

# **Social & Theological**

# **Contempt in the**

# **Jewish-Christian**

# **Encounter**

Rabbinical Thesis  
Hebrew Union Collge-Jewish Institute of Religion  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
David L. Reiner, 2009

# **Introduction**

**Abstract/Precis:**

Over the centuries, two kinds of contempt—social and theological—have defined the encounter between Judaism and Christianity. This contempt, manifest on both sides, has been the basis of the most fundamental problems between two of the world’s major religious groups.

This thesis will trace the evolution of these two kinds of contempt prior to the Holocaust, and then explain how the Holocaust caused a shift in the Jewish-Christian relationship. Finally, it will consider the document *Dabru Emet* as an American Jewish response to Christian efforts at reconciliation with the Jewish community following the Holocaust, and assess its impact on Jewish-Christian dialogue.

**Introduction:**

Contempt for the other has been a defining feature of the encounter between Judaism and Christianity for both Christians and Jews.<sup>1</sup> This contempt has surfaced in various ways throughout history, as have responses to it. The most demonic act of the twentieth century inspired by Christian contempt, of course, would be the Holocaust—an event which, for Christianity as well as for Judaism, prompted a period of serious theological reflection and practical re-evaluation. Doctrinal reconsideration after the Holocaust initiated shifts in Christian thought and practice away from the “teachings of contempt” that previously dominated Christian understandings of Jews and Judaism. Jewish responses to the Holocaust, on the other hand, were mostly “internal”—focused on Jewish thought and practice with little consideration of Jewish contempt for Christians and Christianity.

On 10 September 2000 the Jewish Scholars Group on Christianity of the Institute for Christian-Jewish Studies in Baltimore, Maryland, published “*Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*”—an eight point statement defining the theological and social relationship between Judaism and Christianity signed by more than one hundred and fifty rabbinical leaders, scholars, and theologians—as an advertisement in both the *New York Times* and the *Baltimore Sun*. The introductory paragraphs of *Dabru Emet* declared that “it is time for Jews to reflect on what Judaism may now say about Christianity.” As a public, positive, and unified trans-denominational (and uniquely Jewish) response to Christianity, *Dabru Emet* stands out in history as a noteworthy new step in the history of Jewish-Christian relations intended to stimulate a

---

<sup>1</sup> Contempt in this paper will be defined broadly as an intense dislike accompanied by a profound lack of respect.

meaningful and productive dialogue between Christians and Jews in North America and around the world.

The authors of *Dabru Emet* insist that successful Jewish-Christian dialogue must be geared toward a new understanding of the other for both parties, which will in turn help each side learn more about itself.<sup>2</sup> Michael A. Signer, one of the authors of *Dabru Emet*, described Jewish-Christian dialogue as a positive conversation between Jews and Christians which explores the potential for mutual enrichment that exists in the experience of an encounter towards shared ideas grounded in differences.<sup>3</sup> There are, of course, limits to Jewish-Christian dialogue; for example, Jews can never accept the New Testament and the incarnation God in the form of Jesus of Nazareth.

In the interest of advancing Jewish-Christian dialogue, it is necessary also to present a Christian definition of “dialogue.” In the 1974 Vatican *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration “Nostra Aetate,”* (No. 4) which followed the papal declarations of the Second Vatican Council in 1965 (commonly referred to as “Vatican II”), dialogue is described as an encounter in which “each side wishes to know the other, and wishes to increase and deepen its knowledge of the other.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> cf: T. Frymer-Kensky, D. Novak, P. Ochs, D.F. Sandmel, M.A. Signer, eds., *Christianity in Jewish Terms* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), 1: “[I]t is important to reflect on why this new conversation has been so hopeful and why it has led to such new understanding, not only a new Christian understanding of Jews and Judaism and a new Jewish understanding of Christians and Christianity, but perhaps even a new Christian understanding of Christianity and a new Jewish understanding of Judaism.” (“CJT”)

<sup>3</sup> Michael A. Signer, “What of the Future? A Jewish Response” in *CJT*, 372.

<sup>4</sup> The declarations of the Pope and the Vatican are applicable and authoritative only to followers of the Catholic Church, which is the largest centralized Christian authority. Catholic Church, Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, Cardinal Willebrands, “Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate* (No. 4), 22 October 1974, “Section I: Dialogue” [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_19741201\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_19741201_nostra-aetate_en.html) (accessed 24 February 2009). In the same document the Vatican acknowledged that previous conversations between Jews and Christians had –

Following the Catholic Church's statement, mutual knowledge of and appreciation for other traditions (as well as self-appreciation) is, ideally, at the core of inter-religious dialogue, but the highest and most essential precondition for dialogue is mutual respect. Furthermore, dialogue requires competent participants willing to engage amicably while displaying tact and "a great openness of spirit and diffidence with respect to one's own prejudices,"<sup>5</sup> and does not require or even imply a weakening of values or doctrine.<sup>6</sup> Realistic expectations for Jewish-Christian dialogue should also be clear: dialogue cannot be expected completely to remove the Jewish-Christian divide or off-set (or excuse) a relationship historically dominated by violence.<sup>7</sup>

### What is "Religion?"

Melford Spiro wrote that religion is "an institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings."<sup>8</sup> God may well exist beyond our realm of understanding, and "religion" is an intricate framework of human

---

almost exclusively – been in the form of monologue.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> In the *Decree on Ecumenism*, the statement of the Second Vatican Council (1965) governing intra-Christian dialogue, eight conditions for intra-Christian dialogue were established. These further demonstrate the Catholic understanding of "dialogue," though they were intended for intra-Christian (as opposed to interreligious) dialogue. Intra-Christian dialogue requires: sympathy and openness from all parties involved; all participants approaching as equals; the abstention from participants passing judgement regarding the views of other participants towards the gospels; the acceptance that differences are the object of dialogue; the presence of trained facilitators with competence in theology and practical skills; trained participants, aware of their own faith tradition, their own position on issues of faith and practice, as well as the preconditions for dialogue; a focus on Scripture as the central and essential historical text and source of inspiration for all parties and for the dialogue itself; an awareness of the different vocabularies that exist for different Christian groups and how the same words may convey different realities for every participant, especially with regards to mentality, culture, philosophy, tradition, and lifestyle. Summarized from: Catholic Church, Pope Paul VI, "Decree on Ecumenism: 'Unitatis Redintegratio,'" 28 October 1965  
[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19641121\\_unitatis-redintegratio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html) (accessed 24 February 2009).

<sup>7</sup> "[T]here is no victory for one community or the other. There is only life together." Signer, "Epilogue," in *CJT*, 373.

<sup>8</sup> Melford E. Spiro, "Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Banton (New York: Routledge, 1966), 85-126.

ideas about how to interact with the divine. Religion “must be an eminently collective thing,”<sup>9</sup> that brings together people with similar theologies and similar cultural heritages. Martin Hengel’s definition of religion as “the conception and worship of God”<sup>10</sup> holds well to the sociological and anthropological definition of Emile Durkheim, and leaves us with an understanding of and appreciation for both the social and theological foundations of any religion.

## Contempt

Just as religion is an amalgam of social and theological ideas, “contempt” for the religious “other” originates from both social and theological contexts as well. Social contempt is highly problematic for inter-religious dialogue, and deep-seated hatred rooted in ethnic conflict or intense prejudice is dangerous and difficult to overcome. Early on, Christian social contempt for Jews arose from two causes: theologically motivated Jewish persecution of Christians, and Christian adaptation of pagan hatred for the Jews.

Theological contempt is grounded in theological differences and can emerge in inter- and intra-religious contexts. A prominent example of Jewish theological contempt for non-Jews may be found in the *Alenu*.<sup>11</sup> Because postulation of a group’s relationship

<sup>9</sup> To borrow the words of Emile Durkheim in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Karen E. Fields, trans. (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1995), 44.

<sup>10</sup> Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1974).

<sup>11</sup> “Most versions of this prayer [(the *Alenu*)] today, including those in most Orthodox prayerbooks, omit the lines: ‘For they bow down to nothingness and vanity/And pray to an impotent god.’ This was interpreted as a reference to Christianity and was forcibly censored by the Church. Although it was written not specifically against Christianity but against paganism, it can easily be interpreted that way.” Reuven Hammer, *Entering Jewish Prayer: A Guide to Personal Devotion and the Worship Service* (New York: Schocken Books, 1994), 208. For those Jews who accepted that Christianity was a form of idolatry, as Rambam argues in *Commentary on the Mishnah* (*Avodah Zarah* 1:3) and *Mishnah Torah* (*Hilchot Avodat Kochavim* 9:4) (Ellenson in *CJT*, 73), this expurgated line from the *Alenu* could certainly be understood as referring to Christianity.

to the divine is an essential element of religion, people who do not accept the central theological tenets of a religion become “outsiders,” subject to contempt.

Contempt itself does not necessarily lead to violence, but it may be a source for the extreme hatred that inspires violence. Contempt for Judaism emerges from late first century Christianity and grows to inspire, first, anti-Judaism, and then anti-Semitism.<sup>12</sup> For example, Rabbi Irving Greenberg claims that the Christian “teaching of contempt” was the source of the “subculture of degradation and hostility” that was—in turn—the source of the demonization of the Jews by the Nazi movement, which then became the impetus for the German “eliminationist anti-Semitism” that inspired the Holocaust.<sup>13</sup>

While mild social contempt may leave room for productive inter-religious dialogue, more extreme forms of social contempt will render dialogue meaningless and ineffective. Theological contempt may be a root cause of social contempt, but theological contempt alone cannot be responsible for violence and persecution. If we understand Judaism—the religion—as a theological system, and Jews—the people—as an ethnic or social system, then anti-Judaism emerges from a culture of theological contempt wherein non-Jews oppose the religion of the Jews on theological grounds, and anti-Semitism emerges from a culture of social contempt, wherein the antipathy of non-Jews towards Jews is driven by social or ethnic hatred.<sup>14</sup>

### Contempt Inspired Ideologies

<sup>12</sup> Jules Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism*. (New York: Holt, 1964)

<sup>13</sup> Irving Greenberg, “Judaism and Christianity: Covenants of Redemption,” in *CJT*, 154. “Eliminationist antisemitism” is a term used by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen in *Hitler's Willing Executioners* to differentiate between genteel antisemitism and the antisemitism of (Nazi) Germany.

<sup>14</sup> Jacob Neusner, *The Way of Torah: An Introduction to Judaism; Sixth Edition* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1997), 10: “anti-Judaic (against the religion) and anti-Semitic (against the group) doctrines and attitudes have impeded...Christian study of Judaism.”

Theological contempt for Judaism has been endemic throughout Christian history. Michael A. Signer defines Christian “teachings of contempt” as “the cumulative body of Christian teachings developed over the centuries that call for the rejection of Judaism and declare Christianity the ‘True Israel.’”<sup>15</sup> The core ideology at play in these “teachings of contempt” is Christian supersessionism. Signer applies “contempt” broadly, and mainly refers to what I call “theological contempt”: Christian contempt for Jews and Judaism that results from the doctrine of divine rejection. Christian theological contempt requires the belief that the covenant between God and Abraham (and Abraham’s descendants)<sup>16</sup> has been reassigned—from the descendants of Abraham who refused to accept Jesus as the messiah—to the followers of Jesus. Divine rejection of the Jews and acceptance of Christians as the New Israel is essential to the idea of contempt, as Christians are elevated and Jews are disgraced.

The process of Christian self-definition and differentiation from early rabbinic culture created supersessionist ideology.<sup>17</sup> According to the description of the Covenant found in Genesis 17, Abraham’s offspring will be its possessors. But it was necessary for early Christians, eager to include Gentiles in their congregations, to validate their claim to being the true possessors of the Covenant. Paul’s letter to the Romans explains the supersessionist understanding of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity

<sup>15</sup> Michael A. Signer, “Searching the Scriptures: Jews, Christians, and the Book,” in *CJT*, 92. This claim is incumbent upon the understanding that “Israel” refers to the people of the covenant, and not to an ethnic group.

<sup>16</sup> “I [God] will maintain My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages, to be God to you and to your offspring to come...As for you, you and your offspring to come throughout the ages shall keep My covenant.” (Genesis 17:7-9) The Hebrew word used for “offspring” is “*zar’acha*”, “seeds,” with the implication that the covenant is passed to Abraham and his descendants.

<sup>17</sup> Alan D. Crown, “Judaism and Christianity: The Parting of the Ways,” in *When Judaism and Christianity Began, Essays in Memory of Anthony J. Saldarini, Volume II*, eds. A.J. Avery-Peck, D. Harrington, J. Neusner (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004), 555.

through allegory:

The branches which sinned were broken off. We were grafted on in their place and are partners in the fat of the olive tree. Now let us not take pride and sin so that we too may not be broken off. Lo, we have been grafted onto the olive tree.<sup>18</sup>

Because the new branches are grafted on and not fresh growth, the new people of the Covenant (the “True Israel”) may include Gentiles who were not part of the original tree. Christian theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether argues that supersessionism inspires anti-Semitism during the process of Christian self-conceptualization in her book, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*,<sup>19</sup> a controversial argument that is not without its detractors.<sup>20</sup>

Triumphalism similarly emerges from the Christian culture of contempt, and arises from a foundational assumption that Judaism is “*but* a precursor to Christianity.”<sup>21</sup> Triumphalism follows supersessionism as it denies the possibility that any other group might have a higher or ultimate truth. It is difficult to categorize triumphalism as a form of social or theological contempt, but the effect of triumphalism is social contempt.

---

<sup>18</sup> Romans 11:17

<sup>19</sup> Jon D. Levenson cites Ruether in his own “Is There a Counterpart in the Hebrew Bible to New Testament Antisemitism,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 22, n. 2 (Spring 1985): 242-260. (“*Counterpart*”). In summarizing Ruether, Levenson writes, “the denigration of the Jews followed from Christianity’s supersessionism, its claim to be the new and eternally valid ‘Israel.’ This doctrine was supported by its ‘christological midrash,’ the exegetical maneuvers by which the church deprived the Jews of their Bible and reapplied the desired passages to itself. Her [Rosemary Ruether’s] argument has the advantage of showing that anti-Semitism is not extraneous to the church’s self-conception...but inheres in the very process by which the Christian community first sought to establish its identity.” (Levenson, *Counterpart*, 246)

<sup>20</sup> Levenson also cites Hyam Maccoby, who challenges Ruether’s claims and argues that Christian anti-Semitism resulted from the gnostic-inspired belief that Jesus was the scapegoat intended to avert the anger of God. (Levenson, *Counterpart*, 246). Cf. Hyam Maccoby, “Theologian of the Holocaust,” *Commentary* 74 (December, 1982): 36, and Hyam Maccoby, *The Sacred Executioner*, (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1982).

<sup>21</sup> “Triumphalism,” *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/triumphalism>, (accessed 12 March 2009). See also, David Novak, “What to Seek and What to Avoid in Jewish-Christian Dialogue,” in *CJT*, 6.

Triumphalism denies legitimacy and marginalizes the “other.”<sup>22</sup>

Unlike supersessionism, triumphalism is present in Judaism in the form of Jewish claims that “Christianity is nothing more than a deviant form of Judaism.”<sup>23</sup> The impact of Jewish triumphalism is most recognizable in Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities, where members refuse to have any interaction with non-Jews—clearly a manifestation of social contempt.<sup>24</sup> Tractate *Avodah Zarah* in the Babylonian Talmud describes the proper relationship between Jews and idolaters (a category that is extended to Christians) and makes it clear that Jews must avoid any unnecessary interactions with non-Jews.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to triumphalism, there are other social and theological forms of contempt for Christians and Christianity that exist within Judaism. The fact that Jewish contempt for Christianity has never been a cause of Jewish violence against Christians may simply indicate that Jewish contempt lacks the propensity toward violence that is ascribed to Christian contempt. The absence of Jewish contempt-inspired violence may also result from the absence of Jewish autonomy or political power over Christians, from the start of Christianity through the founding of the State of Israel. In 1985 Jon D.

<sup>22</sup>“Triumphalism is the insistence that not only the highest truth but the final truth has already been given to my community alone.” Novak, *CJT*, 5.

<sup>23</sup> Novak, *CJT*, 6.

<sup>24</sup> This is a position well-articulated in positive terms by the Orthodox Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik in 1964 (in the midst of the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council). Rabbi Soloveitchik, then *Rosh Yeshiva* of the seminary at Yeshiva University wrote the essay “Confrontation” for the publication *Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Thought* 6, n. 2. A parallel assessment of the relationship between Orthodox Judaism and Christianity appears on pp. 412-413 in Avraham (“Avi”) Weiss, “Open Orthodoxy! A Modern Orthodox Rabbi’s Creed,” *Judaism* 46, n. 4 (Fall 1997): 409-421. “For the Orthodox Right, non-Jews are by and large accepted, but not embraced...rarely does one find efforts in that community on behalf of non-Jews who are suffering from hunger, homelessness, and AIDS.”

<sup>25</sup> Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 63b: “It has been taught, ‘And make no mention of other gods’ (Exodus 23:13). This means, one must not say to his neighbor, ‘Wait for me at the side of this idol.’” cf. David Ellenson, “A Jewish View of the Christian God” in *CJT*, pp 70-71. In the “Classical Sources and Medieval Polemics” (70-73) section of the essay Ellenson explains that “if the Jew were responsible for creating a situation in which the non-Jew would swear by his ‘false god,’ then the Jew would be deemed culpable...” (71) Therefore, in order to avoid any responsibility for non-Jews swearing oaths to false gods, Jews were instructed to avoid any unnecessary contact with non-Jews.

Levenson argued that the doctrine of anti-Jewish contempt in the New Testament mirrored the doctrine of anti-pagan contempt in the Hebrew Bible,<sup>26</sup> suggesting that Jews possess the same propensity for contempt as the Christians. Rabbinic literature also contains extensive anti-Christian polemics, with the code word “Edom” often used to represent Christians.<sup>27</sup> However, although in many instances throughout rabbinic literature anti-Christian polemic was explicit<sup>28</sup> a fear of violent retribution and prohibitive laws prompted the Jewish minority, in the presence of a dominant Christian majority, to keep this contempt for Christianity largely silent and within the Jewish community.<sup>29</sup>

We may also find contempt for Christians at several points in Jewish liturgy: the *Nissim b'chol yom* include a blessing thanking God for “not making us Gentiles,”<sup>30</sup> the weekday *Amidah* includes the petitionary prayer regarding *ha-minim* (“heretics”) and even *ha-notzrim* (“Christians”),<sup>31</sup> and, as mentioned earlier, the *Alenu* contains several

<sup>26</sup> Jon D. Levenson, “Is There a Counterpart in the Hebrew Bible to New Testament Antisemitism” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 22, n. 2 (Spring 1985): 242-260. Cf. p. 260 “Jews would do well to consider that the factors [(i.e. contempt)] which impede the banishment of Christian stereotypes are not quite without their counterparts in Judaism.”

<sup>27</sup> Cf. R. Travers Herford, *Christianity in the Talmud and Midrash* (New York: Ktav, 1903); Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Reuven Kimelman and Rivkah Ulmer, eds., *Polemics and Rabbinic Liturgy* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2006). Rabbinic literature understands Edom in prophetic texts as a symbolic reference to the Roman Empire and Christianity, rather than to the historical Edomites. Also Cf. Adele Berlin, Marc Zvi Brettler, Michael A. Fishbane, *The Jewish Study Bible: Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004), 850-851.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, especially Herford.

<sup>29</sup> “Yet another type of damage feared by the church over the ages was the possibility of Jewish blasphemy. Obviously, Jews were deeply opposed to Christianity and expressed their opposition vigorously among themselves. Public expression of such opposition was, however, prohibited. Again, during the thirteenth century, this old prohibition was intensified.” Robert Chazan, “Christian-Jewish Interactions over the Ages,” in *CJT*, 12.

<sup>30</sup> *Birhot Hashachar: Philip Birnbaum, Daily Prayer Book: Ha-Siddur Ha-Shalem* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 2002), 15-16. The *Tosefta* (a fourth-century work with material from the mishnaic period) explains that all people must recite three blessings every day: “Blessed is He who did not make me a gentile;...who did not make me an ignoramus;...who did not make me a woman.” (Hammer, *Entering Jewish Prayer*, 108, citing *Tosefta Berachot* 6:18). The *Talmud* (a seventh-century work, composed between 400-600, with commentary on the *Mishna*) argues that the three mandatory blessings are “who made me an Israelite, who did not make me a woman, who did not make me an ignoramus.” (Hammer, *Entering Jewish Prayer*, 108, citing *BT Menachot* 43b).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. footnote 11, John T. Townsend, “Christianity in Rabbinic Literature” in *Biblical Interpretation in*

particularistic references.<sup>32</sup> The late 4<sup>th</sup> century Christian leader, John Chrysostom, commented that Jews curse Christians in their hearts during prayers, indicating that Christians were likely aware that Jews held Christianity in some degree of contempt.<sup>33</sup>

The chapters that follow explore the evolution of social and theological contempt in Christianity and Judaism before and after the Holocaust, which is viewed as the seminal event of the modern encounter between the two religions. While the work and words of many individuals will be explored separately and in-depth, it is important to keep in mind the larger implications of each position as it pertains to the establishment of a positive and unified dialogue between Judaism and Christianity. Simply put, it is important for us to consider what the words of individuals say about the cultural and religious assumptions of the many, and how words, and the assumptions behind them, have become, and continue to be, actualized throughout the history of the Jewish-Christian encounter.

---

*Judaism and Christianity*, eds. Isaac Kalimi, Peter J. Haas (London?: T. & T. Clark Publishers, 2006). Townsend points out that the omission of the “*birkat ha-minim*” on Shabbat and festivals meant that the prayer was not read on days that Christians were most likely to be present. (153). Townsend also writes “...in at least four versions *minim* is preceded by “the Christians” (*ha-notsarim*). Two come from the Cairo Genizah, and the other two are from two versions of the earliest Jewish liturgy, namely, that of Rav Amram Gaon.” (153). Also Cf: Reuven Kimelman, “*Birkat Ha-Minim* and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity,” in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition. Vol. 2: Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period* eds. E.P. Sanders et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 223-244 (239-40); and Ruth Langer, “Early Rabbinic Liturgy in its Palestinian Milieu: Did Non-Rabbis Know the ‘*Amidah*?’” in *When Judaism and Christianity Began, Essays in Memory of Anthony J. Saldarini*, 423-439

<sup>32</sup> see note 14 “Most versions of this prayer [(the *Alenu*)] today, including those in most Orthodox prayerbooks, omit the lines: ‘For they bow down to nothingness and vanity/And pray to an impotent god.’ This was interpreted as a reference to Christianity and was forcibly censored by the Church. Although it was written not specifically against Christianity but against paganism, it can easily be interpreted that way.” (Hammer, *Entering Jewish Prayer*, 208)

<sup>33</sup> Herbert W. Bassler, *Studies in Exegesis: Christian Critiques of Jewish Law and Rabbinic Responses, 70-300 C.E.* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 65.

# **Chapter One**

## **Chapter One: Pre Holocaust**

The religion of the people Israel during the late Second Temple Period was not uniform.<sup>34</sup> Four major Jewish groups were in existence at the time: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots. Different groups may have shared similar doctrines and theologies, but their perspectives on ritual and praxis often differed. It was from this diverse Jewish environment that Christianity emerged.<sup>35</sup> Some second century historical accounts show that gentiles (and even some Jews) probably understood early Christianity as just another sect of Judaism, similar in many ways to the Essenes, while other accounts demonstrate that gentiles early on distinguished practical and theological differences between Christians and Jews.<sup>36</sup> Modern Christian scholar Anthony J. Saldarini (1941-2001) explained what he regards as the more likely early relationship between Judaism and Christianity:

Many people think that Jews and Christians were sharply divided from one another...and that a new Christian religion was fighting its Jewish parent for independence and supremacy. But for most places in the Mediterranean world this view is inaccurate. Most people still could not clearly distinguish the followers of Jesus from Jews.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Anthony J. Saldarini, "Reconstructions of Rabbinic Judaism," in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, eds. R.A. Kraft and G.W.E. Nickelsburg (Philadelphia and Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 440.

<sup>35</sup> Alan D. Crown, "Judaism and Christianity: The Parting of the Ways," in *When Judaism and Christianity Began, Essays in Memory of Anthony J. Saldarini*, 547.

<sup>36</sup> A second century Greek philosopher and opponent of Christianity (Celsus) wrote that there were many Jewish Christians who believed that Jesus was divine, but "still want[ed] to live according to the Law like the multitude of Jews." (CC V.61) (Crown, *Judaism*, p 548). Crown continues: "Both [Judaism and Christianity], at first, were indistinguishable to Roman eyes." This statement contradicts the accounts of Pliny the Younger (in *Letters* 10.96–97) and Tacitus (in *Annals* 15.39–43) who both mention Christians in their writings, demonstrating that some Romans knew what Christians were and distinguished Christians from Jews. The use of "Edom" as a code word in rabbinic literature was intended to throw off any "undercover" Romans or Christians who had secretly infiltrated the Jewish community.

<sup>37</sup> Anthony J. Saldarini, "Christian Anti-Judaism: The First Century Speaks to the Twenty-First Century," The Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Jerusalem Lecture, 14 April 1999, cited in Francis X. Clooney,

## Early Christian Contempt for Judaism

Although the New Testament is only one source of Christian contempt for Judaism, it is the foundational “anti-Jewish” text. As Saldarini points out, “Christians, who read the New Testament seriously, frequently learn to despise Jews because of the anti-Jewish polemics there.”<sup>38</sup> Christian theological contempt emerges from the perception that the Jews have been rejected by God and that Christians have inherited the Covenant of Israel (made between God and Abraham<sup>39</sup>), making Christians the “True Israel.” These are the primary claims of supersessionism: Christianity inherits the ancient Jewish tradition and legitimates its own existence in the Greco-Roman world. Social contempt is inspired both by supersessionism (motivated by theological contempt), and by frustration at Jewish obstinacy in the refusal to accept or acknowledge Jesus as the messiah.

An example from Paul’s letter to the Galatians demonstrates the division between the theological and social frameworks that serve as a foundation for theological and social contempt, while it also clarifies the rationale behind social contempt.<sup>40</sup> Paul

---

“Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community and Interreligious Encounter Today,” in *When Judaism and Christianity Began*, 531.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. Anthony Saldarini, Bernardin Lecture.

<sup>39</sup> JPS: Genesis 17:1-8 “When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am El Shaddai. Walk in My ways and be blameless. I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will make you exceedingly numerous.’ Abram threw himself on his face; and God spoke to him further, ‘As for Me, this is My covenant with you: You shall be the father of a multitude of nations. And you shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I make you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fertile, and make nations of you; and kings shall come forth from you. I will maintain My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages, to be God to you and to your offspring to come. I assign the land you sojourn in to you and your offspring to come, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting holding. I will be their God.’”

<sup>40</sup> Galatians 4:22-31 (NRSV) “[I]t is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and the other by a free woman....Now this is an allegory: these women are two covenants. One woman, in fact, is Hagar, from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery....But the other woman corresponds to the

presents the relationship between God, the Jews, and the Christians in the form of an allegory based on the Biblical story of Abraham and his two sons. Here, Abraham represents God, Hagar and Sarah represent the two covenants, and Ishmael and Isaac represent the Jews and the Christians, respectively. The old covenant with the Jews, as Paul describes it, is a covenant with people destined to be slaves. The Jews are slaves in a theological framework—slaves to God or slaves to the Law—and they are slaves in a social framework as well, as a people living without autonomy in the Greco-Roman world. The new covenant is with the Christians, who are instructed to “get rid of the slave woman and her son.”<sup>41</sup> Just as Sarah had feelings of social contempt for Hagar and Ishmael, so too do the people of the new covenant have feelings of social contempt for the people of the old.

Christian contempt did not often result in violence or persecution of the Jews. The Syriac Christian bishop Aphrahat (c. 270-c. 345), for example, made clear the fundamental claim of supersessionism—that the descendants of Abraham (the old Israel) were replaced by Christians (the new Israel)—without inciting anti-Jewish action. Citing the “grafted olive branch” image from Paul’s letter to the Romans<sup>42</sup> (11:17, see above) as a supersessionist proof text, Aphrahat suggests that the children of Abraham have been

---

Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother....Now you, my friends, are children of the promise, like Isaac. But just as at that time the child who was born according to the flesh persecuted the child who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. But what does the scripture say? ‘Drive out the slave and her child; for the child of the slave will not share the inheritance with the child of the free woman.’ So then, friends, we are children, not of the slave but of the free woman.”

<sup>41</sup> Genesis 21:10 (JPS) “She [Sarah] said to Abraham, ‘Cast out that slave-woman and her son, for the son of that slave shall not share in the inheritance with my son Isaac.’” This is not quite the message that the Galatians text is conveying, but it is written in Genesis 21:12 (JPS) “But God said to Abraham, ‘Do not be distressed over the boy or your slave; whatever Sarah tells you, do as she says...’”

