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Interreligious Affairs Department, American Jewish Committee, Perkins is Associate Professor in the University of Dallas, and is Professor of Theology.

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—Spinoza.

Jewish-Christian Relations: Issues and Prospects

By
RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM



I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to be here with you, and for the privilege of the invitation. Not the least part of the delight in accepting the invitation was the opportunity that it afforded me to meet once again with a revered and greatly admired scholar, Dr. Albert Outler. Whenever we have had dialogues with the Methodist Church nationally and have found difficulty in making distinctions between what constitutes Methodist theology as compared with, let us say, Baptist theology, somehow that question was invariably

resolved by someone saying, "Well, there is Dr. Albert Outler. He is Methodist theology." And so it is a great pleasure to be with Dr. Outler again, as it was at Notre Dame where the Roman Catholics brought us together, and earlier at Vatican Council II.

My assignment, as I understand it from the letter of invitation and from the description given to you by Dr. James Ward, is to try to do a rather impossible thing during the forty to forty-five minutes in which I am to speak—and that is to try to undertake a *tour d'horizon* of Jewish-Christian relations from a Jewish perspective. This presentation is intended as an overview of the major issues and concerns as seen in the Jewish community, both in the academic and intellectual aspects of the Jewish community, as well as in the living experience of the Jewish people that I encounter in a variety of ways in my travels around the country and in other parts of the world. I submit that this will have to be necessarily a somewhat sketchy presentation of themes, each of which would require for any adequate treatment a full lecture. As you will see, each of the subjects which I should like to identify as being central to the current Jewish-Christian agenda has spawned a very substantial literature, and each of the themes could in itself constitute the basis of an entire seminar of not just one day.

At the very outset, I should like to suggest that for reasons of architecture, I point to at least three areas in which there has been quite substantial progress, growth, development in understanding and in relationships between the Christian and Jewish communities, and particularly the Catholic and Protestant communities in relationship with the Jewish community. I specify that because I believe we have another set of concerns which are emerging out of the present situation in relationship with the Eastern Orthodox churches. And these three areas, I would submit, fall under the categories of the increasing and serious atten-

tion that has been given by the highest teaching authorities and institutions of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant communities with regard to Christian responsibility for certain traditions of Christian teaching that have nurtured anti-Semitism during the greater part of the past two millennia.

Secondly, I would submit that there has been substantial growth and progress in the Christian development of a "theology of Israel," a theology of the Jewish people in the context of a theology of the people of God, which I should like to allude to in a moment. And related to that there has begun to take place a facing up to the historic amnesia that has obtained in church history with regard to the portrayal of post-biblical Judaism, Rabbinic Judaism, in the pedagogic process of Christendom. In this second area—an adequate Christian understanding of the theology of the Jewish people—let me say that there is a companion problem on the Jewish side, namely, the issue of the Jewish community developing an adequate Jewish theological understanding of the place of Christianity and Christians in God's divine plan—which also needs to be examined in terms of the present agenda.

And thirdly, there has been substantial growth and progress in the approach on the part of Christians and Jews to their common concerns as people and as communities to the commanding issues of social justice, world community, and international economic development and related problems. In identifying these problems, it should be noted that progress has been more substantial in some areas than in others, and that in all cases the progress is marked by some ambiguity in terms of the unfinished agenda which is still to be faced.

Now, let me deal in rather summary fashion with the first area of concern, namely, that of the address on the part of Christian leadership to the problem of anti-Semitism, the roots of anti-Semitism in western culture and the influence of certain

forms of Christian teaching and tradition. I would submit that any fair and objective reading of what has been taking place in the western Christian community with regard to this issue would lead one to conclude that we have passed a major landmark in this area of concern, a landmark which must be located in the extraordinary action of Vatican Council II in its adoption of the Statement on the Jews.

