

MISHIKAN

A FORUM ON THE GOSPEL AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

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MISHKAN

A Forum on the Gospel and the Jewish People

“REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY”

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General Editor: Ole Chr. M. Kvarme
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Ten Years of Jewish Evangelism

Editorial

Ten years ago, MISHKAN was established as a forum for biblical and theological thinking on Jewish Evangelism, on the Messianic-Jewish/Hebrew-Christian identity and on Jewish-Christian relations in general. With the celebration of the first decade of our journal it is time to take stock and to face future challenges. What has happened in the mentioned areas of theology and evangelical ministry in these ten years? What are the burning issues that will face us in the future?

Growth in Israel

The plans for MISHKAN were developed in the autumn of 1983 and spring of 1984. In the same months, a considerable shift took place in Israel in public attitudes to the Messianic-Jewish congregations in the country. Ultraorthodox and anti-missionary groups staged demonstrations against Messianic Jews in Tiberias, in the Tel-Aviv area and in Jerusalem, and some of the Messianic Jews also suffered physical persecution. However, these demonstrations also provided an opportunity for Messianic Jewish leaders to speak out on television, on radio and in newspapers.

The results of the demonstrations and the public witness of the believers were two-fold. First of all, we could observe a shift in public terminology: Jewish believers in Jesus had earlier usually been described in the press as apostates; now they were more frequently described in their own words as Messianic Jews. Secondly, a new growth started to take place for the Messianic Jewish congregations — a growth that continues today with regard to the number of Israeli believers as well as with regard to the number of Messianic congregations.

Parallel to this development, another shift has taken place on the Israeli scene. When I moved to Israel in 1975, we were told in no uncertain terms that public outreach with a direct, evangelistic ministry was out of the question. Today street evangelism and a distinct, public witness are integral elements in the life of the Messianic Jewish congregations in Israel.

MISHKAN has reflected these developments in its reports on public research with regard to attitudes among Israelis to the New Testament (2/1985) and to Messianic Jews (10/1989). These reports demonstrate a considerable openness in Israeli society to the gospel and to the Jewish identity of the Messianic believers — a fact which is often overlooked in Jewish-Christian relations. And we have provided reports on cooperation in evangelism in the Holy Land. Indeed, MISHKAN has itself been part of this maturing in the gospel ministry among Jewish people, discussing its biblical basis and raising significant issues such as “Ethics in Jewish Evangelism” (19/1993).

New Developments in Eastern Europe

A different kind of development and growth have taken place in Eastern Europe in the past few years. Glasnost and perestroika provided new and open doors for the gospel and for Bible

distribution in Soviet society from the year 1988. In this situation it was widely observed that Jewish people there were keenly interested in the gospel. Many have joined Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox as well as Pentecostal congregations, and foreign Messianic-Jewish organizations and Jews for Jesus have been catalysts for the growth of Messianic-Jewish congregations in Russia as well as in the Ukraine. It has also been fascinating to see how the immigration from the former Soviet Union to Israel has contributed to the growth of Russian-speaking congregations there.

This movement of Jewish believers in Jesus in the former Soviet Union represents a fascinating new chapter in the ministry of Jewish evangelism. The cultural and ecclesiastical setting is very different from both Israel and the Anglo-Saxon world, and it should be noted that anti-Semitism has had and still has a fertile ground in this part of the world, as well as in some of the churches. The new development of Messianic Jews/Hebrew Christians in the former Soviet Union therefore raises new questions with regard to the expression of their Jewish identity and their relationship to the Jewish people and to the churches in this part of the world.

Hebrew-Christian/Messianic-Jewish Identity

In this first decade of MISHKAN a major concern has been to contribute to the biblical and theological thinking on the Messianic-Jewish/Hebrew-Christian identity. MISHKAN has been a forum for discussions on messianic theology, and it has presented significant historical studies on Jewish Christianity in the early centuries and on Jewish missions and Jewish-Christian leaders in the last two centuries.

At the end of the last century, the question of the Jewish identity of Hebrew Christians came with force onto the agenda of societies and churches involved in Jewish missions. At that time, the movement of Jewish believers had experienced considerable growth and momentum in Central and Eastern Europe, and the issue of congregations for Jewish Christians was much debated. But then came the First World War and the Holocaust, and it has been only after the establishment of the State of Israel and particularly in the last 30 years that the issue of Hebrew-Christian/Messianic-Jewish congregations and identity could be worked out in a fresh way, linked to Hebrew terminology and the expression “Messianic Jew” (*yehudi meshichi*). In this respect, Jews for Jesus and the union of Messianic Jewish Congregations have played a major role; and it is also significant that the International Hebrew Christian Alliance three years ago changed its name to The International Messianic Jewish (Hebrew Christian) Alliance.

Jewish Identity — Christian Identity

The growth of Messianic-Jewish congregations in various parts of the world illustrates that Jewish believers today confidently maintain and express their Jewish identity. Statistics from Israel and the U.S. also demonstrate that their Jewish identity is increasingly accepted among the Jewish people, despite frequent opposition. However, what we have seen of a growing Messianic-Jewish movement, still belongs to the category of small beginnings, and the question of Jewish identity will continue to be a key issue for its future growth in Israel and other parts of the world, particularly in Eastern Europe. But then one should also heed the words of Harcourt Samuel, the former president and grand old man of the international alliance: “Messianic Assemblies need to recognize that they are part of the one Church of Christ, and find some way to work out that

relationship” (MISHKAN 14/1991).

The relationship between the Messianic-Jewish movement and the churches will be a burning issue in years to come, for more than one reason. Today a large number of Jewish Christians can be found in historical churches, and they feel at home in these churches — whether Reformed, Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic or Russian Orthodox. But several of these churches have not yet learned to be confident with the Jewish identity of their Jewish members and with the Messianic-Jewish movement. Further, there is also a considerable uncertainty within these churches with regard to our common evangelistic responsibility among Jewish people and concerning the biblical witness that salvation is only through Jesus — for Jews as well as gentiles.

Rabbinic Theology — Fresh Studies?

When I look back on the first decade of MISHKAN, however, there is one field of theological study which I have missed: genuine and evangelical encounters with rabbinic theology. One hundred years ago, Christian theologians involved in Jewish missions were among the leading experts in the study of rabbinic literature, and they demonstrated the significance of this literature for biblical scholarship. In this respect, men like Franz Delitzsch and Herman L. Strack made lasting contributions and basically changed the scope of New Testament scholarship (MISHKAN 14/1991). Today we continue to study rabbinic literature for the sake of a better understanding of Jesus, the early church and the relations between the Church and the Synagogue in the early centuries. We also approach rabbinic Judaism as a cultural entity and a national heritage in order that we may properly share the gospel with Jewish people in a credible manner. However, rabbinic Judaism is in itself a genuine religious and theological entity which we need to take seriously and encounter as such — not only as a pretext.

A Jerusalem rabbi used to shock Christian pastors when he gave them an introduction to rabbinic Judaism and made his opening statement that Judaism is not a biblical religion, but has developed a distinct identity and its own theological mind-set since Jamnia and the first century AD. From a historical and theological point of view it could be stated that no religious system is so close to Christian faith as rabbinic Judaism — in the understanding of God, of revelation and history, in worship and ethics. But then it must also be acknowledged that there is no other theological entity which so consistently has denied the basic element of our faith — that Jesus is the Messiah and son of God. We must take both of these aspects seriously if we want an honest and genuine encounter with rabbinic Judaism. Today, however, we should also take seriously that rabbinic Judaism is no monolithic entity, and it is fascinating to observe the development of theological trends and in the interpretation of Torah and Prophets within the Jewish People in Israel as well as in other parts of the world.

In our context it is today necessary to pursue the study of rabbinic Judaism for three specific reasons: first of all, in order to develop a proper understanding of the theological relationship between the Church and the Synagogue. A deeper appreciation of the bridges and the blocks in the relationship to rabbinic Judaism will not only strengthen the motivation for Jewish evangelism, but also the actual communication of the gospel in a Jewish setting. Secondly, a proper encounter with rabbinic Judaism and its various expressions is needed for a genuine development of the Messianic-Jewish identity and the life of Messianic-Jewish congregations. Thirdly, an honest, evangelical encounter with rabbinic Judaism would also be a constructive

contribution from evangelical circles to improve Jewish-Christian relations from a theological point of view.

Biblical Confidence in Jewish Evangelism

When MISHKAN was established ten years ago, a significant impetus came from the Lausanne movement and its Thailand consultation on unreached people-groups in 1980: “Let the Earth Hear His Voice.” In Thailand the Lausanne Consultation of Jewish Evangelism (LCJE) was formed, and a close relationship has developed between our journal and the LCJE as well as the broader Lausanne movement for world evangelization. This cooperation has indeed increased awareness among evangelical Christians around the globe with regard to the biblical legitimacy of gospel ministry among Jewish people and with regard to the Messianic-Jewish movement. The second Lausanne congress on World Evangelization in Manila in 1989 affirmed that Jesus is not only the promised savior for gentiles, but also the Messiah for Jewish people, and “that it would be a form of anti-Semitism, as well as being disloyal to Christ to depart from the New Testament pattern of taking the Gospel ... to the Jew first.”

Our close relationship to the LCJE has been well reflected in the pages of MISHKAN. However, our journal has also been a forum for discussions which demonstrate that we still have a task to fulfill in order to strengthen the biblical confidence in Jewish evangelism also among evangelicals. The debate with regard to the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem highlighted the need to continue to clarify the theological ramifications of political support for the State of Israel and a belief in the eschatological role of the Jewish people. Neither political support nor eschatological expectations should diminish the centrality of the biblical calling to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah and Savior for Jewish people.

The Missiological Scene

If we look to the wider scene of missiology and theology in the Christian Church worldwide, certain trends have been manifest in the last decade. On the one hand, the German Catholic scholar Hans K ng some years ago published his study on common ethics for a united humanity. With this study he issues a call to the world religions to unite on a common ethical basis for the sake of the survival of the human race. It should be stressed that some of K ng’s concerns obviously are legitimate, but his writings have nevertheless caused a new development with a “theology of world religions.” This theological thinking has made inroads in the churches, and it has caused uncertainty with regard to basic elements in our biblical faith — with regard to the uniqueness of Christ and salvation in him alone, and with regard to the missiological aspect of biblical ecclesiology and eschatology — that our hope looks forward and our ministry aims at the future unity of a full number of gentiles and all Israel in Christ Jesus.

On the other hand, a British theologian and missionary, Bishop Leslie Newbigin, has called for a new missionary encounter between the gospel and Western culture. He has emphasized that the gospel of Jesus Christ is “Public Truth,” and that it calls not only individuals, but also our churches, our peoples and our cultures to a new and radical conversion of mind and lifestyle. Newbigin’s call and program have received wide attention in traditional and historical churches in the Anglo-Saxon world, and it also provides significant material to the ongoing study of the

World Council of Churches (WCC) on “Gospel and Culture” which is preparing the ground for the next Conference on World Mission of the WCC to be held in 1996.

In this field of missiological and theological debate, the evangelical voice needs to be heard, also the voice claiming biblical confidence for the ministry of Jewish evangelism. The example of Lesslie Newbigin proves that the voice of biblically-oriented missiologists is still being heard; and the Willowbank conference of the World Evangelical Fellowship in April 1989 on “The Gospel and the Jewish People” (MISHKAN 11/1989) also illustrates that efforts in theological study may have impact in theological and missiological circles as well as upon the actual life and ministry of churches today. More than anything, the voices of Messianic-Jewish theologians are needed in the current missiological debate on gospel and culture — in two respects: first their presence and presentations are needed to constantly remind the church of its Jewish roots and its identity as a body of Jews and gentiles; secondly it must affirm the witnessing identity of the Church — that the biblical gospel always implies evangelism with a call to conversion. The gospel ministry among Jewish people will always be the litmus test of the witnessing identity of the church.

Epilogue

When we now pass the tenth anniversary of MISHKAN, it is time for me to pass on the general editorship of the journal to new forces. But let me first of all express the joy and privilege of working with MISHKAN in these years. It was exciting to get the journal started in times of many changes for the Messianic congregations in Israel and in the actual ministry of Jewish evangelism. And it has been fascinating to follow the developments which I have described above. But in this endeavor it has also been a blessing to work together with good colleagues in the editorial group, with advisors and contributors in various countries. The active support of organizations and agencies has been encouraging and significant for the development of our journal.

The task of general editor will now be taken up by my good friend and colleague, Dr. Kai Kjær-Hansen. This Danish pastor and scholar should already be known to the readers of MISHKAN from his contributions to our journal — writing about the Semitic perfume of the gospel (J. Carminac) as well as about Josef Rabinowitz — and in this issue on Replacement Theology. Kjær-Hansen is also known as the International Coordinator of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism and editor of its bulletin. It will also be of interest to our readers that Kai Kjær-Hansen is currently working on a study edition of the various books of the New Testament, with an extensive and dynamic exposition of the New Testament texts and stories in their Jewish setting. A colorful and challenging book on Matthew is now appearing in Danish and Norwegian. The general editorship of MISHKAN will now be in the hands of a man with a colorful pen — and a heart and a head for Jewish evangelism, for the Messianic-Jewish congregations around the world, and for a committed relationship to the Jewish people.

May God bless the new general editor and his coworkers and the continued ministry among us all for the gospel and the Jewish people.

Ole Chr. M. Kvarme
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An Assessment of “Replacement Theology”

The Relationship Between the Israel of the Abrahamic-Davidic Covenant and the Christian Church

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.¹

Replacement theology is not a new arrival in the theological arena, for it probably has its origins in an early political-ecclesiastical alliance forged between Eusebius Pamphilius and the Emperor Constantine.² Constantine, regarding himself as God's representative in his role as emperor, gathered all the bishops together on the day of his tricennalia (30th anniversary of his reign), an event, incidentally, which he saw as the foreshadowing of the eschatological Messianic banquet. The results of that meeting, in Eusebius' mind, made it unnecessary to distinguish any longer between the Church and the Empire, for they appeared to merge into one fulfilled kingdom of God on earth in the present time.³ Such a maneuver, of course, nicely evacuated the role and the significance of the Jewish people in any kingdom considerations. Here began the long trail of replacement theology.

Replacement theology, then, declared that the Church, Abraham's spiritual seed, had replaced national Israel in that it had transcended and fulfilled the terms of the covenant given to Israel, which covenant Israel had lost because of obedience.⁴ Tom Wright makes the point even more adamantly when he affirmed:

Modern attempts to revive such a geographical nationalism, and to give it a “Christian” coloring, provoke the following, most important, theological reflection: the attempt to “carry over” some Old Testament promises about Jerusalem, the Land or the Temple for fulfilment in our own day has the

¹ Walter C. Kaiser is Distinguished Professor of Old Testament and Director for the Foundation of Biblical Ethics at Gordon-Conwell Theological School, Massachusetts. He is the author of many books.

² I am indebted to Daniel Gruber's seminal research in his volume *The Church and the Jews: The Biblical Relationship*, Springfield, Mo.: General Council of the Assemblies of God, Intercultural Ministries Department, 1991, pp. 8-10.

³ Eusebius Pamphilius, *The Ecclesiastical History*; tr. by Christian Fredrick Cruse. Book 3, chapter 36, p. 120 as cited by Daniel Gruber, p. 24. Gruber (p. 10) also points to V. Kesich, “Empire-Church Relations and the Third Temptation,” *Studia Patristica*, Vol IV, Berlin 1961, pp. 468-469.

⁴ Some, such as my good friend Chris Wright, strenuously object to the use of the terms “Replacement” or “supersession” as the way to describe the views of this position. In the view of many in this school, the “promise is now being fulfilled through a multi-national people, the Jew and Gentile in Christ, [with] the 'forever' aspects of nation-state, land, king, king and priest [being] likewise transcended, taken up, and fulfilled.” “A Christian Approach to Old Testament Prophecy Concerning Israel,” in *Jerusalem Past and Present in the Purpose of God*, ed. by P.W.L. Walker, Cambridge: Tyndale 1992, p. 6.

same theological shape as the attempt in pre-Reformation Catholicism to think of Christ as being re-crucified in every Mass.

He Continued:

The work of Christ is once again “incomplete.” ... [This] is not only “Christian Zionism,” ... it is also, more significantly, ‘Christian anti-semitism.’ If the wrath of God spoken of by Jesus and Paul was truly *finished* with the awful events of AD 70, then the only appropriate attitude in subsequent generations towards Jews, the Temple, the Land or Jerusalem must be one of sorrow or pity ... To that extent, “Christian Zionism” is the geographical equivalent of a *soi-disant* “Christian” apartheid, and ought to be rejected as such.⁵

There are at least five fatal flaws in the thinking of those supporting the replacement covenant thesis: 1) The “New Covenant” was made with the house of Israel and Judah. God never made a formal covenant with the Church; 2) The failure of the Jews, like the failure of the Church, was calculated in the plan of God (Rom 11:8); 3) The New Testament clearly teaches that God has not cast off disobedient Israel (Rom 11:1,25-26), for they are the natural branches into which the Church has been grafted; 4) The “eternal” aspect of the promise of the land is not to be equated with the “eternal” aspect of the Aaronic priesthood (I Chr 23:13) or the Rechabite descendants (Jer 35:19); and 5) Paul's allegory of Galatians 4:21-31 does not teach that national Israel has been replaced by the Church; it teaches that the quest for justification by works leads to bondage whereas justification by faith and grace leads to freedom and salvation. Each of these theses must be examined in as much detail as the space here allows.

The New Covenant

God never made a covenant with the Church as such; the “New Covenant,” in which the Church now shares, is the one that God originally made “with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah” (Jer 31:31b). No one, to my knowledge, has attempted to make a case for equating the house of Israel and Judah with the Christian Church! And even those who argue that the equation should be made only with “Israel”, are unable to establish that any of the 73 appearances of the word “Israel” in the New Testament, or the four appearances of “Israelite(s)”, is equated in the text with the Church — not even in one text. And even those who make such a false equation, and who then go about contemporizing the message of the Old Testament, do not make the equation uniformly of all references to “Israel” and “Judah” when interpreting the Old Testament. Only when something good is said about “Israel” is there a tendency to understand that the Church is being spoken of. When something bad is said of “Israel” in the Old Testament, usually that is left as a word about national Israel by modern holders of this theory — a most unsporting way to proceed!

No other covenant is mentioned by the New Testament. Thus, the new covenant was not even made with the elect, the faithful, or the believing; it was made with northern and southern Israel, *qua* “Israel”, And the gospel presented in the new covenant was a continuation of God’s dealings with Israel; in fact, it was from the Old Testament that the early church got her message of good

⁵ Tom Wright, “Jerusalem in the New Testament,” *Jerusalem, Past and Present in the Purpose of God*, Walker, P.W.L. (Ed.) Cambridge: Tyndale, 1992, pp. 73-74,75. The rather strong nature of the language used here does not seem to be the usual style of publications emanating from this source.

news that she proclaimed with such joy in all those years from approximately AD 30 to AD 50-70, before the New Testament was revealed by God.

The Failure of Israel

Israel's disobedience and dispersion were not the end of her calling, for God had announced in the New Testament that his "gifts and his call were irrevocable" (Rom 11:29). In fact, rather than Israel's disobedience serving as a signal that her usefulness in the divine plan had ceased, the reverse was asserted by the apostle Paul. As Hendrikus Berkhof put it, "She is and remains the link between the Messiah and the nations. She could be this link through her obedience, but even now, in her disobedience, she still fulfills her functions as a link."⁶ That is why Paul claimed that "because of [Israel's] transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles" (Rom 11:11).

Another indication that Israel's rejection of the Messiah and her present disobedience (to speak, for the moment, of the vast majority of her people) was not the final episode in the whole drama of her salvation, can be seen in Romans 11:15. Paul argues there that "if [Israel's] rejection means the reconciliation of the world (in that gentiles would be given an opportunity to come to the Messiah as never before), what will [Israel's] acceptance mean but life from the dead?" It is possible that this phrase that we have emphasized in the last quote could be taken spiritually, but Scripture does not appear to treat it in that manner.⁷ Instead, it appears to be picking up the very figure used by Ezekiel 37:12,14, where the Lord said, "O my people. I am going to open up your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel ... I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you down in your own land." Thus, the dry bones would be brought back together again and the breath of God would be breathed into the bones that had lain scattered all over the valley floor. If some would prefer to treat this passage as a prediction of an individual's bodily resurrection, the divine interpreter himself will disallow it, for Ezekiel 37:11 declared, "Then he said to me: 'Son of man, these bones are *the whole house of Israel*'" (emphasis mine). Therefore, it would be only fair to conclude that Paul was referring to the reestablishment of Israel as God's people in the land again when he mentioned that Israel's acceptance of her Messiah in the end times will mean "Life from the dead."

But in the meantime, note the logic here. If so much good has come to the world because of Israel's disobedience, exclaims Paul, can anyone imagine what the world is in for when Israel is once again accepted back into the fold of God? Why, it would be like receiving dead people back to life. And the reverberations of such an event will indeed be earth-shaking!

But the plan of God had deliberately calculated the failure of Israel and her people. Romans 11:8 affirmed, using the informing theology of Deuteronomy 29:4 and Isaiah 29:10, that "God gave [Israel] a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they should not hear, to this very day." Thus, the spiritual slumber in which Israel currently tosses is divinely induced! God thereby insured, in that sense, that all Israel would not believe so that salvation might come to the gentiles through those Jews who did not believe. And so it happened that "because of [Israel's] disobedience," divine mercy was shown to the gentiles — and that condition

⁶ Berkhof, Hendrikus, *Christ, the Meaning of History*, tr. by Lambertus Buurman. Richmond: Knox 1966, pp. 144-145.

⁷ "Life from the dead" is never used in a spiritual sense argued Henrikus Berkhof. Berkhof, pp. 144-145.

persists down “to this very day,” Paul adds.

Of course there are a large number of Jewish people that do believe; however, the “full number” of Jewish believers (Rom 11:12) will not come “until the full number of the gentiles has come in” (Rom 11:25). Therefore, it was not a matter of Israel's faithfulness, or her ability to retain what was stated with her — nor has it ever been. That assessment would need to be made of all the peoples of the world, for as the Psalmist said, “If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O LORD, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.”

Natural and Wild Olive Branches

Romans 11 is the *crux interpretum* for all who tackle the problem of the relationship between Israel and the Church. And the assumption of some⁸ that “all Israel shall be saved” really refers to the New Testament Church, becomes entirely impossible as the chapter proceeds, especially in Romans 11:25-26. Perhaps this is why many who assume this position, though not all, find it more convenient to ignore Romans 11 altogether, and instead, build their positions on logical extrapolations of their theologies, rather than on explicit exegesis of texts of Scripture at that point.