<sup>42</sup> Romans 11:17-20 (NRSV) But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the rich root of the olive tree, do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember that it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you. You will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand only through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe.

replaced by Israel (i.e. the people of the Covenant) and concludes with a line of commentary:

This is the apology against the Jews, because they take pride saying, 'We are the children of Abraham, and we are the people of God.' The demonstration on the people and the peoples is completed.<sup>43</sup>

Louis Ginzberg, in his entry in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, claims that Aphrahat's treatise is "dispassionate"<sup>44</sup>—a claim that challenges the presence of any social or theological contempt. Aphrahat is very matter-of-fact in his treatment of the Jews, but his contempt for the Jews—albeit subtle—is present, as his critique of Jewish pride elevates Christianity and denigrates Judaism. Here, though, Aphrahat only critiques the Jewish theological claim of covenant, and does not articulate any contempt grounded in social differences.

As Christianity engaged in self-definition, supersessionism became a more and more clearly pronounced ideology with stronger and louder anti-Jewish tones. Early Christian texts were edited and changed to emphasize the separation between Judaism and Christianity through the process of Christian self-definition,<sup>45</sup> and Christian texts that were mildly supersessionist were manipulated to display a stronger message.

For Aphrahat's more widely known contemporary, Augustine (354-430), the Jews served an important role for Christianity: Jews, through their stubborn opposition, showed the truth and accuracy of the teachings contained in the New Testament and were

---

<sup>43</sup> "Aphrahat and Judaism", transl. Jacob Neusner (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), 60-67; reproduced in F.E. Talmage, ed. *Disputation & Dialogue: Readings in the Jewish-Christian Encounter* (New York: Ktav Publishing House Inc., Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1975), 27.

<sup>44</sup> F.E. Talmage, ed. *Disputation & Dialogue: Readings in the Jewish-Christian Encounter* (New York: Ktav Publishing House Inc., Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1975), p 17. Talmage cites L. Ginzberg in *Jewish Encyclopedia* (I, 665): "[Aphrahat's writings show] not the slightest traces of personal ill-feeling toward the Jews; and his calm, dispassionate tone proves that it was only his firm conviction of Christianity that caused him to assail Judaism."

<sup>45</sup> Crown, *Judaism*, 545.

a living testimonial to the power of God and the legitimacy of the Covenant. The Jews are likened to Cain, who was cursed to wander the earth and suffer as a laborer following the murder of his brother, Abel. Augustine writes,

[T]he Church admits and avows the Jewish people to be cursed, because after killing Christ they continue to till the ground of an earthly circumcision, an earthly Sabbath, an earthly Passover, while the hidden strength or virtue of making known Christ, which this tilling contains, is not yielded to the Jews while they continue in impiety and unbelief, for it is revealed in the New Testament. While they will not turn to God, the veil which is on their minds in reading the Old Testament is not taken away...In this way the Jewish people, like Cain, continue tilling the ground, in the carnal observance of the law, which does not yield to them its strength, because they do not perceive in it the grace of Christ....‘And the Lord God set a mark upon Cain, lest any one finding him should slay him.’ It is a most notable fact, that all the nations subjugated by Rome adopted the heathenish ceremonies of the Roman worship; while the Jewish nation, whether under Pagan or Christian monarchs, has never lost the sign of their law, by which they are distinguished from all other nations and peoples. No emperor or monarch who finds under his government the people with this mark kills them, that is, makes them cease to be Jews, and as Jews to be separate in their observances and unlike the rest of the world.”<sup>46</sup>

For Augustine, observance of the Torah has become the “mark of Cain” for the Jews—proof of their divine condemnation to suffering and rootlessness. Those who have accepted Jesus as the messiah, on the other hand, are no longer subjected to the suffering, aimless wandering, and labor of the Jews, which the Jews continue to bear and which “justifies” Christian social and theological contempt. Jews are subjected to theological contempt because of their refusal to accept Jesus as “the Christ,” and they are subjected to social contempt in that they are likened to Cain, the prototype of a social pariah, condemned endlessly to suffering and labor.

The only remedy to earthly wandering and suffering for the Jews is conversion:

---

<sup>46</sup> Augustine, “Reply to Faustus the Manichean (12:9-13),” trans. in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Buffalo, 1887, IV, 186-188, also in Talmage, *Disputation* 30-31.

“Only when a Jew comes over to Christ, he is no longer Cain...,”<sup>47</sup> but the continued existence of the Jewish people is also, paradoxically, a demonstration of the power of God and the truth of Biblical history.

Writings by Martin Luther (1483-1546) demonstrate the separation between theological and social contempt as foundations for anti-Jewish rhetoric. In his 1523 treatise, *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew*, Martin Luther exemplifies anti-Judaism grounded in “theological contempt,” while he opposes anti-Judaism motivated by “social contempt.” His incendiary writing is as much anti-Catholic as it is anti-Jewish:

... [The leaders of the Catholic Church] have dealt with the Jews as if they were dogs and not human beings. [When] Jews saw that Judaism had such strong scriptural basis and that Christianity [Catholicism] was pure nonsense without Biblical support, how could they quiet their hearts and become real, good Christians? [Because the Jews were treated so poorly by the Catholics]...I hope that, if the Jews are treated friendly and are instructed kindly through the Bible, many of them will become real Christians and come back to the ancestral faith of the prophets and patriarchs...I would advise and beg everybody to deal kindly with the Jews and to instruct them in the Scriptures; in such a case we could expect them to come over to us. If, however, we use brute force...saying that they need the blood of Christians to get rid of their stench...and treat them like dogs, what good can we expect of them?...If we wish to make them better, we must deal with them not according to the law of the pope, but according to the law of Christian charity...and if some remain obstinate, what of it? Not every one of us is a good Christian....<sup>48</sup>

For Luther, it was no wonder that the Jews were obstinate in their refusal to see the truth of Christianity and convert. But, beneath the surface of Luther’s anti-Catholicism, there is a message of theological contempt against the Jews as well: the Hebrew Bible clearly proves that Christianity is the true path, and the Jews are obstinate for their refusal to

---

<sup>47</sup> Talmage, *Disputation*, 31.

<sup>48</sup> Martin Luther, *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew* (1523), excerpted from J. R. Marcus, ed., *The Jew in the Medieval World, Revised Edition* (Cincinnati, OH: HUC Press, 1999), 186-187. Also in Talmage, *Disputation*, 33-34.

accept the newer religion. But Luther's contempt for the Jews was not always so theologically grounded. Twenty years later, in a piece titled, *Concerning the Jews and their Lies*, Luther speaks in terms of social contempt, though theological contempt is present as well:

What then shall we Christians do with this damned, rejected race of the Jews? Since they live among us and we know about their lying and blasphemy and cursing, we can not tolerate them...we cannot quench the inextinguishable fire of divine rage...nor convert the Jews....Perhaps we may save a few from the fire and the flames. We must not seek vengeance. They are surely being punished a thousand times more than we might wish them...their synagogues or churches should be set on fire, and whatever does not burn up should be covered or spread over with dirt so that no one may ever be able to see a cinder or stone of it. And this ought to be done for the honor of God and of Christianity in order that God may see that we are Christians, and that we have not wittingly tolerated or approved of such public lying, cursing, and blaspheming of His Son and His Christians....if this advice of mine does not suit you, then find a better one so that you and we may all be free of this insufferable devilish burden—the Jews.<sup>49</sup>

Such vitriolic and pernicious anti-Judaism is derived almost exclusively from social contempt, combined perhaps with some “economic rivalry.”<sup>50</sup> Luther's hatred of the Jews extends well beyond a mere expression of frustration at Jewish refusal to accept Jesus as savior. He angrily calls for action against the Jews not only because they are blasphemers, but because they are liars and “rascally lazy bones.”<sup>51</sup>

The distinction between social and theological contempt may appear insignificant, but the broad implications of this two-fold contempt for the possibility of dialogue and coexistence between Jews and Christians should be clear: the anger expressed by Luther

---

<sup>49</sup> Martin Luther, *Concerning the Jews and their Lies* (1543), excerpted from Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World*, 187-189. Also in Talmage, *Disputation*, 34-36.

Luther's screed continues with calls to destroy Jewish homes, and to restrict Jewish education and the ability of Jews to conduct business or live freely—suggestions that clearly foreshadow the Nuremberg Laws of 1935

<sup>50</sup> Talmage, *Disputation*, 19

<sup>51</sup> Martin Luther, *Concerning the Jews and their Lies* (1543), in Talmage, *Disputation*, 36.

in *Concerning the Jews and their Lies* leaves no room for dialogue or any productive relationship. The theological contempt and spiritual rejection expressed in *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew* could, as Talmage points out, leave room for dialogue or coexistence: “Official spiritual rejection of the Jews did not universally preclude a productive coexistence between Jew and Christian.”<sup>52</sup> Read separately, Luther’s two texts present very different positions: Jews have no purpose in the world and should be destroyed, or, Jews might serve an important function as good Christians if they are properly approached. Read together with the earlier text, the severity and danger of *Concerning the Jews and their Lies* becomes even clearer. The juxtaposition of the respective tones of the two treatises demonstrates the potential of social contempt to inspire violence and persecution, and weakens the possibility that dialogue and productive coexistence can actually take place in the midst of theological contempt.

Christian theological contempt is predicated on perceptions that, despite the persistent inability of Jews to recognize and accept Jesus as messiah, Jews serve an important function and are necessary to Christianity because they demonstrate God’s power and the truth of the Hebrew Bible. Christian social contempt, on the other hand, places no value on continued Jewish existence. The Jews are unimportant to the social framework of Christianity, while the theological framework of Christianity depends upon the existence of the Jews—a message echoed in the disturbing words of Christian theologian Karl Barth (1886-1968):

The existence of the Jews, as is generally recognized, is an adequate proof of the existence of God. It is an adequate demonstration of the depths of

---

<sup>52</sup> Talmage, *Disputation*, 19.

human guilt and need and therefore of the inconceivable greatness of God's love in the event in which God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. The Jews of the ghetto give this demonstration involuntarily, joylessly and ingloriously, but they do give it. They have nothing to attest to the world but the shadow of the cross of Jesus Christ that falls upon them. But they, too, do actually and necessarily attest Jesus Christ Himself.<sup>53</sup>

Talmage explains this passage as an argument that "the very misery and suffering of European Jewry is called upon as a witness to Christianity."<sup>54</sup> Even more relevant are the comments of Orthodox Jewish Scholar, Michael Wyschogrod, in response to Barth:

There is little doubt that Barth's experience with Nazism taught him just how equivalent the anti-Christian is to anti-semitism, how necessary the destruction of the Jewish people is to those who make war on the God of Israel and his commandments. But there is also in Barth an anti-semitism made up of two parts: the traditional anti-semitism of European Christendom...and the anti-semitism of Christian theology. As far as the first sort of anti-semitism is concerned, it may surprise some that a man of Barth's stature is not completely immune to it...[The other aspect of Barth's antisemitism stems from the Christian] tradition that Israel, the elect people, is also from the very first a rebellious people who kills its prophets...<sup>55</sup>

Wyschogrod's analysis of Barth is useful, not only because it clarifies Barth's teachings, but also because it makes even more clear the distinction between social and theological contempt in the differentiation between Barth's "traditional anti-semitism of European Christendom" (social contempt) and "the anti-semitism of Christian theology" (theological contempt).

<sup>53</sup> Karl Barth, "The Judgment and the Mercy of God," in *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), II, 205-213, reproduced in Talmage, *Disputation*, 43.

<sup>54</sup> Talmage, *Disputation*, 38.

<sup>55</sup> Michael Wyschogrod, "Why Was and Is the Theology of Karl Barth of Interest to a Jewish Theologian?," in *Footnotes to a Theology: The Karl Barth Colloquium of 1972*, ed. H.M. Rumscheidt (Toronto: Corporation for the Publication of Academic Studies in Religion in Canada, 1974), 107f; also Talmage, *Disputation*, 38.

### **Jewish Social and Theological Contempt for Christianity**

Jewish contempt for Christians and Christianity also exists in social and theological forms. But, unlike Christian contempt for Judaism, Jewish contempt for Christianity has rarely been actualized in the form of persecution, particularly since the fourth century. This absence of Jewish persecution of Christians may simply reflect the lack of Jewish political power until 1948 or a fundamental difference between Judaism and Christianity.

Jewish contempt for Christianity is fundamentally different from Christian contempt for Judaism because Judaism does not require the presence of Christianity in order to exist. Multiple understandings of Christianity exist within Judaism. For example, throughout history some Jews have considered Christians idolaters, while others have regarded Christianity as a sister religion.

Jewish contempt for Christianity was coincident with Christianity's advent—a claim the text of the New Testament certainly affirms. Because Judaism in Jesus's time was a diverse mosaic, it is difficult to present any unified Jewish understanding of Christianity. Nonetheless, Jewish contempt for Christianity is preserved from this early period in multiple forms, especially in liturgy and rabbinic literature.

The medieval French Jewish commentator Joseph Kimhi (1110?-1170?), known for propagating Jewish social contempt for Christianity, was the author of *The Book of the Covenant*—"the first Jewish anti-Christian polemic to have been written in Europe."<sup>56</sup> Engaged in a disputation with Christian contemporaries over the validity of Jewish law, Kimhi responded to accusations of Jewish usury:

---

<sup>56</sup> Talmage, *Disputation*, 9.

A Jew will not lend his brother wheat, wine, or any commodity on a term basis in order to increase his profit, while you, who have disdained usury, sell all commodities to your brethren on a term basis at twice the price. You should be ashamed to say that you do not lend with usury for this is enormous usury. Furthermore, many Gentiles clearly lend on interest to [both] Jews and Gentiles, although Jews do not lend to their fellow Jews.<sup>57</sup>

Kimhi argues that Jewish lending behavior is morally superior to that of Christians. His criticism is not only an anti-Christian polemic in response to Christian violation of the laws in the Torah prohibiting the practice of usury with kinsmen,<sup>58</sup> it is an explicit social critique of Christians and Christianity—an example of social contempt<sup>59</sup> parallel to the Protestant contempt for Catholicism exhibited by Martin Luther five centuries later. Particularly scathing is Kimhi's comment, "It is well known that your priests and bishops who do not marry are fornicators."<sup>60</sup> While we may understand Kimhi's tone and language within the context of the defensive nature of his text—after all, Kimhi was engaged in disputation with Christian contemporaries who insisted upon his conversion—such a comment goes well beyond the merely defensive, and clearly exhibits social critique and contempt.

The writings of the Karaite leader Isaac ben Abraham of Troki (1533-1594) also offer a powerful example of Jewish theological contempt for Christianity. As a Karaite, Isaac ben Abraham was fundamentally opposed to the teachings of Rabbinic Judaism. In spite of the conflict that developed between the Karaites and followers of Rabbinic Judaism in the medieval period,<sup>61</sup> the Karaites and Rabbinites were united in their

<sup>57</sup> Joseph Kimhi, *The Book of the Covenant* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1972), 32-35, also in Talmage, *Disputation*, 13.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Exodus 22:24, Leviticus 25:35-37, Deuteronomy 23:20-21

<sup>59</sup> Talmage, *Disputation*, 9.

<sup>60</sup> Joseph Kimhi, *The Book of the Covenant*, 32-35, also, Talmage, *Disputation*, 13.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Fred N. Reiner, "Masoretes and Rabbis: A Comparison of Biblical Interpretations," Rabbinical Thesis, (HUC-JIR, 1973).

opposition to Christianity.<sup>62</sup> Isaac ben Abraham's work also exceeds a purely theological opposition to Christianity, and contains a clear, underlying tone of contempt which is apparent both in his language and in the message he conveys.

Since that period [the time of Abraham] to the present time, 3000 years and more have elapsed; and the worship of images still continues. For we see your Evangelists, who follow in the steps of Martin Luther, accuse those who walk in the faith of the Pope of Rome of rendering homage to images in their houses of worship; yet it is manifest, that image-worship proceeds not from the will of God.<sup>63</sup>

It is notable that a Karaite leader cited Martin Luther's polemic against the Catholic Church as proof of idolatry in Christianity, given the fact that Karaism opposed interpretations of Rabbinic Judaism that were elevated to the level of Torah Law, just as Martin Luther opposed the promulgation of papal decrees that were elevated to the level of Scriptural revelation.

If there were any doubt that Isaac ben Abraham's understanding of Christianity was contemptuous in nature, a later comment (in response to both Christianity and Islam) should make his theological contempt even more evident:

Would you say then that these two creeds, viz., Popery and Mohammedanism because they are not yet abolished, were established by the approbation or command of God? I have not the slightest idea that a reasonable being can entertain such a supposition: but the fact is, that the Almighty says, 'leave the foolish-minded to themselves, for in the future they will have to render account of their actions.' Moreover, it is known, from the words of the prophets, that idolatry will continue till the time of the Messiah, whose advent we expect....<sup>64</sup>

Isaac ben Abraham's opposition to Christianity is theologically based, and highly contemptuous. He critiques the very manner in which Christians interact with God, and

---

<sup>62</sup> Talmage, *Disputation*, 10.

<sup>63</sup> Isaac ben Abraham of Troki, *Faith Strengthened* (Hizzuq 'Emunah). trans. M. Mocatta, (New York: Ktav, 1970), I:4, 18-20, also Talmage, *Disputation*, 15.

<sup>64</sup> Isaac ben Abraham of Troki, *Faith Strengthened*, 18-20, also Talmage, *Disputation*, 15.

regards their understanding of God as wrong and beyond the boundary of human reason.

Although the Bible makes it clear that idolatry is a contemptible practice, Christians, according to ben Abraham, are idolaters.<sup>65</sup> This polemical text is as much an attempt to “dissuade wavering Jews from leaving the fold,”<sup>66</sup> as it is a condemnation of Christianity, and shows contempt for Christianity while it elevates the status of Judaism

The writings of Isaac ben Abraham demonstrate the view that Jewish opposition to Christianity was grounded in theological difference. The worship of a human manifestation of the divine is understood by Jewish authorities as a form of idolatry, and the Christian Trinity is seen as a form of polytheism.<sup>67</sup> As David Ellenson explains, “Jewish teachings have long viewed the Christian doctrine of Incarnation and the concomitant Christian affirmation of a triune God as lying beyond the boundaries of acceptable Jewish faith.”<sup>68</sup>

Rabbinic texts which discuss the laws relating to idolatry and blasphemy clearly forbid a relationship with non-Jews that might cause the transgression of the Noahide laws.<sup>69</sup> As it states in Sanhedrin 63b:

‘Neither let it [the name of other gods] be heard out of your mouth’ (Exodus 23:13). One should not vow or swear by its name [i.e. the name of other gods], nor cause others (heathens) to swear by the name... ‘Nor

<sup>65</sup> Rabbinic Literature is even more violent in expressions of contempt for idolatrous practices (Cf: *Tractate Avodah Zarah*), including the famous *midrashic* story from *Bereshit Rabbah* involving Abram destroying his father’s idols, but the Karaites challenged the authenticity and applicability of Rabbinic Law. For Biblical contempt of idolatry, Cf: Exodus 20:4-5 (the Decalogue), Leviticus 19:4, Isaiah 44:6, 9-11 (especially), 15-20.

<sup>66</sup> Talmage, *Disputation*, 1

<sup>67</sup> This latter perspective is explored and refuted in Peter Ochs, “The God of Jews and Christians,” in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, eds. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, et. al., (Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 2000), 49-69. (“*CJT*”), published with responses in the same collection (*CJT*) from the Jewish scholar David Ellenson, “A Jewish View of the Christian God: Some Cautionary and Hopeful Remarks,” (pp 69-76), and the Christian theologian, David Tracy, “God as Trinitarian: A Christian Response to Peter Ochs,” ( 77-84).

<sup>68</sup> Ellenson, *CJT*, 69.

<sup>69</sup> Ellenson, *CJT*, 71.

cause others (heathens) to swear by its name.’ This supports the dictum of Samuel’s father. For the father of Samuel said, ‘One may not enter into a business partnership with a heathen, lest the latter be obliged to take an oath [in connection with a business dispute], and he swear by his idol.’<sup>70</sup>

Such a position raises important questions: If Christian worship is a form of idolatry, and Jews must abstain from business partnerships with Christians (and all idolaters), is Judaism required to be insular and avoid relationships with non-Jews? This question has significant implications for the Jewish-Christian encounter: that which some have previously perceived as Jewish isolation motivated by triumphalism in the Orthodox community may, in actuality, be resolute observance of the dictum referenced above. The avoidance of interaction with non-Jews then is not necessarily a by-product of Jewish contempt or condescension, but may be understood positively as a limitation intended to avoid legal transgression.

Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) placed Christians into the same category as pagans and referred to them as “*ovdei kochavim u-mazalot*”<sup>71</sup> (literally, “worshippers of the stars and fates,” but understood to mean “worshippers of idols”). Maimonides’ contempt for Christianity was clearly theological in nature, and we see in him no social animus such as we see in the writings of his contemporary, Joseph Kimhi. Ellenson, too, classifies Maimonides’ opposition to Christianity as founded upon “doctrinal differences.” Because theological and social contempt are motivated by different experiences and in turn motivate different responses which themselves require different reactions in the process of engaging in meaningful dialogue, it is important to understand the distinction between the two. Maimonides’ theological contempt could not have led to

---

<sup>70</sup> BT Sanhedrin 63b. Cited in Ellenson, *CJT*, 70-71.

<sup>71</sup> This categorization by Moses Maimonides was made in both *Commentary on the Mishnah* (1163; *Avodah Zarah* 1:3), and *Mishneh Torah* (1180; *Hilchot Avodat Kochavim* 9:4), and the implications of such a categorization are explored in Ellenson, *CJT*, 73.

anti-Christian violence—his critique of Christianity was more an issue of taxonomy or differentiation than it was a matter of animus. The social contempt of Joseph Kimhi, on the other hand, is quite violent in its polemical and biting tone, and has, therefore, much more potential for instigating violence.<sup>72</sup>

Ellenson's citation of Hasdai Crescas's fourteenth century polemic *The Refutation of the Christian Principles* similarly speaks to the generally non-instigating nature of theological contempt.<sup>73</sup> It is also important to note that while there was significant theological contempt towards Christianity in the Jewish community, many Jews embraced the Christians as fellow monotheists, and even came to offer positive support of Christianity.<sup>74</sup>

In the history of Christianity, contempt for Judaism, as we have seen, takes two broad forms: theological and social. Theological contempt is generally passive and subtle, while social contempt, although it is based in theological contempt, has the propensity to provoke violence by attempting to widen, and personalize, the divide between groups. The writings of Aphrahat and the early writings of Martin Luther display calm and non-violent Christian theological contempt for Judaism. The writings of Augustine and the later writings of Luther, on the other hand, display a social

---

<sup>72</sup> Polemic comes from the Greek word *polemos* (πόλεμος) — “war.” Polemic then is violent by nature. Violent polemic provokes violence, in physical or non-physical forms. Cf. Jonathan Crewe, “Can Polemic Be Ethical? A Response to Michel Foucault” in *Polemic: Critical or Uncritical*, ed. Jane Gallop (New York: Routledge, 2004), 135-152, and: Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 214.

<sup>73</sup> Ellenson, *CJT*, 72. Ellenson's citation of Crescas is significant. In the introduction to a 1904 reprint and translation of Crescas, Ephraim Deinard wrote “[R]abbis who preach Reform...harm us more than the Christians. If only the pious Christians would abolish the missionaries and place Reform rabbis in their place, they could expect the speedy demise of the Jewish religion.” (cf. Talmage, *Disputation*, 241). Ellenson used the 1992 translation of Crescas by Daniel J. Lasker (Albany: State University of New York Press).

<sup>74</sup> Ellenson, *CJT*, 73-75.

contempt which instigated anti-Jewish violence through invective, slander, and accusations of deicide.

Judaism, too, has propagated contempt—for Christianity—though Jewish motivations and the extent and effect of Jewish contempt has been quite different. Subtle Jewish theological contempt may be observed in the writings of Isaac ben Abraham and Maimonides, and Hasdai Crescas, while harsh social contempt is articulated in the writings of Joseph Kimhi, Isaac ben Abraham, and rabbinic literature. The root of Jewish contempt for Christianity is a subject for analysis and debate: were the Jews reciprocating Christian contempt or developing contempt independently? Jewish historian Robert Chazan writes, “Obviously, Jews were deeply opposed to Christianity and expressed their opposition vigorously among themselves. Public expression of such opposition was, however, prohibited.”<sup>75</sup> Edward Kessler, on the other hand, argues that Jewish contempt was merely a response to Christian contempt:

Judaism reciprocated the contempt. Although there is little evidence of any *Adversus Christianos* tract, Christianity was dismissed as a religion practiced by morally and culturally inferior gentiles, based on unbelievable claims such as God-in-the-flesh, which had degenerated into idolatry.<sup>76</sup>

Both Jewish and Christian contempt emerges from a need for self-definition or self-preservation. Christians developed contempt for Judaism to differentiate themselves from Jews. Jews developed contempt for Christianity to prevent apostasy and the loss of Jewish identity in response to Christian oppression. While Christian contempt has

<sup>75</sup> Robert Chazan, “Christian-Jewish Interactions over the Ages” in *CJT*, 12.

<sup>76</sup> Edward Kessler, “Jews revisit Jesus,” *Tablet*, February 3, 2001. <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/article/6880> (accessed 25 February 2009), cited in Richard John Neuhaus, “Bible Babel,” *First Things: A Journal of Religion, Culture, and Public Life*, May 2001. [http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id\\_article=2183](http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=2183) (accessed 25 February 2009).

inspired violence against Jews, violence inspired by Jewish contempt has, for the most part, not been actualized (aside from the Jewish persecution of early Christians).

Positive treatments of the “other” have, of course, existed in both religious traditions. Martin Luther was initially sympathetic to the victims of Catholic anti-Judaism. The German rabbi, Jacob Emden (1697-1776) writing on Christianity (and Islam), stated: “Their assembly is also for the sake of Heaven, to make Godliness known among the nations, to speak of Him in distant places.”<sup>77</sup> Historically, as we have seen, the conflict between Judaism and Christianity has revolved around two types of issues—the social and the theological. Conflict inevitably emerges from contempt, as one party attempts to bolster its own claims while denigrating the other. Post-Enlightenment modern morality compels progressively minded Christians and Jews to engage in a process of reconciliation (a project made especially urgent after the Holocaust) and to examine the history and rootedness of social and theological contempt.

---

<sup>77</sup> Quoted in Harvey Falk, “Rabbi Jacob Emden’s Views on Christianity,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 19, n. 1 (1982): 106. Cited in Ellenson, *CJT*, 74.

# **Chapter Two**

## **Chapter 2: Judaism and Christianity Post Holocaust**

The Holocaust was without precedent in history,<sup>78</sup> and has, of course, had an impact on Jewish-Christian relations. In the aftermath of Auschwitz, Judaism and Christianity have both moved through processes of mourning and reflection, as they have had to face the deeply troubling theological and social questions which the Holocaust poses.

After World War II, the world began a major period of radical change on many fronts: social, economic, political, and religious. The increased popularity of Marxism and a concomitant emphasis on equality was a central feature of this period of cultural redefinition. In America especially, religion became a central focus of public life as people responded to the horrors of the Holocaust and World War II, as well as to the threat of “godless” Communism.<sup>79</sup> The addition of “under God” to the *Pledge of Allegiance* and the adoption of the already ubiquitous “In God We Trust” as the official national motto<sup>80</sup> attests both to a growing interest in religion, and an American desire for theistic self-definition in opposition to the atheistic Communist world.

For Judaism, the process of assimilating and comprehending the Holocaust has, for the most part, been internally focused. Jews have struggled (as have many religious thinkers) with the theological implications of suffering of this unimaginable magnitude. But, a practical response to the Holocaust—the creation of Israel—although it offered no theological answers to the problem of suffering, did offer a hopeful response to an age-old dream as well as the first instance of Jewish political autonomy since the beginning of

---

<sup>78</sup> Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1997), 5.

<sup>79</sup> Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 274.

<sup>80</sup> By acts of Congress in 1954 and 1956, respectively

Christianity. The North American Jewish community, an amalgam of European, Asian, and African Jewish communities, avoided violent Nazi anti-Semitism and, with the aid of many survivors, confronted the theological and social issues raised by the Holocaust from a distance. As the largest Jewish community in existence after the Holocaust, and as a community especially engaged in social, political, and intellectual conversation with Christians and Christianity, the North American Jewish community will be the focus of this examination of Jewish-Christian encounters following the Holocaust.

Christianity has undergone its own process of reconciliation in the wake of the Holocaust. The role of Christian passivity and complicity in the Holocaust challenged “the spiritual and moral credibility of the Christian tradition”<sup>81</sup> and forced Christians to reconsider their relationship with the Jews.<sup>82</sup> While the European Jewish community was nearly destroyed and reduced to the point where meaningful conversation and reflection was an almost futile endeavor, the European Christian community remained intact, confronted with a guilty awareness of what the Nazis had accomplished.

