



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE  
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

*Preserving American Jewish History*

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 13, Folder 20, Catholic-Jewish dialogue, 1973.

Catholic - Jewish Dialogue  
Claretian Center  
September 30, 1973

Rabbi Samson H. Levey  
Hebrew Union College

I am honored with the privilege of making this presentation on the subject of Midrash, together with Father Philip Van Linden.

The two of us met and discussed our respective projections for this meeting. At Father Van Linden's suggestion, I am pleased to provide a brief description of Midrashic method, as well as a definition of the term.

The Hebrew word Midrash is a noun derived from the verb Darash, the basic meaning of which is to seek, to inquire, to beat a path. Derivatively it also has the meaning of to ask, to study, to investigate, to expound, to expostulate, and to resort to Scripture, interpret.

Midrash as we understand it, embodies any or all of these ideas, singly or in combination. It is at one and the same time a study of the text of Holy Writ to try to understand what it says, and an interpretation of the text to determine what may be adduced from it.

Midrash is a discourse on a Biblical passage, designed to penetrate to the core of its meaning, and emerge with new insight and fresh application. It can be Halakhic, with a legal frame of reference; it can be Aggadic, and deal with a variety of themes, non-legal; it can be strictly exegetical, simply explaining the text; or it can be homiletical, sermonic in nature. All four types, and any number of thoughts, may issue from the same text.

"The School of Rabbi Ishmael taught: Quoting Jer. 23:29, And like a hammer that shatters the rock into splinters; just as the hammer produces many sparks, so one Scriptural verse may convey many meanings." (San. 34a)

In terms of literary analysis, Midrash seems to ask these questions: (1) What does the verse mean? (2) What does the verse mean to me and to my generation? (3) What does the verse mean to the ages, as a universal truth?

There are some basic assumptions upon which Midrash rests, as does all of Rabbinic literature:

1. Scripture is the divinely revealed word of God.
2. While Moses is the greatest of the Prophets, and hence

the Pentateuch is the most supreme divine authority, the other books of canon are also sacred, since they too, are divinely inspired.

3. There is a central unity to all the Hebrew Scripture so that one passage may elucidate the other.
4. There is a Torah Shebal Peh, an oral tradition which provides the authoritative ground for the authenticity of a given Rabbi's Midrashic interpretation.

The earliest beginnings of Midrash is somewhat in doubt. Since Ezra the Sofer canonized the Pentateuch (444 BCE), the Rabbinic sources attribute many initiatives to him, including the Targum (Meg. 3a) and the Masoretic reading. We may assume that the Rabbinic tradition credits his successors, the Soferim, with the introduction of the Midrash form of Scriptural study. Indeed, this was their vocation. Hence, it might be safe to assert that some of the elements of Midrash, and some of its substance was already integral to the Soferim and the Pharisees who followed them, as early as the second pre-Christian century. This would apply, even when a given Midrash is attributed to a Sage who lived in the Tannaitic or Amoraic period. It would equally apply, even though we may date a given Midrash compilation to a certain century or period in Jewish history. The date merely represents scholarly assessment of when the book was edited or when it took the form in which we presently know it.

There are a number of Midrashic collections, I'll mention only the more prominent ones:

1. The Tannaitic Midrashim on a portion of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy
2. The Midrash Rabbah on the five books and the five Megillot
3. The Pesikta, special Sabbaths and festivals
4. Midrash Tanhuma on the Pentateuch
5. Yalkut Shimeoni, on the entire Scriptures
6. Minor Midrashim

The most popular method employed by the exegetical and homiletical Midrashim is to use a proem, that is to introduce a passage from another part of Scripture, which at first blush seems extraneous and irrelevant, which the author skillfully relates to the text in question.

Another method is to proceed to expound on the basis of identity or analogy of language, the same word being used in different contexts leading to a congruity of conclusions.

A third method is congruity of ideas, based on a given word in the text.

I shall proceed to demonstrate all three, utilizing Midrashic material dealing with Chapter 22 of Genesis, suggested to me by some of my colleagues since the Akedah was read in the Synagogue for Rosh Hashanah.

## MIDRASHE AKEDAH I.

(from Midrash Tanhuma Hakadum Vehayashan,  
Vayera No. 40. Cited in Yalkut to Psalms  
No. 860)

"And it came to pass after these things, that God tested Abraham" (Gen. 22:1). Another interpretation (anonymous): This is what Scripture says (Ps. 89:35): "I will not violate My covenant or alter that which came forth from My mouth." Said Rabbi Aha (c. 225 CE): "I will not violate My covenant" which I made with Abraham, saying to him (Gen. 21:12), "Verily, your seed shall be established through Isaac." "And I will not alter that which came forth from My mouth," that I said to him, "Please take your son, your only son, Issac, and go to the land of Moriah."

This matter can be compared to a king who says to his friend, "I desire to see a small child on my table." Immediately, his friend went and brought his son and stood him up on the table before the king, proceeding to bring a sword to slay him. At once, the king cried out and said to him, "What are you doing?" The man replied: "But didn't you say to me, I desire to see a small child on my table?" Said the king: "What I referred to was a living child, not a dead one!" In a similar vein, God said to Abraham, "Please take your son, your only son, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah." (Gen. 22:2)

Thereupon, (Gen. 22:9,10) "Abraham built an altar there ... and Abraham put forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son." The angel cried out to him (v. 12), "Do not put forth your hand against the boy." Said Abraham to God, "But didn't you say to me, Please take your son, and place him on the altar?" Said God to him, "But I did not tell you to slay him!" Hence, "I will not violate My covenant, nor alter that which comes forth from MY mouth." This is what Scripture states.

Correspondingly, our Rabbis taught: (Quoting Jer. 19:5) "And they built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command, and which I had not spoken, and which did not come into my mind." "I did not command" Jephthah to sacrifice his daughter (Judges, Chap. 11). "I did not speak" to the king of Moab to sacrifice his son (II Kings 3:27). (Reference to Mesha king of Moab, who offered up his son on the wall when he was defeated). "And it did not come into My mind" to say to Abraham that he should slay his son. Even though I said to him, "Please take your son, your only son, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah." I had no intention for him to slay his son, therefore Scripture says, "I will not violate My covenant."

## MIDRASHE AKEDAH II

(from Genesis Rabbah 56:2; congruity of language)

"Then Abraham said to his young men, Stay here with the ass while I and the boy will go over there, and we will worship (literally, bow down) and come back to you." Gen. 22:5. (from Shahah, to be lowly, humble)

God thus informed Abraham that he (Isaac) would return safely from Mt. Moriah.

Said Rabbi Yitzchok (c. 175 CE): Everything good happens by virtue of Hishtahavayah, bowing in worship. Abraham (and Isaac) did not return safely from Mt. Moriah except by virtue of bowing in worship, as it says, We will bow in worship and come back to you. Israel was redeemed (from Egypt) only by virtue of bowing in worship, as it is said (Ex. 4:31) "And the people believed and bowed their head in worship." The Torah was given only through the merit of bowing in worship, as it is said (Ex. 24:1), "Bow down in worship from afar." Hannah was remembered only by virtue of bowing in worship, as it is said (I Samuel 1:19), "And they bowed in worship before the Lord." The exiles will be gathered in, only by the merit of bowing in worship, as it is said (Is. 27:13), "And it shall come to pass on that day, that a great Shofar shall be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria, and they who were driven out to the land of Egypt, will come and bow down in worship to the Lord on the holy mountain in Jerusalem." The Temple was built only because of the merit of bowing in worship, as it is said (Ps. 99:9), "Extol the Lord our God and bow in worship at His holy mountain." The resurrection of the dead will take place only through the merit of bowing in worship, as it is said (Ps. 95:6), "O come, let us bow in worship, let us bow down and kneel before the Lord our Maker."

## MIDRASHE AKEDAH III.

(from Pirke R. Eliezer 31; congruity of ideas, suggested by text)

"And Abraham arose early in the morning and saddled his ass" (Gen. 22:3). That ass was the foal of the she-ass which was created on the eve of the Sabbath at twilight, as it says, And Abraham arose early in the morning and saddled his ass."

On that same ass Moses rode when he returned to Egypt, as it is said (Ex. 4:20), "Moses took his wife and his sons and set them upon the ass and went back to the land of Egypt."

On that same ass the son of David (Messiah) will ride, as it is said (Zech. 9:9), "Behold your king comes to you, triumphant and victorious, lowly and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass."



AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES

THE SEARCH FOR AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE LITERARY GENRE,  
MIDRASH, IN CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN BIBLICAL STUDY

A paper presented  
by  
Philip Van Linden, C.M.

## INTRODUCTION

The year 1943 was truly a significant year for Christian biblical scholarship. It wasn't significant because of my coming into the world, but because in that year Pope Pius XII issued the letter "Divino Afflante Spiritus", in which he officially opened up to Catholic scholars the previously closed and "dangerous" doors of modern biblical research. In his letter he officially urged that Catholic scholars:

"in order to comply with the present needs of biblical studies... should make a prudent use of this means (modern biblical research) and should determine to what extent the manner of expression or literary mode adopted by the sacred writers may lead to a correct and genuine interpretation. And let him be convinced that this part of his office cannot be neglected without serious detriment to Catholic exegesis." (Text found in THE CATHOLIC MIND, 42 (May, 1944), p. 274)

He says expressly that "in order to know the real meaning of God's written word, it is necessary among other things to determine the literary form." It is one such literary genre, Midrash, that we are here to discuss tonight.

Thus, the purpose of this presentation is not to find Midrash in the Bible and say, "There it is! We've found a Midrash!" The purpose is rather to express what biblical scholars say Midrash is, what its characteristics are, and how such knowledge of this literary genre aids in making clear the real meaning of God's written, abiding, and living Word.

### MIDRASH - ITS NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS

Addison G. Wright, in his book *Midrash* (1967), has established what I believe is the contemporary Christian biblical scholar's understanding of Midrash, its nature and characteristics. Since Wright works "backwards" (from later extant Rabbinic Midrash in the 13th century back to pre-rabbinic and biblical literature), I believe I should too.

#### Rabbinic Midrash

Rabbinic Midrash, properly understood and precisely defined, is "a literature about a literature. As a genre of literature, and not as a method of exegesis, Midrash is a composition which seeks to make a prior biblical text understandable, useful and relevant for the religious needs of a later generation." (WRIGHT, p. 74) What is most important here is that the sacred text is the point of departure, and it is for the sake of the sacred text quoted that the Midrash exists.

Beginning with a text from Scripture, the midrashic author comments upon it, often rewriting or paraphrasing it. Frequently he very carefully analyzes the Hebrew text, and even corrects the Hebrew reading. Sometimes he may wander very far from the text; but he always uses some technique to show the sequence between the sacred text and the midrashic thought. At times the sequence is shown explicitly (e.g. by giving subordinate citations of scripture as "links", etc.); at other times the sequence is implicit. Sometimes the connection is convincing and the midrashic thought stays very close to the original meaning of the text; then at other times the connection is desperate, and the midrash very imaginatively amplifies on the original meaning of the text, deducing many hidden meanings, and connecting totally unrelated parts of the Bible.

By so commenting on a particular sacred text, the Rabbinic midrashic authors seek primarily to make that prior holy text come alive for the religious edification and nourishment of their contemporaries. I want to emphasize once more that the "jumping off point" in a true Midrash is the holy text -- the midrashic text and commentary exist for the sake of making the holy text cited "hearable" and understandable.

#### Pre-rabbinic Midrashim

In moving "backwards" to pre-rabbinic and biblical literature, we should ask: Can such a tradition, with the same basic characteristics, be found in the Christian scriptures? If so, where? And if so, what difference does it make?

