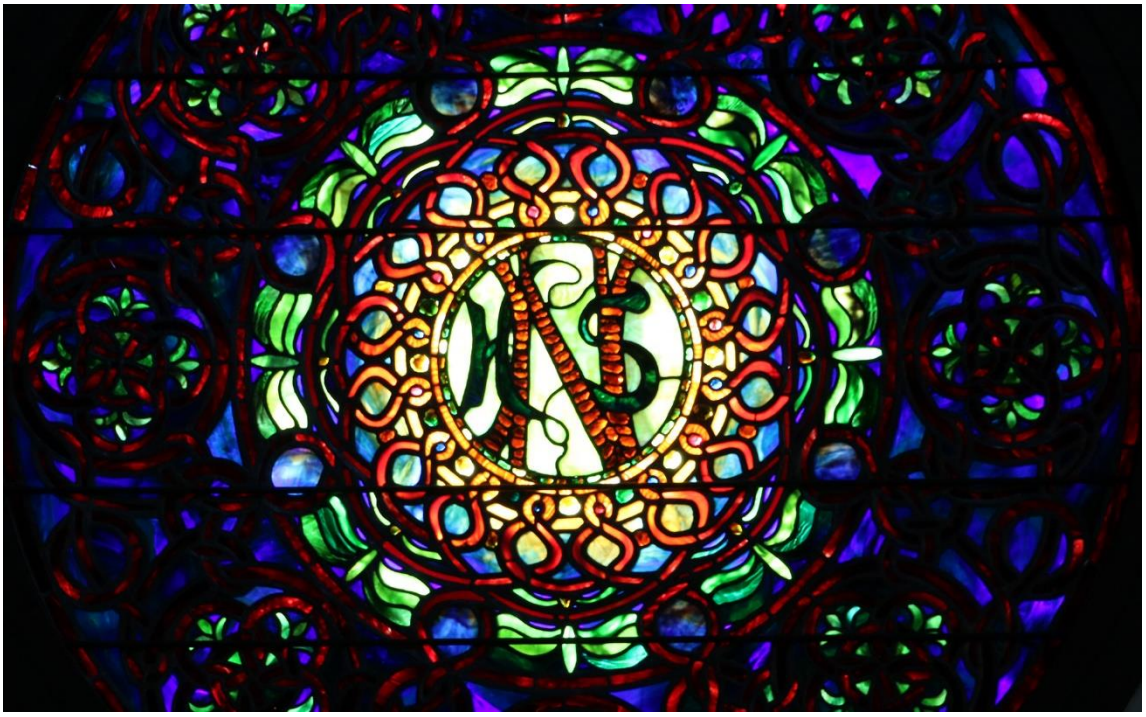
RENEWING HOPE
IN THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

Edited by Val A. McInnes, O.P.



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Renewing Hope

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Other Volumes in the Judeo-Christian Studies Series

Renewing the Judeo-Christian Wellsprings, edited by Val Ambrose McInnes, Crossroad Press, 1987

Religion, Science, and Public Policy, edited by Frank T. Birtel, Crossroad Press, 1987

New Visions, edited by Val Ambrose McInnes, Crossroad Press, 1993

Reasoned Faith, edited by Frank T. Birtel, Crossroad Press, 1993

Religion and the American Experience, edited by Frank T. Birtel, New City Press, 2005

Re-Imaging God for Today, edited by Val Ambrose McInnes, O.P., New City Press, 2005

Renewing Hope

In memory of Val A. McInnes, O.P.

Father Val McInnes had nearly completed editing this volume when he passed away in November 2011. The collection is based on public lectures presented in Tulane's Judeo-Christian Studies series between 1991 and 2009. (Details will be provided on the first page of each paper.) Father Val founded the Chair of Judeo-Christian Studies at Tulane in 1979 and over the years since then directed this prestigious lecture series, working together with Professor Frank Birtel, who passed away shortly before Father Val, in September 2011. They edited and published a set of books based on the lectures, of which this one is the seventh, with an eighth volume to follow, edited by Professor Birtel. (A list of previous volumes can be found at the beginning of this one). The essays in this collection reflect the serious thought and profound commitment to the Judeo-Christian heritage that were hallmarks of the program to which Father McInnes devoted himself.

Ronna Burger
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Summer 2021

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PREFACE

In recent years, the Judeo-Christian dialogue has not progressed as rapidly as some originally expected.

Pope John Paul II's historical visit to the Rome Synagogue on April 13, 1986, where he met with Chief Rabbi Rav Elio Toaff, continued the process of dismantling officially the mutual misunderstanding and opening the door toward gradual reconciliation.

The Pope's visit to Israel in 2000 was a high watermark in the Jewish-Christian dialogue. Like the visit to the Holy Land of his predecessor Pope Paul VI, in 1964, it did much to focus attention on the dialogue between the Holy See and the Jewish nation. Their very presence was one of the strongest signs of reconciliation in a 2000-year-old history of mutual prejudice.

Yes, the reconciliation has been taking place, but it has been gradual, and that has caused difficulty to some. Both Jews and Christians, while enthusiastic, are disappointed that greater strides have not been accomplished.

Pope John Paul II's contributions to the dialogue were on the levels of teaching, better relationships, backed up with positive deeds and pastoral action. In addition, the Pope insisted on the special spiritual bond that binds Christians and Jews together by reason of their "common spiritual heritage."

Certainly, Pope Benedict XVI"s visit to the great Rome Synagogue on January 17, 2010 not only continues the rapprochement of Pope John Paul II but also extends that relationship for Jews and Christians to maintain and propagate "The Great Ethical Code" of the Decalogue received by Moses and shared alike by Jews and Christians. Benedict XVI urged this shared task of "reawakening our society to a new openness to the transcendent dimensions of our faith—witnessing to the one God as a precious service which Jews and Christians can and must offer together." The Pope concluded, "When we succeed in uniting our hearts and our hands in response to the Lord's call, His light comes closer and shines on all the people of the world."

The full consequences of the 1965 Vatican II document, *Nostra Aetate*, in which the Catholic Church officially absolved the Jews of deicide, is only gradually entering the full consciousness of the Catholic and Christian world. It takes time for things to sink in, and this is one reason why the dialogue has not progressed as quickly and as thoroughly as it should have, at least in the

thinking of the outer reaches of the Catholic world. As the various contributors in this volume illustrate, there have been great strides and monumental developments. The full impact of the reconciliation has been felt at the epicenter of Christianity, but like the proverbial pebble dropped into the water, it takes time for the concentric circles to ripple out and reach the shore. A good example of this may be found in Pope Benedict's *Jesus of Nazareth, Part II*, issued in 2011. There he clarifies the term "Jews" in the Gospel narratives by referring to them as the "temple aristocracy," not to the "Jews" as a whole.

It is significant to note that the Catholic biblical scholar, Raymond Brown, in one of his previous lectures for the Chair of Judeo-Christian Studies dwelt for some time on the problem of the translation in the Gospel of John from Greek to Latin, where the word "Sanhedrin" is substituted for the word "Jews." Unwittingly, this misappropriation became the basis for much of the misunderstanding and prejudice against the Jewish people as a whole.

Fortunately, with these most recent clarifications by the Holy Father, the Israeli Government has "welcomed whole-heartedly" these papal statements exonerating "Jews" for the death of Jesus. The Israeli Embassy to the Holy See said it was "confirmation of Pope Benedict XVI's known positive stand towards Jewish people in the State of Israel."

Renewing Hope is the seventh volume in Tulane University's Judeo-Christian Lecture Series. The following, originally lectures made by various distinguished Jewish and Christian scholars from 1991 to 2009, add more light and insight into the progress that has indeed been made.

VAL A. MCINNES, O.P.
Chair, Judeo-Christian Studies, Tulane University
March 27, 2011

October 24, 1991
THE RABBI JULIAN B. FEIBELMAN MEMORIAL LECTURE

Jewish-Christian Relations: Achievements and Unfinished Agenda

Marc H. Tanenbaum

During the past twenty-six years since the adoption of *Nostra Aetate* by Vatican Council II, the Catholic Church and the Jewish people have experienced what has rightly been called "a revolution in mutual esteem." That transformation of a 1,900-year-old encounter between Christians and Jews, which had been characterized mainly by mutual contempt but turned into a radically new culture of "covenantal partnership" and "growing mutual esteem," even of "love between us" (Pope John Paul II, February 15, 1985), is a momentous achievement in its own terms. It is an achievement, even in its infancy, that also resonates with moral and spiritual meaning for enabling us to understand and cope constructively with the enormous challenges and threats that are posed by the immense diversity of religions, races, ethnic groups, and political ideologies in the pluralistic world we inhabit.

Since 1968, I have devoted a large measure of my energies to working with Jewish and Christian groups seeking to bring relief to suffering refugees and starving peoples in Southeast Asia (the Vietnamese boat people, Cambodians, Laotians, ethnic Chinese); in Africa (Ethiopians, South Africans in the black homelands, Nigerians, Ugandans, the Sahel, Sudan, Mozambique, etc.); in the Caribbean (Haitians, Cubans); in South America (Miskito Indians, *descamisados* in the *favellas* of Brazil, Venezuela, etc.); in India (Tibetans, Sikhs); in Sri Lanka (Tamils, Sinhalese); and in the United States (Soviet Jews and Polish refugees).

There are today about 12 million refugees scattered throughout the world, some 6 million of them in Africa alone. Through study and personal observation, I find it is now apparent that many, if not most, of these refugees are victims of profound religious, racial, and tribal conflicts. In a large number of these tragedies, religious fanaticism and absolutist messianic nationalism are the terrible chemistries that caused these explosions and thereby so much human devastation and pain.

The late psychoanalyst, Dr. Eric Fromm, a great humanist, became deeply disturbed by the growing pattern of violence and fanaticism throughout so many parts of the world. At the time of the strife between Hindus and Muslims in India, he carried out a clinical psychoanalytic study of that intergroup violence. In his last monumental publication, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, he presents his findings. Fromm concludes that there is "a pathological dynamic" at work in such religious-political conflicts; he calls it Group Narcissism. As is the case with individual narcissism, groups that are narcissistic attribute to themselves all virtue and ultimate value, while denying value to the outside group, "the other." The narcissistic group views itself as "superior" and regards the other as "inferior." This mentality leads to a process of "dehumanization" or "monsterizing." So-called superior groups feel justified in emptying the alleged inferior group of all human dignity and value. Such dehumanization becomes the precondition as well as the justification for destroying the other.

There are two vital corollaries to this process that Fromm characterizes as the engine of vast destructiveness in the world.

First, physical violence against the human person or group is invariably preceded by "verbal violence." White racist segregationists in the American South invariably abused blacks verbally before carrying out their lynchings. The Nazis engaged in systematic verbal violence against the Jews (and also the Polish people and gypsies, among others), reducing them to dehumanized *Untermenschen* as a cultural precondition for their systematic pogroms. In every instance, it becomes easier to destroy human beings when they are reduced to contemptible, antagonistic caricatures. Psychic numbing makes that destruction possible.

Second, in practically every major religious, racial, and tribal conflict that I have studied in recent years, there is either a nonexistent or seriously undeveloped religious ideology or political doctrine of coexistence in a pluralist society. There are simply no religious or ideological resources for living with differences. Difference invariably is experienced as a threat rather than a possible source of enrichment.

What does all that have to do with Jews and Christians in a pluralistic world? Since the adoption of *Nostra Aetate* by Vatican Council II, a great reversal of historic proportion has taken place in the Church's relationship to Judaism and the Jewish people. His Holiness Pope John Paul II

expressed that new spirit powerfully during a February 15, 1985 audience with the American Jewish Committee: "I am convinced and I am happy to state on this occasion that the relationships between Jews and Christians have radically improved in these years. Where there was ignorance and therefore prejudice and stereotypes, there is now growing mutual knowledge, appreciation, and respect. There is, above all, love between us, that kind of love, I mean, which is for both of us a fundamental injunction of our religious traditions and which the New Testament has received from the old (cf. Mark 12:38; Luke 19:18)." And then, as if to suggest his idea of pluralism between Christians and Jews, he added, "Love involves understanding. It also involves frankness and the freedom to disagree in a brotherly way where there are reasons for it."

I wish to pause here and acknowledge with respect and appreciation the singular contribution that Pope John Paul II, building on the foundations laid by his predecessors, John XXIII and Paul VI, personally has made in redefining and advancing, on deep theological, moral, and human levels, an improved understanding between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people. That assertion should not obscure the fact that there are significant differences regarding certain policies and actions related mainly to some interpretations of the Nazi Holocaust and the State of Israel. But anyone who wishes to speak seriously about the role of the Pope in his inspired commitment to fostering genuine solidarity and mutual respect between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people has a moral duty to study the texts of his numerous addresses and declarations contained in the booklet *On Jews and Judaism, 1979-1986*, edited by Dr. Eugene Fisher and Rabbi Leon Klenicki, and the pamphlet *John Paul II on the Holocaust*, also edited by Dr. Fisher.

His Eminence Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, president of the Holy See's Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews and a worthy bearer of the mantle of the late Cardinal Augustin Bea, made this affirmation. "The Pope [John Paul II] was consistent and untiring in his efforts to spread the teachings of Vatican Council on Jews and Judaism elaborated in the foundation documents of *Nostra Aetate* of 1965, the *Vatican Guidelines in Catholic-Jewish Relations*, and *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church* of 1985. In their essence, these themes embody the central theological and practical achievements in Catholic-Jewish relations

since Vatican Council."

I
THE SPIRITUAL BOND BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

The spiritual bond with Jews is properly understood as "a sacred one; stemming as it does from the mysterious will of God" (10/28/85). The relationship is not marginal to the Church. It reaches to the very essence of the nature of Christian faith itself so that to deny it is to deny something essential to the teaching of the Church (cf. Vatican *Notes*, I, 2).

The dialogue between Catholics and Jews is not a dialogue between past (Judaism) and present (Christian) realities, as if the former had been "superseded" or "displaced" by the latter. "On the contrary," Pope John Paul II declared in his moving allocution to the Jewish community of Mainz, "it is a question rather of reciprocal enlightenment and explanation, just as is the relationship between the Scriptures themselves" (cf. *Dei Verbum*, II). Instead of the traditional terms of Old Testament and New Testament, which might be understood to imply that the "old has been abrogated in favor of the new," the Pope in his address to the Jews of Australia on November 26, 1986, has suggested the use of the terms Hebrew Scriptures and Christian Scriptures as appropriate alternatives.

In his historic visit on April 13, 1986, to the Great Synagogue of Rome, the first such visit since apostolic times, Pope John Paul II made the following assertion. "The Jewish religion is not 'extrinsic' to us, but in a certain way is 'intrinsic' to our own religion. With Judaism, therefore, we have a relationship which we do not have with any other religion. You are dearly beloved brothers and in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers."

II
JUDAISM, "A LIVING HERITAGE"

In his address on November 17, 1980, to the Jewish community of Mainz, Pope John Paul II spoke of "the spiritual heritage of Israel for the Church" as "a living heritage, which must be understood and preserved in its depth and richness by us Catholic Christians."

The "common spiritual patrimony" of Jews and Christians is not something of the past but of the present; it includes an understanding of post-Biblical Judaism and "the faith and religious life of the Jewish people as they are professed and practiced still today" (3/82).

"Jews and Christians," as the Pope stated later at the Rome Synagogue, "are the trustees and witnesses of an ethic marked by the Ten Commandments in the observance of which man finds his truth and freedom."

III
THE PERMANENT VALIDITY OF THE COVENANT

Pope John Paul II teaches that the Jews remain God's chosen people in the fullest sense ("most dear"), and this position in no way diminishes the Church's affirmation of its own standing as "the people of God." In Mainz, the Pope addressed the Jewish community as "the people of God of the Old Covenant, which has never been revoked by God," referring to Romans 11:29, and emphasized "the permanent value" of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Jewish community that witnesses to those Scriptures as sacred texts (11/17/80).

IV
CONDEMNATION OF ANTI-SEMITISM AND REMEMBRANCE OF THE SHOAH

In his first audience with Jewish representatives in March 1979, Pope John Paul II reaffirmed the Second Vatican Council's repudiation of anti-Semitism as being in opposition to "the very spirit of Christianity" and which "in any case the dignity of the human person alone would suffice to condemn." The Pope has repeated this message in country after country throughout the world.

Despite the recent controversies the record is clear that the Pope, who lived under Nazism in Poland and experienced personally the ancient evil of anti-Semitism, has called on Catholics in country after country to remember "in particular the memory of the people whose sons and daughters were intended for total extermination" (Homily at Auschwitz, 6/7/79). In Otranto, October 5, 1987, he linked for the first time, the Holocaust and the rebirth of a Jewish state in the land of Israel: "The Jewish people, after tragic experiences connected with the extermination of so many sons and daughters, driven by the desire for security, set up the state of Israel."

On the twentieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, October 28, 1985, the Pope stated that "anti-Semitism, in its ugly and sometimes violent manifestations, should be completely eradicated." He called the attention of the whole Church to the mandate given in the 1985 Vatican *Notes* to develop Holocaust curricula in Catholic schools and catechetical programs.

"For Catholics, as the *Notes* (no. 25) have asked them to do, to fathom the depths of the extermination of many millions of Jews during World War II and the wounds thereby inflicted on the consciousness of the Jewish people, theological reflection is also needed."

On August 29, 1981, the Pope condemned a bomb-throwing attack on a synagogue in Vienna, Austria, as a "bloody and absurd act, which assails the Jewish community in Austria and the entire world," and he warned against a "new wave of that same anti-Semitism that has provoked so much mourning through the centuries."

V

LAND AND STATE OF ISRAEL

The complexities of the Middle East situation and the differences between the Holy See and Israel on the issue of establishing full diplomatic relations are well known. Suffice it for these purposes in this limited space to cite the Pope's generally positive views on a moral plane toward the State of Israel as disclosed in his Apostolic Letter of April 20, 1984, *Redemptionis Anno:*

> Jews ardently love her (Jerusalem) and in every age venerate her memory, abundant as she is in many remains and monuments from the time of David who chose her as the capital, and of Solomon who built the Temple there. Therefore, they turn their minds to her daily, one may say, and point to her as a sign of their nation. For the Jewish people who live in the State of Israel and who preserve in that land such precious testimonies of their history and their faith, we must ask for the desired security and the due tranquility that is the prerogative of every nation and condition of life and of progress for every society.

VI

CATECHETICS AND LITURGY

Beyond the rethinking of the traditional understanding of Jews and Judaism, the Pope has called upon Catholics to undertake a major effort:

> We should aim in this field, that Catholic teaching at its different levels, in catechesis to children and young people, presents Jews and Judaism, not only in an honest and objective manner, free from prejudices and without any offences, but also with full awareness of the (Jewish) heritage.

He said that it also needs to be made clear to Catholic youth the often tragic history of Christian-Jewish relations over the centuries:

"The proper teaching of history is also the concern of yours (ICCJ). Such a concern is very understandable, given the sad and entangled common history of Jews and Christians—a history that is not always taught or transmitted correctly."

During his Rome Synagogue address, the Pope urged the implementation of the Vatican *Guidelines* and *Notes*. "It is only a question of studying them carefully, of immersing oneself in their teachings, and of putting them into practice."

VII

JOINT WITNESS AND ACTION IN HISTORY

The Pope repeatedly affirms his vision for Jews and Christians of joint social action and witness to the One God and the reality of the Kingdom of God as the defining point of human history. This way of collaboration "in service to humanity" as a means of preparing for God's Kingdom unites Jews and Christians on a level that, in a sense, can be said to be deeper than the doctrinal distinctions that divide us historically.

The Pope's views have been reinforced by pronouncements issued by National Bishops' Conferences in the United States, Austria, Holland, Belgium, France, Switzerland, the Federal Republic of Germany, Colombia, and Brazil. The bishops have promulgated their own statements on Catholic-Jewish relations, on occasion advancing their teachings beyond those presented in the Vatican documents. Individual Cardinals and Bishops, as well as theologians, have made pronouncements on a variety of religious and moral issues relating to Catholic-Jewish bonds that have enlarged the culture of mutual esteem.

To appreciate the dramatic changes in Catholic teaching about Jews and Judaism inaugurated by Vatican Council II and significantly advanced by the *Vatican Guidelines on Catholic-Jewish Relations* of 1974 and the *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church*, issued in June 1985, one needs only to examine the contrasts in educational materials published since the Council with textbooks and teaching manuals in common use into the 1960s. The Saint Louis University textbook studies conducted in the United States by three Catholic sisters under the supervision of Jesuit Father Trafford Naher revealed teachings of hostility and contempt that lent credence to Jewish concerns about Christian polemical traditions as a source of anti-Semitism.

In Europe, the Louvain and Pro Deo University studies that examined Catholic teaching materials in a variety of languages—Italian, Spanish, French-speaking—showed that teachings of contempt were widespread throughout the religious culture. In her study summarizing these findings, Claire Huchet-Bishop, a Catholic scholar, wrote in her book *How Catholics Look at Jews* that in the twenty years after the Holocaust many young Catholics in these countries, including Belgium, France, Switzerland and Canada, were still being taught in the negative manner of the 1960s. He particularly pointed out examples of that negativity.

1. Jews are collectively responsible for the Crucifixion and they are a "deicide people."
2. The Diaspora is the Jews' punishment for the Crucifixion and for their cry, "His blood be upon us and upon our children."
3. Jesus predicted the punishment of his people; the Jews were and remain cursed by him and by God; Jerusalem, as a city, is particularly guilty.
4. The Jewish people as a whole rejected Jesus during his lifetime because of their materialism.
5. The Jewish people have put themselves beyond salvation and are consigned to eternal damnation.
6. The Jewish people have been unfaithful to their mission and are guilty of apostasy.
7. Judaism was once a true religion but then became ossified and ceased to exist with the coming of Jesus.
8. The Jews are no longer the Chosen People but have been superseded as such by the Christians.

Huchet-Bishop noted that charges against the Jewish people were accompanied by a rhetoric of invective—"verbal violence"—that attributed the most vicious motives to them.

In citing these themes of negative theology toward the Jews, it is not my intention to obsess about the past or to seek to evoke guilt. Rather my purpose is to underscore that the radical improvement in Catholic-Jewish relations, theologically and morally significant in itself, may also be a primordial model of how it is possible to transform a culture that once demonized and thereby dehumanized a people into a wholly new culture of re-humanization. It also has something to teach us about the importance of overcoming verbal violence and toxic language that destroy human

dignity and family solidarity and to replace those invectives with healing language of respect and mutual affirmation. These lessons apply equally to Jews and Christians, and, I believe, to all groups who are afflicted by such dehumanizing tendencies.

One of the critical methods for bringing about the dismantling of the old negative culture and constructing a new culture of mutual esteem is to be seen dramatically in improved and enlightened education. Thus both the Louvain and Pro Deo studies reported a sharp drop in negative statements in textbooks and other teaching materials issued after Vatican Council II. Huchet-Bishop observed, "It seems reasonable to assume that these figures reflect the Church's adoption of a new positive policy toward Jews and Judaism at the Second Vatican Council."

In the United States, Dr. Eugene Fisher, executive secretary of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, published a study of post-Vatican Council II Catholic textbooks covering sixteen major religious series used in the grade school and high school levels. In his book, entitled *Faith Without Prejudice*, Fisher discovers great improvement in the treatment of many of the past troublesome themes. For example, he comes upon very clear references to the Jewishness of Jesus, which had been mostly avoided in the past. He finds the notion of Jewish suffering as an expression of Divine retribution completely eliminated from the textbooks. References to the Holocaust were handled with great sensitivity. References to violence against Jews during the Crusades and the Inquisition and references to the modern State of Israel, Fisher concludes, are still "inadequate."

I would like to return to the educational issue under the rubric of "unfinished agenda." Here it may be appropriate to report that in the growing atmosphere of confidence and trust, the Jewish community has conducted its own self-studies of Jewish textbooks in terms of what Jewish schools teach about Christians and Christianity. As summarized by Judith Bank, my former assistant at the American Jewish Committee, which sponsored the Dropsie University study and the study of Jewish seminary curricula, we find the following. While Judaism has been influenced in its development by interaction with Christianity more than is generally acknowledged (Maimonides, St. Thomas Aquinas, etc.), it does not define itself in contrast or comparison with Christianity. The Jewish-Christian encounter as described in Jewish high-school textbooks is social and historical, not

doctrinal or theological. On the one hand, this method avoids the problem of polemical approaches to Christianity; on the other hand, recounting the episodes of persecution, expulsion, and massacre that Jews suffered at the hands of Christians for centuries and that are among the realities of Jewish history, tends to leave a negative image, not so much of Christian faith, but of the Church as temporal power. In fairness, it must be said that this negative image is somehow offset by attention paid to righteous Christians who shielded and protected Jews across the years, and to the high value assigned in Jewish textbooks to religious and cultural pluralism and human kinship.

Still, many Jews, like many Catholics, are not aware of the momentous changes in Catholic thinking about Jews and Judaism that have issued from the highest levels of the Church since Vatican Council II. As part of the future agenda, Jewish students, as well as others in the general Jewish population, need to be informed of these developments both in formal education and through mass communications.

On the Jewish seminary level, briefly, Christianity and Jewish Christian relations are taken seriously; and there are a number of courses dealing with the origins of Christianity, the intertestamental period, medieval and contemporary relations. There are also a number of programs that bring Jewish and Christian seminarians together for study and dialogue. It is important to record that a number of prominent Jewish theologians, scholars and rabbis have been working to conceptualize systematically a Jewish theology or religious understanding of Christianity. As Orthodox Rabbi Yitchak Greenberg formulates the issue, "It is possible for Judaism to have a more affirmative model of Christianity, one that appreciates Christian spiritual life in all its manifest power. After the Holocaust, a model of the relation of Judaism and Christianity ideally should enable one to affirm the fullness of the faith claims of the other, not just offer tolerance."

VIII
UNFINISHED AGENDA
A. EDUCATION

Although remarkable progress has been made since Vatican Council II, there is still much to be done to change habits of thinking. The self-definition-by-denigration model has not yet been fully replaced on the pedagogical level. Current scholarship that sets the conflict events

described in the New Testament—particularly the Passion narratives and the portrayal of the Pharisees—into historical perspective should be reflected in textbooks, teacher's manuals, teacher training, seminary education, homilies, and in the attitudes of clergy to a much greater extent than at present. Excellent basic reference materials, such as Dr. Eugene Fisher's publication, *Seminary Education and Christian-Jewish Relations*, provide important perspectives on such areas as Sacred Scriptures, liturgy and homiletics, Church history, catechetics, systematic and moral theology, spiritual formation and field education. In Jewish education, particularly in the seminaries, there is a need to overcome the little knowledge about Christian beliefs and the history of present communities, as well as to develop a longer view of the development of Christian thought and history.

B. COMMUNICATIONS

There should be a concern that commitment to improved Jewish-Christian relations is progressing primarily among the "ecumenical generals," leaving a substantial gap with the vast number of "infantry troops." A thoughtful, creative, and systematic use of modern means of public education through mass communications would help close this gap and give depth to Jewish-Christian solidarity.

C. JOINT WITNESS, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The epidemic of dehumanization at loose in large parts of the world is, I believe, one of the most profound challenges facing Christians and Jews. Fanaticisms, verbal and physical violence, torture, terrorism, violations of human rights and freedom of conscience are daily assaults on the dignity of human life created in the Divine image. Close collaboration of Christians and Jews who share a common vision of biblical humanism could bring about a critical mass in stemming the forces of dehumanization and in upholding the preciousness of every human life in God's human family. There are models and structures in both the Christian and Jewish communities for advancing this fundamental objective of redemption. It requires moral will, commitment, and courageous leadership.

D. WORLD REFUGEES, WORLD HUNGER

At a time when nations and peoples squander billions on arms races and weapons of death and destruction, it is scandalous that only modest resources are available to help relieve the staggering hunger, starvation, poverty, and disease in many parts of the developing world. Wherever and

whenever Christians and Jews join hands together and mobilize their common will and material resources, they make a crucial difference in relieving vast suffering and in saving human lives. There is no clearer moral and religious duty than Tikkun Olam, the repair and healing of a broken world. The "covenantal partnership" of the Church and the Jewish people is the surest of God's instruments for realizing that work of the Kingdom.

E. PLURALISM

If after two millennia of estrangement and hostility, Christians and Jews can create a genuine culture of mutual esteem and reciprocal caring, the Christian-Jewish dialogue could well become a sign and an inspiration of hope. Other religions, races, and ethnic groups could turn away from contempt and realize authentic human fraternity. This pluralistic model of the Jewish-Christian symbiosis may be the most important service that we have to offer to our troubled world.

March 18, 1993
THE RABBI JULIAN B. FEIBLEMAN MEMORIAL LECTURE

Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Icons of Our Century

David R. Blumenthal

[Reader. Please note that the author of this essay has chosen not to capitalize words like "shoah" and "nazi"; for a fuller explanation please see footnote 1. Editor.]

INTRODUCTION

As we approach the end of our century, we need to pause and reflect upon its place in human history. One refers to the twelfth century as the age of the crusades and to the thirteenth century as the gothic age. One speaks of the seventeenth century as the age of the enlightenment and of the eighteenth as the age of the industrial revolution. What will intelligent people one hundred years from now regard as the icons of our times?

One will not be able to point to any particular technological advance. The innovations of our century have certainly changed the way we live—the car, the jetliner, the computer, antibiotics—but they are not major compared to the advances that the future will bring. Rather, it seems to me that something in the fabric of our culture will be the symbol (or symbols) of our time. There are two events that have marked our century for all times: the shoah[1] and the atomic bomb. These two moments in human history, embodied by Auschwitz and Hiroshima, will be the icons of our century.

I am not a student of Hiroshima or the nuclear age, but three moments stand out in my mind when the awesome event of August 6th, 1945 entered my life. The first was a meeting with Reverend Kiyoshi Tanimoto, one of the six persons whose stories John Hersey follows in Hiroshima.[2] Reverend Tanimoto received his ministerial training at Emory University where I have been teaching for almost two decades; he and his wife were asked to come to Emory to speak and to be honored. When he spoke, I could barely understand. He told of being on the outskirts of Hiroshima when the atomic bomb went off; of his struggle to get back into the city to

his family and to his church; and of his efforts to help the victims during those first terrible seventy-two hours. Mostly, however, his story is of the devastation of the blast—the bodies melted into the cement, the raging inferno of the firestorm after the blast, the people with their skin burned off, and the strange and sudden deaths from an unknown cause. I had read about Hiroshima but I trembled listening to Reverend Tanimoto—not because of what he said, but because of his witness. Just being in the presence of someone who had been there, who had seen and felt the explosion of the atomic bomb, was awe-inspiring. Reverend Tanimoto's story haunts me to this day; our century will be remembered for it.