I recall the days during which I was in Rome as personal guest of Cardinal Bea and of Cardinal Shehan, who was then chairman of the American Bishops' Commission on Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Affairs. As a Jew who comes out of a rather orthodox background, and whose family was victimized on my wife's side by German Nazi anti-Semitism and on my parents' side by Russian-Polish anti-Semitism, I recall standing in Rome in St. Peter's Basilica at the time of the intervention of Cardinal Bea as he introduced that particular declaration, and I found it simply incredible. There in the presence of some 2,500 Council Fathers from throughout the world, the Roman Catholic Church faced forthrightly the issue of the church's responsibility for the abuse of Scripture and the New Testament teachings as it is developed in certain traditions, and for the basic "themes of contempt," and literally sought to turn the church around in a totally opposite direction. Despite all the ambiguities of the language that existed in the Vatican Council declaration, there can be no question that in the perspective of 1,900 years this was a major, revolutionary turning point on the part of the Roman Church. The argument that we in the Jewish community who were involved in relating to the Roman Catholic hierarchy, both here and abroad, sought to make clear to those who were skeptical about that process, was that this was the beginning, the first step, in a process of Christian self-purification. I am persuaded that the events since that time have more than amply justified the involvement of the Jewish commu-

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nity in that cooperative process with the Roman Catholic Church, because what emerged as a result of Vatican Council II was the U. S. Bishops' Guidelines on Jewish-Catholic Relationships which clarified much of the ambiguous language. The guidelines also went on to deal with the basic themes in a very direct way: the problems of teaching that were centered in the misrepresentation of the Pharisees; the conflicts between Jesus and the Pharisees; and the false dichotomy which portrayed Judaism as a religion of harsh legalism in contrast to Christianity as a superior religion of love. These and related questions were faced directly and frontally in the Bishops' Guidelines on the Catholic-Jewish Relationships, which now in fact have become the basis of a major program on many levels in the Roman Catholic community—clergy, teachers, religious education, textbook revision, etc.—a whole new Christian culture with regard to the church's attitudes toward Jews and Judaism has been inaugurated in the wake of Vatican Council II.

In a companion way, the action of the World Council of Churches in 1961, which also sought to face these questions, represented a major contribution to facing the issue of anti-Semitism within the Protestant and Eastern Orthodox communities. But I must confess that there is a strange kind of "out-of-phasesness" which we experience in relationship to much of the national Protestant leadership on this question. Prior to Vatican Council II, perhaps 98% of Jewish-Christian dialogue has been, at least until the past two years, something like 85% Roman Catholic-Jewish. It is only now beginning to turn into a new cycle of relationships with Protestant leadership. We find ourselves now engaged in growing dialogue with good friends in the Southern Baptist Convention, the Lutheran Churches, the United Presbyterian Church—however, that's a relatively new phenomenon. In terms of this unresolved aspect of the Jewish-Christian agenda, there is reason for

very serious concern in the Jewish community as to the depth of the commitment of national Protestant leadership to implementing the insights which have emerged out of contemporary scholarship with regard to the problems of Christian teaching about anti-Semitism. As of this moment, with the exception of the Southern Baptist Convention, there is not a single national Protestant denomination that has a single person working full-time on Jewish-Christian relationships. Not a single national Protestant denomination has a person charged with responsibility to deal with uprooting the sources of anti-Semitism in Protestant culture or to deal with the developing of more affirmative relationships between Christians and Jews.

The reason I begin this presentation with reference to anti-Semitism as the first issue on the agenda of Jewish-Christian relationships today is that there is a tendency on the part of some to feel that there is a peculiar kind of Jewish paranoia with regard to anti-Semitism. I wish there were such a fantasy life of the Jewish community. We could deal with it seriously. Tragically, Jews are deeply preoccupied with the problems of anti-Semitism today because we find ourselves confronting a whole new constellation of anti-Semitism internationally, with spill-over nationally, which has made our community considerably anxious these days and weeks and months. The Jewish community has become the object of manipulation by the Soviet Union which is using anti-Semitism, including classical theological anti-Semitism, on a calculated, systematic basis. The great paradox confronts us of a government committed to uprooting religious teaching in the life of its own society, exploiting classical Russian Orthodox anti-Semitism of the Czarist period as a way of building its relationship with the Arab countries and of suppressing intellectual dissent within its own borders. The Soviet Union has established an official institute on anti-Semitism in the Ukraine, with a professor writing

FALL 1970

with the Protestant community. Since Vatican Council II, and ⁷

encyclopedia articles of an anti-Jewish character, publishing books on "Judaism Unmasked," demonstrating that the Jews for theological reasons are involved in an international conspiracy—the themes of the discredited *protocols of the Elders of Zion*. That material is now being imported into Western Europe, Latin America, and the United States primarily by propagandists for the extremist factions of Arab nationalism and their radical left allies. There is a legitimate form of Palestinian nationalism for Arabs to use anti-Semitism as part of their struggle against Zionism and Israel. And this nation is being swamped, both in overt and covert ways, with forms of anti-Semitism, including the revival of the ritual blood rivals in Islamic versions, whose only parallel is the propaganda activity of the Nazis and their sympathizers in the 1930's.

