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Box 20, Folder 3, Fine, Morris, 1974-1981.

COPY

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Institute of Human Relations
165 EAST 56TH STREET NEW YORK 22, N.Y.

PARIS OFFICE

30, rue La Boétie
Paris VIII*

FO-Eur
December 24, 1974

Dear Morris:

I held up the memorandum summarizing the article on the visit to Europe of the Saudi Arabia Ulemas to wait for a copy of the statement of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, which we learned was made by Dr. Johan M. Snoek.

A photocopy of this is enclosed, and I am sure it will be of particular interest to Marc in view of his forthcoming meetings in London and Rome.

With very best regards,

Sincerely,

Nives Fox

Enclosures

cc: Tanenbaum
Liskofsky

Mr. Morris Fine
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56 Street
New York, N.Y. 10022

C O P Y

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Institute of Human Relations
165 EAST 56TH STREET NEW YORK 22, N.Y.

PARIS OFFICE

30, rue La Boétie
Paris VIII*

FO-Eur
December 19, 1974

MEMORANDUM

To: Morris Fine
From: Nives Fox
Subj: Ulemas - European Tour
(Summary of article by Elisabeth Schemla, Express, 16/22 Dec. 74)

As we informed you, there was barely a mention in the daily press about the 17 day visit to Europe of the Saudi Arabia ulemas. But this week's Express gave them full honors with photographs and a 15 page story by Elisabeth Schemla, the only journalist permitted to accompany the group on their tour to Rome, Strasbourg, Geneva and Paris. (Ms Schemla, incidentally, is Jewish. It is not known whether the ulemas were aware of this, nor how it came about that a woman be chosen for this reportage, given the attitude and practices current in Moslem lands, and especially among religious leaders, with regard to the "weaker sex.")

It is the ulemas themselves who wished no publicity, and all but one in the group limited their tour to the strict schedule prepared for them. For all that this was the first time any of them visited the world outside Saudi Arabia, they made it very clear that they considered the ways of the West foreign --and this in its most pejorative sense -- ungodly, corrupt and decadent; and that contact with the every day street scene risked "defilement." But the group was also convinced that it was their duty to take a first step toward a meeting and detente with western civilization, especially as this was the expressed wish of their King.

Their first public sortie was in Strasbourg, for a debate in the Council of Europe on the rights of man and the unity of the human family. "The hour has come for us to come out of isolation. We have come to explain Islam to you, the laws and structures of our land. We wish to learn about yours and understand European structures. We are not here to show you our folklore...We are not here to sign oil contracts or to engage in tourism. The King sent us because there is need for a rapprochement of our two worlds."

But the major exchange took place in Geneva, at the Ecumenical Council of Churches, on the subject of Jerusalem: "Christians have used the holy places as a pretext to augment their political influence in

Jerusalem, in the Holy Land and in the Middle East...Full religious liberty must be insured for the three historic faiths, and access to Holy Places guaranteed, preferably by international action." This was the opening statement of contrition by the Protestants, and there can be little amazement at the rejoinder which, to everyone's surprise, was given by the private Counsel to King Faisal, Mr. Maaruf Daoualibi, instead of the leader of the ulemas, Sheik Al Arkan. Here is part of what he said during an hour long address:

"Israel and its defenders work on a policy of fait accompli. You cannot go back, a country established for 25 years cannot be erased from the map, say the Zionists. Well, they must give up this point of view!

The Jews are invaders and colonizers. They justify their presence by the law of return to the promised Land. But you, Europeans, would you accept that Rome or Athens, in the name of a past that is thousands of years old, upset the map of your countries and show territorial pretensions? No. Palestine must be returned to the Palestinians. It belongs only to the Palestinians. Golda Meir is Russian? Let her return to Russia! Levy Eshkol is Rumanian? Let him return to Rumania! Of course, Palestinian Jews who were there from ancient times may remain in Palestine, to live within the framework of an inter-confessional state. This could also be accepted for Palestinian Christians. Their prayer sites and their religious freedom will be protected..."

As the writer of the article comments: "A speech that goes even further than that given 15 days later, at the UN, by Yasser Arafat." "The eminent personalities of the Ecumenical Council abstained from comment," continues Ms Schemla. "For, after all, hasn't Saudi Arabia just now officially assured them of their (Christian) presence on Palestinian soil? Everyone knows that King Faisal dreams of ecumenism in this region of the world, to be established around Jerusalem, which he considers the third Holy City of Islam and where he dreams to be able to pray before dying."

In Geneva the Ulemas also visited the Red Cross and the ILO. Saudi Arabia is not a member of the ILO, but this is blithely explained away by the distinguished visitors: "If we do not adhere to your organization it is so that we may better apply its principles..." Such saintly pearls of wisdom are dropped throughout the tour: "Islam was ahead of the Declaration of the Rights of Man (ed: not signed by Saudi Arabia) by 14 centuries. But it went beyond it, making the right to education a strict obligation." Koranic verses are frequently cited to show that nothing really opposes understanding with European nations. "The Arab is no better than the non-Arab, nor is white superior to black for reasons other than his piety." And on the subject of freedom of conscience: "There is no constraint in religion. Is it for you to oblige people to believe?"

The three days spent in Rome also verge on the spectacular. Cardinal Pignedoli (President of the Secretariat for non-Christians) awaits them at the airport tarmac and is their host in the city. There will be hours and hours of work and discussion at the Cardinal's palace, interrupted one morning for a solemn audience with the Pope.

A short meeting, a short, warm welcome. "Your presence," says Paul VI, "shows that Moslems and Christians can reach better understanding and learn to love each other more..." And, of course, a ceremonial exchange of gifts. But what a historic occasion, all agree, wiping out 13 centuries of mortal struggle between Christians and Moslems. The Vatican meetings are emphasized with themes of common interest rather than differences: "We all believe in God, the God of Abraham, of Jesus, of Mahommed and the Prophets. Common to all of us, too, is the struggle to save the places of prayer of Moslems, Christians and Jews."

On the way back to Paris and home a second stop of the ulemas in Strasbourg brought another sign of Arab desire for closer ties with the Christian world. Amid wide-eyed cries of "The Palestinians are entering the Cathedra!" the ulemas filed in procession through its portals. They are greeted by Msgr. Elchinger, the Bishop of Strasbourg: "You have come from the heart of Islam...you are now in the heart of Europe..." As the hour of noon struck, the ulemas knelt facing Mecca -- spotted with a compass they each carry in their pockets -- and prayed at the foot of the organ...their backs turned to the cross.

For all their saintly pronouncements and behavior, the ulemas made it clear that they were perfectly aware of the issues important to the Church these days: the situation of Christian communities and missionaries in Africa and Asia, the question of Jerusalem; and of the problems facing it: the crisis of a society that has become overly materialistic, excessively industrialized, and in which traditional values are breaking down or are lost sight of. They do not wish to have changes in Moslem society that will lead to such results... perhaps they can teach Europe a lesson?

cc: Liskofsky
Tanenbaum

Tarek

VISIT OF SAUDI ARABIAN ULAMA TO THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, GENEVA

THURSDAY, 31 OCTOBER 1974

Introduction to the Discussion on Jerusalem

This opportunity to discuss with our distinguished guests issues related to the Holy City of Jerusalem is for me a great honor and privilege, as well as the fulfilment of a desire which has been voiced more than once by the World Council of Churches.

Thus, the WCC Central Committee meeting in Canterbury (1969) recommended that:

"serious consideration be given by the appropriate departments of the World Council of Churches to initiating discussions with Christians, Jews and Muslims as to the guardianship of the Holy Places, the status of Jerusalem and the people of the city".

Even this year, the WCC Central Committee, meeting in Berlin (August 1974) stated that the issues regarding Jerusalem "should also become subjects for dialogue with Jewish and Muslim participants".

We are most grateful for your visit, as now we can initiate this dialogue with you who come from the heart land of Islam, from the country of two of Islam's Holy Cities and as we know that Jerusalem is dear to your heart.

The same declaration on Jerusalem which was issued this year and which was quoted just before, also stated:

"Jerusalem is a Holy City for three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The tendency to minimize Jerusalem's importance for any of these three religions should be avoided".

We Christians should confess in penitence that we ourselves have not always lived up to this exhortation. On the contrary, instead of being sensitive to the deep attachment to Jerusalem of people of other living faiths, some Christians have violated the rights of others; in this respect, I should mention the dark era of the crusades, or,

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more recently, the fact that so-called Christian nations used the Christian Holy Places as a pretext and stepping stone to increase their own political influence in the city of Jerusalem, the Holy Land and the Middle-East.

This consciousness of mistakes made and sins committed in the past, has led many Christians to being opposed to suggestions to internationalize the Holy City, which might again open the way for powers outside the region to promote, directly or indirectly, their influence for their own aims.

However, the World Council of Churches is in favour of full religious freedom and access to Jerusalem. As the General Assembly (Uppsala, 1968) stated:

"Full religious freedom and access to Holy Places must continue to be guaranteed to the communities of all three historic religions preferably by international agreement".

The underlying conviction is, that Jerusalem is Holy to the three religions: Islam, Christianity and Judaism.

I need not recall Christian reverence for and concern about Jerusalem, as my colleague Archpriest Georgios Tsetsis has already dealt with this subject. Again, I hardly need to underline to this distinguished company the deep feelings of Muslims everywhere regarding the Holy City (al-Quds). Fortunately, an increasing number of Christians are aware that for Muslims Jerusalem is the Holy City, where Abraham submitted to the Will of God and was ready to sacrifice his son; "the most remote sanctuary", from where the Prophet Muhammad ascended into heaven and where the Final Judgement will take place.

Also, an increasing number of Christians are aware of the meaning of the Holy City to Judaism: the name Jerusalem is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible some 750 times; in the grace which Jews say after every meal, the third benediction reads: "And rebuild Jerusalem, the Holy

City, speedily and in our days; blessed art Thou O Lord who builds in His mercy Jerusalem". For as back as we have evidence until today, synagogues have been built oriented towards Jerusalem.

Therefore, Christians should never forget that Jerusalem has great significance for both Muslims and Jews.

In searching a solution, opinions differ also within the Christian world. In "Suggestions for a Theological Evaluation", adopted by the Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church (June 1970) the difference of opinion becomes manifest:

"This city, which because of its history has great meaning for many Christians and Muslims, ought to be a kind of experimental garden where various nations may live together in peace. But as soon as we state this, questions arise which we cannot answer unanimously".

It appears that a solution through which Jerusalem can really become a City of Peace, is extremely difficult to find.

The World Council of Churches has stressed that not only Holy Places are important to the three religions:

"But the question of Jerusalem is not only a matter of protection of the Holy Places, it is organically linked with living faiths and communities of people in the Holy City.

...

Any solution on Jerusalem should take into account the rights and needs of the indigenous people of the Holy City". (Berlin, 1974; my italics)

Perhaps one of the important questions to be asked - and to be solved - is: how can we discover the right pattern of sharing ?

I conclude with a quotation from the prophet Isaiah, who described a great vision about universal peace and the unity of mankind:

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

- 4 -

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more".

(Isaiah 2: 2-4)

Let us continue to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. May those who love her prosper.