The second incident happened when I recounted the story of Reverend Tanimoto to my mother. She listened and then shared an incident from her life. My father had been on a trip, together with my mother, to Hawaii in November 1962. While there, they heard that an atomic bomb was going to be exploded. On that night of November 4, 1962, everyone interested, including my parents, went to the beach. Suddenly, according to my mother's report, the whole eastern sky turned fiery red and yellow, and then a mushroom cloud was seen. As that light faded, all those present remained in stunned silence.

I frowned when I heard the story because I could not believe the United States government would explode a bomb close enough to be seen from Hawaii, but I did not want to doubt my mother. I checked. A bomb, the same size as the one used on Hiroshima, was exploded on Johnston Island approximately 800 miles from Hawaii.[3] It was the last of the atmospheric tests of a nuclear bomb, and the explosion and mushroom cloud were indeed visible in Hawaii.[4] Hearing from a firsthand witness, my mother no less, that an atomic explosion and cloud was seen 800 miles away, I was, and remain, dumbstruck.

The bomb exploded at Hiroshima and the one exploded at Johnston Island were 20 kilotons, but the hydrogen bomb exploded at Bikini Atoll that took place on March 1, 1954, was 15 megatons; that is, 75 times more powerful.[5] For our century, Bikini Atoll is a suburb of Hiroshima; the hydrogen bomb is a natural outgrowth of the atomic bomb; and we shall live through history with that fact.

The third incident, which brought home the deep iconic character of the atomic bomb, I learned when helping to organize Ground Zero, an anti-nuclear protest, in the city of Atlanta in the early 1980s. We did some

research. A single 60 kiloton atomic bomb—only three, not fifteen, times as powerful as that dropped on Hiroshima—if dropped on downtown Atlanta, would vaporize all of downtown out to and including Emory University, some five miles away from ground zero. The blast of that bomb and its firestorm would also level most of Atlanta within the highway that encircles the city. It would wipe out the major hospitals and leave wounded in orders of magnitude greater than the facilities are designed to care for. The blast would hit Emory so fast that we would not have time to confess our sins and say our prayers. Dirt would be sucked up into the air, creating a radioactive cloud that would stretch to Jacksonville, Florida, would be blown all over the southeast. And, since Georgia has many military bases, Atlanta would be hit by more than one bomb, compounding the destruction. This would be the local effect. Worldwide, the picture was not better for we had come to know that the explosion of only 1,000 of the 50,000 atomic bombs then available would set off a "nuclear winter" that would doom the entire planet to another ice age.

Framed, for me, by the live witness to the explosion of the first atomic bomb on August 6, 1945, and by the live testimony to the last atmospheric test of a nuclear bomb on November 4, 1962, and set in the context of a study of the facts done in the early 1980s of possible local and global nuclear devastation, Hiroshima came alive as a symbol of our time.

There it is. We, human beings of the twentieth century created and used military nuclear power. It is part of history; it is part of the story that generations will tell when they recount the events of our century. History cannot be reversed; we can only be held responsible for it. If we have avoided nuclear annihilation so far, that is to our credit. But so is the creation and release of military nuclear power part of our record. Hiroshima will be the symbol of our times; the atomic bomb will be the icon of our century.

I have been linked to the shoah for a longer period of time and more intimately. When I was in high school (1952-56), we did not talk about the shoah. When I was in college (1956-60), which included a year in divided Jerusalem, a scant few hundred yards from Jordanian gun emplacements, we did not talk about the shoah. When I was in rabbinical school (1960-64), which again included a year in divided Jerusalem, I heard one lecture on the shoah. It was not until my third year as an active rabbi (1967) that the shoah was mentioned, and then in a liturgical context. During these years,

too, my great uncle Max, the only member of the family to survive and to come to America, lived half an hour from us, but I did not know him. A curtain of silence hung heavily around him, as it hung around the years he represented.

Three factors enabled Jews to break this conspiracy of silence. First, the unbelievable Six Day War slowly opened the floodgates of knowledge. After June 1967, Jews felt secure enough to confront the ugly, indeed horrible, truth of the shoah. After June 1967, Jews felt confident that history could be mastered and that might would make right. Second, the aging of the survivor generation forced survivors to realize that, if they did not tell their stories, no one would ever know, and the past would be lost. Time was running against the truth of their story, and it needed to be told, painful as that was to prove to be. Third, Jews in America went through a phase of acculturation, of adapting Jewish civilization to western culture.

We learned how to act in an appropriate manner; we assimilated to the dominant culture. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the civil rights movement, however, liberated us. King taught us that it was legitimate to be openly Jewish, that we need not hide our Jewishness any more than he needed to hide his blackness and his African-American culture.

I was at the great civil rights demonstration in 1963 and, by one of those strange acts of providence, I was in the press section, a scant one hundred feet from King when he gave his "I Have a Dream" speech. The speech and the whole occasion were liberating. In freeing us to be Jewish, Martin Luther King, Jr., also liberated us to talk about the shoah.

Slowly and then with increasing speed, books were written, speeches were given, memorials were created, chairs of shoah studies were established, newsletters were started, liturgies developed; American liberators who had known total silence were brought into the picture. I, too, was drawn into the fray as a teacher, scholar, rabbi, and theologian.[6] This led me to conclude that the shoah is a paradigm in three important senses and that this status as a cultural paradigm will turn it into the other icon of our century.

THE SHOAH AS THE PARADIGM FOR THE OPPRESSED, THE OPPRESSORS, AND THE RESISTANCE

To study the shoah is a searing personal experience; it shreds our self-image as decent human beings as we expose ourselves to the utter

helplessness of the concentration camp victim. Nothing helped. There was no way to guarantee survival. A whim meant death. Powerlessness. Those of us who live in a world of empowerment cannot fathom this; we tremble as the realization seeps into our consciousness. We identify with the victim, as fully as we dare; we feel our rage and we gasp at the victim's repression of his or her own rage. We share the victim's humiliation, as fully as we dare, and we rage for her or him. This vicarious suffering and its consequent rage are morally good; they make us human. We *ought* to identify with the victim; we *should* experience rage, even when the victim could not; we *ought* to be angry on behalf of the suffering other.

To study the shoah as a Jew is also to face one's self as the object of hatred, as victim; to know that I would have been the object of hateful brutality just because I am who I am. To study the shoah is to identify with the victims of Jew hatred; to know that, had I been there, I would have endured the same treatment for the same reason: I am a Jew.

The shoah, then, is the incarnation of human helplessness and of racial and Jew hatred. It has become a paradigm of our times, a cultural model—first, for victims.

On the international scene, the usage is particularly common. One writes of the Armenian shoah, the Biafran shoah, the Cambodian shoah, and the Kurdish shoah. One even hears talk of the Palestinian shoah. Political prisoners are said to be in a shoah. One speaks commonly of nuclear shoah and, more recently, of environmental shoah.

On the American scene, too, the usage is common. One speaks of African-American slavery as a shoah. The pro-life movement talks of the "American" shoah referring to babies killed by abortion. Some Jews refer to assimilation and intermarriage as a "second" shoah.

I have even heard of victims of a hurricane referred to as victims of a shoah. Pictures of starving people, of massacred civilians, of prisoners in gulags and camps, and of fetuses—all evoke and claim the paradigm of shoah. Indeed, it was the images of detention camps with inhumane conditions, together with the claim of "ethnic cleansing," that galvanized the world to the plight of the Bosnian Muslims, by echoing loudly the cries of the concentration and extermination camps of the shoah.

For the historical record, while many of the victims who claim the paradigm of shoah have suffered unspeakably, these events have not been a shoah. The shoah properly spoken was not mass murder, nor was it the

carnage of war. The shoah was a systematic, industrialized attempt to exterminate a whole people. There was order and method to identifying, rounding up, transporting, killing, and disposing of the bodies of the victims. The shoah was not an inbreaking of irrationality; it was the epitome of rational, ordered behavior in the cause of racist, ethnic, Jew hatred.

The persecution of Armenians, the killing fields of Cambodia, the slavery of African-Americans, the violation of the civil rights of Palestinians, the torture of political prisoners in many places, the mass kidnapping of children in South America. All are events to be deplored and strongly protested; some may even be said to be genocidal; but they are not the shoah.[7] Yet, the shoah is the paradigm invoked by victims. It is the *icon of the oppressed*. Auschwitz has become the symbol of oppression in our century, the representation of what our human culture has led, and can yet lead, us to.

As the shoah has become the symbol of the oppressed, so has it become the *icon for the oppressors*. Those who hate—and there are many of them—are engaged in a twofold effort. On the one hand, they deny the shoah ever happened, or impugn the evidence for the shoah so much that the truth of what happened is completely distorted. On the other hand and at the same time, the oppressors preach the ideology of the shoah—racial purity and ethnic solidarity—as a positive ideology, advocating and using racial hatred as a justification for their persecution of the different other. Thus, the Serbs openly speak of, and actively practice, "ethnic cleansing" in their attempt to make their country racially pure. There are many other examples.

As the shoah has become the symbol of the oppressed and the oppressors, so too has it become the *icon of the resistance*. It is the memory of the shoah that has drawn Jews and Christians together to fight antisemitism. It is the presence of the shoah that has compelled many Germans to demonstrate against racism, enough to shame their government into action. It is the consciousness of the shoah that motivates much of the backing for the State of Israel by Jews, as well as much of the criticism of Israeli government policy toward the Palestinians. It is the specter of the shoah that motivates many people in the anti-nuclear movement. It is cognizance of the shoah that evokes deep passion in the abortion debate and which evokes firm commitment in the "green"

movement. Put generally, it is the knowledge of the shoah as racist power gone mad that forces us to speak up on issues of repression, starvation, and oppression all over the world.

The evoking of the shoah by resistors of all shades functions by what I call "anticipatory guilt." We, all of us under 55[7b], were not responsible for the shoah; the new generations will not even have live testimony. Yet, because the shoah has entered our collective psyche as a paradigm, we know. And, because we know, we do not want to be passive now for what history may someday label another shoah. I do not want my sons, now in their early twenties, to say to me, "Hey, Pop, what did you do? Why didn't you speak up?" I do not want my students to say to me, "Hey, Dr. B., where were you when...? Why didn't you galvanize us into action?" It is not guilt; it is anticipatory guilt. And, it is *morally good* for, without anticipatory guilt, we would be much poorer ethically. Without being forced to identify with the victims, we will not be responsive to their suffering.

Precisely because it is a paradigm of helplessness, precisely because it is a cultural model of Jew hatred and racism, and precisely because it is the embodiment of an anticipatory guilt that compels us to speak out, the shoah will become the symbol of our century. Because it is claimed by the oppressed, because it is claimed by racist oppressors, and because it is claimed also by the resistors, Auschwitz will become the icon of our times.

THE SHOAH AS THE PARADIGM OF OBEDIENCE AND ALTRUISM

The year 1961 was a seminal one for shoah studies. It was a year whose significance has not yet been fully appreciated. Hannah Arendt covered the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem. Stanley Milgram was in the middle of his famous obedience experiments at Yale University. Arendt, herself a German Jewish refugee and professor of political philosophy at the New School for Social Research in New York, covered the trial of Adolf Eichmann, the man charged with executing the final solution for the nazi regime, for *The New Yorker* and later compiled her work into *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil.*[8] This led Arendt to the startling conclusion: "It was not his fanaticism but his very conscience that prompted Eichmann to adopt his uncompromising attitude during the last year of the war."[9] With this statement Arendt introduced the idea of "the

banality of evil." Doing evil need not be a matter of psychopathology or of ideological fanaticism; rather, doing evil can be a matter of obedience, even a matter of conscience, of dutiful adherence to the demands of authority.

While Arendt was in Jerusalem, Milgram was at Yale conducting the obedience experiments.[10] In these studies, subjects were told that they were to help someone learn a series of word associations by giving the learner an electric shock every time the learner made an error. It was to be an experiment in negative reinforcement. The shocks ranged from harmless to deadly. The learner, who was part of the experiment although the subject did not know it, protested with increasing vigor as the shocks grew stronger. All the teacher-subjects, at some point, objected to continuing to administer the painful and perhaps dangerous electric shocks to an innocent learner. The experimenter, however, simply insisted, in a very impersonal way, that the subject continue the experiment; that is, that the subject continue administering the electric shocks. While Yale psychiatrists had predicted that a fraction of a percent of subjects would continue into the deadly range, the facts are that over 65% continued to the end of the shock range on the simple commands of the experimenter. The statistics held consistently across economic and social class, educational background, and gender; they were slightly higher among college students and in Germany.[11]

In analyzing these frightening experiments, Milgram pointed out that everyone is taught to be part of a series of social hierarchies. "He [or she] has, in the course of moving from a biological creature to a civilized person, internalized the basic rules of social life. And the most basic of these is respect for authority.... There is an internalized basis for his [or her] obedience, not merely an external one.... The most far-reaching consequence of the agentic shift is that a man [or woman] feels responsible *to* the authority directing him [or her] but feels no responsibility *for* the content of the actions that the authority prescribes. Morality does not disappear, but acquires a radically different focus. The subordinate person feels shame or pride depending on how adequately he [or she] has performed the actions called for by authority."[12]

"Being good," Milgram and Arendt demonstrate, is being obedient; not psychopathology or adherence to a moral code. "Morality" is the measure of one's loyalty, cooperativeness, and dutifulness; not insanity or the embodiment of one's commitment to a religious or cultural ideal.

Righteousness is, according to Milgram and Arendt, a matter of conscientious obedience to legitimate authority.

After Arendt and Milgram, many studies were done: the Stanford Prison Experiment (1971),[13] the blued-eyed–brown-eyed elementary school experiment,[14] and the excellent study of Kelman and Hamilton on the trial of Lt. Calley.[15] Always the theme of the shoah is present. Milgram begins and ends his book with it, Lipton and Proctor explore the issue for the medical professions,[16] Müller sets forth the horrifying story of the legal profession,[17] Koonz deals with women in nazi Germany,[18] and Browning, in a book that sets the teeth on edge, explores the mentality of a normal police battalion that had as its task the extermination of the Jews of the Lublin district.[19] The theologians and the professors have also been studied,[20] as have the educators and psychiatrists.[21] Always, the same horrifying point: being good is conforming to the demands of a legitimate authority structure; morality is conscientious fulfilling of the expectations of a duly instantiated social hierarchy.

There can be no exploration of obedience, however, without the study of *resistance*. Much has been done to identify and tell the stories of moral and physical resistance.[22] All these testimonies, deeply moving though they are, raise a fundamental question. If obedience is morally natural, why do some people resist? What is it about rescuers that makes them disobedient?

To answer this question, a whole field called "altruistic studies" has developed. The best scientific study of the rescuers and bystanders is by Samuel and Pearl Oliner.[23] Using the usual social scientific tests and scales, the Oliners studied almost 700 resucers, non-rescuers, and survivors. They suggest that the immediateness of nazi control, local attitudes toward Jews and antisemitism, the position of local leadership, and the availability of rescue contributed toward the likelihood that a person would become a rescuer.

Some facts jump out from this study, though it takes time to absorb them: 65-70% of the rescuers saved more than five people and engaged in rescue activities for three or more years; 80% of the rescuers had households of their own of two or more people, all of whom were endangered by the rescue activities; the remaining 20% of rescuers were single women; 80% were not part of the resistance movements during the war; and, most important, 67% of the rescuers did not engage in rescue

activity until asked by someone in social or peer authority, or by a victim.

The Oliners' conclusions are as simple as they are stunning. Rescue was *not* a function of economic resources, knowledge of nazi policy, patriotism, hatred of the nazis, political conviction, religion, or a special relationship to Jews. These factors, though, did play a part in the decision to act. Rather, rescue activity was a function of a commitment to caring for other human beings. Inclusiveness, pity, compassion, concern, commitment to ethical principles—an ethic of care—this is the vocabulary of the rescuers. Furthermore, the rescuers continue to be caring persons, attending to the sick and aged, and so on.

Most important, the Oliners draw two facts to the surface. First, all rescuers had parents who modeled caring behaviors, parents who preached and practiced care for others. Second, all rescuers had parents who utilized benevolent disciplinary techniques in child-rearing. Reasonable punishment, the Oliners conclude, teaches right and wrong while, at the same time, communicating the message that authority can be challenged, that authority can be dealt with morally.

This contrasts strongly with the modeling and message to non-rescuers for whom authority must always be obeyed, for whom the instructions of an authority figure must always be followed, regardless of the subject's own moral feelings. Either way, the modeling and the message are, the Oliners note, internalized. In the one, they become an ethic of caring; in the other, an ethic of obedience.[24]

"Being good," then, according to the Oliners, need not be the measure of one's loyalty, cooperativeness, and dutifulness; "morality" need not be conscientious obedience to legitimate authority. Rather, the Oliners suggest, "being good" can be a measure of one's commitment to an ethic of caring; "morality" can be a function of one's training and attitude toward the powerless other.[25]

Precisely because it is a paradigm of obedience and of altruism, precisely because it is a cultural model for the study of how we shape other human beings either into socially conforming or socially disconforming persons, the shoah will become the symbol of our century. Because it is claimed by those who preach and exercise obedient authority and because it is also claimed by those who preach and exercise altruistic authority, the shoah will become the icon of our times.

THE SHOAH

AS THE PARADIGM FOR ABUSE AND PROTEST

With this consideration of the shoah as a paradigm for human self-understanding, we move from the realm of political and moral claims to the shoah and from the social psychological lessons to be derived from the shoah into the realm of theology and religious reflection.

Two crucial insights are beginning to surface from the horrifying data about child abuse.

First, a child who has been abused suffers from many very serious problems as a child and as an adult. Foremost among them, the survivor of child abuse loses the ability to trust. Trust, that ever so fragile human relationship upon which civilization is built, is not a natural virtue; it is learned. We learn to trust our parents; we learn to have confidence in, and rely upon, our primary caregivers. We are not born loving those around us; we learn to love. And if someone who has gained that love violates it by invading our bodies, we learn to dis-love. If someone who ought to have our trust violates that trust by beating our bodies, we learn to dis-trust. As a matter of fact, we would be very, very foolish to love someone who has violated the bond of love; we would be very, very foolhardy to trust someone who has broken the covenant of trust. Abused children do not, and should not, trust. Adult survivors of child abuse do not, and should not, easily trust. Wariness, suspicion, and resistance are the intelligent order of the day. Tentative trust, contingent love, and temporary covenant are the reasonable expectations of the abused person.

Second, child abuse is *never* the fault of the child. The child may be told that it is her or his fault; that somehow she or he deserves it. But it is never true. Abusing a child is an act of an adult, by an adult, and for an adult. It wells forth out of the depths of the warped psyche of an adult. Abuse is never the wish of the child. Even lack of resistance is not the fault of the child because the child is at a social-structural disadvantage; she or he cannot defy the adult, either out of fear of further violence or out of fear of violence against someone else. Abuse takes place in a conspiracy of silence; the child may not speak out or otherwise resist. As a result, what characterizes child abuse is not the level of violence but the complete lack of responsibility for abuse by the victim. The victim is the victim, and the perpetrator is the perpetrator; blaming the victim is unfair and unjust.

What kind of religious life can a survivor of child abuse have? What

kind of spiritual existence can a person who has been abused as a child pursue? To put it more plainly: What kind of God can a survivor of child abuse have? What kind of God can a person who has been abused as a child pray to? How can one who has lost basic trust, trust in God? How can one who has a layer of rage within pray to God? These are very serious questions.

The problem of abuse presents itself to Jews in the context of the shoah. Where was God? Did God cause the shoah? How did God allow the shoah to happen? Why would a good and omnipotent God not act to protect God's chosen people? The Jewish people were victims; that is clear. The Jewish people were innocent victims; that is also clear. We, as a people and as individuals were sinful, but not enough to justify killing 1,500,000 babies. We as a people and as individuals transgressed God's covenant, but not enough to justify the shoah. So, where was God?

The Jewish religious tradition gives several answers to this question; I find them all inadequate and would like to suggest that there is another answer, though I admit it sounds offensive and, perhaps, heretical. It begins with a question. If we are the victims of the shoah, who is the perpetrator? If we are the victims of abuse, who is the abuser? I think the time has come to admit that God can be an abuser. God is not always an abuser. Sometimes, indeed often, God is good and God's Presence is a deep comfort to us; from this aspect of God comes our healing. But, sometimes, God does act like an abuser; the shoah is witness to that. And we must, unwilling as we are, face this aspect of God directly, in theological reflection and in prayer.

The idea that God is an abuser is new in terminology but it is an old idea; Jewish tradition has long recognized the unjust nature of Jewish history and responded in thought and prayer. Psalm 44 is an example; a similar stance is taken by Job in the poetic sections of the book that bears his name; and comparable attitudes and responses are taken by the later rabbinic tradition.[26]

The understanding of God as an abusing God and the realization that the proper response is one of challenge and protest form a renewed paradigm for our age. This model enables those who are abused to name their abuse clearly. It sanctions their rage against the abuser and it empowers their sense of righteous self. Adult survivors of child abuse may feel more at home in this theology of protest. Jews haunted by the shoah

may feel more comfortable with this theology of challenge. Indeed, all who are abused may find a spirituality that corresponds openly to their affective lives in this mode of self- and divine-understanding.[27]

Precisely because it is a paradigm of abuse, precisely because it is also a cultural model of rage-ful protest, the shoah will become the symbol of our century. Because it is claimed by survivors of child abuse, because it is claimed by survivors of the shoah, and because it is claimed by sympathetic fellow human beings, the abuse-protest paradigm of the shoah will become the icon of our times.

I wish that our century would be known for its accomplishments in the arts, or for its life-enhancing technologies, or for some stunning intellectual advance, but I fear that is not to be. Too many evil things have happened in our day and in our times. Auschwitz and Hiroshima will be the symbols of our century, the icons of our times. They embody the paradigms of victimage, ethnic hatred, and moral resistance. They personify the models of obedience and altruism, the banality of evil and good. They symbolize the paradigms of abuse and protest, challenge and resistance, even unto God.

Technology is like grass: "in the morning it flourishes and grows; in the evening it is cut down and withers" (Psalm 90:5). Social elegance and art are like beauty, but "gracefulness is deceitful and beauty is vain" (Proverbs 31:30). It is by the terror we have sown and by the lessons we draw from it that we shall be remembered. It is by the destructiveness we have loosed into history and by our moral response to it that we shall be known. Hiroshima and the atom bomb, Auschwitz and the shoah—these will be the icons of our times.

A longer verison of this paper was given as a lecture under the sponsorship of the Chair of Judeo-Christian Studies at Tulane University, New Orleans, in 1994. It was revised and published on my website <http://www.emory.edu/UDR/BLUMENTHAL> in 1997 with the permission of Fr. V. A. McInnes. It is revised yet again now in 2003. I have chosen, however, to retain the voice of 1997 which tried to capture the reflective stance of the approaching end of the twentieth century. It appears in Robert S. Frey, ed., *The Genocidal Temptation: Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Rwanda, and Beyond* (Lanham, Md., University Press of America: 2003), 241-56.

NOTES

1 For many years I used the word "holocaust" to designate the destruction of European Jewry during the Second World War. I have since been persuaded that "holocaust" should not be used for two reasons: (1) It bears the additional meaning of 'a whole burnt offering,' which is certainly not the theological overtone to be sounded in this context. And (2) the destruction of European Jewry happened to Jews and, hence, it is they who should have the sad honor of naming this event with a Hebrew term. The word "shoah" has been used for a long time in Hebrew to denote the catastrophe to Jewry during World War II and has even been adopted by many non-Jews as the proper designation. I now adopt this usage and acknowledge my debt to Professor Jean Halpérin of Geneva and Fribourg for the insight. In any case, it has long been my custom, for ethical and theological reasons, not to capitalize words like "holocaust," "nazi," "final solution," etc.; capitals are reserved for God.

2 New York, A. Knopf: 1946; revised, 1985, with a final chapter added, "The Aftermath," in which Hersey follows the stories of his characters into the late 1970s.

3 The following cities are approximately 800 miles from Atlanta: Milwaukee (799), Dallas and Houston (791), and Kansas City MO (822). The bomb of November 4, 1962 was seen at that range.

4 This is confirmed by the press reports in the *New York Times,* November 5, 1962, pages 1 and 9, and *Facts on File,* for that date. The *Honolulu Star Bulletin,* November 6, 1962, carried an article describing in full the last series of 36 nuclear tests, including the major test of October 30, 1962, which shook the ground in Hawaii. (Photographs of that explosion are in the *Honolulu Advertiser,* November 2, 1962.) The summary article in the *Honolulu Star Bulletin* also contains a photograph of a couple sitting on a bench overlooking the sea (they look suspiciously like my parents) watching the final explosion.

5 Actually, the first hydrogen bomb was exploded at Eniwetok Atoll, not far from Bikini Atoll, on November 1, 1952, though reports of it were leaked only much later. The Bikini blast was covered and reported right away.

6 For more on this, see my "From Wissenschaft to Theology: A Mid-

Life Recalling," in *Selving: Linking Work to Spirituality*, ed. W. Cleary (Milwaukee, Marquette University Press: 2000), 102-112; also available on my website.

7a The best essay on this subject remains S. Katz, "The 'Unique' Intentionality of the shoah," in *Post-shoah Dialogues,* ed. S. Katz (New York, New York University Press: 1985) 287-317. See now, idem., *The shoah in Historical Context,* 3 vols. (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1994-2003).

7b In 2003, it would be 65! My children's ages, cited below, also need to be adjusted.

8 New York, Penguin Books: 1963/1977.

9 Arendt, 146.

10 S. Milgram, *Obedience to Authority* (New York, Harper Colophon Books: 1974); also available as a film.

11 The experiment had many forms and the statistics are spread through the book; see 171 and 173 for the college student and German results.

12 Milgram, 152 and 141; 145-6; egalitarian language added.

13 Available in slide presentation and, later, in a film, "Quiet Rage"; cf. *New York Times Magazine,* April 8, 1973.

14 Film: "In the Eye of the Storm" and later in "A Class Divided"; the latter appeared as a book by W. Peters, *A Class Divided Then and Now* (New Haven, Yale University Press: 1987).

15 H. Kelman and V. Hamilton, *Crimes of Obedience* (New Haven, Yale University Press: 1989).

16 R. Lifton, *The nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press: 1989) and R. Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the nazia* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press: 1988); cf. also "The Value of the Human Being: Medicine in Germany 1918-1945," an exhibition.

17 I. Müller, *Hitler's Justice: The Courts in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press: 1991); reviewed by me in *Modern Judaism,* 1993, 13:95-106.

18 Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland* (New York, St. Martin's Press: 1987).

19 C. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York, Harper Collins: 1992).

20 R. Ericksen, *Theologians Under Hitler* (New Haven, Yale University Press: 1985) and M. Weinreich, *Hitler's Professors* (New York, Yiddish Scientific Institute [YIVO]: 1946).

21 G. Blackburn, *Education in the Third Reich* (Albany, NY, State University of New York Press: 1985) and G. Cocks, *Psychotherapy in the Third Reich* (New York, Oxford University Press: 1985).

22 C. Rittner, *The Courage to Care* (New York, New York University Press: 1986), available also in a film; G. Block and M. Drucker, *Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the shoah* (New York, Holmes and Meier: 1992) which is a catalogue to an exhibit; M. Prager, *Sparks of Glory* (New York, Mesorah Publications: 1974, 1985); C. ten Boom, *The Hiding Place* (New Jersey, Spire Books: 1971); and many others.

23 *The Altruistic Personality* (New York, Free Press: 1988); reviewed by me in *Critical Review of Books in Religion* 3 (1990) 409-11.

24 Oliner, chapters 6 through 8, especially 179-83, as noted.

25 For a fuller exposition of this, see my *The Banality of Good and Evil: Moral Lessons from the Shoah and Jewish Tradition* (Washington, DC, Georgetown University Press: 1999).

26 Cf. A. Laytner, *Arguing With God* (Northvale, NJ, Jason Aronson: 1990); reviewed by me in *Modern Judaism,* 12:1 (Feb. 1992) 105-10.

27 For a full exposition of this theology, see my *Facing the Abusing God: A Theology of Protest* (Westminster / John Knox: 1993). For my second-thoughts on this thesis, see the articles on my website.

February 24,1994
THE RABBI JULIAN B. FEIBELMAN MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Holy See and the State of Israel Past, Present, and Future in the Light of the "Fundamental Agreement"

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PRINCIPLES OF A RELATIONSHIP

On 11 December 1993, less than three weeks before the signing of the "Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel," Pope John Paul II delivered an address that traced, in bold, imaginative terms, a vision of the future for the Christian presence in a renewed, peaceful Middle East. Speaking to experts in Roman and canon law at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome, the Supreme Pontiff reviewed the long centuries of search for a legally secure existence for the Church in the region that saw the birth of the three great monotheistic religions.[1] He spoke of the ways pursued in the past to assure the Christian religious minorities a necessary autonomous space; they have borne fruit in legal and social insitutions that deserve recognition and esteem. However, the Pontiff emphasized that the profound social changes[tl] of our times render "insufficient the sole safeguards traditionally accorded to personal situations or to individually construed aspects of worship." Nowadays, he went on to say, "freedom of religion cannot, in fact, be reduced to the sole freedom of worship; it must include also the right to non-discrimination in the exercise of the other rights and freedoms proper to every human person, considered both in individual and communitarian dimensions."

This contemporary insight poses a challenge and a task to every state, the Holy Father said, quoting a call, issued by the United Nations Human Rights Committee, to examine its own legal order and to modify and perfect it accordingly. "A mature conception of the state and of its legal order," the Pontiff proceeded, "inspired by that which the common conscience of humanity has expressed in the rules of the international community, demands the effort to ensure equality of treatment to every person, irrespective of ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious origin." It is in societies that are built, or refashioned, in accordance with these

principles, he concluded, that "it will be possible to increasingly guarantee, also to the Christians of the Eastern Mediterranean, a future that will preserve their special identity and will be respectful of the human person and its fundamental rights."

Already in 1948, on the 14th of May, a noble vision, congruent with these same aspirations, was expressed by the "Declaration of Independence" of the nascent state of Israel. The state that was being established in conformity with Resolution 181 (II), was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization on 29 November 1947, and made the following declaration in its founding charter.

"The state of Israel shall be based on the foundations of freedom, justice, and peace, in the light of the vision of the Prophets of Israel, (and) shall maintain perfect social and political equality of rights for all its citizens, without distinction of religion, race, or gender, (and) shall ensure the freedom of religion, conscience, language, education, and culture. It will safeguard the holy places of all religions. It will be loyal to the principles of the United Nations Charter."