And so the phenomenon of anti-Semitism today, as we are experiencing it in its political and sociological forms, with a continued appropriation of theological nurturing of anti-Semitism by a variety of sources, makes this question a basic one in the dialogue between Christians and Jews. And indeed, Jews are concerned as they look to Christian colleagues and neighbors for some sympathetic understanding of the seriousness of the problem and an appropriate, concerned response. The problem will become much worse, rather than better, as this nation continues to go through its present upheaval and turmoil. We are now in an extremely ambiguous situation in which the potentiality of the resurrection of anti-Semitism in demonic forms is here with us. As we struggle with the crisis of Vietnam and Cambodia, Jews on the one hand are being singled out for attack by the radical right because many Jewish kids are involved in the New Left on the campuses, and in protest movements. The radical right is exploiting in this country a theme of the Jewish-Communist-Marxist-Zionist conspiracy to destroy America, and therefore the elders of

Jewish kids react humanly by trying to cool it. The parents now find it increasingly difficult to speak out on Vietnam and Cambodia, and then because they are silent, the New Left is now hitting the Jewish establishment for copping out on the moral issues of the war. And so Jews are damned if they do and damned if they don't. Throughout all of this, the themes of anti-Semitism are being incorporated as ways of signaling messages to the Jewish community about its continued marginality to the mainstream of American society.

I move from that area of concern which is existential and deeply significant for the Jewish self-consciousness today, because some of the other concerns which one would prefer to talk about oftentimes are considered luxuries in the face of some of the hard reality problems of survival and the security of the Jewish people here and abroad. But nevertheless I think the question of the new context in which Jews and Christians relate to each other must be faced in terms of what I take to be a substantially healthy development in our encounter; namely, the rediscovery by Christians of Judaism and the Jewish people. It is increasingly clear that for internal Christian theological reasons, as the churches go through their own process of renewal and reform, and find it essential to reconceptualize the classic traditional categories within which Christians have done theology, and are seeking to recover the early foundations in which the church constructed her being, her existence, the churches are brought back inevitably to face the reality of the biblical and Hebraic origins of the church, and of the biblical-theological categories. In the process of doing that, many Christian theologians and church historians are becoming aware of the vitality and the continued reality of the Jewish people as a living witness to that tradition which many Christians now are beginning to recover as their own. And I think it is quite clear as one studies Profes-

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which many Jews both here and in Israel support as valid self-determination,
But neither Christian, Jew, nor humanist should find any warrant
whatsoever in conscience for

PERKINS JOURNAL

sor Jules Isaac¹ or Dr. James Parkes,² or any of the church historians who have been writing about the early centuries, that this is a relatively new development. In much Christian theological writing and church historical material, Judaism ceased to exist with the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem in the first century. And everything that has existed since that time in post-biblical and rabbinic Judaism has been a rather anomalous kind of thing which somehow you are not able to make sense out of. Indeed, Toynbee said something quite real when he spoke of the "Syriac fossil" of Judaism. He was speaking of sentiment which was widespread in much Christian thought.

Out of a commitment to truth, and an effort to understand the realities of living Judaism today, there has now begun to develop virtually a new discipline of thought, both in the Roman Catholic and the Protestant communities, with regard to formulating a more adequate theology of Israel as a living, vital, dynamic, witnessing, worshipping, praying community. One need only cite the Catholic writings of people like Hans Kung, Gregory Baum, Edward Flannery, Cornelius Rijk, Kurt Hruby, John Oesterreicher, Marcel Dubois, and Gabriel Moran; in the Protestant community, scholars such as Krister Stendahl, W. D. Davies, Albert Outler, Coert Rylersdaam, Roy Eckhardt, Franklin Littell, Markus Barth, Elwyn Smith. These and others have come to the firm conviction that a fundamentally new Christian theology of the covenant—a new conception of Israel—is required. One of the more recent formulations of such a theology of Israel which affirms the permanent validity of Judaism and the co-existence of the two covenants, of Israel and the church, is to be found in an essay by Dr. Monika Hellwig in the