At first glancing at the Holy Scriptures, both Jewish and Christian, it is possible to think that the inspired authors used the Midrashic literary genre in many places, chapters, and even whole books. Wherever a later inspired author (e.g. Paul, Mt, or Lk) uses another earlier scriptural text (e.g. Samuel, Psalms, Isaiah), the temptation is to say "Ah, we have Midrash here." But with a precise definition of the midrashic literary genre, and with some idea of its special characteristics, it is possible to check and control our enthusiasm, evaluate the many sections of the Christian scriptures labelled "midrash", and see which are truly midrashic.

#### Some "midrash" sections of the Christian scriptures that are NOT truly Midrashic

Matthew 4:14-16 quotes Isaiah 9:1f to "prove" that Isaiah's prophecy of "the light to be seen by a people living in darkness: has been fulfilled by Jesus "leaving Nazareth to live in Capernaum near the territory of Zebulan and Nephtali." In this instance, and in many others like it, Matthew is merely quoting and applying a text to a new situation...he is not giving an exposition of the text from Isaiah to show how the text applies and can be understood in the light of a new situation. The earlier text from Isaiah is used for the sake of the new situation in Matthew.

Likewise, Luke's first two chapters are often labelled "Midrash". It is true that these chapters are a veritable thread of quotations from the Hebrew scriptures Luke knows and loves so well. It is also true that Luke has caught and made clear the true meaning of one or another text he uses; however, he is not a midrashic author here because he is not drawing his audience's attention to the prior text, but is taking up the ideas of his predecessors to create a new work to explain the person, Jesus of Nazareth.

In chapter 11 of the letter to the Hebrews, we find a recital of the witness of the faith of God's people from Cain and Abel, through Noah, Jacob, Moses, Samuel and the prophets, down to the cross of Jesus and the vision of Jesus seated at the right hand of the throne of God (12:2). Here, the objects of interest are the events and faithful persons listed, not some specific biblical narration of them. That is, in Hebrews 11 we do not have "a literature about a literature".

Many other sections of the Christian scriptures, familiarly labelled Midrash, are not precisely in the midrashic literary tradition because the text quoted is primarily for the sake of the new composition. The text quoted is not really understood better because of the new composition.

#### Some Midrash sections of the Christian scriptures that truly are midrashic

If such commonly accepted Midrashic literature as Luke 1 and 2 is not truly midrashic, where in the gospels and epistles can we find "a literature about a literature", which primarily seeks to clarify the prior text and make its value and message relevant to present circumstances?

Some explicit and implicit citations in the inspired Christian writings that have been seen to stand such a test are the following: Hebrews 3:7-4:11 on Psalm 95; Hebrews 7:10-28 on Psalm 110, 4; 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:14 on Isaiah 33:10,18 and Psalm 33,10; 1 Corinthians 9:8-12 on Deuteronomy 25:4; Galatians 3:6-29 on Genesis 15, 6; Romans 4:1-25 on Genesis 15, 6; Ephesians 4:8-14 on Psalm 68, 18; Hebrews 7:1-10 on Genesis 14:18-20; Galatians 4:21-31 on Genesis 21:2-13; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 on Exodus tradition; 2 Corinthians 3:7-18 on Exodus 34:29-35; and John 6:31-58 on Exodus 16:4,15. This is the listing that Wright gives, (pp.103ff.) and as the final part of this presentation proper, I would like to dwell for a moment in more detail on the Johannine text he lists in order to see if the text is in the strict midrashic literary genre. Finally, I will conclude by asking "So what? What difference does it make if we can find that the midrashic literature genre exists in the Christian scriptures?"

#### IS JOHN 6:31-58 TRULY MIDRASHIC?

In c. 6:31 John's Jesus responds to those who asked him to give them a sign. They explicitly refer to the sign of manna in the desert: "according to the scriptures 'He gave them bread from the heavens to eat'". Jesus, the Rabbi par-excellence for John, replies in vv. 32-58 with an exegetical paraphrase of each part of the text, which comes from Exodus 16.

In his work, Bread from Heaven, P. Borgen shows how John's Jesus employs the typically midrashic pattern of "contrast": the Exodus quote is followed by the exegetical pattern of "not...but". "Not Moses...but God gives the bread" (v.32). To this "contrast" pattern a normal explicative statement has been added in v. 33: "God's bread comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Another significant clue that John is interested in explaining the original text here, is that in 6:32 John gives a different reading of the Exodus text cited in 31b, in accordance with the midrashic pattern for correcting the Hebrew text. This becomes clear if we try to translate John 6:31-32 back into Hebrew:

31b He gave (edōken -- nathan) them bread from heaven to eat

32 Truly, truly, I say to you,

not...gave (dedōken -- nathan)

but...gives (didōsin -- nothen)

Thus v. 32 shows that John's Jesus is trying to give a true understanding of the Exodus (16:15) text quoted in v. 31. For he says it is not based upon the vocalization for the perfect tense, ]]]], but upon the vocalization for the participle, ]]]], which John renders in the Greek by the present tense. (Borgen, pp.66ff.) Even such a brief look at c.6 of the Gospel of John leads us to conclude that midrashic methods (quotations, paraphrase), patterns (contrast, correction), and even terminology ("not...but") are all evident in John 6:31-33. Time doesn't permit us to go into detail in the whole speech in John 6, but throughout there are other obvious manifestations that John's concern is to bring out the meaning of the Exodus text for his audience: in 6:45 he includes a subordinate citation of scripture, Isaias 54:13; in 6:51 he uses the Hillel principle of equality to show that Jesus Himself is the subject of the Exodus text ("whatever can be said of A can be said of B with full equality."); the closing verses refer back to the main statement in vv. 31-33 to sum up all the points of the homily... "This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and died nonetheless, the man who feeds on this bread shall live forever."

All of these elements mentioned here seem to indicate that this section of John's Gospel is a "literature about a literature", constructed on a homiletic pattern very similar to that found in later Palestinian Midrash. (Borgen, pp.28-98)

This does not lead me to conclude that John is a midrashic author -- it does lead me to conclude that this one section of John's gospel is constructed rather strictly according to the precise norms and purpose of the literary genre, Midrash; and consequently, the whole message of John can be better understood if this one section is read in the way the sacred author meant it to be read.

What difference does it make if we are right in concluding that John chose to incorporate such a homiletic midrash into his Gospel? What difference does it make that one reel of an academy award winning film is shown "out of focus"? What difference does it make that a movement in a symphony by Beethoven is performed in a different time and key than that in which it was originally composed? Both of these forms of art are thus radically deformed. The whole movie and entire symphony are seen and heard, but their value can hardly be truly appreciated.

Similarly, in understanding and appreciating an inspired work of literature, which God's Word is, we have to put it into its proper focus and tonality. If we fail to see that the inspired author (e.g. John) is using the Midrashic literary genre to develop his thought, (in c.6) our total appreciation of his message will be deformed, even though we might understand many individual elements of the chapter and gospel. If we don't discover the proper key and tone of the various parts, we will certainly produce many dissonances never intended by God and the inspired author.

#### CONCLUSION

In this presentation I have tried to show that the Christian biblical scholar's understanding of Midrash has become more precise and refined in recent years. I have tried to show why some sections of the Christian scriptures (previously classified as Midrash) are not strictly midrashic because these sections were not written for the sake of the prior text they quote, but rather use the prior citation only to shed light on a new situation. I have also tried to show how some truly midrashic literary units are present in the Christian scriptures, and briefly tested one from the Johannine literature.

Through all of this, two essentials have become very clear to me, a young Christian student of the scriptures, born in 1943: first, that all of us, Jew and Christian, can't help seeing and admiring the respect that the rabbinic and Christian authors (eg. Paul & John) have for God's Word as living; secondly, that the study and appreciation of the literary genre of midrashic literature, which both of our traditions commonly share from the beginning, can only help us to acquire a similar respect for God's Word today. It is for all of us to discover in our study, the true tone and focus of God's Word. It is our responsibility to shed light on the written Word of God in our preaching, so that The Word can be seen and read and heard through us. Thus, instead of thinking "What do I feel and want to say today, and where can I find that in the Scripture readings?", we will ask "What is God saying, and how can I let Him be heard through my words?" As a result we Jewish and Christian preachers and students of His Word can be even more confidently consoled by what God says through Isaiah (55:10-11):

For just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down and do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful, giving seed to him who sows and bread to him who eats, So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it.

Bibliography used in drawing up this presentation:

- Arkin, I. "Hillel: An Influence in the Theological Structure of John's Gospel," a talk delivered at the 36th Meeting of the Catholic Biblical Association, August, 1973.
- Borgen, P. Bread from Heaven, Brill, 1965.
- Brown, R. The Gospel of John, Anchor Bible Commentary.
- Dodd, C.H. The Fourth Gospel, Cambridge, 1958.
- Schokel, A. Understanding Biblical Research, Herder and Herder, 1963.
- Wright, A. The Literary Genre; Midrash, Alba, 1967.



Pharisaism in Light of Actuality

And New Testament Emphasis

**Augustine Flood**

When confronted with the request that I join this discussion on the subject of Pharisaism and present the "Roman Catholic side" I confess that I was somewhat perplexed not so much at being asked to speak in an area where, in all frankness, I feel out of touch, (being neither a New Testament scholar, nor an expert in 1st & 2nd century Christianity, and certainly no scholar in Judaism) but a perplexity resulting more from an immediate reaction of confusion concerning the "side" business. Is there such a thing as a "side" with these (on-the-surface-at-least) purely historical questions? Is it not more a matter of "disinterested scholars" getting together and saying, now here are the facts; this is what we know from such and such sources, and here is the picture from these other sources, now we add them up and voila, there is the reality! Such naivete is charming in children and dangerous in the scholar.

Such naivete summed up my own case when I first considered the subject proposed for this evening. The image of the pharisee had been with me from earliest youth, a wholly negative and pejorative word, denoting quite simply "the enemy of Jesus." Further, my culture made use of this proper class name to denote self-righteousness, sanctimony, hypocrisy, indeed the letter of the law and not its spirit. Now if this is really the Christian or Catholic "side" then it is quite easily said and devil take the hindmost. What we have is a total religio-cultural stance toward

a group of men who lived long ago and vehemently opposed the man/God on whom, for the Christian heart and confession, salvation itself is staked. That is the strongest formulation of the "side" I can make and an occasional "but there were good and bad Pharisees" does little to alleviate the total picture.

So much for the personal introduction. However, it has some value in this: if I can say anything about the actuality of the question today among Christians, I think this harder line would be representative of the common or "stock" evaluation of the Pharisees. This stock evaluation is certainly aided today by a type of literature which seeks to view Jesus as the man of love, living in a sense beyond the law---or rather, "transcending the law in love." At a time when most institutions as such are decried, and traditions are understood only as burdens and bonds tying down the freedom of man, when "religion" as a word has become the chief symbol for such bondage, then indeed those who want to live or think they can live a "traditionless Christianity" are quick to point up the difficulties Jesus had with the religious officialdom of his time which is quite readily identified with the Pharisees. So the question in present day actuality concerning them is more how do you want to look at Jesus?

On the other hand, there is an attempt being made which is more directly concerned with the Pharisees themselves to see this group of men in the light not simply of a fundamentalist and literal interpretation of select New Testament texts. Rather the thrust is to present a more holistic view which is faithful

historically and unprejudiced theologically, or so its proponents claim. I say "claim" since there is a definite pre-understanding involved here too, a good one to my mind, but a pre-understanding nonetheless. In an article kindly sent me by Father Vadakin [I know neither title nor author since it was xeroxed from the middle of the book!] on the relationship of catechetics to prejudice, the author states:

The obligation of the Christian teacher is to make clear to the student the continuing validity of Judaism as a religion and its important contribution to mankind, to show him that the old stereotypes about the total absorption of Judaism by Christianity are wholly unwarranted. At the same time the teacher must frankly admit to the student that it may take Christian theologians quite some time to work out a new positive statement on the interrelationship of the two faith communities, since Christianity has for so long a time defined itself in terms of the culmination of Judaism. [p.114]

This the author conjoins with yet another perspective which he calls "theological:" i.e. that of self-inclusion. In other words, 'Christian, see thyself as condemned where the Pharisees are condemned.' As the author puts it, "we should seek to identify ourselves with the Pharisees; Jesus stands in judgment on all of us." [p.88.] This is extremely useful in a spiritual and preaching context and very understandable in the light of the anti-prejudicial horizon cited above. However, even this does not directly seek to respond to who and what the Pharisees were nor can it deal so well precisely with the heavily negative comments of sections of the New Testament concerning the Pharisees. Now we must turn to the New Testament itself and see something of what is said there concerning the role played by these men which has suddenly become so enigmatic in the Christian consciousness.

