Jews and Christians, by the command to love our neighbor, by a common hope for the Kingdom of God and by the great heritage of the Prophets. Transmitted soon enough by catechesis, such a conception would teach young Christians in a practical way to cooperate with Jews, going beyond simple dialogue (cf. Guidelines, IV).

III. Jewish roots of Christianity

12. Jesus was and always remained a Jew, his ministry was deliberately limited "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 15:24). Jesus is fully a man of his time, and of his environment—the Jewish Palestinian one of the first century, the anxieties and hopes of which he shared. This cannot but underline both the reality of the Incarnation and the very meaning of the history of salvation, as it has been revealed in the Bible (cf. Rom 1:3-4; Gal 4:4-5)

13. Jesus' relations with biblical law and its more or less traditional interpretations are undoubtedly complex and he showed great liberty towards it (cf. the "antitheses" of the Sermon on the Mount: Mt. 5:21-48, bearing in mind the exegetical difficulties, his attitude to rigorous observance of the Sabbath: Mk 3:1-6, etc.).

But there is no doubt that he wished to submit himself to the law (cf. Gal 4:4), that he was circumcised and presented in the Temple like any Jew of his time (cf. Lk 2:21, 22-24), that he was trained in the law's observance. He extolled respect for it (cf. Mt 5:17-20) and invited obedience to it (cf. Mt 8:4). The rhythm of his life was marked by observance of pilgrimages on great feasts, even from his infancy (cf. Lk 2:41-50; Jn 2:13, 7:10 etc.). The importance of the cycle of the Jewish feasts has been frequently underlined in the Gospel of John (cf. 2:13; 5:1; 7:2, 10, 37; 10:22; 12:1; 13:1; 18:28; 19:42 etc.).

14. It should be noted also that Jesus often taught in the Synagogues (cf. Mt 4:23; 9:35; Lk 4: 15-18; Jn 18:20 etc.) and in the Temple (cf. Jn 18:20 etc.), which he frequented as did the disciples even after the Resurrection (cf. e.g., Acts 2:46; 3:1; 21:26 etc.). He wished to put in the context of synagogue worship the proclamation of his Messiahship (cf. Lk 4:16-21). But above all he wished to achieve the supreme act of the gift of himself in the setting of the domestic liturgy of the Passover, or at least of the paschal festivity (cf. Mk 14:1, 12 and parallels, Jn 18:28). This also allows of a better understanding of the ‘memorial’ character of the Eucharist.

15. Thus the Son of God is incarnate in a people and a human family (cf. Gal 4:4; Rom 9:5). This takes away nothing, quite the contrary, from the fact that he was born for all men (Jewish shepherds and pagan wise men are found at his crib: Lk 2:8-20, Mt 2:1-12) and died for all men (at the foot of the cross there are Jews, among them Mary and John: Jn 19:25-27, and pagans like the centurion: Mk 15:39 and parallels). Thus he made two peoples one in his flesh (cf. Eph 2:14-17). This explains why with the “Ecclesia ex gentibus” we have, in Palestine and elsewhere, an “Ecclesia ex circumcisione”, of which Eusebius for example speaks (H.E. IV, 5).

16. His relations with the Pharisees were not always or wholly polemical. Of this there are many proofs:

- It is Pharisees who warn Jesus of the risks he is running (Lk 13:31)
- Some Pharisees are praised-e.g. “the scribe” of Mk 12:34;
- Jesus eats with Pharisees (Lk 7:36; 14: 1).

17. Jesus shares, with the majority of Palestinian Jews of that time, some pharisaic doctrines: the resurrection of the body; forms of piety, like alms-giving, prayer, fasting (cf. Mt 6: 1-18) and the liturgical practice of addressing God as Father; the priority of the commandment to love God and our neighbor (cf. Mk 12:28-34). This is so also with Paul (cf. Acts 23:8), who always considered his membership of the Pharisees as a title of honor (cf. Ibid. 23:6; 26:5; Phil 3:5).

18. Paul also, like Jesus himself, used methods of reading and interpreting which were common to the Pharisees of Scripture and of teaching his disciples their time. This applies to the use of parables in Jesus’ ministry as also to the method of Jesus and Paul of supporting a conclusion with a quotation from Scripture.

19. It is noteworthy too that the Pharisees are not mentioned in accounts of the Passion. Gamaliel (Acts 5:34-39) defends the apostles in a meeting of the Sanhedrin. An exclusively negative picture of the Pharisees is likely to be inaccurate and unjust (cf. “Guidelines”, I Note, cf. AAS, loc. cit. p. 76). If in the Gospels and elsewhere in the New Testament there are all sorts of unfavorable references to the Pharisees, they should be seen against the background of a complex and diversified movement. Criticisms of various types of Pharisees are moreover not lacking in rabbinical sources (cf. the “Babylon Talmud”, the “Sotah” treatise 22b, etc.). “Phariseeism” in the pejorative sense can be rife in any religion. It may also be stressed that, if Jesus shows himself severe towards the Pharisees, it is because he is closer to them than to other contemporary Jewish groups (cf. supra n. 17).