As noted above, Jewish responses to the Holocaust have been largely internal. Theological and social responses have focused on the Jewish community, and very little emphasis—outside of those connections that will serve Jewish interests and prevent a future Holocaust—has been placed on creating connections with the world at large. Christian responses to the Holocaust have been internal *and* external. Christianity has worked to supplant the theological and social contempt for Judaism that was previously one of its defining characteristics, while it has also begun to explore the theological and social implications of these positions.

---

<sup>81</sup> Christopher M. Leighton, “Christian Theology After the Shoah,” in *CJT*, 40.

<sup>82</sup> “In partial response to the Holocaust...churches became more sensitive to the phenomenon of antisemitism--especially the antisemitism within Christianity.” Talmage, *Disputation*, 256.

“*Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*” constitutes an effort by the Jewish Scholars Group of the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies, joined by hundreds of Jewish scholars and community leaders, to recognize the changes that Christianity has undergone since the Holocaust, specifically in the realm of inter-religious dialogue and the formulation of a new understanding of Judaism which does not include contempt.<sup>83</sup>

This chapter seeks to summarize and briefly evaluate several of the most prominent examples of attempts at engagement between Jews and Christians from the years following the Holocaust through the publication of *Dabru Emet* in 2000.

### **Christian Social and Theological Responses to the Holocaust:**

Social and theological contempt for the Jews became a subject of considerable reflection as Christianity became increasingly aware of religious anti-Judaism and political anti-Semitism.<sup>84</sup> Following the Holocaust, the “legacy of Christian contempt,”<sup>85</sup> present from the earliest stages of Christianity, began to emerge as a subject for Christian contemplation and consideration. Neo-Orthodox Protestant thinkers, such as Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971), who focused on the practical application of Christian ethics to society, and the “Christologically centered and scripturally oriented”<sup>86</sup> Karl Barth (1886-1968), who explored the theological implications of Jewish suffering in the Holocaust,<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> “In the decades since the Holocaust...Christianity has changed dramatically”—from the introductory paragraphs to *Dabru Emet* (CJT, xv).

<sup>84</sup> See above: “In partial response to the Holocaust, the churches became more sensitive to the phenomenon of antisemitism--especially the antisemitism within Christianity.” Talmage, 256.

<sup>85</sup> Leighton, CJT, 40.

<sup>86</sup> Talmage, *Disputation*, 37.

<sup>87</sup> Talmage, *Disputation*, 182.

captured the changing views of Protestant Christianity. At this time, and concomitant with other important social events and political movements,<sup>88</sup> Pope John XXIII (b. 1881, Pope: 1958-1963), was responsible for initiating a process of reflection and change in the Catholic Church which paralleled the changes in Protestant Christianity. In all cases, theological responses were combined with social responses as well.

### **The Seelisberg Conference of 1947**

During the summer of 1947 a group of sixty-five Christian and Jewish leaders, representing the Catholic and Reformed (Protestant) Churches as well as the American and European Jewish communities, convened in Seelisberg, Switzerland, for an “International Emergency Conference on Anti-Semitism.”<sup>89</sup> The conference was intended to address the origins of Christian anti-Semitism and to develop a new, meaningful relationship between Judaism and Christianity while taking into account the dark specter of the Holocaust. Participants were concerned about the continued presence of deeply rooted anti-Semitism in spite of the demise of the Nazis.<sup>90</sup> The main outcome of the conference was a document which detailed ten preconditions for meaningful, positive, and productive dialogue between Christians and Jews, as well as guidelines for the eradication of any overt or covert anti-Semitism present in Christian sentiments, practices, and doctrines.

The 1947 conference at Seelisberg was preceded, in 1946, by a similar conference held in Oxford, England, which was convened at the behest of the American Conference

---

<sup>88</sup> See above, e.g. the rise of Communism, Liberation theology, the creation of Israel, the American Civil Rights movement.

<sup>89</sup> Christian M. Rutishauser, “The 1947 Seelisburg Conference: The Foundation of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue,” *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 2, n. 2, (2007): 35.

<sup>90</sup> Rutishauser, *Seelisberg*, 35.

of Christians and Jews—an organization separate from but related to the National Council for Christians and Jews. The Oxford Conference focused primarily on fundamental human rights and responsibilities beyond the boundaries of race and religion, and set the stage for the conference in Seelisberg.<sup>91</sup>

The Seelisberg Conference was primarily a response to the horror of Nazi anti-Semitism—a response which went so far as to prohibit the use of the German language at its meetings.<sup>92</sup> European anti-Semitism was the main issue the conference addressed as it specifically explored how European anti-Semitism grew out of Christian anti-Judaism. Participants were also concerned by the continued presence of anti-Semitism in Communist states.<sup>93</sup>

Among the issues discussed at the Seelisberg conference were problematic elements of Christian doctrine. Calls were made, for example, for formal reinterpretations of the Gospel of John—which had long been perceived to be very anti-Jewish in nature and a cause of anti-Semitism<sup>94</sup>—to be written in such a way that a reading of that Gospel would no longer “incite hatred against Jews.”<sup>95</sup> Another important development at the Seelisberg Conference was the commitment made by Jewish leaders that members of the Jewish community would “refrain from whatever could undermine the good relations between their two faith communities...”<sup>96</sup> and would also express

---

<sup>91</sup> Rutishauser, *Seelisberg*, 36.

<sup>92</sup> Rutishauser, *Seelisberg*, 38.

<sup>93</sup> Rutishauser, *Seelisberg*, 40.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Adele Reinhartz, “The Gospel of John: How the ‘Jews’ Became Part of the Plot,” in *Jesus, Judaism & Christian Anti-Judaism: Reading the New Testament After the Holocaust*, eds. P. Fredriksen, A. Reinhartz (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 99-116. This summary appears in the “Introduction” (p 4): “Adele Reinhartz examines the ways that Jews and Judaism appear in the Gospel of John....She concludes that anti-Judaism is deeply embedded within all these narrative strands, each of which assigns Jews to the negative poles...”

<sup>95</sup> Rutishauser, *Seelisberg*, 42.

<sup>96</sup> Rutishauser, *Seelisberg*, 42.

appreciation for the “sacred in Christianity.”<sup>97</sup> These assurances by the Jewish community are important, because the Seelisberg Conference set the ground-work for both Jews and Christians to begin to view each other positively. The “Ten Points of Seelisberg” establish the pre-conditions necessary for meaningful, positive Jewish-Christian Dialogue.<sup>98</sup>

1. There is one God in the Bible.
2. Jesus was a Jew and his love was for the whole world.
3. The earliest Christians were Jews.
4. The fundamental messages of Judaism and Christianity (love of God and one’s neighbor) are identical and universally binding.
5. Disparaging Judaism to promote Christianity must be avoided.
6. Using the term “Jews” to refer to the enemies of Jesus is unacceptable.
7. Holding Jews responsible for the killing of Jesus is unacceptable.
8. Scriptural curses (i.e. “His blood is upon us and upon our children”) must not be used to incite violence against Jews.
9. Teaching that the Jews are cursed to suffer (a “negative witness”) is unacceptable.
10. It is important to acknowledge that first Christians were Jews.

Points three and ten are almost identical, acknowledging the origins of Christianity in Judaism. Point one is the only exclusively theological issue, although point four addresses matters of social and theological relevance. For the most part, the “Ten Points of Seelisberg” address social issues. Because the conference was convened to examine issues of anti-Semitism, it is reasonable to conclude that in the opinion of the attendees Christian anti-Semitism was primarily a social issue.

---

<sup>97</sup> Rutishauser, *Seelisberg*, 42.

<sup>98</sup> This is an abbreviated summary of the statement which is reproduced in full in Rutishauser, *Seelisberg*, 43.

### **Christian Responses Post World War II: The World Council of Churches (WCC)**

In 1948 the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches<sup>99</sup> was the first major Christian organization to acknowledge the connection between Christian theological and social contempt and the virulent anti-Semitism that propelled Nazi violence against the Jews of Europe.<sup>100</sup> The Seelisberg Conference of the preceding year had been attended by Jews and Christians alike; the World Council of Churches Assembly, on the other hand, was an exclusively Christian ecumenical conference. The proximity of these two events committed to addressing the issue of Christian contempt for Judaism indicates the significance of the subject at that point in history. In addition to these two conferences (as well as the 1946 Oxford conference), the International Council of Christians and Jews was founded on 21-27 July 1948 at Fribourg University through the efforts of Charles Evans Hughes, an American statesman, Vice President, and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.<sup>101</sup> These renewed efforts at stemming Christian anti-Semitism and stimulating Jewish-Christian dialogue show that in the wake of World War II and the Holocaust, and in the midst of the struggle for a Jewish state, Jews and Christians were beginning to engage in meaningful conversation as Christians were reconsidering their understanding of Judaism.

Because the agenda was largely devoted to issues of anti-Semitism (in addition to

---

<sup>99</sup> While the agreement to establish the World Council of Churches was formally made in 1937, the organization did not materialize until a meeting held in Amsterdam in August 1948 which was attended by representatives of 147 churches. According to the Council's website, the World Council of Churches includes Orthodox churches as well as representatives from the Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, and Reformed traditions. There is significant cooperation with the Catholic Church, though the Vatican is officially unaffiliated with the WCC. (World Council of Churches, "The WCC and the ecumenical movement" <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/background.html> (accessed 7 February 2009).)

<sup>100</sup> Leighton, *CJT*, 40.

<sup>101</sup> Rutishauser, *Seelisberg*, 37.

Christian unity), the proximity of the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches to the fall of the Nazi regime (barely three years after) and the liberation of Nazi camps (at a time when the full extent and depth of the Nazi destruction was still being revealed and absorbed), suggests the impact of the Holocaust on many Christian denominations. In its own declaration at the 1948 meeting, the World Council of Churches took responsibility not only for the failure to fight “the disorder of man which anti-Semitism represents,” but also for the role of Council members in instigating such a pervasive culture of theological contempt in Christianity.<sup>102</sup> While the Council declared that anti-Semitism was “absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith,”<sup>103</sup> it failed to push for the eradication of the theological and social contempt responsible for the anti-Semitism that had pervaded Nazi and pre-Nazi Europe, or to pose any challenge to the Christian doctrine of supersessionism.<sup>104</sup> The preamble (“Introduction”) of the report by Committee IV succinctly expresses the motivations of the World Council of Churches, as well as demonstrates the WCCs awareness of the extent of Nazi destruction.

A concern for the Christian approach to the Jewish people confronts us inescapably, as we meet together to look with open and penitent eyes on man’s disorder and to rediscover together God’s eternal purpose for His Church. This concern is ours because it is first a concern of God made known to us in Christ. No people in His one world have suffered more bitterly from the disorder of man than the Jewish people. We cannot forget that we meet in a land from which 110,000 Jews were taken to be

---

<sup>102</sup> “...churches in the past have helped to foster an image of Jews as the sole enemies of Christ.” (Leighton, *CJT*, 40.)

<sup>103</sup> “Report of Committee IV: *Concerns of the Churches*, Chapter 3: *The Christian Approach to the Jews*.” 22 August-4 September, 1948, The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches Collection, International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ), Heppenheim, Germany. <http://jcrelations.net/en/?id=1489> (accessed 7 February 2009).

<sup>104</sup> “[T]he cornerstones of Christian supersessionism remained unchallenged...The statement assumes the eclipse of God’s covenant with the Jewish people and so reinforces the age-old negative assessment of Judaism.” Leighton, *CJT*, 40.

murdered.<sup>105</sup> Nor can we forget that we meet only five years after the extermination of 6 million Jews. To the Jews our God has bound us in a special solidarity linking our destinies together in His design. We call upon all our churches to make this concern their own as we share with them the results of our too brief wrestling with it.<sup>106</sup>

By affirming the historical relationship between Judaism and Christianity, the WCC defined the theological responsibility of Christians to ensure Jewish continuity:

In the design of God, Israel has a unique position. It was Israel with whom God made His covenant by the call of Abraham....The Church has received this spiritual heritage from Israel and is therefore honour bound to render it back in the light of the Cross. We have, therefore, in humble conviction to proclaim to the Jews, 'The Messiah for Whom you wait has come.' The promise [to the Jews of the Messiah] has been fulfilled by the coming of Jesus Christ. For many the continued existence of a Jewish people which does not acknowledge Christ is a divine mystery which finds its only sufficient explanation in the purpose of God's unchanging faithfulness and mercy (Romans 11:25-29).<sup>107</sup>

The acknowledgement and positive affirmation of Judaism's relationship with God as the initial recipients and keepers of the covenant is significant, though this statement certainly continues the supersessionist message of Christianity. Supersessionism (and the wording of this comment) is a cause of anti-Jewish contempt, especially as the continual refusal by the Jews to accept Christian proclamations that "The Messiah for Whom you wait has come" is interpreted as further indication of Jewish obstinacy and obduracy. Furthermore, the final sentence treats the continued existence and presence of the Jews as a didactic opportunity demonstrating God's strength, mercy, and patience. This marks a significant change in Christian understanding of the

<sup>105</sup> The WCC Assembly was held in Amsterdam.

<sup>106</sup> "Report of Committee IV: *Concerns of the Churches*, Chapter 3: *The Christian Approach to the Jews*." 22 August-4 September, 1948, The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches Collection, International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ), Heppenheim, Germany. <http://jcrelations.net/en/?id=1489> (accessed 7 February 2009). Cf. "Introduction," "Section Two: The Special meaning of the Jewish people for Christian faith."

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

continued Jewish presence. The Jews were no longer a “negative witness”<sup>108</sup> of God’s power. They were now a positive, although ambiguous, reminder of God’s eternal patience and mercy.

The WCC statement continues by accepting responsibility for the culture of theological and social contempt that led to anti-Semitism. As with the Seelisberg statement, social contempt was considered far more relevant to the culture of Christian anti-Semitism.

...We have failed to fight with all our strength the age-old disorder of man which anti-semitism [*sic*] represents. The churches in the past have helped to foster an image of the Jews as the sole enemies of Christ, which has contributed to anti-semitism [*sic*] in the secular world. In many lands virulent anti-semitism [*sic*] still threatens and in other lands the Jews are subjected to many indignities. We call upon all the churches we represent to denounce anti-semitism [*sic*], no matter what its origin, as absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith. Anti-semitism [*sic*] is sin against God and man. Only as we give convincing evidence to our Jewish neighbours that we seek for them the common rights and dignities which God wills for His children, can we come to such a meeting with them as would make it possible to share with them the best which God has given us in Christ.<sup>109</sup>

Perhaps the most interesting element of this statement is its final sentence, which clearly affirms the Christian mission of evangelizing the Jews though it radically reverses the approach of Christian evangelism. The Holocaust (as well as many centuries of oppression) is used to demonstrate that a negative approach to the Jews (i.e., Jews must ultimately accept Christianity or, in consequence, there will be suffering and eternal damnation) is not sufficient. The new best approach for bringing Jews to Christianity is to show Jews positive Christian values which will stimulate Jewish interest in, as opposed

---

<sup>108</sup> Cf. note above, Leighton, *CJT*, 40.

<sup>109</sup> “Report of Committee IV: *Concerns of the Churches*, Chapter 3: *The Christian Approach to the Jews*.” Section 3: “Barriers to be overcome.”

to fear of, Christianity. This represented a different approach to Christian evangelism that gained significant popularity following World War II. It is *not* a new approach, as it is remarkably similar to previously cited statements by Martin Luther<sup>110</sup> which call for a non-violent, sympathetic approach to conversion of the Jews. In one of his final sermons, Luther said:

We want to act in a Christian way towards them [the Jews] and offer them first of all the Christian faith, that they might accept the Messiah, who, after all, is their kinsman and born of their flesh and blood and is the real seed of Abraham of which they boast...We still want to treat them with Christian love and to pray for them, to that they might become converted and would receive the Lord.<sup>111</sup>

This sermon is in direct contrast to the violent social contempt expressed in *Concerning the Jews and Their Lies*. Nevertheless, Luther's sermon shows the desire (albeit fleeting, in his case) for a compassionate and non-violent approach to Jewish conversion, similar to the evangelical approach proposed by the WCC in 1948:

Because of the unique inheritance of the Jewish people, the churches should make provision for the education of ministers specially fitted for this task [missionizing the Jews]. Provision should also be made for Christian literature to interpret the gospel to the Jewish people. Equally, it should be made clear to church members that the strongest argument in winning others for Christ is the radiance and contagion of victorious living...the converted Jew calls for particular tenderness...because his coming into the church carries with it often a deeply wounding break with family and friends. In reconstruction and relief activities the churches must not lose sight of the plight of Christians of Jewish origin....<sup>112</sup>

This call for Jewish conversion through Christian missionizing and evangelism<sup>113</sup>

<sup>110</sup> See Martin Luther, "That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew," and "Concerning the Jews and their Lies," in chapter one (above).

<sup>111</sup> Martin Luther, *Sermon in Eisleben*. 15 February 1546 (<http://www.lcje.net/papers/2000/Cohen.pdf>. (accessed 25 February 2009).

<sup>112</sup> "Report of Committee IV: *Concerns of the Churches*, Chapter 3: *The Christian Approach to the Jews*." Section 4: The Christian witness to the Jewish people."

<sup>113</sup> "[Christians must] recover the universality of our Lord's commission by including the Jewish people in

unfortunately encouraged and bolstered the same supersessionism that was an original cause of the culture of anti-Jewish Christian theological contempt.

Thirteen years later in 1961, at the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches, declarations by the Council offered a much clearer challenge to the Christian doctrine of theological contempt.<sup>114</sup> At this Assembly, the Council also finally rejected the charges of deicide that had been pervasive in Christianity. Christopher Leighton writes, “To reject the deicide charge as foundational for the Christian story amounted to a [Christian] confession of complicity. The task of making restitution for a legacy of contempt began to emerge as an exacting mandate of repentance....”<sup>115</sup> Thus the most pernicious example of Christian theological contempt (and the primary inspiration for social contempt) was removed from Christian doctrine.

### **Christian Responses Post World War II: Vatican II**

The most significant shift in Christianity came about through the Second Vatican Conference, which convened off and on from 1962-1965. Vatican II, as the document produced during the Second Vatican Conference is commonly known, was a clear expression by the Catholic Church—the largest Christian denomination—of revised doctrine. Vatican II signaled a shift in how the Church understood itself and its relationship with its members, and also in how the Catholic Church understood its relationship with other world religions.

The final declarations of the Catholic Church in Vatican II were released on

---

their evangelistic work.” (in Leighton, *CJT*, 41)

<sup>114</sup> The Council declared: “the historic events which led to the Crucifixion should not be presented as to impose upon the Jewish people today responsibilities which must fall on all humanity, not on one race or community.” (Leighton, *CJT*, 41.)

<sup>115</sup> Leighton, *CJT*, 41.

October 28, 1965. After a period of drafting and consultation over the course of three years and two papacies, the largest Christian denomination announced its commitment to a new relationship with Judaism and the Jewish people. This new relationship between the Catholic Church and other religious groups, including Judaism, was described in the “Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions; *Nostra Aetate*”<sup>116</sup>— which discusses Jews and Judaism in its fourth section. While the document as a whole is worthy of our attention and consideration, a summary of its major points is sufficient for our purposes.

1. The Church and the Jews are connected through a special historical and spiritual bond: Jewish and Gentile Christians were reconciled through the cross of Christ.
2. Christian<sup>117</sup> faith and chosenness originate with the traditions of Ancient Israel. The History of the Jewish people is essential for Christian continuity: revelations in the “Old Testament” express the relationship between God and humanity; Christianity is “grafted” onto the same roots of Ancient Israel as Judaism. The redemption of Ancient Israel from Egyptian bondage (recounted in the Book of Exodus) foreshadows the salvation of all believers.
3. The early leaders of the Christian community—the first promulgators of the Christian message—were Jewish.
4. In spite of Jewish opposition to Christianity, God continues to hold the Jewish descendants of Ancient Israel in a special relationship. (In the words of Paul, “As regards the gospel they [the Jews] are enemies of God for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved, for the sake of their ancestors; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” (NRSV, Romans 11:28-29))
5. Christianity awaits the same utopian messianic era as the Jews, as prophesied in the Prophetic works.
6. The depiction of Jewish involvement in Jesus’s crucifixion is accurate, but the modern Jewish community must not be held responsible. “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

<sup>116</sup> *Nostra Aetate* [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html) (accessed on 7 February 2009).

<sup>117</sup> While many Christians (i.e. Protestants and Eastern Orthodox) challenge the authority of the Pope and the Catholic Church as the true voice of Christianity, the Catholic Church considers itself to be the true tradition of Christianity. Most mainstream non-Catholic Christian denominations will accept some historical authority of the Church, prior to the Eastern schism and Protestant Reformation, while Mormons deny Catholic authority entirely.

Holy Scriptures.”<sup>118</sup> Any such presentation must be avoided in written text and delivered homily.

7. Anti-Semitism (persecution and hatred of the Jews), is unacceptable and must be avoided (along with persecution against all humanity)
8. The Cross, the defining symbol of Christianity, must be understood as a symbol of God’s love for humanity, and not as a source of hatred or violence.

We see that statements four, five, and eight address issues of theological contempt, while the remaining points relate to causes of social contempt—although statement two incorporates causes of both social and theological contempt. There are a few significant features of *Nostra Aetate* and of Vatican II as a whole that must be considered if one wishes to understand the implications of the declarations. While Jews may read Vatican II as a response to historical events, specifically to the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel, this assumption is not universally accepted. There are some in the Catholic Church itself who argue that the declarations are intended to be ahistorical. The Holocaust and the Modern State of Israel are not mentioned in the Papal Declarations, and *Nostra Aetate* itself makes it clear that it is a declaration “moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel’s spiritual love.”<sup>119</sup>

We must not underestimate the involvement of the Jewish community in the push for and drafting of Vatican II. Leaders from the American Jewish Committee played an important role representing the interests of the Jewish Community to Vatican leaders, as is evident in published documents<sup>120</sup> and personal correspondence in the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives. Vatican leaders met publicly and

<sup>118</sup> *Nostra Aetate* [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html) (accessed 7 February 2009).

<sup>119</sup> *Nostra Aetate* [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html) (accessed 7 February 2009).

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Morris B. Abram and John Slawson, eds., *Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on the Jews: A Background Report*, (New York: The American Jewish Committee, November 1965).

privately with Jewish leaders, including the well-known Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, who willingly used his influence as a scholar, theologian, and community leader to represent the American Jewish Committee as a volunteer.<sup>121</sup> Letters between Heschel and Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, (1925-1992), director of Interreligious Affairs at the American Jewish Committee, clearly demonstrate the involvement of the American Jewish Committee in Vatican II—from the distribution of position papers to Catholic leaders regarding Christian contempt to meetings with Vatican leaders.<sup>122</sup> Perhaps most telling is a letter from Rabbi Heschel to Cardinal Bea dated November 22, 1963 regarding the wording of a draft of *Nostra Aetate* that had been released during the process of preparation.<sup>123</sup> In the letter Rabbi Heschel comments on the language used in

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Meyer Paper letter to Mr. John Slawson, Executive Vice President of The American Jewish Committee Institute of Human Relations, 31 January 1961, Marc H. Tanenbaum [sic] Papers, 603/12/“AJ Heschel” file, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio: Rabbi Heschel’s involvement in the efforts of The American Jewish Committee was first suggested by Mr. Meyer Paper, of St. Paul, Minnesota. In a letter to Mr. John Slawson, Executive Vice President of The American Jewish Committee Institute of Human Relations dated 31 January 1961, Paper wrote, “It is my feeling that Dr. Heschel...is interested in certain phases of the work being done by our Committee. I am, therefore, suggesting that you contact him for the purpose of obtaining his views on the subject...” In a letter of response dated 10 March 1961, John Slawson responded to Meyer Paper that Dr. Heschel had been engaged to participate in a conference of Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant religious journalists as a representative of the Jewish community. This marked the beginning of a lengthy, fruitful, and productive relationship between Dr. Heschel and The American Jewish Committee.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Marc Tannenbaum “Confidential” letter to Heschel, 15 November 1961, Marc H. Tanenbaum [sic] Papers, 603/12/“AJ Heschel” file, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio. In a “Confidential” letter dated November 15, 1961, Tanenbaum wrote to Heschel: “I hope you have received by now the two books by Cardinal Bea [the leader of the Vatican Council on Unity and one of the people most responsible for Vatican II]...Enclosed are several documents which relate to your mission: The “Appeldoorn Statement” which is the basis of the declaration to be issued by the Ecumenical Council on Catholic-Jewish relations; the document, “The Image of the Jews in Catholic Teaching” that we have already submitted to the Vatican.” Later today, I hope to be able to send you a draft version of the memorandum that we will be sending out on Friday to the Vatican on Catholic liturgy. Also enclosed are several statements which reflect the growing acceptance on the part of important Roman Catholics of the concept and practice of religious pluralism. A very important document on this question is the enclosed study of Roman Catholic attitudes toward religious liberty...”

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Letter from A.J. Heschel to Cardinal A. Bea, 22 November 1963, Marc H. Tanenbaum [sic] Papers, 603/12/“AJ Heschel” file, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio. “Your Eminence, The reports on the Conciliar document on the Jews as published in the press have been received with a sense of enthusiasm all over the world and hailed as an event of epoch making importance. Humbly I offer a prayer of thanksgiving to our Father in heaven for the privilege of witnessing the Divine inspiration and grace that guided you in bringing about this great testimony to God’s abundant mercy. I am informed, however, of a few words which may not only mar the splendor of this momentous document but may, God forbid,

the draft of *Nostra Aetate* and tactfully offers suggestions about the document's phrasing that might help it to be more felicitously received by the Jewish community. Rabbi Heschel's popularity as a scholar and religious leader helped to serve Jewish interests during the Second Vatican Council,<sup>124</sup> as doubtless did his private audience<sup>125</sup> with Pope

---

virtually nullify the abundance of blessing contained therein....This clause introduces a dissonant note of indulgence and tentativeness incompatible with the spirit and intention of this momentous declaration. While I am personally convinced that this statement reflects no intention either to qualify or to place conditions on the spirit of love, the above mentioned phrase lends itself to very serious misinterpretation. Those who are anxious to cast suspicion upon the ecumenical spirit will interpret this statement to mean that the friendship of the Church for the Jews is contingent upon the Jews' willingness to accept the Christian faith. As your Eminence knows such an implication would deeply hurt the sensitivity of the Jewish people. The enemies of the Church will spare no effort in maintaining that the whole document is intended to bring about the end of the Jewish faith. Whatever hope and vision the Roman Catholic Church may adhere to in terms of eschatology, this document while addressed to the Catholics will be studied and cherished by Jews all over the world. Dedicated as we are to the fostering of mutual knowledge and esteem, it is of vital importance to eliminate any statement that would place weapons into the hands of those who are hostile to this great objective. This document is a proclamation inspired by the love of God, a love which knows no conditions, no bounds, no qualifications. I therefore respectfully suggest that the phrase quoted above be deleted. At the same time I should like to draw the attention of your Eminence to another passage in this declaration which might also be misinterpreted because of ambiguity of expression. I am referring to: *More tamen Christi non a toto populo tunc vivente...* I respectfully suggest that the *non a toto populo* may be misinterpreted to imply that the majority of the Jewish people living at that time bears responsibility for the Crucifixion. I am fully aware that such an interpretation would be contrary to the belief so forcefully presented by your Eminence and other contemporary Catholic theologians. In recent statements by yourself and others it was made clear that only a few individuals might have shared in the responsibility for that event, but that the Jewish people as a whole had nothing to do with it and are entirely absolved from any guilt. The declaration itself states clearly that Jews bear no more guilt than the rest of mankind, a principle which as your Eminence knows has been solemnly proclaimed by the Council of Trent. May I respectfully suggest that this phrase be amended to read The overwhelming majority of the Jewish people then living shared no more responsibility for the death of Christ than the rest of mankind."

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Eva Fleischner, "Heschel's Significance for Jewish-Christian Relations," *Quarterly Review* 4, n. 4 (Winter 1984): 75. "It is generally known that Heschel played an important role at Vatican II...During the preparatory stage Heschel acted as consultant to the American Jewish Committee and other Jewish agencies, which had been asked by Cardinal Bea's Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity to prepare background documentation for the council. With Heschel's help three memoranda were submitted to Cardinal Bea. The first two dealt with various problem areas in Catholic teaching and liturgy. In a third, submitted in May, 1962, Heschel proposed that a new beginning be made with a Vatican Council declaration that would recognize the "permanent preciousness" of Jews as Jews, rather than seeing them as potential converts, and that would expressly repudiate anti-Semitism and the deicide charge."