Johan M. Snoek

6/6

Marc

I took the tape of your address home and listened to it while I had the transcript before me. In this way I was able to correct many of the obvious errors in transcription and fill in many of the blanks (though not all). Rita was then good enough to retype it, and it is attached.

Now you have to convert it from a spoken text to a printable version. This shouldn't be too hard or time-consuming for you. I do need it, like as of yesterday. Could I have it by Monday? Please let me know.

Rita can fill you in on my conversations with Stendahl.

Morris

PREFACE

INTRO

1.1 "One of the functions of dialogue is to allow participants to describe, and witness to, their faith in their own terms. This is of primary importance since self-serving descriptions of other peoples' faith are one of the roots of prejudice, stereotyping, and condescension. Listening carefully to the neighbours' self-understanding enables Christians better to obey the commandment not to bear false witness against their neighbours. It should be recognized by partners in dialogue that any religion or ideology claiming universality, apart from having an understanding of itself, will also have its own interpretations of other religions and ideologies as part of its own self-understanding. Dialogue gives an opportunity for a mutual questioning of the understanding partners have about themselves and others. It is out of a reciprocal willingness to listen and learn that significant dialogue grows." (WCC Guidelines on Dialogue, III:4)

1.2 In giving such guidelines the WCC speaks ~~only~~ for and to its member churches as it defines the need for and gifts to be received by dialogue. People of other faiths may choose to define their understanding of dialogue, and their expectations as to how dialogue with Christians may affect their own traditions and attitudes and may lead to a better understanding of Christianity.

1.3 In Jewish-Christian dialogues it is of special importance to allow for a certain asymmetry between these two communities of faith. For example, an interpretation of Judaism is an integral and indispensable part of any Christian theology. For Jews, a "theological" understanding of Christianity may well be of a less than essential or integral significance although neither community of faith has developed without awareness of the other.

An understanding of Judaism in N.T. times becomes

1.4 The relations between Jews and Christians have unique characteristics already from the ways in which Christianity historically emerged out of Judaism- Christian understandings of that process constitute a necessary part of the dialogue, and give urgency to the enterprise. As Christianity came to define its own identity over again Judaism, the Church developed her own understandings, definitions, and terms for what she had inherited from Jewish traditions, and for what she read in the Scriptures common to Jews and Christians. In the process of defining her own identity the Church defined Judaism, and assigned to Israel and the Jews definite roles in her understanding of God's acts of salvation. It should not be surprising that Jews resent those Christian theologies in which they as a people are assigned to play a negative role (in the schemes of Christians). History has demonstrated over and over again how short the step is from such patterns of thought in Christianity to overt acts of condescension, persecutions and worse.

1.5 Bible reading and worshipping Christians often believe that they "know Judaism" since they have the Old Testament, the records of Jesus' debates with Jewish teachers and the early Christian reflections on the Judaism of their times. Furthermore, no other religious tradition is as thoroughly "defined" by the Church as is Judaism. This attitude is often enforced by lack of knowledge about the history of Jewish life and thought through the 1,900 years since the parting of the ways of Judaism and Christianity.

teachers
& preachers
in

has been

1.6 Already for these reasons there is special urgency for Christians to listen, through study and dialogue, to ways in which the Jews understand their history and their traditions, their faith and their obedience "in their own terms". Furthermore, a mutual listening to how each is perceived by the other, may be a step toward overcoming fears and correcting misunderstandings that have thrived on isolation.

1.7 Both Judaism and Christianity comprise a wide spectrum of opinions, options, theologies, and styles of life and service. Since generalizations often produce stereotyping, Jewish-Christian dialogue becomes the more significant by aiming at as full as possible a representation of views within the two communities of faith.

2. CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF JUDAISM

2.1 For Christians dialogue requires and fosters understanding of Judaism in its richness both in the past and in the present. The lack of knowledge among otherwise well-educated Christians about the history of the Jewish people after the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem (70 CE) has contributed to the feeling that Judaism dried up when Christianity entered the scene of history. Christians should be made aware of the continuing development of Judaism, especially Rabbinic Judaism as expressed in the Talmud. Through the centuries there has been a rich ongoing tradition of Jewish religious and philosophical literature and commentary of great spiritual and intellectual significance. In fact, contemporary Judaism, with its centres of learning and culture in both Israel and the Diaspora, constitutes one of the major resources for religious life and thought in the world.

Through dialogue with Jews, Christians are aided in overcoming their tendency to think of the Jews and their teachings in anachronistic terms. Just as Christianity has had a long history since the first century of the common era so has Judaism.

2. Christians lack of knowledge about, and interest in, Judaism as a living tradition is sometimes coupled with theological patterns by which Israel is regarded exclusively as a preparation for Christianity. Judaism is thereby denied any theological validity, and Christians claim the validity of God's revelation to themselves by negating the continued validity of God's revelation to the Jewish people. Such patterns of thought and teaching make not for dialogue in mutual respect, but rather for the kind of forced disputations by which the medieval church expressed its disdain for the Jews.

2.3 The negative image of the Pharisees found in much Christian preaching and writing remains one of the gravest distortions of Judaism. Such distortions are spread by Western culture and literature into many other parts of the world. It was from the Pharisees that Jesus learned the Golden Rule, with them he shared belief in resurrection.

Pharisaism was a dynamic religious movement that brought renewal to Judaism in the time of the Second Temple.

Pharisees had the religious vitality necessary for surviving the catastrophe of the loss of the Temple, and they built the structures by which the Jewish people has survived with integrity, scattered widely as they have been. Jesus' debates with the Pharisees indicate that they were the ones he took seriously; to them he addressed - like the prophets

2. TOWARD A CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF JUDAISM

2.1 Through dialogue with Jews, many Christians have come to appreciate the richness and vitality of Jewish faith and life in the covenant and have been enriched in their own understanding of God and the divine will for all creatures.

In dialogue with Jews, Christians have learned that the actual history of Jewish faith and experience does not match the images of Judaism that have dominated a long history of Christian teaching and writing, images that have been spread by Western culture and literature into other parts of the world.

2.2 To many Christians, Judaism as a living tradition came to an end with the coming of Christ and with the destruction of the second temple of Jerusalem; the Church replaced the Jews as God's people, and the Judaism which survived is a fossilized religion of legalism. *Became*

In this view the covenant of God with the people of Israel was only a preparation for the coming of Christ and was then abrogated. Judaism of the first centuries before and after the birth of Jesus was therefore called "Late Judaism". The Pharisees were considered to represent the acme of legalism. Jews and Jewish groups were portrayed as negative models, and the truth and beauty of Christianity were thought to be enhanced by setting up of Judaism as false and ugly.

2.3 Through a renewed study of Judaism and in dialogue with Jews, Christians become aware that Judaism in the time of Christ was in an early stage of its long life. Under the leadership of the Pharisees the Jewish people began a spiritual revival of remarkable power, which gave them the vitality capable of surviving the catastrophe of loss of the temple. It gave birth to Rabbinic Judaism which produced the Mishnah and Talmud and built the structures for a strong and creative life through centuries of persecution.

2.4 Jesus was a Jew, born into this Jewish tradition. In this setting he was nurtured by the Hebrew Scriptures which he accepted as authoritative and to which he gave a new interpretation in his life and teaching. In this context, Jesus announced that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and in his resurrection his followers found the confirmation of his being both Lord and Messiah.

some of
Christians should remember that *(the controversies reported in the New Testament between Jesus and the "scribes and Pharisees" find parallels within Pharisaism itself and its heir, Rabbinic Judaism. These controversies took place in a Jewish context, but when the words of Jesus came to be used by Christians who did not identify with the Jewish people as Jesus did, such sayings often became weapons in anti-Jewish polemics and thereby their original intention was tragically distorted. In this matter an internal Christian debate is taking place on the question of how to understand passages in the New Testament which seem to contain anti-Jewish references.*

2.5 Judaism with its rich history of spiritual life produced the Talmud as the normative guide for Jewish life in thankful response to the grace of God's covenant with the people of Israel. To this have been added over the centuries important commentaries, profound philosophical works and poetry of spiritual depth. The Talmud is for Jews as central and authoritative as the New Testament is for Christians, [Neither tradition is simply a religion of the Scriptures of Israel.] What Christians call the Old Testament has received in the Talmud and later writings interpretations which for Jews share in the authority of Moses.

Rabbinic Judaism is Jewish Tradition
- Judaism, no more than *it is identified in the Scriptures of Israel*
not only the religion of the Scriptures of Israel.

2.6 Christians as well as Jews look to the Hebrew Bible as the story recording Israel's sacred memory of God's election and covenant with this people. By Jewish understanding, it is their own story by historical continuity. Christians, *paraphrase* mostly Gentile since early in the life of the Church, believe themselves to be heirs by grace of this same story. The unique relationship between the two communities, both worshipping the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is a given historical fact, but how it is to be understood theologically is a matter of internal dialogue among Christians which takes on increased seriousness as a result of dialogue with Jews.

2.7 Both ~~communities~~ and commonalities and differences between the two faiths need to be examined carefully. In finding in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament the sole and ultimate authority sufficient for salvation, the Christian Church shares Israel's faith in the One God, but it knows him in the Spirit as the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. For Christians, Jesus Christ is the greatest gift humanity has received from God, for through him millions ~~of members of other peoples~~ have come to share in the love of and to adore the God who first made covenant with the people Israel. Knowing the One God in Jesus Christ through the Spirit, therefore, Christians worship him in a trinitarian confession of his incarnate presence with them, ~~words foreign to those with which Jews praise God.~~ *liturgical language*

sh worship
Christians and Jews both believe that God has created men and women as the crown of creation and has called them to be holy and to exercise stewardship over the creation in accountability to God. Jews and Christians are taught by their Scriptures to know ~~as~~ themselves responsible to their neighbours, especially to those who are weak, poor and oppressed. In various and distinct ways we look for the day in which God will redeem the creation. In dialogue with Jews many Christians come to a more profound appreciation of the Exodus hope of liberation, and pray and work for the coming of righteousness and peace on earth.

→ J.C. is the only begotten Son of the Father through whom

3 AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN WITNESS

3.1 Christians are called to witness to their faith in word and deed. The Church has a mission and it cannot be otherwise.

3.2 Christians have often distorted their ~~authentic~~ witness by coercive proselytism - conscious and unconscious, overt and subtle. In speaking about proselytism between Christian churches, in a study document of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC (Ecumenical Review, 1/1971, p.11) it was stated: "Proselytism embraces whatever violates the right of the human person, Christian or non-Christian, to be free from external coercion in religious matters".

3.3 Such rejection of proselytism, and such advocacy of respect for the integrity and the identity of all persons and all communities of faith are especially urgent in relation to ~~those Jews (who live as minorities among Christians.)~~ Steps toward assuring non-coercive practices are of highest importance. In dialogue ways should be found for the exchange of concerns, perceptions and safeguards in these matters.

3.4 While Christians agree that there can be no place for coercion of any kind, they do disagree - on the basis of their understandings of the Scriptures - as to what ~~constitutes~~ constitutes authentic forms of mission.

There is a wide spectrum, from those who see the very presence of the Church in the world as the witness called for, to those who see mission as the explicit and organized proclamation of the Gospel to all who have not accepted Jesus as their Saviour.