It is clear from Romans 11:13 that Paul is addressing his remarks in this chapter to gentiles. It may well have been that Paul sensed that the gentile Christians were becoming a bit arrogant towards the unbelieving Jewish community, perhaps thinking that God had indeed closed the book on his dealings with this national people with whom he had had such a long history of relations. But that may be the precise reason why Paul began with the rhetorical question in Romans 11:1, “I say then, Did God reject his people?” Paul thunders his answer: “By no means!” Consider me, he continued, for I too am from the physical seed of Abraham and the tribe of Benjamin — neither of which is meant to be a means of expressing his identity in this setting with the Church.

Paul was not attempting to sustain the general argument of God's faithfulness to all believers, that is to say that God had not cast off Abraham's spiritual seed, as Paul had allowed in Galatians 3:29, and so he had thereby proved himself faithful. If Paul had meant to say that, what was the point of his raising his physical, tribal ancestry in Israel? No, God still loved the nation Israel, the people whom he “foreknew” (11:2). And just as God had reserved in Elijah's day a “remnant” of 7000 who had not bowed their knees to Baal, so “at the present time” God also had a “remnant chosen by grace” (11:5) in the nation of Israel. If that remnant in Elijah's day was Jewish, chances were very good that that was what the remnant was meant to be in Paul's argument. It will make no sense to have Paul arguing that God has a gentile “people” (11:1) of faith out of which he has secured a believing remnant (11:4-5) for himself. The logic would fall under its own weight — who are these gentile believing “peoples” out of which God has secured an alternate believing remnant?

Paul goes on to distinguish two groups in Israel: 1) “the elect” (11:7) or “chosen” (11:5); and

⁸ Usually this view is associated with many (but not necessarily all, for the leading exponent of a premillennial theology at the turn of the century were mainly from this tradition) who hold to Covenant Theology. For example, see such a Reformation commentator as Martin Luther in his *Commentary on Romans*, chapter 11.

2) “the rest” or “the others” (11:7). God's grace had given to the first group of Israelites what the second group of Israelites sought, but had not obtained (11:7): salvation.

Now here is the marvel of the whole affair: when the root of a tree is holy, the branches will also be holy (11:16b). The reference to their roots must be to the promises made to the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Alas, however, “some of the (natural) branches were broken off” (11:17) because of their unbelief. But the temporary loss to these natural branches of the tree resulted in an enormous bonanza for the gentiles (11:12). And lest the gentile believers become too puffed up in their own conceits, as if what they now have in Christ was the result of their own searching and finding, any more than it was of “the rest” of Israel's searching, Paul warns the gentile believers not to “boast over those branches,” for the gentile church does not exist for the sake of the Jews, nor was the root of the Church's faith in herself, “but the [Jewish] root supports [the gentile believers]” (11:18). Rather than replacing the former branches, the newly grafted in branches were anchored and provided for in the roots that had been sunk into the earth in the promises given to the Jewish patriarchs!

In fact, rather than lording it over the unbelieving Jewish branches that were cut off because of their unbelief, the gentile believers were to remember that “God is able to graft them [the natural Jewish branches] in again” (11:23) to the olive tree. It is the gentile church that is the anomaly here: it represents the wild olive tree that was grafted into the cultivated olive. (Paul realizes that he has reversed the horticultural analogy for the sake of his illustration. Normally wild stock is used as the base on which to graft cultivated branches; that is not the case here [11:24].) Thus, all who wish to view the believing Church as the newest show in town which some Jewish believers may join if they realize that the Church is an innovative gentile creation, Paul sends a warning salvo over the bow of all such enterprises. Gentiles are not, and never were, the natural branches: Israel was and still is!

What then is the answer to the big question? Does God have a plan for physical, national Israel in the future? Or is such a hope tantamount, as one writer said, making her a co-redemptrix⁹ with Christ, or introducing “Christian Zionism”¹⁰ and “Christian apartheid”¹¹ into the Bible?

Romans 11:25-26 answers that question. “Israel has experienced a hardening in part *until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved*” (emphasis mine). God is not finished with his people Israel as yet. Therefore to express that he is, not runs run right in the face not only of these verses, but also misconstrues the line of continuity that God has built into the whole soteriological process that involved Jew and gentile from the very beginning (e.g. Rom 1:16) and casts off a balanced doctrine of ecclesiology. Look, therefore, for Israel to suddenly obtain one of these days what she has sought in vain (as far as most of her people are concerned) for all these long years without finding it. The number of Israelites who will be saved is called “the fullness” (Greek *pl̄roma*), or as the same word is translated in verse 25, “full number;” exactly paralleling, incidentally, the number of gentiles = “full number” (v. 25) who have come to

⁹ So complained John R. Wilch, “The land and State of Israel in Prophecy and Fulfillment,” *Concordia Journal* 8 (1982): 173. See Walter Kaiser, Jr., “Must the Christian Include Israel and Her Land in a Contemporary Theology?”, *Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987, pp. 46-58.

¹⁰ See footnote 4.

¹¹ See footnote 4.

the Savior.

The late Anthony A. Hoekema¹² raised two objections to our argument. First of all, he complained, Romans 11:26 did not say, “And *then* [implying the Greek word *tote* or *epeita*, a temporal usage] all Israel will be saved.” Instead, the Greek used (*kai*) *houtos*, meaning “thus,” “so,” “in this manner,” describing the *manner* in which it would happen, not the temporal succession of events. In other words, according to Hoekema, Paul was not saying “Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the time when the full number of the gentiles has been reached, and *then* (after this has happened) all Israel will be saved.” Instead, Hoekema urged that Paul was saying that Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel (with Hoekema’s new meaning of Israel) will be saved. In other words, the text taught not the timing for this event, but it described the manner in which it would happen, according to Hoekema.

Hoekema’s second objection was that it did injustice to the word “all” in “all Israel will be saved” to limit this enormous ingathering of Jews to the Messiah just to the end times. That generation would only be a fragment of the large number of generations that had passed by in the meantime, so how could one possibly claim that “all Israel” had been redeemed?

Hoekema had been answered, however, 13 years before he wrote by the Dutch Reformed theologian Hendrikus Berkhof. To the first objection he replied:

We do not read “then” or “after this,” but there is no reason to exclude the possibility that this “and so” is a future event. Paul is dealing with the historical order of God’s activities, and only just before used the conjunction “until” (25). Yet, “and so” implies more than “until.” However, it is less clear what the antecedent of “and so” is.¹³

Berkhof went on to suggest that the antecedent of “and so” probably is “until the full number of the gentiles has come in” (the meaning being that since the “full number” had come in, all Israel could now be saved). Or, one could read, “and so all Israel will be saved” (meaning, the last would be first, and the first temporarily last).

But the point that both Hoekema and Berkhof missed was that Romans 11:27 linked this “and so” with “this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.” This was nothing less than a reference to the New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34), also called “My Covenant,” the “Eternal Covenant,” and the “New Heart and New Spirit” in 16 other passages.¹⁴ The contents of this New Covenant were an expansion of the promises that had been made to Abraham and David and a renewal of the promise that God would send a Seed, the Messiah, be their God, use Israel as his means of blessing all the nations on the earth, and grant them the land as an eternal inheritance. Thus we are brought back to the land promise and to the destiny that God has shaped from the beginning for his people Israel. Indeed, in the very context from which the New Covenant comes (Jer 31:31-34), there is a renewed emphasis on the land promise once again (Jer 31:35-40)! This promise about the land and the future of the nation Israel could be nullified if the sun and moon

¹² Hoekema, Anthony A., *The Bible and the Future*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979, pp. 144-145.

¹³ Berkhof, pp. 145-146.

¹⁴ Kaiser, Walter C., Jr., “The Old Promise and the New Covenant.” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 15 (1972), pp. 11-23. Also reprinted in *The Bible and Its Literary Milieu*, ed. by John Maier and Vincent Tollers, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, pp. 106-120.

were to cease shining; however, in the event that both the sun and the moon continued (as I just checked out my window to see if this covenant was still on), then for just that same period of time God would continue to maintain his promises named in that context. Even the late highly regarded Reformed theologian John Murray commented, after rightly noticing that Romans 11:26-27 were citations from Isaiah 59:20-21 and Jeremiah 31:34:

There should be no question but Paul regards these Old Testament passages as applicable to the restoration of Israel. We cannot dissociate this covenantal assurance from the proposition in support of which the text is adduced or from which follows in verse 28 (on account of the patriarchs). Thus the effect is that the future restoration of Israel is certified by nothing less than the certainty belonging to covenantal institutions.¹⁵

Accordingly, even though the “and so” of this passage in Romans 11 may not be temporal in its reference, nevertheless, it is sequential and consequential in that it ties the promises of the patriarchal-Davidic-New Covenant with the coming in of the “full number,” or the “full inclusion,” of Israel. Once this is admitted, the unity and the connectedness of the three elements of Messiah, gospel and land come back into play as part of a fully developed theology.

As for Hoekema’s second complaint about limiting the “full inclusion” to the end times, we can only argue that this is a refusal to see that the past and present remnant of Israel are the foundation and guarantee that God would complete his work in a grand eschatological and climactic act. Repeatedly, the prophets of the Old Testament had depicted an Israelite remnant returning to the land (e.g., Isa 10:20-30) and becoming prominent among the nations (Mic 4:1) in the end day. In fact, Zechariah 10:8-12 is still repeating this same promise in 518BC, well after the days when many in Israel had returned from their last and final exile, the Babylonian Exile.

Thus, we conclude that God has not cast off disobedient Israel and replaced her with the Christian church for all time and eternity. The natural branches, meaning present day Israel, must not be regarded as dead and gone forever in the program of God, for one day he will re-graft those natural branches into the trunk from which they were once broken off. In the meantime, the wild branches, now the believing gentiles, must not get on their high horses and get all high and mighty about being the tree into which everyone else must be united. God never made a covenant with the Church — believe me! The only covenant was with the house of Judah and the house of Israel. The roots of the tree of faith still remain the promises given to the patriarchs.

The Question of Eternality

The promise of God regarding Israel and her land was said to be an “everlasting” or “eternal” covenant in its scope. But many scholars, such as Chris Wright, admonish that “The expression ‘for ever’ (le-olam) needs to be seen, not so much in terms of ‘everlastingness’ in linear time, but rather as an intensive expression within the terms, conditions and context of the promise concerned.”¹⁶ Wright points out that the Rechabites were promised descendants “forever” (Jer 35:19), but if this were a straight forward prediction, where are their descendants today, queries Wright? In like manner, Wright pointed to the house of David and the Levitical priesthood, in

¹⁵ Murray, John, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965, 2: pp. 99-100.

¹⁶ Chris Wright, p. 6.

which the same form was used about their longevity in Jeremiah 33:17-22.

However, Jeremiah 35:19 does not use the Hebrew word *le-olam*, “for ever” or “everlasting”; instead, it uses the expression literally translated, “a man shall not be cut off from before my presence...”). The same expression is used of the Levites and David in Jeremiah 33:17. Note, however, when the word *olam* is used of David or the Aaronic line of the Levites, it has reference to the *office*, not the person, of the Davidic king or the priesthood! And if it be doubted what this Hebrew word signifies, let it be remembered that the promise to the descendants of Israel and the provision of the office of the Messianic King and Messianic priesthood is as lasting as the sun and moon according to Jeremiah 31:35-40 and 33:17-22.

The careful definition of Daniel Gruber merits close examination. He explained:

The claim that the Hebrew word for “forever” or “everlasting” really means “to the end of the age” is only partially true. In some cases it does mean that, but that is not all it means. The English word “always” provides a helpful parallel. It means “every time,” but it also means “as long as,” and “forever.”

There are actually several different Hebrew expressions used to signify “forever.” Most of them use the word *olam* by itself or with a prefix or suffix. Examples are *me-olam* (from *olam*, *le-olam* to *olam*), and *olamim* (the plural of *olam*). Looking at the use of such words in context is very helpful in understanding the meaning that they are given in the Bible.¹⁷

Gruber then proceeds to show how each of these combinations of the word *olam* are used in various contexts. First, this word is used to express the length of time that God will be God in Genesis 21:33; or that God would be King (Jer 10:10) and his reign would endure (Ps 66:7). Therefore, when God gave the land of Canaan to Israel “for an *everlasting* possession” (*olam*) in Genesis 17:8 and 48:3, 4, there is a strong presumption in favor of seeing that there could be just as abiding a promise in linear terms as was true of God himself, who is “everlasting” and “eternal” (at least so far as what the term could potentially mean). It did not need to be merely an intensive expression within certain boundaries or limits of expression.

Our point has been to show that the word “forever” is not limited in every instance of its usage, for there are numerous examples of its meaning that transcend such boundaries. When the additional phrases that are used in numerous contexts about the land being given in perpetuity to Israel and of the enduring nature of God’s promises to Israel as a nation are all added up, the impression of all the contexts is overwhelmingly in favor of an oath delivered by God that is as enduring as the shining of the sun and moon (e.g., Jer 33:17-22).

The Allegory of Galatians 4:21-31

Paul’s allegory in Galatians 4:21-31 has often been understood to teach that national Israel has now been replaced by the Christian Church. But this is to completely misunderstand what Paul intended and the audience to whom he addressed his remarks.¹⁸

Paul’s audience was primarily a gentile audience. And the issue at hand was whether gentiles should submit to physical circumcision in order to be righteous before God. If one misses this key

¹⁷ Gruber, pp. 339-341.

¹⁸ Here again I am indebted to Daniel Gruber and his remarkable work entitled *The Church and the Jews*. See his discussion on this allegory on pp. 210-212, which I now follow rather closely.

point, the meaning of Paul's allegory will be lost and wrong meanings will be found where they do not exist.

The comparisons are seen in a series of related pairs: two sons, two cities, two mountains, two conditions, two destinies, and two covenants. Some of these comparisons need to be filled in from one's knowledge of the Scriptures, e.g., Abraham had two sons: one is named Isaac, but the other, Ishmael, is not named.

What, then, is Paul trying to say? Is he declaring that the Jews were cast out and that the Church is now the heir? To say this would be to confuse the opposites that Paul is using: the opposite of the Jew is not the Church, but the gentile. If one wants to learn what Paul's opposite for the Church is, it must be the "unbeliever," not the Jew. For even Paul himself was once a persecutor of those who believed in the Messiah. In that action, he was much like Ishmael,¹⁹ born of the flesh and destined to be cast out. But when he believed, he became like Isaac, destined to be an heir, and part of the persecuted seed of promise. But the same could be said for a gentile like Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, who at first persecuted Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:17). But when he too became a believer, he moved from one side of this allegory to the other side (I Cor 1:1).

Gruber aptly concludes,

The point is not that one's physical ancestry necessarily leads to bondage, for neither Gentiles nor Jews need remain in a lost state. It is the quest for justification through the works of the law (by both Jew and Gentile, we might add), rather than through grace and faith, that leads to bondage. Paul was writing to gentiles in Galatia who were making the wrong choice, which would eventually lead them back into bondage and a disinherited state, and eventually turn them into persecutors.²⁰

Conclusion

Replacement theology is just plain bad news for both the Church and Israel. It must be stressed repeatedly that no part of the Church believed such a doctrine until Constantine introduced it in the fourth century of the Christian era under a false axis, in which the Church and the Empire were forged into an alternate alliance by the Emperor Constantine and the Church Father Eusebius. The effect was to replace Isaac as the son of promise with Eliezer of Damascus.

But more pertinently, this substitution and supersession of the Church for Israel runs directly counter, not only to the repeated expectations of the Old Testament prophets, but also to the painstakingly careful analysis offered by the apostle Paul in Romans 9 - 11. Instead of viewing gentiles as being grafted into the stock, root, and trunk of the Jews, it reverses the imagery and

¹⁹ Hans K. La Rondelle, in his work *The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation* (Berrien Springs, Michigan 1983) actually makes the equation that Paul resists: he declared, "This passage has rightly been called 'the sharpest polemic against Jerusalem and Judaism in the New Testament' (DeYoung, J.C., *Jerusalem in the New Testament*. Kampen:Kok 1960 p. 106). Paul goes on so far as to equate "The Present Jerusalem, the nation of Israel, with status before God of Ishmael, who was totally disinherited because he persecuted Isaac".

²⁰

Gruber.

offers a gentitized gospel to the Jews.

We urge Christ's Church to quickly reexamine this most important doctrine, for with it goes not only the investment of the Church in Jewish missions and her expectations of God's future work in the eschaton, but more importantly it involves the Church's ability to correctly proclaim the doctrine of salvation in its biblical fullness and the doctrine of the Church in its relations to Israel and the world. Moreover, it leaves Christ's Church helpless before a plethora of Old Testament texts, not to mention before Paul's *magnum opus* of Romans, with its constant reference to Jew and gentile in the whole soteriological argument, and the definitive emphasis found in Romans 11.

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Replacing The Jews in Early Christian Theology

Ray Pritz²¹

“God gave them the Oral Law, that by this they might be distinguished from the other nations. Hence it was not given in writing, or else the other nations [or Ishmaelites] would falsify it — as they did with the written Torah — and say that they are Israel” (Midrash Numbers XVI 10 [on 7.72]). While the midrash from which this statement comes may date from as late as the 12th century, the situation it describes is the second century AD. Most would agree today that the proscription against writing down the oral traditions remained in effect until about the middle of the third century. This midrash seems to look wistfully back to the time before the oral law had been recorded, before the claim that “we are Israel” was commonly heard in debate with Christian opponents.

There is nothing new about replacement theology. It was well developed before the end of the second century. Of course, those who subscribe to the tenets of replacement theology (and there are many, although few would actually answer yes if asked “Are you a replacement theologian?”) must say that the teaching goes back to the New Testament itself. The purpose of this paper is to see how the subject was presented in about the first hundred years after the completion of the New Testament.²²

The Process of Replacement

In a study of early church use of Abraham in its arguments against Judaism, Jeffrey Siker²³ defined four stages or generations in the development of the idea that the Church had replaced the Jews:

Generation One (AD 30-60): Paul argues that the gentiles are included but the Jews are not excluded.²⁴

Generation Two (AD 60-90): Matthew, Hebrews and Luke-Acts still argue for the inclusion of gentiles but begin to address the question of Jewish exclusion.²⁵ Generation Three (AD 90-120): John, Ignatius, and Barnabas assume gentile inclusion but now argue

²¹Ray Pritz has his Ph.D. on Nazarene Jewish Christianity from the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. Presently he is Study Notes Editor for the United Bible Society and serves as the coordinator of Hebrew Language programs at the Caspari Center

²² Discussion will be limited to the concept of replacement. I will not deal here with passages which attack Jews on other theological grounds or for anti-Semitic reasons.

²³ Jeffrey Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews*, Louisville: Westminster, 1991.

²⁴ Siker, 28-76,190.

²⁵ Siker, 77-127,191.

more strongly for Jewish exclusion.²⁶

Generation Four (AD 120-150): Several works, culminating with Justin Martyr, do not even treat gentile inclusion as an issue and assume Jewish exclusion in their arguments.²⁷

While the present author cannot fully agree with Siker's conclusions regarding some New Testament writings (particularly the Gospel of John)²⁸, his observation of the progression from gentile inclusion to Jewish exclusion in such a relatively short time provides a convenient starting point for our overview.

Apostolic Fathers

While the writings usually grouped under this heading are not all earlier than other post-New Testament writings, they reflect an early stage in the development of Christian thought after the New Testament. It is not surprising, then, to find that there is very little in them which claims that God has rejected the Jewish people or replaced them with the Church. The *Didache* and Polycarp, indeed, contain nothing directly relating to the subject.²⁹ *The Shepherd of Hermas* approaches what might be called a theology of precedence when he has a vision of the Church as an old lady who "was created the first of all things, and for her sake the world was established."³⁰ However, Hermas makes no mention of either Israel or Jews nor indeed of any Old Testament character. With his heavy emphasis on the Church, any inchoate doctrine of replacement would have found a natural place here.

1 Clement

As one reads 1 Clement looking for hints of replacement theology, there is a feeling of innocence and continuity, like the subject has not really come up. Clement refers to "our fathers" (60:4; cf 30:2) and quotes Deuteronomy 3:8-9 ("The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the allotment of his inheritance.") as if it refers to the Church. But there is no vitriol, no attack, nothing in fact that could not have been written by a rabbinic Jew. God has simply expanded his program: "All the generations from Adam until this day have passed away; but those who were perfected in love by the grace of God have a place among the pious" (50:3).³¹

Ignatius

Writing to the church at Philadelphia in the first decade of the second century, the bishop of

²⁶ Siker, 128-143,191.

²⁷ Siker, 144-184,191.

²⁸ In the pivotal discussion of John 7-8, Siker never addresses the problem of the identity of "the Jews". This is unfortunate, since most of his argument concerning John's exclusion of the Jews is based on these chapters.

²⁹ The eighth chapter of the *Didache* (8,1-3) does exhort the readers not to fast with the "hypocrites" or to pray like them. However, far from indicating a theology of replacement, it points to a kind of in-house competition.

³⁰ Vision II 4,1; cf I 3,4. Quotations from the Apostolic Fathers are in the translation of Lake in the Loeb series.

³¹ Continuity is also emphasized by Aristides (*Apology* 16,4), cited by P. Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church*, Cambridge: University Press, 1969, 32.

Antioch issued this warning: “If anyone interpret Judaism to you, do not listen to him; for it is better to hear Christianity from the circumcised than Judaism from the uncircumcised. But both of them, unless they speak of Jesus Christ, are to me tombstones and sepulchers” (*Phil.* 6:1). While this does not speak of a new relationship between Judaism and Christianity, it is interesting to note that Ignatius attacks the Jewish religion while not rejecting the institution of circumcision. However, his position is more clearly refined in his famous statement to the Magnesians (10:2-3): “Put aside the evil leaven, which has grown old and sour, and turn to the new leaven, which is Jesus Christ ... it is monstrous to talk of Jesus Christ and to practice Judaism. For Christianity did not base its faith on Judaism, but Judaism on Christianity.”

Ignatius did not expand on this last statement, but it has all the earmarks of what we have called a theology of precedence or pre-existence: the Church has existed since the foundation of the world and is not to be seen as something subsequent to Judaism. This idea is expanded somewhat in the so-called *Second Epistle of Clement*: “If we do the will of our Father, God, we shall belong to the first church, the spiritual one which was created before the sun and moon ... The Church belongs not to the present, but has existed from the beginning; for she was spiritual, as also was our Jesus, but she was made manifest in the last days that she might save us” (14:1-2). We will discuss this idea further below.

The Epistle to Diognetus is known for its designation of the Christians as a “new race” (1). However, while the writer (4) ridicules Jewish practices such as food laws, Sabbath, circumcision, and the calendar, there is no hint that Judaism or the Jewish people is finished. Indeed, his very reason for writing to Diognetus is to convince him to join the Christians and not the Jews.

