

**DOSSIER**  
**MARIA, FIGLIA DI SION,**  
**NEL DIALOGO IN CAMMINO TRA CRISTIANI ED EBREI**  
**APERTURA ANNO ACCADEMICO 2006-2007**  
**25 OTTOBRE 2006**

I. NOTA INTRODUTTIVA

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II. PROLUZIONE DEL PROF. JOHN. T. PAWLIKOWSKI, OSM

**I**  
**NOTA INTRODUTTIVA:**  
**PER IL DIALOGO EBRAICO-CRISTIANO**

Il 25 ottobre 2006, la *Prolusione* per l'apertura ufficiale dell'Anno Accademico 2006-2007 della Pontificia Facoltà teologica «Marianum» è stata tenuta dal prof. Fr. John T. Pawlikowski osm, docente di etica sociale e direttore degli studi cattolico-ebraici della Catholic Theological Union di Chicago – Illinois (USA).

Egli, alla luce del tema *Nostra Aetate: its continuing challenges*, ha delineato una magistrale panoramica delle tematiche ritenute nodali nel dialogo tra Cristiani ed Ebrei; le posizioni e i pareri di eminenti studiosi; le questioni aperte e/o disputate.

La problematica è assai viva e ancora recentemente una raccolta di studi ne ha fatto riconsiderare l'ampiezza e le possibili articolazioni.<sup>1</sup>

Nella *Relazione* introduttoria all'Atto Accademico, il Preside della Facoltà, il prof. Fr. Silvano M. Maggiani osm, ha significato le motivazioni della scelta della Prolusione:

«Per la nostra Facoltà il dialogo ebraico-cristiano non è affatto secondario. Il nostro specifico, ciò che caratterizza la nostra Istituzione Accademica, è incentrato su una donna ebrea, su una vergine ebrea, su una madre ebrea, su una fedele alla tradizione dei Padri, in cui tutto, in lei che chiamiamo Figlia di Sion, è relativo all'antico Israele che è il suo popolo, di cui ella è personificazione, culmine e voce purissima. La nostra ricerca, e l'insegnamento sulla Madre del Signore Gesù, vuole anche promuovere quella mutua conoscenza e stima tra Ebrei e Cristiani “che si ottengono soprattutto dagli studi biblici e teologici e da un fraterno dialogo” (*Nostra Aetate*, 4)».

In questa prospettiva alcune riflessioni e orientamenti nati dal dialogo a dallo studio interno alla Facoltà con la collaborazione di più studiosi era-

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr E. KESSLER, M. J. WRIGHT (ed), *Themes in Jewish – Christian Relations*, Orchard Academic, Cambridge 2005, 315 pp. Segnaliamo, inoltre, G. RUGGIERI (ed), *Io sono l'Altro degli altri. L'ebraismo e il destino dell'Occidente*. Studio Teologico S. Paolo-Giunti, Catania-Firenze 2006, 309 pp.

no già stati recepiti in alcuni paragrafi del Documento voluto dal Capitolo Generale OSM del 1983, a cui rinviamo per la loro attualità e per i contenuti ancora validi e stimolanti per la ricerca.<sup>2</sup>

La *Prolusione* del prof. Pawlikowski non ha considerato la presenza o l'assenza della persona di Maria nel dialogo ebraico-cristiano se non tramite un fugace accenno.<sup>3</sup>

Stimiamo che, tenendo fermo ciò che è stato approfondito soprattutto nella mariologia biblica,<sup>4</sup> sia compito non secondario degli studiosi e dei ricercatori di mariologia in genere, promuovere rinnovate ricerche e nuovi studi che, nell'ottica della metodologia del dialogo e in riferimento alle tematiche nodali presentate dal prof. Pawlikowski, favoriscano la comprensione e il ruolo della Madre di Gesù nella Storia dell'Alleanza e nell'approfondimento del mistero d'Israele. Alla luce della ricezione in atto della Dichiarazione *Nostra Aetate*, e in particolare del paragrafo 4, formuliamo l'auspicio che anche da parte ebraica nascano sempre più validi tentativi che considerino Maria, donna ebrea, donna che ha avuto ed ha un rilievo culturale e religioso non indifferente in tutti i continenti ed è una presenza amata di generazione in generazione.<sup>5</sup>

IL COMITATO DI REDAZIONE

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<sup>2</sup> 208° CAPITOLO GENERALE DELL'ORDINE DEI SERVI DI MARIA, *Fate quello che vi dirà. Riflessioni e proposte per la promozione della pietà mariana*, Curia Generalizia osm, Roma 1983, nn. 104-105, p. 101-105.

<sup>3</sup> Il IV SIMPOSIO INTERNAZIONALE MARIOLOGICO aveva considerato il problema. Cfr AA VV. *Maria nell'Ebraismo e nell'Islam oggi*. Atti del V Simposio Internazionale Mariologico, Ottobre 1984, Roma 1985, p. 9-118.

<sup>4</sup> Cfr, ad es., A. SERRA, *La Donna dell'Alleanza. Prefigurazioni di Maria nell'Antico Testamento*, Messaggero, Padova 2006, con indicazioni bibliografiche su *Maria nell'Antico Testamento*, p. 309-311; *Le Madri d'Israele*, p. 312-315.

<sup>5</sup> Per una panoramica della ricerca su Myriam di Nazareth negli scritti giudaici dedicati a Gesù e negli scritti di ebrei interessati alla sua verità cfr il cap. IV di M. MASINI, *Myriam di Nazareth nella memoria del Giudaismo*, in IDEM, *Maria di Nazareth nel conflitto delle interpretazioni*, Messaggero, Padova 2005, p. 207-267.

## II

### NOSTRA AETATE: ITS CONTINUING CHALLENGES

*John T. Pawlikowski, OSM*

#### 1. A RADICAL REDEFINITION OF THE CHURCH'S RELATIONSHIP WITH JUDAISM

The release of the study document *Reflections on Covenant and Mission* from an ongoing consultation between the National Council of Synagogues in the USA and the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs on 12 August 2002,<sup>1</sup> caused a firestorm in sectors of the Catholic Church with Cardinal Avery Dulles taking a lead in attacking the document.<sup>2</sup> While no single document within mainline Protestantism has elicited quite the same vigorous response, a number of European statements such as the declaration from the Rhineland Synod<sup>3</sup> in Germany have elicited strong reactions. And some evangelical Protestant groups in the United States have severely critiqued several statements, including the Pontifical Biblical Commission document dealing with the Jews and their Scriptures in the New Testament and the statement *A Sacred Obligation* released in September 2002 by the ecumenical Christian Scholars Group on Christian-Jewish Relations. Clearly the discussion of the theology of the Jewish-Christian relationship and its implication for the churches' understanding of mission relative to the Jews has moved center stage in recent years. We shall return to the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Reflections on Covenant and Mission*, by participants in a dialogue between the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the National Council of Synagogues. *Origins*, 32:13 (5 September 2002), 218-224. In a recent volume Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy describes this document as an important challenge for the church. Cf. Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy, *Recovering Vatican II. Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue*, (New York, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005), 252-256.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. DULLES, 'Evangelization and the Jews', with a Response by Mary C. Boys, in P.A. CUNNINGHAM – J.T. PAWLIKOWSKI, *America* 187:12 (21 October 2002), 8-16.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 'Towards renovation of the relationship of Christians and Jews: A statement of the Evangelical Church of the Rhineland', in A. BROCKWAY – P. VAN BUREN – R. RENDTORFF – S. SCHOON (eds.), *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People: Statements by the World Council of Churches and its Member Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1988), 92-94. Also cf. K.H. HOLTDSCHNEIDER, *The 1980 Statement of the Rhineland Synod: A landmark in Christian-Jewish Relations in Germany* (Cambridge, UK: OJCR Press, 2002).

contemporary discussion later in this essay. But first a bit of recent history on the question is in order.

