

CHRISTIAN SELF-INTERPRETATION IN RELATION TO MODERN JUDAISM:

A STRATEGY FOR MOVING FROM A 'CHURCH AGAINST ISRAEL'  
NEARER TO A 'CHURCH WITH ISRAEL'

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses Christian Self-Interpretation in relation to modern Judaism in the light of the persistence of Christian 'teaching of contempt' (Jules Isaac).

A conceptual revolution valuing difference as equality would help combat the *theological-symbolic* nature of Christian anti-Judaism. Such a conceptual revolution could be achieved by a Church which reconciles itself to an ongoing Synagogue. Meanwhile, an ideological programme is proposed for influencing Christians through Liturgy and Doctrine towards greater solidarity with the Jewish people.

A religious community is largely formed by the moods and motivations induced by a particular festival calendar. The 'parting of the ways' between Christianity and Judaism is focused in the Christian decision to create a calendar around Easter. For the Church, allegiance to a calendar involves Liturgy and Doctrine in mutually reinforcing formative interrelationship.

Judaism and Christianity can be associated through the concept of *isomorphism*: dynamic mutual interrelationships of diverse elements which obey the same relational rules. Christians come to the Father through and in Christ: Jews come to the Father through Torah and in *Knesset Israel* (the Community of Israel). One can refer to the now separated communities as the Christian sacramental people of God and the Jewish *halakhic* people of God.

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Each religion defines itself by the dead it remembers  
and the anniversaries it keeps.

(BBC Television Programme)

*Cor ad cor loquitur.*  
(Heart speaks to heart).

To respect the Other is, before all else,  
to refer to the Other's opinion.  
(Emmanuel Levinas)

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Version.



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To those whose writing provided particularly creative stimulation: Rabbi Dr Joseph Dov Ber Soloveitchik (1903-1993) and Dr Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt.

### Abbreviations used in the text

|               |                                                                                |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AngThR        | Anglican Theological Review                                                    |
| ANF           | Ante-Nicene Fathers                                                            |
| ARCIC         | Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission                               |
| ASA           | Association of Social Anthropologists                                          |
| BT            | Babylonian Talmud                                                              |
| CBQ           | Catholic Biblical Quarterly                                                    |
| CCJ           | The Council of Christians and Jews                                             |
| CD            | Church Dogmatics, Karl Barth                                                   |
| ChAtJJ        | Christian Attitude on Jews and Judaism                                         |
| ChJRel        | Christian-Jewish Relations, previously Christian Attitudes on Jews and Judaism |
| Common Ground | The Journal of the Council of Christians and Jews                              |
| CSEL          | <i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>                            |
| FC            | The Fathers of the Church                                                      |
| Immanuel      | Immanuel, Jerusalem                                                            |
| JAAR          | Journal for the American Academy of Religion                                   |
| JBL           | Journal of Biblical Literature                                                 |
| JES           | Journal of Ecumenical Studies                                                  |
| JJS           | Journal of Jewish Studies                                                      |
| JRel          | The Journal of Religion                                                        |
| JSNTS         | Journal for the Society of New Testament Studies                               |
| JSOTS         | Journal for the Society of Old Testament Studies                               |
| JThSt         | Journal of Theological Studies                                                 |
| LNPNF         | Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers                                      |
| LouvSt        | Louvain Studies                                                                |
| ModCh         | The Modern Churchman                                                           |
| ModTh         | Modern Theology                                                                |
| NovTest       | Novum Testamentum                                                              |
| NTS           | New Testament Studies                                                          |
| OCPHS         | Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies                                  |
| PG            | Patrologia Graeca, J-P Migne                                                   |
| PL            | Patrologia Latina, J-P Migne                                                   |
| PrincSB       | Princeton Seminary Bulletin                                                    |
| RSR           | Religious Studies Review                                                       |
| SBL           | Society for Biblical Literature                                                |
| SC            | <i>Sources chrétiennes</i>                                                     |
| SIDIC         | <i>Service International de Documentation Judéo-Chrétienne</i>                 |
| SJT           | Scottish Journal of Theology                                                   |
| SNTS          | Society for New Testament Studies                                              |
| StLit         | Studia Liturgica                                                               |
| StTheol       | Studia Theologica                                                              |
| ThTod         | Theology Today                                                                 |
| Tradition     | Tradition: A Journal of Jewish Orthodox Thought                                |
| WCC           | The World Council of Churches                                                  |
| WZO           | World Zionist Organisation                                                     |

### Short Forms of regularly used Long Titles

|                             |                                                                           |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt | <u>Das christliche Bekenntnis zu Jesus, dem Juden: Eine Christologie.</u> |
| Band 2                      | Christian Kaiser Verlag, München 1991                                     |
| Band 1                      | Christian Kaiser Verlag, München 1990                                     |
|                             | <u>Christology 2</u>                                                      |
|                             | <u>Christology 1</u>                                                      |

## Statement of Intent

1. To engage in a work of Christian Systematic Theology which is self-consciously reflective on its central affirmations.
2. This will be attempted in the light of Christian responsibility to speak appropriately of the Judaism(s) of which it should not avoid speaking, and yet
3. Seek to avoid a Christian Theology of Israel, as far as this is possible, in order to protect the integrity of the Jewish Other from subsumation under imposed theological terminology.
4. Be confidently self-critical in the task and
5. Constantly aware of the Christian temptation to read the Jewish Other in its own terms.
6. Allow a certain critical distance from popular movements into dialogue between Jews and Christians.
7. Rather, the reflective self-interpretation will consciously draw insights for Christian self-interpretation from Jewish writers as they engage in their own self-interpretation within the Jewish community.
8. Thus allowing for two separate liturgically/halakhically-formed communities, despite some common textual sources and spiritual traditions.

In order to:

9. Continue the task of handing down the Christian faith to Christian adults wishing to grow deeper into their own tradition, a tradition that for too long has defined itself "at the expense of living Judaism".

Christian Self-Interpretation in relation to Modern Judaism:  
A Strategy for moving from a 'Church against Israel' nearer to a  
'Church with Israel'

Abbreviations used in Text  
Statement of Intent

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## Christian Self-Interpretation in relation to Modern Judaism

### Introduction I: From 'Church within Israel', through 'Church against Israel', to 'Church with Israel'

It is a complex task to be involved as a twentieth-century Christian in relation to modern Judaism. Perhaps it is an artificial task. Most adherents of these two great faiths carry on the business of living in our shared world without such self-examination and reflection. And yet most of the major religions have begun to grapple with the implications of many faiths in a shared world.

It is a central contention of this work that the relationship between Christianity and Judaism is a special case in Christianity's relationship to the wider faith-universe. An understanding of Judaism is intrinsic to Christian faith because of the Jewishness of Jesus and our relationship to some common scriptures, whereas the understanding of the other world religions is extrinsic. As an Anglican statement puts it:

For Christians, *Judaism* can never be one religion among others. It has a special bond and affinity with Christianity. Jesus, our Lord and the Christ, was a Jew, and the Scriptures which informed and guided his life were the books of the Hebrew Bible. These still form part of the Christian Scriptures. The God in whom Jesus believed, to whom he totally gave himself, and in whom we believe is 'the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'. A right understanding of the relationship with Judaism is, therefore, fundamental to Christianity's own self-understanding.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue" Appendix 6 § 13 in The Truth shall Set you Free Lambeth 1988, Church House Publishing 1989, p 302.

The 'special bond' of Judaism with Christianity will be seen to have implications not only for the Christian apperception of the humanity of Jesus, but also for its appreciation of the ongoing role of the Jewish people in the teleological purposes of God.

Speaking out of the modern situation encourages the Christian to come to terms with the generally tragic nature of our mutual interaction. Further one must consider Christian theological responsibility for an anti-Judaic myth. Jules Isaac isolated three principal themes of what he named 'the teaching of contempt':<sup>2</sup>

1. The dispersion of Israel as providential chastisement for the crucifixion.
2. A degenerate Judaism in the time of Jesus.
3. The theme of the people of Deicide.<sup>3</sup>

Myths interpret reality.<sup>4</sup> For various reasons, explored in

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<sup>2</sup> Jules Isaac *L'Enseignement du Mépris* Fasquelle, Paris 1962. In the sections pp 33-64, 65-98, 99-131. The ET is The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of anti-semitism trans. H Weaver New York Holt, Rinehart + Winston 1964.

<sup>3</sup> In his The Christian Roots of Antisemitism CCJ/ Parkes Library, Southampton 1965 pp 8-9, Isaac expands on these to yield 7 themes: a degenerate Judaism, a sensual people, Christ misunderstood and rejected, the people denounced by God himself, a deicide people, the dispersion of Israel, and the Synagogue of Satan.

<sup>4</sup> Myth can be used without an inherently polemical intent. As H Mol observes: "In primitive societies, myth expressed the only valid revelation of reality and the sacred was preeminently real. In the 19th and 20th centuries, myth began to mean almost the opposite." Identity and the Sacred Blackwell, Oxford 1976, p 8. A more detailed definition is given in Introduction II(i).

greater depth in Introduction II(i), Christianity from the fourth century CE or earlier largely interpreted theological reality in anti-Judaic ways.

In this thesis it is largely Christian theology and liturgy which is the focus of concern.<sup>5</sup> The theological character of Christian anti-semitism justifies our general preference for the terminology of anti-Judaism or anti-Judaic mythology over anti-semitism.

Johann Baptist Metz calls strongly for:

an end of that kind of Christianity which refuses to form its identity in the face of and together with the Jews. In the final analysis, to say it once more - with a view toward Auschwitz - it is not only a matter of revising Christian theology with regard to Judaism, but a matter of revising Christian theology altogether.<sup>6</sup>

There has of course been a degree of theological movement over the last fifty years. Jules Isaac in his 1960 meeting with Pope John XXIII called for the correction of false and misleading statements about Jews and Judaism in Christian teaching. This stimulus encouraged the Pope in his attention to the issue which then resulted in the Vatican II promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* (Declaration on the Churches and Non-Christian Religions) in 1965.<sup>7</sup> These theological moves are continued in the 1975

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<sup>5</sup> Similar theses could be written concerning biblical studies or Church history.

<sup>6</sup> Johann-Baptist Metz "Facing the Jews. Christian Theology after Auschwitz" in Concilium 175 1984 pp 26-33, p 29.

<sup>7</sup> James Parkes spoke of his 'affectionate admiration' for Pope John XXIII who spoke of Jews not "as an accursed and deicide people, but as separated brethren included in the same divine love." Jews in the Christian Tradition Parkes Library,



Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing Nostra Aetate and the 1985 Notes for Catholic Education on Jews and Judaism. Alongside these Catholic developments are those of Protestant and Orthodox Churches and the progress of the World Council of Churches.<sup>8</sup>

In handling the charge of a Christian anti-Judaic myth, we shall set up a framework for a three-stage movement in the Church's relationship to Judaism. Such a three-stage movement has been described by Paul van Buren as the movement: 'Church within Israel', 'Church against Israel', and 'Church with Israel'.<sup>9</sup> The anti-Judaic myth encourages the Church to remain at a 'Church against Israel' stage.

At first the proto-Church was effectively a sect within Judaism even if it saw itself as Israel. At the stage of defining itself in religious terms it saw itself as against Judaism and it developed an anti-Judaic Christology.<sup>10</sup> And, hopefully, in the modern context it can progress to being Church with Israel. We shall explore what this entails in as much detail as possible.

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Southampton/CCJ 1963, p 20.

<sup>8</sup> WCC The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People 1988 Geneva. Geoffrey Wigoder Jewish-Christian Relations After the Second World War Manchester University Press, Manchester 1988 Paperback 1990. Orthodox-Jewish discussions are currently in early stages.

<sup>9</sup> Paul M van Buren A Theology of the Jewish-Christian Reality in 3 vols. Harper + Row, San Francisco. Part 3 : Christ in Context 1988 pp 103-5.

<sup>10</sup> For a useful summary of the early stage of self-definition see "The Problem of Self-Definition: From Sect to Church" R A Markus as Ch 1 of EP Sanders ed. Jewish and Christian Self-Definition Vol 1: The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries SCM 1980.

The three stages of the Church are theoretical stages isolated for their analytical value. The movement between the stages occurred at different times in different places. However much it may be inadvisable to speak of 'Church' in the first stage, this will be utilised for clarity of communication over the three stages. Similarly, despite the range of possible connotations of 'Israel', it is the liturgical/*halakhic* community which will form the primary focus of this thesis. This liturgical/*halakhic* emphasis means that we discern *antagonism towards Jewish liturgical observation as a key hallmark of the 'Church against Israel' stage*. Examples of this would include the suggestion that the Christian Passover is superior to or replaces the Jewish Passover, or that the significance of the Christ event nullifies the efficacy of Jewish Yom Kippur liturgies.

From a modern Christian perspective it is inappropriate to suppress the history of our engagement with Judaism, and in particular the vehemence of the 'Church against Israel' stage.<sup>11</sup> Also inappropriate is the naïve attempt to restore an earlier more positive 'Church within Israel'. The two religions are now, as not then, two separate liturgically-formed communities.<sup>12</sup> Rather, one must try to live by *consciously developing a 'Church*

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<sup>11</sup> see Jules Isaac The Teaching of Contempt, Alan T Davies ed. Antisemitism and the Foundations of Christianity New York Paulist Press 1979, and FE Talmage ed. Disputation and Dialogue: Readings in the Jewish-Christian Encounter KTAV New York 1975.

<sup>12</sup> My attitude to the Passover celebrations of Messianic Jewish congregations is that they are seeking to return to this early situation which is untenable in the light of 2nd century CE decisions separating out Easter from Passover. See Introduction II(i).

with Israel' stage.<sup>13</sup> It would be naïve to underestimate how long this will take.

How far it is possible to develop a 'Church with Israel' stage when much of Christian scripture bears the imprint of its 'Church against Israel' origin remains an open question. As James Parkes puts it: "I am sure that it is the picture of the Jew and his religion in the Bible which is the root poison (of antisemitism)".<sup>14</sup> Texts tending to problematic interpretations in Christian tradition include: Matt 21. 43 'The Kingdom of God will be taken away from you'; Matt 27.25 'His blood be upon us and on our children!'; Mark 12.1-12 and parallels The Parable of the Wicked Tenants; John 8.44 'your father the devil'; Acts 2.36 'whom you crucified'; 2 Cor 3.7 'the dispensation of death, carved in letters on stone'; and Heb 8.13 'In speaking of a new covenant he treats the first as obsolete'.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> How far it is possible for Judaism to develop a mentality of Judaism with Christianity is also an interesting question. Jacob Neusner in Judaism and its Social Metaphors: Israel in the History of Jewish Thought CUP, Cambridge 1989 speaks in Ch 5 of Judaism without Christianity and in Ch 10 of Judaism despite Christianity, which are equivalents of the stage 1 + 2, but no equivalent of stage 3 is suggested.

<sup>14</sup> James Parkes The Way Forward Parkes Library, Southampton 1977, p 11. Parkes highlights the New Testament texts testifying to rejection of Jews and Judaism in Jesus, Paul and the Jews SCM 1936, pp 25-55.

<sup>15</sup> For a modern introduction to potential problems see Clark M Williamson + Ronald J Allen Interpreting Difficult Texts: Anti-Judaism and Christian Preaching SCM 1989.

## Purpose and Significance of Thesis

What is argued for in this thesis is an *ideological programme for influencing Christians through liturgy and doctrine towards an increasing sense of solidarity with modern Jewry*. The purpose is to give a twentieth century focus to Christian self-interpretation in relation to Judaism, and to seek a strategy for increased solidarity. That increased solidarity will be expressed at a general level as a move from a 'Church against Israel' stage nearer to a 'Church with Israel' stage. In developing such a strategy Christian doctrine, notably the Trinity, and Christian liturgy, notably the Eucharist, will be reformulated.

The significance of this thesis is that:

1. it accepts that Christian self-identity is formed largely by a theological anti-Judaic myth, characterised by the terminology 'Church against Israel', but
2. it does not accept that this is permanently prescriptive for a Christian system.
3. It develops the concept of 'isomorphisms' for the recognition of movements of similar shape in logically separate systems, and so
4. works for a Christian recognition of the holiness of *Knesset Israel* (the Community of Israel).

## Major research questions and hypotheses

A major research question is how to speak of the relation of a twentieth century Jewish system to a twentieth century Christian system. Our hypothesis is that both display a relationship of 'close connection but distinction' with respect to the system of Biblical Judaism.

Another major question is how to speak of two separate communities of God. We opt for the notion of *calendar* allegiance as forming communities.<sup>16</sup> The hypothesis is that there are two separate liturgically/*halakhically* formed communities. These can be described as the Jewish '*halakhic* people of God' around the focus of Torah and the Christian 'sacramental people of God' around the focus of Christ.

A third research question is how to react to modern Jewish systems of holiness, prompted by Jesus' attitude to the holiness system of his day. Our hypothesis is that there is the possibility of Christian openness to a Jewish system of holiness without thereby assuming the univocality of holiness.

A final research question is how to handle Jewish ambivalence to the central Christian themes of Christ and the Trinity. We work with the hypothesis that these central themes serve to contextualise movements of similar shape in the separate systems. This is why Judaism does not need to hold an opinion on

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<sup>16</sup> This gives an explanation for the 'parting of the ways' from Christianity's decision to move out of Judaism through the creation of a counter-calendar. See Introduction II(i).

central Christian themes.

### Definitions of Major Terms

Supersessionism: treating the Jewish religion as obsolete after the advent of Christianity.

Holiness System: system articulating a people's vital relationship with the divine, generally through a world-view based on order by differentiation.

Halakhah: "is the entire body of Jewish law, from scripture to the latest rabbinical rulings. It is a complete system of law governing every aspect of human life. It has been traditionally viewed as wholly rooted in God's revealed will (BT Hag. 3b) but subject to the ongoing interpretation of the Jewish jurists (BT B.M. 59b)." <sup>17</sup>

Maximal Inclusivism: Jonathan Sacks describes Joseph B Soloveitchik's work as a "*maximal inclusivism within the parameters of tradition*".<sup>18</sup> Sacks particularly observes that Soloveitchik can thereby include 'Neo-Sadducees' in his understanding of Judaism.<sup>19</sup> This means that Soloveitchik is able

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<sup>17</sup> David Novak "The Structure of Halakhah" pp 221-234, p 221 in Judaism: A People and its History ed. Robert M Seltzer Macmillan 1987.

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Sacks Crisis and Covenant: Jewish Thought after the Holocaust Manchester, Manchester University Press 1992, p 140. The comment is made of Rabbi Abraham Kook as well.

<sup>19</sup> Sacks op. cit p 121-2 draws on Dasniel Elazar's work in analysing Neo-Sadducees: People and Polity Wayne State University Press 1989.

to include Jews who do not regard *halakhah* as authoritative and yet identify with the Jewish people as a corporate entity.<sup>20</sup>

We shall work on a 'maximally inclusive' interpretation of Christianity. This is firstly by not excluding non-sacramental Christian traditions from our field of interest, and secondly by seeking an understanding of Christianity in which religious concepts, notably the holy-days, can have also secular or cultural significance.

Knesset Israel: "The individual Jew constitutes an integral part of *Knesset Israel* (the community of Israel). This is not a free and voluntary association; it is an ontological-essential one. As *Knesset Israel* is not a sum total or arithmetic combination of such and such individuals, but a metaphysical personality of singular essence and possessing an individual judicial personality, so the individual Jew does not have an independent existence but is a limb of *Knesset Israel* - unless he commits such sins as cut him off from the congregation and uproot him from the community of Israel."<sup>21</sup> Having found this terminology in Soloveitchik, recognised its 'participationist' logic, and its potential to be employed in a maximally inclusive conception of the Jewish people, I considered it a most

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<sup>20</sup> They are in continuity with the Sadducees who did not regard Oral Torah as authoritative and yet identified with the Written Torah and the Jewish nation.

<sup>21</sup> Pinchas H Peli compiler. On Repentance: in the Thought and Oral Discourses of Rabbi Joseph B Soloveitchik Jerusalem, Orot Press 1980 pp 41-42.

appropriate conception to engage with.<sup>22</sup>

Jew:<sup>23</sup> We attempt to locate ourselves along a spectrum of Jewishness from purely ethical to purely religious. In this thesis a Jew is one who is Jewish **by birth**<sup>24</sup> (thus giving an ethnic dimension major importance), **or by conversion** and who has not subsequently changed religious allegiance<sup>25</sup> (allowing a religious dimension to modify but not subsume an ethnic focus).

Jews who confess Jesus as Messiah fit best in the twentieth-century as a Christian sect, even if in the first century they fitted as a Jewish sect. It will be seen in Chapter 9 that there are considerable tensions behind the nomenclature of Messianic

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<sup>22</sup> There are alternative terms for the Community of Israel, such as *Kol Israel* or *Klal Israel* (all Israel). *Knesset* can have political overtones through its use for the Israeli parliamentary assembly. However, the use of a communal term incorporating some sense of an *assembly*, preeminently but not exclusively that at Sinai, represents a traditional stance open to a maximally inclusive interpretation.

<sup>23</sup> It was only with great reluctance that I formulated a definition of a Jew for the sake of this thesis. It is not the role of a Christian theologian to offer an opinion in such a contentious and politically charged area. See Who is a Jew? A Reader ed. Solomon S Bernards Anti Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, especially pp 17-22 on the Brother Daniel case which led the High Court of Israel to sharpen up the definition. Justice Silberg ruled "a Jew who embraced the Christian faith cannot be called a Jew". Justice Moshe Landau ruled "a Jew who has gone over to another religion has excluded himself not only from the Jewish religion but also from the Jewish nation and has no place in the community of Israel". Justice Haim Cohn gave a dissenting opinion: "a Jew is simply one who feels and defines himself as such".

<sup>24</sup> mother or father - both forms in history. Martin Goodman Who was a Jew? OCPHS, Varnton 1989, p 5 speaks of historical precedents to the Reform decision of 1983 to adopt patrilineality as well as matrilineality.

<sup>25</sup> deemed so in the case of Messianic Jews. A purely ethnic definition would, however, include them.



Methods of organisation, scope and limitations of the study

The major principle of organisation is the interrelationship between a retrospective mode and a prospective mode of community formation. Doctrine is regarded as closer to a retrospective mode of community formation and liturgy to a prospective mode. The significance of this interrelationship between the retrospective and the prospective is harnessed by the strategy for a move nearer a 'Church with Israel'. This is why the Christian Trinity and the Christian Eucharist, major examples of doctrine and liturgy, are used as foci of self-interpretation to serve the proposed change in Christian attitude.

Section 1 covers the role of doctrine and liturgy in Christian self-interpretation. Section 2 demonstrates the provisionality of the Christian system. Section 3 demonstrates the possibility of a Christian affirmation of the Holiness of the Jewish assembly. Section 4 shows how the Eucharist and the Trinity can be reformulated to serve a 'Church with Israel'.

The scope of the thesis is very wide: engaging with the heart of two very diverse twentieth century religions. Since the

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<sup>26</sup> While aware that groups of Messianic Jews would vigorously defend their Jewishness, a thesis seeking to hear the rootedness in *halakhah* of Judaism must avoid entering too closely into claims for the legitimacy of Messianic Jews as Jews. It is enough of a positive gesture for me to continue referring to them as Messianic Jews and not as Hebrew Christians.

scope is so wide, a number of important self-limitations were imposed. Firstly it involves a personal stance from within Church of England Anglicanism in relation to one's reading of accessible English translations of modern Jewish Orthodox writers. This involves a decision to approach modern Jewish systems through the medium of modern Jewish Orthodox thought. This approach quickly comes up against the recognition of much important material being only in Hebrew or delivered in oral form, and even where translated it is steeped in talmudic thought forms. It must also be sensitive to the view that the traditional perspective within Judaism, particularly since the nineteenth century, is only one of many Jewish perspectives.

A second limitation is that a twentieth century focus necessitates a selectivity about one's coverage of the first five centuries of the Common Era. This limitation is partly acceptable because more detailed work is already available elsewhere. This is however an inevitable consequence of seeking to relate modern theological systems. Another important self-limitation is to declare the coverage of the complexities of early proto-eucharistic origins in its relations to Judaism beyond the scope of the work.

### Major Influences

As an Anglican concerned with Christian-Jewish relations my deepest continuity is with James W Parkes (1896-1981). He was aware of the complexity of the task, the need to work

ecumenically, and the need for Jews and Christians to work together in social and ethical endeavours. Parkes speaks of the 'uncomfortable profundity of the challenge' represented by the fact that "the Church in her public life - her liturgy and lectionary - never referred to Jewry or Judaism as active contemporaries".<sup>27</sup> Where I differ from him is in moving more quickly 'through history into theology'.<sup>28</sup> This is due to my location of the problem in Christian theological symbolism. And despite also looking for complementary understandings of Sinai and Calvary, I have a deeper appreciation of the communal and social dimension to Christianity than does Parkes in his suggestion of Judaism addressing the social and Christianity the individual aspect of humanity.<sup>29</sup>

Jules Isaac's analytical portrayal of Christian 'teaching of contempt' confirmed my suspicions and reinforced my resolve, as did his isolation of liturgy as a carrier and encourager of anti-Judaic ways of thought. He observes that anti-Judaism, though "a weapon forged principally in the fourth century", forms a coherent whole with great powers of persistence through the centuries:

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<sup>27</sup> James Parkes The Way Forward Parkes Library, Southampton 1977, p 7.

<sup>28</sup> James Parkes "A Reappraisal of the Christian Attitude to Judaism" in Prelude to Dialogue Vallentine Mitchell 1969, p 3.

<sup>29</sup> "Man is inescapably social being, person and seeker. ... In Sinai God spoke to man as social being ... In Jesus of Nazareth he spoke to man as person ... In Humanism he spoke to man as seeker ..." James Parkes Jews, Christians and the World of Tomorrow Parkes Library, Southampton 1969, pp 19-20.

Christian antisemitism is much worse than its pagan predecessor: worse by its content - which is essentially theological - by its coherence, and by the variety of its themes more or less arbitrarily founded upon scripture, or rather upon a certain interpretation of scripture; but worse especially by its continuity - from the first Christian centuries right down to modern times.<sup>30</sup>

The charge of Rosemary Radford Ruether that anti-Judaism is the other side of Christology lies behind the project as a whole.<sup>31</sup>

I take great interest in the work of Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt.<sup>32</sup> Professor of Systematic Theology at Berlin's *Freien* University, Marquardt recognises the problem as a theological one and progresses his answers, as do I, in explicit reaction to the limitations of a Barthian schema. Where I differ from him is my distaste for meeting a 'Jewish maximum' interpretation of the

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<sup>30</sup> Jules Isaac The Christian Roots of Antisemitism pp 7-9. He excludes the first three centuries of the Christian era when "it is the Christians who were persecuted and outlawed, not the Jews."

<sup>31</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism Seabury New York 1975, p 246.

<sup>32</sup> Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt Die Entdeckung des Judentums für die christliche Theologie Israel im Denken Karl Barths (The Meaning of Judaism for Christian Theology) München 1967, Die Juden und ihr Land Hamburg 1975 (The Jews and their Land), Die Gegenwart des Auferstandenen bei seinem Volk Israel Ein dogmatisches Experiment München 1983 (The Way of the Resurrected One through his People Israel), Von Elend und Heimsuchung der Theologie Prolegomena zur Dogmatik München 1988 (Of the Misery and Affliction of Theology).

Das christliche Bekenntnis zu Jesus, dem Juden Eine Christologie (The Christian Affirmation of Jesus the Jew) Band 1 Chr. Kaiser München 1990, Band 2 München 1991 referred to as Christology 1 and Christology 2 hereafter. None have been translated to my knowledge. Discussions in the text are dependent upon my abilities in reading and translating the German originals.

biblical Jesus with a 'Christian minimum'.<sup>33</sup> Instead I prefer to relate central concepts from within the heart of the two modern religions: a maximum Christian understanding of Christ with a maximum Jewish understanding of Torah, even though this generates methodological problems.

Finally a word about Joseph B Soloveitchik.<sup>34</sup> As a traditional Jew educated in the philosophies of Christian Europe, his writing made a deep impression on me for its engagement with the issues of the modern world from a traditional standpoint. As well as providing insights into a Judaism I sought to understand, its ability to reformulate traditional Jewish concepts in maximally inclusive ways provided a model for my own desire to reformulate traditional Christian concepts in maximally inclusive ways. Soloveitchik's work features strongly behind the thesis, sometimes mediated through other modern Jewish Orthodox writers, notably David Hartman.

In taking Soloveitchik's work seriously there needs to be an engagement with his reluctance to join in theological dialogue

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<sup>33</sup> Marquardt Christology 1 Part 1 § 5 pp 124-138, which builds especially on David Flusser's Jesus New York, Herder and Herder 1969. Trans. Ronald Walls from '*Jesus in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten*' Hamburg, Rowalt 1968. Especially Flusser's conclusions at the point of resurrection: 'and Jesus changed/was different' (*und Jesus verschied*).

<sup>34</sup> Rabbi Joseph B Soloveitchik On Repentance: in the Thought and Oral Discourses of Rabbi Joseph B Soloveitchik Pinchas H Peli Jerusalem, Orot Press 1980/ Paulist Press, New York 1984, "Redemption, Prayer, Talmud Torah" in Tradition 17 No.2 1978 pp 55-72, "Majesty and Humility" in Tradition 17 No.2 1978 pp 25-37 lecture 1973, "The Lonely Man of Faith" in Tradition 7 No.2 1965 pp 5-67, "Confrontation" in Tradition 6 No.2 1964 pp 5-29, Halakhic Man Jewish Publication Society of America 1984 trans. Lawrence Kaplan from Hebrew Ish ha-halakhah 1944.

in favour of moral and secular cooperation.<sup>35</sup> The stress in my thesis on self-interpretation rather than dialogue or encounter is sympathetic to the reluctance of Soloveitchik's position.<sup>36</sup> There are limitations to dialogue between those who are often on the fringes of their home communities. By drawing on these writers there has been a preference expressed on my part for engaging with modern Orthodox<sup>37</sup> Jewish thought from among the modern Judaisms.<sup>38</sup> This has been a consequence of trying to bring together the more traditional heart of both Judaism and Christianity in an imaginative engagement. It had to be an imaginative engagement, for the proponents of such positions generally find other priorities than inter-religious dialogue.

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<sup>35</sup> Soloveitchik's ruling against *theological* dialogue is generally taken as permissive of dialogue on other issues rather than as restrictive. For an argument against this theological/non-theological dichotomy see Norman Solomon "The 'Soloveitchik Line' on Dialogue" in Problems in Contemporary Jewish Theology ed. D. Cohn-Sherbok Edwin Mellen, Lampeter 1992.

<sup>36</sup> Although one must applaud the move from mission to dialogue associated with the World Council of Churches because any move from mission is a positive one, there remain reservations on whether dialogue creates for itself a sub-culture of full-time practitioners who largely come from liberal and progressive streams of their religion.

<sup>37</sup> It is to be noted however that even the terminology is tendentious. Many prefer the terminology traditional Jew to orthodox Jew. Jonathan Sacks op. cit. p 23 note 15 observes that "The earliest recorded use of the term 'orthodoxy' occurred in 1807 in the course of debates surrounding Napoleon's proposal for Jewish emancipation in France".

<sup>38</sup> As far as possible the following way of referring to successive Jewish systems will be adopted: Biblical Judaism, Second Temple Judaism(s), Rabbinic Judaism, and modern Judaism(s). For discussions of the significance of various terminologies see Hershel Shanks ed. Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism: A Parallel History of their Origins and Early Development SPCK 1993.

As an introductory example of what a move from 'Church against Israel' to 'Church with Israel' might entail, both conceptually and linguistically, some Christian prayers will now be examined.

#### Liturgy as frequent carrier of a Hierarchical World-View

A 'Church against Israel' carries a hierarchical world-view with Christianity at the top and Judaism at the bottom. A move towards a 'Church with Israel' would accept the need to move away from a world-view in which Christianity is at the top, towards one which allows theological value to other religions, and here Judaism in particular.

There is so much in Christian tradition to resist this move. We have already spoken of an anti-Judaic myth. There is also a simple lack of *conceptual terms for thinking through difference as equality*. In a discussion of feminism, Audré Lorde considers the terms available for the treatment of human differences and finds them all lacking the ability to handle 'difference as equality':

we have all been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate. But we have no patterns for relating across our human differences as equals.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Audré Lorde Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audré Lorde Crossing Press, p 115.

Jacob Neusner considers this 'thinking through' of difference as the most important task facing religion:

The single most important problem facing religion for the next hundred years, as for the last, is an intellectual one: how to think through difference, how to account, within one's own faith and framework, for the outsider, indeed many outsiders.<sup>40</sup>

In the same article, Neusner points especially to the 'incapacity of religions to form for themselves a useful theory of the other'.<sup>41</sup> Jonathan Sacks notes the significance of the otherness of the religions to one another: "Each of us carries the inescapable burden of duality, of being true to our faith while recognising the image of God in, and being a blessing to, those who are unlike us".<sup>42</sup>

Linked to the anti-Judaic myth and the inability to conceive difference as equality is the case of Christian liturgy. This thesis accepts the link between liturgy and the persistence of Christian anti-Judaism observed by Jules Isaac. He recognised in the years immediately following World War II that the prayer for the Jews in the Good Friday service of the Roman liturgy had made a fundamental contribution to the development of Christian anti-Semitism.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Jacob Neusner "Thinking about 'The Other' in Religion: It is Necessary, but is it Possible?" in ModTh Vol 6 No.3 1990 pp 273-285, p 273.

<sup>41</sup> Neusner *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Sacks *op. cit.* p 277.

<sup>43</sup> Jules Isaac The Christian Roots of Antisemitism, *Jesus et Israel* Paris 1948, pp 364-5; *Genèse de l'Antisémitisme* Calmann-Levy, Paris 1956 pp 296-305.



In 1959 Pope John XXIII altered the Roman Missal's prayer for Good Friday from:

Let us pray for the perfidious Jews that our Lord and God will remove the veil from their hearts so that they too may acknowledge our Lord, Jesus Christ. Heed the prayers we offer for the blindness of that people that they might be delivered from their darkness.

to:

Let us pray also for the Jews, that our God and Lord will be pleased to look graciously upon them, so that they too may acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of all mankind.

Continuing that movement, the Roman Missal of 1983 now has the following as a Good Friday prayer:

Let us pray for the Jewish people,  
the first to hear the Word of God,  
that they may continue to grow  
in the love of his name  
and in faithfulness to his covenant.

Anglicans in the Church of England are, however, formed by the following example of a 'Church against Israel' attitude in its Alternative Services Book 1980 as a Good Friday Collect:<sup>44</sup>

Merciful God,  
who made all men and hate nothing  
that you have made:  
you desire not the death of a sinner  
but rather that he should be converted and live.  
Have mercy upon your ancient people the Jews,  
and upon all who have not known you,  
or who deny the faith of Christ crucified;  
take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart,  
and contempt for your word,  
and so fetch them home to your fold  
that they may be made one flock under one shepherd;

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<sup>44</sup> Comparing this with its antecedents in The Book of Common Prayer is an interesting exercise: references to the ignorance of Turks, infidels, and heretics are removed, but ignorance of the Jews is still asserted.

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here Jews are linked with those who do not know God, who are ignorant, hard-hearted and contemptuous of God's word, and those who openly deny the Christian faith.

In 1984 in the Lent, Holy Week, Easter services and prayers book, there were some general Good Friday prayers nearer to a 'Church with Israel' position:<sup>45</sup>

Let us pray for God's ancient people, the Jews,  
the first to hear his word -  
for greater understanding between Christian and Jew  
for the removal of our blindness and bitterness of heart  
that God will grant us grace to be faithful to his  
covenant and to grow in the love of his name.

Lord God of Abraham,  
bless the children of your covenant, both Jew + Christian;  
take from us all blindness and bitterness of heart,  
and hasten the coming of your kingdom,  
when all Israel shall be saved, the Gentiles gathered in,  
and we shall dwell together in mutual love and peace  
under the one God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These represent a conscious break with the attitude of the first example: here the Jews are shown as having heard God's word and are acknowledged as being in covenant relationship with God. Both Jews and Christians are portrayed as needing to progress in faithfulness towards a joint future in which Israel plays her part. However, there is no mandate to encourage the substitution of these more positive prayers for the first Collect.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Lent, Holy Week, Easter: Services and Prayers Church House Publishing/Cambridge University Press/SPCK 1986, pp 213-4.

<sup>46</sup> The Liturgical Commission of the Church of England is currently moving towards decreased regulation by allowing an increasing number of authorised alternatives to the Book of Common Prayer (1662). These are likely to cover a range of attitudes to Jews and Judaism.

What is particularly essential for Christian self-interpretation in relation to Judaism is to resist the temptations of hierarchical thinking in both liturgy and theology. Christianity should be aiming at being able to greet the Jewish Other as an Other whose ongoing existence as Jew is willed by God. This will involve the theological acceptance of the ongoing role of the Jewish people, qua Israel, in the purposes of God. Marquardt can go as far as suggesting that:

If a man would become a Christian, so God calls upon him to live in communion with the Jews.<sup>47</sup>

'Communion' is used here in a general non-liturgical sense. This suggests that a positive relationship with Jews should be mandatory for Christians.

Part of what is involved in a positive relationship is to recognise that what Christ achieves for Christians, Torah achieves for Jews.

#### Torah and Christ as Central Modern Concepts

The questions and comparisons brought to the Christian tradition in the twentieth century should have priority over those which arose in the first century. Although the first century may have concentrated on the question and category of messiahship in its relation to Judaism, now the question and

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<sup>47</sup> Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt Von Elend und Heimsuchung der Theologie: Prologemene zur Dogmatik p 374 Munich 1988, quoted in Franz Mussner "Theology after Auschwitz" in ChJRel 24 Nos 1-2 1991 p 52.

concept is more appropriately Torah: "Is Christ Torah-for-the-nations?" One might thus speak of Christ/Torah parallels rather than Christ/Messiah parallels. E P Sanders demonstrated that Christ replaced Torah as focus in the developing Christianity as it moved out of Palestinian Judaism.<sup>48</sup> This replacement entailed harnessing Judaism's *transfer terminology* and *participationist categories* around the new Christ-focus.<sup>49</sup>

Torah is more than Nomos, even as Christ is more than Messiah. F-W Marquardt regards the Jewish way of holiness in keeping the Torah as an important parallel to the Christian "sacramental" outlook:

In keeping the Torah Jews live in the holy way of God, since for them the Torah has - in our Christian outlook - "sacramental" meaning.<sup>50</sup>

As the focal point of eucharistic worship, Christ is more than a messiah: he is 'the way, the truth, and the life' for the Christian. Torah is 'the way, the truth, and the life' for Jews. And so Marquardt can say:

Jesus is for Christians what Torah is for Jews.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> E P Sanders Paul and Palestinian Judaism SCM 1977 especially pp 467-515.

<sup>49</sup> Christians transfer from the powers of darkness by sharing in Christ's death and attain the new creation by participating in the risen Christ.

<sup>50</sup> F-W Marquardt Christology 1 p 269, drawing from comments by J Maier in *Gesetz und Gnade im Alten Testament und im jüdischen Denken* Zurich 1969 p 92.

<sup>51</sup> Marquardt Christology 1 p 243 which makes links with the preexistence of both Jesus and Torah.

W D Davies interprets the Johannine usage as claiming that Jesus is 'personalised Torah'.<sup>52</sup> A similar claim is made by Jacobus Schoneveld from an analysis of the Prologue of John.<sup>53</sup>

Torah and Christ are used in their respective systems in a whole variety of different ways, and stand over the whole system as a central unifying concept. Such a move must of course avoid the simple replacement of 'new covenant' language by 'new torah' language such as Davies maintains lies behind the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>54</sup> The versatility of a Jewish system around Torah can easily be paralleled by the versatility of a Christian system around Christ. Jacob Neusner allows for seven senses of the word Torah in the Babylonian Talmud: a scroll, revelation, act of Torah, generic category, status, dual Torah - written and oral, source of salvation.<sup>55</sup>

Rather than comparing Jewish and Christian views of Jesus, there is greater potential in comparing central Jewish concepts,

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<sup>52</sup> W D Davies Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come SBL Monograph 7, Philadelphia 1952 p 93.

<sup>53</sup> Jacobus Schoneveld "Torah in the Flesh: A New Reading of the Prologue of the Gospel of John as a Contribution to Christology without Anti-Judaism" in Immanuel Vol 24/25 1990 pp 77-94.

<sup>54</sup> "We may with some confidence assert that the Gospel of Matthew regards the words of Jesus as a New Torah; and tended to find in them the ground for a new halakhah. The words of Jesus 'fulfilled' the Law and the Prophets, they were the Torah of the Messiah." Davies op. cit. p 92.

<sup>55</sup> Jacob Neusner Uniting the Dual Torah: Sifra and the Problem of the Mishnah Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1990 p 188. See also Neusner's The Foundations of Judaism: Method, Teleology, Doctrine 3 Vols. Fortress, Philadelphia Vol 3: Torah: From Scroll to Symbol in Formative Judaism 1985 Ch 6 'The Talmud of Babylonia'.

such as Israel and Torah, with central Christian concepts, such as a trinitarian Christology. This involves an imaginative engagement of the heart of the two religions. Suggestions are made in Chapter 9 about the isomorphic (of similar shape) character of *Knesset Israel* in the dynamic of the Yom Kippur liturgical event and Christ in the dynamic of the Eucharistic liturgical event. In this way there can be some concreteness to the suggestion of responding positively to Jewish holiness from a Christian standpoint.

The stimulus for a deeper appraisal of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism arises for this work from Christian wrestling for self-understanding before God in the light of the twin stimuli of the Jewish humanity of Jesus and the holiness of the Community of Israel. Various chapters will make reference to the Christian Eucharist which is dependant on a conceptual system whereby the worshippers are conformed to the humanity of Christ, without thereby being made into male Jews. It is with, through, and in the humanity and divinity of Christ that Christian worshippers celebrate what God has done for them. That humanity of Jesus remains Jewish for all time.

#### A Jewish 'No' and a Christian 'Yes'

There will be arguments in this work for treating the Jewish 'No' to Jesus as Israel's Messiah positively. This will largely be achieved by allowing *senses in which Jesus is not the Jewish Messiah* without denying his centrality for largely gentile

Christian faith. There is much more to a developed Christology than the early Messiah Christology could provide. In addition to handling the Jewish 'No' to Jesus as Messiah there will be a suggestion of articulating a Christian 'Yes' to the holiness of the people Israel.

Spirit language held a central place in the significance of Christian self-interpretation vis-à-vis Judaism. Spirit language can easily be used for directly polemical ends. The Christian interpretation of the 'first Pentecost' in the Acts of the Apostles is one example. The supposed availability of the divine Spirit and life-giving repentance to gentiles as well as Jews, together with the preaching of Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah, too readily moved towards the 'chosenness' of the new Christ-communities. It would then be very easy to appropriate Jewish election and presume the rejection of the old Israel-communities. These ways of arguing can build up to a *supersessionary* theology: one which treats the Jewish religion as obsolete after the advent of Christianity.

In responding positively to the Jewish 'No' to Jesus as Israel's Messiah, Christian self-understanding must therefore wrestle with the holiness of the Jewish people. However, it must not be assumed that holiness is identically conceived in the different religions. This holiness encourages the confession of the continued availability of the divine Spirit to Israel and the recognition of the divinely authorised path of repentance given

to *Knesset Israel*.<sup>56</sup> Although being Jewish does not require you to hold an opinion concerning Jesus, this Christian openness to the Jewish people is balanced in certain quarters by an evolving Jewish 'Yes' to Jesus as Jew, as teacher of Torah, even as prophet.<sup>57</sup>

These developing insights are applied in Section Four to Christian self-interpretation through an interpretation of one of the Anglican Eucharistic Prayers and a model of the Christian Trinity. The structure of the Eucharistic Prayer and its doxological expressions encourage Christian attitudes which admit the unredeemedness of the world and the need for human cooperation with God in the building of the kingdom of God. These attitudes are ones closely connected to responding positively to the Jewish 'No' to Jesus as Messiah of Israel. Indeed they encourage the Christian response of "Yes, No, and Maybe" to the issue of Jesus' messiahship. An attempt is also made in Chapter 12 to present a model of the Christian Trinity via a particular dance figure. This draws on the prototypical value of Israel's Sonship as well as the prototypical value of Jesus' humanity.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *Knesset Israel* refers to the Knesset or Assembly, with the sense of a liturgical assembly or at least an assembly for largely religious purposes. I would include in this the habits of meeting at a house of study or the Rosh Hodesh study groups in the home for women. Whether a group of women counts as an assembly is, however, a contentious issue for modern Judaism struggling as it is to conceptualise difference as equality.

<sup>57</sup> It is as yet unclear how far this may only carry the view of an unrepresentative vocal group of scholars.

<sup>58</sup> There will be a number of concessions to the cause of inclusive language throughout this work, both in relation to humanity and in relation to the divine. It is part of



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conceptualising difference as equality: "The ease with which we marginalize women by slipping into sexist language parallels the ease with which Jews have been marginalized through the careless use of language in Western culture." Norman Solomon "The Context of the Jewish Christian Dialogue" in ChJRel Vol 24 Nos. 1-2 1991 pp 54-75, pp 54-5. However in cases where Son per se is more significant in the tradition (son as heir) or, as here, seen as a gender-inclusive collective, its use will be retained.

Christian Self-Interpretation in Relation to Modern Judaism

Introduction II(i): The Relationship Between Christianity and  
Judaism and the 'Parting of the Ways'

Each religion defines itself by the dead it remembers  
and the anniversaries it keeps.

(BBC Television Programme)

In this chapter the relationship between the now separate religions of Judaism and Christianity will be considered, including a suggestion as to the timing and character of their parting.

The analogy of Judaism as parent and Christianity as child is inadequate. The parent-child illustration is at the heart of Morna Hooker's argument in Continuity and Discontinuity.<sup>1</sup> Jacob Neusner is right to resist the parent-child imagery, but goes too far by denying any such thing as a 'Judaean-Christian tradition'.<sup>2</sup> The parent-child analogy between Judaism and

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<sup>1</sup> Morna D Hooker Continuity and Discontinuity: Early Christianity in its Jewish Setting Epworth 1986 pp 11-17.

<sup>2</sup> Jacob Neusner Jews and Christians: The Myth of a Common Tradition SCM 1990. "Each religious tradition talks to its adherents about its points of urgent concern, that is, Judaism and Christianity respectively stand for different people talking about different things to different people" p 28.

Christianity should make way for the analogy of siblings, with the analogy of sibling rivalry having some value. The siblings theme is suggested by the title of Roy Eckardt's Elder and Younger Brothers and Alan Segal's Rebecca's Children.<sup>3</sup>

However, the situation is more complex than siblings engaged in rivalry for external parental affections. There are powerful internal forces at work in Christianity generating an *internal dynamic* to the antagonism of Christianity towards Judaism. This antagonism bears little or no relation to the characteristics or actions of Jews themselves.<sup>4</sup> This internal dynamic can be described as an anti-Judaic myth. Myths interpret reality for they "are the expression of the sacred in words".<sup>5</sup>

#### An Anti-Judaic Christian Myth

In a thesis examining the writings of the Church Fathers on the Jews, Miriam Taylor writes:

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<sup>3</sup> Roy Eckardt Elder and Younger Brothers: The Encounter of Jews and Christians New York, Scribners 1967. Alan Segal Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World Harvard University Press, Harvard 1986, especially p 179.

<sup>4</sup> In seeking an analogy for this internal dynamic to Christian antagonism the phenomenon of puberty might assist: puberty entails a growth in self-understanding and it provides a powerful internal dynamic. This often manifests itself in unsocial behaviour towards close family members.

<sup>5</sup> "A myth is an expression of the sacred in words: it reports realities and events from the origin of the world that remain valid for the basis and purpose of all there is. Consequently, a myth functions as a model for human activity, society, wisdom and knowledge." Kees W Bolle in "Myth: An Overview" in The Encyclopedia of Religion ed. Mircea Eliade Macmillan + Free Press pp 261-272, p 261.

I argue that the Judaism negated by the fathers arises not from the contemporary pressures of the Jews, but emerges, rather, from the internal dynamic in the formation of the church's cultural identity, and that it negates a symbolic rather than a living Judaism.<sup>6</sup>

Taylor argues that Christian antagonism towards Judaism is more than competition for something external: it is an *internal dynamic arising out of the formation of the church's cultural identity*.

Taylor isolates the typologies of **Competitive anti-Judaism**, **Conflictual anti-Judaism**, **Inherited anti-Judaism**, and **Symbolic anti-Judaism**. Briefly, *Competitive* involves religious rivalry, *Conflictual* involves social and political underpinnings to rivalry, *Inherited* involves environmental from pagans or traditional from Christian writers, *Symbolic* involves the expression of theological ideas. These form the sections of her thesis.<sup>7</sup> It is the latter, Symbolic anti-Judaism, which she finds to be largely theological anti-Judaism.<sup>8</sup>

Taylor finds that *Theological* Anti-Judaism is by far the most important case of anti-Judaism:<sup>9</sup>

The church's theological vision left no room for the recognition of any other tradition, and Judaism in particular was robbed of its legitimacy in the church's

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<sup>6</sup> Miriam Sophia Taylor The Jews in the writings of the Early Church Fathers (150 -312): Men of Straw or Formidable Rivals? Oxford DPhil 1991 C10338. Abstract I.

<sup>7</sup> Taylor op. cit. pp 9-72, 73-189, 190-207, 208-313.

<sup>8</sup> Taylor op. cit §IV. She subdivides Symbolic Anti-Judaism into Theological, Reaffirmative and Illustrative.

<sup>9</sup> Section IV.1 pp 208-313.

supersessionary arguments.<sup>10</sup>

On this view, anti-Judaism is generated internally by Christianity. It is thus largely independent of contemporary Jewish behaviour.

Taylor is at great pains to refute the so-called 'conflict theories' represented by Marcel Simon's Verus Israel.<sup>11</sup> Conflict theories seek to explain Christian anti-Judaism in rivalries between Christian and Jewish groups. Although admitting some validity to those who propose multifactorial options for Christian anti-Judaism, she considers that ignoring a primary *theological* motivation results in avoiding "submitting Christian teaching to a radical ideological critique, by shifting the focus away from theology and theological categories."<sup>12</sup>

Taylor encourages Christianity to face evidence that it possesses an anti-Jewish myth. Her use of 'anti-Jewish myth' derives from her dependence upon Rosemary Radford Ruether. For Taylor the anti-Jewish myth was a Christian 'theological choice':

The sense in which anti-Judaism was a theological choice, built into the church's vision of itself and of the world, and intrinsic to Christian teaching, is dissimulated by the 'conflict' theory. It fails not only in its claim to illuminate the anti-Judaic texts, but fails, more importantly, to explain the continuing impact through the Christian centuries of the ideas which these texts have

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<sup>10</sup> Taylor op. cit. p 278.

<sup>11</sup> Marcel Simon Verus Israel: A Study of Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135-425) trans. from French by H McKeating OUP 1986.

<sup>12</sup> Taylor op. cit. Abstract II.

perpetuated.<sup>13</sup>

Her suggestion of symbolic anti-Judaism as a theological choice, perpetuated down the centuries by the acceptance of that choice, is important for my current discussion. This perpetuation did not gain momentum through becoming social reality until Christianity's exaltation as an official religion at the time of Constantine. James Parkes makes this comment: "the tap-root (of modern antisemitism) was the attitude of the Christian Church in the centuries when it had the power to impose its will on Europe, from the time of Constantine to the end of the wars of religion in the 17th century".<sup>14</sup>

In coming to grips with the persistence of the anti-Jewish myth, Taylor seeks to move away from the conflictual theories towards a cultural approach. She takes up the work of Clifford Geertz which is also a key source for this thesis. She speaks of the anti-Jewish myth as embodying "systems of meaning that made sense of the world for the early Christians".<sup>15</sup> "The cultural

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<sup>13</sup> Taylor op. cit. p 330.

<sup>14</sup> James Parkes Jews in the Christian Tradition Parkes Library, Southampton/CCJ 1963, p 14. This draws from his historical study of the relationship between Church and Synagogue: The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Antisemitism Soncino Press 1934.

<sup>15</sup> Taylor op. cit. p 258. The key elements of the myth are isolated by Taylor as: Appropriating the scriptures through the christological hermeneutic; The Law: abrogated with the old people, and fulfilled with the new; Salvaging and appropriating the Jewish God at the expense of the Jewish people; Relating the history leading up to Christ: Appropriating the promise and assigning the blame; Interpreting the fate of the two peoples in the wake of Christ's advent, pp 215-229.

approach allows us to see the fathers' references to Judaism as expressions of early Christian religious culture".<sup>16</sup>

It is likely, however, that Taylor's desire to counter the 'conflictual theories' have led her to highlight the internal dynamic element as the major generating factor of the anti-Judaic myth. This itself encourages concentration on two opposing solutions when there may indeed be a spectrum between the two or more than two solutions. Perhaps indirectly the myth provides evidence for the profound attractions of Judaism for disenchanted Christians and for the phenomenon of Jews returning to the Jewish faith after an association with Christianity. Perhaps an anti-Judaic myth results from Christian perceptions of the pressures from Judaism, rather than any historical pressures.

We must at least attempt to search for 'systems of meaning' more appropriate to the present than those which are continually at the expense of Judaism. Whether this can be done without destroying Christian identity remains to be seen, but perhaps not by this generation of scholars. I consider that it is logically coherent to make moves away from an extremely negative position, without having to answer in advance whether the more positive position is tenable, or whether it will not in fact destroy Christian identity. We cannot judge in advance the criteria for future Christian systems. What may appear to our generation to be moves of destruction may be seen by later generations to be the very moves which brought life and hope. Jules Isaac put it

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<sup>16</sup> Taylor op. cit. p 262.

this way: "A work of purification is not always a negative work".<sup>17</sup>

One area a work of purification would need to address is the so-called 'parting of the ways'. These vary from a 1st century break for Christological reasons up to a 4th/5th century conclusion to a gradual sociological separation.

Christian theories of the parting are largely dependant upon a modern outsider understanding of Jewishness. Jonathan Webber draws attention to religion as the 'outsider category' for reading Jewish identity, together with modern Jewish trends for reversing that in favour of ethnicity.<sup>18</sup> Many Christian theories of the parting favour quick theological factors or use crude interpretations of liturgical evidence.<sup>19</sup> J D G Dunn reads Second Temple Judaism through four theological 'pillars': Monotheism, Election, Covenant, and Land focused in Temple. He concludes that "by the end of the second Jewish revolt, Christian

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<sup>17</sup> Jules Isaac *L'Enseignement du Mépris* Fasquelle, Paris 1962, preface. ET *The Teaching of Contempt*.

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Webber "Modern Jewish Identities: The Ethnographic Complexities" in *JJS* 43 No 2 1992 pp 246-267. He speaks of "the internal trend towards what is now commonly called Jewish ethnicity, and a conscious move away from religious belief or practice as the principal defining feature" pp 250-1.

<sup>19</sup> Rueven Kimelman writes against crude portrayals of the *Birkat Ha-Minim* prayer for distinguishing Jewish Christians in synagogue worship. "*Birkat Ha-Minim* and the lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish prayer in late antiquity" in E P Sanders, A I Baumgarten, Alan Mendelson eds. *Jewish and Christian Self Definition Vol.2: Aspects of Judaism in the Greco-Roman Period* SCM 1981, pp 226-244.



and Jew were clearly distinct and separate."<sup>20</sup> His use of monotheism as "a non-negotiable starting point for Christian thought about Christ" is far too strict for the looser complexities of both Jewish and Christian thought in the first two centuries.<sup>21</sup>

We will advance a *liturgical* hypothesis for the parting of the ways, but this should not be seen as excluding other factors, notably historical ones. Martin Goodman, for example, draws attention to the effect of the imposition by the Romans of a Jewish Temple tax, *fiscus Judaicus*, on the definition of Jewishness and as a separating device.<sup>22</sup> Liturgical and calendar observance has cultural and ethnic dimensions as well as a religious focus. As well as acting as a distinguishing feature, it also has an important role in solidifying groups at a time of divergence. For example, Jacob Neusner neglects the liturgical factors which would testify against his portrayal of framers of the Mishnah as a distinct group with a distinct Judaism.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> James D G Dunn The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity SCM 1991, p 243.

<sup>21</sup> Dunn op. cit. p 246. See Peter Hayman "Monotheism - A Misused Word in Jewish Studies?" in JJS XLII No.1 1991.

<sup>22</sup> Martin Goodman Who was a Jew? OCPHS, Varnton 1989, pp 12-19. Initially indiscriminatory in its concept of Jewishness, it was made to define Jewishness in religious terms. "From now on only those Jews who continued openly in their ancestral practices were liable to the tax: that is, the definition of a Jew was by religion, not race.", p 16, referring to Emperor Nerva after Domitian's murder in 96 CE.

<sup>23</sup> See E P Sanders in Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: 5 Studies SCM 1990 Ch 5 "Jacob Neusner and the Philosophy of the Mishnah". Sanders argues against Neusner's suggestion in Judaism:

The Dating and Character of the so-called 'Parting of the Ways'  
between Judaism and Christianity

It is our adherence to certain regular practices within a regular formative calendar which largely forms a community.<sup>24</sup> Those regular practices encompass the *halakhic* dimension to Judaism, a phenomenon with as much cultural and ethnic import as religious significance. Different liturgical/*halakhic* practices form different communities. *To opt for a calendar break with Passover and a strict lunar calendar cycle is to distance one's community from Judaism.* My own approach to the dating is therefore to point to the significance of the decision of Pope Victor at the end of the 2nd century CE in Rome to separate out the Christian Easter from the Jewish Passover. To speak of the significance of a second century decision might entail a fourth or fifth century conclusion to a gradual process as historical and cultural factors are involved.

It would be all too easy however to overestimate how quickly

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The Evidence of the Mishnah Chicago University Press 1981 that Judaism was so fragmented in the first and second centuries that one must speak of 'Judaisms'. Sanders reinforces other critics by pointing to the significance of the fact that "the framers of the Mishnah shared a common liturgy with others" pp 326-7. Liturgical factors, with their eschatological expectation, would also call into question Neusner's portrayal of the 'ahistorical supernatural system of the Mishnah' in "Beyond Myth, after Apocalypse: The Mishnaic Concept of History" in Neusner et. al. eds. The Social World of formative Christianity and Judaism Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1988, pp 91-106, p 99.

<sup>24</sup> It is thus easier in a country with its national calendar representing your religion or alternatively by creating a sub-culture within a country not based on your religion.

the decision took effect. It was taken in response to Quartodeciman practices. A Quartodeciman kept Passover on the night of the 14th of Nisan.<sup>25</sup> Quartodecimans must still have been influential in the 4th Century for they were condemned as Judaisers at Nicaea. So it is inappropriate to be too specific on the dating of the parting. It would also be inappropriate to underestimate the depth of resistance to the decision. There was concerted resistance on the grounds of the apostolic basis of Quartodeciman practice.<sup>26</sup>

As Irving Greenberg observes, a calendar is the carrier of consciousness, rhythm, values and ideal types:

As long as people live in the consciousness and rhythm of the Jewish calendar, they will go on living as Jews. ... from the calendar and the holy days, Jewish values and ideal types enter the bloodstream.<sup>27</sup>

And so, there is a unity between all who relate to a Jewish calendar and disunity with those who have opted for another calendar of festivals, especially a counter-calendar.

We shall speak in this thesis of Israel, the Jewish people, as a *liturgically/halakhically-formed community*. Observing a

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<sup>25</sup> For further details on Quartodecimans see the footnotes of Thomas Talley "The Origins of the Liturgical Year: the current state of research" in Studia Liturgica Vol 14 No. 2-4 1982 pp 34-51. See also S G Wilson "Passover, Easter and Anti-Judaism: Melito of Sardis and others" in Neusner J + Frerichs ES eds. To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Jews, Christians 'Others' in Late Antiquity Scholars Press Chico, California 1985.

<sup>26</sup> See Yves Congar Diversity and Communion SCM 1 9 8 4 trans. by John Bowden from French Cerf, Paris 1982, p 15 + p 23.