Barnabas

Of all of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, none speaks so directly against Judaism as the epistle which bears the name of Barnabas. Interestingly, scholarly opinion has varied widely when interpreting this letter's relationship to Judaism. R.S. MacLennan³² argues that Barnabas was not in fact attacking Judaism as such. He posits a group of extremists (around the time of the Quietus revolt, AD 115-117). These, he suggests, were trying to stir up a “messianic frenzy” which Barnabas tries to moderate. Those who are being replaced are these fanatics, who may have included both Jews and Christians. “The *Epistle of Barnabas* is evangelistic and apologetic — not anti-Jewish. It seeks to clarify and define Christianity as a moderate messianic form of Judaism rather than to degrade Jews.”

On the other end of the scale is the declaration of James Parkes that “the whole of the epistle of Barnabas is an exposition of the Church as the true Israel.”³³ In support of this claim, Parkes quotes in part from *Barnabas* 4, which warns the readers against

heaping up your sins and saying that the covenant is both theirs and ours. It is ours: but in this way did they finally lose it when Moses had just received it, for the Scripture says: “And Moses was in the mount fasting forty days and forty nights, and he received the covenant from the Lord, tables of stone written with the finger of the hand of the Lord” (Exod 34:28). But they turned to idols and lost it ... And Moses understood and cast the two tables out of his hands, and their covenant was broken,

³² *Early Christian Texts on Jews and Judaism*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990, 43-48, 148.

³³ *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue*, New York: Atheneum, 1977 (1934), 84.

in order that the covenant of Jesus the Beloved should be sealed in our hearts in hope of his faith.
(*Barn.* 4:6-8)

Elsewhere Barnabas compares conversion to the Law as “shipwreck” (3:6) and declares that circumcision has been abolished (9:4; cf 13:7). While acknowledging that Jesus loved Israel (5:8), Barnabas states that they were abandoned after seeing signs and wonders (4:14), and Jesus has now prepared for himself “the new people” (5:7) who are now the “heirs of the covenant of the Lord” (6:19; cf 13:1). In this light it is perhaps surprising that he does not make more of the destruction of the Temple. This may be because it was being rebuilt while he was writing (16:3ff). It was safer to spiritualize things, saying that the heart of the Christian is the real Temple (16:6-10).³⁴

Barnabas does not quite say that the Church is Israel, a statement which will not be made in writing for another 40 years or so. However, the basic elements of replacement theology are there, stronger than in any prior Christian writings. Rejection of the Law and circumcision greatly weaken MacLennan’s claim that Barnabas was keeping it all in the family. As we shall note later, the phenomenon of one Jewish party claiming against others that it is the “real Israel” is not unusual. However, the “real Israel” (meaning continuity) does not claim to abrogate the Law, which distinguishes Israel; that claim can only be made by a “new Israel” with a new Law.

Melito of Sardis

Writing in about AD 160-170, Melito did everything but call the Church “Israel”: “... your Sovereign, who formed you, who made you, who honored you, who called you ‘Israel’. But you did not turn out to be ‘Israel’; you did not ‘see God’, you did not recognize the Lord.”³⁵ However, he seems to assume Israel’s replacement when he calls “the people” a “model” and a “preliminary sketch” and says that the Law was only a parable whose fulfillment came in the gospel. The reality, he says, is to be found in the Church. “When the church arose and the gospel took precedence, the model was made void, conceding its power to the reality ... the people was made void when the church arose.”³⁶

Justin Martyr

The definitive formulation of early replacement theology is to be found at great length in the writings of Justin Martyr, especially in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*.³⁷ P. Richardson³⁸

³⁴ The much-discussed phrase “third race” appears in the *Kerygma Petrou*, 2 (cited in Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* VI 5,39-41), a work originating in Egypt and approximately contemporary with Barnabas.

³⁵ *On Pascha* 81-82 [lines 584-591]. Quotations from Melito are from the translation of S.G. Hall, *Melito of Sardis*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1979.

³⁶ Hall, 40-43 (lines 261-279). Melito’s concept of replacement may even extend to certain aspects of Judaism which are post-biblical. In this homily on the Pascha, he sometimes adopts wording from the Passover Haggadah. One example: “It is he that delivered us from slavery to liberty, from darkness to light, from death to life, from tyranny to eternal royalty, he made us a new priesthood and an eternal people personal to him.” Hall, p. 37, note 34, draws the comparison to MPes X,5; ExodR 12.2; also pp. xxvi-xxvii, where he cites his article, “Melito in the light of the Passover Haggadah” *JTS* NS 22 (1971), 29-46.

³⁷ It is far beyond the scope of this article to analyze at any length writings of Justin on this subject. This has been done admirably by O. Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy*, Leiden: Brill, 1987, especially pp. 165-227,

notes that Justin, writing in about AD 160, is the first Christian writer to make explicit the transference of the title “Israel” to the Church: “For the true spiritual Israel, and descendants of Judah, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham, ... are we who have been led to God through this crucified Christ” (*Dial.* 11,5).³⁹ When Trypho reacts to a long speech by Justin with the surprised question “What then? Are you Israel? and speaks He such things to you?” Justin does not answer directly but rather quotes Isaiah 42:1-4 and adds

As therefore from the one man Jacob, who was surnamed Israel, all your nation has been called Jacob and Israel; so we from Christ, who begat us unto God, like Jacob, and Israel, and Judah, and Joseph, and David, are called and are the true sons of God, and keep the commandments of Christ (123,9).

Justin is significant not only for his pronouncement that the Church is Israel, but also because of the large volume of Old Testament exegesis which he brings in support of this claim. Most of the latter half of Isaiah is quoted in chunks of a chapter or more in the *Dialogue*, while New Testament quotations are relatively infrequent and short and almost exclusively from the gospels. Skarsaune notes frequent parallels between Justin's sources and *Barnabas*.⁴⁰ It should not be thought that later Church Fathers all base themselves on Justin or will find no new ways of expressing or supporting replacement theology. However, with Justin the plateau has been reached; from now on it will be assumed that the Church has replaced the Jews in God's salvation program.

Some Observations on the Early Development of Replacement Theology

A. The rejection of the Jews is normally connected to their role in the killing of Jesus. If some tried to argue that if his death was ordained by God, then the Jews should not be blamed, the reply was that they should have refused to carry out such a negative deed.⁴¹

B. In light of Paul's use in Galatians 6:16 of the phrase “the Israel of God,” it is especially noteworthy that the claim “the Church is Israel” comes so late.⁴² Evidently the early Church writers did not understand it to refer to the Church. Even Justin, in his repeated declaration that the Church is now Israel, does not refer to Galatians 6.16 as proof, nor does he even use Paul's exact phrase.

C. Richardson has pointed out that the claim to be “Israel” was a common feature in debates between streams of Judaism. After reviewing 1 Maccabees, the Psalms of Solomon, 1 Enoch, the Testimonies of the Twelve Patriarchs, and the Assumption of Moses, he concludes: “In each case where one party's opinion is set over against the rest of Judaism, it tends to claim that it is Israel, though there are many variations in the measure of exclusiveness and of the hope for others’

260-374. See also Richardson, (n. 10) p. 9-15; M. Simon, *Verus Israel*, Oxford: University Press, 1986 (1964), 116-119 etc.

³⁸ Richardson (n. 10), p. 9. He cites *Dial* 11.5; 123.9; 135.3, quoted below.

³⁹ Translations of Justin are from the Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. 1.

⁴⁰ Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. 1, 171.

⁴¹ Melito, *On Pascha* 74-79 (lines 525-565); Justin, *Dial.* 95,2-3; 141,1

⁴² Richardson, (n. 10) 74-84, argues convincingly that Paul did not intend himself to call the Church “Israel” in this verse.

salvation.”⁴³

D. One wonders if an external religio-political factor might have led to the later spread of the Church’s claim to be Israel. With Roman insistence that its non-Jewish subjects offer sacrifice as a show of loyalty, the believers from among the gentiles were faced with several choices. They could refuse and take whatever consequences were being handed down; they could sacrifice and hope God understood that they did not really mean it; or perhaps in some circumstances they could try to convince the officer that they were Jewish and hence exempt.⁴⁴ All of these short-term options would have been seen as undesirable. A long-term solution to the problem would be to convince the authorities that the *religio licita* status enjoyed by Judaism, with its concomitant exemption from all pagan activities, actually belonged to the Christians.

Conclusion

The New Testament makes no direct claim that the Jewish people have been supplanted by the Church as the new Israel or the new people of God. However, it did not take Christian thought long to arrive at that conclusion. Many factors probably contributed to this conclusion, and only a few of them have been covered in this article. These factors may include Old Testament remnant theology as developed in the New Testament; the normal psychological tendency of a religious movement to claim that it is the "last word," the one which makes all its predecessors obsolete; the socio-ethnic shift in the Church from mostly Jewish to mostly gentile;⁴⁵ the hesitancy of both Judaism and Christianity to be identified too closely with the other when dealing with the Roman authorities.

These last two factors point to a reality which is far too often overlooked: the influence which environmental pressures have on the development of doctrine. The success of this distortion is aided by the ease of finding selective support for almost any preconceived idea from a book as large as the Bible. A bias, a concordance, and bad exegesis are the ingredients for proving almost anything you want. Replacement theologians (as well as those of us who think a lot about Jewish evangelism) should be careful not to mix too many non-biblical factors in with theology.

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⁴³ Richardson, 220; see 217-228. Cf also M. Simon, *Jewish Sects at the Time of Jesus*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967, 7, 48; P.R. Davies, *The Damascus Covenant*, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982, 177. Regarding the Essenes, Simon cites A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran*, Oxford: 1962, 42.

⁴⁴ There may be a hint of such attempts in Rev 2.9 and 3.9. Both come in the context (both textual and historical) of persecution and speak of people who claim to be Jews when they are not.

⁴⁵ For this and other "historical contingencies" which contributed to the shift, see Siker, (n. 2) pp. 194-195.

Replacement Theology — Anti-Replacement Theology

MISHKAN's editors are pleased to publish the following five brief statements on replacement theology. The editors of MISHKAN are responsible for the length of the statements. The individual authors are responsible for the content. From different points of view the five statements all express an anti-replacement theology and in that way are similar.

The editors had hoped to publish statements from evangelicals who assume replacement theology positions to contrast with the views expressed in this issue. Sadly, our requests were declined.

This is unfortunate. The issue is broad and complex. People sharing a common Messianic/Christian background, but with different opinions about Israel's role with regard to eschatology and salvation history ought to aid each other by expressing one's position, thereby allowing others to examine their own thoughts in light of opposition. Likely, different opinions will not be reconciled.

These five statements together with the other articles in this issue are not the final word on replacement theology. A challenging exegetical task lies ahead of anyone involved in debate regarding replacement theology.

When the question about replacement theology is related to Jewish evangelism the situation becomes very complex. One can find supporters of replacement theology defending Jewish evangelism. On the other hand one finds anti-replacement theologians denying the need for any mission to Israel — at least for the time being.

Courage and humility are needed for any discussion on replacement theology. Courage is required to contradict a tradition to which you subscribe whether it is a dogmatic view on Israel's future active role or the opposite. The discussion demands humility as it concerns issues related to the future — some aspects of which God has not revealed.

If this is correct several questions need to be asked:

1. How high on the list of priorities should the question of replacement theology come?
2. Should the view on replacement theology be allowed to divide believers?
3. Is it possible to be involved in Jewish evangelism and at the same time defend views similar to replacement theology?

Certainly not!

Ole Andersen⁴⁶

“Certainly not!” That would have been the answer of the apostle Paul, if he had ever met a 20th century theologian claiming that the Church has replaced the Jewish people. And then the apostle would have continued with emphasis: “God has neither rejected nor cast away his people.”

But if the answer is so clear-cut and obvious, why then all the discussions among evangelical believers? Why then the voluminous “Israelologies” — and why this issue of Mishkan?

A muddy discussion

I think that (part of!) the reason for the ongoing discussion of replacement theology is the unclear and inconsiderate use of the term *God's people*. The lack of a clear definition becomes evident if we ask the question “Is Israel still God's people?”

Some believers equate God's people with *born again* or *saved*. Therefore they understand our question as something like “Does the people of Israel belong to God's saved people, which will inherit eternal life — regardless of their belief or disbelief in Jesus?” Obviously their answer to our question is an emphatic No! Israel as a whole is not God's people. Neither Jews nor, say, Danes are saved regardless of faith. To stress the biblical foundation of their answer, they may refer to texts like Romans 2:17-29; 9:6-13; Galatians 3:26-29.

Other believers equate God's people with *servant*, *instrument* etc. When they hear our question they understand it as something like “Is the people of Israel still God's servant, that is, God's instrument in realizing the history of salvation?” Because they understand it in this way, their answer is a clear Yes! — with references to texts like Jeremiah 31:35-37; Romans 11:1 and 29 and John 4:22.

Both groups point to a large number of texts to support their answer and rather often both groups overlook or ignore the texts used by the other side. The lack of an exact definition together emphasizing one part of the biblical message may be good for the discussion (it can go on and on), but it is bad for our mutual understanding. It makes for a muddy discussion.

As far as I can see, the only way to maintain both sets of biblical texts is to accept both above-mentioned understandings of the term *God's people*.

God's election of Israel has two aspects. They are closely connected, but for the purpose of clarity let us consider them one by one.

One purpose of the election was that every single individual in the people of Israel should “know the Lord.” Through Moses God placed life and death, blessing and cursing before the people and asked them to choose (Deut 30:19). Every single Israelite had to make his own decision. Sometimes during Old Testament times most of the people chose to believe in God and live according to his Word. But often the majority chose the idols or a false self-made worship.

⁴⁶Ole Andersen is working with the Danish organization “Ordet og Israel” (The Bible and Israel). He holds an M.A. of Divinity from the University of Copenhagen.

All of Israel was elected, they went out of Egypt with Moses, they heard the Word of God, but only the believing Israelites were saved. Neither the election nor the Word of God did save the majority — because they did not receive it with faith (Hebrews 4:2).

But the election of Israel had another purpose, too. Israel was elected to be the servant of the Lord (Isa 43:10,12,21; 44:1,21,23). In Israel all peoples of the earth should be blessed. Through the history of Israel God revealed both his love and his holiness to all nations. And with the land and people of Israel as the framework and setting he sent his son to the world.

So, the election of Israel was an election to be the instrument of God in history. And with regard to this aspect of the election Israel had no choice. They were not asked to make a decision. They could not say no. His servant they were, regardless of their attitude toward him. Sometimes Israel chose to be obedient and then God used them as his servant and instrument in revealing his mercy, love, and blessings. Often most of Israel chose to be disobedient. That did not change their status as the servant of the Lord, but God used them as his disobedient servant in revealing his anger and judgment. And regardless of their belief or unbelief God used them when he carried through his plan of salvation.

In Old Testament times all Israelites (believing or unbelieving) made up the people of God, i.e. God's instrument of salvation. But inside Israel there was a group of believers (sometimes many, often few) making up the *remnant* or *the true Israel*.

And so it is today, after the first coming of the Messiah. Still Israel as a whole is God's instrument of salvation, or *God's serving people*. As the land and people of Israel formed the framework and setting for Jesus Messiah's first coming, so they will do when he returns. All Jews belong to *God's serving people* regardless of their faith. But also today a remnant is found inside the Jewish people — a remnant of believers in Jesus Messiah, that is *God's saved people*.

What, then, about replacement theology?

In the light of this I shall respond in two ways to the statement “The Church has replaced the Jewish people”:

1. Has the Church replaced the Jewish people as *God's saved people*? Certainly not! The Church is the *continuation* of the Old Covenant remnant of Israelite believers — consisting of the present remnant of believing Jews extended with non-Jewish believers.
2. Has the Church replaced the Jewish people as *God's serving people*? Certainly not! The Jewish people as a whole is still the Lord's servant and has still an important role to play in the last phase of the realization of God's plan of salvation. But also the Church (Jewish and non-Jewish believers) has been called by its Lord to be his serving people in the present age. Therefore the non-Jewish part of the Church has become *fellowheirs* and *partakers* with the Jewish people.

The Church Has Replaced the Jewish People — A Response

Menachem Benhayim⁴⁷

The doctrine of replacement theology reflects a wide range of Christian thinking, from utterly malignant anti-Jewish hatred to simple misunderstanding and misapplication of biblical texts.

Malignant theological anti-Semitism has been partially neutralized by the restoration of Jewish nationhood in the wake of the Holocaust and the astonishing vitality of Jewish life and influence in the modern world. The anti-Jewish malignancy will only be totally destroyed with the spiritual triumph within Israel in fulfillment of the Pauline vision of the “all Israel” to be saved (Rom 11:25-26). This vision is itself an echo of Deuteronomy, Jeremiah and other prophets of an Israel “saved of the Lord” (Deut 33:29) and living “from the least to the greatest” in the knowledge of God in the new covenant (Jer 31:31-37). At the center of God’s will, Israel will be a powerful instrument in the outworking of universal salvation.

Replacement theology unmotivated by conscious anti-Jewish hatred is nevertheless guilty of a shallow understanding of Scripture. It bases itself on the fact that biblical Israel serves as a paradigm for the Church (1 Cor 10:1-11), that the Church has a universal scope (Rom 4:10-13; Gal 3:28-29), and that national Israel has failed and/or has outlived its special purpose (Acts 28:28).

It is true that biblical, historical Israel is a part of the history of the Church, but divine grace is not so miserly that it can only be extended to the Church at the expense of Israel. The apostle applies to the Church among the gentiles the words of Hosea, originally directed at apostate Israel (Hos 2:23) — “Those who were not my people I will call my people” — as an apostolic midrash (Rom 9:24). This does however require the rejection of its plain original application to Israel. Indeed, in three separate statements in the same epistle, Paul declares that the midrash by which he justifies gentile incorporation or “ingrafting” into the Jewish roots of Christian faith is part of a process “to provoke Israel to jealousy” as a means to accomplish their final salvation. (Rom 10:19;11:11,14).

It is also true that there is a continuing tension between the universal scope of the Church and its message to all nations, on the one hand, and the national scope of Israel’s call to salvation. There is, by comparison, also tension between the proclamation of individual salvation (John 3:16) and the prophetic proclamation to nations (Matt 24:14), or between faith (Eph 2:8-9) and works in seeming opposition (James 2:14,26). These tensions are not resolved by elimination of one element of the tension but by maintaining proper balance between both elements of the tension.

Probably the most grotesque claim for Israel’s replacement by the Church is Jewish national and spiritual failure. Then what hope is there for the Church among the gentiles, whose failures and fragmentation during 2000 years of history have been on massive scale far greater than Israel’s in Scripture and history?

A part of this Christian history from the first century onward includes: “Immorality such as is

⁴⁷Menachem Benhayim, formerly Secretary for the International Messianic Jewish Alliance, and one of the founders of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of Israel is retired and living with his wife, Haya, in Jerusalem.

not even named among the pagans” (1Cor 5:1); those who are “neither cold nor hot ... but are to be spewed out ...” (Rev 3:16); endless factionalism, monstrous hierarchal systems, bloody religious wars, idolatry, misrepresentation of Jesus, alliances with some of the most evil regimes of history, anti-Semitism, racism, etc.

It will not do to argue that those manifestations did not involve the true Church. Were the churches in Corinth, Laodicea, Rome, and elsewhere excluded from the true Church when their sinfulness was addressed; or is it only Israel which sins and grieves the Holy Spirit so that it loses all its biblical prerogatives? No doubt a Muslim theologian could argue that the Church’s sins required its replacement by Islam!

The sovereignty of God and the freedom of man to choose are two poles of reality in tension. Since election in the biblical view is anchored in divine sovereignty, “It depends not upon man’s will or exertion, but upon God’s mercy” (Rom 9:16). Human freedom to accept or reject divine purposes is subordinate to divine sovereignty. Thus, mainstream Israel’s freedom to reject the gospel led to the ministry to the gentiles, since by Israel’s trespass, “salvation has come to the gentiles so as to make Israel jealous” (Rom 11:11). As noted earlier, this serves as one means to accomplish Israel’s salvation.

The notion that human freedom, which itself is a gift of grace, can frustrate the sovereignty of God is an absurdity and contrary to biblical truth. Obviously, human limitations impede our vision of the full outworking of prophecy ... “For now we see through a glass darkly...” (1Cor 13:12). Nevertheless, the truth remains that concerning both Israel and the Church, “... the gifts and call of God are irrevocable” (Rom 11:29).

Finally, the tension between the particular aspect of divine promises to Israel and the universal promises to all nations continues. If we are to judge the Book of Revelation as an ultimate pole of the word of God, this tension continues to the end of time: “The number of the sealed (are) 144,000 out of every tribe of the sons of Israel ... and a great multitude which no man could number from every nation ...” (7:4,9), as well as in the “New Jerusalem” on whose gates “the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed ... “ (21:10,12; 22:2).

The Church Has Replaced the Jewish People — A Perspective

Tuvya Zaretsky⁴⁸

Instead of “replacement theology” I have chosen to use the harsher term *supersessionism* to stigmatize the subject. I mean to express truth first and indignation as a Jewish believer second.

It is good to define terms. The Greek *ekklesia* is commonly translated “church.” It is the *community* of those who are called out by God, who have responded by coming together as the Lord’s body. Like the term *qahal* in the Hebrew Bible, it is indicative of the community of God’s

⁴⁸Tuvya Zaretsky is the Branch Leader of Jews for Jesus in Los Angeles. He is responsible for the Israel Portfolio of Jews for Jesus.

people gathered. That body was initially Jewish, but is now composed of both Jews and gentiles.

The Church is not the Kingdom of God. The Church is a community of the true “people of God.” It is a body of people gathered in time and in a location. It is not an institution to be ruled by politics or arranged by membership. Nor is it a facility like any building. The disciples were not sent out to proclaim the church. They belonged to the King, and proclaimed him and his Kingdom. They were the earliest constituents of his body, the Church. However, they were charged with calling others to him and to be his followers.

The Jewish people are distinct from the Church, but some are in it. We are a nation, ordained by God through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Blood lineage (the kind that can be traced by DNA encoding) is the qualifier, not race, religion or passport. The patriarchs are the connection with the unconditional covenant relationship between God and this people. Inclusion in the covenant blessings, in God’s view, was through a positive response of faith by each individual. The signature act of acknowledgment was circumcision. The sign of the covenant promise was the cut upon an organ which was instrumental to the continuation of the nation.

Jewish people still walk the earth, and some are part of the body of Christ. Therefore, it is inconceivable to me that the community of the Lord’s body has replaced or superseded the Jewish people (Israel).

Of course, some have said that the Church is heir to Israel and the covenant promises. However, if the Church is the sole legitimate elect, then the community of Jewish people alive today is a pretentious bastard. That could explain some historical and modern contempt for Jews as illegitimate pretenders.

Sadly, too many Jewish Christians today have missed the point of the calling as a holy nation and a royal priesthood. Not enough is being said about the faithfulness of God in keeping his covenant with our nation. Too many Jewish believers have focused attention on their own Jewish identity. As a community, we should be declaring God’s grace. He has preserved our people, called an elect from among them and has never invalidated his promises to our fathers.