20. All this should help us to understand better what St. Paul says (Rom 11:16 95) about the “root” and the “branches”. The Church and Christianity, for all their novelty, find their origin in the Jewish milieu of the first century of our era, and more deeply still in the “design of God” (“Nostra Aetate”, 4), realized in the Patriarchs, Moses and the Prophets (*Ibid.*), down to its consummation in Christ Jesus.

IV. Jews in the New Testament

21. The “Guidelines” already say (note 1) that “the formula ‘the Jews’ sometimes according to the context, means ‘the leaders of the Jews’ or ‘the adversaries of Jesus’, terms which express better the thought of the evangelist and avoid appearing to arraign the Jewish people as such”.

An objective presentation of the role of the Jewish people in the New Testament should take account of these various facts:

A. The Gospels are the outcome of long and complicated editorial work. The dogmatic constitution “Dei Verbum”, following the Pontifical Biblical Commission’s Instruction “Sancta Mater Ecclesia”, distinguishes three stages: “The sacred authors wrote the four Gospels, selecting some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writing, reducing some of them to a synthesis, explicating some things in view of the situation of their Churches, and preserving the form of proclamation, but always in such fashion that they told us the honest truth about Jesus” (n. 19).

Hence it cannot be ruled out that some references hostile or less than favorable to the Jews have their historical context in conflicts between the nascent Church and the Jewish community. Certain controversies reflect Christian-Jewish relations long after the time of Jesus.

To establish this is of capital importance if we wish to bring out the meaning of certain Gospel texts for the Christians of today.

All this should be taken into account when preparing catechesis and homilies for the last weeks of Lent and Holy Week (cf. already “Guidelines” II, and now also “Sussidi per l’ecumenismo nella diocesi di Roma”, 1982, 144 b).

B. It is clear on the other hand that there were conflicts between Jesus and certain categories of Jews of his time, among them Pharisees, from the beginning of his ministry (cf. Mk 2: 1-11, 24; 3:6 etc.).

C. There is moreover the sad fact that the majority of the Jewish people and its authorities did not believe in Jesus—a fact not merely of history but of theological bearing, of which St. Paul tries hard to plumb the meaning (Rom chap. 9-11).

D. This fact, accentuated as the Christian mission developed, especially among the pagans, led inevitably to a rupture between Judaism and the young Church, now irreducibly separated and divergent in faith, and this stage of affairs is reflected in the texts of the New Testament and particularly in the Gospels. There is no question of playing down or glossing over this rupture, that could only prejudice the identity of either side. Nevertheless it certainly does not cancel the spiri-

tual “bond” of which the Council speaks (“*Nostra Aetate*”, 4) and which we propose to dwell on here.

E. Reflecting on this in the light of Scripture, notably of the chapters cited from the epistle to the Romans, Christians should never forget that the faith is a free gift of God (cf. Rom 9: 12) and that we should never judge the consciences of others. St. Paul’s exhortation “do not boast” in your attitude to “the root” (Rom 11:18) has its full point here.

F. There is no putting the Jews who knew Jesus and did not believe in him, or those who opposed the preaching of the apostles, on the same plane with Jews who came after or those of today. If the responsibility of the former remains a mystery hidden with God (cf. Rom 11:25), the latter are in an entirely different situation. Vatican II in the declaration on “Religious Liberty” teaches that “all men are to be immune from coercion ... in such wise that in matters religious no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs. Nor ... restrained from acting in accordance with his own beliefs” (n. 2). This is one of the bases—proclaimed by the Council—on which Judaeo-Christian dialogue rests.

22. The delicate question of responsibility for the death of Christ must be looked at from the standpoint of the conciliar declaration “*Nostra Aetate*”, 4 and of “Guidelines and Suggestions” (par. III): “What happened in (Christ’s) passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living without distinction nor upon the Jews of today”, especially since “authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ”. Again, further on: “Christ in his boundless love freely underwent his passion and death because of the sins of all men, so that all might attain salvation” (“*Nostra Aetate*”, 4). The Catechism of the Council of Trent teaches that Christian sinners are more to blame for the death of Christ than those few Jews who brought it about—they indeed “knew not what they did” (cf. Lk 23:34)

V. The Liturgy

23. Jews and Christians find in the Bible the very substance of their liturgy: for the proclamation of God’s word, response to it, prayer of praise and intercession for the living and the dead, recourse to the divine mercy. The Liturgy of the word in its own structure originates in Judaism. The prayer of Hours and other liturgical texts and formularies have their parallels in Judaism as do the very formulas of our most venerable prayers, among them the Our Father. The eucharistic prayers also draw inspiration from models in the Jewish tradition. As John Paul II said (Allocution of 6 March 1982): “...the faith and religious life of the Jewish people as they are professed and practiced still today, can greatly help us to understand better certain aspects of the life of the Church. Such is the case of liturgy . . .”