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Debrief notes from Z. Shuster and A.J. Heschel following their audience with Pope Paul VI, 14 September 1964. Marc H. Tanenbaum [sic] Papers, 603/12/"AJ Heschel" file, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio. In notes dated 14 September 1964 recalling phone conversations with Zachary Shuster (the European leader of the American Jewish Committee) and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, immediately following the private audience of Shuster and Heschel with Pope Paul VI, Rabbi Tannenbaum wrote, "Rabbi Heschel had an interview with ZS [Zachary Shuster] this morning with the Pope and spent 35 minutes [sic] with him in private audience and had a long discussion. Rabbi Heschel gave him [the Pope] a very clear exposition of the four points and concentrated on the passage on conversion. The Pope considers

Paul VI.<sup>126</sup>

Christian responses to *Nostra Aetate* continue to advance the agenda of the declaration. Efforts by subsequent Popes, Cardinals, and other Catholic Ecclesiastical bodies have also prompted the promulgation of formal efforts towards Jewish-Catholic reconciliation.<sup>127</sup> Some of these include: *Reflections and Suggestions for the Application of Directives of Nostra Aetate* (in December of 1969); *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration Nostra Aetate* (in January of 1975); *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* (in March of 1998), and—most recently—*Deus Caritas Est* (“God is Love”), the first encyclical (papal declaration) by Pope Benedict XVI on 25 December 2005.<sup>128</sup>

The organizational bodies of several major Protestant denominations<sup>129</sup> have also issued similar declarations in opposition to Christian anti-Semitism which call for renewed efforts at engagement with the Jewish people. Since the Holocaust, Christianity has, on the whole, re-examined its own doctrine of contempt towards the Jews, and has come to understand that the Nazi genocide was inspired by this culture of contempt—even if the Nazis’ actions were not direct responses to Christian beliefs. As Irving

---

the present document very friendly and benevolent to the Jews. He claims it is primarily a religious document and cannot be ruled by people from the outside. He said the passage on conversion is based on the scriptures of the New Testament. It is what the Church itself has expressed, and the Jews are not obliged to accept. The deicide statement is also based on the scriptures of the New Testament. Many people within the Church believe that the declaration is too favorable to the Jews. If there is too much pressure brought to bear, they may take the declaration off the agenda. The Pope was very friendly and cordial but he insisted that the document is a religious belief and based on the scriptures of the New Testament. It is up to the Council to decide the matter.”

<sup>126</sup> Pope John XXIII originally convened the Second Vatican Council in 1962 before passing away on 3 June 1963. Pope Paul VI sought to continue John XXIII’s legacy in the work of the Second Vatican Council.

<sup>127</sup> Leighton, *CJT*, 42.

<sup>128</sup> This encyclical was released well after *Dabru Emet*, but the text should unequivocally demonstrate the ongoing commitment of the Catholic Church to reevaluate its relationship with the Jews and Judaism.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Leighton, *CJT*, 42: Leighton refers to formal declarations by the Lutheran World Federation, the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church USA, the United Church of Christ, the Mennonite European Regional Conference, and the Synod of the Protestant Church of the Rhineland, among others.

Greenberg states, “After the Shoah, the burden of this past teaching [contempt for the Jews] was insufferable to repentant Christians. The Shoah [Holocaust] made clear the overriding need to end all circles of hatred that surrounded and isolated groups of others.”<sup>130</sup> Heschel’s contributions to Vatican II mark an official end to the inclusion of Christian social and theological contempt in Catholic teaching. Anti-Semitism persists after Vatican II, but not as a product of sanctioned Christian social and theological contempt.

The efforts of the Catholic Church in Vatican II, and other Christian denominations prior to Vatican II, demonstrate a world-wide Christian effort to reshape the relationship between Judaism and Christianity in response to the culmination of Christian contempt in Nazi Germany. Even if we accept the implicit claims of Vatican II that Christian doctrinal changes were ahistorical, we can see that Christianity and the Christian understanding of Jews and Judaism did indeed change in the wake of the Holocaust.<sup>131</sup>

Christian scholar Christopher M. Leighton assesses the impact of Vatican II in the following terms: “With this declaration [Vatican II], the Roman Catholic Church initiated a shift in thought that is still revolutionizing Christian understandings of the Jewish people and Judaism. By insisting on the enduring character of God’s covenantal

---

<sup>130</sup> Greenberg, *CJT*, 154.

<sup>131</sup> An argument for future consideration would be the impact of the discoveries at Qumran in 1947 on Christianity, particularly as Christianity went through a period of renewed self-definition in response to the Holocaust. The text of Dead Sea Scrolls demonstrates that editorial changes were standard in the process of textual transmission in the era when Christianity began. Cf. Alan D. Crown, *The Parting of the Ways*, 547: “Both sets of scholars, Jewish and Christian, were suspicious of the authenticity of each others’ source literature and were restricted by its paucity. Thus, these early studies were not actively followed up in a disciplined and substantial manner until the Dead Sea Scrolls provided a new impetus to assess relationships between the scrolls and Christian literature, and new methodological approaches were applied to the traditional Jewish writings, which reinforced that impetus.” A footnote on this comment refers readers to “J. Neusner, “The Teaching of the Rabbis: Approaches Old and New,” in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 27 (1976): 23-55, and idem, “The History of Earlier Rabbinic Judaism: Some New Approaches” in *History of Religion* 16 (1977): 216-236.

promises, the document began a process of authorizing a nonsupersessionist [*sic*] reading of the Christian story.”<sup>132</sup> For the first time since its origin, Christianity has moved away from anti-Jewish doctrines of social and theological contempt toward a positive understanding of Judaism.

What began as several unrelated responses to the horrors of the Holocaust has grown to nearly universal opposition to endemic Christian anti-Semitism. From the early calls of Reinhold Niebuhr for an end to Christian anti-Judaism to the Seelisberg Conference of 1947 which involved leading representatives from several Christian denominations, to declarations by the World Council of Churches and the Vatican, there is a clear progression of steadily increasing support for doctrinal changes to Christianity in the decades following the Holocaust. Certainly these qualify as the “dramatic changes” to Christianity referred to in the introduction to *Dabru Emet*.

### **American Jewish Responses to the Holocaust**

The Holocaust and Israel developed together and featured prominently in the consciousness of the American Jewish community.<sup>133</sup> Just as the Holocaust changed how Jews thought about themselves, so too did the creation of Israel change Jewish self-perception. These changes took a variety of forms: from newfound interest in Jewish theology and religious thought to increased interest in Jewish literature and culture.<sup>134</sup> Synagogue attendance and participation in Jewish educational programming both skyrocketed,<sup>135</sup> as the Holocaust and Israel became defining features of American

---

<sup>132</sup> Leighton, *CJT*, 41.

<sup>133</sup> Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 333.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 279-280.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 279-280.

Judaism.<sup>136</sup>

Nazi atrocities challenged the foundations of Jewish thought and theology. In the words of one Jewish Holocaust survivor, “I cannot fathom how a caring and compassionate God could have been in Europe, witnessed the horror and destruction of my family, and not interceded.”<sup>137</sup> Members of the Jewish community sought responses to these problems from leading European Jewish theologians from before the war,<sup>138</sup> as well as from immigrant American Jewish scholars who had survived the Holocaust, such as Emil Fackenheim, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Joseph Soloveitchik.<sup>139</sup> Just as Buber offered an approach to Jewish-Christian dialogue before the Holocaust,<sup>140</sup> so did Fackenheim, Soloveitchik, and (especially) Heschel frame the Jewish-Christian encounter in the years following the War as they helped the Jewish community find peace in the shadow of Nazi destruction.

Setting aside Reform Judaism’s efforts towards universalism which avert contempt invoked by particularism (which will be covered separately), our attention now turns to Jewish efforts to reconsider and remove contemptuous attitudes toward Christianity that existed before the Second World War.

In his book, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen claimed that Jews and Jewry were permanently changed because of the Holocaust.<sup>141</sup> The preeminent Holocaust scholar and Jewish theologian Emil Fackenheim, was, earlier, disturbed by this

---

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 333.

<sup>137</sup> Paraphrased from comments made by Rabbi Herman Schaalman during a lecture commemorating *Kristallnacht* at the American Jewish Archives in 2005.

<sup>138</sup> For example, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig

<sup>139</sup> Sarna, *American Judaism*, 280.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Martin Buber, “Open Letter to Gerhard Kittel” in Talmage, *Disputation*, 49-54. In an exchange similar to the Mendelssohn-Lavater affair two hundred years earlier, Gerhard Kittel (1888-1948), a Christian who understood Nazism to be a fulfillment of Christian religion, expressed his thoughts on a solution to “the Jewish question” to Buber.

<sup>141</sup> Goldhagen, *Executioners*, 8.

possibility, and argued that for Judaism to change in response to the Holocaust would be to grant Hitler and the Nazis “a posthumous victory” —an unforgivable offense.<sup>142</sup> But these two seemingly oppositional statements are certainly reconcilable: the attitudes of Jews may change, even if Jewish theology and Jewish religion—the postulation of and interaction with the Divine—remains unchanged. Fackenheim focuses on the need that Jews must not change their conception of God. Goldhagen, on the other hand, focuses on our need (as Jews) to change our perception of ourselves and our relationship with the other.

The involvement of Rabbis Abraham Joshua Heschel and Marc Tannenbaum in the Second Vatican Council demonstrates that Jews were engaged in the development of a new relationship with Christianity following World War II. These efforts do not rise to the level of *rapprochement* reached by Christian introspection and reconsideration of the doctrines of theological and social contempt present in Christianity, naturally, as Jewish contempt for Christianity was never as powerful or destructive a force as was Christian contempt for Jews. Nonetheless, in the context of Christian self-reevaluation and attempts at *rapprochement*, the presence of contempt for Christianity in Judaism required reciprocal reconsideration in order to advance meaningful dialogue. While Heschel urged the Catholic Church to remove negative references to the Jews from liturgy and doctrine, traditional Jewish liturgy continued to include prayers that cast non-Jews in a negative light.<sup>143</sup> Particularism has always been a hallmark of Jewish practice, and such particularistic ideals inevitably include an element of contempt for the “other.”

---

<sup>142</sup> Emil L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections* (New York: NYU Press, 1970), 71.

<sup>143</sup> Particularistic prayers had been removed from Reform liturgy long before the Holocaust. Cf. below and Gary P. Zola, “The First Reform Prayer Book in America: The Liturgy of the Reformed Society of Israelites” in *Platforms and Prayer Books: Theological and Liturgical Perspectives on Reform Judaism*, ed. Dana Evan Kaplan (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Press, 2002), 99-118.

Nevertheless, Heschel is credited as being a leading force behind Jewish reconsideration of particularism.<sup>144</sup>

### **Reform Jewish Universalism**

The first steps towards the removal of Jewish contempt for Christians and Christianity in Reform Judaism predate the Holocaust and are made clear through the efforts of early Reformers to reject traditional Jewish particularistic ideals and embrace universalism. The earliest German Jewish Reformers sought to remove prayers from the liturgy that were seen as overly particularistic.<sup>145</sup> Many of the aforementioned liturgical examples of Jewish contempt for non-Jews were changed or expurgated from early Reform liturgy in Europe prior to the arrival of Reform Judaism in America.<sup>146</sup> These steps towards *rapprochement* with Christianity by the early reformers, prior to the Holocaust, must not be underestimated or ignored. Such changes were the result of positive motivation,<sup>147</sup> and were not made out of fear in response to the Holocaust or in reciprocation to similar changes within Christianity.

The emphasis on universalism in Reform Judaism had already led to a rejection of social contempt—a rejection that Reform Judaism affirmed as an American religious movement. The American religious establishment had little tolerance for intolerance, and, because America was founded on the principles of “Liberty and Justice for all,”

---

<sup>144</sup> “Historically Judaism has largely been interpreted by its thinkers as the only true religion... This attitude is reexamined in light of the work of the contemporary theologian, A.J. Heschel, who continues a trend...to grant validity to other religious traditions.” Harold Kasimow, “Abraham Joshua Heschel and Interreligious Dialogue,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 18, n. 3 (Summer 1981)

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Jakob J. Petuchowski, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe: The Liturgy of European Liberal and Reform Judaism* (New York: UAHC Press, 1968).

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Petuchowski, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe*

<sup>147</sup> The early reformers made principled changes because of their understanding of Judaism and the prophetic call, and not out of fear or desires for acculturation.

doctrines of social contempt were completely in opposition to fundamental American ideals.

The “Platforms” of the Central Conference of American Rabbis similarly show that the Reform Movement had moved away from the teaching of contempt for Christianity prior to the Holocaust. Classical Reform Judaism, articulated in the Pittsburgh Platform (1885), clearly sought a positive relationship with Christianity (as well as Islam). The sixth plank of the Pittsburgh Platform included the following statement:

Christianity and Islam being daughter religions of Judaism, we appreciate their providential mission to aid in the spreading of monotheistic and moral truth...we extend the hand of fellowship to all who cooperate with us in the establishment of the reign of truth and righteousness among men.<sup>148</sup>

The reference to “daughter religions” was subtly triumphalist,<sup>149</sup> but clearly devoid of the intense contempt for Christianity present throughout earlier (European) Jewish texts, discussed in the first chapter of this thesis.

Several well-known Reform leaders delivered sermons sympathetic to Christianity in the years before the Holocaust, including Stephen S. Wise (whom Michael Meyer calls “one of Reform Judaism’s most aggressive rebels”)<sup>150</sup> and Ferdinand Isserman.<sup>151</sup> Such sermons were controversial and many community members were troubled by what they understood to be Jewish encouragement of assimilation and

<sup>148</sup> CCAR Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, in Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 388.

<sup>149</sup> Christianity and Islam could have been referred to as “sister religions” or “brother religions” instead of “daughter religions.”

<sup>150</sup> Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 302

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Ferdinand M. Isserman collection at The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives. Isserman delivered several sermons on Jesus including “Dr. Clayton Morrison’s Challenge that the Jew Take Jesus into the Synagogue,” and “The Jewish Jesus and the Christian Christ.” See also, *idem.*, *Rebels and Saints; The Social Message of the Prophets of Israel* (St. Louis, Missouri: The Bethany Press, 1933).

acculturation by endorsing a love and support for Jesus and Christianity. Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath (1902-1973), Executive Director of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, was also known to advocate “a greater Jewish appreciation of Jesus,”<sup>152</sup> prior to his becoming president of the UAHC in 1943, in the midst of the Holocaust.

The Columbus Platform of 1937, undoubtedly written with knowledge of the Nazi driven anti-Semitism that had become prevalent in Europe and specifically Germany—where Reform Judaism had originated—was less triumphalist or particularistic in approach than the 1885 platform, and offered a far more universalistic perspective in its fifth paragraph under the heading “Israel”:

Throughout the ages it has been Israel’s mission to witness to the Divine in the face of every form of paganism and materialism. We regard it as our historic task to cooperate with all men in the establishment of the kingdom of God, of universal brotherhood, justice, truth and peace on earth. This is our Messianic goal.

It is worthwhile to note the paragraph header of “Israel,” as the Columbus Platform was written eleven years before the modern state came into existence. At the time, Reform Judaism and the CCAR was moving away from anti-Zionism—a shift demonstrated most clearly by the second paragraph of the “Israel” plank in the 1937 platform which called for “the rehabilitation of Palestine,” and “its upbuilding as a Jewish homeland...a haven of refuge for the oppressed [and] also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life.”<sup>153</sup> Nonetheless, despite the beginning of a shift toward Zionism within Reform Judaism at this time, in the context of the excerpt above “Israel” refers more to the Jewish people, and not to the modern state. The mission of the Jewish people to be an *Or Lagoyim*, a

<sup>152</sup> Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 355.

<sup>153</sup> CCAR Columbus Platform of 1937 in Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 389. Also, Cf. Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 327 which discusses papers on the subject of “Israel” presented at the 1935 CCAR convention, “as background for formulating a new plank on the subject in the proposed platform...” in response to ongoing debate within the CCAR about Zionism.

“light unto the nations” is explicit in this excerpt and understood as sacrosanct; the “Messianic goal” of Judaism will be fulfilled through the advancement of human unity, justice, truth, and peace. Certainly this statement (similar to the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform) stands in opposition to Jewish contempt for Christianity on social or theological grounds.

The 1976 San Francisco Platform was the first formal position statement by American Reform Judaism after the founding of the State of Israel and after the revelation of the extent and severity of Nazi genocide. A response to the two most significant events since the birth of Reform Judaism was certainly necessary:

The Holocaust shattered our easy optimism about humanity and its inevitable progress....A universal concern for humanity unaccompanied by a devotion to our particular people is self-destructive; a passion for our people without involvement in humankind contradicts what the prophets have meant to us. Judaism calls us simultaneously to universal and particular obligations....The existence of the Jew is an argument against despair; Jewish survival is warrant for human hope. We remain God’s witness that history is not meaningless....

The 1976 “Centenary Perspective” was a step towards Jewish particularism (in comparison to the previous platforms), even as it clearly promoted a message of universalism. Perhaps words from Emil Fackenheim’s 1970 essay, *How My Mind Has Changed*, parallels the shifting sentiments towards the Jewish-Christian encounter present in the 1976 platform. “[The root of anti-Semitism] lies in the Christian view...that the birth of the new Israel entails the death of the old.”<sup>154</sup> The 1976 platform reflects a post-Holocaust shift in Jewish philosophy toward particularism, but it remains largely non-triumphalist, especially in comparison with contemporaneous Orthodox statements such

---

<sup>154</sup> Emil Fackenheim, “How My Mind has Changed,” in *Christian Century Series*, excerpted in Talmage, *Disputation*, 250.

as the essay *Confrontation* by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik and two *responsa* by Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Soloveitchik's cousin) demanding that Jews abstain from any contact with Christians.<sup>155</sup>

The 1999 "Statement of Principles" (Pittsburgh II) reflects Reform Judaism's continuing concern with particularistic issues at the end of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, the rise in Jewish particularistic concerns in American Reform Judaism does not suggest a loss of interest in the distinctively American values of religious tolerance and pluralism. The Statement made it clear that through God life is sacred, and that we have a sacred responsibility to respond to God through our interactions with other people, Jews and non-Jews alike.<sup>156</sup>

As we have seen, a trend towards particularism appears to emerge in American Reform Judaism after World War II. The 1885 Pittsburgh Platform advocated the "providential message" of Christianity and Islam, while the 1999 Pittsburgh Platform focused on the unique, special relationship between God and the Jewish people. These two messages offer insight into the direction of the movement. In this comparison, it becomes clear that American Reform Judaism, which had supported and advocated universalism for years, was influenced strongly by modern events, particularly the Holocaust and the creation of Israel. These events clearly influenced the way that

---

<sup>155</sup> Soloveitchik's essay will be explored in greater depth below. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein wrote the following in response to a question: "...[A] plague [i.e. *Nostra Aetate*] has now broken out in many locales on account of the initiative of the new pope, whose only intent is to cause all the Jews to abandon their pure and holy faith so that they will accept Christianity...you should not even send a letter...expressing what you might be prepared to discuss, for all contact with them assists them in their most evil plot." Cf. Moshe Feinstein, *Iggerot Moshe, Yoreh; Deah 3; Number 43: Two Responsa Concerning the Prohibition Against Attendance at a Meeting with Christians on Matters of Rapprochement in Faith and Association with Them*. 19 Adar I, 5727/1 March 1967, and 9 Adar II, 5727/21 March 1967, trans. David Ellenson, "A Jewish Legal Authority Addresses Jewish-Christian Dialogue: Two Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein," *American Jewish Archives Journal* LII (2000): 112-128. Excerpt from 122-123.

<sup>156</sup> Cf. Gary P. Zola, "The Common Places of American Reform Judaism's Conflicting Platforms" in *Hebrew Union College Annual* 72 (2001): 155-191.

American Reform Jews thought about Judaism and the world, just as they had an impact on Christian views of Christianity and the world.

### Orthodox Responses to the Holocaust: Irving Greenberg

As much as the Holocaust challenged Jewish understanding of Judaism, it also prompted challenges to Jewish understandings of the world. Orthodox rabbi Irving Greenberg explained that “[t]he Holocaust is itself a revelation,”<sup>157</sup> a source of *noesis* for Judaism, Christianity, and all of humanity.<sup>158</sup> The understanding gained from the Holocaust has several implications, the foremost of which (for the purposes of this project) is that “Jews have a vested interest in Christianity’s existence.”<sup>159</sup> While the Holocaust challenges the theological foundations of Christianity and Judaism, as well as how Christians relate to Jews and Judaism, it also challenges Jews in their view of Christianity:

If Judaism finds the strength and feeling to admit revelation in this time, then it, too, has the prospect of renewed hope and divine Presence. Paradoxically enough, the security of its own confirmation—the restoration of the land, the covenantal sign—releases Judaism to ponder anew the significance of Christianity. Confirmed now in its resumed redemption and responding to the Holocaust’s challenge not to put down others, Judaism must explore the possibility that through the covenant, nurtured and given birth through its body, God has called the Gentiles....The unqualified Jewish renewed encounter with Christianity is a painful prospect. For Jews to accept the revelation of the Holocaust and

---

<sup>157</sup> Greenberg, *CJT*, 29.

<sup>158</sup> Greenberg, *CJT*, 29. Although this essay by Rabbi Greenberg was published in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, the collection of essays that accompanied the publication of *Dabru Emet*, according to the editor’s note this particular essay was compiled by *Dabru Emet* co-author and *Christianity in Jewish Terms* co-editor Tikva Frymer-Kensky and David Toole from several essays written by Irving Greenberg between 1977 and 1999. As such, the positions expressed by Greenberg pre-date *Dabru Emet* and represent a primary source: a Jewish response to Christianity post World War II.

<sup>159</sup> Greenberg, *CJT*, 30.

Israel leads them to challenge existing denominational lines and to open up to fellow Jews and the world in a new, painful, risky, yet exhilarating way. **The acknowledgement of the Holocaust and Israel as revelation brings with it many gifts:** an end to easy Jewish identification of liberation with secularity and liberalism; a much greater Jewish sense of pluralism; **an appreciation of Christianity as a moral/religious balance wheel....**<sup>160</sup>

A new relationship between Judaism and Christianity requires serious reconsideration of the culture of contempt. “After the Holocaust, the relationship of Judaism and Christianity should enable one to affirm the fullness of the faith claims of the other, to affirm the profound inner relationship between the two, and to recognize and admit how much closer they are to each other than either has been able to say.”<sup>161</sup> This is a clear call for the creation of a positive dialogue between Judaism and Christianity following the rejection of the endemic social and theological contempt that has defined the relationship in generations past. Even more important, this is a remarkable call for Jewish-Christian reconciliation by an Orthodox rabbi from a culture of Judaism that is exceedingly particularist and triumphalist in its outlook, even though Greenberg is admittedly on the most liberal edge of traditional Orthodoxy.

### **Orthodox Responses to the Holocaust: Joseph Soloveitchik**

Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1903-1993) offers a significantly contrasting position on the relationship between Judaism and Christianity in his first English essay, *Confrontation*.<sup>162</sup> Before approaching this essay, it is important to consider Soloveitchik’s perspective on dialogue in general: “In each to whom I relate as a human being, I find a friend, for we have many things in common, as well as a stranger, for each

<sup>160</sup> Greenberg, *CJT*, 32-33. Emphasis added.

<sup>161</sup> Greenberg, *CJT*, 33.

<sup>162</sup> Joseph B. Soloveitchik, “Confrontation,” *Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Thought* 6, n. 2 (1964).

of us is unique and wholly other. This otherness stands in the way of complete mutual understanding.”<sup>163</sup> From this particular perspective, it would seem that two individuals, let alone Christianity and Judaism, will never be able completely to understand each other<sup>164</sup>—that true dialogue is not possible on a human level because of the subjectivity of experience. Soloveitchik holds that dialogue *is* possible, though, but only on a “cosmic”—or “macro”—level (by which he means a dialogue which will engage BIG issues) provided that both parties recognize their similarities and differences. He offers several pre-conditions for interreligious dialogue, foremost of which is that the “confrontation”<sup>165</sup> of two faith communities is possible only if it is accompanied by a clear assurance that both parties will enjoy equal rights and full religious freedom”<sup>166</sup>—a situation that is possible and even encouraged with unique fervor in America. Guilt and blame must be avoided by Jews and Christians, particularly with regard to the historical relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Finally, a “scientific approach” that relegates one side to “observation, judgment, and evaluation” is similarly unacceptable and to be avoided; again, both parties must approach the dialogue as equals.

Soloveitchik’s position is informed by recognition of the non-transferability of faith or religious experience, and he insists that dialogue must avoid the imposition of suggestions about how the “other” should change. For Soloveitchik, this is a “*conditio*

---

<sup>163</sup> I used a non-paginated electronic version of the essay *Confrontation* in my research, but this particular quotation came from the antepenultimate paragraph of section I.5.

<http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/resources/articles/soloveitchik/> (accessed 17 June 2008).

<sup>164</sup> What I understand is based upon my own personal experiences, and cannot be understood by anyone else the same way, as no one else has identical experiences. What I understand and interpret as the color “green” or “brown” is not necessarily identical to that which other people experience as the color “green” or “brown.” This is almost the understanding of William James with regard to religious experience (*Varieties of Religious Experience*), in which he argues that religious experience is non-transferable.

<sup>165</sup> “Confrontation” is the word that Soloveitchik utilizes for “dialogue.”

<sup>166</sup> Soloveitchik, *Confrontation*, Section II.3

*sine qua non*” for dialogue with Christians. Judaism cannot change itself in order to engage in dialogue with Christianity, and Christianity cannot change to allow engagement with Judaism. The triumphalism that we might attribute to normative Orthodox Judaism is absent from Soloveitchik’s treatise, but also absent is any move toward removing or reducing Jewish contempt for Christianity.

A mainstream Orthodox response to Soloveitchik’s essay is the “Statement Adopted by the Rabbinical Council of America at the Mid-Winter Conference, February 3-5, 1964”:

...[I]n recent years there has evolved in our country as well as throughout the world a desire to seek better understanding and a mutual respect among the world’s major faiths. The current threat of secularism and materialism and the modern atheistic negation of religion and religious values makes even more imperative a harmonious relationship among the faiths....each religious community is an individual entity which cannot be merged or equated with a community which is committed to a different faith....Any suggestion that the historical and meta-historical worth of a faith community be viewed against the backdrop of another faith, and the mere hint that a revision of basic historic attitudes is anticipated, are incongruous with the fundamentals of religious liberty and freedom of conscience and can only breed discord and suspicion. Such an approach is unacceptable to any self-respecting faith community that is proud of its past, vibrant and active in the present and determined to live on in the future and to continue serving God in its own individual way. Only full appreciation on the part of all of the singular role, inherent worth and basic prerogatives of each religious community will help promote the spirit of cooperation among the faiths. It is the prayerful hope of the Rabbinical Council of America that all inter-religious discussion and activity will be confined to these dimensions and will be guided by the prophet Micah (4:5) ‘Let all the people walk, each one in the name of his god, and we shall walk in the name of our Lord, our God, forever and ever.’

This statement clearly recognizes the changes to the world’s religious milieu in the decades following the Holocaust, while it supports an immutable relationship with the chain of Jewish tradition and rejects projecting changes on other religious groups. The statement gives no evidence of the “culture of contempt” for Christianity present in

Judaism, and subsequently neither does it encourage the revision of such positions. And yet, below the surface, there is a clear message of triumphalism, both over Christianity and over other (liberal) movements within Judaism. While the statement asserts some value to engaging others in dialogue—particularly in a world where religion is threatened by secularism, materialism, and atheistic negation—the tradition of Judaism is an eternal bond between the descendants of Israel and God.<sup>167</sup> From this perspective, there is limited purpose for inter-religious dialogue, and no purpose which could justify changes to Judaism. For Soloveitchik and the Rabbinical Council of America, the Holocaust has no bearing on the immutability of Judaism, and—if anything—the Holocaust makes the reconsideration of Judaism and the position of Judaism towards Christianity a vain endeavor.<sup>168</sup> We may best describe this position towards Christianity as “indifferent.” There is little to be gained from encountering Christians and Christianity, and such encounters certainly do not offer justification for changes to fundamental Jewish concepts. Contempt for Christianity is certainly not addressed specifically by Soloveitchik, but the expression of belief in “the ultimate truthfulness of our views, praying fervently for and expecting confidently the fulfillment of our eschatological vision when our faith will rise from particularity to universality” seems, perhaps, subtly

---

<sup>167</sup> cf: penultimate paragraph of Soloveitchik’s essay.