There is further disagreement where Jews are concerned. There are Christians who view a mission to the Jews as having ~~having~~ a very special salvific significance, and those who believe the conversion of the Jews to be the eschatological event that will climax the history of the world. There are those who ~~wish~~ insist that no special emphasis be placed on a mission to the Jews, since the mission is to all ~~(who have not accepted Christ as their saviour.)~~ There are those who believe that a mission to the Jews is not part of an authentic Christian witness, since the Jewish people finds its fulfilment in faithfulness to God's covenant of old.

Regardless of differing views of mission, Christians responding to the invitation to dialogue with people of other faiths, recognize that the ~~sole~~ intention in dialogue ~~must be~~ ^{is} to hear the others in order better to understand their faith, hopes, insights and concerns; and to ~~give to the best of one's ability~~ ^{in faith} one's own understanding of one's own faith. The spirit of dialogue is to be fully present to one another in full openness and human vulnerability.

3.5 In dialogue with Jews it should be remembered that, according to Rabbinic law, Jews who confess Jesus as the Messiah are considered apostate Jews. But for many Christians of Jewish origin, their identification with the Jewish people is a deep spiritual reality to which they seek to give expression in various ways, some by observing parts of Jewish tradition in worship and life style, many by a special commitment to the well-being of the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Among Christians of Jewish origin there is the same wide spectrum of attitudes toward mission as among other Christians, and the same guidelines for dialogue and against coercion apply.

of old - his critique of the foibles of any religious establishment, a critique which has parallels within Pharisaism itself and within its heir, Rabbinic Judaism. Whatever the Pharisaic movement was it was not an empty, legalistic system, but a dynamic and creative movement - as the later history of Judaism has shown.

- 2.4 In reading and interpreting the New Testament it must be remembered that Jesus was a Jew. His teaching is part of the spectrum of Judaism of his time. Within this spectrum Jesus announced that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and in his resurrection his followers found the confirmation of his being both Lord and Messiah.

The conflicts and controversies reported in the New Testament must be seen as taking place within Judaism identified with his people. But when the words of Jesus came to be used by Christians who did not identify with the Jewish people as Jesus did, they became weapons in anti-Jewish polemics, and thereby their original intention was tragically distorted.

- 2.5 Central to the specific relationship and the different self-definitions of Judaism and Christianity is the fact that what is the Bible to the Jews is also the Bible to Christians - not the whole Bible. To them it is the Old Testament to which the writings of Evangelists and Apostles have been added as the New Testament. Thus the Bible of the Jews and the Old Testament of the Christians are the same - and yet different.

Christian terminology came to dominate Western scholarship, for example on the term "intertestamental literature" or in the term "Spätjudentum". This latter term ("Late Judaism") has the historically false connotation that Judaism comes to an end with Christianity. Attempts at finding terms which can make Christians more aware of Judaism as a living religion are therefore of great importance. For example, to refer to the Old Testament as the Hebrew Scriptures, and to the Judaism in the time of Jesus as Early Judaism, have proven helpful to many.

- 2.6 Christians must guard against the tendencies of portraying Jews or Jewish groups as negative models. The truth and beauty of Christianity cannot be enhanced by setting up Jews or Judaism as false and ugly. The witness of the Hebrew Scriptures should not be portrayed just as less authoritative or normative than the New Testament. They are essential to the tradition which our Lord accepted as his own, and which he reaffirmed as he interpreted them in his life, work and thought. Both the judgment and the redeeming love of God receive testimony in all the Christian scriptures - from Genesis to Revelation.

- 2.7 Jews and Christians both believe in the one God, Creator of all that is, bound to humankind in grace and love. They both believe in the one God who has made his will for us known and who wants that all turn to God, know God and worship God. They both believe that God has created men and women as the crown of creation, and that as such they are called to be holy, are given stewardship in God's name over the creation, and are accountable to God for the way they exercise this stewardship.

As Christians and Jews we are taught by our Scriptures to know ourselves responsible for our neighbours, especially for those who are weak, poor and persecuted. In various and distinct ways we look for the day in which God will redeem the creation. With this vision they work with hope here on earth for greater righteousness, justice and peace.

- 2.8 For Christians the gifts that were received from God through the Jews include Jesus Christ our Lord. It is through him that we are linked to this common faith in God, to obedience to God's revealed will, and to common hopes for a redeemed world in justice and love. As the Church increasingly became a non-Jewish community, Christians learned to express their gratitude to Jesus Christ in ways that strike the Jews as strange and even wrong. Thus Christians speak of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, celebrating the riches of the Trinity and the Incarnation. In dialogue with Jews, Christians will attempt to understand better what they so confess, as they are reminded of our common faith in the one God whom both Jews and Christians call upon in daily prayers as Our Father.

3. AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN WITNESS

- 3.1 Christians have often distorted the authentic witness of their faith in word and deed by coercive mission and proselytism - conscious and unconscious, overt and subtle. In speaking about proselytism between Christian churches the WCC stated:

"Proselytism embraces whatever violates the right of the human person, Christian or non-Christian, to be free from external coercion in religious matters" (Ecumenical Review, 1/1971, a study document of the Joint Working Group between the R.C. Church and the WCC, p. 11)

- AT → 3.2 Such rejection of proselytism, and such advocacy of respect for the integrity and the identity of all persons and all communities of faith, is urgent in Christian relations to Jews who live as minorities, exposed to the forces of cultural and religious assimilation.

- 3.3. Yet Christians are called upon to witness to their faith in word and deed. Christianity is a missionary religion and cannot be otherwise. Chastened by increasing awareness of Christian triumphalism - often welded to Western imperialism - Christians were anxious to overcome all forms of coercion and find authentic forms of witness in a pluralistic world.

- 3.4 While Christians agree that there can be no place for coercion of any kind, they do disagree on the basis of their understanding of the Scriptures, on the question of mission to the Jews.

Some Christians are convinced that for Jews obedience to God does not depend on their accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. These Christians maintain that God's calling of Israel to fulfil - as a distinct people - a special task in his purpose with the world remains valid also after God's call in Jesus Christ went out to all humanity. According to this view the continued existence of the Jewish people and their witness are a sign of God's faithfulness to humanity and an encouragement to the Church fervently to hope for the ultimate redemption of God's creation.

For other Christians the obligation to witness can know of no limits in its universality. Thus it includes a mission to the Jews. To some such a mission should not be given special priority, while to others the mission to the Jews is of special redemptive significance.

Borny - with conviction of all humanity, but opposed organized conversion efforts

- 3.5 In pluralistic societies individual Jews and Christians ~~will~~ decide freely to join one another's communities of faith -as they will join other communities of faith. Such individual moves should not be seen as part of grand theological schemes, ~~issuing~~ in the victory or defeat of the other. resulting

Steps toward assuring non-coercive practices are of highest importance. In dialogue, ways should be found for the exchange of concerns, perceptions and safeguards in these matters.

- 3.6 There are Jews who have come to believe in Jesus as Messiah. Some of them see themselves called to be a specific witness to Christians, to Jews and to the world. They express their Jewish identity, e.g. by observing elements of Jewish tradition and culture, while affirming Jesus as their Messiah and Saviour. Their claims have raised questions both among Jews and Christians. According to Rabbinic Law they are considered apostates. Some Christians have expressed concern that this might lead to a denial of the oneness of all Christians.

Other Christians of Jewish origin have chosen to identify with the Church ~~it~~ without such specific identification with Jewish tradition. Among them some consider themselves part of the Jewish people which they hold in high esteem, but give their witness to Jesus Christ without distinction from their non-Jewish sisters and brothers.



4. ANTISEMITISM - A CONTINUING CONCERN IN THE CHRISTIAN-JEWISH DIALOGUE

- 4.1 Christians cannot enter into dialogue with Jews without the awareness of Christian antisemitism, and its long persistent history especially in countries where Jews constitute a minority. The WCC, in the Assembly at which it was constituted (Amsterdam 1948) condemned antisemitism:

"We call upon the churches we represent to denounce antisemitism, no matter what its origin, as absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith. Antisemitism is sin against God and man."

- 4.2 Christians must face honestly the tragic history with regard to the Jews - a history which includes events like Crusades, Inquisitions, pogroms, and Holocaust. Only by facing this history can Christians come to understand the deep-rooted suspicion that many Jews up to today hold against Christians and Christianity. Christians are called upon to fight antisemitism with all the resources at their disposal. The more so since there are disturbing signs of new and increased evidence of antisemitism in many parts of the world. Those who live in the parts of the world which have a record of antisemitic acts are duty bound to unmask for all Christians that anti-Judaism and antisemitism which they have come to recognize as an ever-present danger to the faith.

- 4.3 The Christian response to the Holocaust must be a resolve that it will never happen again. Christian teaching of contempt for the Jews and Judaism was a spawning ground for the evil of the Nazi Holocaust. The Church must learn so to preach and teach the Gospel as to make sure that it cannot be used again by enemies of the Jewish people. The Christian churches must be in the forefront of any efforts to prevent any conditions which might lead to another slaughter of the people with whom God formed Covenant for the blessing of all peoples.

- 4.4. Christians in other parts of the world had a little or no contact with the Jewish people except the Old Testament - the Hebrew Bible - as the scriptures of the Christian church along with the New Testament. Although the Gospel was brought to them by the western churches, the community of Jews were very far to make any significant impressions upon them. The role of the Jews in the crucifixion of Jesus has often been interpreted as their own sin as human beings revolting against God and his son. These churches, along with the churches which have been in contact, should relate themselves to the Jewish people in expressing their solidarity with them and at the same time hold out the mission given to Israel in terms of their neighbours in the Middle East. This again is so politically and racially complicated that it is very difficult to mention these issues in the dialogue with Jewish people. It is only in an atmosphere of mutual trust and sharing at a deeper spiritual/experiential level that these concerns could be seen in their proper perspective and a more positive understanding of each other's issues could be appreciated. It is as we grow in a dialogical relationship that we could trust each other and help each other to resolve these age-long misunderstandings and forgive the memories of horrors inflicted upon each other. Dialogue should move into this more positive spiritual level for better understanding and growth in trust and cooperation.

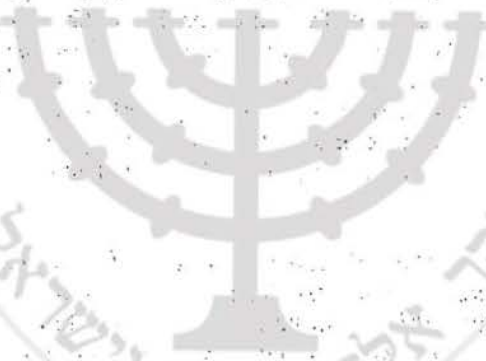
Jewish minorities in Arab world - persecuted

4.5 It will be noted here that the antisemitic horrors that have been visited upon the Jewish people had deep-rooted social, economic and political implications but these racial and other hatreds politically manipulated were given the sanction of religions and wrong interpretations of the Jewish people and their role in the crucifixion of Jesus were given to "legitimate brutal and inhuman acts against the whole Jewish people.

/vested
interests

Similar negative attitudes were pursued in other countries in the name of Christian religions. While some Christians did protest against this antisemitic attitude, the racial hatred and economic exploitation of this community was systematically carried on and supported by a majority with unchristian attitudes and on the pretext of religion. This religious ~~PRETEXT IS OFTEN THE METHOD OF DEALING WITH RACIAL HATREDS AND EXPLOITATION~~ pretext is often the method of dealing with racial hatreds and exploitation of sections of peoples in other cultures and other peoples' histories. Thus the combatting of antisemitism has lessons taught in Jewish-Christian relations have ramifications for humanity at large.