24. This is particularly evident in the great feasts of the liturgical year, like the Passover. Christians and Jews celebrate the Passover: the Jews, the historic Passover looking towards the future; the Christians, the Passover accomplished in the death and resurrection of Christ although still in expectation of the final consummation (cf. supra n. 9). It is still the “memorial” which comes to us from the Jewish tradition, with a specific content different in each case. On either side, however, there is a like dynamism: for Christians it gives meaning to the eucharistic celebration (cf. the antiphon “O sacrum convivium”), a paschal celebration and as such a making present

of the past, but experienced in the expectation of what is to come.

VI. Judaism and Christianity in History

25. The history of Israel did not end in 70 A.D. (cf. "Guidelines", II). It continued, especially in a numerous Diaspora which allowed Israel to carry to the whole world a witness—often heroic—of its fidelity to the one God and to "exalt him in the presence of all the living" ("Tobit" 13:4), while preserving the memory of the land of their forefathers at the heart of their hope (Passover "Seder").

Christians are invited to understand this religious attachment which finds its roots in Biblical tradition, without however making their own any particular religious interpretation of this relationship (cf. "Declaration" of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 20, 1975).

The existence of the State of Israel and its political options should be envisaged not in a perspective which is in itself religious, but in their reference to the common principles of international law.

The permanence of Israel (while so many ancient peoples have disappeared without trace) is a historic fact and a sign to be interpreted within God's design. We must in any case rid ourselves of the traditional idea of a people "punished", preserved as a "living argument" for Christian apologetic. It remains a chosen people, "the pure olive on which were grafted the branches of the wild olive which are the gentiles" (John Paul II, 6 March 1982, alluding to Rom 11:17-24). We must remember how much the balance of relations between Jews and Christians over two thousand years has been negative. We must remind ourselves how the permanence of Israel is accompanied by a continuous spiritual fecundity, in the rabbinical period, in the Middle Ages and in modern times, taking its start from a patrimony which we long shared, so much so that "the faith and religious life of the Jewish people as they are professed and practiced still today, can greatly help us to understand better certain aspects of the life of the Church" (John Paul II, 6 March 1982). Catechesis should on the other hand help in understanding the meaning for the Jews of the extermination during the years 1939-1945, and its consequences.

26. Education and catechesis should concern themselves with the problem of racism, still active in different forms of anti-Semitism. The Council presented it thus: "Moreover, (the Church) mindful of her common patrimony with the Jews and motivated by the Gospel's spiritual love and by no political considerations deplores the hatred, persecutions and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and from any source" ("Nostra Aetate", 4). The "Guidelines" comment: "the spiritual bonds and historical links binding the Church to Judaism condemn (as opposed to the very spirit of Christianity) all forms of anti-Semitism and discrimination, which in any case the dignity of the human person alone would suffice to condemn" ("Guidelines", Preamble).

Conclusion

27. Religious teaching, catechesis and preaching should be a preparation not only for objectivity, justice, tolerance but also for understanding and dialogue. Our traditions are so related that they cannot ignore each other. Mutual knowledge must be encouraged at every level. There is evident in particular a painful ignorance of the history and traditions of Judaism, of which only

negative aspects and often caricature seem to form part of the stock ideas of many Christians.

That is what these notes aim to remedy. This would mean that the Council text and "Guidelines and Suggestions" would be more easily and faithfully put into practice.

Johannes Cardinal Willebrands (President), Pierre Duprey (Vice-President), Jorge Mejia (Secretary)

Endnotes

- 1) We continue to use the expression "Old Testament" because it is traditional (cf. already 2 Cor 3:14) but also because "Old" does not mean "out of date" or "outworn". In any case, it is the permanent value of the O.T. as a source of Christian revelation that is emphasized here (cf. "Dei Verbum", 3).
- 2) A man of gnostic tendency who in the second century rejected the Old Testament and part of the New as the work of an evil god, a demiurge. The Church reacted strongly against this heresy (cf. Irenaeus).

IV. Jews and Judaism in the New *Catechism Of The Catholic Church*²⁷⁸

"The new 'Catechism of the Catholic Church' (CCC) may distinguish itself from its predecessors in content and form, in intention and by the people it addresses. But it too wants to be 'a sure norm for the doctrine of the faith' and a 'sure authentic source text for the presentation of Catholic doctrine, and in particular for the development of local Catechisms' (John Paul II in the introductory Apostolic Constitution). For that reason its significance for the church of the present is not to be underestimated.