<sup>168</sup> “[W]e certainly have not been authorized by our history, sanctified by the martyrdom of millions, to even hint to another faith community that we are mentally ready to revise historical attitudes, to trade favors pertaining to fundamental matters of faith, and to reconcile ‘some’ differences. Such a suggestion would be nothing but a betrayal of our great tradition and heritage and would, furthermore, produce no practical benefits...Only a candid, frank and unequivocal policy reflecting unconditional commitment to our God, a sense of dignity, pride and inner joy in being what we are, believing with great passion in the ultimate truthfulness of our views, praying fervently for and expecting confidently the fulfillment of our eschatological vision when our faith will rise from particularity to universality, will impress the peers of the other faith community among whom we have both adversaries and friends. I hope and pray that our friends in the community of the many will sustain their liberal convictions and humanitarian ideals by articulating their position on the right of the community of the few to live, create, and worship God in its own way, in freedom and with dignity.” (Final paragraph of Soloveitchik, *Confrontation*, section II.3)

contemptuous of non-Jewish views.

Michael Wyschogrod describes these contrasting positions within American Orthodox Judaism, exemplified by Greenberg and Soloveitchik:

Within Orthodoxy there are then two basic positions with respect to Jewish-Christian interaction: the right-wing view that rejects all such interaction as dangerous to Jewish survival and the centrist or modern Orthodox position which rejects theological or religious contact but permits contact on social and political issues as long as these issues do not involve significant questions of faith.<sup>169</sup>

Emil Fackenheim's understanding of the Holocaust, as previously noted, also evolved during the last quarter of the twentieth century. In a more complete quote from *How My Mind Has Changed*, Fackenheim preserved his previously stated position on the immutability of Judaism in response to the Holocaust, while specifically exploring the Jewish-Christian encounter:

Nazi anti-Semitism, anti-Christian, would have been impossible without centuries of Christian anti-Semitism. Why drag up this dead past? Because, alas, I can view it as past no longer, and because I owe the victims of Auschwitz (and...Christianity itself) a relentless truthfulness....Once I held the mild view that Christian anti-Semitism was vanishing in the wake of Jewish-Christian dialogues which confined attention to what the two faiths have in common. I have now been forced into a more radical view: anti-Semitism exists wherever it is held (or implied) that "the Jewish people" is an anachronism which may survive, if at all, only on sufferance...Its ultimate root, however, lies in the Christian view—perpetuated through the centuries, lingering on even where Christianity itself is undermined by atheism or agnosticism—that the birth of the new Israel entails the death of the old."<sup>170</sup>

Particularly after considering these comments by Fackenheim, it is important to

<sup>169</sup> Michael Wyschogrod. *Orthodox Judaism and Jewish-Christian Dialogue*, paper originally delivered 28 January 1986 at the Mid-Winter conference of the Rabbinical Council of America. [http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/center/conferences/soloveitchik/sol\\_wyscho.htm](http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/center/conferences/soloveitchik/sol_wyscho.htm) (accessed 20 February 2009).

<sup>170</sup> Talmage, *Disputation*, p 250.

consider the impact of the Six Day war of 1967 on the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. As Israel faced destruction at the hands of a larger and better-equipped Arab enemy, Jews around the world observed indifference and even enmity from the Christian community. Such experiences led to inevitable questioning by the Jewish community regarding the progress of Jewish-Christian dialogue and the removal of social and theological contempt from Christianity. In the days leading up to the Six Day War in 1967, Jews in America and around the world feared that a pan-Arab attack on Israel would result in the annihilation of the Jewish state. The relative silence of mainline Christian denominations during this period gave rise to questions about the sincerity of Christianity's desire to remove its troubling strands of social and theological contempt in relation to Jews and the Jewish religion.<sup>171</sup>

The desultory nature of the Jewish response to Jewish social and theological contempt for Christianity following the Holocaust undoubtedly results, in part, from the lack of a central authority in Judaism. There is no ecclesiastical body in Judaism that is comparable to the broad and authoritative role that the Catholic Church plays among Catholics around the world, or even the worldwide ecumenical role that the World Council of Churches plays for Christians. American associations such as the Central Conference of American Rabbis or the Union for Reform Judaism have no authority over the religious practice or ideology of its membership. The practice of *Herem* in Orthodox Judaism is loosely equivalent to excommunication in Christianity, but *Herem* as it is practiced in Judaism is more a response to apostasy (or perceived apostasy) than a means of ensuring compliance with the teachings of a "mother Church." Modern rabbinical

---

<sup>171</sup> "Many Jews were profoundly shocked and disillusioned at Christian indifference or enmity to the State of Israel in the spring of 1967." Talmage, *Disputation*, p 263.

authorities can (and very often do) disagree on matters of interpretation of Jewish Law and custom. In the absence of a central religious authority, Judaism is fundamentally and irreconcilably different from Christianity, and (specifically) from Catholicism. Gerald Gamm describes this difference in authority between Judaism and Catholicism in the following terms:

A Jewish congregation is controlled entirely by its members....The group controls its own property, judges its internal disputes, and exercises the right to hire or not to hire a rabbi. These rules are themselves rooted in the fundamental rule that empowers any group of Jewish men to worship—indeed, to perform any ritual act, except the ordination of a rabbi—without the permission or assistance of a rabbi or any other external authority....Governed by rules that render the rabbi and any religious hierarchy superfluous, a Jewish congregation enjoys complete autonomy....A Catholic parish, in contrast, exists within a hierarchical structure....A 1907 handbook, prepared for parishioners in the Milwaukee archdiocese, firmly articulated the basis of Church authority. ‘The Church is not a republic or democracy, but a monarchy.’<sup>172</sup>

Speaking generally, Judaism differs from Catholicism, as well as from many other denominations of Christianity, in its lack of an authoritative centralized ecclesiastical structure that could lay the groundwork for the development of a unified Jewish statement on Christianity in response to the Holocaust. As we will see, this lack of ecclesiastical unity affected both the way that *Dabru Emet* evolved, as well as the Jewish communal response that followed its promulgation.<sup>173</sup>

---

<sup>172</sup> Gerald Gamm, *Urban Exodus: Why the Jews Left Boston and the Catholics Stayed* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1999), p 143: a concise explanation of the fundamentally different sources of authority in Judaism and Christianity.

<sup>173</sup> On the lack of ecclesiastical unity among Jews in America, Cf. Joseph Buchler, “The Struggle for Unity: The Attempts at Union,” *American Jewish Archives Journal* 2, n. 1 (June, 1949): 21-46.

**Social and Theological Contempt in Post Holocaust Judaism and Christianity:****Some Conclusions**

Overall, it is accurate to say that, in contrast to the several noteworthy Christian efforts to reconsider and reevaluate its longstanding “teachings of contempt” toward Jews and Judaism after the Holocaust, there were no comparable efforts among the Jews.<sup>174</sup> There are many possible reasons for this discrepancy: traditional Jewish belief in the unequivocal veracity of its religious heritage; the absence of a central authority in Judaism; an ongoing struggle with the psychological and theological implications of the Holocaust, or even continued suspicion at the motivations behind Christian reconciliation. The universalism embraced by Reform Judaism prior to World War II was no longer so enthusiastically supported in the post-Holocaust era, especially after the creation of the State of Israel. Within Orthodox Judaism, a schism continued to grow between the maintenance of triumphalism and efforts towards some level of coming to grips with the Jewish-Christian encounter in a post-Holocaust world.

The Holocaust demanded consideration and evaluation by Christian theologians, as much as it did for their Jewish counterparts. The role of Christian passivity and complicity in the implementation of the “Final Solution” challenged “the spiritual and moral credibility of the Christian tradition.”<sup>175</sup> After the Holocaust, Christians began to

---

<sup>174</sup> Was Jewish reciprocation necessary? In his essay, *Some Reflections on 'Dabru Emet,' Dabru Emet* author, Michael Signer writes the following: “A reporter from the Jerusalem Post newspaper asked if he might have an interview... Since I have had experience with newspaper reporters and their difficulty with topics of interreligious dialogue, before we met I asked the reporter to please read several documents from the Catholic Church. The interview took place in a café. We sat for nearly two hours and had a very profound discussion of the papal documents and some Jewish responses to them. When we finished our “seminar” the reporter looked at me and said, “If they can make so many serious changes in the way they approach Judaism, are we Jews not obligated to make some changes in our own attitudes about Christians.” I smiled and told him that he had reached my highest expectations. He had reached his own conclusions based on the evidence of the Christian documents that a deep change of attitude had occurred within the Christian approach to Judaism...”

<sup>175</sup> Leighton, *CJT*, 40.

realize or accept that modern anti-Semitism, motivated by social or cultural contempt, was related to Christian anti-Judaism and the theological contempt that was unavoidably connected to the Christian doctrine of supersessionism.<sup>176</sup> While theological contempt and supersessionism had been understood as fundamental Christian dogma, these were not intended to be reasons or rationalizations for the social contempt and culture of anti-Semitism that was fundamental to the “pagan” and racially motivated Nazi movement.

In response to the considerable efforts by many mainstream Christian groups towards reconciliation and the removal of Christian “teachings of contempt,” Jews began to reconsider their own teachings of contempt for Christians. Jewish triumphalism and particularism, although never historically pernicious, were irreconcilable with the desire to advance Jewish-Christian dialogue. The time had come for a Jewish statement on Christianity, an effort by Jewish leaders to reconcile their differences with their Christian peers.

---

<sup>176</sup> Leighton, *CJT*, p 40.

# Chapter

# Three

**Chapter Three:**<sup>177</sup>

The lack of a widespread Jewish response to Christian reconsideration of social and theological contempt after the Holocaust has been established in the preceding chapter. Some Jewish leaders sought to re-evaluate deep-seated Jewish contempt for Christianity, others sought to engage in formal dialogue with their Christian counterparts, while still others wanted to have nothing to do with Christians or Christianity. The authors of *Dabru Emet* (Tikva Frymer-Kensky, David Novak, Peter Ochs, and Michael Signer) sought to supply a Jewish response to Christian self-re-evaluation after the Holocaust. As they wrote in their introductory paragraphs, “We believe that these changes [in Christianity] merit a thoughtful Jewish response...it is time for Jews to learn about the efforts of Christians to honor Judaism...it is time for Jews to reflect on what Judaism may now say about Christianity.” The publication of *Dabru Emet* in October<sup>178</sup> of 2000 represented the culmination of several years of discussion and debate among the authors of the statement and their peers.

---

<sup>177</sup> My primary source for this chapter is a lecture by Dr. Michael A. Signer (1946-2009) titled “*Some Reflections on Dabru Emet*.” I received a copy of the lecture directly from Dr. Signer (prior to his illness and untimely death in January 2009). In the process of my research, I found a nearly identical essay written by Dr. Signer titled “*Dabru Emet: A Contextual Analysis*” published in English in the French Canadian academic journal *Théologiques* 11, n° 1-2 (2003), 187-202. (<http://www.erudit.org/revue/theologi/2003/v11/n1-2/009531ar.pdf>, accessed 28 February 2009) Additional insight has come through conversation with Dr. David Fox Sandmel (1955?-), formerly the Jewish Scholar at the Institute for Christian-Jewish Studies in Baltimore, MD, who was closely involved with the project and was an editor of the collection of accompanying essays that was published along with *Dabru Emet*.

<sup>178</sup> While Dr. Michael Signer writes that *Dabru Emet* was first published on 11 October 2000 (Signer, *Reflections*, page 1), other sources write that *Dabru Emet* was first published on Sunday, September 10, 2000, on page 23 of the New England Edition of the New York Times. ([http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/jewish/dabru\\_emet.htm](http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/jewish/dabru_emet.htm) (accessed 25 March 2009))

**Dabru Emet – First Stirrings:**

In 1992 the Institute for Christian-Jewish studies in Baltimore, Maryland—an interreligious non-profit entity committed to creating a new, positive, and pluralistic relationship between Christians and Jews<sup>179</sup>—organized a group of Jewish scholars initially identified as “The Jewish Scholars Group on Christianity.” These scholars came from a variety of colleges and universities across the United States and Canada, and represented a variety of academic settings. The group’s initial conversations explored the participants’ experiences as Jews studying Christianity in an “American” academic environment which values, not a devotional approach, but rather a scientific and methodological approach to the study of religion.<sup>180</sup>

Meetings generally lasted for two days and consisted of presentations of the participants’ research. These presentations were followed by discussions which explored both the content of the presentation and how the “personal religious commitments”<sup>181</sup> of participants were connected to their research interests.

As time passed, two distinct sub-groups of scholars emerged which were defined by their different approaches to Christianity. The group that focused on history and a scientific approach to Christianity concluded that Christianity was a thing of the past and an object of research that posed a threat to Jewish continuity.<sup>182</sup> Members of this subgroup saw value in Christianity insofar as Christian history helped contextualize and illuminate Jewish history and Jewish texts. The other group understood Christianity

---

<sup>179</sup> <http://www.icjs.org/about/mission.php> (accessed 25 February 2009).

<sup>180</sup> “Our first years were dedicated to asking the question: Was there something more than pure intellectual interests for those of us who were Jewish and made Christianity a central area of our research? In other words, did our commitment to Judaism contribute to restrict our perspective in research and teaching?” (Signer, *Reflections*, 2-3)

<sup>181</sup> Signer, *Reflections*, 3.

<sup>182</sup> Signer, *Reflections*, 3.

positively, as a living, viable alternative to the doctrines and practices of Judaism. This group felt that Christians held a vision for the future similar to their own, and had an appreciation for the doctrinal and practical changes that had occurred within Christianity since the Second World War, specifically with regard to Christian contempt for Jews and Judaism.

From the clear and significant divide based on differing approaches to Christianity, there emerged three overarching observations, unrelated to approach: 1) “Christianity” represents a broad spectrum of beliefs, especially with regard to views of Judaism;<sup>183</sup> 2) some Christian groups have changed their approach to and understanding of Judaism (specifically, they have removed the “teachings of contempt” that were previously considered an inextricable component of Christianity), and 3) changes to Christianity have not been adequately recognized by reputable Jewish organizations.

Orthodox scholar, theologian, and advocate of Jewish-Christian dialogue, Dr. Michael Wyschogrod (1928- ) was the first to call for “The Jewish Scholars Group” to reflect upon and re-evaluate the Jewish approach to and understanding of Christianity.<sup>184</sup> Over the course of the next two years, reflection and re-evaluation by “The Jewish Scholars Group” took the form of a statement intended to recognize and reciprocate Christian efforts at reconciliation. After a “long process of discussion and debate about how contemporary Jews could respond to profound changes within some parts of the Christian community,”<sup>185</sup> “*Dabru Emet*: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity” was published as an advertisement in the New York Times and the Baltimore Sun newspapers on October 11, 2000. “*Dabru Emet*” literally means “speak

---

<sup>183</sup> i.e. Different Christian groups have different beliefs and different understandings of Judaism.

<sup>184</sup> Signer, *Reflections*, 6-7. NB. Wyschogrod ultimately chose to not sign the statement.

<sup>185</sup> Signer, *Reflections*, 7.

the truth,” and is taken from a verse in the book of Zechariah (8:16): “These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to one another, render true and perfect justice in your gates.” An accompanying collection of essays (*Christianity in Jewish Terms*) was published and released at the same time by Westview Press of the Perseus Books Group.

“*Dabru Emet*” was written in English<sup>186</sup> by four North American scholars from diverse Jewish backgrounds. Dr. Tikva Frymer-Kensky (1943-2006), who taught Hebrew Bible and the History of Judaism at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, was not a rabbi and was the only female author of *Dabru Emet*. She published extensively on the subject of women in religion, and was also a highly respected expert on the Ancient Near East known for her application of her studies to the present world.<sup>187</sup> Dr. Frymer-Kensky earned an AB from City College of New York, BHL from the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), and MA and PhD degrees from Yale University, and was director of biblical studies at Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC), taught at Wayne State University, and worked as a visiting professor at JTS, the University of Michigan, Ben Gurion University, and McMaster University. Her husband was (and continues to be) a Conservative rabbi (JTS) at an egalitarian Conservative congregation

<sup>186</sup> Since publication in 2000, *Dabru Emet* has been translated into several Languages including: Polish, Hebrew, Russian, French, and German.

<sup>187</sup> From a University of Chicago Press Release announcing Frymer-Kensky’s death: “Frymer-Kensky, an expert on Assyriology, Sumerology, biblical studies and Jewish studies, was perhaps best known for her work on women and religion.” (<http://www-news.uchicago.edu/releases/06/060905.frymer-kensky.shtml> Accessed on 23 February 2009) “Dr. Frymer-Kensky was a pioneer in combining rigorous study of the ancient Near East with rigorous feminism.” *We Remember - Tikva Frymer-Kensky*, Jewish Women’s Archive; “Dr. Frymer-Kensky exemplified the scholar who believes that the ancient should also serve the present. She wrote about the past and, in doing so, tried to transform the present.” --Rabbi Jane Kanarek <http://jwa.org/weremember/frymer-kensky> “I realized that my years of academic study of the ancient world could have practical applications and my knowledge of ancient cultures, religions and languages could be of use in my own modern world. This sense of vocation sustained me.” (<http://www-news.uchicago.edu/releases/06/060905.frymer-kensky.shtml>) William Schweiker, Professor of Theological Ethics at the University of Chicago Divinity School described Frymer-Kensky with the following words: “She was exemplary as a human being and as a scholar in wanting to understand the connections between religious traditions and to render those connections as humanely as possible...She was a religious humanist.” <http://www-news.uchicago.edu/releases/06/060905.frymer-kensky.shtml>

in the suburbs of Chicago.

Dr. David Novak (1941- ) was a founder of the Union for Traditional Conservative Judaism (now the Union for Traditional Judaism) and is an “observant”<sup>188</sup> Conservative Rabbi. Novak is the Director of the Jewish Studies Programme at the University of Toronto where he teaches Jewish philosophy, Jewish law, and ethics. Dr. Novak received his AB from the University of Chicago, an MHL and Rabbinic Ordination from JTS, and a PhD from Georgetown University. He has taught at the Institute of Traditional Judaism (The *Metivta*), the University of Virginia, Oklahoma City University, Old Dominion University, the New School for Social Research, JTS, and Baruch College of the City University of New York.

Dr. Peter Ochs (1949?-) is a multi-faceted scholar of religion and philosophy and, although he earned a degree from the Jewish Theological Seminary, is not a rabbi.<sup>189</sup> Interested in the history of Jewish thought, philosophy, and theology, Ochs studied at Yale and JTS,<sup>190</sup> and has taught at Drew University (a non-sectarian private university with Methodist roots) and the University of Virginia (a public university).

Dr. Michael A. Signer (1946-2009)—an ordinee of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati (HUC-JIR)—was a professor of Jewish history at Notre Dame University, whose academic interests focused on Medieval Jewish studies. Signer was also known internationally<sup>191</sup> for his involvement in Catholic-Jewish

<sup>188</sup> While Rabbi Novak received ordination from JTS, he is now affiliated with the more observant UTJ.

<sup>189</sup> “Modern Jewish philosophy and theology; history of Jewish thought and Jewish ethics; rabbinic hermeneutics, semiotics, and ethics. American philosophy, pragmatism, semiotics; Charles Peirce, modern and postmodern philosophic theology, philosophy of religion.” Taken from Dr. Ochs’s biography page: <http://artsandsciences.virginia.edu/religiousstudies/people/pwo3v.html> (accessed 23 February 2009).

<sup>190</sup> Ochs earned a BA and PhD from Yale and an MA from JTS.

<sup>191</sup> Signer lectured extensively throughout Europe and was named a “Person of Reconciliation” in 2005 by the Polish Council of Christians and Jews for advancing Jewish-Christian dialogue in Poland.

dialogue—an effort that defined his career as much as did his work on medieval Judaism.

Signer earned a BA from UCLA and a PhD from the University of Toronto, and studied independently at Hebrew University as well as with the former Chief Librarian of the Vatican, Father Leonard Boyle, while at the University of Toronto. Prior to becoming the Abrams Professor of Jewish Thought and Culture at University of Notre Dame, Signer was a professor of Jewish history at HUC-JIR in Los Angeles from 1974-1991.

*Dabru Emet* itself was composed of eight “planks” preceded by two introductory paragraphs, and ended with a quote from the Hebrew Scriptures.<sup>192</sup> Each “plank” took the form of a paragraph preceded by a declarative topic sentence. Co-author Michael Signer claimed that each topic sentence was intended to be read as both a declarative sentence and as a question,<sup>193</sup> although he admitted this claim might have merely reflected his own background as a medievalist.<sup>194</sup> As with a “standard” *Quaestio Disputata*,<sup>195</sup> each “plank” is presented in a single sentence, is followed by supporting arguments and refutation or limitation, and closes with an active resolution.

The eight planks cover a range of topics founded upon “a theological

<sup>192</sup> Isaiah 2:2-3: “It shall come to pass in the end of days that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established at the top of the mountains and be exalted above the hills, and the nations shall flow unto it...and many peoples shall go and say, ‘Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in his paths.’” This is the quotation as it was published. The source of the translation is not offered, but may be the English Revised Version.

<sup>193</sup> “The topic sentence of each paragraph such as ‘Jews and Christians worship the same God’ can be read both as a declarative sentence with a full stop at the end AND it can be read as a question. For example, ‘Do Jews and Christians worship the same God?’” (Signer, *Reflections*, p 11)

<sup>194</sup> “In putting forth this suggestion about reading the document I reveal my own disciplinary background as a medievalist. I view each of the eight brief statements as a *Quaestio Disputata*.” (Signer, *Reflections*, 11). NB: “*Quaestio Disputata*” is a form of medieval philosophical debate, created by the Medieval Christian Bible Commentator, Thomas Aquinas (still popular among Catholics). In a “*Quaestio Disputata*” a topic (thesis) is presented, followed by arguments in support and opposition, followed by a resolution of the arguments. (Cf: *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005))

<sup>195</sup> See previous note

structure,”<sup>196</sup> and are organized according to two rubrics: theocentric<sup>197</sup>—which includes theism,<sup>198</sup> revelation,<sup>199</sup> Israel,<sup>200</sup> and ethics<sup>201</sup>, and historical/temporal<sup>202</sup>—which includes Holocaust/Shoah,<sup>203</sup> eschatology,<sup>204</sup> changes to Judaism,<sup>205</sup> and future hopes.<sup>206</sup>

The accompanying collection of essays, *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, was edited by the same four authors (each of whom had an essay in the volume), joined by David Fox Sandmel. Sandmel was the “Jewish Scholar” at the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies—the organization responsible for assembling “The Jewish Scholars Group” and the publication of *Dabru Emet*—and the Director of the National Jewish Scholars Project that grew from “The Jewish Scholars Group.” Sandmel was also the lead editor of the “workbook” *Irreconcilable Differences? A Learning Resource for Jews and Christians*, which accompanied the publication of *Dabru Emet* and *Christianity in Jewish Terms*. Sandmel, like Signer, was an ordinee of HUC-JIR, and earned a BA from The Ohio State University, and a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. After leaving the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies Sandmel assumed a pulpit in south suburban Chicago. He presently serves as a Professor of Jewish Studies at the Catholic Theological Union.<sup>207</sup>

---

<sup>196</sup> Signer, *Reflections*, 11.

<sup>197</sup> Signer, *Reflections*, 11.

<sup>198</sup> “Jews and Christians worship the same God.”

<sup>199</sup> “Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book--the Bible (what Jews call ‘*Tanakh*’ and Christians call the ‘Old Testament’).”

<sup>200</sup> “Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel.” Understood to mean the “Jewish State of Israel” as it exists today (as opposed to referring to the descendants of Abraham or the people of God’s Covenant, which are the same in Judaism but different in Christianity)

<sup>201</sup> “Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of Torah”

<sup>202</sup> Signer, *Reflections*, 12.

<sup>203</sup> “Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon.”

<sup>204</sup> “The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world as promised in Scripture.”

<sup>205</sup> “A new relationship between Jews and Christians will not weaken Jewish practice.”

<sup>206</sup> “Jews and Christians must work together for justice and peace.”

<sup>207</sup> It should also be mentioned that Dr. Sandmel was the son of Dr. Samuel Sandmel, a professor at HUC-JIR in Cincinnati and a prolific Jewish scholar of Christianity, “recognized as the leading US Jewish authority in the New Testament and early Christianity” (Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*. (a Christian evangelical source) available online: <http://www.greatcom.org/resources/areadydefense/ch22> (accessed

*Christianity in Jewish Terms* comprises eleven “dialogical”<sup>208</sup> chapters, each of which explores a topic related to Jewish philosophy or theology<sup>209</sup> preceded by an introductory essay which discusses preconditions for Jewish-Christian dialogue<sup>210</sup> and a brief history of Jewish-Christian interactions.<sup>211</sup> An epilogue, with an essay in response written by a Christian scholar and a composition of concluding statements by the editors of the volume follows the main text. Each editor contributed an essay, and the volume was completed with twenty-seven more essays written by distinguished academics, all but two of whom were affiliated with universities and seminaries in North America. The two non-North Americans were Menachem Kellner, from Haifa University,<sup>212</sup> and Rabbi Irving (“Yitz”) Greenberg, of Jerusalem who at that time was chair of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council.<sup>213</sup> Several of these scholars taught at Jewish institutions and seminaries, several at Catholic universities and seminaries, and others at “top tier” secular institutions.

---

23 February 2009)) He was a leading scholar in the field of Christianity and an early pioneer in the post Holocaust Jewish-Christian encounter during the middle of the twentieth century. Additional biographical information may be found on the website of the American Jewish Archives, <http://www.americanjewisharchives.org/aja/FindingAids/Sandmel.htm>

<sup>208</sup> Each chapter begins with an essay by a Jewish scholar expounding on an area of Jewish theology with an understanding of the corresponding Christian beliefs, followed by a second essay, also by a Jewish scholar, offering an alternative Jewish perspective, followed by a final essay by a Christian scholar, assessing the veracity of the first essay’s understandings of Christianity.

<sup>209</sup> The eleven “dialogical” chapters explore the following topics, in order: the Holocaust/Shoah, God, Scripture, commandment, Israel, worship, suffering, embodiment, redemption, sin and repentance, and the image of God.

<sup>210</sup> David Novak, “Introduction: What to Seek and What to Avoid in Jewish-Christian Dialogue,” 1-6.

<sup>211</sup> Robert Chazan, “Christian-Jewish Interactions over the Ages,” 7-24.

<sup>212</sup> Menachem Kellner is an American born and educated scholar with experience teaching in American universities, who made aliyah in 1980 and is a professor at the University of Haifa (Israel). At the time of CJT’s publication, Dr. Kellner was at the University of Haifa, but spent a considerable amount of time in America. (Source: I studied with Dr. Kellner at the University of Rochester, which he visited annually to teach). Because of his American citizenship and education we may consider Dr. Kellner an “American scholar.”

<sup>213</sup> Irving Greenberg was listed as the “President of the Jewish Life Institute” and Chair of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council in CJT, but he had previously been affiliated with Yeshiva University and the City College of the City University of New York, and is certainly regarded as a “scholar,” even though he was not affiliated with an academic institution at the time of CJT’s publication.

After its composition and prior to its publication, *Dabru Emet* was distributed to “more than three hundred Rabbis [*sic*], scholars and theologians,”<sup>214</sup> primarily in North America, including Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist Jews who were all asked to sign the document without making any changes to it. More than two hundred of the initial invitees agreed to sign the statement,<sup>215</sup> which, when it was published in the newspapers, was signed by more than one hundred and fifty people.<sup>216</sup> In subsequent years a total of nearly three hundred Jews from North America, Europe, and Israel signed *Dabru Emet*.<sup>217</sup> (According to the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies website there were two hundred and twenty-seven signers,<sup>218</sup> and a version of *Dabru Emet* on the Boston College “Center for Christian-Jewish Learning” website lists a total of one hundred and sixty nine signers.)<sup>219</sup> In the words of author Michael Signer, “Those who signed were some of the most important leaders of American Jewry.”<sup>220</sup> A quick statistical analysis reveals:<sup>221</sup>

- Approximately 57% (129\*) were congregational rabbis or listed congregational affiliation with their signature. (\*These numbers were based on a list of signers that was not verifiable because the list was taken off-line)
- Approximately 41% (92\*) listed affiliation with (Jewish?) organizations and institutions, or with a range of universities.
- approximately 3% (6\*) did not list any affiliation

<sup>214</sup> Signer, *Reflections*, 10.

<sup>215</sup> Signer, *Reflections*, 10.

<sup>216</sup> Signer, *Reflections*, 1. On page one of his reflections Dr. Signer mentions that “over one hundred and fifty Rabbis and University professors affixed their signatures to the statement...” and on page ten he wrote, “more than two hundred...agreed to sign the statement.” I was not able to obtain a replicated version of the original page as published to determine the exact number.

<sup>217</sup> “Today, there are nearly three hundred signatories to *Dabru Emet*.”

<sup>218</sup> The ICJS website no longer lists the signers and I was unable to verify the numbers.

<sup>219</sup> [http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/jewish/dabru\\_emet.htm](http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/jewish/dabru_emet.htm) (accessed 28 February 2009).

<sup>220</sup> Signer, *Reflections*, 10.

<sup>221</sup> Numbers with question marks (“?”) were taken from the ICJS list before it was removed. Other numbers are taken from the Boston College website.