<sup>27</sup> Irving Greenberg The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays New York, Summit Press 1988 p 21-22.

calendar can involve much more than religion. It has a cultural and ethnic dimension. The ethnic dimension remains a key aspect of modern Judaism. Indeed a calendar can be interpreted in non-religious ethnic ways.<sup>28</sup> Especially now in the secular state of Israel, Jewish holy-days are taking on an increasingly cultural and ethnic dimension.<sup>29</sup> This would, however, be in continuity with ancient religion which was a cultural and ethnic phenomenon. It was not until the early self-definition of Christianity as a belief-concept that our modern concept of religion was forged. Comparisons between Judaism and Christianity soon find the asymmetries involved in the absence of an ethnic aspect to Christianity.<sup>30</sup>

There is unity between Jews through the Jewish calendar. This holds even if there is sometimes tension expressed by the more traditional Jews against Jewish Sabbath-breakers or those whose only communal identification with Judaism is to meet with

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<sup>28</sup> There is a great deal of controversy, however, over the addition of Yom Ha-Shoah into the liturgical calendar as advocated by Irving Greenberg The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays New York, Summit Press 1988 Ch 9 "Destruction and Response: Tisha B'Av" Ch 10 "The Shattered Paradigm: Yom Ha-Shoah". Traditional Jews can see this as refocusing Jewish identity around a non-traditional focus (Auschwitz not Sinai), preferring instead to use the *Tisha B'Av* fast for the loss of the Jerusalem Temple to remember Holocaust victims. Immanuel Jakobovits "Some Personal, Theological and Religious Responses to the Holocaust" in Holocaust and Genocide Studies Vol.3 No.4 1988 pp 371-381. I regard the difference as disagreement as to which context of loss is taken to be prototypical.

<sup>29</sup> For a reaction against this reinterpretation of the holidays see Jonathan Sacks "Courage in Conflict with Tradition" Review of Greenberg's The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays in The Jewish Chronicle 16/6/89.

<sup>30</sup> outside of Armenia and, perhaps, Northern Ireland.

the family on Pesach and Chanukah. Similarly, there is a unity across all who relate to a Christian calendar even if current divergences between Christian Gregorian and Julian calendars make sharing in simultaneous celebration of Easter impossible. And this is so even if there is sometimes tension expressed by the more traditional Christians against those Christians whose only public identification with Christianity is to attend church on Easter Sunday or come to midnight Mass at Christmas.

Being Christian has a dimension beyond verbal confession of belief. It includes a sense of consciously living in the rhythm of a religious calendar. This is of course much more likely to occur in countries where the public calendar follows one religious tradition: so that in Britain it is easy to be culturally and ethnically Christian and in Israel to be culturally and ethnically Jewish. This understanding would be one way of refusing to read Judaism in strictly religious terms and indeed may be one way of learning from Judaism how to speak of Christians in cultural and ethnic terms. Far from reading Judaism through Christian categories as a religion, one might usefully read Christianity through Jewish categories in order to learn how to speak 'maximally inclusively' of Christians. This would involve learning how to speak of Christians in ethnic and cultural terms and perhaps even 'reconstructing' Christianity through cultural categories.

Such a view could cope with the phenomenon of Christians who do not regard Christianity as authoritative and yet identify with the Christian calendar: cultural and ethnic Christians. The

phenomenon can be labelled 'folk religion'<sup>31</sup> but may in fact be closer to a reconstructionist movement seeking to remake traditional religious concepts in ways more authentic to modernity or post-modernity.

This understanding of *communities formed by allegiance*, at whatever level of association, to a religious calendar helps preserve a 'maximal inclusivism' to the concept of Jewish and Christian peoplehood. One is not excluded from belonging because one is publicly or communally less committed. The ability to work with a maximal inclusivism in one's traditional corporate conception of the group is a recurrent theme of this thesis.

This understanding of communities also provides a way into understanding the limits to that broad inclusivism. An 'ethnic' Jew can be considered by the majority of Jews to have a greater sense of belonging to the Jewish people than a 'Messianic' Jew even though to some extent the Messianic Jew is more religious. A Messianic Jew will generally demonstrate confusion as to which community-forming calendar he or she is committed. Is she/he formed by Chanukah, Pesach, Simchat Torah, Yom Kippur, and the regular Sabbath? Or is she/he formed by Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and the regular communal meeting for Eucharist? Allegiance to two calendars is very time consuming, and will tend to generate hard feelings from single-calendar communities. A Christian will develop the feeling that they are not valued by a Messianic Jew unless they have detailed knowledge of Jewish

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<sup>31</sup> <sup>This is</sup> especially where religious rites such as confirmation and marriage are used as social rites of passage.

festivals, and can understand the Eucharist through the paradigm of Passover: A Jew will develop the feeling that they are not valued by a Messianic Jew unless they understand the Jewish festivals through the paradigm of the messiahship of Jesus. The tensions of Messianic Judaism will be taken up in greater depth in Chapter 9.

So having suggested a link between community and the calendar of celebration, how might that assist our speaking of the Jewish and Christian communities? This will be covered in greater detail in Introduction II(ii) and then Chapter 4. However, it is appropriate to begin laying foundations here. Firstly, some brief theoretical grounding in theological language is required.

### Theological Language

It is appropriate before we go too much further to give some theoretical grounding to the frequently confused terminology of metaphor and model. Janet Martin Soskice attempts to dispel confusion:

Our suggestion is that model and metaphor are closely linked; when we use a model, we regard one thing or state of affairs in terms of another, and when we use a metaphor, we speak of one thing or state of affairs in language suggestive of another.<sup>32</sup>

*So models are about 'regarding as' and metaphors about 'speaking*

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<sup>32</sup> Janet Martin Soskice Metaphor and Religious Language Clarendon, Oxford 1985, p 50-51.

as'.

Herwi Rikhof has also made an analysis of the role of metaphor in religious language, with particular concern for metaphors of ecclesiology. Rikhof holds that metaphor is a **proposal to redescribe reality:**

the function of metaphor, can be formulated as a proposal to redescribe reality. ... Only if the metaphor is treated as a *speech-act* can the special kind of predication that it is be discovered.<sup>33</sup>

So metaphor is as strong as speech-act, and carries a proposal to redescribe reality.<sup>34</sup> Metaphor is therefore a very useful tool for us to exploit in seeking to argue for a theological change of heart from a 'Church against Israel' position.

What is particularly needed in a move from 'Church against Israel' is the generation of a new perspective throwing complimentary light on modern Judaism. It is very appropriate to harness the power of metaphor towards this end for:

metaphor, as we have seen, is not to do with straightforward speech but with a figurative 'speaking about' that generates new perspectives.<sup>35</sup>

The new perspective concerns seeing the systems of holiness in other religions, particularly Judaism, in a more positive light. The Jewish system of holiness covers sanctification through obedience to Torah. This may or may not be associated with an

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<sup>33</sup> Herwi Rikhof op. cit. p 120 emphasis mine.

<sup>34</sup> 'Speech-acts' are associated with J L Austin's How to Do Things With Words Oxford, Oxford University Press 1962 William James Lectures 1955.

<sup>35</sup> Soskice op. cit. p 66.



individual Messiah.

A traditional Christian anti-Jewish myth would regard the only means of Jewish sanctification to be through acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Jewish Messiah. To begin to resist such thinking we must reconsider sanctification and the messianic task.

### Sanctification and the Messianic Task

Jacob Neusner attempts to turn the focus away from an individual messianic figure to the *messianic task of encouraging Israel to be faithful to the sanctifying Torah*:<sup>36</sup>

The figure of the Messiah serves diverse purposes, which are defined by the framers of the larger systems in which the Messiah myth finds a place.<sup>37</sup>

For example:

the Mishnah's mode of being ... drastically modified the Messiah myth. For the latter was recast into the philosophical mode of thought and stated as teleology of an eternally present sanctification which was obtained by obedience to patterns of holiness laid out in the Torah.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Jacob Neusner The Foundations of Judaism: Method, Teleology, Doctrine 3 Vols. Fortress, Philadelphia  
Vol 2: Messiah in Context: Israel's History and Destiny in Formative Judaism. Neusner writes against Scholem's 'the messianic idea' as a coherent concept in Judaism, pp 227-231. Gershom Scholem The Messianic Idea in Judaism New York, Schocken Books 1971.

<sup>37</sup> Neusner op. cit. p 228.

<sup>38</sup> Neusner op. cit. p 230.

In a Mishnaic, and then Talmudic, system one of the most significant roles of a Messiah is that he encourages the holiness of the Jewish people. This might mean, for example, encouraging 'ethnic' Jews to become more aware of the attractions of a religious Jewish option.<sup>39</sup> In Chapter 7 there will be a discussion of Jesus' role in encouraging the holiness of the Jewish people but without any forced conclusions regarding his messianic status.

It is very important to admit that traditional Christian declarations of Jesus' Messiahship were made on the basis of *Christian* evidence.<sup>40</sup> One may not wish to go quite as far as Marquardt's "Only Jews can judge the Christian confession of Jesus as Messiah, not Christian theologians".<sup>41</sup> However, a number of his points can be admitted:<sup>42</sup> Messianism is a universal religious phenomenon;<sup>43</sup> the use is particularly polemical where Jesus is not only a Messiah but *the* Messiah and especially *the* Messiah of Israel; Christian theology must admit that it was Christian evidence that was used; and the Messiah

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<sup>39</sup> For instance, the Lubavitch movement. See for example Janet Aviad Return to Judaism: Religious Renewal in Israel Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1983.

<sup>40</sup> Marquardt Christology 2 p 217.

<sup>41</sup> Marquardt *ibid.* j) this is because Jewish literary materials are needed to see whether Jesus is practically and actually a Messiah.

<sup>42</sup> Marquardt *op. cit.* "Jesus- a 'Messiah of Israel'?" Part II § 7 d pp 214-8.

<sup>43</sup> A point made also by Norman Solomon in Judaism and World Religion Macmillan 1991. Ch 6 interprets messianism as the *ultimate hope* for people.

name, like all titles of Jesus, stands as an eschatological promise/hope.<sup>44</sup> In Chapter 5 suggestions will be made of regarding the Christian understanding of Jesus' messiahship and the Jewish 'No' to Jesus as Messiah of Israel as proving themselves in time to be authoritatively complementary.

Messiahship remains a useful category for interpreting Jesus so long as it is protected as far as is possible from anti-Jewish polemic. We suggested in the last chapter that the answer to the ancient question of Jesus' messiahship may well be "Yes, No, and Maybe". For it is possible to hold that Jesus of Nazareth is the messiah of Israel in some sense; that he is not in another, since the Christian interpretation of messiahship stretches any Jewish concept beyond breaking point;<sup>45</sup> and that when he comes again Jesus Christ will likely have a role in *encouraging the holiness of both Church and Israel*. This reformulation distinguishes Christ from Messiah and resists the eschatological integration of Israel into Church.

Increasing openness is needed to evidence of Jewish sanctification beyond the anti-Judaic 'Jesus Christ or nothing' polemic. In this thesis we will qualify 'people of God' talk around the respective patterns of holiness in Judaism and Christianity. This will be explored more deeply in the next introductory chapter around the concept 'people of God' and then

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<sup>44</sup> Marquardt op. cit. points b) e) m) and o).

<sup>45</sup> A dominant aspect of Jewish messiahship is the establishment of peace. Yet the issue of Jesus' messiahship causes so much anguish and disharmony between the two communities.

in Chapter 4. We will argue that one might speak of the Christian sacramental people of God and the Jewish halakhic people of God. Both have appropriated the system, or systems, of holiness in the Hebrew Bible in ways that serve the present.

## Christian Self-Interpretation in relation to Modern Judaism

### Introduction II(ii): Two Ambivalent Concepts - Covenant and People of God

Some examples of the ambivalence of two of the central terms in Christian self-interpretation; Covenant and People of God, will be considered in this chapter. The connection between covenant and election can lead too easily to Christians taking what is central to Judaism and making it their own. On this view the logical next step is then to presume either to tell Jews what their divine vocation is or to say that their vocation has been forfeited and taken by others who live up more fully to its demands. As regards 'people of God' talk there were a number of supersessionary ways of implying that God no longer had any purpose for the 'old people of God' now that the 'new people of God' had been formed in Christ.

New Testament usage will not be addressed as a key concern for it would require a thesis in its own right. It is sufficient for our purposes of facilitating the move from 'Church against Israel' to 'Church with Israel' to illustrate Christian 'teaching of contempt' in patristic material and then engage in metaphorical formative redescription of the two concepts; covenant and people of God.

## Part 1. Covenant Talk

Christianity possesses a stock of traditional arguments for regarding itself as involved in a 'new' covenant. This often involved suggesting that the 'old' covenant was obsolete. This central old/new focus may be linked with a number of supporting points: Christians have the authority to interpret the Scriptures which Jews misunderstand and distort ('veil over their faces' 2 Cor 3<sup>1</sup>); Christians have the new Law which makes the old Law obsolete; and Christians have the new sacrifices which make the old sacrifices obsolete. These are all examples of the same basic logic: now that the new has come in Christ, the old is obsolete and will soon pass away.

The invalidation or abolition of the Jewish covenant plays a central role in Christian anti-Judaism. Although it is inappropriate to compromise the sovereign freedom of God to do as he sees fit, it is inappropriate for the Church to declare the covenant null and void from its own reading of scripture and

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<sup>1</sup> Heikki Räisänen describes 2 Cor 3 as "a chapter extremely critical of the Mosaic covenant" in "Paul, God, and Israel: Romans 9-11 in Recent Research" in J Neusner et. al. eds. The Social World of formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in honour of Howard Clark Kee Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1988, p 194. For a less critical interpretation of 2 Cor 3 see Frances M Young + David Ford Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians SPCK 1987 pp 81-84, which includes a translation of *τέλος* by 'outcome' rather than end and fulfilment. For an interpretation of the chapter in the light of Paul's self-understanding as bearer/servant of the new covenant see Young "Understanding Romans in the Light of 2 Corinthians" in SJT 43 No.4 1990 pp 433-446, pp 436-7.

history.<sup>2</sup> To begin to resist this tradition a Christian thinker must become open to the ongoing validity of Israel's relationship with God.<sup>3</sup> E P Sanders goes quite some way towards this with his concept of 'covenantal nomism' as a common pattern shared by Pauline Christianity and forms of Second Temple Judaism.<sup>4</sup> It remains for others to widen this beyond Pauline Christianity, to spell out the implications of this beyond Sanders' 200 CE cut-off, and to introduce the required ecclesial dimensions.

'New Covenant', especially from Jeremiah 31.31-34, was used as a major hermeneutical key at the early stage of the formation of Christian identity.<sup>5</sup> This was often in association with regarding Christians as the new Israel. Generally this was used explicitly at the expense of Jewish identity, ignoring *halakhah* as the fulfilment of the law written upon the heart. It may not

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<sup>2</sup> It is important because of the fear of misunderstanding to distance oneself from association with Jewish thinkers who suggest that the Holocaust testifies to a break in the covenant. Irving Greenberg, for example, has declared the covenant broken by God at the Holocaust and hence only voluntary, no longer mandatory, for Jews. Voluntary Covenant National Jewish Resource Centre, New York 1982 and The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays New York, Summit Press 1988.

<sup>3</sup> See for example John McDade SJ "The Continuing Validity of the Jewish Covenant: A Christian Perspective" in SIDIC XXIII No.3 1990 pp 20-25.

<sup>4</sup> E P Sanders Paul and Palestinian Judaism SCM 1977. I remain convinced that Torah means more than Nomos, even as Christ means more than Messiah.

<sup>5</sup> It is a central strategy of the Letter to the Hebrews and its interpretation of Christian worship. See John Dunnill Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews SNTS Monograph 75 CUP, Cambridge 1992. However, the range of New Testament Christologies demonstrate varying degrees of interest in the concept of covenant, and, within that, varying degrees of interest in the tag 'new'.

be appropriate to retain it as a major hermeneutical key in a strategy for moving from 'Church against Israel' to 'Church with Israel'.<sup>6</sup> First, we must consider some of the worst forms of the Christian anti-Jewish myth around the covenant theme.

### Traditional Denigration of Old Covenant Worship

In the following selection of quotations from Church Fathers, chosen for their linkage with the Eucharist, we shall observe a number of 'new covenant declares old covenant obsolete' arguments.<sup>7</sup> They involve attitudes towards the interpretation of Scripture and the authority of the Law.

Christians could be considered as manifesting the New Covenant through involvement in eucharistic worship.

Because we have been set free by the death of the Lord, mindful of this fact, by eating and drinking His flesh and blood which were offered for us, we manifest the New Covenant which we have obtained through them. It is the New Law, which translates the one who is obedient to it to heavenly realms. For Moses also sprinkled the children of Israel with a calf's blood caught in a bowl, saying: "This is the covenant which God has made in respect to you" (Ex

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<sup>6</sup> An alternative would be for Judaism and Christianity both to use 'New Covenant' as a hermeneutical key in their respective appropriations of Biblical Judaism. However, I have encountered Jewish interest in covenant, covenants, living covenant, but not new covenant. It appears to be too deeply associated with Christian usage. See index entry in Richard Rubenstein's After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1992 2nd edn.: 'New Covenant, Christ seen as establishing'.

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed examination of Chrysostom's anti-Jewish teachings see Mervyn Maxwell John Chrysostom, Homilies against the Jews PhD thesis, University of Chicago 1966.





24.8). This was the figure of the Covenant which the Lord, through the Prophet (Jer 31.31) called New, so that that which Moses handed down would be Old.<sup>8</sup>

Using the hermeneutical key of Jer 31.31, this reads passages central to Jewish identity through the 1 Cor 11 version of the institution words. It regards the Mosaic covenant as the Old Covenant, itself a figure of God's covenant with Christians.

It is one thing to regard Jewish worship as a figure of Christian worship, quite another to imply that Jewish worship is now illegitimate. John Chrysostom directly attacks the ongoing practice of Jewish worship. Even if the attack is on Judaisers or Christians continuing to engage in Jewish practices his remarks can still be interpreted as implying Judaism *per se* is at an end. He singles out the Passover and declares it to have been abolished, in favour of the 'spiritual Pascha' which is the Christian Eucharist.

There was, then, of old a Pascha of the Jews, but now it has been abolished, and the spiritual Pascha has come, the one which Christ handed down at that time.<sup>9</sup>

Chrysostom further emphasised his point by drawing attention to the timing of Christ's institution of the Eucharist at Passover:

Why is it that He instituted this sacrament at the time of passover? That you may learn in every way that He is also the Lawgiver of the Old Covenant, and that the things in it

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<sup>8</sup> Ambrosiaster (?366-384) Commentary on 1 Cor 11.23-30. CSEL 81, 2.126-129. Quoted in Daniel J Sheerin The Eucharist Message of the Fathers of the Church No.7 Delaware, Michael Glazier 1986, pp 192-3.

<sup>9</sup> John Chrysostom (c 349-407), Sermon on the Betrayal by Judas, 5. PG 49.380. Quoted in Sheerin op. cit. p 144.

were foreshadowings of these.<sup>10</sup>

Here again, the supporting argument for the supremacy of the Eucharist as Christian Pascha is the status of Christ as 'Lawgiver of the Old Covenant' which foreshadows the new. This argument can also hold a claim to the supremacy of, or substitution for, Jesus over Moses as lawgiver.

In case the point has not entirely been made, Chrysostom conjures up a, possibly imaginary, questioner who seems unsure of the implications:

"Must we observe that ancient passover also?" someone may ask. By no means. He said DO THIS for this reason, to withdraw us from it. For if this brings about forgiveness of sins, as it surely does, the old passover is now superfluous.<sup>11</sup>

The Jewish Passover, for Chrysostom, is the 'ancient passover'. He argued that the Eucharist is given by Christ to draw Christians away from Jewish practices which are now superfluous. The terminology of 'drawing away', however, testifies indirectly to the continuing attraction of Jewish practices to Christians in Chrysostom's congregations.<sup>12</sup>

All these quotations need to be carefully interpreted. They may represent a response to Greco-Roman suspicions. The ferocity of Chrysostom's preaching may only demonstrate that there were

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<sup>10</sup> John Chrysostom, Homily on the Gospel of Matthew No 82, excerpt (on Mt 26.26-8). PG 58.737-740; tr LNPF 10.491-493. Quoted in Sheerin op. cit. p 195.

<sup>11</sup> Chrysostom op. cit. in Sheerin op. cit. p 197.

<sup>12</sup> especially the Passover to those of Jewish background .

many around who kept both the Jewish Passover and the Christian Eucharist, or who at least thought that the two were not so clearly distinguished as he would have liked to think. However, they serve in this context to demonstrate Christian covenant language used at the expense of Jewish identity.

### Modern Responses to Covenant Talk

It is highly likely that covenant is a word used differently in the different religions. Norman Solomon and Jacob Neusner have both written on the special problems of religions using the same words in different ways.<sup>13</sup> The 'renewal of the covenant' theme can be a useful one *within* a religious tradition. However, across what are now separate religions, Christian 'renewal of the covenant' can easily encourage supersessionism.

To make covenant a central category in Christian/Jewish understanding can be seen by Jews as imparting a Christian agenda. I sympathise with the following remark of Norman Solomon's:

the present concern of Jewish theologians with 'covenant theology' seems to be a response to a Christian agenda rather than a 'natural' growth into Judaism.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> N Solomon "The Language of Dialogue in World Religions" in World Faiths Insight Oct 1987 pp 3-16. J Neusner "How Judaism and Christianity Can Talk to Each Other: The Basis for an Interreligious Dialogue" in Bible Review Dec 1990 pp 32-45.

<sup>14</sup> Norman Solomon "The Context of the Jewish Christian Dialogue" in ChJRel Vol 24 Nos. 1-2 1991 pp 54-75, p 59.

One Christian thinker who calls into question a Christian preoccupation with covenant as a category for understanding the complexities of the Jewish/Christian relationship is Norbert Lohfink in a book entitled The Covenant Never Revoked.<sup>15</sup> After an examination of the biblical "new covenant" passages, Lohfink concludes that Torah is a more central idea than covenant:

If ... reflection on 'covenant' in the Bible has ... led spontaneously to 'torah' as perhaps the more central and more existential idea, why not make it the guiding idea of the dialogue?<sup>16</sup>

Others, such as W D Davies, have come to similar conclusions from their studies of early Palestinian materials. Davies suggests that the increasing use of covenant by Christians and other Jewish sectarians may have had some effect on rabbinic developments of Torah as the more important term.<sup>17</sup> Although it is important not to overstress the case so that Torah becomes an alternative to covenant, this comment would be in keeping with our isolation of Christ and Torah as the central concepts of the respective religions.

When covenant is used it needs to be distanced from New Testament usage arising out of the supersessionary 'Church versus

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<sup>15</sup> Norbert Lohfink *Der niemals gekündigte Bund* ET The Covenant never revoked: biblical reflections on Christian-Jewish dialogue trans. John J Scullion Mahweh Press, New York + Paulist Press, New Jersey 1991.

<sup>16</sup> <sup>This is</sup> taken from a review of Lohfink's The Covenant Never Revoked by Allan R Brockway in Theological Book Review Jan 1992 Vol 4 No 2.

<sup>17</sup> W D Davies Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come SBL Monograph 7, Philadelphia 1952 pp 89-90. Refers to J Bonsirven Le Judaïsme Palestinien Vol 1 pp 79 ff.

Israel' stage: notably the Letter to the Hebrews 8.13: 'In speaking of a new covenant he treats the first as obsolete' (παλαιῶ make old: passive, become old). In the New Testament covenant remains an ambiguous term as William Campbell observes:

The ambiguity concerning the understanding of 'covenant' in the New Testament is illustrated by the variation both in the meaning and in the frequency of the term.<sup>18</sup>

When covenant talk is used it is often with the intent to categorise people by their choice of 'one covenant' or 'two covenant' approaches to the relationship of Christianity to Judaism. This can distract from a deeper engagement with the complex relationship. As is sometimes admitted this tendency involves separating similar positions and linking disparate positions.<sup>19</sup> Christian scholars who have sought to move from a 'Church against Israel' to a 'Church with Israel' may indeed espouse either: for van Buren presents the one Jewish covenant as being opened up in Christ to gentiles,<sup>20</sup> and Marquardt presents two covenants.<sup>21</sup> Hence, scholars keeping to a 'Church

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<sup>18</sup> William S Campbell "Christianity and Judaism : Continuity and Discontinuity" in ChJRel 18 No.1 1985 pp 3-15 , p 3.

<sup>19</sup> See Gavin D'Costa "One Covenant or Many Covenants? Toward a Theology of Christian-Jewish relations" in JES Vol 27 No 3 1990 pp 441-452. Note 5 on p 443 admits that the arguments of 'single covenanters' sometimes overlap with those of 'dual covenanters'.

<sup>20</sup> especially Christ in Context Ch 11 §4 pp 278-283, "the Church discovers itself as having been taken into Israel's covenantal story, and that story is not over." pp 278-9.

<sup>21</sup> Marquardt Christology 2 pp 42-43 speaks of the differences between the two covenants: one with the Jewish people, the other with the other peoples. "God did not chose to be in company with the Jews through and in Jesus of Nazareth".

with Israel' mentality may espouse either single or double covenant theories. It is not so much how many covenants as how the covenant talk is contextualised.

Although this chapter includes a number of reservations on Christian use of the covenant theme, none of this need suggest that covenant may not be chosen as a major theme of Jewish self-interpretation, as for instance by David Hartman and Jonathan Sacks.<sup>22</sup> However, other Jewish writers have drawn attention to problems with any theological use of covenant talk.<sup>23</sup>

Having observed Christian covenant talk at the expense of Jewish identity in the anti-Jewish Christian myth, what alternatives are there? We will look now at one Jewish suggestion. It is a common tactic in Jewish-Christian relations to point to the Noahide covenant as a positive suggestion for covenant talk. The Noahide Covenant is a Jewish concept arising around the late second century CE suggesting that Gentiles are in relationship with the God of the Covenant if they keep a minimum of 7 commandments: 1. set up courts of law 2. avoid idolatry 3. avoid blasphemy 4. avoid sexual immorality 5. abstain from bloodshed 6. avoid robbery 7. do not tear a limb from a living animal.

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<sup>22</sup> David Hartman A Living Covenant: The innovative spirit in traditional Judaism New York, Free Press 1985, Jonathan Sacks Crisis and Covenant: Jewish Thought after the Holocaust Manchester, Manchester University Press 1992.

<sup>23</sup> especially in a context of Holocaust theology. See Richard L Rubenstein in Appendix.

## A Christian Response to the Jewish concept of the Noahide Covenant

The Jewish concept of a Noahide covenant appears to allow particular covenants outside of Judaism.<sup>24</sup> This is often interpreted as a positive Jewish gesture to which Christianity should respond. However, it is such a minimalist covenant that it hardly justifies lengthy response.

Paul van Buren highlights a number of its shortcomings as a serious proposition of covenantal faith outside of Judaism:

Only the minimal requirements of constructive living are stipulated, and God is only committed to preserving the minimal conditions for that living. What is missing is the interior of a covenant, so to speak. This covenant has no heart. ... It is not even necessary for the nations to know God at all. ... (The Noahide covenant) simply does not fit the reality of the church's experience of its relationship to God.<sup>25</sup>

From my own perspective it would seem that the Noahide covenant is not so much an independent covenant relationship as a form of Torah-for-the-nations. It reinforces my suspicion that the easiest way for a tradition to open up to another is to take its central concept, for example Jewish Torah or Christian Christ, and dilute it: so there are the Noahide 'Torah-for-the-nations' and the 'anonymous Christian' concepts. This suspicion is confirmed by Neusner's reading of the Noahide covenant as an

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<sup>24</sup> David Novak uses the Noahide Laws as the grounding of his Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Jewish Justification OUP 1989. Ch 1 "The Doctrine of the Noahide Laws" draws on his The Image of the Non-Jew in Judaism Toronto Studies in Theology 14 1983.

<sup>25</sup> Paul van Buren A Theology of Israel Ch 4 § 2ii pp 131-3.

example of hierarchical thinking:

Judaism ... expressed its hierarchical counterpart by assigning to undifferentiated humanity (Islam and Christianity never singled out for special handling) a set of requirements for a minimal definition of a humane and just social order, with holy Israel, God's first love, responsible for everything else. Of you God wants civility, of us, holiness: a hierarchy with one peak and a vast flat plain, no mountain of ascent in-between.<sup>26</sup>

The Noahide covenant reads too easily as an attempt to value difference through the centrality of hierarchical categories central to Judaism. This suggests that the key to handling other religious traditions than one's own may be in valuing different paths of holiness without falling into hierarchical thinking.<sup>27</sup> This will now be attempted as we move on to more positive contextualisations of covenant talk.

#### More Positive Uses of Covenant in Talk of Sacralization:

#### Creation, Holiness, and Particular Covenants of Destiny

There are ways of harnessing the covenant concept to assist new portrayals of the Jewish/Christian relationship. A detailed suggestion can be made in response to Soloveitchik's two covenant proposal for Judaism in *Kol Dodí Dofek* (It is the Voice of My

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<sup>26</sup> Neusner "Thinking about 'The Other' in Religion: It is Necessary, but is it Possible?" in *ModTh* Vol 6 No.3 1990 pp 273-285 p 276.

<sup>27</sup> This is most generally found in pluralist options. We aim for a maximal inclusivism without becoming pluralist.



Beloved That Knocketh).<sup>28</sup>

For Soloveitchik, Egypt represents the covenant of fate and Sinai the covenant of destiny: "the covenant in Egypt was a covenant of fate, while the covenant at Sinai was a covenant of destiny".<sup>29</sup> He proposed that the Jewish community should be united in a 'covenant of destiny' (*brit ye'ud*) following or consummating a 'covenant of fate' (*brit goral*).

Despite being able to see a positive side to a covenant of fate, Soloveitchik's interests lie elsewhere.<sup>30</sup> He sees too much of Jewish energies being taken up by responses to the Holocaust as an example of a covenant of fate.<sup>31</sup> Rather, he would like to see renewed energies being concentrated on Jewish unity in the future, drawing on a recommitment to Torah, and articulated as a 'covenant of destiny'.

Destiny in the life of a people, as in the life of an individual, signifies a deliberate and conscious existence that the people has chosen out of its own free will and in which it finds the full realization of its historical being.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Joseph Soloveitchik "Kol Dodi Dofek / The Sound of my Lover Knocking" 1956 in *Divrei Hagut ve-Ha'avakhah* WZO, Jerusalem 1981 pp 9-56, ET by Lawrence Kaplan in Theological and Halakhic Reflections on the Holocaust ed Bernard H Rosenberg 1992 pp 51-110.

<sup>29</sup> Soloveitchik op. cit. ET p 81.

<sup>30</sup> Soloveitchik writes of four positive categories which derive from this consciousness of a shared fate: 1. consciousness of shared circumstances 2. the experience of shared suffering 3. awareness of shared responsibility 4. shared activity. pp 83-89.

<sup>31</sup> A point echoed by David Hartman Auschwitz or Sinai? Shalom Hartman Institute, Jerusalem, no date.

<sup>32</sup> Soloveitchik op. cit. ET pp 89-90.

He writes evocatively of the people of fate (*am goral*) becoming a nation of destiny (*goy ye'ud*) or a holy nation (*goy kadosh*) by longing for the realization of the ethical ideal revealed in the Torah.<sup>33</sup>

The concept of Judaism involved in this two covenant analysis works to include a whole range of different ways of being Jewish, while obviously expressing a preference for religious recommitment.<sup>34</sup> Soloveitchik's analysis fits the contemporary Jewish world very well, but only addresses itself to the Jewish world. What is needed for our strategy is a way of sensitively extending Soloveitchik's analysis for Judaism to address more than one religious culture. The two covenant option internal to Judaism can be imaginatively opened out to incorporate other religious cultures.

#### Universal Covenant of Birth and Particular Covenants of Holiness

It would be possible to regard *birth* as a universal 'covenant of fate'. All human beings are born, making this a universal covenant.<sup>35</sup> People come into the world through no choice of their own, and in complete dependence. They are not subjects in relation to their own birth.

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<sup>33</sup> Soloveitchik op. cit. ET p 92.

<sup>34</sup> See later chapters taking up similarly inclusive ways of describing the Jewish people, especially Chs 4 + 9.

<sup>35</sup> The same is true of death according to Soloveitchik.

It is one thing to be passively born and quite another to adopt an attitude toward existence such that created existence is a gift. That is to accept a religious 'onlook' on life.<sup>36</sup> It is one important way of becoming a subject in relation to human existence. For those who accept that created existence is a gift they are united in a 'covenant of destiny': life is to be lived out in grateful response. This might be grateful response to 'the one' who has gifted life itself or as response to the life principle itself. Most religious cultures encourage their adherents to accept life as a gift.<sup>37</sup>

*The covenant of fate is universal but the covenant of destiny comprises a number of particular covenants.* The universal 'covenant of fate': birth, is consummated in particular 'covenants of destiny': accepting life as a gift. The religious affirmation of life as a gift is made in a number of particular ways. For Christians it is particularly the sacraments which encourage the offering of a response to life as gift.<sup>38</sup> For Jews it is particularly the *halakhah* which encourages the offering of a response to life as gift.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> See Donald Evans The Logic of Self-Involvement SCM 1963 for the use of 'onlooks' as attitudes towards creation.

<sup>37</sup> Indeed many non-religious traditions, such as humanism, and non-theistic traditions encourage very similar attitudes.

<sup>38</sup> I would resist the need to add an annual 'Covenant Service', as in Methodism, to the liturgical calendar. Easter and the regular Parish Eucharist should provide sufficient encouragement to recommitment.

<sup>39</sup> This pattern of universal birth consummated in particular covenants can be extended to other religious and non-religious traditions. The ability to value other paths of holiness than

In our thesis it is the theme of *holiness* which will be associated with *particular covenants of destiny*: for both Judaism and Christianity live out in their respective traditions their collective response to the invitation: 'Be ye holy, even as I, the Lord your God, am holy'. Each person is made in the image of God and commands respect and is called to responsibility. The image of God is a calling to holiness, to be like the Holy God. Living a life of holiness, of response to life as gift, is a creative option. It is a major locus of *imitatio Dei*.

This linkage of accepting life as a gift and a call to holiness can include the two particular examples of Judaism and Christianity. As Soloveitchik has observed, *for the Jew that linkage is made in the giving and receiving of Torah within the Jewish community, preeminently at Sinai*. I argue that *for the Christian that linkage is made in the giving and receiving of Christ within the Christian community, preeminently at Calvary*. The focus on the cross demonstrates that making this link between accepting life as a gift and holiness involves no downplaying of human sinfulness. It rather encourages sin to be located in human self-will to declare oneself 'self-made': the classic idolatry.

This completes our constructive redescription of covenant talk.

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one's own will be constantly in the background throughout this thesis.

## Part 2. People of God Talk

As with covenant, 'people of God' talk has been successfully incorporated into an anti-Jewish Christian myth. Jules Isaac drew attention to the description of the Jewish people as 'the people of deicide'.<sup>40</sup> Miriam Taylor included a number of options incorporating uncomplimentary representations of the Jewish people: The Law: abrogated with the old people, and fulfilled with the new; Salvaging and appropriating the Jewish God at the expense of the Jewish people; Interpreting the fate of the two peoples in the wake of Christ's advent.<sup>41</sup> As with all elements of the 'teaching of contempt', the root problems are *hermeneutical*: wishing to appropriate the Jewish scriptures without joining the Jewish people:

the invalidation of Judaism emerges as a theoretical necessity in the appropriation of the Jewish God and the Jewish Bible for the Church. It is grounded in a hermeneutic of the Holy Scriptures which condemns not the contemporary actions of Jews, but judges them rather in terms of historical crimes with a theological significance. The Jews are judged in particular in terms of their response to Christ as Messiah.<sup>42</sup>

As in the previous section a few illustrative examples from the Church Fathers will be given, chosen for their linkage with the Christian sacraments.

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<sup>40</sup> Jules Isaac *L'Enseignement du Mépris* Fasquelle, Paris 1962, pp 99-131. ET The Teaching of Contempt.

<sup>41</sup> Miriam Sophia Taylor The Jews in the writings of the Early Church Fathers (150 -312): Men of Straw or Formidable Rivals? Oxford Dphil 1991 C10338 pp 215-229.

<sup>42</sup> Taylor op. cit. p 229.

## Traditional Denigration of the Jewish People

In a passage on the Eucharist, Irenaeus makes use of Malachi 1.10-11 to argue that it is the gentiles who now offer pure sacrifices to God. He speaks of the Jews as 'the former People':

Malachi, among the twelve prophets, foretold this as follows: "I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord Almighty, and I will not accept sacrifice from your hands. For from the rising of the sun even to its setting my name is glorified among the gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure sacrifice; for my name is great among the gentiles, says the Lord Almighty" (Ml 1.10-11). He shows in the plainest manner, by these words, that the former People shall cease to make offerings to God, but that in every place sacrifice shall be offered to Him, a pure sacrifice, and that His name is glorified among the nations.<sup>43</sup>

This argument is framed in an approach to Scripture which displays overt selectivity of text and contentious interpretation and application. Malachi 1.10-11 is part of a stock of texts regularly used to promote Christian identity at the expense of Jewish identity. Here, the desire to demonstrate the excellence of the Christian Eucharist as sacrifice over against any sacrifice of the 'former people' comes across clearly.

Cyprian refers to 'the gentile people of God' as 'the successors of the Jews' and as the chosen people of God in the following interpretation of the Christian sacraments. He considers Baptism to be signified in Isaiah 43.18-21:

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<sup>43</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons (c 140 - c 200) Against Heresies 4.17.4 SC 100.590-614 tr ANF revised. Quoted in Sheerin op. cit. p 245-6.

"Remember not the events of the past ... Behold, I am doing new things which now will spring forth, and you will know them. In the wilderness I make a road, in the desert, rivers ... to give water to my chosen people, my people whom I have won that they might declare my power." (Is 43.18-21). God foretold there through the Prophet that among the gentiles, in places which before had been without water, rivers should afterwards abound, and should provide water for the chosen people of God, that is, those made sons of God through the birth of baptism.<sup>44</sup>

After commenting that Jews can also partake of baptised grace "if they should thirst and seek Christ", Cyprian progresses to his interpretation of the Eucharist. The Jews continue to be portrayed as lacking spiritual grace and so Christ:

teaches and shows that the people of the gentiles were their successors, and that we were arriving afterwards, through the merit of faith, into that place which the Jews had lost ... He showed that the people of the gentiles instead would gather together and come to the wedding of Christ and His church as the Jews were departing.<sup>45</sup>

The gentiles arrive at the place of celebration which the Jews have lost through lack of faith in Christ.

Often the Christian ritual marks of identity are put forward as evidence that God's relationship with the gentiles is superior to that with the Jews. For this reason it is important for us to work with the sacraments in ways which break out of the coherent and mutually reinforcing logic of the anti-Judaic myth. To achieve this we must formulate positive uses of Christian 'people of God' talk and proffer positive interpretations of sacramental worship.

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<sup>44</sup> Cyprian of Carthage (?200 -258), Letter 63,8 CSEL 3, 2.701-717 tr FC revised. Quoted in Sheerin op. cit. p 260.

<sup>45</sup> Cyprian Letter 63,12.

## Modern responses to 'People of God' talk

Dietrich Ritschl sounds a timely warning on Christian usage of 'people of God' terminology when he says:

Biblical talk about the 'people of God' can no longer be taken over in a naïve way.<sup>46</sup>

In the light of the Christian teaching of contempt there must be a careful hermeneutic of such texts as 1 Peter.<sup>47</sup> These texts are part of the Christian canon. What is needed is for a *hermeneutical tradition to be set in motion which interprets them in such a way that the Jewish people is not written out of ongoing sanctifying and salvific relationship with God*. It is not necessary to continue reading the entire de-historicised Jewish people through the notion of "the builders who rejected Christ the cornerstone" (1 Pet 2.6-8).

People of God language remains central to the self-understanding of the Church. The people of God theme, though ably used by Marcus Barth to incorporate Ephesians into the Romans view, still lacks clarity.<sup>48</sup> Ephesians celebrates far too soon the breaking down of barriers between Jews and Christians. The people of God image is also a popular theme of the Second Vatican

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<sup>46</sup> Dietrich Ritschl The Logic of Theology : A Brief Account of the relationship between basic concepts in theology SCM 1986, p 44.

<sup>47</sup> As for instance 1 Peter 2.9 λαός εις περιποίησιν 'a people for his own possession'.

<sup>48</sup> Marcus Barth The People of God JSNTS Supp No.5 Sheffield 1983.



Council in its promotion of a conciliar understanding of Church. Herwi Rikhof maintains that the term lacks any degree of precision in the Council's documents.<sup>49</sup> Imprecision can encourage interpretation in supersessionary ways.

Any desire to see a united people of God or a sublimation of one into the other, albeit at the end of time, seems to encourage an expectation of mixed Jewish/Gentile communities in the present. One must resist projections of the final shape. This takes the stress away from which religion's concept of the people of God will take precedence. Instead, Jewish and Christian communities are now largely separate, especially if one considers Messianic Judaism as a branch of Evangelical Christianity (see below).

It was Paul who tried to keep his combined communities open to both Jews and Gentiles. Such communities, then as now, need such stress on symbolic boundaries and agreed, often idiosyncratic, faith stances that they would likely be viewed with some concern, even suspicion, by more central communities on both sides. Walter Riggans notes the charge of underdeveloped ecclesiology in forms of Messianic Judaism:

Messianic Jewish Believers have a very weak sense of belonging to the universal Church.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> This charge is directed to the use of the 'people of God' in the Vatican II documents by Herwi Rikhof The Concept of Church: A Methodological inquiry into the use of Metaphors in Ecclesiology Sheed + Ward 1981. Pp 49-55 have his response to the term 'people of God', against MD Koster and A Luneau.

<sup>50</sup> Walter Riggans Messianic Judaism + Jewish-Christian Relations: A Case Study in the field of Religious Identity Birmingham University PhD 1991 p 396.

Riggans notes that this is "a general weakness in the Conservative Evangelical wing of the church". He makes these similarities with evangelical Christianity explicit:

the great majority of Messianic Jews actually identify themselves with the theological and hermeneutical distinctives of the Conservative Evangelical position.<sup>51</sup>

The difficulty with lack of specificity in ecclesiology is that it all too easily masks ecclesiological supersessionism.

#### More Positive uses of 'People of God' talk in Sacralization:

##### Sacramental and Halakhic People of God

Rather than work with ambiguous terminology which encourages ecclesial supersessionism, it is more appropriate to qualify the terminology 'people of God'. This could appropriately be achieved by considering the **received pattern of holiness** honoured within each tradition.

Holiness is about being enabled to work on relationships and attitudes in the anticipation of a final consummation. I will retain 'people of God' language for Christianity and ground it in a specific ecclesiology of the *sacramental* people of God. The stress on baptismal entry to the community, and the significance of communal meals in continuity with Jesus' table fellowship, *form* the community. This formative significance indicates that the sacraments could be used to qualify the people of God in

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<sup>51</sup> Riggans op. cit. p 393.

their Christian manifestation as the sacramental people of God. This qualification involves *eschatological* formation, for sacramental peoplehood is about a people in process of becoming. For Judaism that *eschatological* formation is bound up with *halakhah* as the *unfolding of Torah in time and space*. And so Judaism may be referred to as the *halakhic* people of God. The notions of holiness are not identical in the two communities. Indeed, the distinctions between holiness systems will remain until that day when sacraments and *mitzvot* are no longer required. The future can be anticipated in the present in a way which allows the provisionality and distinctiveness of all present systems.

It was Avery Dulles who put forward the model of church as 'sacrament' as the most important of his five suggested models: Institution, Servant, Herald, Mystical Communion, and Sacrament.<sup>52</sup> This was because it was the 'theologian's model' and helped to integrate all the facets represented by the others. Dulles knew that it was important to have models interacting with one another, to avoid the situation of one becoming dominant and stifling the dynamic of the concept. To qualify the popular choice, 'people of God', with a theologian's model would allow theology to modify popular ambiguity.<sup>53</sup> It would allow the 'regarding-as' model to come to speech as a 'speaking-as'

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<sup>52</sup> Avery Dulles Models of the Church: A Critical Assessment of the Church in all its Aspects Gill + Macmillan, Dublin 1976, now in 2nd ed.

<sup>53</sup> the reverse can also be fruitful.

metaphor: sacramental peoplehood.

Clearly, our suggestion of a '*sacramental people of God*' can be described as a proposal to redescribe reality: it is a proposal to describe Christianity through a sense of peoplehood formed by a sacramental understanding of holiness. It is also a 'speech-act' for it argues, here explicitly, for openness to other systems of holiness functioning in separate traditions. Specifically it is arguing for Christian openness to a *halakhic* Jewish system of holiness and to Jews as the *halakhic* people of God. Any resystematization will lead to exclusions.<sup>54</sup> I will endeavour to make my usage of 'sacramental' maximally inclusive in relation to Christian traditions without explicit sacraments.

It is significant that our suggestion, Christian '*sacramental people of God*' and Jewish '*halakhic people of God*' use the same model of 'God in relationship to his people' which is central to the covenant concept: you will be my people and I will be your God. It retains the relationship imagery but locates it more firmly in the interrelation between sanctification and salvation which both sacrament and *halakhah* represent. Christian use of the Covenant theme can easily put too much stress on salvation and too little on sanctification. Admittedly, Christian use of the sacraments can put too much stress on sanctification

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<sup>54</sup> So Vermes speaks of the effect of a *halakhic* system on charismatic figures: "supernatural proof was judged totally inadmissible" in the definition of "lawful conduct (*halakhah*)". "Since *halakhah* became the cornerstone of rabbinic Judaism it is not surprising that, despite their popular religious appeal Jesus, Hanina, and the others, were slowly but surely squeezed out beyond the pale of true respectability" *Jesus the Jew* SCM 2nd ed. 1983 1st 1973, pp 81-82.

and too little on salvation by a God who seeks personal relationship, but it need not as we shall see in Section Two.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> In this way our use of the sacramental people of God keeps all the strengths of 'covenantal nomism' (communal formation, personal relationship, committed response of faith) without using either of the terms covenant or nomism.

SECTION ONE :

DOCTRINE AND LITURGY IN SELF-INTERPRETATION:

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Doctrine and Liturgy in Self-Interpretation:Opportunities for Development

In this first section of the thesis, a grounding will be laid on which the other sections will build. Doctrine and liturgy in mutual interrelation have primary significance in forming the Christian community. Both doctrine and liturgy are open-ended and so available for development. The developments particularly hoped for in this thesis are those which will assist a move from 'Church against Israel' towards 'Church with Israel'.

In Chapter One doctrine is the primary focus. Clifford Geertz' cultural understanding of religion as the interrelationship between a group's world-view and its way of life is utilised. Cultural theories of religion lead on to an engagement with George Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic approach to doctrine. Certain weaknesses with this view lead us to posit a cultural-symbolic view of doctrine. Symbolism is a cognitive device open to lifelong learning and to the stimulation of both external and internal phenomena. The symbol system is itself a sophisticated *hermeneutical* device. Cultural symbolism is associated with a group's need for systematization. Systematization brings balance and integration to the group. It is focused for religious societies around the systemic core of

the group's self-understanding as a corporate body.

In Chapter Two liturgy is the primary focus. The liturgical assembly is regarded as the highest expression of the religious body. Community identity is linked to a regular calendar of festival assemblies. Regular liturgy forms a communal self-understanding in adherents and this is open to *ongoing formation*. It is open to gradual changes through the imaginative play of celebration. Liturgical events provide opportunities for communal self-transcendence and for alignment to reformulated communal expressions. There are many pointers ahead to Section Four of the thesis where liturgical alternatives are integral to the formative strategy towards a 'Church with Israel'. It is argued that the Christian sacraments acclimatize the community away from expectations of immediate divine intervention. In this way the sacraments normalize the irregularities of history. They also contextualize the individual within the moods and motivations of a community shaped by its holy days.

In Chapter Three there is an engagement with the development of the Trinity as an example of doctrine and liturgy in mutual interrelation. The driving forces behind trinitarian doctrine are isolated as: worship and prayer; baptism and eucharist; the imitation of Jewish culture in the exaltation of Christ; the consequences of social separation from Judaism; and the process of Christian self-definition. Each of these driving forces has links to a historical trajectory of Anti-Judaism through the



Letter to the Hebrews, the Epistle of Barnabas, Justin Martyr, and Melito of Sardis. This has to be admitted before progress towards a 'Church with Israel' can be made. Particular attention is given to christology and sacramentology in their mutually supporting entirety as Christianity learns its doctrine of God and humanity. In the context of the growth of a separate religion alongside Judaism the Christ of the sacraments involves much more than the Messiah as an individual human agent of God's purposes. Acknowledging that Christ means more than Messiah will enable the continuing Jewish 'No' to Jesus as Messiah of Israel to be put into perspective.

Ch 1 A Doctrinal Aspect to Christian Self-Interpretation:  
Doctrine as Cultural-Symbolic Systematization

This work is unashamedly dependent on Christian particulars. The greatest contribution to interfaith understanding comes from growing deeper into our own particularities. The two key particularities which Christianity has developed during and since the first century of the Common Era are doctrine and liturgy. Both doctrine and liturgy use tradition and other authoritative sources in their own ways.

This first chapter will look at doctrine in some detail and the second will concentrate on liturgy. In the work as a whole pride of place will be given to the doctrine of the Trinity and the regularly repeated liturgy of the Eucharist. This thesis comes out of a Eucharistic tradition. For non-eucharistic Christian traditions there will be some regularly repeated ritual which mediates between world-view and way of life.

Doctrine and liturgy are interrelated facets of the Christian life, for liturgy depends on and expresses doctrine. Both are closely related to the Christian world-view. Such an interdependent relationship between doctrine and liturgy can be presented at an analytical level by drawing on the work of Clifford Geertz. Geertz found it useful to distinguish between

'model of' and 'model for' senses in his analysis of religion.<sup>1</sup> A theory models relationships so as to render them apprehensible: it is a model of 'reality'. A theory is also a model under whose guidance relationships are organised: it is a model for 'reality'. It will be suggested that doctrine is closer to the model of mode, and liturgy closer to the model for mode. Together they mould the Christian character. This close relationship is exemplified in the double principle of Henri de Lubac:

The Church makes the Eucharist and the Eucharist makes the Church.<sup>2</sup>

Geertz was interested in understanding *religion* as a *cultural system* in a framework which would be invariant over cultures and religions. He found an invariant core in the interrelationship between a group's ethos, or way of life, and its world-view:

In religious belief and practice a group's ethos is rendered intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a way of life ideally adapted to the actual state of affairs the world-view describes, while the world-view is rendered emotionally convincing by being presented as an image of an actual state of affairs peculiarly well arranged to accommodate such a way of life.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Clifford Geertz 'Religion as a Cultural System' in Anthropological Approaches to the study of Religion ed. M Banton, ASA Monograph 3 Tavistock Press 1966, p 7. Also published as Ch 4 of The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz Basic Books, New York 1973.

<sup>2</sup> Henri de Lubac *Méditations sur L'Eglise* Aubier, Paris 1953 p113 ET The Splendour of the Church Sheed + Ward 1956, p 92.

<sup>3</sup> Geertz op. cit. p 3.

Geertz was able to observe a certain circularity in this interrelationship between the way of life and world-view in the *mutually sustaining authority of religious symbols*:

Religious symbols formulate a basic congruence between a particular style of life and a specific (if, most often, implicit) metaphysic, and in so doing sustain each with the borrowed authority of the other.<sup>4</sup>

Having signposted the close interrelationship between doctrine, with its link to world-view, and liturgy, with its link to way of life, it will be doctrine which occupies the focus of this chapter. Doctrines arose in intimate connection with worship and with life, yet largely as systematic rationalisation of such experience.<sup>5</sup> And liturgy drove the intimate connection back to experience, providing models for behaviour and attitude.<sup>6</sup> This systematising often leads to a recognition that there are some first order and second order doctrines.<sup>7</sup>

That it is Christology which is generally regarded as a first-order doctrine is largely due to its cultural implications. If the dominant self-image of the Christian community is 'the

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<sup>4</sup> Geertz op. cit. p 4.

<sup>5</sup> And often control of such experience. See Edward Schillebeeckx Christ: The Christian Experience in the Modern World SCM + Seabury 1980 from Dutch 1977, especially Part Two §3+4 pp 463-628.

<sup>6</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life Epworth 1980.

<sup>7</sup> For instance, it has been regarded as more important to agree on a statement of Christology than on one on atonement, for atonement is dependent upon Christology. The Nicene Creed, for example, gives boundaries for Christology, at least in terms of a vocabulary, but merely reiterates the scriptural 'he died for our sins'. This opens up a range of possible theories of the atonement linked to Nicene Christology.

body of Christ', then the higher the view of Christology the higher the view of the social group. A similar social systematising is in place when the group regards themselves as 'the temple of the Spirit'. In this case the cultural self-understanding of the group depends on a high pneumatology.

### The Role of Doctrine: Doctrine as Cultural-Symbolic System

We begin this chapter by giving some basis for understanding the nature of doctrine. A particularly influential contribution to the role of doctrine is made by George Lindbeck in The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Post Liberal Age.<sup>8</sup>

Lindbeck suggests considering doctrine as a cultural-linguistic phenomenon. This builds on Wittgenstein's 'language game' approach<sup>9</sup> to see doctrine as the linguistic expression of cultural forms of life. His general strategy is to seek a *via media* between a *cognitive propositional* approach to doctrine and one which focuses on *expressive symbolism* in the

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<sup>8</sup> George Lindbeck The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Post Liberal Age Westminster Press, Philadelphia 1984.

<sup>9</sup> For instance Ludwig Wittgenstein Philosophical Investigations trans. GEM Anscombe Blackwell, Oxford 1958 3rd ed Part II vii: "People who on waking up tell us certain incidents (that they have been in such-and-such places etc.). Then we teach them the expression "I dreamt", which precedes the narrative. Afterwards I sometimes ask them "did you dream anything last night?" and am answered yes or no, sometimes with an account of a dream, sometimes not. That is the language-game."

affective domain.

It has become customary in a considerable body of anthropological, sociological, and philosophical literature (...) to emphasise neither the cognitive nor the experiential-expressive aspects of religion; rather, emphasis is placed on those respects in which religions resemble languages together with their correlative forms of life and are thus similar to cultures (...). The function of church doctrines that becomes most prominent in this perspective is their use, not as expressive symbols or as truth claims, but as *communally authoritative rules of discourse, attitude and action*. This general way of conceptualizing religion will be called ... a "cultural-linguistic" approach, and the implied view of church doctrine will be referred to as a "regulative" or "rule" theory. <sup>10</sup>

So doctrine belongs to the domain of **regulating** the language and behaviour of a community, according to Lindbeck. Similarly:

in a cultural-linguistic outlook, religions are thought of primarily as different idioms for construing reality, expressing experience, and ordering life. Attention, when considering the question of truth, focuses on the categories (or "grammar", or "rules of the game") in terms of which truth claims are made and expressive symbolisms employed. Thus the questions raised in comparing religions have to do first of all with the adequacy of their categories. <sup>11</sup>

This suggests that religions can be compared by the adequacy of their authoritative rules for construing reality and for shaping community life in accordance with that reality.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Lindbeck op. cit. pp 17-18 (highlights mine).

<sup>11</sup> Lindbeck op. cit. pp 47-48.

<sup>12</sup> Whether there can be adequate criteria for construing reality independent of the tradition that generates those criteria will remain a matter of debate. For example, the classical tradition encourages towards the criteria of truth, beauty, and goodness; Christianity of love and self-sacrifice; Judaism of righteousness, justice, and peace.

Lindbeck puts forward his position as a midway between two opposed approaches: the cognitive and experiential-expressive approaches to doctrine. He is severely dismissive of the 'experiential-expressive' symbol, largely due to the misrepresentation of symbol as purely affective.

One writer who is aware of the ability to integrate the approaches Lindbeck polarises is Dan Sperber. In his detailed analysis of symbolism Sperber writes that symbolism:

is a **cognitive** mechanism, I mean that it is an autonomous mechanism that, alongside the perceptual and conceptual mechanisms, *participates in the construction of knowledge and in the functioning of memory.*<sup>13</sup>

If symbolism is itself a cognitive mechanism it should not be so readily polarised by Lindbeck over against a cognitive approach.

Rather than doctrine as 'rules of discourse, attitude and action', it would be better to draw from Sperber and apply his analysis to consider doctrine as:

symbolic system encouraging a cultural evocational field and individual evocation<sup>14</sup>

where evocation is understood as a search in memory and for memory. **Doctrine entails symbolic systems.**

By speaking of religion as an 'idiom for constructing reality' and doctrines as 'rules of attitude and action', Lindbeck may appear to have the same two-way interaction between

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<sup>13</sup> Dan Sperber Rethinking Symbolism Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1975 p xi-xii (highlights mine).

<sup>14</sup> Sperber op. cit. Ch 5, especially pp 137-140.

world-view and way of life in which Geertz was grounded. However, for Lindbeck, this interaction is best handled in a *linguistic* framework, and he remains optimistic about isolating the 'rules of discourse'. For Geertz, and also for Victor Turner, symbolism by its very nature is grounded at the deepest level of human cultural interaction and its rules are not so readily isolated. To engage with symbolism one must examine dominant symbols in their functioning ritual contexts.<sup>15</sup> Liturgy harnesses the *participatory* side of language, demonstrating powerful self-involving features. Reality is not independent of its thought- and life-forms. Knowledge is acquired, or discovered, by those who engage in participatory commitment.<sup>16</sup> It is for such reasons that Eucharist is a central concern of this thesis.

The grammar or rule theory can be tightened up and made more responsive by a creative interaction with the symbolic rather than stressing the grammatical/linguistic to the exclusion of the symbolic. Sperber analyses the concept of grammar and finds it merely a generative mechanism unable to respond to external input:

A grammar is a device that generates the sentences of the language it describes by means of given axioms and by the operation of rules, independently of all external input. All sentences, the whole language, are contained in its

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<sup>15</sup> Victor W Turner Drama, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society Cornell University Press, Ithaca + London 1974, The Drums of Affliction: A Study of Religious Processes among the Ndembu of Zambia Clarendon, Oxford 1968 The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual Cornell University Press, Ithaca + London 1967.

<sup>16</sup> see Michael Polanyi Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy Routledge + Kegan Paul 1962 1st ed. 1958.



grammar.<sup>17</sup>

This gives the impression that everything is already 'there' and is soon learnt. Whereas, by contrast, symbolism is an *interpretative mechanism responsive to lifelong learning*:

Symbolism, because it is cognitive, remains throughout life a learning mechanism.<sup>18</sup>

Sperber gives a direct comparison between the symbolic and the grammatical/linguistic in the following:

Language learning is soon over. By contrast, the symbolic mechanism does not process new data without itself being modified: it is not only the object of learning, but also constant learning is one of its objects.<sup>19</sup>

Symbolic systems are themselves *hermeneutical* devices for the cultures which control them.

Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic view of doctrine is insufficiently interested in lifelong learning and being modified by new input. It appears to encourage the Karaite (Jewish) or Conservative Evangelical (Christian) concentration on finished text and authoritative well-delimited interpretation, even if this is the opposite of his intention.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Sperber op. cit. p 82.

<sup>18</sup> Sperber op. cit. p 89.

<sup>19</sup> Sperber op. cit. p 90.

<sup>20</sup> The Karaites were a movement maintaining that the Torah of the five books of Moses was sufficient basis for life, and so resisted the 'oral' Torah. They have modern-day adherents.

Conservative Evangelicals share that sense of a finished authoritative text of the Old and New Testaments and resist criteria for biblical interpretation arising from outside the canon. It is particularly interesting to see the link between

We will now look at some understandings open to regarding doctrine as a changing, growing, learning device.

#### Development of Doctrine: Open to Internal and External Stimuli

Many metaphors have been suggested to help frame the nature of doctrinal growth. Cardinal Newman's essay "On the Development of Christian Doctrine" (1845) was a notable contribution to understanding the nature of doctrine. Since Newman's foundational essay the idea of development has been uppermost, but this is notable now for its ambiguity as much as it was in its time for its radicality.<sup>21</sup> Further sub-metaphors for development aiming to increase its clarity include 'evolution' (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin), 'change in perspective' (Maurice Wiles), and 'change in focus' (Nicholas Lash).