In an address to the Catholic Theological Society of America annual meeting in 1986 the Canadian theologian Gregory Baum, who served as an expert at the II Vatican Council and worked on *Nostra Aetate*, argued that 'the Church's recognition of the spiritual status of the Jewish religion is the most dramatic example of doctrinal turn-about in the age-old *'magisterium ordinarium'* to occur at the Council.<sup>4</sup> For centuries Christian theology, beginning with most of the major Church Fathers in the second century and thereafter, was infected with a viewpoint which saw the Church as replacing 'old' Israel in the covenantal relationship with God. This replacement theology relegated Jews to a miserable and marginal status which could only be overcome through conversion.<sup>5</sup>

Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate*, together with many parallel Protestant documents, fundamentally changed Christianity's theological posture relative to Jews and Judaism that had permeated its theology, art, and practice for nearly eighteen hundred years. Jews were now to be seen as integral to the ongoing divine covenant. Jesus and early Christianity were portrayed as deeply rooted in a constructive sense in the religiosity of Second Temple Judaism (particularly its Pharisaic branch). Jews were not to be held collectively accountable for the death of Jesus. Vatican II did not 'forgive' Jews of the so-called crime of deicide as some newspaper headlines proclaimed. Rather it argued that there existed no basis for such a charge in the first place.

One indication of how thorough the change was on the Catholic side can be seen in the references the Bishops at Vatican II used to support their argument for a basic turn in the Church's understanding of its relationship with the Jewish People. Dr. Eugene J. Fisher, who oversees Catholic-Jewish relations for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, wrote some years ago that '*Nostra Aetate*, for all practical purposes, begins the Church's teaching ... concerning a theological or, more

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<sup>4</sup> G. BAUM, 'The social context of American Catholic theology', *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 41 (1986), 87.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. E. FLANNERY, *The Anguish of the Jews* (New York: Macmillan, 1965); M. PERRY – F.M. SCHWEITZER (eds.), *Antisemitism: Myth and Hate - From Antiquity to the Present* (New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2002). Also cf. J.T. PAWLIKOWSKI, *Sinai and Calvary: A Meeting of Two Peoples* (Beverly Hills, CA: Benzinger, 1976), 129-161.

precisely, a doctrinal understanding of the relationship between the Church as “People of God” and “God’s People” Israel.<sup>6</sup> Examining chapter four of *Nostra Aetate* we find scarcely any reference to the usual sources cited in conciliar documents: the Church Fathers, papal statements and previous conciliar documents. Rather, the Declaration returns to Romans 9–11, as if to say that the Church is now taking up where Paul left off in his insistence that Jews remain part of the covenant after the Resurrection despite the theological ambiguity involved in such a statement. Without saying it so explicitly, the 2,221 Council members who voted for *Nostra Aetate* were in fact stating that everything that had been said about the Christian–Jewish relationship since Paul moved in a direction they could no longer support. It is interesting to note that *Nostra Aetate* never makes reference to the several passages in the Letter to the Hebrews where the original covenant appears to be abrogated after Christ and the Jewish law overturned (Heb. 7:12; 8:13 and 10:9) Given the interpretive role of a Church Council in the Catholic tradition this omission is theologically significant. It indicates that the Council Fathers judged these texts from Hebrews as a theologically inappropriate resource for thinking about the relationship between Christianity and Judaism today. I will return to this point subsequently in discussing Cardinal Avery Dulles’ reaction to the study document Reflections ‘On Covenant and Mission’.

In reality the theological about-face on the Jews at Vatican II represents, along with such closely related statements as the affirmation of the democratic constitutional state in the Declaration on Religious Liberty and the depiction of the Catholic Church as ‘subsisting’ in the one true Church in which the other Christian churches are to be regarded as integral members in the document on ecumenism, one of the central theological developments at the Council. Unfortunately its full significance for all of Christianity has been insufficiently recognised up till now within Catholicism. This is also largely true within Protestantism where the several ground-breaking statements on continued Jewish covenantal inclusion have not significantly impacted the course of Christian theological reflection in the last forty years.

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<sup>6</sup> E.J. FISHER, ‘The evolution of a tradition: From *Nostra Aetate* to the *Notes*’, in INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC-JEWISH LIAISON COMMITTEE, *Fifteen Years of Catholic–Jewish Dialogue: 1970-1985* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana and Libreria Editrice Lateranense, 1988), 239.

## 2. THE RADICAL RE-DEFINITION OF THE CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONSHIP: ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANITY'S THEOLOGICAL SELF-IDENTITY

The German theologian Johannes-Baptist Metz is one Christian scholar who acknowledged the overall theological implications of the recent documents from the Christian churches on the understanding of the Christian-Jewish relationship. Metz has insisted that these implications go far beyond the parameters of the Christian-Jewish dialogue. Especially after the Holocaust, Metz insists, they involve a 'revision of Christian theology itself'.<sup>7</sup> Yet we have seen little impact from these documents thus far on theology as such. One looks in vain for citations to *Nostra Aetate* and subsequent papal/Vatican documents on Christian-Jewish relations or to the major parallel Protestant statements in books or documents reflecting on Christian theological identity outside the context of the dialogue with Jews. Yet, historically, Christian identity, including in particular Christological affirmation, has been rooted in the notion of the Church as the replacement for the Jewish People in the covenantal relationship with God.

Jewish participants in the dialogue with Christians have sometimes noted the above reality with dismay. They are right in expressing their concern. Do these declarations on the Church's relationship with the Jewish People have relevance only when Christians are actually speaking with Jews? Or are they brought into the picture when Christians are conversing among themselves in terms of theological identity. Only if we begin to see a development of the latter can we say that there has been genuine reception of *Nostra Aetate* and the Protestant declarations within the Christian community.

Let me cite two examples where I have seen a failure to understand the profound implications of *Nostra Aetate* and similar Protestant statements. The first was in the process leading up to the international ecumenical gathering held at Santiago de Compostela, Spain, several years ago. In the preparatory drafts of the major statement to be issued from that gathering the vision of Christian self-identity was dangerously close to displacement theology. Yet little objection was initially raised to this per-

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<sup>7</sup> J.B. METZ, 'Facing the Jews: Christian theology after Auschwitz', in E.S. FIORENZA – D. TRACY (eds.), *The Holocaust as Interruption. Concilium* 175 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1984), 27.

spective either by Protestant or Catholic church leaders involved with the process until some of us connected with Christian-Jewish dialogue raised a fuss. Eventually the final document was altered to back away from the displacement theme. But I cannot say the final document fully embodied the full implications of the recent Christian statements on the Church's relationship to the Jewish people. For me this experience continued to illustrate how far we still are from integrating the recent documents on Christian-Jewish relations into mainstream Christian theological thinking.

A second example occurred during the October 1997 meeting at the Vatican on the Church and anti-Judaism. I was one of three American scholars participating in this meeting, part of the Vatican's preparation for the new millennium and specifically for the anticipated papal apology for antisemitism which took place on the first Sunday of Lent, 2000, and shortly thereafter during the papal visit to Jerusalem. Throughout the meeting I was often dismayed at the lack of acquaintance with the theological vision of *Nostra Aetate* displayed by some of the participants, including high curial officials. One bishop argued that the primary purpose of the Jewish People from a religious perspective was to teach Christians how to suffer. This gathering further convinced me that much work remains if the profound implications of chapter four of *Nostra Aetate* are to be realised within Catholicism and lead to the about-face in Christian theology that Gregory Baum saw them as inaugurating.

*Nostra Aetate* and the concomitant Protestant documents have given rise to several attempts by theologians to restate the basic understanding of Christianity's relationship to Judaism. I have summarised these theological developments in a number of my own writings.<sup>8</sup> They include: (1) an appreciation that the Jewish covenant remains valid after the coming of Christ; (2) Christianity is not automatically superior to Judaism, nor is it the simple fulfillment of Judaism as traditionally claimed; (3) the Sinai covenant is, in principle, as crucial to Christian faith expression as is the covenant in

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. J.T. PAWLKOWSKI, *Christ in the Light of Christian-Jewish Dialogue* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001); *Jesus and the Theology of Israel* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989); 'Christology, Anti-Semitism, and Christian-Jewish bonding', in R.S. CHOPP – M.L. TAYLOR (eds.), *Reconstructing Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994); and 'The Christ event and the Jewish People', in T. WILEY (ed.), *Thinking of Christ: Proclamation, Explanation, Meaning* (New York / London: Continuum, 2003), 103-121.