- approximately 18% (41\*) did not use the title “rabbi” (some of those may have been rabbis)
- 92% (155) of the signers were from American institutions
- 2.4% (4) of the signers were from Canadian institutions
- 94% (159) of the signers were from North American Institutions
- 3 (1.8%) of the signers were from Israeli institutions (all were non-native Israelis: two are American-born and the third is British)
- 7 (4.1%) of the signers were from British institutions.
- Leaders of the rabbinical organizations from the Reform, Reconstructionist, and Conservative movements, as well as professional leaders of the affiliated organizations signed the statement.
- While several Orthodox rabbis signed the statement (Irving Greenberg, Tzvi Blanchard, Yechiel Eckstein, Barry Freundel, and David Rosen, to name a few), no Orthodox organizations are represented.

Despite broad support from Jews representing a diverse array of theological perspectives, some Jewish constituencies *are* noticeably absent. Very few signers were affiliated with an Orthodox movement, and, of those who were, all were affiliated with a liberal wing of Modern Orthodoxy. Also, nearly all the signers are from North America. Rabbi David Rosen<sup>222</sup> of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in Jerusalem, Israel—one of the few non-North American signers of *Dabru Emet*—attributed the “Americanocentricity” of *Dabru Emet* to “the fact that the statement had been prepared under the auspices of the Baltimore Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies...”<sup>223</sup>

*Dabru Emet* has no rabbinical authority.<sup>224</sup> Jews are not obligated to take any action in response to the statement, nor are they required to abide by any of the principles

<sup>222</sup> In the published version of *Dabru Emet*, Rabbi David Rosen was listed as representing the Anti-Defamation League in Jerusalem, Israel. He is an Orthodox rabbi, former chief rabbi of Ireland, and now the Director of the American Jewish Committee’s Department for Interreligious Affairs.

<sup>223</sup> David Rosen, “*Dabru Emet*: Its Significance for the Jewish-Christian Dialogue.” Paper, (delivered at the Dutch Council of Christians and Jews (OJEC) at Tilburg, The Netherlands, 6 November 2001). <http://www.dialog.org/dialog/dabru-emet-david-rosen.htm> (accessed 25 February 2009).

<sup>224</sup> *Dabru Emet* lacks the authoritative criteria of other genres of Jewish statements. Medieval *Takkanot* (“decrees”) were issued by rabbinical synods and were authoritative for the Jewish community, but related to matters of law. Responsa respond to questions of Jewish law and were binding to those who asked the questions. Resolutions are a modern creation of national organizations that propose action but are non-binding. (Signer, *Reflections*, 7-9)

it proposed. Furthermore, *Dabru Emet* was “A Jewish **Statement** on Christians and Christianity” and was not actionable.<sup>225</sup> As such, it stands out as a unique result of the North American religious milieu that has inspired similar, non-actionable “platforms” in several of the American movements of Judaism.

### The Content of *Dabru Emet*

As mentioned previously, the eight paragraphs of *Dabru Emet* are loosely organized around a “theological structure” which begins with an assessment of current theology and concludes with reflections on the immediate past and hopes for the future.

The first plank firmly asserts that “Jews and Christians worship the same God”—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (as well as Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, and Rachel). Although methods of worship differ greatly between Judaism and Christianity,<sup>226</sup> billions of people around the world and throughout history have been in a relationship with the God of Israel, either as Jews or as Christians.<sup>227</sup> The prophetic words of God to Isaiah, adapted in Paul’s epistles both to the Philippians<sup>228</sup> and the Romans,<sup>229</sup> that “[unto God] every knee shall bend, every tongue swear loyalty,”<sup>230</sup> are brought from mere prophecy towards reality through the mutual worship of the God of Israel.

The second plank of *Dabru Emet* asserts that both traditions consider the Hebrew

---

<sup>225</sup> *Dabru Emet* most closely resembles the various “platforms” adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Such “platforms” are a statement of values and principles of the organization (and the movement), and while they may inspire action, they are not inherently “actionable.” “Platforms” are not doctrines of faith and members may object to anything in the “platform” and remain affiliated with the organization.

<sup>226</sup> “Christian worship is not a viable religious choice for Jews....”

<sup>227</sup> “[A]s Jewish theologians we rejoice that through Christianity hundreds of millions of people have entered into relationship with the God of Israel.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>228</sup> Philippians 2:10-11

<sup>229</sup> Romans 14:11

<sup>230</sup> Isaiah 45:23

Scriptures to be foundationally authoritative: “Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book—the Bible (what Jews call ‘Tanakh’ and Christians call the ‘Old Testament’). The Bible is also a common source of the shared *values* at the core of Jewish and Christian belief.<sup>231</sup> The fundamental beliefs common to Judaism and Christianity shape our interpersonal (and interreligious) interactions, our worldview, and our hopes for the future.<sup>232</sup> And, in spite of all these fundamental similarities, we must also recognize and accept that not everyone will derive the same message from the same text.<sup>233</sup> Judaism and Christianity both derive authority from their shared text, and, while some fundamental beliefs and values are shared, major differences in interpretation exist as well.

The third plank relates to the modern Jewish state of Israel, affirms Christian support and urges justice for all its residents: “Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel.” Christians understand the modern State of Israel as the fulfillment of promises recorded in the Bible, as a physical manifestation of the covenant between the descendants of Abraham and God.<sup>234</sup> It is also important to recognize that although Christian support for Israel may be grounded in eschatological beliefs,<sup>235</sup> all support for Israel, no matter the motivation, must be accepted with gratitude.<sup>236</sup> Furthermore, principles of justice and fairness, rooted in the Jewish

---

<sup>231</sup> “Turning to the Bible for religious orientation, spiritual enrichment, and communal education, we each take away similar lessons....” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>232</sup> “God created and sustains the universe; God established a covenant with the people Israel; God’s revealed word guides Israel to a life of righteousness; and God will ultimately redeem Israel and the whole world.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>233</sup> “Jews and Christians interpret the Bible differently on many points. Such differences must always be respected.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>234</sup> “As members of a biblically based religion, Christians appreciate that Israel was promised—and given—to Jews as the physical center of the covenant between them and God.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>235</sup> “Many Christians support the State of Israel for reasons far more profound than mere politics.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>236</sup> “As Jews, we applaud this support.” (*Dabru Emet*)

tradition, must be extended to all residents of Israel, no matter their religion.<sup>237</sup>

The fourth plank asserts the implications associated with the shared fundamental moral principles of Judaism and Christianity that are rooted in the Torah text: “Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of Torah.” These moral principles show our common divine mandate to ensure (through a strong interreligious relationship<sup>238</sup>) the “sanctity and dignity” of all people,<sup>239</sup> and guide us towards ameliorating the problems that plague humanity, especially those that plagued humankind during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>240</sup>

*Dabru Emet*’s fifth plank addresses the pivotal event of the twentieth century<sup>241</sup>—the Holocaust—and absolves Christianity of responsibility: “Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon,” although Christian anti-Judaism, in violent and rhetorical forms, created a fertile culture of anti-Semitism receptive to Nazi ideology and action.<sup>242</sup> Christian involvement in and indifference to the Nazi movement is problematic, but, the document asserts, Nazism and Christianity are not in a causal relationship,<sup>243</sup> and Nazis would have

<sup>237</sup> “We also recognize that Jewish tradition mandates justice for all non-Jews who reside in a Jewish state.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>238</sup> “This shared moral emphasis can be the basis of an improved relationship between our two communities.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>239</sup> “Central to the moral principles of Torah are the inalienable sanctity and dignity of every human being. All of us were created in the image of God. This shared moral emphasis can be the basis of an improved relationship between our two communities.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>240</sup> “It [shared emphasis on the moral principles of Torah] can also be the basis of a powerful witness to all humanity for improving the lives of our fellow human beings and for standing against the immoralities and idolatries that harm and degrade us. Such witness is especially needed after the unprecedented horrors of the past century.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>241</sup> Among many who have made this claim is Pope John Paul II from 1998, cited by A. James Rudin in Rudin’s response to this particular plank in *Dabru Emet*: “The crime known as the Shoah (Holocaust) remains an indelible stain on the history of the (20th) century.” A. James Rudin, “*Dabru Emet*: A Jewish Dissent,” *Religion News Service* (2000). <http://www.jcrelations.net/en/?item=957> (accessed 25 February 2009).

<sup>242</sup> “Without the long history of Christian anti-Judaism and Christian violence against Jews, Nazi ideology could not have taken hold nor could it have been carried out.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>243</sup> “Too many Christians participated in, or were sympathetic to, Nazi atrocities against Jews. Other Christians did not protest sufficiently against these atrocities. But Nazism itself was not an inevitable outcome of Christianity.” (*Dabru Emet*)

targeted more Christians had all the Jews in the world actually been exterminated.<sup>244</sup>

Christian efforts at rescuing Jews from the Nazis are taken into account as well. These recent efforts to reevaluate Christian theology and doctrine relating to Jews and Judaism in response to the Holocaust indicate a positive and welcome change in the Jewish-Christian encounter.<sup>245</sup>

The sixth plank of *Dabru Emet* recognizes that we will not know the correct understanding of the *eschaton* until the arrival of the *eschaton*: “The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world as promised in Scripture.” Differences in Jewish and Christian perspectives on God and the “end of times” are often enormous, and must be recognized, but must not be allowed to present an obstacle to meaningful dialogue.<sup>246</sup> Our views of the world relate to our religious tradition, and it is important for us to recognize these differences; we need not affirm or reject the position of the other, and dialogue must be kept separate from disputation.

The seventh plank of *Dabru Emet* responds to concerns that Jewish-Christian dialogue might lead to Jewish assimilation or acculturation and asserts that: “A new relationship between Jews and Christians will not weaken Jewish practice.” Fears that a Jewish-Christian dialogue will provoke a loss of Jewish identity and Jewish assimilation

---

<sup>244</sup> “If the Nazi extermination of the Jews had been fully successful, it would have turned its murderous rage more directly to Christians.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>245</sup> “We recognize with gratitude those Christians who risked or sacrificed their lives to save Jews during the Nazi regime. With that in mind, we encourage the continuation of recent efforts in Christian theology to repudiate unequivocally contempt of Judaism and the Jewish people. We applaud those Christians who reject this teaching of contempt, and we do not blame them for the sins committed by their ancestors.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>246</sup> “Christians know and serve God through Jesus Christ and the Christian tradition. Jews know and serve God through Torah and the Jewish tradition. That difference will not be settled by one community insisting that it has interpreted Scripture more accurately than the other, nor by one community exercising political power over the other. Jews can respect Christians’ faithfulness to their revelation just as we expect Christians to respect our faithfulness to our revelation.” (*Dabru Emet*)

are unfounded with regards to “true dialogue,” which involves a concerted effort to avoid syncretism, apostasy, and assimilation.<sup>247</sup> Christianity must be understood as a sibling to Judaism, and not merely as an extension.<sup>248</sup> Honoring the distinctions between the religious traditions ensures the preservation of both traditions.<sup>249</sup>

The document’s eighth plank promotes the idea that Judaism and Christianity share a common mission that aspires to realize a more perfect world—that “Jews and Christians must work together for justice and peace.” Shared recognition of the maladies that plague the world compels us to work—together and separately—towards the prophetic vision.<sup>250</sup>

### **Responses to *Dabru Emet* in the Christian Community**

*Dabru Emet* was met, for the most part, with positive responses from the Christian community in America and around the world. Statements of support in response to its publication were released by many Christian groups, including the National Council of Catholic Bishops (USA),<sup>251</sup> the National Council of Churches of

<sup>247</sup> “An improved relationship will not accelerate the cultural and religious assimilation that Jews rightly fear. It will not change traditional Jewish forms of worship, nor increase intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, nor persuade more Jews to convert to Christianity, nor create a false blending of Judaism and Christianity.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>248</sup> “We respect Christianity as a faith that originated within Judaism and that still has significant contacts with it. We do not see it as an extension of Judaism.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>249</sup> “Only if we cherish our own traditions can we pursue this relationship with integrity.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>250</sup> “Jews and Christians, each in their own way, recognize the unredeemed state of the world as reflected in the persistence of persecution, poverty, and human degradation and misery. Although justice and peace are finally God’s, our joint efforts, together with those of other faith communities, will help bring the kingdom of God for which we hope and long. Separately and together, we must work to bring justice and peace to our world. In this enterprise, we are guided by the vision of the prophets of Israel...” (*Dabru Emet in Christianity in Jewish Terms*, page xviii)

<sup>251</sup> Cardinal William Keeler, “The Power of Words: A Catholic Response to *Dabru Emet*,” National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 31 October 2000.  
[http://www.kings.uwo.ca/ccjl/academic\\_resources/researchers\\_students/official\\_catholic/dabru\\_emet/](http://www.kings.uwo.ca/ccjl/academic_resources/researchers_students/official_catholic/dabru_emet/) (accessed 28 February 2009).

Christ in the USA,<sup>252</sup> the Synod of the North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church (Germany),<sup>253</sup> the European Lutheran Commission on the Church and the Jewish People,<sup>254</sup> the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,<sup>255</sup> and the American Baptist Church.<sup>256</sup> These groups (and others) unanimously expressed their gratitude and appreciation for what they called a welcome move by Jews.

Lutheran responses to *Dabru Emet* are especially noteworthy because of the long-standing connection between Lutheran Christianity and German culture, as well because of the history of harsh anti-Judaism espoused by Martin Luther himself.<sup>257</sup> The response of the European Lutheran Commission emphasizes the willingness of a portion of the German Lutheran community to radically reconsider its relationship with Judaism:

We are aware...that there are many tasks yet before us. We know that we must reexamine themes in Lutheran theology that in the past have repeatedly given rise to enmity towards Jews. *Dabru Emet* impels us to formulate more clearly central elements of the Christian faith in light of Jewish questions, for example the Trinitarian development of our faith in the one God.<sup>258</sup>

The leadership of the Catholic Church in America was similarly affirming of *Dabru*

<sup>252</sup> Interfaith Relations Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, "An Ecumenical Response to *Dabru Emet*: a Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity," 24 February 2001. <http://www.jcrelations.net/en/index.php?id=990> (accessed on 28 February 2009).

<sup>253</sup> Synod of the North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church, "Christians and Jews," Rendsburg: 22 September 2001. <http://www.jcrelations.net/en/index.php?id=1468> (accessed 28 February 2009).

<sup>254</sup> European Lutheran Commission on the Church and the Jewish People (Lutherische Europäische Kommission Kirche und Judentum (LEKKJ)), "A Response to *Dabru Emet*." Graz, Austria: 12 May 2003. <http://www.jcrelations.net/en/index.php?id=1981> (accessed 28 February 2009). (The Commission represents twenty-five Lutheran church bodies in Europe.)

<sup>255</sup> ELCA News Service Press release, "Lutheran-Jewish Panel Welcomes 'Dabru Emet,'" 16 November 2006, 00-282-FI. <http://www.wfn.org/2000/11/msg00147.html> (accessed 23 February 2009).

<sup>256</sup> Committee on Christian Unity of the American Baptist Churches in the USA, "An American Baptist Response to 'Dabru Emet [To Speak the Truth]: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity,'" 10 July 2002, <http://www.jcrelations.net/en/index.php?id=988> (accessed 28 February 2009).

<sup>257</sup> see above, Chapter One.

<sup>258</sup> European Lutheran Commission on the Church and the Jewish People (Lutherische Europäische Kommission Kirche und Judentum (LEKKJ)), "A Response to *Dabru Emet*." Graz, Austria, 12 May 2003. <http://www.jcrelations.net/en/index.php?id=1981>, accessed on 28 February 2009.

*Emet*.<sup>259</sup>

Through dialogue, we have come to understand something of the pain of centuries of Jewish suffering at the hands of Christians that lies just underneath the surface of this document and why, therefore, it is such a significant contribution to further progress in Jewish-Christian relations.<sup>260</sup>

Interestingly, some Catholics were concerned by certain aspects of the statement, specifically those regarding the release of Christians from blame for the Holocaust.<sup>261</sup>

Father John Pawlikowski, a Catholic priest who was a founding member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council and a prolific Catholic advocate for Jewish-Catholic dialogue, expressed support, but also had specific concerns about *Dabru Emet*. In his commencement address at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati in May of 2001, Pawlikowski offered a mixed reaction to the efforts of *Dabru Emet* towards stimulating meaningful dialogue between Jews and Christians:

[I]t is incumbent upon the churches to cleanse their teachings of anti-Semitism for their own moral integrity when [*sic*] any Jew noticed or not, clearly the dialogue will be stymied if Christians affirm a theological bonding with Jews...without an acknowledgement of such bonding from the Jewish side....I myself have some disagree [*sic*] with the way it handles the Shoah and Christian responsibility. But my hope would be that you think it important enough to give it serious reflection in the days ahead.”<sup>262</sup>

<sup>259</sup> Cardinal William Keeler, Episcopal Moderator, Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote a formal response on behalf of the American Catholic community entitled “The Power of Words: A Catholic Response to Dabru Emet.”

<sup>260</sup> [http://www.kings.uwo.ca/ccjl/academic\\_resources/researchers\\_students/official\\_catholic/dabru\\_emet/](http://www.kings.uwo.ca/ccjl/academic_resources/researchers_students/official_catholic/dabru_emet/) (accessed 25 February 2009)

<sup>261</sup> Regarding Catholic responses to the controversial statement that “Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon,” Dr. Signer wrote, “Father John Pawlikowski, a very sympathetic Christian, has also expressed his doubts about the wisdom of such a radical sentence.” (Signer, *Reflections*, 14.)

<sup>262</sup> John Pawlikowski, *On the Threshold: Religion's Role in the New Millennium*. Cincinnati Commencement Address, 30 May 2001, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, OH. <http://www.huc.edu/faculty/faculty/pubs/pawlikowski.html> (accessed 25 February 2009). Pawlikowski was the Commencement speaker on the occasion of being awarded the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Cited by David Berger, *Dabru Emet: Some Reservations about a Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*. Paper read at the first annual meeting of the “Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations” in Baltimore, MD: 28 October 2002. <http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta->

In his *Reflections*, Michael Signer makes reference to Pawlikowski's concerns calling him "a very sympathetic Christian" who "has also expressed his doubts about the wisdom of [*Dabru Emet's fifth plank which stated that*] Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon."<sup>263</sup>

Other negative responses to *Dabru Emet* in the American Christian community also often expressed vehement opposition to the document's controversial fifth plank. Dr. Walter L Michel, an Austrian-born retired professor of Hebrew and Semitic Studies at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, authored a paragraph-by-paragraph rebuttal of *Dabru Emet*. Michel's response was originally self-published, although an abbreviated German version was published in 2001.<sup>264</sup> Commenting on the statement's fifth plank, Michel included a brief list of reputable books examining Christian anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism which he followed with his blunt assertion that "Christianity, the way it has been manifest in the various forms since the fourth century CE/AD, has died in the fires of Auschwitz and has forfeited all respect."<sup>265</sup> In a letter to *Commentary Magazine* that Michel hoped to have published in response to Jon Levenson's *How Not to Conduct Jewish-Christian Dialogue*,<sup>266</sup> Michel summarized his opposition to *Dabru Emet*:

The signers of *Dabru Emet* are not speaking truth, worse, they propagate half truths. Their appeasement politics are a danger to Judaism and a (purposeful?) misunderstanding of Christianity. The Shoah would not have been possible without the pernicious Christian teaching of the victory of Christianity over Judaism, i.e., supersession....Since 1945 Christians

---

elements/sites/partners/ccjr/berger02.htm (accessed 27 February 2009).

<sup>263</sup> Signer, *Reflections*, 14

<sup>264</sup> Walter L. Michel, "Einige Probleme mit 'Dabru Emet'," in FRIEDE UND FREIHEIT 4. Zeitschrift Evangelisch-Reformierter Kirche in Sachsen (2001) 6-8.

<sup>265</sup> Walter L. Michel, *Some of the Problems with Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*. [http://www.michelwl.net/dabru\\_english.htm](http://www.michelwl.net/dabru_english.htm) (accessed 7 July 2008).

<sup>266</sup> See below.

have NOT repudiated this teaching.<sup>267</sup>

It is impossible to determine if concerns, similar to those expressed by Michel, were held by Michel's colleagues. Nevertheless, Michel offers a negative, scholarly Christian response to *Dabru Emet* that is worthy of our consideration, if, for no other reason, than because Michel opposes *Dabru Emet* and is a Christian scholar. The problem with Michel's opposition, however, is that he assigns more authority to *Dabru Emet* than the authors intended. *Dabru Emet* was not meant to be an authoritative statement, but rather a proclamation of "what Judaism **may** now say about Christianity" (emphasis added) intended to galvanize a stagnate Jewish-Christian dialogue.

A German volume titled *Redet Wahrheit— Dabru Emet*<sup>268</sup> presented additional German responses to *Dabru Emet*, including two essays written by *Dabru Emet* co-author, Michael Signer. Stanislaw Krajewski of Warsaw translated *Dabru Emet* into Polish for publication in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the "leading" paper in Poland,<sup>269</sup> and wrote a personal account of the Polish response to *Dabru Emet*. While Krajewski is Jewish himself, he recounts the largely positive reaction of secular and Catholic Poles to the promulgation of *Dabru Emet*. Krajewski did make note of one negative Polish Christian response to *Dabru Emet*, a perspective offered by Lech Stepniewski, whom Krajewski calls "little known"<sup>270</sup> and "right-wing."<sup>271</sup> Stepniewski understood the message of

<sup>267</sup> Walter L. Michel, *Postscript: (January 8, 2002)* note 2. From *Some of the Problems with Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*. [http://www.michelwl.net/dabru\\_english.htm](http://www.michelwl.net/dabru_english.htm) (accessed 7 July 2008).

<sup>268</sup> Von Erwin Dirscherl, Werner Trutwin (Hg.). *Redet Wahrheit - Dabru Emet: jüdisch-christliches Gespräch über Gott, Messias und Dekalog. Forum Christen und Juden. Veröffentlicht von LIT Verlag Berlin-Hamburg-Münster*, 2004.

<sup>269</sup> Krajewski writes, "Gazeta Wyborcza is very much "the" newspaper in Poland, at least as much as is the host paper of the original version, *The New York Times*. Its role can be also compared to that of *Le Monde* in France." Stanislaw Krajewski. "Dabru Emet in Poland: A Summary and Discussion (a personal account)," <http://jcrelations.net/en/?item=1968> (accessed 5 March 2009).

<sup>270</sup> Krajewski, 3. ("Dabru Emet in Poland: A Summary and Discussion (a personal account)," <http://jcrelations.net/en/?item=1968> (accessed 5 March 2009).

*Dabru Emet* to be: “Don’t try to convert us, support the state of Israel, and for this we will not identify Christianity with Nazism.”<sup>272</sup>

Generally speaking, Christian responses to *Dabru Emet* were positive, supportive and even grateful for the efforts of Jewish leaders and scholars. Responses largely recognized theological and philosophical changes to Christianity in response to the Holocaust (or *Shoah*, the Hebrew term for “Holocaust” used in most of the Christian responses). Catholics and Lutherans seemed, on the whole, to offer the most encouraging responses.

### **Jewish Responses to *Dabru Emet***

*Dabru Emet* was also received mostly positively within the Jewish community, which was not surprising considering that the rabbis who had signed the statement represented a large portion of the Jewish community in North America. Yet, *Dabru Emet* did have its critics in the Jewish community, many of whom were particularly troubled by their belief that the statement absolved Christianity of any blame for the Holocaust.<sup>273</sup>

The Institute for Public Affairs of the Orthodox Union<sup>274</sup> released a statement in

---

<sup>271</sup> Apparently Stepniewski wrote a commentary for a series of “Right-wing lectures.” For more on Stepniewski’s commentary on *Dabru Emet*, Krajewski directs readers to: “‘Jews and Christians,’ published in „Najwyższy Czas”, October 2000. Original: „jeśli żydowskie tezy o chrześcijaństwie nie zostaną szybko podjęte, pogłębione i rozszerzone, to w gruncie rzeczy do chrześcijan dotrze tylko niezbyt ciekawa oferta: ‘Nie nawracajcie nas, wspierajcie państwo Izraela, a my za to nie będziemy stawiać znaku równości między chrześcijaństwem a nazizmem’. Powiedzcie prawdę, upewnijcie nas, że nie o to jedynie wam chodzi”

<sup>272</sup> Krajewski, *Poland*, p 3.

<sup>273</sup> “There is no paragraph in the entire statement that has generated more controversy than the statement, ‘Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon.’” (Signer, *Reflections*, 14)

<sup>274</sup> The Institute for Public Affairs of the Orthodox Union is “the public policy arm of the nation’s largest representative Orthodox Jewish organization -- with over 1,000 member synagogues nationwide...the IPA works to protect Jewish interests and freedoms by providing government officials with informative policy briefings, advocating legislative and regulatory initiatives, and coordinating our constituency’s

response to *Dabru Emet* on 14 September 2000 authored by Dr. David Berger,<sup>275</sup> and later adopted by the Rabbinical Council of America as its official position on *Dabru Emet*.<sup>276</sup> In refusing to sign *Dabru Emet*, Berger agreed with those who contended that the “controversial” fifth plank unnecessarily exonerated Christianity of any blame for the success of Nazi anti-Semitism.<sup>277</sup> In addition to his opposition to the fifth plank, Berger raised objections to three additional planks in *Dabru Emet*:

1. Berger voiced his opposition to what he termed “theological reciprocity”<sup>278</sup>
2. Berger felt that the assertions differentiating Jewish and Christian theology were inadequate<sup>279</sup>
3. Berger disagreed with the position of *Dabru Emet* with regard to triumphalism<sup>280</sup>

By discouraging claims by Jews and Christians of the validity of their respective interpretations of Scripture with the assertion that interpretations would be more fully understood in the future with the arrival of the *eschaton*, the authors of *Dabru Emet* hoped to discourage missionary efforts by both sides. Berger was concerned that in opposing missionizing the authors had strayed too far from some of the unique claims of

---

grass-roots political activities...” “About the IPA” [http://www.ou.org/public\\_affairs/article/ipasum](http://www.ou.org/public_affairs/article/ipasum) (accessed 27 February 2009).

<sup>275</sup> David Berger is an Orthodox rabbi and is a professor of Jewish History and head of the Jewish Studies department at Yeshiva University.

<sup>276</sup> David Berger, *Dabru Emet: Some Reservations about a Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*. Paper read at the first annual meeting of the “Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations” in Baltimore, MD: 28 October 2002. <http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/sites/partners/ccjr/berger02.htm> (accessed 27 February 2009). (“*Reservations*”)

<sup>277</sup> “I agree with much of it, including the controversial but carefully balanced passage denying that Nazism was a Christian phenomenon.” (David Berger, “Statement,” 14 September 2000, <http://www.ou.org/public/statements/2000/betty25.htm> (accessed 27 February 2009)).

<sup>278</sup> “[I]t [*Dabru Emet*] implies that Jews should reassess their view of Christianity in light of Christian reassessments of Judaism. This inclination toward theological reciprocity is fraught with danger.” (Berger, *Statement*).

<sup>279</sup> “[A]lthough it is proper to emphasize that Christians ‘worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, creator of heaven and earth,’ it is essential to add that worship of Jesus of Nazareth as a manifestation or component of that God constitutes what Jewish law and theology call *avodah zarah*, or foreign worship—at least if done by a Jew.” (Berger, *Statement*)

<sup>280</sup> “[T]he statement discourages either community from ‘insisting that it has interpreted Scripture more accurately than the other.’ While intended for the laudable purpose of discouraging missionizing, this assertion conveys an uncomfortably relativistic message.” (Berger, *Statement*)

Judaism. Furthermore, Berger asserts that Christian worship constituted a form of “*avodah zarah*,” which he translates as “foreign worship”<sup>281</sup>—a form of worship that is wholly unacceptable for Jews. The implications of the first plank of *Dabru Emet*, which stated that “Christian worship is not a viable religious choice for Jews”<sup>282</sup> was, he felt, “[a] bland assertion...thoroughly inadequate,”<sup>283</sup> which failed to recognize the gravity of Jewish martyrdom in defense of the significant theological differences between Judaism and Christianity.<sup>284</sup> The implications of the sixth plank of *Dabru Emet*,<sup>285</sup> that “difference[s] will not be settled by one community insisting that it has interpreted Scripture more accurately than the other,” are similarly problematic for Berger, who feared that the avoidance of debate over the accuracy of Scriptural interpretations would be counter-productive and potentially lead to increased “relativism.”<sup>286</sup> In a 2002 address reflecting on his statement of September 2000, Berger clarified his opposition.<sup>287</sup> “Theological reciprocity”, he stated, is dangerous because it produces inappropriate pressure on Jews<sup>288</sup> and Christians<sup>289</sup> to change their beliefs and practices. He went on to

<sup>281</sup> Berger’s translation of “*avodah zarah*” as “foreign worship” is misleading, as the normative understanding of “*avodah zarah*” in Judaism is “idol worship.” Encyclopaedia Judaica, 1974: “Idolatry” The phrase “*avodah zarah*” originates as the title of a Talmudic tractate, from *Nezikin*.