Journal of Ecumenical Studies. "Christianity has been confronted with a logical dilemma in terms of seeing Christianity as superceding Judaism and the fact that the Jews were blind to the revelation of Jesus as the Christ," writes Dr. Hellwig, adding that the

Christian position on the blindness of the Jews rests rather heavily on the assumption that revelation is a past event and consists of what God told us. Being just and merciful, God would guarantee an adequate relaying of the truth and sufficient supporting evidence that make it convincing to all. Implicit in it is a definition of the truth with which revelation is concerned as simply verbal conceptual, more specifically, propositional. The process of revelation is seen as communication of fully shaped and immutable concepts in a mechanical and paraexperiential model. Today we are at an important moment of truth and opportunity. Not only does this understanding of revelation render the truth claims of the Jewish and Christian communities ultimately irreconcilable. The Christian theologians themselves have found that they can no longer work with this model in attempting to answer contemporary questions about Christian life. Christian theology can no longer remain internally coherent in a two-story universe in which grace is separate from nature in the sense that it operated outside of the sphere of human experience. We are being compelled to rely on our experience and observations of the historical situation for the interpretation of God's intervention in history. We simply cannot answer the questions of contemporary Christians in terms of an understanding of revelation as instantaneous transfer of fully conceptualized knowledge from the realm of non-experiential supernatural to the experiential natural. Roger Shinn, of Union Theological Seminary, has said in a felicitous utterance that revelation is that event which alters the capacity for perception. We may be approaching the point of dialogue at which Jewish and Christian thinkers can attempt to express to each other on behalf of their respective traditions the meaning of those events which have altered their capacity for perception. Such truth-claims need by no means be mutually exclusive. They are far more likely to be complementary, and dependent upon each other for fuller comprehension.

And Dr. Hellwig goes on to elaborate a theology of the complementariness of Judaism and Christianity by building on Romans 9-11. Dr. Hellwig comes to a conclusion which Yehuda Halevi forecast in the twelfth century—namely, that despite our human perversity, it is quite conceivable that God in his own plan established one

¹ *The Teaching of Contempt: Jesus and Israel* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston).

² *The Conflict Between Church and Synagogue: Judaism and Christianity*.

covenant with many branches, and that Judaism, Christianity and Islam are branches grafted on to the common trunk, rooted in the one covenant. The more appropriate role for them as sons and daughters of the common covenant is to be complementary and supplementary to each other, rather than exclusivistic and polemical in their relationships with one another.

The polemical history which dates back to the first four centuries of our encounter, when the synagogue and church broke with one another, reflects patterns that have determined our history, our fate and destiny across the millenia. One recognizes the magnitude of the problem of fostering mutual understanding as one surveys the way in which church history and Jewish history textbooks continue to support this historiography of misunderstanding each other. As one looks into much of church historical writing and Jewish historical writing, it is evident that by and large we are continuing to develop two different universes of discourse among our young people. To illustrate the point very briefly, if one reads, for example, Father Philip Hughes' account of the crusades in his "History of the Catholic Church," and then compares that treatment of the crusades with the writings of such Jewish historians as Marx and Margolis, Solomon Grayzel, and Selo Baron, it is as though two separate universes are being described. Father Hughes depicts the crusades as a holy, noble venture to redeem the Holy Land and the Holy City of Jerusalem from the hands of the infidels. The Jews are not mentioned once in his account of the crusades. But if you read the Jewish accounts of that period, the crusades were an unmitigated pogrom. Jewish texts highlight an account of how at the end of the first crusade all the Jews in Jerusalem were packed into the synagogues and the synagogues were burned. Thus, in the Jewish understanding, the crusades were far from holy or noble. Christians, raised on this reading of history, can never under-

stand why Jews shudder at the very mention of the word "crusade." Until there is some kind of inter-disciplinary writing of history which incorporates the corrective insights of both our traditions, I'm afraid we are going to continue to perpetuate the problem of mutual misperception and misunderstanding.