Others will exegete Bible passages relevant to this topic in this *MISHKAN* issue. No doubt, they will show that supersessionist writers may fail to credit the Jewish context when making New Testament references. An example of this sort of misapplication is 1 Peter 2.

The “chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God” of 1 Peter 2:9 was addressed to “God’s elect, strangers in the world, scattered” in the diaspora of 1 Peter 1:1. Greek scholar, Kenneth S. Wuest noted, “We thus see that the recipients of this letter were Christian Jews.” Peter wrote out of pastoral care for those believing Jews living among the nations, elect yet scattered. Peter also used language borrowed from Hosea, “Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” Hosea was God’s prophet to reassure the remnant, who faced judgment and scattering in their day. God’s covenant faithfulness should not be forgotten. Hosea said that the Jewish people would yet be called “sons of the living God.”

In this era, the Jewish nation has been cut down, but the original root stock has remained. The Messiah/King invited the elect from the nations and from the Jewish people to participate in his kingdom. The “unnatural” members were grafted onto the original root stock and the “natural” members were regrafted in. At the cross of Calvary, elements were consummated and the covenants were renewed.

Israel was not rejected (Rom 11:2). An elect remnant was preserved (Rom 9:6 and 11:5, 7). The unconditional grace-gifts of God and his calling were irrevocable (Rom 11:29). God has not forgotten the promises to our fathers. Therefore, the believing community could not have superseded the Jewish people. By definition of the terms and the plan of God, that is inconceivable. The mystery is that elect individuals from among the nations now co-participate with the elect of the Jewish people in a blessed relationship with God.

It may also be time to reject the couplet “Christians and Jews” where “Christianity and Judaism” are intended. The non-Christian Jewish community will use that couplet because it serves a divisive purpose. The supersessionists will employ such language in arrogance. Some of us are Jews who also happen to be in the community of God’s people called out and gathered.

As Jewish believers in Jesus, we ought to resist supersessionist notions and language as being contemptuous of our people. The Apostle Paul issued the warning against such as “boasting.”

The Church Has Replaced the Jewish People

Albrecht Haefner⁴⁹

The people have rebelled against God at the building of the Tower of Babel. His answer consisted of a judgment on the one hand, but on the other hand of calling Abraham, and in choosing the people of Israel, whom he himself formed to proclaim his praise (Isa 43:21). Since then Israel and the nations are related to one another. This became particularly apparent at Pentecost (Acts 2).

When could the Church have replaced Israel?

When God called the Church into existence, only Jews were a part of it (Jews and converts to Judaism Acts 2:11).

Were replacement theology correct, then the Church, at its founding, would have taken Israel’s place. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the people of Israel would have therefore meant a retraction of the choosing of Israel. This thought is difficult to comprehend!

Furthermore, since at the Church’s beginning only the people of Israel were a part, the church then was spiritually and ethnically a part of Israel. According to a subsequently applied replacement theology, Israel would have been replaced by a part of Israel itself. This statement is strange. But then otherwise it would not mean replacement. The Church at Pentecost was the “firstfruit offering of the dough” (Rom 11:16). It was from Israel and meant for Israel.

Did the Church replace the Jewish people after Pentecost?

It is often said, that the Church, consisting of both Jews and gentiles, took the place of Israel. The Church would not have already replaced the Jewish people at Pentecost, but only after

⁴⁹Albrecht Haefner has served as Vicar of a parish church in the “Evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg” and is now on the staff of “Evangeliumsdienst für Israel”, Germany.

gentiles joined it.

However if the calling of the gentile Christians were so important in the redemption story, it would have meant that the Jewish people would have been replaced by the gentile Christian church. Expressed differently, with the calling of members of the gentile nations, who had come under judgment after the building of the Tower of Babel, the choosing of Israel would have been negated. With what justification can such a statement be made?

If gentile Christians had such importance, then through their calling, the Jewish part of the Church would have lost all importance.

This would have therefore meant a break for the gentile Christian part of the Church from its origins. The Church would have actually been cut off from its roots. Replacement would not have been able to say more than: "Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph 2:20).

One needs to go one more step: Because the Church, according to the scriptures, can only be a Church consisting of Jews and gentiles, replacement would be like a division of the Church in itself.

In coherence with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as God's answer to the rebellion at the building of the Tower of Babel, only Jews were present (Jews and converts to Judaism, Acts 2:11). They originated from Jerusalem, Judea and the diaspora. While many of them believed in Jesus, it became obvious that God through them had focused on the whole Jewish people in Jerusalem, Judea, and the diaspora. As Paul wrote: "If the part of the dough offered as firstfruit is holy, then the whole batch is holy" (Rom 11:16).

With it God has again made especially clear his claim on his people of Israel at Pentecost. The Jewish people were not replaced by the Church. On the contrary, its importance to the nations of the world and the whole Church was strongly underlined on the day of the foundation of the Church. Because the Jews who became believers at Pentecost are not only meant as an offering of firstfruits for their own people, but also for all nations. Through languages the nations were judged after the building of the tower of Babel. Therefore the Jews from the diaspora, who understand the languages of their countries and have become believers, are like a firstfruit offering of the nations among which they live (even Paul did not relate the expression to the nations in Rom 11:16), because they will go back and fulfill the mission of preaching the gospel.

Therefore God has not replaced Israel by the Church, but through the founding of the Church, he sealed the choice of Israel.

The Church, as a Church of Jews and gentiles, is also a church for Jews and gentiles. And in the Church of Jews and gentiles, the Jews are the core. This becomes especially clear in the parable of the olive-tree.

The branches which are grafted from the wild olive-tree, says Paul, can be broken off again. He does not say that the Church would cease to exist without gentile believers. Beyond that, there are broken off branches beside the original olive-tree, which apparently do not dry out, but can be grafted again.

With such coherence, how can one speak of replacement?

Replacement Theology and the Japanese Christians

Kenichi Nakagawa⁵⁰

At different international meetings I have been asked this question by those who found out I am interested in Jewish evangelism: “What made you, a Japanese pastor of all people, interested in Jewish evangelism?” My response is, “Because I read the Bible.” Then comes another question. “What is the attitude of the Japanese Christians toward Jewish evangelism?” “Indifference!” is my answer. The teaching that the Church has replaced the Jewish people has blinded the spiritual eyes of the Japanese Christians to the biblical truth. There are, in my opinion, two monsters which seem to control the nation of Japan. One is the monster of “Emperor Worship” which symbolizes all other forms of idolatry in Japan. Another is that of Replacement Theology. The first one is mainly responsible for blinding the unbelievers whereas the second is busy keeping the believers asleep to the crucial teaching of the Bible.

During and after the Gulf War, there was a proliferation of books related to the Jewish people and Israel in the Japanese market. Professor Masanari Miyazawa of Dousisya Women’s College, an expert on Jewish studies in Japan, reported that he noticed at least 56 books related to this theme were published in Japan in 1989, 76 books in 1990, and 150 books in 1991. Out of the total of 282 books, according to professor Miyazawa, 18 were so-called anti-Jewish and the rest were books dealing with political and/or economic issues. With only a few exceptions, the overall tone of those books is pro-Palestinian or pro-Arab.

Due to the anti-Zionistic emphasis of those books and mass media reports, the average Japanese seems to have espoused a similar position toward the Jewish people. This trend has obviously crept into the liberal branch of the protestant church in Japan, namely the Kyoudan Church. Most of those who belong to this denomination view the establishment of the state of Israel as nothing other than a historical coincidence. According to Pastor Moritade Murayama of Kyoudan Church, the most outspoken leader for the cause of the Palestinians, a so-called Holy Land tour itself is an act of unrighteousness because it recognizes the existence of the state of Israel. He insists that we should never visit Israel, nor even call it the Holy Land.

The evangelical churches in Japan are somewhat removed from political and economic issues. But even among them anti-Jewish sentiment can be traced. Personally, I am not surprised with the position of Kyoudan Church which promotes liberal theology, denying the inerrancy of the Bible. But when it comes to the position of the Evangelical Churches which believe in the inerrancy of the Bible and to which I belong, I am somewhat mystified. “Replacement Theology” has been taught at seminaries and churches, leaving a strong influence on the thinking of the evangelical Christians. Take the chain Bible published by the Word of Life Press for instance. By the way, this is the only study Bible published in Japanese, which means that average Japanese lay people are heavily dependent upon the footnotes printed in the margin of the book. As we all know, once

⁵⁰Kenichi Nakagawa is founder of the Harvest Time Ministries, the largest TV-evangelism organization in Japan. He has recently established an organization called J & J Ministries which is devoted to promoting Jewish evangelism in Japan.

footnotes are written in the margin, they become as authoritative as the biblical text itself.

Commenting on Matthew 21:43, the footnote of the above-mentioned book says, "This verse means that the Kingdom of God will be taken away from the Jewish people and will be given to the Church." This statement is based on a superficial exegesis of the text presupposing Replacement theology. (For footnote references, this book depends heavily on The Ryrie Study Bible, Moody Press.)

Now the problem is that there are no other books available for the average readers which express viewpoints other than that of Replacement Theology. Their prooftexts are such verses as Galatians 3:6-9,29, Romans 2:28, 29, 4:13, Matthew 21:43.

The battle is the one related to hermeneutical principles. Are we maintaining the historical and grammatical method to interpret the text and allowing it to express the meaning which the author originally intended? Or are we approaching the text with preconceived ideas? That is the issue.

Nevertheless, a new interest for Jewish evangelism can be found among some Japanese Christian leaders. About ten pastors got together in March this year to discuss how to establish a Japanese chapter of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE). We all felt the Lord is directing us to establish a fellowship of evangelical Christian leaders who are interested in Jewish evangelism. An agreement was reached to officially establish the Japanese chapter in October 1994. It is my conviction that the revival of Japan will be closely connected with how the churches in Japan treat the Jewish people. I covet your prayers for the establishment of the Japanese chapter of LCJE.

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The Neglected Story of Christian Philo-Semitism in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

Oskar Skarsaune⁵¹

I propose in this article an alternative way of reading a well-known body of early Christian literature — the *adversus Iudaeos* texts. It may seem strange to think of these texts as source material for the story of Christian philo-Semitism.⁵² The more obvious approach is of course to take them as sources for Christian anti-Jewish attitudes, because that is what they express in varying degrees, and are thus usually understood that way.

But let me first remark that these texts have not been extensively studied. Scholars in general seem to find the repetitive character and the polemical stereotypes of this literature very boring⁵³; consequently these books are not widely read. Even one of the most interesting and most read books in this genre, Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*, elicited the following comment by Adolf von Harnack:

If you remove the endless Bible quotations, the frequent tedious repetitions and the excessive verbosity, the book shrinks considerably so that whatever it offers is hidden under such thick foliage one can easily understand that very few scholars have the desire or the courage to look for the fruit.⁵⁴

⁵¹Oskar Skarsaune (Ph.D. University of Oslo) is professor of Patristic Studies and Early Church History at the Lutheran School of Theology in Oslo, Norway.

⁵² I use this well-established term, although I am not particularly happy with it. Concerning the terminology for the opposite attitude, I would like to distinguish between anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish. The traditional Christian attitude was certainly anti-Jewish, condemning Judaism as a religion and Jews as a people, because of their refusal to believe in Jesus. But it was not racist. The church did not claim that there was something inherently wrong or inferior with Jewish blood or race as such. In contrast, the modern pseudo-science which *named itself* “anti-Semitism”, claimed precisely this, as in the well-known Nazi slogan “getauft oder ungetauft ist einerlei, im Rasse steckt die Schweinerei”. I would prefer to reserve the term anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic for this modern racist attitude, and rather use anti-Jewish for the older Christian attitudes. The opposite of anti-Jewish should be pro-Jewish or philo-Jewish, but there is no tradition for the latter term, and Philo-Semitism seems fairly established. So I use it, with the above reservations. - I should add that the one study which by its title would seem to be most close to my theme, practically does not overlap at all with the material I comment on in this article: Alan Edelstein, *An Unacknowledged Harmony: Philo-Semitism and the survival of European Jewry* (Contributions in Ethnic Studies, No. 4), Westport, Conn./London 1982.

⁵³ Even A. Lukyn-Williams, who wrote an extensive overview (see below and note 4) over this whole body of literature and advocated the view that it contained much of interest and should be taken seriously, says that on first reading of it one is struck by the feeling of “sameness”, A. Lukan-Williams, *Adversus Iudaeos*, London 1935, xvii.

⁵⁴ Adolf von Harnack, *Judentum und Judenchristentum in Justins Dialog mit Tryphon* (Texte und Untersuchungen 39/1), Leipzig 1913, 48f.

This was written some 80 years ago, but with regard to the *Adversus Judaeos* literature in general, it is still true. Three comprehensive studies of this literature have been published to date: A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*;⁵⁵ B. Blumenkranz, *Les auteurs chrétiens latins du moyen âge sur les juifs et le judaïsme*;⁵⁶ and Heinz Schreckenberg's two volumes *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte*.⁵⁷ Schreckenberg lists in painstaking detail every utterance concerning the Jews in Christian documents, chronologically arranged. But the overwhelming amount of material has made any deeper analysis of the arguments and the developments within this tradition almost impossible.⁵⁸

But these studies read this literature as Christian literature about the Jews. This is entirely legitimate, and is the most obvious way to read it. It is, mostly, about the Jews. But it is, with a few exceptions, not addressed to the Jews. It is addressed to Christians. It was supposed to be read by Christians, not Jews. And why were so many books written to Christian readers about the Jews? Often to confirm and strengthen Christians in their own faith and occasionally to equip Christians with arguments in their discussions with Jews. Regardless, Judaism cannot have been something remote and distant, posing no challenge.⁵⁹ Indirectly, the *Adversus Judaeos* literature proves that Judaism continued to be perceived as something close and challenging. There was social contact between Christians and Jews; otherwise so many books are hard to explain.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Subtitle: *A Bird's-eye View of Christian 'Apologiae' until the Renaissance*, London 1935.

⁵⁶ Paris 1963.

⁵⁷ *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (1.-11. Jh)* (Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe XXIII, Bd. 172), Frankfurt a.M./Bern 1982; and *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte (11.-13.Jh). Mit einer Ikonographie des Judenthemas bis zum 4. Laterankonzil* (Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe XXIII, Bd. 335, 2. Aufl.), Frankfurt a.M./Bern/New York/Paris 1991.

⁵⁸ To these large-scale studies one could also add some less extensive ones, like Amos B. Hulen, "The 'Dialogues with the Jews' as sources for the early Jewish Argument against Christianity", *Journ. of Biblical Literature* 51 (1932), 58-70; James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue*, New York 1934, 1ff; Robert Wilde, *The Treatment of the Jews in the Greek Christian Writers of the First Three Centuries*, Washington 1949; Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel. Étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et juifs dans l'Empire Romain (135-425)*, Paris 1964, chs. V, VI, and VIII; Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, Siegfried von Kortzfleisch (eds.), *Kirche und Synagoge. Handbuch zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden, Band I*, Stuttgart 1968, chs. I and II, 23-135; D. Judant, *Judaïsme et Christianisme. Dossier patristique*, Paris 1969; Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, New Haven and London 1971, ch. I: "Jewish-Christian Relations in the Roman Empire", 9-38; John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism. Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*, New York/Oxford 1985, Part III (113-191).

⁵⁹ Many scholars hold the view that the anti-Jewish polemic is only a literary convention, not founded on any real-life contact with Jews. This is often substantiated with a reference to Amos B. Hulen's article (previous note). In this article, however, Hulen does not deny that real-life contact should be seen as the background of the anti-Jewish tracts, cf. pp. 64f.

⁶⁰ I think this point is well made i.a. by Robert L. Wilken in his *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology*, New Haven/London 1971, 9-38.

So, while these books are direct evidence of Christian anti-Judaism, they are also indirect testimony of interaction and social contact between Christians and Jews. But we can go further. In some of these books, Christians are not only the addressees; they are also the ones attacked. The Christian author attacks fellow Christians because they socialize with the Jews, visit their synagogues, take part in their festivals, and so on. In other words, we see a Christian anti-Semite attack Christian philo-Semites. In the old church the latter were usually called *hoi ioudaizontes*, the judaizers.

Exemplifying this is perhaps the most famous of all *Adversus Judaeos* books, John Chrysostom's *Eight Discourses Kata Ioudaion*, which is not at all addressed to Jews. Probably very few, if any, Jews were present in the cathedral at Antioch when these homilies were given. In any case, the Jews are not addressed as part of the audience. It is otherwise with the judaizing Christians. Those are the ones addressed time and again, and those are the ones against whom Chrysostom directs all his rhetorical polemic. Those are the ones he wants to influence and change. Therefore the translator of the recent American translation of Chrysostom's homilies is certainly correct when he changes the traditional title somewhat and now renders it *Discourses against Judaizing Christians*.⁶¹

It is these judaizing Christians, attacked time and again in this literature, who interest me. Who were they, how many were they, what kind of Christians were they? A fringe group only, or a substantial segment of the local communities?

One interesting, preliminary, question is: Why have they left us no books, so that we could have their version of the conflict? Did the philo-Semites write less than the anti-Semites, or is it simply that their books were not copied and kept? Maybe a bit of both? If they wrote less, could it be because the philo-Semites had less reason to be dissatisfied with the grass-roots attitudes among the Christian communities than did the anti-Semitic authors?

I shall not speculate more about this, but I want to emphasize the presence and importance of the Christian judaizers or philo-Semites in many of the *Adversus Judaeos* books and texts. Together, these many and scattered references build up a picture of a grass-roots phenomenon in early and medieval Christianity — the neglected story of Christian philo-Semitism.

Ignatius of Antioch

Let us begin our story with Ignatius of Antioch. Around 110AD he was arrested and sent to Rome to be thrown to the wild beasts. On his way to Rome, he visited some of the cities in the province of Asia (Philadelphia, Smyrna, Troas), and talked with the bishops of some other cities (Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles). To the Christian communities in these cities he wrote five letters (one to each, except Troas), and in some of these letters he attacks Christian, non-Jewish judaizers.⁶² To the

⁶¹ Paul W. Harkins (transl.), *Saint John Chrysostom. Discourses against Judaizing Christians* (The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, Vol. 68), Washington, D.C. 1979.

⁶² I think S.G. Wilson is correct to stress that only *Gentiles*, not born Jews, were called “Judaizers” in Pagan as well as Jewish and Christian literature of Antiquity. Cp. his article “Gentile Judaizers”, *New Testament Studies* 38 (1992), 605-616; esp. 608. Pagan use: Plutarch *Lives*, Cicero VII:6 (Loeb ed. Vol. VII, 98/99); Jewish use: Josephus *Bello Judaico*. II:463; Christian use: Ignatius in *Philad.* 6:1 and *Magn.* 8:1.

Magnesians he says “if we are living until now according to Judaism, we confess that we have not received grace” (*Magn.* 8:1). Ignatius seems to be speaking of Christians who were not of Jewish origin (*Philad.* 6:1), but who observed the Sabbath (*Magn.* 9:1), and probably took part in other Jewish festivals (e.g. Passover, *Magn.* 10:2) as well. He says, “It is monstrous to talk of Jesus Christ and to practise Judaism” (*Magn.* 10:3).⁶³ Ignatius adds that he has no report that such Christians are actually present in Magnesia; he has nevertheless warned them, as a routine, against these people (*Magn.* 11:1). Could it be that Ignatius knew such people from his own community in Antioch?

In Philadelphia it seems he actually had some personal contact with judaizers. They were themselves uncircumcised (*Philad.* 6:1), but “interpreted Judaism” (*ioudaïsmōn hermeneue*). They said that they would not believe in the gospel unless one could substantiate it from the “archives” (probably the Old Testament), and they seem to have questioned Ignatius' proof of the Gospel from the Old Testament (*Philad.* 8:2). Ignatius does not say that they were heretics or could be accused of any doctrinal error.⁶⁴ He blames them for their high respect for Judaism, and probably, some Jewish observances (perhaps “interpreting Judaism” means “giving Jewish observances a Christian meaning?”).

Christian Judaizers

The evidence in Ignatius is scanty and does not give us much information about the judaizers. But the probability that at least some of it refers to judaizers in Antioch makes me curious to compare it to a rather full description of judaizers in Antioch at a later period, viz. in the late 380s. In 386/87AD John Chrysostom, newly ordained presbyter, preached eight sermons in the great basilica at Antioch.⁶⁵ His stated purpose in these sermons was to win back to the Church some Christians who had begun visiting the local synagogue. They themselves did not consider this a break with the Church nor apostasy from their Christian faith. But that was the way Chrysostom viewed the matter, and his eight sermons — traditionally called *Kata Ioudaïōn* — are not addressed to the Jews, but to these Christian judaizers.

Chrysostom provides us with some rather specific information concerning these people. First of all, let us notice something he is *not* saying. He is not accusing them of any doctrinal error. He is not saying there is something wrong with their Christology or ethics. This is significant, because

⁶³ Generally on Ignatius and the judaizers: C.K. Barrett, “Jews and Judaizers in the Epistles of Ignatius”, R. Hamerton-Kelly and R. Scroggs (eds.), *Jews, Greeks, and Christians: Essays in Honor of William David Davies*, Leiden 1976, 220-44; L. Gaston, “Judaism of the Uncircumcised in Ignatius and Related Writers”, S.G. Wilson (ed.), *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity*, Waterloo 1986, II: 33-44; and Wilson, 607-609.

⁶⁴ Unless the judaizers were the same as the Docetists he attacks elsewhere. The classic statement of this theory is E. Molland, “The Heretics Combated by Ignatius of Antioch”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 5 (1954), 1-6; repr. in E. Molland, *Opuscula Patristica*, Oslo 1970, 17-23. I fail to be convinced by this argument, cp. i.a. Barrett’s article quoted above.

⁶⁵ Greek text in Migne, *Patrologia graeca*, Vol. 48, cols. 843-942. English translation: Paul W. Harkins, *Saint John Chrysostom: Discourses against Judaizing Christians* (The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, Vol. 68), Washington, D.C. 1979.

Chrysostom's sermons against the judaizers were interruptions into another series of sermons directed against the Arians. He offers an apology for this interruption himself, emphasizing the urgency of the matter of judaizing, which has forced him to leave the subject of Arianism for a while. In other words: the Arians and the judaizers are not the same, and the judaizers are not blamed for something they believe or teach or say, but for something they do.