First Position

It is to be acknowledged, that the CCC does not fall back behind the statements of the Council about the Jews and the church's relationship to Judaism (*Nostra Aetate*). It is clearly stated that Jesus was a Jew and that he valued the Torah positively (423.577). The Pharisees and the relationship to them are presented in a differentiating manner (579.595). In the section 'The church's relationship to the Jewish people'(839) the CCC explicitly quotes the Council and mentions the irrevocability of Israel's election (121.839). Above all it is clearly stated: The Jews are not collectively responsible for the death of Jesus (597). Occasionally even the significance of present-day Jewish life is mentioned (1096). —These and other statements are a hopeful sign for the

²⁷⁸ Unedited extracts from a statement by the Central Committee of German Catholics, "Jews and Judaism in the New *Catechism of the Catholic Church*," 29 January 1996, preamble. Unofficial translation by Fritz Voll-size. Available at <http://www.jcrelations.com/stmnts/cccc.htm>; Internet; accessed 21 August 1997. It is more unsparing than the valuable critique of Rabbi Leon Kenicki in "Catechism of the Catholic Church—An Interfaith Jewish Reading," *Sidic* 27, no. 2 (1994): 9-18. This issue of *Sidic* is devoted to the *Catechism*.

seriousness, with which the church wants to renew its relationship to Judaism.

Second Position

The CCC evidently has difficulty to acknowledge post-biblical Judaism as an independent salvation-historical entity side by side with the church and particularly as the people of the covenant, which God has never terminated. This is less obvious, where it speaks explicitly about Judaism, but apparent where it speaks of the church as if Judaism did not exist anymore, although in the context it would have been obliged to affirm it.

When the CCC speaks about the relationship between Israel/Judaism and the church, its language often becomes oscillating and its theology contradictory. There are passages, which come close to the view rejected by the Council according to which the church, the 'new', actual people of God replaced the 'old people of God' (674, 761-763). In accordance with the New Testament it is said that Israel's calling is irrevocable (839), but in other places the impression emerges that the covenant with Israel is broken nevertheless and replaced by the new, eternal covenant of God in the church. The arrival of the glorified Messiah is supposed to depend on the recognition of Jesus by all Israel, which is now 'hardened' in part (Romans 11:25). For the Jewish self-understanding this is unbearable, because it imposes on Jews the responsibility for the appearance or absence of the end time (674).

Mainly in three areas the CCC is not successful in fully realizing the will of the church to renew itself. Here remain deficits, which were already present in earlier catechisms:

1. The relationship between both Testaments of the one Christian Bible appears in an indistinct twilight. On the one hand the independent revelational character of the 'Old Testament' is repeatedly emphasized (121-123, 129). On the other hand it is generally relativized. The reason for this is, above all, the fact that the 'Old Testament' is usually read according to a 'typological' method of interpretation, as imperfect pre-form (*typos*), which finds its perfection only in the New Testament, and that against the affirmation of its independent value (121). Whatever God says in the 'Old Testament' is, according to this typology, oriented towards the New Testament and finds its finality only here (140). This shows itself, for example, in the way some important themes are presented, which are here listed shortly:

The prophetic promises of love have been fulfilled in the new and eternal covenant (2787). The execution of Jesus announces the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (586). The old Jewish law is a 'disciplinarian' (Galatians 3:24), to lead Israel towards Christ (708). The Law is the preparation for the Gospel, it offers to the New Testament 'types' to demonstrate the new life according to the Spirit (1964). The Jewish exile stands in the shadow of the cross, and the 'holy remnant', which returns from the exile, is an image of the church (710).

The word of Augustine, 'The New Testament is hidden in the Old, the Old is revealed in the New' is cited without a theological reflection (129, 2763). —This kind of typology will of necessity give the impression that the Hebrew Bible is the imperfect pre-cursor of the New Testament. The CCC holds the two Testaments together through typology. This leads to the danger of dissolving the history of biblical Israel and Judaism's constitutive memory in this history. For this reason the typological approach, as it is applied here, can just be a milder form of the disinheritance of Israel, from which the church in other announcements had already distanced itself.

2. The church's anti-Judaism is not addressed at all. It has its roots in the separation of the early church from Judaism. This in turn led to anti-Jewish polemic already in the New Testament and was disseminated widely in the church through some predecessors of the CCC. The failure to address this anti-Judaism is hard to understand today. A Catechism after the Shoah should have mentioned the history of guilt of the earlier Catechisms, name their consequences and draw the necessary conclusions.

3. The CCC misses the chance, to present the renewed relationship of Jews and Christians as signs of hope amidst a world that appears unredeemed and as challenge to work separately/together for the arrival of the kingdom of God.

Summing up we may recall the declaration of our dialogue group of 1988, "After 50 Years—How to Talk about Guilt, Grief and Reconciliation?": "Healing of our wounds can only happen, if the first steps towards each other are followed by many steps with each other—with each other in the grieving process and in reconciliation and thereby also reconciled into the future. Healing can only happen, when we wait jointly for the kingdom of God, work towards it and so 'serve the Lord shoulder to shoulder' (Zephania 3:9)."

V. Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel²⁷⁹

Preamble

The Holy See and the State of Israel,

Mindful of the singular character and universal significance of the Holy Land;

Aware of the unique nature of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people, and of the historic process of reconciliation and growth in mutual understanding and friendship between Catholics and Jews;

Having decided on July 29, 1992, to establish a bilateral permanent working commission in order to study and define together issues of common interest, and in view of normalizing their relations;

Recognizing that the work of the aforementioned commission has produced sufficient material for a first and fundamental agreement;

Realizing that such agreement will provide a sound and lasting basis for the continued development of their present and future relations and for the furtherance of the commission's task,

Agree upon the following articles:

Article 1

1. The state of Israel, recalling its Declaration of Independence, affirms its continuing commitment to uphold and observe the human right to freedom of religion and conscience, as set

²⁷⁹ Text available at <http://www.israel.org/mfa/holysee.html>; Internet; accessed 5 October 1997.

forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in other international instruments to which it is a party.

2. The Holy See, recalling the Declaration on Religious Freedom of the Second Vatican Council, "Dignitatis Humanae," affirms the Catholic Church's commitment to uphold the human right to freedom of religion and conscience, as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in other international instruments to which it is a party. The Holy See wishes to affirm as well the Catholic Church's respect for other religions and their followers as solemnly stated by the Second Vatican Council in its Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, "Nostra Aetate."

Article 2

1. The Holy See and the state of Israel are committed to appropriate cooperation in combating all forms of anti-Semitism and all kinds of racism and of religious intolerance, and in promoting mutual understanding among nations, tolerance among communities and respect for human life and dignity.

2. The Holy See takes this occasion to reiterate its condemnation of hatred, persecution and all other manifestations of anti-Semitism directed against the Jewish people and individual Jews anywhere, at any time and by anyone. In particular, the Holy See deplores attacks on Jews and desecration of Jewish synagogues and cemeteries, acts which offend the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, especially when they occur in the same places which witnessed it.

Article 3

1. The Holy See and the state of Israel recognize that both are free in the exercise of their respective rights and powers, and commit themselves to respect this principle in their mutual relations and in their cooperation for the good of the people.

2. The state of Israel recognizes the right of the Catholic Church to carry out its religious, moral, educational and charitable functions, and to have its own institutions, and to train, appoint and deploy its own personnel in the said institutions or for the said functions to these ends. The church recognizes the right of the state to carry out its functions, such as promoting and protecting the welfare and the safety of the people. Both the state and the church recognize the need for dialogue and cooperation in such matters as by their nature call for it.

3. Concerning Catholic legal personality at canon law, the Holy See and the state of Israel will negotiate on giving it full effect in Israeli law, following a report from a joint subcommission of experts.

Article 4

1. The state of Israel affirms its continuing commitment to maintain and respect the status quo in the Christian holy places to which it applies and the respective rights of the Christian communities thereunder. The Holy See affirms the Catholic Church's continuing commitment to re-

spect the aforementioned status quo and the said rights.

2. The above shall apply notwithstanding an interpretation to the contrary of any article in this fundamental agreement.

3. The state of Israel agrees with the Holy See on the obligation of continuing respect for and protection of the character proper to Catholic sacred places, such as churches, monasteries, convents, cemeteries and their like.

4. The state of Israel agrees with the Holy See on the continuing guarantee of the freedom of Catholic worship.

Article 5

1. The Holy See and the state of Israel recognize that both have an interest in favoring Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Whenever the need for coordination arises, the proper agencies of the church and of the state will consult and cooperate as required.

2. The state of Israel and the Holy See express the hope that such pilgrimages will provide an occasion for better understanding between the pilgrims and the people and religions of Israel.

Article 6

The Holy See and the state of Israel jointly reaffirm the right of the Catholic Church to establish, maintain and direct schools and institutes of study at all levels, this right being exercised in harmony with the rights of the state in the field of education.

Article 7

The Holy See and the state of Israel recognize a common interest in promoting and encouraging cultural exchanges between Catholic institutions worldwide and educational, cultural and research institutions in Israel, and in facilitating access to manuscripts, historical documents and similar source materials, in conformity with applicable laws and regulations.

Article 8

The state of Israel recognizes that the right of the Catholic Church to freedom of expression in the carrying out of its functions is exercised also through the church's own communications media, this right being exercised in harmony with the rights of the state in the field of communications media.

Article 9

The Holy See and the state of Israel jointly reaffirm the right of the Catholic Church to carry out its charitable functions through its health care and social welfare institutions, this right

being exercised in harmony with the rights of the state in this field.

Article 10

1. The Holy See and the state of Israel jointly reaffirm the right of the Catholic Church to property.
2. Without prejudice to rights relied upon by the parties:
 - a. The Holy See and the state of Israel will negotiate in good faith a comprehensive agreement, containing solutions acceptable to both parties, on unclear, unsettled and disputed issues, concerning property, economic and fiscal matters relating to the Catholic Church generally or to specific Catholic communities or institutions.
 - b. For the purpose of the said negotiations, the permanent bilateral working commission will appoint one or more bilateral subcommissions of experts to study the issues and make proposals.
 - c. The parties intend to commence the aforementioned negotiations within three months of entry into force of the present agreement and aim to reach agreement within two years from the beginning of the negotiations.
 - d. During the period of these negotiations, actions incompatible with these commitments shall be avoided.

