

International  
Conference

# Program

July 10 - 13, 2016

Philadelphia

## The Dynamics of Religious Pluralism in a Changing World: The Philadelphia, United States, and International Contexts



**The Dynamics of Religious Pluralism  
in a Changing World:  
The Philadelphia, United States,  
and International Contexts**

**C O N F E R E N C E   P R O G R A M**

**2016 International Conference of the  
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS  
and the  
COUNCIL OF CENTERS ON JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS**

**Philadelphia, USA**

**Saint Joseph's University,  
Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations**

**July 10 – 13, 2016**

**WE EXTEND OUR SPECIAL THANKS TO**

Gefördert durch:



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**GERMAN MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR, BERLIN**



**SAINT JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY, PHILADELPHIA**

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# WELCOME

Dr Philip A. Cunningham

President of the International Council of Christians and Jews

It is my honor and delight to welcome you all to Philadelphia, to the United States, and to the campus of Saint Joseph's University! I mention all three places because each has contributed, in its own way, to the vision of interreligious amity to which we are all dedicated.

The story of Philadelphia, the "City of Brotherly Love," begins with William Penn, an English aristocrat who was a member of the Religious Society of Friends. In 1681, King Charles II of England repaid a family debt by granting him a royal charter for a colony to be called Pennsylvania ("Penn's Woods"). Believing that all people are equal under God, Penn drafted a "Frame of Government" that assured freedom of religion, trial by jury, and free elections. His "Holy Experiment" appealed to various persecuted religious minorities from many countries, making his colony unusually diverse religiously.

Philadelphia later played a pivotal role in the American Revolution and the formation of a new nation. The Pennsylvania State House (now "Independence Hall") was where the "Continental Congress" issued its "Declaration of Independence" in 1776. It was also where the "Constitution of the United States of America" was drafted in 1787. Penn's axiom that "all Persons are equal under God" informed the first amendment to the Constitution, which prohibited Congress from establishing a state religion and guaranteed freedom from governmental interference in private and public religious matters.

The subsequent history of both Philadelphia and the United States often failed to meet these principles. The enslavement of African peoples starting in the colonial period caused the bloody Civil War of 1861-1865 and promoted systemic racism in American society. Waves of massive immigration in the 19th and 20th centuries triggered a backlash of isolationism and inter-ethnic rivalry that periodically erupted in violence and destruction. Still, religious pluralism grew. Within a decade of a major riot that destroyed Philadelphia Catholic churches and buildings, members of the Jesuit order founded, in 1851, Saint Joseph's College. And by the mid-19th century, Philadelphia was rightly called "the Jewish capital of America" due to the major Jewish institutions that had been established there.

Jumping ahead a century, when *Nostra Aetate* was issued by the Second Vatican Council in 1965, the Jesuit leadership of Saint Joseph's College – partly inspired by the ecumenical movement of the prior decades in which Protestants, Catholics, and Jews collaborated in many ventures – founded the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations. Its vision that Christians and Jews are spiritually enriched by studying and learning together was enshrined in 2015 in an original sculpture by artist Joshua Koffman, "*Synagoga and Ecclesia in Our Time*." This artwork, celebrating the golden jubilee of *Nostra Aetate* and the mission of the Institute, was blessed by Pope Francis during his visit to Philadelphia in September 2015. The Institute's story, and that of other members of the Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations, reflects the depth of the Christian-Jewish dialogue that has evolved in a nation that fosters religious expression and where the world's largest diaspora Jewish community prospers.

This rapid flight through history shows why the ICCJ's 2016 Conference Theme: "The Dynamics of Religious Pluralism in a Changing World" is so appropriate in Penn's City. We will consider how the "American Experiment" in religious pluralism has been experienced by diverse religious communities past and present. We will learn whether the challenges of religious pluralism as experienced in different countries can help us all as we pursue the ICCJ's mission of promoting interreligious understanding and cooperation based on respect for one another's identity and integrity.

***As William Penn might say: welcome, friends, from far and near!***



# WELCOME

Rabbi David Straus

Co-convener of the Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia

Welcome to Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection! It is my honor to be co-chairing our conference with Dr Philip A. Cunningham. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors of the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations of Saint Joseph's University, I also serve as a co-convener of the Religious Leaders Council here in Philadelphia. Let me tell you a little about it.

The Council includes over 30 religious communities in the greater Philadelphia area, and thus represents more than two million people of diverse faith traditions from across the region. It works to create relationships of mutual support among area religious leaders, and to serve as a moral and spiritual voice on issues facing our region. The Council can therefore be seen as the direct outgrowth of the principles of religious tolerance upon which Pennsylvania was first founded in 1681. How fitting that this year's ICCJ meeting occurs here in Philadelphia, the birthplace of American democracy, and most especially of freedom of religion! I hope you will have some time during your stay here to explore historic Philadelphia, and visit our many historic sites and museums, especially in Center City.

One of the founding values of the United States is freedom of religion. This right is written into our founding documents as a democratic country. Constitutionally, freedom of religion does not mean that religion has no role or voice in the public sphere or world of ideas and politics. Religion, religious values, and religious leaders have always been at the forefront for social change in America. But freedom of religion *does* mean that the government cannot impose a religion on any of our citizens. During our time together, I know we will explore the role of religion and religious values in our contemporary, religiously plural society.

How wonderful that we also meet in the wake of last year's celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*! These past 50 years have been nothing short of revolutionary in multi-faith dialogue, learning and understanding. In the midst of our learning together over the coming days, let us not forget to celebrate how far we have come in so short a time!

***Again, welcome to Philadelphia!***

# GREETINGS

Rabbi Dr Ruth Langer

Chair of the Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations

On behalf of the Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations (CCJR), welcome to the United States and welcome to Philadelphia! As the national member organization for the United States to the ICCJ, we are particularly excited to be hosting this meeting here in one of the cradles of American democracy. One of the key characteristics of that democracy, from its beginnings, has been freedom of religion, and significant elements of our conference will be exploring how that has found expression in American society, how it has enhanced American religious life, and its importance, especially for religious minorities. Religion is very much on the table in American society, particularly in a presidential election year like this one. This creates important opportunities – and mandates – to deepen interreligious understanding through dialogue.

As its name suggests, the CCJR serves as a network for the sharing of information, research, and resources among academic and educational organizations. While most of these are centers or institutes located in North America, we also include affiliate members from overseas and liaison representatives from major Christian and Jewish agencies and religious bodies in the United States.

This opportunity to host the 2016 ICCJ conference is allowing us to expand our annual meeting's offerings. We are also pleased to offer annually a number of scholarships so students can attend our conferences, and are delighted that this year they also have the added benefit of participating in the international setting of the ICCJ's gathering.

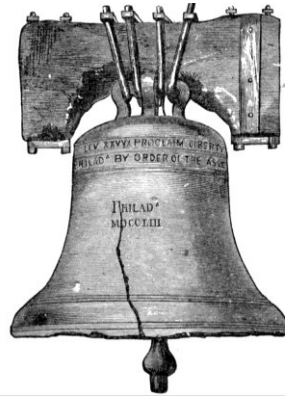
***Enjoy the conference!***

# THE LIBERTY BELL

## From Signal to Symbol

The State House bell, now known as the Liberty Bell, is part of our conference logo because of its historical associations with religious and civil freedoms. It first rang in the tower of the Pennsylvania State House, known today as Independence Hall.

Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly Isaac Norris first ordered a bell for the bell tower in 1751 from the Whitechapel Foundry in London. That bell cracked on the first test ring. Local metalworkers John Pass and John Stow melted down that bell and cast a new one right here in Philadelphia. It's this bell that would ring to call lawmakers to their meetings and the townspeople together to hear the reading of the news. It's not until the 1830's that the old State House bell would begin to take on significance as a symbol of liberty.



## The Crack

No one recorded when or why the Liberty Bell first cracked, but the most likely explanation is that a narrow split developed in the early 1840's after nearly 90 years of hard use.

In 1846, when the city decided to repair the bell prior to George Washington's birthday holiday (February 23), metal workers widened the thin crack to prevent its farther spread and restore the tone of the bell using a technique called "stop drilling". The wide "crack" in the Liberty Bell is actually the repair job! But, the repair was not successful. *The Public Ledger* newspaper reported that the repair failed when another fissure developed. This second crack, running from the abbreviation for "Philadelphia" up through the word "Liberty", silenced the bell forever. No one living today has heard the bell ring freely with its clapper.

## The Inscription and Its Meaning over Time

The Liberty Bell's inscription is from Leviticus 25:10: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."

This biblical verse refers to the "Jubilee," with the instructions to the Israelites to free slaves every 50 years. Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly Isaac Norris chose this inscription for the State House bell in 1751, perhaps to commemorate the 50th anniversary of William Penn's 1701 Charter of Privileges which granted religious liberties to the people of Pennsylvania.

The inscription of Liberty on the Bell went unnoticed during the Revolutionary War (1775-1783). In the 1830s, the bell's inscription provided a rallying cry for abolitionists seeking to end slavery in America. *The Anti-Slavery Record* first referred to the bell as the Liberty Bell in 1835, but that name was not widely adopted until years later.

Suffragists commissioned a replica of the Liberty Bell. Their "Justice Bell" travelled across Pennsylvania in 1915 to encourage support for women's voting rights legislation. It then sat chained in silence until the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920.

Beginning in the late 1800's, the Liberty Bell travelled across the country for display at expositions and fairs, stopping in towns small and large along the way. For a nation recovering from wounds of the Civil War, the bell served to remind Americans of a time when they fought together for independence.

Movements from Women's Suffrage (1880s-1920s) to Civil Rights (1960s) embraced the Liberty Bell for both protest and celebration. Now a worldwide symbol, the bell's message of liberty remains just as relevant and powerful today: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."

# THE PHILADELPHIA CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS

## THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS (ICCJ)

After a first international post-war meeting of Jewish and Christian leaders in Oxford, UK, in 1946, another so called 'emergency conference' as a reaction to the Holocaust, the Shoah, was held in Seelisberg, Switzerland in 1947 during which the resolution was adopted that "in view of the world-wide nature of the task, it is mandatory that the suggestion of the Oxford Conference of August 1946 to establish an International Council of Christians and Jews should be implemented without delay, and that the Continuation Committee then appointed should take energetic action to organize and establish in as many countries as possible Councils of Christians and Jews linked with the International Council."

In the aftermath of this conference in Seelisberg the International Council of Christians and Jews was founded and it serves today, nearly 70 years later, as the umbrella organization of 40 national Jewish-Christian dialogue organizations world-wide.

The ICCJ together with its member organizations has been successfully engaged in the historic renewal of Jewish-Christian relations over the last seven decades and brought theologians, historians, educators as well as grassroots initiatives into its work.

In more recent years the ICCJ and its members increasingly joined in the Abrahamic dialogue among Jews, Christians and Muslims. The ICCJ's efforts to promote Jewish-Christian dialogue provide models for wider interfaith relations, particularly dialogue among Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Through its annual conferences and other consultations the ICCJ offers a platform where people of different religious backgrounds examine current issues across national and religious boundaries, enabling face-to-face exchanges of experience and expertise.

The international headquarters of the ICCJ are located in Heppenheim, Germany, in the house where the great Jewish thinker Martin Buber and his family lived until Nazi persecution forced him to flee Germany.

## Mission Statement

According to its constitution the ICCJ:

- **promotes** understanding and cooperation between Christians and Jews based on respect for each other's identity and integrity;
- **addresses** issues of human rights and human dignity deeply enshrined in the traditions of Judaism and Christianity;
- **counters** all forms of prejudice, intolerance, discrimination, racism and the misuse of religion for national and political domination;
- **affirms** that in honest dialogue each person remains loyal to his or her own essential faith commitment, recognizing in the other person his or her integrity and otherness;
- **coordinates** worldwide activities through a programme of carefully structured conferences held regularly in different countries. The participants examine current issues across national and religious boundaries, enabling face-to-face exchanges of experience and expertise;
- **encourages** research and education at all levels, including universities and theological seminaries, to promote interreligious understanding among students, teachers, religious leaders, and scholars;
- **performs** outreach in regions that so far have little or no structured Jewish-Christian dialogue, such as Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Far East;
- **provides** a platform for wide-ranging theological debate in order to add a religious choice to the contemporary search for answers to existential and ethical challenges.

## Jewish-Christian Relations Net

The ICCJ owns and maintains the online platform *Jewish-Christian Relations Net* (<http://www.jcrelations.net>), which is devoted to fostering mutual respect and understanding between Christians and Jews. It publishes and translates articles, reviews, reports, official statements, and study resources on Jewish-Christian relations from all over the world, making them available in English, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, and Russian.

***To learn more about the ICCJ and its 40 member organizations world-wide visit ICCJ's website on [www.iccj.org](http://www.iccj.org).***

## **THE COUNCIL OF CENTERS ON JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS (CCJR)**

The CCJR, ICCJ's national member organization for the United States, is an association of nearly forty centers and institutes in the USA and Canada devoted to enhancing mutual understanding between Jews and Christians. The Council serves as a network for the sharing of information, research, and resources among its members, most of which are housed at universities. There are also affiliate members from overseas. Representatives from major Christian and Jewish agencies and religious bodies in the United States are also members. Founded in 2001, the CCJR is holding its 15th annual meeting in 2016 concurrently with the ICCJ's annual conference, hosted by the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations of Saint Joseph's University.

### **Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations**

The CCJR publishes an online journal, *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* (<http://escholarship.bc.edu/scjr/>) in collaboration with Boston College's Center for Christian-Jewish Learning and Libraries. The e-journal makes available at no charge blind peer reviewed research articles, conference proceedings, and book reviews.

In the eleven volumes published beginning in 2005, SCJR has published nearly one hundred blind peer reviewed articles, dozens of conference proceedings, and nearly 175 book reviews and review essays. The topics addressed include biblical, dialogical, historical, and theological subjects.

### **Dialogika**

The CCJR maintains an English language supersite for resources and research in Christian-Jewish relations ([www.dialogika.us](http://www.dialogika.us)). The website is operated in partnership with the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations of Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia. Dialogika, "items of dialogue," is an online library that chronicles the evolving conversation and relationship between the Christian and Jewish communities. It provides a comprehensive cyber-archive of official statements, historic documents, educational resources, topics of contemporary concern, and current information.

***To learn more about the CCJR, its 37 member organizations and 6 affiliated members visit CCJR's website on [www.ccjr.us](http://www.ccjr.us).***

## THE INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH-CATHOLIC RELATIONS

Flowing from the Catholic and Jesuit identity of Saint Joseph's University, the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations seeks to increase knowledge and deepen understanding between the Jewish and Catholic communities.

The Institute is committed to academic research and education in Christian-Jewish relations, especially about the theologies that have shaped and continue to shape Catholic and Jewish self-understanding in relation to the other community. It is dedicated to promoting opportunities for Jews and Catholics to be study partners, teaching and learning about themselves and each other by studying and experiencing together texts, rituals, events, and places.

The Institute was organized almost immediately after the Second Vatican Council promulgated its Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*) in 1965. Collaborating with the American Jewish Committee and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, what was then Saint Joseph's College sought to implement the Council's call for Jews and Catholics to engage in "biblical and theological inquiry... and friendly discussions."

For over forty years, led by its director the Rev. Donald G. Clifford, S.J., and with the aid of Charles Kahn, Jr. who initially represented the AJC, the Institute sought to increase knowledge and deepen understanding between Jews and Catholics. Directed today by Dr. Philip A. Cunningham and Dr. Adam Gregerman, the Institute continues to support academic research and to sponsor programs for the university community and the public to explore the religious and ethical issues that affect relations between the two peoples.

The Institute enjoys close ties with many local partners: the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the Consortium of Holocaust Educators of Greater Philadelphia, the Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies of the University of Pennsylvania, the Jewish Christian Studies Program at Gratz College, the Board of Rabbis of Greater Philadelphia, and many synagogues near the University.