Christ. There was no 'old' Testament for Jesus and there should not be for us; and (4) Christianity needs to reincorporate dimensions from its original Jewish matrix in a central way in its contemporary faith expression.

I realise that most, if not all of these assertions, may appear controversial to many. But I believe they are demanded by the revolution in theological thinking about the Christian-Jewish relationship represented by chapter four of *Nostra Aetate* and its companion documents from the Protestant churches. To repeat the point made by Metz, the new theological understanding of the Jewish-Christian relations affects the basic face of Christian theology. That it may also do so with respect to Jewish theological self-understanding is something upon which Jewish scholars need to reflect. Some have begun that process as the Jewish statement on Christianity *Dabru Emet* and its accompanying theological volume have shown.<sup>9</sup>

### 3. MODELS FOR EXPRESSING THE NEW CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONSHIP

As some Christian theologians moved to reexamine Christianity's theological understanding of Judaism just prior to and following Vatican II they tended to focus on Paul's reflections on the post-Easter Jewish-Christian relationship which he articulated in Romans 9–11. These chapters, as was already indicated, served as the basis for Vatican II's approach to the Jewish-Christian issue. And they have been central to Protestant re-evaluations as well, including the recent statement from the Leuenberg Fellowship of Reformation Churches in Europe.

#### a) *Early Attempts*

The first generation of Christian scholars dealing with this issue saw a basis in these Pauline chapters' assertion that God remains faithful to the original people of the covenant for their pioneering efforts to rethink the meaning of Christology, at least in terms of the insistence that 'newness' in Christ cannot be stated in a manner that relegates Jews to covenantal removal. Some of these pioneering scholars, after considerable reflection,

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<sup>9</sup> *Dabru Emet* can be found (with commentaries by Jewish and Christians scholars) in T. FRYMER-KENSKY - D. NOVAK - P. OCHS - D.F. SANDMEL - M.A. SIGNER (eds.), *Christianity in Jewish Terms* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000).

were forced to conclude that it is not possible for the Church to go beyond saying what Paul himself said, i.e., that reconciliation between an assertion of redemptive 'newness' in Christ and the concomitant affirmation of the continued participation of the Jewish People in the ongoing covenant remains a 'mystery' presently understandable to God. Only at the end time might we come to see the lack of contradiction in these twin theological statements. Associated with this line of thought were scholars such as Kurt Hruby, Jacques Maritain and Jean Danielou. This was also the perspective of Cardinal Augustine Bea who initially was suspicious of such new theological thinking about the Christian–Jewish relationship,<sup>10</sup> but eventually came to play a central role in Vatican II's approval of *Nostra Aetate* and organised the initial implementation of the statement immediately following the close of the Council.

These early attempts to eradicate a Christology rooted in Jewish covenantal displacement continued to insist on a central role for Christ in all human salvation as well as on a fulfillment dimension in Jesus' Incarnation and Resurrection. No effort was made to erase the apparent contradiction between the affirmation of Jewish covenantal continuity and fulfillment in Christ. Rather these scholars argued for a dual proclamation of Jewish covenantal inclusion and salvific fulfillment in Christ as integral to Christian faith expression.

In these scholars' perspective God remains Sovereign both of Jews and Christians. Therein is to be found the basis for the reconciliation of these two seemingly contradictory assertions. As we shall see subsequently, this tension is far from overcome even in more recent theological attempts at stating the theology of the Christian–Jewish relationship from the side of the Church.

#### *b) Countering the old Anti-Judaic Exegesis*

Scripture scholars in particular have played a major role in the process of revising Christianity's theological approach to Judaism. We are in the midst of a genuine revolution in New Testament and early Christian scholarship, as well as parallel scholarship on the Judaism, or as some scholars

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<sup>10</sup> M. PHAYER, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 206-215.

such as Jacob Neusner would prefer it, the 'Judaisms' of the time. Within Christian biblical scholarship the dominance of the 'Religionsgeschichte' approach, found in Rudolf Bultmann especially but also some of his disciples such as Ernst Käsemann and Helmut Kosester, has significantly receded. This exegetical framework seriously undercut any notion of Jesus' concrete ties to, and dependence upon, biblical and Second Temple Judaism. This in turn tended to produce an excessively universalistic interpretation of Jesus' message which harbored the seeds of theological anti-Judaism and reinforced the traditional supersessionist interpretation of the Christian-Jewish relationship.

There have been a number of leading biblical scholars, some with a continuing transcontinental influence, who have contributed to the removal of Judaism from the heart of the Christian faith, an image that has been central to Pope John Paul II's numerous writings on Christianity and Judaism.<sup>11</sup> One of the most prominent has been Gerhard Kittel, the original editor of the widely used *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.<sup>12</sup> Kittel viewed postbiblical Jews as forming a community in dispersion. 'Authentic Judaism', he wrote, 'abides by the symbol of the stranger wandering restless and homeless on the face of the earth'.<sup>13</sup> And the prominent exegete Martin Noth, whose *History of Israel* became a standard reference for students and professors alike, spoke of Israel as a strictly 'religious community' which experienced a slow, agonizing death in the first century C.E. Noth argues that Jewish history reached its culmination in the arrival of Jesus:

Jesus himself no longer formed part of the history of Israel. In him the history of Israel had come, rather, to its real end. What did belong to the history of Israel was the process of his rejection and condemnation by the Jerusalem religious community.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. E.J. FISHER - L. KLENICKI (eds.), *Pope John Paul II on Jews and Judaism* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1987) and E.J. FISHER - L. KLENICKI (eds.), *Spiritual Pilgrimage: Texts on Jews and Judaism 1979-1995-Pope John Paul II* (New York: Crossroads, 1995). Also cf. B.L. SHERWIN - H. FASIMON (eds.), *John Paul II and Interreligious Dialogue* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> G. KITTEL, *Die Judenfrage* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933), 73.

<sup>13</sup> M. NOTH, *The Law in the Pentateuch and Other Stories* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1966).

<sup>14</sup> R. BULTMANN, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Scribners, 1951).

After this condemnation the history of Israel moved quickly to its end.

The implication of Noth's perspective is that the Jewish People and its tradition no longer have a role to play in the Church's theological understanding of Jesus' ministry. Such a view has not altogether disappeared in Christianity, even if redefined within a wider global context. Prominent Asian Christian theologian S. Wesley Ariarajah who worked for many years in the interreligious office of the World Council of Churches recently termed the effort to return Jesus to his Jewish context in such documents as *A Sacred Obligation*<sup>15</sup> a 'futile attempt' in terms of creating Christian faith expression in a non-European context. He acknowledges Jesus' connections with the Jewish community of his day. But these carry no theological significance today for Ariarajah. He feels much closer to the Eastern religions in terms of Christian theology.<sup>16</sup>

Now I do not wish to suggest that Noth and Ariarajah are exactly in the same place on the Jewish question in terms of Christian theology. Noth regarded Judaism as spiritually dead after the coming of Christ. Ariarajah continues to view Judaism as a authentic religion, but of no significant consequence for understanding Christian faith, particularly in a non-European context. But in one sense there exists a similarity. Neither sees the Jewishness of Jesus as theologically significant for the interpretation of his message today. I find this perspective quite troubling. While I strongly support the contextualisation of Christian theology in differing cultural settings, understanding the Jewish context of Jesus remains indispensable for an accurate understanding of his basic teachings. This point has been strongly emphasised by scholars such as James Charlesworth and Cardinal Carlo Martini, SJ, the retired Archbishop of Milan, a prominent biblical scholar in his own right. Cardinal Martini has written that 'Without a sincere feeling for the Jewish world, and a direct experience of

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<sup>15</sup> *A Sacred Obligation: Rethinking Christian Faith in Relation to Judaism and the Jewish People: A Statement by the Christian Scholars Group on Christian-Jewish Relation*, 1 September 2002 (Boston: Center for Christian-Jewish Learning, Boston College).