The problem exists on the Jewish side as it does on the Christian side. For example, Jewish historic accounts of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment are at great variance with Catholic histories of the same period. In much of the Jewish accounts of the French Revolution, it is hailed as the salvation of the Jews. The French Revolution enabled the Jews to achieve civic equality for the first time in virtually 1700 years in the Christian West. The Jewish history books never mention the fact that at the same time the French Revolution was a pogrom against the Roman Catholic Church, and that many of the orders of the sisters and the priests who are here in this country are here as displaced persons of the French Revolution. The convents were destroyed, monasteries were uprooted, most of the major universities under Catholic auspices were eliminated by the French Revolution in the process of the disestablishment of the Catholic Church. To many European Christians, who have a guarded feeling about the ultimate redemptive value of the Revolution and the Enlightenment, they speak a language which many Jews do not begin to comprehend. And so here is an area of unfinished business on the Jewish-Christian agenda which is worthy of further exploration.

In a certain sense, the kind of issues discussed thus far are really very conventional ways of approaching the Jewish-Christian dialogue. They exist without almost any reference to time. In talking about Jewish-Christian relationships over the past 1,900 years, one would have to face all these questions as the central, perennial questions of the dialogue—anti-Semitism, the theology of

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the people of God, of the people of Israel, the theology of Christianity—as well as the problem of portrayals of both of our respective historic experiences.

But there is a new turn in our relationship which has been transforming, and that involves the Jewish community's understanding of itself, of its vocation, of its selfhood. It is virtually impossible, it seems to me, in terms of any reality-oriented dialogue, for Christians and Jews to talk with each other unless they face the centrality of that new Jewish self-consciousness in the Jewish community. That has very much to do with the experience the Jews have undergone literally throughout the world since the June 1967 war in the Middle East. Now, here, too, it is quite possible to deal with the transformation of the Jewish understanding of peoplehood and the Jewish relationship to the land and the State of Israel also in quite conventional ways. And I daresay that the overwhelming majority of the dialogues between Jews and Christians in which the issue of Israel has emerged, and whatever understandings or misunderstandings have developed between Christians and Jews around the Middle East crisis, has taken place on the basis of these conventional categories. There is great validity to that, and I think every Jewish-Christian dialogue if it is to be based on an honest understanding of both partners in that dialogue, must go through that process. It is essential that the Jewish partner of the dialogue communicate to the Christian community that Jews reenacted almost traumatically in their response to the threats of the annihilation of Israel in May and June 1967, and an awareness of the importance of Israel in terms of its historical, religious, liturgical dimensions of the Jews. The historic relationship of the Jewish people to the land of Israel literally across 3,000 years is constitutive to the Jewish identity. From the beginning of the promise given to Abraham down through every century there have been Jewish settlements in

Palestine. Whether there was a Jewish state, a Jewish commonwealth, a Jewish sovereignty, or whether the Jews lived in the Dispersion, there were always Jewish communities present in the Holy Land, always communities which sought to retain a commitment and loyalty to the promise given to the forefathers, as well as to retain a community that would point toward the future promise. A very substantial presentation could be made on the depths to which the Holy Land has penetrated Jewish consciousness. Israel is the place of the origins of the Jewish people as a historic community, and that has profound religious meaning to the Jews. Every Jewish prayer book is replete with references to the restoration of Jerusalem to her former glory. The daily prayer services, the Sabbath prayer services, the pilgrim festivals of Passover, Succoth (Tabernacles) and Shavouth (Pentecost) are simply incomprehensible without reference to the centrality of Israel in the Jewish self-understanding of the past, the present, and the future promise. And yet, as one thinks about that method of communication, of what Israel has meant to the Jewish people historically, theologically, religiously, liturgically, one becomes aware of the difficulty that Jews are building into their communication to Christians, because the effect of that interpretation is to suggest, all right, that's a Jewish hang-up. That is your Jewish thing and your Jewish problem, and as a matter of ecumenical friendship, we will seek to understand that this is your difficulty. And one, in fact, sees this in the latest unofficial Vatican declaration on the Jewish people. There is a spirit of extraordinary friendship toward the Jews in that document. And yet, there is almost an unintended confession that we really don't comprehend this whole relationship of the universal religious community and its link to that particular land. The document states that Catholics must simply respect the fact that there is a bond between the Jewish people and the land of Israel, which is to

say that we'll shelve that for the time being, until the Messiah comes and works that out for everybody.