'Evolution' has been well explored by Teilhard de Chardin and Gerd Theissen.<sup>22</sup> It is able to exploit both internal and external stimuli by a combination of environment, competition, and genetic factors. 'Change in perspective' is Maurice Wiles'

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modern Messianic Jews and the hermeneutics of Conservative Evangelicalism - in Riggans Walter Messianic Judaism + Jewish-Christian Relations: A Case Study in the field of Religious Identity Birmingham University PhD 1991.

<sup>21</sup> See also Nicholas Lash Newman on Development: The search for an explanation in history Sheed + Ward 1975.

<sup>22</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin The Phenomenon of Man ET Collins 1959 French 1955 , Gerd Theissen Biblical Faith: An Evolutionary Approach SCM 1984 trans J Bowden from German.

suggestion for handling development in The Remaking of Christian Doctrine. He gives the analogy of seeing a human face from a new direction as opening up a new appreciation of the person.<sup>23</sup> Wiles focuses on the creative theological work of coming up with new perspectives which enable the traditional elements of the faith to be seen from a new perspective.<sup>24</sup> Lash's 'change in focus' suggests that from the many elements in a doctrinal picture the focus will be at different points at different times.<sup>25</sup> These different times may include different cultural settings and different concerns, for example that of dialogue. A doctrinal picture has sharp and distinct parts at its central focus and more blurred parts at its margins.

One metaphor we will add in addition to these is 'integration'.

### Doctrine as Integration

'Integration' as a sub-metaphor for the development of doctrine has great potential. It speaks of the reflexive or retrospective nature of doctrinal development. It is widely used in the mathematical sciences. Integration is also a term widely used in the psychological sciences for personal integration.

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<sup>23</sup> M Wiles The Remaking of Christian Doctrine Hulsean Lectures 1973 SCM 1974 p 7.

<sup>24</sup> Wiles op. cit. p 15.

<sup>25</sup> Nicholas Lash Change in Focus: A study of doctrinal change and continuity Sheed + Ward 1973.

Jung, for instance, uses 'individuation' for the process of integration within oneself.

Integration involves a reconsideration of the breadth of Christian experience: a retrospective look to see where the community has come since the last time it was done. The presuppositions of 'integration' suggest that the human sides of religion have generated natural fragmentations or imbalances which need reincorporating. Perhaps the task of integration is merely to point out an imbalance. For example, the expressions of faith may have grown in certain areas at the expense of certain others which need to be brought along too; for example, ethics out of step with worship.

Integration may suggest that certain novelties are inappropriate because they are incompatible with central elements of the faith, and so a period of community readjustment is required. Maybe it is a question of a novel pastoral situation requiring the resources of the faith to serve the new situation.

Integration is the complement of differentiation: it is a movement from multiplicity. Using it involves the realism that religious traditions are bound to develop multiplicities over time. Doctrine can help to stabilize a fragmented situation by giving an *interpretative framework or system*. Integration, whilst retaining a reflexive and retrospective function, is also *prospective and future-oriented*. It seeks to provide a balanced whole at the service of the present, but firm and broad enough to be open to the future. It provides a teleological framework wherein God will be 'all in all' and 'all things to all people';

the final act of integration.<sup>26</sup> The rediscovery of eschatology as the foundational context of New Testament doctrine was deeply significant.<sup>27</sup>

Integration can cope with the radically new as well as more mundane changes of circumstances. A radically new, perhaps unexpected event, such as the Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, needs to be integrated into the faith. The stress is on the formation of a framework which forms a unifying whole. Integration can encompass merely the stretching of the old or a complete realigning of the old to take account of the new. Sometimes a complete realignment of the old is what is called for in the light of the urgent demands of the present. A new system may come into being.

Systematic Theology aims to avoid the *isolation* of doctrines from one another through systematization. To be understood at all, Christianity must be allowed to be taken on its own terms and in its *mutually supporting entirety*. This mutually supporting entirety is sometimes referred to as its "ecology", where ecology is understood as the recognition of relationship between elements of an ecosystem in their

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<sup>26</sup> 1 Cor 15.28 is a text which provokes much interest in the writings of those reflecting on the Jewish/Christian reality.

<sup>27</sup> Future eschatology was underplayed for much of Christian tradition until the work of Weiss and Albert Schweitzer. This omission has been addressed particularly in the work of Jürgen Moltmann, especially Theology of Hope SCM 1967 and The Trinity and the Kingdom of God : The Doctrine of God SCM 1981, Pt II Ch 4 which interacts with Ernst Bloch's writings including Principle of Hope Blackwell 1986.

surroundings.<sup>28</sup> Rather than solving a problem by reducing it to smaller tasks, a problem in a systematic framework is more usefully approached by examining the imbalances of the whole structure. It is particularly the Christian doctrine of the Trinity which will be presented in this work as aiding an integrated approach to Christian self-interpretation.

Up until now the images have been gentle, almost pastoral, images. Let us now introduce a geological metaphor which allows for large scale upheaval. Grand geological eruptions are on a scale which can appear unconcerned for individual humans or even whole communities. Jacob Neusner uses a geological metaphor for one view of the formation of the Talmud of Babylonia, known as the 'Bavli':

the Bavli originates as a cogent and proportioned statement through a process we may compare - continuing our geological metaphor - to the way in which igneous rock takes shape: through a grand eruption, all at once, then coalescence and solidification essentially forthwith.<sup>29</sup>

Such an image of doctrinal change could allow major rearrangements in a systematic response to a crisis. A doctrinal system does not blindly mirror historical change. It is rather reformed by a community which comes to it with urgent questions in the light of historical change.

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<sup>28</sup> 'Ecology' is a term taken up by a number of authors, including David Ford and Jacob Neusner.

<sup>29</sup> Jacob Neusner First Principles of Systemic Analysis: The Case of Judaism within the History of Religion University Press of America, Lanham New York 1987, p 134.

We move on now to some material on conscious systematisation. Systematising is the work of integration with the importance of coherence uppermost in mind. Coherence generates security. In achieving and assessing coherence, what is currently a major stimulus for the group will tend to provide the major focus.

### The Hermeneutical Priority of the System

In his First Principles of Systemic Analysis, Jacob Neusner provides a framework for analysing religious systems, which he then applies to the Judaisms of the Mishnah and the Babylonian Talmud.<sup>30</sup> We can draw from his theoretical base to analyse Christian systems. Neusner stresses throughout the *hermeneutical priority of systemic description and analysis* over thematic description and analysis in analysing religions.

In the formation of a system it is the programme of thought which is uppermost. This programme of thought has a profound effect on the traditional material used as its basis. As Neusner argues in an extended interaction with "the Judaism of the Dual Torah" in the Babylonian Talmud:

*The Judaism of the dual Torah knows not traditions to be recited and reviewed but merely sources, to be honoured always but to be used only when pertinent to a quite independent program of thought.*<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Neusner op. cit.

<sup>31</sup> Neusner op. cit. p 135.

In this way, traditions are regarded as sources to be used, or left aside, in a fresh programme rather than merely honoured by reiteration:<sup>32</sup>

Vis-à-vis its sources, the Bavli represents an essentially autonomous, fresh, and original statement of its own.<sup>33</sup>

*Its authorship does not take over, rework, and repeat what it has received out of prior writings but makes its own statement, on its own program, in its own terms, and for its own purposes.*<sup>34</sup>

The purpose for the fresh programme is to meet the pressing concern facing the community in the present.

This analysis of the structure of a specific Jewish document should raise awareness of the possibility of similar conscious systematising being at work at significant points in Christian self-understanding. One specific example of this is the Christian Canon.

#### Text and the System of the Canon

The Christian Bible comes to us through the major systematising exercise of the Christian Canon. Christianity did not end with the close of the Canon. Canonical authority, however, can be misused to limit Christianity to the framework of the Bible.

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<sup>32</sup> This is very close to the Christian hermeneutic of the Hebrew scriptures.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Neusner *op. cit.* p 136.



The Christian Canon arranges material in a way conducive to a Christian reading of salvation history. It is designed to regard Jesus as the fulfilment of the historical, legal, and prophetic strands of the Hebrew Scriptures: it thus regards Jews as written out of salvation history unless they accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah of Israel and the Church as the only authentic interpreter of that tradition. At the point of the closing of the Christian Canon, the urgent problems facing the Christian communities were that of self-understanding in relation to the Jewish people and apologetic in relation to Greco-Roman authorities. This led to the integrating of the Hebrew scriptures with some of the Gospels and some early Christian letters in the order that has ever since been handed down authoritatively. In continuing to hand down that Canon, Christians are colluding with a system that marginalises Jewish identity.<sup>35</sup> The Jewish Canon arranges the books quite differently, as Torah, Prophets, and Writings (*Tanakh*).

A sensitive reading of Scripture recognises the inherent stereotyping involved in certain parts of Scripture itself.<sup>36</sup> Stereotyping may be a natural human response to either complexity or to urgent practical situations. In either case it should be open to a loosening up as the complex situation becomes clarified or the urgency fades. The Hebrew Scriptures could be rearranged

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<sup>35</sup> and not just Jewish identity. Also, for example, women's experience.

<sup>36</sup> be that related to anti-Jewish stereotyping, anti-Canaanite mythology or anti-female elements.

to allow greater continuity to the Jewish people apart from those who accept Jesus as Messiah. All symbolic systems can be used with strict exclusivity when circumstances become difficult and borders need to be tightened. However, that is hopefully only temporary expediency. For example, John Ashton suggests that some of the antipathy towards 'the Jews' in the Fourth Gospel arises out of circumstances in which the Judaism(s) of the time made use of the principle of monotheism to close ranks and present an irenic face to political overlords.<sup>37</sup> Monotheism too easily becomes a convenient conceptual tool to deny the validity of a plural tradition or to force premature closure of an argument. Elaine Pagels includes a chapter on the 'Politics of Monotheism' in The Gnostic Gospels.<sup>38</sup>

At this point it has to be asked where the criteria are developed for criticizing scripture.<sup>39</sup> It seems to arise out of a combination of consciousness-raising, and the feeling for the 'textual underdog'. This rises to particular prominence when one group becomes a 'problem' to the dominant speakers, as in the Christian 'problem of Jewish unbelief'.

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<sup>37</sup> John Ashton Understanding the Fourth Gospel Clarendon, Oxford 1991 p 196-8, following Klaus Wengst.

<sup>38</sup> Elaine Pagels The Gnostic Gospels Penguin 1979.

<sup>39</sup> See scholars engaged in feminist hermeneutics for the development of critical criteria: Elisabeth Schlüssler Fiorenza Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation Boston, Beacon 1984 and In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins 1983. Also Rosemary Radford Ruether Sexism and God Talk SCM 1983 and the Jewish writer Judith Plaskow Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective T + T Clark, Edinburgh 1991.

In order to draw together this preliminary analysis of the nature of doctrine, two post-biblical examples will be given. Both point to the weakness of a purely linguistic/grammar generative approach in favour of greater stress on the hermeneutical approach of a symbolic system open to ongoing learning.

### Christianity as Learning its Doctrine of God and Humanity

#### a) The creeds and the doctrine of God.

Lindbeck considers the regulative principles at work in the origin of the creeds in a way which presumes that Christianity already knew its doctrine of God. For him, the regulative principles supporting the creeds are:

- a. the monotheistic principle: there is only one God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus.
- b. the principle of historical specificity: the stories of Jesus refer to a genuine human being.
- c. the principle of Christological maximalism: every possible importance is to be ascribed to Jesus that is not inconsistent with the first rules.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Lindbeck op. cit. p 94.

This treats the 'monotheism principle' as an *a priori* principle. This is inappropriate to Trinitarian faith.<sup>41</sup> The order should rather be b. c. followed by a new d.:

1. the principle of historical specificity: the stories of Jesus refer to a genuine human being.
2. the principle of Christological maximalism: every possible importance is to be ascribed to Jesus that is not inconsistent with the first principle.
3. whatever doctrine of God is compatible with these principles and which also successfully distances itself from polytheism.

This demonstrates a looser *a posteriori* form appropriate for a Christian system which has to learn its principle of monotheism. The doctrine of God is not conveniently *a priori* for Christianity in the centuries of credal formulation.<sup>42</sup> In the first century Christianity had neither a doctrine of God nor a festival system and had to 'learn' them. It also had to learn that they were to be distinguished from those of Judaism.<sup>43</sup> It should not forget that it had to learn these things.

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<sup>41</sup> It may also be inappropriate to Jewish faith. See Peter Hayman "Monotheism - A Misused Word in Jewish Studies?" in JJS XLII No.1 1991 and Lenn Evan Goodman Monotheism: A Philosophical Inquiry into the Foundations of Theology and Ethics David Baumgardt Memorial Lecture 1978 Allenheld, Osmun Press 1981.

<sup>42</sup> even as it was not conveniently *a priori* for Biblical Judaism when it engaged with the Baals of Canaanite culture.

<sup>43</sup> As for instance occurred at the separation of Easter from Passover in response to the Quartodeciman controversy. See Introduction II(i).

Not only did Christianity have to learn its doctrine of God but it also had to learn its doctrine of humanity. As Marquardt observes it is significant that it holds up a Jew and says *vere homo*.<sup>44</sup> It is as though Christians need to learn from Jews how to be human in the world.

The church is still learning its doctrine of God. Jürgen Moltmann links this to the modern discovery of 'history in God':

To think of 'God in history' always leads to theism and to atheism. To think of 'history in God' leads beyond that, into new creation and *theopoiesis*.<sup>45</sup>

b) Chalcedon and the doctrine of God and humanity.

The Chalcedonian Definition, accepted in the fifth century CE, gives an important historical expression of Christian faith.<sup>46</sup> It is agreed upon by almost all branches of the Christian family, though they may give it varying interpretations.

The central clause of the Chalcedonian Definition states that Christ is;

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<sup>44</sup> See Marquardt Christology 1 Part 1 § 6 pp 138-9 The "true" Man is a true Jew. The "*vere homo*" is a Jew.

<sup>45</sup> Jürgen Moltmann The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology SCM 1974, pp 246-7.

<sup>46</sup> The Definition has had modern critics such as Friedrich Schleiermacher in The Christian Faith pp 392-395, Dietrich Ritschl and Arnold von Harnack.

"unconfusedly, unalterably, undividedly, inseparable in two natures" coming together "in one person and one hypostasis".

Effectively what is suggested is a consideration of two natures brought together so close that they conform to the principle of 'distinguishing without separation in order to unite without confusion'. This is conscious systematization of the biblical material in the light of liturgically-driven experience.

Doctrines consist of certain firm elements bounding a field of possibilities open to future development. For example, the Chalcedonian Definition articulates that Christ has two natures, divine and human, without needing to know exactly what it is to be human or to have a logically coherent notion of divinity.<sup>47</sup> The Trinity articulates the threefoldness of the Christian view of God without needing to force agreement over subsidiary Christian options such as the precise relation between the Spirit and the Son. In making decisions about which areas need firm boundaries and which elements can be left open, conscious systematising as well as selective focalising is in process.

The achievement of Chalcedonian Christology is the delimitation by a series of four delimiters (unconfusedly, unalterably, undividedly, inseparable) of a theological space, usefully imagined as a hockey or football pitch. It yields

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<sup>47</sup> Note the title of R P C Hanson The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381 T+T Clark, Edinburgh 1988. This indicates that the doctrine of God is not yet finalised for Christianity even by the fourth century CE.

'rules' whereby play outside the limits is known to be 'offside'. Yet it allows a certain free space for a variety of possible 'games' to be played. There is a dynamism about it.

It is this open bounded space which represents its openness to the future. HEW Turner notes that Chalcedon sets guidelines for future exploration:

Its intention was to ... delimit common ground in Christology and to set guidelines for future explorations.<sup>48</sup>

So there is control in the delimiting of a bounded area, together with freedom and openness to the possibilities within the bounded area. This openness allows for later learning. The boundaries give a control which should not be caricatured as inflexible rigidity. They actually allow the freedom for a lively, dynamic game on the pitch. An uncontrolled, unlimited, unregulated game soon degenerates. A comparable phenomenon occurs with the Jewish principle of 'putting a fence around the Torah' (M. Aboth 1.1). Rabbinic interpretation and halakhic ruling give a control with flexibility for ongoing learning.<sup>49</sup>

Chalcedon was a systematising exercise of providing language and limits for Christology. However, it does not tie down either the doctrine of God or of humanity as completely known or determined. It is for each Christian generation to discover as it commits itself to working out its discipleship in the light

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<sup>48</sup> HEW Turner Jesus the Christ Mowbrays 1976 p 54.

<sup>49</sup> For a discussion of the comparable phenomena see James Parkes The Concept of a Chosen People in Judaism and Christianity New York, American Hebrew Congregations 1954, pp 9-11.

of that intimate link between God and humanity revealed in Christ.

### Doctrine and the Discovery of Truth

Throughout these discussions of Christian self-interpretation in relation to modern Judaism the question of how to handle conflicting truth claims arises. This will be considered in greater depth in Chapter 9, but an introduction will be given here.

Vincent Brümmer considers four categories for the concept of truth: the *Correspondance* theory, the *Coherence* theory, the *Pragmatic* theory and the *Performance* theory.<sup>50</sup> Geertz's interrelationship between a group's way of life and its world-view in a religious system provides a strong reminder that truth categories are likely to be mutually reinforcing.

The systematising of doctrine fits particularly well with truth considered as Coherence. It also makes claims for truth as and Correspondence, although we note the tendency for the doctrinal system to generate its own criteria for authenticating relationship to reality.<sup>51</sup> In that doctrine gives access to self-involving and self-authenticating truth, there will be opportunities to test both Pragmatic and Performance aspects as

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<sup>50</sup> Vincent Brümmer Theology and Philosophical Inquiry: An Introduction Westminster, Philadelphia 1982.

<sup>51</sup> George Steiner Real Presences: Is there anything in what we say? Faber + Faber 1989 reinforces the need to consider carefully the sense in which language refers.



life progresses, although which system performs best depends on where you start and what you are encouraged to use as criteria.

That truth is discovered as one grows deeper in self-involving commitment is the reason for the modern predominance of existential philosophies. Donald Evans suggests increasing self-involvement as the way to test the truth claims of religion:

What I call an 'existentialist' approach differs from objectivism in that a specific kind of self-involvement is held to be a prerequisite for understanding what is being said and for discovering the truth. Moreover, the quality and extent of one's self-involvement will determine the degree of adequacy of one's understanding and the degree to which one discovers the truth.<sup>52</sup>

One cannot discover truth from the uncommitted sidelines.

### Conclusions

Geertz' work on the interrelationship of a group's way of life and its world-view provided a conceptual basis for the chapter as a whole. There is a mutually reinforcing feedback between world-view and way of life as a group is formed by its dominant symbols in the events of ritual. It was suggested that this feedback could be seen in the interrelationship between doctrine and liturgy.

Lindbeck's understanding of the role of doctrine as a 'cultural-linguistic' element in religious life was examined. His understanding of doctrine is open to criticism for its failure

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<sup>52</sup> Donald Evans Faith, Authenticity and Morality University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1980 p 22-23.

to appreciate symbol as a cognitive mechanism, and also for its failure to deliver a genuinely learning device. Instead, a *cultural-symbolic* understanding of doctrine was put forward for use in this thesis. Specifically, the symbolic incorporates a mechanism for life-long learning. Doctrine must be allowed to be a living thing. The community can be regarded as being involved in on-going learning as it reacts through its symbol systems to both external and internal stimuli. A symbol system has a key hermeneutical role for the community. Among the gentle pastoral metaphors for doctrinal development was seen the geological metaphor of the grand eruption. This may be associated with community response to crisis.

The formation of the Christian Canon is an example of a conscious subsuming of sources to conform to an independent integrating programme. This programme regards the majority of Jews as an anomaly in 'salvation history'. In examining Christian forms of life, including the Canon, there needs to be a 'hermeneutic of suspicion' alongside the 'hermeneutic of retrieval'.<sup>53</sup> Otherwise there will be unquestioned stereotypes; Jews are those who rejected their Messiah who was clearly expected throughout biblical history and foretold in the prophetic tradition. A stereotype is associated with temporary expediency and should be reexamined once the situation has stabilised. Temporary expediency included, for example, apologetics in relation to Greco-Roman authorities.

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<sup>53</sup> Elisabeth Schlüssler Fiorenza uses 'hermeneutics of suspicion' as the first stage of her hermeneutic.

The stereotype of doctrine as inflexible, predetermined truth must be set aside. This was achieved by going to the history of Christian doctrine to observe it at work in practice: a careful integration of thought, life, and worship open to lifelong development and learning.

After this first look at doctrine as the retrospective/model of reality we shall move on to examine liturgy. Liturgy is the prospective/model for providing a model under whose guidance relationships are organised.

Ch 2 A Liturgical Aspect to Christian Self-Interpretation:  
The Formation of Community Identity

Doctrine provided the focus for the last chapter and liturgy will provide the focus for this one. As argued in the previous chapter doctrine and liturgy are closely interrelated in the task of forming a communal Christian identity. Together they are able to harness the religious energy of foundational events for present generations. Doctrine and liturgy together in mutual reinforcement draw out in history the communal implications of foundational events. The communal implications are communicated during and through the event of the liturgical assembly.

The Liturgical Assembly

There needs to be a liturgical and doxological element to Christian self-interpretation. Liturgy can be regarded as *condensed community reflection on foundational events*. Such reflection is expressive and formative, for a liturgical assembly expresses and forms the nature of the group:

the liturgical assembly is itself the highest expression of what the Church is.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John A Gurrieri "Catholic Liturgical Sources of Social Commitment" in Liturgical Foundations of Social Policy in the Catholic and Jewish Traditions eds. Daniel F Polish + Eugene J

Liturgy forms a community united by recurrent moods and motivations as it moves through the liturgical year.<sup>2</sup> People are united by expressing the same moods and they are directed by submitting to the same motivations.

It is naïve to think we can avoid tradition as an aid to bridging the gap between the first and the twentieth centuries.<sup>3</sup> Indeed the plurality of the first century's responses demonstrate that scripture itself is tradition from the very start:

the character of all manuscript copying meant that there was a continuing interplay between the scripture - the text copied - and the tradition - the person engaged in the process of copying in and for the Church.<sup>4</sup>

Tradition includes the particular Christian form of doctrine and liturgy. Liturgy forms part of the tradition handed down between generations. Tradition comes before being: it is something given us from outside and into which we grow as we appropriate it for ourselves.

The formation of tradition means for the Jewish religious system a combination of Bible, Mishnah, Talmud working together

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Fisher, University Notre Dame Press, Indiana 1983, p 25, commenting on Gaudium et Spes: The Constitution of the Church in the Modern World.

<sup>2</sup> "The major difference between moods and motivations is that while the latter are, so to speak, vectorial qualities, the former are merely scalar", p 11 Geertz Clifford 'Religion as a Cultural System' in Anthropological Approaches to the study of Religion ASA Monograph 3 ed. M Banton Tavistock 1966.

<sup>3</sup> Much biblical fundamentalism tries unsuccessfully to avoid this. See James Barr Fundamentalism SCM 1981 2nd ed.

<sup>4</sup> D C Parker "Scripture is Tradition" in Theology Jan/Feb 1991 pp 11-17, p 16.

to form oral and written Torah in the working setting of a *halakhic* community. For the Christian religious system tradition incorporates the combination of Old Testament and New Testament together with a number of conciliar and credal articulations in the working setting of a sacramental community.

Scripture needs to take embodied forms in order to shape life in the present. This is because:

The Bible suggests concepts but in no way limits their development to the meaning they had in their context.<sup>5</sup>

For the Christian system that embodiment manifests itself as a complex interrelationship between word and sacrament in mutually empowering embrace, for:

it is precisely through the sacrament that the word is interpreted, for the interpretation of the word is always witness to the fact that the Word has become our life.<sup>6</sup>

Too close an attention to scripture unmediated by further tradition can encourage unbalanced and literalistic ways of thinking. It is Lonergan who assigns biblical hermeneutics to a low point on the scale leading from research and interpretation through systematics to communication.<sup>7</sup> Any Christian system which argues for sole dependence on the bible is actually

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<sup>5</sup> Colin Gunton "Using and Being Used: Scripture and Systematic Theology" ThTod Oct 1990 p 255.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Schmemmann The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom St Vladimir Seminary Press New York 1988 p 68.

<sup>7</sup> Bernard J F Lonergan SJ Method in Theology Darton Longman + Todd 1971 refers to the foundations of Transcendental Method as progressively: Research, Interpretation (Hermeneutics and Exegesis), History, Dialectic, Foundations, Doctrines, Systematics and Communications.

dependent firstly on the system of the canon, secondly on an implicit hermeneutic, and finally on sophisticated word-events which have sacramental form.

It is also important that tradition should not be handed down uncritically between the generations. It is likely that appropriating the traditional modes requires us also to be critical of them. This is well expressed in the example of breaking the Torah in order to really keep it: "At times, the abolition of the Torah is its founding".<sup>8</sup>

The early ecumenical creed, the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed, retains its twentieth century significance by its central role in the communal rehearsal of the faith at the Eucharist. In this context it encourages response to the hearing of the Word in both readings and sermon. The credal formularies have central significance in the appropriation and reappropriation of the doxological Christian faith. Alexander Schmemmann notes the primary role of the confession of faith in Christian nurture of the catechumens:

The 'handing back of the creed' (*redditio symboli*), that is, the solemn confession of faith, concluded the preparation of the catechumens for their baptismal entry into the Church. *The symbol of faith arose in connection with baptism, and only later, at the time of the great dogmatic disputes, did it more often come to be used in its capacity as a measure of orthodoxy, as an oros, a 'limit', guarding the Church from heresy.*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> M'nahot 96 a+b - with respect to Moses shattering the Tablets before the people in the context of worship of the Golden Calf. Quoted in E Berkovits Not in Heaven KTAV 1983 New York pp 69-70.

<sup>9</sup> A Schmemmann op. cit. p 140 (main italics mine).

The creed's primary role is in the handing on of the faith even as it is handed back: prospective and retrospective aspects are again united.

Schmemmann reinforces the link between the use of articles of faith and entering a particular Christian community by receiving its communal identity. Similarly arguments from the social anthropology of religion are advanced by H Mol who regards religion as the 'sacralisation of identity'.<sup>10</sup> Communal identity is manifested as attachment to a religious calendar of festivals. Different communities have different festivals. One of the main characteristics of a community of confused affiliation is uncertainty over which are its festivals of adherence: so, for instance, some Messianic Jews demonstrate a confusion between the Eucharist and a Christian Passover, and Seventh Day Adventists keep a Christian form of the Sabbath.<sup>11</sup> Such confusion leads to misunderstanding and encourages the liturgical supersessionism of regarding one festival as testimony to the other's obsolescence. Behind our preference for regarding Judaism and Christianity as separate liturgically-formed traditions is a desire to keep the Passover as a Jewish festival away from

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<sup>10</sup> H Mol Identity and the Sacred Blackwell, Oxford 1976, Ch 1.

<sup>11</sup> Sabbath is a particularly interesting festival for it has been a major source of philosemitism throughout the centuries. Martin Goodman speaks of the spread of Jewish practices, especially Sabbath, among the pagan population in 2nd and 3rd centuries, linking it to the polemic against conversion to Judaism in Latin literature. Who was a Jew? OCPHS, Yarnnton 1989, p 14. See also his State and Society in Roman Galilee AD 132-212 1983.



Christian liturgical supersessionism, despite its close association with the origins of the Eucharist.<sup>12</sup>

Some recent material has been published on the Lord's Prayer and its Jewish context and modern resonances.<sup>13</sup> This is an important doxological example which relates to one first century standpoint within a range of possible Jewish responses. Frances Young suggests that: "Creeds have their genesis in doxology, and they are not to that extent a surprising or uncharacteristic development from Christianity's Jewish background".<sup>14</sup> Nothing has so far been published which uses Christian eucharistic prayers in such a central way in self-interpretation situation. Yet much of what materialises from such a study would be conducive to Christian self-interpretation explored from a modern perspective. In Section Four a eucharistic prayer will be interpreted from a theological perspective which manifests a degree of openness to Judaism.

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<sup>12</sup> The complex relationship between the various practices of both Agape and Eucharist with their Jewish antecedents is beyond the scope of this work. See Hans Lietzmann Mass and Lord's Supper: A Study in the History of the Liturgy EJ Brill Leiden 1979 trans D H G Reeve, Ch 12 and J F Keating The Agapé and the Eucharist in the Early Church: Studies in the History of the Christian Love-Feasts Methuen 1901.

<sup>13</sup> The Lord's Prayer and Jewish Life ed. Jakob J Petuchowski and Michael Brocke, Burns and Oates 1978. See also van Buren A Theology of Israel pp 288-294 The Prayer of Jesus. See also Pnina Nave Levinson Du, Unserer Vater, Jüdische Gebete für Christen Freiburg, Herder 1975 and her forthcoming Jewish Reader to the Lord's Prayer. And notes under Marcus Barth The People of God JSNTS Supp No.5 Sheffield 1983 p 80 n 56.

<sup>14</sup> Frances M Young The Making of the Creeds SCM 1991, p 13.

It is most appropriate to make use of liturgical elements in self-interpretation. Among Christian liturgical elements it is the Eucharist which has captured the high ground. This is because at the Eucharist the Christian community is at its most characteristic activity: actively celebrating what God has done in forming the community. Schmemmann goes as far as speaking of the Eucharist as the Church's self-fulfilment in describing the:

link between the *unity of faith* and the Church and her **self-fulfilment in the eucharist**. And this link constituted the heartbeat of the experience and life of the early Church.<sup>15</sup>

Unity is the principle behind the dominant symbols of the Eucharist. The church achieves unity even as she celebrates the unity she receives from God. Despite the central eucharistic symbolism of reconciliation, for some, however, its repercussions are divisive.<sup>16</sup>

A Christian community which gathers regularly for the eucharist and rehearses its faith in admitting new members through baptism can be termed a sacramental community. A sacramental community displays a nature which approaches a corporate personality. This might be called sacramental thinking and might be harnessed to assist a 'Church with Israel' if its potential were recognised. One area of potential is the way it

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<sup>15</sup> Schmemmann op. cit. p 141 emboldening mine.

<sup>16</sup> Victor Turner in his work on Ndembu ritual points out many an occasion when divisive behaviour belied dominant uniting symbolism. This arose when sociological principles, such as matriliney and virilocality, were in tension. The difference from Turner's situation is that any for whom the eucharist is more divisive than unifying are free to leave the voluntary community.

attunes the community to temporary and provisional fulfilments of expectation.

### Attuned to Temporary Fulfilments

A liturgical and doxological approach is most appropriate to the Christian situation in the twentieth century. The perspectives of the first century were ones in close contact with the historical Jesus and the risen Christ. Contemporary situations are more appropriately handled by the *ambiguity* and *multivocality* of the 'real (but hidden) presence' of Christ as it is manifested in the context of the eucharistic assembly of the Church.

Sacramental thinking is a mode of life which attunes the community to **temporary fulfilments of expectation** and to **teleological presentations of redemption**. Despite being temporary, these fulfilments are satisfying, for they involve a **fullness of satisfaction**.<sup>17</sup> The dialectic of the 'now and not yet' will be a recurrent theme in the overall project. Speaking of sacraments as temporary fulfilments points ahead to Chapter 10 where such thinking will be explored in greater detail in the context of an eschatological Christology.

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<sup>17</sup> David Hartman speaks in the Jewish context of "the dialectical tension in Judaism between the hope for a 'full meal' in the future and the gratitude for a partial meal in the present" A Living Covenant New York, Free Press 1985, p 226.

The liturgical mode is a mode of existence which accepts the possibility that God might hide his face from the events of human history. Any confession of 'real presence' is also a veiled admission of 'real absence'. The liturgy may well open us to full presence, but it is certainly an acceptance of only temporary presence.<sup>18</sup>

Both Christian sacraments and Jewish *mitzvot* are evidence that God works with imperfect people and an imperfect world. Sacrament and *mitzvot* have similar functions in their respective communities. There will of course be differences, for even if the moods may be similar the motivations will be different. This is because the foundational events of the respective communities are different. One similarity between sacraments and *mitzvot* is that they attune the community to a life with or without affirmation of the divine presence. Interestingly, sacrament is a term which can be used unselfconsciously by Jewish writers in Jewish contexts: "Study of Torah for its own sake is a sacramental act, the greatest of all *mitzvot*".<sup>19</sup>

The outworkings of such a sacramental approach to self-interpretation will require a subtle form of understanding the nature of divine intervention. Such an understanding is put forward by Timothy Gorringer in God's Theatre, although he does

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<sup>18</sup> see also Samuel E Balentine The Hidden God: The Hiding of the Face of God in the Old Testament OUP 1983.

<sup>19</sup> David J Bleich Contemporary Halakhic Problems New York KTAV 1977 p xii.

not explicitly make connections here with the sacraments.<sup>20</sup> Gorringe has customised Peter Brooks' reflection on the role of a theatre director for understanding the relation between God and a community of human actors.<sup>21</sup> For Gorringe the image of the divine director of human actors in a play can help illuminate a subtle form of interventionism:

The director must look for where the actor is messing up his own right urges - and here he must help the actor to see and overcome his own obstacles. All this is a dialogue and a dance between director and player. ... He will follow the natural principle of rotation of crops: he will see that explanation, logic, improvisation, inspiration are methods that rapidly run dry and he will move from one to the other.<sup>22</sup> ... A divine director, in amongst the actors, endlessly resourceful in creativity, full of humour, compassion, himself the truth which is at the heart of 'holy theatre' ... "A theatre working like the plague, by intoxication, by infection, by analogy, by magic; a theatre in which the play, the event itself, stands in place of a text."<sup>23</sup>

This more subtle form of divine intervention and the focus on human actors engaging together in significant action could assist Christian self-interpretation in relation to modern Judaism.

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<sup>20</sup> Timothy J Gorringe God's Theatre: A Theology of Providence SCM 1991.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Brooks The Empty Space 1968 Penguin 1972.

<sup>22</sup> Gorringe op. cit. p 80, quoting Brooks p 138.

<sup>23</sup> Gorringe op. cit. p 81, quoting Antoine Artaud from Brooks op. cit. p 55.

## Liturgy as Opportunity for Communal Self-Transcendence

There is a danger in modernity of losing the creative imagination of a symbolic culture. To bring the regular community ritual into self-interpretation would go some way towards alerting us of imbalances and potential losses of our creative imagination. Often the loss of creative imagination is through attempts at treating symbolism as a code to be 'cracked'. Symbolism is less a code to be cracked than an *indication of imaginative profundity beyond the articulate*.

Symbolism is impoverished by repeated attempts at explanation or interpretation. What is most important is often not sayable.<sup>24</sup> A symbol system encourages commitment to communal norms, often of unity, in ways which bypass the divisive intellect.<sup>25</sup> Liturgy may incorporate the mystical appreciation of silence and meaning beyond, though often through, words.

George Worgul recognises the power of imagination in uniting a community engaged in ritual:

The human imagination both invites the individuals to surrender their individuality to a common experience and empowers the act of transcendence whereby the self recognizes and embraces the unitary experience of the group.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Whatever else one might say or not say about the Shoah, it encourages reflection about the unsayable. See material by Jean François Lyotard.

<sup>25</sup> The introduction of H Mol Identity and the Sacred Blackwell, Oxford 1976 speaks of situations in which intellectuality is dysfunctional and deep commitment functional.

<sup>26</sup> George S Worgul "Imagination, Ritual and Eucharistic Real Presence" in LouvSt IX 1983, pp 198-210, p 205.

A liturgical context for self-interpretation reinforces the *communal* aspect of the self to be interpreted, and stresses the unity to be gained through cooperation with others. It encourages relation-in-mutuality.

Celebration, that key liturgical and doxological mode, is an opportunity for **imaginative play**. Play is a very important mechanism which allows those involved to project themselves into new roles and identities. The play of praise is an activity which involves imaginative world-building.<sup>27</sup> In encouraging people to align themselves to community norms they need to **imagine** what compliance would involve whilst still on the fringes of full commitment.

In a similar way, Lonergan speaks of the self-transcendence involved in *conversion*. Before engaging in the new form of life appropriate to what he describes as intellectual, religious and moral conversion, Lonergan suggests that one needs to be detached from one's present form of life and allowed space for the consideration of alternatives.

Any Christian self-interpretation will need to be attuned to **rituals of communal self-transcendence**. The Eucharist is an opportunity for communal re-alignment to God's will. The Eucharist is an event of *ekstasis*: it takes the church outside of herself as she is reminded of what she is called to be. As the Church is given a reminder of God's will she is given an opportunity to cooperate afresh with the divine plan for the

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<sup>27</sup> See Walter Brueggemann Israel's Praise: Doxology against Idolatry and Ideology Philadelphia, Fortress Press 1988.

whole of creation. In order to cooperate afresh at the communal level, the change of heart and mind associated at the individual level with repentance is often necessary at the communal level as well.<sup>28</sup>

For the Church to regard itself as 'Church with Israel' after a 'Church against Israel' stage would involve a communal change of heart and mind. Readjustment to a 'Church with Israel' position will take time, and people need to be assisted to imagine what it would entail. The imaginative play is often at the deeper level of a symbolic transaction. Any group intellectually challenged to repent of its 'Church against Israel' stage would likely react defensively and perhaps retreat further from the possibility of change. **The potential of symbol change is that it can work ahead of intellectual change and with non-confrontational techniques.** Each participant catches up in his or her own time. This all points ahead to Section Four and the final conclusions.

Since sacramental activity is associated with uniting a community around stable communal norms through the imaginative exercise of play, a sacramental perspective displays a sophisticated attitude to everyday realities. This will be demonstrated by considering its attitude to history in general and then individual suffering in particular.

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<sup>28</sup> At this point the communal treatment of dissenters may be appropriately be raised. Those who do not conform to expected roles may experience sharp redressive measures in strictly cohesive symbol systems.



## Sacrament as the Mediation of History

History is never taken undiluted by a community of faith. Neither should history be reified and treated as the major locus of divine activity.<sup>29</sup> Rather the community finds immediacy in the faithful walking in the way handed down from generations past. History is mediated through the Jewish *mitzvot* and the Christian sacraments.<sup>30</sup>

There is a revealing conversation between Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik and David Hartman after the Yom Kippur War where Hartman asked Soloveitchik "Can we not celebrate the living God of our directly-felt redemption?". The reply exhorted patience by reminding Hartman of the one year delay before the liturgical celebration of the circumstances surrounding a previous victory. Soloveitchik points to a Talmudic discussion on the festival of *Chanukah*. This celebrates the miracle of the light during the Maccabean victory which was not proclaimed immediately after the wondrous events but a year later. Hartman's retort to this was:

(Soloveitchik) chose to be satisfied with *history mediated via Halakhah*.<sup>31</sup>

In this exchange Soloveitchik's approach goes deeper. A Christian sacramental, or Jewish *halakhic*, mentality has the patience of

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<sup>29</sup> as is arguably the case with the *Heilsgeschichte* school.

<sup>30</sup> and perhaps the privileged forms of holy doing in other faiths.

<sup>31</sup> David Hartman Joy and Responsibility Ben-Zvi Posner, Jerusalem p 5-6 (italics mine).

a longer, reflective approach to history. It is thus less susceptible to historical disaster.

For a concrete example of a more reflective attitude to history the analysis by Jacob Neusner of the Mishnah provides an interesting example.<sup>32</sup> E P Sanders has taken issue with Neusner's reading, accusing him of a 'misapprehension of genre', of treating legal discussion as metaphysical construct.<sup>33</sup> Although some of Sanders criticisms hit home<sup>34</sup> the Mishnah does convey the sense of a reflective understanding of history given by a group wanting to stabilise after critical historical experience.

Having looked at the sacramental attitude to history in general, we will now consider a limit situation of this, namely *theodicy*: the rationalisation of the malevolent in history.

#### Sacrament as the mediation of Theodicy

In the perennial question of theodicy it is especially important to resist attention to scripture unmediated by further hermeneutical tradition. David Hartman speaks of the biblical approach as characterised by the expectation of immediate

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<sup>32</sup> "Beyond Myth, after Apocalypse: The Mishnaic Concept of History" in Neusner et. al. eds. The Social World of formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in honour of Howard Clark Kee Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1988 pp 91-106.

<sup>33</sup> Ed P Sanders Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: 5 Studies SCM 1990 Ch 5 pp 309-331.

<sup>34</sup> notably Neusner's use of silence and his reading social groups out of texts.

gratification:

Like the psychological world of the child, the biblical world promises immediate gratification for compliance with the covenant. If you observe the commandments, the rains will fall in season. The rains must fall, nature must respond, for the God of nature and the Lord of history are one. ... The ability to accept postponed gratification is foreign to the early biblical outlook.<sup>35</sup>

Theodicy will be a major preoccupation for systems which expect instant resolution of communal misfortunes.

Most symbol systems are sophisticated enough not to generate the expectation of such easy resolution. This hermeneutic avoids generating the expectation of instant gratification. Both the traditions mediated by Jewish *halakhah* and Christian sacrament can cope with delayed gratification. Specifically, a symbol system generates an understanding of the individual as an individual-in-community. The symbol system may encourage belief in the longevity of the group over the individual. Or it may encourage association of individual misfortune with individual misdemeanour. Either tactic usefully sidesteps individual misfortune being perceived as a problem for the system itself.

Although the relation between theodicy and individual suffering is a complex one, the concept of theodicy is powerfully associated with expectations of God's presence to individuals at times of distress. By contrast:

Unlike biblical accounts of direct, unmistakable manifestations of divine will, rabbinic Judaism encountered the "hiding of God's face".<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> David Hartman Joy and Responsibility pp 1-2.

<sup>36</sup> Hartman op. cit. p 101.

A sacramental Christianity similarly has regular reminders that Jesus was in the centre of God's purposes even when God's face was hidden from him. Good Friday provides a powerful *contextualisation* of individual sorrows. However, individual sorrow is rarely allowed to take central focus in the Christian communal symbol system.

This is not to say that the God of the hidden face is the end of the story. Rather, there is a sophisticated interleaving of expectation of divine responsiveness together with an attuning to life in the everyday world. Hartman gives a Jewish example:

In talmudic Judaism, one encounters the world of divine responsiveness and mutuality, not in everyday reality but in institutionalised memories, such as biblical readings.<sup>37</sup>

Similarly in the Christian sacraments, biblical readings encouraging immediate divine intervention are encountered in a liturgy acclimatising the community to life in an unresponsive world.

In this way, it is *patterns of behaviour which mediate God's presence*. Hartman maintains for a Jewish *halakhist* that:

The *halakhist's* meeting with God is not dependent upon fleeting moments of history, but upon fixed patterns of behaviour. Even during black moments of history he can address God. ... He says "Thou" because he feels the force of the *mitzvah* in his daily life; because he experiences the *mitzvah*, he experiences God's presence.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Hartman op. cit. p 187.

<sup>38</sup> Hartman op. cit. p 227, from a section interacting with Soloveitchik.

A daily Christian eucharistic discipline, or even the regular saying of the office, encourages this regularisation of the sense of God's presence.

Hartman describes the character of the halakhic personalities Soloveitchik portrays as 'halakhic heroes'.<sup>39</sup> One characteristic they all, male and female, portray is the ability to allow community norms to override individual desires. For example in Halakhic Man Soloveitchik tells of the Gaon of Vilna:

It is related concerning the Gaon of Vilna how greatly he would rejoice on Simhat Torah during the *hakafot*. He would dance, clap, sing, and celebrate the occasion in a state of great rapture and enthusiasm. However, immediately afterward, upon the conclusion of the *hakafot*, he would revert to his normal tranquil state. When the Gaon's brother died and the Gaon learned of it on the Sabbath (when mourning is forbidden), he did not display any emotion or signs of grief. After the Sabbath, when he concluded the *havdalah*, he burst into tears.<sup>40</sup>

This restraint disturbs Hartman, who comments on a similar response by Aaron at the death of his two children:

Soloveitchik considers that not only was the public manifestation of grief prohibited to Aaron, but even the internal experience of grief. The *halakhah* similarly asks mourners who have buried a dear relative just before a holiday to cast off their garments of mourning and participate in the festive spirit of the community. It is not only external social behaviour that is demanded, but an internal experience of joy.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> see Hartman's "The Halakhic Hero: Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, Halakhic Man" Paper.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph B Soloveitchik Halakhic Man Jewish Publications Society of America trans. of Hebrew Ish ha-halakhah L Kaplan 1984, p 77.

<sup>41</sup> Discussed in Hartman's A Living Covenant pp 85-87 and drawn from Soloveitchik's essay "Catharsis" in Tradition 17 No.2 1978 pp 38-54 lecture 1962 pp 47-49.

This displays a normalisation of individual emotions as well as individual behaviour to the moods of a community shaped by the regularity of its holidays.

For a person shaped by a sacramental or *halakhic* tradition the question raised in theodicy is less how to explain the logic of God's omnipotence than whether one is drawing the strength and emotional energy mediated through the symbolic system. More than anything it is a question of maintaining human dignity in the face of suffering and tragedy. Jonathan Sacks comments in relation to his discussion of Soloveitchik:

The *halakhic* personality refuses to be transformed by tragedy from subject to object. Instead it asks: 'What shall the sufferer do to live in the midst of his suffering?'.<sup>42</sup>

Sacks goes on to make connections with the *halakhic* material which came out of the Shoah experience:

the most striking literature to have emerged from the Holocaust is not theological but *halakhic* ... May a father purchase his son's escape from the ovens, knowing that the quota will be met and another child will die in his place? How should one celebrate Passover, the festival of freedom, in a concentration camp? ... What is the correct form of blessing to be said on going to one's death for the sanctification of God?<sup>43</sup>

It is inverting the proper order to remake a symbol system to focus on individual suffering, and even more so to read human suffering back into God even analogically. This is not to say

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<sup>42</sup> Jonathan Sacks Crisis and Covenant: Jewish Thought after the Holocaust Manchester, Manchester University Press 1992, p 42.

<sup>43</sup> Sacks *ibid.*

that the older 'apatheia' doctrine of God should not be questioned as it successfully has by a number of authors.<sup>44</sup> There needs to be a recognition of the difficulties with too close a relationship between God and his people in the Bible. Such reluctance to attribute very close relation between human and divine in the context of suffering can be seen in Eliezer Berkovits' response to Abraham Joshua Heschel.<sup>45</sup> Heschel appropriated the prophetic presentation of the God of 'pathos' to form the linchpin of his theology. In so doing he is laying himself open to the expectations of the biblical view.<sup>46</sup> Berkovits' reluctance centres around what he regards as the illegitimacy of regarding human pathos and divine pathos as analogically related. It can be argued that a liturgical tradition modifies in quite important ways the tendency to treat divine 'pathos' as analogous to human 'pathos'. The Eucharist, for example, treats the death of Christ with full theological seriousness, together with his intimate link with the Father, without ever being forced to speak of the Father's suffering.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> notably Eberhard Jüngel.

<sup>45</sup> Originally published as Eliezer Berkovits "Dr A J Heschel's Theology of Pathos" Tradition 6 1964 pp 67-104. Discussed by John C Merkle "Heschel's Theology of Divine Pathos" LouvSt 10 1984 pp 115-165.

<sup>46</sup> A Christian learner from Judaism, such as Moltmann, would do well to avoid Jewish thinkers who are considered eccentric by their own co-religionists.

<sup>47</sup> Patripassianism is a greater temptation for a biblical commentator than for a person steeped in a sacramental tradition.

## Conclusion

This chapter has concentrated on a liturgical approach to Christian self-interpretation in relation to modern Judaism. With its careful treatment of history and the limit case in theodicy, liturgy is part of a measured approach to communal experience in an often unresponsive world. In this context the sacraments were regarded as 'temporary but satisfying anticipations in the present of what will be completely and permanently ours in the life to come: notably the presence of God with us'. A sacramental attitude attunes the community to a dialectic of an absence/presence pattern of experiencing the divine and acclimatizes the community away from expectations of immediate divine intervention.

A case was made for similarities between the character of Christian sacraments and of Jewish *mitzvot* insofar as they encourage individuals to subsume individual concerns under a deep commitment to the moods and motivations of their respective communities. Any similarity is of course in separate liturgically formed systems. This is because the motivations, in particular, contextualise different foundational events which mediate the separateness of the Jewish and Christian communities.

It is important in this connection to consider the temporary character of the sacramental mode itself. The sacraments are a means to an end: that of preparing the community for the life of the world to come. It is safer to regard them as no longer necessary in the coming life rather than to be tempted into any



reification of the tradition itself.<sup>48</sup>

In the next chapter, one particular part of the Christian tradition will be explored in greater depth: the doctrine of the Trinity. This is intimately connected with the liturgical tradition. The ongoing importance of the Trinity to the central thrusts of this thesis make close attention to its development essential.

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<sup>48</sup> Even as the majority Jewish view is that the *mitzvot* will cease in heaven, though the study of Torah for its own sake will continue.

### Ch 3 The Development of the Trinity:

#### Doctrine and Liturgy in mutual interrelation

Having looked at both doctrine and liturgy as key resources in Christian self-interpretation in the first two chapters, we will now return to these and go into greater depth. The central liturgical example of the Eucharist will be examined in detail in Section Four of this thesis, as a worked example of how changes in Christian attitudes towards Jews and Judaism can be put into practice. This ability to work for change arises because liturgy is closest to Clifford Geertz' prospective 'model for' mode of religion.<sup>1</sup> As such it incorporates profound access to conscious and subconscious levels of influence. Doctrine is closer to the retrospective 'model of' mode of religion, and so gives access to the Christian world-view. The world-view encompassed in doctrine will be examined in its relation to Judaism throughout this thesis.

The choice of the Trinity as the major focus of this thesis, in this chapter and throughout sections three and four, reflects its foundational character for Christian self-understanding. It has been the doctrine worked out to embrace Christian experience

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<sup>1</sup> Geertz' distinction between retrospective models of and prospective models for, as used in the first chapter, comes from his 'Religion as a Cultural System' in Anthropological Approaches to the study of Religion ASA Monograph 3 ed. M Banton Tavistock 1966.

in worship and pastoral ethics from the earliest Christian times.<sup>2</sup>

To consider using the Trinity as a resource, or source of potential, in Christian self-interpretation in relation to modern Judaism would seem, to many, to be unlikely if not impossible. And yet the Trinity is being increasingly reclaimed as a help and not a hindrance to Christian self-understanding. There is a plethora of writing and publication on the subject. Some Christian feminists regard its principles of egalitarian communality as of major significance in the redemption of patriarchal thought and life forms.<sup>3</sup>

The Trinity is being recognised as the foundation of Christian existence and not an optional extra. One of the most significant suggestions of this wave of writing is that to decide for the Trinity must be the *first* decision into which all of the subsequent material is slotted, rather than as a way of bringing the material together afterwards. This distinction can be envisaged as the difference between planning a house with doors and windows before building it, as opposed to building a house and then breaking through for doors and windows.

The real question is whether the doctrine of the Trinity can be shown to be at the service of Christian worship and

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<sup>2</sup> see Geoffrey Wainwright Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life Epworth 1980.

<sup>3</sup> Catherine Mowry LaCugna's God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life Harper, San Francisco 1991 is one example. It is sad when some feminists ignore the deep potential of trinitarian thought forms because of the surface grammar of male imagery.

pastoral ethics in the present circumstances, both within the Christian family as well as on its edges in relating to other lived faith systems? That is the challenge indeed.

A number of contributors to Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered<sup>4</sup> seek to harness the 'resource' of the Trinity to be at the service of Christian self-interpretation before other faiths. Gavin D'Costa draws attention to the following linguistic distinction regarding the Christian doctrine of God:

Jesus is called *totus Deus*, never *totum Dei*; wholly God, but never the whole of God. It is therefore legitimate to argue that Christ is *normative*, not exclusive or absolute in revealing God. Without Jesus we cannot speak of God, but that speaking is never completely exhausted in history, for the Spirit constantly and in surprising ways calls us into a deeper understanding of God in Christ.<sup>5</sup>

A sensitive harnessing of the potential within the Trinity can assist the Christian contribution to the paradigm change which many regard as essential in Christian attitudes to the world religions without having to embrace theological pluralism. This can come about by careful attention to the role of the Spirit within what D'Costa calls 'Christocentric trinitarianism':

Pneumatology allows the particularity of Christ to be related to the universal activity of God in the history of humankind. ... The church stands under the judgment of the Holy Spirit, and if the Holy Spirit is active in the world religions, then the world religions are vital to Christian

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<sup>4</sup> Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions ed. G D'Costa Orbis New York 1990. This is written as a conscious response to the proposals for a pluralistic theology of religions in The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Towards a Pluralistic Theology of Religions eds. John Hick + Paul F Knitter SCM 1987.

<sup>5</sup> D'Costa op. cit. pp 18-19.

faithfulness.<sup>6</sup>

The criticism of the world religions, on this view, is part of God's way of keeping Christianity honest and faithful. We have already seen a number of points at which Judaism in particular can keep Christianity honest and faithful.

In grappling with the significance of the Trinity there needs to be a framework for understanding the development of Trinitarian doctrine over the first six or so centuries. It is appropriate to regard the early Christians as 'reluctant trinitarians'. In the very early days Christians were able to integrate their adherence to the man from Nazareth with their Jewish faith. Various groups continued able to do this, although with differences in styles of belief and practice. These included the Ebionites and the Nazoraeans. There is variety between the groups over keeping the Jewish Law, over allegiance to Paul, over precursors of the eucharist, and over acceptance of the messiahship of Jesus and his Virgin Birth.<sup>7</sup>

However, at some stage the majority, or at least a vociferous minority, were unable to integrate their understanding within Judaism. Now Judaism at that time was largely a cultural term (*Judaismos*) and so this minority became associated with a

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<sup>6</sup> D'Costa op. cit. p 19 and p 22. These are the second and last of five theses put forward by D'Costa.

<sup>7</sup> see A F J Klijn + G J Reininck Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects Supp. NovTest Vol 36 EJ Brill, Leiden 1973. The authors note how often patristic material lacks first-hand knowledge of the sects it describes, and may sometimes be the invention of early Christian authors.

counter-culture. This was perceived as a potential threat to the cultures of the political rulers (*Hellenismos* and *Romanismos*). Public provocation of a dominant culture was a dangerous option in such politically turbulent times. Some strands of the Christian movement quickly moved out of Jerusalem leaving behind only those who could integrate their experiences in ways which disturbed neither the political nor religious leaders of the city. Those who remained were seen as increasingly marginal by the missionary focus of the developing faith.

It is essential to recognise that the Jewish background was of the greatest benefit to the emerging Christianity. *Judaism contributed thought forms, social morality, and spirituality to the emerging faith-culture.* It is significant that even the Fourth Gospel, seen as a major source of trinitarian thought, can be regarded as thoroughly Jewish in its background. This is well developed by John Ashton using the concept of Jesus as God's juridical agent.<sup>8</sup> It has also been explored by Jacobus Schoneveld around the concept of Jesus as 'Torah in the flesh' for gentiles.<sup>9</sup> The gospel itself displays a surface grammar of anti-Judaism through vilification of 'the Jews'.<sup>10</sup> However, its

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<sup>8</sup> John Ashton Understanding the Fourth Gospel Clarendon, Oxford 1991.

<sup>9</sup> Jacobus Schoneveld "Torah in the Flesh: A New Reading of the Prologue of the Gospel of John as a Contribution to Christology without Anti-Judaism" in Immanuel Vol 24/25 1990 pp 77-94.

<sup>10</sup> For example, the discussions concerning contextualization of tensions against 'the Jews' (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι). See Malcolme Lowe "Who were the Ioudaioi?" NovTest 18 1976 pp 101-130. Some see this as 'am ha-aretz' or the common people of the land, others

depth grammar is conducive to pro-Judaism since it depends so heavily on replicating Jewish thought forms and imitation is always the sincerest form of flattery.

The gospel which displays both surface and depth grammars of anti-Judaism is the Gospel of Matthew. David Flusser tries to defend Matthew's gospel with a vigorous attempt at showing that the anti-Jewish slant occurs at the final redactive stages, marked as they are by Greek redaction of Hebrew traditions.<sup>11</sup> However, he is aware of the severity of its harsh anti-Judaism, speaking of 'anti-Jewish montages' and Matthew's 'verus Israel' passages.<sup>12</sup> For a helpful contextualisation of Matthew in the context of self-identification in relation to what he terms 'Formative Judaism', that is the Judaism after 70 CE, see J Andrew Overman's Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism.<sup>13</sup>

Sean Freyne analyses the difficult texts of both Matthew and John and regards them as testimony to problems of identity.<sup>14</sup>

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want a geographical reference to Judaeans. All agree that it should not be taken as a blanket term for all Jews at that time.

<sup>11</sup> David Flusser Judaism and the Origins of Christianity Jerusalem, Magnes Press 1988. Flusser himself tries to argue that "... one finds that probably all the passages expressing an anti-Jewish tension came into being only in the Greek stage of (the synoptic gospels) ..." p 552.

<sup>12</sup> For an analysis of Matthew's 'Versus Israel' material see Flusser op. cit. Ch 35 "Two Anti-Jewish Montages in Matthew" Ch 36 "Matthew's 'Verus Israel'".

<sup>13</sup> J Andrew Overman's Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1990.

<sup>14</sup> Sean Freyne "Vilifying the Other and Defining the Self: Matthew's and John's Anti-Jewish Polemic in Focus" in J Neusner + ES Frerichs eds. To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Jews, Christians 'Others' in Late Antiquity Scholars Press Chico,

Admitting "the long history of oppression of Jews by Christians to which these texts have contributed, once they were taken as foundation documents by a dominant Christianity backed by the power and authority of the state"<sup>15</sup>, Freyne seeks to root the problem in the human condition of seeking to define the fragile self.<sup>16</sup> In majoring on a consideration of religions as manifestations of cultural symbol-systems our position is sympathetic to such questions of identity. We note that the character of identity in one generation is not necessarily determinative for the next.

The anti-Judaism of these texts cannot be softened by pointing to vigorous inter-group debates, for the sole reason that it is this anti-Judaism which is canonised as Christian Gospel. It has some connection with the low social role of Christianity in the Greco-Roman world in the first centuries and its desire for respectability. The continued usage, with the use of supersessionary arguments to present itself as the 'true Israel', is however located in the heart of a 'Church against Israel'. This anti-Judaism has an historical and theological trajectory through such texts as the Letter to the Hebrews, the Epistle of Barnabas,<sup>17</sup> Justin's Dialogue with Trypho, and

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California 1985.

<sup>15</sup> Freyne op. cit. p 141.

<sup>16</sup> Freyne ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Lynne Jennifer Wall The Epistle of Barnabas and Early Rabbinic Exegetical Traditions Birmingham University PhD 1993.



Melito's *Peri Pascha*.<sup>18</sup> Whether the strand of anti-Judaism in Christian identity is to be regarded as contingent or necessary remains to be seen. The material in Section Four of the thesis is generated with the hope that it is not strongly necessary.

The Jewish roots and the Jewish early days were necessary not contingent; then and likely even now. Brian Hebblethwaite emphasises the value of Jesus' Jewish heritage in forming his vital openness to God:

Only the utter and transparent openness to God and dependence on God that Jewish faith made possible for a man could mirror and be, humanly, God's 'very self and essence all divine', this side of the divide between Creator and creature. ... Jewishness was constitutive of the human person he was and is. This makes God's human face - ... - necessarily and for ever a Jewish face and indeed this particular Jewish face.<sup>19</sup>

Here the positive implications are made contemporary: God's human face remains a Jewish face for all time. Dietrich Ritschl speaks of the concepts of God found in Judaism as integral to the doctrine of the Trinity:

The God who comforts and heals, who brings about liberation and a new creation, is to be found in Israel, in the coming of Jesus and in the sending of the Spirit, with which the

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<sup>18</sup> Melito of Sardis' *Peri Pascha* provides a classic case of the link between Christian supersessionary thought and the Christian appropriation of the Passover. See The Homily on the Passion by Melito, bishop of Sardis in Studies and Documents ed. Campbell Bonner 1940 and Alistair C Stewart Sykes The Quartodeciman Paschal Liturgy in the light of Melito's Peri Pascha Form Critically Examined Birmingham University PhD 1992.