## **2016 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE PHILADELPHIA**

The Dynamics of Religious Pluralism in a Changing World:  
The Philadelphia, United States, and International Contexts  
July 10 – 13, 2016

### **P R O G R A M**

#### **SUNDAY, JULY 10, 2016:**

##### **1.00-3.30 pm**

On-site Check-In for Full Participants at the Champion Student Center,  
Saint Joseph's University

##### **4.00-6.00 pm    O P E N I N G    C E R E M O N I E S**

(Chapel of Saint Joseph – Michael J. Smith, S.J. Memorial)

Keynote Address

##### **Rabbi David N. Saperstein**

(United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious  
Freedom)

#### **INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONS IN THE WORLD TODAY**

##### **6.00 pm**

Dinner at the Doyle Banquet Hall South, Champion Student Center

##### **8.00-9.00 pm**

Shuttle Service to the Conference Hotel "Hilton Philadelphia City  
Avenue"

## **MONDAY, JULY 11, 2016:**

### **WILLIAM PENN'S "HOLY EXPERIMENT"**

*"No people can be truly happy, though under the greatest enjoyments of civil liberties, if abridged of the Freedom of their Conscience as to their Religious Profession and Worship."*

Pennsylvania Charter of Liberties, 1701

### **08.00-08.30**

On-Site Check-In for Registered Day Guests at the Campion Student Center, Saint Joseph's University

### **8.30-10.30**

#### **P L E N A R Y   S E S S I O N   A** (Doyle Banquet Hall North)

Moderator: Dr Philip A. Cunningham

### **8.30**

**Meditative Moment** (prepared by Members of the YLC) dedicated to Rev. Armin Ihle of Uruguay with reminiscences by Sonia Kirchheimer

### **9.00**

#### **The Christian Majority in the United States: Tolerance, Intolerance, and Competition**

*Although Christians were the overwhelming religious majority in the United States since colonial days, the experiences of the diverse Christian subgroups have been quite varied over the centuries because of ethnic origins, theological conflicts, and waves of immigration. This plenary session of Philadelphia-based scholars explores this kaleidoscopic story involving Anabaptists and Quakers, Mainline and Evangelical Christianity, African-American Christians, and Roman Catholics*

Speakers: Dr David M. Krueger

Dr Kate Oxx

Dr Terry Rey

Dr David Watt

### **10.00**

#### **Buzz Groups / Question and Answer**

### **10.30-11.00**

Break (Doyle Banquet Hall South)

**11.00-12.30**      **WORKSHOP SESSION A** (see pages 24-25)

Workshop **A1** (Sun Room 1)

**A "City of Brotherly Love:" The Origins and Lasting Influence of the Society of Friends in Philadelphia**

Presenter:      Dr Kate Oxx

Workshop **A2** (Sun Room 2)

**How Christian was Kongo Square? African Religion in Colonial Philadelphia**

Presenter:      Dr Terry Rey

Workshop **A3** (North Lounge)

**American Religious Origins in Mythic Terms**

Presenter:      Dr David Krueger

Workshop **A4** (Presidents' Lounge)

**The History of Fundamentalism in the United States**

Presenter:      Dr David Watt

Workshop **A5** (Doyle Banquet Hall North)

**Accepting Difference and Teaching Acceptance**

Presenters:      Dr Reuven Firestone  
                         Dr Amineh Hoti  
                         Rev. Todd Stavrakos

**12.30-2.00 pm**      Lunch (Main Cafeteria, Campion Student Center)

**2.00-4.30 pm**      **AN AFTERNOON OF DIALOGUE: NEW DOCUMENTS ON CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS**  
(Doyle Banquet Hall North)

Moderator:      Rabbi Dr Ruth Langer

**2.00 pm**      **Authors' Roundtable**

*Speakers representing the authorship of several recent statements on Jewish-Christian relations will introduce the purpose and intended audience(s) of their document and highlight sentences or portions they consider to be the most important and/or the most difficult to compose. In order of publication:*

1. Presbytery of Chicago, Presbyterian Church (USA),  
**"...In Our Time...' A statement on relations between the Presbytery of Chicago and the Jewish community in metropolitan Chicago"**

Speaker: Rev. Joyce Shin

2. French Jewish Community,  
**"Declaration for the Upcoming Jubilee of Brotherhood: A New Jewish View of Jewish-Christian Relations"**

Speaker: Jean François Bensahel

3. Orthodox Rabbis,  
**"To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians"**

Speaker: Rabbi Jehoschua Ahrens

4. Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews,  
**"The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable' (Rom 11:29): A Reflection on Theological Questions Pertaining to Catholic-Jewish Relations on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, No. 4"**

Speaker: Rev. Dr Norbert Hofmann

**2.45 pm Small Group Dialogues**

*Facilitated discussions on document excerpts: The groups will generate questions to be submitted in writing for the ensuing scholarly panel.*

**3.45 pm Comments and Responses by CCJR Members**

Speakers: Dr Adam Gregerman  
Rev. Dr Peter A. Pettit  
Dr Matthew Tapie

**4.15 pm Break (Doyle Banquet Hall South)**

**4.45-6.00 pm    W O R K S H O P   S E S S I O N   B** (see pages 26-27)

Workshop **B1** (Doyle Banquet Hall North)

**A Different Lens: Understanding the Holocaust in a Multireligious World**

Presenters:        Remaz Abdelgader  
                          Dr Mehnaz Afridi  
                          Dr Victoria Barnett  
                          Dr Adam Gregerman  
                          Dr Heather Miller-Rubens

Workshop **B2** (Sun Room 2)

**Voice, Engage, Support and Act: Interfaith Cooperation on Campus**

Presenters:        Elena Dini  
                          Joe Philipson

Workshop **B3** (President's Lounge)

**Religion as Problem and Solution**

Presenters:        Dr Pavol Bargár  
                          Rev. Dr Michael Trainor  
                          Dr Deborah Weissman

Workshop **B4** (Sun Room 1)

**Higher Education in Christian-Jewish Relations**

Presenters:        Rev. Dr Lawrence Frizzell  
                          Dr Frederek Musall

Workshop **B5** (North Lounge)

**The Marrakesh Declaration – Muslims in the US and Christians in the Middle East**

Presenters:        Sheikh Ghassan Manasra  
                          Rev. Dr John Pawlikowski  
                          Rabbi Dr Burton Visotzky

**6.00-7.00 pm**     Dinner (Doyle Banquet Hall South)

**7.00-9.00 pm**    Evening Programs and Meetings (see pages 32-33)

**TUESDAY, JULY 12, 2016:**

**THE NON-ESTABLISHMENT EXPERIMENT**

*"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."*

First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States

**08.00-08.30**

On-Site Check-In for Registered Day Guests at the Campion Student Center, Saint Joseph's University

**8.30-12.30**      **P L E N A R Y   S E S S I O N   B** (Doyle Banquet Hall North)  
Moderator:      Rev. Dr Michael Trainor

**8.30**              **Meditative Moment** (prepared by Rev. Dick Pruiksma)  
dedicated to Dr William Szekely of Australia with  
reminiscences by Rev. Dr Michael Trainor

**9.00**              **The Jewish Experience of the American Experiment**

*An overview of how Jews have fared under the Constitution's "Establishment Clause," which prohibits the government from curtailing the "free exercise" of religious traditions and from preferring one religion over others or none.*

Speaker:              Dr Jonathan D. Sarna

**9.45**              **Comments / Responses**

Speakers:              Dr Mehnaz Afridi  
Dr Volker Haarmann

**10.00**              **Buzz Groups / Question and Answer**

**10.30**              Break (Doyle Banquet Hall South)

**11.00**              **The Muslim Experience of the American Experiment**

*A survey of the Muslim experience of life in the United States under the Constitution's Establishment Clause.*

Speaker:              Dr Mehnaz Afridi

**11.45**                    **Comments / Responses**

Speakers:            Dr Volker Haarmann  
                              Dr Jonathan D. Sarna

**12.00**                    **Buzz Groups / Question and Answer**

**12.30-13.30 pm** Lunch (Main Cafeteria, Campion Student Center)

**13.30-16.30 pm** **FIELD TRIPS TO LOCAL SITES** (see pages 30-31)

**16.30 pm**                **RENDEZVOUS AT THE  
                                  NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER**

Keynote Address

**Jeffrey Rosen, J.D.**

(President and CEO of the National Constitution Center)

**The Meaning and Legacy of the Establishment Clause**

**17.30 pm**                Free Evening (use public transportation to return to  
                                  the "Hilton Philadelphia City Avenue")

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 2016:

### INTERNATIONAL INSIGHTS

#### **08.00-08.30**

On-Site Check-In for Registered Day Guests at the Campion Student Center, Saint Joseph's University

#### **8.30-10.30**

#### **P L E N A R Y   S E S S I O N   C** (Doyle Banquet Hall North)

Moderator: Dr Eva Schulz-Jander

#### **8.30**

**Meditative Moment** (prepared by Rabbi Ehud Bandel) dedicated to Dr Victor Goldbloom of Canada with reminiscences by Rev. Dr John T. Pawlikowski

#### **9.00**

#### **International Perspectives on Religious Pluralism: Challenges, Limits, and Possibilities**

*In dialogue with the previous mornings' plenaries, members of the Executive Board of the ICCJ will discuss how a plurality of religious traditions lives together in their respective national contexts.*

Speakers:

Liliane Apotheker  
Dr Pavol Bargár  
Rabbi Shmuel Sztainhendler  
Rev. Dr Michael Trainor  
Dr Deborah Weissman

#### **10.00**

#### **Buzz Groups / Question and Answer**

#### **10.30-11.00**

Break (Doyle Banquet Hall South)

#### **11.00-12.30**

#### **W O R K S H O P   S E S S I O N   C** (see pages 28-29)

Workshop C1 (Sun Room 1)

#### **What Teachers and Students Bring to Their Understanding of the Holocaust: An International, Interreligious Discussion**

Presenters: Dr Jane Clements  
Josey G. Fisher  
Dr Henri Parens



Workshop C2 (Sun Room 2)

**Day of Judaism / Israel Sunday**

Presenters: Anette Adelman  
Piotr Dudek  
Sarah Egger

Workshop C3 (Presidents' Lounge)

**A Prelude to 2017: Luther and the Jews**

Moderator: Liliane Apotheker  
Presenters: Rev. Dr Peter Pettit  
Rev. Dr Ursula Rudnick

Workshop C4 (Doyle Banquet Hall North)

**Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism: A Distinction without a Difference?**

Presenters: Elizabeth Harris-Sawczenko  
Rev. Dr John Pawlikowski  
Rabbi Dr David Sandmel

Workshop C5 (North Lounge)

**Sharia and Halakha in the United States Today**

Presenters: Dr Mustafa Baig  
Dr Amineh Hoti  
Dr Jonathan D. Sarna

**12.30-2.00 pm** Lunch (Main Cafeteria, Campion Student Center)

**2.00-3.30 pm** **P L E N A R Y O N P A U L** (Doyle Banquet Hall North)

Moderator: Dr Adam Gregerman

**2.00 pm** **The Understanding of Paul's Theology and Christian Anti-Judaism**

*Nearly forty years ago, E.P. Sanders published a book that revolutionized Pauline studies by situating the Apostle to the Gentiles within a more accurate description of the beliefs and practices of Late Second Temple Judaism. Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion rapidly became a classic work. In this special plenary session, Prof. Sanders will offer reflections on how Christian understandings of Paul relates to their attitudes toward Judaism.*

Speaker: Dr E. P. Sanders

**3.00 pm**                    **Comments / Responses**  
Speakers:                Rev. Dick Pruiksma  
                                  Dr Adele Reinhartz

**3.30-4.00 pm**            Break (Doyle Banquet Hall South)

**4.00-5.00 pm**            **CONCLUDING SESSION**  
Moderator:              Dr Philip A. Cunningham

Speakers:                Rev. Dr John Crossin  
                                  Rev. Friedhelm Pieper  
                                  Rabbi David Straus

**7.00 pm**                    **CLOSING FESTIVE DINNER**  
                                  (Hotel "Hilton Philadelphia City Avenue")

## **WORKSHOPS**

### **Workshop Session A – Monday Morning**

**A1** (Campion Student Center, Sun Room 1)

Dr Kate Oxx

#### **A "City of Brotherly Love:" The Origins and Lasting Influence of the Society of Friends in Philadelphia**

The city of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have both long been associated with the Quaker religious ideals of their "founder" William Penn. His "holy experiment" also included a number of other Anabaptist and Pietist communities suffering persecution in their homelands.

In this discussion, we'll look at these distinctive beliefs and their impact on the ideals and institutions of the city and eventually of the United States.

**A2** (Campion Student Center, Sun Room 2)

Dr Terry Rey

#### **How Christian was Kongo Square? African Religion in Colonial Philadelphia**

Little is known about African religious culture in colonial Philadelphia, but the signs thereof are intriguing and invite scholarly inquiry.

Seemingly the epicenter of African religious life in the city was then one of the five public parks designated by William Penn. Today known as Washington Square Park, in the 18th century the plaza near Independence Hall was called Kongo Square. Why? That Africans buried their dead and surely venerated them there, and that they performed drumming ceremonies and chanted numerous African languages, suggests that the Square was indeed the locus of African religion in colonial Philadelphia.

Many slaves from Kongo, furthermore, were already Christian, Catholics in fact, meaning that the Square was likely a cradle of Black Christianity in the Americas. This workshop will explore Kongo Square's history and its implications for understanding the history of religion in Philadelphia.

### **A3 (Campion Student Center, North Lounge)**

Dr David Krueger

#### **American Religious Origins in Mythic Terms**

In the United States, candidates running for political office often claim they want to "make America great again" or "restore the nation's Judeo-Christian origins." What is meant by these statements? References to the nation's origins are often code language to express anxiety about increasing religious and racial diversity. This workshop will explore the history of popular myths in American culture that perpetuate the notion that the U.S. was founded as a white, Christian, and exceptional nation. These mythic perspectives will be related to the vision and reality of Penn's "Holy Experiment" of religious freedom.

### **A4 (Campion Student Center, Presidents' Lounge)**

Dr David Watt

#### **The History of Fundamentalism in the United States**

In the United States a variety of Christian traditions have developed that are often sweepingly and confusingly described as "Evangelical" or "Fundamentalist."

Participants in this workshop will consider the nature of Protestant Fundamentalism, the relationships between Fundamentalists, Pentecostals, Evangelicals, and Liberal Protestants, and the role that the fear of Fundamentalism has played in shaping the cultural history of the United States

### **A5 (Campion Student Center, Doyle Banquet Hall North)**

*[Organized by the ICCJ International Abrahamic Forum]*

Dr Reuven Firestone, Dr Amineh Hoti, Rev. Todd Stavrakos

#### **Accepting Difference and Teaching Acceptance**

With a nine-fold increase in violent extremism all over our shared world, accepting difference and teaching acceptance is crucial to changing mindsets, especially among the young.

Social scientists have argued that this is "The Age of Empathy." Since Abrahamic values promote compassion and tolerance, this session explores how through these ideas we can together help heal our fractured world.

## **Workshop Session B – Monday Afternoon**

**B1** (Campion Student Center, Doyle Banquet Hall North)

Remaz Abdelgader, Dr Mehnaz Afridi, Dr Victoria Barnett, Dr Adam Gregerman, Dr Heather Miller-Rubens

### **A Different Lens: Understanding the Holocaust in a Multireligious World**

Much post-Holocaust interreligious work has focused on repairing the Jewish-Christian relationship and addressing anti-Jewish teachings in Christianity. Yet, the complex history of the Holocaust has implications for contemporary interreligious conversations.

Recent historical research has given us new knowledge of the Holocaust's impact on various faith communities, including Muslim populations throughout Europe and in North Africa, and on the dynamics of religious prejudice and the ways in which nationalism, religion, and ideology intersect.

Moreover, newer generations are bringing their own concerns and questions both to the study of the Holocaust and the interfaith conversations.

Join us for an informal discussion of the insights from different faith and disciplinary perspectives.

**B2** (Campion Student Center, Sun Room 2)

*[Organized by the ICCJ Young Leadership Council]*

Elena Dini, Joe Philipson

### **Voice, Engage, Support and Act: Interfaith Cooperation on Campus**

In this workshop, members of the Young Leadership Council will lead participants in a discussion about interfaith cooperation in institutions of higher learning.

We will draw on the historical role of faith communities and interfaith dialogue in the context of colleges and universities, and evaluate the current situation of campus ministry, chaplaincy, and interfaith work.

The goal of the workshop is to compare and contrast challenges and success stories from interfaith cooperation at colleges and universities around the world, toward concrete takeaways that might build on what participants are already doing at their institutions.