<sup>16</sup> S.W. ARIARAJAH, *Towards a fourth phase in Jewish-Christian relations: An Asian perspective*, unpublished paper, Conference on Christian-Jewish Dialogue Temple Emmanuel, New York, co-sponsored by the Center for Interreligious Understanding and the Office of Interreligious Affairs of the World Council of Churches, November 2003.

it, one cannot fully understand Christianity. Jesus is fully Jewish, the apostles are Jewish, and one cannot doubt their attachment to the tradition of their forefathers'.<sup>17</sup> And the 1985 Vatican *Notes* on preaching and teaching about Jews and Judaism declares that 'Jesus was and always remained a Jew.... Jesus is fully a man of his time, and his environment—the Jewish Palestinian one of the 1st century, the anxieties and hope of which he shared'.<sup>18</sup> Fortunately not all Asian theologians share the Ariarajah's perspective. The prominent Vietnamese–American scholar Peter Phan has been outspoken in terms of the Jewish context of Jesus' message. He is in fact one of the signatories of the statement 'A Sacred Obligation.' Scholars such as Phan, while trying to integrate Christ and his message into Asian cultural traditions understand that such integration cannot authentically take place without an effort to understand the original message of the New Testament. And such understanding is impossible without a deep grasp of Jewish religious thought in the time of Jesus and the period of the New Testament's composition.

Another example of a biblical scholar whose writings helped to undercut Jesus' ties to Judaism is Rudolf Bultmann. He has exercised a decisive influence over Christian biblical interpretation for many years. In recent years this influence has begun to wane. Arthur Droge has spoken of a recent liberation of biblical scholarship from the Bultmannian captivity on the question of Jesus and Judaism.

For Bultmann a Jewish People cannot be said to exist with the onset of Christianity. In his perspective Jewish religious expression removed God to a distant realm. In contrast, the continued presence of Christ in prayer and worship enabled each individual Christian to come ever closer to God. Again, Bultmann's viewpoint stands contrary to the position of a growing number of contemporary biblical scholars and church documents which depict Jesus and his disciples as profoundly intertwined in their fundamental religious outlook with the Judaism of the time.

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<sup>17</sup> C.M. MARTINI, 'Christianity and Judaism: A historical and theological overview', in J.H. CHARLESWORTH (ed.), *Jews and Christians: Exploring the Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 19.

<sup>18</sup> *Notes* may be found in H. CRONER (ed.), *More Stepping Stones to Jewish–Christian relations: An Unabridged Collection of Christian Documents 1975–1983* (New York: Paulist, 1985).

There is little question that the dominant exegetical approach during most of the twentieth century continued to sustain the classical covenantal displacement theology with respect to Judaism. It is only in the latter part of the twentieth century and into the present century that scholars such as James Charlesworth, W.D. Davies, E.P. Sanders, Douglas Hare, Daniel Harrington, Clemens Thoma and Robin Scroggs, to name but a few, have moved New Testament interpretation in directions opposite to that advanced by the likes of Bultmann and Kittel. This new exegesis is gradually forcing theologians to rethink significantly the theology of the Christian-Jewish relationship, redirecting it away from the long dominant supersessionist approach towards an emphasis on a continuing interrelationship rooted in the affirmation of continued Jewish covenantal inclusion after the Christ Event.

One church document that takes this new exegesis as a starting point for its theological reflections on the Christian-Jewish relationship comes from the Leuenberg Church Fellowship, an association of the Reformation churches in Europe. Its 2001 document *Church and Israel*, published both in English and German, argues that the interrelationship between the Church and Israel is not a marginal issue for Christianity. Rather it represents a central dimension of ecclesiology. The relationship with Israel is seen in this document as an indispensable foundation of Christian faith. The Church is required to reflect on its relationship with Judaism because of its profound linkage to the Jewish community in its beginnings. 'The biblical texts referring to these beginnings', according to this document, 'do not only speak of the historical origin of the Church and thus of the historical relation with Israel; they also form the starting point and critical point of reference (*fons et iudex*) for all theological reflection.'<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. The Leuenberg Church Fellowship, *Church and Israel: A Contribution from the Reformation Churches in Europe to the Relationship Between Christians and Jews* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Otto Lembeck, 2001) 1.3 and 3.1. Also cf. the recent statement by the discussion group Jews and Christians of the Central Committee of German Catholics, 'Jews and Christians in Germany: Responsibility in Today's Pluralistic Society', available on the website of the Center for Jewish-Christian Learning at Boston College (<http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl>).

*c) Returning Jesus to his Jewish Context*

This recent biblical scholarship coupled with official church teaching is now saying that any portrayal of Jesus that separates him from the Judaism of his time in the manner of Bultmann, Noth or even Ariarajah represents a truncated and distorted presentation of his message and mission. It is ironic that, at least in the case of Ariarajah, he would want to inculturate the gospel by de-inculturating Jesus himself. Certainly it is legitimate to present the image of Jesus through various cultural symbols and images. But Jesus the Jew is not one among manifold ways of presenting Jesus. It forms the base for authentically interpreting his fundamental message. Without maintenance of this fundament efforts to translate the meaning of Jesus' message into a variety of cultures, a quite legitimate and necessary effort as I already said, will likely eviscerate important dimensions of this message.

One of the best summaries of where we are today in terms of Jesus' relationship to the Judaism of his time and the implications it carries for understanding a theology of Christian-Jewish covenantal bonding can be found in the writings of Robin Scroggs. His view was accepted by the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago, a leader in promoting Jewish-Christian reconciliation.<sup>20</sup>

Scroggs emphasises the following points: (1) The movement begun by Jesus and continued after his death in Palestine can best be described as a reform movement within Judaism. Little or no evidence exists to suggest a separate sense of identity within the emerging Christian community. (2) Paul understood his mission to the Gentiles as fundamentally a mission out of Judaism which aimed at extending God's original and continuing call to the Jewish People to the Gentiles. (3) Prior to the end of the Jewish war with the Romans in 70 C.E., it is difficult to speak of a separate Christian reality. Followers of Jesus did not seem on the whole to understand themselves as part of a separate religion from Judaism. A distinctive Christian identity only began to develop after the Roman-Jewish war. And (4) the later parts of the New Testament do exhibit the beginnings of a sense of separation between Church and synagogue, but they

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<sup>20</sup> R. SCROGGS, 'The Judaizing of the New Testament', in *Chicago Theological Seminary Register* 75 (Winter 1986), 1.

also retain some sense of continuing contact with the Christian community's original Jewish matrix.<sup>21</sup>

While not every New Testament scholar may subscribe to each and every point made by Scroggs, a consensus is definitely developing that the process of church–synagogue separation was longer and more complex than we once believed. Such a picture significantly challenges how most Christians have understood the situation. They were raised, as I was raised, with the notion that by the time Jesus died on Calvary the church was clearly established as a distinct religious body apart from Judaism. This understanding was subsequently expanded, especially by the Church Fathers, into what is known as the *adversos Judaeos* tradition which had as a theological centerpiece the total displacement of the Jewish People from the covenant.<sup>22</sup> But more and more, thanks to such scholars as Robin Scroggs, we are coming to see that many people in the very early days of Christianity did not interpret the significance of the Jesus movement as inaugurating a new, totally separate religious community that would stand over against Judaism.

It does not appear that Jesus conveyed to his disciples and followers a clear sense that he meant to create a new and distinct religious entity called the Church that was to be totally independent of Judaism. This separate identity only emerged gradually well after his death. And we now know through the research of scholars such as Robert Wilken, Wayne Meeks, Alan Segal and Anthony Saldarini that this development was of several centuries duration in a number of areas of the Christian world.<sup>23</sup> Evidence now exists for regular Christian participation in Jewish worship, particularly in the East, during the second and third centuries and, in a few places, until the fourth century.

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. W.A. MEEKS – R. WILKEN, *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978); R. WILKEN, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983); and A.J. SALDARINI, 'Jews and Christians in the first two centuries: The Changing Paradigm', *Sofar* 10 (1992), 32-43.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. R. RUETHER, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*. (New York: Seabury, 1974); D.P. EFROYMSON, 'The patristic connection', in A.T. DAVIES (ed.), *Antisemitism and the Foundations of Christianity* (New York: Ramsey/Toronto: Paulist, 1979), 98-117.

<sup>23</sup> C.M. MARTINI, 'The relation of the Church to the Jewish People', *From the Martin Buber House* 6 (1984), 3-10.