With these stirring words the state of Israel also promised a different future, one characterized by freedom and equality to the Christian presence on its territory. This, after centuries marked by an unequal struggle to survive on the fringes of a long-ailing empire ruled by a rather different vision of state and society; this, on the fringes of the interplay between religious identity and participation in the rights and duties of citizenship. That empire, gone some decades before, was being replaced throughout the eastern Mediterranean by new nation-states, Israel among them, who were now joining as a new political community in the awakening region.

It is the congruence between the hopes and aspirations of the Holy See for the Christian presence in the whole region, on the one hand, and the noble principles of the Declaration of Independence, on the other hand, that has now permitted the signing and ratification of the Fundamental Agreement. This was in marked difference from other church-state accords entered into in the course of many centuries. This was not a temporary practical compromise allowing the parties to "live with" tensions of one kind or another, but truly a Fundamental Agreement; an agreement on the very foundation of human society in the context of the interaction between religion and state. There is no need to expand on the enormous

significance and exemplary potential of such an explicit agreement, against the background of the complex, evolving situations so fully addressed by the Holy Father in the address of 11 December 1993.

Indeed, the shared values, the common principles, of the parties had been agreed upon before the Fundamental Agreement was formally launched. Thus, at the preparatory meeting of 15 July 1992, the Holy See and the State of Israel adopted a bilateral Agenda recognizing that "the fundamental human right to religious freedom," as explicated in the Universal Declaration and in international instruments, furnishes "a foundation for the relationship between the Holy See together with the Catholic Church, of which it is the Sovereign Organ, and the State of Israel." In establishing the Bilateral Permanent Working Commission, the parties confirmed this same Agenda" a fortnight later, on 29 July 1992. Even more significantly, this primordial Agenda item has now become the very first, and most fundamental, of the articles and paragraphs of the Fundamental Agreement. It read as follows:

> The State of Israel, recalling its Declaration of Independence, affirms its continuing commitment to uphold and observe the human right to freedom of religion and conscience, as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in other international instruments to which it is a party.

The evident reference to the solemn commitment to freedom of religion and conscience, which was freely proclaimed to the whole world at the very birth of the State of Israel, allows one to say that the foundations for friendly relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel had already been laid at that time. They have only been "uncovered" now; building upon them is just beginning.

Many have inquired into the causes of the long interval. Different understandings of the historical evidence have been proposed; some were complementary; others, contradictory. To be sure, there is a legitimate field for scholarly research, and even informed speculation, so long as they adhere to criteria of objectivity and employ proper historical perspective on events, developments, statements, and policies of the past. It is not my purpose, in this modest address, to propose an overall theory or to engage the well-known writers and theses on the subject. Let me simply confine my remarks on the past to a few simple statements, which may seem slightly disjointed, but which I hope can find acceptance as objective, fair,

and helpful.

ABOUT THE PAST

Discourse on relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel was often marked by an unfortunate misconception. The claim was frequently made, in the form of a complaint, that the Holy See "did not recognize" the State of Israel. This was a profoundly mistaken reading of the facts, born of a lack of familiarity with the typical forms of the participation of the Holy See in international life. The fact is that, with rare and rather unique exceptions in the present decade, it was not the custom of the Holy See to declare recognition (or non-recognition) of states and governments. The existence or otherwise of recognition of one international legal person by another does not indeed depend on any formal statement to that effect. "In any case 'recognition' is not a term of art" in international law.[3]

Furthermore, to the extent that it matters, it is rather, "a matter of intention and may be expressed or implied."[4] Now, as a rule, where recognition or non-recognition of a state may be a matter of purely political dispute between or among other states, the Holy See will not seek to intervene with a purely political position of its own. It is clearly recalled, for example, in Art. 11 § 2 of the Fundamental Agreement. "The Holy See...owing to its own character, is solemnly committed to remaining a stranger to all merely temporal conflict."

The other side of the same coin is that, where there is a consensus of the international community concerning recognition of a state, it is safe—indeed, necessary—to presume that the Holy See too recognizes the state in question. Now it is also entirely safe, knowing the approach of the Holy See to international life, to presume that the admission of a state to the United Nations Organization is seen in this light, namely as creating an irrebuttable presumption that the international community as such (although not necessarily every individual state) has recognized the state in question. Since Israel was admitted to the United Nations Organization shortly after its founding, which itself had taken place in accordance with the will of the United Nations, there can be no serious doubting of conclusion that, at least since its admission to the UN, Israel was recognized as a state by the Holy See.

This presumption is confirmed by a whole series of indications spanning many years; there are no indications at all to support any challenge to it. Starting with the audience, granted on 27 March 1952, by

Pope Pius XII to Israel's Foreign Minister Moshe' Sharet, successive Pontiffs received foreign ministers and prime ministers of the State of Israel, precisely in that capacity, as ministers of foreign affairs of the State of Israel. Moreover, in keeping with the custom of the Holy See, every Sovereign Pontiff elected after the establishment of the State of Israel notified his accession to the President of the State of Israel, as to every other head of state, precisely in his capacity as Head of State. These facts alone are sufficient to show that there was no issue of recognition, or non-recognition, pending in terms of how the Holy See related to the State of Israel.

Lacking, however, were formal diplomatic relations. Their absence, and the context and background of such absence, were adverted to and discoursed upon in certain statements issued by officials of the Holy See in recent years. There is no need to repeat them in detail here. Instead let me mention one element of the situation, which is particularly relevant to the formation in our time of the Fundamental Agreement. It is perhaps a partial perspective, but it is particularly pertinent in the present concept.

Writing in *The Times of London*, on 6 February 1980, the paper's Jerusalem correspondent claimed to quote from a privately circulated document, describing the anxieties of churchmen in Israel.

"The present situation of the Christian churches and communities in the Holy Land is also in large part anomalous, and moreover uncertain and insecure. The whole network of treaties, agreements, concessions, and status-quo type arrangements that assure these institutions a whole range of necessary liberties, rights, exemptions, etc., has no firm foundation in statutory or equivalent arrangements recognized as binding on themselves by the civil power, or powers, in the land."

Whatever the correspondent's precise source, he was not wide of the mark. The whole existence of the Church was governed by a mostly but not always consistent patchwork of old Ottoman traditions, and even pre-Ottoman concessions, decrees, laws, customs, and usages, together with a number of treaties concluded between the Ottoman Empire and certain European States. Regarding the continuing force of these treaties, the position of the state of Israel was not always easy to fathom. As to the patchwork, parts were easy to interpret and apply; parts were being casually replaced by new legislation and administrative practice.

Suggestions had been made for years, in various ways, that some form

of new agreements between church and state might usefully be negotiated to settle, stabilize and clarify the whole position. On the whole, though, the Israeli position appeared to be that the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel was a precondition to such a general settlement of church-state relations. The thought on the part of the Holy See, however, appeared to be that diplomatic relations should rather be thought of as the eventual crowning or conclusion of the process of bilaterally settling church-state relations in Israel.

It took a great deal of creativity and imagination to avoid a continuing stalemate on this point as the parties were finally gearing up for the current process, in the spring of 1992. It was then that an amicable understanding was achieved; the normalization of formal relations was certainly one item in a whole agenda, of which the core was the bilateral settlement of church-state relations in Israel.

Of course, these evolving approaches to church-state relations in Israel were not happening in a vacuum, or outside the general history of international relations and the Middle East. There was the 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt; the launching in Madrid, on 30 October 1991, of the Regional Peace Conference for the Middle East; the Israeli-Palestinian "Declaration of Principles" of 13 September 1993 (which is now beginning to be implemented on the ground). All these have been progressively creating a climate in which the dialogue between the Holy See and the State of Israel has flourished. It would be wrong to assume that a real linkage existed between two such completely different processes. Yet the analogy of a climate would seem to be both fair and helpful. It is surely superfluous to expand on this.

The new diplomatic climate in the region was also helpful in dealing with long-standing difficulties on the way to relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel. Thus, for example, a clearer picture was now emerging with regard to the future of the City of Jerusalem. Becoming more evident to all was the distinction between political disputes concerning territorial sovereignty over the City or parts of it and the earnest hopes of the Holy See. Whoever would be recognized as the sovereign or sovereigns in the City or parts of it, would have to accept an internationally guaranteed special statute, one that would safeguard, on the plane of international law, the universal cultural and religious values located"in the City, was. Indeed the Palestine Liberation Organization and

the State of Israel have now agreed to include this in their negotiations.

Likewise, the significance of partial absence of international borders, which had equally hindered the establishment of diplomatic relations by the Holy See with both the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the State of Israel, now appeared to be very much reduced with the major advances in the peace negotiations between these two countries and Israel. Other factors too, felt and commented upon in the past, could now be seen in a new light, generated by the new regional climate.

All of this is undeniable but in the bilateral sphere, which is our proper subject, the imaginative, bold breakthrough in conceiving diplomatic relations as an element in an over-all Agenda could rightly be said to have been the most important single factor; indeed the decisive one. It is significant that this breakthrough was deliberated first by Israel's former Likud-led government, and then worked out in greater detail by the incoming Labor-led government, thus symbolizing broad national consensus on this initiative among Israelis.

Reference to the past cannot be complete without some mention of the dramatic transformation in Catholic-Jewish relations over the last few decades, especially since the Second Vatican Council's Declaration, "Nostra Aetate"—a transformation that reached a certain high point in Pope John Paul II's moving recognition of the Jews as "our Elder Brothers," with all its rich significance, perhaps yet to be fully mined. It is true that the Holy See has always insisted, and will continue to insist, on the clearest distinction between the Catholic-Jewish interreligious dialogue, on the one hand, and the relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel as a State, on the other hand. And yet, it is equally true that, given the centrality of the State of Israel to Jewish self-awareness today, Catholic-Jewish relations are also in themselves a distinct element in the over-all climate. The state of Israel, too, has every reason to feel satisfaction and pride at this achievement; it is so completely congruent with the rich promise of its own "Declaration of Independence"; and it confirms the state's continued determination to maintain the high standards of the "Declaration of Independence" and translate them into practice.

The relationship is full of promise. The Fundamental Agreement, signed on 30 December 1993, was already ratified and in force by the middle of March 1994. By that time, too, the parties raised the level of

their official relations through the exchange of special representatives, possessing personally the highest diplomatic rank, in accordance with Art. 14 § 1 of the Agreement, while the establishment of "full diplomatic relations," in accordance with Art. 14 § 2, is imminent.

The present is also very much aware of the audience granted by the Holy Father to Israel's Prime Minister, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin. The new relationship between the Holy See and the State of Israel was clearly marked by unmistakable external signs, on which the media commented extensively. But much more significant were the statements made on the occasion of this visit by the Israeli Prime Minister. Mr. Rabin expressed an impressive comprehension of the specificity of the Holy See's contribution to international life, especially the promotion of international peace. Specifically heartening were the Prime Minister's appreciative and encouraging reflections on the possibilities open to the Holy See to assist the Middle East peace process. Knowledgeable observers have been speaking and writing for some time now on the eventuality of the Holy See's role in the peace process.

The Holy See's and the State of Israel's participation in the Middle East Regional Peace Conference, in a manner somewhat analogous to its participation in the so-called "Helsinki process," was geared to the building-up of peace and security in Europe. Statements by Prime Minister Rabin and others, including Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Yossi Beilin, have suggested that Israel would now welcome such a contribution by the Holy See. These statements are characteristic of the present situation of gratitude for the Fundamental Agreement, of growing mutual trust and considerable hope. But the present, while definitely leaving the past behind, inevitably moves into the future, which will test the validity of its assumptions and determine the fate of its hopes.

THE FUTURE

In the bilateral sphere, the future will be determined by the complex and demanding process of the implementation of the Fundamental Agreement. The agreement is merely that, a foundation, something solid; yet the whole meaning, purpose, and use of the foundation is to support an edifice that has yet to be designed, let alone built. To build it continues to be the task of the Bilateral Permanent Working Commission, established on 29 July 1992. The Commission (in virtue of Art. 12 of the Fundamental Agreement) continues to pursue the Agenda given it at that

date as well as to build on what the "Preamble" calls "a first and Fundamental Agreement."

Now the core of the Fundamental Agreement consists in the comprehensive bilateral settlement by means of treaty instruments on the plane of international law. That includes all relevant aspects of the relationship in Israel between the Catholic Church and the state; it includes also the primacy of the human right to freedom of religion and conscience, and the reciprocal respect for the proper spheres of competence of the state as a state and the Catholic Church. In Israel, this will involve a review of existing legislation and governmental practice, and a willingness to complete and appropriately modify them as necessary. It is a process that may be delicate in terms of current issues in Israeli public life, as well as technically complicated and arduous.

To accomplish it successfully, the authorities of the state will need to display the same subtlety, imagination, determination, and generosity that have made possible the Fundamental Agreement itself. The Church will gradually become more truly at home in Israel; she and her members will become progressively more aware of the implications of full citizenship in Israeli society. Tiny as the Catholic community is in Israel, it surely has a responsibility to take part in the public conversation. In a particularly significant way, the Fundamental Agreement can be viewed as a contribution to the on-going conversation in Israeli public life; that is to say, on the constitutional principles and values of the state and the need to remain faithful to the highest standards of the Declaration of Independence, in terms of building up a pluralistic, democratic state for all its citizens.

The Fundamental Agreement foresees several other areas and modalities of "transcendent" relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel. Specifically Art. 2 expresses the commitment of the Holy See and the State of Israel to cooperate internationally on a broad range of subjects. In fact, the parties go on record as "committed to appropriate cooperation in combating all forms of anti-Semitism and all kinds of racism and religious intolerance, and in promoting mutual understanding among nations, tolerance among communities, and respect for human life and dignity."

The occasions and proper modalities for such cooperation will disclose themselves gradually, on a case-by-case basis. As communication between

the parties expands, concerns are shared; Israel becomes a full member of that wide circle of political communities, which the Holy See regularly seeks to coordinate and cooperate on initiatives for the good of the whole human family. For its part, the Holy See is likely to count on vigorous Israeli support for initiatives to promote the somewhat stalled progress of international instruments to eliminate all forms of religious discrimination, and to protect "human life and dignity," especially at the most defenseless stages of life, the beginning and the end.

No doubt the further evolution of the regional climate in the Middle East will continue to be significant for the relationship, not least in terms of follow-up to Prime Minister Rabin's, and Deputy Minister's Beilin's, references to the role of the Holy See in relation to the continuing peace process. The Holy See, on its part, will develop its relations with the other nations and peoples in the region, in its search to enlarge the space of religious liberty and establish the indispensable role of human rights generally, and religious freedom specifically. The Holy Father's address, with which I began this lecture, outlines for the Holy See's diplomatic activity a vision and a goal that will need to be pursued patiently and perseveringly.

Catholic-Jewish relations will continue tobe a climatic factor, too. Freed of the burden of past suspicions that the lack of formal relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel somehow betrayed an occult theological agenda on the part of the Church, the interreligious dialogue is likely to progress more serenely and fruitfully than before. The placing of the shared commitment to oppose racism and intolerance and promote mutual understanding and tolerance among nations and communities should turn also the Catholic-Jewish dialogue worldwide "outward," to a world so very much in need of the common witness to the values rooted in the shared heritage of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Ultimately, the future should bring accurate Israeli appreciation of the nature and meaning of the Holy See's wishes for the City of Jerusalem; that would include safeguarding internationally the universally significant religious and cultural values that place the City of Peace at the center of attention of Jews, Christians, Muslims, and so many other persons and communities of good-will. Israel's agreement to discuss the political future of the City with its Palestinian neighbors is a promising omen of new openness to consider also those aspects of the reality of the City, which

transcend the political sphere. A gradual building up of mutual confidence and the daily experience of cordial and constructive relations can well prepare the way for a more profound communication on the subject of Jerusalem, too.

In the end the future of relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel should be marked by the one term in negotiations since the beginning: normalization. It will have been achieved when all those "firsts" of the last few months, which have evoked the admiration and approval of the whole world, cease to amaze and impress, and the extraordinary becomes the ordinary stuff of daily life. The signing of treaties, the presentation of credentials, visits and meetings, all those numerous, discrete acts, events, exchanges that go to make up a normal relationship between the Holy See and a friendly state, in which the Church lives in freedom and security. Was this not the dream of the founders of the modern Jewish national movement for the Jewish people, to have a normal existence in an independent, free, and just state, within the community of nations, enjoying peaceful recognition and the security that comes with it? With this State the Holy See has now entered into Fundamental Agreement—and a mutual commitment to build an edifice of multifaceted relations on this remarkable, solid foundation.

NOTES

1 Discorso ai partecipanti al IX co Lt.oqui.o Internazionale Romanistico-Canonistico organizzato dalla Pontifica Universita Lateranense, ne L'Osservatore Romano di domenica 12 settembre 1993, p. 5.

2 The reference is the Holy See's statement of recognition of the independence of certain former Jugoslav republics.

3 Cf. I. Brownlie, *Principles of Public International Law*, 4th edition, Oxford University Press 1990 (reprinted with correction 1991), p. 91.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 95.

February 24, 1994
THE RABBI JULIAN B. FEIBELMAN MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Establishment of Relations Between the Holy See and the State of Israel

Avi Granot

The task of understanding the greatness of the moment of the establishment of full, diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel could not be completed unless we go back in time and compare the 30th of December 1993 to a past date.

It would have been relatively easy to choose, for comparison's sake, the Inquisition, persecutions, pogroms, or even silence when a cry was needed. Yet I would not want to go so far back. I would rather take you to January 1964. Many of you would remember, although some of you may be too young to remember, that Pope Paul VI made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Many books, not to mention articles, could have been written about the complexity of that visit. One can include the fact that Israel found out about the Pope's visit to the Holy Land from press reports. One can include also the fact that throughout the visit His Holiness would not even once, not even by mistake, utter the name "Israel."

Yet my story to you today is of a different nature. It reflects better than any other story where Jews and Catholics stood and how they related to each other at that time.

Upon arriving to the holy city of Jerusalem Pope Paul VI was welcomed, as the custom goes, by the late Mayor of Jerusalem, Mordechai Ish-Shalom. The Mayor, in honor of the Pope, learned—or I should say tried to learn—a few welcoming words in French, a language the Mayor did not speak, but one that was understood by His Holiness; besides French was easier to learn at the last minute than Latin. The Mayor, obviously quite nervous, presented to the visiting guest a tray with bread and salt, a Jewish custom going back to biblical times. Ish-Shalom was old; his hands were trembling; the salt shaker fell to the ground. The Pope, without hesitation, bent forward, picked it up, and placed it on the tray.

No one made an issue of that tiny incident as it happened. But afterward it dawned on the leaders of Israel watching the event that the

next day's front page would feature the Pope kneeling in front of a Jew. If you wonder why that picture did not appear, it was due solely to the undemocratic and almost uncivilized decision by the authorities in Israel to confiscate and destroy, that same afternoon, the film of all photographers present at the meeting. Israel's fear was not only that the picture might cause His Holiness some embarrassment but also that it would raise immensely the level of anti-Semitism. It is almost thirty years later when normal—or definitely more normal—attitudes describe Israel-Vatican relations.

I would like to stress that one of the concerns that people in Israel as well as Jewish people everywhere had when it came to dealing with the Vatican was the past. How do we deal with the past? How do we compensate for thousands of years of persecution? Can we not mention the Holocaust? In 1948 the Jewish state was finally established, and there was a sense in Israel that the Vatican, at that point, had the moral responsibility to announce publicly its acceptance of the Jewish state. There are those among us who even question whether we have the right to establish full, diplomatic relations with the Vatican until full repentance is achieved. I strongly believe that this kind of view is wrong.

The whole premise has a major fault in it. If in 1977 we dared enter into the process of negotiations with Egypt and eventually established full, diplomatic relations, it was not because we have forgotten all the lives that had been lost on the battlefields; it was because of our commitment to create a better life for generations to come.

Two years ago we embarked, initially indirectly and then directly, in a process of negotiations with what can be considered the worst of our enemies in modern times: the PLO. We often ask the wrong questions, like how can we talk to the PLO? The whole premise of our thinking has to be reversed. I am not comparing one situation to another, but the philosophy behind the negotiations should be the same. It is exactly because of the past that we have an obligation to create a better future. It is exactly because we remember the past that we are responsible for creating structures and systems that are going to present a much nicer perspective for coming generations.

It is with this in mind that Israel embarked on the task of the establishment of relations with the Holy See. The concept our leaders had—that the establishment of relations should not be the end in itself but

the beginning of normal and hopefully good dialogue, or, if I can rephrase it, the establishment of diplomatic relations—should actually create a faster channel and a more solid one of communications; that would make the task of any future negotiation on an issue of bilateral concern much, much easier. For example, one of the criticisms I have heard by some members of the Jewish community regarding the agreement is that it does not address the hidden, ancient Jewish treasure in Vatican vaults. "How do we sign an agreement with the Vatican until we personally have searched the Vatican vaults?"

This premise is wrong. Now I don't know whether the vaults in the Vatican contain the Holy Ark of Solomon's temple. I suspect, and I should point out it is my own personal suspicion, that the possibility is as preposterous as the circulating story of the Holy Ark being stashed in Ethiopia, of all places. But whatever the issue, it is precisely because of the lack of dialogue that we are prevented from dealing with such questions.

We talk about the need to fight anti-Semitism; it is a major issue; in the Jewish and Catholic communities' dialogues this has been a very prominent one. Israel wants and should be part of this dialogue, and we in Jerusalem feel very strongly about participating in it. It is the lack of diplomatic relations that blocks us from any progress.

That concept created a problem in our early negotiations with the Vatican because the Holy See wanted the agreement to end all conflicts and to be the final step towards brotherly relations. Our premise was exactly the opposite. The brotherly relations would develop in time. Issues will be solved one step at a time. The purpose of an ambassador is to solve problems, not to be sent after all problems have been solved. Eventually we said that issues of concern—and there are many—would be dealt with.

One of the subjects on the table is taxation of religious institutions. A valid point to be raised by the Catholic Church, yet at the same time a bit of a problem for a country known as the Holy Land, where it seems that every institution is religious. The whole question of taxation and exemption is a great concern for a variety of denominations.

Another element that had to be preserved is the very delicate balance that we call the "holy status quo" that exists among the various denominations in the Holy Land and has existed for hundreds of years.

The other day Israel's first appointed representative, Shmuel Hadas, presented a letter of credentials signed by Foreign Minister Peres to His

Holiness Pope John Paul II. This is the beginning of a normal relationship. Something that had been missing until the establishment of full, diplomatic relations. While most Israeli Foreign Ministers and Prime Ministers met with the Popes in the last forty years, none of those meetings could be described as official, as they lacked the dignity and respect that is inherent in officialdom.

One of the fascinating elements in the process of true dialogue is the discovery that the same words have different meanings to different people. What was presented as a genuine concern could at times be seen by the other side as a real offense. Such was the request by the Vatican for Israel to guarantee in this agreement its protection of the holy sites. Our belief was that since we have included in our declaration of independence the guarantee of freedom of worship for all religions and since the experience of the last forty-five years has proved Israel's willingness to open up to all religions, there was no need for any repeat commitment.

The Vatican was surprised to hear that we were surprised. They pointed out that while Israel may be committed to its declaration of independence, that document has no relevance in the international arena. And since we have been observant of that commitment, there could be nothing easier than including a guarantee of protection and access to all holy sites in this internationally binding contract.

I do realize that contracts evoke in the minds of many the right to sue, and that good legal minds already ponder such a possibility. But I would like to assure everyone that Israel is committed to looking toward a whole new future with great hope. If 1993 can be viewed as an end of an era of animosity and hatred, 1994 can be seen as a beginning of a new time.

In order to heal many wounds and correct many wrongs, there is a need—first and foremost—for mutual respect. Without this, no healing will ever take place. This fundamental agreement between the Holy See, representing not just the city of the Vatican, but the universal Catholic community, and the State of Israel in its unique role as the Jewish state symbolizes this mutual respect and permits the process of healing to begin.

March 7, 1996
THE RABBI JULIAN B. FEIBELMAN MEMORIAL LECTURE

Jewish Messianic Expectations

David Novak
Edited by Yehuda Halper

I am grateful to the Chair of Judeo-Christian Studies here at Tulane University for the honor of delivering the Rabbi Julian B. Feibelman Memorial Lecture of 1996. Considering who my predecessors in this lectureship have been (in particular, my late lamented friend, Professor Jakob J. Petuchowski), it is clear that the most serious attention to the issues of the relations between Judaism and Christianity is now called for. Yet I cannot help but seriously question the choice of the topic of “Jewish Messianic Expectations” by the sponsor of this annual lecture. For it would seem that this topic in particular has been one that has constituted the greatest division between Jews and Christians. Is it not one about which Jews and Christians have been talking past each other rather than to each other for nearly two thousand years? Would it not be more advisable for a Chair of Judeo-Christian Studies, where the hyphen between “Judeo” and “Christian” seems to indicate a conjunction rather than a disjunction ("and" rather than "or"), to concentrate on what unites Jews and Christians together rather than on what is seemingly an unbridgeable difference that sets one against the other? Have we not had enough of what divides us from each other throughout our joint history—with all the strife and suffering that comes with it—and not nearly enough of what unites us? Do not our relatively new positions in a pluralistic society enable us to work on a new common relationship rather than returning again and again to our old polemical relationship? Shouldn't we attend to what we have that is good and avoid what we have had that is bad?

If one were to ask ordinary people in our society just what differentiates Jews from Christians, they would probably say: "Christians believe in Christ; Jews do not." With a little more education, they would probably say: "Christians believe that the Messiah has already come; Jews believe the Messiah is yet to come." How do we possibly resolve such a difference?

What external criterion (*tertium quid*) could one possibly invoke to prove that either the Christians are right and the Jews are therefore wrong, or that the Jews are right and the Christians are therefore wrong?

Nevertheless, I propose this evening that this crucial difference between us, real though it surely is, need not imply that Jews and Christians cannot engage in intelligent and constructive discussion of the question of the Messiah. For even though we surely disagree about *who* the Messiah is—and is not—we can learn much from each other about *what* the Messiah is; that is, how we think about this issue of messianism in our respective traditions. Here we might very well discover that there is some commonality among us despite the greater differences between us.

Indeed, my proposal is that concentrating on the present political meaning of messianism might show us that there is more to Jewish messianism than the future claim that the Messiah has not yet come, and that there is more to Christian messianism than the past claim that the Messiah has already come. For in the case of the present, the communal present where we all as essentially political beings live, one could well say that the Messiah, specifically the idea of the Messiah, signifies both a presence and an absence. This suggests, at least, that Jewish claims to messianic truth might not entail a total rejection of Christian messianic claims as false, and vice versa. In other words, for Jews, the Messiah is not totally absent; for Christians, the Messiah is not totally present. Being a Jewish scholar, let me concentrate on the Jewish side of this theological-political equation. But, knowing Christians and something of what they believe, and considering the majority of the audience here this evening, the implications of what I have to say for Christians are near at hand for me.

In Judaism, one could well say that all theological ideas have political implications and all political ideas have theological implications. This is because the God-human relationship is essentially covenantal; it is between God and *us*.[1] As such, nothing significant can be said about how humans are to order their lives together without including it in the context of their relationship with God; and nothing significant can be said about how humans are related to God without including it in the context of their relationship with one another. God's covenant is with a people. As such, the relationship of God and individuals—even such exalted individuals as prophets—is always with these individuals as representatives of their community. Thus Moses, the prophet of all prophets,

says to God, “If you will forgive their sin [well and good], but if not, then blot me out from the book you have written" (Exodus32:32). And the people has no identity without being in direct relationship with God. Even their most mundane human activities cannot be seen as merely human concerns. Thus Moses again, speaking on behalf of the whole people of Israel in the wilderness, says to God, "If your presence does not go [with us], do not bring us up out of this place" (Exodus 33:15). Because of this connection of theology and politics, one can never understand any theological idea, and especially the idea of the Messiah which is so evidently political, without understanding the historical context in which it is being explicated. History is the temporal context of politics. And one cannot understand any political situation in history without looking at its theological meaning.

The Messiah is the essentially political idea of the optimal leader of the covenantal polity. It is also the essentially theological idea of how God optimally rules his people. From biblical times on, this has been the issue of kingship. Both God and the Messiah are seen as kings. Yet this has led to a problem – what might very well be *the* theological-political problem. That problem is best expressed in God's response to the annoyance of the prophet Samuel with the demand of the people of Israel for a human king: "It is not you they reject (*ma'asu*) but Me they reject from ruling over them" (I Samuel 8:7). The impasse here seems to be: If there is a human king, then God's authority has been displaced; if God is king, why is there any need for a human authority at all? The compromise seems to be that the people need human authority, but this human authority must never regard itself as ultimate.[2]

Of course, everyone who has ever read much of the history of Israel recorded in the Bible knows that this compromise was never satisfactorily worked out in that history. The human kings were constantly exercising their power in ways that were taken to be in defiance of God and his law, and God never seems to have found the optimal human ruler of his people who could be a true religious and political success—in tandem. The theological problem was seen to be the unfaithfulness of the people with their leaders to God; the political problem was seen to be the constant vulnerability of the people to forces in the world beyond their control. Indeed, these two problems were seen in terms of cause and effect; that is, the religious unfaithfulness of the people to God is what has led to their political impotence. As the classical Jewish liturgy puts it, in the major prayer for the end of the exile (*galut*) and the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, “because of our sins were we

exiled (*galinu*) from our land."[3] So it is, then, that the political situation of the Jewish people is going to largely determine just how they view their unredeemed condition, one that is to be alleviated by the Messiah himself.

The theological solution to this problem became the projection of the idea of kingship onto a future horizon. There was to be a future king of Israel, an "anointed one" (*mashiah*) like all the kings from Saul on who had been anointed, upon whom "authority (*hamisrah*) would be on his shoulders" and who would accomplish "peace (*shalom*) without limit, with David's throne and kingdom, that it may be firmly established in justice and charity, now and forever" (Isaiah 9:5-6). Unlike the earlier kings, who more often than not alienated the people from God, this future optimal king, the Messiah, would reconcile the people with God. Obviously, he would have to be quite different from all the royal failures whowill have preceded him.