There are at least two profound theological, intellectual, spiritual issues that Jews are struggling with in their understanding of the relationship of their being adherents to the universal faith of Judaism, and their ties to that particular land. These are not just Jewish questions, I submit, but are of the deepest intellectual and spiritual importance to Christians as well. What Jews are struggling with as they are trying to find the meaning of the restoration of the state of Israel, and the implications for a universal tradition in relation to a holy land, holy places, and holy cities is essentially this: we are engaged in the deepest kind of struggle to try to retrieve some validity for the meaning of religious symbolism in the consciousness of religious man today—of the *homo religiosus*. We live at a time which contemporary historians tell us is an age of a highly rational, mechanical culture. We live at a time in which the control of nature has been dominated by scientific, rational thinking. As Cyril Richardson has written in Ernest Johnson's book on "Religious Symbolism," we are likely to think of symbolism as being something essentially unnecessary. We deal in hard facts which do not lend themselves to the symbolic. We think of a symbol as standing for something else, and we imagine that as soon as we grasp that something else, the symbol has served its turn and is no longer of use. It is the something else to which the symbol points that is the reality, and hence we no longer need the symbol, once we have passed beyond it to the truth that it tells. That is why as a culture we have so few symbols. That is why, incidentally, in America today we find people trying to develop a civil religion with civic religious symbols because the classic, historical, traditional symbol system has collapsed in this rational, technical culture. So we imagine that our control of nature brings us into direct contact

with reality which we can manipulate to our own ends and which needs no symbolic expression.

And yet the irony of this moment in which rational man finds symbols to be a kind of buffer against reality and therefore useless is that it takes place at a time in which psychotherapy and psychoanalysis have had their greatest dominance. Psychotherapy is modern western man's mode for the pursuit of wholeness and spiritual health. Psychotherapy deals in nothing else than the symbol life of the human being, and the whole internal self-understanding and self-consciousness of man is mediated entirely through the symbol system. The whole dream of life of man is the symbol system that articulates the deepest unconscious awarenesses of man. And yet, in the public religious life the crisis of faith that exists today is crucially located in the question of the collapse of belief in religious symbol systems.

I have been reading some of the literature about the current debate over the eucharist and communion, and I have been struck by rather interesting analogies to our subject. The question as to whether the divine presence is present in reality in the two elements of the eucharist or in the communion, or whether the eucharist is simply commemorative or the memorial of the past, raises the question of the transcendence and the immanence of spiritual reality in the life of man. How the holy and the sacred are experienced in human existence, in the life of the individual and of the community, are not unlike some of the questions that Jews are struggling with when they probe the meanings of the *Shechinah*, the divine presence, and its mediation in the life of the Jewish people as centered in the "holy" temple and the "holy" city of Jerusalem. And so, I should like to suggest that what Jews are engaged in in seeking to articulate some meaningful understanding of the holiness of the Holy Land are the meaning of sacred values, the validity of religious sym-

bols, and the presence of the sacred in the life of all people. If Jews are able to make a valid intellectual case for the articulation of their universal tradition in relationship to that particular historic society and land, then it will not have been without some relevance for others who are engaged in the struggle to try to make some sense out of the present crisis in faith.

Involved also in this question of the relationship of Judaism to the land of Israel is the problem of religious language, indeed, the problem of language altogether. There is the need to make distinctions between factual language, the language of science and rationalism, and poetic, religious, mythic language which deals with reality on another order of existence. And the problem of the universal and the particular has occupied for centuries the most sophisticated philosophers and theologians, and it is not going to be resolved here, not in these waning moments of this presentation.

Much of this discussion of the universal and the particular may be bypassed if we realize that the problem is not answerable in the terms in which it is proposed, simply because they confuse the map with the territory. That is to say, that much of the factual language which we use in our conventional discourse today is something like the map which abstracts from the reality of experience, and it has the same relationship to reality that the map has to all of the richness and the depth and the vitality of the terrain. Good and evil are abstract categories, and categories do not perform their function unless they are kept distinct. Therefore, it is perfectly proper that the concepts of good and evil be distinct, dualistic, irreconcilable, and that they be firm and clear as any other measure. But the problem of the duality, or the inherent contradiction between the universal and the particular arises only when the abstract is confused with the concrete, and when it is thought that these are clearly distinguishable entities in the natural universe. Factual

language is never more than a strictly limited symbolism for what is happening in nature. The image, the religious, poetic or mythic image, is closer than linguistic categories to events themselves.