#### 4. IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW MODELS OF THE CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONSHIP

##### a) *Schism*

The challenge now facing Christianity in light of this new research on the origins of the Church is to ask whether the creation of a totally separated religious community was actually in the mind of Jesus himself. This is something that Cardinal Martini has addressed. In some of his writings he has reintroduced the idea of 'schism' into the discussion of the basic theological relationship between Jews and Christians, a notion that first appeared in the early part of the twentieth century. Martini applies the term 'schism' to the original separation of the church and synagogue. For him the break between Jews and Christians represents the fundamental schism, far more consequential in negative terms than the two subsequent ruptures within Christianity itself. In introducing the notion of schism Martini has interjected two important notions into the conversation. For schism is a reality that ideally should not have occurred and which should be seen as a temporary situation rather than a permanent reality. So schism, which had been used previously only in terms of the two inter-Christian separations, implies a certain mandate to heal the rupture that has ensued.

There is legitimate room for debate as to the appropriateness of the term 'schism' in reflecting on the nature of the Christian-Jewish theological relationship today. I myself do not think it will take us too far. But behind it lay the strong conviction on Martini's part that we cannot forge a meaningful theological self-identity within contemporary Christianity without a restoration of the profoundly Jewish context of Jesus' teaching. Clearly the Church will not return to an understanding of itself as one among many Jewish groups. But, in light of recent biblical scholarship, it will need to reassess how its self-identity is rooted in Judaism. This is the challenge that Ariarajah's contention about the inconsequential nature of Judaism for Christian theological self-understanding presents today. Christian theology will have to respond in the coming years to this challenge. Is Ariarajah correct or is someone such as Johannes-Baptist Metz correct? In a diametrically contrary way Metz has argued that 'Christians can form and sufficiently understand their identity only in the face of the Jews'.<sup>24</sup> For Metz

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. J.B. METZ, *Facing the Jews*, 33, and J.B. METZ, *The Emergent Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1981).

such a vision involves a definite reintegration of Jewish history and Jewish beliefs into Christian theological consciousness and statement. Jewish history is not merely Christian pre-history. Rather it forms an integral, continuing part of ecclesial history.

As biblical scholars and theologians have begun to probe the implications of this new vision of Jesus as profoundly intertwined with the Jewish community, two initial approaches have emerged in terms of understanding the theological relationship between the Church and the Jewish People in a new way in terms of covenantal inclusion. Within each approach different nuances appear as we move from scholar to scholar. Yet all affirm a central linkage between Judaism and Christianity. We can generally characterise the two trends as 'single covenant' and 'double covenant' with a few scholars calling for an understanding of the Jewish-Christian relationship within a multi-covenant framework.<sup>25</sup>

#### *b) Single covenantal perspectives*

The 'single covenant' perspective sees Jews and Christians as basically united within one covenantal tradition with its origins at Sinai. This one ongoing covenant was in no way ruptured through the Christ Event. Rather the coming of Christ represented the decisive moment when the Gentiles were able to enter fully into the special relationship with God already enjoyed by Jews, a relationship they continue to maintain. Some scholars opting for this approach argue that the decisive features of the Christ Event do impact all people, including Jews, but not in a way that results in the breaking of already existing Jewish covenantal ties. Others would have the Christian appropriation and reinterpretation of the original covenantal tradition in and through Jesus apply primarily to non-Jews. This would seem to be the argument that Cardinal Walter Kasper has made in a number of addresses and articles over the past several years. Kasper would argue that Jews represent an altogether special case in the history of salvation from the

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<sup>25</sup> Rosemary Ruether and Paul Knitter are two examples of this perspective. Marcus Braybrooke in a volume entitled *Christian-Jewish Dialogue: The Next Steps* (London: SCM, 2000), has argued for further reflection on how we might relate Jewish-Christian covenantal thinking to the wider dialogue of world religions. I myself have taken up this important theme as well: J.T. PAWLIKOWSKI, 'Toward a theology of religious diversity', in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 11 (Winter 1989), 138-153.

Christian perspective. This view has also been expressed by Cardinal Kasper's former colleague at the Vatican, Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald who headed the office for relations with peoples of other faiths except for the Jews. This is essentially a viewpoint shared by Pope John Paul II as well. One major Protestant theologian who took the single covenantal perspective in his writings was the late Paul van Buren, although towards the end of his career he seemed to be moving back towards a more classical outlook rooted in the thought of his mentor Karl Barth.<sup>26</sup>

I see several problems with the single covenant approach. In the first instance it is highly dependent on a linear understanding of the Jewish-Christian relationship. Even when that linear notion has been expressed in fairly positive terms ('mother-daughter' or 'elder brother-younger brother') it can still mask a certain form of theological fulfillment in Christianity that renders Judaism a second class religion. I fear that such an attitude lies behind Cardinal Avery Dulles' assertion that there are not two independent covenants for Jews and Christians. Dulles insists that Jews are not saved through the Sinai covenant alone but only through the completion of the one covenant through Christ's death and resurrection.<sup>27</sup>

The linear thrust of single covenant perspective appears increasingly problematical in light of new scholarship. An increasing number of scholars today, Daniel Boyarin for one, are emphasizing what Boyarin terms the 'co-emergence' of Judaism and Christianity today from within a common religious revolution in Second Temple Judaism. While the parallel understanding would still preserve a common Jewish/Christian core, it tends to stress their distinctive responses to the fundamental covenantal relationship. Such an outlook renders any simple notion of a single covenant, especially in terms of theological fulfillment, increasingly difficult to sustain. Yet I believe that Boyarin and others have made a strong case for their parallel approach.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> F. MUSSNER, *Tractate on the Jews: The Significance of Judaism for Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); also cf. F. MUSSNER, 'From Jesus the "Prophet" to Jesus the "Son"', in A.J. FALATURI - J.J. PETUCHOWSKI - W. STROLZ (eds.), *Three Ways to the One God: The Faith Experience in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (New York: Crossroad), 76-85.

<sup>27</sup> A. DULLES, 'Evangelization and the Jews', 10.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel Boyarin has been working for several years on a 'Co-Emergence' Project. Three of his books have amplified this theme: D. BOYARIN, *Dying for God: Martyrdom*

*c) Double covenantal perspectives*

The 'double covenant' theory begins at more or less the same starting point as its single covenant counterpart. Jews and Christians continue to remain bonded despite their somewhat distinctive appropriation of the original covenantal tradition. But it prefers to highlight the distinctiveness of the two communities and their traditions particularly in terms of their experiences after the final separation of the church and synagogue. I have personally favored this view over the years though it certainly needs qualification.

Christians associated with this perspective insist on maintaining the view that through the ministry, teachings, and person of Jesus a vision of God emerged that was distinctively new in terms of some central features. Even though there may well have been important groundwork laid for this emergence in Second Temple or Middle Judaism, what came to be understood regarding the divine-human relationship, and hence ultimately covenantal relationship, through the Christ Event has to be seen as distinctive.<sup>29</sup>

An important example of the double covenant approach can be found in the writings of the German theologian Franz Mussner.<sup>30</sup> Mussner highlights Jesus' deep, positive links to the Jewish tradition of his day. He likewise rejects any interpretation of the Christ Event over against Judaism in terms of Jesus' fulfillment of biblical messianic prophecies. Rather, for Mussner, the uniqueness of the Christ Event arises from the complete identity of the work of Jesus, as well as his words and actions, with the work of God. As a result of the revelatory vision in Christ, the New Testament is able to speak about God with an anthropomorphic boldness not found to the same extent within the biblical or postbiblical tradition of Judaism.

In answer to the question of what the disciples finally experienced through their close association with Jesus, Mussner speaks of 'a unity of action extending to the point of congruence of Jesus with God, an unheard

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*and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997); and *Border Lives: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

<sup>29</sup> On my Christological writings, cf. #8.

<sup>30</sup> F. MUSSNER, *Tractate on the Jews*, 226.

of existential imitation of God by Jesus'.<sup>31</sup> But this imitation, Mussner insists, is in keeping with Jewish thinking, a contention that many Jewish scholars would certainly challenge, though Elliot Wolfson has argued that the rabbinic corpus does reveal some evidence of a modified incarnational theology.<sup>32</sup> For Mussner, the uniqueness of Jesus arises from the depth of his imitation of God. So the most distinctive feature of Christianity for Mussner when contrasted with Judaism is the notion of Incarnation rather than the fulfillment of messianic prophecies. And even this Christian particularity, he insists, represents an outgrowth of a sensibility profoundly Jewish at its core.