Moreover, since Israel's lack of redemption intimately involves her relations with the nations of the world, it would seem, therefore, that Israel's redemption could not be possible let alone complete without all the nations of the world being involved in it somehow or other. This became especially evident during the days of the Second Temple, when the very return of the people to the land of Israel was through the power of the Persian king Cyrus, whose "spirit was awakened by the Lord" (Ezra 1:1). So, a prophet of this post-exilic period speaks of the time when God will "turn to the nations with clear speech to call all of them in the name of the Lord to serve Him with one shoulder" (Zephaniah 3:9). In this call, they will be finally united with "the remnant" (*she'erit*) of Israel, who will do no wrong and will speak no falsehood" (3:13). Indeed, just as the biblical narrative began with all of humanity and God's failure with them, so would the final narrative yet to be written end with God's success with all humanity, a success prefigured in the unbroken covenant with Israel. In other words, Israel's messianically effected redemption will begin with her but will not be confined to her alone. The redemption will not only include the polity of Israel established by the revelation of the Torah, it will also include all of humanity, indeed all of creation itself—a "new heaven and a new earth" (Isaiah 65:17 and 66: 22)

The issue of the Messiah has been until very recently a bone of such bitter contention between the Jewish and Christian communities precisely because their respective political situations have been so different. Furthermore, these different situations have at the most fundamental level involved rival theological claims.

Until quite recently in the full history of the West, Christians have had

considerable political power over Jews. That power, however, has entailed a major theological problem. For the task the Church has seen for herself has been to spread the reign of her messianic redeemer, her Christ, over all humankind. With the initially pagan masses the Church first encountered in its process of separation from Judaism, she was quite successful. It was so successful in fact that from the time of the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, she soon claimed the allegiance of the Roman Empire, the very political power that had crucified her Savior. But there were two major holdouts in this process of theological-political expansion: the Muslims and the Jews. The Muslims posed what might be called a "geo-political" threat; that is, they ruled what was considered to be the rest of the civilized world and sought to expand their rule into the Christian domain. The response to their threat had to be primarily military. The Jews, however, although not posing this type of geo-political threat inasmuch as they had no physical power, posed a more serious internal political threat. They were living under Christian political rule as a matter of expediency only, rejecting at the same time the theological truth claims that justified that very polity. The response to their threat had to be primarily cultural. Indeed, for many Christian thinkers, the conversion of the Jews, which primarily means Jewish acceptance of Christian messianic claims, would be the sign of the fulfillment of the Church's fundamental mandate.[4]

For Jews, conversely, the very fact of living under Christian political rule was indicative of their unredeemed condition. For the Christians considered their domain (“Christendom”) to be the legitimate successor of the Roman Empire, the very power that had destroyed the Second Temple and had initiated the longest Jewish exile. Indeed, the very name Jews had used to designate their pagan Roman oppressors, Edom, was frequently used in the Middle Ages to designate Christendom.[5] Furthermore, the Christians justified their polity in the name of a Jew, Jesus of Nazareth, whom the vast majority of his own people did not accept as their Messiah. As such, it is not hard to understand why so much of Jewish messianic longing in pre-modern times hoped for the final refutation of the Church and her messianic claims.

The situation for most of what we could call Judeo-Christian history has been, therefore, confrontational. It is epitomized by the medieval disputations, where Jewish and Christian theologians were pitted against each other by royalty, frequently for nothing more than the amusement of the royalty who sponsored these contests.[6] The arguments at these disputations were basically theological justifications of political claims and counterclaims. Christians often asserted, as had the Romans before them, that their political

success and the political impotence of the Jews simultaneously proved that God had indeed vindicated their messianic claims. Jews, in response, asserted that messianic claims could only be verified by the entire geo-political condition. That is, until the whole of human civilization was under the messianic realm of full justice and peace, any messianic claims in the present were grossly premature, pseudo-messianic as it were.[7] Needless to say, these disputations were more exercises in theological posturing than actual attempts to engage in true persuasion. For each side was essentially frustrated in its political situation, and the other side was considered to be an essential part of that frustration. Christians thought that Jews were holding up the full reign of the kingdom of God on earth that had already begun with them; Jews thought that Christians were preventing the redemption of the world by their denial of its being centered in the Jewish people.

The rise of secular modernity, especially in the form of the modern nation-state, radically and irrevocably changed the political situation of both Christians and Jews. As such, it could not help but change the messianic theology of both communities.

The modern secular nation-states no longer looked to the Church for their legitimacy. As such, Christians basically had three choices. They could either remove themselves from political life altogether for the sake of their spiritual integrity (the sectarian option), or they could divide themselves into a public secularist self and a private religious self (the liberal option), or they could try to convince themselves and the growing number of irreligious secularists that this new form of polity really drew its strength from Christian sources and had an ultimately Christian meaning (the nationalist option).

Each option had its own messianic consequences. For the sectarians, it meant that Christ's triumphant return would be their redemption from the alien polity and its culture. For the liberals, for whom theology was now so separated from politics, it meant that all hope for the future (which is the messianic hope) was basically taken over by secularist notions of progress. And for the nationalists, it meant that the ethnic project of their particular nation was seen as being the vanguard of the kingdom of God on earth. Here one sees that there is still a connection between theology and politics, but it is an inversion of the ancient one. Here it is no longer the theological justification of politics but, rather, the political justification of theology (what the ancients would have recognized as idolatry). It is no accident that modern anti-Semitism, as distinct from medieval anti-Judaism, grew out of this type

of modern, religiously blessed, nationalism. Modern anti-Semitism is a form of what has been recently called "ethnic cleansing." It asserts that the political integrity of the nation in its drive for ethnic purity requires that the Jews, being the quintessential "other," be eliminated from the polity by whatever means necessary: from expulsion to extermination. Medieval anti-Judaism, conversely, generally insisted that the Jews could not be eliminated until the final judgment; that is, until Christ completed the redemption his first coming had initiated and the Jews would finally accept it.

There is no doubt that the old anti-Judaism contributed to modern anti-Semitism, but it was a case of selective political appropriation of some aspects of theology, not a theological-political vision as had been the case theretofore. Hence many truly insightful Christians quickly realized how Christianity was being used and wholly distorted by the modern nationalists, most especially the Nazis. Thus, for example, the most important Protestant theologian of this century, Karl Barth, was a consistent advocate of a classical type of Christian anti-Judaism and simultaneously a powerful and courageous opponent of the nationalist anti-Semitism of the Nazis and their sympathizers.[8] For him Nazism was idolatry; Judaism, whatever its errors might be for the Church, was still the religion of the people with whom God has made an irrevocable covenant.

Just as there have been sectarians, liberals, and nationalists among modern Christians, each with their own messianism, so have there been these three types of modern Jews, each with their own messianism.

Jewish sectarians (what we now call "Ultra-Orthodox") have basically regarded the political and cultural equality Jews seem to have gained in modernity to be a colossally dangerous mistake for those Jews who have happily accepted it. For them, both liberals and nationalists are engaging in heretical pseudo-messianism. This explains why, in their most extreme forms, they have been very much opposed to Zionism, regarding it as a human, Jewish usurpation of the redemption (*ge'ulah*) that is the prerogative of God alone.

Jewish liberals, very much like their Christian counterparts, have divided themselves into a private and a public part, reserving whatever Judaism they have left for the private realm. Thus, having so completely severed from their Judaism its political component, their politics has merged with general

secularist notions of progress and, therefore, they have no messianic doctrine to speak of. In the case of Jewish Marxists, of whom there are hardly any left due to Communist anti-Semitism, where the private realm was rejected as “bourgeois,” there was no place left for their Judaism at all, and they often turned against it violently.

Finally, unlike Christian nationalists who could conceive of their own ethnic locality as the place for the solution of their theological-political predicament, Jewish nationalists had to look elsewhere. Hence Zionism saw the solution to the Jewish theological-political predicament in a revived Jewish state in the land of Israel. For the growing number of Jews who see the Zionist triumph of the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 as having religious significance, the messianic implication of this political act is expressed in the prayer for the new state composed by its Chief Rabbinate, where the state (*medinat yisra'el*) is referred to as "the beginning of the growth of our redemption" (*re'eshit tsemihatge'ulatenu*).[9] Like all forms of nationalism where a religious justification is invoked, Zionism will have to prove that such a justification is more than a mere rationalization of political power. But the State of Israel, the political product of the Zionist movement, is still too young to judge the value of its approach to the theological-political predicament of the Jews.[10]

Now just as the messianism that has emerged from modern Christian sectarianism, liberalism, and nationalism is problematic, so is the messianism that has emerged from Jewish sectarianism, liberalism, and nationalism problematic.

At this juncture of history, it would seem that Jews and Christians have come closer together than ever before in their respective political situations. Christians can no longer claim the political order as their own. Like the Jews, they too have now become marginalized. Modern secularism has forced Christians to look elsewhere for the solution to their theological-political predicament. Indeed, the modern phenomenon of nationalism, which so often deviously uses religious motifs to promote its own essentially idolatrous project, should make Christians very wary of hoping somehow or other to recapture the political realm. And Jews have to a certain extent regained political power in the world, both by becoming citizens of modern nation-states and by reestablishing their own state in Israel. Although there remain

vast differences between these two political situations in the world today (for one, there are many more Christians than Jews), both require a fresh look at their respective theological justifications. Both communities are faced with the peculiar balance of power and marginality in the world. Neither community anymore is in a position of dominating or being dominated by the other or by the world. This peculiar balance very much entails more research on the issue of messianism on the part of both Jewish and Christian scholars.

As a Jewish scholar I cannot propose anything like a real solution to the Christian theological-political predicament. However, since this predicament is somewhat similar to the Jewish one, I cannot help but think that Christians have good reason to be interested in my own reflections on Jewish messianism.

Throughout the history of Judaism, I have been able to detect basically two forms of messianism. One type of messianism might be called "extensive." the other "apocalyptic." Each form of Jewish messianism has its own distinct view of the future of the covenant, and this is connected to how it views the past and the present of the covenant as well.

The covenant has a past, a present and a future. The past is creation; that is, what God has brought into existence, the world in which all humankind, Israel included, live and work. In the created realm, natural law operates, directly governing interhuman relations, but only indirectly alluding to God who created the world with moral norms imbedded in it, and which are discoverable by rational human beings inhabiting this world.[11]

Into this world come the election of Israel and the revelation of the Torah to her. This event of election/revelation is experienced by Jews as present inasmuch as the commandments (*misvot*) that concretize this event are ever present acts. When the Bible says that the commandments (first and foremost the commandment to love God) are to be "this day (*hayom*) upon your heart" (Deuteronomy 6:6), the Rabbis comment: "they should not be in your eyes like an antiquated decree (*diatagma*) that nobody minds, but like a new decree which everyone hastens to read."[12] The Rabbis see the continuous reacceptance of the Torah as incumbent on the community that has accepted it as its own constitution.

If revelation is the fuller extension of the law of creation, one can see redemption, the coming of the Messiah, as meaning the maximum extension

of the authority of the law possible, with the best possible political results. About the coming of the Messiah, Maimonides writes:

> Do not think that in the days of the Messiah any aspect of the natural order of things will be annulled or that there will be something new (*hiddush*) in the order of creation, but the world will continue in its normal course (*keminhago*). … The essence of the matter is that Israel will dwell securely … and all of them [Jews and gentiles] will return to the true faith (*datemet*) and no one will rob or destroy.[13]

In order to emphasize the universal meaning of all this, he soon says thereafter:

> The prophets and the sages did not desire the day of the Messiah in order that they [Israel] might rule over all the world or subjugate the gentiles or that the nations might exalt them but that they might be free to be involved in the Torah and her wisdom, that no one might persecute or deter them. This is so that they might merit the life of the world-to-come.[14]

Here we have the theological presentation of extensive Jewish messianism in its most impressive philosophical form. Being heavily influenced by Plato, especially by Plato's political philosophy as it was developed by the Muslim philosopher A1-Farabi, Maimonides clearly constitutes the Messiah as the true philosopher-king. But, unlike Plato's philosopher-king and his philosophical colleagues (whom Plato called the "guardians" of the ideal polity), who basically make up the law of the polity as they go along,[15] the Messiah-king is the one who intelligently and imaginatively applies the law of the Torah to the mundane affairs of the world, the Torah being the law that best expresses eternal and politically effective truth.

This extensive messianism has several key components, all of them logically connected. First, it is not supernatural, but it is the reign of an exceptionally intelligent and imaginative ruler. Second, the Jewish people play a key role in this universal reign precisely because it is essentially the universal reign of the Torah and they are the people who have accepted the Torah and preserved it. Third, the reign of the Messiah will not be one of Jewish dominance because the gentiles will be attracted to this reign by virtue of its spiritual and political goodness. Fourth, the messianic reign is not the ultimate redemption desired by Israel and all humanity. That final

redemption is decidedly nonpolitical, or better transpolitical.[16]

Finally, in a responsum written toward the end of his life, Maimonides praises Christians for the fact that they (in contrast to the Muslims) accept the full Mosaic Torah as the word of God, their only problem being their sometimes erroneous interpretation of it.[17] (Thus Thomas Aquinas, who so clearly respected Maimonides for his insight into the Torah, would himself be by Maimonides' criteria a prime candidate for the world-to-come precisely because Aquinas insisted that the natural law is only the rationally accessible part of the divine law, all of which is rooted in the eternal law by which God governs the universe.[18])This problem, he is convinced, could be rectified by Christians' learning Torah from insightful Jewish teachers. In other words, Maimonides is suggesting Jewish proselytizing, and that Christians are the prime candidates for it (a logic that Christian proselytizing of Jews has employed by inverting the key terms of the proposition).[19]

At this point, many contemporary Jewish theologians, especially those of a more traditionalist stance, would be content to stop here with Maimonides' beautifully coherent messianic doctrine. For our purposes here, its advantages seem to be that it is not a theory of political subjugation, and that it constitutes a particular place of importance for Christianity. Yet, despite my own traditionalism and despite my own reverence for Maimonides, I am inclined for theological-political reasons to prefer what I have termed the apocalyptic form of Jewish messianism.

In this form of Jewish messianism, the end-time is not an extension of the present. Following the etymology of the very word "apocalypse" (from the Greek *apokaluptein*, “to fall down”), it is a wholly new future invading the present as it were. In this view, it would seem, the messianic reign is not a political preparation for the transcendent world-to-come but is identical with it. In the brief time I have left, let me indicate what its advantages are in my view.

First, despite the fact that Maimonides is careful to eliminate any gross political subjugation from his extensive messianic theory, it is still a form of what we might term cultural imperialism. Although the gentiles will not be required to adopt Judaism in all its details, their monotheism will be secondary, albeit tolerated by the Jews. The apocalyptic version of Jewish messianism, conversely, can be interpreted to indicate that in the "end of time" (‘*aharit hayamim*), all that distinguishes the Jews from the rest of humankind will no longer be necessary. Those commandments that are termed “ritual,” such as the dietary laws or the observance of Passover, can

be envisioned as being null and void (*betelot*) in the truly transcendent future. Only those laws that pertain to all humankind, such as the commandments to love God and love one's neighbor, will prevail.[20] In other words, the days of the Messiah will be the reconciliation of all humankind with God. The theological-political meaning of all of this here and now is that Jews, Christians, Muslims—indeed, all monotheistic faith traditions—can be convinced of their respective truth claims here and now (*sub specie durationis*), without having to make the triumphalist claim that we and we alone have the complete truth forever (*subspecie aeternitatis*).[21]Second, despite the fact that Maimonides is careful not to identify the Messiah with any present Jewish regime, he still makes the future sound too much like the present. As such, the messianic future is not transcendent enough to adequately function as the "day of judgment" (*yom hadin*) of all that has transpired within human history. It includes the resurrection of the dead. To do that it must clearly bebeyond history as far as we can possibly conceive it. In this sense especially, when we have become so disillusioned by all the confident "futurism" of modernity, by retrieving a more apocalyptic messianism, Jews and perhaps Christiansin a parallel way can truly wait for that which "no eye has seen" (Isaiah 64:3) but God's.[22] What we have seen and can see is simply not enough for our human selves as the image of the unseen God.

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[1]For rabbinic insistence on the irrevocability of the covenant, both for Israel and for God, see *Babylonian Talmud:* Shevu 'ot 39a; Berakhot 32a.

[2] See Martin Buber, *Kingship of God,* trans. R. Scheimann (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 138ff.

[3] *The Prayer Book,* trans. B.Z. Bokser (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1961), p. 184.

[4]See, e.g., Augustine, *City of God*, 18.46-47.

[5]See, e.g., Solomon Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (New York: Schocken, 1961), pp. 99-101. This is also mentioned in Gershom Scholem, *The Origins of the Kabbalah,* trans. A. Arkush (Princeton: Princeton University Press,1987), p. 296.

[6]For a major study of the most famous of these debates, see R. Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond: The Disputation of 1263 and Its Aftermath* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).See also, e.g., D. Berger, *The Jewish-ChristianDebate in the High Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979).

[7]See Hasdai Crescas, *The Refutation of the Christian Principles,* trans. D.J. Lasker (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 65-66.

[8]See Katherine Sonderegger, *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew: Karl Barth's "Doctrine of Israel"* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).
[9] *The Prayer Book,* p. 166.
[10]See Yeshayahu Leibowitz, *Judaism, Human Values, and the Jewish State,* trans. E. Goldman et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).
[11] Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*: Melakhim, 8.11-9.1.
[12] *Sifre: Devarim,* no. 33. Cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 6:6.
[13] *Mishneh Torah*, Book of Kings, 12.1.
[14] *Ibid*. 12.4. Cf. *Babylonian Talmud*: 'Eruvin43b.
[15]Cf. Plato, *Republic* 425c ff.
[16] See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*: Teshuvah, 8.7-8
[17] *Responsa of Maimonides* (Heb.), no. 149, ed. J. Blau (Jerusalem: Mekitsei Nirdamim, 1957), 1, pp. 284-85.
[18]See *Summa Theologiae,* 2/1: q.93, a.3; q.94, a.4 ad1.
[19]See D. Novak, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Jewish Justification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 64ff.
[20]See D. Novak, *The Election of Israel: The Idea of a Chosen People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 152ff.
[21]See Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption,* trans. W.W. Hallo (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1970), pp. 415-16.
[22]See *Babylonian Talmud: Berakhot* 34a; I Corinthians 2:9.

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THE RABBI JULIAN B. FEIBELMAN MEMORIAL LECTURE

Theological Responses to the Holocaust

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I

In responding theologically to the Holocaust, Jewish thinkers have explored many possible conceptual avenues, some old, some new. Jewish history is no stranger to national tragedy and, as a consequence, there is an abundance of traditional explanatory "models" that could be, and have been, adapted, and re-applied to the Holocaust. Of these, six have regularly been looked to by modern thinkers as providing some map for dealing with the theological complexities of our own time.

1
THE AKEDAH
(THE "BINDING OF ISAAC")

The biblical narrative recounted in Genesis 22:2ff is often appealed to as a possible paradigm for treating the Holocaust. Such a move is rooted in Jewish tradition, especially that of the medieval martyrologies of the crusader and post-crusader period, during which time the biblical event became the prism through which the horrific medieval experience became refracted and "intelligible." Like Isaac of old, the Jewish children of Europe and, more generally, all of slaughtered Israel, are martyrs to God and willingly sacrifice themselves and their loved ones in order to prove beyond all doubt their faithfulness to the Almighty. See Shalom Spiegel, *The Last Trial* (E.T., New York,1967,Schocken Books) and the medieval religious poems collected in A.M. Habermann, *Sefer Gezerot Ashkenaz Ve Tzarfat* (Jerusalem, 1945). The appeal of this decipherment lies in its heroic imputation to the Dead, in the defense of their sanctity and obedience to the God of Israel. Their death is not due to sin, or to any imperfection on their part, or to any violation of the covenant, but rather is the climactic evidence of their unwavering devotion to the faith of their fathers rather than its abandonment. As a consequence, the traditional as well as more contemporary reproach, that what befalls Israel is "because of our sins," is wholly inappropriate. Not sin but piety is the key factor in accounting for

the genocidal event. God makes unique demands upon those who love Him, and whom He loves. As with Abraham, so too the Jewish People in our time respond with a fidelity of unmatched purity and selflessness. As such, the dreadful events become a test, the occasion for the maximal religious service, the absolute existential moment of the religious life, whose benefits are enjoyed both by the martyrs in the world-to-come, as well as by the world as a whole which benefits from such dedication.

In evaluating the oppositeness of this reading of the Holocaust, one appreciates the positive elements which it stresses: its avoidance of the imputation of sin to the victims, its denial of sin as the cause of the horrific events which unfolded, its praise of Israel's heroism and faithfulness. Yet the analogy between biblical and contemporary events breaks down before other elemental features of the Akedah paradigm.

A In Genesis it is God who commands the test. Are we likewise to impute Auschwitz to a command of God? Or is such a direct claim so terrible as to shatter all belief in the compassionate God of Israel?

B In the original it is Abraham, God's especially faithful servant, who is tested—and tested because of his special religious status: "Take now thy son, the only son, whom Thou loves" (Genesis 22:2). Can we transfer, as is required by the analogy, Hitler and his SS into the pivotal role of Abraham? Abraham who sacrifices his "beloved,"as compared to the *Einsatzgruppen* who murdered Jews as lice, as sub-humans, as the principle of all that was negative, parasitical, polluting in creation?

C Above all, in the biblical circumstance the Angel of the Lord brings the matter to a conclusion with no blood being shed: "Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything to him" (Genesis 12:12).

2
JOB

The biblical book of Job, the best known treatment of theodicy in the Hebrew Bible, naturally enough presents itself as a possible model for decoding the Holocaust. According to such a rendering, and parallel in certain ways to the modality suggested by the Akedah, Job provides an inviting paradigm because again Job's suffering is caused not by his sinfulness but rather by his righteousness—perceived by Satan as a cause for jealousy. Moreover, the tale ends on a 'happy' note: Job is rewarded for

his faithfulness with God's double blessing. On a deeper level, of course, the issues are far more problematic and their meaning ambigious; i.e., the resolution of Job's doubts is never really clear; God's reply through the whirlwind is, in important ways, no answer to Job's questions and, perhaps most telling; Job's first wife and family are still dead through no fault of their own.

Beyond the inherent difficulties in ascertaining the correct reading of Job, the story in its detailed structure presents details which lead away from rather than toward an analogy with the Holocaust, and hence with the use of Job as an appropriate response to Hitler's demonic assault.

A The reader of Job knows, via the prologue, that the pact between God and Satan over the conditions of Job's trial explicitly include that Job not be killed. This, above all, renders the situation of Job and that of Auschwitz altogether different.

B Except for the few who survived, all other theological ruminations are by those who were not in the hell of the death-camps; hence our situation is not that of Job but, as Eliezer Berkobits has said, of Job's brother. Hence, our cry is a different cry, our faith and its resiliency a different faith.

C Thirdly, the haunting matter of those who died in order to make the test possible finds no "resolution" in Job. God's capriciousness appears all too manifest.

D And lastly, the climax of Job occurs when God reveals Himself. He may not provide an answer to the specific bill of complaints raised by Job, but at least Job knows there is a God and hence, at a minimum, has some reason to "trust in the Lord," even while not understanding his ways. Job receives some sort of "answer," as Martin Buber among others emphasized, through this manifestation of God's presence: "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eyes see thee; wherefore I abhor my words and repent" (Job 42:5-6).

Knowing there is a God makes a fundamental difference, even if one does not know how God balances the equation of good and evil, righteousness and reward. By contrast, and inescapable, those who went to their death in the death camps, or those murdered by SS men in mass graves, or those children thrown alive into open fires, received no such comforting revelation of the Divine. This unbroken silence makes the

totality of the Holocaust irreconcilable with a Joban mode.

3
THE SUFFERING SERVANT

One of the richest theological doctrines of biblical theodicy is that of the "Suffering Servant." Given its classic presentation in the Book of Isaiah (especially chapter 53), the "Suffering Servant" doctrine is that of vicarious suffering and atonement in which the righteous suffer for the wicked and hence allay, in some mysterious way, God's wrath and judgment, thus making the continuation of history possible. According to Jewish tradition, the "Suffering Servant" is Israel, the people of the covenant, who suffer with and for God in the midst of the evil of creation. As God is long-suffering with His creation, so Israel, God's People, must be long suffering. In this they mirror the divine in their own reality and through this religiously rooted courage they, by suffering for others, make it possible for creation to endure. In this act of faithfulness the guiltless establish a unique bond with the Almighty. As they suffer for and with Him, He suffers their suffering, shares their agony, and comes to love them in a special way for loving Him with such fortitude and without limit.

This theme has been enunciated in Jewish theological writings emanating from the Holocaust era itself and continuing down to our own day. One finds it in the writings of Hasidic rebbes, of conservative thinkers such as Abraham Joshua Heschel (*Man's Quest for God and God in Search of Men*), and Orthodox thinkers such as Eliezer Berkovits (*Faith After the Holocaust*, pp. 124-127). In these and many other sources it receives a classical exposition: "God's servant," Berkovits writes, for example, "carries upon his shoulders God's dilemma with man through history. God's people share in all the fortunes of God's dilemma as man is bungling his way through toward Messianic realization" (p. 127).

One contemporary Jewish theologian has, however, gone beyond the traditional framework and used it to construct a more elaborate, systematic, theological deconstruction of the Holocaust. For Ignaz Maybaum, a German Reform Rabbi who survived the war in London, the pattern of the "Suffering Servant" is the paradigm of Israel's way in history. First in the "Servant of God" in Isaiah, then in the Jew Jesus, and now at Treblinka and Auschwitz, God uses the Jewish people to address the world and to save it: "They died though innocent so that others might

live." According to this reading of the Holocaust, the perennial dialectic of history is God's desire that the gentile nations come close to Him, while they resist this call. To foster and facilitate this relationship is the special task, the "mission," of Israel. It is they who must make God's message accessible in terms the gentile nations will understand and respond to. But what language, what symbols, will speak to the nations? Not that of the Akedah in which Isaac is spared and no blood is shed but rather, and only, that of the crucifixion; i.e., a sacrifice in which the innocent die for the guilty, where some die vicariously so that others might live.

Accordingly, modern Israel repeats collectively the single crucifixion of one Jew two millennia ago and by so doing again reveals to mankind its weaknesses, as well as the need for its turning to Heaven. In a daring parallelism Maybaum writes: "The Golgotha of modern mankind is Auschwitz. The cross, the Roman gallows, was replaced by the gas chamber. The gentiles, it seems, must first be terrified by the blood of the sacrificed scapegoat to have the mercy of God revealed to them and become converted, become baptized gentiles, become Christians" (*The Face of God After Auschwitz*, p.36). For Maybaum, through the Holocaust the world moves again forward and upward, from the final vestiges of medieval obscurantism and intolerance, of which the Shoah is a product, to a new era of spiritual maturity, human morality, and divine-human encounter.

The critical difficulties inherent in this view are twofold. As to the thesis in its generality, it "solves" the problems raised by appeal to a doctrine which is equally in need of explanation; i.e., the notion of vicarious suffering, especially suffering on so monumental a scale and involving such systematic indignity, incalculable pain, and vast death. Applied to the Holocaust the answer, i.e., the doctrine of the Servant, seems worse than the problem: a God who acts in such a way, who demands such sacrifices, who regulates creation by such "unacceptable" means, is a God whose nature requires more than a little explanation within the covenantal framework of biblical faith. Surely the omnipotent, omniscient Creator could have found a more satisfactory principle for directing and sustaining His creation. If at this juncture one defends the doctrine of vicarious suffering, one can only do so by recourse to mystery—"God's ways are not our ways"—but this is not an explanation but a capitulation before the immensity of the Shoah, and a cry of faith.

In the more specific, elaborate form given to the doctrine by

Maybaum, the problem is sharper. First, it empties Jewish life of all meaning other than that intelligible to and directed towards these gentile nations. Only the Christocentric pattern now applied to the people of Israel gives meaning to this people's history and spirituality. Second, and urgent, is the realization that this view is predicated on a fundamentally false analogy between the Holocaust and Good Friday. Christians are able to declare that "Christ died for the sins of mankind," for (at least) two cardinal reasons. The first and most weighty is that Christ is believed to be God Incarnate, the Second Person of the Trinity: the Crucifixion is God taking the sins of mankind on Himself. He is the vicarious atonement for mankind. There is thus no terrible cruelty or unspeakable "crime" but only Divine Love, the presence of unlimited Divine Grace. Secondly, the human yet divine Christ, the Hypostatic Union of man and God, mounts the Cross voluntarily. He willingly "dies so that others might live." How very different was the Shoah. How very dissimilar its victims (not martyrs) and their fate. The murdered, including the million Jewish children, were not Divine—they were all too human creatures crushed in the most unspeakable brutality. If God was the cause of their suffering, how at odds from the traditional Christian picture, for here God purchases life for some by sacrificing others, not Himself. Here grace, if present, is so only in a most paradoxical way, and certainly not in the reality of the victims. Here there is only Golgotha, crucifixion, death; there is no Easter for the crucified ones. Furthermore, the Jews were singled out "unwillingly"; they were not martyrs in the classical sense though we may wish to so transform their fate for our needs.

The disanalogy of the Holocaust and Good Friday reveals yet something more. According to Maybaum, the symbol of the Crucifixion is that of vicarious atonement. But given the circumstances of this vicarious sacrifice, of Auschwitz and Treblinka, of *Einsatzgruppen* and gas chambers, is it not the case that the nature of the atonement is far more criminal and infinitely more depraved than the sins for which it atones? What sort of reconciliation can the work of Hitler and the SS have been? What sort of kohanim (priests) were these and what sort of sacrifice can they bring? Can one truly envision God, the God of Israel, making such vicarious expiation?

4
HESTER PANIM

GOD HIDES HIS FACE.

The Bible, in wrestling with human suffering, appeals, especially in the Psalms, to the notion of Hester Panim: "The Hiding of the Face of God." This concept has two meanings. The first, as in Deuteronomy 31:17-18 and later in Micah 3:4, is the causal one which links God's absence to human sin: God turns away from the sinner. The second sense, found particularly in a number of psalms (e.g., Ps 44.69,88 and variants in, e.g., Ps 9, 1ff, 13; and see also Job 13:24), suggests protest, despair, confusion over the absence of God for no clear reason, and certainly not, e.g., in the mind of the Psalmist, as a consequence of sin. Here mankind stands "abandoned" for reasons that appear unknown and unfathomable. The Divine Presence has been removed and chaos unloosed upon the world. Thus the repetitive theme of lament sounded in the Psalms, "Why" or "How long," God, will you be absent? Is it possible for God to be continually indifferent to human affairs, to be passive in the struggle of good and evil, to be unmoved by suffering and its overcoming?

In applying this difficult doctrine to the Holocaust modern theologians are attempting three things:

(a) to vindicate Israel;

(b) to remove God as the direct cause of the evil; i.e., it is something men do to other men; and

(c) to affirm the reality and even saving nature of the Divine despite the empirical evidence to the contrary.