<sup>19</sup> Brian Hebblethwaite "The Jewishness of Jesus from the perspective of Christian Doctrine" in SJT Vol 42 1989 pp 35-37.

doctrine of the Trinity deals.<sup>20</sup>

Such positive assessments of Judaism need wider currency.

We must now look at the driving forces behind the development of the doctrine of the Trinity.

### The Driving Forces behind Development

There were particular driving forces behind the development of Trinitarian language:

1. The Church's worship and prayer.
2. Christian rituals, notably baptism and eucharist.
3. A process of *mimesis*: Imitation of Jewish culture in the exaltation of Christ.
4. The consequences of the growing social separation from Judaism, and
5. A process of self-definition over centuries linked with the search for a system of belief adequate to the realities as Christians perceived them.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Dietrich Ritschl The Logic of Theology SCM 1986 trans. of *Zur Logik der Theologie* München 1984 p 143.

<sup>21</sup> See the 3 volume series Jewish and Christian Self-Definition: Vol 1: The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries EP Sanders ed. SCM 1980; Vol.2: Aspects of Judaism in the Greco-Roman Period EP Sanders, AI Baumgarten, Alan Mendelson eds. SCM 1981; Vol 3: Self-Definition in the Greco-Roman World EP Sanders + Ben F Meyer eds. SCM 1982.

In all these driving forces a number of interlinked factors are in play at once. There is a mutual reinforcing and interlinking between doctrine and liturgical practice which incorporates criteria and checks. This was encapsulated in criteria such as "*lex supplicandi legem statuat credendi*: the law of worship establishes the law of belief", and Irenaeus' "our doctrine agrees with the eucharist, and the eucharist confirms the doctrine".<sup>22</sup>

It is important to observe how often the mutual support of doctrine and liturgy involves appeals to practice and experience. As R P C Hanson remarks:

the doctrine of the Holy Spirit put forward by Basil (of Caesarea) and his friends as orthodox necessarily depended upon an appeal to the practice and experience of the church.<sup>23</sup>

This necessity is made explicit in the formative work of Gregory of Nazianzus:

(Gregory) argues that we are bound by the logical consequences of Scriptural doctrine, even though they are not stated in Scripture: if his opponent said twice five or twice seven Gregory would be justified in concluding that he meant ten or fourteen; these would be virtually the man's words though he had not uttered them.<sup>24</sup>

This sense of drawing out the implications of scripture protect the *sola scriptura* principle while at the same time allowing

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<sup>22</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons *Adversus Haereses* IV. 18,5, PG 7, 1028.

<sup>23</sup> R P C Hanson The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381 T+T Clark, Edinburgh 1988, p 779.

<sup>24</sup> Hanson op. cit. p 782 quoting the Fifth Theological Oration *Orat.* XXXI.24 (160).

legitimate innovation.<sup>25</sup> Such a sense is required in affirming the *homoousion* of the Son and the full divinity of the Holy Spirit.

#### 1. The Church's worship and prayer

At some stage, probably second century CE, the Church's worship of God included an element of the worship of Jesus Christ expressed at the level of popular piety. The Christian scriptures in final form hold back from demonstrating or encouraging outright worship of Jesus, but contain sufficient material to be seen to support it once it occurred. The more formal prayers of the Church's liturgy were prayers offered to God through Jesus Christ. Some Christian leaders tried to resist this manifestation of popular piety.

Origen in the third century chose to continue an earlier distinction between prayers and hymns to Christ and those offered to God himself:

While we may pray to God through Christ, we must address our prayer to God the Father alone.<sup>26</sup>

Jesus, he points out, instructs us to offer our prayers to the Father in his name as our pattern for Christian prayer. This distinction is between prayer in the fullest sense of the word, and a secondary sense of prayer which is strictly a request for

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<sup>25</sup> The Christian *homoousion* is one example of innovation. Oral Torah drawing out the Written Torah is a Jewish example.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph W Trigg Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third Century Church SCM 1983 p 160.

the Son to convey our prayers to the Father. This distinction was commonplace in the philosophical system formulated by Origen. While this was acceptable at the time:

later generations suspected that Origen's care to subordinate Christ to God the Father was the source of the heresy of Arius, who denied Christ's full divinity. Such a subordination is also implicit in Origen's refusal to allow any distinction between the type of prayer offered to Christ and the type offered to the saints.<sup>27</sup>

Maurice Wiles suggests that despite this reluctance of some of the Christian leaders:

in the long run the popular piety of devotion to the person of Jesus was not content to be taken with anything less than full theological seriousness.<sup>28</sup>

Wiles goes on to give reasons for regretting this influence, preferring rather Origen's distinctions from the consideration of prayer. Jüngmann puts the stress quite differently:

Although the prayer to Christ was in use by the faithful from the earliest times, it was denied a home for a long time in the solemn public worship of the community.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the differences in stress, this discussion demonstrates that whilst accepting the need to incorporate Christian experience, this criteria has not been, and should not be, accepted uncritically. General experience can confirm a

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<sup>27</sup> Trigg *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> M Wiles The Making of Christian Doctrine Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1967 p 75.

<sup>29</sup> Joseph A Jüngmann The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer Geoffrey Chapman ET 1989 trans. A Peeler from German 1925, p 213.

theological system, but should not generate or overthrow it.<sup>30</sup>

There is further evidence to suggest that this 'driving force' for theology was not allowed to develop unchecked. If the tendency to exalt Christ had been left unchecked by other influences, the church would undoubtedly have developed a wholly Monophysite doctrine of the person of Christ: seeing him as a wholly divine figure at the expense of his Jewish humanity. Jüngmann notes the tendency with 'crude monophysitism' for the humanity of Christ to 'evaporate' in liturgical prayer.<sup>31</sup> Instead, what it developed by way of a sophisticated theological system was the intimate connection between divine and human natures in Christ. That intimate connection found support in the practice of the sacraments.

## 2. Christian Rituals, notably Baptism and Eucharist

As well as general prayer and worship, it is the development of Christian ritual forms which has a strong influence on the development of trinitarian thought.<sup>32</sup> What is of importance to note is the development of *regular ritual expressions linking the*

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<sup>30</sup> And so in later controversies the high esteem for Mary of Nazareth and her role in intercession can crystallise into terms of respect such as Queen of Heaven, but not the title *Co-Redemptorix*. Her title *Theotokos*, God-Bearer is dependent on Christological confession.

<sup>31</sup> Jüngmann op. cit. p 230.

<sup>32</sup> Creeds arose "as summaries of faith taught to new Christians by their local bishop" Frances M Young The Making of the Creeds SCM 1991, p 3.

*humanity of Christ and his role in the divine activities of creation, redemption and sanctification.*

As the Church passed through its sect phase it needed a social boundary marker such as baptism represented. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza links the attractiveness of Christianity for Jewish and pagan women to the inclusive and egalitarian nature of early baptismal concepts, particularly the influence of Gal. 3.27-28.<sup>33</sup> As the Church reflected on Jesus' intent at the Last Supper it recognised the need to continue a regular ritual meeting with Jesus as the focus of community identity.

Baptism and eucharist increasingly gain the importance of ritual principles of development. Even at the very early stage baptism was instrumental in the development of a high Christology. Lars Hartman argues that the practice of baptism may have begun with a non-titular son of man Christology but was likely soon linked to high opinions of the community of the saved (or community to be saved) and the experience of the Holy Spirit.<sup>34</sup> Later, each of the Cappadocian fathers uses "the continually practised custom of baptising into the Triple Name" as argument for the high ranking of the Holy Spirit.<sup>35</sup> Hanson

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<sup>33</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins SCM 1983, especially Ch 6 'Neither Male nor Female: Gal 3.28 - Alternative Vision and Pauline Modification'.

<sup>34</sup> Lars Hartman "Baptism 'Into the Name of Jesus' and Early Christology: Some Tentative Considerations" in StTheol 28 1974 pp 21-48. He proposes a trajectory through parallels with Enoch and Moses after a son of man Christology.

<sup>35</sup> Hanson op. cit. p 739.

does note however the ambiguity of such argument since the Arians can also point to the practice of Baptism for a subordinate view of the Spirit,<sup>36</sup> and also because behind 1 Cor 10.2 is the phraseology of baptism into Moses which need not imply the divinity of Moses.<sup>37</sup>

Although the theological recognition of the divinity of the Spirit occurs in the Cappadocians, the significance is anticipated by both Cyril of Jerusalem and Athanasius of Alexandria.<sup>38</sup> Basil of Caesarea makes use of an addition to the traditional celebration formula at the Eucharist of 'Glory to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit' to yield 'Glory to the Father with (μετά) the Son with (σύν) the Holy Spirit'. He prefers this doxology 'with' (σύν) the Spirit because it preserves both the propriety of the Persons and the inseparable unity of the Trinity.<sup>39</sup> While properly reticent on referring to the Spirit as 'God', Basil can say in *De Fide* that "we are baptised into the consubstantial (*homoousion*) Trinity",<sup>40</sup> and also, that since baptism is the seal of our faith and faith is the recognition of the Godhead, therefore all three names into

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<sup>36</sup> Hanson op. cit. p 752 n.67 - on the grounds of the Spirit's coming consistently last in the triple Name.

<sup>37</sup> Hanson op. cit. pp 768-9, an argument engaged in by Basil with opponents in *De Spiritu Sancte* Cap. 14 passim.

<sup>38</sup> Hanson op. cit. p 743 + p 752.

<sup>39</sup> Hanson op. cit. p 773 + p 775 *De Spiritu Sancte* 25.59 (460).

<sup>40</sup> Hanson op. cit. p 776 *De Fide* 4 (688).



which we are baptised must be divine.<sup>41</sup> He can make the mutual interaction between practice, doctrine, and liturgy explicit in this way:

We must be baptised as we have received, and believe as we have been baptised, and worship as we have believed, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>42</sup>

Gregory of Nazianzus argues more succinctly for the deity of the Spirit from the theological significance of baptism. It is expounded here, as frequently in these texts, as involving deification:

If he is the same rank with myself, how can he make me God, or join me with the Godhead?<sup>43</sup>  
If he is not to be worshipped, how can he deify me by baptism?<sup>44</sup>

This use of deification language needs to be protected from destroying our integrity as creatures for, as Basil says:

the Spirit is present to each of those who receive him as to him alone, but produces sufficiently to everyone unimpaired grace, and its recipients enjoy it as far as their nature allows, but not as far as its power extends.<sup>45</sup>

Our nature remains human in baptism and that nature becomes more able to bear the weight of divine grace.

In baptism and eucharist some degree of complementarity between the two natures can be maintained in the context of

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<sup>41</sup> Hanson op. cit. *Adv. Eunom.* III.5 (665).

<sup>42</sup> Hanson op. cit. p 778 *Ep.* 125.3.

<sup>43</sup> LNP NF 2nd series Vol 7 p 319. Hanson's translation at p 780 of *Orat.* XXXI.4 (137).

<sup>44</sup> LNP NF op. cit. p 327.

<sup>45</sup> Hanson op. cit. p 773-774 *De Spiritu Sancte* 9.22 (108-9).

worship. Baptism incorporates the humanity of Christ, through the contextualisation of Christ's baptism, at the same time as dependence on Christ's role in the divine cleansing of the neophyte. Similarly, eucharist incorporates the humanity of Christ, with the remembrance of a meal among friends, and the contemporary presence of the risen humanity of Jesus, as well as dependence on Christ's role in the divine feeding and strengthening of the people. Indeed, the practice of the sacraments provided a useful check on any of the spiritualising tendencies, be that from Greek or Jewish Platonisms and Gnosticisms or wherever.

### 3. Imitation of Jewish Culture in the Exaltation of Christ

Christian *mimesis* of Judaism occurred at the conceptual level, the hermeneutical level, and the practical level. Each level was carefully integrated by cross-referencing to form a coherent whole.

The mixed community of Jews and Gentiles became largely a Gentile group. It may have been partly due to Jewish disappointment with the Christian communities or the inability of the Christian options to compete for Jewish adherents once a number of non-Temple Judaisms were formed post-70 CE. Alternatively it may have been that political circumstances led to a crisis of decision: for example, military call up for the Jewish revolt, or payment of Jewish tax for the Roman temple. In different geopolitical areas there will have been different

circumstances.

In this situation there were a number of twists to the Christian appropriation of elements of Jewish self-understanding. The great influx of gentiles from pagan backgrounds came from the whole spectrum: from those attracted to Jewish religious practices and the Jewish scriptures to those who were looking for an alternative to Jewish culture. The new communities tried to regard themselves as inheritors of Jewish resources and relationships at the same time as ridding themselves of Jewish obligations or questioning Jewish interpretations of scripture. This provoked reactions and controversies, such as are behind Galatians and Acts 15.

There were urgent practical problems requiring resolution, largely because of the influx of gentiles from pagan background. For the new communities, in making semi-autonomous practical decisions the Jesus scriptures began to take on the authoritative role of Torah itself: 'Take my yoke upon you and learn of me'.<sup>46</sup> The Christian practice of keeping testimonies and sayings of Jesus in note-book form and giving these greater hermeneutical authority than the scroll-form Jewish scriptures could be seen as undermining traditional Jewish practices and authorities.<sup>47</sup> It was as though these communities moved from 'keeping Torah as Jesus did' to 'keeping Jesus': a change in focus. It was

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<sup>46</sup> and also Gal 3.24: Torah is the pedagogue until Christ comes.

<sup>47</sup> An insight to which I am indebted to Frances Young's The Speaker's Lectures 1992. She speaks of physical aspects as part of the Christian relativising of Jewish scriptures.

associated with a Christian hermeneutical process which distinguished some commandments as interim. This Torah/ Christ parallel accelerated the exalted status of Christ. The Johannine texts point to a developing consciousness linking Jesus with Torah and Wisdom. As part of these discussions, one must be aware of the variety of modes through which Second Temple Judaism expressed divine immanence, such as Wisdom, Spirit, Word.<sup>48</sup>

EP Sanders points to the downplaying of 'the Law' in Paul's 'participatory eschatology' with Christ at its centre, but finds little in his construct of 'Palestinian Judaism' to compare with the combination of forensic and participatory language in Pauline soteriology.<sup>49</sup> It strikes me as most strange that he should lump together the Qumran Community with Rabbinic Judaism into 'Palestinian Judaism' in this way, since the Essenes undercut so much of what Rabbinic Judaism stood for, as he observes on occasion.<sup>50</sup> In my opinion it is his undifferentiated use of 'the covenant' which allows him to obfuscate the Qumranic sectarianism and their rejection of the holiness system based on the Jerusalem Temple and its sacrifices.<sup>51</sup> Even if such language cannot be found they would display close affinity to later Christian 'new

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<sup>48</sup> see Margaret Barker The Great Angel SPCK 1992.

<sup>49</sup> EP Sanders Paul and Palestinian Judaism SCM 1977 § V.3-4.

<sup>50</sup> Sanders op. cit. p 320 'general pattern of religion' also present in Qumran. p 318 'one of the most basic views of the Qumran community was that all outside the sect were damned'.

<sup>51</sup> For a helpful reconstruction of the Essenes see Geza Vermes + Martin D Goodman The Essenes: According to the Classical Sources JSOTS 1989.

Israel' and 'new covenant' perspectives because of the exclusivity of their soteriological conception of community. I agree with him, against W D Davies, that a focus on Christian participation in the death and resurrection of Christ involves much more than a messiah christology could ever provide: "The central Pauline soteriological conviction is not well denominated as a conviction *that* Jesus was the Messiah, what is essential is that Jesus Christ came to save *all*, both Jew and Gentile".<sup>52</sup>

It will be proposed in Chapter 9 that it is possible to argue for closeness in what Sanders refers to as 'patterns of religion', although this will be attempted with modern orthodoxies of both Judaism and Christianity and their respective combinations of forensic and participatory language in the functioning context of ritual. In attempting such a thing, I am accepting some form of Sanders' methodology, although tightening it up beyond vague notions of 'patterns'. I am also accepting his stress on participatory language but with the ability to see much further than his occasional 'in Israel' comment.<sup>53</sup> This is largely because I look beyond his 200 CE cutoff, and see more in Jewish notions of repentance and renewal than he can from his Pauline perspective.

A group soon develops a group consciousness. The most accessible group consciousness to the Christ-communities was that of Israel, and so some regarded themselves as the new Israel.

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<sup>52</sup> Sanders op. cit. pp 496-7. Davies' remarks from the Cambridge History of Judaism.

<sup>53</sup> at page 549.

Israel is most properly itself in the liturgical assembly, *Knesset Israel*. The developing Christian liturgies and rituals, in association with increasingly separate communities, have a contributory role to play in the self-designation of the communities as the 'new Israel'.

There are major difficulties associated with taking this 'new Israel' formulation into Gentile self-understanding. Indeed, the generation and genre of replacement thinking are well documented.<sup>54</sup> However, as a phenomenon at the early stage, it illustrates an Israel/Christ parallel and accelerated the exalted status of Christ.

#### 4. Consequences of the growing social separation from Judaism

In discussing the driving forces behind doctrinal development it is important to remember the significance of different communities' identity factors. One example of 'identity factors' used in this way can be seen in Maurice Casey's From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God.<sup>55</sup> 'Identity factors' generate value judgments, or are at the very least attitude-bearers.

Casey suggests eight identity factors for Second Temple Judaism: ethnicity, scripture, monotheism, circumcision, sabbath

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<sup>54</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism Seabury New York 1975.

<sup>55</sup> Maurice P Casey From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God: The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology Cambridge, James Clarke 1991.

observance, dietary laws, purity laws, and major festivals.<sup>56</sup> On this view, Jesus could be regarded by his followers as the embodiment of Judaism even though the more orthodox may have regarded him as overstepping on Sabbath and purity laws. Paul let most of the factors slip in the push for Gentile mission, developing instead the central focus of Christ to echo Messiah, Wisdom, Israel, Torah, God's Word and God's agent in Creation and redemption. Earliest Christian traditions are seen to increasingly arrange themselves around the sole 'identity factor' of Christ. This was contextualised earlier as moving from 'keeping the Torah as Jesus did' to 'keeping Jesus'.

What is needed to contextualise doctrinal development against growing social separation is a 3-stage development. There is variety of Christ and Spirit language reflected in the following social stages:

- i) Jewish sect
- ii) increasing number of Gentiles
- iii) largely Gentile

(similar but not identical to van Buren's three stages: Church within Israel, Church against Israel, Church with Israel.<sup>57</sup>)

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<sup>56</sup> Casey op. cit. p 12.

<sup>57</sup> Paul van Buren Christ in Context Harper + Row, San Francisco 1988 pp 103-5.

For example, the Christ and Spirit language develops over these 3 stages in ways such as:

- i) Jesus as the embodiment of Judaism
- ii) Christ imitating Torah for ethics  
Christ imitating Messiah for polemics <sup>58</sup>
- iii) Christ imitating Israel for sense of peoplehood  
Spirit imitating Halakhah for walking in  
faithfulness  
Christ and Spirit together imitating Torah for  
'the way, the truth, the life'

And so, for example, someone who wished to keep all aspects of the Jewish Law could hold to the first stage: Jesus as embodiment of Judaism; but would resist looking to Jesus as a source of authoritative rulings on behaviour: Christ imitating Torah. As a phenomenon of imitation, this development could be a form of flattery as long as it does not progress to *imitation with the intent to disinherit*.<sup>59</sup> When it becomes replacement thinking it oversteps itself towards what Ruether calls 'fratricide'.

In speaking of the significance of the stage 2 to stage 3 move it would be appropriate to keep separate the terms Messiah

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<sup>58</sup> such as "why can't you accept the Gentile mission as a legitimate development of the 'light to the Gentiles' prophecies?".

<sup>59</sup> There are academic parallels with the responsible use of material, as well as biblical parallels with stealing birthrights.



Christology (univocal: Jesus is the Messiah of Israel), and Christ Christology (equivocal: 'person, people, land' concept where 'person' is Jesus Christ; 'people' is the community as the Body of Christ; and the 'land' idea involves "in" Christ as entering territory). Although some of the first group of disciples saw in Jesus the Messiah of Israel and formed the 'bridge communities' into a gentile world many did not. Either this was because he did not fulfil expected beliefs (for example, restoring political control to the Jewish people) or because the variety of messianic expectations were so diverse as to be unattainable by a single individual. Even those who did accept Jesus as messiah had different ways of expressing its significance, as the range of christologies in the New Testament suggests.

*A Christ Christology is working a lot harder than a Messiah Christology, notably by encouraging a God-Man concept. Stage 2 Christ/Messiah parallels are not sufficient to support Stage 3 Christologies. Whatever the variety of, often irreconcilable, messianic tasks there is no suggestion that he, or they, be more than a human being. This will be taken up again in Chapter 10 with a discussion of the preference for a developed Son of Man Christology over a Messiah Christology. Much more was/is needed than a Messiah Christology to meet the need of an independent liturgical tradition.*

It is possible to accept the developing theology of the 'bridge community' as a historical fact without needing to use

it as part of twentieth-century self-interpretation.<sup>60</sup> Part of finding theological room for the Jewish 'No' to Jesus as Messiah of Israel is to accept the *irreversibility of the stage 2 to stage 3 move*, and thereby deem stage 2 language no longer appropriate.<sup>61</sup> A stage 3 attitude of the contemporary church is most important for its responsible talking about the Jewish people. Problems can be caused when the perception of a person in stage 1 (for example, Jewish sectarian says 'new Israel' implying a renewal from within the fold) is used by a stage 3 person (for example, gentile Church Father regarding Church as new replacement Israel). Who says what is very important. There is a sensitivity to criticism of Israel which depends on where you stand in saying it.<sup>62</sup> Apparently the first Christian overseers/bishops in Jerusalem were forbidden to be Jewish. This gentile self-understanding would obviously have had its effect on the development, and is testimony to an acceptance of the direction of the new religion.

Doxological language can represent the effective change between stages 1 and 3. So, for example, Mishnah Bikkurim 1.4 is traditionally interpreted so that proselytes may only say in

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<sup>60</sup> Is it not possible to make use of stage 3 and jettison stage 2 on the analogy of a spacecraft no longer requiring its lift-off equipment once airborne?

<sup>61</sup> Acceptable stage 3 affirmations of Jesus include Son of God, God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus is God and man, from God to God as God : suspect forms allowable only in irregular use include Jesus Christ is God, the Word was God.

<sup>62</sup> This holds for Israel as person, people, or land, and for any historical time.

synagogue 'O God of **your** fathers' and not 'O God of *our* fathers'. This is because they are regarded as insufficiently incorporated into the community.<sup>63</sup> Such discussions also illustrate why Lindbeck's suggestion of a joint Jewish and Christian terminology of 'the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Jesus' is superficial in its grasp of the situation and unsatisfactory to either side. It fails to grasp the importance in moving liturgical congregations. It presents an affirmation which could only be affirmed by a member of a strangely mixed liturgical congregation.

#### 5. Process of Self-Definition

Part of the process of self-definition involved apologetic towards ruling authorities. Christianity, though associated with advocating freedom of slaves and the brotherhood of all classes, needed to present itself as supporting and not undercutting the ruling system of its time. It saw a political need to dissociate itself from Jews and thereby was tempted to present the split between Christianity and Judaism as over and done with even if this were not the case.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> see article S Laye J D Cohen "Can Converts to Judaism say 'God of our Fathers?'" in Judaism 40 No.4 1991 pp 419-428 for a modern discussion of this text.

<sup>64</sup> For a New Testament example see Lawrence M Wiles "The Depiction of the Jews in Acts" in JBL 110 No 4 1991 pp 631-654. "What is disturbing about Luke's view of the Jews is that it is seen from the ruling Roman perspective ... the real issue is citizenship and (Christian) acceptance in the Roman world-view." pp 653-4. And so Luke seeks to distance Christians from Jews who

Differentiation from previous theological systems became essential to the developing Christian movement. Previous theological systems are treated as provisional. Such theological systems seen with hindsight to be provisional included Gnostic systems and Marcionism.<sup>65</sup> Vital to this process of self-interpretation was the search for a Christian exegetical process which enhanced the community's emerging sense of identity.<sup>66</sup>

Another provisional system was the scheme associated with Arius. The arguments as to the exact teachings of Arius himself are beyond the scope of this work but most scholars allow some sense of a coherent system which became associated with his name.<sup>67</sup> Jüngmann shows how anti-Arian feeling had a part to play, without needing to overestimate it, in liturgical development. He documents examples allowing liturgical prayer to the Father with the Son in consequence of the *homoousion* and then sometimes to the Son alone in special contexts such as festivals at which Christ is the focus.<sup>68</sup>

Arianism fitted for fifty years or more with church tradition and scriptures. The system was appropriate to the

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had been involved in 'three bloody rebellions in 70 years' p 653.

<sup>65</sup> For a number of articles on Gnosticism see E P Sanders ed. Jewish and Christian Self-Definition Vol 1: The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries SCM 1980.

<sup>66</sup> Frances Young addresses just this issue of the vital pre-Nicene period in The Speaker's Lectures 1992.

<sup>67</sup> for example R P C Hanson + R Williams.

<sup>68</sup> Jüngmann op. cit. Ch XIII 'The Prayer to Christ. Anti-Arian Compositions of the Post Patristic Period'. The chapter covers a period between the 4th and 12th centuries CE.

reality for quite some time.<sup>69</sup> There is indeed a sense in which Arianism continues to fit the scriptures better than the trinitarian system which came to shape over five or six centuries. If the scriptures are taken at face value and assumed to present a static doctrine of God who is Lord of creation and will tolerate no others beside him, then there is bound to be a need to present Jesus as merely a creature, albeit a perfect creature above all other creatures. This was how the Christian system up until the anti-Arian moves had largely understood God.

There is room in the Jewish Wisdom tradition, for example by using Proverbs 8.22, to regard Jesus as created in advance of history and as working out God's purposes in the world. There is room in the Logos tradition, taken from Greek philosophical systems, to include Christ in the divine activity of creation where creation is envisaged as creation by the Word out of non-being. Both of these could be incorporated into the Arian system with an understanding of Christ as the perfect creature. Neither of these concepts necessitate a divine Son, coequal and coeternal with the Father. For the anti-Arians this was to regard Christ as 'like God' (*homoiousios*) but not 'same as God' (*homoousios*).<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> See Rowan D Williams Arius: Heresy and Tradition Darton, Longman and Todd 1987.

<sup>70</sup> It should however be remembered that the terminology of *ousia*, *hypostasis*, *prosopon* had not at this stage settled into any regularity of signification.

It was recognised that the pursuit of orthodoxy necessitates conceptual innovation.<sup>71</sup> The eternal Fatherhood of the Christian God waited upon the overthrow of the provisional conceptual system. For the Arian system God was not always Father. The Son was created a perfect creature before history, but he was not always in existence and so God was not always Father. There was strong resistance to any 'consubstantial' (*homoousios*) language. This is bound to follow from any system which regards only God as eternal, all-knowing, and unchanging. Such a system can permit only a Son who is limited in time, limited in knowledge and open to changing passions. The Arian system fitted well the biblical picture of the Son who suffered, grew angry, who admitted lack of knowledge of 'the hour' of the end, and demonstrated obedience and submission of his will to his Father.

Athanasius engaged vigorously with the theological implications of this view, through open ridicule of the Arian system. Little of this system remains for historical reconstruction. If the Son was limited in knowledge of the Father's activities, Athanasius saw a break in the Father's self-communication in the Son and a radical reduction in the concept of revelation. If the Father was not directly involved in either creation or salvation but only the less than fully divine Son, then Athanasius considered that we are not created by or saved by God himself. This puts into question the depth of our

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<sup>71</sup> in this case the *homoousios*. See Rowan Williams op. cit. especially his Theological Postscript.

salvation since, according to Athanasius' logic, only God can save. Athanasius' responses to the Arian system encouraged the confession of the *homoousion* of the Son and hence the eternal Fatherhood of the Christian God.

The Athanasian system however laid so much stress on the divine nature of the Son in the Incarnation that other difficulties can be introduced. Nature can very easily be exalted over will. Then the redemptive incarnation can seem to take the focus away from Christ's human cooperation through a human will with God's plan for the whole creation. It can seem as if the whole of creation is saved at the taking up of humanity into the Godhead regardless of its need to cooperate in a human response to the divine initiative in Christ. The stress is so much on fullness of salvation in the Incarnation that the close link between salvation and sanctification is overshadowed.

It was left to the Cappadocians to spell out the need for a divine Spirit to work together with a divine Son in salvation and sanctification. To them fell the task of patiently working out the dynamics of salvation at the level of human cooperation with the divine Spirit in sanctification. It involved them in signalling the 'conceptual revolution' involved in full divine personhood.

## Conclusions

Some factors involved in the development of the doctrine of the Trinity were explored. These included the Church's worship and prayer around the person of Jesus, Christian rituals of baptism and eucharist, a process of *mimesis* of Jewish culture in the exaltation of Christ, the consequences of the growing social separation from Judaism, and the growing internal needs of Christian self-definition over against conceptual systems deemed no longer adequate.

The growing social separation from Judaism was seen against a three stage process with its attendant ways of speaking: from Jewish sect, through increasing number of gentiles, to a largely gentile group. A suggestion was made that the permanence of the stage 3 position characterised by a Christ Christology should be accepted, and stage 2 talk characterised by a Messiah Christology left behind. This would allow for the historical significance of the affirmation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel in the early bridge communities, without needing to affirm it as an allowable focus of a stage 3 community. The Jewish 'No' to Jesus as Messiah of Israel needs to be given a positive interpretation, perhaps going as far as to speak of its *revelatory* significance for Christianity. This will be examined in more detail in Chapter 5.

This chapter has shown that Christianity must confess that **conceptual innovation in its theological systems has marked its progress from the start**, notably in the fixing of *homousios* talk in Christology. In particular it should acknowledge that the



Arian system of Christ as the most important creature fitted the evidence for at least fifty years. Also it should recognise that all is not finalised by the Athanasian concept of a saving incarnation but that rather clears the ground for a deeper engagement with the dynamics of human salvation and sanctification.

This is a basis from which Christianity could consider that it cannot so easily engage in theological denunciations of other systems of sanctification and salvation. In the next section of the thesis the whole area of opening up Christian theological space will be explored. It is particularly an analysis of the ambiguities involved in Christian talk of the Holy Spirit which will assist. Terminology such as *verus Israel* and Christians as a 'spiritual temple' will need to be examined in an effort to gauge how far the 'Church against Israel' stage needs to be prescriptive for later Christianities.

The otherness of Judaism to Christianity in this stage 3 situation is not to be envisaged as an otherness to be excluded and feared, but to be graciously accepted. Indeed, the otherness of Judaism to Christianity may reveal the otherness of God to a Christianity which needs to accept that all has not yet been said on the God who is in Christ. Christianity may need Judaism to keep it honest and humble. Coming to terms with otherness will entail conceptual innovation. The pursuit of orthodoxy requires conceptual innovation, not least in this fraught context of Jewish-Christian understanding.

SECTION TWO :

THE PROVISIONALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM:

OPPORTUNITY FOR INNOVATION AND FORMATIVE REDESCRIPTION

The Provisionality of the Christian System:Opportunity for Innovation and Formative Redescription

Section Two takes over from Section One the theme of a Christian doctrinal system open to innovative reformulation. It focuses again upon a trinitarian christology seeking to harness opportunities for increasing openness to Jewish self-understanding.

Chapter 4 presents a formative redescription of the so-called 'parting of the ways' between Judaism and Christianity. It recapitulates the content of Introduction II(i) which argued for an understanding of Christianity as the sacramental people of God and Judaism as the *halakhic* people of God. Both sacrament and *halakhah* involve the eschatological formation of the People of God. The chapter works with this suggestion through an analysis of the key issues of *sacrifice* and *temple*. Observing *halakhah* as a Jew and sacramental observance as a Christian effect for the now separated communities the same benefits as that of the sacrificial system of their joint ancestors. Christians have been released from repeated animal sacrifice by Jesus the Son. Jews have been released from repeated animal sacrifice by the Father himself, although it is possible to regard this as a temporary expedient pending the rebuilding of

the temple.

Chapter 5 continues the engagement with the doctrine of the trinity running throughout all sections of the thesis. The trinity provides a model for the Christian community which values interdependence and mutual equality. It provides balancing checks to prevent dialectics hardening into dualisms. Rosemary Radford Ruether highlighted a number of potential dualisms as particularly damaging to Jewish-Christian understanding. Taking this further one could heal the rigid Law/Gospel dualism by suggesting new associations: for example, by associating Torah with Revelation and with Word of God rather than with Law. Through an analysis of some important developments in trinitarian thinking, notably the 'conceptual revolution' of the Cappadocians, it is suggested that *responsiveness* is vital to our understanding of Revelation. Revelation involves the otherness of response to initiative. As well as becoming more open to regarding the Jewish 'No' to Jesus as God-inspired response, we argued that it may have been Christian unfaithfulness to Christ which manifested itself in a sectarian spirit vis-à-vis Judaism. From then on, separated traditions developed in response to different questions and by drawing on different philosophical resources. *Perhaps the Jewish/Christian divergence over the messiahship of Jesus will in time also prove to be authoritatively complementary.* It may first require another conceptual revolution.

Chapter 6 criticises the work of Paul van Buren in A Theology of the Jewish-Christian Reality in such a way as to assist the ongoing argument of our whole thesis. Van Buren maintains that the Church adores Israel's Lord and that the covenant is opened up in Jesus Christ to the gentiles through a movement out from Sinai. After a presentation of his main points, some of van Buren's major critics are utilised to highlight the difficulties inherent in his position. The Jewish critic Peter Haas argues that anyone responding to a call from Israel's God would appear to be walking in a *Jewish* way. Others charge him of normalising one part of Israel's history: that of biblical Judaism. In a sharp criticism, Rosemary Radford Ruether argues that in his use of extreme theological language for Israel van Buren is *making the God-Israel relation hypostatic*. It is in response to this charge of hypostatizing the God-Israel relation that we put forward the terminology of *ontologizing Israel*: that is, of *speaking of the God-Israel relation with the same 'theological excess' traditionally reserved for the God-humanity relation in Christ*. Speaking of the God-Israel relation in terms of theological excess could be related to Christian thinkers reacting to Christian temptations to supersessionism. What is needed is a way of retaining the Christian exaltation of the God-humanity relation through and in Christ while also gaining in theological respect for the God-Israel relation through Torah and in *Knesset Israel*. It is the Christian ability to relate two centres of theological significance which forms the task of section three of the thesis.

Ch 4 The Parting of the Ways: The Emergence of a Halakhic People of God and a Sacramental People of God

Both Judaism and Christianity see themselves in a 'close connection but distinction' relationship with respect to biblical Judaism:

Both (Judaism today and Christianity) derive from and are inseparably linked to ancient Israel but both deviate from it.<sup>1</sup>

We shall endeavour to speak of the dialectic between Judaism and Judaisms in the following manner: biblical Judaism, Second Temple Judaism(s), Rabbinic Judaism, and modern Judaism(s). Alongside the progression of Jewish forms there are also the progression of Christian forms.<sup>2</sup>

Christian discontinuities with one of the Second Temple Judaisms need not imply antagonism towards modern Judaisms. For modern Judaisms themselves display discontinuities with Second Temple Judaisms. However, for Judaism it is important to affirm the preeminence of continuity over discontinuity, as stressed in this remark of Jonathan Sacks on Judaism:

Post-biblical Judaism is marked by its principled continuity with rather than its departure from the terms of

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<sup>1</sup> James A Carpenter A Review of Paul van Buren's Christ in Context in AngThR 71 Spring 1989 p 218. Carpenter holds that van Buren has underestimated the discontinuity between ancient Israel and Judaism today.

<sup>2</sup> See Hershel Shanks ed. Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism: A Parallel History of their Origins and Early Development SPCK 1993.

biblical Judaism.<sup>3</sup>

One particular manifestation of that 'close connection but distinction' theme of both Christianity and Judaism is the case of sacrifice. Sacrifice is **paradigmatic** for both Judaism and Christianity because of the power of a symbol drawing from cultic domains.<sup>4</sup> Colin Gunton considers how far sacrifice is a *transcendental* in an analysis of Christian atonement talk concluding that "the notion of sacrifice takes us not only to the heart of the being of God, but also to the heart of creaturely being".<sup>5</sup>

How far both Jewish and Christian worship today is in continuity with the sacrifices of biblical Judaism generates a creative problem. It is that creativity which testifies to its importance over and above the importance of any 'solution'. A

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<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Sacks Crisis and Covenant: Jewish Thought after the Holocaust Manchester, Manchester University Press 1992, p 217.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas S Kuhn admits equivocality in his concept of paradigms in science. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2nd edn. 1970 1st edn. 1962 p 181. However, certain aspects of his usage can be isolated: a problem and a method which is "sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes ... (and) sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for ... practitioners to resolve" p10, and "paradigms provide scientists not only with a map but also with some of the directions essential for map-making" p 109. Most theologians recognise a large degree of commonality between scientific and theological paradigms.

<sup>5</sup> Colin E Gunton "The Sacrifice and the Sacrifices: From Metaphor to Transcendental?" in Ronald J Feenstra + Cornelius Jr Plantinga eds. Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays Notre Dame University Press, Notre Dame Indiana 1989 pp 210-229, p 226.

discussion of a sacrificial dimension to worship will tend to generate heat and energy in the participants and that testifies to its location in something deeply significant.

### Sacrificial Language in Biblical and Post-Biblical Perspectives

It is notoriously difficult to put forward a convincing argument as to the understanding of sacrifice in the biblical texts.<sup>6</sup> The details of practice predominate and interpretative material is sparse. It is often the practices which are self-evident to the people at the time which are hardest to fathom in modern times. Sacrifice was so much the accepted medium of religious response in biblical times that when Christians desisted from the practice they were regarded by many as pagan.

There have been many attempts to interpret the phenomenon of biblical sacrifice, drawing on numerous different methodologies. They are not, of course, mutually exclusive. These include the *gift theories*: sacrifice presupposes personal relationship between God and people and seeks to express and develop that relationship.<sup>7</sup> There are the *cultic theories*: sacrifice as the God-given means of restoring damaged relationships and cleansing states of pollution.<sup>8</sup> There are the

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<sup>6</sup> G A Anderson Sacrifices and Offerings in Ancient Israel Scholars Press, Atlanta 1987 provides one attempt.

<sup>7</sup> H Hubert + M Mauss Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function French 1899 ET Cohen + West 1964.

<sup>8</sup> See B A Levine The JPS Torah Commentary: Leviticus Jewish Publications Society, Philadelphia 1989.



*metaphysical communication* theories: sacrifice as a means of communication between the divine and human worlds.<sup>9</sup> And there are the *violence theories*: sacrifice as a cathartic channelling of human violence in ways which are beneficial for society.

Whatever the preferred approach, or combination of approaches, it is important to highlight certain points. Firstly, *sacrifice is God-given*. Secondly, there is a linkage between God-given sacrifice and joyous *group feasting and celebration*. And thirdly, it is important to emphasise that sacrifice is a concrete and outward expression of attitudes of will, mind, and heart.

So then, how might it be possible to describe the movement from the biblical period in its relation to sacrifice? Perhaps it is in the paradigm of sacrifice that the relationship of 'close connection but distinction' with respect to biblical Judaism can be seen.

I would suggest that Christians live under a new order by being released by the Son of the Father from repeated animal sacrifice. And further that Jews live under a new order by being released by the Father himself from repeated animal sacrifice. Although this way of speaking is original to my argument its structure echoes Franz Rosenzweig's suggestion that Jews do not need to come to the Father since they are already with the

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<sup>9</sup> For example William Robertson Smith's The Religion of the Semites A+C Black revised ed. 1894. This incorporates an understanding of God as a member of the tribe taking part in communal feasting.

Father.<sup>10</sup>

Such a suggestion highlights that *both* Judaism and Christianity have appropriated biblical Judaism, although in divergent ways. Any appropriation involves development, even if that development is then interpreted as merely drawing out what was there from the start.

For the Jewish *Halakhist* studying the sacred texts on sacrificial worship:

The study of Kodshim effects for us the selfsame benefits which flowed from the sacrificial offerings of our ancestors.<sup>11</sup>

There is an intimate link between the modern Jewish study of tractates relating to sacrifice and the sacrifices made by the ancestors in the Temple. This link is maintained for the Jewish Talmudic scheme via an understanding of study as *imitatio Dei*.<sup>12</sup> This link is continued in modern Orthodox Judaism. Reform Judaism regards the links differently and even opted to omit the synagogue prayers for the reestablishment of the Temple and its sacrifices.

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<sup>10</sup> Franz Rosenzweig "Jesus was the way to the Father for the nations (*goyim*), whereas the Jews are already with the Father". Briefe Edith Rosenzweig ed. Schocken-Verlag, Berlin 1935 pp 73 ff. Quoted in note 27 on p 39 of Anton Wessels' Images of Jesus: How Jesus is Perceived and Portrayed in Non-European Cultures SCM ET 1990 by John Vriend from Dutch 1986.

<sup>11</sup> J David Bleich Contemporary Halakhic Problems KTAV 1977 p 268.

<sup>12</sup> Whether study was viewed as *imitatio Dei* at the earlier period of Second Temple Judaism is one issue lying behind Jacob Neusner's disagreements with EP Sanders. Jacob Neusner Review Article on EP Sanders' Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah in SJT 44 No.1 1991 pp 73-95.

We suggest that Christians have a similar link with the sacrificial offerings of our common ancestors. The paradigm of sacrifice has always held a place in the interpretation of the Christian Eucharist, carefully related to the sacrificial death of Christ.<sup>13</sup> *The Eucharist effects for the Christian the selfsame benefits which flowed from the sacrificial offering of our common ancestors.* Christian understandings of Eucharist start with a *bloodless* link with biblical sacrifice. Christian worship can be considered as a 'living sacrifice' (Roms 12.1) as can also Christian walking in faithfulness. This section points ahead to Section Four of the thesis where the Eucharist will form the focus of Christian self-interpretation.

This has potential for encouraging Christian respect for modern Orthodox Jewish systems. Reform Judaism chose to radically reframe the sacrificial intent of liturgical texts, largely omitting traditional references to biblical sacrifice. Of particular significance for this argument is the essay on animal sacrifice by Lord Jakobovits in the Centenary edition of The Authorised Daily Prayer Book.<sup>14</sup> It will be taken as an important example of post-biblical Jewish attitudes to sacrifice.

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<sup>13</sup> Frances M Young isolates 3 types of sacrifice offered by Christians: sacrifices of praise, worship and thanksgiving; sacrifices of communion (fellowship meals and Eucharist); and sacrifices for sin (Baptism, forgiveness, penitence, martyrdom). The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Writers from the NT to John Chrysostom Patristic Monograph series no.5 Philadelphia Patristic Foundation 1979.

<sup>14</sup> Immanuel Jakobovits "Chief Rabbi's Essay on Animal Sacrifices in Judaism" in The Authorised Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth Revised Ed. 1990 Singer's Prayer Book Publication Committee.

Jakobovits illustrates the *ambivalence* of the Jewish tradition to animal sacrifice, pointing out the stress on motivation and intent of the worshipper as the significant factor.

The essence of offering a sacrifice is to effect a dramatic regeneration in moral, psychological and intellectual attitudes.<sup>15</sup>

The sacrifice served the regeneration of the person. It would have had a powerful effect of deterrence:

Victims of involuntary aberration needed ... an experience so awesome and powerful that it would leave a permanent mark on the offender's consciousness ... a permanent deterrent to any renewal of momentary mindlessness.

This was the main object of atonement by sacrifice. ... Every sin represents the failure to master the brute in man, a surrender to his elemental forces of nature ... Sin is expunged when the brute is slaughtered and its blood consecrated to the service of the Creator.<sup>16</sup>

Atonement by sacrifice, on this view, sought to 'master the brute in man'. The central affirmations about sin in this portrayal sound as severe as any Christian statements of the human plight.

In this modern interpretation of biblical sacrifice, Jakobovits emphasises the flexibility of Jewish tradition. Tradition can harness the power of sacrifice into the prayer life of the community.

(Jewish tradition) transferred the power of sacrifice to prayer, pending the rebuilding of the Temple, on the strength of the Prophetic utterance: "Take with you words and return unto the Lord; say unto Him: 'Take away all iniquity ... as we offer the *bullocks of our lips*'"(Hos. 14.3).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Jakobovits op. cit. p 900.

<sup>16</sup> Jakobovits op. cit. p 901.

<sup>17</sup> Jakobovits pp 901-902.

Whether this 'transfer' of the power of sacrifice was a conscious decision to move away from literal sacrifice or merely the temporary cessation of sacrifice forced by loss of religious autonomy is a key issue. The above quotation retains the hope that the Temple will be rebuilt.<sup>18</sup> Jewish tradition, according to this modern Orthodox interpretation at least, lives in a time awaiting the rebuilding of the Temple.

Jakobovits suggests that there is a common misappropriation of Maimonides' arguments in his Guide for the Perplexed. The misappropriation reads as "suggesting that sacrifices were altogether enacted only as a temporary expedient to wean the Israelites of the idolatrous practices to which their environment, particularly in godless Egypt, had accustomed them".<sup>19</sup> By contrast, Jakobovits holds him to support the retention of animal sacrifice:

Indeed, Maimonides is more insistent than any other exponent of Jewish thought and law on the permanence and primacy of sacrifices in the Divine order. ... he included all the detailed regulations on sacrifices in his great Code, ruling that in Messianic times the practice will be restored (*Hil. Melachim*, 11:1). Even more significantly, Maimonides singles out sacrifices as the highest form of Divine service. The Torah itself gave priority to the ritual laws over social legislation (Lev. 18:5), and sacrifices are supreme among ritual laws: "The world stands on the practice of sacrifices" (*Hil. Me'ilah*, 8:8).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> and presumably carries the implication that sacrifices might be restored.

<sup>19</sup> Jakobovits op. cit. pp 899-900.

<sup>20</sup> Jakobovits op. cit. p 900.

That 'the world stands on the practice of sacrifices' is a very strong statement indeed.<sup>21</sup>

The argument so far has taken seriously the suggestion that both Christianity and Judaism stand in a 'close connection but distinction' relationship to biblical Judaism. It has worked through some implications for sacrificial worship. Our suggestion sees both discontinuities and continuities between the modern systems and biblical Judaism with the stress more on continuity in Judaism's case and discontinuity in Christianity's case.<sup>22</sup>

What might this signify for Christian attitudes to a holiness system based around the Temple?

#### Attitudes to the System of Holiness focused in the Temple.

It was seen how both Judaism and Christianity are close to, but distinct from, biblical Judaism. In particular it was suggested that both had been released from repeated animal sacrifice. Rabbinic Judaism spoke of repentance, the sacrifice of the heart, taking over from animal sacrifice, *pending the rebuilding of the Temple*. Patristic Christianity spoke of

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<sup>21</sup> even if open to a number of interpretations as to the methodology of 'standing'.

<sup>22</sup> Making such suggestions need not be interpreted as contradicting the perspective of the writer of the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews. That writer stressed the discontinuities of the Christian system of the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ over *biblical* Judaism.

repentance, the sacrifice of the heart, taking over from animal sacrifice, *pending the coming of Christ*. Here we have a Christ/Temple parallel. Patristic Christianity, with its eucharistic tradition, saw no need for a Temple to be built: imitation had become replacement.<sup>23</sup>

Although sympathetic to the scholars who argue that the Temple had little significance for the Galilean Judaism of Jesus himself, this is only the start of the story. Geza Vermes for example argues that Jews from Galilee were often not much interested in the Temple, and so were quickly able to adjust to the loss of the Temple in AD 70.<sup>24</sup> In our approach to Christian discontinuities with Second Temple Judaisms, it is necessary to hold together the undoubted Galilean lesser interest in the Temple with the greater interest of some of the early Christianities. The Temple became of great symbolic significance for the development of 'Church against Israel' thinking. The more negative stance associated with Stephen's speech in Acts cannot be simply dismissed because of its discontinuity with Jesus' own view.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Such texts as John 2.19-22 Jesus is the Temple; Hebrews 8.4: Jesus is a minister in the "heavenly sanctuary"; Revelation 21.22 "I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb" became important in patristic hermeneutics.

<sup>24</sup> Geza Vermes The Religion of Jesus the Jew SCM 1993 p 185. In note 1 here, Vermes argues strongly against Sanders' Jesus and Judaism and Judaism: Practice and Belief who regarded the attitude to the Temple as decisive.

<sup>25</sup> "Stephen appears to have taken a more negative stance than did Jesus." Sanders Jesus and Judaism pp 267-9.

The 'Church against Israel', which sadly was effectively 'formative' Christianity, made much of the finality of the falling of the Second Temple. James Dunn's Partings of the Ways takes criticism of the Temple as the undermining of the first of the four 'Pillars of Second Temple Judaism' (Monotheism, Election, Covenant and Torah, Land and Temple).<sup>26</sup> The Church exalted the talk of a 'Temple made without hands' over the continued practice of many Christians to keep meeting in the Temple.<sup>27</sup> It has to be admitted that such attitudes were formative for Christianity as part of the total package of the anti-Judaic myth. What of a 'Church with Israel'? Need it replicate these attitudes *ad infinitum*?

As part of an answer we need to interact with Jesus' attitude to the Temple, as far as this can be ascertained.

EP Sanders in his Jesus and Judaism holds that:

- a) Jesus supported the sacrificial system, but
- b) engaged in a piece of symbolic action signifying the overthrow and *destruction* of the Temple on account of its temporality at the turn of the ages:

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<sup>26</sup> James D G Dunn The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity SCM 1991. For Dunn the splits on these four pillars were over by 135 CE.

<sup>27</sup> Although admitting that "the Judaism which emerged from the first century was also able to reconstruct itself without the recourse of the Temple and its cult. Dunn op. cit. conclusions to Ch 4.



It was Jesus' sense of living at the turn of the ages which allowed him to think that the Mosaic law was not final and absolute. The disciples did not gain the impression that the Mosaic dispensation was valueless and had already passed away. ... They may have thought that it was doomed, but not that it was impure or had already been superseded. ... We gather, however, that the action (against the Temple) was not construed to mean, and probably did not mean, that Jesus objected to the sacrifices instituted by God.<sup>28</sup>

In his later work, Sanders can say more positively of Jesus' attitude to the sacrifices:

He accepted the sacrificial system both as atoning (Matt 5.23 ff) and purifying (Mk 1.40-44).<sup>29</sup>

I consider, then, that there are arguments for accepting Sanders first point: that Jesus supported the sacrificial system in a general sense;<sup>30</sup> but substantially modifying his second: that he engaged in a piece of symbolic action signifying the overthrow and *destruction* of the Temple on account of its temporality at the turn of the ages.

There was symbolic action, but interpreting that as signifying destruction is too sharp a conclusion. Our present concern is what a modern 'Church with Israel' might make of Jewish living 'pending the rebuilding of the Temple', necessitating as it does some attitude to a third earthly temple

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<sup>28</sup> EP Sanders Jesus and Judaism SCM 1985 pp 267-269.

<sup>29</sup> Sanders Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: 5 Studies SCM 1990, p 90.

<sup>30</sup> So, for instance, in the healing of the lepers he directs them to show themselves to the priests. Vermes in The Religion of Jesus the Jew SCM 1993, p 16 notes from Matt 17.24-27 Jesus' support for the Half Shekel Temple Tax.

likely to be located in Jerusalem.<sup>31</sup> There seems to be no need from Jesus' words and actions to exclude the possibility of a Jewish system's suspension of animal sacrifice 'pending the rebuilding of the temple'. He presumably must have meant something by the action, but we have argued not total and final destruction. Sanders is dismissive of opinions regarding the temple scene as a 'cleansing'.<sup>32</sup> A cleansing holds a less critical force than a gesture indicating destruction.<sup>33</sup>

Sanders reinforces his theory from the 'sayings against the temple'. These include the Johannine "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up". Why should the phrase, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up", not have a two-level meaning, as many of the enigmatic Johannine sayings? So the sense is not just a prophecy of the resurrection for the disciples, but also a prophecy that God will restore the Jerusalem temple. Sanders does indeed follow this logic part way to yield: "Jesus threatened the destruction of the temple (and

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<sup>31</sup> There have historically been Jewish temples in other countries than Palestine/Israel. Martin Goodman Who was a Jew? OCPHS, Yarnton 1989, p 8 speaks of "a rival Jewish temple which offered cultic ceremonies similar to those of the Jerusalem shrine flourished at Leontopolis in Egypt, apparently without serious challenge, from c 160 BCE until it was closed down by the Romans in 73 CE as a possible centre of disaffection (Jos. War 7.420-36)."

<sup>32</sup> Sanders op. cit. pp 61-63.

<sup>33</sup> Sanders admits the proposal of C F D Moule that merely overturning a table is not an obvious sign of destruction, but continues with this interpretation of the symbolic action notwithstanding. Sanders op. cit. p 70.

perhaps predicted its rebuilding after three days)." <sup>34</sup> However, he takes his parenthesis no further to entertain thoughts of an earthly rebuilding. He can only envisage an eschatological temple from heaven. <sup>35</sup>

Neusner admits his bafflement in trying to interpret the symbolic action of Jesus. Neusner's bafflement surfaces in this detailed quotation:

Anyone who understood the concept of the daily whole-offerings would have found incomprehensible and unintelligible Jesus' overturning of the money changers' tables. Such an action would have provoked astonishment, because it would have called into question the fundamental belief that the daily whole-offerings effected atonement and brought expiation from sin, and that God had so instructed Moses in the Torah. Only someone who rejected the Torah's explicit teaching concerning the daily whole-offerings could have overturned the tables - or someone who intended to set up a different table for a different purpose. ... it is, in effect, a statement that the daily whole-offering is no longer a means of atonement. What then would take the place of the daily whole-offering? It was to be the rite of the Eucharist; table for table, whole-offering for whole-offering; it is through the body and blood of Christ that atonement for sin is possible. Thus, it seems to me, that the correct context in which to read the overturning of the money changers' tables is not the destruction of the Temple, but the destruction of the institution of sacrifice and its replacement by the Eucharist. <sup>36</sup>

So Neusner interprets the symbolic action as either a rejection of the Torah's teaching, or as an indication of intent to set up another table.

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<sup>34</sup> Sanders Jesus and Judaism p 73 emphasis mine.

<sup>35</sup> Sanders op. cit. Ch 2 New Temple and restoration in Jewish literature.

<sup>36</sup> Jacob Neusner "How Judaism and Christianity Can Talk to Each Other: The Basis for an Interreligious Dialogue" in Bible Review Dec 1990 pp 32-45, p 37 emphasis mine.

This makes more sense of table imagery and of overturning than does Sanders' suggestion. Its presupposition that there was some line of continuity between Jesus' intent at the last supper and what later became Christian eucharistic worship is also welcome. However, it presses the evidence too far by encouraging such questions as: Did Jesus *intend separate tables* even if not replacement tables? <sup>37</sup>

We need to keep a number of options together: cleansing, not destruction; tables, but only proto-eucharistically; and retain Jesus' own high regard for the biblical sacrificial system together with the later Christian appropriation of the biblical sacrificial system for its own self-understanding.

*A system of holiness associated with the Second Temple and its cultic personnel made way for systems of holiness located more centrally in holy peoplehood.* At that time of transition there were competing forms of holy peoplehood, each considering itself the true Israel. There were other Second Temple Judaism's besides some of the Jewish Christianities. Some of these also engaged in enacted appropriation of the system centred around the Jerusalem Temple. As Christopher Rowland observes of the Qumran community:

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<sup>37</sup> It is interesting to note that this sense of 'separate tables' can function in a modern situation as a challenge to a Christian system in a similar way as it functioned as a challenge to a Jewish system. For a group of Christians to request a eucharistic celebration apart from the customary parish gathering is generally taken as a direct threat to the authority of the current holiness system.

The situation of the Qumran community finds many parallels in the writings of early Christianity. Here too we find that cultic terminology is transferred to the community.<sup>38</sup>

The similarity between Qumran and early Christianity on this issue is important. It illustrates that a number of Second Temple Judaism's sought to honour the Temple by appropriating its language for their own community.<sup>39</sup> They did not all go on to form separate religions. One thing which kept many of them in a family relationship would have been a common liturgy.

#### The Provisionality of Systems

There is a sense of implied provisionality in Jesus' symbolic action in relation to the Temple. However, what is provisional is not the sacrifices or the Temple but the **system of holiness** focused in the physical standing of the Second Temple.<sup>40</sup> When the system of holiness focused in the physical standing of the Second Temple made way for others it was differently arranged. The Christian system revolved around faithfulness to Christ in gathering for communal sacred meals.

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<sup>38</sup> Christopher Rowland Christian Origins: An Account of the Setting and Character of the Most Important Messianic Sect of Judaism SPCK 1985 p 237.

<sup>39</sup> See Geza Vermes + Martin D Goodman The Essenes: According to the Classical Sources JSOTS, Sheffield 1989.

<sup>40</sup> This system of holiness focused in the physical standing of the Second Temple may or may not give way in the modern period to a system of holiness focused in the physical standing of a Third Temple. It would if the desires of the Temple Mount Faithful came to realization.

These eventually formalised themselves in normative circles as the Eucharist. The Jewish system revolved around faithfulness to Torah and the study of Torah as *imitatio Dei*.

Mary Douglas makes use of the anthropological concept of the symbol system: "rules of behaviour, actions and expectations which constitute society itself".<sup>41</sup> In her comments on Jacob Neusner's The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism,<sup>42</sup> she considers Neusner to be insufficiently aware of purity rules as "instruments of social control",<sup>43</sup> and seems to consider the purity rules of the Second Temple as the medium of influence of a sectarian group.<sup>44</sup> The provisionality of a system is linked to the ebb and flow of the power of system-builders.

In an acute analysis of these "instruments of social control" Douglas is able to see a "mapping of the same basic set of rules from one context to another" <sup>45</sup> in the various contexts of the purity system:

The table, the marriage bed and the altar match each other's rules, as do the farmer, the husband and the priest

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<sup>41</sup> Douglas op. cit. p 138.

<sup>42</sup> Jacob Neusner The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism The Heskell lectures 1972-3 EJ Brill, Leiden 1973 with a critique + commentary by Mary Douglas.

<sup>43</sup> Douglas op. cit. p 141.

<sup>44</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has criticised Neusner for a selectivity of awareness of systems as mediums of social control. She cites the Mishnaic example of women being sanctified by their husbands In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins SCM 1983 pp 58-59.

<sup>45</sup> Douglas op. cit. p 139.

match each other's roles in the total pattern.<sup>46</sup>

Douglas goes on from the insight of 'the same basic set of rules in a different context' to challenge the justification "for making all the lines of thought converge on the temple".<sup>47</sup> "If the table and the bed and the body are all figures of the temple", she holds that:

It is equally plausible to argue that the temple stands for the pure consecrated body of the worshipper and that the rules which protect the sanctuary from defilement repeat by analogy the rules which protect the purity of the human body from wrong food and wrong sex, and the people of Israel from false gods.<sup>48</sup>

Following this to, for her, the logical end, she concludes:

Since it is clear that the temple rules and sex rules are a single system of analogies, they do not converge on any one point but sustain the whole moral and physical universe simultaneously in their systematic interrelatedness.<sup>49</sup>

Hence, for Douglas, the Temple analogy has no necessary precedence over the body analogy.<sup>50</sup> The ability to regard a number of contexts as linked through the mapping of "the same basic set of rules" will be seen to be of great significance in Chapter 9.

However, I am not so sure that the preeminence of one context is so easily sidestepped. It surely depends on where you

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<sup>46</sup> Douglas on Neusner op. cit. p 139.

<sup>47</sup> Douglas op. cit. p 140.

<sup>48</sup> Douglas on Neusner op. cit. p 140.

<sup>49</sup> Douglas on Neusner op. cit. p 140.

<sup>50</sup> The body analogy always has centrality in her systems.

stand in saying it, and which set you regard as prototypical. This will be particularly significant in the Chapter 9 discussion of *isomorphism* between systems and in Chapter 12 with its discussion of prototypical Sonship. The significance of the purity rules in the temple, where symbol systems are manipulated protecting the sanctity of *all Israel*, seem to entail a certain precedence over a cloth maker keeping his or her yarns separate. A system may exhibit tremendous flexibility over the centuries.

A temple-focused system makes way for systems more appropriate to diaspora existence under foreign power. This need not negate a temple-focused system being regarded as prototypical.