**B3** (Campion Student Center, Presidents' Lounge)

*[Organized by the ICCJ Theology Committee]*

Dr Pavol Bargár, Rev. Dr Michael Trainor, Dr Deborah Weissman

### **Religion as Problem and Solution**

Some social scientists have argued that in modern, secular society, religion would disappear. But in many parts of the world, religion has made a comeback—some would say, "with a vengeance" because throughout the world religions are involved in violent conflicts. Often these conflicts have political, national, ethnic, social and economic aspects, as well. And so all too often the image of religion in the world today is one of extremism, xenophobia and violence. But is this accurate?

**B4** (Campion Student Center, Sun Room 1)

Rev. Dr Lawrence Frizzell, Dr Frederek Musall

### **Higher Education in Christian-Jewish Relations**

The development of Jewish-Christian Studies on the Master's and Doctoral levels prepares the next generation for the important work ahead. Exchange of experiences from North America, European and Israeli perspectives will provide a stimulating context for discussion.

**B5** (Campion Student Center, North Lounge)

*[Organized by the International Abrahamic Forum]*

Sheikh Ghassan Manasra, Rev. Dr John Pawlikowski, Rabbi Dr Burton Visotzky

### **The Marrakesh Declaration – Muslims in the US and Christians in the Middle East**

## **Workshop Session C – Wednesday Morning**

**C1** (Campion Student Center, Sun Room 1)

Dr Jane Clements, Josey G. Fisher, Dr Henri Parens

### **What Teachers and Students Bring to Their Understanding of the Holocaust: An International, Interreligious Discussion**

This workshop considers the role that one's personal background plays in educating and learning about the Shoah.

Depending on individual and familial histories, people will have different questions and concerns: What is it we want to discover? What is the focus of our inquiry? What are the hardest questions that the Shoah raises for us? What role does our religious and national background play? What outcomes might the study produce?

The workshop will enrich and inform our thinking about the field of Holocaust education and related disciplines and concerns.

**C2** (Campion Student Center, Sun Room 2)

Anette Adelman, Piotr Dudek, Sarah Egger

### **Day of Judaism / Israel Sunday**

In several European countries, special days are annually set aside by various churches to celebrate the Jewish tradition and Europe's Jewish heritage. In some Protestant communities this day is called Israel Sunday, while in Catholic dioceses it is named the Day of Judaism. This panel will consider the purposes and nature of these observances with special focus on Austria, Germany and Poland.

**C3** (Campion Student Center, Presidents' Lounge)

Rev. Dr Peter Pettit, Rev. Dr Ursula Rudnick

### **A Prelude to 2017: Luther and the Jews**

This workshop will give a brief introduction to Martin Luther's writings on Jews and Judaism and then analyze how the Lutheran churches in the United States and Germany have dealt with Luther's antisemitism over the past decades.

Discussion will focus on both Jewish and Christian responses to these recent developments, including possible distinctions among responses in the US, in Europe, and elsewhere. We will ask how this has affected the Jewish community and explore the impact of

Luther's negative legacy on Christian communities and on the agenda for Christian theology moving forward.

As the 2017 ICCJ conference will be held in Germany to mark the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, this workshop introduces many of the themes and questions to be considered next year at ICCJ's conference in Bonn.

**C4** (Campion Student Center, Doyle Banquet Hall North)

Elizabeth Harris-Sawczenko, Rev. Dr John Pawlikowski, Rabbi Dr David Sandmel

**Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism: A Distinction without a Difference?**

In today's political and religious discourse the terms "antisemitism" and "anti-zionism" are used by people on all sides. Both of these terms are highly emotive. Some claim that charges of antisemitism are used (or abused) to shut down dialogue or critique of Israel and the policies of the State of Israel, while others hold that one can be anti-zionist without being antisemitic. This presentation will explore the challenges of defining these terms and what is at stake in the debate over their meanings.

**C5** (Campion Student Center, North Lounge)

*[Organized by the ICCJ International Abrahamic Forum]*

Dr Mustafa Baig, Dr Amineh Hoti, Dr Jonathan D. Sarna

**Sharia and Halakha in the United States Today**

The workshop discusses questions such as: What do Jews and Muslims share together in the predominantly Christian society of North America? What particular and common challenges do they face and how can they increase cooperation and respect among them and between them and the majority society?



# FIELD TRIPS TO LOCAL SITES

## **1: National Museum of American Jewish History**

Now housed in a brand new building on Independence Mall, the NMAJH presents exhibits and experiences that preserve, explore, and celebrate the history of Jews in America. Its purpose is to inspire in people of all backgrounds a greater appreciation for the diversity of the American Jewish experience and the freedoms to which Americans aspire.

## **2: Historic Walking Tour of Jewish Philadelphia**

Jews were present in Penn's City from early colonial days, but in the 19th century the Jewish population increased enormously, making the city the "Jewish capital of America." This walking tour will visit some of the most important Jewish synagogues and sites, highlighting the cultural contributions of the city's Jewish citizens over the years.

## **3: Philadelphia – Penn's "Holy Experiment" in Religious Pluralism: A Walking Tour**

From its earliest days, Philadelphia was recognized for the unusual diversity of Christian and other religious traditions. This walking tour will vividly display this pluralism by visiting an amazing array of historical houses of worship, all located within a few city blocks of one another.

## **4: Expressing Religious Freedom and Pluralism in Art**

The cultural heart of the city, the Philadelphia Museum of Art houses a collection of over 250,000 works of art from the Americas, Europe, and Asia and attracts more than a million visitors each year. This guided tour will focus on artwork that illustrates the high value placed on religious freedom in Philadelphia as well as on works pointing toward key issues in the Jewish-Christian dialogue.

## **5: Independence Hall and Liberty Bell**

Visit the building originally known as the Pennsylvania State House in which the Declaration of Independence was voted upon 240 years ago and where the Constitution of the United States was composed. Also see the famous "Liberty Bell" and learn about its origins in colonial days and the extremely powerful symbolism it came to hold during the American Civil War and afterward.

## **6: National Constitution Center**

The Constitution Center brings the United States Constitution to life by hosting interactive exhibits and constitutional conversations and inspires active citizenship by celebrating the American constitutional tradition. As the Museum of "We the People," the Constitution Center features hundreds of interactive exhibits, engaging theatrical performances, and original documents of freedom.

## OTHER EVENTS AND MEETINGS

Monday, 11.07.2016, 12.30 pm:

**Lunch Meeting of the Advisory Board of CCJR's Journal *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations***

Saint Joseph's University, Campion Student Center, Main Cafeteria

Monday, 11.07.2016, 7.00 pm:

**Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations (CCJR): Annual Business Meeting**

Saint Joseph's University, Campion Student Center, Sun Room 1

Monday, 11.07.2016, 7.30 pm:

**Association of Friends and Sponsors of the Martin-Buber-House: Annual General Meeting [AGM]**

Saint Joseph's University, Campion Student Center, Sun Room 2

Thursday, 14.07.2015, 9.00 am:

**International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ): Annual General Meeting [AGM]**

Saint Joseph's University, Campion Student Center, Doyle Banquet Hall North

## GO TO THE MOVIES ON MONDAY EVENING

7.00 pm, Campion Student Center, Forum Theater

**Hiding and Seeking: Faith and Tolerance after the Holocaust**

with introduction and discussion; moderator: Dr Deborah Weissman

Is it possible to heal wounds and bitterness passed down through generations? An Orthodox Jewish father tries to alert his adult sons to the dangers of creating impenetrable barriers between themselves and those outside their faith. He takes them on an emotional journey to Poland to track down the family who risked

their lives to hide their grandfather for more than two years during World War II. Like many children of survivors, the sons feel that Poland is a country that is incurably antisemitic, but it is precisely here that they meet people who personify the highest levels of compassion. *Hiding and Seeking* explores the Holocaust's effect on faith in God as well as faith in our fellow human beings.

7.00 pm, Campion Student Center, Presidents' Lounge

**Urban Trinity: The Story of Catholic Philadelphia**

with introduction and discussion; co-producer: Dr Kate Oxx

*Urban Trinity: The Story of Catholic Philadelphia* is the story of the people, the city, and the church. It is a 75-minute film that tells the history of successive waves of immigrants whose common bond was their Catholicism and who came to the city seeking religious freedom, survival and a better life. Despite its reputation as the place of William Penn's "holy experiment," enabling all forms of religious practice, Philadelphia, like America itself, imposed significant obstacles in the quest of Catholic immigrants for acceptance, opportunity and dignity. The film explores the experiences, challenges, sorrows and triumphs of the area's diverse and unique Catholic communities throughout the past three centuries.

7.00 pm, Campion Student Center, North Lounge

**The Jewish Cardinal**

with introduction and discussion; moderator: Rabbi Dr Ruth Sandberg

*The Jewish Cardinal* tells the amazing true story of Jean-Marie Lustiger, the son of Polish-Jewish immigrants, who maintained his cultural identity as a Jew even after converting to Catholicism at a young age, and later joining the priesthood. Quickly rising within the ranks of the Church, Lustiger was appointed Archbishop of Paris by Pope Jean Paul II - and found a new platform to celebrate his dual identity as a Catholic Jew, earning him both friends and enemies from either group. When Carmelite nuns settle down to build a convent within the cursed walls of Auschwitz, Lustiger finds himself a mediator between the two communities - and may be forced at last to choose his side.

# NEW DOCUMENTS ON JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

Presbytery of Chicago<sup>1</sup> (published November 21, 2015):

## '... In Our time ...' – A statement on relations between the Presbytery of Chicago and the Jewish community in metropolitan Chicago

### I. Preface

During a time of much needed renewal, as deep disagreement and polarizing discourse over the ongoing Israeli–Palestinian conflict has led to fractured relations between Presbyterians within the denomination, and between the denomination and the Jewish community across their local and national expressions, we seek to reconsider our theology and practices. In light of historic circumstances and fresh insights of how the God we know in Jesus Christ is at work among us, we cannot consider our relationship with the Jewish community in the US without taking this reality into account.

Further, it must be clearly stated that the affirmation of our spiritual kinship with the Jewish community is not dependent upon a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, nor does it presume to offer a specific path to its resolution. Rather, it seeks to provide a framework by which Jews and Presbyterians can discuss the conflict in an engaged, civil, and productive way.

This document is primarily addressed to Presbyterians, in the Presbytery of Chicago, for the purpose of framing and guiding individual and corporate discourse, dialogue, relations and action with respect to the Jewish community in metropolitan Chicago. We recognize the pluralistic reality and diversity of the members of the body of the PC (USA), the Presbytery of Chicago, and the individual congregations therein.

As this document addresses the relationship of Presbyterians to the Jewish people in metropolitan Chicago, and as such will be 'overheard' by the Jewish community, we strive to understand the Jewish community as they understand themselves, and to be clear about our commitment to the wellbeing and aspirations of the Jewish people. We recognize the pluralistic reality and diversity of the Jewish people in metropolitan Chicago, in the United States, and around the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Authors: Rev. Dr Jay Moses (Pastor, Hope Presbyterian Church, Wheaton, Convener, Ecumenical and Interreligious Work Group, Presbytery of Chicago), Rev. Dr Robert Cathey (Professor of Theology, McCormick Theological Seminary, Member, Ecumenical and Interreligious Work Group, Presbytery of Chicago), Rev. Nanette Sawyer (Pastor, St. James Presbyterian Church / Grace Commons), Rev. Dirk Ficca (Director, Interreligious Initiative for Middle East Peace, Presbytery of Chicago); with special thanks to Jill Folan and Katie Rains.

Any credible document that addresses the relationship of Presbyterians to the Jewish people must take into account the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and as such will be 'overheard' by the Palestinian community in metropolitan Chicago. For that reason, we also strive to be clear about our commitment to the wellbeing and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

It is the hope of the Ecumenical and Interreligious Work Group that this document might be a resource to other presbyteries and the Presbyterian Church (USA) in their broader relations with the Jewish community in the US.

## II. Preamble

".... In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth.

Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel from the house of bondage...

Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.

Like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home, God is faithful still...."<sup>2</sup>

"The Christian church arose within (the people) Israel.

The followers of Jesus remained at first within the people of Israel.

As persons from all nations joined them, they...separated from the Jewish community.

Yet they continued to accept Israel's story as their own and to consider themselves part of the people of God.

We can never lay exclusive claim to being God's people, as though we had replaced those to whom the covenant, the law, and the promises belong.

We affirm that God has not rejected God's people the Jews.

The Lord does not take back the Lord's promises.

We Christians have often rejected Jews throughout our history with shameful prejudice and cruelty.

God calls us to dialogue and cooperation that do not ignore our real disagreements, yet proceed in mutual respect and love.

We are bound together with them in (a) story of those chosen to serve and proclaim the living God".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *A Brief Statement of Faith*, 1990, 10.3.

<sup>3</sup> *Declaration of Faith*, 1977. The 1976-77 Declaration of Faith of the Presbyterian Church (US) was never approved as a confessional document. It was approved as an educational and liturgical resource, and later accepted by the PC (US).

### III. An Understanding in Our Time

Nearly fifty years ago, the Second Vatican Council issued a groundbreaking declaration on the relation between the Roman Catholic Church and the wider Christian Church, and with other non-Christian religious communities, especially the Jewish community. Titled *Nostra Aetate* (meaning literally 'in our time') it spoke of an emerging reality when "...day by day humankind is being drawn closer together, and the ties between different peoples are becoming stronger..." in light of which "...the Church examines more closely her relationship to non-Christian religions." Given the task of the Church in "...promoting unity and love among humankind, indeed among nations..." it was crucial to consider "...what human beings have in common and what draws them into fellowship."

While addressed in general to all the non-Christian religions, *Nostra Aetate* nevertheless paid special attention to the relations of Christians and Jews, affirming that "...God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers..." and decrying "...hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone."

We believe God calls us "in our time" to declare a self-understanding of the deep and continuing relationship between congregations of the Presbytery of Chicago and the Jewish community in metropolitan Chicago. Considering the tragedy of the Holocaust, the establishment of the state of Israel, and the rediscovery (through historical-critical inquiry) of the Jewish covenantal dimension of our Reformed faith, we propose today that:

- Presbyterian Christians and Jews, each in their own unique way, offer a contemporary witness to the living God of Abraham and Sarah;
- Presbyterians understand themselves better as Christians when they understand the historic and living tradition of the Jewish people;
- Given our shared vision for social justice Presbyterian Christians and Jews have worked together in the past, and in the present continue to work, to strengthen the democratic social contract in the United States consistent with the commandments and values of both traditions;
- Presbyterian Christians need a theological and relational framework in which to work out our understanding of the sacred promise and hope embodied in ancient Israel in relationship to the modern state of Israel. This framework is also crucial to our understanding of the ways in which that sacred promise and hope remains pivotal to the evolving identity of the US Jewish community today, as they understand themselves.

For these reasons, we offer this theological affirmation and vision for relations between Presbyterian Christians and Jews in the United States 'in our time.'

### IV. A Theological Affirmation

Over the past fifty years, the Presbyterian Church (USA) has begun to more fully acknowledge its relationship to the modern Jewish people and

Judaism. This has been reflected in a variety of denominational confessional and study documents that can offer guidance for the denomination:

**The Confession of 1967:**

In this confession, Presbyterians expressed the significant statement that Jesus was indeed not just human, but "a Palestinian Jew" (9.08) living amongst his people, Israel, "whom God chose to be his covenant people to serve God in love and faithfulness (9.18)". Of significance to this confession is the fact that Jesus indeed came "out of Israel." (9.19)

**A Theological Understanding of the Relationship between Christians and Jews (1987):**

This General Assembly approved study document highlighted seven theological affirmations regarding Christianity and its relationship with Judaism:

1. That Christians and Jews worship the same God.
2. That Christian identity is intimately related to the continuing identity of the Jewish people.
3. That Jews and Christians share an elect status to be a light to the nations.
4. That Jews are in continual covenant with God and are therefore partners and to be treated as such.
5. A pledge by Christians to put an end to "the teaching of contempt" toward Jews.
6. An obligation for Christians to discern the existential importance of the land within Judaism and its repercussions for Christian theology.
7. A readiness to act with Jews in promotion of the shared hope of a peaceable kingdom.