The first two points need no further explanation; the third and most significant does. Framed in this way Hester Panim is not merely or only the absence of God but rather entails a more complex exegesis of Divine Providence stemming from an analysis of the ontological nature of the Divine. God's absence, Hester Panim, is a necessary, active, condition of His saving mercy; i.e.,His "hiddenness" is the obverse of His "long-suffering" patience with sinners; that is, being patient with sinners means allowing sin. "One may call it the divine dilemma that God's Erek Apayim, his patiently waiting countenance to some is, of necessity, identical with his Hester Panim, his hiding of the countenance, to others" (Berkovits, *Faith*, p. 107). Placed in the still larger mosaic of human purpose Hester Panim also is dialectically related to the fundamental character of human freedom without which man would not be man. (We shall return in detail to this doctrine below in point 6.) It needs also to be recognized that this

notion is an affirmation of faith. The lament addressed to God is a sign that God is, and that His manifest presence is still possible. Even more, it declaims that God in His absence is still, paradoxically, present. It is a sign that one believes that ultimately evil will not triumph for God will not always "Hide His Face." For some contemporary Jewish theologians like Emil Fackenheim, Eliezer Berkovitz, Yitzchak Greenberg, and Martin Buber, the State of Israel is proof of this.

Martin Buber, in his contemporary idiom, modernized the biblical phrase and spoke of our time during and after the Holocaust as one of "the eclipse of God"; he titled his 1952 book *The Eclipse of God*. Like the believers of old he too wished, through this felicitous description, to continue to affirm the existence of God despite the counter evidence of Auschwitz. Yet such affirmations stand under two critical judgments. First, it is again an appeal to faith and mystery despite strong evidence to the contrary. Second and related, this gambit still has to answer the pressing question: Where was God in the death camps? Given the moral attributes, the qualities of love and concern which are integral to His nature, how can we rest in the assertion of His self-willed absence, i.e., passivity in the face of the murder of a million Jewish children? Thus, this solution only produces a larger metaphysical and moral conundrum.

5

MIPNEI CHATAEYNU
"BECAUSE OF OUR SINS WE ARE PUNISHED"

In biblical and later Jewish sources the principal, though as we have already seen not unique, "explanation" for human suffering was sin. There was a balance in the universal order that was inescapable: good brought forth blessing; sin, retribution. Both on the individual and collective level the law of cause and effect, sin and grief, operated. In our time it is not surprising that some, particularly traditional, theologians and certain rabbinic sages have responded to the tragedy of European Jewry with this classical "answer." Harsh as it is, the argument advanced is that Israel sinned "grievously" and God, after much patience and hope of "return," finally "cut off" the generation of the wicked. Though the majority of those who have wrestled with the theological implications of the Shoah have rejected this line of analysis, an important if small segment of the religious community have consistently advanced it.

Two questions immediately arise in pursuing the application of this

millennial old doctrine to the contemporary tragedy of the Holocaust.

First, "what kind of God would exact such retribution?" In all the writings of those who advance this "explanation," no real effort has been made to truly grapple with this shattering concern. Christian thinkers who "explain" Auschwitz as another in the age-old punishments on a rebellious Israel for the crime of deicide, and Jewish thinkers who pronounce on Israel's sinfulness, are obligated to reflect, to be self-conscious, about the implications for their God-idea of such dogmatics. Could a God of love, the God of Israel, use a Hitler, use the SS, to consume the Jewish people in medical experiments without purpose, unbridled sadism, *Einsatzgruppen* "actions" and gas chambers?

Second, what sin could Israel be guilty of to warrant such retribution? Here the explanations vary depending on one's perspective. For some, such as the late Satmar Rebbe, R. Joel Teitelbaum, and his small circle of Hasidic and extreme right wing, anti-Zionist followers, the sin which precipitated the Holocaust was Zionism. In Zionism the Jewish people broke their convenant with God which demanded that they not try to end their exile and thereby hasten the coming of the messiah through their own means. In return, "we have witnessed the immense manifestation of God's anger, the Holocaust." (Sefer Va Yoel Moshe, Brooklyn, 5721/1961, p.5 [in Hebrew]). For others on the right of the religious spectrum, the primary crime was not Zionism but Reform Judaism. In this equation, the centrality of Germany as the land which gave birth both to Reform Judaism and, according to the principle of "measure for measure,"to Nazism is undeniable proof of this causal connection. (See, for the presentation of this position, R. Elhanan Wasserman, *In the Footsteps of the Messiah* {Tel Aviv, 5702/1942, p.6 [in Hebrew]}; R. Haim Ozer Grodzinsky, *Ahiezer* {Vilna, 5699/1939 [in Hebrew]; R. Jacob Israel Kanyevsky, *Hayyai Olam* {Rishon Le Zion, 5732/1972 [in Hebrew]}.)

In a similar, if broader view, others of this theological predisposition identified Jewish assimilation as the root issue. Again, the key role played by Germany is "proof" of the mechanism of cause and effect. Alternatively and interestingly, in these same very traditional orthodox circles, R. Isaachar Teichtal saw the negative catalyst not in the Jewish people's Zionist activity but just the reverse, in their passionate commitment to life in exile and their failure to willingly, freely, support the sanctified activity of the Zionist upbuilding which would bring the exile to a close. In his *Eim Habanim 5' Mechah*, written in Hungary in 1943,Teichtal, writing under

the belief that the twin events of the Holocaust and the growth of the Zionist movement marked the beginning of the messianic era, declaimed: "And these (anti-Zionist leaders) have caused even more lamentation; [and because of their opposition] we have arrived at the situation we are in today: this abomination in the house of Israel, endless trouble, and sorrow upon sorrow—all because we despised our precious land" (Eim Habanim 5' Mechah, Budapest 5703/1942, p.17 [in Hebrew]).

All these "justifications" and "explanations" are both ad hoc and of extremely limited plausibility. To accept any one of them, one has first to accept the world view of their authors, idiosyncrasies and all, as in the case of the Satmar Rebbe, and even then all appear to be post-hoc rationalizations of little independent, philosophically coercive force. It is not an accident, nor is it regrettable, that this entire line of blaming the Jewish people for their own destruction has had so few champions.

6

THE BURDEN OF HUMAN FREEDOM
"THE FREE WILL DEFENSE."

Among philosophical reflections concerning theodicy none has an older or more distinguished lineage than that known as the "Free-Will Defense." According to this argument human evil is the necessary and ever-present possibility entailed by the reality of human freedom. If human beings are to have the potential for majesty, they must, conversely, have an equal potential for corruption; if they are to be capable of acts of authentic morality, they must be capable of acts of authentic immorality. Freedom is a two-edged sword, hence its challenge and its cost. Applying this consideration to the events of the Nazi epoch, the Shoah becomes a case of man's inhumanity to man, the extreme misuse of human freedom. At the same time such a position in no way forces a reconsideration of the cosmological structure in which the anthropological drama unfolds, nor does it call into question God's good and solicitude, for it is man, not God, who perpetrates genocide. God observes these events with his unique Divine pathos, but in order to allow human morality to be a substantively real thing, He refrains from intercession. At the same time that He is long-suffering with an evil humanity His patience results in the suffering of others.

That is to say, God must absent Himself for man to be, but God must also be present in order that ultimately meaninglessness does not gain final

victory. Thus, God's presence in history must be sensed as hiddenness, and His anonymity must be understood as the sign of his presence. God reveals His power in history by curbing His might so that man too might be powerful. In this scenario the only enduring witness to God's ultimate control over the course of things is the Jewish people. In Israel's experience, as Berkovits declares in making this case, one sees both attributes of God. The continued existence of Israel despite its long record of suffering is the strongest single proof that God does exist despite His concealment. Israel is the witness to His accompaniment of happenings in space and time. Nazism, in its Luciferian power, understood this fact, and its slaughter of the Jews was an attempt to slaughter the God of history. The Nazis were aware, even as Israel sometimes fails to be, that God's manifest reality in the world is necessarily linked to the fate of the Jewish people.

This defense has been, not surprisingly, given its history and intellectual power, widely advocated by post-Holocaust thinkers of all shades of theological opinion. The two most notable presentations of the theme in the general theological literature are to be found in Eliezer Berkovits's *Faith After the Holocaust* and Arthur A. Cohen's *The Tremendum*. Berkovits has employed it to defend a traditional Jewish theological position while Cohen has utilized it to develop a Jewish "Process-Theology." (For more on Cohen's view see Part III, point 3, below.)

In trying to estimate the power of the "Free-Will" argument in the face of Auschwitz, two counter-arguments are salient. First, could not God, possessed of omniscience, omnipotence, and absolute goodness, have created a world in which there was human freedom but less, or even no, evil? The sheer gratuitous evil manifest during the Holocaust goes beyond anything that appears logically or metaphysically necessary for the existence of freedom and beyond the bounds of "toleration" for a just, all powerful God. One has to recognize, moreover, that for those committed to a belief in the biblical God, one miracle, even a "small" one, could have reduced the tragedy of the Shoah without canceling the moral autonomy of the murderers. Second, it might be argued that it would be preferable, morally preferable, to have a world in which "evil" did not exist, at least not in the magnitude witnessed during the Shoah, even if this meant doing without certain heroic moral attributes or accomplishments. That is to say, for example, though feeding and caring for the sick or hungry is a great

virtue, it would be far better if there were no sickness or hunger and hence no need for such care. The price is just too high. This is true even for the much exalted value of freedom itself. Better to introduce limits, even limits on that freedom of the will requisite to moral choice than to allow Auschwitz. Here it is salient to recognize that Free Will is not, despite a widespread tendency to so understand it, all of one piece. One can limit Free Will in certain aspects; that is with respect, for example, to specific types of circumstances, just as one constrains action in particular ways. Consider, too, that God could have created a humankind that, while possessing Free Will, nonetheless also had a proportionately stronger inclination for the Good and a correspondingly weaker inclination to evil. He could also have endowed us with a greater capacity for moral education. Neither of these alterations in the scheme of things would have obviated the reality of Free Will, though they would have appreciatively improved humankind's moral record, perhaps even to the point of significantly reducing the moral evil done to the innocent by a Hitler.

In sum, then, the "Free-Will Defense" while full of theological interest and intellectual attraction, fails to completely satisfy the theological demands raised by the Holocaust.

II

To this point the first six positions analyzed have all been predicated upon, and the extension of, classical Jewish responses to national tragedy. In the last two decades, however, a number of innovative, more radical responses have been proposed by contemporary post-Holocaust thinkers. Five in particular merit serious attention.

1

AUSCHWITZ—A NEW REVELATION

The first of these emerges from the work of Emil Fackenheim who has contended that the Holocaust represents a new revelation. Rejecting any account that analyzes Auschwitz as "mipnei chataeynu" as well as the literal notion of "explanation" as regards the Holocaust, Fackenheim, employing a Buberian-type model of dialogical revelation—revelation as the personal encounter of an I with the Eternal Thou (God)—urges Israel to continue to believe despite the moral outrage of the Shoah. God, on this view, is always present in Jewish history, even at Auschwitz. We do not, and cannot, understand what He was doing at Auschwitz, or why He allowed it, but we must insist that He was there. Still more from the death

camps, as from Sinai, God commands Israel. The nature of this commanding voice, what Fackenheim has called the "614th commandment" (there are 613 commandments in traditional Judaism) is: "Jews are forbidden to hand Hitler posthumous victories"; that is, Jews are under a sacred obligation to survive.

After the death camps Jewish existence itself is a holy act; Jews are under a sacred obligation to remember their martyrs; Jews are, as Jews, forbidden to despair of redemption, or to become cynical about the world and man, for to submit to cynicism is to abdicate responsibility for the world and to deliver the world into the hands of the Luciferian forces of Nazism. And above all, Jews are "forbidden to despair of the God of Israel, lest Judaism perish." The voice that speaks from Auschwitz demands above all that Hitler win no posthumous victories, that no Jew do what Hitler could not do. The Jewish will for survival is natural enough, but Fackenheim invests it with transcendental significance. Precisely because others would eradicate Jews from the earth, Jews are commanded to resist annihilation. Paradoxically, Hitler makes Judaism after Auschwitz a necessity. To say "no" to Hitler is to say "yes"to the God of Sinai; to say no to the God of Sinai is to say "yes"to Hitler.

This interesting, highly influential response to the Shoah requires detailed analysis of a sort that is beyond our present possibilities. However, it needs to be stressed that the main line of critical inquiry into Fackenheim's position must center on the dialogueical notion of revelation and the related idea of commandment, as that traditional notion is here employed. That is to ask: (a) how do historical events become "revelatory? and (b) what exactly does Fackenheim mean by the term "commandment?" In the older, traditional theological vocabulary of Judaism, it meant something God actually "spoke" to the people of Israel. Fackenheim, however, would reject this literal meaning in line with his dialogueical premises. But then what does "commanded" here mean? It would seem that the word has only analogical or metaphorical sense in this case, but if so, what urgency and compelling power does it retain? Secondly, should Hitler gain such prominence in Jewish Theology; i.e., that Judaism survives primarily in order to spite his dark memory? In raising these two issues we only begin to do justice to the richness and ingenuity of Fackenheim's position.

2

THE COVENANT BROKEN—A NEW AGE

A second contemporary thinker who has urged continued belief in the God of Israel, though on new terms, is Yitzchak (Irving) Greenberg. For Greenberg all the old truths and certainties, all the old commitments and obligations, have been destroyed by the Holocaust. Moreover, any simple faith is now impossible. The Holocaust ends the old era of Jewish covenantal existence and ushers in a new and different one. Greenberg explicates this radical notion in this way. There are three major periods in the covenantal history of Israel. The first is the biblical era. What characterizes this first covenantal stage is the asymmetry of the relationship between God and Israel.

The biblical encounter may be a covenant, but it is clearly a covenant in which "God is the initiator, the senior partner, who punishes, rewards and enforces the punishment if the Jews slacken" (*Third Great Cycle of Jewish History*, National Jewish Resource Center, New York,1981, p. 6). This type of relationship culminated in the crisis engendered by the destruction of the first Temple in 586 BCE. To this tragedy Israel, through the prophets, in keeping with the "logic" of this position, responded primarily through the doctrine of self-chastisement: the destruction was divine punishment rather than rejection or proof of God's nonexistence.

The second Rabbinical phase in the transformation of the convenant idea is marked by the destruction of the Second Temple. The "meaning" adduced from this event, the reaction of the Rabbis, was to argue that now Jews must take a more equal role in the covenant, becoming true-partners with the Almighty. "The manifest divine presence and activity was being reduced but the covenant was actually being renewed" (TGC, p. 7). The destruction of 70 CE signaled the initiation of an age in which God would be less manifest though still present.

This brings us to what is decisive and radical in Greenberg's ruminations, what he has termed the "Third Great Cycle in Jewish History," which has come about as a consequence of the Holocaust. The Shoah marks a new era in which the Sinaitic covenantal relationship was shattered and thus an unprecedented form of covenantal relationship, if there is to be any covenantal relationship at all, must come into being to take its place. "In retrospect, it is now clear that the divine assignment to the Jews was untenable. After the Holocaust it is obvious that this role opened the Jews to a total murderous fury from which there was no

escape.... Morally speaking, then, God can have no claims on the Jews by dint of the Covenant." What this means, Greenberg argues, is that the Covenant "can no longer be commanded and subject to a serious external enforcement. It cannot be commanded because morally speaking—covenantally speaking—one cannot order another to step forward to die. One can give an order like this to an enemy, but in a moral relationship I cannot demand giving up one's life. I can ask for it or plead for it, but I cannot order it" (TGC, p. 23).

Out of this complex of considerations Greenberg pronounces the fateful judgment: The Jewish Covenant With God is now Voluntary! Jews have, quite miraculously, chosen to continue to live Jewish lives and collectively to build a Jewish State, the ultimate symbol of Jewish continuity, but these acts are, after Auschwitz, the result of the free choice of the Jewish people. "I submit," writes Greenberg, "that the covenant was broken. God was in no position to command any more, but the Jewish people were so in love with the dream of redemption that it volunteered to carry on with its mission"(TGC, p.25). The consequence of this voluntary action transforms the existing convenantal order. First, Israel was a junior partner, then an equal partner. Finally, after Auschwitz, it becomes "the senior partner in action."

In turn, Israel's voluntary acceptance of the covenant and continued will to survive suggest three corollaries.

First, it points, if obliquely, to the continued existence of the God of Israel. By creating the State of Israel, by having Jewish children, Israel shows that "covenantal hope is not in vain."

Second, and very importantly, in an age of voluntarism rather than coercion, living Jewishly under the covenant can no longer be interpreted monolithically; i.e., only in strict halachic (traditional rabbinic) fashion.

Third, any aspect of religious behavior that demeans the image of the divine or of people—for example, prejudice, sexism, and oppression of all sorts—must be purged.

Greenberg's reconstruction of Jewish theology after the Holocaust presents a fascinating, creative reaction to the unprecedented evil manifest in the death camps. The question of the maintenance of his view, however, turns on the issues of: (a) the correctness of his theological reading of Jewish history, an open and difficult question; and (b) the theological meaning and status of key categories such as "covenant," "revelation,"

"commandment," and the like. That is to ask, on the one hand, whether Greenberg has done justice to their classical employment, and secondly, is his revised rendering justifiable and functional; and (c) should we allow Hitler and the Holocaust such decisive power in determining the inner, authentic nature of Jewish theology. A careful reading of Greenberg's essays suggest that there are still unresolved problems and internal contradictions within this novel deconstruction which require that a final judgment regarding Greenberg's proposals await future elaboration and reflection.

3
A REDEFINITION OF GOD.

An important school in modern theological circles known as "Process Theology," inspired by the work of Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne, has argued that the classical understanding of God has to be quite dramatically revised, not least in terms of our conception of His power and direct, causal involvement in human affairs. According to those who advance this thesis, God certainly exists, but the old-new difficulties of theodicy and related metaphysical problems emanating from classical theism arise precisely because of an inadequate "description" of the Divine; i.e., one that misascribes to Him attributes of omnipotence and omniscience that He does not possess.

Arthur A. Cohen, in his *The Tremendum: A Theological Interpretation of the Holocaust* (New York, 1981, Crossroad Pub. Co.), made a related proposal, drawing on Schelling, Rosenzweig and kabbalah (Jewish mysticism) as his sources, though there is no doubt that he was familiar with the work of the process theologians. After arguing for the enormity of the Holocaust, its uniqueness, and its transcendence of any "meaning," Cohen suggested that the way out of the dilemma posed by classical thought is to rethink whether "national catastrophes are compatible with our traditional notions of a beneficent and providential God" (p.50). For Cohen the answer is "no," at least to the degree that the activity and nature of the providential God have to be reconceptualized. Against the traditional view that asks, given its understanding of God's action in history, "How could it be that God witnessed the Holocaust and remained silent?" Cohen would pose the contrary "dipolar" thesis that "what is taken as God's speech is really always man's hearing, that God is not the strategist of our particularities or of our historical condition, but rather the mystery of our futurity,

always our *posse*, never our acts." That is, "if we begin to see God less as an interferer whose insertion is welcome (when it accords with our needs) and more as the immensity whose reality is our prefiguration, we shall have won a sense of God whom we may love and honor, but whom we no longer fear and from whom we no longer demand" (p. 97).

This redescription of God, coupled with a form of the "Free-Will Defense," made all the more plausible because God is now not a direct causal agent in human affairs, resolves much of the tension created by the tremendum.

The difficulty, however, lies in the price paid for this success. This deconstruction of classical theism and its substitution by theological dipolarity fails to deal adequately with the problem of God's attributes. Is "God" still God if he is no longer the providential agency in history? Is "God"still God if he lacks the power to enter history vertically to perform the miraculous? Is such a "dipolar" God still the God to whom one prays, the God of salvation? Put the other way round, it certainly does not appear to be the God of the covenant, nor again the God of Exodus-Sinai, nor yet again the God of the Prophets and the Churban Bayit Rishon (Destruction of the First Temple) and the Churban Bayit Sheni (Destruction of the Second Temple). Now, none of these objections count logically against Cohen's theism qua an independent non-Jewish theism, for he is free to speculate as he will. But alternatively, these counter evidences suggest that Cohen's God is not the God of the Bible and Jewish tradition. Hence, it is legitimate to ask whether, if Cohen is right, indeed, particularly if Cohen is right, there is any meaning left to Judaism, to the God-idea of Jewish tradition, and any covenantal role or meaning left to the Jewish people? Cohen's revisionism in this particular area is so radical that it sweeps away the biblical ground of Jewish faith and tradition and allows the biblical evidence to count not at all against his own speculative metaphysical hypotheses.

Secondly, is the dipolar, non-interfering God "whom we no longer fear and from whom we no longer demand" yet worthy of our "love and honor?" This God seems closer, say, to Plato's Demiurgos or perhaps better still to the innocuous and irrelevant God of the Deists. Such a God hardly seems to count in how we act, or in how history devolves or transpires. What difference in our lives between this God and no God at all? What sense is there, given His non-interference, in calling Him a God

of love and salvation?

4
GOD IS DEAD

It is natural that many should have responded to the horror of the Holocaust with unbelief. How, they asked quite legitimately, could one continue to believe in God when such a God did nothing to halt the demonic fury of Hitler and his minions. Such skepticism usually takes a non-systematic, almost intuitive, form: "I can no longer believe." However, one contemporary Jewish theologian, Richard Rubenstein, has provided a formally structured "Death of God" theology as a response to the Shoah.

In Rubenstein's view the only honest response to the death camps is the rejection of God, "God is dead," and the open recognition of the meaninglessness of existence. Our life is neither planned nor purposeful, there is no Divine Will nor does the world reflect Divine concern. The world is indifferent to human beings. Mankind must now reject its illusions and recognize the existential truth that life is not intrinsically valuable, that the human condition reflects no transcendental purpose; history reveals no providence. All theological "rationalizations" of Auschwitz pale before its enormity and, for Rubenstein, the only reaction that is worthy is the rejection of the entire Jewish theological framework: there is no God and no covenant with Israel.

Humankind must turn away from transcendental myths and face its actual existential situation. Drawing heavily upon the atheistic existentialists, Rubenstein interprets this to mean that in the face of the world's nihilism individuals must assert value; in response to history's meaninglessness human beings must create and project meaning.
Had Rubenstein merely asserted the "death of God," his would not be a Jewish theology. What makes it "Jewish" are the implications he draws from his radical negation with respect to the people of Israel. It might be expected that the denial of God's covenantal relation with Israel would entail the end of Judaism and so the end of the Jewish people. From the perspective of traditional Jewish theology this would certainly be the case. Rubenstein, however, again inverts our ordinary perception and argues that with the "death of God," the existence of"people-hood," of the community of Israel, is all the more important. Now that there is nowhere else to turn for meaning, Jews need each other all the more to create meaning: "it is precisely because human existence is tragic, ultimately

hopeless, and without meaning that we treasure our religious community" (*After Auschwitz,* Indianapolis, 1966, p. 68). Though Judaism has to be "demythologized"; i.e., it has to renounce all normative claims to a unique "chosen status," at the same time it paradoxically gains heightened importance in the process.

Coupled to this psychoanalytic revisionism in Rubenstein's ontology is a mystical paganism in which the Jew is urged to forgo history and return to the cosmic rhythms of natural existence. The modern Jew is exhorted to recognize the priorities of nature. So, for example, he must come to understand that the real meaning of Messianism is "the proclamation of the end of history and return to nature and nature's cyclical repetitiveness" (*After Auschwitz,* p. 135). The future and final redemption is not to be the conquest of nature by history, as traditionally conceived in the Jewish tradition, but rather the conquest of history by nature and the return of all things to their primal origins. Man has to rediscover the sanctity of his bodily life and reject forever the delusions of overcoming it; he must submit to and enjoy his physicality—not try to transform or transcend it. Rubenstein sees the renewal of Zion, and the rebuilding of the land with its return to the soil, as a harbinger of this return to nature on the part of the Jew who has been removed from the earth (symbolic of nature) by theology and necessity for almost two thousand years. The return to the land points toward the final escape of the Jew from the negativity of history to the vitality and promise of self-liberation through nature.

Rubenstein's challenging position raises many pressing, fundamental issues, but two especially take us to the heart of the matter.

Firstly, how does one evaluate Jewish history as "evidence" for and against the existence of God. It may well be that the radical theologian sees Jewish history too narrowly: i.e., as focused solely in and through the Holocaust. He takes the decisive event of Jewish history to be the death camps. But this is a distorted image at least to the degree that there was a pre-Holocaust and a post-Holocaust Jewish history which includes, among other things, the reborn State of Israel. Logic and conceptual adequacy require that if we give (negative) theological weight to Auschwitz, we give (positive) theological weight to the recreation of the Jewish State, an event of equal or greater valence in Jewish history.

Secondly, and again an issue raised by the question of "evidence," is the adoption by Rubenstein of the philosophically unsatisfactory

"empiricist theory of manning" as the measure by which to judge the status of God's existence. This basic premise of his argument will not, however, satisfy, for ultimately not only is the theory itself logically deficient, but history in its totality provides evidence both for and against the non-existence of God on empirical-verification grounds; i.e., there is both good and bad in history. In sum, then, Rubenstein's criteria are less than convincing. His work is highly provocative in the best sense but not yet theologically definitive.

5

MYSTERY AND SILENCE.

In the face of the abyss, the devouring of Israel by the dark forces of evil incarnate, recourse to the God of mystery and human silence are not unworthy options. However, there are two kinds of silence, two kinds of employment of the "God of mystery." The first is closer to the attitude of the agnostic: "I cannot know," and hence all profound existential and intellectual wrestling with the enormous problems raised by the Shoah, and with God after the Shoah, are avoided. The second is the silence and mystery which Job and many of the prophets reveal, to which the Bible points in its recognition of God's elemental otherness. This is the silence which comes after struggling with God, after reproaching God, after feeling His closeness or His painful absence. This silence, this mystery, is the silence and mystery of seriousness, of that authenticity which will not diminish the tragedy by a too-quick, too-gauche, answer, yet which having forced reason to its limits, recognizes the limits of reason. Had Abraham accepted God's judgment at Sodom too quickly or Job his suffering in a too-easy silence, they would have betrayed the majesty and morality of the God in whom they trusted. In the literary responses to Auschwitz by survivors, one finds this attitude more commonly expressed than in more formal works of overt theology. For example, it is pre-eminent in the novels of Elie Wiesel, Andre Schwarzbart, and Primo Levi and in the poetry of Nellie Sachs. Assuredly, there is great difficulty in ascertaining when thought has reached its limit and silence and mystery become proper, but at the same time there is the need to know when to speak in silence.

Yet silence, too, can be problematic for, ultimately, if employed incorrectly as a theological more, it removes the Holocaust from history and all post-Holocaust human experience and thus may produce the unintended consequence of making the Holocaust irrelevant. If the

generations that come after Auschwitz cannot speak of it, and thus cannot raise deep questions as a consequence of it, then it becomes literally meaningless to them.

III

All the views analyzed above are thoughtful and provocative, but none has sufficient logical or theological force that it can be understood as providing an unchallenged and fully persuasive response to Auschwitz and Treblinka. And so our critical search goes on.

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THE RABBI JULIAN B. FEIBELMAN MEMORIAL LECTURE

Strengthening Jewish-Christian Relations: A Jewish Perspective on the Recent Papal Visit to Israel

Joseph H. Ehrenkranz

I consider myself privileged. I've had seven visits with His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, and he is my hero.

Do any of you know what the word "Hassid" means? Have you heard of "Hassidism?" Hassidism was a movement in the eighteenth century when there were certain Rebbes—not Rabbis—Rebbes. They were people who by their personality and captivating charisma were able to get people to follow them, and they could do no wrong. I consider myself a Hassid of Pope John Paul II. In my eyes, he can do no wrong, and I'm going to describe to you how I came to feel that way.

I met with him for the first time in 1990. Let me tell you how it happened. There is an organization called the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations. The acronym is IJCIC. It sounds like a sickness, but it's not really. Twenty Jewish people were invited to the Vatican to study along with twenty Catholics on the 25th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*. Please raise your hand and tell me that you've heard the words *Nostra Aetate*. Okay. I suspected that. *Nostra Aetate* was the last four paragraphs at the end of Vatican II. Vatican II, everybody's heard of, right? Well, let me repeat: in the Vatican II, they published this vital document called the *Nostra Aetate* (which means "Our Age").

In this *Nostra Aetate*, they said something that changed the world. They said the Jewish people were not responsible for the death of Jesus. Not only does the *Nostra Aetate* say that, but it is ludicrous to blame some people—a whole people—two thousand years later for what some of their ancestors might have been involved in two thousand years earlier. This is a revolutionary statement because it takes away from a lot of the hatred that was created toward the Jewish people.

One week before that meeting, I was called. There was a Jewish man

who got sick. If he was not able to make it, would I take his place? Now, you will not report this to anybody, I am sure. But, did you ever pray that someone stays sick?

Well, I made it, and I went over there. And here I was for four days in a room that's narrower than this but longer, in the Vatican with fifteen Bishops and five Cardinals; and on the Jewish side, five Rabbis and 15 Jewish lay people, all good lay people, all people with influence and knowledge, all people who have done much in their lifetime to help the cause of the Jewish people, all ignorant of Jewish theology. And if they're ignorant of Jewish theology, can you imagine how ignorant they were of Catholicism?

I lived through four days that for me were torture because I saw Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, a Bishop from Holland who played an important role in ecumenism. Cardinal Willebrands is six foot six, and he stood erect (he is even older now, but still stands erect!). And on our side, a fellow who was about five foot four. Now, can you picture someone six foot six arguing with someone five foot four? He was speaking into his bellybutton! And the problem was that the Jewish fellow was not a theologian. Willebrands was a Cardinal. He understood not only Catholicism, but he understood Judaism. He understood religion. But the Jewish man was a survivor of the Holocaust, a deeply beaten man, great man—but ignorant of theology.

So, when they spoke to one another, they were talking past one another rather than talking with one another. And so, those four days were very, very difficult days for me. But, at the end of the four days something happened. The Pope received reports—a Catholic report and a Jewish report. He took those two reports and delivered a speech of his own the morning of our departure. The Pope must have been about seventy years old at the time. He was a man with unlimited courage and bounce—he didn't walk, he bounced. He was sitting up on a platform and in his delivery he said something I had never heard before. He said, "It is inappropriate for Catholics to try to convert Jews to Catholicism. Jewish people have a covenant with God that is eternal, and those people who follow God in the Jewish religion —they are entitled to salvation. You don't have to convert them." I heard this with my own ears.

At the time, I was serving as a rabbi of a congregation. I had been there since 1948. I retired after forty-five years, and what happened in 1990 is

what made me retire in 1993, and this is what happened. The Pope said from his podium, "I want the Cardinals and the Bishops to leave. I want to be in this room with my Jewish friends." They all got up and left. I mean, you've got to picture this! And then he said to at least twenty people—all Jewish, and I was one of them, "I want to know each of you. I want to know your names. I want to know who you are." And he came bouncing down to the floor where we all were. And one by one, he shook hands with us, asked us our names, and said, "I'd like to have a conversation. I'd like to know something more about you."