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES



5. THE LAND (ARE THE STATE OF ISRAEL?)

5.1 The words from the WCC Guidelines that "one of the functions of dialogue is to allow participants to describe and witness to their faith in their own terms" are of particular significance for the understanding of the indissoluble bond between the Land of Israel and the Jewish people. This bond has in the present time, after many centuries of dispersion, found (religious) social, cultural, economic and political expression in the State of Israel.

Holy Land
(Borovoy)

5.2 Christians likewise recognize the special bonds which the Palestinians - both Christian and Muslim - have with the same Land.

In acknowledging the right of the Jews to return to the State of Israel we Christians recognize its importance in any dialogue with Jews.

Christians likewise affirm the right of Palestinians to their own independent state and to a return to it, with mutual recognition of one state by the other. There must be a place in God's plan for all to live in security and peace.

5.3 The Land has a quality of holiness for the 3 monotheistic religions. They have all maintained a presence in the Land from their beginnings.

1. For Muslims the Land has special significance. With its holy places it has been an integral part of the Muslim world.

2. The Land has special significance ^{for} Christians as it was here that Jesus was born and ~~die~~ lived, worked and taught, suffered, died and was raised from the dead.

3. For Jews the relation to the Land is of an essential nature and Christians find it difficult to grasp this essential nature of the Jewish attachment to the Land. Many Christians tend to depreciate this attachment as "particularistic", contrasting it with the "universalistic" thrust of the Christian message. Such a view does justice neither to the particular nor to the universal elements in Jewish - no less than in the Christian understanding of the Land. Christians are, therefore, called to examine their theology and the history of their own faith on this point during any dialogue with Jews concerning the meaning of the Land.

Different understandings among Christians
5.4 (Too easily Christians particularly of Western traditions, expect Jews, as well as Eastern Christians) to share their own distinctions between faith and nationality, Church and State, religion and politics. *This often* hinders a genuine understanding of the significance of the Land for Jews both in Israel and the Diaspora. It may also hinder an understanding of the significance of the Land for Palestinian Christians and Muslims.

5.5 The attachments to the Land only emphasize the need for sustained dialogue with Jews.

Implementation committee, guidelines

6. Future tasks / desiderata

6.0. When the churches agree in Jewish-Christian dialogue being necessary we still have to keep in mind that there are great differences between churches in their relation to the Jewish people. These result from different motives, in which theological and non-theological reasons are intertwined.

6.1. Theological aspects

6.1.1. Most churches share a tradition of common values that have contributed to religious and to secular anti-Judaism, for example

- the charge of deicide
- the antithesis of old/new, law/grace, letter/spirit etc
- the displacement of Israel by the church.

6.1.2. Even if we all share these, there are specific aspects in various church traditions, such as the orthodox, anglican, lutheran, which require specific attention in these communities if we want dialogue to be authentic.

6.1.3. The churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America are in a specific situation: after having met Christianity in its Western form they are today developing their own indigenous theology. While not sharing a common history or contemporary contact with the Jewish people traditions of the Hebrew Bible are used in this process, for example the Exodus-liberation tradition or the re-discovery of God being the Lord of history.

6.2. Contextual aspects

6.2.1. A motivation or hindrance for dialogue has to be seen in the history of the Jewish diaspora, which has been different in different parts of the world.

6.2.2. Jewish communities have lived for centuries in most European countries and have suffered there again and again from anti-semitism. After Auschwitz, some churches have begun to re-think their relation to the Jewish people. There is now a different situation in those countries where the Jewish communities have been extinguished and in those where there is a substantial Jewish presence. This has consequences for dialogue.

6.2.3. Jewish communities have also lived for centuries in other parts of the world, and they have been indirectly afflicted by the Holocaust. A specific, very intense situation of practical living together and dialogue has developed in North America today with its great Jewish communities.

6.2.4. In the Middle East with its long history of Jews and Christians living together in Islamic countries, and with its present situation of Christians and Muslims living as minorities in the Jewish state of Israel, dialogue would be of vital importance, but the political situation hardly gives an opportunity for it.

6.3. The different historical, political and social situations and the different theological traditions are decisive for the motivation for dialogue in churches, congregations and individual Christians. Therefore it is of vital importance that every church reflect its own tradition and relation to the Jewish people. Of equal importance is the inner-Christian dialogue between those who take part in actual Jewish-Christian dialogue and those who do not.

6.4. Consequences

6.4.1. In those countries where there are Jewish communities we ask the churches to set up specific activities in dialogue, like

- how can churches promote good neighbourliness between Jews and Christians?
- what are the common tasks to be taken up by Jews and Christians?
- how can structures of co-operation be built up between Jews and Christians?

6.4.2. In those countries where there are not or have never been Jewish communities we ask the churches to consider their relation to the Jewish people and revise any anti-Jewish aspects that might be found in their tradition.

6.4.3. As the churches in the Middle East are involved with Islam (being minorities in Islamic countries), we call upon these churches to establish deeper relations with the Jewish communities in their region as well and search out the best ways for Christian-Jewish dialogue in their setting for the best of all people in the Middle East.

- refugees / human rights / world hunger / war & peace / nuclear disarmament /

- 2.1 Through dialogue with Jews, many Christians have come to know for the first time the richness and validity of Jewish faith and life in the covenant and so to an enrichment of their own understanding of God and ^{his} will for his creatures. *Divine*

ui
In entering into dialogue with Jews, Christians should be prepared for the fact that the actual history of Jewish faith and experience does not match the images of Judaism that have dominated *our* tradition. *Christian*

- AD*
2.2 The traditional view, still held by many Christians, is that Judaism as a living tradition came to an end with the coming of Christ and the destruction of the Second Temple (70 ~~CE~~), that the church replaced the Jews as God's people and that the Judaism which survived is the religion of the Old Testament, interpreted as a religion of legalistic works - righteousness.

Subsequently
and religious literature
In this traditional view, the covenant of God with the people Israel has been abrogated, Judaism of the first centuries before and after the coming of Jesus was therefore called "Late Judaism", the Pharisees were considered to be the acme of legalism, and no important developments in Judaism took place. Dialogue with Jews backed by a study of Jewish history raises questions about this view.

- 2.3 Christians can learn from dialogue and study that Judaism was in an early stage of its long life at the time of Jesus. Under the leadership of the Pharisees, the Jewish people began a spiritual revival of remarkable power. ~~(Christians have the Pharisees to thank that)~~ Jesus was born into and lived in the context of a vital, ~~Bible-faithful~~ Judaism. The Jews have them to thank for a religious vitality capable of surviving the catastrophe of the loss of the Temple and of giving birth to Rabbinic Judaism, which produced the Mishnah and Talmud and has kept the Jewish people strong and creative through centuries of persecution.

Christians should remember that the N.T. stories of controversies between Jesus and "the scribes and Pharisees" or "the Jews" arose in a totally Jewish context and take on a quite different tone when read by Christians unaware of this framework.

- 2-4 The continuing vitality of Judaism with its rich history of spiritual life produced the Talmud as the normative guide for Jewish life in thankful response to the grace of God's covenant with the people Israel. To this have been added over the centuries important commentaries, profound ~~intel~~ philosophical works, poetry of great spiritual depth and much more. The Talmud has been for Jews as central and authoritative as the N.T. for Christians, so that neither tradition is simply a religion of the Scriptures of Israel. What Christians call the "Old Testament" has received in Judaism, as in Christianity, an interpretation through these later writings which, in each tradition, bear the same stamp of divine revelation.

- 2.5 Christians as well as Jews, however, look to the Hebrew Bible as the record of Israel's sacred memory of God's election of and covenant with this people. The Jewish people are their descendants and understand themselves as still the one people of Israel. Christians, almost entirely Gentile by background since very early in the life of the church, know themselves as grafted into that covenant through their Lord Jesus Christ. Through dialogue with Jews, many Christians are being led to explore anew what God was doing in Jesus Christ. Did God send his Son into the world to found a new people in place of Israel as one tradition has claimed, or was it to found a new people, the church, alongside and in cooperation with his people Israel,

both for the sake of the whole of creation? The alternative view is a fruit of dialogue which we have only begun to taste and which is still unsettled among us.

- 2.6 In any case, the Christian church has entered into Israel's faith in the One God, whom it knows in the Spirit as the God and Father of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus Christ millions of Gentiles have come to know and share in the love of the God of Israel. Knowing Israel's God in the Spirit through Jesus Christ, Christians confess him in this trinitarian reality of his incarnate presence with them and so in word, which are foreign to his Jewish people. Foreign also to Judaism is the way in which the church has understood and expressed the hope of Israel into which it has been drawn. Through dialogue with Jews, many Christians are coming to appreciate the historical, political and economic concreteness of Exodus hope in the God of liberation and Jewish longing, not just for the coming of the Messiah, but for the coming of the Messianic age of righteousness and peace on earth.
- 2.8 Dialogue with Jews is thus opening new horizons for many Christians, but also raising profound questions about the ways in which they have read and interpreted the Bible in the past. As Christians come to know Jews as they understand themselves, and Judaism as it has developed, they are being led to a painful soul-searching about their own tradition and self-understanding, which open challenging possibilities of new life. Since differing assessments of this challenge cut right across traditional divisions in the churches, this dialogue holds the promise of opening a new chapter in the Christian quest for unity.

5. THE LAND

5.1 The words from the WCC Guidelines that one of the functions of dialogue is to allow participants to describe and witness to their faith "in their own terms" are of particular significance for the understanding of the indissoluble bond between the Land of Israel and the Jewish people. This bond has in the present time, after many centuries of dispersion, found expression in the State of Israel. The need for the State of Israel to exist in security and peace is of paramount importance in any dialogue with Jews.

is fundamental to Jewish consciousness and

5.2 When Christians enter into dialogue with Jews they also recognize the need of Palestinians for self-determination and expression of their national identity. It is important to hear Palestinians - Christian and Muslim - express their special bonds with the Land "in their own terms". There must be a place in God's plan for all to live in security and peace.

5.3 The Land is holy for the three monotheistic religions - yet this is understood in different ways. They have all maintained a presence in the Land from their beginnings.

For Muslims the Land has special significance, and with its holy places it has been an integral part of the Muslim world. The Land is symbolic of God's universal promises to all the children of Abraham.

For countless Christians the Land has special significance. It is the Land of the Bible. It was in this Land that the Lord Jesus Christ was born and died, worked and taught, suffered, died and was raised from the dead.

But for Jews the relation to the Land is of an essential nature. It is the Land of the Fathers and the Land of promise.

5.4 Many Christians find it difficult to grasp this essential nature of the Jewish attachment to the Land. They find it "particularistic", contrasting it with the "universalistic" thrust of the Christian message. Such a view does justice neither to the particular nor to the universal elements in Jewish, no less than in the Christian understanding of the Land. Christians ~~have~~ are therefore called to examine their theology and the history of their own faith on this point in any dialogue with Jews concerning the meaning of the Land.