The easiest way of proceeding in our limited amount of time is to follow R. Mercurio's method in the New Catholic Encyclopedia, [McGraw-Hill, N.Y., 1967, vol. XI, pp. 252-253] dividing what he terms the unfavorable texts from the more favorable or ambivalent ones. The ambivalent texts come in Luke and Acts (Lk. 13, 31; Acts 5, 34; 23, 6-9). Yet he lays special emphasis on the fact that the evangelists themselves do not emphasize the activities of the Pharisees during the passion narratives, and only a few times are the Pharisees directly implicated in Jesus' death (Mt. 27, 62; Jn. 18, 3). He states that the same reluctance to identify the Pharisees as enemies is present in the predictions of the passion (Mt. 20, 17-19; Mk. 8, 31; 10, 33; Lk. 9, 22; 18, 31)---Elders, Chief-priests, Scribes, and even pagans(!) variously take the blame here. But the case for exonerating the Pharisees in these texts is, to my mind, weak since, as exegetes point out, the general lack of concern in the Synoptics to distinguish Pharisees from Sadducees or from Herodians (e.g. Mt. 16, 6 & par.) or from Priests (Mk. 12, 1-12 & par. where Mt. (22, 15) brings in the Pharisees) is such as to leave any sharp determination in question. [Cfr. Kittel, ThWzNT, IX, 38-39.] The matter is especially complicated vis-à-vis the Scribes many of whose number followed the Pharisaic tendency of Judaism in Jesus' time. [Ibid. p. 39.] A characteristic of Mt. seems to have been simply to identify them (Mt. 5, 20 & 15, 1) while Lk. seems to have been closer to the historical facts: in the par. to Mt. 23, Lk. (11, 37) distinguishes the woes delivered to the Pharisees from those given the lawyers or Scribes. Mark too seems to be more aware of the distinction, for in 2, 16 he denotes certain Scribes

"of the Pharisaic party" (οἱ γραμματεῖς τῶν Φαρισαίων) and in 7,1 makes the distinction evident. The point is that Mt.'s Gospel for sure and to some extent the other synoptics confuse the groups who are in greater or lesser confrontation with Jesus, so that mentioning the others while not mentioning the Pharisees in a given text doesn't prove as much as it would had they been sharply distinguished generally.

However it is just as certain that Jesus had what we might term "decent relations" with certain Pharisees: he accepts their invitation to dinner in Lk 11,37ff. (although no one could argue that that dinner was the social success of the season); he is warned by a group of them concerning a plot being hatched against him by Herod (Lk.13,31-32); has nightly colloquiums with Nicodemus described in John's Gospel as both a Pharisee and as a leader among the Jews (3,1-15; N. later defends Jesus in Ch.7,50-51, and is identified as the one who with Joseph of Arimathea, went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus and buried it (19,38-40)). The Acts portray two instances of Pharisaic justice on behalf of the nascent Christian community: 5,34; 23,6ff.

By far the "less ambivalent" texts are those which seem to set up an insuperable chasm between Jesus and the Pharisees. In areas affecting everyday Jewish piety the words of Jesus cut deeply: in the manner of giving alms (Mt.6,2), in the manner of praying (Mt.6,16), in pettiness concerning the Sabbath (Mt. 12,2,10-14), in works done for attention (Mt.23,4ff.), in tithing

(Mt.23,23), in matters of purification (Mt.15,2) ; Jesus decries their self-righteousness (Lk.18,9-14) and pride (Mt.23,27-28).

A study by W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann in their Commentary on Matthew's Gospel [Anchor Bible, Doubleday, 1971, vol.26, cfr. pp.cvi-cxxiii.] on the question of "Jesus and the Law" includes an appendix on the meaning of the terms: ὑπόκρισις, ὑπόκριτης and ὑποκρίνησθαι. It should be noted that it is precisely Mt.'s Gospel which portrays Jesus as strongly upholding the Law.[Ibid. p.cvi,cfr.Mt.23,1ff.,5,17-19.] We are also reminded by the commentators that the question of the relationship of Jesus to the Law is a complicated one and should never be separated from the context of the Kingdom which He proclaimed. In any case, being a subject which in itself could be discussed for hours, it does give us some background for understanding Jesus' relationship with the Pharisees:

Nearly all the commentaries ignore the salient fact of the background and upbringing of Jesus as a loyal and devoted son of Israel. His appeal was not to any new interpretation of the Law, still less to an interpretation propounded by himself, any more than the strictures of Amos, Micah, or Jeremiah can be held to urge any new interpretation of the Law. Jesus' appeal is firmly against new interpretations, in particular those proliferating from the oral tradition of the Pharisees, and arising from the new application of Greek hermeneutics to Jewish Law.[Ibid.pp.cix-cx.]

(As an aside I might mention here that it would seem to me, and perhaps Rabbi Dorff will have clarified this point, that the reaction of Jesus against the introduction of Greek hermeneutic as applied to the Law would place him more in the current of Pharisaic thinking than against it.)

Yet there is another principle at work in Jesus' interpretation of and relationship to the Law which is evident in Mt.XV where He

on the question of honoring parents and in 19,4 concerning the question of divorce. Jesus argues in the latter case ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, (vv.4 & 9)---on a primordial principle, from which follows the teaching: "So then, what God has united, man must not divide." He is not condemning Moses for allowing divorce but the hardness of the hearts of men which in a sense almost wrested a concession. The authority of Jesus' teaching is "have you not read that the creator from the beginning" (v.5) and from that he draws his conclusion. One senses that this is a key to His difficulties with the Pharisees, at least in the historical situation for as much as we have a faithful picture of it in the Gospels.

As to what "hypocrite" might mean in Matthew's Gospel, Albright and Mann see in this term more a neutral Greek word in the sense of a critic or casuist---the more pejorative sense would then be hairsplitter, pettifogger or a hypercritical person in the scrupulous sense. This would, for the most part, exclude our modern interpretation of hypocrite in the moral sense. If this interpretation is possible, then it certainly changes the meaning of the central anti-Pharisaic text of Mt.23. However, if it changes the force of the text one cannot simply disavow the meaning of "insincerity" from the general sense of the text. The modern meaning of hypocrite is certainly implied in vv.25-26.

Mark 7 (par: Mt.15,1-20) is a pericope of which the leit-motif is "How ingeniously you get around the commandment of God in order to preserve your own tradition!" (v.9) [The chapter begins with the question posed by the Pharisees as to why the disciples of Jesus do not observe the "tradition of the elders" τὴν παράδοσιν τοῦ πατέρους in the question of ablutions before meals.] The phrase "tradition of the elders" is strongly reversed in v.8 to read "tradition of men."

[Mk. 7,8: "...κρατεῖτε τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων."] Weiß in ThWzNT, 9, p.42, holds that this change in effect was central to the problem between Jesus and the Pharisees in that it makes of Jesus the judge of Pharisaic tradition as a purely human thing and implies that He himself proclaims the will of God beyond that tradition. The accusation or difficulty is not that the tradition is itself wrong, but that the Pharisees practice the unessential, leaving the essential aside, (Mk.7,8;Mt.15,3b). In any case, the changing of "tradition of the elders" into "the tradition of men" would seem enough to drive a wedge between Jesus and the Pharisaic party.

\*\*\*\*\*

Let us depart for the moment from my feeble attempts to synthesize what exegetes say and consider briefly the larger horizon out of which a Christian "side" can be considered. In general, Catholic sources such as the 1936 article by Heinisch in the Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche[v.8, Herder & Co., Freiburg im B., cc.213-214] and the present (1963) edition of the same Lexikon (cc.438-440, article by K. Schubert) as well as the article in the Enciclopedia Cattolica by Ricciotti, [Vaticano, 1950, cc.1041-1043.] stress the dogmatic proximity of the Pharisaic party (usually in distinction from the Sadducees) with Christian teaching on such points as the immortality of the soul, resurrection of the dead, the defense of free will and divine providence etc. Why is it that early Christianity did not find more of an ally in Pharisaic tradition?

Part of the answer comes surely from the crisis experienced in the nascent Christian community concerning the reception of gentiles into the Church. What this would mean, as far as I understand it, would be that at the very time the Gospels were being set down, redacted and re-redacted, the pressing issue or question was "do the gentiles have to observe the totality of the Law?" Now granted that there were very real problems between Jesus (the historical Jesus) and the Pharisees, how could that problem be better resolved than by pointing out and up Jesus' words (or approximations of his words) vis-a-vis the Pharisees? The polemic of Jesus against the piety the separates from God became a real weapon against the so-called Judaizers in the ancient Church. This might well answer the one-sided position of the Gospels against the Pharisees. If a case can be made for this "slanting" or positioning of the Pharisees in a particularly slanted context, then it makes a much more solid ground for revision of Christian understanding than the pious (and true) "see yourself condemned with them" business we referred to above. What it means for modern catechetics as well as for theology is this: that a more holistic understanding of the historic role of Pharisaism within Judaism is called for. The Pharisees, then, probably stood as "typical" representatives of a Judaism which was perhaps to become inimical to Christianity but which also posed, through no fault of its own, an internal threat to the proselytizing of Christianity. Certainly, there were problems between the historical Jesus and the Pharisees, but it seems that the Gospels represent more the problems of a later Christian community. [ThWzNT, IX, p.37]

The phrase "the piety which separates from God" I borrowed from Joachim Jeremias in his "New Testament Theology, the Proclamation of Jesus," [Scribners, 1971, pp. 147-151.] where the spiritual meaning of the relationship of Jesus to the Pharisees in the Gospels is succinctly set down, a spiritual teaching which for better or worse, historically justifiable or not, is of extreme importance to Christianity, and I daresay with all deference, to Judaism. I can only see it as a summation of the Prophet Joel's "Rend your hearts and not your garments, and return to the Lord your God." (2, 13) or again of Isaiah:

Is not this the sort of fast that pleases me  
 ---it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks---  
 to break unjust fetters  
 and undo the thongs of the yoke,

to let the oppressed go free,  
 and break every yoke,  
 to share your bread with the hungry,  
 and shelter the homeless poor,

to clothe the man you see naked  
 and not turn from your own kin?  
 Then will your light shine like the dawn  
 and your wound be quickly healed over

Your integrity will go before you  
 and the glory of Yahweh behind you.  
 Cry and Yahweh will answer;  
 call, and he will say, 'I am here.'  
 Is. 58, 6-9

Much of the Christian reiteration of this prophetic teaching is to be found in the polemic between Jesus and the Pharisees. There can be no doubt that they are made the targets of just such prophetic criticism. The Christian must simply offset what is ascribed to the Pharisees as a class in the New Testament with the historical facts which tell of the greatness and holiness of the School. But he can never lose the prophetic teaching involved, the thrust of Jesus' words, any more than Judaism can afford to ignore Isaiah's.

---

## 1970 Noordwijkerhout: Pastoral Recommendations

*During the Plenary Session of the Pastoral Council of the Catholic Church in the Netherlands from 5 to 8 April, 1970 at Noordwijkerhout, a series of "Pastoral Recommendations" were studied from a plan for "Relations between Jews and Christians". This final document was drawn up by the Sub-Commission "The Church and Israel" of which Mgr Dr A. Ramselaar is the president.*

*According to the method of this Pastoral Council only the "Pastoral Recommendations" were voted on and are now official conclusion. They are to be published with the basic schema.*

Plan of report: « Relations between Jews and Christians ».