**The Study Catechism (1998):**

With significance for the Christian relationship with Jewish tradition and religion, the following developments can be noted in this approved Presbyterian teaching resource:

1. The lifting up of the Ten Commandments as a source of "God's law" for our lives, which should be followed out of gratitude (Question 89-92).
2. The reaffirmation of the covenant relationship between God and (the people) Israel, stating that "God has not rejected Israel, that God still loves Israel, and that God is their hope, "for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11:29). (Question 37)
3. The necessity of a Christian's vigilant stance against "prejudice of people who belong to any vulnerable, different or disfavored social group", specifically lifting up "Jews" as among those who have "suffered terribly from being subjected to the slurs of social prejudice." (Question 115)



### **Christians and Jews: People of God (2014):**

A recent General Assembly approved resource regarding Jewish / Christian relations highlights the following significant developments for Presbyterians:

- A rejection of any theology that attempts to see the Jewish people as supplanted or replaced by Christians as "contrary to the core witness of the New Testament and ... not supported by the mainstream Reformed tradition."
- A refutation of anti-Judaic rhetoric in the New Testament as appropriate for current conversation and dispute with Jews.
- An affirmation of the existential importance of the land of Israel as "particular and concrete" for Jews, but also not sufficient "to resolve this conflict or provide any basis by which to settle modern territorial disputes," affirming that a Christian theology of the land must "base [its] commitments on a justice for all peoples."
- A continual recognition that Jews and Christians are "partners in hope" and should view and treat each other accordingly.

*In our present day*, as Presbyterians, can we see the need to affirm, positively and proactively, our present spiritual kinship with the Jewish people, to rediscover the Jewish dimension of our own tradition, and to engage with the Jewish people in causes of mutual concern?

Jesus sought the well being of the Jewish people, and through this, the renewal of the world. By following the teaching and practice of Jesus, Presbyterians not only 'love our neighbor as ourselves', but fulfill God's call to discipleship which comes through him. In this context, a Reformed theology of Presbyterian relations with the Jewish people...

- *Humbles* Christians as we are reminded that we are not alone in the sacred story of salvation;
- *Reminds* the Church of the witness of God's plan for all people through the existence, integrity, and perseverance of Israel as a unique covenantal people, called to be 'light of the world' and a 'blessings to the nations;'
- *Preserves* the Jewish roots and context of which Jesus was a part;
- *Grounds* Christian theological reflection on 2,000 years of a dynamic and vital Jewish civilization, which continues to this day with the independent and changing lives of a real and living Jewish people;
- *Provokes* the church to repentance from the hubris and historic contempt and actions towards the Jewish people;
- *Sustains* a transformative partnership even when there is irreconcilable disagreement about messianic fulfillment (in Jesus of Nazareth) or a yet unrealized expectation for a messianic age (full realization of God's promises to the people Israel and with it the world);

- Gives witness to the One God, to the commandments, and to the ethics that flow from them;
- Awakens Christians to the evolving nature of our understanding of God's activity by learning the history of the people Israel in its historic and modern embodiments.

## V. Changing Hearts and Lives

### A. Owning our Historical Privilege

As with our Catholic brothers and sisters from fifty years ago, in the last several years conversations with Jews have renewed our concern to guard against anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish motifs and stereotypes. Many Presbyterians have become aware of previous strains of anti-Judaic thought present in the way we ourselves sometimes speak and write, and of the ways in which the classic medieval teaching of contempt of Judaism and the Jewish people continues to live on in contemporary expressions of anti-Semitic rhetoric:

"We acknowledge in repentance the church's long and deep complicity in the proliferation of anti-Jewish attitudes and actions through its 'teaching of contempt' for the Jews. Such teaching we now repudiate, together with the acts and attitudes which it generates."<sup>4</sup>

Historically, this has been more specifically reflected in the Presbyterian tradition...

- In the condemnation found in the Second Helvetic Confession (1566), under "HERESIES" regarding the doctrine of God: "...Therefore we condemn the Jews and Mohammedans, and all those who blaspheme that sacred and adorable Trinity."<sup>5</sup>
- In his controversies with Roman Catholic writers and Michael Servetus, the attacks of Calvin on "...Scripture exegesis which indulges in materialistic or 'carnal' interpretations, a pattern Calvin frequently identifies as typically Jewish."<sup>6</sup>
- In the assessment of Friedrich Schleiermacher, the Prussian Reformed theologian who was one of the founders of Protestant liberal theology, who wrote in 1799 that "Judaism is long since a dead religion, and those who at present still bear its colors are actually sitting and mourning beside the undecaying mummy and weeping over its demise and sad legacy."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Presbyterian Church (USA), *A Theological Understanding of the Relationship Between Christians and Jews*, Study Paper, 1987.

<sup>5</sup> *Book of Confessions*, 5.019.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Sweetland Laver, *Calvin, Jews, and intra-Christian Polemics*, Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1988, 224.

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, trans. by Richard Crouter, New York 1996, 113-14.

- In the admission of Karl Barth, who, though opposed to the Nazis and attentive to a "doctrine of (the people) Israel" in his theology, admitted that "...in personal encounters with living Jews (even Jewish Christians) I have always, so long as I can remember, had to suppress a totally irrational aversion..." which "...could have had a retrogressive effect on my doctrine of Israel."<sup>8</sup>
- In the Barmen Declaration of May 1934 (included in our Book of Confessions), Barth and the other 'Confessing Church' leaders issued the admonition to resist the influence of Nazi ideology promoted by the movement of "German Christians" in the churches. Nevertheless, the Declaration was silent about the mistreatment of Jews and defamation of Judaism, and the racist intentions of Nazi anti-Semitism.

## **B. Our Commitment to Change**

In light of this history, and ongoing spiritual kinship with Jewish people, we must recommit ourselves to more accurate biblical and theological scholarship and Christian education in all our congregations and institutions regarding the treatment of Jews, Judaism, and the history of God's relation with the Jewish people in the past and present. This includes scrutinizing our curriculae in congregations and seminaries to discover where we may be communicating 'false witness' about Jews and Judaism. The more comprehensive our study of this covenantal people, the safer the lives of the Jews, and the practice of their way of life, will be in our local communities.

Unfortunately, the attitudes and beliefs of the church toward the Jewish people and Judaism have often been woefully inadequate—not acknowledging the impact of the Jewish dimension of New Testament witness, nor the significance of the inclusion of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Christian canon. Supersessionist theology (seeking to replace the Jewish covenant with the Christian covenant), and the persistence of anti-Judaic rhetoric in Christian thought (holding contempt for the Jewish character of biblical revelation) are painful examples of these attitudes and beliefs that have often led to tragic consequences.

We must seek unambiguously respectful forms of attribution and dialogue between Jews and Presbyterians. "God calls us to dialogue and cooperation that do not ignore our real disagreements, yet proceed in mutual respect and love. We are bound together with them in a story of those chosen to serve and proclaim the living God."<sup>9</sup>

Changing our hearts and lives – which is the essence of repentance - also requires us to look critically at Christian beliefs and practices regarding evangelism and our Jewish neighbors, friends, and relatives. One of our study documents states frankly:

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<sup>8</sup> Karl Barth, *Letters 1961-1968*, ed. by J. Fangmeier and H. Stoevesandt, trans. and ed. by G. W. Bromily, Grand Rapids, MI, 1981, 262.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *A Declaration of Faith, 1976 / 1977*.

"We must continue to be clear that proselytism by Christians seeking to persuade, even convert, Jews often implies a negative judgment on Jewish faith. Jewish reluctance to accept Christian claims is all the more understandable when it is realized that conversion is often seen by them as a threat to Jewish survival, as many Jews who unite with the church sever their bonds with their people."<sup>10</sup>

Our past practices of evangelizing Jews assumed that witness and testimony occurred only in one direction: from Christians to Jews, as if Jews were godless, lacking covenant, in need of conversion to find relationship with God. But this is contrary to Scripture as the 2014 General Assembly study document argues: "The New Testament makes it clear to Christians that Jews are not empty vessels, without God, who must be filled with Christianity to be restored to divine favor.... (Rom 11:1,11,28,31,33,36)." The document then affirms:

"God remains faithful to the people Israel; God remains faithful to Christians. Jews remain faithful to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Christians remain faithful to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob whom we know in Emmanuel, Jesus Christ. As two peoples who are known and loved by God and who know and love the one God, Christians and Jews are therefore called to be faithful to one another in bonds of love."<sup>11</sup>

Rather than one-way communication, Presbyterians are called with Jews to a relationship characterized by "mutual witness," "mutual disclosure," "mutual affirmation," and "mutual questioning and correction" (from 'Christians and Jews: People of God,' p. 17). In such a relationship, we will no doubt continue to ponder the ongoing mysteries of election, mission, and 'the promise of the land.' And of those three, the matter of the 'land' looms large at this particular moment in time.

## **VI. Forging a Framework on 'the Land'**

For Presbyterians, and many but not all Jews, the answer to the question of Jewish sovereignty is to be found in distinguishing the biblical meaning of the land for the chosen people of God from the national aspirations of the modern Jewish people.

On the one hand, these national aspirations for Jews are grounded in the sacred tradition of Israel. Their attachment to 'the land' is deepened by a history of two thousand years of exile and suffering in lands where the Jewish people had no sovereignty; of a longing for a homeland; of the horror of the Holocaust; of the establishment of the modern state of Israel; and of the ongoing struggle over sovereignty with respect to the Palestinian people who know this same land as their homeland.

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Presbyterian Church (USA), *A Theological Understanding of the Relationship between Christians and Jews*, Study Paper, 1987.

<sup>11</sup> Presbyterian Church (USA), *Christians and Jews: People of God*, Study Paper, 2014, 16.

On the other hand, (to borrow from official Catholic teaching): "The existence of the State of Israel and its political options should be envisaged, not in a perspective which is in itself religious, but in their reference to the common principles of international law."<sup>12</sup> This represents the implications of *Nostra Aetate* that were worked out extensively in Catholic social teachings, employing international law and broadly recognized human rights to critique the practices and policies of the modern Jewish state, instead of using any theological objection to the Jewish return to sovereignty in the ancient land.

In terms of our spiritual kinship to the Jewish community, it is especially important in our analysis and critique of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be vigilant against employing language, rhetoric and lines of argumentation that introduce harmful stereotypes, anti-Jewish motifs, and classic Christian anti-Judaic theology into nevertheless critically necessary discussions.

An example of anti-Judaic theology is the notion that with the coming of Christ, the Jews lost connection to 'the land' and their covenant with God, as expressed in a variety of Christian writings, such as Martin Luther (1483-1546) in his Interpretation of Psalm 2: "Finally they were exterminated and devastated by the Romans over fourteen hundred years ago— so that they might well perceive that God did not regard, nor will regard, their country, city, temple, priesthood, or principality, and view them on account of these as his own peculiar people."

While it is challenging to address the rights and aspirations of both the Jewish and Palestinian peoples, and the steps needed toward a just and peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the conversation and analysis can be engaged frankly and critically without resorting to such language and thought. At the same time, Presbyterians can respectfully communicate that the use of the historical victimization of the Jewish people, in so far as such use seeks to legitimize specific policies and practices regarding the occupation and its impact on the Palestinian people, does not further constructive discourse about the state of Israel.

Critique of the policies and practices of the state of Israel on political grounds, employing frameworks and criteria used broadly by the international community — and which resonate with the underlying principles of Reformed theology<sup>13</sup> — is an effective way for Presbyterians to

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church*, 1985.

<sup>13</sup> Reformed theology sees human collectives, such as a nation state, as an instrument of providence, contributing to human flourishing. At the same time, nation states are fallible, and therefore open to critique and reform. Such a critique can be based, for instance, in the theological claim that all human beings are created in the image of God, and therefore worthy of the respect and recognition accorded them by the central principles found in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Any attempt to sacralize the temporal and fallible nature of the nation state is idolatrous, and ultimately destructive of human well being.

enter into this complex discussion. This is in contrast to the out-of-context use of explicit covenantal warnings embedded in biblical sources and addressed to ancient Israel. In this way, Presbyterians can fully engage questions of justice and peace without resorting to more problematic approaches that slip over into anti-Semitic or anti-Judaic rhetoric or lines of argumentation.

Given this overall framework, Presbyterians can do the following:

- Fully engage in public witness, discourse and action with regards to matters such as self-determination, human rights, reconciliation, justice and peace, related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
- Affirm the aspirations for, and the right to, self-determination by both Israelis and Palestinians;
- Affirm the necessity of human and civil rights afforded to all Arab and other minorities in the state of Israel, and to Jewish and other minorities in a future state of Palestine and other Arab countries;
- Actively work on behalf of Israelis and Palestinians, and a just and peaceful future for both, without compromising our relationship to each people.

## VII. Living Together as Covenant Peoples

Question 52 in The Study Catechism asks, "How should I treat non-Christians and people of other religions?" and then answers this way:

"As much as I can, I should meet friendship with friendship, hostility with kindness, generosity with gratitude, persecution with forbearance, truth with agreement, and error with truth. I should express my faith with humility and devotion as the occasion requires, whether silently or openly, boldly or meekly, by word or by deed. I should avoid compromising the truth on the one hand and being narrow-minded on the other. In short, I should always welcome and accept these others in a way that honors and reflects the Lord's welcome and acceptance of me."<sup>14</sup>

This is an invitation to respect and love that does not require us to ignore our real disagreements, but which does require us to do the hard work of building trust and deepening relationship. Pursuing and fostering relationships in these ways carries us into a deeper experience of our own faith commitments. The spiritual practice of such kindness, generosity, persistence, humility and open-hearted conviction may help us develop a sense of empathy that in no way negates our sense of self. On the contrary, such spiritual disciplines are a means of developing caring and considerate hearts—helping us to more accurately know and more sincerely love our Jewish neighbors.

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<sup>14</sup> *Book of Catechisms: Reference Edition*, Louisville, KY, 2001, 84.

**Together, Presbyterians and Jews can share the most treasured aspects of our religious identity:**

- By inviting, listening to and offering mutually transparent testimonies.
- By regularly discussing issues that are significant to each community.
- By sharing, through conversation or encounter, ritual practices that are especially meaningful.

**Together, Presbyterians and Jews can work for the well being of our world:**

- By coming together to aid yet other religious groups who might face prejudice in their neighborhoods.
- By working together on issues of hunger, violence, poverty, immigration, and other shared concerns for the common good.

**Together, Presbyterians and Jews can create safe havens for religious diversity:**

- By building relationships over time, not in reaction to crises, but in order to live out a commitment to deep hospitality and mutual respect.
- By maintaining these relationships even in (and especially in) times of crisis.
- By listening attentively and representing our Jewish dialogue partners in ways that they feel accurately represent them.

***With the best elements of our respective traditions, the relationship between Christians and Jews remains unique, foundational and enduring.***

Clergy and Scholars of the French Jewish Community<sup>1</sup> (published November 23, 2015):

## **Declaration for the Upcoming Jubilee of Brotherhood: A New Jewish View of Jewish-Christian Relations<sup>2</sup>**

So I will make pure the speech of the peoples,  
that they all may call upon the name of the LORD,  
and serve Him with one heart.  
(Zeph 3:9)

We, Jews of France, signatories of this declaration, express the joy of celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration Nostra Aetate composed at the Second Vatican Council, which opened an era of reconciliation between Jews and Christians. For us, this anniversary marks not only the culmination of a Jubilee of reconciliation. It should also be the beginning of another. We understand this as a sacred calling, as a pivotal moment, as a challenge and a commitment.

### **What have we Jews learned from you Christians during these last 50 years?**

That the Catholic Church, but also Protestant churches and prominent members of the Orthodox and Anglican Churches, decided to go back to the Jewish sources and values enshrined in the heart of the identity of Jesus and the apostles.

In a move whose sincerity has been proven, the Church has made a decisive turning point of theological significance. Now, for her, the Jewish people are not held responsible for the death of Jesus; Christian faith does not cancel or supersede the covenant established between God and the people of Israel; anti-Judaism, which has often been the seedbed of antisemitism, and was once able to feed into doctrinal teaching, is a sin; the Jewish people are no longer considered an outcast people; and the State of Israel is now recognized by the Vatican.