<sup>282</sup> Berger misquotes the text of *Dabru Emet*, omitting the word “religious” from his quotation of the phrase “Christian worship is not a viable choice for Jews” (Berger, *Statement*)

<sup>283</sup> Berger, *Statement*

<sup>284</sup> “Many Jews died to underscore this point, and the bland assertion that ‘Christian worship is not a viable choice for Jews’ is thoroughly inadequate.” (Berger, *Statement*)

<sup>285</sup> “The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world as promised in Scripture” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>286</sup> “While intended for the laudable purpose of discouraging missionizing, this assertion conveys an uncomfortably relativistic message.” (Berger, *Statement*) I am not clear as to what Dr. Berger means by claiming “this assertion conveys an uncomfortably relativistic message.” I understand “relativism” through the definition of David Novak in *What to Seek and What to Avoid in Jewish-Christian Dialogue* (Novak, *CJT*, 4), in which he argues that “relativism” must be avoided in Jewish-Christian dialogue: “In the atmosphere of modern secularism, which we can also call ‘relativism,’ in which most Jews and Christians now live, religion is taken to be a matter of private preference at best. Relativism is especially dangerous to the dialogue because it denies that some things are true all the time everywhere for everyone.”

<sup>287</sup> Berger, *Reservations*.

<sup>288</sup> “For Jews, the dynamic of interfaith dialogue has produced pressure from within or from without to see

define “*avodah zarah*” not as “idolatry,”<sup>290</sup> but rather as improper worship of the right God, a distinction which separates Christianity from paganism and leaves Christians “eligible” for salvation.<sup>291</sup> Berger also wished to avoid the document’s “relativism,” which demands that Jews must avoid making any assertions about Christian beliefs or practices.<sup>292</sup> To these reflections Berger added his critical comments on the third plank<sup>293</sup> of *Dabru Emet* regarding Christian support for the modern State of Israel. According to Berger, Christians who support Israel are not interested in Jewish-Christian dialogue, but rather are interested in converting Jews to Christianity.<sup>294</sup> Conversely, Berger insisted that Christians interested in Jewish-Christian dialogue are, generally speaking, much less supportive of Israel than they are of the Palestinian cause.<sup>295</sup>

Another negative response came from Rabbi A. James Rudin—a highly respected leader in the field of Jewish-Christian relations—who is the Interreligious Adviser to the American Jewish Committee. Rabbi Rudin’s opposition focused primarily on the

---

Jesus as a prophet, or even as a Messiah for non-Jews; to see the incarnation as a theologically acceptable, even if erroneous belief; to downplay the problem of ‘foreign worship’ (*avodah zarah*); and to engage in interfaith prayer services.” (Berger, *Reservations*)

<sup>289</sup> “For Christians, it [interfaith dialogue motivated by theological reciprocity] has produced pressures to deny the historicity of sections of the Gospels; to see the New Testament as an antisemitic work; to demand that it be revised; to question even eschatological confirmation of Christian truth...” (Berger, *Reservations*)

<sup>290</sup> Berger conveys the definition of “idolatry” proposed by David Novak in CJT: the worship of a ‘strange god.’

<sup>291</sup> Berger is examining what he previously described as an inadequate assertion of *Dabru Emet*, that “Christian worship is not a viable religious choice for Jews” and understands the issue to be quite complex with regards to Jewish understandings of Christian theology.

<sup>292</sup> “For many traditionalists of both faiths, the affirmation that the key tenets of one’s religion will be verified at the end of days follows ineluctably from the conviction that they are true...Jews engaged in dialogue with Christians succumb all too often to the temptation to tell Christians what to believe about their own religion...We have no such right, any more than Christians have the right to demand that traditional Jews give up their conviction that at the end of days all the world will recognize the messiah—and that he will not be Jesus of Nazareth.” (Berger, *Reservations*)

<sup>293</sup> “Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel.” (*Dabru Emet*)

<sup>294</sup> “Support for Israel in the organized Christian community comes primarily from those who eschew theological dialogue and support conversionary efforts aimed at Jews.” (Berger, *Reservations*)

<sup>295</sup> “Churches and organizations most involved in dialogue are far more ambivalent and even hostile. The very habits of mind that produce the dialogical imperative--the desire to redress grievances and achieve justice for the historically oppressed--produce sympathy for Palestinians.” (Berger, *Reservations*)

statement's contentious fifth plank, which, as we know, asserts that "Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon."<sup>296</sup> In his public refusal to sign *Dabru Emet*, Rabbi Rudin wrote: "I refused [to sign *Dabru Emet*] because the Baltimore statement fails to adequately and accurately address the critical issue of Christianity and the Holocaust."<sup>297</sup> Rudin insisted that it was an "undeniable historical reality"<sup>298</sup> that Christianity paved the way and was responsible for a climate conducive to the growth of "genocidal Nazism." Furthermore, Rudin challenged the historicity of the claim in *Dabru Emet* that the Nazis planned to target Christians in the same way that they killed Jews, arguing that such an assertion was not only unsupported by historical evidence, but that it was a specious comparison.<sup>299</sup> In Rudin's opinion, the "Holocaust" statement in *Dabru Emet* did not go far enough, or was not honest enough, to pave the way for post-Holocaust dialogue.<sup>300</sup>

In his 2002 review of *Dabru Emet* Berger cites and reproduces a letter from the *Forward* in response to Rudin. This response demonstrates the oppositional views of Berger and Rudin regarding some fundamental aspects of Jewish-Christian dialogue explored in *Dabru Emet*.<sup>301</sup> While Rudin was most troubled by the position of *Dabru*

<sup>296</sup> "Rabbi A. James Rudin, a well-respected author of the Jewish-Christian dialogue has written that his refusal to sign *Dabru Emet* was based on his conviction that this statement ['Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon'] is in error." Signer, *Reflections*, 14.

<sup>297</sup> A. James Rudin, "Dabru Emet: A Jewish Dissent," *Religion News Service* (2000). <http://www.jcrelations.net/en/?item=957> (accessed 25 February 2009). ("Dissent")

<sup>298</sup> Rudin, *Dissent*

<sup>299</sup> "[T]he Baltimore statement is misleading at best, and dangerous at worst, because it sets up a moral equivalency between the undeniable Nazi attempt to kill every Jew in the world and an unprovable historical prediction that the same 'murderous rage' would be aimed at 'Christians' in general." (Rudin, *Dissent*)

<sup>300</sup> "The troublesome paragraph concludes: 'We do not blame them (Christians) for the sins committed by their ancestors.' No argument here. But beyond rejecting blame there is need for genuine responsibility on the part of Christian churches to search their past regarding the Holocaust. That specific call is lacking in *Dabru Emet*." (Rudin, *Dissent*)

<sup>301</sup> "I was stunned by A. James Rudin's assertion ('While the Messiah Tarries,' February 22, 2002) that Catholics must not only assert that the Jewish longing for the Messiah is "valid"; they must assert that "the messiah's identity remains unknown, and Jesus, whom Christians believe to be the messiah, is not waiting at the end of days for Jews to recognize the 'error of their ways.'" How does one believe that Jesus is the messiah and simultaneously refrain from asserting that Jews will discover this at the end of

*Emet* on the Holocaust, this position was not an issue for Berger, who was most troubled by that which Rudin approved of and asserted.

Professor and theologian Jon Levenson wrote “the most trenchant”<sup>302</sup> critique of *Dabru Emet*—“The Agenda of *Dabru Emet*”—which was first published in a shorter form in *Commentary* magazine under the title “How Not to Conduct Jewish-Christian Dialogue,”<sup>303</sup> and later in a longer version titled “The Agenda of *Dabru Emet*” in *Review of Rabbinic Judaism*.<sup>304</sup> Levenson’s critique caused a major stir in the world of academia, and began a debate among Jewish scholars that played out in the pages of two academic journals, *Commentary* and *First Things*.<sup>305</sup> Levenson’s core opposition to *Dabru Emet* related to the tenor of the document. In his opinion, *Dabru Emet* represented a negotiation and not a dialogue. As Levenson wrote in his penultimate paragraph,

The real agenda of *Dabru Emet* is thus not one of dialogue at all. It is one of negotiation. The Jews are making Christians an offer: If you change your religion so as to make it look more like Judaism, we will, without reservation, affirm it alongside Judaism as our fraternal twin. Indeed, we

---

days? Rabbi Rudin apparently believes that Jews have the right to demand that Christians reject one of the core beliefs of Christianity...” (Berger, *Reservations*)

<sup>302</sup> Signer described Levenson’s critique in just those terms. See Michael Signer to David Reiner, 12 June 2008, in Appendix.

<sup>303</sup> Jon D. Levenson, “How not to conduct Jewish-Christian dialogue” *Commentary*, 112, n. 5 (Dec. 2001), 31-37.

<sup>304</sup> Jon D. Levenson. “The Agenda of *Dabru Emet*,” in *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 7 (Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, 2004) 1-26. For the purposes of this project I have focused on the longer essay in *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* as well as the extended discussion between authors of *Dabru Emet* and critics in the article “Controversy: Jewish-Christian dialogue” *Commentary*, 113, n. 4 (Apr. 2002), 8-21. The lengthy debate in *Commentary* received significant attention from many in the field and was referenced in several articles that I read and continues to be a source of contention. Cf Edward Kessler, “Understanding Christianity Today - Jewish Perspectives: *Dabru Emet* - A Jewish Statement about Christianity” *Reviews in Religion and Theology* 9, n. 5 (November 2002): 479-487(9); idem., “Onward Catholic Soldiers?” *First Things: A Journal of Religion, Culture, and Public Life*, (August/September 2002).

<sup>305</sup> Two reputable scholarly publications, *Commentary* and *First Things*, featured a rather acrimonious “disputation” between supporters of Levenson and supporters of *Dabru Emet*. Extended discussions appear in *Commentary* 113:4 (2002) 8, 10, 12, 14, 16-21, and in *First Things* 125 (August/September, 2002), 8-11.

will present Judaism so that it closely resembles the Judaized Christianity that you have produced.<sup>306</sup>

Levenson was opposed to nearly all of *Dabru Emet*, and integrated harsh critique<sup>307</sup> with occasional ironic humor.<sup>308</sup> The theological, scholarly, and social criticisms that Levenson brought against *Dabru Emet* shook the very foundational claims of the document by directly challenging the approach to dialogue used by the authors.

Dr. Jacob Neusner (1932- ) also composed a highly critical evaluation of *Dabru Emet*, peppered with acerbic comments.<sup>309</sup> Referring to *Dabru Emet* as “theological liberalism run amok,”<sup>310</sup> Neusner offered a harsh critique of the “Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity” in a *Jerusalem Post* book review that is also highly critical of the Chabad movement (which Neusner calls “*halachic* Christianity”). Neusner’s assessment of *Dabru Emet* was blistering:

**...*Dabru Emet* legitimizes the Christian Bible...The group’s reward is typified by the Archbishop of Canterbury’s statement that, in light of *Dabru Emet*, Christianity has no reason to proselytize among Jews any longer. But a greater danger to Judaism’s insistence that the authenticity of the Torah from Sinai (oral and written) takes precedence over any other claim comes from the Right. It takes the form of authentic Judaic living, to validate the substance of Christian Messianism. And **this threat from within is represented, not by scarcely 200 Reform and Conservative “*Dabru Emet*” rabbis of little faith, but by the halachic****

<sup>306</sup> Levenson, “The Agenda of *Dabru Emet*” in *Review of Rabbinic Judaism*, 7(2004): 26.

<sup>307</sup> “What, then, are we to make of the fact that [*Dabru Emet*]...takes no account of doctrines central to historic Christianity...Whatever its authors’ and signatories’ intentions...” (pp. 9-10); “A similar partiality of vision, a similar tendency to neglect rather than reassess historic points of discord, informs the second thesis of *Dabru Emet*...The awkward parenthetical gloss already points to the problem...” (p. 10)

<sup>308</sup> “The last of the eight theses of *Dabru Emet*, finally, affirms that ‘Jews and Christians must work together for justice and peace.’ This gutsy stand has doubtless provoked unimaginable consternation in the camp that advocates that Jews and Christians work separately for injustice and war.” (p. 25)

<sup>309</sup> An article in the *New York Times* dated 13 April 2005 stated: “Mr. Neusner’s sharp tongue has also made him enemies among his colleagues....” (Dinitia Smith, “Scholar of Judaism, Professional Provocateur,” *The New York Times* (13 April 2005). [http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/13/books/13neus.html?\\_r=1&ex=1113969600&en=ec006dec26ddc80c&ei=5070&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/13/books/13neus.html?_r=1&ex=1113969600&en=ec006dec26ddc80c&ei=5070&oref=slogin) (accessed 5 November 2008))

<sup>310</sup> Jacob Neusner, “A Messianism that Some Call Heresy,” *The Jerusalem Post* (19 October 2001): Books Section, 13.

Christianity of Chabad.<sup>311</sup>

Neusner also offered an oppositional vision of Jewish-Christian dialogue in multiple publications before and after the completion of *Dabru Emet*. His book, *A Rabbi Talks with Jesus*,<sup>312</sup> was well received in the Catholic community because of the honesty, precision, and respect that Neusner demonstrated for the Christian Scriptures. No less a figure than John Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI), wrote that Neusner's book was "by far the most important book for the Jewish-Christian dialogue in the last decade."<sup>313</sup> Based upon Neusner's stature as a scholar of Judaism and as a Jewish scholar of Christianity, and particularly after writing a book that was so well-received by the Vatican, it is significant to note that Neusner was not an author of *Dabru Emet*, nor did he sign the final statement. It is not clear if Neusner's absence from the project may have influenced his burning critique that goes beyond the boundaries of dispassionate scholarly criticism. Early conversations among The Jewish Scholars Project discussed the idea of extending a personal invitation to Neusner to participate in the early discussions that led to *Dabru Emet*, but a decision was made to not extend an invitation out of fear that Neusner would try to domineer or even politicize the process of writing *Dabru Emet*.<sup>314</sup>

Although most responses to *Dabru Emet* in the "progressive"<sup>315</sup> Jewish community were positive, it is important to point out that many rabbis, Jewish academics, and Jewish community leaders elected not to endorse *Dabru Emet* publicly after it was

<sup>311</sup> Jacob Neusner, "A Messianism that Some Call Heresy" in *The Jerusalem Post*, 19 October 2001: Books Section, 13.

<sup>312</sup> Jacob Neusner, *A Rabbi Talks with Jesus* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press: 2000)

<sup>313</sup> From the laudatory comments ("blurb") on the back cover of Neusner's book.

<sup>314</sup> Personal Conversation with Dr. David Sandmel, 3 April 2008. Used without permission.

<sup>315</sup> By which I mean the non-Orthodox community

published. While the majority of people initially invited to sign chose to sign, very few people added their signatures after publication. (Although the draft of the document was initially only circulated to “more than three hundred Rabbis, scholars and theologians,”<sup>316</sup> it later became available for people to sign via the internet).<sup>317</sup> Stanislaw Krajewski claimed that some of the Jewish opposition to *Dabru Emet* may have been inspired by personal rivalries and anger—as opposed to divergent views—or even by merely habitual “devil’s advocacy.”<sup>318</sup>

Most Jewish and Christian opposition focused on the claim of the fifth plank that “Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon.” Other opposition to *Dabru Emet* was mostly from Jewish scholars who questioned the effectiveness of the approach of *Dabru Emet* to Jewish-Christian dialogue, and felt that *Dabru Emet* conceded too much to Christianity theologically. The “Americanocentricity” of *Dabru Emet*, to return to the terminology used by Rabbi David Rosen, is apparent from the list of signatories—despite the fact that the statement was ultimately translated into several other languages. While expressing disappointment at both the small number of signers and the lack of European signatories, Krajewski claimed that anti-American sentiments in Europe may have contributed to the disproportionately American nature of *Dabru Emet*.<sup>319</sup> It is also possible that European

---

<sup>316</sup> Signer, *Reflections*, 10

<sup>317</sup> Signer, *Reflections*, 10

<sup>318</sup> “I feel that personal rivalry has been an important reason for *not* signing the declaration. Some of those who felt “I would write that better”, refused to sign. Some of the Jewish polemics misrepresent the declaration so much that they seem to be based on anger...not just divergent views.” (Krajewski, *Summary and Discussion*, p 3.)

<sup>319</sup> “[T]o my mind, the number of signatures is not as large as it could be. I feel that the search for potential signers was not broad enough. The fact remains that nobody else from Eastern Europe has joined the signatories. Of course, almost nobody from Western Europe has. Why? The reasons varied, from disagreement to lack of contacts with the authors of DE, to anti-American sentiments. It seems clear that anti-American bias could hardly be [sic] the reason in the East, while it could have been quite essential in the West. If in my part of Europe there had been Jews sufficiently committed to the cause

Jewish scholars, themselves survivors of the Nazi regime, were not quite ready to absolve Christians for their role in the Holocaust.

The progressivism and openness of post-Enlightenment American religious culture (and perhaps, on the other hand, its naïveté and lack of historical experience as well) made a statement such as *Dabru Emet* possible. The role of the Holocaust in prompting a period of Christian reflection and reconciliation must not be underestimated, particularly when considering the historical events most responsible for the creation of *Dabru Emet* and the improvement of relations between Judaism and Christianity. But it was the unique American religious and cultural milieu, conducive to interreligious dialogue, that most contributed to the creation of *Dabru Emet*, as well as the unique settled position of the Jewish community in America.

---

advocated by DE, they would have found their way.” (Krajewski, *Summary and Discussion*, 3-4.)

# **Epilogue**

**Epilogue:**

For nearly two millennia, formal ecclesiastical encounters between Judaism and Christianity have been riddled with tensions, disdain, and contempt. Jews and Christians alike claim an exclusive covenantal relationship with God, as the “True Israel,” and have historically denied the essential validity of the theological claims made by the other. The process of this denial of validity has taken several forms—from mild theological contempt, to stronger social contempt to the strongest form of contempt: demonization of the other. Without attempting to assert that there is an essential parity in this mutual rejection, it is fair to point out that Christians long sought to minimize Judaism and bolster Christianity through supersessionist and triumphalist ideologies even as Jews long rejected the validity of Christian teachings and insisted that Christianity’s theological assertions were fundamentally false and illegitimate.

The Holocaust was arguably the most significant theological and historical event of the twentieth century, as well as in the long history of the encounter between Judaism and Christianity. The destruction of the European Jewish community prompted significant reflection and reevaluation on matters of social and theological import in both Judaism and Christianity. Christian theological responses to the Holocaust were largely external, focused on a reconsideration of the Jews and Judaism in a manner that would avoid the “teachings of contempt.” Jewish theological responses to the Holocaust were largely introspective, as a victimized Jewish community increasingly struggled to understand the dimensions of the world’s inexplicable apathy.

After the Holocaust, various Christian ecclesiastical bodies took tangible steps to move away from the long-accepted “teachings of contempt” that had prevailed over the

centuries. One step in this direction was the formal removal of problematic passages from Christian liturgy, pericope, and doctrine. There were those who believed, however, that these Christian overtures were largely unreciprocated by the Jewish community, aside from some positive responses by several influential Jewish leaders.<sup>320</sup>

As the new millennium approached, a group of Jewish leaders and scholars gathered to prepare a formal Jewish response to these initiatives. The result of their effort was “*Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*.” There were many who viewed this statement as a positive and unified Jewish understanding of Christianity and as an attempt to reconcile some of the key differences that had kept Judaism and Christianity apart and at odds for so long.

This thesis has attempted to analyze the historical context of *Dabru Emet* in the history of Jewish-Christian dialogue. No other statement has emerged from such a diverse and unified Jewish collective as an effort to promote and promulgate a distinctly positive and distinctively Jewish approach to understanding Christians and Christianity. Christian responses to *Dabru Emet* were largely positive and affirming. Although there were Jews who responded positively to the statement, there were many Jewish leaders who criticized the effort and pointed out its essential flaws.

It may well be unrealistic to expect that there can ever be a complete reconciliation between Jews and Christians. Fundamentalism in both Judaism and Christianity prevents productive dialogue, and triumphalism on both sides creates an insurmountable barrier that may never be fully overcome. Productive and meaningful dialogue can only exist when both parties are willing to validate and sanction the other's

---

<sup>320</sup> I recall especially the efforts of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel.

religious convictions. Just as Christians must reconsider and reevaluate their understanding of Jews and Judaism in order for dialogue to prosper, so too must Jews engage in a parallel process.

Distinct fundamental differences between Judaism and Christianity make widespread dialogue a challenging proposition. Centuries of Christian oppression create an obstacle for Jews in formulating a positive view of Christians and Christianity, especially after an event as horrific as the Holocaust primarily perpetrated by Christians. Jewish oppression of the early Christians, preserved in the text of the New Testament, whether exaggerated or an accurate account, has become an obstacle for positive Christian views of Jews and Judaism. The historian Robert Chazan explains, “[T]he early stories of persecution, in particular the purported Jewish role in the crucifixion, served to establish an image of Judaism and Jews that would exert profound influence on Christian thinking over the ages.”<sup>321</sup> Both of these obstacles must be overcome if there is to be any hope for a productive meaningful dialogue.

Examining *Dabru Emet* in a historical and a religious context allows us to recognize the roles that society and theology play in the Jewish-Christian encounter, and this recognition may help to promote a level of self-reflection and introspection among Jews and Christians that is necessary for interreligious dialogue to proceed. There is far more work to be done.

Nearly nine years after the promulgation of *Dabru Emet*, the relationship between Judaism and Christianity continues to evolve in the midst of many changes to the world’s religious landscape. Too often Jews and Christians come together for the purpose of interreligious dialogue without a specific agenda. As I found in the process of

---

<sup>321</sup> Robert Chazan, “Christian-Jewish Interactions over the Ages,” in *CJT*, p 9.

researching and writing this thesis, the relationship and history of encounters between Judaism and Christianity is too vast to explore without a very specific focus. Organizers assume that any group of Jews or Christians seated together around a table, breaking bread (or pizza) will inherently engage in a positive and productive interreligious dialogue. While important conversations may occur, even accompanied by some dialogue, it is far more likely that people will depart thinking that they have accomplished more than they really have. Content with the presumption of progress, both sides become complacent and fail to recognize the immense potential for positive Jewish-Christian encounters. United in a shared vision for the future, Jews and Christians can engage together in acts of *caritas* and *chesed*, and hope to better the difficult conditions faced by many of the world's peoples. Separated from each other and satisfied with a status quo that ranges from apathy to suspicion to contempt, Jews and Christians will fail to recognize the potential of united efforts toward the realization of the shared prophetic call to do good, pursue justice, and seek peace.

It seems fitting to conclude with words by a Christian scholar, Anthony J. Saldarini, a man who sought to reconcile the centuries of conflict between Judaism and Christianity:

As for the future, a healthy appreciation for human limitations counsels moderation in utopian hopes for peace and understanding. Jews and Christians have been thrown together because of their common origins in the Middle East, their common religious traditions (however differently interpreted), and the course of history in the West. The increasingly smaller world of instant communication and swift travel guarantees that Jews and Christians will continue to argue over their traditions, history, political relationships, and ultimate goals.<sup>322</sup>

---

<sup>322</sup> Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, cited in William S. Green, "Realistic Expectations: The Limits of Theological Negotiation" in *When Judaism and Christianity Began*:

Indeed, there are limits to future dialogue and interactions between Judaism and Christianity. And yet, with these limitations in mind, it remains important to engage in dialogue, that we may continue to make progress toward mutual understanding and acceptance.

THE END

**Bibliography/Works Cited:****Primary Sources:**

Morris B. Abram and John Slawson, eds., *Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Jews: A Background Report*, (New York: The American Jewish Committee, November 1965).

American Baptists: Committee on Christian Unity of the American Baptist Churches in the USA, "An American Baptist Response to 'Dabru Emet [To Speak the Truth]: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity,'" 10 July 2002, <http://www.jcrelations.net/en/index.php?id=988> (accessed 28 February 2009).

Anglican/Episcopal Church. "Towards a Theology for Interfaith Dialogue." Lambeth Conference: 1988. <http://www.ccj.org.uk/documents/Towards%20a%20Theology%20Lambeth%201988.pdf>

Aphrahat, "Aphrahat and Judaism," transl. Jacob Neusner (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), pages 60-67; in F.E. Talmage, ed. *Disputation & Dialogue: Readings in the Jewish-Christian Encounter* (New York: Ktav Publishing House Inc., Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1975), 27.

Augustine, "Reply to Faustus the Manichean (12:9-13)," transl. in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Buffalo, 1887, IV, 186-188, in Frank E. Talmage, ed. *Disputation & Dialogue: Readings in the Jewish-Christian Encounter* (New York: Ktav Publishing House Inc., Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1975), p. 28-32.

Karl Barth, "The Judgment and the Mercy of God," in *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), II, pp 205-213, reproduced in Talmage, *Disputation*, p 43:

David Berger, *Dabru Emet: Some Reservations about a Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*. Paper read at the first annual meeting of the "Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations" in Baltimore, MD: 28 October 2002. <http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/sites/partners/ccjr/berger02.htm> (accessed 27 February 2009).

David Berger, "Statement," 14 September 2000, <http://www.ou.org/public/statements/2000/betty25.htm> (accessed 27 February 2009).

Philip Birnbaum, *Daily Prayer Book: Ha-Siddur Ha-Shalem* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 2002)

Allan Brockway, Rolf Rendtorff, Simon Schoon, and Paul M. van Buren. *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People: Statements by the World Council of Churches and its member churches*. (Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications, 1988).

Martin Buber, "Open Letter to Gerhard Kittel" in *Disputation & Dialogue: Readings in the Jewish-Christian Encounter*, ed. F.E. Talmage (New York: Ktav Publishing House Inc., Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1975), pp 49-54.

Catholic Church: Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, Cardinal Willebrands, "Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate* (No. 4), 22 October 1974, "Section I: Dialogue" [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_19741201\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_19741201_nostra-aetate_en.html) (accessed 24 February 2009).

*Dabru Emet*: Tikva Frymer-Kensky, David Novak, Peter Ochs, and Michael Signer, "Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity," *The New York Times* and *The Baltimore Sun* (11 October 2000): (Paid Advertisement)

Emil L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections* (New York: NYU Press, 1970), p 71.

Emil L. Fackenheim, "How My Mind has Changed," in *Christian Century Series*, excerpted in Talmage, *Disputation*, p 250.

Moshe Feinstein, *Iggerot Moshe, Yoreh; Deah 3; Number 43: Two Responsa Concerning the Prohibition Against Attendance at a Meeting with Christians on Matters of Rapprochement in Faith and Association with Them*. 19 Adar I, 5727/1 March 1967, and 9 Adar II, 5727/21 March 1967, transl. David Ellenson, "A Jewish Legal Authority Addresses Jewish-Christian Dialogue: Two Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein," *American Jewish Archives Journal* LII (2000): 112-128.

Eugene J. Fisher and Leon Klenicki, *In our Time: The Flowering of Jewish-Catholic Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990).

Eugene J. Fisher and Leon Klenicki, eds. *Pope John Paul II on Jews and Judaism 1979-1986*. (Washington: National Conference of Catholic Bishops - Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1998).

Laurie Goodstein, "Leading Jewish Scholars Extend a Hand to Christians." *The New York Times*. (8 September 2000): A22.  
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9807E6DD1339F93BA3575AC0A9669C8B63&scp=1&sq=%22Dabru+Emet%22&st=nyt> (Accessed 7 July 2008)

Heschel: Debrief notes from Z. Shuster and A.J. Heschel following their audience with Pope Paul VI, 14 September 1964 Marc H. Tanenbaum [sic] Papers, 603/12/“AJ Heschel” file, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Heschel: Draft Memorandum to Pope John XXIII by Abraham Joshua Heschel, undated, Marc H. Tanenbaum [sic] Papers, 603-17/12, AJA. Cincinnati, Ohio.

Heschel: Letter to Cardinal A. Bea, 22 November 1963, Marc H. Tanenbaum [sic] Papers, 603/12/“AJ Heschel” file, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Heschel: Memorandum on the Jewish Decree by Abraham Joshua Heschel, 10 September 1964, Marc H. Tanenbaum [sic] Papers, 603-17/12, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Heschel: Note on private meeting with Pope John XXIII at Castle Gandaolfo by Abraham Joshua Heschel, 14 September 1964, Marc H. Tanenbaum [sic] Papers, 603-17/12, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Heschel: “On Improving Catholic-Jewish Relations: A Memorandum to His Eminence Agostino Cardinal Bea, President. The Secretariat for Christian Unity.” by Abraham Joshua Heschel, 22 May 1962, Marc H. Tanenbaum [sic] Papers, 603-17/12, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Heschel: Speech in response to Vatican II Council by Abraham Joshua Heschel, Marc H. Tannenbaum Papers, 603-17/12, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

ICCJ: “Report of Committee IV: *Concerns of the Churches*, Chapter 3: *The Christian Approach to the Jews*.” 22 August-4 September, 1948, The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches Collection, International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ), Heppenheim, Germany. <http://jcrelations.net/en/?id=1489> (accessed 7 February 2009). Cf. “Introduction,” Sections 2, 3, 4.