### Introduction

#### Motives and plan

The Pastoral Council of the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands considers it desirable to examine her attitude towards the Jewish people (1).

1. The Jews have made important contributions to the history of Dutch civilization, and the Netherlands have played a prominent role in Jewish life and thought during past centuries, so that our capital has been called the Jerusalem of the West.

2. The destruction of most of the Jewish communities in the Netherlands in the horrifying persecution during the years of occupation — 1940-1945 — still calls for reflection: on the one

---

(1) The expression "Jewish people" immediately raises the question of the exact significance of this term. We take our stand from the conviction expressed in the Old Testament and confirmed in the New Testament, that the Jewish people has an existence very specially its own. Its existence as a people (its origin and centuries of vicissitudes) similar to those of other peoples, however, display characteristics which place it as a people ordinary categories.

This is why it is impossible to define the expression "Jewish people". They themselves have never been able to find a solution acceptable to all and this report does not intend to do so either.

The title "Jewish people" was preferred to "Jews" as this latter word suggests that the individual Jew is

different from other men, whereas it is solely their particular existence as a *people* with which this document is concerned. Moreover, the name "Jews" fails to recognize the solidarity of the Jewish people dispersed, as they are, throughout the whole world. The name "Israel" is also avoided because of its divergent overtones, even more acute than those of the "Jewish people".

This document wishes only to be an expression of relations between Jews and Christians as such, inasmuch as they belong to the Jewish people or to the Christian community. As the Jewish people is not simply a religious group, its existence among other peoples always includes political implications. This report bears no judgement on such implications, even when they touch such interests as the internationalization of Jerusalem or the administration of the Holy Places.

hand to uphold the living remembrance of the courage and faith-inspired power which were demonstrated by so many in privation and under torture; and, on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that many Christians failed in their duty as a consequence of centuries of Christian anti-Semitism, which has been used as a warning by the Provincial Council of the Dutch Roman Catholic Church (2).

3. The Jewish people have their special place in the Church's faith. They can never be simply equated with non-Christian peoples. The Church knows that she cannot be the Church for all Nations, without being connected to the living Jewish people of today. She believes that, through her Head, Jesus Christ, she remains united for ever to the Jewish people, not only historically, but also in its continued existence. The unbroken and particular link between the Jewish people and the Church must be a determining factor in the Church's own mission, and her attitude towards present-day Jewish people. This will help the Church to a better understanding of her mission in the world, and to the fostering of unity with other Churches.

Only a few problems have been treated here from among the many that exist in Jewish-Christian relations. The report tries to avoid looking upon relations with the Jewish people exclusively from biblical and theological data, and neglecting the development of Jewish life after the year A.D. 70 (and 130).

(2) *Acta et decreta concilii provincialis ultrajectensis* 1924 can. 1325 par. 3 p. 183: (...).

"Relations with Jews must be avoided because this people is very estranged from the doctrine of the Cross of Christ: a scandalous thing for them. Parish priests must take care that Christians do not work for Jews who would use them as servants or as subordinates. If there is no danger to faith or morals, paid daily work may be undertaken for Jews, either in agriculture or in factories.

However, a grave warning is given: such services must not lead to others which would endanger the soul, arising, above all, from a desire for lucre. Moreover, the faithful must take care — according to the warning of Benedict XIV (Enc. *A quo primum*, 1751) never to need the help, or the support of the Jews (...)."

It is a speciality of the spirit of Judaism to learn from the day-to-day lessons of history. That is why the starting point of the relationship is the attitude towards the Jews throughout the centuries. And, in virtue of biblical, historical, and theological data, some principles have been formulated which should determine relations between Jews and Christians.

The close connection between Jews and Christians consists not only in the historical origin of Christianity in Judaism, but, above all, in spite of different outlooks, that they have many elements in common in the Church's daily life, and in Jewish worship, namely: the liturgy of the Word, the Lamb of God and the ministry of Reconciliation. For this reason a special paragraph has been devoted to this point.

Attention is also called to the improvement in social relations between Jews and Christians, in two paragraphs:

- Catechesis concerning the Jewish people
- Education and information regarding the relation between Jews and Christians.

## Chapter I

### Anti-Semitism

Referring to the Declaration of Vatican II *Nostra Aetate*, the Pastoral Council condemns every form of anti-Semitism.

*A also spells out*  
1. The Vatican Council states (*Nostra Aetate*, No. 5): "We cannot in truthfulness call upon that God who is the Father of all, if we refuse to act in a brotherly way towards certain created

*Jews not responsible for death of Jesus, not to be accused of "deicide" neither punished nor condemned by God.*

[start]

Original documents  
faded and/or illegible



men, created as they are in God's image. A man's relationship to God the Father and his relationship with his brother men are so linked together that Scripture says: "He who does not love, does not know God" (1 Jn 4:8).

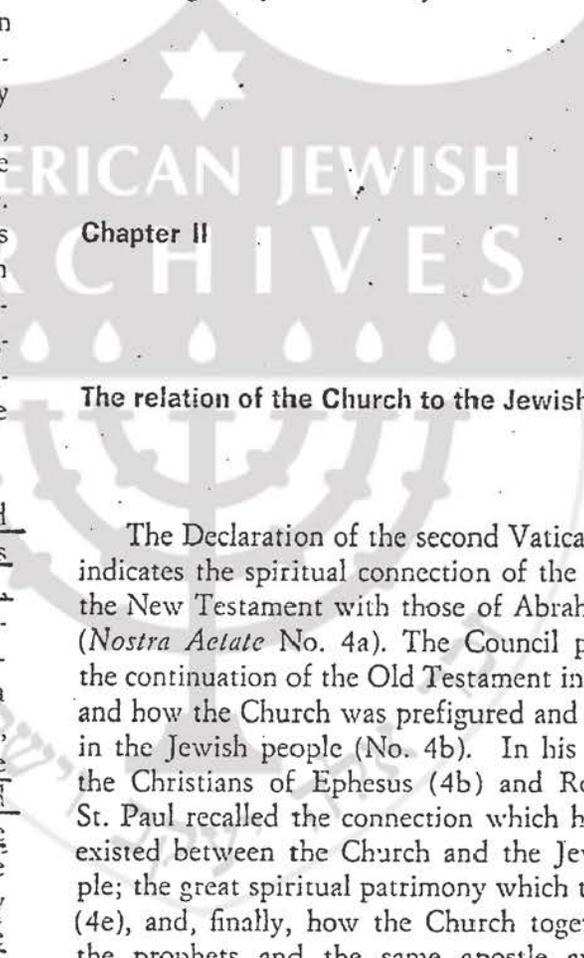
This is a condemnation of any theory or practice which discriminates between one man and another, between one people and another, in their human dignity, and hence, in their human rights".

2. This is particularly true in any sincere reflection about relations with Jews and with the Jewish people. Anti-Semitism is not only a form of unjust discrimination with regard to a human group or people, but it is also resistance to a fundamental view of life. It is directed not only against the Jews as an ethnic or sociological group, but, above all, against their very existence as the result of their history and religious experience. In this context, anti-Semitism fundamentally means misjudgement of the very nature of God's action with the Jewish people, the firstborn of all peoples. If this aspect of anti-Semitism is not recognized, we continue to risk making a wrong estimation of the qualities and behaviour of the Jewish people.

3. In the past, and even today, Christians and churches have looked upon the history of God's people too much from their own, all too human, point of view. The Church has always been predominantly considered as the Church of the Gentiles, to the exclusion of the Jewish people, and a common spiritual heritage has been lost. This, among other things, has been the cause of the unspeakable injustices that have been committed against the Jews. The extent of such injustice was revealed in this present century, when the vast number of Christians and Churches hardly raised their voices against a massacre of the Jewish people which exceeds all imagining, — a massacre in which all men share responsibility.

*on non-Communist at the trial of Vatican*  
4. Religious thinking about the very existence of the Jewish people as such, shows that there is a particular relationship between the Jewish

people and the Promised Land. The Jews consider this relationship not only as a historical, cultural, or religious phenomenon, but as an indissoluble element in their expectation of the day when all nations will embrace in Peace and Justice. To neglect or to deny this fact may be the cause of misunderstanding, and help to nourish prejudice about the nature of the Jewish people and its place among the nations; a misunderstanding which has already led, and may lead again to discrimination. The presence of anti-Semitism requires great cautiousness, and a sound knowledge of Jewish reality.



## Chapter II

### The relation of the Church to the Jewish people

The Declaration of the second Vatican Council indicates the spiritual connection of the people of the New Testament with those of Abraham's race (*Nostra Aetate* No. 4a). The Council points out the continuation of the Old Testament in the New, and how the Church was prefigured and took root in the Jewish people (No. 4b). In his letters to the Christians of Ephesus (4b) and Rome (4c), St. Paul recalled the connection which has always existed between the Church and the Jewish people; the great spiritual patrimony which they share (4e), and, finally, how the Church together with the prophets and the same apostle awaits the day, known to God alone, when all nations will unanimously invoke the Lord and "serve Him shoulder to shoulder" (Ze 3:9).

The Pastoral Council of the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands believes that, according

to the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (Lk 24:44; Lk 13:34-35), the Jewish people has been constituted for ever as a testimony of God's saving alliance with mankind (Is 43:10; Rm 9:11).

God's promise *par excellence* to the Jewish people is the everlasting covenant (cf. Rm 9:4-5; 11:29; Ep 2:12). The Pastoral Council believes that Jesus Christ born under the Law (cf. Ga 4:5), is the one whom the Prophets, the Righteous and Kings desired to see (Mt 13:17; Lk 10:24), because in Him the revelation of God's eternal love reached its plenitude (cf. Ep 1:10; Col 1:15-23). The Pastoral Council states that in Jesus Christ, peace has been initiated, uniting the two worlds, and breaking down the wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles (cf. Ep 2:14-15). He shall come to complete this Peace (Jn 16:33; Rv 21). That is why also the as yet unfulfilled promises of God to the Jewish people are held in honour in liturgical prayer.

With gratitude the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands gratefully commemorates the true spiritual tradition in which the Jews have preserved the Law and the Prophets. She also recognizes the many spiritual and religious values existing among the Jewish people, which provide a permanent stimulus and the reason for an examination of the Church's conscience, being as they are, of great significance for justice and peace in the whole world.

Consequently, the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands is doing her utmost to promote the renewal of Jewish-Christian relations through mutual knowledge and esteem, as the Second Vatican Council proposed to the whole Church. Searching the Scriptures and history together, with equal readiness to learn from them, will be a great contribution to this cause. Any intention, or design, for proselytism must be rejected as contrary to human dignity and Christian conviction. Moreover, the position of the Jewish people with regard to the universal message of Christ cannot be equated with the position of those professing other non-Christian religions. Christianity nowadays is confronted by questions regarding the

recognizability of God's ways in human history and in respect of religion itself in a secularized society. It may be appropriate to attempt to integrate Jewish tradition into this new thinking.

### Chapter III

#### Relation with the Jewish people in liturgy

1. The link between the Jewish people and the Church comes to light especially, and is mysteriously experienced in public worship. In Word and Sacrament, in hymn and prayer, the community celebrates the living Presence of Christ, the Head of His Body in the Spirit. What God has operated in his people, Christ has consolidated and brought to its ultimate completion by his unique and eternal mediation. In the liturgy the Church experiences a new creation in Christ, and a participation in Abraham's offspring and Israel's dignity (baptism, liturgy in the Passover night). Christ is "the true Easter-Lamb that takes away the sins of the world" (Easter preface). Partaking of it we proclaim His death until He comes (cf. 1 Co 11:16).

In the essential elements of her liturgy the Church preserves the heritage of Jewish worship both in content and form; the proclamation of the Word of God, the celebration of the Passover meal and the ministry of Reconciliation in Baptism and the sacrament of Penitence.