5.5 Different understandings among Christians of the distinctions between faith and nationality, Church and State, religion and politics, often hinder a genuine understanding of the significance of the Land for Jews both in Israel and the Diaspora. It also hinders an understanding of the significance of the Land for Palestinian Christians and Muslims.

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4.1 Christians cannot enter into dialogue with Jews without the awareness of antisemitism and its long persistent history, especially in countries where Jews constitute a minority. The WCC Assembly at its first meeting in Amsterdam 1948 condemned antisemitism, *among Christians*

"We call upon the churches we represent to denounce antisemitism, no matter what its origin, as absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith. Antisemitism is sin against God and man."

This appeal has been reiterated many times, and *is affirmed in these Guidelines.*

expressed so often in everyday relationships

4.2. Christians must face honestly the tragic history of antisemitism which includes ~~events like~~ the Crusades, the Inquisitions, Pogroms and the Holocaust. It is only by facing this history that Christians can understand the deep-rooted suspicion that many Jews ~~have~~ up to today hold against Christians and Christianity. Christians are called upon to fight antisemitism with all the resources at their disposal, the more so since there are disturbing signs of new and increased evidence of antisemitism in many parts of the world. Those who live in parts of the world where there is a record of antisemitic acts are duty bound to unmask for all Christians the ever-present danger which they have come to recognize in anti-judaism and antisemitism.

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Discrimination against and

have

further persecutions and

4.4. Persecution of the Jewish people ~~had~~ *have* deep-rooted socio-economic and political aspects ~~in which~~ *are* religious differences ~~were~~ magnified to justify racial hatred in support of vested interests. Similar phenomena are evident in many inter-racial conflicts. Christians should oppose all such religious prejudices, whereby people are made scapegoats for the failures and problems of societies and political regimes.

4.5 Christians in parts of the world with little or no Jewish presence do not wish to be conditioned by the experience and shortcoming of those that brought the Gospel to them; rather, they ~~want~~ *are* to explore in their own ways the significance of Christian-Jewish relations from the earliest times to the present, for their life and witness.

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Anti-ZionismGUIDELINES FOR JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUEConsultation on the Church and the Jewish People
World Council of ChurchesHistorical Note

At its meeting in Jerusalem, June 20-23, 1977 the CCJP began the drafting of Guidelines for Christian-Jewish dialogue. The Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People (CCJP) had at that time drafts and study papers from various study groups in various countries from which a joint document was prepared by a committee. This document became the basis for further work and revisions. The International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) was invited to submit comments and did so at the Liaison and Planning Committee (LPC) meeting in Geneva in February 1979. An Ad Hoc Committee of the CCJP gave further attention to the draft in March 1980. In order to produce a more coherent document the present draft has been restructured, but incorporates the basic content of the earlier drafts.

During this process WCC Guidelines on Dialogue (1979) were recommended to the member churches "for their consideration and discussion, testing and evaluation, and for their elaboration in each specific situation" (Central Committee, Kingston, Jamaica, January 1979). The following document is a Draft of Guidelines, constituting such an elaboration for the specific tasks of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

PREFACE

- 1.1 "One of the functions of dialogue is to allow participants to describe and witness to their faith in their own terms. This is of primary importance since self-serving descriptions of other peoples' faith are one of the roots and prejudice, stereotyping, and condescension. Listening carefully to the neighbours' selfunderstanding enables Christians better to obey the commandment not to bear false witness against their neighbours ... (WCC Guidelines III:4, p.17-18).
- 1.2 This groundrule for dialogue has particular and specific implications for Jewish-Christian dialogue, due to the way in which Christianity emerged out of Judaism. Thus Christianity came to define her own identity overagainst that of Judaism. In the process the Church developed her own definitions, understandings and terms for what she had inherited from Jewish traditions. Thus the need for seeking in and through dialogues the answer to the question how the Jews understand themselves becomes more urgent.
- 1.3 Due to this process the average bible-reading and worshipping Christians often believe that they "know Judaism" since they have the Old Testament and records of Jesus' debates with Jewish teachers and the early Christian reflections on Judaism of their times.

INTRO
Common affirmations

- 1.4 Thus, no other religious tradition is as thoroughly "defined" by the Church, as is Judaism. Therein lies the special need for Jewish-Christian dialogue, i.e. the seeking and the listening to how the Jewish community "describe and witness to their faith in their own terms".
- 1.5 In Jewish-Christian dialogue it often becomes clear that, in a certain sense, an understanding and interpretation of Judaism is an integral part of Christian theology. But, from a Jewish perspective, a theological understanding of Christianity is not of essential or integral significance. This lack of congruity between these two communities of faith must be recognized in Jewish-Christian dialogue. It cannot surprise us that Jews resent Christian theologies in which they as a people are assigned to play a negative role in the schemes of Christians. The step is not long from such patterns of thought to overt acts of condensation, persecution, and worse - as history demonstrates over and over again.
- 1.6 Central to the specific relationship and the different self-definitions of Judaism and Christianity is the fact that what is the Bible to the Jews is also the Bible to Christians - but not the whole Bible. To them it is the Old Testament to which the writings of Evangelists and Apostles have been added as the New Testament. Thus the Bible of the Jews and the Old Testament of the Christians are the same and yet different. The Christian terminology came to dominate Western scholarship, also in the term "intertestamental literature", or in the term "Spätjudentum". This latter term ("Late Judaism") has the unfortunate connotation that Judaism comes to an end with Christianity and the Post-Biblical time from 150 BCE - 150 CE is the end of Judaism, as far as Christians are concerned.
- 1.7 It is important for the dialogue to aim at a terminology - scholarly and otherwise - which does not bear the marks of the interpretation of one of the partners. Toward that end - and for the purpose of consciousness - raising - we shall use in this document terms like The Hebrew Bible, the period of the Second Temple, BCE/CE.

2. ANTISEMITISM

- 2.1 Christians cannot enter into dialogue with Jews without ashamed awareness of Christian antisemitism and its long and persistent history. The WCC, in the Assembly at which it was constituted (Amsterdam 1948) condemned antisemitism: "We call upon all the churches we represent to denounce antisemitism, no matter what its origin, as absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith."

living
Judaism

exclusivity

Antisemitism is sin against God and man". This appeal has been reiterated many times. The WCC Assembly in New Delhi (1961) stated clearly that in Christian theology the responsibilities for the Crucifixion of Jesus "must fall on all humanity, not on one race or community. Jews were the first to accept Jesus, and Jews are not the only ones who do not yet recognise him".

- 2.2 It is necessary that Christians face honestly the tragic history with regard to the Jews - a history which includes events like Crusades, Inquisition, Pogroms and Holocaust. *earliest form of antisemitism*
~~It is only by~~ facing this history that Christians come to understand the deep-rooted suspicion that many Jews up to today hold against Christians and Christianity. While Jews remember with gratitude acts of compassion from Christians, the persistent potential of Christian antisemitism remains a threat. It is a lamentable fact that large parts of Christendom have been guilty of antisemitic attitudes and acts. Christians are called upon to fight, with all the resources at their disposal, antisemitism, especially since it shows increase in many parts of the world.

- 2.3 Christians in parts of the world that have had little Jewish presence recognize the importance of the Hebrew Bible for Christian faith and life. They do not wish to be burdened by the weight of Western history and theology, but rather want to explore in their own ways the significance of Jewish-Christian relations, from the earliest times to the present, for their life and witness. Evenso, those who live in the parts of the church which have a record of anti-semitic acts feel duty bound to make known to all Christians the history of anti-judaism and antisemitism.

- 2.4 We must be especially attentive to those traditional convictions which have furthered antisemitic stances and attitudes on the part of Christians. Attention should therefore be given to the following points: Judaism should not be presented as a kind of anachronism after the coming of Christ:
 → the Jews are a living people, very much alive in our present time as, for instance, the establishment of the State of Israel shows. Neither should the impression be given that
 → the Church has superseded the Israel of old. The Jewish People continues to be God's People, for God is not unfaithful to those whom he has chosen (Rom. 11:29).
 As long as Christians regard Israel only as preparation for Christianity, as long as Christians claim the validity of God's revelation to them by negating the validity of God's revelation to the Jewish People, Judaism is denied any theological validity, and it becomes impossible to maintain a common ground for our common hope.

- 2.5 The Christian reponse to the Holocaust must be a resolve that it will never happen again. Christian teaching of contempt for the Jews and Judaism was spawning-ground for the evil of the Nazi Holocaust. We must ask ourselves: In what specific ways can the lessons of the Holocaust be taken

→ seriously by Christian churches and theologians? We must learn so to preach and teach the Gospel as to make sure that it will never again be used by the enemies of the Jewish People. The Christian churches must be in the forefront of any efforts to prevent any conditions which might lead to another slaughter of the people with whom God formed the covenant.

The Holocaust must lay to rest forever the Christian fable that the sufferings of the Jewish People are a judgment of God. The time has long since come for the Church to cease passing judgments on other faiths and people by holding an absolutist tradition or theology that in any way appears to sanction persecution of others. God's love and compassion do not permit us to attribute to him the wounds of body and mind that have been inflicted on the Jews.

→ If the above misrepresentations and misunderstandings are to be counteracted, a constant critical review of all church teaching, preaching and liturgy is necessary. Some churches have done such reviewing, others not yet.

3. UNDERSTANDING OF JUDAISM

- 3.1 Dialogue is a meeting with "the other". There is no substitute for Christians meeting with Jews and understanding them in their distinctiveness as Jews. Such knowledge is by far the best safeguard against antisemitism, old and new.
- 3.2 Dialogue is a programme for relationships. Christians have to listen to Jews defining themselves - listening as equal partners in a conversation from which the power dimension has been removed. The disputations of mediaeval times between Christian and Jewish theologians, which were organised from time to time, were never held on a footing of equality.
- 3.3 The often total ignorance among otherwise well educated Christians about the history of the Jewish People after the fall of the Temple of Jerusalem (70 CE) has contributed to the feeling that Judaism dried up when Christianity entered the scene of history. But Christians should be aware of the vibrant and continuing development of Judaism in post-biblical times. Between the first century and today there has been an enormous output of Jewish religious and philosophical literature and commentary. European Jewry was virtually destroyed by the Nazis; it is little short of miraculous that the destruction of six million Jews should have been followed by the reconstruction of Jewish life with its special points of focus in Israel, America, and to a certain extent in Western Europe.
- 3.4 Knowledge of Jewish history and spiritual achievements together with the meeting with contemporary Jews will make us better able "to compare equal with equal". Just as Christianity has a long history of development so has

Judaism. We should not compare contemporary Christianity with our image of ancient Israel.

- 3.5 The negative image of the Pharisees found in much Christian preaching and writing remains one of the gravest distortions of Judaism prevalent in Christianity and spread by Western literature into many other parts of the world. It was from the Pharisees that Jesus learned the Golden Rule, from them comes the belief in resurrection.

Pharisaism was a dynamic religious movement that brought renewal to Judaism in the time of the Second Temple. The Pharisees were the ~~only~~ ones who had the religious vitality necessary for surviving the catastrophe of the fall of the Temple and to build the structures by which the Jewish People could survive 2000 years of exile.