First, they "go to watch the (Jewish) festivals, and others will join the Jews in keeping their feasts and observing their fasts" (*Discourse 1*, I:5).⁶⁶ This means that these Christians took part in the Jewish festival celebrations in the synagogue. Chrysostom specifies that they took part in the fast from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, and then joined the celebration of Tabernacles (*Disc. 1*, I:5, pp. 3f);⁶⁷ they also celebrated the Passover according to the Jewish calendar and the Jewish ritual (*Disc. 3, passim.*, pp. 47-70), and seem to have been invited to share the seder meal with their Jewish friends. "You observe with them the fellowship of the festivals, you go to their profane places, enter their unclean doors, and share in the table of demons" (*Disc.1*, VII:5, p. 28). "How can we blame the Jews for waiting for you in their houses when it is you who go running to them?" (*Disc.3*, VI:10, p. 69). In general, the judaizers held the Jewish festivals and the Jewish way of life to be something venerable and holy. "Many, I know, respect the Jews and think their present way of life (*politeia*) is a venerable one" (*Disc.1*, III:1, p. 10). The judaizers admire the Jewish ceremonies, they think they are "venerable and great" (*Disc.1*, VI:5, pp. 23f); and that the Jewish festivals "have something solemn and great about them" (*Disc.1*, VII:1, p. 26).

The judaizers also visited the synagogue. "What is it that you are rushing to see in the synagogue ...?" (*Disc.4*, VII:4, p.92), Chrysostom asks. In his own polemics, he indicates the real answers of the judaizers to this question. "Many are now ... destroying us and exalting the Jews. These men consider the Jews as more trustworthy teachers than their own Fathers ..." (*Disc.3*, VI:6, p.68). The judaizers seem to have held the local rabbi in high regard. Not only did they attend the synagogue service, they also preferred the rabbi as a mitigator in their lawsuits. Chrysostom tells us about a Christian husband who took his wife to the synagogue "to swear there an oath about some matters under dispute with him" (*Disc.1*, III:4, p.12). Chrysostom tried to prevent this, and "asked him why he rejected the Church and dragged the woman to the place where the Hebrews assembled. He answered that many people had told him that oaths sworn there were more to be feared" (*Disc.1*, III:5, p.12). Chrysostom also tells us that the synagogue building itself was regarded with great reverence by the judaizers, partly because the Torah rolls kept in the synagogue were considered holy. "Since there are some who think of the synagogue as a holy place, I must say a few words to them. Why do you reverence that place? ... They answer that the Law and the books of the prophets are kept there" (*Disc.1*, V:2, p. 19).

The judaizers also had a high regard for the Jews as intercessors and physicians in case of illness. "You profess you are a Christian, but you rush off to their synagogues and beg them to help you" (*Disc.8*, VIII:9, p.238). The judaizers are reported as saying: "They (the Jews) promise to make me well, and so I go to them" (*Disc.8*, V:6, p. 222).

In all of this, the judaizers did not convert to Judaism, did not circumcise and only kept *some*

⁶⁶ Harkins' translation, 4. Cf. *Disc. I*, IV:7 (Harkins, 16); V:1 (Harkins, 18); VI:5 (23f); VII:5 (28); VIII:1 (32); *Disc. II*, III:8 (45); *Disc. III*, II:5f (53f); *Disc. IV*, III:4f (77f); III:8f (80); IV:1 (80f); VII:4 (92); et al.

⁶⁷ The page reference in this and the following references is to Harkins' translation.

ritual laws (*Disc. 2, II, pp. 38-42*). The very fact that Jews were willing to receive them at their tables and have meal fellowship with them, is indirect proof that the judaizers at least obeyed the apostolic decree of Acts 15 concerning blood and strangled animals; it is possible that they avoided pork, and tried, in general, to respect the rules of kashrut when eating together with Jews.

Chrysostom tells us two things more about the judaizers. First, they seem to be simple people; they are unable to give satisfactory theological, theoretical reasons for their behavior.

If I were to ask them, you would then clearly know how untimely the contentiousness of these men is. They cannot explain what they do. But they refuse to ask anybody, just as if they were wiser than anybody else ... They do not have the answers themselves, but they refuse to follow those who have been appointed to lead them. They have simply risked all they have on this silly practice... (*Disc.3, II:6, 54*).

In other words, this was a grass-roots phenomenon, much disliked by appointed teachers like Chrysostom.

Secondly, the majority of the judaizers were women. Chrysostom exhorts the husbands to take authority over their judaizing wives, *Disc.2, III:2-5, pp. 43-45*, and this seems like the “normal” situation.

Finally, how numerous were these philo-Semites in the Christian community of Antioch? Chrysostom hints they were far too many, so many that one should rather not speak about it.

Let us not go around saying: How many kept the (Jewish) fast? ... Rather, let us show our concern for them. Even if those who observed the fast are many, you, my beloved, must not make a show and a parade of this calamity in the Church; you must cure it. If someone tells you that many have observed the fast, stop him from talking so that the rumor may not get around and become public knowledge (*Disc.8, IV:5, p. 218*).

Evidence of their Presence

After this survey of the situation in Antioch in the late 380s, let us ask: (1) Do we have indications in the sources that such judaizing Christians were present in Antioch in the time between Ignatius and Chrysostom; and (2) do we have comparable evidence from other provinces? I think the answer to both questions is a qualified yes.

(1) With regard to Antioch, we have in fact more than one source of great relevance to our theme, especially if we expand the area to include Syria in general. Syria was the homeland of the pseudepigraphic “Apostolic” Church ordinances, beginning with the *Didache* (c. 100AD?), continuing with the Syriac *Didascalia Apostolorum* (c. 250AD?), and culminating in the so-called *Apostolic Constitutions* (which include the first two; compiled c. 380AD). All of these warn against judaizing so clearly that it is not possible to doubt the reality of the things prohibited. The *Didascalia* especially fills in the space between Ignatius and Chrysostom in such a way that one can hardly doubt the historical continuity of the judaizing phenomenon among Christians in Syria, or Antioch in particular.

(2) We have scattered but significant evidence for the judaizing tendency from other provinces as well, for the whole period under review, and beyond.

In Rome, Justin Martyr (c. 160AD) speaks of gentile Christians who are persuaded by Jewish

Christians to keep some of the ritual commandments of the Law.⁶⁸ In Alexandria, Origen (c. 220-50AD) speaks of judaizing Christians as well as judaizing gentiles.⁶⁹ In Rome, Novatian (c. 250AD) writes tract after tract to explain why Christians should not take part in Jewish observances: *De cibis Judaicis*, *De sabbato*, *De circumcissione*. Somewhere in the Latin West, Commodian (250?) describes judaizing as a very live issue, but this time among non-Christian gentiles. In Pannonia, far north of the Adriatic Sea, Victor of Pettau (290?) describes the problems with Christians observing the Sabbath. In Spain, the synod at Elvira (c. 306AD) passes several canons against judaizers (canons 16; 49; 50; and 78).⁷⁰ In Nicaea, the 52 (Arabic) canon prohibits any social contact between priests and Jews, especially meal fellowship. And in the better known ruling in the issue of the date of Easter, Nicaea explicitly says that one should separate the Jewish and the Christian festivals on the calendar to prevent judaizing.

Bishop Agobard's Letters

We could continue this listing of evidence through the fourth and following centuries. But I break off here, and make a chronological jump to the ninth century, and to the bishopric of Lyons. In the years between 822 and 828AD the bishop of Lyons, Agobard (bishop 823-40), wrote a series of five letters⁷¹ in which he attacks most vehemently the judaizers of his time and area.⁷² In the first place, Agobard finds that the emperor, Louis the Pious, is far too friendly and protective with regard to the Jews. The Jews had been allowed to import pagan slaves, and since it was not allowed that Jews could have Christian slaves, the civil authorities supported the Jews in denying baptism to these slaves in case they became Christian believers (unless their owners approved). The bishop is, of course, not satisfied with this; but he uses the occasion to launch a veritable campaign against all judaizers in the Christian Frankish society — to his regret, they are many, in both high and low places. At the royal court, Christian women of the nobility had close contacts with Jewish women, gave them clothes and other support. The Jews had free access to the king,

⁶⁸ *Dialogue with Trypho* 47:4.

⁶⁹ Source references in Schreckenberg I, 230.

⁷⁰ “The Council of Elvira leaves the impression that Jews and Christians must have had intimate social relations” (Wilken, 25). Canon 16: No mixed marriages between Christians and heretics or Jews. Canon 49: Christian landowners should not let Jews bless their harvests. “Es kam offenbar vor, dass Rabbiner von Christen gebeten wurden, die Felder zu segnen” (Schreckenberg I, 248). Canon 50: Neither priests nor laypeople should eat with Jews. On this council and its canons against the judaizers, cp. Schreckenberg I, 247-49; and Simon, *Verus Israel*, 381.

⁷¹ Latin text in Migne, *Patrologia Latina* vol. 104; and *Corpus Christianorum, continuatio mediaevalis*, vol. 52. An old German translation to which I have not had access, is E. Samostz, *Des heiligen Agobard Abhandlungen wider die Juden*, Leipzig 1852.

⁷² For the following, I refer to Schreckenberg I, 491-99; Bernhard Blumenkranz, “Agobard: Bischof und Parteimann”, pp. 109-111, in his chapter “Patristik und Frühmittelalter. A. Die Entwicklung im Westen zwischen 200 und 1200”, in K.H. Rengstorff and S. Kortzfleisch (eds.), *Kirche und Synagoge. Handbuch zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden, Band I*, Stuttgart 1968, 84-135; and A. Lukyn-Williams, 348-57. There is a very full bibliography on Agobard in Schreckenberg I, 645f.

and he held them in high regard because they were the descendants of the biblical patriarchs. Members of the Frankish court even asked Jews to bless them and to pray for them. Several new synagogues were built, and Christians frequently visited them, on Sabbaths and festivals. “It comes to such a pass that uneducated Christians say the Jews preach better to them than our priests.” The Jews are venerable because they are the inheritors of the prophets, these Christians claimed. The Jews are the true people of God.

Christians frequently shared meals with Jews, and through all of Agobard's vehement polemics, one gets the clear picture of a generally philo-Semitic society, with close and frequent contacts between the Jews and the Christian population. The bishop feels lonely with his stark anti-Jewish attitude, and the fate of his letters confirm this impression: They only exist in one single copy. They seem to have been completely neglected, not only in his own days, but afterwards also.⁷³

Agobard's letters are perhaps the most vitriolic anti-Jewish tracts since the discourses of John Chrysostom in the fourth century. And exactly like Chrysostom's discourses, they are among our best and most informative sources on Christian philo-Semitism. It was a strong and widespread Christian philo-Semitism that provoked them in the first place, as at Antioch 440 years earlier.

The Historical “Why?”

What we have seen now are only glimpses, fragments, of the story of Christian philo-Semitism. Perhaps you will object that these fragments are still too scattered to prove that there really is a continuous story behind them, and not just episodes. I could bolster my case by adding more evidence coming from all corners of the Church and accumulating through the centuries. But this is not the time and place for that. Instead, I shall share with you some reflections on the historical “Why?” question concerning the judaizers. Whether we should think of the judaizers as small islands in the sea of Christian anti-Semitism or rather as a broad stream in the river of the Church through the centuries, we have to ask: Why did some Christians become judaizers in the first place? We have to keep in mind that, as far as our evidence goes, they never had the bishops and the theologians, the church leadership, on their side. They were judaizers in spite of the official preaching and instruction given in the church. If we think of the effect of countless sermons and lectures given in the churches, the existence of Christian anti-Jewish attitudes needs no explanation. But the existence of philo-Semitism does.

Let us reflect a while on its characteristics. The judaizers were not a sect in the classical meaning of that term, i.e. they were not followers of any particular leader. One cannot name any sect founder; even the old sources do not.⁷⁴ It was not an organized movement and it had no

⁷³ “Agobards anti-jüdische Schriften stiessen bei seiner — im allgemeinen judenfreundlichen — Umwelt wie auch bei der Nachwelt auf wenig Interesse, wie aus dem Umstand erhellt, dass sie nur in einer einzigen Handschrift (des 9. Jh.) erhalten sind. Nur sein Nachfolger Amolo von Lyon schöpft klar erkennbar aus ihnen für seinen ‘Liber contra Judaeos’, und wohl nur über ihn reicht die Fernwirkung Agobards ins weitere Mittelalter” (Schreckenberg I, 494). Cf. the same observation by Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Kirche und Synagoge I*, 109.

⁷⁴ In general, the heresiologists of the Early Church had a tendency to invent “founders” where none existed, as with the famous “Ebion” in Tertullian: fictive founder of the Ebionites (*Against all heresies* ch. 3).

leadership structure of its own. Even the old sources do not speak of the judaizers as a distinctive group or party. They had no distinctive doctrines, heretical or otherwise.

I think Marcel Simon has well captured the situation when he says, “The phenomenon of judaizers does not represent a sect on the fringes of the Church, but simply a tendency within the Church; a certain direction which mainstream Christianity took in certain milieus.”⁷⁵ One could add that the judaizing tendency seems to have had few adherents among the clergy; it was a lay phenomenon and mostly among women.

So, how do we explain this phenomenon? Simon points, quite simply, to the social contact with neighbors who were Jews. The judaizing movement seems to have been strongest in areas with strong Jewish colonies, especially where these colonies are known to have been well integrated into social life and not isolated.⁷⁶

Although this would explain social contact or general friendliness, what is the explanation for the active participation in Jewish festivals? Why the partial observance of ritual laws, far beyond what was necessary for social contact? And, perhaps the most puzzling question is “How do we explain that these Christians seem to have been so well-received by the Jews?”

At this point I would like to make a step beyond Simon and suggest an explanation based on a theory of early Christian mission in general. The theory is this: The most important target group for early Christian mission among the gentiles was the so-called God-fearing gentiles, those Gentiles who were attracted to Judaism, visited the synagogue, were familiar with the Scriptures (the Septuagint), believed in the God of Israel and tried to conduct their lives according to the moral commandments of the Old testament, and some of the ritual commandments, too (primarily one would think of the laws of ritual purity). Very likely they took part in the main festivals of the synagogue community.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ “C'est là un phénomène beaucoup plus nuancé encore et plus complexe que le judéo-christianisme vulgaire; plus diffus aussi et moins défini, puisqu'il représente, non pas une secte en marge de l'Eglise, mais simplement une tendance dans l'Eglise, une direction imprimée au christianisme ecclésiastique par certains milieux” (*Verus Israel*, 357).

⁷⁶ The quote in the former note continues: “Sa répartition géographique suffit à établir, comme sa cause essentielle, le contact direct de la Synagogue.” Cf. his precisions of this thesis on pp. 382ff.

⁷⁷ A lot has been written in recent years concerning the so-called God-fearers; the following is only a narrow selection of entries: B. Lifshitz, “Du Nouveau sur les ‘Sympathisants’”, *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 1 (1970), 77-84; F. Siegert, “Gottesfürchtige und Sympathisanten”, *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 4 (1973), 109-164; M. Wilcox, “The ‘God-Fearers’ in Acts: A Reconsideration”, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 13 (1981), 102-122; T.M. Finn, “The God-Fearers Reconsidered”, *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47 (1985), 74-85; L.H. Feldman, “The Omnipresence of the God-Fearers”, *Biblical Archaeology Review* 12 (1986), No. 5, 58-69; J.G. Gager, “Jews, Gentiles, and Synagogues in the Book of Acts”, *Harvard Theological Review* 79 (1986), 91-99; J.D. Shaye Cohen, “Respect for Judaism by Gentiles according to Josephus”, *Harvard Theological Review* 80 (1987), 409-430; J.A. Overman, “The God-Fearers: Some Neglected Features”, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 32 (1988), 17-26; S.D. Cohen, “Crossing the Boundary and Becoming a Jew”, *Harvard Theological Review* 82 (1989), 13-33. Cp. also the two following notes.

Even if it has been disputed recently,⁷⁸ I think it can be stated beyond doubt that there existed such a group of gentiles on the fringes of most Jewish communities in the diaspora, and that they were often called God-fearers.⁷⁹ Clearly, that is a name given to them by the Jewish community, or maybe it is the name they would like to call themselves. But what did other gentiles call them? One obvious way of describing them would be to say that they were *ioudaizontes*, judaizers, philo-Semites.

Now, if Christian mission was particularly successful among such people, and I think we have good reason to think that was the case, these converts to Christianity would have been philo-Semites before they became Christians. And would their conversion to Christianity suddenly make them anti-Semites? If our sources are fairly accurate, their local Christian leader would do his best to turn them away from Judaism and their Jewish friends. Would he always succeed? From Ignatius to Chrysostom we have a cloud of witnesses saying no.

This would explain the grass-roots character of this movement, this would explain the female majority (which was characteristic of the God-fearer group),⁸⁰ this would explain the active involvement with Jewish festivals, Jewish calendar, kashrut regulations, trust in the rabbinical courts, etc.

In short, the explanation I propose for the phenomenon of Christian judaizers is not that some Christians became judaizers, but that many judaizers became Christians.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Most emphatically by A.T. Kraabel, "The Disappearance of the 'God-Fearers'", *Numen* 28 (1981), 113-126; "Greeks, Jews, and Lutherans in the Middle of Acts", *Harvard Theological Review* 79 (1986), 147-57; with R.S. MacLennan, "The God-Fearers: A Literary and Theological Invention", *The Biblical Archaeological Review* 12 (1986), No. 5, 46-53, 64.

⁷⁹ Recent and compelling archaeological evidence for this has come to light in Aphrodisias, Asia Minor. See i.a. J. Reynolds, R.F. Tannenbaum, *Jews and God-Fearers at Aphrodisias. Greek Inscriptions with Commentary* (The Cambridge Philological Society, Suppl. Vol. 12), Cambridge 1987; L.H. Feldman, "Proselytes and 'Sympathizers' in the Light of the New Inscriptions from Aphrodisias", *Revue des Etudes Juives* 148 (1989), 265-305; I.A. Levinskaya, "The Inscription from Aphrodisias and the Problem of God-Fearers", *Tyndale Bulletin* 41 (1990), 312-18; P.W. van der Horst, "Jews and Christians in Aphrodisias in the Light of Their Relations in Other Cities of Asia Minor", *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity* (Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus 14), Freiburg/Göttingen 1990, 166-181; P.R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (Soc. for New Test. Stud., Monograph Series 69), Cambridge 1991.

⁸⁰ Cp. i.a. B.J. Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue: Inscriptional Evidence and Background Issues* (Brown Judaic Studies 36), Chicago 1982; R.S. Kraemer, "Hellenistic Jewish Women: The Epigraphical Evidence", *SBLSPS* 28 (1986), 183-200; and many of the studies listed in notes 26 and 28.

⁸¹ After I had written this, I was pleased to see the same point of view in Gager, 112: "... it is safe to assume that many Gentile converts (to Christianity) were drawn from those already attracted in some fashion to Judaism... we must reckon with the possibility that the widespread tendency toward Judaizing in early Christian communities arose not only as the result of (Jewish) missionary activity within the Christian movement but also from the experience of Gentile converts whose familiarity with Judaizing predated their acceptance of Christianity." Even more recently, the same point has been made by Stephen G. Wilson with regard to the judaizers in Ignatius (*Philadelphians and Magnesians*): "Who then would these [Christian judaizers] have been? Most obviously they would have been former godfearers or sympathizers, who had been

attached to the synagogue, had now joined the Church, and had brought with them the predilections of their former existence. Their judaizing was not therefore something new but merely an extension of their past practice” (Wilson., 608-9). I should add that this explanation of the phenomenon of Christian judaizing is primarily related to the epoch before Christianity became the only legitimate religion of the Empire in 380AD and Paganism gradually disappeared. But the reasons and mechanisms behind judaizing could very well be much the same even after this transition.

The Problem of the Two-Covenant Theology

Kai Kjær-Hansen⁸²

Jesus says, according to John 14:6: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.”

In Jesus’ parable about the prodigal son, the father in the parable says to his eldest son, “Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours” (Luke 15:31).

Franz Rosenzweig says, with an allusion to John 14:6 and Luke 15:31:

We are wholly agreed as to what Christ and his church mean to the world: no one can reach the Father save through him.

No one can reach the Father! But the situation is quite different for one who does not have to reach the Father because he is already with him. And this is true of the people of Israel (though not of individual Jews).⁸³

The Issue

Above is a quotation by Franz Rosenzweig, a Jewish philosopher who died in 1929. I contend that if we understand his method of argument, it will be easy to see through similar arguments in others. This is even true regarding those representatives of two-covenant theology whose theological and philosophical bases differ from Rosenzweig’s but whose argument can nevertheless be compared to his. They also arrive at solutions of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity similar to those he suggested. This approach implies that this essay will conclude with a few clues that elucidate the Christological consequences for Christian advocates of two-covenant theology.

The crux is: What is the theological foundation of the view that the gospel of and by Jesus is for non-Jews *only*? And is it possible to maintain the New Testament’s view of Jesus if two-covenant theology is recognized?

That is the very heart of the matter!

It is true that the doctrine of the two covenants to many has the ring of “Good News.” At long last a solution has been found to the difficult relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Both religions are equal, both are willed by the same God, and both have a divine mission in the world. The Christian Church need no longer have a bad conscience because it has failed to bring the gospel to the Jews so that they would believe in Jesus. The Church has been released from what it used to believe was its obligation. And this has happened, not through a prohibition, but — it

⁸²Kai Kjær-Hansen has his Ph.D. on Studies in the Name of Jesus. Presently he serves as Editor of the LCJE Bulletin. He is the author of several books and the editor of the recently published book *The Death of Messiah*.

⁸³ Nahum N. Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought* (New York: Stocken Books, 1953), p. 341.

seems — thanks to a positive theological argument. And if it is possible to talk about superiority here, it is no longer the question of the superiority of Christianity over Judaism but, on the contrary, the superiority of Judaism over Christianity.

It is not difficult to understand why a great many Jews subscribe to the idea of a double covenant. The “second” covenant does not really challenge their position. Nor is it very difficult to understand why liberal and radical Christian theologians support this view, if one considers how these have reduced and transformed Jesus in relation to the New Testament. Still, this theory has gained advocates among evangelical Christians. Although most Jews state that they do not missionize and do not have a need to missionize among non-Jews, they have nevertheless, to a certain degree, succeeded in convincing many Christians that Jews have their own covenant with God, which for them makes belief in Jesus unnecessary. That is also a kind of “mission.” Unlike some Jews who do not recognize the Christian Church’s right to missionize Jews, I fully recognize the Jewish people’s right to influence Christians and fight for the truth of which they, as Jews, are convinced. To fight for the “truth” *with arguments* is a human right. I am even impressed with the efficiency achieved by Jews involved in the Jewish-Christian dialogue in asserting that Jews have no need for faith in Jesus. Seen against that background, it is no wonder that Jews, involved in this dialogue, urge Christians to give their testimony only within the framework of the Jewish-Christian dialogue.⁸⁴ So far, what testimony there may have been within that framework has proved a relatively harmless affair for Jews.