This reversal is not only for us Jews a happy realization. It also shows an unusual ability for self-criticism in the name of the most fundamental religious and ethical values. It sanctifies God's name, forever commands

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<sup>1</sup> Written and signed by Jean-François Bensahel (President of the "Union libérale israélite de France", President of the Copernic Synagogue, Paris) Philippe Haddad (Rabbi of the "Union libérale israélite de France"), Rivon Krygier (Rabbi of the Massorti congregation "Adath Shalom"), Raphy Marciano (Director of "Espace Culturel et Universitaire Juif d'Europe") and Franklin Rausky (Program Director of the "Institut Universitaire d'Études Juives Elie Wiesel"), and presented by the Chief Rabbi of France, Haim Korsia, to Cardinal André Vingt-Trois, the Archbishop of Paris.

<sup>2</sup> English translation of the French original by Liliane Apotheker and Philip A. Cunningham.



respect, and constitutes a precedent of exemplary character for all religions and spiritual beliefs on the planet.

**What can we, the Jews, hope to build with you Christians in the next 50 years?**

What is our duty, now that the highest representatives of Christian institutions have expressed the wish to be replanted, to be regrafted onto the trunk of Israel? To welcome Christianity as the religion of our brothers and sisters in synergy with Judaism.

We, the undersigned, recognize, with the support of historical research, that rabbinic Judaism and Christianity of the [patristic] councils were built in the past upon opposition, in contempt and hatred. The Jews have often paid a high price through persecution. These twenty centuries of denial have made us forget the essential reality: our ways, although irreducibly distinctive, are complementary and convergent. Do we not, in fact, both hold the supreme hope that the history of mankind has the same horizon, that of the universal brotherhood of humanity gathered around the One and Only God? We must work together, more than ever, hand in hand.

We Jews are working on this through the study of the Torah, the practice of mitzvot, that is to say, the divine commandments, by teaching the wisdom that follows from it, and aims at the transformation of hearts and minds. You, Christians are working on this through the reception of the Word that gives you that higher existence, the elevation of the heart and mind. Theological differences should not make us forget that many Christian teachings are in perfect agreement with those of rabbinic tradition.

The Jubilee that begins bids us to work together to build this universal brotherhood and to achieve a common ethic, valid for the whole world. We must learn to get rid of the prejudices that over time became embedded in our respective consciences about what the other believes, thinks, and does in order to better listen to what each religion says of itself and its plan for the respect and prosperity of all humanity. We must now strive to better understand each other, to appreciate, esteem, and love the other for what he or she is and accomplishes.

The brotherhood between Jews and Christians is a first step and an invitation to make dialogue among all religions and spiritualities the cornerstone of a reconciled and pacified humanity. May this live in the heart of our prayers.

Orthodox Rabbinic Statement on Christianity<sup>1</sup> (published December 3, 2015:

## **To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians**

After nearly two millennia of mutual hostility and alienation, we Orthodox Rabbis who lead communities, institutions and seminaries in Israel, the United States and Europe recognize the historic opportunity now before us. We seek to do the will of our Father in Heaven by accepting the hand offered to us by our Christian brothers and sisters. Jews and Christians must work together as partners to address the moral challenges of our era.

1. The Shoah ended 70 years ago. It was the warped climax to centuries of disrespect, oppression and rejection of Jews and the consequent enmity that developed between Jews and Christians. In retrospect it is clear that the failure to break through this contempt and engage in constructive dialogue for the good of humankind weakened resistance to evil forces of anti-Semitism that engulfed the world in murder and genocide.

2. We recognize that since the Second Vatican Council the official teachings of the Catholic Church about Judaism have changed fundamentally and irrevocably. The promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* fifty years ago started the process of reconciliation between our two communities. *Nostra Aetate* and the later official Church documents it inspired unequivocally reject any form of antisemitism, affirm the eternal Covenant between G-d and the Jewish people, reject deicide and stress the unique relationship between Christians and Jews, who were called "our elder brothers" by Pope John Paul II and "our fathers in faith" by Pope Benedict XVI. On this basis, Catholics and other Christian officials started an honest dialogue with Jews that has grown during the last five decades. We appreciate the Church's affirmation of Israel's unique place in sacred history and the ultimate world redemption. Today Jews have experienced sincere love and respect from many Christians that have been expressed in many dialogue initiatives, meetings and conferences around the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Initially signed (in alphabetical order) by Rabbi Jehoshua Ahrens (Germany), Rabbi Marc Angel (United States), Rabbi Isak Asiel (Chief Rabbi of Serbia), Rabbi David Bigman (Israel), Rabbi David Bollag (Switzerland), Rabbi David Brodman (Israel), Rabbi Natan Lopez Cardozo (Israel), Rav Yehudah Gilad (Israel), Rabbi Alon Goshen-Gottstein (Israel), Rabbi Irving Greenberg (United States), Rabbi Marc Raphael Guedj (Switzerland), Rabbi Eugene Korn (Israel), Rabbi Daniel Landes (Israel), Rabbi Steven Langnas (Germany), Rabbi Benjamin Lau (Israel), Rabbi Simon Livson (Chief Rabbi of Finland), Rabbi Asher Lopatin (United States), Rabbi Shlomo Riskin (Israel), Rabbi David Rosen (Israel), Rabbi Naftali Rothenberg (Israel), Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger (Israel), Rabbi Shmuel Sirat (France), Rabbi Daniel Sperber (Israel), Rabbi Jeremiah Wohlberg (United States), Rabbi Alan Yuter (Israel) and originally published by the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation (CJUC).

**3.** As did Maimonides and Yehudah Halevi,<sup>2</sup> we acknowledge that Christianity is neither an accident nor an error, but the willed divine outcome and gift to the nations. In separating Judaism and Christianity, G-d willed a separation between partners with significant theological differences, not a separation between enemies. Rabbi Jacob Emden wrote that

"Jesus brought a double goodness to the world. On the one hand he strengthened the Torah of Moses majestically... and not one of our Sages spoke out more emphatically concerning the immutability of the Torah. On the other hand he removed idols from the nations and obligated them in the seven commandments of Noah so that they would not behave like animals of the field, and instilled them firmly with moral traits.....Christians are congregations that work for the sake of heaven who are destined to endure, whose intent is for the sake of heaven and whose reward will not be denied."<sup>3</sup>

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch taught us that Christians "have accepted the Jewish Bible of the Old Testament as a book of Divine revelation. They profess their belief in the G-d of Heaven and Earth as proclaimed in the Bible and they acknowledge the sovereignty of Divine Providence."<sup>4</sup>

Now that the Catholic Church has acknowledged the eternal Covenant between G-d and Israel, we Jews can acknowledge the ongoing constructive validity of Christianity as our partner in world redemption, without any fear that this will be exploited for missionary purposes. As stated by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel's Bilateral Commission with the Holy See under the leadership of Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen, "We are no longer enemies, but unequivocal partners in articulating the essential moral values for the survival and welfare of humanity".<sup>5</sup> Neither of us can achieve G-d's mission in this world alone.

**4.** Both Jews and Christians have a common covenantal mission to perfect the world under the sovereignty of the Almighty, so that all humanity will call on His name and abominations will be removed from the earth. We understand the hesitation of both sides to affirm this truth and we call on our communities to overcome these fears in order to establish a relationship of trust and respect. Rabbi Hirsch also taught that the Talmud puts Christians "with regard to the duties between man and man on exactly the same level as Jews. They have a claim to the benefit of all the duties not only of justice but also of active human brotherly love." In the past relations between Christians and Jews were often seen through the adversarial relationship of Esau and Jacob, yet Rabbi Naftali Zvi Berliner (Netziv) already understood at the end of the 19th century that Jews and Christians are

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<sup>2</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings 11:4 (uncensored edition); *Kuzari*, section 4:22.

<sup>3</sup> *Seder Olam Rabbah* 35-37; *Sefer ha-Shimush* 15-17.

<sup>4</sup> *Principles of Education*, "Talmudic Judaism and Society," 225-227.

<sup>5</sup> Fourth meeting of the Bilateral Commission of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with Jewry, Grottaferrata, Italy (October 19, 2004).

destined by G-d to be loving partners: "In the future when the children of Esau are moved by pure spirit to recognize the people of Israel and their virtues, then we will also be moved to recognize that Esau is our brother."<sup>6</sup>

**5.** We Jews and Christians have more in common than what divides us: the ethical monotheism of Abraham; the relationship with the One Creator of Heaven and Earth, who loves and cares for all of us; Jewish Sacred Scriptures; a belief in a binding tradition; and the values of life, family, compassionate righteousness, justice, inalienable freedom, universal love and ultimate world peace. Rabbi Moses Rivkis (Be'er Hagoleh) confirms this and wrote that "the Sages made reference only to the idolator of their day who did not believe in the creation of the world, the Exodus, G-d's miraculous deeds and the divinely given law. In contrast, the people among whom we are scattered believe in all these essentials of religion."<sup>7</sup>

**6.** Our partnership in no way minimizes the ongoing differences between the two communities and two religions.

We believe that G-d employs many messengers to reveal His truth, while we affirm the fundamental ethical obligations that all people have before G-d that Judaism has always taught through the universal Noahide covenant.

**7.** In imitating G-d, Jews and Christians must offer models of service, unconditional love and holiness. We are all created in G-d's Holy Image, and Jews and Christians will remain dedicated to the Covenant by playing an active role together in redeeming the world.

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<sup>6</sup> *Commentary on Genesis 33:4.*

<sup>7</sup> *Gloss on Shulhan Arukh, Hoshen Mishpat, Section 425:5.*

Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews<sup>1</sup>  
(published December 10, 2015):

**"The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable" (Rom 11:29): A Reflection on Theological Questions Pertaining to Catholic-Jewish Relations on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* (No. 4)**

**Preface**

Fifty years ago, the declaration "Nostra aetate" of the Second Vatican Council was promulgated. Its fourth article presents the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people in a new theological framework. The following reflections aim at looking back with gratitude on all that has been achieved over the last decades in the Jewish–Catholic relationship, providing at the same time a new stimulus for the future. Stressing once again the unique status of this relationship within the wider ambit of interreligious dialogue, theological questions are further discussed, such as the relevance of revelation, the relationship between the Old and the New Covenant, the relationship between the universality of salvation in Jesus Christ and the affirmation that the covenant of God with Israel has never been revoked, and the Church's mandate to evangelize in relation to Judaism. This document presents Catholic reflections on these questions, placing them in a theological context, in order that their significance may be deepened for members of both faith traditions. The text is not a magisterial document or doctrinal teaching of the Catholic Church, but is a reflection prepared by the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews on current theological questions that have developed since the Second Vatican Council. It is intended to be a starting point for further theological thought with a view to enriching and intensifying the theological dimension of Jewish–Catholic dialogue.

**I. A brief history of the impact of "Nostra aetate" (No.4) over the last 50 years**

1. "Nostra aetate" (No.4) is rightly counted among those documents of the Second Vatican Council which have been able to effect, in a particularly striking manner, a new direction of the Catholic Church since then. This shift in the relations of the Church with the Jewish people and Judaism becomes apparent only when we recall that there were previously great reservations on both sides, in part because the history of Christianity has been seen to be discriminatory against Jews, even including attempts at forced conversion (cf. "Evangelii gaudium", 248). The background of this complex connection consists inter alia in an asymmetrical relationship: as a minority the Jews

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<sup>1</sup> Signed by the Commission's President Cardinal Kurt Koch, the Commission's Vice-President The Most Reverend Brian Farrell, and the Commission's Secretary Reverend Norbert Hofmann, SDB.

were often confronted by and dependent upon a Christian majority. The dark and terrible shadow of the Shoah over Europe during the Nazi period led the Church to reflect anew on her bond with the Jewish people.

**2.** The fundamental esteem for Judaism expressed in "Nostra aetate" (No.4) however has enabled communities that once faced one another with scepticism to become – step by step over the years – reliable partners and even good friends, capable of weathering crises together and negotiating conflicts positively. Therefore, the fourth article of "Nostra aetate" is recognised as the solid foundation for improving the relationship between Catholics and Jews.

**3.** For the practical implementation of "Nostra aetate" (No.4), Blessed Pope Paul VI on 22 October 1974 established the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews which, although organisationally attached to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, is operationally independent and entrusted with the task of accompanying and fostering religious dialogue with Judaism. From a theological perspective it also makes good sense to link this Commission with the Council for Promoting Christian Unity, since the separation between Synagogue and Church may be viewed as the first and most far-reaching breach among the chosen people.

**4.** Within a year of its foundation, the Holy See's Commission published its first official document on 1 December 1974, with the title "Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration Nostra Aetate (No.4)". The crucial and new concern of this document consists in becoming acquainted with Judaism as it defines itself, giving expression to the high esteem in which Christianity holds Judaism and stressing the great significance for the Catholic Church of dialogue with the Jews, as stated in the words of the document: "On the practical level in particular, Christians must therefore strive to acquire a better knowledge of the basic components of the religious tradition of Judaism: they must strive to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience" (Preamble). On the basis of the Church's witness of faith in Jesus Christ, the document reflects upon the specific nature of the Church's dialogue with Judaism. Reference is made in the text to the roots of Christian liturgy in its Jewish matrix, new possibilities are outlined for rapprochement in the spheres of teaching, education and training, and finally suggestions are made for joint social action.

**5.** Eleven years later on 24 June 1985, the Holy See's Commission issued a second document entitled "Notes on the correct way to present the Jews and Judaism in preaching and catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church". This document has a stronger theological-exegetical orientation insofar as it reflects on the relationship of the Old and New Testaments, delineates the Jewish roots of the Christian faith, explicates the manner in which 'the Jews' are represented in the New Testament, points out commonalities in liturgy, above all in the great festivals of the church year, and briefly focuses on the

relationship of Judaism and Christianity in history. With regard to the "land of the forefathers" the document emphasizes: "Christians are invited to understand this religious attachment which finds its roots in Biblical tradition, without however making their own any particular religious interpretation of this relationship. ... The existence of the State of Israel and its political options should be envisaged not in a perspective which is in itself religious, but in their reference to the common principles of international law." The permanence of Israel is however to be perceived as an "historic fact and a sign to be interpreted within God's design" (VI, 1).

6. A third document of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews was presented to the public on 16 March 1998. It deals with the Shoah under the title "We remember. A reflection on the Shoah". This text delivers the harsh but accurate judgement that the balance of the 2000-year relationship between Jews and Christians is regrettably negative. It recalls the attitude of Christians towards the anti-Semitism of the National Socialists and focuses on the duty of Christians to remember the human catastrophe of the Shoah. In a letter at the beginning of this declaration Saint Pope John Paul II expresses his hope that this document will truly "help to heal the wounds of past misunderstandings and injustices. May it enable memory to play its necessary part in the process of shaping a future in which the unspeakable iniquity of the *Shoah* will never again be possible."

7. In the series of documents issued by the Holy See, reference must be made to the text published by the Pontifical Biblical Commission on 24 May 2001, which deals explicitly with Jewish-Catholic dialogue: "The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible". This represents the most significant exegetical and theological document of the Jewish-Catholic dialogue and is a treasure-trove of common issues which have their basis in the Scriptures of Judaism and Christianity. The Sacred Scriptures of the Jewish people are considered a "fundamental component of the Christian Bible", the fundamental themes of the Holy Scripture of the Jewish people and their adoption into the faith in Christ are discussed, and the manner in which Jews are represented in the New Testament is illustrated in detail.

8. Texts and documents, as important as they are, cannot replace personal encounters and face-to-face dialogues. While under Blessed Pope Paul VI the first steps in Jewish-Catholic dialogue were undertaken, Saint Pope John Paul II succeeded in fostering and deepening this dialogue through compelling gestures towards the Jewish people. He was the first pope to visit the former concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau to pray for the victims of the Shoah, and he visited the Roman Synagogue to express his solidarity with the Jewish community. In the context of an historical pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he was also a guest of the state of Israel where he participated in interreligious encounters, paid a visit to both Chief Rabbis and prayed at the Western Wall. Again and again he met with Jewish groups, whether in the Vatican or during his numerous apostolic journeys.

So too Benedict XVI, even before his election to the papacy, engaged in Jewish-Catholic dialogue by offering in a series of lectures important theological reflections on the relationship between the Old and the New Covenant, and the Synagogue and the Church. Following his election and in the footsteps of Saint Pope John Paul II he fostered this dialogue in his own way by reinforcing the same gestures and giving expression to his esteem for Judaism through the power of his words. As Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was greatly committed to fostering Jewish-Catholic dialogue and had many friends among the Jews of Argentina. Now as Pope he continues, at the international level, to intensify dialogue with Judaism through many friendly encounters. One of his first such encounters was in May 2014 in Israel, where he met with the two Chief Rabbis, visited the Western Wall, and prayed for the victims of the Shoah in Yad Vashem.