How might this quite detailed background assist us in speaking about what became separate communities? It was seen how both Judaism and Christianity are close to, but distinct from, biblical Judaism. In particular it was suggested that both had been released from repeated animal sacrifice. Rabbinic Judaism followed the path of daily devotion and study: *halakhic peoplehood*. Christianity formed the path of daily devotion and meeting for sacred meals: *sacramental peoplehood*. Both are partially realized eschatologies holding themselves in readiness for future consummation.<sup>51</sup> As argued in Introduction II(i) the sacraments form the Christian community even as *halakhic*

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<sup>51</sup> For Christianity the future consummation is represented by the return of Christ. For Judaism it can be the streaming of the nations into the restored Temple, or the life of the world to come.



observance forms the Jewish community. As Jonathan Sacks puts it:

Jews preserved the *halakhah*. But *halakhah* also preserved the Jews.<sup>52</sup>

Both Christian sacramental peoplehood and Jewish *halakhic* peoplehood are arranged around the centrality of holy peoplehood in their respective systems.

### Conclusion

This chapter has followed the insight that both Christianity and Judaism are in a relationship of 'close connection but distinction' with respect to biblical Judaism. For Christianity the discontinuity all too easily became a case of a powerful internal dynamic generating an anti-Judaic myth.

The continuity theme came to the fore in a discussion of sacrificial language and its importance in both religions. Both religions are aware of the power of sacrificial language and so relate themselves in some significant way to the sacrifices of their joint ancestors. The framers of the Babylonian Talmud reacted to the loss of the Second Temple by generating a system of holiness suited to diaspora existence. The framers of the Jerusalem Talmud generated a system still rooted in the land but without recourse to an extant Jewish temple. Modern Judaism regards itself as living 'pending the rebuilding of the Temple', at least in its more traditional manifestations.

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<sup>52</sup> Jonathan Sacks Crisis and Covenant p 6.

Early and Patristic Christianity was unfortunately the Christianity which interpreted the loss of the Second Temple as evidence for its anti-Judaic myth and an anti-Temple stance in particular. In this it read too much tension back into the relationship of Jesus to the system of holiness focused in the Second Temple. Jesus certainly engaged in an act symbolising the provisionality of the systems of holiness based in the Temple.<sup>53</sup> However, this need not be interpreted as prophesying or seeking the destruction of the Temple itself.

The same 'close relationship but distinction' theme continued the discussion from Introduction II(ii) of terminology for the Jewish and Christian communities. Distinctions arise in the patterns of holiness of the respective systems. This yielded an understanding of two forms of holy peoplehood in continuity with biblical Judaism: Jewish *halakhic* peoplehood and Christian sacramental peoplehood. Openness to other forms of holiness was based in different ways of appropriating the phenomenon of sacrifice.

This point of view accepts both the Christian sacraments and the Jewish *halakhah* as God's provision in the 'now and not yet' time before the eschatological consummation of the respective communities. The whole discussion of the possibility of relation between sacrament and *mitzvot*, lays foundations which will be built on in the following sections of the thesis.

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<sup>53</sup> possibly as an act of solidarity with those disadvantaged by that system of social control.

The Church should be relating to the Jewish people with acceptance of Israel's on-going role in the plan of God. A 'Church with Israel' is aware that she does not exhaust the intent of God. Specifically, she should be aware that God has authorised other discontinuities with the past alongside the Christian system. Jewish discontinuities with biblical Judaism need not imply a degeneration of Judaism. They represent regeneration. Such an opinion assists our resistance to the Christian 'teaching of contempt'.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Jules Isaac isolated three principal themes of the ongoing teaching of contempt: 1. The dispersion of Israel as providential chastisement for the crucifixion. 2. A degenerate Judaism in Jesus' time. 3. The theme of the people of Deicide. *L'Enseignement du Mépris* Fasquelle, Paris 1962, preface. In the sections pp 33-64, 65-98, 99-131. ET The Teaching of Contempt.

Ch 5 The Trinity as Resisting Dichotomy and Opening up  
To more than one System of Holiness

In this chapter moves will be made to harness Christian Trinitarian thinking to the aid of Christian self-interpretation in relation to modern Judaism. The Trinity is not so much a retrospective model of the nature of God as a prospective model for human community. It provides a model for human mutuality and interdependence based on equality of value.<sup>1</sup> Whether it can assist the formation of a 'Church with Israel' is the focus of this chapter.

It will be argued that the relational ontology of the Trinity can be used to widen the theological space available to Judaism in Christian self-understanding. It will be argued that there is a fruitful precedent in the Western Christian judgment of validity to the Eastern Christian stance on the procession of the Spirit. The Eastern Christian/Western Christian 'schism' of the eleventh Century provides a fruitful comparison to the Jewish/Christian schism of the 2nd Century CE and later.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As in previous chapters, this model of / model for distinction is taken from Clifford Geertz' theoretical distinction made for analytical purposes in 'Religion as a Cultural System' in Anthropological Approaches to the study of Religion ASA Monograph 3 ed. M Banton Tavistock 1966.

<sup>2</sup> As argued in Introduction II(i) my own approach to dating the so-called 'parting of the ways' is to point to the significance of the decision of Pope Victor at the end of the second century CE in Rome to separate out the Christian Easter from the Jewish Passover in response to Quartodeciman practices.

Starting from a consideration of the Trinity as an aid to resisting dichotomy, some commonly dichotomous examples from Jewish/Christian relations will be handled by suggesting *therapeutic* associations. In particular, a sustained case will be made for associating Torah with Revelation and with Word of God rather than with a Law/Gospel dichotomy. In this way the same pattern of divine initiative and divine/human response demonstrated in the Christian system of the Sonship of Jesus will be seen in the divine initiative and divine/human response of the Dual Torah (Written and Oral) in the Jewish system.

It needs constant reaffirming that Judaism is not to be 'read' through trinitarian categories. The trinitarian conception of God is not required of a non-incarnational Jewish faith. Jewish ways of articulating the nature of God embrace a different vision to Christianity.

#### The Trinity as a way of resisting dichotomy

Rosemary Radford Ruether has suggested that it is Christianity's use of a system of dichotomous classification which is largely responsible for encouraging anti-Judaism.<sup>3</sup> These dichotomies include: law and gospel, judgement and promise, letter and spirit, and particularism and universalism. However, dichotomous classification itself may be essential for thought

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<sup>3</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism Seabury New York 1975 pp 226-245.

and social action: we distinguish in order to act.<sup>4</sup> The problem is with dual classification in the context of hierarchy of value and used with intent to produce an anti-Judaic myth.

It would be possible to make a list of all the elements frequently ranged over against one another in religious disputes and work on recognising their interrelatedness. This could be a healthy exercise in healing the dichotomies. There needs to be a deeper appreciation of preexisting relationship between what may otherwise be presented as opposites. The stereotyping of Judaism as orthopraxy (right praxis) and Christianity as orthodoxy (right worship), for example, does both a disservice, not least because of the Jewish roots of Christian liturgy.<sup>5</sup>

It should be recognised that both Jewish and Christian traditions have had to deal with not just tendencies to duality, but resurgences of metaphysical dualism.<sup>6</sup> At times Augustine can appear to be expressing himself more out of his Manichaeian past than out of his Christian heritage.<sup>7</sup> The figure of Satan has often influenced dualistic presentations. It is likely that the

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<sup>4</sup> Rodney Needham Symbolic Classification Goodyear Press, California 2nd ed. 1979, p 19. 1st ed. 1974.

<sup>5</sup> see E J Fisher ed. Jewish Roots of Christian Liturgy Paulist Press, New York 1990 and The Making of Jewish and Christian Worship ed. Paul F Bradshaw + Lawrence A Hoffman University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame 1992.

<sup>6</sup> that is encouraging a metaphysical conception of two equal powers ranged over against one another.

<sup>7</sup> "There was some foundation for Julian (of Eclanum)'s claim that if Augustine was opposed to Pelagius, he must be identifying himself with an old enemy of Pelagius' circle: the Manichee." G R Evans Augustine on Evil Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1982 p 142.

bold statement at Isaiah 45.7 of God's creation of evil was formed in opposition to practices based on the autonomy of evil. Augustine's mature thought on evil as the perversion or privation of good formed a solid basis for the limitation of dualisms. ~~That~~ God can allow his creation of evil to be used for further good also helps break down a rigid dichotomy based on hierarchy of value.<sup>8</sup>

One could consider a system which displays *chronic* tendencies to dichotomize under the analogy of a 'diseased' system. Encouraging such a system to greater balance through interaction between the opposed factors could then be envisaged as 'healing' the dichotomies by *therapeutic* associations.

#### Healing Dichotomies by Therapeutic Associations

Very often it is simplistic stereotyping which affects dichotomies. In the healing of such stereotyping there needs to be moves towards *therapeutic associations*. For instance, if Torah can be associated with Revelation and with Word of God, rather than a Law/Gospel dichotomy, and *Mitzvot* can be associated with Worship rather than a Faith/Works dichotomy, a tremendous service

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<sup>8</sup> This is retained in the Jewish Rabbinic teaching about the potential for good of the evil inclination, *Yetzer HaRa*. For example the male lustful urge is deemed to have a positive aspect if contained within marriage for the sexual satisfaction of the woman and the procreation of their children.

will be done towards Christian appreciation of Judaism.<sup>9</sup> A Christian reader may then be able to grasp the association between *mitzvot* and worship in the following comment by David Hartman articulating the significance of *halakhah*:

For the *halakhic* Jew, the *mitzvah* mediates God's active presence in history.<sup>10</sup>

The test for any atonement-driven Christian system will be how far it can make therapeutic associations with the Jewish Yom Kippur, as will be considered in a Chapter 9. In order to achieve this there must be some consideration of how far Christian thinking that emerged in Christology is of a similar dynamic pattern to mature Jewish thinking concerning the Dual Torah. This "analogous" pattern is of course in a separate conceptual system and so only the terminology of equal shape, or isomorphism, would be appropriate.<sup>11</sup> This concept will be explored in detail in Chapter 9 in the context of repentance and renewal.

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<sup>9</sup> I am indebted to Anne Cathérine Avril nds for a deeper appreciation of the linkage between the Christian concept of sacrament and the Jewish concept of *mitzvot*.

<sup>10</sup> David Hartman Joy and Responsibility: Israel, Modernity and the Renewal of Judaism Ben-Zvi Posner, Jerusalem 1978, p 226.

<sup>11</sup> Isomorphism needs distinguishing from homomorphism. Homos implies same, isos implies equal. Isomorphism suggests that patterns are equal in separate systems. This is another reason why associations should be freely admitted as imposed.



## Trinity as Relatedness

The key concepts in trinitarian language are *lack of separation* and *intimate relationship*. The persons of the Trinity are distinguished relationally. God is not just God, but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: the Spirit is not just the Holy Spirit but is also the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. No one person is ever present in isolation from the others: at creation, at salvation, at sanctification, wherever.

The interrelatedness between persons in the Trinity is articulated in the concept of mutual coinherence or *perichoresis*.<sup>12</sup> The persons never act independently. The principle of *opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa* (the work of the trinity *ad extra* are indivisible) focuses the mutual interrelation of the trinitarian persons. No one function of the divine is the sole task of one particular member: for example salvation, although traditionally associated with the Son, is also the work of Father and Spirit. This is because the one who redeems is also the one who created, and because salvation cannot be separated from sanctification. The main significant distinction in the Trinity is the difference demonstrated in naming the relational God: Father, Son and Spirit.

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<sup>12</sup> The concept of *perichoresis* is refined and passed on by a number of Christian theologians. Thomas F Torrance attributes it first to Athanasius in the context of sanctification. See The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church T+T Clark, Edinburgh 1988, p 10 + pp 229-231.

That salvation should not be separated from sanctification was emphasised as early as the introductory chapters. Any christology must be in creative combination with a pneumatology. Both the Son and the Spirit together seek to draw the whole creation into the intimate embrace of the Holy God. It is possible to regard early church theology as concerning itself with salvation at the expense of sanctification. It is possible to similarly regard the Jewish Mishnaic system as concerned with sanctification at the expense of salvation.

It is not until the Cappadocian fathers that the doctrine of the Trinity moves into its fuller expression.<sup>13</sup> They were the ones who recognised the 'conceptual revolution' involved in the *homoousios* of both Son and Spirit.<sup>14</sup> The Chalcedon Definition of Christology works with that same principle of 'lack of separation and intimate relationship' in the context of the person of Christ. Jesus Christ's human and divine natures are so closely related as to be 'unconfused, unaltered, undivided and inseparable'. This refuses all attempts to force a wedge between human persons and divine persons.

Being is being-in-relationship. And so the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* "I think therefore I am" should be replaced by *relatio*

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<sup>13</sup> See R P C Hanson The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381 T+T Clark, Edinburgh 1988 pp 772-790 'The Holy Spirit in the Cappadocian Fathers'.

<sup>14</sup> Colin Gunton 'Augustine, the Trinity and the Theological Crisis of the West' in SJT 43 pp 33-58; p 43 refers to the 'conceptual revolution', p 56 to the 'ontological revolution'. "For them, the three persons are what they are in their relations, and therefore the relations qualify them ontologically, in terms of what they are", p 44.

ergo sum "I relate therefore I am".<sup>15</sup> This is as true for the doctrine of God as for the doctrine of humanity once God is properly protected from external necessity. John Zizioulas emphasises the relational aspect of both God and the people of God in his Being as Communion.<sup>16</sup>

### The Trinity as Inclusive Patterns of Love

Both Judaism and Christianity demonstrate an appreciation of the linkage between love of God and love of one's neighbour. A particularly potent example for the Christian self-interpretation before Judaism is to consider the demands of the Sh'ma in the context of community life. Mark 12.29-31 and parallels demonstrates Jesus' use of the Sh'ma and his summary of the responsibilities of Torah, drawing from the traditions of Deuteronomy 6.4-5 and Leviticus 19.18:

'Which commandment is first of all?'. Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself". There is no other commandment greater than these'.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> see my more detailed argument in Jenny Sankey A Theological Grammar of Models of Atonement in Biblical Literature M Phil Nottingham University 1989, pp 113-114.

<sup>16</sup> John Zizioulas Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church St Vladimir Seminary Press, New York 1985.

<sup>17</sup> // Matthew 22.34-40. Luke 10.25-28. There are variations including 'The Lord is our God, the Lord alone', where 'echad' is differently translated. The first stanza in Deut 6.4 is given as 'The Lord our God is one Lord' in RSV.

Properly speaking, there is no tension between loving God with all your heart, soul, and might and loving your neighbour as yourself.<sup>18</sup> An integrated relationship to God and the world draws the two loves together in intimate embrace. What is affirmed about God's oneness encourages us to respond to our neighbour's call upon us because of the unity of all humankind. This is, of course, precisely the point the *Shema* is making.

In order to see how this linkage of divine and human love is of central importance for Christian theology, two theologians will be taken as formative examples: Richard of St Victor and St Augustine. It is the ability to see that love flowing into the wider community which Richard of St Victor pointed to as the demonstration of an appropriate relationship with God.<sup>19</sup> His argument can be summarised as follows: A single being loving itself is a very sorry sight: that is Self-love. The Father and the Son together and in harmony can attain Mutual love, which in its ideal form is between equals: hence divine persons. But the love of two for each other can become introverted and swallowed up in itself. And so the aim of mutual love is *Shared love: a love between Father and Son which flows out into the community*. This love protects the dignity of its recipients: it treats as

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<sup>18</sup> And so Michael Wyschogrod's suggestion that Barth's reading of Mark 12 isolates the two loves is unsustainable. See p 30 The Roots of our Common Faith WCC, Geneva ed. Hans-Georg Link 1984.

<sup>19</sup> Richard of St Victor De Trinitate PL 196 (887-992). A 12th Century work.

equal persons those it is drawn to love.

With Richard the stress is on an *inter-personal, relational* love which sustains a community of three or more.<sup>20</sup> In so doing he is drawing from the Cappadocian insight into the full personhood of the Spirit. Trinitarian thought is not so much about canonising the number three, as about resisting exclusive love relations based on twosomes. Trinitarian thought modifies, but does not destroy, two-fold classifications.

To a certain extent even with such a trinitarian formulation there is not full equality. The Father is regarded as having a certain precedence and it is important in Christian self-interpretation in relation to Judaism to retain that precedence. There is rather the useful extension of models of mutual interrelating to encompass a concept such as *primus inter pares*: first among equals.<sup>21</sup> Usually this lack of full equality focuses around one person taking responsibility for the final decisions on behalf of the whole community, albeit after extensive consultation and with the good of the whole community in mind. The Father is thus regarded as the presiding source of divine intent even though the Son and the Spirit are also centres of will and intent and co-equal persons.

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<sup>20</sup> One of the interesting aspects of Richard of St Victor's theory is that it yields at least three persons, and the closure at three has to be made on grounds external to the argument, such as the credal pattern.

<sup>21</sup> This concept is sometimes used of an archbishop in relation to the bishops.

Richard's focus on three equal persons is preferable to Augustine's trinity of the One Loving, the Beloved, and their Love. This is because with Augustine the focus remains largely with one person's decision to love or at most with two individuals.<sup>22</sup> Colin Gunton analyses Augustine's material and argues that it displays an underlying shape of one mind in the triad memory, understanding and will:

*The crucial analogy for Augustine is between the inner structure of the human mind and the inner being of God, because it is in the former that the latter is made known, this side of eternity at any rate, more really than in the 'outer' economy of grace.*<sup>23</sup>

In so doing, Gunton sees Augustine downplaying the 'conceptual revolution' of the Cappadocians who recognised the heart of trinitarian thought in a relational ontology. A fully relational ontology allows that God can self-differentiate and hence God is in **response** as well as initiative.

#### God is in Response as well as in Initiative

The Christian Trinity crystallises God's openness to the world, his involvement in, and self-limitation by, his human creation. God's revelation of himself as Trinitarian involves God in potential compromise. This is because *God takes initiatives*

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<sup>22</sup> St Augustine De Trinitate Trans. in Library of Christian Classics Vol VIII SCM 1955.

<sup>23</sup> Colin Gunton op. cit. p 48.

but gives the partner the authority and freedom to respond as it seems fit from their context. It is interesting that Jewish writers can express the Torah as potentially compromising God.<sup>24</sup> This is particularly seen in interpretations of the Aknai Oven incident in Baba Mezia 59a where the voice of God is 'overruled' by a rabbinic court in the context of a *halakhic* decision:<sup>25</sup>

The words were interpreted in the Talmud as meaning: "The Torah has already been given us from Sinai. We are not to listen to a heavenly voice [ie. in the matter of *halakhic* decision]. For Thou hast already written for us at Sinai to make decisions in accordance with the opinion of the majority".<sup>26</sup>

In this sense of the potentially compromising there is a Trinity/Torah parallel. For a sense of the limitations of its seeming acceptance of rule by majority see David Hartman's A Living Covenant.<sup>27</sup> Not all Christian theologians would agree with this analysis.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> BT.BM 59a also Ber 52a 'Er 7a Hul 44a Pes 114a Yeb 14a. See Alan Asher Wolf Miller Studies in the Concept of the Torah in the Babylonian Talmud PhD London External 1959 ch 3.

<sup>25</sup> The Talmud story of the Aknai Oven, a question of ritual purity, is discussed in detail by Eliezer Berkovits in his Not in Heaven: The Nature and Function of Halakah New York KTAV 1983 Ch 2 'The Nature of Halakhic Authority'.

<sup>26</sup> Berkovits op. cit. pp 47-48. The story has a postscript with God laughing and saying "My sons have defeated Me."

<sup>27</sup> David Hartman A Living Covenant: The innovative spirit in traditional Judaism New York, Free Press 1985 pp 47-8.

<sup>28</sup> However, Christian theology open to learning from Judaism must be able to take such insights to heart. It could encourage a healing of the Revelation versus Natural Theology dichotomy through an invigorated doctrine of Creation. For a Protestant theology it encourages an extension of the doctrine of creation towards some form of *analogia entis*: we are creative creatures.

We are called to be *coworkers with God* in the earthly domain.<sup>29</sup> The language of sonship should not be taken too literally to imply always a dependant, immature child. No, our sonship or daughtership of God is about growing into full responsible adulthood. James Barr's article "Abbà isn't 'Daddy'" argues that Jesus' relationship in prayer to God the Father was the address of an adult responsible Son to his Jewish Father.<sup>30</sup> There is real interchange between Father and child: the Son in active obedience to the Father can be subject as well as object of God's intention.

The Christian Trinity is a prospective model: it concerns the bringing of the whole cosmos to redemption through the focal point of Christ's humanity.<sup>31</sup> God values our maturity even to the extent that mature human disagreement may be regarded not so much as compromise but as participating in God's planning. This is due in no small part to the acceptance that **God is as much in response as in initiative.** To speak only of divine initiative and human response is insufficient testimony to the nature of the living God. God can self-differentiate to the degree that he reacts to his own initiatives in the humanity of Christ. There is not a Christian tradition of disagreeing with God in the same way that there is a Jewish tradition. Again, this is an area where Christian theology could learn from Judaism.

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<sup>29</sup> *συνεργοί* 1 Cor 3.9.

<sup>30</sup> James Barr "Abbà isn't 'Daddy'" *Jthst* IXL 1988 pp 28-47.

<sup>31</sup> Rom 8.19-24.



Response can be valued in its otherness to initiative. This valuing of response shows how far multiplicity and openness are central to the Christian doctrine of God. As Rowan Williams observes there is a creative pattern of initiative and response in God:

Because (God's) activity and life are self-differentiating, a pattern of initiating gift, perfect response, and the distinct and 'new' energy that is in the harmony of these two movements, created difference, otherness, multiplicity, may find place in God.<sup>32</sup>

Since the otherness of self-differentiation is proper to the Christian vision of God then also there are grounds for valuing the human differentiations which are involved in maturation. For Christianity, human maturation is related to increasing participation in the responses of God the Son. As Christians open up to the Spirit of Christ they are drawn into Jesus' own relationship of perfect response to the Father.

Alongside "We believe in one God" in the Nicene Creed is the statement "true God from true God". As Wittgenstein points out, it is not just what you say but the consequences you would draw which are significant.<sup>33</sup> The combination of the two phrases "one God" and "God from God" constitutes the heartland of the

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<sup>32</sup> Rowan Williams Arius: Heresy and Tradition Darton Longman + Todd 1987 p 243.

<sup>33</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religion ed. Cyril Barnett, Blackwell, Oxford 1966 Lecture III on religion. In the context of discussion on immortality and resurrection, Wittgenstein remarks of the locution 'The separation of soul from body', "I know these words, I have certain pictures. (But) if he says this, I won't know yet what consequences he will draw. I don't know what he opposes this to." p69.

trinitarian faith. The term underlying this "God from God" talk is *homousios*, the same *ousia*, itself generally translated 'substance'. The Torah may be divine and eternal but is the phrase "God from God" an acceptable Jewish locution? I think not, and this is an indication that trinitarian theology cannot be superimposed on Judaism.

### Halakhic decision and Hiddush as Responsive Revelation in a Jewish System

For a modern Jewish system, human maturity is related to response to the Torah. Particularly this involves the **creative interpretation of Torah (Hiddush)** which allows the unfolding of the Written Torah in the Oral Torah:

With the development of the oral tradition, Israel becomes a co-partner in the creative process of the Word; ... The Covenant experience truly emerges when Israel, the listener, turns the received Word into a creative Word that is, so to speak, open-ended.<sup>34</sup>

*Hiddush* is the drawing out of the eternal Torah in time. A human listener, including both Jews and Christians, who turns the received Word into a creative Word is living fully in the image of the Creator God. For Jews that received Word is the Torah: for Christians the received Word is Christ. There is a strong Torah/Christ parallel in the separate systems.

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<sup>34</sup> David Hartman Joy and Responsibility: Israel, Modernity and the Renewal of Judaism Ben-Zvi Posner, Jerusalem 1978, pp 27-28.

God is to some extent present as God in the interrelation of theological interpretation as well as in the original Word. Mere reiteration, the same thing said over again, would be insufficient testimony to the living God. For the Jewish system it is the appreciation that interpretation (*hiddush*) can also be truly creative. This incorporates the insight that humanity has a part in the divine work of creation. In that sense Judaism involves an understanding of God being in the response of Israel's interpretation as well as in the initiative of the spoken word. In the revelatory event of theological interpretation God comes from God to God as God.<sup>35</sup>

Further, for Judaism, God has allowed *halakhic* decisions to be taken on earth. Encouraging formative decisions to be taken on earth is to regard Oral Torah as completing the Written Torah. A *halakhic* decision in response to new areas of controversy is more than reiteration of what was from the beginning.<sup>36</sup> Rather it is new event, real predication and witness to the living God. It in no way implies that the original was in any way imperfect. The living response and ongoing involvement opens up a system to the future. It also raises the question of ongoing revelation.

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<sup>35</sup> see also Stephen Lawson Stell Hermeneutics and the Holy Spirit: Trinitarian Insights into a hermeneutical impasse Princeton PhD 1988 UMI. Stell does not contextualize hermeneutics well enough in a hermeneutical community, in my opinion.

<sup>36</sup> although one inventive response to the conceptual difficulty is to regard all *halakhic* decisions as originally made but then forgotten.

## Revelation and Community

There is an ongoing debate concerning the usefulness of the concept 'revelation' for modern theology. Without excluding a proper element of 'givenness from outside', what is needed is a more fluid and flexible approach to the past of our religious communities. For instance, Rowan Williams suggests that:

'Revelation' is a concept which emerges from a questioning attention to our present life in the light of a particular past - a past seen as 'generative'.<sup>37</sup>

That 'generative' past included a Christian sectarian spirit in relation to the Judaism which nurtured Jesus of Nazareth and towards which he entertained no such sectarian spirit. That Judaism is in continuity with the Judaism of our contemporary Jewish neighbours. This situation requires 'questioning attention to our present life'.<sup>38</sup>

What is revealed are not timeless ahistorical truths, but *a way of existing which values response as creativity and dependence as strength*. Rowan Williams holds that:

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<sup>37</sup> Rowan Williams "Trinity and Revelation" ModTh 2 No.3 1986 p 199.

<sup>38</sup> It is important not to underestimate, however, the discontinuity of the Judaisms. Jacob Neusner's work on the innovative spirit of the system-builders of Judaism(s) highlights the potential of discontinuity. See First Principles of Systemic Analysis: The Case of Judaism within the History of Religion University Press of America, Lanham New York 1987 and Ch 4.IV 'Not linear history but singular systems'.

There is a proper liberty generated out of dependence, a proper creativity which is responsive rather than simply initiatory. ... So Jesus shares the creativity of God, yet not as a 'second God', a separate individual: he is God as dependent - for whom the metaphors of Word, Image, and Son are appropriate.<sup>39</sup>

Valuing response and dependence are bound up with regarding self-involvement and commitment as perfect freedom. A level of existence emerges which is a 'participation-in' order of belonging to God's world.<sup>40</sup> For Williams, drawing on Paul Ricoeur, this would mean that the concept of revelation is contextualised in human participation in God's world:

If, then, we follow something like Ricoeur's analysis of revelation, a statement like 'God reveals himself' will mean that God invites us into his 'world': new life is manifested historically, in event speech and memory restoring to us a 'participation-in' or belonging-to order of things ... .<sup>41</sup>

God invites us into a 'participation-in' or belonging-to order of being. How a Jewish *Halakhic* 'participation-in' order of existence might relate to a Christian Sacramental 'participation-in' order of existence formed the focus of Chapter 4 and will form a focus of Chapter 9. For Christianity the participation-in order of being is focused with, through, and in Jesus Christ. For Judaism the participation-in order of being might be described as with fellow Jews, through obedience to Torah, and in *Knesset*

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<sup>39</sup> R Williams 'Trinity and Revelation' op. cit. p 204.

<sup>40</sup> see Michael Polanyi Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy Routledge + Kegan Paul 1962 1st ed. 1958 for the implications of this for epistemology.

<sup>41</sup> Rowan Williams 'Trinity and Revelation' op. cit. p 208.

*Israel.*

In this movement of God to God, God aims at the fulfilment of all creation: from Father to Son for the sake of creation. That fulfilment comes about specifically through temporal human beings as they open themselves up to a 'participation-in' order of being. The Christian affirmation is that God's intention for the world is to glorify it in Christ as the archetype of a new humanity and draw us into his ongoing future. With this in mind, each can rejoice in his or her humanity. Particular humanity is community-sustained. Revelation is linked to the acceptance of a community. God is present in the world as God in the event of love. Preeminently, this is in personal concern for others: love of God interlinked with love of neighbour. This is an event which is never disembodied or ahistorical. Love as commitment to a community is the nearest to a fully 'belonging-to' order of existence this side of the age to come.

John Ashton in his recent work on the Fourth Gospel argues for the recognition of 'revelation' as the key theme of the gospel.<sup>42</sup> He suggests how it might have developed in a community challenged to defend its understanding of Jesus, and unwilling to become embroiled in arguments from prophecy. And so, revelation as a Christian concept must be critically examined for any elements of community self-justification, particularly over against Jewish communities. The sectarian spirit can raise its head in many Christian theological guises, and has done so

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<sup>42</sup> John Ashton Understanding the Fourth Gospel Clarendon, Oxford 1991. Part 3 'Revelation'.

particularly in the Christian use of Spirit language.<sup>43</sup>

An example of Jewish faithfulness to Torah and Christian  
unfaithfulness to Christ

For most Jews in Palestine, faithfulness to the interplay of initiative and response in the divine/human Torah issued forth in a firm 'No' to the early missionary claims concerning Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>44</sup> The Jewish 'No' to Jesus as Messiah of Israel needs to be given positive value in the modern Christian system. Whether this Christian system can be broadened enough to greet the Jewish 'No' as *God-inspired response* remains to be seen. That communal response is continued to this present day largely unaltered. It will need to be heard in a Christian system that allows response to be held in honour as assisting the outcome of the cosmic consummation. This will be handled in depth later on.

It is a great strength of Joseph Bracken's work on the Trinity that he can work with an openness to God's adaption of plans in the light of human responses. Bracken has appropriated the processual thinking of AN Whitehead and J Royce for Trinitarian self-understanding. He recognises that Jesus did not

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<sup>43</sup> Chapter 7 will be devoted to the issue of Christian use of holiness language.

<sup>44</sup> Other Jews had no contact with Christian missionary groups or lived outside Palestine.

intend the sectarian spirit which produced the later movement.<sup>45</sup>

Indeed, for Bracken:

Sectarian divisions within Christianity itself over the intervening centuries have only added to the basic ambiguity of the Christian message in the world today. Yet the three divine persons have not allowed themselves thereby to become discouraged. Instead, they have continually adapted their plan for the salvation of the world to meet the ever changing situation of the human race as it moves through history.<sup>46</sup>

In this schema *Christian sectarian spirit could be linked to human hardness of heart*. The interplay of initiative and response in the divine/human Christ demonstrates a positive evaluation of the Jewish system, within limits.<sup>47</sup> For some Christians, unfaithfulness to Christ issued forth in a sectarian attitude in relation to Judaism. The sectarian attitude readily replicates itself down Christian history.

Now we will look at an example of trinitarian language as it affects one Christian community's view of another Christian community. This will be seen to provide a useful precedent for extending Western Christian valuation of the traditions lying

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<sup>45</sup> Ch 4 of Joseph A Bracken The Triune Symbol: Persons, Process and Community Lanham MD, University Press of America 1985.

<sup>46</sup> Bracken op. cit. p 104. Developed in detail this approach would challenge the traditional understanding of the divine attributes as unchanging/immutable. Adopting selected insights from process theology to modify the 'God of the Omnis' in this way is an alternative to Jürgen Moltmann's approach in The Crucified God SCM 1974, focused as it is around questioning the impassability of God.

<sup>47</sup> Some of those limits were explored in Chapter 4 in relation to the Second Temple Judaism focused in the sacrificial system.



outside Christianity.

Internal Christian Conversations Concerning the Spirit:

Attitude to the *Filioque* as an Example of Opening up Theological Space for the Other

There is an ongoing Christian debate on the unilateral addition by the Western church of the *Filioque* ('and the Son') into the phrase on the procession of the Spirit in the Nicene Creed. It will be argued that this seemingly esoteric part of Christian self-understanding has potential for improving the potential of Christian self-interpretation in relation to modern Judaism.

Vladimir Lossky suggests that the Eastern view of the Spirit's procession from the Father is simpler and based on the Spirit's procession from *the being* of the Father. That still retains the element of relationality since it is from the being of the Father *qua Father*, rather than from the being of an impersonal deity.<sup>48</sup> Whether the Spirit's generation from the *being* of the Father or from the *interpersonal relation* between Father and Son would seem to be important to address. Or is there really a need to choose between them?

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<sup>48</sup> Vladimir Lossky In the Image and Likeness of God Mowbrays 1974 French 1967 Chapter 4.

Yves Congar at the end of his mammoth study on the affirmation of the Holy Spirit suggests that both sides are appropriate in their own terms. He uses the terminology of complementarity:<sup>49</sup>

Trinitarian faith is the same in the East and the West. ... It is necessary to combine the truth invested in the two formulae by showing that they are complementary.<sup>50</sup>

This suggests that the nature of the Western interpretation is dependent on thought systems which give the *Filioque* meaning and sense. And so the *Filioque* may be necessary only within contingent patterns of Western thought. In that case, it may be reasonable to affirm it in Western churches without requiring it of an East which developed using different modes of thinking.<sup>51</sup>

This attitude is echoed by Dietrich Ritschl:

The differences between East and West ... can partly be explained by the fact that each tradition was asking different questions, and partly from the different philosophical resources used.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Yves Congar I Believe in the Holy Spirit 3 Vols. ET Geoffrey Chapman. In discussion of the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1439), Congar observes "the intention to recognise that the two formulae were compatible and even equivalent - I would willingly say, that they were complementary" Vol III, p 188.

<sup>50</sup> Congar op. cit. Vol III, pp 213-4. See also Diversity and Communion SCM 1984 trans. by John Bowden from French Cerf, Paris 1982 Ch 7 'A Structure of Duality in Unity? East + West, Complementarity'.

<sup>51</sup> Congar does however suggest ways in which it would be possible for the Latin Church to move towards a position which could dispense with the *Filioque*. This would be a significant gesture towards the Eastern Church(es). "Should the *Filioque* be suppressed in the creed?" Vol III, pp 204-8.

<sup>52</sup> Dietrich Ritschl The Logic of Theology Chr. Kaiser Verlag, München 1984 p 145.

For most purposes saying that the Spirit proceeds from the Father (alone) and yet can also be called the Spirit of the Son, keeps the relatedness well enough.<sup>53</sup>

This internal Christian conversation has rich implications for Christian self-interpretation in relation to modern Judaism. If the Western view can make space for an 'intimately connected but distinct' Eastern view, this creates a valuable precedent. This generates an acceptance of the Eastern view as what might be termed **authoritatively complementary**. It is a significant example of *increasing the theological space allowed to an Other*. It is gestures like these which will also be needed to encourage Christian self-interpretation to move from its persistent 'Church against Israel' attitude.

If there is 'closeness but difference' between Western and Eastern forms of Christianity, then surely there can be 'closeness but difference' between Western Christianity and Judaism.<sup>54</sup> This thesis arises out of a context in Western Christianity. There are a number of reasons why the relationship

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<sup>53</sup> A compromise solution is sometimes put forward where both the Son and the Spirit are regarded as coming from the Father *eternally*, and in addition the Spirit is given by the Son *in time*, but this glosses over the complex relationship between God and time. See the discussion in the WCC report ed. Lukas Vischer Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ: Ecumenical Reflections on the "Filioque" Controversy Faith + Order Paper No. 103 Geneva 1981.

<sup>54</sup> It is interesting to note how often Jewish viewpoints are expressed in The Journal of Ecumenical Studies, suggesting a possible extension of 'ecumenical' language to Judaism.

between Eastern Christianity and Judaism could potentially be much closer: perhaps because there has often been a shared cultural climate, and because of their common bond of so often being at the receiving end of Western triumphalism. However, antisemitism remains a problem still in the Eastern traditions.<sup>55</sup>

It is interesting to reflect that one of the reasons for the formation of the World Council of Churches arose out of the reaction of Eastern Christians that they should not be on the receiving end of Western-style mission. In an almost direct parallel the greatest stimulation to a 'Church with Israel' position is taking seriously Jewish community reactions that they should similarly not be on the receiving end of such mission.

### Conclusion

Grappling with the Trinity in the contemporary world is central to the Christian task of opening up theological space for the Other. This is true as much *internally* for the range of Christian traditions as *externally* for extra-Christian religions. Love for the Other as *Other* is vitally important to Christian self-understanding in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit: the Spirit

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<sup>55</sup> see F Littel p 104 "Eastern orthodoxy, where some of the most actively vicious antisemitism has flourished." The Crucifixion of the Jews: The Failure of Christians to understand the Jewish Experience Macon GA, Mercer University Press 1986 1st ed. 1975.

is not just another Son and yet he is of equal worth. This gives a precedent that could encourage further applications of the 'love for another as other' principle. The Christian recognition of the full personhood of the Spirit involved a 'conceptual revolution'. Further conceptual revolutions will be required to open up Christian theological space to Judaism.

The understanding of God's relationship to the world involves a vision in which God is as much in response as in initiative. This allowed for theological interpretation to be regarded as a divine/human engagement. It also encompassed an openness to God's 'lighter' control on the outcome of history through the possibility of a range of possible plans.<sup>56</sup> Both Jewish *Hiddush* (creative interpretation) and *Halakhic* decision-making can be regarded as a 'participation-in' order of existence.

Against this background it was suggested that the Christian sectarian spirit has grave consequences for the consummation of creation in the age to come. There is a sense in which the Christian sectarian spirit in relation to Judaism involves unfaithfulness to Christ. One might speak of the revelatory significance for the Christian community of the Torah community's 'No' to Jesus as Messiah of Israel. The Jewish 'No' to Jesus as Messiah could then be regarded as Jewish faithfulness to Torah.

Christian traditions have developed to some extent in response to different questions and by drawing on different

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<sup>56</sup> Sometimes illustrated with the analogy of God as the Master Chess player.

philosophical resources. This demonstrates an internal precedent which will have profound consequences for the assessment of extra-Christian religions. It took nearly a millennium to verbalise an acceptance of Eastern and Western conceptions of the Spirit as 'complementary'. It is likely to take another millennium before Christian and Jewish conceptions of Christ as verbalised as 'complementary' even if the conceptual tools become available within, say, three centuries.

It remains the contention of this thesis that Christian openness to the validity of the Jewish walk with God is more likely to come from a deeper engagement with its own particularities. In the next chapter the work of Paul van Buren will be assessed. Van Buren makes use of the doctrine of the Trinity in his presentation of 'the Jewish-Christian Reality', but is critical of classical Christology.

## Ch 6 Are Supersessionism and Ontologizing Judaism the Scylla and Charybdis for Christian Theology?

### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The aim of this chapter is to see van Buren's theory at work around some of his central concepts. We will assess his argument in a way that will lead naturally on to the charges he is made to face by his reviewers. These charges may help signpost areas of potential imbalance from which we can draw useful lessons. It is particularly the Christian temptation to 'ontologize Judaism' that will attract attention: that is, *to speak of the God-Israel relation with the same theological excess as Christian writers reserve for the God-Humanity relation in Jesus Christ.*

Paul van Buren's work represents the most important recent sustained piece from a Western Christian perspective which treats the Trinity as a major resource for a remaking of Christian theology in relation to modern Judaism. It displays a particular concern with traditional or orthodox Judaism. It is therefore important to signpost where we diverge from his project. This will be achieved by comparing his work with the criteria developed in the classical Christological and Trinitarian

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter the following abbreviations will be used for Paul van Buren's A Theology of the Jewish-Christian Reality Harper + Row, San Francisco 1980, 1983, 1988.

Pt 1 Discerning the Way :

The Way;

Pt 2 A Christian Theology of the People Israel:Theology of Israel,

Pt 3 Christ in Context :

Christ in Context;

and the references will appear abbreviated from (Part A, page B) to (A,B).

tradition. These we have found to be more fruitful for use than van Buren allows.

Van Buren presents a picture of the Church adoring Israel's Lord and of Christianity as a more complicated version of Judaism at one remove. In support of this, he makes use of the context of (one) covenant theology and a scenario of God's active covenant partners freely accepting responsibility for furthering God's purposes in the world. Those purposes are seen as the triumph of humble love and the end of domination in all creation. All Christian affirmations must be brought firmly under the main theme of "giving glory to God the Father".

#### The Church adores Israel's LORD

We begin with his statements:

The assertion that the church adores Israel's LORD is fundamental for its conversation and all its theology, and every further theological point can only be an unfolding of this one claim. (pt 1, p 33)

the *church* adores *Israel's LORD* and the relationship between Israel and the church is nonreversible. (1,36)<sup>2</sup>

It is one thing to deny two rival gods, quite another to assert

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<sup>2</sup> This use of 'Church' over van Buren's 'church' is important. Interestingly, by Part 3 van Buren himself is also using 'Church'. Any apparent discrepancies in style are taken from the sources.



that two separate traditions worship the same God.<sup>3</sup> The link between *how* God is addressed and the worshipping community *in which* God is addressed is being glossed over by van Buren. For a Christian to say "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ" is very different to saying "the God of Israel". The latter invites confusion as to the community in which that Christian speaker stands. Indeed, Peter Haas finds these statements of van Buren confusing from a Jewish perspective:

It would seem to follow, certainly from a Jewish point of view, that anyone who hears a call from "Israel's Lord" and who responds appropriately is walking on a "Jewish Way". My question as a Jew then is why these gentiles, responding in faith to the God of the Jews, are not thereby themselves transformed into Jews." <sup>4</sup>

This pertinent question of the relation of Christians to 'the God of the Jews', without themselves becoming Jews, quickly highlights the ambiguities of van Buren's work.

The implications of van Buren's ideas for Christianity are wide ranging. Christology should rejoice in a subordinationist Christology. The Church should recognise that any glory given to Christ will be humbly passed on to the Father, so it might so to speak 'cut out the middle man'. And the Christian life of worship and witness must be seen through van Buren's idealisation of a Jewish *controlling concept of the covenant relationship*: God yearns for relationship with his people and involves them in his

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<sup>3</sup> Even John Hick admits that the question "Jews, Christians, Muslims: Do we all worship the same God?" is a matter for dispute. Disputed Questions in Theology and Philosophy of Religion Macmillan 1993 pp 146-163.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Haas RSR 16 No.4 Oct 1990 p 317.

purposes as active covenant partners. It is of course debatable whether there is such a thing as a 'controlling concept' in Judaism. Many would emphasise Torah in preference in post-biblical Judaism even if they allowed such a thing as a 'controlling concept'.<sup>5</sup>

It is as though van Buren would have Christians as 'nominal' Jews with access to the one covenant on slightly different terms of entrance. Most Christians would vehemently deny such a description. This position is too close to the traditional *Jewish* view. Judaism has always welcomed proselytes, although sometimes being politically prevented from active proselytism. What about Christianity's own *internal dynamic* for development which supported the worshipping life of Christian communities down two millennia? It is this which will resist the treatment of Christ as a distracting 'middle man' whose main attribute is humility.

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<sup>5</sup> It is possible to regard the Deuteronomic systematization of ancient Israelite traditions as a focusing around the covenant idea. For evidence of such a systematization see Ernest W Nicholson God and his People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament Clarendon 1986. However, as Jacob Neusner has shown in First Principles of Systemic Analysis: The Case of Judaism within the History of Religion University Press of America, Lanham New York 1987, any systematizing is done at a point in time in the face of urgent questions facing the community. Millennia later the community faces different urgent questions and may not find the system focused around the covenant idea so helpful. Rabbinic Judaism appears focused around the (Dual) Torah focus.

## Presuppositions as Fundamental Decisions

Van Buren admits in the foreword to Christ in Context that he has made two fundamental decisions that determine how he has chosen to address the subject.

1. Following James A Sanders "God is the subject of all the verbs of the Torah-Christ story".<sup>6</sup>
2. To give priority to the theme of solidarity between Jesus and his people rather than the theme of conflict.

It is useful that he is so explicit with his presuppositions, but obviously this will have a profound effect on what he is willing to hear. This is of course true of any and every theologian. His presuppositions emerge as fundamental *a priori* decisions which affect what he is willing to hear as evidence. To a certain extent this is true of any conceptual approach, theses especially.<sup>7</sup> However, it is our contention that what he is thus unable to hear is of great significance. The 'bracketing out' of such material (aural 'epoche') distorts and thus affects the acceptability of his work.

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<sup>6</sup> James A Sanders Canon and Community Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1984 p 59.

<sup>7</sup> The legitimacy of the strategy of this thesis is largely dependent upon the acceptability of its own decisions and presuppositions. The Statement of Intent at the start of the thesis was produced out of an attempt to be equally 'upfront and honest'.

We now consider one very important example which van Buren handles in some detail. That is Chalcedonian Christology. It is largely handled in Christ in Context Chapter 10: 'The Incarnate Word'.

### Chalcedonian Christology

Throughout it is the *humanity* of Christ that is the overriding concern of van Buren. This is of itself no bad thing and echoes his desire to restore the historical Jesus of Nazareth to the forefront of our consciousness.

He is 'a son of the covenant' (3,254),

He was and is a man, a Jew, not a second God, heaven forbid, not a deified man, but just a man. Only the LORD is God. ... For us Gentiles in the Way, then, Jesus is not the LORD, but our Lord, the one Jew who has given us access to the God of the Jews'. (1,85)

However, in giving Christians 'access' to God, Jesus is much more than a Jew. Chalcedonian Christology itself excludes the second God and deified man solutions without reducing Jesus to "just a man". The second God is excluded by the Chalcedonian reaffirmation of the Nicene Creed which affirms "We believe in one God" and speaks of the Son as 'God from God' rather than simply 'God'. The deified man is excluded by the one person being 'unconfused and unaltered in two natures': the natures affect one another, but the humanity does not change from humanity nor the

divinity from divinity.<sup>8</sup>

Van Buren portrays the process of thought represented by Chalcedon as a narrowing which squeezes out Israel's story:

Chalcedon represents a remarkable narrowing of the rich diversity of (the presentations of the things concerning Jesus of Nazareth). (3, 39)

Israel's story, ... , no longer formed a controlling context, and as a result, it was not felt necessary to say that God is the God of Israel. (3, 39)

Although his criticism has point there are aspects of Christian liturgical life which address this issue. One function of the Gospels in Christian liturgical life is to give a Jewish context to the ontological language of the Chalcedonian affirmation of Jesus' humanity. This can be achieved without requiring Christians to worship God as the God of Israel.

Van Buren deals with the 'legacy' of incarnational christology through 6 weaknesses and 6 strengths in his Chapter 10. Weaknesses for him include:

Jesus of Nazareth is slipping from our consciousness. (3,236), and:

It is less clear that (classical christology) helps the Church to make (the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord) "to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:11), because so much attention is given to the glory of God the Son. (3, 239-

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<sup>8</sup> A stronger version of deification may have lain behind the Chalcedonian option 'out (ἐκ) of two natures' rather than 'in (ἐν) two natures'. This option, which could have allowed for one nature to overwhelm, proved unacceptable.

Yet it is possible to keep a balance between giving glory to the Father and giving glory to the Son. This is actively pursued in Section Four of this thesis through attention to the eucharistic praise of the Father through the Son in the Spirit.

His understanding of incarnation as a 'powerful metaphor or figure for God's intimate, active involvement' (3,240) fails to do it justice.<sup>10</sup> The reading of incarnation as:

God's word having taken to himself one human being (3, 236)

is made in a conscious break from classical Christology. It follows from his preference for covenantal over incarnational analogues. A covenant is made, or 'cut', with an already existing person or group who are given the option of accepting or rejecting. The significance of the classical terminology, by contrast, signifies that there was never any independent autonomous human Jesus waiting to be 'taken up'. The incarnation as saving event *formed* the human Jesus, it did not 'take up' the human Jesus.<sup>11</sup> The classical post-Chalcedonian terminology of *enhypostasis* asserts that the humanity of Jesus did not have any independence apart from God's loving purpose. Of this van Buren

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<sup>9</sup> This is a criticism which parallels Don Cupitt's contribution to The Myth of God Incarnate ed. John Hick SCM 1977. Here Cupitt openly charges Christianity with 'idolatry'.

<sup>10</sup> It also uses 'metaphor' in a very loose way.

<sup>11</sup> The Ebionite/Adoptionist options in early Christianity are in this way excluded from what is regarded as normative post-Chalcedon.

writes:

(Enhypostasis) hardly does justice to Israel's witness to the existence of God's covenantal partner who is grounded independently of God by God's gracious gift of Creation. (3,238).

He needs to read creation as independent of God in order to fit his concept of covenantal partnership. Van Buren begins by suggesting covenant as an analogy for incarnation, which is quite acceptable. However, he goes further and uses incarnation as a dispensable analogy for covenant, which is unacceptable.

His use of covenant as the overriding term is pursued because of his desire to make use of loving, personal, relational terms rather than 'material' terms (3,258). It is common to criticize Chalcedon as involved in concrete material descriptions through using the terminology of nature. His objections to the divinity of Christ are particularly significant:

(it is) so misleading to speak of "the divinity of Christ". That phrase sounds as if the Church knew something reliable about divinity and so felt it was justified in predicating this of Christ.(3,293)

This is precisely what it is *not* doing. Christianity does not say: "We know what both divinity and humanity are about and we judge that Jesus Christ is both". Rather it says: "We feel compelled to take what we see in Jesus Christ as the pattern of interaction between divinity and humanity for our world". Properly contextualised, incarnation is a relational term. The Chalcedonian Definition may be understood as encouraging relationship between humanity and God in Christ, perfectly open to the interpretation of a dynamic loving personal relationship.

It does not presume that either God or humanity are fully known in advance.

It would seem that in looking for a loving relationship of active response to God, van Buren can see only the Jewish notion of human covenant partners. Whereas, as was demonstrated in the previous chapter, classical Christology itself incorporates active loving response of the human partners-in-community. Chalcedonian Christology involves the Trinitarian concept of the God who is in response as well as in initiative, and in whom one can participate by participating in Christ's divine/human Sonship.

One would not disagree with his statement:

A church aware of the Jewish-Christian reality will be grateful to Israel for having given it the lived reality and so the vocabulary with which to speak of the closeness of a divine-human relationship'. (3,255)

However, it seems that the vocabulary which matters to him is preeminently covenant and the God of Israel. It would equally well hold with other vocabulary such as: the Fatherhood of God and the holiness of the Spirit of God. It would then be possible to be grateful for language which could become Trinitarian vocabulary on Christian lips.



## The Charge of Normalising one part of Israel's History

As will be seen, van Buren attracts criticism from his reviewers that he isolates the section of Israel's *ancient* history as the most important. This creates problems for his reading of post-biblical Judaism as well as for his reading of Christianity. So, for instance, James A Carpenter holds van Buren to:

the view that living Judaism is the continuation of ancient Israel in, as it were, a straight line.<sup>12</sup>

Rather, as Carpenter points out, Judaism today is not in this straight line with ancient Israel:

Both (Judaism today and Christianity) derive from and are inseparably linked to ancient Israel but both deviate from it.<sup>13</sup>

Peter Haas argues that the Judaisms are quite different:

If any one theology is taken as an adequate expression of normative Judaism, then all prior, and of course, succeeding, Judaisms will be discounted. To take examples often invoked in Christian speculations on Judaism, 1st-century Pharisaism, medieval Kabbalah and 19th-century German Reform are vastly different from one another. In fact, a modern American Jew has much more in common with a modern American Christian than he or she has with any of the above mentioned Judaisms.<sup>14</sup>

If indeed the Judaisms are quite different, this sharpens the question as to why van Buren takes ancient Israel as his central

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<sup>12</sup> James A Carpenter Review of van Buren's Christ in Context in AngThR 71 1989 p 218.

<sup>13</sup> Carpenter *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Haas *op. cit.* pp 316-7.

focus. Supersessionary Christianity holds that ancient Israel can be interpreted through the story of Jesus. Van Buren is open to the criticism of reversing this and interpreting Jesus through the story of ancient Israel.

Van Buren may be aware at a low level of post-biblical Judaism, but he is still taking the covenant at Sinai as his major 'centre of gravity'. Hence Rosemary Radford Ruether's criticisms must be addressed:

Van Buren, in his theology of the Jewish-Christian reality, seems to have transferred (the neo-Orthodox) monistic idea of revelation to God's covenant with Israel at Sinai. God, the only God that Jews or Christians have ever known, as van Buren continually says, has made himself known in only one way, and that is as the God who chose Israel as his people. The covenant of God with Israel at Sinai is God's foundational and normative work of relating to the human community in history. All other knowledge and relation to God flow exclusively from this one elect centre.<sup>15</sup>

This concentration on the 'normativity' of the covenant of God with Israel at Sinai limits not only Christianity, but all forms of Judaism, to being mere recapitulations of the covenant of Sinai. And so Ruether argues:

Van Buren seems to want to make the revelation of God at Sinai all-sufficient, perfect, and final, as though neither Jews nor Christians were allowed to have any new ideas.<sup>16</sup>

Thus van Buren's project attracts the charge of normalising one part of Israel's history.

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<sup>15</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether "Jewish-Christian Relations in the Theology of Paul van Buren" - Review article on van Buren, in RSR 16 No.4 1990 p 321.

<sup>16</sup> Ruether op. cit. p 322.

A further imbalance of van Buren's concentration on the covenant with Israel at Sinai is not just the historical localization of the covenant in ancient Israel, but the theological localization in covenant itself. It is as though he overwrites creation, and being human before God, by the covenant at Sinai, that is being Jewish before God.

#### Creation or Covenant as the Focus of Humanity?

Van Buren's treatment of belonging to Israel as being the most important way of being human attracts a great deal of criticism. He is of the opinion that the early conciliar creeds opted to take creation as their context rather than the covenant, and openly seeks to reverse this decision. This reversal has wide-ranging consequences, notably the exaltation of the Jewish way of life.

It is as though an important decision is being glossed over: is Jesus the authentic Jew or the authentic human being? To collapse the two, as van Buren arguably does, is to beg a whole set of questions. James Carpenter treats his work as a form of 'anonymous Judaism' because of this exaltation of the Jewish way:

van Buren tends in my view to make the covenantal relationship of God with Israel and through Israel with Christ's Church too exclusive. There may be a little triumphalism in his idea that the non-biblical religions of the world contain 'echoes' of the covenant at Sinai and 'echoes' of God's covenantal act in Jesus Christ (3, 271) ... These 'echoes' bear more than a faint resemblance to Rahner's 'anonymous' Christianity.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> James A Carpenter AngThR 71 Spring 1989 p 218.

It is one thing, and a welcome one, for van Buren to work on what is traditionally an anti-Jewish "Christian Theology of the People Israel" and struggle towards a pro-Jewish Christology:

the Church will need a Christology appropriate to its new situation, a Christology for the Jewish-Christian reality, for it will no longer be able to speak of the things concerning Jesus of Nazareth as it did when it understood itself as the Church versus Israel. (3, 104-5)

However, to then imply that being Jewish is effectively the most significant way of being human in the world and Jewish forms of address to God are the most significant is going a stage too far. It encourages the world-view of Judaism at the centre and an undifferentiated world outside which will be drawn to Judaism when it comes to its senses. Christianity serves a wider purpose than merely pointing humanity towards Judaism.

#### Sonship and Subordinationist Christology

Rather than coping with the subtleties of classical Christology, van Buren largely dispenses with it. Instead he lays out his openly subordinationist christology:

Christ has no cause of his own because his cause is God's. (3,284)

The texts at 1 Cor 15.28 and Romans 11.25-36 - both visions of the end times - provide him with material on which to build. He interprets both of these as having Christ fading into the background and passing all the glory on to the Father. This is

contextualised in a view of the Son as a general term for God's human covenant partners.

The irony of the classical christological tradition is that it has made of the designation son of God - a Jewish term of service, intimacy, fidelity and humility (...) - a title of power, dominion and assertion. ... If we could resist the pull of this idea of superiority, however, we might be free to see that the glory of the Son is that he wanted to be nothing other than one wholly in the service of God, and that this is not being inferior to God. It is being God's partner as God would have it. (3,292-293)

One might indeed harness the 1 Cor 15.28 picture of the final handing over of authority to the Father. However, this does not detract from a properly bounded authority of the Son during his earthly ministry. Van Buren seems to be downplaying the Sonship of Jesus and replacing this with the mediatorial role of Israel: Christians need to go to the 'Israel of God' to learn how to worship. It is such suspicions which will encourage suspicions of 'ontologizing' Israel.

Van Buren is constantly downplaying the authority of the Son through his use of Jesus and the Spirit leading to the God of Israel and the overplaying of humility and subjection in sonship. The conception of Jesus' sonship needs to incorporate due authority. John Ashton's work on the Fourth Gospel draws from J A Bühner's 'Son of House' imagery to locate the sense of authority in the Johannine Jesus.<sup>18</sup> The 'son of the House'

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<sup>18</sup> John Ashton Understanding the Fourth Gospel Clarendon, Oxford 1991, Ch 8 'Son of God'. Pp 320-323 especially draw from J A Bühner *Der Gesandte und sein Weg im vierten Evangelium: Die kultur und religionsgeschichtliche Grundlagen der johanneischen Sengschristologie sowie ihre traditionsgeschichtliche Entwicklung* Tübingen 1977.

concept illuminates the Son's legal agency and with mission of authority in the Father's domain: where the son is sent to act for the father he acts with the father's full authority. Even if they cannot be used to explain Jesus' own self-understanding, ideas such as these help to resist van Buren's onesided identification of Jewish sonship with humility and service over against power and dominion.

The highest possible christology will be one that sees in the lowly crucified one the very heart of God the Father. His lowliness is the image of God's humility. ... The subjection of the Son to his Father is therefore fittingly presented as his goal. He could have no higher.(3,295)

Subjection is all well and good, but a one-sided subjection of the Son to the Father without a responding subjection of the Father to the Son is an unbalanced half truth. Fatherhood is spelt out in terms of humility, but here on behalf of all creation. The loving personal interrelationship between Father and Son is subsumed under the Father's wider purpose. And so, the full personhood of both Son and Spirit in the Christian system has to be radically undermined by van Buren.

In the next section it will be argued that having evacuated authority from Jesus Christ, van Buren appears to find it in Israel. Such a conclusion has already been anticipated by his preference for covenantal over incarnational categories. We shall speak of 'ontologizing Israel' as exalting the God-Israel relationship. This is not to imply that it is an illegitimate strategy for one expects to find this as a central part of Judaism. The difficulty is when it is affirmed by Christians.

### The Charge of 'Ontologizing Israel'

Van Buren has lowered his understanding of Christ, notably by abandoning any sense of his divinity. And he compensates by exalting his understanding of Israel, into which (or whom) Christians now come through the extended covenant. The which/whom alternative for Israel is a serious one for it testifies to ways of speaking which can imply personification. The higher van Buren's view of Israel the nearer it approximates to Israel as the beloved Son. This reads as if he is transferring 'high' ways of thinking from one locus, Christ, to another locus, Israel.<sup>19</sup> It is this 'high' way of speaking of Israel which, if taken to excess, can be termed 'ontologizing Judaism'.

It is for such reasons that van Buren needs to develop a 'theology of the People Israel' as an integral part of his Christian self-understanding, whereas it is a central tenet of this thesis that such a move is undesirable for Christian theology.<sup>20</sup>

The closeness of his linkage of Christ and Israel is to be seen in his Theology of Israel.<sup>21</sup> This develops the concept of not just Jesus with Israel and Jesus for Israel but Jesus as

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<sup>19</sup> If theological power is evacuated from one source it will reappear in another.

<sup>20</sup> See our Statement of Intent.

<sup>21</sup> Ch 8 Israel and Jesus §2 Jesus as Israel: the Word of the Humility and Generosity of God.