I myself have argued in somewhat the same vein as Mussner. I do believe that the distinctive identity of Christianity vis-à-vis Judaism primarily resides in the notion of the Incarnation. And, with Mussner, I see some Jewish roots for this notion in the growing sense of God's proximity to humanity that Ellis Rivkin has argued represents the core of Pharisaism, the Jewish movement which in the words of the 1985 Vatican *Notes* on Jewish-Christian relations most directly impacted Jesus' worldview.

At this point there is need to note another aspect of the ongoing relationship between the Church and the Jewish People within the framework of covenantal theology. Metz has made it and so have I. The consideration of a theology of the covenant cannot be oblivious to the contemporary problem of God, especially in light of the Holocaust. Irving Greenberg, for example, has maintained that the covenant now becomes voluntary in the shadow of Auschwitz. Any covenantal theology must grapple with the issue of what kind of understanding of God can sustain a covenantal theology today. We cannot glibly endorse biblical or classical theological categories in this regard without confronting this central question.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. E.R. WOLFSON, 'Judaism and Incarnation: The Imaginal Body of God', in T. FRYMER-KENSKY - D. NOVAK - P. OCHS, D.F. SANDMEL, - M.A. SIGNER (eds.), *Christianity In Jewish Terms*, 239-254.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. J.M. METZ, 'Facing the Jews'; J.T. Pawlikowski, 'Christology after the Holocaust', in T. MERRIGAN - J. HAERS (eds.), *The Myriad Christ* (Leuven, Paris and Sterling, VA: Uitgeveru Peeters and Leuven University Press, 2000), 381-397. and Irving Greenberg, 'Judaism, Christianity and Partnership After the Twentieth Century', in T. FRYMER-KENSKY - D. NOVAK - P. OCHS - D.F. SANDMEL - M.A. SINGER (eds.), *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, 25-36.

*d) Moving beyond the current models*

In recent years it has become evident that neither the single nor double covenantal perspectives adequately address all the important issues, at least from the Christian side. Clearly we cannot forge a new covenantal theology in terms of the Christian–Jewish nexus without explicitly taking up the Christological question. This is certainly behind the affirmation in the ecumenical statement *A Sacred Obligation* referenced earlier in this presentation which underlines that ‘Affirming God’s Enduring Covenant with the Jewish People has consequences for Christian understandings of salvation’. The accompanying paragraph spells out further the challenge facing the Church regarding Christology:

Christians meet God’s saving power in the person of Jesus Christ and believe that this power is available to all people in him. Christians have therefore taught for centuries that salvation is available only through Jesus Christ. With their recent realization that God’s covenant with the Jewish people is eternal, Christians can now recognize in the Jewish tradition the redemptive power of God at work. If Jews, who do not share our faith in Christ, are in a saving covenant with God, then Christians need new ways of understanding the universal significance of Christ.<sup>34</sup>

Now that we have come to understand that the theology which interpreted the Christ Event as the fulfillment of Judaism and the inauguration, in Jesus’ own lifetime, of a new religious community to replace the ‘old Israel’ no longer meets the test of historical accuracy, we need to find new ways on expressing Christological distinctiveness that acknowledges at the same time the ongoing participation of Jews in the salvific covenant.

Because Christology stands at the very nerve center of Christian faith, re-evaluation of Christological affirmations cannot be undertaken superficially. There is a trend found in some sectors of Christianity, especially among those most open to general interreligious understanding, that the Christ Event is only one of several authentic revelations with no particular universal aspect. Such a starting point is not acceptable to myself nor to many people who have championed a significant rethinking of the Church’s theology of the Jewish People such as Cardinal Walter Kasper or the biblical scholars and theologians associated with *A Sacred Obligation*.

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. *A Sacred Obligation*, #6.

We must maintain from the Christian side some understanding that the Christ Event carries universal significance.

As I have expressed earlier in this chapter, for me Incarnational Christology holds out the best possibility for preserving such universalistic dimensions of the Christ Event while opening up authentic theological space for Judaism (as the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago put it).<sup>35</sup> Cardinal Walter Kasper has insisted in several essays since he assumed the role of President of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews that in any reconsideration of our understanding of Christology as a result of new biblical scholarship and official church documents some understanding of Christ's mission as universal needs to be retained. I support Cardinal Kasper in this affirmation.

An important contribution to the Church's ongoing reinterpretation of the meaning of the Christ Event, in light of its new understanding of covenantal theology, appears in a document issued by the Pontifical Biblical Commission in 2001. The document carries a supportive introduction by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger who had jurisdiction over this commission. Released without much fanfare, this new document opens up several new possibilities in terms of expressing the significance of the Christ Event while leaving theological space for Judaism.<sup>36</sup>

The Pontifical Biblical Commission document, despite some significant limitations in the way it portrays postbiblical Judaism, makes an important contribution to the development of a new constructive Christological understanding in the context of Jewish covenantal inclusion. Two statements in particular are very significant for this discussion.

The first assertion is that Jewish messianic hopes are not in vain. This is coupled with a recognition that Jewish readings of the Hebrew Scriptures in terms of understanding human redemption represent an

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Note #8.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. THE PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002). Also cf. DONALD SENIOR, 'Rome has spoken: A new Catholic approach to Judaism', *Commonweal* 130 (31 January 2003), 20-23. JOAN E. COOK, 'The new PBC document: Continuity, discontinuity, and the progression revisited'. Unpublished paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Catholic Biblical Association, San Francisco, California, 5 August 2003; also cf. the articles by M. BOYS - L. HOPPE - M. O'CONNOR - J.T. PAWLIKOWSKI - A.J. LEVINE in *The Bible Today*, 41:3 (May 2003), 141-172.

authentic interpretation of these texts. Here we have the seeds of what appears to be a recognition of a distinct salvific path for the Jewish People as a theological principle. In this connection Cardinal Kasper has said that 'if they (i.e. the Jews) follow their own conscience and believe in God's promises as they understand them in their religious tradition they are in line with God's plan'.<sup>37</sup>

In his various addresses and articles Kaspar has underlined the continuing validity of the Jewish path to salvation.<sup>38</sup> He has insisted that the Jewish-Christian relationship is *sui generis* because Jews are alone in having authentic revelation from a Christian theological perspective. As a result, Kaspar has already argued that there is no need for Christians to proselytize Jews because they are already in a covenantal relationship with God. He has likewise underlined his continued belief in the universality of Christ and that there are not two totally disconnected paths to salvation for Jews and Christians. He appears to be saying that while the Jewish and Christian paths may be distinctive they are not distinct but somehow integrated. Kaspar's present position leaves aside a discussion as to how his affirmation of the continuing validity of the Jewish path to salvation pursued in a distinctive fashion relates to the universal salvific plan found in the Christ Event. Do Jews now or at least at the end time, have to acknowledge explicitly the universal reign of Christ? This question requires a more comprehensive answer than Kaspar has offered thus far. It also has to be said that he recently does not seem to be pursuing the issue of the theological relationship between Jews and Christians with quite the same vigor as in the early days of his presidency of the Vatican Commission. Put another way, are the distinctive paths of Jews and Christians towards ultimate salvation on an equal footing or does the Jewish path, while distinctive, ultimately fall under the sway of the Christian path and require an explicit recognition of Christ at some point? Or is there a way of theologically stating the ultimate integration of the distinctive paths without employing expressly Christological language? Does Christ in the end bring about the

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<sup>37</sup> Cardinal Walter Kasper's Boston College address can be found on the website of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College: [www.cjlrning\\_bbc.edu](http://www.cjlrning_bbc.edu)

<sup>38</sup> Cf. W. KASPER, 'The good olive tree', *America* 185:7 (17 September 2001), 12-14; 'Spiritual and ethical commitment in Jewish-Christian dialogue', in R. WEYL (ed.), *From the Martin Buber House*. 30 (Summer 2002), 12-20; and 'Christians, Jews and the thorny question of mission', 457; 459-467.



salvation of all people, including Jews, but it is not necessary for Jews to expressly acknowledge this reality from a Christian perspective?