**9.** Even before the establishment of the Holy See's Commission, there were contacts and links with various Jewish organisations through the then Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. Since Judaism is multi-faceted and not constituted as an organisational unity, the Catholic Church was faced with the challenge of determining with whom to engage, because it was not possible to conduct individual and independent bilateral dialogues with all Jewish groupings and organisations which had declared their readiness to dialogue. To resolve this problem the Jewish organisations took up the suggestion of the Catholic Church to establish a single organisation for this dialogue. The International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) is the official Jewish representative to the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.

**10.** The IJCIC began its work in 1970, and a year later the first joint conference was organized in Paris. The conferences which have been conducted regularly since are the responsibility of the entity known as the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee (ILC), and they shape the collaboration between the IJCIC and the Holy See's Commission. In February 2011, once more in Paris, the ILC was able to look back with gratitude on 40 years of institutional dialogue. Much has developed over the past 40 years; the former confrontation has turned into successful cooperation, the previous potential for conflict has become positive conflict management, and the past co-existence marked by tension has been replaced by resilient and fruitful mutuality. The bonds of friendship forged in the meantime have proved to be stable, so that it has become possible to address even controversial subjects together without the danger of permanent damage being done to the dialogue. This was all the more necessary because over the past decades the dialogue had not always been free of tensions. In general, however, one can observe with appreciation that in Jewish-Catholic dialogue since the new millennium above all, intensive efforts have been made to deal openly and positively with any arising differences of opinion and conflicts, in such a way that mutual relations have become stronger.



**11.** Beside the dialogue with the IJCIC we should also mention the institutional conversation with the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, which is clearly to be seen as a fruit of the encounter of Saint Pope John Paul II with both Chief Rabbis in Jerusalem during his visit to Israel in March 2000. The first meeting was organised in June 2002 in Jerusalem, and since then such meetings have been conducted annually, taking place in Rome and Jerusalem alternately. The two delegations are relatively small so that a very personal and intensive discussion on various subjects is possible, such as on the sanctity of life, the status of the family, the significance of the Sacred Scriptures for life in society, religious freedom, the ethical foundations of human behaviour, the ecological challenge, the relationship of secular and religious authority and the essential qualities of religious leadership in secular society. The fact that the Catholic representatives taking part in the meetings are bishops and priests and the Jewish representatives almost exclusively rabbis permits individual topics to be examined from a religious perspective as well. The dialogue with the Chief Rabbinate of Israel has to that extent enabled more open relations between Orthodox Judaism and the Catholic Church at a global level. After each meeting a joint declaration is published which in each instance has testified to the richness of the common spiritual heritage of Judaism and Christianity and to what valuable treasures are still to be unearthed. In reviewing over more than ten years of dialogue we can gratefully affirm that a strong friendship has resulted which represents a firm foundation for the future.

**12.** The efforts of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews cannot of course be restricted to these two institutional dialogues. The Commission aims in fact at being open to all streams within Judaism and at maintaining contact with all Jewish groupings and organisations that wish to establish links with the Holy See. The Jewish side shows a particular interest in audiences with the Pope, which are in every instance prepared by the Commission. Besides direct contacts with Judaism the Holy See's Commission also strives to provide opportunities within the Catholic Church for dialogue with Judaism and to work together with individual Bishops' Conferences to support them locally in promoting Jewish-Catholic dialogue. The introduction of the 'Day of Judaism' in some European countries is a good example of this.

**13.** Over the past decades both the 'dialogue ad extra' and the 'dialogue ad intra' have led with increasing clarity to the awareness that Christians and Jews are irrevocably inter-dependent, and that the dialogue between the two is not a matter of choice but of duty as far as theology is concerned. Jews and Christians can enrich one another in mutual friendship. Without her Jewish roots the Church would be in danger of losing its soteriological anchoring in salvation history and would slide into an ultimately unhistorical Gnosis. Pope Francis states that "while it is true that certain Christian beliefs are unacceptable to Judaism, and that the Church cannot refrain from proclaiming Jesus as Lord and Messiah, there exists as well a rich complementarity which allows us to read the texts of the Hebrew Scriptures

together and to help one another to mine the riches of God's word. We can also share many ethical convictions and a common concern for justice and the development of peoples" ("Evangelii gaudium", 249).

## **II. The special theological status of Jewish-Catholic dialogue**

**14.** The dialogue with Judaism is for Christians something quite special, since Christianity possesses Jewish roots which determine relations between the two in a unique way (cf. "Evangelii gaudium", 247). In spite of the historical breach and the painful conflicts arising from it, the Church remains conscious of its enduring continuity with Israel. Judaism is not to be considered simply as another religion; the Jews are instead our "elder brothers" (Saint Pope John Paul II), our "fathers in faith" (Benedict XVI). Jesus was a Jew, was at home in the Jewish tradition of his time, and was decisively shaped by this religious milieu (cf. "Ecclesia in Medio Oriente", 20). His first disciples gathered around him had the same heritage and were defined by the same Jewish tradition in their everyday life. In his unique relationship with his heavenly Father, Jesus was intent above all on proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom of God. "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel" (Mk 1:15). Within Judaism there were many very different kinds of ideas regarding how the kingdom of God would be realised, and yet Jesus' central message on the Kingdom of God is in accordance with some Jewish thinking of his day. One cannot understand Jesus' teaching or that of his disciples without situating it within the Jewish horizon in the context of the living tradition of Israel; one would understand his teachings even less so if they were seen in opposition to this tradition. In Jesus not a few Jews of his time saw the coming of a 'new Moses', the promised Christ (Messiah). But his coming nevertheless provoked a drama with consequences still felt today. Fully and completely human, a Jew of his time, descendant of Abraham, son of David, shaped by the whole tradition of Israel, heir of the prophets, Jesus stands in continuity with his people and its history. On the other hand he is, in the light of the Christian faith, himself God – the Son – and he transcends time, history, and every earthly reality. The community of those who believe in him confesses his divinity (cf. Phil 2:6-11). In this sense he is perceived to be in discontinuity with the history that prepared his coming. From the perspective of the Christian faith, he fulfils the mission and expectation of Israel in a perfect way. At the same time, however, he overcomes and transcends them in an eschatological manner. Herein consists the fundamental difference between Judaism and Christianity, that is, how the figure of Jesus is to be evaluated. Jews are able to see Jesus as belonging to their people, a Jewish teacher who felt himself called in a particular way to preach the Kingdom of God. That this Kingdom of God has come with himself as God's representative is beyond the horizon of Jewish expectation. The conflict between Jesus and the Jewish authorities of his time is ultimately not a matter of an individual transgression of the law, but of Jesus' claim to be acting with divine authority. The figure of Jesus thus is and remains for Jews the 'stumbling block', the central and neuralgic point in

Jewish-Catholic dialogue. From a theological perspective, Christians need to refer to the Judaism of Jesus' time and to a degree also the Judaism that developed from it over the ages for their own self-understanding. Given Jesus' Jewish origins, coming to terms with Judaism in one way or another is indispensable for Christians. Yet, the history of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity has also been mutually influenced over time.

15. Dialogue between Jews and Christians then can only be termed 'interreligious dialogue' by analogy, that is, dialogue between two intrinsically separate and different religions. It is not the case that two fundamentally diverse religions confront one another after having developed independently of one another or without mutual influence. The soil that nurtured both Jews and Christians is the Judaism of Jesus' time, which not only brought forth Christianity but also, after the destruction of the temple in the year 70, post-biblical rabbinical Judaism which then had to do without the sacrificial cult and, in its further development, had to depend exclusively on prayer and the interpretation of both written and oral divine revelation. Thus Jews and Christians have the same mother and can be seen, as it were, as two siblings who – as is the normal course of events for siblings – have developed in different directions. The Scriptures of ancient Israel constitute an integral part of the Scriptures of both Judaism and Christianity, understood by both as the word of God, revelation, and salvation history. The first Christians were Jews; as a matter of course they gathered as part of the community in the Synagogue, they observed the dietary laws, the Sabbath and the requirement of circumcision, while at the same time confessing Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah sent by God for the salvation of Israel and the entire human race. With Paul the 'Jewish Jesus movement' definitively opens up other horizons and transcends its purely Jewish origins. Gradually his concept came to prevail, that is, that a non-Jew did not have to become first a Jew in order to confess Christ. In the early years of the Church, therefore, there were the so-called Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians, the *ecclesia ex circumcisione* and the *ecclesia ex gentibus*, one Church originating from Judaism, the other from the Gentiles, who however together constituted the one and only Church of Jesus Christ.

16. The separation of the Church from the Synagogue does not take place abruptly however and, according to some recent insights, may not have been complete until well into the third or fourth centuries. This means that many Jewish Christians of the first period did not perceive any contradiction between living in accordance with some aspects of the Jewish tradition and yet confessing Jesus as the Christ. Only when the number of Gentile Christians represented the majority, and within the Jewish community the polemics regarding the figure of Jesus took on sharper contours, did a definitive separation appear to be no longer avoidable. Over time the siblings Christianity and Judaism increasingly grew apart, becoming hostile and even defaming one another. For Christians, Jews were often represented as damned by God and blind since they were unable to recognise in Jesus the Messiah and bearer of salvation. For Jews, Christians

were often seen as heretics who no longer followed the path originally laid down by God but who went their own way. It is not without reason that in the Acts of the Apostles Christianity is called 'the way' (cf. Acts 9:2; 19:9,23; 24:14,22) in contrast to the Jewish *Halacha* which determined the interpretation of the law for practical conduct. Over time Judaism and Christianity became increasingly alienated from one another, even becoming involved in ruthless conflicts and accusing one another of abandoning the path prescribed by God.

**17.** On the part of many of the Church Fathers the so-called replacement theory or supersessionism steadily gained favour until in the Middle Ages it represented the standard theological foundation of the relationship with Judaism: the promises and commitments of God would no longer apply to Israel because it had not recognised Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God, but had been transferred to the Church of Jesus Christ which was now the true 'new Israel', the new chosen people of God. Arising from the same soil, Judaism and Christianity in the centuries after their separation became involved in a theological antagonism which was only to be defused at the Second Vatican Council. With its Declaration "Nostra aetate" (No.4) the Church unequivocally professes, within a new theological framework, the Jewish roots of Christianity. While affirming salvation through an explicit or even implicit faith in Christ, the Church does not question the continued love of God for the chosen people of Israel. A replacement or supersession theology which sets against one another two separate entities, a Church of the Gentiles and the rejected Synagogue whose place it takes, is deprived of its foundations. From an originally close relationship between Judaism and Christianity a long-term state of tension had developed, which has been gradually transformed after the Second Vatican Council into a constructive dialogue relationship.

**18.** There have often been attempts to identify this replacement theory in the Epistle to the Hebrews. This Epistle, however, is not directed to the Jews but rather to the Christians of Jewish background who have become weary and uncertain. Its purpose is to strengthen their faith and to encourage them to persevere, by pointing to Christ Jesus as the true and ultimate high priest, the mediator of the new covenant. This context is necessary to understand the Epistle's contrast between the first purely earthly covenant and a second better (cf. Heb 8:7) and new covenant (cf. 9:15, 12:24). The first covenant is defined as outdated, in decline and doomed to obsolescence (cf. 8:13), while the second covenant is defined as everlasting (cf. 13:20). To establish the foundations of this contrast the Epistle refers to the promise of a new covenant in the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah 31:31-34 (cf. Heb 8:8-12). This demonstrates that the Epistle to the Hebrews has no intention of proving the promises of the Old Covenant to be false, but on the contrary treats them as valid. The reference to the Old Testament promises is intended to help Christians to be sure of their salvation in Christ. At issue in the Epistle to the Hebrews is not the contrast of the Old and New Covenants as we understand them today, nor a contrast between the

church and Judaism. Rather, the contrast is between the eternal heavenly priesthood of Christ and the transitory earthly priesthood. The fundamental issue in the Epistle to the Hebrews in the new situation is a Christological interpretation of the New Covenant. For exactly this reason, "Nostra aetate" (No.4) did not refer to the Epistle to the Hebrews, but rather to Saint Paul's reflections in his letter to the Romans 9–11.

**19.** For an outside observer, the Conciliar Declaration "Nostra aetate" could give the impression that the text deals with the relations of the Catholic Church with all world religions in a relationship based on parity, but the history of its development and the text itself point in a different direction. Originally Saint Pope John XXIII proposed that the Council should promulgate a *Tractatus de Iudaeis*, but in the end the decision was made to give consideration to all world religions in "Nostra aetate". However, the fourth article of this Conciliar Declaration, which deals with a new theological relationship with Judaism, represents almost the heart of the document, in which a place is also made for the Catholic Church's relationship with other religions. The relationship with Judaism can in that sense be seen as the catalyst for the determination of the relationship with the other world religions.

**20.** Nevertheless, from the theological perspective the dialogue with Judaism has a completely different character and is on a different level in comparison with the other world religions. The faith of the Jews testified to in the Bible, found in the Old Testament, is not for Christians another religion but the foundation of their own faith, although clearly the figure of Jesus is the sole key for the Christian interpretation of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The cornerstone of the Christian faith is Jesus (cf. Acts 4:11; 1 Pt 2:4–8). However, the dialogue with Judaism occupies a unique position for Christians; Christianity is by its roots connected with Judaism as with no other religion. Therefore the Jewish-Christian dialogue can only with reservations be termed 'interreligious dialogue' in the true sense of the expression; one could however speak of a kind of 'intra-religious' or 'intra-familial' dialogue *sui generis*. In his address in the Roman Synagogue on 13 April 1986 Saint Pope John Paul II expressed this situation in these words: "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 our dearly beloved brothers and, in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers."

### **III. Revelation in history as 'Word of God' in Judaism and Christianity**

**21.** We find in the Old Testament God's plan of salvation presented for his people (cf. "Dei verbum", 14). This plan of salvation is expressed in an enlightening way at the beginning of biblical history in the call to Abraham (Gen 12ff). In order to reveal himself and speak to humankind, redeeming it from sin and gathering it together as one people, God began by choosing

the people of Israel through Abraham and setting them apart. To them God revealed himself gradually through his emissaries, his prophets, as the true God, the only God, the living God, the redeeming God. This divine election was constitutive of the people of Israel. Only after the first great intervention of the redeeming God, the liberation from slavery in Egypt (cf. Ex 13:17ff) and the establishment of the covenant at Sinai (Ex 19ff), did the twelve tribes truly become a nation and become conscious of being the people of God, the bearers of his message and his promises, witnesses of his merciful favour in the midst of the nations and also for the nations (cf. Is 26:1-9; 54; 60; 62). In order to instruct his people on how to fulfil their mission and how to pass on the revelation entrusted to them, God gave Israel the law which defines how they are to live (cf. Ex 20; Deut 5), and which distinguishes them from other peoples.

**22.** Like the Church itself even in our own day, Israel bears the treasure of its election in fragile vessels. The relationship of Israel with its Lord is the story of its faithfulness and its unfaithfulness. In order to fulfil his work of salvation despite the smallness and weakness of the instruments he chose, God manifested his mercy and the graciousness of his gifts, as well as his faithfulness to his promises which no human infidelity can nullify (cf. Rom 3:3; 2 Tim 2:13). At every step of his people along the way God set apart at least a 'small number' (cf. Deut 4:27), a 'remnant' (cf. Is 1:9; Zeph 3:12; cf. also Is 6:13; 17:5-6), a handful of the faithful who 'have not bowed the knee to Baal' (cf. 1 Kings 19:18). Through this remnant, God realized his plan of salvation. Constantly the object of his election and love remained the chosen people as through them – as the ultimate goal – the whole of humanity is gathered together and led to him.

**23.** The Church is called the new people of God (cf. "Nostra aetate", No.4) but not in the sense that the people of God of Israel has ceased to exist. The Church "was prepared in a remarkable way throughout the history of the people of Israel and by means of the Old Covenant" ("Lumen gentium", 2). The Church does not replace the people of God of Israel, since as the community founded on Christ it represents in him the fulfilment of the promises made to Israel. This does not mean that Israel, not having achieved such a fulfilment, can no longer be considered to be the people of God. "Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures" ("Nostra aetate", No.4).