ICCJ: International Council of Christians and Jews. *The Ten Points of Seelisberg*. 5 August 1947. <http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/interreligious/Seelisberg.htm> (accessed 25 June 2008)

IPA: “About the IPA” [http://www.ou.org/public\\_affairs/article/ipasum](http://www.ou.org/public_affairs/article/ipasum) (accessed 27 February 2009).

Ferdinand M. Isserman collection at The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives.

- Cardinal William Keeler, "The Power of Words: A Catholic Response to Dabru Emet," National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 31 October 2000.  
[http://www.kings.uwo.ca/ccjl/academic\\_resources/researchers\\_students/official\\_catholic/dabru\\_emet/](http://www.kings.uwo.ca/ccjl/academic_resources/researchers_students/official_catholic/dabru_emet/) (accessed 28 February 2009).
- Joseph Kimhi, *The Book of the Covenant* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1972), pp. 32-35, Also in Talmage, *Disputation*, page 13.
- Stanislaw Krajewski. "Dabru Emet in Poland: A Summary and Discussion (a personal account)," <http://jcrelations.net/en/?item=1968> (accessed 5 March 2009)
- Martin Luther, *Concerning the Jews and their Lies* (1543), excerpted from Jacob R. Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World, Revised Edition* (Cincinnati, OH: HUC Press, 1999), pp. 187-189. Also F.E. Talmage, *Disputation*, pp. 34-36
- Martin Luther, *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew* (1523), excerpted from Jacob R. Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World, Revised Edition* (Cincinnati, OH: HUC Press, 1999), 186-187. Also F.E. Talmage, *Disputation*, pp. 33-34.
- Lutheran: ELCA News Service Press release, "Lutheran-Jewish Panel Welcomes 'Dabru Emet,'" 16 November 2006, 00-282-FI.  
<http://www.wfn.org/2000/11/msg00147.html> (accessed 23 February 2009).
- Lutheran: European Lutheran Commission on the Church and the Jewish People (Lutherische Europäische Kommission Kirche und Judentum (LEKKJ)), "A Response to *Dabru Emet*." Graz, Austria: 12 May 2003.  
<http://www.jcrelations.net/en/index.php?id=1981> (accessed 28 February 2009)
- Lutheran: European Lutheran Commission on the Church and the Jewish People. "Recommendations for the Liturgy." 10 May 2003.
- Lutheran: Synod of the North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church, "Christians and Jews," Rendsburg: 22 September 2001.  
<http://www.jcrelations.net/en/index.php?id=1468> (accessed 28 February 2009).
- NCCCJ: Relations Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, "An Ecumenical Response to *Dabru Emet*: a Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity," 24 February 2001.  
<http://www.jcrelations.net/en/index.php?id=990> (accessed on 28 February 2009).
- Meyer Paper letter to Mr. John Slawson, Executive Vice President of The American Jewish Committee Institute of Human Relations, 31 January 1961, Marc H. Tanenbaum [*sic*] Papers, 603/12/"AJ Heschel" file, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Pope John Paul II. *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*. (New York: Knopf, 1995).

Pope John Paul II, Byron L. Sherwin and Harold Kasimow, eds. *John Paul II and Interreligious Dialogue*. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999).

Pope Paul VI. *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions* ("Nostra Aetate"). Catholic Church: 28 October 1965. (in Latin, translated by Vatican)  
[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html) Accessed on 7 February 2009.

Pope Paul VI, "Decree on Ecumenism: 'Unitatis Redintegratio,'" 28 October 1965,  
[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19641121\\_unitatis-redintegratio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html) (accessed 24 February 2009).

John Pawlikowski, *On the Threshold: Religion's Role in the New Millennium*. Cincinnati Commencement Address, 30 May 2001, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, OH.  
<http://www.huc.edu/faculty/faculty/pubs/pawlikowski.html> (accessed 5 March 2009).

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI), Scott Hahn, *Many Religions, One Covenant: Israel, the Church, and The World*. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press. 1999).

RCA: "Statement Adopted by the Rabbinical Council of America at the Mid-Winter Conference, February 3-5, 1964"

A. James Rudin, "Dabru Emet: A Jewish Dissent," *Religion News Service* (2000).  
<http://www.jcrelations.net/en/?item=957> (accessed 25 February 2009).

Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "Confrontation." In *Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Thought* 6, n. 2 (1964): 5ff. <http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/resources/articles/soloveitchik/> (accessed 17 June 2008).

Marc Tannenbaum "Confidential" letter to Heschel, 15 November 1961, Marc H. Tanenbaum [sic] Papers, 603/12/"AJ Heschel" file, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Tannenbaum: "Anti-Jewish Elements in Catholic Liturgy; A Memorandum to The Secretariat for Christian Unity. (Confidential)," 17 November 1961, Marc H. Tannenbaum Papers, 603-17/12, American Jewish Archives (AJA), Cincinnati, Ohio.

Tannenbaum: "Conversation of Cardinal Bea with Jewish Scholars and Theologians in New York, 31<sup>st</sup> of March 1963; Summary of the main ideas," 31 March 1963, Marc H. Tannenbaum Papers, 603-17/12, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

- Tannenbaum: "The Image of The Jews in Catholic Teaching; A Memorandum to The Secretariat for Christian Unity. (Confidential)," 30 November 1961, Marc H. Tannenbaum Papers, 603-17/12, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Tannenbaum: "Proposal to Vatican Ecumenical Council." 13 July 1961, Marc H. Tannenbaum Papers, 603-17/12, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Tannenbaum: "The Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Jews: A background Report." November 1965, Marc H. Tannenbaum Papers, 603-17/12, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Tannenbaum: Transcript: *Interview with Tom Stransky*. 25 July 1988. Marc H. Tannenbaum Papers, 603-19/13/2. AJA. Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Troki: Isaac ben Abraham of Troki, *Faith Strengthened* (Hizzuq 'Emunah). transl. M. Mocatta, (New York: Ktav, 1970), I:4, pp. 18-20, also in Talmage, *Disputation*, p 15.
- University of Virginia, "Dr. Peter Ochs,"  
<http://artsandsciences.virginia.edu/religiousstudies/people/pwo3v.html> (accessed 23 February 2009).
- Avraham ("Avi") Weiss, "Open Orthodoxy! A Modern Orthodox Rabbi's Creed," *Judaism* 46, n. 4 (Fall 1997): 409-421
- World Council of Churches, "The WCC and the ecumenical movement"  
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/background.html> Accessed 7 February 2009.
- Wyschogrod, Michael. "Orthodox Judaism and Jewish-Christian Dialogue." Paper delivered on 28 January 28 1986. Rabbinical Council of America.  
[http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/center/conferences/soloveitchik/sol\\_wyscho.htm](http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/center/conferences/soloveitchik/sol_wyscho.htm)

### **Secondary Sources:**

- James K. Aitken and Edward Kessler, eds. *Challenges in Jewish-Christian Relations*. (New York & Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2006).
- Judith H. Banki, "The Interfaith Story behind *Nostra Aetate*," lecture, (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*).  
[http://www.ushmm.org/research/center/presentations/features/details/2005-12-07/view\\_transcript.php](http://www.ushmm.org/research/center/presentations/features/details/2005-12-07/view_transcript.php) (accessed 25 June 2008)

- Judith H. Banki, "Vatican II Revisited," in *Ethics in the Shadow of the Holocaust: Christian and Jewish Perspectives*, ed. Judith H. Banki and John T. Pawlikowski. (Chicago: Sheed and Ward, 2002), Appendix B.
- Herbert W. Basser, *Studies in Exegesis: Christian Critiques of Jewish Law and Rabbinic Responses, 70-300 C.E.* (Leiden: Brill, 2000)
- Norman A. Beck, "Replacing Barriers with Bridges," in *Faith Transformed: Christian Encounters with Jews and Judaism*, ed. John C. Merkle (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003).
- William H. Bellinger, "Response to Ruth Langer: Jewish-Christian Dialogue about Covenant," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*, 2, n. 2 (2007): article 27.
- Adele Berlin, Marc Zvi Brettler, Michael A. Fishbane, *The Jewish Study Bible: Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004): 850-851
- Bible: *Christian Scripture quotations are from New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Bible: *Hebrew Bible quotations are from Jewish Publication Society Tanakh*, copyright © 1985 The Jewish Publication Society.
- Eugene Borowitz, "The Need for Interfaith Theological Dialogue," lecture, (The Catholic University of America, 10 March 2005) <http://urj.org/resources/johnpaulii/catholic-jewish/borowitz/> (accessed 25 June 2008).
- Mary C. Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding*. (New York & Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000).
- Mary C. Boys, "The Road Is Made By Walking," in *Faith Transformed: Christian Encounters with Jews and Judaism*, ed. John C. Merkle (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003).
- Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue: Learning in the Presence of the Other*, (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2006).
- Marshall J. Breger, "Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik's 'Confrontation': A Reassessment," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*, 1, n. 1, (2005): Article 18. <http://escholarship.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1017&context=scjr> (accessed 25 June 2008).
- Joseph Buchler, "The Struggle for Unity: The Attempts at Union," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 2, n. 1 (June, 1949): 21-46.

- Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy, *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue: Unitatis Redintegratio, Nostra Aetate* (New York & Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005).
- Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy, "The Vatican Document on the Holocaust: Reflections toward a New Millenium," in *Ethics in the Shadow of the Holocaust: Christian and Jewish Perspectives*, ed. Judith H. Banki and John T. Pawlikowski (Chicago: Sheed and Ward, 2002), chapter one.
- Robert Chazan, "Christian-Jewish Interactions over the Ages," in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, eds. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, et. al., (Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 2000), pp 7-24.
- University of Chicago, "Tikva Frymer-Kensky, 1943-2006," <http://www-news.uchicago.edu/releases/06/060905.frymer-kensky.shtml> (accessed 23 February 2009)
- Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner. *The Intellectual Foundations of Christian and Jewish Discourse: The Philosophy of Religious Argument* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
- Francis X. Clooney, "Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community and Interreligious Encounter Today," in *When Judaism and Christianity Began, Essays in Memory of Anthony J. Saldarini, Volume II*, eds. A.J. Avery-Peck, D. Harrington, J. Neusner (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004), pp 529-543.
- Arthur A. Cohen, *The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition and Other Dissenting Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).
- Dan Cohn-Sherbock, *A Dictionary of Judaism & Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1991).
- Jonathan Crewe, "Can Polemic Be Ethical? A Response to Michel Foucault" in *Polemic: Critical or Uncritical*, ed. Jane Gallop (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp 135-152.
- Helga Croner, ed., *More Stepping Stones to Jewish-Christian Relations* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985).
- Alan D. Crown, "Judaism and Christianity: The Parting of the Ways," in *When Judaism and Christianity Began, Essays in Memory of Anthony J. Saldarini, Volume II*, eds. A.J. Avery-Peck, D. Harrington, J. Neusner (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004), pp. 545-562.
- Philip A. Cunningham, *The Catholic Church and the Jewish People: Recent Reflections from Rome (Abrahamic Dialogues)* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007).

- Philip A. Cunningham, "A Covenantal Christology," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 1, n. 1 (2005): Article 6.  
<http://escholarship.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1014&context=scjr> (accessed 25 July 2008).
- Philip A. Cunningham, *Pondering the Passion: What's at Stake for Christians and Jews*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004).
- Philip A. Cunningham, *A Story of Shalom: The Calling of Christians and Jews by a Covenanting God* (New York & Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2001).
- Philip A. Cunningham, "Uncharted Waters: The Future of Catholic-Jewish Relations," *Commonweal* 133, n. 13 (14 July 2006).  
[http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/article.php3?id\\_article=1687](http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/article.php3?id_article=1687) (accessed 25 July 2008).
- Hasia R. Diner, *A History of the Jews of the United States, 1645 to 2000* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004).
- Von Erwin Dirscherl, Werner Trutwin (Hg.). *Redet Wahrheit - Dabru Emet: jüdisch-christliches Gespräch über Gott, Messias und Dekalog. Forum Christen und Juden. Veröffentlicht von LIT Verlag Berlin-Hamburg-Münster*, 2004.
- Audrey Doetzel, "A Review Essay: *Nostra Aetate*, §4, the Rabbis, and the Messianic Age," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 1, n. 1 (2005): 2005.  
<http://escholarship.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1027&context=scjr> (accessed 25 July 2008)
- Scott Daniel Dunbar, "The Place of Interreligious Dialogue in the Academic Study of Religion," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 35, n. 3-4 (1998): 455-470
- Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1995).
- Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 2002).
- Geoff Eley, ed., *The Goldhagen Effect: History, Memory, Nazism--Facing The German past* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).
- David Ellenson, "A Jewish View of the Christian God: Some Cautionary and Hopeful Remarks," in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, eds. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, et. al., (Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 2000), pp 69-76.
- Encyclopedia Judaica, 1974 edition. Articles on "Judaism" and "Christianity"

- Harvey Falk, "Rabbi Jacob Emden's Views on Christianity," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 19, n. 1 (1982): 106. Cited in Ellenson, *CJT*, p 74.
- Henry Feingold, ed., *The Jewish People in America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press for the American Jewish Historical Society, 1992).
- Eugene J. Fisher, "Enriching Christian Life Through Encounter with Judaism," in *Faith Transformed: Christian Encounters with Jews and Judaism*, ed. John C. Merkle (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003).
- Eva Fleischner, "Heschel's Significance for Jewish-Christian Relations," *Quarterly Review* 4, n. 4 (Winter 1984): p 75.
- Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, transl. Richard Howard, (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).
- Tikva Frymer-Kensky, et. al., *Christianity in Jewish Terms* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 2000).
- Serena L. Fujita, "From disputation to dialogue: Jewish participation in the creation of Nostre [sic!] Aetate." Rabbinical Thesis, (Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion--New York, 2000).
- Gerald Gamm, *Urban Exodus: Why the Jews Left Boston and the Catholics Stayed* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1999).
- Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1997).
- William S. Green, "Realistic Expectations: The Limits of Theological Negotiation" in *When Judaism and Christianity Began: Essays in Memory of Anthony J. Saldarini*, ed. Alan J. Avery-Peck, Daniel Harrington and Jacob Neusner (Leipzig: Brill, 2004).
- Irving Greenberg, "The Church as Sacrament and as Institution: Jewish Reflections." in *Ethics in the Shadow of the Holocaust: Christian and Jewish Perspectives*, ed. Judith H. Banki and John T. Pawlikowski (Chicago: Sheed and Ward, 2002), Chapter Five.
- Irving Greenberg, "Judaism and Christianity: Covenants of Redemption," in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, eds. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, et. al., (Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 2000), 141-158.
- Irving Greenberg, "Judaism, Christianity, and Partnership After the Twentieth Century," in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, eds. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, et. al., (Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 2000), 25-36.

Irving Greenberg, *For the Sake of Heaven and Earth: The New Encounter between Judaism and Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 2004)

Reuven Hammer, *Entering Jewish Prayer: A Guide to Personal Devotion and the Worship Service* (New York: Schocken Books, 1994), p 208.

Walter Harrelson, "What I Have Learned About Christian Faith from Jews and Judaism," in *Faith Transformed: Christian Encounters with Jews and Judaism*, ed. John C. Merkle (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003).

Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1974).

R. Travers Herford, *Christianity in the Talmud and Midrash* (New York: Ktav, 1903)

Jules Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism*. (New York: Holt, 1964)

Ferdinand M. Isserman, *Rebels and Saints; The Social Message of the Prophets of Israel* (St. Louis, Missouri: The Bethany Press, 1933).

Walter Jacob, *Christianity Through Jewish Eyes: The Quest for Common Ground* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1974).

William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, (New York: Touchstone, 1997).

Rabbi Jane Kanarek, *We Remember - Tikva Frymer-Kensky*, Jewish Women's Archive, <http://jwa.org/weremember/frymer-kensky> (accessed 23 February 2009).

Edward K. Kaplan, *Spiritual Radical: Abraham Joshua Heschel in America, 1940-1972*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

Harold Kasimow, "Abraham Joshua Heschel and Interreligious Dialogue," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 18, n. 3 (Summer 1981).

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

Edward Kessler, "Onward Catholic Soldiers?" *First Things: A Journal of Religion, Culture, and Public Life*, (August/September 2002).

Edward Kessler, "Understanding Christianity Today - Jewish Perspectives: *Dabru Emet - A Jewish Statement about Christianity*" *Reviews in Religion and Theology* 9, n. 5 (November 2002): 479-487(9);

Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn, eds., *"A Dictionary of Christian Jewish Relations."* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Reuven Kimelman, "Rabbis Joseph B. Soloveitchik and Abraham Joshua Heschel on Jewish-Christian Relations," *The Edah Journal*, Kislev 5765, 4:2.  
[http://www.edah.org/backend/JournalArticle/4\\_2\\_Kimelman.pdf](http://www.edah.org/backend/JournalArticle/4_2_Kimelman.pdf) (accessed 25 July 2008)

Reuven Kimelman, "Birkat Ha-Minim and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition. Vol. 2: Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period* eds. E.P. Sanders et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), pp. 223-244 (239-40)

Reuven Kimelman, and Rivkah Ulmer, eds., *Polemics and Rabbinic Liturgy* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2006).

Stanislaw Krajewski, "Dabru Emet in Poland: A Summary and Discussion" 1 June 2003  
<http://www.jcrelations.net/en/?item=1968> (accessed 25 February 2009).

Ruth Langer, "Early Rabbinic Liturgy in its Palestinian Milieu: Did Non-Rabbis Know the 'Amidah?" in *When Judaism and Christianity Began, Essays in Memory of Anthony J. Saldarini, Volume II*, eds. A.J. Avery-Peck, D. Harrington, J. Neusner (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004), pp. 423-439

Ruth Langer, "Jewish-Christian Dialogue about Covenant" *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*, 2, n. 2, (2007), article 26.

Christopher M. Leighton, "Christian Theology After the Shoah," in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, eds. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, et. al., (Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 2000), pp 36-48.

Jon D. Levenson. "The Agenda of *Dabru Emet*," in *Review of Rabbinic Judaism 7* (Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, 2004) pp 1-26

Jon D. Levenson, "Controversy: Jewish-Christian dialogue" *Commentary*, 113, n. 4 (Apr. 2002).

Jon D. Levenson, "How not to conduct Jewish-Christian dialogue" *Commentary*, 112, n. 5 (Dec. 2001).

Jon D. Levenson, "Is There a Counterpart in the Hebrew Bible to New Testament Antisemitism" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 22, n. 2 (Spring 1985): 242-260.

Michael McGarry, C.S.P., "The Path to a Journey," in *Faith Transformed: Christian Encounters with Jews and Judaism*, ed. John C. Merkle (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003).

Hyam Maccoby, *The Sacred Executioner* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1982).

Hyam Maccoby, "Theologian of the Holocaust," *Commentary* 74 (December, 1982): 36

Jacob R. Marcus, *The American Jew, 1585-1990: A History* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson, 1995).

Jacob R. Marcus, *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1996).

Jacob R. Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World, Revised Edition* (Cincinnati, OH: HUC Press, 1999).

Jacob R. Marcus, *United States Jewry: 1776-1985* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1993), Volumes 1-4.

Michael R. Marrus, "We Remember: The Vatican and the Holocaust in Historical Context," in *Ethics in the Shadow of the Holocaust: Christian and Jewish Perspectives*, ed. Judith H. Banki and John T. Pawlikowski (Chicago, IL: Sheed and Ward, 2002), Chapter Eight.

John C. Merkle, "Faith Transformed by Study and Friendship," and "A Sacred Obligation: Rethinking Christian Faith in Relation to Judaism and the Jewish People," in *Faith Transformed: Christian Encounters with Jews and Judaism*, ed. John C. Merkle (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003).

Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1995),

Walter L. Michel, "Einige Probleme mit 'Dabru Emet'," in *FRIEDE UND FREIHEIT* 4. Zeitschrift Evangelisch-Reformierter Kirche in Sachsen (2001) pp. 6-8.

Walter L. Michel, "Some of the Problems with 'Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement of Christians and Christianity'" October 21, 2000. (Accessed 7 July 2008).  
[http://www.michelwl.net/dabru\\_english.htm](http://www.michelwl.net/dabru_english.htm)

Rebecca Moore, *Jews and Christians in the Life and Thought of Hugh of St. Victor* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998).

Jacob Neusner, "The History of Earlier Rabbinic Judaism: Some New Approaches" in *History of Religion* 16 (1977), pp. 216-236.

Jacob Neusner, "A Messianism that Some Call Heresy," *The Jerusalem Post* (19 October 2001).

Jacob Neusner, *A Rabbi Talks with Jesus* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press: 2000).

Jacob Neusner, "The Teaching of the Rabbis: Approaches Old and New," in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 27 (1976), pp. 23-55.

Jacob Neusner, *Telling Tales: The Urgency and Basis for Judeo-Christian Dialogue* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993).

Jacob Neusner, *The Way of Torah: An Introduction to Judaism; Sixth Edition* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1997).

Peter Ochs, "The God of Jews and Christians," in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, eds. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, et. al., (Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 2000), pp 49-69.

*The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

John T. Pawlikowski, "Drawing from Jewish Wellsprings," in *Faith Transformed: Christian Encounters with Jews and Judaism*, ed. John C. Merkle (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003).

John T. Pawlikowski, *On the Threshold: Religion's Role in the New Millennium* Commencement Address (HUC-Cincinnati, 30 May 2001).  
<http://www.huc.edu/faculty/faculty/pubs/pawlikowski.html> (accessed 25 February 2009)

John T. Pawlikowski, "The Vatican and the Holocaust: Putting We Remember in Context." in *Ethics in the Shadow of the Holocaust: Christian and Jewish Perspectives*, ed. Judith H. Banki and John T. Pawlikowski (Chicago: Sheed and Ward, 2002), Appendix C.

Jakob J. Petuchowski, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe: The Liturgy of European Liberal and Reform Judaism* (New York: UAHC Press, 1968).

Fred N. Reiner, "Masoretes and Rabbis: A Comparison of Biblical Interpretations," Rabbinical Thesis, (HUC-JIR, 1973).

Adele Reinhartz, "The Gospel of John: How the 'Jews' Became Part of the Plot," in *Jesus, Judaism & Christian Anti-Judaism: Reading the New Testament After the Holocaust*, eds. P. Fredriksen, A. Reinhartz (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), pp 99-116. (& "Introduction," p 4).

David Rosen, "Dabru Emet: Its Significance for the Jewish-Christian Dialogue." Paper, (delivered at the Dutch Council of Christians and Jews (OJEC) at Tilburg, The Netherlands, 6 November 2001). <http://www.dialog.org/dialog/dabru-emet-david-rosen.htm> (accessed 25 February 2009).

David Rosen, *Orthodox Judaism and Jewish-Christian Dialogue*.

[http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/center/conferences/soloveitchik/sol\\_rosen.htm](http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/center/conferences/soloveitchik/sol_rosen.htm) (accessed 25 February 2009)

Christian M. Rutishauser, "The 1947 Seelisburg Conference: The Foundation of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 2, n. 2, (2007): Article 6. <http://escholarship.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1076&context=scjr> (accessed 25 July 2008).

Christian M. Rutishauser, "Jewish-Christian Dialogue and the Theology of Religions" *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 1, n. 1, (2005): Article 7. <http://escholarship.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=scjr> (accessed 25 July 2008).

Anthony J. Saldarini, "Christian Anti-Judaism: The First Century Speaks to the Twenty-First Century," The Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Jerusalem Lecture, 14 April 1999. <http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/resources/articles/saldarini.htm> (accessed 25 February 2009)

Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

Anthony J. Saldarini, "Reconstructions of Rabbinic Judaism," in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, eds. R.A. Kraft and G.W.E. Nickelsburg (Philadelphia and Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), pp. 437-177

David F. Sandmel, ed., *Irreconcilable Differences? A Learning Resource for Jews and Christians* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001).

Jonathan D. Sarna, *The American Jewish Experience, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1997).

Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007)

Claudia J. Setzer, "The Jewish-Christian Schism: Reflections on the Vatican Document We Remember," in *Ethics in the Shadow of the Holocaust: Christian and Jewish Perspectives*, eds. Judith H. Banki and John T. Pawlikowski (Chicago: Sheed and Ward, 2002), Chapter Three.

- Franklin Sherman, "Steps Along the Way," in *Faith Transformed: Christian Encounters with Jews and Judaism*, ed. John C. Merkle (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003).
- Michael Signer, "Dabru Emet: A Contextual Analysis," *Théologiques* 11, n. 1-2 (2003), pp 187-202. <http://www.erudit.org/revue/theologi/2003/v11/n1-2/009531ar.pdf> (accessed 28 February 2009). (nearly same text as "Some Reflections on Dabru Emet")
- Michael A. Signer, "Dabru Emet: Sic et Non" Paper (Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations, Baltimore, MD, 28 October 2002).
- Michael A. Signer, "Searching the Scriptures: Jews, Christians, and the Book," in *CJT*, p 85-99.
- Michael A. Signer, "Some Reflections on Dabru Emet" Paper undated, received from author.
- Michael A. Signer, "What of the Future? A Jewish Response" in *CJT*, p 366-373.
- Michael Signer, Claus Jungkuntz, Katherina Wolff, transl., Central Committee of German Catholics Statement: *Jews and Christians in Germany: Responsibility in Today's Pluralistic Society*, 16 March 2005, [http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/interreligious/German\\_Catholics\\_Jews\\_2005.htm](http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/interreligious/German_Catholics_Jews_2005.htm) (accessed 23 July 2008).
- Gerard S. Sloyan, "Christian Tradition, Anti-Judaism, and Anti-Semitism," in *Ethics in the Shadow of the Holocaust: Christian and Jewish Perspectives*, eds. Judith H. Banki and John T. Pawlikowski (Chicago: Sheed and Ward, 2002), Chapter Two.
- Dinitia Smith, "Scholar of Judaism, Professional Provocateur," *The New York Times* (13 April 2005). [http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/13/books/13news.html?\\_r=1&ex=1113969600&en=ec006dec26ddc80c&ei=5070&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/13/books/13news.html?_r=1&ex=1113969600&en=ec006dec26ddc80c&ei=5070&oref=slogin) (accessed 5 November 2008)
- Melford E. Spiro, "Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Banton (New York: Routledge, 1966).
- Frank E. Talmage, ed. *Disputation & Dialogue: Readings in the Jewish-Christian Encounter* (New York: Ktav Publishing House Inc., Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1975)
- John T. Townsend, "Christianity in Rabbinic Literature" in *Biblical Interpretation in Judaism and Christianity*, eds. Isaac Kalimi, Peter J. Haas (London?: T. & T. Clark Publishers, 2006)

David Tracy, "God as Trinitarian: A Christian Response to Peter Ochs," in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, eds. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, et. al., (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), pp 77-84.

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Clark M. Williamson, *A Guest in the House of Israel: Post-Holocaust Church Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993).

Clark M. Williamson, "Blessed Chutzpah, Blessed Questions, Blessed Chaverim," in *Faith Transformed: Christian Encounters with Jews and Judaism*, ed. John C. Merkle (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003).

Michael Wyschogrod, *The Body of Faith: God in the People Israel* San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1989).

Michael Wyschogrod, *Orthodox Judaism and Jewish-Christian Dialogue*, paper originally delivered 28 January 1986 at the Mid-Winter conference of the Rabbinical Council of America. [http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/center/conferences/soloveitchik/sol\\_wyscho.htm](http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/center/conferences/soloveitchik/sol_wyscho.htm) (accessed 20 February 2009).

Michael Wyschogrod, "Why Was and Is the Theology of Karl Barth of Interest to a Jewish Theologian?," in *Footnotes to a Theology: The Karl Barth Colloquium of 1972*, ed. H.M. Rumscheidt (Corporation for the Publication of Academic Studies in Religion in Canada, 1974), pp 107f; in Talmage, *Disputation*, p 38.

Michael Wyschogrod and Kendall Soulen, *Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004).

Eric Yoffie, "Good News, Bad News: Extraordinary Achievements and Current Tensions in Catholic-Jewish Relations," The Rabbi Klein Lecture on Judaic Affairs (Assumption College, 23 March 2000).

Gary P. Zola, "The Common Places of American Reform Judaism's Conflicting Platforms" in *Hebrew Union College Annual* 72 (2001): 155-191.

Gary P. Zola, "The First Reform Prayer Book in America: The Liturgy of the Reformed Society of Israelites" in *Platforms and Prayer Books: Theological and Liturgical Perspectives on Reform Judaism*, ed. Dana Evan Kaplan (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Press, 2002), pp. 99-118.