In the Old Testament there are several successive covenants between God and Israel, and prior to these covenants there was the covenant between God and Noah, which included the whole of mankind (Gen 9:9-11). Among the so-called unconditional covenants we find the Abrahamic covenant, the Davidic covenant, and the new covenant, which the prophet Jeremiah — and others — refer to (Jer 31). On the other hand the Mosaic covenant is a conditional one.⁸⁵

It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that in the Hebrew Bible — e.g. in the prophet Jeremiah — a new covenant is anticipated. No matter what the relationship was between the earlier covenants and the new covenant, there is something “more,” something more “far-reaching,” or at least a “renewal” in the new covenant. These vague expressions have been chosen with a purpose: I want to point out that Jews and Christians who want to take the prophet Jeremiah seriously can share the idea of a new covenant, although there is also here some difference of opinion. According to a Christian viewpoint one aspect of the covenant is already in effect. Barry R. Leventhal says that

when the Lord instituted the Lord’s Supper, He did not apply all of the provisions in the New covenant. He only applied the single provision of the forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:27-28). All of the various provisions await their ultimate fulfillment in Israel’s Messianic kingdom.⁸⁶

It has often been argued by Jews that one cannot see that the promised redemption has come with Jesus. The response to this may be that the New Testament admits the presence of a tension:

⁸⁴ See Yechiel Eckstein, *What You Should Know about Jews and Judaism* (Waco, Texas: Word Books 1984) p. 321.

⁸⁵ For a discussion of the various covenants, cf. Barry R. Leventhal, “Theological Perspectives on the Holocaust, Part Two”, in *Mishkan* nos. 8&9, I+II/1989, pp. 79-117.

⁸⁶ Leventhal, pp. 98-99.

redemption *has* come with Jesus and yet the ultimate redemption still belongs to the future. Oscar Cullmann describes this tension as “already fulfilled” and “not yet completed.”⁸⁷

When the New Testament mentions the “new covenant,” there can be no doubt that it is a reference to the covenant mentioned by Jeremiah. Furthermore, no matter how the New Testament writers look upon covenant and election, it does not challenge the fundamental concept that the new covenant in Jesus includes Jews. On the basis of this one observation, it seems as if two-covenant theology has embarked on a collision course with one principal New Testament concept. Substantially, the new covenant in the New Testament is combined with the concept of redemption through Jesus’ death and the resulting forgiveness of sins for all — Jews as well as non-Jews. That at least some Jews today seem to have diverged radically from the Hebrew Bible’s idea of atonement is perhaps understandable, as the Jews no longer have a place of sacrifice.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, a Christian cannot help being surprised when some Jews argue that they do not need a “covenant of grace.” Marc Angel is quite unambiguous: “Judaism does not teach that one must be ‘saved’ by a special act of God’s grace.”⁸⁹ And, in the same context, “Any suggestion by Christians that God’s covenant with Israel has been transferred to a ‘new Israel’ is obviously offensive to Jewish belief.”⁹⁰ It is probably equally “offensive” to argue, that God has *not* annulled his covenant with Israel, but that with *Jesus* a renewed covenant has been established which is also for Jews, and that if there is such a thing as a “new Israel” it consists of Jesus-believing Jews living in the renewed covenant, and that non-Jews, by God’s grace and for Jesus’ sake, have been allowed to share its benefits.

The Apostle Paul makes the point in Romans 9-11 that even if Israel as a people has rejected Jesus as their Messiah, God’s election is irrevocable. For Paul — often the butt of abuse by Jews as well as Christians — Israel’s election has not been annulled, even though they have not received Jesus as Messiah. Israel continues to have a place in God’s plan of salvation. But this belief does not cause Paul to refrain from proclaiming the gospel of Jesus to Jews.

That the issue of two-covenant theology is of more than academic interest and indeed a delicate question among many Jews and some Christians, will now be shown with an example.

The Positions

In evangelical circles involved in Jewish evangelism today it is affirmed that the people of Israel are God’s covenant-people and that the Jewish people have an ongoing part in God’s plan;⁹¹ but they deny that this covenant renders faith in Jesus unnecessary for Jews. The obligation to take back the gospel to the Jewish people is still in force.

In Jewish circles it is affirmed that God’s covenant with the people of Israel has not been

⁸⁷ Oscar Cullmann, *Salvation in History*, (London: SCM Press, 1967), p. 172.

⁸⁸ See also Louis Goldberg, *Are Their Two Ways of Atonement?* (Baltimore: Lederer Publications, 1990), pp. 27-30.

⁸⁹ Marc Angel, "Covenant", in Leon Klenicki & Geoffrey Wigoder, *A Dictionary of the Jewish - Christian Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), p. 37.

⁹⁰ Angel, p. 36.

⁹¹ "The Willowbank Declaration on the Christian Gospel and the Jewish People", Article III.12. The Declaration is printed in *Mishkan* no. 11, II/1989, pp. 76-84.

annulled, and as a rule it is denied that this covenant can include faith in Jesus for Jews; some Jews recognize that non-Jews can reach the Father through Jesus. The Christians have no obligation to preach the gospel to the Jewish people — and certainly not after the Holocaust.

The evangelical position was expressed in two important documents in 1989. The shorter version is to be found in the *Manila Manifesto* from Lausanne II in Manila. With a clear reference to the so-called two-covenant theology the Manifest has the following to say:

It is sometimes held that in virtue of God's covenant with Abraham, Jewish people do not need to acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah. We affirm that they need him as much as anyone else, that it would be a form of anti-Semitism, as well as being disloyal to Christ, to depart from the New Testament pattern of taking the gospel to "the Jew first...". We therefore reject the thesis that Jews have their own covenant which renders faith in Jesus unnecessary.⁹²

The longer statement is to be found in the document *The Willowbank Declaration on the Christian Gospel and the Jewish People*, which was made in April 1989. The Willowbank Declaration is introduced with two Scripture texts from Paul's Letter to the Romans: "The Gospel is the power of God for salvation, to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16), and "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved" (Romans 10:1). With these references to Paul, the Jesus-believing Jew, a clear signal has been given that the gospel is a message *for* Jews. In the preamble to the Declaration this is developed with the following statement:

Some church leaders have retreated from embracing the task of evangelizing Jews as a responsibility of Christian mission. Rather, a new theology is being embraced which holds that God's covenant with Israel through Abraham establishes all Jews in God's favor for all times, and so makes faith in Jesus Christ for salvation needless so far as they are concerned.

On this basis, it is argued that dialogue with Jews in order to understand each other better, and cooperation in the quest for socio-economical shalom, is all that Christian mission requires in relation to the Jewish people. Continued attempts to do what the Church has done from the first, in seeking to win Jews to Jesus as Messiah, are widely opposed and decried by Christian as well as Jewish leaders.⁹³

The reactions to this declaration were prompt. In an interview Rabbi A. James Rudin, National Director of Inter-Religious Affairs for the American Jewish Committee, called the Declaration a "blueprint for spiritual genocide that is shot through with the ancient Christian 'teaching of contempt' for Jews and Judaism."⁹⁴ Elsewhere Rudin refers to the Declaration as "wrong-headed" and "arrogant."⁹⁵ Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, describes the Declaration as "retrograde and primitive."⁹⁶ In an article entitled "Jewish Leaders Call on Evangelicals to Repudiate Their Conversion Goals"

⁹² Cf. *Mishkan* no. 11, II/1989, p. 85.

⁹³ *Mishkan* no. 11, pp. 77-78.

⁹⁴ Darell Turner, "Evangelical Statement Stresses Importance of Witness to Jews", in *Religious News Service*, 9 May 1989.

⁹⁵ Peter Steinfel, "Evangelical Group Urges Conversion of Jews", in *New York Times*, 21 May 1989.

⁹⁶ "Ecumenical Debate: Preaching Jesus While Respecting Other Faiths", in *Los Angeles Times*, 27 May 1989.

Schindler is quoted as labeling the Declaration “a desperate attempt to stop the clock of progress in inter-religious relations.” Rudin calls the Declaration “the worst kind of Christian religious imperialism.”⁹⁷

It is possible that Rudin’s mention of “spiritual genocide” has a certain effect on Christians who are weighed down by guilt caused by the awareness of the Christian Church’s crimes against Jews down through history. The Christian Church, including the part of it that is engaged in mission to the Jews, cannot possibly ask Jews to forget history, even though the Christians in question have no personal responsibility for the Holocaust. History endows a people with an identity. But when Christians help to preserve the memory of the church’s bloody history with the Jewish people and *at the same time* speak about the church’s obligation to take the gospel to the Jewish people, then they have chosen the most difficult solution imaginable. Less radical solutions either belittle the Church’s history and behave as if the Holocaust is only a problem for Jewish people, or they belittle the Lord of the Church who has obliged his Church to mission — to all peoples. The choice of the difficult solution is a signal to those who have ears to hear that mission to Jews is not an easy task and that it cannot be carried out in a triumphalistic way.

When Rudin refers to the Willowbank Declaration as a “blueprint for spiritual genocide,” it is an exceedingly sharp statement against what the Christian Church regards as an obligation, entrusted to it by the Lord of the Church — namely that the gospel *is* for Jews and therefore should be preached to Jews. It is worth noting that Rudin does not just attack a *way* of evangelizing. The *ways and methods* in Jewish evangelism are of course not above criticism.

When genuine Christian theology, in the face of great difficulties, maintains that Jews need Jesus, it is not an idea that originated with gentile Christians. This idea is deeply rooted in that gospel which non-Jews received from Jews and which to Jews and gentiles alike is folly (1 Cor 1:22-25). I refer to that gospel which first came to Jews, and whose principal character is Jesus, the Jew.

Evangelical theology is therefore of the opinion that neither the Jew Jesus nor the Jew Paul wanted to cause a “spiritual genocide.” It is possible to understand the harsh words against Jews in the New Testament within the framework of Jewish debate and self-criticism, which rules out that those words are anti-Semitic. If they were anti-Semitic, the criticism leveled against the covenant-people in the Hebrew Bible by several Jewish prophets would also have to be stamped as such. The book dealing with, on the one hand, Jewish prophetic self-criticism and Jewish movements’ criticism of fellow Jews immediately before and after the fall of the Second Temple, and on the other hand, the so-called anti-Judaistic or anti-Semitic statements in the New Testament has not yet been written.

The following is an attempt to investigate what, according to New Testament theology, is at stake when the so-called two-covenant theology is accepted.

Franz Rosenzweig and Two-Covenant Theology

⁹⁷ In Chicago *Jewish Sentinel*, 8 June 1989. The references in notes 12-15 are available in Tuvia Zaretsky, “A Report: Response To the Willowbank Declaration”, presented at the LCJE meeting in St. Louis, 15 March 1990.

Hardly any Jew before Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) ever spoke with such appreciation of *Christianity* and *the Christian Church*. Rosenzweig had a positive attitude regarding the Church's role in the world. Therefore he has been extremely influential in the development of the doctrine of the two covenants.

The path Rosenzweig had to walk to arrive at his positive attitude toward Christianity and the Church's importance for non-Jews cannot but make a certain impression. A person who through his struggle with himself and his God at last finds himself in his own tradition — while retaining faith in his God — commands our respect and sympathy. Rosenzweig is that man. His principal work, *The Star of Redemption*, which he began writing on army postal cards at the end of August 1918 on the Balkan Front is the expression of a personal need and is not determined by “objective, theoretical speculations,” as mentioned by Nahum N. Glatzer.⁹⁸

Raised in an assimilated Jewish home in Germany, Rosenzweig found his way back to his Jewish heritage. In 1914 he finished his doctoral thesis entitled *Hegel und der Staat* (published 1920). While at university he had thoroughgoing discussions about Judaism and Christianity with Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy, professor of law and sociology, and with his two cousins Hans and Rudolf Ehrenberg, who had both become Christians and who made a strong impression on Rosenzweig.

The result of these conversations was that Rosenzweig, in 1913, was convinced that he ought to be baptized. A conversation with Rosenstock had led him from his “relativistic position into a non-relativistic one.”⁹⁹ But he declared that he could turn Christian only “*qua* Jew — not through the intermediate stage of paganism.” While talking to his mother, who realized that he planned to be baptized, he pointed to the New Testament which he was holding in his hand: “Mother, here is everything, here is the truth. There is only one way, Jesus.”¹⁰⁰

However, it did not end with baptism. On 11 October 1913 he celebrated Yom Kippur in a small synagogue in Berlin. What was supposed to have been a farewell to Judaism became the inauguration of a new life for him *as a Jew*. The service on the Day of Atonement revolutionized his life, or, in the words of Nahum N. Glatzer: “What that day conveyed to him was that essential as a mediator may be in the Christian experience, the Jews stand in no need of a mediator. God is near to a man and desires his undeviated devotion.”¹⁰¹ Franz Rosenzweig, the “near-believer” became “a traditional Jew,” as Louis Goldberg puts it.¹⁰²

By birth Franz Rosenzweig *was* a Jew. He did not *become* a Jew. But he became aware of what he already was, namely a Jew.

For Rosenzweig, the difference between Jews and non-Jews is that the Jew, because he is a descendant of Abraham, does not need to be reborn, which non-Jews need. The Jew is born a Jew.

⁹⁸ Nahum N. Glatzer, “Introduction”, in Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), p. x.

⁹⁹ Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, p. 23-24.

¹⁰⁰ Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, p. 25. For a recent monograph which positively supports Rosenzweig's view of Jesus and the importance of the Church for Gentiles, see Ronald H. Miller, *Dialogue and Disagreement. Franz Rosenzweig's Relevance to Contemporary Jewish-Christian Understanding* (Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1989).

¹⁰¹ Nahum N. Glatzer, “Franz Rosenzweig”, in *Great Twentieth Century Jewish Philosophers* (Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Books, 1985), p. 162; cf. Louis Goldberg, p. 7.

¹⁰² Louis Goldberg, p. 6.

It is different with the pagans. When a non-Jew receives Jesus he is reborn. “A Christian is made, not born.” As for the Jew, “the individual is born a Jew. He no longer needs to become one in some decisive moment of his individual life.”¹⁰³ The fundamental difference between Jewish and Christian is that “the Christian is by nature or at least by birth — a pagan; the Jew, however, is a Jew.”¹⁰⁴ A Jew is born into the faith-community that was instituted between God and Israel on Sinai, it is a natural phenomenon; in contrast, pagans have to undergo a rebirth.

As complementary entities Judaism as well as Christianity have a God-willed function in the world. Rosenzweig has the following to say about this:

Before God, then, the Jew and Christian both labor at the same task. He cannot dispense with either. He has set enmity between the two for all time, and withal has most intimately bound each to each. To us (Jews) he gave eternal life by kindling the fire of the Star of his truth in our hearts. Them (the Christians) he set on the eternal way by causing them to pursue the rays of that Star of his truth for all time unto the eternal end.

In the same passage Rosenzweig goes on to say: “The truth, the whole truth, thus belongs neither to them (the Christians) nor to us.” But this does not challenge his position that Judaism is superior to Christianity as the Star is primary in relation to the rays. The Christians “are in any event already destined for all time to see what is illuminated, and not the light.”¹⁰⁵ But it is exactly Christianity’s inherent “paganism”¹⁰⁶ that qualifies the Christian to convert the pagans. “The Christian credo had to accommodate itself to a pagan impulse in order to win over the pagans, and this impulse is quenched by the worship of God in the Spirit and the truth, by the promise that Spirit would lead Christendom.”¹⁰⁷ While Judaism does not need to missionize, it only needs to be, and is already, a testimony of God through its very being; this is not so with Christianity. “Christianity must proselytize.”¹⁰⁸

But Christianity holds no decisive message for Jews. To Rosenzweig, Jewish Christians have only a historical right as an early-church phenomenon and a dogmatic right in Christian eschatology. He argues the first case is an anachronism, and the last a paradox.¹⁰⁹

Comments on Rosenzweig’s Theory and its Further Development

1. “The pride of the Jew”

Whatever positive opinions Rosenzweig may hold of Christianity, Rosenzweig does not hide his pride in Judaism, which derived from his conviction that as a Jew he knows the truth. Rosenzweig says about this:

The metaphysical reason for this pride can be formulated thus: (1) that we know the truth; (2) that we

¹⁰³ Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), p. 396.

¹⁰⁴ Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, p. 407.

¹⁰⁵ Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, pp. 415-416.

¹⁰⁶ Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, p. 350.

¹⁰⁷ Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, p. 399.

¹⁰⁸ Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, p. 341.

¹⁰⁹ *Franz Rosenzweig / Briefe*, ed. by Edith Rosenzweig (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1935), p. 553.

have reached the goal; (3) that at the bottom of his heart any Jew will consider the Christian's relationship to God, and hence his religion, a meager and roundabout affair. For to the Jew it is incomprehensible that one should need a teacher, be he who he may, to learn what is obvious and a matter of course to him, namely to call our God our Father. Why should a third person have to be between me and my Father in heaven? This is no invention of modern apologists but simply Jewish instinct.¹¹⁰

The theological content of the quotation, not least point three, reveals Rosenzweig's views of man and his sin, of Jesus' redemptive death and of the nature of salvation, all of them views whereby he places himself in remarkable contrast to the first Jesus-believing Jews. The question suggests itself if it is "only" through a "reduced" Jesus of this kind that non-Jews can come to the Father. It is also worth noting that even if Rosenzweig sees the interrelationship of the two religions, Judaism and Christianity, as that of complement, then this is "one of unequals in his scheme," as John T. Pawlikowski¹¹¹ very properly states. While it becomes a reason for Pawlikowski to reject Rosenzweig's model, for me it becomes something positive that a person who has a living faith expresses himself in the terms that Rosenzweig uses. It is not offensive to me, a Christian, that a Jew — or anybody else — thinks that he is in possession of the truth and that his faith is superior to mine. On the contrary, it is something I respect. But then I also expect Jews not to feel offended when I tell them that I know the truth because I believe in Jesus, who said about himself that he was the Truth.

2. Many ways to the same destination

Even with a different point of departure it is possible to reach a result which is similar to Franz Rosenzweig's. Martin Buber is an example of a philosopher with a different point of departure. In the course of his conversation with the Christian professor Karl-Ludwig Schmidt in 1933 Buber said: "God's doors are open for all. In order to come to God, the Christian need not go through Judaism nor the Jew through Christianity."¹¹² C.G. Montefiore may be adduced as an example of the tolerance of a liberal Judaism. He writes, in 1930:

Both the "righteousness" of the Rabbis and the "righteousness" of Jesus are excellent righteousnesses. Each thought that the other was quite inadequate for the entering into the Kingdom of Heaven. Yet surely here were Jesus and the Rabbis equally in error: For both righteousnesses, honestly pursued, are acceptable unto God.¹¹³

3. Rosenzweig's symbolic world

In an article from 1931 Gerschom Scholem compares Rosenzweig's symbolic world to "mystical astronomy." Few works have been as provocative as *The Star of Redemption* since the appearance of the *Guide of the Perplexed* or the *Zohar*. In this work there is "something new," indeed, "it challenged us and, why not admit it, perplexed us," Scholem says. He finds that

¹¹⁰ Rosenzweig: *The Star of Redemption*, pp. 346-347.

¹¹¹ John T. Pawlikowski, *What Are They Saying About Christian-Jewish Relations?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), p. 89.

¹¹² Cf. Mitch Glaser, "Critique of The Two Covenant Theory", *Mishkan* no. 11, II/1989, p. 53.

¹¹³ C.G. Montefiore, *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teaching* (London: 1930), p. 201.

Rosenzweig's new interpretation of the world stands in opposition to the classical theology of a Maimonides or a Hasdai Crescas.

To begin with it moves from the position of reason to a theistic mysticism and gives support to strictly mystical theologoumena ... More important, it dares as well to set in the center of its theological anthropology a comparative analysis of Judaism and Christianity which ends in a *non liquet*, and therefore with a dictum that from the point of view of orthodoxy must seem rash and nearly blasphemous.¹¹⁴

4. Rosenzweig's metahistoric religion

About Rosenzweig's view of Judaism, Nahum N. Glatzer writes: "As a metahistoric religion, Judaism cannot be known by its external fate and by its external expressions. It can be understood from within only. 'For now', Rosenzweig writes to Eugen Rosenstock, 'I would have to show you Judaism from within, that is, in a hymn.'"¹¹⁵

From his own Christian stance, John T. Pawlikowski finds that Rosenzweig in basically removing the Jewish people from the historical process, "does violence, to one of the basic hallmarks of the Jewish spirit — its rootedness in the flow of history which is the locus of human salvation."¹¹⁶

Arthur A. Cohen is one of Rosenzweig's Jewish critics who is not any milder in his criticism:

Rosenzweig, seeking as he did to ground a metaphysics which was structurally prior to faith and, in fact, demanded faith as a noetic principle, was obliged to ontologize historical realities. The Jews and the Christians cease in his analysis to be historical and become hypostatic. The Jew is beyond time and history, eternally present with God, and, therefore, always symbolically at the End, living in the condition of redemption. And though such a Jew is redeemed, his redemption is not complete since it is redemption through revelation, and creation remains, as it was before, untransformed. It is the Christian, always on his way from paganism to the Christ, who is bound to history and, by implication, whose task it is to unite creation with the *eschaton*. The Jew is the image of redemption which the Christian is obliged to pursue. Understandably, therefore, Rosenzweig suggests that the Parousia for the Christian may well be the first coming for the Jews, that the reconciliation will take place at the last moment when the Jew's virtual existence becomes actual in eternity and the Christian has been enabled by Christ to offer history back to God.¹¹⁷

5. Rosenzweig's terminology

When Rosenzweig speaks about redemption he is not dealing with the guilt of sin, as is the case in Christian theology. In 1913 he wrote, in a letter: "In the most important points, especially regarding the doctrine of sin, where I had most strongly disagreed before, I am now in complete agreement with Jewish doctrine."¹¹⁸ That Paul the Jew with his Jewish doctrine of sin, of

¹¹⁴ Gershom Scholem, "On the 1930 Edition of Rosenzweig's Star of Redemption", in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), pp. 320-324,

¹¹⁵ Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, p. xxii.

¹¹⁶ Pawlikowski, 1980, p. 90.

¹¹⁷ Arthur A. Cohen, *The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 210.

¹¹⁸ Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, p. 28.

atonement and redemption in the blood of Jesus, in short with his doctrine of salvation, has a different view of these things should be evident against this background.

While it is true that Rosenzweig uses biblical terms, to him they have a different content than to the New Testament writers. While Rosenzweig the Jew thought that a Jew need not be reborn, Jesus said to Nicodemus the Jew that no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born anew (John 3).

6. The abyss

It appears from what has been said above that to Rosenzweig there is an abyss between Christians and their Church, on the one hand, and every Jew on the other — “an abyss that will never be filled up.” And he continues: “That ‘connection of the innermost heart with God’ which the heathen can only reach through Jesus is something the Jew already possesses, provided that his Judaism is not withheld from him by force; he possesses it by nature, through having been born one of the Chosen People.” With all possible force Judaism has rejected “the notion that he has already arrived through whom their historic mission is to be fulfilled; it is still waiting for him and will continue to wait so long as there is Judaism. The development of Judaism has by-passed him whom the heathens call ‘Lord’ and by whom ‘they reach the Father’; it does not pass through him.”¹¹⁹

Advocates of two-covenant theology have diligently emphasized Rosenzweig’s positive view of the Church’s task. But they have not asserted with equal vigor that there seems to be an abyss between Rosenzweig’s understanding of the true nature of Christ’s mission and the New Testament’s understanding of it.