Well, I got on the end of the line so there would be nobody behind me pushing me and rushing me. When I got to shake his hand, I said many nice things, and then I said to him, "I have a question that I want to ask you. And please be assured that I have the highest respect and deep love and appreciation for you. But I do have a question. You and I are landsmen. Do you know what a landsman is?" "Sure, a landsman—we both come from the same land." My father and mother grew up in Poland, and my older brother was born in Poland. I was born in America. But, his Holiness was born in Poland. He's Polish. So, I said, "You're Polish, and I'm Polish...."

And I had great reverence for my father, too, but my father had a wonderful feeling about people. Every person was valuable and good, and he taught us that. My father served as president of a local Teamsters Union in north New Jersey, and a great many of his people who served with him in that union were black, and we were never allowed to say anything that was derogatory. My father said, "Everybody is good. Everybody is created by God. God loves everybody," he said to me, "but the Polish people have done much to hurt us." "The Poles?" I said, "How can you say that?" He said, "What do you know? You were born here. I was born there. I grew up there, and I had a miserable life because of my Polish neighbors...."

So, I said to this Pope, "There is no friend that the Jewish people ever had in our entire history like we have in you, John Paul II—no better friend ever. And yet, my Father told me, 'If he's from Poland he can't be all good.' Explain that to me."

He said, "Let me tell you, instead of saying that's not true, just let me tell you a story. I never dreamed of being a priest. I went to school—a small school—in Warsaw. I studied drama. I wanted to be a playwright and an actor." And incidentally, I had the privilege of seeing one of the two

plays that Pope John Paul II wrote. And it's a magnificent, good play. It never opened on Broadway. It has no sex in it, and it has no violence, so it didn't make it. But, it's a great, great play with a tremendously good message. But I am digressing....

Here is what His Holiness said to me. "In 1939, the Nazis walked in. They came into our school. All our teachers were Jewish—almost all. I was a favorite student of theirs. They lined up all of the faculty up against the wall, brought the entire student body down into the courtyard, and shot them all dead." He said, "What a traumatic experience for me. And within weeks I had made the decision that I didn't like this world. And the only way I could escape from this terrible, terrible world, was to study for the priesthood. And I made a promise to God that no one has ever heard; and that promise was if ever I were in a position of influence, I would do all I could to help the Jewish people. I never dreamed of being Pope because I wasn't even a priest. But, I don't deny that I am in a position of influence, and I do what I can."

So, scene one of why I think that was the greatest man of the twentieth century—I know it for a fact. It's too bad there are so many people who don't know it.

I want to tell you a story—hoping it will not offend anyone. There were four people sitting around in a nursing home—four elderly people like me. And one person sitting there with his cup of coffee said, "I am so weak. I can't pick up this cup of coffee," to which a fellow sitting at the same table responded, "Big deal. My cataracts are so bad, I can't see the cup of coffee." The third one said, "You guys know nothing. I have arthritis here in the neck, and I cannot see to the left or the right. If I want to see anything, I have to turn left and then I have to turn right, but I can't turn my head." The fourth one said, "You're lucky. I have high blood pressure, and the doctor—he gives me pills, and the pills make me dizzy. I walk around all day long, and I can't take five steps without holding on," to which the first person replied, "Listen, we ought to thank God they still allow us to drive."

There are so many people—Catholic people—who ask me about the health of the Pope. "He looks so frail. I feel so badly for him." He has Parkinson's disease, and it's hurt him and in many ways incapacitated him, but I want to tell you something. He's still driving. He is the head of one billion Catholics, and he sets an agenda. And there is no person in the

whole world who has gained my respect in the same way that this man has.

So, let me tell you about what I'm supposed to speak about, and that's our trip to Israel. I'm going to tell you I'm not as important as I'd like you to think I am, because it's not what you know; often it's who you know. Well, in the Vatican, there is a Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. I don't know whether you know that. And the chairman of that Commission at that time was a fellow by the name of Cardinal Edward Cassidy. He came from Australia. He was just a really good person, if you can understand Australian. Thanks to him, the Commission and I established a very, very good relationship. Let me get back to that in a moment.

In 1990, after I had met the Pope, I discovered that, as I was getting older, there was something funny happening in my congregation. The membership of the congregation was getting younger and younger, and I was going to say unfortunately, and it's not unfortunately, but that's the way it is. As they were getting younger and younger, I was getting older and older. And the gap was too much for me—and I think too much for them, too—for me to stay on. And I began to think in 1990, "It's got to come to an end." I took this job in 1948, and by 1991 I was sixty-five years old, and I said, "I'm going to retire." And so, I decided on the target date of 1993 and prepared for it.

Incidentally, I had a wonderful thing happen to me. A group of people from the congregation—the executive, the directors of the congregation—came to see me and said, "Wouldn't you stay on for another five years and make it an even half century?" And my ego was uplifted. That was a nice offer. And I told it to my wife, and my wife says to me, "The time to leave is when they ask you to stay."

I decided I would retire in 1993, and I prepared the way. I went to Sacred Heart University, where I met a most wonderful person: Dr. Anthony Cernera, president of the university. And by the way, Sacred Heart University is the first Catholic University in the United States to have a lay president. He's a magnificent guy. As time has gone on, I grew closer and closer to him, and I understand the magnificence of some human beings. He's done a marvelous job at Sacred Heart University.

When I asked him if we should establish a Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding at the University, he thought it was a great idea. In fact, he's instituted a rule: you cannot graduate from Sacred Heart University

unless you take a course in Christian-Jewish Understanding. In short, he has dedicated his life to making sure that Catholics in this Catholic university understand the value of Christian-Jewish understanding in the same way that I've dedicated my life to make sure that Jews understand Christianity

We established the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding in 1993. The acronym is CCJU. If you want to follow some of the things that we do, we have a web site: www.ccju.org. There are a lot of things on that web site that would keep you informed unless you read all of the Catholic magazines: if you read *America*, *First Things*, or *National Catholic Review*, then you pretty much know what's going on. But, if you don't, look up our website. It's worth it.

I have made friends because I've been to Israel—I have a daughter who lives in Israel with eight grandchildren. The daughter is not that important, but eight grandchildren—that's important.
You know the reason people have children? Because you can't have grandchildren without them. So, I have eight smart grandchildren living there, and my heart goes out to them, and I worry about them.

So, I've gone to Israel close to a hundred times. There, I befriended the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Sambi. And we've become fast friends. So, I have two pulls. I have the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews with whom I was very friendly, and Archbishop Sambi, the Papal Nuncio in Israel. So, when I heard that the Pope was going to make his visit to Israel, I said that I had been invited. That was hutzpa!

I don't think I was invited. But I was informed that I could join, and I think that was great. That made me feel very good to be able to join with His Holiness on his trip to Israel. And again, we had a private audience. As a matter of fact, you know that I'm an Orthodox Jew—Orthodox Rabbi—and I don't ride on the Sabbath. I don't drive. There are many restrictions that we have on the Sabbath. And this first Saturday morning, the Pope was celebrating mass at the Basilica in Nazareth. And I was able to get someone to host me for the Sabbath in Nazareth about two and a half miles from the basilica, and I was able to walk down. And it's a 10 o'clock mass. You had to be there by 8:00. We were there by 7:00 to make sure, and Archbishop Sambi made sure that we had a seat in the third row.

There was a group of a hundred people—young people, teenagers—in the choir. And when the Pope walked in, they began to chant. I want to set

the stage. This is Nazareth. This is not New York—Nazareth where there are only two languages. There's Arabic and Hebrew. They don't know any other languages. This hundred-piece choir—boys and girls—began to chant, "JP2, we love you!"

And there were a thousand people out. This is a tremendous Basilica. I don't know if you've ever been there, but it's a tremendous Basilica. You know, it was packed. Of course, it was packed. And everybody in the audience in a matter of two minutes was singing, "JP2, we love you!" I was sitting with Tony Cernera, the President of Sacred Heart University. I looked at him, and both of us shrugged our shoulders, and we started in, "JP2, we love you!" I don't think there was a single person sitting there not chanting "JP2, we love you!"

I want to tell you what he did. I can't believe that there's another human being as sensitive and good as Pope John Paul II. He greeted the audience all over. And he walked from one side to the other. And when he came to our side, I want to believe—I want to believe; I won't swear—that he recognized me because we had met so many times, and recently before that. And instead of making the sign of the cross, he waved.

Let me tell you, when I met Pope John Paul II, you don't understand the depth of feeling and sensitivity this man has. Coming from Stamford and having lived there since 1948, I have accumulated many, many Jewish friends and many, many Catholic friends—really good friends of mine. And when they heard I was going to see the Pope, they all gave me different gifts that I would bring to Him and ask Him to bless and then bring back to them. I didn't know whether it was appropriate or not, but when I met with him, I took them out and I held them in my hand and I said, "If it's inappropriate, it's okay. Tell me so. But, if it is appropriate, I have so many Catholic friends who would deem it a great honor if you would bless these items." He said to me, "Is it okay with you if I make the sign of the cross over these items, or do you just want me to put my hands on them?"

Here is a man who is the spiritual leader of the Catholic world, but he is also a tremendous influence in the Jewish world. This man is asking me if it's okay with me that he make the sign of the cross. I don't know how many leaders I know, how many rabbis, priests—I don't care who they are—who have the same sensitivity and feeling of the people who want to make sure they wouldn't offend. He's a great spiritual leader—and a great

human being. He is a *Mensch*—this is a word you may have heard. It's a tremendous compliment. It means human, but it means more than that. "He is a *Mensch*" means he's "a human in every respect under God." He's given me nothing but pleasure every time that I have had the distinct honor to meet with him.

Many of you remember some stories of the Old Testament. Remember Moses at the burning bush? Do you remember what happened? Moses saw the bush burn. He stopped, he took his shoes off, and he heard the voice of God. God speaks to many of us often, but not too many of us hear the voice of God. Moses heard the voice of God. And then, God said to him, "I want you to go to Egypt and take the people out." What was Moses' response? "Who, me? No, no, get somebody else." And God argued with him and said, "You're the man." And he said, "But, I'm not capable. I can't. I won't. I didn't ...," then they went back and forth. Finally, God says to him, "You're going because I want you to go," and he didn't argue anymore. And then, God says to him, "Take that staff in your hand." He's had the staff in the hand. Then, he says, "Throw it on the ground." He threw it on the ground. What happened to it? It became a snake. He says, "Pick it up," and it became a staff. When someone's holding the staff of the leadership, he's a leader. When he abdicates and throws it to the ground, that staff becomes a snake.

I have heard people who have come to me and say it's time for Pope John Paul II to resign, to put the staff down. It's the worst thing that could happen to Catholic people. It's the worst thing that could happen to the world because he is a leader, and the world needs him.

You know, we take for granted there is no more Communist Russia. What happened? All of a sudden do you think they decided to give up Communism and go their own way? It took a Pope John Paul II. I am not taking anything away from President Reagan, but it took John Paul II who felt the pain of the Polish people under Communism who knew what it was to be under that system. It took him, his strength and his leadership to undermine Russian Communism. And it's true. It's true that President Reagan did a great deal. The two of them together rid this world of one of its worst dangers, and I applaud. I am thankful. I am thankful in every way for what he's done.

The first thing that the Pope was involved in during his visit to Israel was an interfaith service at Notre Dame, in Jerusalem. The Center for

Christian-Jewish Understanding was a co-sponsor of the service, which involved Chief Rabbi Lau, Chief Rabbi of Israel; his Holiness, Pope John Paul II; and there was supposed to be the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. Archbishop Sambi had arranged for me to meet with the Grand Mufti, and I did. I asked him to appear that evening because I think it would be good for the Moslem world to see that kind of interfaith group: Chief Rabbi of Israel, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, and his Holiness. I thought it would be great. But he said to me, "I would never appear on the same program with the Pope."

Do you remember the controversy that existed at that time? The Moslems wanted to build a mosque on the property next to the basilica in Nazareth. The Pope opposed that. The Grand Mufti said, "He opposed my building of a mosque because he thinks his basilica is more holy than my mosque. I will never appear with him." Instead, he sent a delegate, who proceeded to speak in Arabic. Luckily, there was a Monsignor who sat next to the Pope on the podium, and he kept translating what was being said. After a few minutes the Pope put his hands up to his ears—he could no longer listen to what was supposed to be an interfaith gathering.

And incidentally, someone had trained three choirs—a Christian, a Jewish, and a Moslem choir—each to make presentations and then train them to sing together. It was a beautiful, beautiful presentation. You know, children are great. You're not born with hatred. So, this was great, except for that presentation which nobody could stand.

Incidentally, it was a small thing, but it made a tremendous impression on me when they wanted to help the Pope get up from his chair to walk over to the podium where the microphone was. He shooed everybody away. He wouldn't let anybody help him, but he walked by himself, with only the help of a cane. When he got through, Chief Rabbi Lau came over and took him by the elbow and escorted him back to his seat. Incidentally, the reason that they are friendly is because Rabbi Lau is from Poland. So, they converse in Polish, and the Pope likes that. But I've digressed from the meeting itself....

Archbishop Sambi had arranged for us to meet with the Pope. This is a Basilica where there are now a thousand people, and about a hundred people were privileged to sit in the front. So, Dr. Anthony Cernera and I were sitting in the front. And then, Archbishop Sambi sent somebody over to Dr. Cernera and me to leave before the morning was

over, and they escorted us to an alleyway, and we stood there and waited. And sure enough, the Pope came by there, and that's when I was able to show him if he looked up, he would see on the hill we planted a forest called the John Paul II Forest. It's a very large forest that starts in Nazareth and goes on to Afula. I wanted him to see what we were involved in. And that was an opportunity for us to meet with him and tell him what we were doing.

In conclusion, let me tell you a story—a true story—1936. Did you ever hear the name Martin Buber? Martin Buber was addressing an audience of two hundred Christian clergy. And he said to them, "My friends, you and I—we're brothers. There is no difference. You believe in the Messiah. We believe in the Messiah. We're brothers. What's the difference? You think the Messiah has been here and he's coming again. I think he's never been here. Why don't we wait until a Messiah comes and we'll ask him, "Mr. Messiah, have you ever been here before?"

He said, "If I'm there, I'm going to tiptoe up to him and whisper in his ear, 'Don't tell them.'"

I think that's the message that I get from Pope John Paul II. It doesn't make any difference. I hope all Catholics will be true to their faith, and I hope that all Jews will be true to their faith. By keeping our faith and by making sure our behavior is faith-filled, we will bring the Messiah—whether we bring him or bring him back. Who cares? This world needs the Messiah now.

Thank you very much.

May 24, 2001
THE CATHERINE AND HENRY J. GAISMAN MEMORIAL LECTURE

What Does Erez Israel Mean to Us?

Christoph Schönborn

I could hardly have chosen a more difficult subject. Nevertheless, it is a necessary and inescapable one. Because it is an inescapable fact—a fact for both the Jewish and the Christian faith—that once, and once only in human history, there was and is a country that God took into his possession as his "inheritance" (1 Samuel 26:19), his "inheritance" (Jeremiah 2:7), and which he entrusted as a gift to his "Chosen People" (Deuteronomy 1:36) in such a form that the Israelites remain in the country "which the Lord thy God give thee for an inheritance" (Deuteronomy 4:21,38; 12:9; 19:10 *passim*), "strangers and sojourners" of the God of Israel (Leviticus 25:23), indicating their loyalty to him.

In this "good land" (Exodus 3:8) the State of Israel has existed since 1948. Israel is a modern State, a State among others, a member of the community of nations. The State of Israel is not the same as Erez Israel, yet hardly anybody will dispute that the foundation of this State had something to do with the biblical prophecy.

The question "What does Erez Israel mean to us?" is thus indissolubly linked with the question, "What does the State of Israel mean to us?" At first glance it would appear that this second question must be easy to answer. Israel is one State among others, with rights and obligations, with a history, cares, and joys. But in fact Israel is not just one state among others; it is the Promised Land of God. He himself will gather his people from all nations and bring them home, letting them live once more in the land which belongs to God. In Jerusalem, his place of rest, and on Zion, his holy mountain, and in many hearts the certainty reigns that the foundation of the State of Israel has something to do with this promise, even if this "something" cannot be precisely defined, and even if this promise is still far from being fulfilled.

But why "What does Erez Israel mean to us?" This "us" is deliberately left open. It concerns us, we who have a home or who have found a home

in Austria. But it also concerns the body of believers to which I belong, the Christians. Because for them, this country, Erez Israel, is also in a specific way their homeland. From our infancy onward we have learned of Nazareth and Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and the places associated with Jesus of Nazareth, whom we believe to be Christ, the Messiah. However, what this signifies from the Christian point of view, as regards understanding Erez Israel, is far from having been explained satisfactorily.

Much has happened in the last hundred years. The Zionist movement could not fail to leave its mark on theological consideration of the significance of the Promised Land for Christians. Since the unimaginable happenings of the Shoah, this consideration has taken on an urgency that places the relationship of Christians to Jews in a completely new light. The Second Vatican Council took some decisive steps. Numerous theological works, many meetings and discussions have carried the new attitude further. Within these efforts, the following fragmentary considerations may be included.

It is not my intention—nor is it within my competence—to retell the history of Christian reactions to the idea of Zionism, starting with Theodor Herzl's visit to Pope Pius X a few months before his death. We know only the gist of their discussion from Herzl's diary. I was told in the Vatican that to date no notes or reactions of Pius X are extant. In any case, Herzl was disappointed. The discussion with the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Merry del Val, was more fruitful and led to the commencement of diplomatic relations between the State of Israel and the Holy Stool under Pope John Paul II.

I shall take an approach to the subject, which at first sight might seem surprising. A few years ago I found myself in a train sitting opposite a young Asian, presumably a Korean. After some time he took a Bible out of his case and began reading it reverently. I saw he was reading the first Book of Kings. And thinking about today's lecture, I wondered why this Asian came to be reading as a holy book this story of the kings of a small pre-Asian nation, as his holy book? How do I, a gentile, come to be praying, "By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.... If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy" (Psalm 137:1-6)?

How is it that nowadays the Bible of Israel is read all over the world

and that, alongside the Christian one, it is the most translated, most widespread, most widely read book in the world?

In A.D. 144 a man named Markion was expelled from the Christian community. The reason for his excommunication was that he had produced a "purely Christian" Bible, without the Old Testament, and a New Testament purged, he maintained, of all Jewish elements. Markion's teaching was clear: for him, the God of the Jews, the creator of this wicked world, was a wicked God. He wanted to teach about the unknown God whom Jesus had revealed, a God of love, not the Jewish law-giving God. He accused the Church and its teachings of being *"pseudo-apostoli et Judaici evangelizatores"* (Adolf von Harnack, *Markion*, TU 45, Leipzig 1924, p. 197). He wanted a strict division between the Law and the Gospel, and he accused the Church of considering the Law and the Gospel, and hence the Old and the New Testament, as a unity (*ibid.*, 198).

One can hardly overestimate the significance of this excommunication. Markion founded a rival church, which remained in existence until the fifth century. The Catholic Church followed another path. It said Yes to the Old Testament. And this Yes meant that the Bible of Israel went into the whole world with the Christian mission, well beyond the Jewish Diaspora, to all nations, in all countries.

The decision against Markion, the Yes to the Old Testament as a binding and still valid revelation, meant that people of all peoples and tribes, languages, and nations, received the Bible as a book affecting them, valid for them.

> "And so it came about that the Torah, the prophets and other writings were disseminated over the whole world, and were accepted as the Word of God. Diverse peoples received the promises and the scriptures that we brought and proclaimed with the Good News of Jesus Christ. The Bible is the most translated book in the world, with versions in about 1600 languages today. Despite the multiplicity of these languages, we maintain that the Hebrew Bible, safely handed down to us in the beautiful vocalized handwriting of the Massoret from the Judaic tradition, is divinely inspired. And all Christians recognize the Hebrew text as a revelation, and a standard point of reference for all translations. Want it or not, like it or not, whether Jew or Gentile, this phenomenon, unique in human history means that the particular history of the Jewish nation is omnipresent—and

not only its history but also its spiritual tradition. For the Bible is not a representation of the annals of Egyptian and Babylonian rulers. It is the Word of God, opening to all humankind the way of the fundamental moral commandments, presenting a call to a holy life, and revealing the depths of wisdom. It shows the true spiritual battle that is still being waged. Above all, it makes the voice of the individual (Praise him...) audible to the entire world. The peoples who receive the Torah as the Word of Truth hear the revelation of the unique God, the God of all peoples. So they cannot understand the God of Israel as other than their own. Whether he wants to be or not, every Jew is regarded by people who received the Bible as belonging to the people through whom God made himself known. The battle of the Gentiles for or against God, for or against their idols, must sooner or later become a battle for or against the Jews.... Where the Bible is accepted as the inspired Word of God, the point of departure for the holy story, to which all peoples in Christ are invited to subscribe, will always be the Jewish people and their history. So even where no Jews live, but where the Bible is present, there will be talk of the Jews." (J-M. Lustiger, "Let my people go," NRT 115 {1993}, pp.481-495; here 483ff.).

The consequences, the paths, and also the wrong paths that resulted, and are still resulting, from this process in world history will now be outlined, at least in broad detail.

The first and most significant consequence in the life of the peoples who accept the Bible as the Word of God is that the history of Israel becomes the history of us all. (Cf. J. Ratzinger, "Jesus von Nazareth, Israel und die Christen," op.cit., *Evangelium, Katechese, Katechismus* {Munich-Zürich-Vienna 1995, pp.63-83}.) Wherever the Bible is accepted, people, nations, cultures, languages become involved in the history of the people of God; Israel's history becomes their own. What is said year after year in the Jewish seder—that every participant should regard him- or herself as someone on the return from Egypt (according to the tradition that "from generation to generation, everyone is obliged to look at himself as if he had returned from Egypt" (mPes X,5; cf bBer 12a-13a)—becomes true for all those who by accepting the Word of God have become co-inheritors of his promise.

In the following section there are some examples and indications of how deeply this idea penetrated into the consciousness of people, affecting

their life and thought, their feelings and actions. The first example is a particularly impressive one, referred to already by Cardinal Lustiger in his already cited lecture, "Testimony of the Blacks in the New World." The black slaves, robbed of their dignity, their cultures, their countries, had to find some meaning in their situation. They found it in the Christian faith, which made it possible to identify themselves and their fate with that of the Jewish people suffering in the Egyptian house of slavery. This identification enabled them to live on, to survive. Their liberation from slavery was the way of deliverance from slavery in Egypt: "Let my people go!" Together with the Gospel they received the Old Testament. Through the Gospel they learned to understand the Old Testament, and hence their own history, their own fate. In Exodus they saw hope. Their faith became the source of their release. As Christians, they also saw themselves as *Bene Israel*, sons of Israel. From here derive the old connections between Afro-Americans and Jews in America.

But let us not restrict ourselves to this particularly striking example.

This identification with the history of the people of Israel goes back to the roots of the Christian tradition. This is seldom as strikingly expressed as in the Christian Easter vigil, in which all over the world not only is the night commemorated when Christ rose from the grave, but also the liberation from Egypt. "This is the night," proclaims the *Exultet*, in praise of the paschal candle, "which freed our fathers, the sons of Israel, from the bonds of Egypt and led them on dry paths through the waters of the Red Sea." Hence, the prayer after the reading of the liberation from Egypt: "God.... Grant that all men will become children of Abraham and become worthy of the Chosen People," and "Grant that all men may through their faith participate in the worthiness of Israel" (*israelitica dignitas*).

What happened to Israel then is nowadays celebrated as their own liberation by all those peoples who followed the promises of Israel.

This may cause some discomfort. Does not such a view represent a usurpation? Does it seem like an attempt to rob the Jewish nation of its own history by spiritualizing it and making it universal? Is this not one of the consequences of also spiritualizing the Promised Land and the hope of a return from exile to Erez Israel? For the Exodus led to the Promised Land, that was its goal. But what does this Promised Land mean if the people receive the promise through the Gospel, the Bible? What then does Erez Israel mean? This question brings up a long and painful history of

guilt, which has still not come to an end, though new and promising aspects are now evident. Before we seek to formulate an answer, it seems I must make another wide detour around the basic question. But it is not a diversion.

What happens in Christian liturgy, what with the Gospel of the story of one Chosen People, has become the story of many peoples, has deep roots in the mission of the Jewish people themselves. For whether the people of Israel like it or not, the yoke of having been chosen has placed them in the focus of history, with a universal mission valid for all peoples since God said to our father Abraham, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). A prophecy from the Book of Isaiah throws light on this universal mission:

> "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." (Isaiah 2:2-5)

Unfortunately this prophecy has not yet been fully fulfilled. The sword is still raised, nation against nation. But part of the prophecy has already become reality: *De Sion exibit lex*, "From Zion comes the word of the Lord." Even if the great pilgrimage of the peoples to the mountain of the Lord has not been completed, his laws have already been spread from Zion to all peoples.

Again, we cannot overemphasize the significance of the decision against Markion in the days of early Christianity. What does it mean to the peoples who accepted the Gospel and with it the Torah, the prophets, and the other scriptures? Here are a few brief pointers.

For hundreds of years Europe learned to read in the Bible not only the gospels but also, equally intensively, the psalms, with the Torah, the prophets, the books of wisdom. I do not know to what extent there has

been academic research into the notion that the peoples of Europe received their "*éducation sentimentale*" from the Bible. For it is not only a book of stories, a literary document, historical testimony. It is the book of life, which like no other has shaped the spiritual landscape of Europe and also many other parts of the globe.

People find in the Bible great figures with whom to identify: Abraham, the father of all believers, and Isaac, his son who, no less than Odysseus, stirred imaginations and sentiments. The story of Joseph is incomparable, as is that of King David, Job the sufferer, Daniel in the lions' den. These and many others have formed images for the soul, which people of all nations and languages have used to interpret the story of their own lives, and to give their suffering a name. The languages of Europe are strongly influenced by their biblical mother tongue, taking shape from its words and pictures. Generations have derived their affects, their morals, their spiritual life from the Bible. The Song of Songs has shaped pictures of love no less than Ovid's *Ars Amoris*.

The image of the ruler in Europe was long based on the Old Testament. It was not oriental despots or Roman emperors who were the model, but David and Solomon.

In the Old Testament the Christian rulers learned the standards for just rule, and in the Old Testament they could perceive as a warning how dangerous were the consequences of injustice and misuse of power. Shakespeare's dramas dealing with kings would be unthinkable without the Books of Kings in the Bible. These plays read like an extension of them.

With the Bible people received the moral message of God's People. These are to be found in the Decalogue, and in the warnings of the prophets. However, they are also to be found earlier, in the fundamental message of Genesis.

> Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them (1:26-27).

The small tribe that was the People of Israel became the carrier and messenger with the universal message that mankind is truly a family,

interrelated and with a common ancestral origin, sharing the same dignity through their common origin in the will and works of the Creator.

With the Bible, this message went around the world and formed the basis of recognition of the same human rights for all. How little self-evident this biblical universalism is and was can be found in the works of philosophers such as Kelsos who reproached both Jews and Christians in the second century, maintaining that the idea of a common origin and hence of equal dignity was absurd and "the voice of revolt." Greeks and barbarians were simply not on the same level.

Thus the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled. *De Sion exibit lex*, God's instructions to all the peoples of the world, proceed from Zion.

A final example brings us back to the question of Erez Israel. The Bible spread the image of the "Tent of God among men" from the Temple in Jerusalem to all nations. The image of the town of Jerusalem and the Temple has become firmly rooted in the ideas and thought, the images and pictures of the peoples who have received the Bible as the Word of God. No other building has influenced the history of building in Europe as much as the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. (To see how it was imagined over the centuries, see and compare Paul von Naredi-Rainer, *Salomons Tempel und das Abendland. Monumentale Folgen historischer Irrtümer*, Köln 1994; Otto von Simson, *Die gotische Kathedrale. Beiträge zu ihrer Entstehung und Deutung*, Darmstadt 1972, 59.138ff.)

What is the significance of these multiple relationships, these thousand threads that link Christianity with Jerusalem, with the Temple and with Erez Israel? Certainly for nearly two thousand years there have been many pilgrims to the Holy Land, to honor the traces of the patriarchs, David, Jesus, and the apostles. But are they concerned with Erez Israel in the sense of the biblical vocation of the country? For Christians, has the country kept even just a little of the significance it had in the sense of the biblical promises? The Christian mission has indeed conveyed the Torah, the prophets, and other writings to all nations but in the light of a particular interpretation. As Professor Zwi Werblowsky of the Hebrew University succinctly stated:

> "Even the New Testament shows a clear tendency to what one could term 'Deterritiorialization' of the concept of holiness, and the consequent dissolution of territorially linked symbols. At the centre are not the Temple and the Holy of Holies, but Christ, not the Holy City or the Holy Land represent the area of holiness, but the new

community, the body of Christ" (*Die Bedeutung Jerusalems für Juden, Christen und Moslems*, Brochure, Jerusalem 1988, pp. 6-7).

Hence, for the Christian tradition, Jerusalem and the Holy Land can be, so to speak, everywhere where people are living a Christian life pleasing to God. This universalizing of the Promised Land is adumbrated in the Beatitudes when Jesus says, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5).

Is this a falsification of the original Promised Land? Yes, many may regard it as a sort of usurpation that Jewish hopes for Erez Israel have been spiritualized by Christians, with the claim that they represent "the true Israel," taking over from the "old" Israel. I shall conclude by looking at the problems and their extremely painful history.

But first, I would point out a positive aspect of this universalizing of the Promised Land. What I am formulating here derives more from intuition than a scientifically validated thesis. I believe that the peoples and nations to whom the Bible came as the Word of God, learned with the people of Israel, into whose history they entered, also to love the Promised Land, to long for Jerusalem and Zion. They learned about a "home" in the school of the Bible, the psalms, the holy story, which grew into a sort of culture of love of the homeland. I must ask whether what we in Europe consider love of the homeland, the motherland or fatherland, is not also a fruit of our education through the Bible. The entire biblical complex of images, language, and feelings, covering the ideas of home and abroad, of exile and return, have helped influence the love of home. Something of the longing for Erez Israel has also emigrated with peoples, and provided a glimpse of the appeal of home. The heart's longing for home, for *Heimat*, perhaps particularly marked in German-speaking areas, has also to some extent been formed by the longing for Erez Israel. This love of the homeland was appropriate as long as it could be seen as a counterbalance to the longing for the heavenly Jerusalem, the eternal home. For the peoples of the Bible also learned from the Bible that with Abraham we are "strangers and sojourners" and that we have here no abiding city.