Israel.<sup>22</sup>:

(Jesus) has re-presented to the Gentile church Israel as God's chosen witness to the humility and generosity of the Creator. (2, 249)

Israel for van Buren here is Israel-for-the-Gentiles:

The creature Jesus of Nazareth could hardly, as a Jew, as Israel for the Gentiles, bear any other witness. (2, 250)

Jesus Christ recapitulates and embodies Israel's reality, its relationship to God, and its calling to be a light for the Gentiles. (2, 253)

The figure of Jesus-as-Israel, serving Israel in its mission to the Gentiles and being for them the place at which is seen the humility and generosity of God. Just so is Jesus the telos of the Torah. (2, 253)

Having effectively 'cut out the traditional middle man of the divine Son' by requiring all talk about Jesus to give glory to God the Father, van Buren effectively reinstitutes another 'middle man': Israel, albeit Jesus-as-Israel. Jesus remains 'the place' wherein gentiles meet God in both presentations: in the traditional one Jesus is portrayed as the recapitulation of Sonship, in van Buren's as the recapitulation of Israel.

Others have noticed this patterning to van Buren's raising up of Israel even as he downgrades Christ. Rosemary Radford Ruether puts it with characteristic bluntness:

Van Buren seems to make out of the God-Israel relation the same hypostatic relation that he criticizes as idolatrous when applied to Christ! <sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Jesus as Israel is also used by Franz Mussner in Tractate on the Jews SPCK 1984 Ch 3 pp 130-131.

<sup>23</sup> Ruether RSR 16 No 4 Oct 1990 p 322.



Ruether openly accuses van Buren of making the God-Israel relation hypostatic. This means that the way van Buren speaks of the God-Israel relation as the coming together of the divine and human in the pursuit of God's purposes for creation is exactly the way classical Christology speaks of the God-Humanity relation in Jesus Christ: that is, by a hypostatic relation. For van Buren to speak of the God-Israel relation as though it were a hypostatic relation is to run the risk of being charged as a Christian with ontologizing Israel.

Peter Haas more gently suggests that van Buren is merely guilty of the reification of the Jewish social group and of marginalizing Jewish self-understanding:

On the one hand (Paul van Buren's solution) reifies the social group and moves it to the centre of concern, while on the other it entirely ignores the very patterns of attitudes and ideas that makes that community 'Judaic'.<sup>24</sup>

Reification can be a very early step on the road to ontologization. Ruether's analysis has deeper insight here. She is able to perceive that van Buren is utilising what are Christian patterns of speech developed in christological contexts for speaking of Israel in its relation to God. Van Buren is speaking ontologically, and thus uncritically, of the God-Israel relationship.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Haas op. cit. p 317.

<sup>25</sup> This makes him impervious to criticism of the Jewish people. Ruether argues that he "turns negation of anti-Semitism into an uncritical philo-Semitism that is unable to face the significant ethical failures of the state of Israel" RSR 16 No.4 1990 p 323.

## Ontologizing and Supersessionism: Scylla and Charybdis for Christians?

The two perceptive review articles by Peter Haas and Rosemary Radford Ruether of van Buren and related writers seem to point to two polar tendencies within Christian writings concerning the relationship of Christianity to Judaism. The first is the Christian tendency to *supersessionism*, that is to act as though sacred history finished for Judaism at the advent of the Christian era. This is harder to avoid than might at first appear given the difficulties involved in coming out of the supersessionist thinking of the 'Church versus Israel' stage.<sup>26</sup> The second tendency is for Christians to '*ontologize Judaism*'. Haas makes this claim of ontologizing explicitly of Roy and Alice Eckardt:

The Eckardts, largely avoiding supersessionism, have paid the price by '*ontologizing*' Judaism. <sup>27</sup>

This quotation usefully highlights that ontologizing Judaism may well be the result of seeking to avoid supersessionism. Reacting too severely to one problem may generate another. Are the two extremes of supersessionism and ontologization like the Scylla and Charybdis *between* which one must steer? Whether this is the case or not, it is the contention of this chapter that van Buren

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<sup>26</sup> This is an especially acute dilemma since the Christian scriptures arise out of contexts in which modes of supersessionary thinking were commonplace.

<sup>27</sup> Haas op. cit. p 319.

is guilty of 'ontologizing Judaism'.

Most Christian writers aiming at sensitivity in Jewish/Christian relations seek to distance themselves from supersessionism. It is thus significant to uncover another difficulty linked to avoiding supersessionism. That is to display tendencies towards 'ontologizing Judaism': speaking of the People Israel with the same theological excess which Christian writers reserve for Jesus as the hypostasis of God. This excess makes itself known through van Buren's normalizing of ancient Israel's history, his exaltation of the covenant concept, and the implications that being Jewish is the most significant way of being human in the world. This presents a *Jewish* form of the Christian excess, viz: normalizing the history of Jesus of Nazareth, the exaltation of the incarnation concept, and the implication that being Christian is the most significant way of being human in the world. Are we trapped somehow in our patterns of formative thought?

Van Buren began with a doctoral thesis on Calvin's Christology in the 1950's under Karl Barth, went through the 1960's as a 'death of God' secular theologian, and came to a 3-part (or 4-part) theology of the Jewish-Christian reality in the 1980's and 1990's.<sup>28</sup> There appears to have been four parts originally intended, the fourth being 'The Covenant and the

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<sup>28</sup> see Stephen R Haynes Prospects for Post-Holocaust Theology Atlanta, Scholars Press 1991 pp 161-164 for biographical detail.

World'.<sup>29</sup> When there will be a fourth part to The Jewish-Christian Reality remains to be seen.<sup>30</sup> A clarification of the link between his major concept of covenant and that of creation might assist his argument.

Van Buren's movements could be interpreted as the searchings of a man who found no solace in stark pessimism of the human condition and the seeming inactivity of God in the world, and who desperately needed the confidence of a religious tradition that retained both belief in God despite overwhelming evidence of God's inactivity and a strong sense of the significance of human responsibility and freedom. This he found in Judaism.<sup>31</sup> It seems appropriate to say that it is not only to be found in Judaism. It should also be available in a Christianity willing to learn from Judaism.

It is deeply significant to consider whether his approach to the God-Israel relation in the Jewish covenant bears the same patterning as that of the God-Humanity relation in classic incarnational Christology. Having once trained his mind to look for such patterns he cannot leave them behind. It is a pity that he opts for the Jewish pattern *replacing* the Christian pattern, rather than recognising them as isomorphic in their respective

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<sup>29</sup> My copy of Part 1 declares Part 4 intended. My copy of Part 3 declares itself the 'third and central' part of the work. Will the prophecy be fulfilled before this thesis is finalised?

<sup>30</sup> Van Buren in "Covenantal Pluralism?" in Common Ground 1990 No.3 pp 21-27, p 21 seems both to keep the possibility open and to argue that a fourth is unnecessary.

<sup>31</sup> see Haynes op. cit. pp 162-3.

systems.<sup>32</sup>

### Conclusion

Van Buren's work represents a milestone in Protestant rethinking vis-à-vis Judaism. However, its overall thrusts have been roundly criticised. In this all too brief analysis of his A Theology of the Jewish-Christian Reality there have been isolated a number of key areas of concern. Specifically it has seemed appropriate to engage with his vigorous criticisms of Chalcedonian Christology for squeezing out both the story and the context of Israel for interpreting Jesus. In this way he was found guilty of misrepresenting the subtleties of classical Christology and of trying to replicate in a Jewish covenant context what such a Christology already achieves in a creation context.

Then with the help of a number of very perceptive reviewers of van Buren's work, we found that some very serious charges can be brought against his work. The first is that it normalises just one period of Israel's history and presents Judaism as the most authentic way of being human, thus attracting the charge of 'anonymous Judaism'. The second is that it 'ontologizes Judaism' as part of a process of evacuating religious authority from Jesus Christ to replace it with the authority of the People Israel.

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<sup>32</sup> See Ch 9 for a detailed explanation of Isomorphisms.

The most perceptive analysis came from the Jewish writer Peter Haas who saw van Buren as part of a wave of Christian writers trapped between the competing poles of supersessionism and ontologizing Judaism. In an attempt to avoid supersessionism, van Buren moves almost completely to what is proposed as the other extreme, namely ontologizing Judaism.

It remains for others to judge whether this thesis similarly demonstrates the dilemma of 'supersessionism or ontologization'. However, having worked through such a perceptive analysis one should be grateful that 'forewarned is forearmed'. It seems that one is saved a little from this dilemma if one holds that Judaism and Christianity are now theologically and liturgically distinct. This would appear to be the only way to avoid Christian theologising of Judaism and yet still allow Christianity to retain a theological and liturgical element to its self-understanding. To allow that similar patterns in different systems are isomorphic should be to allow comparisons without undue theologising.

In the meantime, let Rosemary Radford Ruether have the last incisive word:

Christianity very much needs a theology that can affirm its experience of redemption in Christ without negating the Jewish people and its ongoing covenant with God. But van Buren has failed in significant ways to write that theology.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ruether op. cit. p 323.

SECTION THREE :

THE HOLINESS OF THE JEWISH ASSEMBLY:  
OF VITAL CONCERN FOR A 'CHURCH WITH ISRAEL'

The Holiness of the Jewish Assembly:Of Vital Concern for a 'Church with Israel'

This section continues the investigation into a trinitarian christology. It focuses on the link between corporate holiness and atonement theology in order to integrate concepts of sanctification and salvation. We propose a concept of Christ as 'divine/human communal point of gracious interchange'. The concept of *isomorphism* is introduced.

Chapter 7 demonstrates how easy it is to have a Christian pneumatology which is overtly supersessionary in relation to Judaism. If holiness is a *system of meaning particularly associated with separation and order*, then it is all too easy to understand one's group as the exclusive locus of divine concern. Sociological theories show how ecstatic religion can be an attack on an established order. Paul's conversion can be understood by Alan F Segal as a change in focusing community. Jacob Neusner argues that Paul's notion of 'Israel after the Spirit' was in tension with the other notions of Israel of the time. Marie Isaacs argues that Πνεῦμα is a theological term used in anti-Jewish polemic in early Christianity. Observing such a range of tactics one might consider rephrasing Ruether's words on christology for pneumatology: *how can Christians say that the*



*Spirit comes to the Church without also saying "and the Jews be damned"?* Jesus encouraged his hearers to reflect on their allegiance to Torah in ways which upheld both Torah and Jewish community holiness. An open question is posited at this stage which runs throughout this section of the thesis: how far can a 'Church with Israel' affirm Jewish corporate holiness?

Chapter 8 considers the case that the anti-Jewish myth is perpetuated not just in the patristic period but also in the modern period. The work of Karl Barth and Thomas F Torrance on atonement is scrutinised especially in its portrayal of Judaism. In support of the case we draw on Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt, Bertold Klappert, and Stephen Haynes. The case has to be carefully argued for Barth is aware that anti-semitism is a sin. Nonetheless he has been charged of it himself. At the very least there is an unhelpful dialectical tension in his work. In Church Dogmatics the Jew acts as a mirror of human sinfulness, and the Synagogue acts as the Church of the scapegoat and a revelation of divine judgement. Throughout, Barth's criterion in assessing Judaism is the Synagogue's rejection of Jesus Christ as her Messiah. She is blamed for the schism in the 'one people of God', and the onus is on her to repair the damage to the 'gaping hole in the body of Christ'. Jewish Christians, those who do confess Jesus Christ as the long-awaited Messiah of the Synagogue and join the Church, function as the only obedient Jews. Stephen Haynes suggests that Barth is traumatised by the Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah of Israel. Certainly Barth displays great

reluctance to interpret this Jewish 'No' in any positive theological light. At the very least this is perpetuating a Christian system which regards Jews as participating in their inheritance (the election of Israel) only after positive response to Jesus as Messiah.

Chapter 9 proposes a methodology for comparing the now separate Jewish and Christian religious communities. It draws from a concept in mathematics of *isomorphism*. An isomorphic joke, for instance, is a joke with *the same dynamic interrelationship of operations but in a different context*. Quite different kinds of operations can be associated by this concept. It entails no suggestion of influence from one system on another. The interrelationship under consideration concerns for the Christian the sinlessness of the corporate Christ at the Eucharist: and for the Jew the holiness of *Knesset Israel* on Yom Kippur. It might then be possible on the basis of isomorphisms for a Christian used to recognising dynamic interrelation to affirm *Knesset Israel as an isomorph of Christ*. The holiness of the corporate concept is so central to the Jewish system that Joseph Soloveitchik can suggest that *belief in the Messiah is linked to belief in Knesset Israel*. This helps illuminate the tensions of Messianic Judaism: trying to put oneself forward as Jewish while affirming the holiness of the Christian corporate concept, not the Jewish corporate concept.

Ch 7 The Development of a Pneumatology in the move from a  
'Church against Israel' towards a 'Church with Israel'

This chapter argues that the holiness of the Jewish people can be positively handled by modern Christian theology. A church aware of its need of self-understanding as 'Church with Israel' will treat carefully those historical texts which handle Jewish holiness in a negative, even polemical, way. A case will be made that theological arguments were employed which tend towards supersessionism in not just *christology* but also pneumatology and ecclesiology.

It is particularly the community holiness of Judaism which should be positively treated by a 'Church with Israel'. For this would be to bear in mind Jesus' own positive attitude towards Torah and the holiness of his own Jewish community. To argue for moves from a 'Church against Israel' to a 'Church with Israel' is to argue for reform. The question of who is arguing for reform is bound to arise. An analysis of Congar's work on reform in the Church suggests **holiness** of successful reformers is a key element.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> see Diane Jagdeo OP Holiness and Reform of the Church in the Writings of Yves Congar OP PhD Catholic University of America 1986. It is also important for intending reformers to avoid confrontation over the holiness of the reformer, leading to a breakaway movements.

Concepts of holiness vary quite radically between communities and within communities.<sup>2</sup> The arguments around competing truth claims in pluralist societies should include an examination of differing conceptions of community holiness. There will be tensions if one community's conception of community holiness undercuts the holiness of other particular faith communities.

God's world is set up so that holiness is an achievable situation. Each tradition can point to holy men and women. Often they are marginal people. This may be because there is something awesome about holiness. Otto uses the terminology *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* of the holy: holiness is a tremendous but fascinating mystery.<sup>3</sup> The concepts of Christ and Torah in their respective Christian and Jewish traditions set up a Creation and Redemption pattern wherein holiness is achievable. This is manifested as regular overall 'moves in the right direction'.

Holiness need not indicate lack of conflict with the community: indeed sometimes the reverse. The prophets were often in tension with their communities, but their holiness was not in doubt. Most importantly, they spoke from within their community. Tension mediated by one committed to the system in dispute feels

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<sup>2</sup> See John G Gammie Holiness in Israel Fortress Press, Minneapolis 1989 (Overtures to Biblical Theology series) for a guide to the understandings of holiness characteristic of priestly, prophetic, wisdom and apocalyptic traditions in the Old Testament.

<sup>3</sup> Rudolf Otto in The Idea of the Holy: An inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational trans John W Harvey OUP 1923 2nd ed. 1950.

very different from criticism from without.

More than anything, however, holiness is about system. Mary Douglas' insight of systems of holiness as instruments of social control played an important role in Chapter 4.

### Holiness as System

In the Old Testament holiness is a positive cultic or moral condition of God, people, things, places, and time.<sup>4</sup> It may be an inherent condition or be achieved through ritual means.<sup>5</sup> In the New Testament holiness is an attribute of God that the people of God are urged to reflect in their lives.<sup>6</sup> One example of both Old Testament and New Testament use will be discussed with its significance for our present concerns.

a) The system of the Priestly writer.

Mary Douglas has put forward some very influential theories on the pollution and taboo associated with the holiness system

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<sup>4</sup> David P Wright "Holiness in the Old Testament" in Anchor Bible Dictionary ed. David Noel Freedman Doubleday, New York Vol 3 1992 pp 237-249.

<sup>5</sup> F H Gorman The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and the Status of Priestly Theology SJOTS Sheffield.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Jr Hodgson "Holiness in the New Testament" in Anchor Bible Dictionary ed. David Noel Freedman Doubleday, New York Vol 3 1992 pp 249-254.

in the priestly writer, notably Leviticus.<sup>7</sup> She uncovers the *system of meaning* underlying the prohibitions on eating animals which do not conform to the accepted classes. That profound system of meanings meant that:

the dietary laws would have been like signs which at every turn inspired meditation on the oneness, purity and completeness of God. By rules of avoidance holiness was given a physical expression in every encounter with the animal kingdom and at every meal.<sup>8</sup>

Holiness for the system of the priestly writer also entailed separation of Israel from the nations, of those who had been sanctified by accepting the Torah and those who had not.<sup>9</sup> Whether that system necessitates a hierarchy of value remains a matter of ongoing concern.

Douglas notes almost in passing that Christianity represents a system encapsulating separation from Judaism. In a comment on the situation of Jews in England, she remarks:

(Jews in English society) ... Belief in their sinister but undefinable advantages in commerce justifies discrimination against them - whereas their real offense is always to have been outside the formal structure of Christendom.<sup>10</sup>

The implications behind that last phrase 'their real offense is always to have been outside the structure of Christendom' is

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<sup>7</sup> Mary Douglas Purity and Danger: An analysis of the concept of pollution and taboo Routledge + Kegan Paul 1966.

<sup>8</sup> Douglas op. cit. p 57.

<sup>9</sup> Philip Peter Jensen Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World JSOTS Sup No 106, Sheffield 1992.

<sup>10</sup> Douglas op. cit. p 104.

taken very seriously in this thesis. Throughout we have avoided being distracted by explanations of the anti-Judaic myth other than the systemic and theological-symbolic.

b) The system of Acts/ Galatians<sup>11</sup>

Acts presents a particularly idealized form of the early situation.<sup>12</sup> In the incorporation of Gentiles to the assembly in Acts 10 - 15 the use of Spirit language is significant. A case is made for Gentile integration and the matter is supposedly resolved at the Jerusalem council. The texts in Galatians 3-5 also reveal the complexity of the decision to push for gentile integration, and the theological use of Spirit language in justifying that move. The opening narrative of the book of Acts at Pentecost provides another use of Spirit language to authorize this outward movement, leaving behind some communities and forming others.

In these discussions of the makeup of communities, the monolithic use of 'Jewish Christians' should be resisted. For example Simon C Mimouni argues that they include a variety of options: "Jews who recognised the messiahship of Jesus, who

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<sup>11</sup> The critical questions of these texts should not be put in abeyance. The variations between Acts 15's irenical portrayal and the contention behind Galatians are well known. In Galatians there is a notable lack of reference to any agreement on minimum standards for gentile integration.

<sup>12</sup> This is likely to be far from the historical reality, especially in its portrayal of Peter. It is a pity that the canon has included so few insights from communities to whom the Pauline mission was marginal.

recognised or did not recognise the divinity of Christ, and who continued to observe Torah".<sup>13</sup> Raymond Brown has also argued for at least four different kinds of Jewish Christianity.<sup>14</sup> These are:

1. those who practised full observance of the Mosaic Law, including circumcision, as necessary for receiving the fullness of salvation brought by Jesus Christ,
2. those who did not require gentile converts to be circumcised but did require them to keep some Jewish purity laws,
3. those who did not insist on either circumcision or Jewish food laws, and
4. those who did not insist on either circumcision or food laws, and who saw no abiding significance in the cult of the Jerusalem Temple.

Theological use of Spirit language is integral to the development of Christology/ies in openness to the Gentile mission. Spirit language functions hermeneutically in the legitimation of a Christological reading of scripture and theologically for the pneumatological benefits of Christ's human exaltation to believers.

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<sup>13</sup> Simon C Mimouni *"Pour une définition nouvelle du judéo-christianisme ancien"* in *NTS* 38 No 2 1992 pp 161-186, p 184.

<sup>14</sup> R E Brown *"Not Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity but Types of Jewish/Gentile Christianity"* in *CBQ* Vol 45 No 1 1983 pp 74-79.



These New Testament texts provide a prime example of David Kelsey's insight that a theological position depends upon a judgement as to the mode of God's presence.<sup>15</sup> A judgment is made by some observers as to God's active presence in the gentiles after guidance in visions and ecstatic spirit possession. This is interpreted by the dominant story-telling-community as prompting the question of baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. Baptism signals admission to the assembly of those whose system of meaning and focus of identity is in Jesus Christ. But this community still had to decide: *admission of Gentiles on what basis* and with what ground rules? The implications of various possible options will prove significant to our theme of holiness as system.

Options and their likely consequence include:

1. No ground rules. This would leave the community open to disrepute as libertines.
2. Full Jewish law including male circumcision. The traditional

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<sup>15</sup> D H Kelsey The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1975. "At the root of a theological position there is *an imaginative act in which a theologian tries to catch up in a single metaphorical judgement the full complexity of God's presence in, through, and over against the activities comprising the church's common life and which, in turn, both provides the discrimen against which the theology criticises the church's current forms of speech and life, and determines the peculiar 'shape' of the 'position'*" p 163 italics mine.

proselyte route.<sup>16</sup> This was considered ruled out by events. One community in which this would have been possible was a community described as the 'Jacobites' because of their link with James, the brother of Jesus. They remained in Jerusalem. However, the community represented here had let go of so many 'identity factors of Second Temple Judaism' <sup>17</sup> in the interests of mission and of focalizing the message around Jesus Christ that this 'full Jewish law' option would not have been possible.

3. Partial law, a lighter commitment as, for example, women. This would be similar to the status of God-fearers who attend synagogue worship and identify with Jewish community. It was not accepted here. Gentiles identify here with Christ *rather than* Jewish community (Christ/*Knesset Israel* parallel) or see Christ as the fulfilment or encapsulation of the Jewish community (the 'new Israel' supersessionary view). The logic can be anywhere along a continuum from irenic imitation to polemical replacement.

4. Abstain from sexual immorality, idolatry and eating blood. This is the accepted decision.<sup>18</sup> It is grounded in a dialectic of not offending Jewish community, but equally not fundamentally

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<sup>16</sup> Whether the status and differentiation between proselytes, semi-proselytes, and God-fearers was precise at this time is however a matter of dispute.

<sup>17</sup> see Maurice P Casey From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God: The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology Cambridge, James Clarke 1991 and our Chapter 3 for a definition of the identity factors of Second Temple Judaism.

<sup>18</sup> some see in this a precursor of the Noahide covenant.

identifying with the Jewish assembly.<sup>19</sup>

These basic ground rules seem to be largely motivated by the desire not to offend the wider Jewish and Roman society. It was possible to continue keeping Torah as way of life long after Christ had become one's world-view. Keeping Torah as way of life but not world-view does not count as following Torah *qua* Torah. This community decided against following Torah *qua* Torah and sought instead a system of meaning and a focus for identity in Christ.

The move from option 3 to option 4 in the above scheme is a particularly interesting one: it relates to a change of focusing community as much as anything. We shall see in the next part of this chapter that a *change in focusing community has theological significance*. Generally the attractiveness of this move could have been connected with political reasons, with the undesirability of adult male circumcision, or similar difficulties with progressing to full status in the synagogue: "To take the final step into Judaism was a dangerous operation surgically and often politically inexpedient".<sup>20</sup> There were and are vast numbers of gentile God-fearers attached to synagogues at various stages in Jewish history.

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<sup>19</sup> It is likely that these are also conciliatory and apologetic measures in relation to the Greco-Roman authorities.

<sup>20</sup> Alan F Segal Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee Yale University Press 1990 pp 105-6.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza suggests that the early Christian missionary movements provided a particularly attractive option for *Jewish women* as well as for gentiles. For they came into an egalitarian community where admission was on the basis of confession of faith and gender-inclusive baptism.<sup>21</sup> Although presenting the egalitarian Christian community as attractive to Jewish women, she remains aware of the temptations to read Judaism negatively. Instead she argues that: "The praxis and vision of Jesus and his movement is best understood as an inner-Jewish renewal movement that presented an alternative option to dominant patriarchal structures rather than an oppositional form rejecting the values and praxis of Judaism".<sup>22</sup>

Whatever the makeup and orientation of the communities in question the predominance of Spirit language in the book of Acts suggests that this movement from synagogue God-fearer to house-church member was interpreted theologically. The political and social factors are glossed, streamlined and simplified in order to throw the theological factors into high relief.<sup>23</sup> The theological interest remained at the "refusal of the Jews to

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<sup>21</sup> "While the baptismal declaration in Galatians 3.28 offered a new religious vision to women and slaves, it denied all male religious prerogatives in the Christian community based on gender-roles" Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins SCM 1983, p 217.

<sup>22</sup> Fiorenza op. cit. p 107.

<sup>23</sup> Miriam Taylor shows how political and social factors are subsumed under theological interest in the work of the early church fathers The Jews in the writings of the Early Church Fathers (150 -312): Men of Straw or Formidable Rivals? Oxford Dphil 1991 C10338.

accept the messiahship of Jesus". Anti-Judaic systems generally have the messiahship of Jesus as a major focus.

#### Paul's Conversion: As Change of Focusing Community

Paul handles the influx of large numbers of Gentiles in ways which undermine the authority of Torah and seriously threaten prevailing conceptions of community holiness.

These difficulties arise because Paul attempts to form new mixed communities of Jews and Gentiles, taking the boundary marker of these new communities as baptism on confession of Jesus Christ. In this way the focus of meaning is Jesus Christ and observance of Torah *qua* Torah can no longer take first priority even if Torah as way of life continues. Movement along the continuum from Jesus Christ as symbolic *imitation* of Torah and *Knesset Israel* to Jesus Christ as symbolic *replacement* for Torah and *Knesset Israel* is justified by a replacement pneumatology as well as more overtly Christological concerns. Many Jews were offended by Paul's shifting priorities and openly opposed him.

Paul's attempts to forge a mixed community relate to the self-understanding generated by his conversion. For Paul, conversion was bound up with a different conception of what constituted *Knesset Israel* and a change of community. Alan Segal has made a major contribution to the study of the Judaisms of the New Testament period by exploring concepts of **conversion**.<sup>24</sup> He

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<sup>24</sup> Segal op. cit.

takes the concepts of conversion used today and examines their relevance for understanding the activity of sects in general and Paul's new communities in particular. In considering the portrayal of Paul's conversion in Acts and its significance for the communities Paul founded, Segal draws upon sociological analyses.

IM Lewis's use of possession and power in groups peripheral to power is of particular interest to Segal. Ecstatic religion could function as an attack on an established order:

When claims for ecstasy occur in groups peripheral to power, they tend to function as bids to short-circuit the legitimate organisation of power. In contrast, when spirit possession or ecstasy occurs close to the centre of a political movement, it is highly controlled, usually by an established religious authority. *Ecstatic religion represents a peripheral strategy in first century Judaism; it was an oblique attack against established order, as when the Qumran sectarians practised ecstatic ascent.*<sup>25</sup>

Paul's ecstatic experiences and notably his conversion experience serve as legitimation of his apostleship in his letters. He also upholds the spiritual progress of his, increasingly Gentile, communities as further evidence of his apostleship.<sup>26</sup>

In Acts whole communities are presented as closely modelled on Paul's own experiences.<sup>27</sup> Segal observes that Paul is used as the model for gentile conversion in ways that are quite foreign

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<sup>25</sup> Segal op. cit. p 15, my italics.

<sup>26</sup> "You yourselves are our letter of recommendation ... you show that you are a letter from Christ ... written with the Spirit of the living God ... " 2 Cor 3.2

<sup>27</sup> Segal ibid.

to his own experience.<sup>28</sup> When the strategy of a peripheral individual trying to influence an established order is overplayed onto the case for large-scale Gentile conversion the difficulties cannot be hidden. Spirit language can quickly descend into polemic: "The Gentiles are acceptable to the Spirit of God, so if they are not acceptable to you, you must not have the Spirit of God with and in you".

As the Pauline community of Jews and Gentiles grows quickly and does not gain acceptance in quite the peaceful way described in Acts, the use of Spirit language extends to descriptions of the community itself. One of the Christian responses to decreasing involvement in the Temple assemblies at Jerusalem was located around regarding the newly formed community as a 'Temple of the Holy Spirit'.<sup>29</sup> This is not merely a lack of interest in geographical locations and buildings, but a potentially polemical comment on the holiness of respective communities.<sup>30</sup> The tragic events of 65-70 CE added a bitter twist to the theological impetus of these arguments.

Alan Segal has noted the logic being used by Paul in ethical situations, using the Body of Christ and temple of the Holy Spirit concepts:

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<sup>28</sup> Segal op. cit. p 273.

<sup>29</sup> This kind of thinking is found in Paul and also in the Fourth Gospel.

<sup>30</sup> and perhaps a stance on the authority of religious figures such as the High Priest.

By saying that the body is a temple and that God's Spirit dwells in it, Paul has transferred God's presence from the physical temple, the centre of the purity rules, to the believers, and the community to which they belong.<sup>31</sup>

This also links Jesus to the authority of the Temple, even if not quite simply identifying him as the Temple. The potential for a replacement pneumatology is then well established.

In these last two sections we have the building blocks of a Christian system of social control through the expression of theological ideas. These theological ideas express anti-Judaism and carry great potential for anti-semitism.<sup>32</sup>

#### Spirit Language and Pneumatological Supersessionism

Marie Isaacs has drawn attention to the role of Spirit language in the polemical theology of many New Testament books.<sup>33</sup> She demonstrated that Πνεῦμα is predominantly a theological concept, and specifically that Πνεῦμα is a term used in anti-Jewish polemic.

A 'replacement christology' and a 'replacement pneumatology' are frequently mutually supportive. There may be a

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<sup>31</sup> Segal op. cit. p 168.

<sup>32</sup> See Rosemary Radford Ruether Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism Seabury New York 1975 Ch 4 'The Social Incorporation of the Negative Myth of the Jews in Christendom' from Constantine onwards, pp 183-225.

<sup>33</sup> Marie E Isaacs The Concept of Spirit: A Study of Pneuma in Hellenistic Judaism and its Bearing on the NT Heythrop Monograph No.1 1976 - see especially Ch 11. She concludes that the pneumatology of the New Testament is indebted to the figure of Wisdom in Hellenistic Judaism.



pneumatologically justified *christological* reading of scripture. At the very least there will be a pneumatologically justified focusing on certain 'texts within the texts' or at least 'traditions within traditions'.<sup>34</sup> A development is under way which culminates in the formation of the New Testament Canon, seen in Chapter 1 to be a carrier of anti-Judaism.

Many writers have analyzed the strategies and forms of a *christological* supersessionism, the classic line being from Jules Isaac's The Teaching of Contempt through Rosemary Radford Ruether's Faith and Fratricide.<sup>35</sup> Fewer writers have incorporated also pneumatological supersessionism and the manipulation of community symbols to yield ecclesiological supersessionism. Ruether's analysis contents itself with unveiling christological supersessionism, looking no further for other replications of supersessionary thinking. It has also attracted criticism for exalting uncritically the messianic-prophetic tradition.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> It is debatable whether one can speak of texts at this early stage.

<sup>35</sup> Jules Isaac *Genèse de l'Antisémitisme* Calmann-Levy, Paris 1956 *L'Enseignement de Mépris ET The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism* trans. Helen Weaver, Holt, Rhinehat + Winston, New York 1964. Rosemary Radford Ruether Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism Seabury New York 1975.

<sup>36</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza accuses Ruether of ignoring the prophets' involvement in patriarchal polemic and the suppression of the Goddess cult. In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins SCM 1983, p 17. However, it is fair to say that Ruether demonstrates development on this point in her later work.

There are strong powers resisting moving too far away from the simple picture of a christological break with Judaism. This simple picture writes 'the Jews' out of salvation history on the single issue of Jesus' messiahship. It does not like to admit that there were many other theological concepts from within Judaism which were gradually appropriated for Christianity and then denied to Judaism: election, Torah, Temple, Spirit, and community concepts (notably Israel). This did not happen all at once. We have spoken of movement along a continuum from irenic imitation to polemic replacement and the ability to keep Torah as way of life long after losing it as world view. Harold Weiss documents members of the Johannine community having to make gradual decisions concerning what had been clear identity markers of Jews, such as circumcision, food laws, and the Sabbath. It is noteworthy that they seem to have dealt with each one differently, and yet also similarly.<sup>37</sup>

However, as each issue was raised the gradual moves away from Torah as central focus became more apparent. In this way Christ begins to develop both Torah and Knesset Israel roles. Jacob Neusner argues that Paul is working with a notion of Israel ("Israel" after the Spirit) which is in tension with the Jewish systems of the time. Neusner considers the concept of Israel as

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<sup>37</sup> Harold Weiss "The Sabbath in the Fourth Gospel" in JBL 110 No 2 1991 pp 311-321, pp 320-1. He observes the tools of spiritualization, allegorization, relativization, and eschatologization.

determinative of a Jewish system.<sup>38</sup>

There needs to be a recognition that a number of interlinked judgements are developed concurrently so that christological, pneumatological and ecclesial strategies mutually support and reinforce one another. *Replacement thinking readily replicates itself and forms a mutually supportive entirety.* A mutually supporting web of supersessionisms is well underway forming the 'Church versus Israel' attitude.

Van Buren admits that the use of Spirit language had some connection with the 'anti-Judaic Church', but he does little to more effectively analyse the situation. His theological 'discrimen' leaves him in a poor position to harness such Spirit language in a more positive way. His Christ in Context is severely underweighted in its pneumatology and relies heavily on Geoffrey Lampe's God as Spirit in support of its subordinationist position.<sup>39</sup>

When the Church speaks of the Holy Spirit, it is claiming that its own life is also part of the story of the one God. The claim to have a place in the story of the one God, however, has consequences which the anti-Judaic Church could not see, but which a Church wishing to acknowledge the covenant between God and Israel will have to develop.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Jacob Neusner in Judaism and its Social Metaphors: Israel in the History of Jewish Thought CUP 1989 and First Principles of Systemic Analysis: The Case of Judaism within the History of Religion University Press of America, Lanham New York 1987, Ch 7 in particular.

<sup>39</sup> Paul van Buren A Theology of the Jewish-Christian Reality Pt 3. Harper and Row San Francisco 1988 p 264 ff. He acknowledges his debt to Lampe's exegesis at p 264. G W H Lampe God as Spirit Clarendon, Oxford 1977.

<sup>40</sup> op. cit. p 266.

He is right to suggest that a church conscious of needing to be 'Church with Israel' will take particular care of its use of Spirit language. However, van Buren does not recognise the recurrent link between a pneumatological reading of that 'story of the one God' and fundamental decisions about suitable hearers of that story. These fundamental decisions include those concerning Christ, Torah and the different Israel-concepts as the locus of communal holiness. The story diverges as it is read in the light of *assumptions about suitable hearers and suitable speakers*.<sup>41</sup> These decisions lead to positions which will resist his presentation of the communities linked through allegiance to the same story. His is a far too irenic construction on an incompletely radical analysis.<sup>42</sup>

Openness to the predominantly liturgical hearing and speaking of texts will help illuminate these important points. It is for such reasons that the Eucharist forms a central focus for this Christian self-interpretation. A Christian hears the 'story of the One God' in a liturgical setting of a group of Christians who have traditionally seen themselves as the new Israel, or at least the spiritual Israel. To really get some

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<sup>41</sup> as for instance Matthew 6.32 uses the 'not us' terminology of  $\tau\acute{\alpha}\ \xi\theta\nu\eta$  gentiles for his largely Jewish hearers.

<sup>42</sup> His model addresses a situation where Jews and Christians come together to study texts outside their community liturgies. Such practices are regarded with suspicion by many in their respective faith communities, largely because they encourage artificial contexts which obscure foundational community commitments. This raises the interesting question of gaps between church or synagogue and academy. The question of studying biblical texts in a university setting with students of many faiths and none can be regarded with suspicion.

movement towards a 'Church with Israel' mentality the eucharistic liturgy will have to ameliorate the 'Church versus Israel' attitude of the New Testament readings, and the lectionary's reinforcement of the canonical division between Old and New Testaments.

### Jesus as Upholder of Torah and Preserver of Jewish Community Holiness

The Church is now able to reflect on the significance of Judaism to the human Jesus in ways it did not consider necessary prior to World War II and the subsequent openness to dialogue represented by Vatican II's Nostra Aetate. The effects will be particularly felt in christology, ecclesiology, sacramentology and anthropology.

Jesus appeared to adhere to the regulations concerning male attendance at the pilgrim festivals, sacrificial offerings and the other regulations related to the holiness of the Jewish people, notably the Sabbath.<sup>43</sup> Of the two examples of Sabbath-breaking regularly cited neither is convincing once stripped of secondary polemical use. Mark 3. 1-6 and parallels has nothing which constitutes work since the man merely stretches out his

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<sup>43</sup> EP Sanders Jesus and Judaism SCM 1985 pp 264-269 argues for "no substantial conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees with regard to Sabbath, food, and purity laws" p 265.

hand.<sup>44</sup> The Sabbath theme of life as preeminent concern is well preserved. In John 5 the nearest you could get is that Jesus encouraged *another* to carry his bed and so Jesus might be construed *in extremis* as undermining the Sabbath.

We will consider Jesus' attitudes as an insider to the holiness of the Jewish community. Community holiness is particularly strained by situations of murder or adultery. Although there are grave textual difficulties with the narrative of Jesus' encounter with the adulterous woman in John 8, it is a theologically instructive case even as a pericope from a later period.<sup>45</sup> J Duncan M Derrett accepts it as "a piece of authentic tradition going back to the beginnings of the church, though it is extracanonical".<sup>46</sup>

In its intentional linkage with the canonical gospel John 8 is instructive in providing an insight into the attitudes seen to be in continuity with Jesus' own. It may also be in continuity with the attitude of some of the Jewish groups of the day.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> It must be noted that "there is no actual transgression of the law on the part of Jesus" and ... "The matter is quite simple: no work was performed" Sanders op. cit. pp 265-266.

<sup>45</sup> C K Barratt The Gospel According to St John SPCK 2nd edn. 1978 1st edn. 1955 "it represents the character and method of Jesus as they are revealed elsewhere" p 590.

<sup>46</sup> J Duncan M Derrett Law in the New Testament Darton, Longman + Todd 1970. Ch 7 pp 156-188.

<sup>47</sup> C K Barratt draws attention to an unpublished essay by D Daube suggesting that in its original context the slogan "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to cast a stone at her" is directed against the unfair treatment of women by men and their laws; and that it is representative of a strong movement in Tannaitic Judaism" Barratt op. cit. p 590.

Derrett treats it as a test for Jesus arising out of the setting of a trap for the woman. Derrett emphasises the irregularity of the situation for this was no regular trial.<sup>48</sup> The constitutional method of seeking a penalty against her would have been to approach the Roman governor. He underlines the doubt in the case: "doubt whether the husband has not deliberately engineered a situation, which implies failure to prevent the crime from being committed; doubt whether the husband and/or the witnesses have not corruptly allowed the adulterer to escape; and lastly the virtual certainty that the witnesses 'stood by' and allowed the crime to be commenced, and proceeded with".<sup>49</sup>

There are at least 4 options open to Jesus. Each has important consequences:

1. Do nothing - and lose respect of crowd as a teacher.
2. Let her go as 'choose life' principle - ignores law and community holiness.
3. Uphold Mosaic law in principle (despite lack of evidence that she had been warned - required for practice) - encourage the desire of a zealous minority for a public lynching.

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<sup>48</sup> "the only court which had jurisdiction to try her by Jewish law seems to have been deprived of jurisdiction in capital cases not long before." A note refers to M. San 41a = Soncino 267 (closed c. AD 30). "... The Sanhedrin was not allowed to hear cases involving the death penalty, at any rate in Jerusalem itself" Derrett op. cit. pp 166-7.

<sup>49</sup> Derrett op. cit. p 164.

4. Get hearers to reflect on their situation while encouraging her to 'move in the right direction' - none remain to condemn.

How he achieves his aim of encouraging his hearers to reflect on their situation is expertly done. Derrett proposes some interesting texts for Jesus to have written in the dust at his feet. For the first he suggests Ex 23.16 "Place not thy hand with the wicked (to be a false witness)" and for the second Ex 23.7a "From a false matter keep far (and the innocent and righteous slay not; for I shall not acquit the guilty)".<sup>50</sup> These would emphasise the stress on motive and personal righteousness seen also in Jesus' spoken words. Even if the charge is true, it is likely that the witnesses have conspired with a jealous or mean husband who should instead "have helped his wife to avoid adultery in a spirit of loving kindness, and not conspired (as would seem to be the case) to effect her destruction; and her 'brothers' should consider whether their conduct is conniving with his scheme and does not make them such as 'place their hand with the wicked' (Ex 23.1b)".<sup>51</sup>

'Go and sin no more' is the response of the gospel Jesus once there is none left to condemn. Someone is willing to give her back some self-respect and autonomy. He encourages her conscious intention not to repeat having effectively given her

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<sup>50</sup> Derrett op. cit. pp 178-184.

<sup>51</sup> Derrett op. cit. p 182.



a public warning.<sup>52</sup> He gives space for her decision to be made. He encourages a mode of repentance but does not require it as a precondition for concern.<sup>53</sup> He is content with gradual moves towards holiness of life.

What is particularly interesting for our present concerns is to notice Jesus' sensitive handling of the link between individual and community holiness. Jesus appeared to be able to achieve all of the following simultaneously:

- a) keep the estranged individual in touch with their community,
- b) encourage all members of that community to admit their own need to grow in holiness,
- c) without undermining the spiritual holiness and authority of that community.<sup>54</sup>

Although not involved in direct interpretation of the Law, Jesus upholds the Torah and encourages all of his hearers to observe it by 'moving in the right direction' towards it. In this way he could uphold the purity of Torah, and the sinlessness of the

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<sup>52</sup> Derrett makes much of the significance of Jesus' actions being "she was sent away with the warning to which she had been entitled (11c), but had not had" p 186.

<sup>53</sup> Sanders "he admitted sinners to the kingdom without requiring the lawful signs of repentance" op. cit. p 267. Vermes The Religion of Jesus the Jew SCM 1993 finds this distinction unlikely to have much foundation in Galilean Judaism. Nonetheless it could be taken to have significance in more formal contexts.

<sup>54</sup> Derrett suggests that "had she been warned and had the accusers been sinless her stoning could have taken place with his approval" p 187.

community, while allowing that each member of that community fell short of God's revealed ideal. It is particularly the holding together of the holiness of the group concept together with the failures of each individual which will prove a major focus of chapter 9. This sensitivity and balance in Jesus' handling of points of Jewish community holiness becomes outright tension in Paul's handling of groups of Gentile converts.

This more positive attitude to the Jewishness of Jesus should encourage a more positive attitude towards modern-day Jewry. Evidence for the holiness of other faith communities is generally an external matter whereas evidence for the holiness of Judaism is an internal matter to Christianity. Should not the positive attitude of Jesus toward the holiness of Israel take priority over the theological tension of the later Matthew and Paul?<sup>55</sup>

The 'Church with Israel' should be able to leave behind as much contingent polemic as possible. There is, however, a strong case for regarding the polemic as theologically inevitable, integrally related to the Christian confession:

Is it possible to say "Jesus is Messiah" without, implicitly or explicitly, saying at the same time "and the Jews be damned"?<sup>56</sup>

For the present discussion this questioning might also be extended to the Christian confession of the Holy Spirit. One might indeed also say:

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<sup>55</sup> and of the Church Fathers.

<sup>56</sup> Ruether op. cit. p 246.

How can one say that the Spirit comes to the Church without saying "and the Jews be damned"?

It is our contention that the polemic involved in the 'Church against Israel' stage cannot be ignored, but that there is room to move nearer towards a 'Church with Israel' position.

### Conclusions

Various analyses of the use of Spirit language showed how easily such talk could be used for either simple polemic or more subtle 'replacement pneumatologies'. In the light of this fact it is important to harness Spirit talk for a more positive portrayal of the relationship between faith communities.

Jesus' attitude towards *community holiness* provided useful 'pointers in the right direction'. It was suggested that Jesus was able to uphold the Torah at the same time as encouraging all his hearers to 'move in the right direction' towards it. Such 'moves in the right direction' are linked with repentance and renewal. Ways of coping with modern Jewish and Christian approaches to repentance and renewal will be covered in Chapter 9.

Throughout the chapter there have been pointers towards a more positive Christian view of Jewish community holiness, drawing from the character and practise of Jesus and a careful critique of the practice of some early Christian missionary movements. The evidence for the community holiness of Judaism can

properly be heard as an internal claim because of the special closeness of Judaism to Christianity. To hear such a claim is part of the process of reform. Reform is more likely to succeed if the pressing decision is perceived as arising internally rather than externally and if the reformer is deemed holy by the community to be reformed.

Jesus upheld Torah *qua* Torah and the community holiness of Israel. Paul was not able to achieve such a delicate balance, largely due to the enormity of the task he sets himself: arguing for the integrity of a mixed community of Jews and Gentiles while his credentials for reform-from-within are in doubt. A Christianity focused around the humanity of Christ in its worship can follow Jesus' attitudes in seeking to develop a strategy for moving from a 'Church against Israel' nearer to a 'Church with Israel'.

To move towards this position would require the conscious cultivation of a 'Church with Israel' attitude. However, this achievement is dependent on the right analysis of, and response to, the 'Church versus Israel' stage. It was argued that both van Buren and Ruether's analyses of the 'Church versus Israel' stage observes only christological supersessionism and therefore overlooks other manifestations of supersessionism in pneumatology and ecclesiology. Having now explored pneumatological supersessionism it is ecclesiological supersessionism which forms the undercurrent of the next chapter.

## Ch 8 Example of a Modern Anti-Judaic Christian Myth:

### An Anti-Judaic 'Left-Hand' to Atonement Theology

In this chapter examples of Christian atonement theology will be explored. They have been chosen because they illustrate, in my opinion, an anti-Judaic 'left-hand'. Rosemary Radford Ruether has spoken of an anti-Judaic left hand to Christology.<sup>1</sup> To suggest that there can be an anti-Judaic left hand to atonement theology is a corollary of this thesis, since atonement theories are parasitic upon Christology. The particular examples chosen are the theological systems of Karl Barth in Church Dogmatics and Thomas F Torrance in The Mediation of Christ.<sup>2</sup> Although going beyond it in significant ways, Torrance is himself largely formed by the Barthian schema.

Isolating Barth as an example of an anti-Judaic myth needs defense.<sup>3</sup> He had a major role in the Confessing Church's

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<sup>1</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism Seabury New York 1975, for instance p 228. A thesis which has not gone unchallenged: see Alan T Davies ed. Anti-Semitism and the Foundations of Christianity Paulist Press, New York 1979.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas F Torrance The Mediation of Christ 2nd ed. T + T Clark, Edinburgh 1992 and 1st ed. Paternoster 1983.

<sup>3</sup> Although a recent analysis terms the Church Dogmatics "irreconcilably anti-Judaic - though not anti-Semitic" Katherine Sonderegger That Jesus Christ was born a Jew: Karl Barth's "Doctrine of Israel" Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania 1992, p 174. However, to put this into context Sonderegger considers a non-anti-Judaic Christianity impossible.

resistance to the Nazis in World War II, and had to give up his university position on account of that resistance. Nonetheless, Stephen Haynes argues for the ambiguity of Barth's position. He suggests that Barth's involvement in the Barman Declaration was aimed at condemning the German Christians, and not at expressing either solidarity with the Jews in their suffering or the need for practical opposition to Nazi policies.<sup>4</sup>

While Barth is clear that the Church must never become anti-Semitic or even 'a-Semitic' (CD II:2, p 234)<sup>5</sup>, the strains of Christian anti-Jewish rhetoric are unmistakable in his theology.<sup>6</sup>

This ambiguity in Barth's theology has also attracted comment from Jewish writers. I will begin by drawing from FE Talmage:

In his writings, especially the *Church Dogmatics*, Barth acknowledged the continuity of the Israel of old with the Israel of the present, the Jewish people. During the rise of nazism, Barth lost his position at the University of Bonn because of his theologically based opposition to the regime. ... Yet Barth's acceptance and recognition of the old Israel is dialectical. In many passages in his writings, the Jews remain recalcitrant, perfidious, and rebellious in conformity with Christian theological moulds. ... the very misery and suffering of European Jewry is called upon as a witness to Christianity.<sup>7</sup>

Talmage observes the dialectical tension in Barth's theology of Israel. Michael Wyschogrod also notes that the ambivalence of

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<sup>4</sup> Stephen R Haynes Prospects for Post-Holocaust Theology JAAR Series 77 Atlanta, Scholars Press 1991, pp 55-57.

<sup>5</sup> "A Church that becomes antisemitic or even only asemitic sooner or later suffers the loss of its faith by losing the object of it" Church Dogmatics (hereafter CD) II.2 § 34.3.

<sup>6</sup> Haynes op. cit. p 65.

<sup>7</sup> FE Talmage ed. Disputation and Dialogue: Readings in the Jewish-Christian Encounter KTAV New York 1975, p 37-38.

Barth's position considering this a *consequence of his reading of scripture*:

The truth is that Barth's position towards Jews is ambivalent. ... (there is) in Barth an antisemitism made up of two parts: the traditional anti-semitism of European Christendom ... and the anti-semitism of Christian theology. ... (The anti-semitism of Christian theology stems from the Christian) tradition that Israel, the elect people, is also from the very first a rebellious people who kills its prophets.<sup>8</sup>

Here Wyschogrod associates Barth's Christian theology with antisemitism.<sup>9</sup> This criticism of Wyschogrod's is all the more significant because he himself makes central use of the biblical election theme in his Jewish self-interpretation.<sup>10</sup> For the sake of completeness, it should be noted that some Jewish writers can also speak positively of Barth, including Wyschogrod and David Novak.<sup>11</sup> In a review of Katherine Sonderegger's That Jesus Christ was born a Jew: Karl Barth's "Doctrine of Israel", Michael Wyschogrod has recently appreciatively reinforced the ambiguity of Barth's writings:

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Wyschogrod "Why Was and Is the Theology of Karl Barth of Interest to a Jewish Theologian?" in H M Rumscheidt ed. Footnotes to a Theology: The Karl Barth Colloquium of 1972 Corporation for the Publication of Academic Studies in Religion in Canada 1974 pp 107 ff, quoted in Talmage op. cit. p 37-8.

<sup>9</sup> It is difficult to sustain a criticism of anti-Judaism whilst holding back from a charge of anti-semitism bearing in mind the cultural nature of Judaism.

<sup>10</sup> See Michael Wyschogrod The Body of Faith: Judaism as Corporeal Election New York, Seabury Press 1983. This demonstrates that it is possible for Jews to demonstrate the same attentive reading of the scriptures testifying to Israel's election without producing an antisemitic result.

<sup>11</sup> David Novak "Before Revelation: The Rabbis, Paul and Karl Barth" in Jrel 71 No.1 1991 pp 50-66.

the anti-Judaism that cannot be missed in Barth's writings. At the same time, there must also be much that is good in Barth's views on Judaism if these views constitute the background of some of the most constructive Christian writings about Judaism in this century. No such list could be drawn up from the disciples of Bultmann.<sup>12</sup>

In interacting with this theological portrayal of Israel in relation to the Church the work of Stephen Haynes and the German theologians Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt and Bernard Klappert will be used. All of these have analyzed Barth's system in relation to Israel in detail.<sup>13</sup>

The work of theological analysis will engage with the concept of salvation history and the portrayal of theological anthropology before leading onto the central section on the portrayal of atonement. Finally, it will include an analysis of the range of ecclesiological models employed by Karl Barth for the relation between Judaism and Christianity.

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<sup>12</sup> Wyschogrod Review of That Jesus Christ was born a Jew: Karl Barth's "Doctrine of Israel" by Katherine Sonderegger in ModTh Vol 9 No 3 1992 pp 306-7, p 306, referring to Helmut Gollwitzer, Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt, Bertold Klappert, and Paul van Buren each "deeply influenced by Barth and each gone beyond him in significant respects".

<sup>13</sup> Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt Die Entdeckung des Judentums für die Christliche Theology: Israel in Denken Karl Barths Chr. Kaiser Verlag München 1967; Bertold Klappert Israel und die Kirche: Erwagungen zur Israellehre Karl Barths Christian Kaiser München 1980; Haynes op. cit. For a useful summary of Barth's doctrine of Israel in Church Dogmatics from someone acquainted with Marquardt's work see the Dutch work Henk Vreekamp's Een onbedachte verhouding: De plaats van Israëi in een kerkelijke dogmatiek J H Kok, Kampen 1991. (I had conversations in English on this work with the author).



## Israel in Christian Portrayals of Salvation History

Thomas F Torrance holds that:

God's revelation of himself through the medium of Israel has provided mankind with permanent structures of thought and speech about him. Among these permanent structures let me refer to the Word and Name of God, to revelation, mercy, truth, holiness, to messiah, saviour, to prophet, priest and king, father, son, servant, to covenant, sacrifice, forgiveness, reconciliation, redemption, atonement, and those basic patterns of worship which we find set out in the ancient liturgy or in the psalms.<sup>14</sup>

It is as though the Jewish people can be shaken to generate structures of thought useful to Christian understanding of salvation-history. On this view they themselves can be laid aside as of no continuing significance. Such language encourages supersessionism.

In his portrayal of salvation history the ongoing history of the people of Israel post-Christum has little positive significance for Barth. What positive significance there is comes from the history of that minority which accepts Jesus Christ as Messiah and joins the Church.<sup>15</sup> The Jewish Christians are seen by Barth as guaranteeing the unity of the 'one people of God':<sup>16</sup>

The existence of Jewish Christians is the visible guarantee of the unity of the one people of God, which on its one side is called Israel and on its other the Church.

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas F Torrance The Mediation of Christ Paternoster 1983 p 27-28.

<sup>15</sup> This should be in tension with the Romans 11 image of gentiles being grafted into the root stock of Israel.

<sup>16</sup> As seen in the last chapter, the term Jewish Christians obscures a number of variants, both in church history and in modern times.

Alongside the Church there is still a Synagogue, existing upon the denial of Jesus Christ and on a powerless continuation of Israelite history, which entered upon fullness long ago.<sup>17</sup>

The Jewish Christians are made to stand over against a Synagogue characterized by denial and powerlessness. This distancing of Jewish Christians from Israel and the synagogue is here maintained through tight linguistic distinctions. In Barth's scheme Israel's only valid future is to identify with the Church through confession of Jesus as its Messiah:

(Israel) refuses to confirm its own election by uniting with the Church - by abandoning, that is, its self-assertion with respect to it, and breaking out into the confession of Jesus as its own and promised Messiah.<sup>18</sup>

For his analysis of the Barthian system Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt maintains that if Israel refuses to respond in this way she is dismissed from high godly significance in salvation history:

Israel is dismissed into a theologically insignificant world history,... free from the significance of high godly 'salvation history'.<sup>19</sup>

There is only one path for Jews in such a schema and that is one defined by Christians. Jewish Christians function for Barth as the only obedient Jews, the only significant Jews. Such talk has murderous implications, as Haynes suggests:

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<sup>17</sup> K Barth Dogmatics in Outline SCM 1948 p 81 German 1947.

<sup>18</sup> CD II.2 p 204.

<sup>19</sup> Marquardt op. cit. p 328 translation mine.

Barth's myths of 'Jews' and 'Jewish history' have little connection with any Jewish persons, except that where they are embraced, the myths Barth helps perpetuate can have murderous consequences for Jewish life.<sup>20</sup>

Franklin Littel puts this more bluntly: "To teach that a people's mission in God's providence is finished, that they have been relegated to the limbo of history, has murderous implications which murderers will in time spell out".<sup>21</sup>

The charge that Barth is perpetuating stock anti-Judaic myths might not be outrageous. Rather it could be in accordance with Jules Isaac's analysis in The Christian Roots of Antisemitism:

Christian antisemitism is much worse than its pagan predecessor: worse by its content - which is essentially theological - by its coherence, and by the variety of its themes more or less arbitrarily founded upon scripture, or rather upon a certain interpretation of scripture; but worse especially by its continuity - from the first Christian centuries right down to modern times.<sup>22</sup>

The point about the continuity of antisemitism is significant. It could be argued that this is the same constant theological tradition seen here in a different guise in Barth's twentieth century system.

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<sup>20</sup> Haynes op. cit. p 71.

<sup>21</sup> Franklin H Littel The Crucifixion of the Jews: The Failure of Christians to understand the Jewish Experience Macon GA, Mercer Un.Pr 1986 1st ed. 1975 p 2.

<sup>22</sup> Jules Isaac The Christian Roots of Antisemitism pp 7-9. He excludes the first three centuries of the Christian era when "it is the Christians who were persecuted and outlawed, not the Jews."

## Election and Anthropology

We have seen that the continuing existence of the synagogue is a case of wilful disobedience for Barth. Furthermore the motif of Israel functions as the contemporary paradigm sinner who refuses to respond to its divine vocation:

The covenant partnership of God with Israel had the effect of intensifying the conflict of Israel with God, the closer God drew near the more the human self-will of Israel asserted itself in resistance to its divine vocation.<sup>23</sup>

In Church Dogmatics III.3 Barth develops the concept of the Jew in his theological anthropology. The Jew is portrayed as the 'mirror' of human sinfulness and rebellion.

In the Jew there is revealed the primal revolt, the unbelief, the disobedience, in which we are all engaged. In this sense the Jew is the most human of all men. And that is why he is not pleasing to us. ... Our annoyance is not really with the Jew himself. It is with the Jew only because and to the extent that the Jew is a mirror in which we immediately recognise ourselves, in which all the nations recognise themselves as they are before the judgement-seat of God. That is why we can never forgive the Jew.<sup>24</sup>

There should be some other way of portraying human rebellion before God without Christians singling out 'the Jew' as the paradigm sinner. In Chapter 4 the phenomenon of sacrifice was presented as catharsis for human brutishness, wilfulness and violence. Our suggestion of the worship of both communities being in continuity with the sacrifices of our joint ancestors

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<sup>23</sup> Torrance op. cit. p 38.

<sup>24</sup> CD III.3 p 222.

represents a paradigm shift from a Christian portrayal of 'the Jew' as the paradigm wilful, rebellious one. In any case the categorical ascription of disobedience to Israel will run up against the faithfulness of Jesus the Jew, as Roy Eckardt observes.<sup>25</sup>

Barth is even able to give a place to antisemitism as an integral part of his theology of salvation history, as Haynes observes:

Barth's analysis of anti-Semitism in Church Dogmatics III:3 may actually provide a justification for the anti-Semitism he is trying to explain. As Alan Davies has observed, with his analysis of what it 'costs' to be the chosen people of God, Barth actually incorporates anti-Semitism into Salvation history.<sup>26</sup>

The linkage between explanation of behaviour and justification for behaviour is a significant one, underlining the feedback between prospective and retrospective modes of thought.

This connection of 'the Jew' with sinfulness and rebellion is then described at the level of peoplehood by regarding Israel as 'revelations of divine judgement'. It comes from the section described by Haynes as the 'now famous paragraph 34' of Church Dogmatics II.2.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> A Roy Eckardt Elder and Younger Brothers: The Encounter of Jews and Christians New York, Scribners 1967, Ch 4 'Israel and the Church: the Rhetoric of Discontinuity', p 59.

<sup>26</sup> Alan T Davies Anti-semitism and the Christian Mind New York Herder + Herder 1969 p 124 in Haynes op. cit. p 69.

<sup>27</sup> Haynes op. cit. p 60.

The existence of the elect in and from Israel does not alter at all the determination of Israel as such and as a whole because these elect are exceptions which as such do not suspend the rule that Israel has to serve the revelation of the divine judgement. Again it is only partially that in their function and mission they point beyond this rule.<sup>28</sup>

For Barth, Israel can only move away from this association with self-assertion and judgement if she accepts Jesus Christ as her Messiah, for "the risen Lord of the Church ... is the manifested Messiah of Israel".<sup>29</sup> This perspective is maintained in Church Dogmatics IV.1 § 62:

In its form as Israel (the community) attests the justification which begins strangely and terribly in the midst of a world of sin and death, its *terminus a quo*. In its form as the Church it attests its *terminus ad quem*, its strange and glorious consummation in a new world of right and life. On the one hand there is the promise, on the other its fulfilment.<sup>30</sup>

The portrayal of Israel as promise and Church as fulfilment is a classic example of collapsing dialectic into dualism.<sup>31</sup>

Torrance speaks of the 'split Church' after the Cross:

The Christian Church went out from the resurrection side of the Cross into history as the Church of the Lamb who had been slain but is forever triumphantly alive; but the Jewish Church went out from the dark side of the Cross into history as the Church of the scapegoat, cast out and scattered over the earth under the shadow of the crucified Jesus.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> CD II.2 p 212 italics mine.

<sup>29</sup> CD IV.1, p 670.

<sup>30</sup> CD IV.1 p 670.