2. Only in the awareness of this bond, will true relations between Jews and Christians come about. Through living and realizing this link,

The community of Christ will reach her true stature. This principle formed the original liturgy of the Church, its service of the Word and Eucharistic celebration, Advent and Christmas, Passover from Lent to Pentecost, and the entire Reconciliation ministry. Liturgical renewal always has to be alive to this idea, in order to maintain the sound proclamation of the ecumenical and eschatological character of the liturgy.

This draws attention to the following concrete points:

a) The use of the psalms in the liturgy, rather than hymn singing, not only because the Church has always considered the book of Psalms as her book of prayer, but in the psalms, the proclamation of Salvation is put into words in striking and many faceted ways.

b) The readings, especially those concerning the Jewish people and the Promised Land, should contribute to a correct understanding of the Christian link with the Jewish people.

c) Prayers, especially those of the Eucharistic celebration, have to express Christ's love of all men, and His love for His own people.

3. All traces of anti-Semitism should disappear. This applies to texts in some parts of the Missal and breviary, and particularly to any presentations of Christ's Passion, where Jesus, Mary, and the apostles feature as non-Jews, and the other Jews as caricatures. Care must be taken that old prejudices do not unintentionally creep in again.

4. Texts that may give rise to misunderstanding if read out of context, or without knowledge of historical circumstances or linguistic usage of the times, should be carefully placed in their right perspective in preaching, so that they may contribute to a new attitude towards the Jewish people.

## Chapter IV

### Catechesis and the Jewish people

#### *Actual situation*

1. Catechesis should provide an important contribution to the improvement of Jewish-Christian relations, and to fruitful interaction between Judaism and Christianity. In the past it was the way in which catechesis was presented that fostered prejudices against the Jewish people in succeeding generations. Even present-day catechesis frequently fails in this respect:

- mainly by unconscious misjudgement or disdain of the Jewish people, past or present;
- by lack of a positive approach to the Jewish people;
- by an insufficient concept of the real nature and extent of anti-Semitism.

#### *General Rules*

2. Conditions to build up a true catechesis about the Jewish people:

— a thorough knowledge and a right understanding of the Bible as the proclamation of God's action in mankind. A correct relation to the Jewish people can never come about as long as the Christian feels a stranger to the Bible. Belittling ideas about the Jewish people will inevitably live on as long as the preaching of Jesus and the apostles is detached from its historical Jewish background, and Christianity is presented as a system of abstract truths. The history of the Jewish people, before, as well as after Christ, has to be considered in its particular meaning in Salvation History.

[end]

Original documents  
faded and/or illegible



— a sincere, faithful reflection on the relation of the Church to the Jewish people according to the rules expressed in Chapter III.

— respect of the full historical truth concerning the Jewish people and correct information about the living Jewish reality.

### *Special points*

Some points demand particular attention:

1. The Jewish people has to be considered as the people with whom God concluded his covenant for ever. The Old Testament does not exist only in function of the New Testament, but has its own significance in Jewish as well as in world history.

3. The Jewish people is not collectively guilty of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ, nor of the rejection of Jesus as Messiah. Though the Jewish authorities, with their adherents, clamoured for His death, as the Declaration on the attitude of the Church towards non-Christian Religions states (No. 4): "...what happened in His Passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today". The Jewish people is not damned, nor bereft of its election. Their sufferings, dispersion, and persecution are not punishments for the crucifixion or the rejection of Jesus. It is unjust to accuse the Jews of "deicide".

4. It is not self-evident at all that a complete rupture arose between Jews and Christians, since Jesus himself — born of a Jewish mother — never broke away from his attachment to his people. The young Church was rooted in the Jewish people.

5. Present religious life of the Jewish people has to be represented truthfully in catechesis.

6. It is incorrect and unjust to place the New Testament and the Old Testament in opposition, the New Testament as a covenant of love, and the Old Testament as a covenant of fear, since

the preaching of God's love of man and of man's love of his fellow-men in charity, fidelity, and justice form an essential part of Old Testament teaching.

7. The evangelical message and the apostolic preaching about the significance of the Jewish people in the ultimate unification of the world (Mt 23:37-39; Lk 13:35; Ac 1:7; 19, 21; Rm 9:11, and Ep 2:11-22) should be brought into more distinctive relief.

## Chapter V

### Education and Information.

1. All who are responsible for instruction and education should be informed during their training about the permanent significance of the Jewish people in God's plan for mankind. The history of persecutions should not be concealed and the Jewish people must not be treated as though they were non-existent.

2. It is important to set up a concrete project for the promotion of those sciences which are connected with Judaism, preferably in collaboration with other Churches.

3. Study of the Jewish people is also recommended in the training of future priests.

4. This has to be done in the spirit in which the Jewish people understands its own existence.

5. An appeal is made to all mass media to promote the renewal of Jewish-Christian relations.

## Pastoral recommendations

- That the Catholic Church in the Netherlands be guided by the religious conscience expressed in the Declaration of Vatican Council II *Nostra Aetate* No. 4, in her relations with the Jews. This recalls that:
- a) The Jews remain most dear to God because of the Fathers (Rm 9:4-5; and Rm 11:28);
  - b) The Church of Christ is grafted on to the branches of the Jewish people, (cf. Rm 11:17-24);
  - c) There is a spiritual patrimony common to Jews and Christians.
2. The Pastoral Council recognizes that the biblical message came to the Church in and from the Jewish world of thought and faith, therefore:
- a) A thorough knowledge and correct understanding of the Bible as the proclamation of God's way of acting with mankind cannot be fully attained without familiarity with Jewish awareness of God and Jewish understanding of biblical terms;
  - b) It should be acknowledged that not only the Old Testament, but the New Testament also can be reckoned among Jewish writings, and that the New Testament cannot be understood without knowledge of the Jewish back-ground.
  - c) Study of the Scriptures by Jews and Christians in common is desirable.
  - d) It is necessary for the Church that fidelity to the original text of the Scriptures be safeguarded.
3. A common re-orientation on their Jewish origin is necessary for the progress of encounter between the different Churches.
4. The Pastoral Council rejects all forms of anti-Semitism and declares in particular:
- a) That, in continuation of the Declaration of Vatican Council II, it not only deplores, but positively condemns all forms of anti-Semitism.
  - b) It wishes to repeat, that the Passion of Christ cannot be blamed on all the Jews then living, nor on Jews of today; therefore, they should not be considered as accursed or rejected.
  - c) That humanitarian grounds alone suffice for the condemnation of discrimination against Jews as a special group in world society and followers of a particular religion and concept of life.
  - d) That the Church has the duty to reflect on the entire history of the Jewish people before, as well as after Christ, and on its own self-understanding as well.
  - e) That reflection together by Jews and Christians, with the help of modern Jewish and Christian thought, on their common origin, as well as on the causes of their separation, is necessary.
  - f) That it would be right—after the reference to the *acta et decreta concilii provincialis ultrajectensis* 1924, canon 1325, par. 3, p. 183, made in the draft report — to ask the Dutch Episcopate to nullify what was stated in that paragraph.
5. The Pastoral Council wishes to bear witness that the Catholic Church in the Netherlands jointly with other Christians and Jews.

- a) wishes to live according to God's promise of justice and peace;
- b) wishes to serve the welfare of the whole of creation;
- c) wishes to seek the answers to questions about the idea of God, the image of man, the eschatological expectation, as they co-

determine the general and religious crises of the West today.

- 6. The Pastoral Council emphatically requests those responsible to give constant and serious attention to the deeper penetration of these thoughts and the results of further study and reflection in theological formation, preaching, catechesis, liturgy and publications.

---

1970 Albany: Directives for relations between Catholics and Jews

Just as this issue is about to go to Press, another document has been received, published by the diocese of Albany (New York), under the title "Directives for Catholic-Jewish Relations". The seventeen pages consist of three main divisions: General Principles, General Directives, and Special Directives. Then follow three Appendices giving information about official organizations, publications, and copies of documents. Among

these latter is the "working paper" used by the Plenary Session of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity in November 1969, and published in error in the United States. In his introduction, Mgr Edwin B. Broderick, Bishop of Albany states: "This working Document is to be accepted as a statement of the concepts and values to be fostered in this diocese".

We shall publish these directives later.

## **THEMES FOR CATHOLICS ENGAGED IN THE DIALOGUE**

Because of its importance and practical value, we reprint in full Section 1—Paragraphs A to G of "Recommended Programs" contained in the text of the U.S. Bishops' GUIDELINES FOR CATHOLIC-JEWISH RELATIONS. The selection of themes listed below and the extent to which they are pursued are left to the discretion of each diocesan commission.

*"The following themes which, among others, are viewed by Christians and Jews engaged in the dialogue as important issues affecting Christian-Jewish relations merit the attention and study of Catholic educators and scholars."*

- A. Scholarly studies and educational efforts to show common historical, biblical, doctrinal and liturgical heritage shared by Catholics and Jews, as well as their differences.*
- B. As the statement requires, the presentation of the Crucifixion story in such a way as not to implicate all Jews of Jesus' time or of today in a collective guilt for the crime.*
- C. In keeping with the statement's strong repudiation of anti-Semitism, a frank and honest treatment of the history of Christian anti-Semitism in our history books, courses and curricula.*
- D. A study of the life of Jesus and of the primitive church in the setting of the religious, social, and cultural features of Jewish life in the first century.*
- E. An explicit rejection of the historically inaccurate notion that Judaism of that time, especially that of Pharisaism, was a decadent formalism and hypocrisy, well exemplified by Jesus' enemies.*
- F. An acknowledgment by Catholic scholars of the living and complex reality of Judaism after Christ and the permanent election of Israel, alluded by St. Paul (Rom. 9:29), and incorporation of the results into Catholic teaching.*
- G. A full and precise explanation of the use of the expression "the Jews" by St. John and other New Testaments references which appear to place all Jews in a negative light. (These expressions and references should be fully and precisely clarified in accordance with the intent of the Statement that Jews are not to be "presented as rejected or accursed by God as if this followed from Holy Scripture.")*

## DOCUMENT

### Pastoral Orientations on the Attitude of Christians to Judaism

*The Jewish community of France, consisting of 600,000 members, is the second largest in Europe. It is a particularly lively community with a future enriched by the encounter that is at present taking place in its own ranks of Jews from both Eastern Europe and North Africa. Today relations between Jews and Christians are increasingly frequent. The Episcopal Committee founded in 1969 by the French bishops is therefore publishing these guide-lines for the faithful; their aim is to put into force in France the declaration *Nostra Aetate* of Vatican Council II.*

#### I. THE EXISTENCE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE CONSTITUTES A QUESTION FOR THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE

The existence today of the Jewish people, its condition, often so precarious during the course of its history, its hope, its tragic sufferings in the past and above all in modern times, and its partial ingathering in the land of the Bible constitute increasingly for the Christian the basis of a better understanding of his own faith and a greater enlightenment for his own life.

The continued existence of this people from ancient times, its having survived other civilizations, its presence as a rigorous and exacting partner of Christianity are facts of such importance that they cannot be either ignored or despised.

The Church whose founder is Jesus Christ and which, through him, is from her origin and for all time linked to the Jewish people, sees in the age-old and uninterrupted existence of this people a sign which she would wish to understand in all its truth.

#### II. THE SLOW PROGRESS OF THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE

On October 28, 1965, Vatican Council II solemnly promulgated the declaration *Nostra Aetate* which con-

tains a chapter on the Jewish people. We reaffirm the importance of this text which recalls the fact that the Church « draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles (cf. Rom. 11: 17-24) » [N.C.W.C. translation, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1966]. It is our duty as the Episcopal Committee for Relations with Judaism to make clear the real meaning of this declaration and to indicate its application.

The stand taken by the Council should be considered more as a beginning than as a final conclusion. It marks a turning point in the Christian attitude to Judaism. It opens the way and enables us to make a just evaluation of our task.