It is important also to indicate that it is not only a question of language, but as well of the philosophical inheritance of the western world. I cannot dwell at too great a length on the question of the metaphysical dualisms which have come down to us through the scholastic tradition in which the universal has been, as it were, elevated to a category of superior form of being, and the particular is seen as an inferior form of existence. One needs to read people such as Herbert Richardson, Leslie Dewart or Rosemary Reuther or some of the other newer theologians today who are engaged in the "de-hellenization of dogma," and are seeking to break down the disparities of the dualism between essence and existence. They now are making the case that one cannot really talk of universalism in abstract ways, especially in the scholastic sense, without seeing that the universal does not exist without its being expressed in the particular, in the concrete experience of man. The particular has no meaning without its being a form of representation of universal meanings.

In much of the newer writings and theology that has been developing in recent years, there is a clue which can help us understand each other on this question. There is a sense in which Jews can understand themselves as they reflect this through Christian self-understanding when Christians speak of the church universal. There is a projection of the conception of the church in its ideal-typical sense which is messianic, eschatological, and which speaks of the church universal as an instrument of God's action involving the whole human family. Jews understand that tension between the universal and the particular when they speak of the Lord God of Israel being the Lord God of all the nations. Indeed,

one of our great scholars, Solomon Schechter, spoke of "catholic Israel," as universal as is the church universal. Yet in terms of the reality in which the church universal is experienced by its communicants, that experience is not unlike that with which Jews are wrestling today. Herbert Richardson in his book, *Towards an American Theology*, makes the observation that if one really wants to understand the Christian situation, one must understand Christianity as a universal church as it is experienced in its spatial centers. That is to say, one can really not speak of the church universal or the universal Christian faith apart from the various historic forms in which it was experienced by its communicants and continues to be experienced today. Thus he says that Christianity exists in the modality of Latin-Hispanic culture, and that is Latin Christianity. And Latin Christianity informed Latin-Hispanic culture, shaped it, and was in turn shaped by it. But one cannot speak of the universal church in its Protestant Reformation form without understanding the degree to which the Reformation tradition was deeply implicated in the culture, the society, the economics, the politics, of northern-western Europe, and the degree to which the Reformation church cannot be understood apart from the degree to which the culture, the society, the history shaped the church in its deepest spiritual formation. And obviously, as one looks at Byzantine culture, one cannot understand the Byzantine Orthodox Church apart from its relationship to the Byzantine Empire and the degree to which the imperial form of that culture shaped the imperial theology and the very hierarchical and ecclesiastical structures of that church.

That was the spatial center of the Orthodox Church. The Latin-Hispanic world, with its culture, provides the spatial center of Latin Christianity, just as northwestern Europe provides the spatial center for Reformation Christianity. Today, as Richardson says, the spatial center in which whatever really significant, dynamic theology will develop in Protestantism, and perhaps Catholicism, will be the dynamic centers of American culture as Christianity seeks to engage scientific, technological civilization there.

I would submit that the land of Israel represents for the Jewish people the spatial center of Judaism. The experience of Christendom and of Christianity's encounter with history and modernity which has taken place in these variety of spatial centers finds its analogies in the way in which Judaism is seeking to engage modernity and history in the land of Israel. The disparity in our perception of this has more to do with demography, with the quantity of persons than with the essential relationship. Had there been five hundred million Jews in the world with Israel as its spatial center, undoubtedly, there may have been other spatial centers flowing out in the dispersion but related to Israel as the center of Jewish cultural, religious life, historical origins, and messianic promise for the future.

The degree to which Jews are able to resolve the relationship in constructive ways, are able to moralize and spiritualize their relationship to that spatial center, to that degree we are engaged in an understanding which indeed is uniquely Jewish, but hopefully, may have some instruction for others who are concerned about the present spiritual crisis for the whole of mankind.