Article 11

1. The Holy See and the state of Israel declare their respective commitment to the promotion of the peaceful resolution of conflicts among states and nations, excluding violence and terror from international life.
2. The Holy See, while maintaining in every case the right to exercise its moral and spiritual teaching office, deems it opportune to recall that, owing to its own character, it is solemnly committed to remaining a stranger to all merely temporal conflicts, which principle applies specifically to disputed territories and unsettled borders.

Article 12

The Holy See and the state of Israel will continue to negotiate in good faith in pursuance of the agenda agreed upon in Jerusalem on July 15, 1992, and confirmed at the Vatican on July 29, 1992; likewise on issues arising from articles of this present agreement, as well as on other issues bilaterally agreed upon as objects of negotiation.

Article 13

1. In this agreement the parties use these terms in the following sense:
 - a. The Catholic Church and the church—including, “*inter alia*,” its communities and insti-

tutions.

b. Communities of the Catholic Church-meaning the Catholic religious entities considered by the Holy See as churches "sui juris" and by the state of Israel as recognized religious communities.

c. The state of Israel and the state—including, "inter alia," its authorities established by law.

2. Notwithstanding the validity of this agreement as between the parties, and without detracting from the generality of any applicable rule of law with reference to treaties, the parties agree that this agreement does not prejudice rights and obligations arising from existing treaties between either party and a state or states, which are known and in fact available to both parties at the time of the signature of this agreement.

Article 14

1. Upon signing of the present fundamental agreement and in preparation for the establishment of full diplomatic relations, the Holy See and the state of Israel exchange special representatives, whose rank and privileges are specified in an additional protocol.

2. Following the entry into force and immediately upon the beginning of the implementation of the present fundamental agreement, the Holy See and the state of Israel will establish full diplomatic relations at the level of apostolic nunciature on the part of the Holy See, and embassy on the part of the state of Israel.

Article 15

This agreement shall enter into force on the date of the latter notification of ratification by a party.

Done in two original copies in the English and Hebrew languages, both texts being equally authentic. In case of divergency, the English text shall prevail. Signed in Jerusalem, this 30th day of the month of December, in the year 1993, which corresponds to the 16th day of the month of Tevet, in the year 5754. Signed by Msgr. Claudio Celli, Vatican assistant secretary of state and Israel's deputy minister of foreign affairs, Yossi Beilin in Jerusalem on December 30, 1993.

VI. Jerusalem: Considerations of the Secretariat of State²⁸⁰

1. The fundamental agreement between the Holy See and the state of Israel was signed on Dec. 30, 1993. In Article 11.2 of the agreement we find the same basic concept that appears in Article 24 of the Lateran Treaty, which was an agreement between the Holy See and the Italian state signed on Feb. 11, 1929 [ending a long controversy arising out of the occupation of Rome in

²⁸⁰ Text available <http://www.al-bushra.org/mag08/ejerusco.htm>; Internet; accessed 15 October 1997.

1870]. Paragraph 2 of Article 11 of the fundamental agreement says: "The Holy See . . . is solemnly committed to remaining a stranger to all merely temporal conflicts, which principle applies specifically to disputed territories and unsettled borders."

This statement has given rise to a number of critical observations, especially when reference is being made to the status of Jerusalem. In part these reservations may be due to the fact that few people have paid proper attention to the first part of the same Paragraph 2 of Article 11, where it says that the Holy See maintains "in every case the right to exercise its moral and spiritual teaching office."

2. On the same day that the agreement was signed, the Press Office of the Holy See publicly presented a detailed official statement which included, among other things, an explanation of the meaning of Article 11.2. The statement said that the Holy See would not get involved in territorial problems as far as strictly technical aspects were concerned, but it would not renounce its mission or its right to express its judgment on the moral dimensions that each of these questions necessarily entails.

3. The same statement made a specific reference to the question of Jerusalem and affirmed:

—That questions relative to the city of Jerusalem have been a cause of concern for the Holy See for a long time.

—That these questions are not mentioned in the agreement because of their international and multilateral character, which prevents their being resolved by the fundamental agreement, which by its nature is bilateral, binding only the two parties which signed it.

—That these questions remain important for the Holy See, which has not changed its position on them (a position which the statement then proceeds to illustrate).

I. Analysis of the Question

1. There exists a territorial problem relative to Jerusalem. Since 1967, when a part of the city was militarily occupied and then annexed, this problem has become more obvious and more difficult. The part of the city that was occupied and annexed is where most of the holy places of the three monotheistic religions are situated.