This declaration is based on a return to scriptural sources. It marks a break with the attitude of an entire past. From now onwards it calls for a new attitude on the part of Christians to the Jewish people, not only in the sphere of human relations but also in that of faith. It is impossible to re-examine in one day either all the affirmations made by the Church in the course of centuries or all her historical attitudes. The Christian conscience has, however, begun the process of reminding the Church of its Jewish origins. The essential is that this should be begun, that it should reach all strata of Christian society, and that it should be continued everywhere honestly and energetically.

#### III. THE PERMANENT VOCATION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

It is not possible to regard the Jewish « religion » simply as one among the existing religions. It is through the people of Israel that faith in the One God has been written into human history. It is through them also that monotheism has, with certain differences, become the common property of the three great families descended from Abraham: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

God himself, according to biblical revelation, constituted this people, educated it, confided his designs to it, concluded with it an eternal Covenant (Gen. 17:7) and made it the object of a vocation which St. Paul describes as irrevocable (Rom. 11:29). To it we owe the five books of the Law, the Prophets and the other sacred writings which complete God's message. This teaching, after having been collected in written and oral tradition, was adopted by Christians and retained by the Jews. For Christians the Covenant is renewed in Jesus Christ, but they should nevertheless regard Judaism as a reality not only social and historical, but above all religious; not only as a relic of a venerable and closed past, but as a reality living on through time. The chief signs of the vitality of the Jewish people are the witness of their corporate fidelity to the one God, their zeal in studying Scripture to find, in the light of revelation, the meaning of human life, their quest for identity in the midst of other men, their constant efforts to come together as a reunited community. These signs are for us Christians questions which touch the heart of our faith: what is the specific mission of the Jewish people in God's plan? what is the expectation that animates them? how does it differ from, how does it resemble ours?

#### IV. NOT TO TEACH ANYTHING THAT IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST (« NOSTRA AETATE » 4)

a) It is a matter of urgency that Christians should once and for all cease to represent the Jew according to the clichés developed during centuries of hostility; we must for ever eliminate and, in every instance, courageously oppose caricatures and presentations unworthy of decent men, let alone of Christians: declaring, for example, with undertones of contempt or aversion that the Jew is not like other men, describing him as « a usurer, an ambitious person, a conspirator », or, with consequences that are still more dangerous, as a « deicide ». These defamatory allusions are, alas, still current today, either overt or masked; we emphatically denounce and condemn them. Anti-Semitism is a heritage from the pagan world, but it has been increased in Christian times by pseudo-theological arguments. The Jew deserves our attention, our esteem and often our admiration, sometimes our fraternal criticism but always our love. It is in this love that we have perhaps failed him the most, and here the Christian conscience is the most culpable.

b) It is a theological, historical and juridical error to hold the Jewish people indiscriminately to blame for the passion and death of Jesus Christ. The catechism of the Council of Trent had already condemned

this error (Pars 1, cap. 5, 11). It is true that historically the responsibility for the death of Jesus was shared in varying degrees by certain Jewish and Roman authorities, but the Church holds that « Christ underwent his passion and death because of the sins of all men and out of infinite love in order that all may reach salvation » (*Nostra Aetate* 4). Contrary to a very ancient but contestable exegesis, it cannot be concluded from the New Testament that the Jewish people have been deprived of their election. On the contrary, Scripture as a whole urges us to recognize, in the concern of Judaism to be faithful to the Law and the Covenant, a sign of God's fidelity to his people.

c) It is false to oppose Judaism as a religion of fear and Christianity as a religion of love. The fundamental article of Jewish belief, the *Shema Israel*, begins thus: « Thou shalt love the Lord thy God », and continues with the commandment to love the neighbor (Lev. 19:18). This was the starting point of Jesus' preaching and hence a dogma common to both Judaism and Christianity.

The sense of God's transcendence, his fidelity, his justice, his mercy, of repentance and forgiveness of sins are fundamental characteristics of Jewish tradition. Christians who claim to possess the same values would be wrong in thinking that they have nothing to receive today even from Jewish spirituality.

d) It must be affirmed that contrary to well established reactions, the doctrine of the Pharisees is not opposed to Christianity. The Pharisees strove to make the Law a principle of life for each Jew by interpreting its prescriptions so that they could be adapted to the different circumstances of daily living. Contemporary research has clearly shown that the Pharisees were well aware of the interior meaning of the Law, as were also the masters of the Talmud. When Jesus denounced the attitude and the formalism of the teaching of certain Pharisees he was not questioning this awareness. Moreover it seems that it was precisely because the Pharisees and the first Christians were close to each other in so many respects that they were opposed, sometimes violently, on such matters as the traditions received from the fathers and the interpretation of the Law of Moses.

#### V. TO ARRIVE AT A RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF JUDAISM

Christians, were it only for their own sakes, should acquire a true and living knowledge of Jewish tradition.

a) A real Christian catechesis should affirm the value of the whole Bible. The first Covenant has not been rendered void by the new. The first Covenant is in

fact, the root, the source, the foundation and the promise of the new. It is true that, for us, the Old Testament can be fully understood only in the light of the New, but this fact in itself presupposes that it should be welcomed and recognized in its own right (cf. Tim. 3:16). We must not forget that Jesus, who was through his mother a Jewish man, fulfilled his ministry within the people of the Covenant by his obedience to the Torah and by his prayer.

b) We must endeavor to present the particular vocation of this people as « the sanctification of the Name ». This is one of the essential dimensions of synagogue prayer by which the Jewish people, invested with a sacerdotal mission (Ex. 19:6), offer all human creation to God and give him glory. Their vocation makes the life and the prayer of the Jewish people a blessing for all the nations of the earth.

c) Those who see in the precepts of Judaism nothing but constraining practices underestimate them. These rites are gestures that break through man's day-to-day existence and remind those who observe them of the sovereignty of God. Faithful Jews receive as gifts from God the Sabbath and the rites destined to sanctify human acts. They transcend the literal prescriptions of these rites and find in them light and joy on the road of life (Ps. 119), a way of « building time » and of giving thanks for the entire creation. Indeed the whole of existence should be referred to God, as St. Paul reminded his brethren (1 Cor. 10:30-31).

d) The dispersion of the Jewish people should be understood in the light of their own history.

Jewish tradition sees the sufferings of exile as a punishment for infidelity (Jer. 13:17; 20:21-23), but it is nevertheless true that ever since the letter addressed to the Babylonian exiles by Jeremiah (Jer. 29:1-23), the life of the Jewish people in the diaspora has had a positive meaning: through their suffering they are called to « sanctify the Name » in the midst of the nations.

Christians should at all times combat the anti-Jewish and Manichean temptation to consider the Jews as a people accursed because they have been consistently persecuted. On the contrary, according to Scripture itself (Is. 53:2-4), to undergo persecution is at once an effect and a reminder of the prophetic state.

e) Today it is more difficult than ever before to make a calm theological judgment on the movement of return of the Jewish people to « its » land. Above all, faced with this fact, we as Christians cannot forget that in the past God gave to the people of Israel a land on which they were called to assemble (cf. Gen. 12:7, 26:3-4, 28:13; Is. 43:5-7; Jer. 16:15; Zeph. 3:20).

Throughout its history Jewish existence has been continually divided between life among the nations and the desire for nationhood in this land. This desire creates many problems for the conscience of the Jews themselves. If Christians are to understand it and the consequent disputes under all their aspects, they should not allow themselves to be carried away by any exegesis that fails to recognize both the religious and the communitarian forms of Jewish life, or by political stands which, though generous, are premature. They must take into account the way in which the regathering around Jerusalem is interpreted by those Jews who, in the name of their faith, look on it as a blessing.

By this return and by its repercussions, justice is put to the test. On the political level there is opposition between the different demands of justice. Beyond the legitimate diversity of political options the universal conscience cannot deny the Jewish people, who in the course of history has suffered such vicissitudes, the right to its own political existence among the nations and the means necessary to pursue it. Furthermore, this right and these possibilities of existence cannot be refused by the nations to those who, as a result of the local conflicts consequent on this return, are at present victims of situations that are gravely unjust. Therefore, let us turn our eyes attentively towards this land, visited by God, and let us bear within ourselves a lively hope that it may become a place where all its inhabitants, Jews and non-Jews, may live in peace. Christians as well as Jews are faced with the essential question: will the ingathering of the dispersed Jews effected under the constraint of persecution and the interplay of political forces be finally, in spite of so many dramas, one of the channels of God's justice for the Jewish people, and at the same time, for all the peoples of the earth, or will it not? How can Christians remain indifferent to what is now being decided in that land?

#### VI. TO FOSTER A MUTUAL KNOWLEDGE AND RESPECT (« NOSTRA AETATE » 4)

Most of the encounters between Jews and Christians are today still marked by mutual ignorance and sometimes by a certain mistrust. This ignorance and mistrust have in the past, and can again in the future, give rise to grave misunderstandings and formidable evils. We consider it an essential and urgent task for priests, people, and those responsible for education at all levels, to strive to rouse in Christian people a better understanding of Judaism, of its tradition, of its customs and of its history.

The first condition of this is that Christians should

at all times respect the Jew, regardless of his way of being Jewish. They must try to understand him as he understands himself instead of judging him by their own categories of thought. They must respect his convictions, his aspirations, his rites and his attachment to them. They must also admit that without detriment to the fundamental unity of Jewish existence, there can be different ways of being Jewish or of considering oneself as such.

The second condition is that in meetings between Christians and Jews the right of each one to give full witness to his faith must be recognized. He must not on this account be suspected of a disloyal desire to draw anybody away from the other community into his own. Such an intention should be excluded not only because of that respect which is a condition of all dialogue between men no matter who they may be, but still more for this particular reason to which Christians, and especially pastors, should be very attentive: the Jewish people, as a people, has been the object of an « eternal Covenant », without which the « New Covenant » itself would not exist. Therefore, far from aiming at the disappearance of the Jewish community, the Church recognizes herself in the quest for a living link with it. A great openness of mind, mistrust of one's prejudices and a keen sense of the psychological conditioning of the individual are, in the face of such problems, indispensable pastoral qualities.

Even if, in the present context of « civilization without frontiers », there are personal proceedings which escape the intentions of the two communities, their mutual respect should not change.

## VII. THE CHURCH AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

a) The Jewish people is conscious of having received, through its particular vocation, a universal mission to the nations. The Church on her side considers that her own mission cannot be situated elsewhere than in the same purpose of universal salvation.

b) Israel and the Church are not complementary institutions. The permanence of Israel and the Church in the position of opposites is a sign that God's plan is not yet fulfilled. The Jewish and the Christian peoples are thus, with regard to unity, at variance, or as St. Paul says, « jealous » (Rom. 11:14, cf. Deut. 32:21).

c) The words of Jesus himself and the teaching of Paul bear witness to the role of the Jewish people in the accomplishment of both the ultimate unity of humanity and that of Israel and the nations. Thus the present quest of Judaism for its own unity cannot be alien to God's plan of salvation. Neither can it be unrelated to the efforts of Christians to find their own unity, although these two intentions are being accomplished in very different ways.

But if Jews and Christians fulfil their vocation in different ways, history shows that their paths are always crossing. Are they not both preoccupied with messianic times? It is therefore to be desired that they should at last begin to recognize and understand each other, to renounce their age-old hostility and turn to the Father in a common hope which will be a promise for the whole earth.

### Summer Sessions 1973

#### SÉANQUE, FRANCE

Third International Week of Jewish Studies

Dates: July 8 - 15

Theme: The study of Jewish mysticism

Write: Abbaye de Séanque, 84 Gordes

#### NAPLES

Eleventh Session of Ecumenical Formation

Dates: July 28 - August 5

Theme: Eucharist and Unity

Write: Maria Vingiani, Segretariato Attività Ecumeniche, via Cava Aurelia 8, 00165 Roma

#### LES AVENTS, FRANCE

Israel Week: July 17 - 23

Theme: Jewish tradition from the Bible to the Talmud

Islam Week: August 1 - 7

Theme: Religious values of Islam

Write: Père André Fabre, Les Avents, Peyregoux, 81100 Castres

#### SEMINAR IN ISRAEL

Dates: July 14 - August 20

Theme: The Jewish Sources of Christianity: Literary and Archaeological

Write: Sr. Rose Thering, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey 07079



ARCHDIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES

1531 WEST NINTH STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015

DUnkirk 6-8101

July 16th, 1973

Reverend Royale M. Vadakin  
St. Anthony's Rectory  
1901 South San Gabriel Boulevard  
San Gabriel, California 91776

Dear Father Vadakin:

In pursuit of the mind of the Vatican Council and the guidelines set by the United States Catholic hierarchy for Catholic and Jewish relations, we would like to sponsor an initial dialogue between Rabbis and Priests. This will have the advantage of fraternal association so reminiscent of the open arms of Pope John and his endearing expression - "I am Joseph, your brother".