Jesus' debate with the Pharisees is a sign that they were the ones he took seriously, to them he addressed - like the prophets of old - his critique of the foibles of any religious establishment, a critique which has many parallels within Pharisaism itself and within its heir, Rabbinic Judaism. Whatever the Pharisaic movement was - it was not an empty, legalistic system, but a dynamic and creative movement - as the later history of Judaism has shown.

- 3.6 In reading and interpreting the New Testament we must constantly remember that Jesus was a Jew. He lived and taught among the Jews. His teaching belongs to the Judaism of his time. Therefore, the conflicts and controversies reported in the New Testament must be seen as taking place within a framework which he not only shared with fellow-Jews, but by which he identified with his people. When the words of Jesus were used by Christians who did not identify with Israel but used them against "the Jews", they became weapons in anti-Jewish polemics, and thereby their original intention was distorted.

- 3.7 We must guard against tendencies to portray Jews or Jewish groups as negative models. The truth and beauty of Christianity cannot be enhanced by setting up Jews or Judaism as false and ugly. Likewise the witness of the Hebrew Bible should not be portrayed as less authoritative or normative than the New Testament. It is central to the tradition which our Lord accepted as his own and which he reaffirmed as He interpreted it in his life, work and thought. The judgment and the redeeming love of God should be presented as existing from Genesis to Revelation.

- 3.8 We both believe in the one God, Creator of all that is, bound to humankind in grace and love. We both believe in the one God who has made his will for us known to us and who wants that all turn to God, know God and worship God.

We both believe that God has created men and women as crown of creation, that as such they are called to be holy, are

given stewardship in God's name over the creation and are accountable to God for the way they exercise this stewardship.

As Christians and Jews we are taught by our scriptures to know ourselves responsible for our neighbours, especially for those who are weak, poor, persecuted.

Christians and Jews have a common hope, looking forward to the fulfilment when this earth will be renewed, all suffering be done away with and God's will shall be victorious in all realms and respects. In this ultimate hope they work here for greater righteousness, trusting that all deeds of justice will not be in vain.

- 3.9 For us Christians the gifts that we have received from God through the Jews include Jesus Christ our Lord. It is through him that we are linked to this common faith in God, this obedience to God's revealed will, to common hopes for a redeemed world in justice and love.

In the history of the Church as it became for all practical purposes a Gentile community, we have learned to express our gratitude to Jesus Christ in ways that strike the Jews as strange. In our dialogue with the Jews we shall attempt to understand better what we so confess, as we are equally reminded of our common faith in the one God whom both we and they call upon in daily prayers as Father.

4. AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN WITNESS

- 4.1 Proselytism, as distinct from Mission or Witness, is rejected, in the strongest terms by the WCC: "Proselytism embraces whatever violates the right of the human person, Christian or non-Christian, to be free from external coercion in religious matters, or whatever, in the proclamation of the Gospel, does not conform to the ways God draws free men to himself in response to his calls to serve in spirit and in truth." (Ecumenical Review 1/1971, a study document of the Joint Working Group between the R.C. Church and the WCC, p. 11).

We now realise more than ever before that the world in which we live is a world of religious pluralism. This demands from us that we treat those who differ from us with respect and that we strongly support the religious liberty of all.

- 4.2 This rejection of proselytism and our advocacy of respect for the integrity and the identity of all peoples and faith communities is the more urgent where Jews are concerned. For, as stated above, our relationship to the Jews is of a unique and very close character. Moreover, the history of antisemitism among Christians and forced baptisms of Jews in the past makes it understandable that Jews are rightly sensitive towards all religious pressures from outside and all attempts at proselytising.

- 4.3 We reject proselytism both in its gross and more refined forms. This implies that all triumphalism and every kind of manipulation are to be abrogated. We are called upon to minimize the power dimension in all encounters with the Jews and to speak at every level from equal to equal. We have to be conscious of the pain and the perception of the others and have to respect their right to define themselves.
- 4.4 We are called upon to witness to God's love for and claim upon the whole of humankind. The witness to Christ as Lord and Saviour, however, is challenged in special ways where Jews are concerned. It has often become discredited as a result of past behaviour on the part of Christians. We therefore are seeking authentic and proper forms of Christian relations with Jews. Some of us believe that we must bear witness also to the Jews. Some among us are convinced that the Jews' faithfulness and obedience to God do not depend on their acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Some of us maintain that as a separate and specific people the Jews are an instrument of God with a specific God-given task and, as such, a sign of God's faithfulness to all humankind on the way towards ultimate redemption.
- 4.5 Through the history of the Church there have been communities of Jewish Christians/Christian Jews who see themselves called to a specific witness to Christians, to Jews and to the world. They retain their identity with Jewish Law and calendar, language and liturgy while affirming Jesus Christ as their Messiah and Saviour. Their claims have raised questions both among Jews and Christians. According to Rabbinic Law they are not accepted as Jews. Among Christians they have been accused of not recognizing fully the oneness in Christ of Jews and Gentiles.

Other Christians of Jewish origin have chosen to identify with the Church without such specific identification with Jewish tradition. Among them some consider themselves part of the Jewish people which they hold in high esteem, but give their witness to Jesus Christ without distinction from their Gentile sisters and brothers.

X It is important for Jewish-Christian dialogue that both of these perspectives be recognized as part of the full Christian spectrum.

5. THE LAND / ~~STATE OF ISRAEL~~

- 5.1 We are reminded again of the World Council of Churches' "Guidelines on Dialogue", which state that "one of the functions of dialogue is to allow participants to describe and witness to their faith in their own terms". We recognize that this guideline is of particular significance with reference to a feature of Jewish self-awareness which is often misunderstood by Christians: the indissoluble bond between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, which has in the present time, after

many centuries of exile, found social, cultural, economic and political expression in the reality of the State of Israel. Failing to acknowledge the right of Jews to return to the Land prevents any fruitful dialogue with them. Christians are, therefore, called to examine their theology and history of their own faith on this point during any serious Jewish-Christian dialogue on the meaning of the State of Israel.

- 5.2 Although this Land has also special significance for Christians, as it was here that Jesus Christ was born and lived, worked and taught, suffered and died and was resurrected, and thus has a quality of holiness for them as well, they often find it difficult to fully grasp the validity of the Jewish attachment to this land. Not seldom they depreciate this attachment as "particularistic", contrasting it with the "universalistic" thrust of the Christian message. Such a view does neither justice to the particular nor to the universal elements in Jewish no less than in Christian understanding of the Holy Land. Too easily Christians, particularly of Western traditions, take their own distinctions between faith and nationality, church and state, religion and politics for granted and expect Jews to subscribe to them, thus creating a hindrance to a genuine understanding of the significance of the State of Israel for Jews both in Israel and in Diaspora. That Jews disagree among themselves as to the meaning of this significance, only emphasizes the Christian need to enter and maintain serious dialogue with representatives of all shades of opinion in contemporary Jewish life. Such dialogue may prevent Christians from falling into false stereotypes about the Jewish people, the Zionist Movement and the State of Israel.

- 5.3 We believe that the claims of the Jews to the Land of Israel can be reconciled with the claims of others, especially Arabs, who know this land as "Palestine", and that a solution can and must be found which does justice to both nations.

urge dialogue for reconciliation

6. FUTURE WORK

- 6.1 We are aware that the questions dealt with in this statement do not cover the whole area of Jewish-Christian encounter. We express our hope, moreover, that contributions to work in the future will increasingly come from Christians in Africa and Asia. We are very much aware that the differences of opinion among us demand further study.
- 6.2 Our dealing with these issues will show that in our thinking about Israel and the Jews very important and vital tenets of our Christian faith are at stake. Is it too much to hope that Christians and Jews may live in creative tension, enriching and encouraging each other, despite the appalling record of the relationship between the two communities over the centuries?
- 6.3 Consultations between Jews and Christians should be encouraged

in which the basic convictions and differences of their respective faiths are discussed not merely in the hope of a better understanding of the faith of our partners and an enrichment of our own faith, but also in the hope of reaching a common understanding of the nature of divine revelation and thus healing the breach which exists between the Jewish People and the Church.

- 6.4 Christians and Jews share with other believers the conviction that all people, regardless of race, religion or nationality are equally God's children and equally precious in His sight. This conviction is based on a concept of God as Creator of the universe, who continues to care for his creation, whose mercies are over all His creatures. Such common concept of God should unite believers in trying to understand each other and in caring for God's creation, including nature and all creatures.
- 6.5 The past has all too often been a time of alienation, even bitterness. Happily today we have entered into a new stage of conversation. The present contains seeds of hope that under the same one revealing God, Jews and Christians will fulfill God's purpose of bringing justice, peace and holiness to the whole human family.



IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Final Report

1. Via the CCJP consultants we ask the churches
 - to set up special activities in Jewish-Christian dialogue in order to distribute and practise the guidelines on Jewish-Christian dialogue;
 - to reconsider their lectionaires in regard to the use of Old Testament texts. The Hebrew Bible should not be used as an illustration for the New Testament, but as Scriptures of their own worth?
 - to reconsider and, if necessary, revise their educational material and provide new material on Jewish-Christian dialogue. Our experience shows that biographical, narrative material, the "sharing of stories" often is more helpful than other. Churches in different parts of the world should (eventually via CCJP members) share their material.
2. We ask the DFI department of the WCC
 - to provide the opportunity, especially for Eastern European Old Testament scholars, to meet with Jewish bible scholars;
 - to see too that the work of Faith and Order takes up the theological questions that arise from Jewish-Christian dialogue (e.g. Exodus liberation, the Covenant and others);
 - to provide bibliographies on Jewish-Christian dialogue on the academic level and, even more important, on the "beginners level";
 - to make the "newsletter" a network of information on what is going on in dialogue. In editing the newsletter special attention should be given to the fact that for some Christians the newsletter is the only means of information on dialogue to which they have access;
 - to seek ways of cooperation between CCJP and the LWF in these questions.

REPORT OF THE STATEMENT COMMITTEE
Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People

Relations of the World Council of Churches with Jews and Muslims have on earlier occasions been strained because of our failure to be sufficiently sensitive to the interests of each of the communities. The Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People recommends that when the World Council and its representatives issue statements upon events in world affairs, they take into account the following factors and adhere to the procedures listed below.

1. We should ask ourselves why the church, and specifically the World Council of Churches, ought to be concerned about a particular situation or event, and what we as a Christian body have to contribute towards the resolution of the conflict or problem. Relevant factors include the furtherance of peace, justice, reconciliation, pastoral care, and the world's expectations of the church as a moral and caring institution.

Religion is often involved in what may appear at first glance to be purely secular situations. Secular incidents may well have interfaith dimensions as well as implications for intra-Christian relations.

It is essential to take all sides with utter seriousness. Admittedly, we cannot avoid unknown and even tragic consequences of our acts. While this uncertainty ought not keep us from making decisions, it should influence the formulating of our positions. We need to remember our past sins and, accordingly, to be most sensitive to issues involving Jews and/or Muslims.

2. Types of response to world events include support of a people's policies and actions, disapproval, even-handedness, and silence. Silence is not always wrong for it is important that we not immediately alienate one party and thereby lose the opportunity to play a reconciling role.

3. It is incumbent upon us to take heed of all sides in a controversy even when an appeal for support is made to us from one side only.

4. The responsible WCC staff ought to be consulted before final decisions on statements are reached. In the specific issues with which CCJP and DFI are concerned, this means the persons responsible for Christian-Jewish and Christian-Muslim relations.