<sup>31</sup> Ruether op. cit. pp 228-233.

<sup>32</sup> TF Torrance op. cit. p 46 italics mine.

This unfolding sense of the Church has a triumphant Christian Church and a scapegoat "Jewish Church". Here is the zenith of the projection of sin onto an "Other". It should be morally unacceptable to engage in such a theological hermeneutic of scripture which invites confusion between the modern Jewish people and a scapegoat "Jewish Church".

### Critical Analysis of this Portrayal of Atonement

Thomas F Torrance insists that in the Christian theological system the human nature assumed by the Son of God must be alienated, fallen and sinful humanity rather than perfect humanity.<sup>33</sup> Reconciliation is to be achieved *within* the representative human being, where it is needed. In this way a cleansed and restored humanity is made available to those who coinhere in the 'new humanity'. This could be criticised for reducing the incarnation to a fall-driven system. New Testament theology can utilise a whole range of anthropologies typified in Christ. An Adam/Christ typology, for example, may be drawing on Adam as perfect humanity: Adam as the type of the one who is to come.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> T F Torrance op. cit. p 48.

<sup>34</sup> See John Muddiman "Adam, The Type of the One to Come" in Theology 1985 pp 101-110 for arguments that a range of possible anthropologies lie behind the defense of the incarnation. He wishes to resist the theological use of the incarnation as merely fitting the God-shaped hole of the fall.

To associate this sinful humanity so clearly with "the Jewish Church" and the 'new humanity' so clearly with "the Christian Church" presents a theological problematic. It is achieved by Torrance with a theological overlay on the historical situation in the Gospels:

With the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and with the overthrow of Jerusalem which seemed, *theologically*, to follow from it, a schism broke out in the believing people of God.<sup>35</sup>

To link the crucifixion theologically with the fall of Jerusalem is a way of thinking which interprets historical disasters as evidence for God's rejection of Israel. It is a strong example of Jules Isaac's 'teaching of contempt'.<sup>36</sup> By its selected reading of history this view tends to ignore historical situations where the Jewish people has historical successes:<sup>37</sup>

The existence of a restored Israel, proof positive that the Jewish people is not annihilated, assimilated or otherwise withering away, is substantial refutation of the traditional Christian myth about their end in the historic process.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> TF Torrance op. cit. p 47 stress mine.

<sup>36</sup> The first principal themes of the ongoing teaching of contempt is: The dispersion of Israel as providential chastisement for the crucifixion. Jules Isaac *L'Enseignement du Mépris* Fasquelle, Paris 1962 pp 33-64. ET The Teaching of Contempt.

<sup>37</sup> That is one reason why the positive event of the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 proved a theological stimulus to this way of thinking. Unfortunately, it can also reinforce this mentality which then sees only positive significance in Jewish Christians (ie. messianic congregations) in Israel today.

<sup>38</sup> Littel op. cit. p 3.



Even in the historical period under discussion there is selectivity about which events of Jewish history are deemed theologically significant. The downfall of Jerusalem with the loss of the Temple and literal sacrifice system are selected as particularly significant. More positive events are ignored.<sup>39</sup>

Linking the crucifixion to the overthrow of Jerusalem obscures the historical reality of precisely who was responsible for Jesus' death by encouraging the whole of the Jewish people to be held responsible. This is historically erroneous although encouraged by gospel readings.<sup>40</sup> Arguments against the historical error that all Jews could be held responsible for the crucifixion have been made by a number of scholars.<sup>41</sup> As far as the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed is concerned "he was crucified ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν 'on our behalf' under Pontius Pilate". Crucifixion was a barbaric Roman practice reserved for criminals. The sentence goes down in history as being passed by a particular Roman governor. No mention is made of Jewish complicity in the events. Indeed the 'on our behalf' points rather to Christians

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<sup>39</sup> such as the rebuilding and rededication under Ezra, the Maccabean period, the vindication of Jerusalem against Titus, the Bar-Kochba period or the revival of Judaism in the 2nd century CE.

<sup>40</sup> "in order not to antagonise their political rulers, Christians were anxious to minimise the part played by Roman authorities in the death of Jesus." Piet van Boxel and Margaret McGrath 'Anti-Jewish Elements in Christian Liturgy' in The Jewish Roots of Christian Liturgy ed E J Fisher New York, Paulist Press 1990 p 163.

<sup>41</sup> E P Sanders in Jesus and Judaism SCM 1985 makes the case for the Sadducees alone. See also Ellis Rivkin What Crucified Jesus? SCM 1984 "It was the Roman imperial system that was at fault, not the system of Judaism." p 75.

for whom this is a redeeming myth and not a de-historicised Jewish crowd. Credal confession in the Eucharist can ameliorate readings from scripture by acting as a 'Church with Israel' filter to 'Church against Israel' texts.<sup>42</sup>

Substitutionary atonement may be an important part of Christian self-definition so long as such theories are protected from theological anti-Judaism and from the charge of alienation. Many allow some credibility to substitutionary thought so long as it then facilitates our participation in the substitute.<sup>43</sup> Something is needed to capture the 'through' element of the with/through/in movement of the God-human encounter. But substitutionary atonement where Jesus as the representative of sinful humanity is played down so that the paradigm Jew taking the blame can take centre stage should be a theological embarrassment. Representation,<sup>44</sup> substitution, and participation<sup>45</sup> (or coinherence) remain useful concepts in the

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<sup>42</sup> Matt 27.25 'His blood be upon us and upon our children'. There has been a concerted effort by scholars to have this text removed from the Oberammagau Passion Play because it encourages Christian audiences to regard the whole Jewish people as responsible for Christ's death. Rudolf Pesch "His blood be on us and on our children": Appendix to Oberammagau 1990.

<sup>43</sup> "he substitutes for us in order to free us to then be ourselves and to go where he has gone, into God's presence." Colin Gunton The Actuality of Atonement T+T Clark 1988 pp 165-6. See Morna D Hooker "Interchange in Christ" in JThSt N.S. XXII/2 1971 pp 349-361 for evidence against a substitutionary interpretation of Pauline material in favour of representation.

<sup>44</sup> Dorothea Sölle Christ the Representative SCM 1967.

<sup>45</sup> Trevor Hart "Humankind in Christ and Christ in Humankind : Salvation as Participation in our Substitute in the Theology of John Calvin" in SJT Vol 42 1989 pp 67-84.

Christian understanding of Atonement so long as this does not lead to concentration on Jewish sins.

Barth's position is that even if the Church does have a part in the sin it is a lesser part than that contributed by Israel:

It was the sin of Israel indeed which was lifted by its Messiah and borne and borne away on the cross, and in it the sin of the whole world. In it! For what He had to lift and bear and bear away as the sin of the Gentiles was only accessory to the sin of Israel. *For, after all, in their sin against Him, the Gentiles had only that dependent share in the crucifixion as it may be clearly enough discerned in the four Gospels. They carried out only what as a decision was the sin of the chosen people.*<sup>46</sup>

Here the Gentiles contribute a lesser part because they were regarded as carrying out the intentions of Israel.<sup>47</sup> David W Torrance shows a healthier balance:

The other nations and the Church cannot rightly stand back from Israel in criticism and judgement of her. Judgement belongs solely to God. We are all equally involved in Israel's sin and rejection of her calling. *Her sin is our sin, and her rejection of God's call is our rejection of God's call to obedience and love.* We all are involved with Israel and have responsibility for helping her toward the path of obedience, for her sake and for the sake of us all. The salvation and peace of this world depend on it.<sup>48</sup>

This is a slight improvement as it regards 'her sin' as 'our sin', but the attitude remains paternalistic with regard to the Jewish people.

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<sup>46</sup> CD II.2 § 34 p 282 italics mine.

<sup>47</sup> then logically the Jews also contribute only a small part because they can be regarded as carrying out the divine intention.

<sup>48</sup> The Witness of the Jews to God ed. David W Torrance Handsel, Edinburgh 1982 p 110 italics mine.

Although Israel is not deprived by Barth of her election she is made to serve as the bearer of divine wrath. Haynes is aware that the concept of election lies behind difficulties with the Jewish/Christian relationship.

In Barth, Richard Rubenstein's observations on the connection between Christian views of the Jews as a chosen people and the divine willing of Jewish persecution and destruction seem to be confirmed.<sup>49</sup>

There is a real dilemma here for Christian theology: how to distinguish oneself from biblical Judaism at the same time as claiming the Church is in continuity with biblical religion.<sup>50</sup> It all too easily manifests in a refutation of the right of post-biblical Judaism to theological significance apart from joining the Church.

The blame for the original schism in the one community is firmly laid by Barth at the feet of the Jewish people: Israel creates schism by seeking to continue its existence outside the Church.<sup>51</sup> This is contrary to our proposal that *Christianity* made the break by choosing a different community-forming liturgical calendar.<sup>52</sup> In Church Dogmatics IV.1 Barth suggests that:

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<sup>49</sup> Haynes op. cit. p 229, referring to Richard L Rubenstein After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1992 2nd edn., and the chapter "The Dean and the Chosen People". See our Appendix.

<sup>50</sup> This has been attempted in Chapter 4 through an understanding of sacrament and sacrifice.

<sup>51</sup> although there is some consideration whether they might have been elected to reject their messiah.

<sup>52</sup> See Introduction II(i).

the existence of the Synagogue side by side with the Church is an ontological impossibility, a wound, a gaping hole in the body of Christ, something which is quite intolerable.<sup>53</sup>

Barth notes that this is largely intolerable for the missionary self-understanding of the Church.<sup>54</sup>

Barth speaks of the onus being on *Israel*, who has created schism, to repair the damage by joining the Christian Church.

*Israel refuses to enter upon its service in the one elected community of God. Israel forms and upholds the Synagogue (even though the conclusion of its history is confirmed by the fall of Jerusalem). It acts as if it had still another special determination and future beside and outwith the Church. It acts as if it could realise its true determination beside and outwith the Church. And in so doing it creates schism, a gulf, in the midst of the community of God.*<sup>55</sup>

Here is 'community of God' talk used against the Jewish right of self-definition before God.

The only way Barth can find round this gulf in the community of God is for Jews to confess Jesus as 'Israel's promised Messiah' and join the Church. This is then expanded through an understanding of cross and resurrection. For Barth's system,

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<sup>53</sup> CD IV.1 p 671.

<sup>54</sup> Christian mission to the Jews is an emotive subject. Many would now only allow the sense of mission as lovingly-shared witness. Mission as witness can also find support in Barth's reflection on Romans 9-11. For a reflection on senses of mission which Christianity and Judaism could share see Tony Bayfield "Mission: A Jewish Perspective" in *Theology* May/June 1993 pp 180-190 "mission as the full realization in each Jew, Christian and Muslim of the best that each of the Abrahamic faiths can teach" p 189. We would prefer something like: mission is the encouragement of communities to respond to God in repentance and renewal.

<sup>55</sup> CD 2.2 p 208 italics mine.

Israel can participate theologically in the cross as the paradigm of fallen humanity but may not participate theologically in the resurrection until she confesses Jesus Christ as her Messiah:

The Church is the perfect form of the elected community of God. ... *The Church form of the community stands in the same relation to its Israelite form as the resurrection of Jesus to His crucifixion, as God's mercy to God's judgement.*<sup>56</sup>

It is significant that some Christian authors have spoken of other ways in which Israel might participate in the resurrection - notably in the founding of the state of Israel.<sup>57</sup> Arguments about selective participation in cross and resurrection harden for Barth into an identification of Church with God's mercy and Israel with God's judgement. This is another example of Ruether's charge of dialectic collapsing into dualism. The Church takes over as the paradigm of raised humanity via the continuity of the Jewish Christians.<sup>58</sup> This is collapsing into the supersessionism of Christology-dependent ecclesiology.

One reason for this theological impasse is that Barth is unable to interpret positively the Jewish 'No' to Jesus as Messiah of Israel. As Haynes remarks: "While the logic of Barth's

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<sup>56</sup> CD II.2 p 211 italics mine.

<sup>57</sup> Littel frequently refers to 'the resurrection of Israel' in this and other ways. For a Jewish example see Irving Greenberg The Jewish Way Ch 11 Resurrection and Redemption: *Yom Ha'Atzmuat* (Israel Independence Day).

<sup>58</sup> It was indicative of the political ineffectiveness of the Christian churches in Germany that they were unable to save even the Jewish Christians from the death camps. See Haynes op. cit. p 57-59 "The Confessing Church ultimately failed to protect even the Jewish Christians in its midst, let alone the majority of Jews who were outside the church" p 59.

theology often seems to lead in the direction of a positive determination of post-biblical Israel apart from the Church, Barth is theologically traumatised by the stark fact of Israel's rejection of its Messiah".<sup>59</sup> Haynes holds that:

Israel's No is clearly at the centre of (Barth's) system.<sup>60</sup>

### Charges of Systemic Imbalance

Stephen Haynes is overwhelmed by the range of models Barth uses to portray the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Barth makes use of most of the five negative and three positive models isolated by Bertold Klappert:<sup>61</sup>

In what we have begun to see is typical Barthian fashion, the relationship between church and Israel described here is complementary and symbiotic, but it is also typological and integrationist ... Israel is always seen from the perspective of its proper *telos*, which is life in the church through faith in its Messiah.<sup>62</sup>

Despite this testimony to Barth's versatility this serves to illustrate the centrality of Israel's 'No' in his thinking. This centralization of Israel's 'No' leads to systemic imbalance.

Klappert resists the conclusion that the only future

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<sup>59</sup> Haynes op. cit. p 228.

<sup>60</sup> Haynes op. cit. p 229.

<sup>61</sup> Bertold Klappert has isolated five historic negative models: *substitution, integration, typology, illustration and subsumation*, together with three positive models: *complementarity, representative and participation*. op. cit.

<sup>62</sup> Haynes op. cit. p 64.

available for Israel is to join the Church on confession of Jesus Christ as its Messiah and finds its logic surprisingly untypical:

Klappert ... argues that the future of Israel in Romans is not describable in terms of integration into the church. What Klappert finds ironic, however, is the fact that Barth's emphasis on ecclesiological integration runs counter to his own "fundamental systematic orientation" in the christological participation or dependence model. According to this model, the church is dependent on the election of Israel confirmed in Jesus Christ, and the Gentile "nations" are called forth to participate in Israel's election and promissory history.<sup>63</sup>

According to Klappert, Barth's logic should lead him to affirm *the Church's dependence on and need to participate in Israel's election*. Instead he turns this round instead to the need for *Israel to participate in the election of Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel*. It is only through recognition of Christ that Jews can then be said to participate in the election of Israel, not before.

Marquardt notes the collapse of a teleological perspective in these passages of *Kirchliche Dogmatik*. Christ is the end/telos rather than the way to the end for Israel.<sup>64</sup> For Marquardt, Barth's use of "End" masks a theological concept. There is a premature closure of Christ, and hence of the Church, as the End rather than as the way to God's teleological purpose for this world. Barth can work from an interpretation of 'Christ is the telos of the law' as meaning 'Christ is the goal of torah' or

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<sup>63</sup> Haynes op. cit. p 83 emphasis mine.

<sup>64</sup> Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt op. cit. pp 325-326.



'Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness'<sup>65</sup> and this at least protects him from assuming outright abrogation of Torah. Nonetheless, Barth can see no ongoing way for Judaism, or indeed any other faith, apart from existence in the Church.<sup>66</sup> It might be possible to argue that this loss of eschatological perspective is linked with imbalances in Barth's theological system, specifically his underweighted pneumatology. Colin Gunton has drawn attention to Barth's inattention to the pneumatological dimensions to incarnation and salvation.<sup>67</sup>

Barth's theology can be regarded as underdeveloped in its pneumatology,<sup>68</sup> its ecclesiology, and necessarily therefore its sacramentology. Since the sacraments are regarded as a focus of Christian self-interpretation in this thesis some specific comments on this charge of underdeveloped sacramentology are in order. Barth has little energy left for the sacraments in Church

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<sup>65</sup> Karl Barth The Epistle to the Romans O x f o r d University Press, Oxford 1933 trans. from 6th ed. 1932 by Edwyn C Hoskyns, Romans 9.4-5, pp 374-6. "For the end of the law - its sense and meaning - is the righteousness of God." p 375.

<sup>66</sup> The Romans 11 image of the Church as a branch alongside other branches feeding off the rootstock of Israel has been eclipsed. Although having some potential for resisting theological anti-Judaism, this image is not subtle enough to bear the weight of understanding the complexities of the Jewish/Christian relationship over time.

<sup>67</sup> Colin E Gunton "Barth, the Trinity and Human Freedom" in ThTod 43 Oct 1986 pp 316-333, p 316.

<sup>68</sup> see Philip J Rosato SJ The Spirit as Lord: The Pneumatology of Karl Barth T+T Clark, Edinburgh 1981 for a not uncritical appreciation of his pneumatology.

Dogmatics.<sup>69</sup> This lack is addressed by the sacramental theology of Thomas F Torrance.<sup>70</sup> However, the created elements can only have a referential sense in a theology so averse to natural theology. Further, the person of the Holy Spirit appears insufficiently distinguished alongside Christ.<sup>71</sup> "For Torrance the Spirit's presence in the sacrament itself constitutes (by virtue of the *perichoresis*) the presence of the worshipping Christ" and this provides a drawback for a theology put forward to aid reconciliation with Eastern traditions: "For the East the Spirit's presence will not suffice for the presence of Christ".<sup>72</sup> Nonetheless, a detailed engagement with the Church

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<sup>69</sup> There is no entry in the index to CD for Eucharist or Holy Communion. Sacraments and the Doctrine of Baptism are largely confined to the unfinished IV.4, itself stifled by the fear of compromising faith by human actions.

<sup>70</sup> Thomas F Torrance The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church T+T Clark, Edinburgh 1988 especially pp 169-179 Eucharist pp 250-270 Baptism; "The Paschal Mystery of the Eucharist: General Theses" in Liturgical Review Vol 6 1976 pp 6-12; Theology in Reconciliation: Essays Towards Evangelical and Catholic Unity in East and West Geoffrey Chapman 1975; "The Breaking of Bread" in Liturgical Studies 1971 pp 18-26; "Die Arnoldshainer Abendmahlthesen" 1960 ET SJT Vol 15 1962 pp 283-304; Conflict and Agreement in the Church Vol 2: The Sacraments of the Gospel Lutterworth 1960.

<sup>71</sup> Robert J Stamps "The Sacrament of the Word made Flesh": The Eucharistic Theology of Thomas F Torrance Nottingham PhD 1986 for a critical appraisal of T F Torrance's sacramental theology, which is put forward as a 'theology in reconciliation between Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Evangelicals': "The Holy Spirit in Torrance's thought appears to have no unique characteristics", p 416.

<sup>72</sup> Stamps op. cit. p 387.

Fathers has helped progress a theology in process.<sup>73</sup>

In reference to the progression of Barth's theological schema throughout his career, David Tracy suggests there was much development:

Karl Barth, through his study of Anselm, released himself from a purely negative dialectics and articulated in Church Dogmatics ever new reformulations of a new theological language of analogy - his "analogy of grace" language.<sup>74</sup>

One must not deny the significance of such a development. However, it would appear that Barth's theology of Israel remains locked into an unredeemed negative dialectic. His interpretation of Israel's 'No' demonstrates the ability to harden into the kind of dualism which Ruether criticises in her analysis of the anti-Judaic myth. It is for such reasons that I have found it appropriate to widen Ruether's portrayal of Christology as the left hand of the anti-Judaic myth to present this material as an example of the anti-Judaic left hand of atonement theory.

It is possible that Barth himself was made aware of the tensions in the Church Dogmatics in later life. In Against the Stream published in 1954, Barth affirms: "God's choice has not been withdrawn" from the Jewish people because of the cross; "It is in their existence that we non-Jews come up against the rock of divine choice"; and he can refer to the gentile Christian

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<sup>73</sup> Indeed the section in Trinitarian Faith covering the contrast with Judaism pp 65-68 is mild in comparison with the statements isolated from CD. Torrance considers Nicene Christology as 'undoubtedly Hebraic in basic slant and character', p 65.

<sup>74</sup> David Tracy The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism SCM 1981, p 417.

community as simply a "guest in the house of Israel".<sup>75</sup>

### Responding to Systemic Imbalance

Marquardt ends his systematic theology with the conclusion that the Church must become reconciled to the continuation of Israel's history:

Israel's responsibility is the struggle - under God - to assert herself. The Church's responsibility is to win the nations' delight in Israel's remaining and to keep this safe. Jesus remains for this.<sup>76</sup>

Before reconciling the nations, the Church must reconcile *herself* to Israel's remaining. Indeed, Israel's ongoing presence and purpose may have revelatory significance for the Church.<sup>77</sup> This anticipates the work of Chapter 12 where suggestions are made that the future of the Church might be bound up with her acceptance of the ongoing role of the Synagogue alongside the Church.

At a general level, it is the interpretation of election in Barth's theology which can lead to imbalance vis-à-vis Judaism: Christians are elected in the Jew Jesus Christ but Jews may only participate in Israel's election through recognising Christ as Israel's Messiah. *Any Christian use of election must be*

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<sup>75</sup> Karl Barth Against the Stream SCM 1954, pp 198-200.

<sup>76</sup> Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt Christology 2 Chr. Kaiser Verlag München 1991, p 438.

<sup>77</sup> See suggestions in Chapter 5.

*constantly aware of temptations to theological anti-Judaism.*<sup>78</sup> Gunton draws attention to Edward Irving's writings which portray election as the mysterious activity of the Spirit, communicating the benefits of redemption to particular people at particular times.<sup>79</sup> Certainly some location of the election theme in the activity of the Spirit in human history will assist Christian self-interpretation in relation to modern Judaism.

### Conclusions

Barth's theological schema has been examined in some detail, drawing on the critical appraisals of a number of important scholars. Barth's schema was examined in relation to its use of 'the Jew' as the paradigm of one who rejects his or her vocation. Israel only has significance in salvation history for this system if she confesses Jesus as her promised Messiah. If not, she must take the blame for 'the schism in the one people of God'. It is a powerful example of Christian identity at the expense of Judaism.

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<sup>78</sup> We could for instance suggest that *Christians might only participate in Christ's resurrection through recognising the ongoing role of Israel as separate Synagogue alongside the Church*. It would be a symmetric response to Barth's insistence that Jews may only participate in Israel's election through recognising Christ as Israel's Messiah.

<sup>79</sup> Gunton op. cit. pp 329-333. G Carlyle ed. The Selected Writings of Edward Irving Volume V Alexander Strahan 1865.

Barth demonstrates premature closure in collapsing the teleological perspective, demanding that Israel should avoid schism by joining the Church. To avoid such conclusions there needs to be greater stress on eschatological fulfilment and a more accurate portrayal of the parting of the ways. There will also need to be renewed attention to the theme of election, rejecting the theme of Israel's conditional participation in its own election through confession of Christ's messiahship. It might then be possible to affirm the revelatory significance of Israel's 'No' to the messiahship of Jesus and to accept the ongoing presence of the Synagogue alongside the Church.

Christian theology must look beyond the fall of the Second Temple, and the loss of literal sacrifice at that time, to the renewal of Judaism around the central concept of Torah. Then it might see properly authorised means of atonement. This is achieved in Judaism through the concept of repentance and the liturgical and festal calendar. The high point of this is the Jewish High Holy Days, of which Yom Kippur is the climax. For Christianity to see this will entail an appreciation of the sense of Jewish peoplehood associated with Israel on its holiest day. And so in the next chapter a consideration will be made of *Knesset Israel* in the liturgical setting of the Jewish Day of Atonement.

Ch 9 One Jesus, Many Christs?: Knesset Israel on Yom Kippur as an Isomorph of Christ

In the introductory section of the thesis a suggestion was made of a way of redeeming 'people of God' language from the lack of precision which encourages supersessionism. The suggestion was to describe the particularities of the respective 'people of God' traditions through their divinely authorised ways of holiness: so that one might speak of the sacramental people of God to describe Christians and the halakhic people of God to describe Jews. There is an extension possible here to religions beyond Judaism and Christianity through other ways of holiness. Such an approach should help counter any thoughts of Christian 'sacramental supersessionism': of regarding Jewish observance of Passover and Yom Kippur as unnecessary, or as disobedience to God, now that Jesus Christ has been revealed.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter the methodological implications of separate Jewish and Christian ways of holiness will be investigated. What does it mean for Christian self-interpretation to affirm Jewish peoplehood formed by *halakhic* obedience as the divinely authorised way of holiness for Jews? Can it do so and remain Christian as traditionally understood? In an attempt to cope with these questions the concept of isomorphism will be introduced:

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<sup>1</sup> It would still be possible to interpret the phrase 'the sacraments of the new covenant' in a supersessionary way unless other factors, such as those suggested in Section Four of the thesis, came into the total picture.

*dynamic mutual interaction of diverse elements which obey the same relational rules.*

The concept of isomorphism could assist the Christian admission that it can only read the Other of Judaism through categories central to its own system whilst at the same time cultivating an attitude to the Other which values difference as difference.

#### Methodology: Theological Isomorphs

'Daddy, I know a good joke: "Why do white sheep eat more than black sheep?"' 'I've no idea'. 'Because there are fewer black sheep than white sheep!' If Daddy had wished to 'repeat' this joke in his club, he would probably have altered it: 'Any of you chaps know why Americans drink more whisky than Scotsmen...?' Here we have an example of what we might call *isomorphic jokes*: they are really the *same* joke, but placed into a different context.<sup>2</sup>

This quotation comes from an application of the theory of isomorphism to a branch of pure mathematics: 'group' theory. One mathematical group can be regarded as 'really the same group in a different context' as another different group.

In speaking of such correspondances between diverse contexts there does not need to be loose application of Wittgenstein's useful concept of 'family resemblances'.<sup>3</sup> Neither does it mean

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<sup>2</sup> F J Budden The Fascination of Groups CUP, Cambridge 1972, p 131.

<sup>3</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein Philosophical Investigations trans. GEM Anscombe Blackwell, Oxford 1958 3rd ed. § 66-67 links board games, card games, ball games, ring-a-ring-a-roses etc. together in "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes



that a Jewish system is an extension of a Christian system, for this is effectively 'anonymous Christianity' for Jews. Regarding Jews as 'anonymous Christians' overlooks the general expectation of formal public response to the Christian faith for someone of another ethnic tradition to be regarded as Christian.<sup>4</sup> It does mean there is a *comparable dynamic about the patterning*, with the emphasis as much on the dynamic as on the patterning. It might then be possible for someone trained to regard patterning as deeply significant to regard them both as equally significant.

Any similarity is at the level of imposed structural shape and as such is a construction of the intuitive observer. It does not, of course, mean that adherents of either religion would affirm the rightness of the suggestion. It does not mean that Christian theologians observed the pattern of individual-in-community in Judaism and copied it with the Body of Christ concept for instance. Rather, it means that any social group will have concepts of individual-in-group and any theistic community will regard the existence of that group as the outworking of God's benevolence.

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similarities of detail. I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than 'family resemblances'; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament etc. etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way."

<sup>4</sup> See discussion in Introduction II(i) where a spectrum from religious to ethnic understandings of Christianity were introduced. For someone whose ethnic allegiance is of another religion Christian allegiance would fall nearer to the religious end of the Christian spectrum. For someone whose ethnic allegiance was Christian the response would fall further from the religious end of the Christian spectrum.

There is no need to posit any dependence or interaction between one tradition and the other. David Shapiro overstates the case for dependence of the Roman Catholic sacramental tradition on Jewish *halakhah*:

Roman Catholicism has set up its own "halakhic" forms with its rigorous demands and insistence on precision both in the performance of its sacraments and in its directives for daily conduct in various phases of life. In the long run, however, the question raised about Roman Catholic "Halakhah" may not be too significant, because we may be dealing here with vestiges of Jewish influence, as is probably also true of the "halakhic" counterparts of the Islamic way of life.<sup>5</sup>

The Christian sacraments are now sufficiently independent not to be regarded as 'vestiges of Jewish influence', although influence at the early stage should not be underestimated.<sup>6</sup>

It is situations such as this which could be handled by customising a concept well developed in pure mathematics: that of isomorphism: of equal shape ('isos': equal 'morphe': shape). Interdisciplinary work is vital for Christian theology beyond its customary dependence on languages and philosophy. It is currently

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<sup>5</sup> David S Shapiro "The Ideological Foundations of the Halakhah" in Understanding Jewish Theology: Classical Issues and Modern Perspectives ed. Jacob Neusner KTAV 1973 pp 107-120 pp 107-108. Article originally in Tradition Vol 9 Nos.1-2 Spring/Summer 1967 pp 100-122.

<sup>6</sup> It is interesting to read A Loisy's response to A von Harnack in this light. A von Harnack The Essence of Christianity trans. TB Saunders, Williams + Norgate 1901 from Berlin lectures 1899-1900. Harnack wants to peel away the 'husk' of church, tradition, and sacraments from the 'kernel' of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. Loisy argues that the Church needed to develop sacramental rituals to survive, and he admits that it took these from Judaism. 'Baptism was a Jewish rite' The Gospel and the Church trans. C Horne, Ibister + Co 1903, p 242. The Eucharist is the symbol of the Kingdom and 'an anticipation of the festival of the Messiah' p 246.

benefitting from the insights of social anthropologists. It has yet to significantly benefit from systems analysis and pure mathematics.<sup>7</sup> In group theory for instance there is a structure which consists of four operations, one of which (I) is the identity operator, and the others of which obey the rule 'A followed by B gives C'. Hence:

|   | I | A | B | C |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | I | A | B | C |
| A | A | I | C | B |
| B | B | C | I | A |
| C | C | B | A | I |

A common numerical example of this is the numbers 1,3,5 and 7 and the operation 'multiplication modulus 8'. (Modulus 8 indicates the residue after multiples of 8 have been removed. eg.  $\text{Mod } (7 \times 5) = \text{mod } 35 = 3$ , since  $35 = (4 \times 8) + 3$ ).

| x (mod 8) | 1 | 3 | 5 | 7 |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|
| 1         | 1 | 3 | 5 | 7 |
| 3         | 3 | 1 | 7 | 5 |
| 5         | 5 | 7 | 1 | 3 |
| 7         | 7 | 5 | 3 | 1 |

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<sup>7</sup> Although Jacob Neusner's systemic analyses of 'Israel's' might give a useful Jewish lead: First Principles of Systemic Analysis: The Case of Judaism within the History of Religion University Press of America, Lanham New York 1987.

Operations following this pattern may be as diverse as moves in a child's game, codes in a wartime communication, rotations of a geometrical shape, the distribution of family chores, mixing of the colours of light etc.

Completely different operations can be linked by their *operations of dynamic mutual interaction obeying the same relational rules*. This is the power of group theory: "from the abstract theoretical point of view, the two groups are identical even though the meaning of the elements in the two groups may be different".<sup>8</sup>

So, for example, if A,B, and C stand for the following operations:

- A: turn the trousers back to front
- B: turn the trousers inside out
- C: turn the trousers inside out and back to front

the original table would express the results of combining these operations, which belong to an entirely different context.<sup>9</sup>

The patterning of operators suggested for associating the separate religions of Judaism and Christianity would be:

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<sup>8</sup> Gerald Burns Introduction to Group Theory with Applications Academic Press, New York 1977, p 28.

<sup>9</sup> Example from Budden *ibid*.

A: declaring an individual 'holy' as he or she participates as an individual-in-community,

B: according to a way of holiness received by that community as unmerited,

C: where the holiness of the community at that liturgical point is affirmed.

The dynamic pattern under consideration here is the confession of a holy community of which one is a part by the acceptance of the movement of divine grace towards one as an individual in that community. And by community for the Christian is meant 'the corporate Christ' as an understanding of the Church.

The same original table pertains:

|   | I | A | B | C |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | I | A | B | C |
| A | A | I | C | B |
| B | B | C | I | A |
| C | C | B | A | I |

The operations combine in this way:

C followed by B yields A: (holy community) with (unmerited way of holiness) implies (individual is holy),

A followed by B yields C: (individual holy) with (unmerited way of corporate holiness) implies (community is holy), etc.

If Christ is seen as the divine/human communal point of gracious interchange then it would be possible for Christians to recognise isomorphs of Christ in other traditions. Any tradition which displays this patterning at a significant point could thus be declared isomorphic by those with the mind to see. It does not imply that there are unchanging patterns to the universe or the human mind which Christianity has unlocked with its understanding of Christ.<sup>10</sup>

It would be possible to view the *'sinlessness of Christ'* with the *'in Christ'* incorporative concept at liturgical highpoints as isomorphic to Knesset Israel in the context of corporate repentance on Yom Kippur. Both demonstrate the dynamic mutual interaction of the three elements: declaring an individual *'holy'* as he or she participates as an individual-in-community, according to a way of holiness received by that community as unmerited, where the holiness of the community at that liturgical point is affirmed. Their interaction obeys the relational rules as laid out in the table. The dynamic is bound up with the ritual form of a dynamic liturgical event. It does not hold for a static

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<sup>10</sup> This line of approach needs to be distanced from Structuralism. This name is given to a diverse group of disciplines which are interested in elements interrelated in systems and structures, the structures and the interrelation of their elements being regarded as more significant than the elements considered in isolation. Its methodologies, particularly the link with structures of consciousness, have been discredited.

pattern apart from the participatory logic of ritual.

### Isomorphisms of Repentance and Renewal

One can make use of this isomorphism concept to compare the dynamics of language, belief and experience in a work such as R Joseph B Soloveitchik's Halakhic Man<sup>11</sup> with a Christian attempt at self-interpretation through the concept Sacramental Man.<sup>12</sup>

Soloveitchik's Halakhic Man offers an interpretation of Psalm 8 via the seeming split between verses:<sup>13</sup>

4-5        What is man?        and

6-7        crowned him with glory and honour.

Rather than treating the humble and majestic aspects of humanity as a spiritual split, Soloveitchik considers that the *halakhah* enables the harmony to be found. Harmony for the Jew comes through the *halakhah*:

(Halakhic man) mends the split through the concept of Halakhah and law.<sup>14</sup>

This harmony is presented as the greatest achievement of *halakhah*, which others, represented as *homo religiosus*, have yet

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<sup>11</sup> R Joseph B Soloveitchik Halakhic Man Jewish Publns. Soc. of America trans. of Hebrew Ish ha-halakhah L Kaplan 1984.

<sup>12</sup> For example, Edward Farley's Ecclesial Man: A Social Phenomenology of Faith and Reality Fortress 1975.

<sup>13</sup> Soloveitchik op. cit. pp 68-69.

<sup>14</sup> Soloveitchik op. cit. p 69.

to find. For the Christian people of God, sacramental man mends the split through the concept of sacrament and Christian formation. In that sense both the sacramental people of God and the *halakhic* people of God are valid corporate interpretations of Psalm 8 at the communal level. Such a conception has many connections with the two covenant logic developed in Introduction II(ii): the covenant of birth and the covenant of holiness.<sup>15</sup>

In such a comparison, there is a recognition that behaviour in another system has values and general goals which can be similar even if practices are not held in common. David Hartman presses the question:

Can the halakhic Jew recognise in non-halakhic behaviour those aspirations which his own system is attempting to realize?<sup>16</sup>

Likewise, can the sacramental Christian recognise in non-sacramental behaviour those aspirations which his or her system is attempting to realize? Such aspirations are likely to be found in those patterns of behaviour and practice to which people constantly refer and which they would be least willing to give up. This indicates that one is close to the centre of their religious system.

For the *halakhic* people of God, it is the phenomenon of repentance and renewal which provides clear indication of values

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<sup>15</sup> Many other religions would have an equivalent of this Psalm 8 section and similarly handle the dialectical harmony between the humble and majestic aspects of man through a communal system of religious formation.

<sup>16</sup> David Hartman Joy and Responsibility: Israel, Modernity and the Renewal of Judaism Ben-Zvi Posner, Jerusalem 1978, p 143.



and goals. *Can the sacramental Christian recognise in the halakhic behaviour of repentance and renewal those aspirations which his or her system is attempting to realize?* It is not just a question of saying 'We have repentance and renewal in Christianity too', for that is not the issue. It is important not to quickly assume that the phenomena are identical. Rather, it is about Christians being able to recognise some general validity of the Jewish system within which repentance functions.

In arguing towards this Christian judgement the oral discourses of Soloveitchik 'On Repentance' will be used, as recorded by Pinchas Peli.<sup>17</sup> The quotations to be used in successive stages of the argument will be labelled to facilitate subsequent Christian comment.

#### Jewish Repentance and Renewal on Yom Kippur

1. *The very phenomenon of repentance ... is one of the great acts of grace conferred by God on his creations.*<sup>18</sup>

The Jewish concept of repentance is embedded in the loving-kindness (*Hesed*) of God towards his people. It is a movement of God towards his people which seeks an active response. That human response is assisted by the divine benevolence of sanctification:

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<sup>17</sup> On Repentance: in the Thought and Oral Discourses of Rabbi Joseph B Soloveitchik Pinchas H Peli, Jerusalem, Orot Press 1980, referred to as OR in the footnotes. There is a paperback edition. However, the page numbers refer to the hardback edition.

<sup>18</sup> OR p 41 (*italics mine*).

2. For him who comes to be purified, the way is cleared and he is extended a helping hand.<sup>19</sup>

The most significant context for this strong concept of repentance is the Yom Kippur service. On Repentance expands two functions of the Day of Atonement : acquittal and purification.

Yom Kippur - the Day of Atonement - has a double function. The first is *kapparah* - acquittal from sin or atonement: "For the virtue of this very day shall acquit you of sin" (Lev 16:30). This was expressed in the prayer recited by the High Priest in the Holy Temple: "Please grant acquittal for sins."

The second aspect of Yom Kippur is *taharah* - catharsis or purification. As it is written: "For the virtue of this very day shall acquit you of sin, to cleanse you ...". This, too, was brought out in the Yom Kippur Temple service. The High Priest pronounced to the assembled people: "Before God, be you cleansed." ...

Both these elements, acquittal and purification, are a direct response and remedy for the ontological effects of sin. This is because sin places man under the burden of culpable liability and it defiles him as well.<sup>20</sup>

So there is firstly *acquittal from the sin that binds* in culpable liability: this is atonement or pardon. There is secondly catharsis or *purification from the sin that defiles*.

R Judah Hanassi is quoted as authority for a traditional rule regarding the scope of acquittal:

3. 'The Day of Atonement procures acquittal of sin - even for those who have not repented individually' BT Yoma

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<sup>19</sup> Traditional rule OR p 343.

<sup>20</sup> OR p 57.

So the Day of Atonement functions at the first level of acquittal for *Knesset Israel* as a whole, even for those who do not assemble. '*Knesset*' Israel is used here in the sense of a liturgical assembly.<sup>22</sup> This comment indicates that acquittal extends more widely than those who literally assemble: it is a maximally inclusive concept at the acquittal level.<sup>23</sup>

4. The 'indemnity payment' shields man from divine anger and wrath. However his personality remains contaminated.<sup>24</sup>

Even after the legal payment for sin, the defiling effects of sin on the individual remain until dealt with personally.

5. Repentance of purification necessitates a complete breaking away from the environment, the contributing factors and all the forces which created the atmosphere of sin.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> OR p 59.

<sup>22</sup> The assembly here is gender inclusive. Women are held accountable for at least the time-independent commandments of women. In some traditions they may also voluntarily undertake to be responsible for more if they so wish.

<sup>23</sup> Introduction II(i) examined maximally inclusive concepts for the community in both Judaism and Christianity.

<sup>24</sup> OR p 61.

<sup>25</sup> OR p 64.

The acquittal part of atonement prevails for *Knesset Israel* as a whole, and even those who do not literally attend are included. However, to rid oneself of the clinging and defiling effects of sin the individual-in-community must avail him- or her-self of purification by breaking away from the forces which created the atmosphere of sin. This repentance of purification is described as a rebirth with a new heart and a renewed spirit:

6. Through repentance of purification man is reborn and he gains a new heart, a renewed spirit, another outlook on life and different horizons.<sup>26</sup>

Repentance issues out in renewal of individuals-in-community.

The relationship of a sinner to his or her community is an important one, for it is the *community* that avails for acquittal. An individual receives the atonement of acquittal and purification only as part of growing into his or her community.

Soloveitchik's discourses make the point that it is only so far as a Jew *identifies* wholeheartedly with *Knesset Israel* that he can partake of the double acquittal: community and individual. One's receipt of acquittal is dependent upon identification with *Knesset Israel*. This is because it is *Knesset Israel* which is acquitted and not the individual.

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<sup>26</sup> OR p 67.

7. That acquittal which covers both the community and the individual, is indivisible. On the Day of Atonement either a person enjoys dual acquittal ... or he receives no acquittal at all.<sup>27</sup>

If one has no sense of *Kneset Israel* and its acquittal on this day then one is not included in its benefits. Those who receive double acquittal are those who hold *Kneset Israel* to be free from sin, for:

8. *Kneset Israel* cannot be considered wicked.<sup>28</sup>

The corporate concept of *Kneset Israel* is a very positive one. It is impossible to consider her negatively. To do so would indicate either a lack of identification, or a lack of trust in Israel's gracious God, the beloved:

9. *Kneset Israel* ... confesses out of a sense of confidence and even rejoicing, for it does so in the presence of a loyal ally, before its most beloved one.<sup>29</sup>

This is why such a solemn occasion as Yom Kippur is also the context for much rejoicing in a Jewish community. This involves

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<sup>27</sup> OR p 124 (highlighting mine).

<sup>28</sup> OR p 120 .

<sup>29</sup> OR p 131.

both grammatical senses of 'rejoicing in'.

The belief in the purity of *Knesset Israel* extends over the generations through the bond of Torah. This adds another dimension to the maximal inclusivism: an inclusivism across time as well as space.

10. The Jew who believes in *Knesset Israel* is the Jew who ... binds himself with insoluble bonds not only to the People of Israel in his generation but to the community of Israel throughout the ages. How so? Through the Torah which embodies the Spirit and the destiny of Israel from generation to generation into eternity.<sup>30</sup>

The Jew binds his or herself to Israel, the community down all ages, 'through the Torah which embodies the Spirit'.

Atonement, therefore, in the Jewish system includes a strongly positive communal concept and a sense of Torah handed down, and thus linking, the generations. The phrase "through the Torah, with *Knesset Israel*, in the gracious love of God" could function as a systemic analysis of Judaism. The dynamic sense is seen here in the ritual of Yom Kippur.

It is now appropriate to make some Christian comments on areas of potential isomorphism with this Jewish system.

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<sup>30</sup> OR p 137.

## Christian Dynamic Interrelation of Corporate and Individual Acquittal

Detailed comments on Soloveitchik's On Repentance by quotation number.

2. A Christian correspondance is that Christ is the way and the Spirit (of Christ) the helping hand.

3 - 4. The acquittal from divine wrath occurs in the personal work of Christ. The making of the new person and the renewed spirit is the activity of the Holy Spirit enabling us to walk the path of repentance/metanoia. The repentance side is linked with active response through Baptism and the self-involving life-response prompted by the Eucharist. A baptised child before Confirmation and first Communion is regarded on this view as included in the acquittal aspect but not yet in the purification aspect. Until taking full membership of the community and full responsibility for the consequences of one's own sins, the child is not in receipt of double acquittal in the Christian system. This is an isomorphic position to the ethnic Jew who does not attend synagogue on Yom Kippur in the Jewish system here described.

3. A difference is the scope of the activity. On Repentance prefaces the explanation of repentance with a treatment of the metaphysical entity *Knesset Israel*, suggesting that every Jew is

a member unless s/he puts himself or herself outside. Therefore, both acquittal and purification relate only to *Knesset Israel*. The status of the rest of the world is not explicitly addressed. In an unsubstantiated extension, *the rest of the world might logically be included only in so far as it holds Knesset Israel in high regard*. This unsubstantiated extension anticipates material in Chapter 12.

Traditionally, the scope of the acquittal level of Christian Atonement has been the *whole of humanity* with the purification level representing only those who respond in faith. It is hoped that all humanity will respond to Christ. And so Christian systems are generally understood as making claims on behalf of those far wider than its own liturgical assembly. That liturgical assembly is the *ecclesia* or the mystical body of Christ. It might help to put the stress on such imagery as 'ransom for many' rather than such all-embracing imagery as 'saviour of the world' in Christian liturgical settings. Perhaps interpreting the 'Drink this, all of you' of the Eucharist as encompassing the 'all' of present Christendom and mystical Christendom linked down the generations, rather than the whole world, would assist.

The Jewish system legislates purely for its own group. It does not seem to have envisaged the whole world as Jewish. It retains a generosity towards those who are outside its group. This is presuming that there is no doctrine of divine wrath on those outside *Knesset Israel*, since they have not accepted Torah: one cannot be culpably liable for what one has not undertaken.



There is special generosity for those who can affirm the holiness of the group without actually joining it.<sup>31</sup> The Christian system, by contrast, attempts to legislate for the whole of humanity and finds it hard to entertain a generosity of heart towards those who do not actively take up a Christian way of holiness. It would be beneficial for a 'Church with Israel' to learn from the Jewish way at this point by contextually modifying its universal claims. It would help to regard only the Church, the Body of Christ, as culpably liable for its sins even if it still holds to the universality of sin itself and the universal significance of Christ's personal work. To a certain extent this is the importance of our formative redescription, sacramental people of God: it puts stress on those who have freely undertaken Christian obligations.<sup>32</sup>

5-6. same in Christian penitence.

7. There is the same recognition that there is double acquittal (belief in the purity of the group and active response as individual-within-the group) or none. It is one thing to speak of double acquittal or none for your own group, quite another to state categorically that outside of your group there is no possibility of acquittal. It would be strange, but not

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<sup>31</sup> A group such as Christian Friends of Israel, perhaps.

<sup>32</sup> It also gives a background to the reasons Jews resist Christian Baptism: it represents the undertaking of non-Jewish obligations.

inconceivable, that an outsider might regard the group concept favourably but not join it. For the Christian system it would entail a non-Christian regarding Christ as sinless. To an extent, for a Jew to regard Jesus as an observant Jew might appear close to this, but it assumes an attitude to Jesus as an individual, not to Christ as group concept. One instance of regarding him as a group concept would be to regard him as Moses (baptised into Moses 1 Cor 10.2), as Israel, or as Torah. These are all moves made by the Christian communities as they moved out of Jewish culture by imitating its concepts.

8. corresponds to the sinlessness of Christ<sup>33</sup> <sup>34</sup>, the corporate concept. There is a recognition here that speaking of the sinlessness of Christ is inseparably speaking of the purity of the group, for the group is 'the body of Christ'. God-talk and

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<sup>33</sup> John A T Robinson sums up well the status of this doctrine in "Need Jesus have been perfect?" in Christ, Faith and History: Cambridge Studies in Christology ed. S W Sykes + J P Clayton CUP 1972 pp 39-52. "The attribution of sinlessness to Jesus ... is a theological judgement rather than an extrapolation from the historical evidence. Yet it is made remarkably early and by a variety of NT writers. In II Cor v.21 Paul says explicitly that Jesus 'knew no sin'; I Pet ii.22 applies to him the words of Is liii that 'he committed no sin'; and Heb iv.15, ... , says that he was tempted at all points like us yet 'without sin'. These judgements, ... could scarcely have been made, let alone sustained, within the lifetime of many who had known Jesus if the facts of history had blatantly contradicted them. ... Yet no sweeping historical claims are made for his perfection. In fact Jesus specifically says (...) 'why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone' (Mark 10.18)" pp 44-45.

<sup>34</sup> For an analysis from the philosophy of religion see Antonie Vos "The Possibility of Impeccability" in Christian Faith and Philosophical Theology: Essays in honour of Vincent Brümmer ed. Gijsbert van den Brink, Lucio J. van den Brom, Marcel Sarot Pharos Books, Kampen pp 227-239.

community talk are very closely related.

Both Judaism and Christianity demonstrate the same dynamic interrelationship between forensic and participationist thinking.<sup>35</sup> In this way the link between salvation and sanctification can be maintained.

Chapter 1 presented a first engagement with the concept of truth. It is essential in this more methodological chapter to return to the concept of truth in greater depth.

#### Truth as Absolute and yet Particular

Vincent Brümmer considers four categories for the concept of truth: the Correspondance theory, the Coherence theory, the Pragmatic theory and the Performance theory.<sup>36</sup> The systematizing of doctrine is likely to fit well with truth considered as Coherence and Correspondance. Where doctrine is regarded as self-

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<sup>35</sup> For an illuminating, if not unchallengeable, application of forensic and participationist categories to atonement see E P Sanders' Paul and Palestinian Judaism SCM 1977. Sanders seeks, however, to sidestep the significance of communal affiliation in atonement by speaking of 'salvation by membership in the covenant'. This allows him to lump together in 'covenantal nomism' diverse groups who would undercut one another's claims to community holiness. Hence he simplifies the complexities of the 'verus Israel' problem. He may also be exalting the covenant concept to becoming a universal with the same problematic for Judaism as we have demonstrated for Christianity with the universal scope of the Christ concept.

<sup>36</sup> Vincent Brümmer Theology and Philosophical Inquiry: An Introduction Westminster, Philadelphia 1982.

involving and self-authenticating truth, there will also be opportunities to test both the Pragmatic and Performance aspects as life progresses, although which system performs best depends on who you are and how quickly it persuades you that its truth criteria are the only realistic ones.<sup>37</sup> It is important to note, however, that the pragmatic testing is more properly a *communal* testing and not an individual testing. Sufferings and disasters may befall individuals in ways which strengthen their communities.

Existential and phenomenological theories assist the gradually increasing self-involvement which is the presupposition of maximally-inclusive theories of religion. It is very appropriate to attempt to recast the Jewish *halakhah* and the Christian sacraments in existential and phenomenological terms to communicate to the modern world. I have yet to see anything for Christian sacramental life to match Soloveitchik's Halakhic Man with its encouragement for Jews to be involved in Jewish *halakhic* life.

Donald Evans suggests increasing self-involvement as the way to 'discover the truth' in religion:

What I call an 'existentialist' approach differs from objectivism in that a specific kind of self-involvement is held to be a prerequisite for understanding what is being said and for discovering the truth. Moreover, the quality and extent of one's self-involvement will determine the degree of adequacy of one's understanding and the degree to

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<sup>37</sup> The fact that we are discussing truth criteria and not for example righteousness or justice criteria demonstrates our seduction by the classical tradition.

which one discovers the truth.<sup>38</sup>

The quality of one's self-involvement determines the degree to which one discovers truth. The greatest progress is to be found in those who interpret traditional religions in ways which are maximally inclusive, for they open up the deeper resources of religion to the greatest number of people.

Any systemic analysis of religion depends in the first instance on the coherence theory of truth: the system is true because it holds together well. *Systematic* is taken to pertain to the level of general coherence, and *systemic* to the level of deep invasive coherence. The parts confirm the whole and the whole the parts in a mutually reinforcing feedback. Throughout an analysis one looks for potential lacks of coherence and inconsistency and attempts to remove them or modify them towards a more coherent whole. Although the logic is often circular, its very circularity encourages trust. There is always a reassuring answer, even if it is the same one as before in another guise.

And yet it is logically possible for a system to cohere perfectly but to be a falsely coherent whole.<sup>39</sup> The system hangs together well but has no marks of the authorship of God about it. Often when a previously accepted system comes to a point of crisis these questions of verification are explicitly voiced. How do we know that the system has not taken on a life of its own and

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<sup>38</sup> Donald Evans Faith, Authenticity and Morality University Toronto Press, Toronto 1980 p 22-23.

<sup>39</sup> Who decides the criteria for coherence and truth is, however, a matter of controversy.

stifled the voice of God?<sup>40</sup>

Jacob Neusner has made some very interesting analyses of Judaism in history. A system is reformed in the light of an urgent question confronting the communal body, the Israel.<sup>41</sup> The Judaism itself is the result of the foundational question: what is an Israel? The system can ride the storms which question secondary issues, but it cannot ignore questions which demand the reformulation of the systemic core: the Israel.

The systemic core of a Judaism is Israel, and so it is right to suggest that one can only conceivably belong to Israel if one can confess: *Knesset Israel* (or the systemic equivalent) cannot be considered wicked. The systemic core of a Christianity is Christ, and so it could conceivably be suggested that logically one can only conceivably belong to Christ if one can confess the sinlessness of Christ. One says *logically* since Christian individuals exist who do not affirm the sinlessness of Christ. It seems that this is *logically* prior even to affirmation of the resurrection. The resurrection pertains to what is more properly a future state of one's community.<sup>42</sup> The sinlessness of Christ pertains more properly to the present state of one's community.

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<sup>40</sup> See for instance Emmanuel Levinas "Loving the Torah more than God" in Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism Athlone 1990 trans. Séan Hand *Difficile Liberté* Paris 1963 pp 142-145.

<sup>41</sup> Jacob Neusner First Principles of Systemic Analysis: The Case of Judaism within the History of Religion University Press of America, Lanham New York 1987 Ch 7 in particular.

<sup>42</sup> even though sacramental life is regarded as anticipation of the resurrection existence.

We have argued that Christianity needs to cope with a concept of the universality of Christ which is contextualised in the particularity of those who have taken on the obligations involved in the liturgical assembly: the sacramental people of God. Underneath such a formulation is an understanding of truth as both absolute and particular, a combination which was traditionally viewed by Christianity with suspicion. Such an understanding of truth as both absolute and particular is however foundational for Judaism:

Judaism was and is predicated on the conviction that there can be truth which is absolute and yet particular.<sup>43</sup>

Taking seriously the Jewish 'No' to Jesus as Messiah of Israel can draw Christianity into a deeper and richer understanding of truth by learning ways of speaking of truth as both absolute and particular.

#### Excursus: The Tensions of 20th Century Self-identification as Messianic Jews

It will prove significant now to examine the case of twentieth-century Messianic Jews; those who regard themselves in direct hermeneutical line to Jewish sectarians of the first century. They see no need to learn from the Jewish 'No' to Jesus

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<sup>43</sup> Jonathan Sacks Crisis and Covenant: Jewish Thought after the Holocaust Manchester, Manchester University Press 1992 p 254. He contrasts this perspective with that of the Enlightenment. For the Enlightenment the ethical principle is universal or it is private.

as Messiah of Israel. It will be argued from our isolation of the concept of 'divine/human communal point of gracious interchange' that there is confusion about the appropriate group concept of atoning significance. This highlights ambiguities over the religious role of the now separate communities.

It is a significant question to consider how far someone can self-identify as a Messianic Jew, rather than a Hebrew Christian, if he or she has no concept of the holiness of Israel as a corporate entity. Any understanding of Judaism, beyond the cognitively individualistic sense of identifying with certain tenets of faith, would need to hold a positive attitude towards the Jewish people as a collectivity.

Messianic Jews would generally affirm the corporate holiness concept of Christianity: Christ, and undercut the corporate holiness concept of Judaism: *Knesset Israel*, while seeking still to present themselves as Jews. It is presenting a mixed case: *wanting to participate as an individual-in-community of Israel while affirming the holiness of the Christian group concept, not the Jewish group concept.* This cannot be done if a positive attitude to the Jewish corporate concept is deemed foundational for Judaism.

Although Soloveitchik does not explicitly address the issue of Messianic Jews, he links faith in the Messiah, central to Messianic Jews, directly to faith in *Knesset Israel*:

faith in the coming of the Messiah is dependant upon our faith in *Knesset Israel*.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> OR p 135.



For Soloveitchik such an ambiguous middle way cannot be included under the 'maximal inclusivism of tradition'. It is significant that despite being able to include ethnic Jews his concept would not appear to be able to include Messianic Jews. It is as though anyone even contemplating saying that Jesus Christ is the Messiah of Israel must have a positive attitude to the corporate Israel of which he is allegedly the Messiah.

Significant to this assessment, Alan Segal in his Paul the Convert<sup>45</sup> sees profound tensions in Romans 9-11. Segal testifies to Paul's inability to hold back from confessing a form of the positive Jewish group concept: *All Israel shall be saved*.<sup>46</sup> In this way Paul holds back from reliance upon a remnant theology:

Paul's refusal to spell out the implications of his reasoning is extremely important. Having virtually committed himself to the proposition that only a remnant of Israel will be retained, the standard apocalyptic notion, he then surprisingly asserts the rabbinic notion that all Israel will be saved (Rom 11.26 cf. M. Sanhedrin 10:1).<sup>47</sup>

Segal's subtle use of the conversion vocabulary for conscious change in religious community<sup>48</sup> helps reveal the tensions within modern Messianic Judaism. These tensions generally result in an

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<sup>45</sup> Segal Alan F Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee New Haven, Yale university. Press 1990.

<sup>46</sup> Romans 11.26. See the rabbinic text M. Sanhedrin 10.1, drawing as it does on Isaiah 60.21.

<sup>47</sup> Segal op. cit. p 280. See also p 276 where he isolates the three arguments behind Romans 9-11, and observes: "it is not clear that they can all be held simultaneously".

<sup>48</sup> Segal op. cit. p 286 "psychological researchers call the religious change a conversion, even when the subjects themselves would call it a rebirth or a calling."

inability to remain as individuals within a regular synagogue. Not content to be Messianic Jews in mainstream synagogues, they generally set up their own messianic congregations where they reinforce one another in what are effectively idiosyncratic concepts of Messiah and Israel.

### Conclusions

Having argued for the treatment of *halakhic* people of God and sacramental people of God as the respective communal understandings, this chapter has worked through the implications of that view with greater rigour. Specifically, there have been attempts to give a Christian response to the challenge to see in Jewish *halakhah* the same values and aspirations which are expressed in Christian sacraments.

Although aware that Christian rituals at the 'Church versus Israel' stage were openly modelled in a supersessionist way on Jewish rituals, this is in no way prescriptive for present understandings. It is argued in this chapter that a 'Church with Israel' can regard both Jewish *halakhah* and Christian sacraments as valid ways of forming their respective communities.

If the Christian sacraments need no longer be at the expense of Jewish ritual forms, how might the correspondances between the two be described? This formed the core of the chapter. A case was made for Christians to regard Christ as a **divine/human communal point of gracious interchange**. Then it would be possible to see

a similar dynamic interrelationship of diverse elements in the rituals of other religions, specifically Judaism. This dynamic interrelationship was described through the mathematical concept of 'isomorphism'. It was contextualised in an argument for the isomorphism of *Knesset Israel* in the Jewish Yom Kippur liturgy and the sinlessness of Christ in the Christian Eucharist. The concept of isomorphism could assist Christianity to both admit that it can only read the Other of Judaism through categories central to its own system and also to cultivate an attitude to the Other which values difference as difference.

We also found that Christian categories were themselves modified in the imaginative engagement with Jewish concepts towards the view that only those who voluntarily undertake obligations can be held culpably liable for them. This was the real scandal of the anti-Judaic myth in Chapter 8: holding Jews as the paradigm culpable ones for breaking something they had never undertaken. The functioning context for the realisation of Christ's atoning work is the Christian assembly of the repentant and renewed in the Eucharist. This is inclusive of all Christians through the generations. The way would then be clear to allow Christians the theological space to affirm the holiness of *Knesset Israel* without thereby becoming proselytes or being regarded as anonymous Jews.

An excursus was made on the case of twentieth-century Messianic Judaism. Here it was argued that in affirming Christ as their sinless group concept they are generally undercutting

the holiness of *Knesset Israel*. Whether one can believe in the Messiah without affirming the holiness of the Jewish group concept, *Knesset Israel*, remains a source of tension. For Soloveitchik, belief in the Messiah is conditional upon belief in *Knesset Israel*.

Some final remarks were made on the status of this argument for the problem of truth claims between religions. A systematic approach tends towards regarding truth as correspondance and coherence. Linking truth to deepening self-involvement in religions allows the kind of 'maximal inclusivism' argued for in this thesis. Specifically, an engagement with Judaism such as this chapter represents can lead to a conception of truth as both absolute and particular. This is to resist the Enlightenment concept of truth as universal or private.

SECTION FOUR :

EÚCHARIST AND TRINITY REFORMULATED TO SERVE A

'CHURCH WITH ISRAEL'

Eucharist and Trinity reformulated to serve  
a 'Church with Israel'

The section as a whole seeks to capitalise on the work of the previous sections. In particular it seeks to generate formative redescriptions of the Eucharist and the Trinity which will serve a 'Church with Israel' attitude. An attempt is made to clarify the concept of a 'Church with Israel' as far as possible. However, we are still too close to this third stage of the Church's relationship to Israel for the details to be clear. As in Section One, the Eucharist is regarded as the most significant example of liturgy and the Trinity as the most important example of doctrine. Both doctrine and liturgy in mutual interrelationship form the Church.