In addition to this, it is hoped that such meetings would foster the education of those involved by presentations and discussions of topics of basic interest, and also the review of the guidelines for continued dialogue.

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to such a meeting. It will consist of about twenty invited guests. We have the most acceptable facilities available to us through the kindness of the Claretian Fathers at the Claretian Center, 1119 Westchester Place, Los Angeles. The date we have selected is Sunday, September 30th, 1973, and the event would proceed as follows:

5:45 - 6:30 P.M. Social  
6:30 - 7:30 P.M. Dinner  
8:00 - 10:00 P.M. Presentation and Discussions

We wish to assure our Jewish guests that the proper dietary regulations will be respected and observed under the guidance and direction of Rabbi Harry Essrig.

Father Royale Vadakin, who has been the sustaining advocate of our Ecumenical programs, has consented to supervise the details of this meeting. I would appreciate that your response be directed to him at St. Anthony's Rectory, 1901 South San Gabriel Boulevard, San Gabriel, California 91776.

With sentiments of esteem, I am

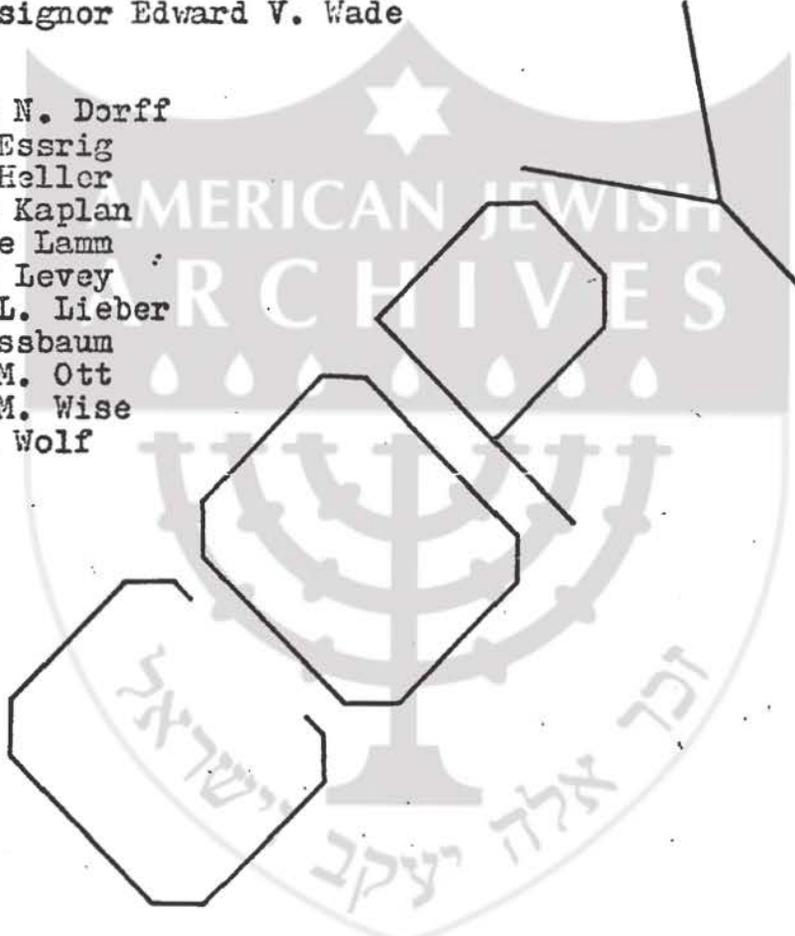
Very sincerely yours,

*Timothy Cardinal Manning*

Timothy Cardinal Manning  
Archbishop of Los Angeles

Reverend Charles S. Casassa, S.J.  
Reverend Monsignor John Chedid  
Reverend George Ferrick  
Reverend Augustine Flood  
Reverend Vincent Martin, O.S.B.  
Reverend Hugh Noonan, O.F.M.  
Reverend Edward Penonzek  
Reverend Patrick G. Thompson  
Reverend Royale M. Vadakin  
Reverend Philip A. Van Linden, C.M.  
Reverend Monsignor Edward V. Wade

Rabbi Elliot N. Dorff  
Rabbi Harry Essrig  
Rabbi Meyer Heller  
Rabbi Morris Kaplan  
Rabbi Maurice Lamm  
Rabbi Samson Levey  
Rabbi David L. Lieber  
Rabbi Max Nussbaum  
Rabbi Jacob M. Ott  
Rabbi Aaron M. Wise  
Rabbi Alfred Wolf





FAITH AND ORDER STUDY

## *A Statement to our Fellow Christians*

The Executive Committee of the Commission on Faith and Order of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. received on May 31, 1973 A STATEMENT TO OUR FELLOW CHRISTIANS based on the study on Israel: People, Land, State and took the following action: That A STATEMENT TO OUR FELLOW CHRISTIANS be transmitted to the Commission on Faith and Order and to appropriate Christian and Jewish organizations for study and response with the understanding that

- 1) it does not carry either approval or endorsement by the Commission;
- 2) it represents a stage in a process leading, it is hoped, to a fuller theological statement;
- 3) it is the responsibility of the signatories and not a consensus of the religious communities to which they belong.

1. The Church of Christ is rooted in the life of the People Israel. We Christians look upon Abraham as our spiritual ancestor and father of our faith. For us the relationship is not one of physical descent but the inheritance of a faith like that of Abraham whose life was based on his trust in the promises made to him by God (Gen. 15:1-6). The ministry of Jesus and the life of the early Christian community were thoroughly rooted in the Judaism of their day, particularly in the teachings of the Pharisees. The Christian Church is still sustained by the living faith of the patriarchs and prophets, kings and priests, scribes and rabbis, and the people whom God chose for his own. Christ is the link (Gal. 3:26-29) enabling the Gentiles to be numbered among Abraham's "offspring" and therefore fellow-heirs with the Jews according to God's promise. It is a tragedy of history that Jesus, our bond of unity with the Jews, has all too often become a symbol and source of division and bitterness because of human weakness and pride.

2. Christians can also enrich themselves by a careful study of post-biblical Judaism to the present day. Such enrichment is especially imperative in light of the far-reaching value crisis that now affects the entire Western world. If religion is to play its rightful role in the value reconstruction that is now beginning, its approach will have to be ecumenical. And in the West this

means, first of all, the recognition that two religious traditions, not a single Judaeo-Christian tradition, have shaped our culture; and secondly, the genuine and open sharing of insights and differences between Jews and Christians, each realizing that one's understanding of the spiritual nature of the human person remains incomplete without the other.

3. The singular grace of Jesus Christ does not abrogate the covenantal relationship of God with Israel (Rom. 11:1-2). In Christ the Church shares in Israel's election without superseding it. By baptism and faith the Christian, as the Roman liturgy says, passes over to the sonship of Abraham and shares in the dignity of Israel. The survival of the Jewish people, despite the barbaric persecutions and the cruel circumstances under which they were forced to live, is a sign of God's continuing fidelity to the people dear to him. For our spiritual legacy and for all that the Jews have done for the whole human race we Christians are grateful to God and to the people whom God has chosen as a special instrument of his kindness.

4. The new ecumenical atmosphere in theological research and the tragic reality of the Holocaust together with the present Middle East conflict urge us to reconsider the relationship of Christians to Jews. We Christians have already acknowledged that God made a covenant with the Jews in the past, promising his paternal care for his chosen people in return for their fidelity. Unfortunately many Christians have assumed that the validity of Judaism ended with the beginning of Christianity, the rejection of Jesus as Messiah marking the dissolution of the covenant. This assumption conflicts sharply with St. Paul's declaration that God did not annul his promise to the chosen people since God never takes back his gifts or revokes his call (Romans 11, 28-29). The Apostle dismissed as altogether untenable the notion that God had rejected his people.

*The Faith and Order Study Group on Christian-Jewish relations was convened in the Fall of 1969 under the aegis of the National Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission with the cooperation of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. In line with its initial decision to work toward the creation of a major new statement on Christian-Jewish relations, the group spent considerable time in study and discussion of the principal issues with which this statement would have to deal. Input was sought and received from Christian, Jewish and Muslim scholars.*

*Included were major papers by: Hans Eberhard von Waldow on "Israel and Her Land: Some Theological Considerations"; Dr. Hassan Hanafi on "The Theology of the Land: An Islamic Approach"; Professor John Townsend on "Israel's Land Promises under the New Covenant"; Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg on "The Meaning of the Land of Israel to the Jewish Community"; Lucy S. Dawidowicz on "Reflections on the Holocaust"; Professor Leonard J. Fein on "Jewish Particularism in Contemporary Universalism"; Dr. J. Coert Rylaarsdam on "The Two Covenants and Dilemmas of Christology"; Professor Walter Harrelson on "The Christian Bible and Judaism"; Professor Franklin Littell on "Kirkenkampf and Holocaust"; William Harter on "Jewish-Christian Relations in the 1970's: A Protestant View"; and John Pawlikowski, "Catholic-Jewish Relations: 1945-1972--An Interpretative History." The Study Group also spent considerable time analyzing the statement on Christian-Jewish relations issued by the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church.*

*Upon completion of two years of discussion and study, the group began writing its own statement which, after several drafts, appears on the following pages. The Study Group intends to spend the next year seriously considering comments on its statement from interested parties, both Christian and non-Christian.*

There is thus strong Scriptural support for the position that God's covenant love for the Jewish people remains firm. The continuity of contemporary Judaism with ancient Israel demonstrates the abiding validity of Jewish worship and life as authentic forms of service to the true God.

5. The fierce persecution of Jews by Christians through the centuries should be seen as a fratricidal strife as well as a vast human tragedy. In many instances Christian preachers and writers disseminated slanderous stories about the Jews. From the apostolic age the Church accepted uncritically the condemnation of the Pharisees as hypocrites even though the Synoptic Gospels picture Jesus as generally agreeing with what many Pharisees actually stood for. Whole generations of Christians looked with contempt upon this people who were condemned to remain wanderers on the earth on the charge, in fact false, of having killed Christ. Anti-Jewish polemics became a perennial feature of Christendom and reflected gross ignorance of Jewish history and religion. This sin has infected the non-Christian world as well.

6. A major source of friction in contemporary Christian-Jewish relations is Christian hostility and indifference to the State of Israel. In dialogue among Christians on the Middle East question there exists a startling variety of opinions, some of which exacerbate already existing Christian-Jewish misunderstandings. We urge the churches therefore to give their prayerful attention to such central questions as the legitimacy of the Jewish state, the rights of the Palestinians, and the problem of the refugees-Jewish as well as Arab. Only a conscience seeking to be well-informed and free of prejudice can help to bring about peace with justice in the Middle East.

7. The validity of the State of Israel rests on moral and juridical grounds. It was established in response to a resolution of the U. N. General Assembly, after termination of the British Mandate. However, involved in the potentially explosive political conflict in the Middle East is a theological question that demands careful scrutiny. What is the relationship between "the people" and "the land"? What is the relation between the chosen people and the territory comprising the present State of Israel? There is no Christian consensus on these questions. Genesis explicitly affirms a connection between the people and the land (Gen. 15:18), and even within the New Testament certain passages imply such a connection. Therefore, Christians who see Israel as something more than a political state are not wrongly theologizing politics by understanding the existence of the Jewish state in theological terms. They are merely recognizing that modern Israel is the homeland of a people whose political identity is sustained by the faith that God has blessed them with a covenant. There is reason for Christians to rejoice that the Jewish people are no longer required to live in enforced dispersion among the nations, separated from the land of the promise.