5. We need to consider what impact the statement (or its absence) is likely to have on the situation, on the people most directly involved, and on the Council and its constituencies. Above all, it is most important to take account of previous experiences.

Subsequently we ought to assess the reactions and the consequences as a way of benefitting in the future.

William Weiler, Convenor
George Anderson
A. Roy Eckardt
Herbert Schmid

25th June 1981

6.4.3. Regardless of the specific situation the following tasks should be considered by all churches:

- Jewish exegesis of the Hebrew Bible should be taken as a help for Christian exegesis;
- Liturgy, prayer, songs and preaching should avoid reflecting or creating anti-Jewish prejudice;
- Religious education should not promote false witness against the Jewish neighbour (or Jewish stranger);
- Theological education should aim to enable for dialogue. Learning dialogue with Jews will also enable for dialogue with people of other living faiths and ideologies.

6.4.4. The Bristol document of Faith and Order in 1967 stated: "...the conversation among us (the Christian churches) has only just begun, and we realize that in this question (of Jewish-Christian dialogue) the whole self-understanding of the church is at stake." Having recognized the different situation in different countries, we ask the WCC to promote the theological communication between its member churches on these questions.



REPORT FROM THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE

I. THEME, ISSUES AND MAJOR CONCERNS

A. Theme

1. The CCJP stresses the importance of dialogue with Jews (and with people of other faiths) for any serious study of the Assembly theme of ("Jesus Christ - the Life of the World"). We are especially concerned that interfaith groups of Jews and Christians participate in the planned study, and particularly in the Bible study related to the theme.

2. The CCJP encourages member churches of the WCC to involve Jews in their preparatory Bible studies. We also encourage member churches, including their local congregations, and other appropriate organizations (e.g. interfaith councils) to organize interfaith consultations on the theme and on the biblical images related to it. The consultation now being planned by the Arnoldshain Academy for November 1981 is an example of such a meeting.

3. The CCJP encourages the WCC to publish reactions to and comments on preparatory Bible work related to the Assembly theme received from member churches and other groups (including interfaith reactions) and to make this publication widely available for further study in order to profit from them in the final preparation.

4. We draw attention to the question found on page 12 of the pamphlet "Assembly Assembling" - "How do we affirm the unique and universal offer of life in Christ when we are committed to a dialogue with people of other living faiths and ideologies?" - and we strongly suggest that this issue must be incorporated into any serious discussion of the Vancouver theme. Jewish communities have suffered terribly in the past as a result of misunderstandings and distortions by many Christians of the universal claims of the Gospel. We therefore stress the particular importance of Jewish-Christian dialogue for any discussion of "Jesus Christ - the Life of the World".

B. Major concerns and issues

1. In line with the previous discussion we recommend that the stated concern "Life in Christ and the life of the whole human family" be given serious consideration by the WCC as a "major concern" at the Vancouver Assembly. This concern touches on a number of important emphases within the WCC, including DFI's concern for dialogue with peoples of other faiths and ideologies and Faith and Order's concern for "The renewal of human community".

2. We also recommend that attention be paid at Vancouver to "Biblical teaching on life" and especially to the significance of the Old Testament for church life and education. This might be formulated as a ~~special~~ separate "major concern" or taken into account in the discussion of other proposed "concerns".

3. A number of "issues" to be presented and discussed at Vancouver are currently under consideration by those WCC committees responsible for Assembly preparations. We underline the importance of "Dialogue and Witness" (an issue suggested by DFI for discussion in Vancouver). This formulation would encourage discussion at Vancouver on the "Guidelines for Dialogue" and on the contributions to those guidelines made by CCJP. In the light of the tension and polarization caused by this subject at the Nairobi Assembly, and considering the fact that much more thinking has been devoted to this issue since then by the WCC (e.g. at Chiang Mai), we hope and urge ^{some} evangelicals will be included in discussions on this issue. In view of ~~the~~ statements made at Lausanne (1977) and Pattaya (1980), there appear to be new openings for mutual understanding on this subject.

Further consultation

II JEWISH PARTICIPATION AT VANCOUVER

A. Official participation

1. The CCJP recommends that one plenary session (or part of a plenary session) at Vancouver be given to the guests representing other faiths for a presentation of their reactions to the deliberations of the Assembly. The theme "Jesus Christ - the life of the world" would seem to demand substantive reaction from those outside the Christian community.

2. We also recommend that different committees or working groups meet periodically in special sessions, with the guests of other faiths, in order to hear their reactions to the proceedings and to receive their input on certain issues.

B. Unofficial activities

We recommend that arrangements be made for informal, unofficial activities that would take place alongside the official programme. Such activities might include workshops and visits to communities of other faiths. We therefore urge the WCC to ask the interfaith council in Vancouver to provide contacts with communities of other faiths, including the Jewish community.

C. Invitations

1. We urge the WCC to issue invitations for guests from other faiths as early as possible so that these guests will be able to take part in the process of preparation.

2. We note that it would be most useful for the work of the Assembly to have representatives of various Jewish groups - including Sephardic and Orthodox Jews - represented in Vancouver. We also note the importance of having women representatives at Vancouver.

III PREPARATORY PROGRAMME OF CONSULTATIONS AND VISITS

We note with appreciation the policy, adopted by the Assembly Preparatory Committee, to include visits to communities of other faiths as part of the preparatory programme. In areas where they exist interfaith councils might organize local visits.

THE RELATION OF THE CHRISTIAN-JEWISH DIALOGUE IN DIALOGUE
WITH PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS

1. Christian-Jewish dialogue is basically part of and similar to dialogue between persons of various faiths. All such dialogue represents an attempt to build bridges of understanding and stimulate communication for the sake of the healing and wholeness of the human community. It carries particular importance for the fragmented society of today. It seeks to correct stereotypes, explore differences and commonalities and open means of witness, understanding and cooperation between persons of different religious faiths.

2. Within the whole range of interreligious dialogue, however, we recognize that Christian-Jewish encounter must hold a special place. For Christians speak to Jews as a people who "were made God's sons; theirs is the splendour of the divine presence, theirs the covenants, the Law, the temple worship and the promises" (Rom 9:4)

Hence in our Christian-Jewish dialogue we discover common ground. Our dialogue is not only about breaking stereotypes and the making of bridges of understanding within our common humanity. It also leads us to new understandings of our faith, for the Church needs Jewish insight and tradition; its complementary exposition of the Hebrew Scriptures, its interpretation of Jesus; its wrestlings with the meaning of God and life since Auschwitz. By constant dialogue with the Jewish people the Church renews and purifies its self-understanding.

3. Our dialogue with Jews draws upon a common monotheism, Hebrew Scriptures and heritage in Abraham. These same features may also foster dialogue with Muslims. Thus our dialogue with Jews may pave the way for better Christian-Muslim understanding, and lead eventually to creative dialogue of these three monotheistic faiths with roots in Abraham.

4. As Christians now seek to develop dialogical relations with people of living faiths and other than Jews and Muslims, their dialogue with the Jewish people can help them never to forget that Christianity has its roots in the faith of Israel, and that the message of the Old Testament is an integral part of God's revelation. God is the God of history, who covenanted with his people and chose to reveal himself in a man who lived in a special time, in a special country, and as a member of a special people. When and where we meet the work of God's Spirit in the civilisations and religions of the world it is the Spirit of this God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, "the God and Father of Jesus. It is this God who had not left himself without witness" (Acts 14:17) among all nations and whom people everywhere seek "in the hope that they might feel after him and find him" (Acts 17:27). Because of this Christians expect to discover and learn new insights regarding this God in their meeting with persons of other faiths.

5. Because Jews, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and others are increasingly drawn together in scientific, technological, business and academic enterprises, it is urgent that they meet to explore together how the different religious faiths contribute to our common human endeavour. Therefore it is an important responsibility of Christians to encourage multilateral dialogue.

As we seek to develop better ways and means for fruitful dialogue with the Jewish people, emphasizing the common origins and roots Christianity has with Judaism, we do not overlook nor neglect the need for dialogue with people of other living faiths.

However, all of this has to be seen as an integral part of the efforts to strengthen dialogues between all peoples of the various living faiths, as the ONE HUMANITY UNDER GOD.

Interreligious Affairs Department
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
165 East 56th Street
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GUIDELINES FOR JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

Adopted by the Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People of the sub-unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies, World Council of Churches, on 26th June, 1981, at London Colney, England

PREFACE

- 1.1 "One of the functions of dialogue is to allow participants to describe and witness to their faith in their own terms. This is of primary importance since self-serving descriptions of other peoples' faith are one of the roots of prejudice, stereotyping, and condescension. Listening carefully to the neighbours' self-understanding enables Christians better to obey the commandment not to bear false witness against their neighbours, whether those neighbours be of long established religious, cultural or ideological traditions or members of new religious groups. It should be recognized by partners in dialogue that any religion or ideology claiming universality, apart from having an understanding of itself, will also have its own interpretations of other religions and ideologies as part of its own self-understanding. Dialogue gives an opportunity for a mutual questioning of the understanding partners have about themselves and others. It is out of a reciprocal willingness to listen and learn that significant dialogue grows."
(WCC Guidelines on Dialogue, III.4)
- 1.2 In giving such guidelines the World Council of Churches speaks primarily for and to its member churches as it defines the need for and gifts to be received by dialogue. People of other faiths may choose to define their understanding of dialogue, and their expectations as to how dialogue with Christians may affect their own traditions and attitudes and may lead to a better understanding of Christianity.
- 1.3 In Jewish-Christian dialogue it is of special importance to allow for a certain asymmetry between these two communities of faith. For example, an understanding of Judaism in New Testament times becomes an integral and indispensable part of any Christian theology. For Jews, a "theological" understanding of Christianity is of a less than essential or integral significance, although neither community of faith has developed without awareness of the other.
- 1.4 The relations between Jews and Christians have unique characteristics because of the ways in which Christianity historically emerged out of Judaism. Christian understandings of that process constitute a necessary part of the dialogue and give urgency to the enterprise. As Christianity came to define its own identity over against Judaism, the Church developed its own understandings, definitions and terms for what it had inherited from Jewish traditions, and for what it read in the Scriptures common to Jews and Christians. In the process of defining its own identity the Church defined Judaism, and assigned to the Jews definite roles in its understanding of God's acts of salvation. It should not be surprising that Jews resent those Christian theologies in which they as a people are assigned to play a negative role. History has demonstrated over and again how short the step is from such patterns of thought in Christianity to overt acts of condescension, persecutions and worse.

- 1.5 Bible-reading and worshipping Christians often believe that they "know Judaism" since they have the Old Testament, the records of Jesus' debates with Jewish teachers and the early Christian reflections on the Judaism of their times. Furthermore, no other religious tradition has been as thoroughly "defined" by preachers and teachers in the Church as has Judaism. This attitude is often enforced by lack of knowledge about the history of Jewish life and thought through the 1,900 years since the parting of the ways of Judaism and Christianity.
- 1.6 For these reasons there is special urgency for Christians to listen, through study and dialogue, to ways in which Jews understand their history and their traditions, their faith and their obedience "in their own terms". Furthermore, a mutual listening to how each is perceived by the other may be a step toward overcoming fears and correcting misunderstandings that have thrived on isolation.
- 1.7 Both Judaism and Christianity comprise a wide spectrum of opinions, options, theologies, and styles of life and service. Since generalizations often produce stereotyping, Jewish-Christian dialogue becomes the more significant by aiming at as full as possible a representation of views within the two communities of faith.