The same questions might be posed regarding initial theological reflections on the Christian-Jewish relationship by the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as well as the theological implications of the comprehensive statement from the Pontifical Biblical Commission as the Jews and their Scriptures as seen in the New Testament which Cardinal Ratzinger approved and for which he wrote a positive introduction.<sup>39</sup> When the document *Dominus Iesus* was issued by Cardinal Ratzinger's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, considerable discussion arose as to whether it was meant to apply to Jews. Cardinals Cassidy and Keeler with others joined forces to argue that it did not although in all candor that could have been made more explicit in the document. In the end this effort appears to have prevailed and some even see Cardinal Ratzinger's subsequent writings on the Christian-Jewish relationship and his embrace of the Pontifical Biblical Commission's statement as confirmation of its inapplicability.

Building, it would appear, on the Pontifical Biblical Commission's argument that Jewish messianic hopes are not in vain, something that Ratzinger explicitly mentions in his Introduction to the PBC document, he argues in a manner similar to Kasper that Jews follow their own distinctive path to salvation. But in the end he holds out more explicitly than Kasper for Christological confirmation of the Jewish path. What is not fully clear in his writings, which too must be described as the beginnings of a theology of the Christian-Jewish relationship rather than a fully developed treatise, is whether Jews must affirm this Christological confirmation at some point. This same ambiguity also exists in the Pontifical Biblical Commission's document itself which adds another interesting statement with some potential for the theological understanding of the Christian-Jewish relationship. The PBC document speaks of the eschatological Messiah as the One who is to come. This eschatological Messiah will exhibit the traits Christians have already seen and acknowledged in the Jesus who has already come and remains with the Church. While there is a small window

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<sup>39</sup> J. RATZINGER, 'The heritage of Abraham, the gift of Christmas', *L'osservatore Romano* (29 December 2000); *Many Religions—One Covenant* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000); and *God and the World: Believing and Living in our Time* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002). For a Jewish response, cf. D. BERGER, 'Dominus Iesus and the Jews', *America* 185:7 (17 September 2001), 7-12.

for new thinking here, an opening seems to be provided for acknowledgement of the future 'One' by Jews without necessarily speaking of the 'One' in specific Christological terms. This may be reading into the text but I would at least suggest this as a possible interpretation.

The Pontifical Biblical Commission document is a study rooted in biblical exegesis, not a work of systematic theology which lies outside of the commission's mandate. Hence the commission did not draw out the full theological implications of the above statements. But these affirmations certainly can provide building blocks for developing such implications. They provide space for exploring whether the Church can speak about the universal significance of the Christ Event in a way that allows for its articulation through religious symbols not directly connected with Christology, such as Jewish religious symbols. This might in fact prove the most fruitful way of developing a Christology that remains open to covenantal pluralism, particularly with respect to the Jews who are acknowledged to have authentic revelation from the Christian theological perspective as Cardinal Walter Kasper has underscored in a number of his essays.

Some may say that the above approach is nothing more than the 'anonymous Christian' notion put forth by the renowned German theologian Karl Rahner who profoundly shaped the theology of Vatican II. I do not believe this to be the case. It is suggesting rather an understanding that the process of human salvation revealed in the Christ Event goes beyond its articulation within the Church through symbols associated with the Christ Event. Hence Jews, and perhaps some other religious people, do not have to apprehend it directly through Christological symbolism. It suggests that while the salvific reality behind the Christ symbolism is indeed universal, the specific symbolism associated with this salvific reality within the churches may be more limited in scope than the actual reality.

The above perspective, in my judgment, goes considerably beyond what Rahner proposed under the rubric of 'anonymous Christian' where the Christ Event remained the dominant religious symbolism. This proposal certainly remains in the realm of a hypothesis. And clearly it is a hypothesis that primarily aims at helping Christians come to a new self-understanding in light of recent biblical scholarship and magisterial pronouncements regarding the Christian-Jewish relationship. It would be a way of helping Christians think about themselves with reference to Jews, rather than focusing on a theology of Judaism and the Jewish People from

the Church's perspective. While, unlike Johnson, I believe both avenues of reflection need to be pursued, he is correct in claiming that a certain priority should be given to Christian self-understanding. It is also true to say, and Christians need to recognise this, that Jews and other religious communities may not feel any necessity for theological confirmation of their faith perspective from the churches.

We are thus at a very early stage in the process of rethinking Christology and its impact on a theological understanding of covenant in terms of the Christian–Jewish relationship. As Christians, we may never come to a point where our Christological affirmations will lead us into a theology of religious pluralism that squares totally with the basic faith affirmations of Judaism or other world religions. But I believe we have a continuing obligation to pursue this issue since in our globalised world interreligious understanding is not merely confined to the realm of theological ideas but directly impacts people's life together in community. A shift seems to be emerging at present within Christian theology towards a form of double covenant but with continued Jewish–Christian bonding, a shift that has produced strong disagreement from the likes of a Cardinal Avery Dulles. But church leaders who have spoken to this question such as Cardinals Kasper and Ratzinger need to develop a much fuller synthesis of their perspectives which at the moment represent only fragments of meaning. This also holds true for scholars who have been reimagining the Christian–Jewish relationship in terms of 'siblings' or 'fraternal twins', images that seem rooted in the more parallel framework suggested by Daniel Boyarin in his co-emergence project. These images suggest both Boyarin and distinctiveness need to be drawn out further.

##### 5. THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONSHIP

Thus far I have considered only the first two assertions introduced at the outset of this essay. To round off my discussion, I would now like to focus on the remaining two and add a third. They are the role of the Old Testament or Hebrew Scriptures in forging Christian theological self-identity and the necessity of a Jewish matrix for fully comprehending Christian teaching plus the very controversial issue of Christian mission to the Jews.

Some years ago I became involved in a debate regarding the name Christians ought to use for the first part of our Bible. I felt Hebrew Scriptures was a more appropriate term than Old Testament. But the name itself is not the key issue. It is rather how we use this biblical resource in terms of Christian theological self-identity. This discussion has gone for more than a decade with no clear resolution.<sup>40</sup> It surfaced again on the Jewish side with the appearance of *Dabru Emet*, the Jewish statement on Christianity, which asserted that Jews and Christians take authority from the same book. This statement occasioned both harsh and more sober criticism from scholars such as Jon Levinson and David Berger. As a result, *A Sacred Obligation* moderated its statement somewhat, saying that 'The Bible Both Connects and Separates Jews and Christians'. (#5)

Clearly in the past the Hebrew Scriptures were not generally valued very highly as a resource for Christian self-identity. The most extreme anti-Hebrew Scriptures viewpoint was association with the ancient Christian writer Marcion who urged their total elimination from the Christian version of the Bible. There are some exceptions to this trend, such as in the Calvinist tradition, but not many. Overall Christians used the Hebrew Scriptures as foil or merely prelude for the New Testament. There even develop a strong sense that one could find glimpses of Christian revelation, including Christ and Mary, in these books.

While it is not possible to elaborate on this issue in this essay, it must be said that any Christian covenantal theology in terms of the Church's relationship with the Jewish People will need seriously to reconsider the place of the Hebrew Scriptures. Many years ago the late A. Roy Eckardt, a pioneer in reinterpreting the Christian theological tradition in terms of Judaism, wrote that the covenant forged at Sinai is in principal no less important than the covenant renewed through Jesus Christ.<sup>41</sup> I have always regarded Eckardt as fundamentally correct on this point. The Hebrew

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. R. BROOKS – J.J. COLLINS (eds.), *Hebrew Bible or Old Testament?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990). Also Cf. *Dabru Emet* #2 and *A Sacred Obligation* #5. For a critical Jewish response, cf. J.D. LEVENSON, 'How not to conduct Jewish-Christian dialogue', *Commentary* (December 2001), 31-37. It is followed by a spirited exchange of letters. I briefly address this issue in 'Jews and Christians: The contemporary dialogue', *Quarterly Review* 4:4 (Winter 1984), 26-28.