8. We have traditionally viewed the Jews as a people having a universal dimension. God wanted them to set up a special society dedicated to the fulfillment of the messianic aspirations for righteousness and freedom. Even when dispersed they became a summons to the human conscience to safeguard and protect the rights of all people. Here in the United States the Jewish contribution to the advancement of human rights remains outstanding. Now the question arises:

is the Jewish people so universalistic as to exclude the possibility of their having a state of their own? It does seem to many observers that the localizing of Jewish activities gives a greater opportunity to fulfill their universal vocation than would an unfocused global presence.

9. As a political state, Israel is open to all the temptations of power. As a result of its military triumphs in the Six-Day War, the charge is sometimes made that Israel is belligerently expansionistic. Visitors to Israel, however, can easily discover that the overriding concern of the majority of Israelis is peace, not more territory. Israel's anxiety about national defense reflects the age-old human yearning for security, the anxiety of a people whose history has been a saga of frightful persecution, climaxed by the Holocaust of six million men, women and children. Against such a tormented background, is it surprising that the Jewish people should want to defend themselves? It would be quite unrealistic and unjust to expect Israel to become a sort of heavenly society of which more is demanded than of other nations. This does not mean that Christians must endorse every policy decision by the Israeli government. Many Jews, both within Israel and without, do not do so. Rather, Christians must refrain from the type of criticism that would use Israel's failures, real or imagined, to live up to the highest moral standards as an excuse to deny its right to exist. Such a view would be a double standard, one not applied to any other nation on earth.

10. As Christians we urge all nations in the world (our own nation, Israel, and the Arab states included) to recognize that there is no way to secure lasting peace based on the balance of military power and the use of fear as a deterrent. Rather, the only road leading to peace is trust in and understanding of neighbors and partners. We urge the Church to attend to its role as an agent of reconciliation.

11. At present antisemitism is unfashionable and seems to have gone underground in the United States, though some recent studies show it is on the rise. But even an underground antisemitism surfaces from time to time in various forms and disguises. New Left literature has excoriated the Jews not as Jews but as "Zionists." Antisemitism, however, is a difficult virus to counteract. It has a pervasiveness that infects our whole civilization and manifests itself in education, housing, job opportunities and social life. Fortunately some Christian churches are working hard to excise from their liturgy and education any antisemitic references.

12. Those who refuse to learn from history must relive the errors and evils of the past. In times of civil disorders, agitators have arisen and will continue to appear in our society attempting to make Jews the scapegoats for the evils of an era. If problems like inflation and unemployment continue to escalate, if a depression should set in, we can be fairly sure that the radical Right and/or the radical Left will make Jews out to be the culprits.

13. The pressure of our violent times urges us as Christians to live up to our calling as ministers of reconciliation, ready and willing to stifle rumors about the Jews and to build up an atmosphere of brotherly understanding in

Christian-Jewish relations. We strongly commend Jewish-Christian dialogue as a favored instrument by which we may explore the richness of Judaism and the Jewish roots of our Christian faith.

14. The pain of the past has taught us that antisemitism is a Pandora's box from which spring out not only atrocities against Jews but also contempt for Christ. Whatever the antisemite inflicts on the Jews he inflicts on Christ who is "bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh." In the words of St. Paul, "They are Israelites and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race according to the flesh is the Christ" (Rom. 9:4-5).

---

This statement is the responsibility of the signatories, who during the past four years have been convened as a study group and assisted by the Commission on Faith and Order of the National Council of Churches of Christ in collaboration with the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. We cordially invite your response. Study papers supporting the views herein expressed are available on request. Address requests and responses to Commission on Faith and Order, National Council of Churches, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, N.Y. 10027.

(Institutions and church affiliations are listed for purposes of identification only)

Dr. Markus Barth  
University of Basel  
Basel, Switzerland

[Reformed Church, formerly  
United Presbyterian]

Dr. Roland de Corneille  
National Director  
League for Human Rights of B'nai B'rith  
Toronto, Canada

[Anglican]

Dr. A. Roy Eckardt  
Lehigh University  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

[United Methodist]

Rev. Edward H. Flannery  
Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations  
Washington, D.C.

[Roman Catholic]

Dr. Robert T. Handy  
Union Theological Seminary  
New York, New York

[American Baptist Churches]

Dr. Walter J. Harrelson, Dean  
Divinity School, Vanderbilt University  
Nashville, Tennessee

[American Baptist/Disciples of Christ]

Rev. William H. Harter, Pastor  
Margaretville-New Kingston  
United Presbyterian Parish  
Margaretville, N.Y.

[United Presbyterian]

Dr. Frank H. Littell  
Director of Graduate Religious Studies  
Temple University  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

[United Methodist]

Msgr. John M. Oesterreicher, Director  
Institute of Judaean-Christian Studies  
Seton Hall University  
South Orange, New Jersey  
[Roman Catholic]

Dr. Bernhard E. Olson  
National Director of Interreligious Affairs  
National Conference of Christians and Jews  
New York, New York  
[United Methodist]

Rev. John T. Pawlikowski, O.S.M.  
Catholic Theological Union  
Chicago, Illinois  
[Roman Catholic]

Rt. Rev. Leo Rudloff, O.S.B., Abbot  
Benedictine Priory  
Weston, Vermont  
[Roman Catholic]

Dr. J. Coert Rylaarsdam  
Marquette University  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
[Reformed Church in America]

Rev. John B. Sheerin, C.S.P.  
The New Catholic World  
New York, New York  
[Roman Catholic]

Rev. Theodore Stylianopoulos  
Hellenic College  
Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary  
Brookline, Massachusetts  
[Greek Orthodox]

Sister Rose Thering, O.P.  
Institute of Judaean-Christian Studies  
Seton Hall University  
South Orange, New Jersey  
[Roman Catholic]

Dr. John T. Townsend  
Philadelphia Divinity School  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
[Episcopal Church]

Dr. Hans Eberhard von Waldow  
Pittsburgh Theological Seminary  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
[Lutheran Church in America]

#### RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHURCHES

[These recommendations and the following questions for further study are attached to the Faith and Order Document].

We call upon Christians to recognize and to respond to God's love for the Jewish people. We affirm this love to be expressed by his presence with them in history to this day and by his choice of them as bearers of the Christ, His Son. We perceive this love to require concrete responses in the life and work of the Christian churches. Among such responses we recommend the following:

##### 1. Sensitivity and balance in use of New Testament texts

There are numerous NT texts which might be interpreted as reflecting negatively on Jews and Judaism. In reading and interpreting such texts as we must constantly remember that Jesus was a Jew. His forebears were Jews. He lived and taught among the Jews. His dress, his manner of speaking, his mode of life, his teaching reflected the Judaism of the time. Therefore, conflict and controversies must be seen as taking place within a framework which he not only shared with fellow-Jews, but which he and God affirmed.

Caution in this respect is particularly advisable when treating the Pharisees. Conflicts with the Pharisees were internal Jewish struggles. The diatribes reflect serious family quarrels which took place between Jews and Jesus' followers in the nascent church. They underline God's choice to reveal himself through a Jewish context, rather than indicating a total rejection of Jews or Pharisees. Jesus, in fact, agreed with Pharisaic perspectives on many points, as did Paul and other early church leaders.

2. Preaching which portrays or refers to Jews, Judaism, and the OT in a positive light

Christian preaching employs negative as well as positive examples, images, and experimental analogies. We try to teach what not to do as well as what to do. Some examples of what not to do lie ready at hand in the words or actions of Jews in the NT. Preachers must guard against any tendency to portray Jews or Jewish groups as negative models. The truth and beauty of Christianity should not be enhanced by setting up Jews or Judaism as false and ugly. Likewise the OT witness should not be portrayed as less authoritative, less normative, or superseded. It is central to the tradition which our Lord accepted as his own and which he re-affirmed as He interpreted it in his life, work, and thought. The Judgment and the redeeming love of God should be presented as existing from the beginning to the end of both Testaments.

3. Receptivity to the way in which God's love continues to be revealed in Jewish self-expression

The varieties of modern Jewish religious and social experience reaffirm God's mysterious loving purpose in our world today. Fulfillment of commandments and ordinances, liturgy, festivals, family life, communal experience, the State of Israel, and many other aspects of Jewish experience inspire, influence, edify and challenge us. Christians must confront and respond with warmth and openness to the ways in which God is speaking and acting in and through Jewish life today.

As a corollary, we must prepare to speak and act forthrightly against all efforts to distort or to negate the status or value of Jewish life and experience. Jews are pilgrims with us, recipients of God's gracious love, sojourners on the way of salvation.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. In what sense are Christians "God's chosen people"? Is this an exclusive claim, or is the Jewish people part of God's continuing work in history (Romans 9:4)? If "chosen," what are Christians "chosen" for?
2. In what sense are the Jews a covenant people? Are Christians possessors of a second covenant, a shared covenant, or a renewed covenant?
3. Is an ecumenical movement without the Jewish component dependable and valid? What is the role of Christian-Jewish dialogue in the future of the church? What are the agreed areas of Jewish-Christian cooperation?
4. What is the meaning of the Holocaust to believing Christians? What is the responsibility of Christendom in relation to the Holocaust?
5. Is not antisemitism a betrayal of the faith? Is not antisemitism also antichristianity (Heschel)?
6. To what extent must Jews and Christians read the Jewish scriptures (which we call "Old Testament") differently?
  - (a) Does the acceptance of Jesus Christ mean reading the OT differently?
  - (b) In what sense are certain events in Jewish history - like the Exodus and Sinai - also formative for the Christian faith?

7. How can Christianity benefit from post-biblical Judaism?
8. To what extent have Christians taught and are still teaching that which creates religious antisemitism and lays the foundations for the political antisemitism whose horrors we have seen in recent decades?
9. Should there be a conversionist mission to the Jews in the light of Paul's statements (Romans 9)?
10. Does the land of Israel have a special meaning for Christians? Is this meaning merely figurative?
11. Compare the concept of the Messiah in Christianity and Judaism.
  - A. What does it mean to say Jesus Christ is "the Messiah" (a Jewish word)?
  - B. Do we share in the Jewish anticipation of the Messianic era?
  - C. What are the implications for Christians that the Messianic era does not appear to have come?

#### FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- ++ Probe is a 4 page newsletter filled with information about printed and electronic material suitable for a variety of apostolic activities. Published ten times per year. Order from: Christian Associates of S.W. Pennsylvania, 401 Wood St., 1800 Arrott Bldg., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222. Subscription: five dollars per year.
- ++ NCC Abortion Statement. The recent (and controversial) study on abortion issued by the National Council of Churches for consideration by its member Churches [Cf. Ecumenical Trends, April 1973, page 3], is available in booklet form. Also included are official statements on abortion by 16 Protestant and Orthodox Communion. Order from: Dept. of Publication Services, National Council of Churches, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, N.Y. 10027. Price 25 cents per copy.
- ++ Annual Conference of North American Academy of Ecumenists. September 28-30. Dayton, Ohio. Conference theme: "Concepts of Unity and Models of Union." Attendance open to non-members of the NAAE who are involved significantly in ecumenical relations and issues. Information: Dr. Arthur C. Core, United Theological Seminary, 1810 Harvard Blvd., Dayton, Ohio 45406.
- ++ 30,000 Volumes of Medieval Manuscripts on Microfilm. North American students probing the theology and piety of the Christian Church in the centuries immediately prior to the Reformation will welcome news that 30,000 volumes of medieval European manuscripts (more than nine million pages) are available on microfilm at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota. The collection is constantly being increased, with plans now being made to photograph manuscripts in Spain, Ethiopia and Malta. About 8,000 of the present 30,000 volumes have been catalogued.