2. TOWARD A CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF JUDAISM

- 2.1 Through dialogue with Jews, many Christians have come to appreciate the richness and vitality of Jewish faith and life in the covenant and have been enriched in their own understanding of God and the divine will for all creatures.

In dialogue with Jews, Christians have learned that the actual history of Jewish faith and experience does not match the images of Judaism that have dominated a long history of Christian teaching and writing, images that have been spread by Western culture and literature into other parts of the world.

- 2.2 In the understanding of many Christians, Judaism as a living tradition came to an end with the coming of Christ and with the destruction of the second temple of Jerusalem; the Church replaced the Jews as God's people, and the Judaism that survived is a fossilized religion of legalism.

In this view the covenant of God with the people of Israel was only a preparation for the coming of Christ, after which it was abrogated. Judaism of the first centuries before and after the birth of Jesus was therefore called "Late Judaism". The Pharisees were considered to represent the acme of legalism, Jews and Jewish groups were portrayed as negative models, and the truth and beauty of Christianity were thought to be enhanced by setting up Judaism as false and ugly.

- 2.3 Through a renewed study of Judaism and in dialogue with Jews, Christians become aware that Judaism in the time of Christ was in an early stage of its long life. Under the leadership of the Pharisees the Jewish people began a spiritual revival of remarkable power, which gave them the vitality capable of surviving the catastrophe of the loss of the temple. It gave birth to Rabbinic Judaism which produced the Mishnah and Talmud and built the structures for a strong and creative life through the centuries.

- 2.4 Jesus was born a Jew, born into this Jewish tradition. In this setting he was nurtured by the Hebrew Scriptures, which he accepted as authoritative and to which he gave a new interpretation in his life and teaching. In this context Jesus announced that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and in his resurrection his followers found the confirmation of his being both Lord and Messiah.

Christians should remember that some of the controversies reported in the New Testament between Jesus and the "scribes and Pharisees" find parallels within Pharisaism itself and its heir, Rabbinic Judaism. These controversies took place in a Jewish context, but when the words of Jesus came to be used by Christians who did not identify with the Jewish people as Jesus did, such sayings often became weapons in anti-Jewish polemics and thereby their original intention was tragically distorted. An internal Christian debate is now taking place on the question of how to understand passages in the New Testament that seem to contain anti-Jewish references.

AMERICAN JEWISH

- 2.5 Judaism, with its rich history of spiritual life, produced the Talmud as the normative guide for Jewish life in thankful response to the grace of God's covenant with the people of Israel. Over the centuries important commentaries, profound philosophical works and poetry of spiritual depth have been added. For Jews the Talmud is as central and authoritative as the New Testament is for Christians. Judaism, like Christianity, is more than the religion of the Scriptures of Israel. What Christians call the Old Testament has received in the Talmud and later writings interpretations which for Jewish tradition share in the authority of Moses.
- 2.6 Christians as well as Jews look to the Hebrew Bible as the story recording Israel's sacred memory of God's election and covenant with this people. For Jews, it is their own story in historical continuity with the present. Christians, mostly of gentile background since early in the life of the Church, believe themselves to be heirs by grace of this same story. The unique relationship between the two communities, both worshipping the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is a given historical fact, but how it is to be understood theologically is a matter of internal dialogue among Christians, which takes on increased seriousness as a result of dialogue with Jews.
- 2.7 Both commonalities and differences between the two faiths need to be examined carefully. In finding in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments the sole and ultimate authority sufficient for salvation, the Christian Church shares Israel's faith in the One God, whom it knows in the Spirit as the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. For Christians, Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father, through whom millions have come to share in the love of, and to adore, the God who first made covenant with the people of Israel. Knowing the One God in Jesus Christ through the Spirit, therefore, Christians worship that God with a trinitarian confession of the incarnate presence, liturgical language foreign to Jewish worship.

Christians and Jews both believe that God has created men and women as the crown of creation and has called them to be holy and to exercise stewardship over the creation in accountability to God. Jews and Christians are taught by their Scriptures to know themselves responsible to their neighbours, especially to those who are weak, poor and oppressed. In various and distinct ways they look for the day in which God will redeem the creation. In dialogue with Jews many Christians come to a more profound appreciation of the Exodus hope of liberation, and pray and work for the coming of righteousness and peace on earth.

- 2.8 As more and more Christians of different traditions enter into dialogue with Jews in local, national and international situations, they will come to express their growing understanding of Judaism in other language, style and ways than has been done in these guidelines. Such understandings are to be shared among the churches for the enrichment of all.

3. AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN WITNESS

- 3.1 Christians are called to witness to their faith in word and deed. The Church has a mission and it cannot be otherwise.
- 3.2 Christians have often distorted their witness by coercive proselytism - conscious and unconscious, overt and subtle. Referring to proselytism between Christian churches, the Joint Working Group of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches stated: "Proselytism embraces whatever violates the right of the human person, Christian or non-Christian, to be free from external coercion in religious matters." (Ecumenical Review, 1/1971, p.11)
- 3.3 Such rejection of proselytism, and such advocacy of respect for the integrity and the identity of all persons and all communities of faith are urgent in relation to Jews, especially those who live as minorities among Christians. Steps toward assuring non-coercive practices are of highest importance. In dialogue ways should be found for the exchange of concerns, perceptions and safeguards in these matters.
- 3.4 While Christians agree that there can be no place for coercion of any kind, they do disagree - on the basis of their understandings of the Scriptures - as to what constitutes authentic forms of mission.

There is a wide spectrum, from those who see the very presence of the Church in the world as the witness called for, to those who see mission as the explicit and organized proclamation of the gospel to all who have not accepted Jesus as their Saviour.

There is further disagreement where Jews are concerned. There are Christians who view a mission to the Jews as having a very special salvific significance, and those who believe the conversion of the Jews to be the eschatological event that will climax the history of the world. There are those who would place no special emphasis on a mission to the Jews, but would include them in the one mission to all who have not accepted Christ as their Saviour. There are those who believe that a mission to the Jews is not part of an authentic Christian witness, since the Jewish people finds its fulfilment in faithfulness to God's covenant of old.

Dialogue can rightly be described as a mutual witness, but only when the intention is to hear the others in order better to understand their faith, hopes, insights and concerns, and to give, to the best of one's ability, one's own understanding of one's own faith. The spirit of dialogue is to be fully present to one another in full openness and human vulnerability.

- 3.5 In dialogue with Jews it should be remembered that, according to rabbinic law, Jews who confess Jesus as the Messiah are considered apostate Jews. But for many Christians of Jewish origin, their identification with the Jewish people is a deep spiritual reality to which they seek to give expression in various ways, some by observing parts of Jewish tradition in worship and life style, many by a special commitment to the well-being of the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Among Christians of Jewish origin there is the same wide spectrum of attitudes toward mission as among other Christians, and the same guidelines for dialogue and against coercion apply.

4. ANTISEMITISM - A CONTINUING CONCERN IN THE JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

- 4.1 Christians cannot enter into dialogue with Jews without the awareness of antisemitism and its long persistent history, especially in countries where Jews constitute a minority among Christians. The World Council of Churches Assembly at its first meeting in Amsterdam 1948 condemned antisemitism: "We call upon the churches we represent to denounce antisemitism, no matter what its origin, as absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith. Antisemitism is sin against God and man." This appeal has been reiterated many times.
- 4.2 Christians must face honestly the tragic history of antisemitism, which includes the Crusades, the Inquisition, pogroms and the Holocaust. It is only by facing this history that Christians can understand the deep-rooted suspicion that many Jews even today have of Christians and Christianity. Christians are called upon to fight antisemitism with all the resources at their disposal, the more so since there are disturbing signs of new and increased antisemitism in many parts of the world. Those who live in parts of the world where there is a record of antisemitic acts are duty bound to unmask for all Christians the ever-present danger they have come to recognize in anti-Judaism and antisemitism.

- 4.3 One Christian response to the Holocaust must be a resolve that it will never happen again. Teachings of contempt for Jews and Judaism in certain Christian traditions were a spawning ground for the evil of the Nazi Holocaust. The Church must learn so to preach and teach the Gospel as to make sure that it cannot be used against the Jewish people. The Christian churches must be in the forefront of any efforts to prevent conditions which might lead to further persecution and another slaughter of the Jewish people.
- 4.4. Discrimination against and persecution of the Jewish people have deep-rooted socio-economic and political aspects. Religious differences are magnified to justify racial hatred in support of vested interests. Similar phenomena are evident in many inter-racial conflicts. Christians should oppose all such religious prejudices, whereby people are made scapegoats for the failures and problems of societies and political regimes.
- 4.5 Christians in parts of the world with little or no Jewish presence do not wish to be conditioned by the experience and shortcoming of those who brought the Gospel to them; rather, they explore in their own ways the significance of Christian-Jewish relations from the earliest times to the present, for their life and witness.

5. THE LAND

- 5.1 The words from the World Council of Churches' Guidelines on Dialogue that one of the functions of dialogue is to allow participants to describe and witness to their faith "in their own terms" are of particular significance for the understanding of the indissoluble bond between the Land of Israel and the Jewish people. This bond has, after many centuries of dispersion, found expression in the State of Israel. The need for the State of Israel to exist in security and peace is fundamental to Jewish consciousness and therefore is of paramount importance in any dialogue with Jews.
- 5.2 When Christians enter into dialogue with Jews they also recognize the need of Palestinians for self-determination and expression of their national identity. It is important to hear Palestinians - Christian and Muslim - express their special bonds with the Land "in their own terms". There must be a place in God's plan for all to live in security and peace.
- 5.3 The Land is holy for the three monotheistic religions - yet understood in different ways. They have all maintained a presence in the Land from their beginnings.

For Muslims the Land has special significance and, with its holy places, has been an integral part of the Muslim world, symbolic of God's universal promises to all the children of Abraham.

For countless Christians the Land has special significance. It is the Land of the Bible. It was in this Land that the Lord Jesus Christ was born, worked and taught, suffered, died and was raised from the dead.

But for Jews the relation to the land is of an essential nature. It is the Land of the Fathers and the Land of promise.

- 5.4 Many Christians find it difficult to grasp this essential nature of the Jewish attachment to the Land. They find it "particularistic", contrasting it with the "universalistic" thrust of the Christian message. Such a view does justice neither to the particular nor to the universal elements in Jewish, no less than in Christian understandings of the Land. Christians are therefore called to examine their theology and the history of their own faith on this point in any dialogue with Jews concerning the meaning of the Land.
- 5.5 Different understandings among Christians of the distinctions between faith and nationality, church and state, religion and politics, often hinder a genuine understanding of the significance of the Land for Jews, both in Israel and the diaspora. They also hinder an understanding of the significance of the Land for Palestinian Christians and Muslims.
- 5.6 These attachments to the Land only emphasize the need for sustained dialogue with Jews. In such dialogue, consideration should be given to finding ways to promote mutual respect and reconciliation among Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Middle East and elsewhere as a contribution to the common welfare of all members of God's human family.