7. Rosenzweig’s doctrine: a step backward?

Emil L. Fachenheim is an example of Jewish rejection of Rosenzweig’s main thesis. He says:

I never could accept Rosenzweig’s famous “double covenant” doctrine, according to which all except Jews (who are already “with the Father”) need the Son in order to find Him. How can a modern Jew pray for the conversion of the whole non-Jewish world to Christianity when even pre-modern Jews could pay homage to Moslem monotheism?

Fachenheim also combines the issues of “double covenant” and Christian mission:

Rosenzweig’s doctrine seems altogether outmoded at a time when Christians themselves are beginning to replace missionary efforts with inter-religious dialogue, and I wonder whether even for Rosenzweig this doctrine was more than a stage in his self-emancipation from modern paganism.¹²⁰

“Rosenzweig’s scheme is not Church-oriented but Israel-oriented” (or even better perhaps: Judaism-oriented), which Maurice G. Bowler calls to our attention in connection with this quotation of Fachenheim and thereby rightly shows that in Rosenzweig the Church has been “brought into the picture in order to relate it to a centrally-placed Israel and not vice-versa.”¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, p. 27.

¹²⁰ Emil L. Fachenheim, “Jewish Faith and the Holocaust”, in *Commentary*, August 1968, p. 33.

¹²¹ Maurice G. Bowler, “Rosenzweig on Judaism and Christianity”, *Mishkan no. 11*, II/1989, p. 3.

Preparatio Messianica and Maimonides

When the interrelationship of Judaism and Christianity is discussed today in the framework of a double covenant theology, Maimonides (1135-1204), the great Jewish medieval authority is often produced as an example of Judaism's positive attitude to Christianity. But often the problem becomes blurred. Whatever the reason may be, the explanation is not that Maimonides is not clear. When it comes to clarity, he surpasses most modern spokesmen for two-covenant theology.

Unlike some modern Jewish spokesmen of the double covenant, Maimonides does not turn Jesus into a Messiah for non-Jews. Jesus — and Mohammed — “served to clear the way for King Messiah.”¹²² In Maimonides it is an axiom that Jesus was not the Messiah, not for Jews and not for non-Jews. Both Jesus and Mohammed were false prophets.¹²³

Maimonides appreciated the achievement of the two monotheistic religions, Christianity and Islam; that is not debated. He is often quoted for these words:

It is beyond the human mind to fathom the designs of the Creator; for our ways are not His ways, neither are our thoughts His thoughts. All matters relating to Jesus of Nazareth and the Ishmaelite (Mohammed) who came after him, served to clear the way for King Messiah, to prepare the whole world to worship God with one accord, as it is written, *For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent* (Zeph 3:9). Thus the Messianic hope, the Torah, and the commandments have become familiar topics — topics of conversation (among the inhabitants) of the far isles and many people ... (*Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Melakhim XI,4*).¹²⁴

It is a matter open for debate whether his concession to the value of “all matters relating to Jesus of Nazareth” is not conditioned by the historical circumstances under which he lived rather than by his theology. But Maimonides' view of Christianity and Islam can also be seen in the light of a struggle for Jewish survival in confrontation with two religions which outnumbered Judaism and presented a danger to Jewish life.

Abraham Joshua Heschel realizes “that it was Christianity that implanted attachment to the God of Abraham and involvement with the Hebrew Bible in the hearts of Western man.”¹²⁵ No religion is an island, and therefore today religious isolationism is a myth. “Judaism is sooner or later affected by the intellectual, moral and spiritual events within the Christian society, and vice versa,” he argues. To him the choice is between “interfaith and inter-nihilism,” and he chooses the former.¹²⁶ With reference to leading Jewish authorities, such as Yehuda Halevi and Maimonides, who acknowledged “Christianity to be *preparatio messianica* (preparation for the Messiah), while the Church regarded ancient Judaism to have been a *preparatio evangelica* (preparation for the gospel),” he says: “Thus, whereas the Christian doctrine has often regarded Judaism as having outlived its usefulness and the Jews as candidates for conversion, the Jewish attitude enables us to

¹²² Abraham Joshua Heschel, “No Religion is an Island”, in Frank Ephraim Talmage, *Disputation and Dialogue* (New York: Ktav Publishing House), 1975, p. 358.

¹²³ Joseph Sarachek, *The Doctrine of the Messiah in Medieval Jewish Literature* (New York: Hermon Press, 1968), p. 137.

¹²⁴ Cf. Abraham Joshua Heschel, in F.E. Talmage, p. 358.

¹²⁵ Heschel, p. 344.

¹²⁶ Heschel, p. 345.

acknowledge the presence of a divine plan in the role of Christianity within the history of redemption.” Heschel sums up Maimonides’ view in the following words: “Christianity and Islam, far from being accidents of history or purely human phenomena, are regarded as part of God’s design for the redemption of all men.”¹²⁷

Maimonides, according to Jacob Katz, “conceived their (Christianity and Islam) historic task to be the dissemination of Jewish ideas in preparation for the Messianic era, when the monotheistic doctrine of Judaism would be universally accepted. But in their actual religious practices and tenets, he regarded them — Christianity even more than Islam — as contaminated with idolatrous elements.”¹²⁸

The Jewish religious authorities in the Middle Ages accepted the Talmud’s words: “Pious men of all the nations have a share in the life to come.” All those who observe the so-called Noachide Laws fall under the category *hasidei ummot ha-olam*.¹²⁹ Katz has this comment on Rashi (1040-1105):

Since for the Talmud and midrashic literature Christianity was reckoned but one of the many heretical sects to be combated, Rashi followed their lead and did not make explicit reference to it. Christianity was included in the notion of *ummot ha-olam* the ‘Nations of the World,’ i.e. the gentile ... The other nations, Christians not excluded, were *ovdei avodah zarah*, that is adherents of “alien worship“ or idolaters.¹³⁰

Rosenzweig went further than Maimonides, holding that the Church and Christianity possess the truth for non-Jews and that these can only reach the Father through Jesus Christ. Rosenzweig speaks differently than Maimonides about the Church, but it is more difficult to get a grasp of Rosenzweig than of Maimonides simply because — to put it bluntly — Rosenzweig says so many things. In a theological and historical perspective, Maimonides seems to be a lot more consistent than Rosenzweig. In any circumstances it makes a great difference whether Christianity is regarded as a *preparatio messianica* where Jesus, if it is true, is seen as a false prophet for both Jews and non-Jews but whose message has nevertheless had positive consequences, and then on the other side, as Rosenzweig does, to regard Jesus as a totally unnecessary person for Jews but as absolutely necessary for non-Jews to reach the Father. But if, instead, one chooses to emphasize that Rosenzweig, with a reference to Yehuda Halevi, also says that “Christianity as a universal power is Jewish dogma,”¹³¹ then it is possible in this to see an approximation to Maimonides’ main view.

A clear answer to the question of whether the Christian Church’s message of Jesus is to be regarded as a *preparatio messianica* is essential in order to understand what Jews think of Christianity. Two examples will be offered in an attempt to demonstrate that, namely Pinchas Lapide and Samuel Levine.

¹²⁷ Heschel, p. 356-358.

¹²⁸ Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times* (New York: Schocken Books 1962), pp. 119-120.

¹²⁹ Mitch Glaser, p. 50.

¹³⁰ Katz, p. 24.

¹³¹ Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, p. 346.

Pinchas Lapidé follows in Rosenzweig's footsteps.¹³² He sees "that the coming-to-believe of Christendom was without doubt a God-willed messianic act, a messianic event on the way to the conversion of the world to the One God."¹³³ Also to Lapidé Judaism and Christianity are two ways that lead to the Father. Therefore Jews are not to be converted to Christianity, which would be "to sprinkle sugar on the top of honey."¹³⁴

In his book *The Resurrection of Jesus* Lapidé reaches the conclusion, which is certainly a daring one for a Jew, that the resurrection of Jesus is a historic event. He says: "The experience of the resurrection as the foundation act of the church which has carried the faith in the God of Israel into the whole Western world must belong to God's plan of salvation."¹³⁵

But it calls for objection when Lapidé in the quotation above from Maimonides (*Hilkhot Melakhim* XI,4) finds "confirmation for this supposition from a high rabbinic authority," i.e. Maimonides.¹³⁶ Lapidé is not right when he argues that all these matters that refer to Jesus, for Maimonides, also "have to include his [Jesus'] resurrection," *the way Lapidé understands it*. He recognizes the Christian resurrection *belief* and its effects, which is something different from what Lapidé supposes.

In the "Epilog" Lapidé is not so ambiguous. In spite of everything, Jesus only belongs to the *preparatio messianica* of the full salvation which is still in the future. But this does not mean that his resurrection makes him the Messiah of Israel for the Jewish people. Lapidé refers to Clemens Thoma, a Catholic theologian, who admits that

for Jewish scholars, the testimony of the resurrection was no proof for the messiahship of Jesus because for them the concept of resurrection is not connected with the messianic expectations of salvation.... Through the resurrection of Jesus, an access to faith in the *one*, until then unknown, God of Israel was opened to the Gentiles.¹³⁷

Lapidé concludes: "I therefore can accept neither the messiahship of Jesus for the people of Israel nor the Pauline interpretation of the resurrection of Jesus."¹³⁸

Again, one cannot help questioning his line of reasoning. Following his argument, it might with some justice be said that since Judaism does not include the idea that there will be a risen Jewish Messiah for non-Jews, this whole construction must collapse.

But exactly the fact that Lapidé's approach to his subject of the resurrection of Jesus in the New Testament is *historical*, makes his leap away from the historic testimony of the significance of the resurrection for Jews all the more dramatic and all the more incomprehensible than the leap made by Rosenzweig, the philosopher. Theologically speaking, Lapidé has placed himself in a hopeless situation when, with the New Testament as basis, he recognizes the historical facticity of

¹³² See Carl E. Braaten, "Introduction: The Resurrection in Jewish-Christian Dialogue", in Pinchas Lapidé, *The Resurrection of Jesus* (London: SPCK, 1984), pp. 16-18.

¹³³ Pinchas Lapidé & Jürgen Moltmann, *Jewish Monotheism and Christian Trinitarian Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), p. 71.

¹³⁴ Lapidé & Jürgen Moltmann, p. 70.

¹³⁵ Lapidé, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, p. 142.

¹³⁶ Lapidé, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, p. 142.

¹³⁷ Clemens Thoma, *Kirche aus Juden und Heiden* (Wien: 1970), p. 45.

¹³⁸ Pinchas Lapidé, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, p. 153.

Jesus' resurrection and at the same time, in spite of the New Testament, denies the importance of this event for Jews.

In the light of such observations it may be argued that Maimonides is clearer than Lapidé and some Christian theologians who are eager to create harmony.

The academic dialogue between Jews and Christians today, where words and terms are usually subdued if not always clear, is one thing. Another is the confrontation where Jews warn against Christian mission among Jews and try to remedy the damages they think Christian mission inflicts on Jews.

"How to Refute Christian Missionaries" is the subtitle of Samuel Levine's book, *You Take Jesus, I'll Take God* — a title which in modern language expresses a point in two-covenant theology, namely that Jesus is only for pagans. As Levine says in his introduction, his book is "a response to Christian missionaries who are trying to convert the Jews." And he continues:

I have no quarrel with Christian missionaries who try to convert pagans into becoming Christians. That is highly meritorious, because they are then transforming an immoral, primitive person into a more moral and spiritual one. However, this is not true when a Jew becomes a Christian.¹³⁹

Apart from the fact that some people would consider Levine's choice of words about "the pagans" of our day offensive, it is nevertheless worth noting that Christian mission *among non-Jews* is said to be "highly meritorious." However, this does not prevent Levine from arguing that "the New Testament itself clearly indicates that Jesus and Paul were not the lovely people that they are claimed to be. They were vindictive, hate-breeding liars, rather than Messianic producers of peace, gentleness, unity and brotherhood among men."¹⁴⁰

Levine sums up: "Let us conclude this investigation of Christianity with the realization that it is easy for millions of humans to believe in nonsense."¹⁴¹

In other words: nonsense and hate-breeding liars are good enough for "pagans"!

Jewish and Christian academics who advocate two-covenant theology will doubtless prefer not to be lumped with Samuel Levine. But there is no denying that his words help us to focus attention on what is theologically relevant for our understanding of Christianity as a *preparatio messianica* for King Messiah. We can therefore conclude the following:

When Christianity is understood solely as a *preparatio messianica*, it makes sense theologically to argue that Jesus was neither the Messiah for Jews nor for non-Jews, even if he is meaningful for the latter. Whether or not the picture of Jesus is a sympathetic or a less sympathetic one, it remains a fact that the work of Jesus has been reduced compared to the New Testament picture.

When Christianity is understood as more than a *preparatio messianica*, as a special covenant but only for non-Jews, it is close to being historical and theological nonsense to want to find a basis for this in the New Testament. Nor is there basis for such a view in Maimonides.

Whether Jesus is the Church's *Christ* — who according to Rosenzweig leads non-Jews to the Father; or he is a "nasty and deceitful"¹⁴² *Jesus*, who according to Levine is good enough for

¹³⁹ Samuel Levine, *You Take Jesus, I'll Take God* (Los Angeles: Hamoroh Press, 1980), p. 12.

¹⁴⁰ Levine, p. 91.

¹⁴¹ Levine, p. 131.

¹⁴² Levine, p. 92.

non-Jews; or he is a false prophet, who according to Maimonides serves to clear the way for King Messiah — these views are agreed about one basic point: Jews do not need *Jesus Christ* as Messiah and Lord.

As it seems to me that spokesmen for two-covenant theology often treat New Testament passages lightly and strain the meaning of them, we shall now deal with this issue.

Historical and Exegetical Absurdities

It is impossible to prevent people from re-interpreting historical texts against their original intention. If the re-interpretation, however, is in obvious conflict with the original content, an admission of this would be welcomed — and would increase the degree of seriousness. When philosophers and theologians make the leap away from the obvious historical meaning of a text, they must be prepared to meet with criticism — whether they are Jews or Christians.

A few examples will be given of frivolous play with New Testament words.

1. John 14:6

Frank Ephraim Talmage argues that “Rosenzweig tried to abandon the apologetic approach and establish a corelationship with Christianity which would affirm the necessity of each.”¹⁴³ However, Rosenzweig’s use of John 14:6 shows that in his approach he has not completely abandoned a *way* of thinking and arguing which has parallels in traditional polemics — Jewish as well as Christian.

It can hardly be denied that Rosenzweig uses the words from the Gospel of John contrary to their original meaning. Jesus’ words, “No one comes to the Father, but by me,” were addressed *to* Jews. So when Rosenzweig, unambiguously, takes the words to refer to non-Jews, it is a historical and exegetical absurdity. And only if Rosenzweig’s use of these words is seen in the light of an apologetic context, may it be argued that it bears the hallmark of “near-genius,” as Shemaryahu Talmon characterizes it.¹⁴⁴ Talmon quite rightly asserts, however, that Rosenzweig is contradicted by the first half of the verse: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life,” since the point of this verse is that eternal life can be received through faith in Jesus. According to the Gospel of John this verse speaks of the redemption which Rosenzweig claims belongs to Judaism.¹⁴⁵

2. Luke 15:31

In the Rosenzweig quotation at the head of this essay there is an allusion to the parable of the Prodigal Son. In the parable the father says to the elder son, who does not want to take part in the party for the younger son who had come home: “Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.”

Rosenzweig and others use the quotation to say that Jews do not need Jesus in order to reach

¹⁴³ Talmage, p. 110.

¹⁴⁴ Shemaryahu Talmon, “Das Verhältnis von Judentum und Christentum in Verständnis Franz Rosenzweigs”, in R. Schaeffer & Bernhard Kasper & Shemaryahu Talmon Amir, *Offenbarung im Denken Franz Rosenzweigs* (Essen: Ludgerus, 1979), p. 135.

¹⁴⁵ Talmon, p. 136.

the Father; they are already with the Father.

In the light of what has been said above, we shall confine ourselves to the following observation: The parable may be identified as an apologetic parable, “in which Jesus justifies his table companionship with sinners against his critics,” as Joachim Jeremias says.¹⁴⁶ In the Lukan context Jesus’ critics are the Pharisees and the scribes (Luke 15:2). And the sinners and tax collectors are — like the Pharisees and the scribes — *Jews*. On the basis of just this one observation it is absurd to use Luke 15:31 as an argument for the opinion that Jews, without accepting Jesus’ teaching, are with the Father.

The parable has a double climax: it describes not only the return of the younger son, but also the protest of the elder brother.¹⁴⁷ While the point is to defend that the gospel is for sinners — Jewish sinners — the second is an invitation to some leaders — Jewish leaders — to abandon their resistance to the gospel.

However, the double climax of the parable does not speak for but rather against a double covenant theology. Even if we pose that the younger son does not merely represent sinners and tax collectors in Jesus’ day but in an anticipatory way includes future generations of non-Jews who accept the gospel, we shall do violence to the parable by isolating one verse which will then contradict the information given in the immediate context and also the context of the totality of Jesus’ teaching.

Apart from that, modern research of the parables has challenged the allegorical interpretation of the parables of Jesus. For centuries this interpretation has been very popular, not least because it has made it possible for the reader to read his own subjective, profound ideas into single words. It is the main point — or as here — the two main points of the parable that require our attention.

The main issue is clear. Jesus, the narrator of the parable, is a Jew, and both those that he defends and those that he criticizes through the parable are Jews. The message Jesus brings is for both “big” and “small” sinners, and consequently also for the Jewish leaders. From an exegetical point of view it is therefore absurd when Luke 15:31 is used as an argument that Israel, interpreted as the elder son in the parable, belongs to the Father’s house and is on God’s way and in God’s will.¹⁴⁸

3. “To save those who are eagerly waiting for him”

Franz Rosenzweig’s statement that “whether Jesus is Messiah will be shown when the Messiah comes”¹⁴⁹ is sometimes transformed into the popular idea that the second coming of Jesus will be the first coming of the Messiah for the Jews. Even the esteemed scholar David Flusser can say: “I do not think many Jews would object if the messiah when he came again was the Jew Jesus.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Joachim Jeremias, *Rediscovering the Parables* (London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 104.

¹⁴⁷ Jeremias, p. 103.

¹⁴⁸ See also A. Roy Eckardt, *Elder and Younger Brothers: The Encounter of Jews and Christians* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1967) and Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide. The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), pp. 254-255.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. David Berger, “Jewish-Christian Relations: A Jewish Perspective” in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 20:1, 1983, p. 9.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Clemens Thoma, *A Christian Theology of Judaism* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), p. 134; David

And yet, the whole idea is an absurd one — from a New Testament point of view and also from a traditional Jewish point of view. According to the New Testament it is the same Jesus that went into Heaven who will come again — from Heaven. According to the post-Maimonides Jewish way of thinking about the Messiah, he will be a man among men, who does *not* come from Heaven. The comparison obscures the important difference between the New Testament doctrine of Jesus' supernatural second coming from Heaven and the traditional Jewish expectation that the Messiah is a human being of this world.

4. The exegetical and historical difficulty admitted

Hans-Joachim Schoeps is an example of a spokesman for two-covenant theology that admits the existence of exegetical and historical difficulties in relation to the New Testament.

“The New Testament is glad tidings only for the nations of the world, and the latter bear witness to it in the polyphony of the Christian churches and communities centred in Christ,” Schoeps says. He poses the question “how far Christian dogmatics may be ready to grant the existence of an absolute revelation apart from its own, such as would except Israel from the sphere of its saving proclamation.” He formulates the difficulties without beating around the bush. The issue is complicated, among other things, by “the fact that Jesus' original sense of mission was directed towards His own people.” Schoeps' own answer to this is: “However, the continued existence of Israel almost 2,000 years *post Christum natum*, still undisturbed in its consciousness of being God's covenant people, is testimony that the old covenant has not been abrogated, that as the covenant of Israel it continues to exist along-side the wider human covenant of the Christian Church.” Schoeps describes the problems in a disarmingly honest way:

We stand in obvious opposition to the view of history outlined by Paul. But we have taken into account the possibility that Paul falsely interpreted the will of God, that his understanding of saving history was a subjective judgment and an objective error. Although his view became official church teaching, the question of revision of this might now be raised, one result of which would be to correct the church's judgment on Israel in such a way as would involve the abandonment of the church's mission to the Jews. For to speak of the blinding and hardening of the Jews was a mistake, which might even now be rectified.¹⁵¹

5. The exegetical and historical difficulty obscured

It seems to me that the exegetical and historical difficulty is obscured by Christian exegetes like Krister Stendahl, who tones down what Paul actually says in Romans 9-11. The importance of these chapters for Paul's view of Israel and for his theology as such cannot be exaggerated. This importance has not always been recognized in the history of the Church and of Christian theology. On the contrary, Krister Stendahl is one of those theologians who has emphasized this importance. And yet the exegetical basis of his argument seems weak.

In chapters 9-11 Stendahl sees an expression of “Paul's growing awareness that God envisages a co-existence between Jews and Christians, a co-existence that makes mission an

Flusser, “To What Extent Is Jesus a Question for the Jews?”, in *Concilium*, 1974, new series vol.5, no. 10, p. 71.

¹⁵¹ Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Paul, The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), pp. 256-258.

inappropriate mode of witness.”¹⁵² Paul’s missionary urge to convert Israel is held in check.¹⁵³ Stendahl supports this main view with the following words:

For can it be pure coincidence that in Romans 9-11 the names of Jesus or Christ are not to be found after 10:17 (or even 10:9, depending on what manuscript we read)? And it is equally striking that the doxology by which he concludes this section of Romans (11:33-36) is the only one in Paul which is totally in “God language,” i.e. without any reference to Jesus or Christ. There are not many places in Paul’s epistles where you can find three or four pages without reference by name to Jesus or Christ. It so happens that it is in this part of Paul’s epistle to the Romans that he consciously (or if unconsciously, then it is the more interesting) drops the Christ language. There is a striking absence of overt Christology.¹⁵⁴

Stendahl’s thesis makes Paul contradict himself, which challenges the validity of his thesis. It also seems strange that Stendahl ignores Paul’s main concern in 10:1-17: that salvation is tied up with the confession of Jesus as Lord (v.9), that there is no distinction between Jew and Greek (v. 12), and that the gospel needs to be preached to Jews if they are to believe (vv. 14-17). Add to this that according to Acts 28 Paul tried, during his prison time exactly in Rome, to convince the local Jewish leaders (Acts 28:17-31). There is no reason to question that this should be the historical reality at the end of Paul’s work.

There is no denying that in Romans 9-11 Paul struggled with essential theological issues which include the idea of the mystery of Israel. But according to Pauline understanding a theology of the mystery of Israel includes the proclamation of Jesus to Jews. Whatever is meant by “mysterious co-existence,” the proclamation of the gospel is included. In other words: Paul can only be salvaged with the help of bad exegesis.