The Holy See has always insisted that this territorial question should be resolved equitably and by negotiation. The Holy See, as the previously mentioned Article 11 of the fundamental agreement indicates, is not concerned with the question of how many square meters or kilometers constitute the disputed territory, but it does have the right—a right which it exercises—to express a moral judgment on the situation.

It is obvious that every territorial dispute involves ethical considerations such as the right of national communities to self-determination, the right of communities to preserve their own identity, the right of all people to equality before the law and in the distribution of resources, the right not to be discriminated against by reason of ethnic origin or religious affiliation, etc.

The Holy See's attitude with regard to the territorial situation of Jerusalem is necessarily the same as that of the international community. The latter could be summarized as follows: The part of the city militarily occupied in 1967 and subsequently annexed and declared the capital of the state of Israel is occupied territory, and all Israeli measures which exceed the power of a bel-

ligerent occupant under international law are therefore null and void. In particular, this same position was expressed and is still expressed by Resolution 478 of the U.N. Security Council, adopted on Aug. 20, 1980, which declared the Israeli "basic law" concerning Jerusalem to be "null and void," and which invited countries with embassies in Jerusalem to move them elsewhere.

As is well known, when the Holy See entered into diplomatic relations with the state of Israel, it opened its nunciature (embassy) in Tel Aviv, where indeed the overwhelming majority of the embassies are situated. It is also well known that the apostolic delegation for Jerusalem and Palestine (opened on Feb. 11, 1948, before the state of Israel was established) continues to function.

2. There is, however, a further aspect of Jerusalem which in the Holy See's view goes well beyond the simple territorial aspect: This is the "religious dimension" of the city, the particular value which it has for the Jewish, Christian and Muslim believers who live there, and for Jewish, Christian and Muslim believers throughout the world.

It is a question here of a value which must be considered as having a worldwide and universal character: Jerusalem is a "treasure of the whole of humanity."

For decades and long before the 1967 occupation, the Holy See has always been very attentive to this aspect and has not failed to intervene when necessary, insisting on the need for adequate measures to protect the singular identity of the holy city. An explanation of what this protection consists of and what characteristics it must have in order to meet its objectives can be outlined as follows in II, 2.

a) With a view to safeguarding the universal character of a city already claimed by two peoples (Arab and Jewish) and held sacred by three religions, the Holy See supported the proposal for the internationalization of the territory, the "corpus separatum" called for by U.N. General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) of Nov. 29, 1947. The Holy See at the time considered the "corpus separatum" as an adequate means, a useful juridical instrument, for preventing Jerusalem from becoming a cause and arena of conflict, with the resulting loss of an important aspect of its identity (as in fact subsequently happened and continues to happen).

b) In the years that followed, although the objective of internationalization was shown to be unattainable, the Holy See—especially, but not only through public statements of the popes—continued to call for the protection of the holy city's identity. It consistently drew attention to the need for an international commitment in this regard. To this end, the Holy See has consistently called for an international juridical instrument: which is what is meant by the phrase "an internationally guaranteed special statute."

c) Following the well-known events of 1967 and their aftermath, the Holy See's concern has not waned, but has become ever more insistent. Documented proof of this concern can be found in Archbishop Edmond Farhat's collection of documents titled "Jerusalem in Papal Documents from 1887 to 1984" published in Rome in 1987. This valuable work has also been translated into Arabic and published in Lebanon.

Among these documents the following can be listed as examples for their comprehensiveness and clarity:

—The address of Pope Paul VI to the cardinals and prelates of the Roman Curia on Dec.

22, 1967.

—The statement distributed at the United Nations by the Holy See's Permanent Observer Mission on Dec. 3, 1979.

—The article which appeared in the June 30-July 1, 1980, edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*.

II. Clarification of Some Concepts

1. It is important to note that in its interventions the Holy See has always insisted on yet another question which, given the particular situation of Jerusalem, is of fundamental importance precisely for safeguarding the identity of the Holy City: Jerusalem is equally regarded as sacred by the three great monotheistic religions— Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In other words, no unilateral claim made in the name of one or other of these religions or by reason of historical precedence or numerical preponderance is acceptable. Jerusalem is a unique reality, universal because of its sacredness as a whole and for the three religions.

This was clearly underscored by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in his apostolic letter "Redemptionis Anno" of April 20, 1984. There he writes:

"Jews ardently love [Jerusalem] and in every age venerate her memory, abundant as she is in many remains and monuments from the time of David, who chose her as the capital, and of Solomon, who built the temple there. Therefore they turn their minds to her daily, one may say, and point to her as the sign of their nation"

"Christians honor her with a religious and intent concern because there the words of Christ so often resounded, there the great events of the redemption were accomplished: the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord. In the city of Jerusalem the first Christian community sprang up and remained throughout the centuries a continual ecclesial presence despite difficulties...."

"Muslims also call Jerusalem 'holy,' with a profound attachment that goes back to the origins of Islam and spring from the fact that they have there many special places of pilgrimage and for more than a thousand years have dwelt there, almost without interruption."