However, when this view of the coming world, the future earth, was lacking, when love of the homeland was godless, it was reflected in nationalism, which usurped the choosing of Israel as the homeland and transferred the title to another nation, a race, a class of idolaters.

There were very early indications of this in European history. For

instance, when Eusebius of Caesarea identified the Roman empire Christianized under the Emperor Constantine as the People of God. "Nothing small and insignificant, tucked away in some corner of the world," but the great Roman empire, rich in numbers, is for him "the new People of God" (E. von Ivánka, *Rhomäerreich und Gottesvolk*, Freiburg–Munich 1968, pp, 49-61).

Identification of one's own people as the Chosen, and hence one's own country as the Promised Land, is one of the sources of European nationalism. One can interpret nationalism as usurpation of the land promised to the People of God. This was early evident in France: since the thirteenth century there has been an ideology proposing France as "the new Israel," as God's kingdom (cf. J.-M.Lustiger, *loc.cit.*, p. 493). It certainly was present in the formation of the United States of America, considered by the Pilgrim father's and somehow still now as "God's Chosen Land." However, it was only in the nineteenth century that nationalism assumed that threatening, perverted form of an ideology of power which idolized one's own people, one's own nation, and which led to the great catastrophes of the twentieth century. The radical perversion of the biblical chosen people and the Promised Land is found in the racist ideology of National Socialism and in the ideology of class in Marxist-Leninism. Ernest Bloch said, *Ubi Lenin, ibi Jerusalem*. Never should this idea be accepted.

Within the area of these wild aberrations of nationalism in regard to the biblical idea of promise, the emancipated agnostic Jew Theodor Herzl developed his brand of Jewish nationalism. Even though Herzl played with the idea of a Jewish state in Uganda or elsewhere, the attraction of Erez Israel became stronger and stronger. And thinking about Erez Israel, the emancipated Theodor Herzl started to consider his sources. At the first Zionist Congress in Basel, 1897, he said, "Zionism is the return to Judaism, even before the return to the land of the Jews."

So what does Erez Israel mean to us? At the Second Zionist Congress Theodor Herzl said, "If there are any legitimate claims at all to a part of the Earth's surface, all peoples who believe in the Bible must recognize the right of the Jews" (A. Elon, *op. cit.*, p. 256).

Taking these two quotations from Herzl as a point of departure, I will try to formulate three conclusions.

M. It was of decisive importance that early Christianity, the Church of Rome, clearly said No to Markion, and hence spread the

entire Bible, the Old and the New Testament, all over the world. The positive consequences of this Yes to the Law and the Prophets were the main subject of my considerations. However, one Yes was largely missing, and this omission had serious and negative consequences: the Yes to the continuation of the Chosen People in places which could not recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of Israel, the Savior of the World. It took a long time, a time involving much blood and many wounds, until *Nostra Aetate* appeared from the Second Vatican Council, which, together with subsequent statements from the Pope, emphasized what Paul had a long time ago said about God's abiding loyalty to his people and the covenant. "They are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came...." (Romans 9:4-5). "For the gifts of God are without repentance" (Romans 1:29).

Herzl spoke of the return to Judaism within the Church; there was also a return to its roots. It became increasingly conscious of the words of St. Paul: "The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in" (Romans 11:19).

N. On 17 November 1980 Pope John Paul II said in Mainz that "the Old Covenant has never been repealed." This covenant obliges the Jews to serve God in Erez Israel, in the Promised Land. Hence, the return to Erez Israel is a holy command, deriving from the extant covenant. Admittedly, this duty is not identical with the founding of a sovereign state. Herzl realized this when he rejected theocracy for the "Jewish State." But this does not hinder people from being in favor of a national homeland for the Jewish people, to approve of it, to support it, as many Christians did. Only this foundation had to take place following an arduous and painful process, in conformity with international law, and with justice for the Palestinian population. The long path to lasting peace is still ahead.

O. This path leading to peace secured by international law proceeds via people following the path of righteousness. The prophet Isaiah says, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgement, and her

converts with righteousness" (Isaiah 1:27). And Exodus 23:9 states, "Thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

The return to Erez Israel is a symbol of hope, not yet the fulfilling of this hope. We are still pilgrims, and this we have in common, that we all try to be children of Abraham who saw himself, too, as a "pilgrim and foreigner." The children of Israel live far apart, even if they have begun to come together. There are still shameful clefts—consider the lack of unity shown by Christians in the Holy Land but also by Jews and Muslims—but there is one thing for which we all pray to God and that we have in common: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee" (Psalm 122:6).

A longer version of this lecture, "100 Years of *Der Judenstaat*," was given on March 19, 1996, at the Theodor Herzl Symposium in Vienna.

March 27, 2003
THE RABBI JULIAN B. FEIBELMAN MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Pontifical Biblical Document, The Jewish People, and Their Sacred Scriptures in the New Testament: A Jewish Perspective

Jack Bemporad

The Pontifical Biblical document is an important step in the direction of better understanding between Catholics and Jews. In some respects it makes new, significant, and positive affirmations as to Catholic appreciation of Judaism. In other respects it is problematic, and I will deal with these in detail, but even here the document is both important and helpful since it tries in an honest and comprehensive manner to clearly present a Catholic understanding of the place of the Jewish people and its scriptures in the New Testament. The document places its findings in the interreligious context both in its preface and in more detail in the concluding sections.

First of all, I want to express my appreciation to the Pontifical Biblical Commission for such a difficult and valiant effort. The problem it addresses has haunted Jews and Christians for centuries. What is the real and binding connection between our two faiths? Even the most superficial view of the New Testament immediately impresses the reader with its indissoluble connection to the Hebrew Bible but especially if one is cognizant of Rabbinic texts and institutions with the Rabbinic context within which it emerged.

I think it took daring for the Pontifical Commission to present its results when so much of the material it covers is in the process of intense scrutiny and changing scholarly opinion. This uncertainty is not just in the study of early Rabbinic Judaism but also in New Testament research, both in the scholarly work on the historical Jesus and even more so in the intense debate over the apostle Paul.

One of the many merits of this document is that it is viewed as part of an ongoing process embodying the results of current work, which is subject to revision.

The leitmotif of the document is announced in Cardinal Ratzinger's

introduction, where he quotes section 84: "Without the Old Testament the New Testament would be an incomprehensible book, a plant deprived of its roots and destined to dry up and wither."

Hence any attempt to view the N.T as self-sufficient or in a Marcionite context is again repudiated but in a much more vigorous form.

The document clearly reaffirms the past statements of the Church in the section on pastoral orientations.

The Second Vatican Council, in its recommendation that there be "understanding and mutual esteem" between Christians and Jews, declared that these will be "born especially from biblical and theological study as well as from fraternal dialogue".

The present document has been composed in this spirit; it hopes to make a positive contribution to it, and encourages in the Church of Christ the love toward Jews that Pope Paul VI emphasized on the day of the promulgation of the conciliar document *Nostra Aetate*.

With this text Vatican Two laid the foundations for a new understanding of our relations with Jews. "According to the apostle (Paul), the Jews, because of their ancestors, still remain very dear to God, whose gifts and calling are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29).

Through his teaching John Paul II has, on many occasions, taken the initiative in developing this Declaration. During a visit to the synagogue of Mainz in 1980, he said: "The encounter between the people of God of the Old Covenant, which has never been abrogated by God (cf. Romans 11:29), and that of the New Covenant is also an internal dialogue in our Church, similar to that between the first and second part of its Bible."

Later, addressing the Jewish communities of Italy during a visit to the synagogue of Rome in 1986, he declared: "The Church of Christ discovers its 'links' with Judaism 'by pondering its own mystery' (cf. *Nostra Aetate*). The Jewish religion is not 'extrinsic' to us but, in a certain manner, it is 'intrinsic' to our religion. We have therefore a relationship with it, which we do not have with any other religion. You are our favored brothers and, in a certain sense, one can say our elder brothers.

"An attitude of respect, esteem, and love for the Jewish people is the only truly Christian attitude in a situation, which is mysteriously part of the beneficent and positive plan of God. Dialogue is possible since Jews and Christians share a rich common patrimony that unites them. It is greatly to be desired that prejudice and misunderstanding be gradually

eliminated on both sides in favor of a better understanding of the patrimony they share and to strengthen the links that bind them."

Never before, as far as I am aware, has as unequivocal an affirmation as the following been made by a pontifical commission.

"The New Testament recognizes the divine authority of the Jewish Scriptures and supports itself on this authority. When the New Testament speaks of the 'Scriptures' and refers to 'that which is written,' it is to the Jewish Scriptures that it refers."

Cardinal Ratzinger believes that the Hebrew Bible can become a common ground for the fostering of positive relations between Christians and Jews.

Another very positive affirmation of this document that Cardinal Ratzinger alludes to is in section 22. Here what is affirmed is that Christians can and ought to admit that the Jewish reading of the Bible is a possible one, in continuity with the Jewish Sacred Scriptures from the Second Temple period, a reading analogous to the Christian reading which developed in parallel fashion. Both readings are bound up with the vision of their respective faiths, of which the readings are the result and expression. Consequently, both are irreducible (23).

In clarifying what this twofold reading entails, and in clearing the ground for a "possible" Jewish reading, the text states:

> "It would be wrong to consider the prophecies of the O.T. as some kind of photographic anticipations of future events. All the texts, including those which later were read as Messianic prophecies, already had an immediate import and meaning for their contemporaries before attaining a fuller meaning for future hearers. The messiah-ship of Jesus has a meaning that is new and original...it is therefore better not to excessively insist...on the probative value attributable to the fulfillment of prophecy (which) must be discarded"(22).

This is all very positive since it clearly maintains separate readings of the biblical foundations of Judaism and Christianity and also makes room for a reading of the biblical prophecies in non-fulfillment terms. It also perceptively affirms that what happened in Jesus from a Christian point of view was "new and original."

And again later:

> "When the Christian reader perceives that the internal dynamism of the O.T. finds its goal in Jesus, this is a retrospective perception

whose point of departure is not in the text as such, but in the events of the N.T. proclaimed by the apostolic preaching. It cannot be said, therefore, that Jews do not see what has been proclaimed in the text, but the Christians, in the light of Christ and in the Spirit, discovers in the text further meaning that was hidden there" (22) .

What is left hanging is, what exactly is the difference between Jewish and Christian Messianic expectations? The obvious answer from a Jewish perspective is that the Messiah is seen in the Hebrew Bible as ushering in a Messianic age of Justice and Peace for all. Here the Jewish communities' view of the very texts used by the Church in a Christological manner are viewed very differently in Judaism.

Recognizing this divergence, a remarkable and welcome affirmation follows:

> The Jewish expectation for a Messiah is not in vain. It can become for us Christians a strong stimulus to maintain alive the eschatological dimension of our faith. We also, like them, live in expectation. The difference lies in the fact that for us He who will come will have the attributes of that Jesus that has already come and is already active and present in us. (22)

From a theological point of view this is a most important step forward in recognizing the legitimacy of a Jewish understanding of the Messiah not merely by rejecting the long standing belief that Jewish Messianic hopes are vain but, even more, that traditional Jewish expectations can become a powerful stimulus to keep alive the eschatological understanding of the Christian faith. What this accomplishes is the identifying of Jewish expectations of the coming of the Messiah with the second coming of Jesus, and in this sense we both share this anticipation.

One caution, however, is necessary. The concept of the Messiah in Jewish thought has not the same centrality as it does in Christianity. I think our great teacher, Leo Baeck, expressed this accurately.

> The hope is no longer for one man who will renew the world but for the new world that is to arise upon the earth. For it is inconsistent with the way of Judaism that one man should be lifted above humanity to be its destiny. The conception of the one man retired into the background in favor of the conception of the one time; the Messiah gives way to the "days of the Messiah" and, side by side with it, the more definite expression of the Kingdom of God.

There is much that could be said about the document's detailed analysis of the relationship between the O.T and the Jewish environment that accompanied the N.T and indeed the N.T. itself. Much as I have noted is very positive; for example, the long descriptions of Paul's teaching on pages 36 and 37 ending with the words: "Paul is convinced that at the end, God, in his inscrutable wisdom, will graft all Israel back onto their own olive tree, 'all Israel will be saved' is very positive indeed."

Also at the conclusion of each section there are a number of positive assertions about Judaism and the Jewish people.

If the parallel development from the Hebrew Bible as the original foundational covenant would be traced in two directions with the Christian emerging out of its early Rabbinic context, then a more incisive connection between our two faiths would ensue. However, in the detailed comparison I find the discussion somewhat wooden, mechanical, and not properly valenced. It is all presented on the same level without clarifying what is essential and what is peripheral.

Its chief defect can be simply stated. The document evinces little awareness of the great debt the authors of the N.T. owe to Rabbinic Judaism and the almost complete lack of appreciation for what early Rabbinic Judaism contributed.

The clearest example is proof-texting, a rabbinic contribution which lies at the whole foundation of the Gospels and Paul. It is not simply the use of hermeneutic principles but the whole innovation of using biblical verses as proof-texts that is Pharisaic and fundamental to the way of the early Rabbinic sages; after them Jesus and Paul established their authority. This is clearly seen in Jesus' controversy with the Sadducees in Matthew (22:23-32.) This is very important for understanding the controversies in the N.T.

The New Testament clearly identifies Jesus as a Jew. The religious terminology he used came from Judaism. When asked, "What is the chief one of all the commandments?" Jesus replied, 'The chief one is: Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with your whole mind, and with your whole strength. The second is this. You must love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:32ff)

In affirming the central teachings of religion, Jesus responded much as Hillel or Rabbi Akiba responded when asked similar questions. When a

pagan challenged Hillel to summarize the whole of the Torah while he stood on one foot, Hillel answered, "What is hateful to you do not unto your fellow human being; this is the whole of the Torah; the rest is commentary; go and learn" (Shabbat 31A). Akiba affirmed that the central principle of the Torah is "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Bereshit Rabbah 24).

The selection of the passage from Deuteronomy is Rabbinic and completely accepted by Jesus, and incidentally, by the earliest Christian prayer communities. The conflicts relating to Sabbath Observance and the dietary laws are in principle no different than the disagreements between the various schools of Judaism of that time. They resemble the type of differences that took place between the schools of Hillel and Shammai—incidentally, neither Hillel nor Shammai were rabbis as is affirmed in the text—between the Sadducees and Pharisees, and they are really not such as to separate Jesus from Judaism.

Y. Kaufmann in his important work, *Golah v Nekhar,* points out that "no controversy concerning the 'Son of God' concept as such is reported in the New Testament" (p. 24). If I am not mistaken there is no debate between Jesus and his Jewish antagonist over whether Jesus is the Messiah or not; no debate on the virgin birth or incarnation or any "dogma that may have separated the Christian sectarians from Judaism" (*ibid*).

On the critical question of authority, many spoke with authority and indeed their own authority, basing it in one form or another on the received tradition. Luke 16:31 clearly endorses the authority of Moses and the prophets, and as Kaufmann points out, "Jesus never cites a prophetic word which was revealed to him or claims 'authority' to alter Pentateuchal statutes. He either explicates the texts according to the expository system of the Pharisees, or cites the intent and spirit of the law." So in his discussion with the Pharisees in Mark (2:23-28), which parallels Matthew (12:1-4) and Luke (6:1-5), Jesus quotes a well known Rabbinic dictum, *the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath* but, what is more important, he then bases the legitimacy of what his disciples did through an interpretation of Scripture and not on his own authority; the interpretation is a typical Rabbinic Hermeneutical method of inferring from minor to major. Perhaps, as I have noted above, the clearest example of the Pharisaic manner of Jesus' exegesis is in his teaching the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the dead. The Sadduccees rejected any form of

resurrection and immortality as being not based on the Pentateuch. The Pharisees and Jesus defend both and defend their position using the same Hermeneutical principles. Jesus does not teach the Doctrines of Immortality and Resurrection as a prophet proclaiming the word of God nor on the basis of his own authority but rather on scriptural exegesis. Thus, Kaufmann after a careful analysis points out that on the issue of oaths and vows "the difference of opinions concerned Halachic niceties, and Jesus' reasoning is definitely Pharisaic."

Let me make this as clear as possible. The ancient prayer of the synagogue emphasizing resurrection clearly connects Rabbinic Judaism and the N.T.

> He sustains life with His grace, revives the dead with His boundless mercy, supports the falling, heals the sick, loosens the bounds, and keeps his faith with those who sleep in the dust. Who is like unto Thee, master of mighty acts, and who bears resemblance unto Thee, O King, Who deadens and enlivens and causes salvation to flower? And Thou art indeed utterly trustworthy to resurrect the dead. Praised be Thou, O Lord, Who causes the dead to come to life.

This is foundational and must be recognized for a proper understanding of Judaism and its relation to the N.T.

A related, for me, and disconcerting aspect of this document is the constant quotes from texts that the Jewish community never accepted or quoted in authorized sources as important for a description of Judaism, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls. To use such texts in explicating what the Jews believed is the equivalent, in a reconstruction of Christianity, for one to quote all the non-canonical gospels, like the Gospel of Thomas, as an appropriate description of early Christianity, while ignoring the texts of the N.T.

I do not in any way wish to minimize the importance of the summary statements in each section, which are all positive and affirmative of Judaism and the Jewish people, but in the comparisons in the intermediate sections, the fundamental question is not clearly addressed. This question can be stated in its sharpest form in the following manner. What is unique to Christianity if all Jewish elements that contributed to it were deleted?

In an endeavor to answer this question, I am reminded of a statement by Raymond Brown, who in a lecture on the book of Acts asked why Jesus as founder of Christianity did not establish laws and institutions like

Moses and Mohammed? His answer was that he did not have to since he accepted the fundamental teachings and institutions of Judaism. The synagogue was a foundational institution. Judaism was the only religion prior to Christianity and Islam that made religion central in one's life and put one's faith in God before all else.

The belief in Monotheism is the foundation stone without which the whole revolutionary faith of Judaism would be impossible as well as Christianity. Monotheism is not just the belief in one God as one element among other elements in the Hebrew Bible. It integrates and transforms all the basic elements that make for the very possibility of there being a Judaism as well as a Christianity and Islam.

The essence of Judaism is the affirmation of Monotheism and all that this implies. This was, and remains, its greatest contribution to the world.

The belief in Monotheism is not just the affirmation that God is one as opposed to the multiplicity of pagan deities but, more importantly, Monotheism brought about a revolution in religious thinking that to this day is the foundation for the three great Monotheistic faiths of the western world: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Monotheism implies Spiritual creator God.

A. As long as the gods were forces in nature, as was true of all pre-biblical religion, then each deity had a certain domain and was characterized by arbitrariness and conflict. There was the battle between the gods, and nature was seen in constant strife.

   The Jewish biblical view was of a God that was not one among a number of natural forces but the transcendent spiritual creator of nature. This revolutionary view was initiated by the Prophets, who made it possible to see nature as the creation of God, as a cosmos and not a chaos. Also since God created nature, God is not a natural force but a spiritual being. God transcends nature.

   Another consequence of Monotheism is that Human Beings are made in and for the Divine image. They have a spark of the Divine. Hence they must be treated with respect and as ends in themselves and not solely as objects of use. Since God is a spiritual being, then Human Beings made in the Divine image also transcend physical nature. They also have a spiritual quality that manifests itself not only in natural processes but in ethical

action.

B. As a result of the new concept of Human nature as a spiritual and not simply physical reality, History is now possible. The Bible was the first book that actually viewed society as historical and not just cyclical. History became the means through which human values and goals could be realized. This also was a consequence of Monotheism

C. Just as Monotheism affirmed one God and one Cosmos, it also made it possible to believe in one ideal goal of history, which would be constituted by a society of Justice and Peace. It is this working for a society of Justice and Peace which gives human beings their tasks and responsibilities in the world. It is a threefold responsibility:
   a) For themselves, in the sense that the spark of the Divine within them must be tended and realized and used to deal with all self-centered action at the expense of others.
   b) For others who also are made in the Divine image. The Bible was the first book to indicate that all human beings have a claim on us and that in the sight of God they are spiritually equal. Thus the ideal of a Just society for all was a basic affirmation of Monotheism.
   c) For God who is the ground for the order, value, and meaning in the world and in our lives.

D. Monotheism means that Peace is now a possible ideal. With no warfare between the gods and one cosmos and one goal of history, the realization of peace is now the end of all our striving.

E. Monotheism in the Bible also affirmed that the Jewish People were given the task of taking on the burden of making Monotheism known to the world. This was the concept in the Prophets of the mission of Israel. This mission was to make God and Righteousness real in the world.

F. Monotheism also affirmed the centrality of the ethical, which brought about the revolutionary idea that all ritual was not to be seen as a means of cajoling or bribing or propitiating God but as a means of the implementation of the ethical. As a result the ethical and the holy became indissoluble. The holy was seen as

all that realizes the spiritual in man and brings him close to God and since the holy is inoperative without the ethical, the prophets viewed ethical behavior and not ritual as central to Judaism. For example, on Yom Kippur only ethical sins are listed, and God will not forgive sins of a moral nature without moral-spiritual regeneration on our part. Ritual should be a symbolization, implementation, and a continual reminder of our ethical ideals and values.

G. The goal of Jewish life on an individual basis is:
   a) the transformation of self by using our best selves to deal with our worst selves;
   b) the transformation of society by establishing a just social order;
   c) taking our place in history by building on the past and doing our part. As Rabbi Tarfon has said, "It is not yours to finish the task; neither is it yours to exempt yourselves from it."

H. The rejection of Monotheism is idolatry. Idolatry is the having of a false sense of the Holy. It is the making sacred of all those things, objects, persons, institutions that have no right to be sacred. Monotheism in its ethical and ritual manifestations enjoins us to continually guard ourselves against the temptation to attribute holiness to the projection of our fears and desires. An idol is a false hope. It is the taking of something that is finite, limited, and time-bound, and giving it the status of the ultimate and eternal. The worst form of idolatry is the acting as if we are the center of the universe, and that all is there to serve us and to cater to us as if we were divine. It is the taking of ourselves and all extensions of ourselves as the true sacred without any consideration for the claims of others. It is not recognizing our proper place in the scheme of things.

All of the above constitutes the foundational covenant which became part and parcel of the Christian religion. A conceptual connectedness rather than a mechanical textual comparison is what is needed in any future work.

There is no need for me to elaborate on this before this group except to say that the distinction between faith and works is a distinction which is

alien to Judaism. One fulfills one's faith through one's works and one's works establish and reinforce one's faith.

Herman Cohen has pointed out that the "idea of humanity" came from the Hebrew Bible, and we can add so much more, most especially the ideal of a society of Justice and Peace for all the world.

Almost in passing, the text makes many very significant points that are helpful for Christian Jewish relations.

At the bottom of page 28, it states that "God was never resigned to leaving his people in wretchedness. He always reinstates them in the path of true greatness, for the benefit of the whole of humanity." What a wonderful affirmation of the nature and role of the Jewish people. The text introduces contextual language to interpret Acts 4:12, a troublesome text for many non-Christians.

In commenting on a servant passage in second Isaiah it clearly recognizes the servant as the People of Israel, which is destined to be a light to the nations (34). While there seems to be some hesitation in interpreting Paul in Romans as I indicated above, the long section on pages 36 and 37 is very positive.

What is especially helpful is the document's claim that the unconditional promises given to Abraham include the "gift of the land" (38); "to your descendants I give this land"; on page 39 again it states "the Lord commits himself to the gift of the land."

All of the above is positive. There is, however, unfortunately, much that from a Jewish perspective is troublesome.

First is the treatment of Paul, and especially Galatians and Romans. I personally believe that the work of Stendahl and Gager—that Paul was indeed the apostle to the gentiles and that the strictures as to those under the law were strictures against Judaizers—is convincing. The careful analysis of both Galatians and Romans in Gager's book, *Reinventing Paul,* makes it clear that the disputes Paul alludes to were disputes "within the Jesus-movement, not with Jews or Judaism outside" (p. 69). Building on the ground-breaking work of Krister Stendahl, Gager summarizes his two books on Paul as follows:

> When Paul summarizes his gospel—"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.... For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death"(8.1ff)—he does so using language characteristic of Gentiles

throughout the letter. When he speaks unambiguously of the law and Israel, he never uses terms like condemnation and death. Moreover, there is a strong thematic continuity between Chapters 1-4, which emphasizes the disobedience, the sins, and redemption of the Gentiles, and Chapters 5-8, which speak of their new life in Christ. Any other reading goes against the grain not just of the entire letter but of every Jewish understanding of the law. Little wonder that older Jewish readers of Paul spoke with dismay of his profound distortion of Judaism. But if, as more recent readers have discovered, Paul is not speaking of the law and Israel, that issue disappears. Still, the damage has been done. "I believe it a great tragedy that generations of Christians have seen Jews through these dark lense"(p.81).

Apropos of this position, the words of Stendahl are central.

> To me the climax of Romans is actually chapters 9-11; i.e., his reflections on the relation between church and synagogue, the church and the Jewish people—not "Christianity" and "Judaism," not the attitudes of the gospel versus the attitudes of the law. The question is the relation between two communities and their coexistence in the mysterious plan of God. It should be noted that Paul does not say that when the time of God's kingdom, the consummation, comes, Israel will accept Jesus as the Messiah. He says only that the time will come when "all Israel will be saved" (11:26). It is stunning to note that Paul writes this whole section of Romans (10:18-11:36) without using the name of Jesus Christ. This includes the final doxology (11:33-36), the only such doxology in his writings without any christologial element (*see Paul among Jews and Gentiles*, p. 4).

I am not claiming that such a revisionist view of Paul is conclusive. What I am saying is that its claims must be carefully weighed and dealt with. The text does mention Judaizers, so it is at least aware of its importance.

A second issue that needs clarification is the identification of the prophets' condemnation of Israelites society with Jesus' condemnation of the Jewish leadership. What is involved is the kind of controversies mentioned above, not what is stated in the text. The Prophetic criticism in the Hebrew Bible evinces a concern for two issues, idolatry and social

justice. Kaufmann points out that the classical prophets believe it is not only idolatry but also injustice, oppression of the poor and needy, exploitation and social corruption of the ruling classes that would lead to exile.

Their condemnation is accompanied with a broken heart for the great tragedy that is befalling their people. Moses' plea has a parallel in Paul in Romans, chapter 9, but to claim that the leadership of the Jewish people were intent on killing Jesus and destroying Christianity is totally unwarranted, as is evidenced by the compelling scholarship both Jewish and non-Jewish for the last hundred years. It was the Roman government and Pontius Pilate who were doing the oppressing, not the Pharasaic leadership. We know that the high priest was the appointee of the Procurator and functioned as his henchman. The oppressive nature of the Roman government can be seen by the numerous revolts against Rome.

I do not want these criticisms in any way to take away from what I can only view as a most important step forward in Catholic-Jewish relations. There is no question that the intent and, in the main, the execution of this document is motivated by a sincere desire for genuinely warm and loving relations between our two faiths. No more fitting conclusion can be the whole-hearted agreement on my part with the hope expressed in the text's conclusion, "that prejudice and misunderstanding be gradually eliminated" for both of us "in favor of a better understanding of the patrimony" we share so as to strengthen the links that bind us.

September 11, 2003
THE CATHERINE AND HENRY J. GAISMAN MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Catholic Church and the Jewish People

William H. Keeler

With much personal joy I have accepted the invitation of Father Val McInnes, a friend for many years, to speak this evening. Father McInnes wrote to me in 1987; we were having the difficult days following the audience given by Pope John Paul II to the Chancellor of Austria, Kurt Waldheim. As I quickly learned, neither the Pope nor Catholics generally understood the negative meaning of this for so many in the Jewish community.

This came at a period when Catholic-Jewish relations had already begun to become so very positive. The year before, in 1986, Pope John Paul II became the first Pope since St. Peter to visit a Jewish synagogue. He made a pilgrimage across the Tiber to the Great Synagogue of Rome.

Many of you who are here this evening are already familiar with the significant and positive developments that have taken place in relationships between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people in the last four decades. This evening my intention is to review some of those developments with special emphasis on Pope John Paul II, who has been so personally dedicated to efforts to build bridges between church and synagogue.

Pope John Paul has done this in the context of his commitment to making the teachings of the Second Vatican Council come alive for Catholic people around the world.

At that Council, Cardinal Augustin Bea introduced in 1963 the first draft of what eventually became the *Declaration on the Relationship between the Catholic Church and Non-Christian Religions* (*Nostra Aetate*). It seems to me like yesterday when he stood before us at the Council to speak with persuasive logic of the request of Pope John XXIII that the Council take up this issue.

Cardinal Bea referred to what had occurred under Nazi rule in Europe during World War II. He repeated the injunction of Pope John XXIII, that

the Council should take whatever steps were necessary to be sure that never again would the Christian Scriptures or the teachings of the Church be misused in a way that might contribute to anti-Semitism.

The Council document (*Nostra Aetate,* Chapter Four) reminds Catholics of several points, but I will mention two of these now as bases for our reflection.

A. Although some Jews opposed the spread of the gospel of Jesus, "nevertheless, according to the Apostle, the Jews still remain most dear to God because of their fathers, for he does not repent of the gifts he makes nor of the calls he issues" (cf. Romans 11:28-29). "Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred Synod (Second Vatican Council) wishes to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit above all of biblical and theological studies and of brotherly dialogues."

B. With specific reference to texts of the Christian scriptures, the Council points out that what happened to Jesus in "his suffering cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today." What follows is the basis for catechetical instruction to ensure that neither Christian scriptures nor Christian teaching could be used in any way that would be an excuse for anti-Semitism. In a word, the dream of Pope John XXIII had been endorsed as a way of acting by the highest authority in the Catholic Church, the Pope and bishops acting together in an ecumenical council.

In the years since the Second Vatican Council, we have tried to apply this document to preaching in our churches and to our teaching in seminaries, universities, colleges, and perhaps most important of all, in the religious education classes for children of every age.

Pope John Paul II made me personally aware of how closely he had taken to his heart the challenges and possibilities of Catholic-Jewish relations when on September 1, 1987, he received the International Liaison Committee of Catholics and Jews at his residence at Castel Gandolfo. He spoke of what had occurred in his native land of Poland on September 1, 1939. On that day the Nazis invaded the country and began a period of persecution. He recalled how he had returned to his own hometown after the war to discover that many who had been his friends

and classmates were no more. He spoke also of his own meditation that very morning on the meaning of the Exodus and of how he could understand that the Jewish people would see in Israel today a fulfillment of ancient prophecy.