**24.** God revealed himself in his Word, so that it may be understood by humanity in actual historical situations. This Word invites all people to respond. If their responses are in accord with the Word of God they stand in right relationship with him. For Jews this Word can be learned through the Torah and the traditions based on it. The Torah is the instruction for a successful life in right relationship with God. Whoever observes the Torah has life in its fullness (cf. Pirke Avot II, 7). By observing the Torah the Jew receives a share in communion with God. In this regard, Pope Francis has

stated: "The Christian confessions find their unity in Christ; Judaism finds its unity in the Torah. Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the Word of God made flesh in the world; for Jews the Word of God is present above all in the Torah. Both faith traditions find their foundation in the One God, the God of the Covenant, who reveals himself through his Word. In seeking a right attitude towards God, Christians turn to Christ as the fount of new life, and Jews to the teaching of the Torah." (Address to members of the International Council of Christians and Jews, 30 June 2015).

**25.** Judaism and the Christian faith as seen in the New Testament are two ways by which God's people can make the Sacred Scriptures of Israel their own. The Scriptures which Christians call the Old Testament is open therefore to both ways. A response to God's word of salvation that accords with one or the other tradition can thus open up access to God, even if it is left up to his counsel of salvation to determine in what way he may intend to save mankind in each instance. That his will for salvation is universally directed is testified by the Scriptures (cf. eg. Gen 12:1-3; Is 2:2-5; 1 Tim 2:4). Therefore there are not two paths to salvation according to the expression "Jews hold to the Torah, Christians hold to Christ". Christian faith proclaims that Christ's work of salvation is universal and involves all mankind. God's word is one single and undivided reality which takes concrete form in each respective historical context.

**26.** In this sense, Christians affirm that Jesus Christ can be considered as 'the living Torah of God'. Torah and Christ are the Word of God, his revelation for us human beings as testimony of his boundless love. For Christians, the pre-existence of Christ as the Word and Son of the Father is a fundamental doctrine, and according to rabbinical tradition the Torah and the name of the Messiah exist already before creation (cf. Genesis Rabbah 1,1). Further, according to Jewish understanding God himself interprets the Torah in the Eschaton, while in Christian understanding everything is recapitulated in Christ in the end (cf. Eph 1:10; Col 1:20). In the gospel of Matthew Christ is seen as it were as the 'new Moses'. Matthew 5:17–19 presents Jesus as the authoritative and authentic interpreter of the Torah (cf. Lk 24:27, 45–47). In the rabbinical literature, however, we find the identification of the Torah with Moses. Against this background, Christ as the 'new Moses' can be connected with the Torah. Torah and Christ are the locus of the presence of God in the world as this presence is experienced in the respective worship communities. The Hebrew *dabar* means word and event at the same time – and thus one may reach the conclusion that the word of the Torah may be open for the Christ event.

#### **IV. The relationship between the Old and New Testament and the Old and New Covenant**

**27.** The covenant that God has offered Israel is irrevocable. "God is not man, that he should lie" (Num 23:19; cf. 2 Tim 2:13). The permanent elective fidelity of God expressed in earlier covenants is never repudiated (cf. Rom

9:4; 11:1–2). The New Covenant does not revoke the earlier covenants, but it brings them to fulfilment. Through the Christ event Christians have understood that all that had gone before was to be interpreted anew. For Christians the New Covenant has acquired a quality of its own, even though the orientation for both consists in a unique relationship with God (cf. for example, the covenant formula in Lev 26:12, "I will be your God and you will be my people"). For Christians, the New Covenant in Christ is the culminating point of the promises of salvation of the Old Covenant, and is to that extent never independent of it. The New Covenant is grounded in and based on the Old, because it is ultimately the God of Israel who concludes the Old Covenant with his people Israel and enables the New Covenant in Jesus Christ. Jesus lives during the period of the Old Covenant, but in his work of salvation in the New Covenant confirms and perfects the dimensions of the Old. The term covenant, therefore, means a relationship with God that takes effect in different ways for Jews and Christians. The New Covenant can never replace the Old but presupposes it and gives it a new dimension of meaning, by reinforcing the personal nature of God as revealed in the Old Covenant and establishing it as openness for all who respond faithfully from all the nations (cf. Zech 8:20–23; Psalm 87).

**28.** Unity and difference between Judaism and Christianity come to the fore in the first instance with the testimonies of divine revelation. With the existence of the Old Testament as an integral part of the one Christian Bible, there is a deeply rooted sense of intrinsic kinship between Judaism and Christianity. The roots of Christianity lie in the Old Testament, and Christianity constantly draws nourishment from these roots. However, Christianity is grounded in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, who is recognised as the Messiah promised to the Jewish people, and as the only begotten Son of God who has communicated himself through the Holy Spirit following his death on the cross and his resurrection. With the existence of the New Testament, the question naturally arose quite soon of how the two testaments are related to one another, whether for example the New Testament writings have not superseded the older writings and nullified them. This position was represented by Marcion, who in the second century held that the New Testament had made the Old Testament book of promises obsolete, destined to fade away in the glow of the new, just as one no longer needs the light of the moon as soon as the sun has risen. This stark antithesis between the Hebrew and the Christian Bible never became an official doctrine of the Christian Church. By excluding Marcion from the Christian community in 144, the Church rejected his concept of a purely "Christian" Bible purged of all Old Testament elements, bore witness to its faith in the one and only God who is the author of both testaments, and thus held fast to the unity of both testaments, the "concordia testamentorum".

**29.** This is of course only one side of the relationship between the two testaments. The common patrimony of the Old Testament not only formed the fundamental basis of a spiritual kinship between Jews and Christians but



also brought with it a basic tension in the relationship of the two faith communities. This is demonstrated by the fact that Christians read the Old Testament in the light of the New, in the conviction expressed by Augustine in the indelible formula: "In the Old Testament the New is concealed and in the New the Old is revealed" (*Quaestiones in Heptateuchum* 2, 73). Pope Gregory the Great also spoke in the same sense when he defined the Old Testament as "the prophecy of the New" and the latter as the "best exposition of the Old" (*Homiliae in Ezechielem* I, VI, 15; cf. "Dei verbum", 16).

**30.** This Christological exegesis can easily give rise to the impression that Christians consider the New Testament not only as the fulfilment of the Old but at the same time as a replacement for it. That this impression cannot be correct is evident already from the fact that Judaism too found itself compelled to adopt a new reading of Scripture after the catastrophe of the destruction of the Second Temple in the year 70. Since the Sadducees who were bound to the temple did not survive this catastrophe, the rabbis, following in the footsteps of the Pharisees, who had already developed their particular mode of reading and interpreting Scripture, now did so without the temple as the centre of Jewish religious devotion.

**31.** As a consequence there were two responses to this situation, or more precisely, two new ways of reading Scripture, namely the Christological exegesis of the Christians and the rabbinical exegesis of that form of Judaism that developed historically. Since each mode involved a new interpretation of Scripture, the crucial new question must be precisely how these two modes are related to each other. But since the Christian Church and post-biblical rabbinical Judaism developed in parallel, but also in opposition and mutual ignorance, this question cannot be answered from the New Testament alone. After centuries of opposing positions it has been the duty of Jewish-Catholic dialogue to bring these two new ways of reading the Biblical writings into dialogue with one another in order to perceive the "rich complementarity" where it exists and "to help one another to mine the riches of God's word" ("*Evangelii gaudium*", 249). The document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission "The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible" in 2001 therefore stated that Christians can and must admit "that the Jewish reading of the Bible is a possible one, in continuity with the Jewish Scriptures from the Second Temple period, a reading analogous to the Christian reading which developed in parallel fashion". It then draws the conclusion: "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" (No.22).

**32.** Since each of the two readings serves the purpose of rightly understanding God's will and word, it becomes evident how important is the awareness that the Christian faith is rooted in the faith of Abraham. That raises the further question of how the Old and the New Covenant stand in relation to one another. For the Christian faith it is axiomatic that

there can only be one single covenant history of God with humanity. The covenant with Abraham, with circumcision as its sign (cf. Gen 17), and the covenant with Moses restricted to Israel regarding obedience to the law (cf. Ex 19:5; 24:7-8) and in particular the observance of the Sabbath (cf. Ex 31:16-17) had been extended in the covenant with Noah, with the rainbow as its sign (cf. "Verbum Domini", 117), to the whole of creation (cf. Gen 9:9 ff). Through the prophets God in turn promises a new and eternal covenant (cf. Is 55:3; 61:8; Jer 31:31-34; Ez 36:22-28). Each of these covenants incorporates the previous covenant and interprets it in a new way. That is also true for the New Covenant which for Christians is the final eternal covenant and therefore the definitive interpretation of what was promised by the prophets of the Old Covenant, or as Paul expresses it, the "Yes" and "Amen" to "all that God has promised" (2 Cor 1:20). The Church as the renewed people of God has been elected by God without conditions. The Church is the definitive and unsurpassable locus of the salvific action of God. This however does not mean that Israel as the people of God has been repudiated or has lost its mission (cf. "Nostra aetate", No.4). The New Covenant for Christians is therefore neither the annulment nor the replacement, but the fulfilment of the promises of the Old Covenant.

**33.** For Jewish-Christian dialogue in the first instance God's covenant with Abraham proves to be constitutive, as he is not only the father of Israel but also the father of the faith of Christians. In this covenant community it should be evident for Christians that the covenant that God concluded with Israel has never been revoked but remains valid on the basis of God's unfailing faithfulness to his people, and consequently the New Covenant which Christians believe in can only be understood as the affirmation and fulfilment of the Old. Christians are therefore also convinced that through the New Covenant the Abrahamic covenant has obtained that universality for all peoples which was originally intended in the call of Abram (cf. Gen 12:1-3). This recourse to the Abrahamic covenant is so essentially constitutive of the Christian faith that the Church without Israel would be in danger of losing its locus in the history of salvation. By the same token, Jews could with regard to the Abrahamic covenant arrive at the insight that Israel without the Church would be in danger of remaining too particularist and of failing to grasp the universality of its experience of God. In this fundamental sense Israel and the Church remain bound to each other according to the covenant and are interdependent.

**34.** That there can only be one history of God's covenant with mankind, and that consequently Israel is God's chosen and beloved people of the covenant which has never been repealed or revoked (cf. Rom 9:4; 11:29), is the conviction behind the Apostle Paul's passionate struggle with the dual fact that while the Old Covenant from God continues to be in force, Israel has not adopted the New Covenant. In order to do justice to both facts Paul coined the expressive image of the root of Israel into which the wild branches of the Gentiles have been grafted (cf. Rom 11:16-21). One could say that Jesus Christ bears in himself the living root of the "green olive tree",

and yet in a deeper meaning that the whole promise has its root in him (cf. Jn 8:58). This image represents for Paul the decisive key to thinking of the relationship between Israel and the Church in the light of faith. With this image Paul gives expression to the duality of the unity and divergence of Israel and the Church. On the one hand the image is to be taken seriously in the sense that the grafted wild branches have not their origin as branches in the plant onto which they are grafted and their new situation represents a new reality and a new dimension of God's work of salvation, so that the Christian Church cannot merely be understood as a branch or a fruit of Israel (cf. Mt 8:10-13). On the other hand, the image is also to be taken seriously in the sense that the Church draws nourishment and strength from the root of Israel, and that the grafted branches would wither or even die if they were cut off from the root of Israel (cf. "Ecclesia in Medio Oriente", 21).

## **V. The universality of salvation in Jesus Christ and God's unrevoked covenant with Israel**

**35.** Since God has never revoked his covenant with his people Israel, there cannot be different paths or approaches to God's salvation. The theory that there may be two different paths to salvation, the Jewish path without Christ and the path with the Christ, whom Christians believe is Jesus of Nazareth, would in fact endanger the foundations of Christian faith. Confessing the universal and therefore also exclusive mediation of salvation through Jesus Christ belongs to the core of Christian faith. So too does the confession of the one God, the God of Israel, who through his revelation in Jesus Christ has become totally manifest as the God of all peoples, insofar as in him the promise has been fulfilled that all peoples will pray to the God of Israel as the one God (cf. Is 56:1-8). The document "Notes on the correct way to present the Jews and Judaism in preaching and catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church" published by the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews in 1985 therefore maintained that the Church and Judaism cannot be represented as "two parallel ways to salvation", but that the Church must "witness to Christ as the Redeemer for all" (No.1, 7). The Christian faith confesses that God wants to lead all people to salvation, that Jesus Christ is the universal mediator of salvation, and that there is no "other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved" (Acts 4:12).

**36.** From the Christian confession that there can be only one path to salvation, however, it does not in any way follow that the Jews are excluded from God's salvation because they do not believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah of Israel and the Son of God. Such a claim would find no support in the soteriological understanding of Saint Paul, who in the Letter to the Romans not only gives expression to his conviction that there can be no breach in the history of salvation, but that salvation comes from the Jews (cf. also Jn 4:22). God entrusted Israel with a unique mission, and He does not bring his mysterious plan of salvation for all peoples (cf. 1 Tim 2:4) to

fulfilment without drawing into it his "first-born son" (Ex 4:22). From this it is self-evident that Paul in the Letter to the Romans definitively negates the question he himself has posed, whether God has repudiated his own people. Just as decisively he asserts: "For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11:29). That the Jews are participants in God's salvation is theologically unquestionable, but how that can be possible without confessing Christ explicitly, is and remains an unfathomable divine mystery. It is therefore no accident that Paul's soteriological reflections in Romans 9-11 on the irrevocable redemption of Israel against the background of the Christ-mystery culminate in a magnificent doxology: "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgments and how unsearchable his ways" (Rom 11:33). Bernard of Clairvaux (De cons. III/1,3) says that for the Jews "a determined point in time has been fixed which cannot be anticipated".

**37.** Another focus for Catholics must continue to be the highly complex theological question of how Christian belief in the universal salvific significance of Jesus Christ can be combined in a coherent way with the equally clear statement of faith in the never-revoked covenant of God with Israel. It is the belief of the Church that Christ is the Saviour for all. There cannot be two ways of salvation, therefore, since Christ is also the Redeemer of the Jews in addition to the Gentiles. Here we confront the mystery of God's work, which is not a matter of missionary efforts to convert Jews, but rather the expectation that the Lord will bring about the hour when we will all be united, "when all peoples will call on God with one voice and 'serve him shoulder to shoulder' " ("Nostra aetate", No.4).

**38.** The Declaration of the Second Vatican Council on Judaism, that is the fourth article of "Nostra aetate", is located within a decidedly theological framework regarding the universality of salvation in Jesus Christ and God's unrevoked covenant with Israel. That does not mean that all theological questions which arise in the relationship of Christianity and Judaism were resolved in the text. These questions were introduced in the Declaration, but require further theological reflection. Of course, there had been earlier magisterial texts which focussed on Judaism, but "Nostra aetate" (No.4) provides the first theological overview of the relationship of the Catholic Church to the Jews.

**39.** Because it was such a theological breakthrough, the Conciliar text is not infrequently over-interpreted, and things are read into it which it does not in fact contain. An important example of over-interpretation would be the following: that the covenant that God made with his people Israel perdures and is never invalidated. Although this statement is true, it cannot be explicitly read into "Nostra aetate" (No.4). This statement was instead first made with full clarity by Saint Pope John Paul II when he said during a meeting with Jewish representatives in Mainz on 17 November 1980 that the Old Covenant had never been revoked by God: "The first dimension of this dialogue, that is, the meeting between the people of God of the Old

Covenant, never revoked by God ... and that of the New Covenant, is at the same time a dialogue within our Church, that is to say, between the first and the second part of her Bible" (No.3). The same conviction is stated also in the Catechism of the Church in 1993: "The Old Covenant has never been revoked" (121).

## **VI. The Church's mandate to evangelize in relation to Judaism**

**40.** It is easy to understand that the so-called 'mission to the Jews' is a very delicate and sensitive matter for Jews because, in their eyes, it involves the very existence of the Jewish people. This question also proves to be awkward for Christians, because for them the universal salvific significance of Jesus Christ and consequently the universal mission of the Church are of fundamental importance. The Church is therefore obliged to view evangelisation to Jews, who believe in the one God, in a different manner from that to people of other religions and world views. In concrete terms this means that the Catholic Church neither conducts nor supports any specific institutional mission work directed towards Jews. While there is a principled rejection of an institutional Jewish mission, Christians are nonetheless called to bear witness to their faith in Jesus Christ also to Jews, although they should do so in a humble and sensitive manner, acknowledging that Jews are bearers of God's Word, and particularly in view of the great tragedy of the Shoah.