2. It would also seem important and fundamental to explain what the Holy See means by "safeguarding the identity" of Jerusalem and what it means by "guarantees." In the Holy See's view:

—The historical and material characteristics of the city as well as its religious and cultural characteristics must be preserved, and perhaps today it is necessary to speak of restoring and safeguarding those still existing.

—There must be equality of rights and treatment for those belonging to the communities of the three religions found in the city, in the context of the freedom of spiritual, cultural, civic and economic activities.

—The holy places situated in the city must be preserved, and the rights of freedom of religion and worship, and of access for residents and pilgrims alike, whether from the Holy Land itself or from other parts of the world, must be safeguarded.

At stake is the basic question of preserving and protecting the identity of the holy city in its entirety, in every aspect. For example, the simple "extraterritoriality" of the holy places, with

the assurance that pilgrims would be able to visit them without hindrance, would not suffice. The identity of the city includes a sacred character which belongs not just to the individual sites or monuments, as if these could be separated from one another or isolated from the respective communities. The sacred character involves Jerusalem in its entirety, its holy places and its communities.

III. Situation After the Oslo Agreements

The Oslo agreements between the Israelis and the Palestinians called for a second stage, in which some particularly delicate and difficult problems would be dealt with. These include the whole question of Jerusalem. From this perspective the Holy See, firmly maintaining its position, together with the requirements that follow from it, believes that certain considerations can be formulated:

1. It is foreseen that negotiations will take place. The promise of negotiations and the presumption that they will take place are already in themselves a positive development, but only a beginning. The Holy See can only hope that the intentions expressed by the parties most directly involved will become a reality.

The Holy See is ready to offer its support in this regard, in accordance with the possibilities open to it and its specific character.

2. As they are now prospected, the negotiations are expected to include the participation of the sponsors of the peace process and, in the light of statements made in the last few months, other parties also could be invited to contribute.

The Holy See believes in the importance of extending representation at the negotiating table, precisely in order to ensure that the negotiations themselves are fair and that no aspect of the problem is overlooked.

3. It is essential that the parties to the negotiations take fair and appropriate account of the sacred and universal character of the city. This requires that any possible solution should have the support of the three religions, both at the local level and beyond, and that the international community should in some way be involved.

4. In effect, the territorial and religious dimensions of the problem, although often separated in order to facilitate proper and thorough discussions of the situation, are interrelated. They are such that a political solution will not be valid unless it takes into account in a profound and just manner the religious needs present in the city. This the Holy See has often stressed. These are needs stemming from history, but above all they are needs of today; they concern, before all else, the full observance of that most fundamental of human rights, the right to freedom of religion and conscience.

IV. Conclusions

The patriarchs and the other Christian religious leaders in Jerusalem on Nov. 14, 1994, issued a memorandum on the holy city. In the final part of their document they wrote:

"It is necessary to accord Jerusalem a special statute which will allow Jerusalem not to be victimized by laws imposed as a result of hostilities or wars, but to be an open city which transcends local, regional and world political troubles. This statute, established in common by local political and religious authorities, should also be guaranteed by the international community."

This demand of the Christian religious leaders of Jerusalem substantially reflects what the Holy See has insisted on for years, and which was repeated, though in different terms, by His Holiness Pope John Paul II last Jan. 13, in his address to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See:

1. His Holiness first invoked divine assistance: "May God assist the Israelis and the Palestinians to live from now on side by side with one another in peace, mutual esteem and sincere cooperation!" He added: "Allow me to confide that this hope could prove ephemeral if a just and adequate solution is not also found to the particular problem of Jerusalem." (Thus the question of Jerusalem, together with all that it involves—politically, territorially, religiously, demographically, etc.—exists and is a fundamental one.)

2. The pope continued: "The religious and universal dimension of the holy city demands a commitment on the part of the whole international community in order to ensure that the city preserves its uniqueness and retains its living character." (The pope thus calls for a commitment that is international in nature in order to preserve Jerusalem's identity, especially from the religious and cultural point of view, the very reason why the city constitutes an important part of the world's patrimony.) He goes on to say that: "The holy places, dear to the three monotheistic religions, are of course important for believers, but they would lose much of their significance if they were not permanently surrounded by active communities of Jews, Christians and Muslims, enjoying true freedom of conscience and religion, and engaging in their own religious, educational and social activities."

3. And referring to the scheduled negotiations which should take into account the question of Jerusalem in its entirety, the pope said: "It is my hope that the international community will offer to the political partners most directly involved the juridical and diplomatic instruments capable of ensuring that Jerusalem, one and holy, may truly be a crossroads of peace." (Here His Holiness is asking for an international instrument and for international assistance to safeguard the true value that Jerusalem has for Israelis and Palestinians, for Jews, Christians and Muslims).

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²⁸¹ All of John Paul's official writings (except *Redemptionis Anno*), as well as most papal writings since the thirteenth century, are available at <http://www.listserv.american.edu/catholic/church/papal/papal.html>

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