<sup>41</sup> A. ECKARDT, *Elder and Younger Brother* (New York: Schocken, 1973), 142.

Scriptures cannot serve merely as foil or even prelude for Christian self-understanding. They were not that for Jesus for whom they clearly served as a framework for his religious outlook. Whether we would want to regard them as absolutely 'coequal' in defining Christian theological identity is open to discussion. But if Jews remain part of the ongoing covenant after the Christ Event and if they remain bonded with Christians then logically their sacred books, as well as their interpretations of these books, become an undeniable resource for Christian theology. Yet rarely do they serve this function even today.

Reincorporating the Hebrew Scriptures as a primal resource for Christian theology will not come easy because of the history of their use. But it is simplistic to assert that Christians do not really rely on the Hebrew Scriptures because they have used them in quite different ways. Historically that is true. But the historic turnabout within mainline Christianity on the inclusion of Jews in the covenant after the Christ Event that has occurred over the past forty years forces upon Christians a basic re-evaluation of their role in formulating Christian doctrine.

One cautionary note needs to be sounded here. There is some danger that Judaism as a theological resource for Christianity will become solely and exclusively identified with the Hebrew Scriptures. The Judaism of Jesus' time was already postbiblical and we need to come to understand its perspectives if we are accurately to interpret Jesus' teachings. Scholars such as Cardinals Ratzinger and Kasper seem to fall into this trap. We shall have to ask not only how the Hebrew Scriptures function as a continuing theological resource for Christianity but how postbiblical Jewish thinking ought to impact on Christian thinking. The 1985 Vatican *Notes* do emphasise the importance of Christians coming to know postbiblical Jewish thought, but seem to imply that this is merely so that we better understand contemporary Judaism. While that is correct, it is also important that we begin to appreciate that, given Jewish-Christian covenantal bonding, present-day Jewish interpretations of Scripture and tradition should impinge not only on overall Christian doctrine but also on specific religious and ethical issues.

Regarding the reincorporation of Christianity into its original Jewish matrix much that has already been said in this essay covers this theme. I would only repeat here a point that we already saw in the writings of Johannes Baptist Metz, but this time in the words of Cardinal Walter

Kasper—‘Christianity therefore cannot be defined without reference to biblical Israel and to Judaism’.<sup>42</sup> This means that an understanding of Judaism is integral to an authentic interpretation of Christian doctrine as such, not merely for a theology of Christian-Jewish relations. And as I have underscored in several of my own writings, and as Cardinal Kasper has emphasised as well, Jesus’ sense of ethics, ecclesiology and spirituality was profoundly conditioned by his Jewish religious background.<sup>43</sup> There is simply no way to comprehend his vision in these critical areas without a deep grounding in Judaism.

#### 6. MISSION TO THE JEWS IN THE NEW MODELS OF THE CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONSHIP

Finally, let me briefly take up the issue of mission. This is certainly one of the most difficult issues in the contemporary Jewish-Christian dialogue. The proposed rejection of any notion of mission to the Jews in documents such *A Sacred Obligation* and *Reflections on Covenant and Mission* has encountered strong opposition in sectors of Christianity. The Southern Baptists attacked these documents as well as the Pontifical Biblical Commission document on Jews and the Hebrew Scriptures in the New Testament. Cardinal Avery Dulles took strong exception to *Reflections on Covenant and Mission* on this point.

The issue of mission to the Jews has been a contested issue within Protestantism for some time. A major Evangelical Christian statement issued from an international conference in Bermuda reiterated a Christian mandate to convert Jews. Within Catholicism where the concrete effort to convert Jews has never been quite as strong as within Protestantism the issue was pretty much kept under wraps since the time of the Council as I emphasised in an address to an international conference held at

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<sup>42</sup> W. KASPER, ‘Issues concerning future dialogue between Jews and Christians’. Unpublished Paper delivered at The Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, 17 April 2002, 3.

<sup>43</sup> See *ibid.*, 10; also cf. J.T. PAWLIKOWSKI, *Christ in the Light of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue*, 76-107 and ‘The Jewish covenant: Its continuing challenge for Christian faith’, in J.A. EDELHEIT (ed.), *The Life of Covenant: The Challenge of Contemporary Judaism: Essays in Honor of Herman E. Schaalman* (Chicago: Spertus College of Judaica Press, 1986), 113-123.

Cambridge University in 2001.<sup>44</sup> But in the same address I stressed that the issue might surface at any moment within Catholicism. It remained in my view a central, unresolved question in the Christian–Jewish dialogue. A Catholic lay scholar Tomasso Federici spoke to it in a paper delivered at the 1978 Vatican–Jewish International Dialogue held in Venice. In that paper Professor Federici called for the formal termination of any Catholic mission to the Jews on the grounds that the Jews, in light of *Nostra Aetate*, were now recognised as standing within the divine covenantal framework and as possessing authentic revelation from the Christian theological perspective.<sup>45</sup> These same points have been used by Cardinal Kasper to argue as well against any organised effort to convert Jews within Catholicism. Federici’s paper was subsequently altered in its final form, to read that ‘undue’ proselytizing of Jews is to be avoided. And Kasper has not further developed his thinking on the matter. *Reflections on Covenant and Mission* represents in fact an effort to develop further the ideas Kasper has put forth on mission to the Jews, something he himself urged in talks at Sacred Heart University and at Boston College.<sup>46</sup>

Certainly there is no easy resolution of the issue of mission to the Jews. Mission has been at the heart of Christian self-understanding. To renounce it for the Jews is to touch the very nerve center of the Christian faith. Some Christians have argued that it represents a failure to love Jews because there is no greater love a Christian can offer anyone than the love made present in the life of Jesus. Certainly we must leave open the possibility of individual conversion in either direction—Jew to Christian or Christian to Jew. But as a theological principle I would support Cardinal Kasper’s argument that the Church has no formal obligation to espouse the conversion of the Jews to Christianity through organised missionary efforts. I recognise that this affirmation can open a Pandora’s box in terms of mission and other world religions. That is something we need to continue discussing. But for the moment the best we can say is what *A Sacred Obligation* stated in its point #7: ‘Christians should not target Jews for

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<sup>44</sup> J.T. PAWLIKOWSKI, ‘Maintaining momentum in a global village’, in E. KESSLER - J.T. PAWLIKOWSKI - J. BANKS (eds.), *Jews and Christians in Conversation: Crossing Cultures and Generations* (Cambridge, UK: Orchard Academic, 2002), 75-91.

<sup>45</sup> T. FEDERICI, ‘Mission and witness of the church’, in International Catholic–Jewish Liaison Committee, *Fifteen Years of Catholic–Jewish Dialogue, 1970-1985*, 46-62.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. W. KASPER, ‘Christians, Jews and the thorny question of mission’.

Conversion'. The document then adds that 'In view of our conviction that Jews are in an eternal covenant with God, we renounce missionary efforts directed at converting Jews. At the same time, we welcome opportunities for Jews and Christians to bear witness to their respective experiences of God's saving ways. Neither can properly claim to possess knowledge of God entirely or exclusively'.

In light of the above discussion the viewpoint of Gregory Baum cited at the beginning of this essay is definitely confirmed. *Nostra Aetate* in restoring Jews to the divine covenant from a Christian theological perspective opened a radical rethinking of Christian faith identity. Over forty years the major dimensions of this fundamental re-definition have begun to unfold as scholarly research leads to institutional restatement. But clearly a backlash has arisen in some quarters of Christianity.<sup>47</sup> How quickly this process will continue in the coming years, if it continues at all, remains an open question.

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<sup>47</sup> In a recent article, Cardinal Avery Dulles has questioned whether Vatican II really affirmed the continuity of the Jewish Covenant. I find his claim incomprehensible in light of Chapter Four of *Nostra Aetate*, which relies on Paul's affirmation of continuity in Romans 9-11 as well as any number of statements of Pope John Paul II such as Mainz (1980) and the Rome Synagogue address. Dulles again raises up the texts in Hebrews mentioned earlier. In retrospect it would have been good if *Nostrae Aetate* had dealt with these texts directly rather than ignoring them. Cf., 'The Covenant with Israel', *First Things* (November 2005), 16-21.