In all of his trips the Pope has tried to meet with local Jewish leaders. That includes his trips to the United States. I recall vividly his meeting with the Jewish leadership in Miami in 1987 and in New York in 1995. One was very formal and the other quite informal. Both were occasions when heart spoke to heart. At Miami, Pope John Paul specifically commended our dialogue efforts in the United States and our commitment to introduce a formal curriculum on the Holocaust in our Catholic schools. This we have succeeded in doing, with advice from representatives of various Jewish groups. The outline of the curriculum has now been distributed nationally with the endorsement of our United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Also, in the United States, we have been able to introduce into our published liturgical resources statements that make clear the teaching of the Councils of Trent *(Jesus died because of the sins of all of us)* and of Vatican II (What occurred in the suffering and death of Jesus is not to be attributed to the Jewish people as a whole of his day or of any subsequent age).

When Roman Catholics begin to think about the important relationships between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people, we have a history that is both stormy and troubled but, finally, we come to the Second Vatican Council and a profound awareness that we are speaking about a mystery that joins Christians and Jews together.

It is a mystery more fully recognized in our day but not yet fully understood. As Cardinal Walter Kasper has noted recently, "We are at the beginning of the beginning."

I would like to carry forward this reflection, limited as it must be by the mysterious nature of the Jewish-Christian bond first by speaking of the insights, to which I have just referred, that emerged in *Nostra Aetate*; second by noting how Pope John Paul II has developed these insights in meetings with Jewish representatives; and third with some theological reflections that seek to relate the mystery of Jewish-Christian relations to the other dimensions of the mystery of the Church. Finally, I wish to underscore the symbolic actions on the part of Pope John Paul II that probably more than statements or speculation help people everywhere to

see the positive developments in relationships between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people.

First, then, *Nostra Aetate*. This declaration, as we have seen, affirmed in a public and universal manner the Church's self-knowledge. In doing so it presented the Church with a dimension of itself that, while evident in the Scriptures, is spoken anew, for this declaration notes that in the very searching "into the mystery of the Church" herself there is found "that spiritual bond linking the people of the New Covenant with Abraham's stock."

The compact formulation given in the Council document has been gradually differentiated in terms of the meaning of this mystery. Leading that clarification has been Pope John Paul II in his writings, his public pronouncements, and his practice.

Pope John Paul's bond with the Jewish people began in his hometown. We know, from his own words, what a close relationship he developed with Jerzy Kluger, as demonstrated in the book, *Letter to a Jewish Friend.* About this Pope John Paul II spoke with me in 1988, and I could see how much he took to heart what he was saying about his dear friend.

The vision of Pope John Paul II found its fuller account in his remarks given on March 12, 1979, during his first formal presentation to an audience of representatives of Jewish organizations. There he speaks of the importance of guidelines that had been developed by the Holy See in 1974 (*Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration, Nostra Aetate*, No. 4, by the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews). He points to the central aspects of the mystery of the relationship of Jews and Christians.

First, there is the necessity for Christians to "strive to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience." (*Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration, Nostra Aetate*, No. 4, by the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, Prologue.) Second, "In virtue of her divine mission, and her very nature, the Church must preach Jesus Christ to the world (*Ad Gentes*, 2). Lest witness of Catholics to Jesus Christ should give offense to Jews, they must take care to live and spread their Christian faith while maintaining the strictest respect for religious liberty in line with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council (c.f. *Dignitatis Humanae,* the Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom). They will likewise strive to understand the difficulties which arise for the

Jewish soul—rightly imbued with an extremely high, pure notion of the divine transcendence—when faced with the mystery of the incarnate Word." The demand made on Catholics is how to give witness to Christ by respecting the mystery that is found in the hearts and souls of Jews who are our "older brothers."

Pope John Paul II had brought with him to the Papacy, as he did with his friendship with Jerzy Kluger, a considerable experience from the practical and pastoral sphere of his life as a worker, a student, a priest and a bishop under totalitarian rule. In terms of personal and official witness, he focused on the centrality of the Christian mystery of Redemption of the world through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ in his first encyclical letter of March 4, 1979, *Redemptor Hominis*. In his address to the people gathered in St. Peter's Square for the Angelus on that day, he spoke of his purpose in the encyclical.

> I tried to express in it what has animated and continually animates my thoughts and my heart since the beginning of the pontificate.... The Encyclical contains those thoughts which then, at the beginning of this new life, were pressing with particular forcefulness on my mind and which certainly, already been maturing in me previously, during the years of my service as a priest and then as bishop.

Indeed, in a personal reflection on this fifteen years later, he noted the following in his book, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*.

> "I was actually carrying its [the Encyclical's] contents within me. I had only to 'copy' from memory and experience what I had already been living on the threshold of the papacy.... The Encyclical aims to be a great hymn of joy for the fact that man has been redeemed through Christ—redeemed in spirit and body."

This is the belief of Catholics and all other Christians (6, 1, 2); furthermore he notes that it is this mystery which impels authentic "dialogue, prayer, investigation of the treasures of human spirituality" with peoples of other religions.

In the Encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio*, written fourteen years later, and presented to the Church on December 7, 1990, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Vatican II's Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, *Ad Gentes*, he urges the Church to renew its commitment to evangelize the world, as he considers one aspect of St. Paul's concern, "Woe to me if I do

not preach the Gospel." This encyclical deals with a theme that had been controversial among some Catholics since Vatican II. These considered teaching about one's faith to be merely "exporting" a foreign religion from one culture to another. The Pope affirms that the mission of the Church is part of her catholicity.

The Encyclical has a special section on the relationship of Mission and other religions (paragraph 55). Here the Pope speaks to authorities in missionary countries, noting that evangelization is not the agency of any foreign political, social, economic, educational, or cultural imperialism; it "has but one purpose: to serve man by revealing to him the love God made manifest in Jesus Christ" (2.5). In her preaching the Church herself must always respect freedom of conscience. "The Church proposes; she imposes nothing. She respects individuals and cultures, and she honors the sanctuary of conscience"(39.2). Catholics then are to undertake dialogue with "deep respect that has been brought about in human beings by the Spirit who blows where he wills" (56.1). Respect and dialogue do not permit the Church to avoid its missionary task given it by Christ, but respect and dialogue help to purify the Church, and encourage greater mutual understanding among peoples and the elimination of prejudice and intolerance.

LEX ORANDI, LEX CREDENDI

There is only one official prayer for the Jews in the Liturgy of the Catholic Church. This is the traditional Good Friday prayer. It was (and is) in the middle of a threefold prayer, first, for the church (*fideles*, believers), then for the Jews (*perfideles*, half-believers), and finally for the unbelievers (*infideles*). Over the centuries the teaching of contempt burdened the original theological category of "*perfideles*" with so much opprobrium that the modern term "perfidious" took on a far more sinister meaning than perhaps first intended by the ancient liturgy. Thus, Pope Pius XII in the mid 1950's directed that "*perfideles*" no longer be translated as "perfidious" in official liturgical books, such as missals, but rather as "unbelieving" or "unfaithful." Blessed John XXIII ordered that the Latin term be deleted from the prayer altogether, though it remained a prayer for the conversion of Jews.

The reform of the Liturgy mandated by the Second Vatican Council, however, re-conceptualized and rewrote the prayer entirely. It now reads:

Let us pray for the Jewish people, the first to hear the word of God,

that they may continue to grow in the love of his Name and in faithfulness to his covenant. Almighty and eternal God, long ago you gave your promise to Abraham and his posterity. Listen to your Church as we pray that the people you first made your own may arrive at the fullness of redemption.

The phrase, "fullness of redemption," here is blessed with ambiguity. Some see it as not historical but eschatological. Like St. Paul in Romans 11, the phrase leaves the issue in God's hands, to be revealed at the end of time with the Second Coming of Christ, Redeemer of all humanity. Of course, individual Jews whose own, personal spiritual lives and consciences lead them to the fullness of our faith are welcomed into the Church. To do otherwise would offend against the principles of religious freedom and of mission.

Pope John Paul II has been leading and teaching the Church how to pray for a quarter of a century. The most significant of the prayers touching on the relationship between the Church and the Jewish people is the one he prayed first at the millennial liturgy of repentance in St. Peter's on March 12, 2000. Later, in a dramatic gesture, he inserted it into the Western Wall, where Jewish people have developed the custom of placing their written prayers. Pope John Paul's prayer is deeply significant. Central to the Christian anti-Judaism had been the notion that the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and the dispersion (Diaspora) of Jews around the then-known world was God's punishment of the Jews for the crime of "deicide" ("God-killing"). While Vatican II condemned this notion, many Jews understandably felt that its influence lingered in the Church. The pope's dramatic gesture affirmed in the strongest way possible that that sort of thinking has no place in the Church today nor in the future. The Church acknowledges its eternal debt to Judaism for having given it the revelation of God

> God of our fathers, you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring your Name to the Nations. We are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused these children of yours to suffer, and asking your forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant. (March 26, 2000)

Less well known but also theologically significant is the prayer for the Jews composed by Pope John Paul II at the request of the Bishops of

Poland in 1998, which is now prayed throughout the country on Poland's annual day of reflection on Jews and Judaism. It serves as a model for how Catholics should pray for the Jews:

> God of Abraham, the prophets, Jesus Christ,
> in you everything is embraced,
> toward you everything moves,
> you are the end of all things.
> Hear the prayers we extend for the Jewish People
> which, thanks to its forefathers, is still very dear to you.
> Instill within them a constant, ever livelier desire
> to deepen your truth and love.
> Help them, as they yearn for peace and justice,
> that they may reveal to the world the might of your blessing.
> Succor them, that they may obtain respect and love
> from those who do not yet understand
> the greatness of suffering they have borne,
> and those who, in solidarity and a sense of mutual care,
> experience together the pain of wounds inflicted upon them.
> Remember the new generations of youth and children,
> that they may, unchangeably faithful to you,
> uphold what remains the particular mystery of their vocation.
> Strengthen all generations so that, thanks to their testimony,
> humanity will understand that your salvific intention
> extends over all the human family, and that you, God,
> are for all nations the beginning and the final end.

THE UNIVERSAL MISSION OF THE CHURCH AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

In the United States the publication of a fruit of the dialogue on Covenant and Mission has given rise to considerable discussion. As Cardinal Kasper has pointed out, it has opened the way to a more profound theological weighing of the issues involved.

At the outset, one should note that the term "covenant" must not be seen as universal in meaning. It does not indicate a clearly defined and universally recognized reality.

It is important to remember that the Old Testament speaks of different

types of covenants according to the situation and the persons involved. Note for example the covenant with Noah (Genesis 9), the covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17), and the one on Sinai in Exodus (19-24.32-34). Jeremiah (31:31) even mentions a "new Covenant" which refers to the content of the Sinaitic one but implies a completely new orientation: the law is written in the hearts of the Israelites so that it cannot be broken any more. The fundamental meaning of this Covenant is expressed through the words: "I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah 31:33). The "Covenant" itself does not guarantee automatic salvation but offers the possibility of partaking in salvation. Therefore, those who follow God's indications contained in the Covenant, i.e., who are faithful to the Torah, have the correct relationship to God and can receive the gift of salvation from God.

The Bible presents not only different examples of covenant but also different conceptions of it, such as the deuteronomic idea based on the old oriental contracts, and the priestly idea according to which there is only God's salvific proposal, which man simply needs to accept. "Covenant" never means a legal or juridical contract between two partners with equal rights, which can be used as the basis for human claims. In the end, the initiative always comes from God and cannot be forced by individual men and women. Because of these different types and ideas of covenant, there are different ways in which the word "Covenant" (in Hebrew *berit)* is used in the Bible, so that this word is never univocal or uni-dimensional. One should also pay attention to the parallelism between the words "Covenant" and "Election," which sometimes simply mean a special relationship with God.

The conclusions that can be drawn from these reflections is that the theological discussion following "Reflection on Covenant and Mission" should give greater weight to the biblical dimension of the concept of covenant. It seems necessary to deepen the understanding of this word and to see which theological implications flow from it.

A statement made last year in Boston by Cardinal Kasper, President of the Holy See's Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews, gives us guidelines on how to relate the overall mission to proclaim the Good News universally while at the same time acknowledging the profound particularity of its unique relationship with God's People, Israel.

"This issue is not a new one, and has been debated for a long time in our dialogues. But it does touch on the fundamental question which stands between us, and in that perspective new reflections and fresh ideas are welcome, although clearly easy answers are not possible. As I see things, a convincing solution is not yet in sight, and the discussion must continue. Thus, I take this document (on Covenant and Mission) for what it sets itself out to be, and that is, an invitation and a challenge for further discussion. What I have to say is certainly not definitive and represents no more than a modest personal contribution to a still unresolved problem.

I know very well that the question of Christian missionary activity evokes among Jews bitter and painful historical memories on forced conversions. We sincerely reject and regret this today. The Second Vatican Council in its "Declaration on Religious Liberty" (*Dignitatis Humanae*) was very clear regarding the rejection of all means of coercion in matters of faith and regarding the recognition of religious freedom. Nevertheless, I know that, given the historical background, even the word "mission" raises for Jews still today often insurmountable misunderstandings, suspicion, and resistance. The wounds of the past are far from being healed. The question must therefore be dealt with with great sensitivity.

On the other hand there are also Christian sensitivities, and there is a Christian identity also at stake. The word "mission" is central in the New Testament. We cannot cancel it, and if we should try to do so, it would not help the Jewish-Christian dialogue at all. Rather, it would make thedialogue dishonest, and ultimately distort it. If Jews want to speak with Christians, they cannot demand that Christians no longer be Christians. This is the very essence of dialogue—neither confusion nor absorption or relativism or syncretism, but encounter of different perspectives and horizons, and—as I have learned from Jewish thinkers like Martin Buber and Emmanuel Lévinas—recognition of the other in his/her otherness.

But even when we avoid an historically incriminated terminology and seek a less misleading wording and even when we reject former attitudes, when we recognize and actively promote religious freedom, the thorny problem will not be resolved.... It is not simply a question of wrong attitudes in the past coupled with a

misleading terminology. The problem goes much deeper and is much more fundamental; it leads us to the very core of our respective religious convictions and to the very heart of our religious identities.

Indeed, the problem of mission touches the substance of what we have in common and of what divides us as well, and both our rich common heritage and our incontestable differences are constitutive for our respective identities. Thus [when] we speak on a question which touches the heart of both of us, we deal with a question which cannot be approached without emotion and one which must be dealt with mutual respect for our most profound convictions as believers.

What we have in common is above all what Jews call the Hebrew Bible and we the Old Testament. We have in common our common father in faith Abraham, and Moses and the Ten Commandments, the Patriarchs and Prophets, the covenant and the promises of the one and unique God, and the messianic hope. Because we have all this in common and because as Christians we know that God's covenant with Israel by God's faithfulness is not broken (Romans 11:29; cf. 3:4), mission understood as a call to conversion from idolatry to the living and true God (1 Thessalonians 1:9) does not apply and cannot be applied to Jews. They confess the living true God, who gave and gives them support, hope, confidence, and strength in many difficult situations of their history. There cannot be the same kind of behavior toward Jews as there exists toward Gentiles. This is not a merely abstract theological affirmation, but an affirmation that has concrete and tangible consequences such as the fact that there is no organized Catholic missionary activity towards Jews....

But having said and confirmed all this we cannot stop, because we have considered only one half of the problem. And this point the issues raised in the above-mentioned document—as I see it—should be developed and amplified. The approach to be taken to this becomes clear when we reflect on our differences, immediately evident from the different names we give to our common heritage—Hebrew Bible or Old Testament. This difference in terminology denotes that we have a different reading of what we have in common. Paradoxically we could say: we differ on what we

have in common. The recent document of the Biblical Pontifical Commission entitled "The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible" (2001), signed by Cardinal Ratzinger, shows for me very convincingly that in a mere historical perspective and interpreted with mere historical methods both readings and both interpretations, the Jewish rabbinical and the Christian one, are possible and legitimate. What reading we choose depends on what faith we have chosen.

For both of us this sacred text is an open text pointing out to a future which will be determined by God alone at the end of time. Both our faiths are open towards this future. So together we can give witness to the incompleteness of the world and to its incompletability by human efforts, and together against the pessimism, skepticism, and nihilism in our midst we can witness to the openness of history toward the future and to the unwavering hope of completion which God alone can and will fulfill at the end of time. But in their differences Jews and Christians are—to put it in a paradoxical way—hopeless witnesses of hope. To give witness to this common and yet distinctly perceived hope is a compelling urgency in our world today, so in need of hope and so devoid of its consolation.

But whilst Jews expect the coming of the Messiah, who is still unknown, Christians believe that he has already shown his face in Jesus of Nazareth, whom we as Christians therefore confess as the Christ, he who at the end of time will be revealed as the Messiah for Jews and for all nations. The universality of Christ's redemption for Jews and for Gentiles is so fundamental throughout the entire New Testament (Ephesians 2:14-18; Colossians 1:15-18; 1 Timothy 2:5 and many others) and even in the same Letter to the Romans (3:24; 8:32) that it cannot be ignored or passed over in silence. So from the Christian perspective the covenant with the Jewish people is unbroken (Romans 11:29), for we as Christians believe that these promises find in Jesus their definitive and irrevocable Amen (2 Corinthians 1:20) and at the same time that in him, who is the end of the law (Romans 10:4), the law is not nullified but upheld (Romans 3:31).

Still much is yet to be undertaken. For the question of mission can only be solved in the wider context of the overall Christian

theology of Judaism. Here we are only at the beginning and still far from a definitive understanding. The long period of anti-Judaistic theology cannot be overcome in only forty years. *Nostra Aetate* was only the beginning of a new beginning."

In another setting Cardinal Kasper spoke a very positive note about what we can do together. "In today's world, we, Jews and Christians, have a common mission: together we should give an orientation. Together we must be ambassadors of peace and bring about Shalom."

We must see our relationships also in the context of the world stage, in which differences of faith have too often been used as excuses for violence.

With respect to the Middle East, I quote now from a talk given earlier this year by Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Archbishop of Washington, and for many years one who has been intimately involved in the International Policy Committee of our Bishops' Conference. He was speaking to the Anti-Defamation League.

> Israelis rightly see the failure of some Palestinians to demonstrate full respect for Israel's right to exist and to flourish within secure borders as a fundamental cause of the conflict... Palestinian leaders must clearly and unequivocally renounce terrorist violence and terrorist acts against innocent civilians and must show the Israeli people that they are fully committed to prepare their people to live in peace with Israel.
>
> Palestinians see the occupation as a central underlying cause of the present crisis. This becomes unfortunately more problematic when it is cemented by the growth and expansion of settlements and is maintained by force and marked by daily indignities, abuse and violence. As difficult as it may be, we are convinced that both Israelis and Palestinians are called to be partners in an historic peace. Despite the current crisis, the elements of a just and lasting peace remain the same: and here we are echoing our statement of 1989), real security for the State of Israel, a viable state for Palestinians, just resolution of the refugee problem, an agreement on Jerusalem which protects religious freedom and other basic rights, and implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions and other provisions of international law.

In November, 2000, at the death camp at Majdanik, just outside of

Lublin, I witnessed a deeply moving service inspired by the teaching of the Pope. The Romanian Orthodox Patriarch, the Chief Rabbi of Rome, the Muslim Imam of Poland and the ranking Protestant clergyman of the land helped lead the service. I had a part, reading in English the psalm with the words, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." The hour and a half program was televised live through all of Poland. All could hear the testimony of survivors that the loudspeakers carried as we walked, some four thousand strong, from station to station in the camp. By the end, all felt the seriousness and the weight of the sad memories of the camp, and I was reminded of another reality.

When Pope John Paul was born, his land was home to the largest number of Jews in the world. When he was ordained a priest a quarter of a century later—after the Nazis had taken the lives of millions of Jews—only a pitiful remnant remained. This priest from Poland has now seized the opportunity not just of a lifetime but of a millennium. The world will be forever better for it.

November 8, 2007
THE RABBI JULIAN B. FEIBELMAN MEMORIAL LECTURE

On the Road to Reconciling the Israeli-Palestinian Conflicts In the Light of Recent Historical Developments
or
Israel at Sixty

Asher Yarden

Next May Israel will celebrate its sixtieth anniversary of statehood. After wandering for thousands of years, being sixty is not something we take for granted! I'd like to share with you the challenges and dilemmas Israel is facing as it approaches its sixtieth birthday.

First, keep in mind that one of Israel's most important achievements has been its ability to maintain its democratic system and a free society in spite of wars, the constant threat of war, and terrorism.

Israel's major goal is to achieve peace—peace with security, peace with the Palestinians, with Syria and Lebanon—a true reconciliation and coexistence. For Israel peace is not only a fundamental value but the most important policy objective. Israel is ready to make sacrifices to achieve peace, but peace without security is meaningless. This is true anywhere in the world, but especially in the Middle East—a region where the saying "You only live twice" does not apply. Security means (a) an end to terrorism, and (b) borders that are secure and defensible. Israel has already shown its willingness to make concessions to achieve peace—but one condition must be met: security. Security for the country, security for its inhabitants.

We need to face many challenges with regard to our security. One is the impact on our national strength of whatever development or move we might consider. Let me share with you at least six elements of Israel's national strength as I see them.

First is our ability to defend ourselves. That has to do with our own capacity to deter and defend against the intentions of our adversaries and enemies.

Second is Israel's nature as a solid Jewish and democratic state. This is a question of demography. To keep Israel as a solid Jewish and democratic

state, we need a very large Jewish majority within the state.

Third is the impact of any defense policy on our economic base.

Given our need to defend ourselves in a very dangerous neighborhood, Israel invests between 8-9% of its GDP in its security, though, if you were to add other elements outside of the Defense Department, it might be closer to 10%. So it is obvious that our ability to defend ourselves is connected to our economic base. If our economic base does not grow, it will hamper our ability to meet the developing threats, and our ability to win a war may diminish.

The fourth element of our national strength is our international position—our partnerships, our alliances, and most importantly our special relationship with the United States of America.

Fifth, which is very unique to the State of Israel, is our relationship with the Jewish people. This impacts every move we make. We must always consider how our actions and policies reflect on Israel, being a magnet and source of strength for the Jewish people since Israel is the Jewish state, the only Jewish state.

And the sixth and last element, solidarity and sense of purpose and mission within the Israeli society. This is a critical element of our national strength. When you have a relatively small nation facing so many challenges, you need the strength of almost every individual to face these challenges.

To give you an example of what I mean, let's take the disengagement from Gaza only two years ago. Let's try to measure the impact of these six elements. On the area of the ability to defend ourselves, one can argue that the impact was not positive in terms of our deterrence and ability to defend from attacks emanating from Gaza. At the same time there was a very positive effect on our demography, and the equation of geography and demography. Gaza added very little in terms of geography, and disengagement helped immensely in terms of no longer controlling the area. And at least, at the moment, it helped Israel a lot in the context of its international position. Economy—I am not sure, but frankly, this was not the major consideration when the decision was made. The Jewish people—maybe a slight positive; there is a division as much as there is within Israel (remember, we're a democracy). And solidarity and sense of mission—a mix.

Basically, when you hear why Israel doesn't do that, and why it

shouldn't do this—I think it is important to look at it through a more complex sense of lenses.

A second comment that I want to make, is that we are not living in isolation. I am afraid that those evaluating our own era many years from now may not be able to say that we were at the beginning of a positive global trend. Actually, I am afraid that the world is facing the beginning of a major negative trend. I am afraid that we are far away from the peak. These are largely emanating from our region, and Israel is at the front of the defense line of the moderates and the western societies.

You see major growth in religious extremism and fanaticism. You see a rise in terror. Rational regimes, or as they are called "more moderate regimes," in many cases, don't seem to grow stronger. You have non-state actors who are presenting asymmetric threats. You have a significant diminishing of deterrence, especially in the face of the new phenomenon of suicide bombing—from a market in Tel Aviv and a coffee shop in Jerusalem to the Twin Towers in New York. The whole notion of deterring someone is becoming not relevant anymore. If someone has decided to die, he is simply trying to take as many innocent people along with him as he can.

Globalization is not only having positive effects. It is also helping to export terrorist know-how. Think about how easy it is to relay information over the internet and transfer funds utilizing innocent banks. We are facing a very imminent threat by having a military nuclear capacity in the hands of rogue regimes and terrorist organizations. This combination of fanaticism, terrorism, and nuclear military capacity could, if reached, create a nightmare to everybody in the world.

So, I will share with you some of the lenses that Israel is viewing things through, and at the same time, explain the environment in which we—and I don't think it is only Israel—are living.

The most serious challenge is coming from Iran. They are playing in at least five theaters. You know that better than we do, about Afghanistan and Iraq. We know, like you, and maybe a little more, about their support for Syria, Hezbollah, and Hamas. We should not be deceived any longer that Hezbollah and Hamas are just small organizations. They are non-state actors at the service of Iran, with armies very well equipped—big armies that have no accountability to a state or country. They present a threat directly and indirectly—think what it would mean in terms of proliferation

of nuclear weapons—that is of a magnitude that I doubt we have ever seen. And I have to share with you that this is a major concern. Because in the race between Iran—to get the bomb, or to get very close to the bomb—and the world trying to stop it, Iran seems to still be moving faster. Time is running out. What could probably stop them, or make them reconsider, short of the military option, is a very strong and determined world position, especially in the area of economy and diplomacy. Except for the United States and Israel, I am afraid to say, there is not an actor on the world arena that is playing as seriously as the challenge demands. The world is still feeding their economy, and the western economies are still giving credits to companies investing in Iran's business. Iranian nuclear scientists are continuing to drive to work on imported gasoline that someone is selling them. If this madness doesn't stop, we might leave for our children a world with so many genies out of the bottle and no instruction about how to get them back in the bottle.

So, if you ask me, "Is there still something that can be done?" I would say "Yes." There is still time, but very little. Time is not an asset in itself; time is either something that you use or don't use. So far, the steps that are being taken are falling far short of having the Iranians reconsider. Only a resolved America with global support could bring this regime to reconsider. It would be criminal not to do it.

In short, we hope that the Iranian threat is creating a coalition of fear and concern. We hear from American colleagues that when they talk to Arab representatives in the region, they concur with this fear. Will it be possible to turn this coalition of concern and fear into a coalition for peace? We deeply hope that this is the case. This is why, with all of the difficulties that you are aware of, Israel said it was ready to engage, and accepted the idea of the Arab League. This is why we accepted the invitation to meet with our Arab neighbors, even though it only included Egypt and Jordan, when we hoped that it would expand further to include Saudi Arabia. This is why Prime Minister Olmert invited himself to anywhere to meet with the Arab leaders and listen to what they had to say. This is why we welcome the idea of President Bush and Secretary Rice's convening the meeting at Annapolis, hopefully at the end of this month. We hope that we can use the threat, not just to better protect from it, but to see if there is an opportunity here and build upon that. So far, the evidence is not striking that this is going to happen. But we have not given

up on hope; we are going to continue to try to make sure we do not miss this opportunity.

I now would like to speak about our situation vis á vis the Palestinians. A trend over the last seven years, since the collapse of Camp David, has been very negative. From the four-year intifada to their reaction to our disengagement from Gaza; from their electing a terror government, and now using Gaza as a terror base; from their takeover of Gaza as a terrorist arm of Hamas. We could just say, like Chicken Little, "The sky is falling," and do nothing. We understand that the option of talking to Hamas would buy us some quiet for the short run, but would be a major mistake in the long run. It would be a death knell to any step toward peace. Also, that's what it would be to the region and to our security in the entire area. We do try to see if we can work to ease the situation for the more moderate Palestinian leadership, the national leadership, the non-fanatic leadership of President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad. In order to help them, we make conditions easier for them to succeed; we prove to them that there is an alternative; and we both move gradually, wherever possible, toward a two-state solution.

Israel made a strategic choice. The majority of the public is of this opinion, the majority of the Knesset (our Parliament) is of this opinion. For our future and for the Palestinian's future, we are ready to make an historic compromise that will be very hard for us and equally difficult for them, but it is the only way by which there is hope for them and for us. We can help the Palestinians, but we cannot make the choice for them. We hope that they will make the same choice.

Lastly, I shared with you the threats and challenges that the negative trends bring, and still I am cautiously optimistic. One could argue, or ask, "How come?" My answer is two-fold. One is some historic perspective, and the other is what I see in Israel today.

The historic perspective is that, 110 years ago, Theodore Herzl was standing in Basel, Switzerland, after having called the Jewish leaders from around the world to join him; he had a fantasy that there would again be a Jewish State in the land of Israel. His best friends asked him to see a doctor. He was standing there in Basel, 1897, saying "In Basel I established a Jewish State." There must have been less than fifty thousand people then in what became Israel. You know what the situation of the Jewish people was back then, being dispersed, and see where we are today.

This goes to the second element, which is today. I assume that in a short while we will be six million Jews in Israel—quite a symbolic number for the Jewish people. We are a very vibrant society, a democracy, with a growing economy; the first half of 2007's annual growth rate was 6.6%, and I assume it will end with over 5%, which will be the forth year for over 5% growth). We have one of the strongest armies in the world, which is necessary to protect us in our hostile environment, and also a great young generation. A great generation that you can see from their devotion when they are called upon to give their lives for their country. They are watched and invited by every super hi-tech firm in the world to contribute some of their innovation to their future developments. So with this being achieved, not disregarding the challenges, I am still cautiously optimistic.

There are two parallel tracks to advance the peace process: political-strategic and humanitarian. It is important to remember that Israel lives in a very difficult neighborhood. There are two competing trends in the Middle East: (a) hope for a "New Middle East" (economic development, modernization, openness to democracy), and (b) growth of radical movements and violence. We hope that the first trend prevails.

David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, believed that the society Israel needed to build should be based on three foundations: the ethics of the biblical prophets, the universal values of humanity, and the achievements of modern science. This has always been our aspiration and will be for the next millennium.

Israel is a nation that has struggled, survived, and thrived in spite of all the odds against it. The rebirth of the state of Israel was a triumph of justice, a triumph of the human spirit, a triumph of *the few* against the many. In Israel we say that if you don't believe in miracles, you're not a realist. We believe that it is *realistic* to believe that peace with all our neighbors is an attainable goal. Once peace is achieved, we will be able to focus our resources and energies on education, economic growth, and quality of life.

So the State of Israel that we hope for and believe in is living in peace with its neighbors, maintaining and strengthening its democratic system and values, and relying on its high-tech industry by focusing on education and science. Israel will also continue its unique relationship and strategic partnership with the U.S., because the future of our two countries is inextricably intertwined.

I would like to conclude by inviting you to visit Israel. In addition to our many historical and religious sites, we have glorious weather and beaches, restaurants and wines that can compete with the best in the world—and win. A visit to Israel is truly an unforgettable spiritual experience. Though God is universal, you can pray to Him from anywhere. When you call God from Jerusalem, it is considered a local call.