Rosemary Ruether, for example, has seen this clearly. Even though I have strong reservations about her interpretation of Paul, she is right when saying this: “The ‘conversion of the Jews’, then, becomes in Paul the last event in the historical economy of salvation.”¹⁵⁵ To Ruether, contemporary ecumenists speak “out of good intention, but inaccurate exegesis,” when they use Romans 11 to defend the doctrine of the two covenants. Gregory Baum designates it as “wishful thinking” when Christian theologians attempt to derive a positive conclusion from Paul’s teaching in Romans 9-11.¹⁵⁶

Ruether and Baum understand what is Paul’s main concern, namely that Jews need to believe in Jesus in order to be saved. In this main concern they *interpret* Paul correctly, but they themselves turn *against* Paul and reject his ideas as non-valid for Christians today. In other words: The recognition of Judaism as the truth for Jews today involves, for these theologians, a rejection of the Apostle Paul’s words about the necessity to proclaim Christ to Jews.

A Reformulation of Christian Theology

¹⁵² Krister Stendahl, “In No Other Name”, in Arne Sovik, *Christian Witness and the Jewish People* (Geneve: LWF, 1976), p. 53.

¹⁵³ Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (London: SCM Press, 1977) p. 4.

¹⁵⁴ Stendahl, “In No Other Name”, pp. 52-53. Cf. also Pawlikowski, 1980, p. 17.

¹⁵⁵ Rosemary R. Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, p. 106.

¹⁵⁶ Gregory Baum, “Introduction”, in Rosemary R. Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, p. 6.

We shall now proceed to give a brief outline of that reformulation of Christology which advocates of two-covenant theology have found compelled to make. While Rosenzweig emphasized the importance of the *Church's Christ* for non-Jews, although with the modifications we have mentioned above, quite a few modern spokesmen for two-covenant theology have challenged the Church's Christ and his importance for non-Jews.

I am well aware that there are significant differences between the various versions of the double covenant theology. Many Christians find it difficult to realize what is at stake. The reason could be that an emotional mode of argument is often employed when a popular version of two-covenant theology is presented.

It is interesting to note that this reformulation takes place whether or not one argues for a single covenant theory or for a double covenant theory. John T. Pawlikowski offers a succinct characterization of the difference between the single and double covenant theories with the following words: "The first wishes to re-incorporate Christianity into the original Jewish covenant. The second acknowledges two covenants that are different but complementary."¹⁵⁷

1. Guilt and the Holocaust

It would be a gross simplification to maintain that the appearance of two-covenant theology is due to the Holocaust. Its roots are, as we have seen, in the time before the Holocaust. On the other hand, it is difficult to over-emphasize the impact of the Holocaust on the theory's growth and further development in *Christian* circles after World War II. Ridden with guilt, some Christians were forced to a rethinking which resulted in a theology of silence towards Jews.

We should not forget, however, that a radical reformulation of traditional biblical theology had been done by Christian theologians long before the Holocaust and independent of the ecumenical dialogue between Jews and Christians. It is relatively easy to trace radical views on traditional Christian theology in the rationalistic theology of the 19th century; they are also there in the so-called liberal theology around the beginning of the 20th century, and in the existentialist inspired interpretation of the New Testament.

Since hatred of the Jews has nothing to do with what Jesus taught or did and since persecution of the Jews was against what Jesus wanted, Moishe Rosen concludes: "So, persecution of the Jews, instead of becoming a reason to cease telling Jews the gospel of God's love in Christ, should have become an impetus to do that."¹⁵⁸

It therefore becomes a relevant question whether it is God's word and his imperatives to missionize among Jews which should be obeyed, or whether it is people's emotions and ideas of the Holocaust that should guide one's thinking. In double covenant thinking, so much significance seems to be attached to the Christian Church's cruel history that the authority of the Lord of the Church according to the New Testament seems to be disregarded.

2. Anti-Semitism and the Bible

Rosemary Ruether's book, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*, has

¹⁵⁷ Pawlikowski, 1980, p. 35.

¹⁵⁸ Moishe Rosen, "Jewish evangelism: the touchstone of theology and missiology", in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, October 1990, p. 384.

been particularly important for the development of a Christian two-covenant theology, because the alleged anti-Semitism in the New Testament has been the starting-point for some rethinking. A reformulation of the New Testament's Christology is only a logical consequence of Ruether's opinion that the New Testament's interpretation of Jesus' suffering and death is anti-Judaic and that "anti-Judaism is the left hand of Christology."¹⁵⁹ The problem is not solved by isolating a few Bible verses in the New Testament. The problem is "the basic structure of New Testament theology itself," as Alan Davies puts it.¹⁶⁰

Clark M. Williamson, who is among those who find anti-Judaism in the New Testament, expresses the consequence he has to draw like this: "When we find anti-Judaism in a text from the Gospels, we have the hermeneutical freedom to preach against the text in the name of Jesus the Jew."¹⁶¹

To Alice and Roy Eckardt, for example, the consequence is that an insistence on "the divine inspiration of all Scripture ... cannot escape a proclivity to antisemitism."¹⁶²

When alleged anti-Semitism in the New Testament results in the above-mentioned conclusions, a reformulation of the view of the Bible as God's word is a *fait accompli*.

3. The Messiahship of Jesus

Rosemary Ruether argues that from the standpoint of the faith of Israel itself, "there is no possibility of talking about the Messiah having come (much less of having come two thousand years ago, with all the evil history that has reigned from that time until this) when the reign of God has not come."¹⁶³ She maintains that "what Christianity has in Jesus is not the Messiah, but a Jew who hoped for the kingdom of God and who died in that hope."¹⁶⁴

Gregory Baum argues that "as long as the Church proclaims Jesus as the one mediator without whom there is no salvation, no theological space is left for other religions, and, in particular, no theological validity is left for Jewish religion." To Baum it means that "Jesus is the Christ *now* only in the sense that he anticipated the divine victory at the end."¹⁶⁵

Some time in the future, and not till then, will Jesus be Christ in the proper sense of the word.

Although some advocates of two-covenant theology — among them Baum — maintain that to non-Jews Jesus may be Christ, all agree that to Jews he was not the Messiah. The way Jesus is portrayed as Christ seems to indicate that the work of Christ is understood in a way that differs from the explicit teaching of the New Testament which is another example that it is not enough to

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Rosemary Ruether, "Anti-Semitism Is the Left Hand of Christology", in R. Heyer, *Jewish-Christian Relations* (New York: Paulist Press, 1974), pp. 1-9.

¹⁶⁰ Alan Davies, *Anti-Semitism and the Foundations of Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), p. xv; cf. David Berger, p. 19.

¹⁶¹ Clark M. Williamson, *Has God Rejected His People* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), p. 172.

¹⁶² Cf. David Berger, p. 11.

¹⁶³ Rosemary Ruether, "An Invitation to Jewish-Christian Dialogue: In What Sense Can We Say That Jesus Was 'The Christ'?", in *The Ecumenist*, 10, 1972, p. 17; cf. John T. Pawlikowski, *Christ in the Light of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press 1982) p. 26.

¹⁶⁴ Rosemary Ruether, "Christian-Jewish Dialogue: New Interpretations", in *ADL Bulletin*, 30, 1973, p. 4; cf. Pawlikowski, 1982, p. 26.

¹⁶⁵

Gregory Baum, p. 5 and 19.

speak of Christ. The decisive question is: which Christ?

When the messiahship of Jesus is being denied and considered of no significance for the salvation of Jews, the New Testament's view of the work and significance of Jesus has been reformulated.

4. The resurrection of Jesus

To Roy Eckardt the Holocaust has had the consequence that the resurrection of Jesus must be removed from the Christian faith if the degradation of the Jewish faith is to cease. He says about Jesus:

That Jewish man from the Galilee sleeps now. He sleeps with the other Jewish dead, with all disconsolate and scattered ones of the murder camps, and with the unnumbered dead of the human and non-human family. But Jesus of Nazareth shall be raised. So too shall the small Hungarian children who were burned alive at Auschwitz.¹⁶⁶

Resurrection — however that may be — is conceived as a futuristic category.

When the resurrection of Jesus is denied, or reinterpreted in existentialist terms, the result is a reformulation of his resurrection, as the apostle says: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (1 Cor 15:17).

5. Salvation

If Jesus is not the Messiah and did not rise from the dead, it is no wonder that the New Testament's concept of salvation needs to be reformulated. Among modern Christian double covenant advocates salvation is not understood as the reception of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus' redemptive death. The Christ event means to the Christian what the Exodus event means to the Jew, Rosemary Ruether argues. This seems to be boiled down to a hope suspended between the present existence and that which it ought to be.¹⁶⁷

When the view of salvation does not include redemption in the blood of Jesus as its central point and the forgiveness of sin as a consequence of this, the New Testament's understanding of salvation has been reformulated.

6. Evangelism

From what has been said above it must be clear that a weak position on Jewish evangelism is a litmus test of who you think Jesus is and what is his work. With that in mind it is not surprising that evangelical Christians can criticize other evangelicals when the latter are weak on mission to Jews, or pass over the subject in silence, or restrict themselves to dialogue.¹⁶⁸

There are few in the evangelical camp who have attempted to formulate a theological version of two-covenant theology.¹⁶⁹ But this does not necessarily mean that they feel a clear obligation

¹⁶⁶ Roy Eckardt, "The Resurrection and the Holocaust", in *Israel Study Group*, New York City, 4 March 1978, p. 13; cf. John T. Pawlikowski, 1980, p. 40.

¹⁶⁷ See Pawlikowski, 1982, pp. 28-29.

¹⁶⁸ This criticism is voiced in circles attached to the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE).

¹⁶⁹ See Robert M. Price, "An Evangelical Version of the 'Double Covenant': New Possibilities for Jewish-

to missionize Jews. For some this is motivated by a conviction that Israel will only be saved in connection with the return of Jesus, which means that in relation to Israel there are matters with a higher priority than mission on the agenda. Such matters can be the preoccupation with the state of Israel as a fulfilment of Old Testament land promises, or eschatological speculations. When one considers the zeal shown by the very same evangelicals to bring the gospel to non-Jews, indeed to nominal Christians, one cannot help being astonished at their negligence of the obligation to bring the gospel to Jews. But even more astounding, there are evangelicals who say an emphatic no to mission among Jews.

An Evangelical Contradiction in Terms

John Hagee's book, *Should Christians Support Israel?*, is a clear example that also among so-called evangelicals there are extreme theological viewpoints. In the book the author is introduced as "senior pastor of Cornerstone Church, a non-denominational, evangelical church located in San Antonio, Texas."¹⁷⁰ It is reasonable to assume that the ideas put forward by Hagee are representative of other evangelical circles, and therefore it is relevant to mention them here.

The author has a deep love of Israel. Hagee calls his book "a declaration of War" against, among other things, the "heresy" that "The Old Covenant is Dead and replaced by the New Covenant."¹⁷¹ This is a fine "war" to wage. But his weapons, to remain in the picture, are highly questionable. Catchword follows catchword (e.g. "The only theology that God ever created was Judaism!"; "God the Father was the first Zionist").¹⁷² Uncritically and speculatively Hagee sees the fulfilment of Old Testament statements in events and persons of our day (Hagee mentions, for instance, about 40 well-known Jewish persons, among them Kirk Douglas, Barbara Streisand, Danny Kaye, Peter Falk, to say that "These people are living testimonies; 'in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed'").¹⁷³ With such a use of the Bible, one fears the worst when it comes to more important matters.

One of Hagee's main points is: "The message of the gospel was *from* Israel, not *to* Israel."¹⁷⁴ The latter is just as wrong as the former is true. Historically speaking, this is a striking denial of facts.

Hagee's main viewpoint leads him to the assertion that Jesus did not at all want to be Messiah for the Jews, a rather rash assertion for an evangelical. "The Jews did not reject Jesus as Messiah, it was Jesus who rejected the Jewish desire for Him to be their Messiah."¹⁷⁵ It is true that there are divergent opinions among theologians and historians of whether Jesus regarded himself as Messiah or not. In the history of theology there has also been some discussion about how Jesus

Fundamentalist Dialogue", in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 20:1, 1983, pp. 33-42; a critique is given by Louis Golderg, pp. 23-24.

¹⁷⁰ John Hagee, *Should Christians Support Israel?* (San Antonio: Dominion Publishers, 1987), p. [174].

¹⁷¹ Hagee, p. 1.

¹⁷² Hagee, p. 136 and p. 165.

¹⁷³ Hagee, pp. 162-163.

¹⁷⁴ Hagee, p. 62.

¹⁷⁵ Hagee, p. 72.

and the primitive church understood his messiahship. But the scholar who denies that Jesus was — or understood himself as — the Messiah would never take it into his head to begin a book the way Hagee does: “If you do not believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God ... put this book down.”¹⁷⁶ With such an introduction he signals to his readers that he sees the Bible as the Word of God. And when that is the case, it is out of the question to do what a radical theologian might do: make a distinction between the so-called historical Jesus, who did not want to be Messiah, and the Christ proclaimed by the primitive Church. The teaching of the primitive Church, as we know it from the New Testament scriptures, is quite unambiguous that while the gospel came *from* Israel it is also *for* Israel.

There is no reason to go into details about Hagee’s views. He argues that “right now there are Jewish people on this earth who have a special relationship with God”¹⁷⁷ — implied: without faith in Jesus. The result of this is that Jews should not be evangelized. Under cover of loyalty to the Bible, Hagee actually rewrites the entire New Testament testimony of Jesus.

Jewish and Christian Exclusivity

“The test of tolerance is where men combat for truth but honor persons,”¹⁷⁸ Arthur A. Cohen maintains. I fully agree with this but I do not hesitate to admit that I have had difficulty in living up to this test of tolerance in this essay. Or to put it bluntly, it is easier to show respect for Jews who from their point of view reject Jesus as Messiah, who are pleased with Judaism and without hesitation designate it as *the* truth, than it is to show respect for Jewish and Christian advocates of two-covenant theology who, although they refer to the New Testament, reformulate its message and dare not speak about truth in order not to offend anyone.

In the New Testament message there is an exclusivity attached to Jesus the Jew. It is not possible to remove this exclusivity without at the same time violating the Christian message. Christians who feel committed to the New Testament message have a clear right to go on believing that Jesus is the Messiah for Jews as well as for non-Jews. And they have the same clear right to *repeat* the exclusivity which was expressed by one of the first Jesus-believing Jews, namely the Apostle Peter, who, facing the Jewish council in Jerusalem asserted that there is salvation in no other name under heaven but the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12). For those who share this conviction it means a commitment to take the gospel back to the Jewish people.

This attitude cannot under any circumstances be described as un-Jewish. That Jesus is the Messiah is something gentiles have learned from Jews. That the God of Israel, when he reveals himself, means what he says is something gentiles have learned from Jews. That there is such a thing as truth — distinct from relativism — is something gentiles have learned from Jews. That the gospel is for Jews is not a gentile or a gentile-Christian invention, but a Jewish conviction delivered to us by the Jesus-believing Jews. That there is salvation only in the name of Jesus is something the first Jesus-believing Jews said to their fellow-Jews.

It is possible to find the opinion that Christians who believe Christianity to be the truth in relation to Judaism are guilty of a “kind of religious arrogance that must be labelled *a sin*, in

¹⁷⁶ Hagee, p. 1.

¹⁷⁷ Hagee, p. 125.

¹⁷⁸ Cohen, p. 216.

Daniel F. Polish's words.¹⁷⁹ In connection with this it may be remarked that the "sin" that God can only be known through Jesus is also something gentiles have learned from Jews.

When one reads the literature of two-covenant theology and related subjects and comes across statements like the one above, one cannot help being astonished that repeating what the first Jewish believers said is labelled anti-Semitism.

There are many bad things to be said about Christian theology's treatment of the relationship between Jews and Christians. More bad things can be said about the way the Christian Church has treated Jewish people over the centuries.

But one thing that cannot be said is that it is "un-Jewish" to tell Jews about the Jew Jesus.

But this lie has been repeated so often that some have come to believe it.

"The test of tolerance is where men combat for truth but honor persons," Cohen says. Among quite a few Jews and many advocates of two-covenant theology it is quite difficult to find this tolerance towards the Jesus-believing Jews of our time.

The Messianic Jews have, by and large, been made losers by two-covenant theology. The contempt they often meet is comparable to the contempt which the Christian Church has often shown Jews and their Jewish faith. It is not proper, however, for Christians to reject Jews who believe in Jesus for the sake of good relations with other Jewish people who do not accept Jesus.¹⁸⁰

Axel Torm, former chairman of the Danish Israel Mission sums up the problem with these words:

In earlier times the church downgraded Judaism in order to exalt Christ. It was a sin that the church committed. Today people downgrade Christ in order to exalt Judaism. Is that better?¹⁸¹

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¹⁷⁹ Daniel F. Polish, "A Jewish Perspective: This Moment in Jewish-Christian Relations," in *Ecumenical Bulletin* 44, 1980, pp. 8-9; cf. Berger, p. 15.

¹⁸⁰ See Daniel C. Juster, "Discrediting Jewish Evangelism" in *Mishkan* nos. 6&7, I+II/1987, p. 117.

¹⁸¹ Axel Torm, "Kirke og synagoge" [Church and Synagoge], in Magne Saeboe, *Israel, Kirken og Verden [Israel, the Church and the World]* (Oslo: Forlaget Land og Kirke, 1972), p. 188.

THE DEATH OF MESSIAH

Kai Kjær-Hansen, Editor

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Reviewed by Menachem Benhayim

For two years the aged Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the “Rebbe,” dynastic leader of the hassidic Habad movement, was virtually immobile, speechless and finally comatose. Multitudes of his followers round the world with a passionate and primitive fervor loudly cried out, and proclaimed, demanded that he be miraculously restored to health and life in order to assume his messianic prerogative — redeeming Israel and the world as King Messiah.

Already in his tenth decade, feeble and stroke-ridden, it was an immense order to make of a man who was no longer in a position either to affirm or deny the clamorous cries of his followers from Brooklyn to Brisbane, from Buenos Aires to Bat Yam, or even Kfar Habad in Israel, where a king-sized replica of his stately Eastern Parkway brownstone mansion was all in readiness for messianic occupancy.

Less ecstatic observers in and out of the Habad movement were expressing anxieties and making preparations for coping with mass hysterical reactions, even massive apostacies from orthodox Judaism when the inevitable occurred, and the 90-plus Lubavitch Rebbe returned his soul to his Maker. Neither reason nor common sense could prevail upon the faithful to face the reality of his imminent demise, and they pinned their hopes on resurrection as the end drew near. Surprisingly, for some observers with a New Testament perspective, the prophet Isaiah’s oracle of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah (Isa 52:3 - 53:12), long shunned by mainstream Judaism in its messianic aspect, was rediscovered to explain the sufferings of the Rebbe.

It was out of the messianic welter of woe and weal that this slim volume of brief articles emerged as a response from Jewish and gentile believers in the messiahship of Yeshua — Jesus.

Editor Kai Kjær-Hansen, who works with the Danish Israel Mission and also serves as International Coordinator of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE), assures readers in his introduction that the authors of the 20 contributions “have no calling to be patronizing about the messianic expectations of the Habad movement.” With the death of Rabbi Schneerson on 3 Tamuz 5754 (12 June 1994), the writers wished to “reformulate” the ancient messianic challenge made by the first Yeshua-believing Jews to the Jewish community almost 2000 years ago.

Two of the articles (by Arnold Fruchtenbaum and Walter Riggans) in this anthology are actually adaptations of previously published book portions: the former deals with Jewish objections to Jesus, the latter with the kind of person Jesus is. Another article is a brief reprise of Stan Telchin’s well-known personal testimony, *Betrayed*.

A number of the pieces provide relevant background material to traditional Jewish messianic

belief beginning with the Hebrew Scriptures (Tanakh), the Qumran scrolls, first-century Jewish Christianity, the writings of medieval and modern rabbinics, and of various calculations relating to Messiah's appearance. Susan Perlman of "Jews for Jesus" presents an abstract of press reports on Rabbi Schneerson from June 1982 to June 1994.

Another category of articles might be characterized "tracts for the times," presenting a traditional evangelical message, and mostly do not directly relate to the Habad movement's claims for its leader. David Sedaca of the International Messianic Jewish Alliance and Bodil Skjøtt of the Caspari Center for Biblical and Jewish Studies in Jerusalem provide separate articles on Messianic Jews and Hebrew Christians worldwide and in Israel. The editor supplies a closing article about the coming Messiah and the return of Jesus.

A glossary of Hebrew terms used in the book, a selected bibliography and brief notes about the authors is appended.

The book is an easy read and is presumably geared for those Jews who have been caught up, or at least intrigued, by the messianic speculations and fervor stimulated by the Habad movement, and who may be seeking explanations and alternatives to another flawed messianic movement among the several which have appeared in Jewish history.

As an evangelistic medium, this work resembles a book of testimonies; it is multifocal, and for Jewish inquirers is a potentially interesting introduction to New Testament faith from a mostly evangelical perspective. It also provides food for thought for convinced believers in the context of the Second Coming of Messiah.

Like a smorgasbord or buffet lunch, one can nibble a bit here, a bit there. This can be a disadvantage because a number of the contributions are really little more than appetizers and merit a larger helping. Carol Calise's insightful piece about the Habad movement and its messianic beliefs provides a glimpse into a world of mysticism and messianic vision which has alarmed many mainstream Jews; and, as Tsvi Sadan points out in his piece about Messianic texts re-focused by Habad, there are interesting implications for New Covenant messianism.

The article by Ray Pritz "on calculating the time of the Messiah's appearance" is equally timely and appropriate for mainstream Jewish believers and New Testament believers caught up in speculations which they advocate with monotonous regularity as "the sure thing."

Ole Andersen offers a wider historical perspective and corrective to messianism in his piece about Qumran and Jesus in light of recent wild speculations about the Dead Sea scrolls. Arthur Glaser provides a brief survey of Jewish Christianity at the turn of the second century, about which there is much debate among modern scholars since so much of the source material has been distilled from unfriendly rabbinic Jewish and gentile Christian writings.

Torleif Elgvin ("The Messiah Who Was Cursed on the Tree") and Louis Goldberg ("The Messianic Idea in Judaism") present concepts from Jewish sources that are compatible with New Covenant messianism, while Noam Hendren focuses on "God's Messiah in the Tanakh," and several others focus on New Testament texts.

As of this writing, Jewish anxieties concerning massive fallout following the death of another unresurrected Messiah have been allayed. The Habad movement seems to be coping with the Rebbe's passing with surprising aplomb and no little hutzpah as it continues its messianic campaign and other activities. Whether, as Tsvi Sadan believes, Habad has put the messianic hope back on the Jewish agenda today, or has made it seem an absurd illusion, remains to be seen.

Hopefully, it will provoke Jews and Gentiles to dig more deeply into the messianic hope, especially in its relation to history as the second millennium draws to its close. *Maranatha!*

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