**41.** The concept of mission must be presented correctly in dialogue between Jews and Christians. Christian mission has its origin in the sending of Jesus by the Father. He gives his disciples a share in this call in relation to God's people of Israel (cf. Mt 10:6) and then as the risen Lord with regard to all nations (cf. Mt 28:19). Thus the people of God attains a new dimension through Jesus, who calls his Church from both Jews and Gentiles (cf. Eph 2:11-22) on the basis of faith in Christ and by means of baptism, through which there is incorporation into his Body which is the Church ("Lumen gentium", 14).

**42.** Christian mission and witness, in personal life and in proclamation, belong together. The principle that Jesus gives his disciples when he sends them out is to suffer violence rather than to inflict violence. Christians must put their trust in God, who will carry out his universal plan of salvation in ways that only he knows, for they are witnesses to Christ, but they do not themselves have to implement the salvation of humankind. Zeal for the "house of the Lord" and confident trust in the victorious deeds of God belong together. Christian mission means that all Christians, in community with the Church, confess and proclaim the historical realisation of God's universal will for salvation in Christ Jesus (cf. "Ad gentes", 7). They experience his sacramental presence in the liturgy and make it tangible in their service to others, especially those in need.

**43.** It is and remains a qualitative definition of the Church of the New Covenant that it consists of Jews and Gentiles, even if the quantitative

proportions of Jewish and Gentile Christians may initially give a different impression. Just as after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ there were not two unrelated covenants, so too the people of the covenant of Israel are not disconnected from 'the people of God drawn from the Gentiles'. Rather, the enduring role of the covenant people of Israel in God's plan of salvation is to relate dynamically to the 'people of God of Jews and Gentiles, united in Christ', he whom the Church confesses as the universal mediator of creation and salvation. In the context of God's universal will of salvation, all people who have not yet received the gospel are aligned with the people of God of the New Covenant. "In the first place there is the people to whom the covenants and promises were given and from whom Christ was born according to the flesh (cf. Rom 9:4-5). On account of their fathers this people remains most dear to God, for he does not repent of the gifts he makes nor of the calls he issues (cf. Rom 11:28-29)" ("Lumen gentium", 16).

## **VII. The goals of dialogue with Judaism**

**44.** The first goal of the dialogue is to add depth to the reciprocal knowledge of Jews and Christians. One can only learn to love what one has gradually come to know, and one can only know truly and profoundly what one loves. This profound knowledge is accompanied by a mutual enrichment whereby the dialogue partners become the recipients of gifts. The Conciliar declaration "Nostra aetate" (No.4) speaks of the rich spiritual patrimony that should be further discovered step by step through biblical and theological studies and through dialogue. To that extent, from the Christian perspective, an important goal is the mining of the spiritual treasures concealed in Judaism for Christians. In this regard one must mention above all the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures. In the foreword by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger to the 2001 document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission "The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible", the respect of Christians for the Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament is stressed. It highlights that "Christians can learn a great deal from a Jewish exegesis practised for more than 2000 years; in return Christians may hope that Jews can profit from Christian exegetical research." In the field of exegesis many Jewish and Christian scholars now work together and find their collaboration mutually fruitful precisely because they belong to different religious traditions.

**45.** This reciprocal acquiring of knowledge must not be limited to specialists alone. Therefore it is important that Catholic educational institutions, particularly in the training of priests, integrate into their curricula both "Nostra aetate" and the subsequent documents of the Holy See regarding the implementation of the Conciliar declaration. The Church is also grateful for the analogous efforts within the Jewish community. The fundamental changes in relations between Christians and Jews which were initiated by "Nostra aetate" (No. 4) must also be made known to the coming generations and be received and disseminated by them.

**46.** One important goal of Jewish-Christian dialogue certainly consists in joint engagement throughout the world for justice, peace, conservation of creation, and reconciliation. In the past, it may have been that the different religions – against the background of a narrowly understood claim to truth and a corresponding intolerance – contributed to the incitement of conflict and confrontation. But today religions should not be part of the problem, but part of the solution. Only when religions engage in a successful dialogue with one another, and in that way contribute towards world peace, can this be realised also on the social and political levels. Religious freedom guaranteed by civil authority is the prerequisite for such dialogue and peace. In this regard, the litmus-test is how religious minorities are treated, and which rights of theirs are guaranteed. In Jewish-Christian dialogue the situation of Christian communities in the state of Israel is of great relevance, since there – as nowhere else in the world – a Christian minority faces a Jewish majority. Peace in the Holy Land – lacking and constantly prayed for – plays a major role in dialogue between Jews and Christians.

**47.** Another important goal of Jewish-Catholic dialogue consists in jointly combatting all manifestations of racial discrimination against Jews and all forms of anti-Semitism, which have certainly not yet been eradicated and re-emerge in different ways in various contexts. History teaches us where even the slightest perceptible forms of anti-Semitism can lead: the human tragedy of the Shoah in which two-thirds of European Jewry were annihilated. Both faith traditions are called to maintain together an unceasing vigilance and sensitivity in the social sphere as well. Because of the strong bond of friendship between Jews and Catholics, the Catholic Church feels particularly obliged to do all that is possible with our Jewish friends to repel anti-Semitic tendencies. Pope Francis has repeatedly stressed that a Christian can never be an anti-Semite, especially because of the Jewish roots of Christianity.

**48.** Justice and peace, however, should not simply be abstractions within dialogue, but should also be evidenced in tangible ways. The social-charitable sphere provides a rich field of activity, since both Jewish and Christian ethics include the imperative to support the poor, disadvantaged and sick. Thus, for example, the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews and the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) worked together in 2004 in Argentina during the financial crisis in that country to organise joint soup kitchens for the poor and homeless, and to enable impoverished children to attend school by providing meals for them. Most Christian churches have large charitable organisations, which likewise exist within Judaism. These would be able to work together to alleviate human need. Judaism teaches that the commandment "to walk in His ways" (Deut 11:22) requires the imitation of the Divine Attributes (*Imitatio Dei*) through care for the vulnerable, the poor and the suffering (Babylonian Talmud, *Sotah* 14a). This principle accords with Jesus' instruction to support those in need (cf. eg. Mt 25:35–46). Jews

and Christians cannot simply accept poverty and human suffering; rather they must strive to overcome these problems.

**49.** When Jews and Christians make a joint contribution through concrete humanitarian aid for justice and peace in the world, they bear witness to the loving care of God. No longer in confrontational opposition but cooperating side by side, Jews and Christians should seek to strive for a better world. Saint Pope John Paul II called for such cooperation in his address to the Central Council of German Jewry and to the Conference of Rabbis in Mainz on 17 November 1980: "Jews and Christians, as children of Abraham, are called to be a blessing for the world ... , by committing themselves together for peace and justice among all men and peoples, with the fullness and depth that God himself intended us to have, and with the readiness for sacrifices that this goal may demand".



## **SPEAKERS AND PRESENTERS**

### **Abdelgader, Remaz**

USA, Remaz Abdelgader, School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University

### **Adelmann, Anette**

Germany, Anette Adelmann, General Secretary of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ)

### **Afridi, Mehnaz**

USA, Dr Mehnaz Afridi, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Director of Holocaust, Genocide, and Interfaith Education Center at Manhattan College in New York City

### **Ahrens, Jehoschua**

Germany, Rabbi Jehoschua Ahrens, former communal rabbi in Bulgaria, Switzerland and Germany, Director for Central Europe of the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation (CJCUC), Efrat / Israel

### **Apotheker, Liliane**

France, Liliane Apotheker, First Vice-President of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ)

### **Baig, Mustafa**

UK, Dr Mustafa Baig, Cardiff University, Co-Chair of the International Abrahamic Forum (IAF)

### **Bargár, Pavol**

Czech Republic, Rev. Dr Pavol Bargár, post- doctoral researcher at the Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague, Board member of the CCJ in the Czech Republic, Executive Board member of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ)

### **Barnett, Victoria**

USA, Dr Victoria Barnett, Director of the Programs on Ethics, Religion, and the Holocaust at the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

### **Bensahel, Jean-François**

France, Jean-François Bensahel, President of the Union libérale israélite de France, President of the Copernic Synagogue, Paris

**Clements, Jane**

UK, Dr Jane Clements, Director of the Council of Christians and Jews of the United Kingdom, member of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Anglican Commission to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel

**Crossin, John**

USA, Father Dr John Crossin, priest of the Oblates of St. Francis De Sales, executive director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, past president of the North American Academy of Ecumenists and the Thomas More Society of Washington

**Cunningham, Philip A.**

USA, Dr Philip A. Cunningham, Professor of Theology and Director of the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations of Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Secretary-Treasurer of the Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations (CCJR), President of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ)

**Dini, Elena**

Italy, Elena Dini, graduated in Near and Middle Eastern Studies, Interfaith Dialogue, and Interreligious Studies, student of Catholic Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome

**Dudek, Piotr**

Poland, Piotr Dudek, Master in Jewish-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University, Member of Board of Advisors: The Center of Global Responsibility

**Egger, Sarah**

Austria, Sarah Egger, CEO of the Austrian Coordinating Committee for Christian-Jewish Cooperation

**Firestone, Reuven**

USA, Rabbi Dr Reuven Firestone, Regenstein Professor in Medieval Judaism and Islam at the Hebrew Union College, Senior Fellow of the Center for Religion & Civic Culture, University of Southern California

**Fisher, Josey G.**

USA, Josey G. Fisher, Director of the Holocaust Oral History Archive and Instructor in Holocaust Studies at Gratz College, Philadelphia

**Frizzell, Lawrence**

USA, Rev. Dr Lawrence E. Frizzell, Associate Professor in the College of Arts and Sciences, Director of the M.A. Program in Jewish-Christian Studies, and Director of the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ

**Gregerman, Adam**

USA, Dr Adam Gregerman, Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies and Co-Director of the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations, Saint Joseph's University, Philadelphia, PA

**Haarmann, Volker**

Germany, Rev. Dr Volker Haarmann, Pastor for Jewish-Christian relations, Protestant Church of the Rhineland, Duesseldorf

**Harris-Sawczenko, Elizabeth**

UK, Elizabeth Harris-Sawczenko, Deputy Director of the Council of Christians and Jews, former Development Director of the New Israel Fund, currently trustee of the Abraham Fund Initiatives and member of the Muslim-Jewish Women Leaders Initiative in the UK

**Hofmann, Norbert**

Vatican City, Rev. Dr Norbert Hofmann SDB, Secretary to the Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews

**Hoti, Amineh**

Pakistan, Dr Amineh A. Hoti, Executive Director of Markaz-e-Ilm, the Centre for Dialogue & Action (CD&A), founder of the Society for Dialogue and Action at Lucy Cavendish College, distinguished Fellow of the Institute of Strategic Studies, Pakistan

**Krueger, David M.**

USA, Dr David M. Krueger, independent scholar of American religion, Philadelphia history tour guide, United Methodist deacon

**Langer, Ruth**

USA, Rabbi Dr Ruth Langer, Professor of Jewish Studies, Associate Director of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College, Chair of the Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations (CCJR)

**Manasra, Ghassan**

USA, Shaikh Ghassan Manasra, Sufi shaikh, originally from Israel, now Florida, USA, International Director of Abrahamic Reunion, former Co-Chair of the ICCJ International Abrahamic Forum

**Miller-Rubens, Heather**

USA, Dr Heather Miller-Rubens, Executive Director of the Institute of Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies, Baltimore, Maryland

**Musall, Frederek**

Germany, Dr Frederek Musall, Professor for Jewish Philosophy and Intellectual History at the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien in Heidelberg, working for the Central Council of Jews in Germany and the Central Board of Jewish Welfare in Germany (ZWSt) in the field of adult education and interreligious dialogue, member of the steering committee of ICCJ's International Abrahamic Forum (IAF)

**Oxx, Kate**

USA, Dr Kate Oxx, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Saint Joseph's University, Philadelphia, PA

**Parens, Henri**

USA, Dr Henri Parens, Professor of Psychiatry at the Thomas Jefferson University, training and supervising analyst at the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia

**Pawlikowski, John**

USA, Rev. Dr John T. Pawlikowski, Professor of Social Ethics and Director of the Catholic-Jewish Studies Program, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Illinois

**Pettit, Peter**

USA, Rev. Dr Peter A. Pettit, Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Institute for Jewish-Christian Understanding at Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA

**Philipson, Joe**

USA, Joe Philipson graduated from Tufts University in Boston, Massachusetts, in 2015 with a degree in religion and political science

**Pieper, Friedhelm**

Germany, Rev. Friedhelm Pieper, Program Manager for Interreligious Dialogue with focus on Judaism and Middle East at the Centre for Ecumenical Work of Protestant Churches in Frankfurt am Main, Protestant President of the German Council of Christians and Jews

**Pruiksma, Dick**

Netherlands, Rev. Dick Pruiksma, former ICCJ General Secretary, member of the Council for Jewish-Christian Relations of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, coordinator of the Council's "Paul-within-Judaism" project

**Reinhartz, Adele**

Canada, Dr Adele Reinhartz, Professor in the Department of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa, Ontario and Corcoran Visiting Chair in the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College

**Rey, Terry**

USA, Dr Terry Rey, Associate Professor of Religion at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

**Rosen, Jeffrey**

USA, Jeffrey Rosen, President and CEO of the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, Professor of Law at the George Washington University Law School, Washington, D.C.

**Rudnick, Ursula**

Germany, Dr Ursula Rudnick, Professor at the Leibniz Universität Hannover, consultant for Jewish-Christian relations of the Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche Hannovers

**Sanders, E. P.**

USA, Dr Ed Parish Sanders, Emeritus Arts and Sciences Professor of Religion at Duke University, Durham, N.C. and Emeritus Professor of Religious Studies at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

**Sandmel, David**

USA, Rabbi Dr David Fox Sandmel, Director of Interfaith Affairs at the Anti-Defamation League (ADL)

**Saperstein, David N.**

USA, Rabbi David N. Saperstein, United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom since January 2015, former Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC)

**Sarna, Jonathan**

USA, Dr Jonathan D. Sarna, University Professor and Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University, Waltham, MA and the Chief Historian of the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia

**Schulz-Jander, Eva**

Germany, Dr Eva Schulz-Jander, from 1995 until 2001 member of the Executive Board of ICCJ's German member organization Deutscher Koordinierungsrat (DKR) and from 2001 until 2016 its catholic president

**Shin, Joyce**

USA, Rev. Joyce Shin, pastor of Swarthmore Presbyterian Church, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

**Stavrakos, Todd**

USA, Rev. Todd Stavrakos, pastor of Gladwyne Presbyterian Church, Lower Merion, member of Interfaith Partners for Peace, Board member of the Institute of Jewish-Catholic Relations at Saint Joseph's University, member of the clergy council of the Hand in Hand Schools in Israel

**Straus, David**

USA, Rabbi David Straus, Senior Rabbi of Main Line Reform Temple in Wynnewood, PA, a past president of the VAAD: The Philadelphia Board of Rabbis, and served as chair of the Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Community Relations Council from 2010-2014, a co-convenor of the Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia, chair of the National Council of Synagogues

**Szteinhendler, Shmuel**

Chile, Rabbi Shmuel Szteinhendler, rabbi of the congregation Beit Emunah, Chair of the Chilean Council of Christians and Jews, member of the Executive Board of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ)

**Tapie, Matthew**

USA, Dr Matthew Tapie, Assistant Professor of Theology and Director of the Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies, Saint Leo University, Saint Leo, FL

**Trainor, Michael**

Australia, Rev. Dr Michael Trainor, Senior Lecturer at the School of Theology and Philosophy, Australian Catholic University, Adelaide

**Visotzky, Burton L.**

USA, Rabbi Dr Burton L. Visotzky, Appleman Professor of Midrash and Interreligious Studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, Director of the Milstein Center for Interreligious Dialogue

**Watt, David**

USA, Dr David Harrington Watt, Professor of History at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

**Weissman, Deborah**

Israel, Dr Deborah Weissman, Immediate Past President of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ)

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**Heather Miller-Rubens** (Board of Directors, CCJR)

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Marissa Tremoglie	SJU Student



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