Chapter 10 considers the sacraments as the Christian 'language of the future'. Baptism and Eucharist involve the formation of a holy people marked by the characteristic of becoming. The sacraments are Christian strategies for permanence in a situation of impermanence. They are techniques for 'presence-in-absence': points of privileged presence amidst the consciousness of God's absence. The Church should be aware that its confession is cultically realized in an incomplete and anticipatory way. Indeed the fullness of redemption lies in the

future. Such self-awareness will assist a 'Church with Israel' based as it is on the eschatological dimension to christology: Christ is 'the coming one'.

The Eucharist shapes and expresses the Christian community. It provides opportunities for the community to transcend its ordinary mode of life and opt to cooperate afresh with the formative divine will. And so Chapter 11 looks in detail at one of the Anglican eucharistic prayers in order to make suggestions which could be taken up in a wider ecumenical context. This eucharistic prayer can be interpreted for Christians to allow other forms of God's people to have access to the Holy Spirit and indeed to be communally a holy temple. There are suggestions for including some lines paralleling the sending of Christ and the formation of the Christian holy people with the giving of Torah and the formation of the Jewish holy people. A suggestion is made for affirming the Sonship of Israel alongside the retention of Christian descriptions of Jesus as God's *only Son*.

Chapter 12 continues with the significance of a Christian affirmation of Israel's extant filial relationship with God. This time the focus is on the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Jesus Christ is affirmed as "*the 'only Son' whose brother is Israel*". Such a 'formative redescription' (Rikhof on metaphor) is able to retain traditional Christian understandings of the uniqueness of Christ while opening up to the significance of Israel's divine filial relationship. As such it holds a Christian 'maximal

inclusivism' of Christ together with an increasing openness to a Jewish 'maximal inclusivism' of *Knesset Israel* and Torah. The theory is presented dramatically in a portrayal of a dance figure. In the age of the Spirit, humanity is called to be active co-partners with God. As in Chapter 9, the movement of salvific sanctification unfolds around a divine/human communal point of gracious interchange. It is argued that the Church is welcomed in the heavenly court insofar as she has reconciled herself to the ongoing existence of a Synagogue alongside the Church. This would be an application of Marquardt's call for Christians to 'live in communion with Jews'. It recognises the need for a Church's self-understanding *with* Israel, not *instead of* or *as* Israel.

#### Clarification of the concept 'Church with Israel'

Paul van Buren's stages of the Jewish-Christian reality were used in Introduction I for setting up the analytical framework of 'Church within Israel', 'Church against Israel', and 'Church with Israel'.<sup>1</sup> Now that Section Four of the thesis has been reached it will be appropriate to clarify as much as possible what might be meant by the third stage: Church *with* Israel.

Van Buren himself allows that the Church with Israel is not

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<sup>1</sup> Paul van Buren Christ in Context pp 103-5.



yet a very clear concept, for we are "too close to it to see it clearly". For him it was events such as Israel's regaining of Jerusalem and the Declaration of *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council which could be taken as marking the beginning of the Church with Israel.

As Israel's loss of Jerusalem in the war with Rome marked the transition from the Church within Israel, so Israel's regaining of Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish State may have signalled what could turn out to be a third stage in the history of the Church, of which the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council could count as the beginning. We may call the third stage that of *the Church with Israel*. As with the first transition, the second appears to be a gradual change, and we are today far too close to it to see clearly what the third stage will look like, or whether we have named it accurately.<sup>2</sup>

It is because it is not yet obvious that we must talk of clarifying the concept of a 'Church with Israel' as much as possible. Its character and even its name is not determined in advance.

Characteristically, van Buren focuses on the task of reformulating Christology for the Church to become Church with Israel:

For such a stage the Church will need a Christology appropriate to its new situation, a Christology for the Jewish-Christian reality, for it will no longer be able to speak of the things concerning Jesus of Nazareth as it did when it understood itself as the Church against Israel.<sup>3</sup>

It is in continuity with this task of reformulating Christology that van Buren can indeed begin to contemplate a fourth stage:

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<sup>2</sup> van Buren op. cit. p 104.

<sup>3</sup> van Buren op. cit. pp 104-5.

'Church and Israel with the world'.<sup>4</sup> The task of this fourth stage is characterised as "developing a Christology for the wider reality of the world". It is seen as dependent upon the task of the third stage: "developing a Christology for the Jewish-Christian reality".

Developing a Christology is obviously fundamental to the task at the third of van Buren's stages, which remains the level of this thesis. And yet it seems to me that formal statements on Judaism and theological reformulations of Christology are just the beginning of what is required to really form a Church with Israel. The formal statements in the context of Jewish-Christian relations need to affect the formal statements on ecclesiology, the Church's self-understanding, and the Church's mission, its relationship to the world. This would make the third stage, that of 'Church with Israel', programmatic for all aspects of the Church's self-understanding.

As an example of a statement on ecclesiology in keeping with a 'Church with Israel', the following remark of Eugene Fisher demonstrates an understanding of both Jews and Christians as the people of God:

Only to the extent that we are reconciled one to the other as people of God, I fully believe, can we hope for full Reconciliation with God who calls us both into being as God's people.<sup>5</sup>

It further relates our acknowledgment of Jews as the people of

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<sup>4</sup> van Buren op. cit. pp 105-6.

<sup>5</sup> Eugene Fisher "God's Chosen People: A Christian response to Rabbi Leon Klenicki" in SIDIC Vol 23 No 3 1990 pp 17-19, p 17.

God to our own reconciliation with God. This link between the Church's acknowledgement of the Jewish people as the People of God and its acceptability before God recurs in Chapter 12.

A 'Church with Israel' will have to be aware of the significance of the way it talks for the conjunctions it uses. Hence it speaks of: Church *and* Israel/ Jesus *and* Torah rather than: Church *instead of* Israel/ Jesus *instead of* Torah or: Church as Israel/ Jesus as Torah. It is this sense of Church and Israel which is very much behind van Buren's fourth stage.

As well as formal statements addressing specialists, the Church with Israel stage should also be programmatic for its liturgy. Its liturgy is closely bound up with more general ecclesial formation. That is why in this final section of the thesis we draw together the first section, which regards doctrine and liturgy as mutually reinforcing modes of ecclesial formation, with the second and third sections, which worked through in detail the theological implications of the Church with Israel stage. It is not enough to have doctrinal theologians writing on Torah as 'the Way' to the Father for the Jewish people if the regular formative liturgy of the faithful still regards Jesus as the only way to the Father.

Ch 10 Baptism and Eucharist remind the Church that Fullness of Redemption is in the Future: People marked by the Characteristic of Becoming

Eschatological language lends itself to a dialectic between the now and the not yet, being and becoming. This is a fruitful context in which to reflect on Christian identity alongside Jewish identity. If Christianity can admit it speaks only the language of the future, and has not been privileged with the fullness of the end in the present, this should help to provide an antidote to supersessionism. This will provide the focus for the present chapter contextualised in ways of speaking about the Christian community. Supersessionism, in its various forms, is based upon the group's convictions of fulfilment in the present in membership of its own group, and hence the irrelevance of any other group's convictions.

Herbert McCabe speaks of sacraments as the 'language of the future':

As Jesus before his death was Word of God (language of the future society) in the flesh of this world, so **sacraments of the Church are the language of the future in the language of our world** and we have to be aware of the same ironic character in them.<sup>1</sup>

Sacramental participation attunes the community to the incompleteness of redemption and human responsibility to work together with God in the ways opened up for them. Christian

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert McCabe OP God Matters Templegate, Illinois 1987 p 178. Highlights mine.

sacramental thinking displays structural similarities to Jewish *halakhic* thinking in this respect.

*Redemption is the language of the future.* It appears that a common Jewish interpretation of the Christian affirmation of Jesus as Christ is to see this as proclaiming the complete redemption of the world.<sup>2</sup> And so a Jewish response to the Christian reading of Jesus as Christ is to point to the unredeemedness of the world, as though this falsifies the claim. This is not, however, the case. Rather, the sacramental (including the penitential) system testifies to the Christian interlinking between the confession of Jesus as Christ with an admission that all is not yet fulfilled and that humans have free will to delay God's teleological purposes.

Throughout this thesis we have made connections between Christianity's ability to open up theological space to Judaism and its own self-understanding. Often this has involved a level of learning from Judaism: seen so far in our use of maximally inclusive understandings of the Christian community, especially Introduction II(i); in our desire for atonement talk to count only those culpably liable who have undertaken obligations Chapter 9; and in our recognition that human cooperation with God has value in the theological domain. The first two have come from our engagement with Soloveitchik, the third is a general characteristic of Jewish writing.

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<sup>2</sup> That the world is not yet saved is the strongest Jewish objection against the Christian confession of Messiahship according to Marquardt Christology 2, p 320.

Jonathan Sacks explicitly links the theology of difference to a theology of redemption:

If the other cannot be affirmed in his differentness, then the world is not yet redeemed.<sup>3</sup>

Christianity needs for its own redemption to affirm the difference, to confess that outside the Church there is theological value.

Christian self-interpretation also needs to take seriously the **cultic realization** of its confession. There are arguments for regarding faith in the resurrection as intimately linked to ritual gatherings of believers.<sup>4</sup> David Aune has put forward an argument that much of the early Christian confession was deeply bound up with its cultic nature.<sup>5</sup> Andrew Lincoln points to the realization in Christian worship of 'the heavenly dimension' represented in the realized eschatology of such texts as Colossians and Ephesians in his Paradise Now and Not Yet.<sup>6</sup> This cultic realization occurs in intimate connection with a proper degree of future orientation: futuristic eschatology. However

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<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Sacks Crisis and Covenant: Jewish Thought after the Holocaust Manchester, Manchester University Press 1992, p 270.

<sup>4</sup> The resurrection of Jesus is only affirmed by believers. L Schenke Le Tombeau Vide et L'Annonce de la Résurrection 1968 argues for such a setting for resurrection confession in ritual gatherings around the Jerusalem tomb.

<sup>5</sup> David Edward Aune The Cultic Setting of Realized Eschatology in Early Christianity EJ Brill, Leiden 1972.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew T Lincoln Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to his Eschatology SNTS Mono. No 43 CUP, Cambridge 1981.

great the fullness in the present, this does not negate a proper sense of future expectancy.

### People marked by the Characteristic of Becoming

The Eucharist is the prime taster of creation and redemption for the Christian community. But it is only a taster. Gratitude for a partial meal in the present exists alongside hope for a full meal in the future. Sacramental participation generates a perspective of longing for the full redemption of the world through the realization of creation in its fullness. In particular it encourages us to regard ourselves as a people in process of becoming as God's purposes are achieved in the world.

Baptism is the rite of incorporation into Christ and entrance to the *eucharistic community of redeemed and recreated humanity*. It is the entrance to a people marked by the characteristic of becoming. It is not the entrance to a people who have arrived, nor the entrance to the only people marked by the characteristic of becoming. Even as previous chapters have worked with the distinction between the *halakhic* people of God and the sacramental people of God, so other faiths beyond Judaism and Christianity have systems articulating this aspect of peoplehood marked by the characteristic of becoming.

In the Eucharist Christians are enabled as a community to *become* that broken yet glorified body being prepared for the world to come. They are a people marked by the characteristic of

becoming, properly a people of and for the future. Corporate being is a becoming because it is created in the image of the God whose being is in becoming.<sup>7</sup> Even if the Church is in possession of all she needs to reach the goal, the credal marks of the Church; *unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity, remain properly teleological marks.*

This understanding of peoplehood marked by the characteristic of becoming can be grounded in an eschatological ecclesiology. The Church is moving towards her own fulfilment:

The Church is a dynamic reality moving towards its fulfilment.<sup>8</sup>

The Church is a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the fullness of communion. It is:

a visible sign which both points to and embodies our communion with God and with one another; as an instrument through which God effects this communion; and as a foretaste of the fullness of communion to be consummated when Christ is all in all.<sup>9</sup>

One major insight into the goal of becoming is the use of visions of unity and integration. The theme of *reintegration* of body, mind and spirit and the unity of the scattered was a major theme of Jesus' ministry, focused as it was on the 'house of Israel'. It is continued by the work of the Holy Spirit who moves

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<sup>7</sup> Eberhard Jüngel The Doctrine of the Trinity: God's Being is in Becoming Scottish Academic Press, Monograph Supplement to SJT No.4 1976.

<sup>8</sup> ARCIC II Church as Communion Church House Publishing 1991, introduction p 9.

<sup>9</sup> ARCIC II op. cit. p 16.



out beyond the house of Israel drawing all of creation into the unity which is God's appointed destiny, so that God may be "all in all". Then all will recognise "The Lord our God is One Lord". This unity arises not from *a priori* human categories from below but will rather be revealed from above. It will be properly realized only in the future.

The Church may carry a vision of the future in the sacraments, but some of the details are as yet imprecise. We do not have complete knowledge of the future, but as we are drawn deeper into God's purposes for the whole creation we see more clearly and know more fully. For those who grow deeper into it, the Eucharist enables them to possess incommunicable truth and knowledge:

the eucharist is also the sacrament of our access to God and knowledge of him and union with him. Being offered in the Son, it is offered to the Father. Being offered to the Father, it is fulfilled in the partaking of the Holy Spirit. And therefore the eucharist is the eternally living and lifecreating source of the Church's knowledge of the Most Holy Trinity.<sup>10</sup>

The Eucharist can be a source of knowledge. The Eucharist encourages Christian participation and knowledge is participatory.<sup>11</sup> However, this does not mean that Christians know all there is to know about God. We have no authorization to assert that Christians have a monopoly of holy truth nor to speak

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<sup>10</sup> Alexander Schmemmann The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom St Vladimir Seminary Press 1988 trans. from Russian Paul Kachur, p 167 bold mine.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Polanyi Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy Routledge + Kegan Paul 1962 1st ed. 1958.

only of ecclesiological integration. Neither do Christians know all there is to know about the future state of created existence. All we can do is speak of Christ as our foretaste of the New Creation. What we have received is a 'call to personhood' and not complete personhood itself.<sup>12</sup> We may have received a *gift* of holiness but that gifting is also a calling to holiness. In our two covenant proposal: the covenant of birth and the covenant of holiness, there is the affirmation that holiness is both gift and call.

John Bowker speaks of Jesus' institution of the Eucharist as a **prophetic action**.<sup>13</sup> Prophecy in word and action is also 'language of the future'. For Bowker:

What Jesus also added was the enacted statement that everything which the disciples had begun to discern and experience of God in and through Jesus would continue, even if he was removed from them by death. ... This was the enacted sign of a prophet.<sup>14</sup>

It is this prophetic enactment which was appropriated through the institution of the Eucharist and the use of the phrase "This is my body" of a piece of bread.<sup>15</sup>

Christianity bears great hopes for the reordering of the world according to God's revealed purposes. It provides tasters

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<sup>12</sup> Alistair McFadyen The call to personhood: A Christian theory of the individual in social relationships Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1990.

<sup>13</sup> John Bowker The Meanings of Death CUP, Cambridge 1991 p 84.

<sup>14</sup> Bowker *ibid*.

<sup>15</sup> Bowker *ibid*.

of fulfilment, together with reminders that the task is not yet finished. The Eucharist is the central locus of Christian tasters of fulfilment.<sup>16</sup> This regular community ritual confirms temporary fulfilment whilst providing strength for the ongoing task of being co-workers with God.<sup>17</sup>

We taste fulfilment in so far as we grow into our gifting of holiness: "Be holy, even as I am holy.". Holiness is about living life to the full. It is about being drawn and drawing closer to the living God. Holiness reveals our status as the image and likeness of God on earth. It also reveals the closeness between *response to the divine and responsibility for the human*.

As regards redemption, the Eucharist presents revisionings of the foundational moments of the faith, tasters of redemption in the present, and visions of a task to be completed at the final consummation. It carries all three grammatical tenses with a stress on the future. Schmemmann sees links between commemoration and anticipation in this way:

the entire endless joy of this (eucharistic) commemoration is precisely that it remembers the last supper ... as the presence and gift of the very goal: the kingdom for which God created the world, ...<sup>18</sup>

We may be given the goal as a gift but we still have to unwrap the gift and move towards the goal. We are redeemed as we open

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<sup>16</sup> For non-sacramental Christian traditions there will be some other ritual which functions as the major link between the group's world-view and its way of life and provides tasters of fulfilment.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Cor 3.9 'God's fellow-workers' συνεργοί.

<sup>18</sup> Schmemmann op. cit. p 203.

up to the present power of our foundational events and as we wait for the consummation of the cosmos in the world to come.

Both Baptism and Eucharist present *liturgical ideals* which encompass attitudes towards creation and redemption, time and human existence. These ideals are not full realities in our lifetime. As regards creation, there are reminders that God is Creator and we are *creative* creatures. The Eucharist makes use of the creatures of ordinary materials declaring that they have their own innate holiness and showing how they can encourage the realization of holiness in us. Speaking of a gradual realization of our innate holiness reinforces that fullness of redemption lies in the future. *Christianity may not argue that redemption has come independently of the increase in holiness of the community that is sanctification.* In the modern period Christianity can admit the close relationship between redemption and sanctification.<sup>19</sup>

The aim of the Eucharist is to encourage all creation to give praise and thanksgiving to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is future-oriented. God unites his self-offering to us in the Son with our self-offering to him in the Son. This mutual self-offering fulfils the purpose for which the whole

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<sup>19</sup> It is possible to regard the Patristic stage of the Church as maintaining the preeminence of redemption over sanctification. At the same time the Mishnaic Jewish system maintained the preeminence of sanctification over redemption. Twentieth-century Jewish and Christian systems can admit the interrelation between redemption and sanctification.

creation was created.<sup>20</sup> This mutual self-offering in Christ has often been expressed in sacrificial language. The linkage between Christian sacraments and the sacrifices of our joint ancestors was explored in Chapter 4.

The Christian Eucharist can be regarded as the celebration of the Resurrection as the First Day of the New Creation.<sup>21</sup> Eastern traditions have retained this creation focus more readily than Western traditions. Even as God blessed the Seventh Day and gave it to reintegrate and communicate life, so Christ reintegrated life in the tomb on the Seventh Day. Thus he honoured the Sabbath in death as in life.

Christ rose again on the First Day of the week which was also known as the Eighth Day.<sup>22</sup> The Eighth Day has traditional associations with abundance of life and the eschaton.<sup>23</sup> He rose with a body which bore the marks of the cross. This body was in process of being glorified and prepared for the world to come. The resurrection confirms the restoration of humankind to its true nature in Christ. It is a restoration to that perfection associated with the Creation.

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<sup>20</sup> Alexander Schmemmann op cit.

<sup>21</sup> see Veselin Kesich The First Day of the New Creation: The Resurrection and the Christian Faith St Vladimir's Seminary Press New York 1982.

<sup>22</sup> Jean Daniélou 'The Eighth Day' in Bible and Liturgy trans. of Bible et Liturgie Paris Cerf 1951.

<sup>23</sup> for example: the Eighth Day as the time of circumcision and the Eighth Day as abundant or extra time at the changeover from Sukkot to Simchat Torah.

The sacraments are the *Christian strategies for permanence and techniques for presence-in-absence*. The Eucharist is linked with affirmations of the presence of the living God with, through, and in the assembled community. The contribution of deconstructionists helps to illuminate the dialectic between the now and the not yet, tempering any overexcessive use of the presence motif:

There is no pure moment of presence, or present time, there cannot be. There can only be that which is in the past and both recollected and re-presented, or that which is in the endlessly deferred future, which is always a 'not yet'.<sup>24</sup>

God inhabits the praises of his people but these are largely praises for what God has done and hopes for the future. The assembly does not possess God and may not presume on his presence in its midst. Neither can it override God's sovereign freedom to withhold that presence. God can come, go, and remain at will.

#### A coming, going, and remaining God

Christians are related to a 'coming, going, and remaining' God. Marquardt develops this theme in the second volume of his *Christology*.<sup>25</sup> There he speaks of coming as 'a way of being' (*seinsweise*), and links the future coming of Jesus to the Church's confession that he might be the Christ in the future

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<sup>24</sup> Graham Ward "Why is Derrida Important for Theology?" in *Theology* July/Aug 1992 pp 263-270, p 266.

<sup>25</sup> Marquardt *Christology* 2 Part III pp 238-446.

(vielleicht Christ sein).<sup>26</sup> It is imperative in Christian self-interpretation to admit that there are unfulfilled aspects to Jesus' messiahship. There are still tasks to be performed and Christians do not have the authority to declare the tasks completed.<sup>27</sup> This does not imply that he is not the Messiah, but it would hold back from declaring him 'the Messiah of Israel' in some final sense.<sup>28</sup> We spoke in the Introductory chapters of a "Yes, No, and Maybe" response to Jesus' messiahship.

Too much of Western Christian writing on the Eucharist has focused on the 'remaining' of God through discussions over the sense in which one can speak of 'real presence'.<sup>29</sup> To look beyond the elements to the risen and glorified Christ present in the Holy Spirit, and to the communal invocation of the Spirit, would facilitate focusing on the God who is 'coming and going' as well as 'remaining'. This movement from 'presence' to a 'coming and going' finds liturgical expression in the increased importance of the *epiclesis*, the invocation of the Holy Spirit,

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<sup>26</sup> Marquardt Christology 2, p 319.

<sup>27</sup> Marquardt argues that it is for God to answer the Christological question. Christology 2 p 25 i). Until then it remains an 'open question'.

<sup>28</sup> Marquardt Christology 2 p 215 points d) + e). See also discussion at Introduction II(i) on criteria and authority for interpretation of Jesus messiahship.

<sup>29</sup> See George Steiner Real Presences: Is there anything in what we say? Faber + Faber 1989 for a useful discussion of the limitations of referential language drawing on the phenomena of aesthetics.

in Western eucharistic prayers.<sup>30</sup>

Another way of tempering the apparent stress on 'remaining' is to attend to mystical testimonies of 'the dark night of the soul'. The dark night of the soul carries an intense experience of the God whose going feels like a disappearance. Soloveitchik refers to this as the state of black despair:

Catharsis of religious life consists exactly in the awareness of the long interludes during which man finds himself at an infinite distance from God: the periodic states of ecstasy engendered by the feeling of closeness to God alternate with the states of black despair (which) contain the catharsis element which cleanses and redeems religious life.<sup>31</sup>

These times of despair are important to the catharsis of the religious life. Soloveitchik speaks not of God's absence but of 'man finding himself at an infinite distance from God'.

John Ashton makes much of the coming and going theme, linking it into the use of the 'Son of Man' Christology in John's Gospel.<sup>32</sup> The Son of Man ascends and descends from his home in heaven.<sup>33</sup> Ashton sees a link between John 1.51: "You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man"; Jacob's dream; and a midrash on Isaiah 49.3

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<sup>30</sup> Yves Congar I Believe in the Holy Spirit Vol III pp 228-258 'The Eucharistic Epiclesis' Geoffrey Chapman/ Seabury, New York ET 1983.

<sup>31</sup> Joseph B Soloveitchik "Catharsis" in Tradition 17 No.2 1978 pp 38-54 lecture 1962, p 53.

<sup>32</sup> John Ashton Understanding the Fourth Gospel Clarendon, Oxford 1991.

<sup>33</sup> Ashton draws from Wayne A Meeks' "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism" in JBL 91 1972 pp 44-72.



referring to Israel's image in heaven.<sup>34</sup> Together these involve a substitution of Jesus for Israel(= Jacob) in the minds of the hearers of the gospel: as a heavenly one who descends to earth for some purpose and reascends once the work is done. He does not remain on earth.

The Son of Man's future coming was a conviction shared by Jesus. Indeed Jesus frequently turned current messianic questions round into future Son of Man statements. This may have been an attempt to correct the tendencies to realized eschatology in his hearers. Ashton considers that the Son of Man Christology in John is deeply significant and of greater importance than the Messiah Christology. He suggests that a Messiah Christology was taken over from earlier tradition and maintained but not developed by John:

Important as it is, the messianic status of Jesus prompts John's theological creativity much less than the title of Son of Man or the notion of Jesus' divine mission. ... The title of Messiah has been so devalued in (Paul's) writings that it appears there mostly as part of a proper name.<sup>35</sup>

The Johannine prophet looked elsewhere than to a Messiah Christology for building blocks for theological development. He found such building blocks notably in Sonship, in the concept of divine agency, and in the fusing of an angel with a seer to form a heavenly being who was human and a human being who was

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<sup>34</sup> Ashton op. cit. pp 342-348. See also the next chapter for more detailed application of this material.

<sup>35</sup> Ashton op. cit. p 245.

heavenly.<sup>36</sup>

Such a tactic as looking beyond a Messiah Christology for tools for theological development would be commensurate with Jüngel's comment on the limited usefulness of messianic categories to developing Christian consciousness:

Man can virtually say that Jesus' relationship to himself and thus his being as a person is consummated as relationship to God based on the preceding relationship of God to him. Earlier, one tried to express this with the unfortunate category of the *messianic self-consciousness*. But this category is inappropriate because it says too much anthropologically and too little theologically.<sup>37</sup>

Christology needed categories which were both theologically and anthropologically creative as it searched for a system of belief adequate to its perception of reality. This was covered in Chapter 3's isolation of five driving forces behind doctrinal development. The messiahship of Jesus is a notable absence in the Nicene Creed.

A Messiah Christology may have been adequate for the reality at the early stages of Christian self-understanding but it was soon surpassed by more suitable theological building blocks. A 'coming, going, and remaining' Son of Man Christology is more

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<sup>36</sup> Christopher Rowland in Christian Origins: An Account of the Setting and Character of the Most Important Messianic Sect of Judaism SPCK 1985 also makes much of the significance of what he calls 'angelomorphic' ideas in the development of Christology. See also his The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity SPCK 1982. Both Rowland and Ashton document the growth of *revelation as disclosures of heavenly knowledge* in connection with Christology.

<sup>37</sup> Eberhard Jüngel God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism T+T Clark, Edinburgh 1983 trans. from 3rd ed. 1977, p 357. Highlights mine.

creative than a Messiah Christology.

### Conclusion

It is not enough merely to admit the doxological character of Christian confessional language. This must be located in its proper setting of the ritual gatherings of the faithful. Christian confession needs to be linked to cultic realization in the gatherings of the faithful in a way which does not preclude a proper sense of futuristic eschatology. The sacraments are 'the language of the future'.

There also needs to be a recognition that the cult is about the becoming of a people. This can be a useful modification of universalizing tendencies in Christian doctrinal confession. Christian doxological language carries visions of a future reintegration of all humanity so that God may be all in all, but this need not imply that God has only authorised one form of 'peoplehood as becoming'.

Judaism too has been endowed with holiness as a gift and as a calling. She has her own tasters of creation and redemption and speaks her own language of the future (*halakhah*). It is no longer adequate for Christians to gauge the future of the Jewish people from their reaction to the claim that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel. For a Messiah Christology itself was inadequate to stimulate the Christian vision of a 'coming, going, and

remaining' God such as lies behind the Eucharist. A serious engagement with Judaism assists the honesty and humility of a 'Church with Israel'. Such an engagement encourages Christianity to confess that fullness of redemption lies in the future.

The theoretical underpinning of this chapter will now be applied in a detailed engagement with one particular eucharistic prayer. This will be treated as an example of how all eucharistic prayers could be interpreted.

Ch 11 The Eucharist as Christian Communal Self-Transcendence:  
Opportunity for a 'Church with Israel'

The Eucharist regularly **shapes and expresses** the Christian community. It encourages an understanding of the human as a mode of celebratory being. Cecil McGarry speaks of the Eucharist realizing and constituting the Church:

The eucharistic celebration is the truest manifestation of the nature of the Church. For the Church and the eucharist stand each as cause to the other. *It is the Church which effects and celebrates the eucharist.* But it is equally true to say, and the patristic tradition is unambiguous on this point, that *the eucharist realizes and constitutes the Church* in the fullest sense.<sup>1</sup>

Whether the Eucharist is able to shape and express a 'Church with Israel' is the cumulative task of this section of the thesis.

The Eucharist is a major concept and can represent the living whole of the religion. As Paul de Clerk observes it contains potentially all other sacraments in itself:

(The Eucharist) is so central to Christianity that it recapitulates in itself the various facets of the mystery of Christ and contains potentially all the other sacraments.<sup>2</sup>

The Eucharist is thus able to recapitulate the whole of Christian corporate identity.

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<sup>1</sup> Cecil McGarry 'The Eucharistic Celebration as the true manifestation of the Church' in Church and Eucharist ed. Michael Hurley, Gill and Son Dublin 1966 pp 28-44, p 28. Italics mine.

<sup>2</sup> Paul de Clerk "Salvation, or Reconciliation, and its Sacramental Realizations" in StLit 18 No.1 1988 p 59.

The Eucharist provides opportunities for reorienting and being reoriented according to the ideals portrayed. These are opportunities for constructive change. That reorienting takes place as a community and as an individual in-so-far as he or she is in the community. We are recreated as we are reconnected with our community and as our community is faithful to God. In engaging with the temporality of human existence, the Eucharist offer opportunities for repentance/*metanoia*: that quiet pronouncement that the past may not hold back the future if appropriately dealt with in the present. It may provide an opportunity to turn away from the corporate identity of a 'Church against Israel' formed by centuries of 'the teaching of contempt'. Ritual is forward- looking in a way which can overcome the deficiencies of the past.

The Eucharist provides opportunities for community self-transcendence. It is a creative act. The community is able to transcend its everyday self and take the opportunity to reorient itself in accordance with the divine will for its realization. It is particularly the work of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist which enables the Church to transcend itself and to draw from the creativity of self-transcendence. James Hanvey has proposed a neologism for understanding the activity of the Spirit: the one-who-always-has-its-being-beyond-itself: *Der AuBersichseiende*.<sup>3</sup> We will contextualize our understanding of the Eucharist in such

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<sup>3</sup> James W Hanvey SJ Hegel, Rahner and Karl Barth: A Study in the Possibilities of a Trinitarian Theology Oxford University D Phil. 1989 pp 322-325.

a creatively transcending view of the work of the Spirit.

Since the Eucharist is one of the most important points of influence of the Christian community, both at conscious and unconscious levels, we will harness it for the formation of a 'Church with Israel'. The subtitle of our thesis testifies to an interest in developing a strategy for moving from a 'Church against Israel' nearer to a 'Church with Israel'. Such a regularly repeated community-forming ritual as the Eucharist is an ideal candidate to put the strategy into practice. As Godfrey Diekmann has said *lex orandi, lex vivendi* (as it is prayed so is it lived).<sup>4</sup>

As a strategic example of what could be achieved with any Christian eucharistic prayer one of the Anglican Eucharistic prayers from the Alternative Services Book 1980 will be considered in some detail. There will first be a commentary on its current form and then some suggestions for future alternative wording. What it is intended to achieve is to show from one particular case how greater sensitivity towards the Jewish people can result in reconsideration of formative corporate prayer. Progress comes through the recognition of the universal significance of attention to particulars.

It is not intended that this should imply a greater significance to Anglican eucharistic prayers over those of any

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<sup>4</sup> Godfrey Diekmann OSB "Response: Some Memories" in Worship 51 July 1977 p 372 quoted in John A Gurrieri "Catholic Liturgical Sources of Social Commitment" in Liturgical Foundations of Social Policy in the Catholic and Jewish Traditions eds. Daniel F Polish + Eugene J Fisher, p 21.

other Christian denomination. Nor indeed that Anglicans could lead the way in moving from a 'Church against Israel' nearer to a 'Church with Israel'. In many ways Anglicans are only capitalizing on Roman Catholic recognition of the significance of liturgy in the response to the 'teaching of contempt'. Anglicans are at a disadvantage because they belong to a church of very wide opinion in relation to Judaism and in which there is still a missionary society devoted to evangelism among Jewish people.<sup>5</sup> Having made these provisos, let us continue.

A Commentary on one of the Anglican Eucharistic Prayers with suggestions for future alternative wording

The Second Rite A Eucharistic Prayer taken from the Church of England Alternative Services Book 1980.

|                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| The Lord be with you. | or The Lord is here.   |
| And also with you.    | His Spirit is with us. |

Lift up your hearts.  
We lift them up unto the Lord.  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

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<sup>5</sup> The Church's Ministry Among the Jews.



It is indeed right,  
it is our duty and our joy,  
at all times and in all places  
to give you thanks and praise,  
holy Father, heavenly King,  
almighty and eternal God,  
through Jesus Christ your only Son our Lord.

For he is your living Word;  
through him you have created all things from the beginning,  
and formed us in your own image;

Through him you have freed us from the slavery of sin,  
giving him to be born as man and to die upon the cross;  
you raised him from the dead  
and exalted him to your right hand on high;  
Through him you have sent upon us  
your holy and life-giving Spirit  
and made us a people for your own possession.

Therefore with angels and archangels,  
and with all the company of heaven,  
we proclaim your great and glorious name,  
for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,**

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

*This anthem may also be used.*

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Hear us, heavenly Father,  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord  
through him accept our sacrifice of praise;  
and grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit  
these gifts of bread and wine  
may be to us his body and blood.

Who in the same night that he was betrayed,  
took bread and gave you thanks;  
he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying,  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.  
In the same way after supper  
he took the cup and gave you thanks;  
he gave it to them saying;  
Drink this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant  
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

Therefore Lord and heavenly Father,  
having in remembrance his death once for all upon the cross,  
his resurrection from the dead,  
and his ascension into heaven,  
and looking for the coming of his kingdom,  
we make with this bread and this cup  
the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Accept, through him, this offering of our duty and service;  
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts  
in the presence of your divine majesty,  
fill us with your grace and heavenly blessing  
nourish us with the body and blood of your Son  
that we may grow into his likeness  
and, made one by your Spirit,  
become a living temple to your glory.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
by whom, and with whom, and in whom,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,  
from all who stand before you in earth and heaven,  
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Post-Communion Prayers.

*either or both*

Father of all, we give you thanks and praise, that  
when we were still far off you met us in your Son  
and brought us home. Dying and living, he  
declared your love, gave us grace, and opened  
the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's  
body live his risen life; we who drink his cup  
bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights  
give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope  
you have set before us, so we and all your  
children shall be free, and the whole earth live to  
praise your name; through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies  
to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out  
in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work  
to your praise and glory. Amen.

### Eucharistic Prayer: Comments by Line No.

As we proceed through the prayer line by line points will be highlighted where there are possibilities of a more open view in relation to Judaism. Many of them will be seen to engage with material from earlier chapters. Others anticipate the next chapter.

1. 'The Lord' is used for the Father, who is the addressee of the prayer of thanks and praise (see for example 1.10 'you'). 'Our Lord' is frequently used to refer to the Son. Lord can be used of them both but 'the Lord' is wider in application than 'our Lord'.

11. Here God the Father is referred to as 'heavenly King'. Later in line 65 there is a reference to the Father as 'divine majesty'. It is important to remember the preeminence of the Father's kingship when at line 60 there is some ambiguity over whose is the kingdom: the Father's or the Son's. It might be possible to refer to the Son as prince, but this is not common practice.

13. 'your only Son'. This is taken as a mark of specialness. *The sonship of Jesus need not be taken as excluding a sense of the sonship of Israel.* A parallel is the case of Isaac being referred to as Abraham's 'only Son' for the Akedah and for the

interpretation of the biblical promises, despite Abraham's paternity of Ishmael. As Elie Wiesel observes of Genesis 22.2:

'Take your son, your only son, the one you have loved, Isaac'. But that is wrong! Isaac is not his only son! The punctuation needs to be changed. The sentence should read as follows: *Kakh na et binkha*, comma, - 'Take your son' et *yehidkha asher ahavta* - 'the only one you have loved', comma, 'Isaac'. Thus the command contains a reproach as well as an explanation.

The *akedah* - the supreme test a father and a people can face - is therefore the result, the consequence, of an injustice committed by the father and his wife toward an unloved son, Ishmael.<sup>6</sup>

The passage can therefore be read as a reproach concerning injustice and lack of love.

Note that line 36 of the eucharistic prayer omits 'only'.

14. *That Jesus Christ is described as God's 'living Word' need not be understood as excluding the Torah as also being God's living Word.* The wording is not 'the exclusive locus of your living Word'. As explored in Chapter 7 Jesus' own respect and support for Torah would encourage us to avoid such exclusion.

14.+ 15. This phrase testifies to divine creation through the Word, in the same belief of creation *ex nihilo* as is reflected in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed. Creation *ex nihilo* can be regarded as the ultimate starting point of a world-view founded on the notion of divine will. It has functioned as a

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<sup>6</sup> Elie Wiesel "Ishmael and Hagar" in The Life of Covenant ed. Joseph A Edelheit pp 235-249, p 247.

theological slogan, best interpreted as 'creation of everything, but not out of anything'.<sup>7</sup>

Although not strictly necessary, Logos theology in relation to creation is regarded as moving towards the concept of preexistence. John Ashton sees evidence for Jesus' preexistence from the link between Jesus and Elijah even before the Logos tradition:

the identification of Jesus with Elijah could have been one of the sources of the strange concept of preexistence - later to be associated firmly and unambiguously with the Logos and the Son of Man.<sup>8</sup>

The same dynamic can be observed in Creation in Judaism: God looked into the preexistent Torah and saw the blueprint for the world.<sup>9</sup> This is also creation by the divine Word and 'creation of everything, but not out of anything'. Judaic systems involve the pre-existence of what is most important to them, notably Torah.<sup>10</sup> Marquardt argues that Christian belief in the preexistence of Jesus is related to Jewish belief in the preexistence of Torah.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See II Mac 7.28. An exception to this is Heb 11.3: creation out of "things which do not appear."

<sup>8</sup> See John Ashton Understanding the Fourth Gospel Clarendon, Oxford 1991 p 256.

<sup>9</sup> See Alan Asher Wolf Miller Studies in the Concept of the Torah in the Babylonian Talmud PhD London External 1959 Ch 3.

<sup>10</sup> All religious traditions treat as eternal and in heaven what is most important to them.

<sup>11</sup> Marquardt Christology 1 p 243 .

21.+ 22. The effect of 'freedom from the slavery of sin' at line 17 is here linked to the ability to partake in God's 'holy and life-giving Spirit'. *This does not exclude other peoples from having access to God's 'holy and life-giving Spirit' where they too have been given rites achieving freedom from the slavery of sin.* As has been argued in Section 3 of this thesis, there should be no outstanding grounds for pneumatological supersessionism vis-à-vis modern Judaism.

23. Here there is mere reference to 'a people', resisting the temptation to regard Christians as 'the' people for the Father's own possession. We have argued in Chapter 4 for a self-understanding of the church as 'the sacramental people of God' without excluding Jews as 'the *halakhic* people of God'.

26.+ 28. 'your great and glorious name' is linked with the sanctus 'holy, holy, holy Lord'. This would be understood as proclaiming the Christian Trinity. There is the presumption that the Divine Name is revealed to Christians, but there is also the knowledge that the threefold holy has a pre-christian history. Its importance has been explored elsewhere.<sup>12</sup>

37. 'Our sacrifice of praise'.

Here the sacrificial sense is of a sacrifice of praise, sometimes also a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Sacrificial language

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<sup>12</sup> D Flusser "Liturgical Roots of the Liturgical Trisagion" in Immanuel 3 1973 pp 37-43 cf. Isaiah 6.3



continues to be used in connection with the Eucharist, more than anything for its ability to make connections between Christ's death and our reception of the forgiveness of sins. However, the Eucharist itself does not function as the biblical sacrifices in any straightforward sense. It is only Christ's death itself which can entertain the primary sense, if then.<sup>13</sup> Chapter 4 argued that both Christian and Jewish worship could be regarded in continuity with the sacrifices of our common ancestors.

38-40. All 4 of the Rite A Eucharistic prayers have tacit admissions that the integrity of creation is not abrogated: bread and wine retain their character as bread and wine. This is not to say that they are not *given an additional identity* as they are consecrated in God's service: that of the body and blood of Christ. The first 3 make the linkage with body and blood at the point of reception in this way:

'grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit  
these gifts of bread and wine  
may be to us his (our Lord Jesus Christ's) body and blood'

There is a dependence here on the logic of the incarnation: the integrity of humanity was not abrogated by the assumption of humanity by the Son of God. Although the humanity remained humanity it was of course affected by such close association with

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<sup>13</sup> M Barth "Was Christ's death a Sacrifice?" SJT Occasional Paper No.9 1961.

the holiness of God.

50. 'new' covenant. We take this to mean the second half of our two covenant proposal.<sup>14</sup> The 'new covenant' thus indicates the Christian covenant of holiness: how Christians as the sacramental people of God live out holiness as a gifting and calling. We noted in Introduction II(ii) how easily 'new covenant' talk can be used as part of supersessionary thinking.

49.- 51. All versions of the eucharistic prayer have, in the context of supposed oral tradition of the institution night, the request:

Drink this all of you;

this is my blood of the new covenant

which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Much has been written on the Eucharistic use of the institution narratives, and on the significance of 'blood of the covenant' in particular.<sup>15</sup> It is important however to admit that

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<sup>14</sup> the universal covenant of birth and particular covenants of holiness.

<sup>15</sup> For example Maurice P Casey "The Original Aramaic Form of Jesus' Interpretation of the Cup" in Jthst April 1990 Vol 41 pp 1-12. Casey takes the Marcan form as the oldest narrative account and reconstructs an acceptable Aramaic underlay to be: "This is my blood, of the covenant, poured out for many". This became "blood of the covenant" under the influence of Greek transmission, since Greek more readily takes the construct form.

we are unlikely to be sure as to any original wording let alone any definitive stress Jesus may have laid on them. As David Parker notes of attempts at historical reconstruction: "The recovery of a definite 'original' text that is consequently 'authoritative' cannot be presumed to be an attainable target".<sup>16</sup>

It is making a link between drinking from the cup of wine in the company of one's fellows and being in a relationship with the Father, the Son and the Spirit. This relationship with God includes acceptance of forgiven sins and the resolution to live in holiness of life.

This could have been achieved without the 'new'.<sup>17</sup>

53.- 55. Death, resurrection and future coming again all point to how much more 'Christ' means than 'Messiah'. The concept of a personal Messiah was strained in being linked with crucifixion. It is likely that Jewish evidence was hermeneutically abused in the Christian confession of Jesus messiahship.

Our eager looking for his coming again, and its significance for the signalling of the completion of the process of becoming the sacramental people of God, reinforces the view that fullness

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<sup>16</sup> His comments are made in the context of Jesus' words on marriage, but the sense is the same. D C Parker "Marriage and Divorce in the Manuscripts" in Theology (forthcoming), p 9.

<sup>17</sup> Casey op. cit. refers to the 'new covenant' of Paul, the longer text of Luke, and some manuscripts of Matthew and Mark. This gives the likelihood that scribal transmission added 'new' in the light of developments to a tradition lacking 'new'.

of corporate salvation lies in the future.

60. Marquardt interprets the title King in relation to Jesus as a 'king who is the negation of all kingship' indicating thereby 'the restitution of the kingship of God'.<sup>18</sup>

This reference to kingdom in close proximity to a congregational acclamation 'Christ will come again' indicates that *Christ's kingship is properly eschatological, even though it may be anticipated cultically in worship*. It retains the element of God's kingship *in Christ's person*, through the real but hidden presence, as well as the kingdom of God in his work.

62. 'Memorial' is one of the key metaphors of what is taking place at the Eucharist. By what is said and done in this liturgical celebration, the Christ tradition is brought into the present. Let it be said that one of the most frequent comments of growths in understanding from Christians involved in learning from Jews is a strengthening in the understanding of the imperative 'remember' from the Hebrew 'zakar'.

Indeed this strong sense of memory and remembering is an integral part of one of Schmemmann's perspectives on Eucharist.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Marquardt Christology 2 §7.6a pp 138-162, p 151 + p 153.

<sup>19</sup> Alexander Schmemmann The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom St Vladimir Seminary Press 1988 trans. from Russian Paul Kachur, Ch 6.

Here, sin is forgetfulness.<sup>20</sup> To forget God is:

a *falling* away from him, from life, ceasing to live through him and in him.<sup>21</sup>

Man has forgotten God and needs to recognise the Saviour and remember his God.<sup>22</sup> God and man, for Schmemmann, meet in their memory of one another, in:

God's memory of man, man's memory of God, that diune memory which is eternal life.<sup>23</sup>

There is room on this interpretation for a recognition that Torah and keeping the *mitzvot* serve as life-creating remembrance of God for Jews.

63. The Eucharist is associated with the Christian community's 'offering of our duty and service'. Any interpretation of 'offering' needs always to be protected from the sense of God's needing anything, or from our coming out of fear.

67. 'nourish us with the body and blood of your Son'.

This saying has to be protected from an unthinking literalism and from all theories of cannibalism even though some

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<sup>20</sup> Schmemmann op. cit. p 126: "to forget means above all to cut what has been forgotten off from life, to cease to live by it, to fall away from it."

<sup>21</sup> Schmemmann *ibid*.

<sup>22</sup> Memory as a life-creating power. Schmemmann op. cit. p 127.

<sup>23</sup> Schmemmann op. cit. p 130.

sense of physicality is important.<sup>24</sup> The sense is of being nourished by the Father in intimate connection with the Son, we are enabled by the work of the Spirit to grow into Christ-likeness. That intimate connection with the Son is described as being nourished with his body and blood.

There needs to be some sense of physicality or at least embodiment if the result of eucharistic participation are 'body and blood' Christians who show Christ to the world. It is that end result of showing Christ to the world which is the prime focus, for the Eucharist presents prospective models for human community. The Eucharist is not there for us to retreat into the 'good old days' in our remembering. It is there so that the risen and ascended Christ may have an embodied existence in the world through and in us.

68. 'that we may grow into his likeness'.

It needs to be addressed whether ordinary gentile Christians somehow become Jewish as they 'grow into the likeness' of Jesus Christ. If so, there may be possibilities of Christians as 'anonymous Jews'. There is a sense in which they could do, since so much of their formative prayer life carries a Jewish origin

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<sup>24</sup> See John Fenton "Eating People" in Theology Nov/Dec 1991 pp 414-423 for an engagement with suggestions of cannibalism and with Jewish aversions to suggestions of drinking blood. Fenton is attracted to the idea that "to drink someone's blood is to declare oneself the cause of that person's death" p 420. Certainly there are concepts of hostility at the root of a ritual so steeped in sacrificial imagery. See our Chapter 4 and René Girard with Jean-Michel Oughourlian + Guy Lefort Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World Athlone Press 1987 trans. from French 1978 ed. by Stephen Bann + Michael Metteer

and because Christ's humanity into which they are incorporated remains Jewish. And yet from our definition in Introduction I of "a Jew is one by birth or by conversion, and who has not subsequently changed religion" they obviously are not. On the assumption that the religions are now separate, Christians will have been deemed to have put themselves outside Judaism by following Christ (putting Christ as world-view, not Torah), even if they were born Jewish.

69-70.     'and, made one by your Spirit,  
            become a living temple to your glory.'

The communal embodiment of Christ by Christians can be described as a 'living temple to the Father's glory.' The attitude towards temple language has been covered in Chapter 4. For a twentieth-century Christian system, *this need not exclude an affirmation of the Jewish people as also being 'a living temple to the Father's glory'*. Section Three looked at the possibility of Christian affirmation of the holiness of the Jewish liturgical assembly (*Knesset Israel*).

72. This line, repeated in all 4 of the Rite A prayers, is perhaps the most important of all.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord  
*by whom, and with whom, and in whom,*  
(our honour comes to the Father).

At the closing stanza of the Eucharistic prayer itself, there is an admission that our approach to the Father is a quite complicated one. That complication is intimately bound up with Christ. Christians give the Father honour and praise **by, with, and in** Jesus Christ their Lord.

This 'by, with and in' gives a way into describing the 'more complicated' relationship of Christians to the Father than of Jews to the Father. It is popular to describe this 'more complicated' relationship to the opening up of the one Jewish covenant to the gentiles through Christ. I have preferred to keep the 'more complicated' aspect to the opening up of the sonship relationship to the gentiles through Christ: it is not a covenant which opens up but effectively God himself.<sup>25</sup>

'By' indicates both Christ and us but with the sense of his being able to do more than we can. 'With' brings distinction because it speaks as though Christ is standing by our side: we imagine two separate people. 'In' indicates our intimate connection as though we were standing in his very shoes. Such a sophisticated understanding of Christ exceeds any Messiah Christology: for one cannot come to the Father by and in an individual human Messiah. It requires a progression from Christ/Messiah parallels to Christ/Torah and Christ/Knesset Israel comparisons. Rather, a Jew comes to the Father by the Torah and in *Knesset Israel*.

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<sup>25</sup> See the next chapter for more detail on this proposal.



There seems to be a greater significance to this with/through/in movement as a basis for growing deeper into one's religious tradition. The Christian comes 'by, with, and in' Christ. The Jew comes 'with' fellow Jews, 'by' the Torah, and 'in' *Knesset Israel*. Here there is isomorphic similarity between the dynamics of two separate systems. Both religions express a sense of gracious corporate embodiment which was expressed in Chapter 9 as "a divine/human communal point of gracious interchange".

Post-Communion Prayer (PCP): Comments by Line No.

PCP 1. Again the Father is the addressee of the thanks and praise. 'Father of all' is allowing the sense in which God is a Father to all humanity.

PCP 2. 'your Son'. Chapter 12 will make explicit a theological argument resisting an exclusive interpretation of Jesus' sonship. It will allow *the prototypical nature of Israel as Son of God*. This follows on in this context from the comments on 'only Son' at line 13.

PCP 2.+ 3. 'you met us in your Son and brought us home'

This is a beautiful expression, with allusions to the Luke

15 story.<sup>26</sup> For the Christian, being brought home is accomplished when we are in the risen Christ, for the risen Christ is there in the bosom of the Father. 'Bringing us home' is reminiscent of the 'return' accomplished for the modern Jew by *Teshuvah* and its corporate expression on Yom Kippur. On that day the Jewish people are 'met in your Son (*Knesset Israel*)' and brought home.

PCP 5. 'Opened the gate of glory' is another beautiful phrase.<sup>27</sup> Christ in his death, resurrection and ascension has gone before us, opened the gate, and given himself as a way for us to follow with the Spirit's help. Israel's acceptance of the Torah can be regarded as 'opening the gate of glory' for the Jewish people.

PCP 6. 'May we who share Christ's body live his risen life'.

This is the end focus and the present consequences of the eucharistic celebration: that we should be enabled to embody the risen Christ in the world, and by doing so draw others to glorify the Father. To live the resurrection is to live as the new creation, thereby encouraging others to remember their Creator. Other faiths, and particularly Judaism, similarly encourage their adherents to remember their creator and glorify their Father God.

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<sup>26</sup> There has been a long history of reading this Christian parable against Jewish identity.

<sup>27</sup> George L Carey's book on Atonement uses this title. The Gate of Glory Hodder and Stoughton 2nd ed. 1992.

PCP 8.- 9.        'Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us'.

Here is an implicit reference to hope as a way for us to walk in. All faiths offer hope as a way to walk in.

PCP 9.- 10.      'We and all your children shall be free'.

This can be construed as an indication that the Father has more children than 'us' (Christians). See also comments on PCP 1.

PCP 17.    'Offer our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice' echoes Romans 12.1, well representing the intention of sacrificial language being the presentation of our very selves for God's purposes in the world. Jews and Christians are both in continuity with the sacrifices of our common ancestors and both present themselves for God's purposes in the world.

#### Suggestions for future alternative wording

The central passage is reproduced with alternative wording incorporated and highlighted:

It is indeed right,  
it is our duty and our joy,  
at all times and in all places  
to give you thanks and praise,  
holy Father, heavenly King,  
almighty and eternal God,  
through Jesus Christ your only Son our Lord.

For he is your living Word;  
through him you have created all things from the beginning,  
and formed us in your own image;

Through him you have freed us from the slavery of sin,  
giving him to be **born as a Jew** and to die upon the cross;  
you raised him from the dead  
and exalted him to your right hand on high;  
Through him you have sent upon us  
your holy and life-giving Spirit  
and made us a people for your own possession  
even as you made Israel a people for your own possession  
by giving them the Torah.

1.18 'born as a man' could be changed to 'born as a Jew'.

This minimal change will have profound consequences for Christian imaging of Jews. The sentences of a regularly repeated liturgy go down deep into people's being and communal attitude. Such sentences often drive the symbolic, pre-linguistic gut reactions of people when confronted with something they are unable to articulate. It is not a redundant change for part of the subtlety of a 'Church against Israel' is to presume that Jesus was not Jewish. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza draws attention to student resistance to entertain the possibility that

Jesus Christ was Jewish.<sup>28</sup>

To get 'Jesus was born as a Jew' down to the pre-articulate level with people will yield more profound results than any special preaching campaigns or even massive developmental work on catechetics. It represents an interpretation of the tradition in the direction of Jesus' increased solidarity with the Jewish people, itself one of van Buren's major aims. It may also go some way towards countering what Littel rightly perceived to be Christianity's lack of controlling influence with its adherents:

most of the baptised betrayed (Jews to the death camps) with enthusiasm.<sup>29</sup>

If the change from 'man' to 'Jew' is considered to have compromised Jesus' universality, then it only serves to emphasise the particularity of existence. One cannot be born directly into universal humanity: one is born into a particular culture and must then learn how to appreciate its particularity whilst transcending its limitations. It is that ability to transcend through appreciation which is seen preeminently in Christ.

Let it be noted in passing that substituting 'born as a Jew' for 'born as a man' also has the advantage of omitting a gender-specific term.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins SCM 1983 p 105.

<sup>29</sup> Franklin H Littel The Crucifixion of the Jews: The Failure of Christians to understand the Jewish Experience Macon GA, Mercer University Press 1986 1st ed. 1975, p 41.

<sup>30</sup> As also 'born as a human being', 'born of woman'.

1.23 Add 'even as you made Israel a people for your own possession by giving them the Torah'.

This provides a parallel with how Christians were made a people in the line before. It makes concrete the parallel sense of Jewish peoplehood 'by the Torah' and Christian peoplehood 'through Jesus Christ'.

### Conclusion

An Anglican Eucharistic prayer was used for commentary purposes and to explore some possible alternative wordings which might service a move nearer to a 'Church with Israel'. It was used merely as a particular example of a more general ecumenical process of becoming more alert to liturgical sensitivity. This could set in motion the 'change in perspective' and 'formative redescription' argued for in Introduction II(i): that of an ecclesial self-understanding of 'the sacramental people of God' alongside understanding the Jews as 'the *halakhic* people of God'. Both holy people are marked by the characteristic of becoming. They cooperate with the characteristic of becoming by a creative act of self-transcendence in the Spirit of God.

Both liturgy and doctrine could assist this 'being as becoming' of the Christian faith-community. This chapter has looked at liturgy but also given significant pointers ahead to the next chapter on doctrine. As seen in Section One, liturgy and doctrine work in mutual interrelation to form and mould community

identity. Yves Congar observed that liturgical change can precede ecclesiological self-understanding, citing the growth of the Western epiclesis in the eucharistic prayer as an example of learning from the Eastern view.<sup>31</sup>

We suggested writing "Jesus was born a Jew" into the eucharistic prayer and recognising that Israel was made as a people for God's own possession by the giving and receiving of Torah. This would have a profound longterm effect generating movement towards an ecclesial self-understanding as 'Church with Israel'. It would present a positive view of Judaism at the heart of the Christian religion. Liturgical change can precede ecclesiological self-understanding.

There seems to be a greater significance to the with/through/in movement seen in the Eucharist as a basis for growing deeper into one's religious tradition. The Christian comes 'by, with, and in' Christ. The Jew comes 'with' fellow Jews, 'by' the Torah, and 'in' *Knesset Israel*. Here is isomorphic similarity between the dynamics of two separate systems. Both religions express a sense of gracious corporate embodiment which was expressed in Chapter 9 as "a divine/human communal point of gracious interchange".

The next chapter will engage with many of the insights of this one. It will justify describing Jesus Christ as 'the only

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<sup>31</sup> Yves Congar I Believe in the Holy Spirit Geoffrey Chapman/ Seabury, New York. trans. David Smith. Vol. 3: The River of Life Flows in the East and in the West ET 1983 French 1980, p 254 "The eucharistic prayers introduced since the Second Vatican Council have given the epicleses back their place. Theology will in this case follow Christian practice."

Son whose brother is Israel'.



Ch 12 Jesus Christ as "the 'Only Son' whose Brother is Israel":  
A Model of the Christian Trinity and a Model for a 'Church with  
Israel'

The following chapter focuses again upon doctrine. It attempts to enable the Christian church to reconcile itself to the continued existence of the Jewish people in God's purposes. In reconciling itself to the continued existence of the Jewish people the church would be being obedient to this challenge from Marquardt to 'live in communion with the Jews':

If a man would become a Christian, so God calls upon him to live in communion with the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

'Live in communion' is used here in the sense of irenic social cooperation and not in the restricted sense of religious rituals. In order to achieve this a model of the Christian Trinity will be presented through the medium of a dance figure. This model incorporates a Christology which allows that Israel is the prototype of the Son of God.<sup>2</sup> As such, it is in tension with any Christian overplaying of a 'beloved Son' or 'only Son' in Christology at the expense of Israel's special relationship with

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<sup>1</sup> F-W Marquardt *Von Elend und Heimsuchung der Theologie: Prolegomena zur Dogmatik* Munich 1988 p 374. Quoted in Franz Mussner "Theology after Auschwitz" *ChJRel* Vol 24 Nos.1-2 1991 p 52.

<sup>2</sup> A Christology cannot achieve this by some talk of a Quadritarian conception of divinity, but it could admit that sonship language was taken straight out of Israel's scriptural self-understanding and focused in the self-understanding of Jesus.

God.

Once again it must be emphasised that these models are merely imaginative Christian models employed for Christian self-interpretation. They should not be used to deny the Jewish right to self-definition.

In the New Testament the sonship of Jesus has a central place, sometimes as Son of God, Son of Man, Son of David, or just Son. There is evidence that sonship formed part of Jesus' self-understanding. In the gospels this is particularly associated with the high points of baptism and transfiguration. His prayer life incorporates the 'Abba' terminology which could be associated with adult use in informal Jewish contexts, against Joachim Jeremias who denied a Jewish *sitz-im-leben*.<sup>3</sup> Addressing God as 'Abba' encourages attitudes of both intimacy and dependence. Jesus encourages his followers to share these attitudes and this desire for extension gives an indication that he did not interpret the terminology of sonship too exclusively. Indeed it could be argued that he interpreted this sense of sonship 'maximally inclusively' with respect to others.

Although part of the point of such intimacy is exclusivity,<sup>4</sup> interpreting terms of intimacy too exclusively

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<sup>3</sup> Joachim Jeremias The Prayers of Jesus London 1967. See David Flusser Jesus New York, Herder and Herder 1969 p 94. "Jeremias could not find 'Abba' used to address God in Talmudic literature; but considering the scarcity of rabbinic material on charismatic prayer, this does not tell us very much." and James Barr "Abbà isn't 'Daddy'" in Jthst Vol IXL 1988 pp 28-4.

<sup>4</sup> The 'jealous God' tradition.

promotes unnecessary difficulties and rivalries. We saw in the last chapter the need to read a rebuke into our appellation of 'only Son' to Jesus Christ, drawing on Elie Wiesel's insights into the *Akedah* and its exclusive use of 'only Son' of Isaac against Ishmael.<sup>5</sup> Rather than exclusivity for the sake of antagonism there should be dialectic between special intimacy and wider application in terms of endearment such as beloved, special one, or only one.<sup>6</sup>

Often this kind of language has a function beyond the strictness of grammatical uniqueness. For example: the uniqueness of Christ has at least three aspects, none of which need imply a strict exclusivism. Firstly, it is *conventional* to use language in such a way that he is the Son and we are sons/ daughters. Secondly, it is *theological* where he functions as a corporate personality. For example, in Paul's use of Adam/Christ parallels no one who follows his thought asks if there is more than one Adam. Thirdly, the uniqueness of Christ is a *statement of sufficiency*; Christ is the only one a Christian strictly needs

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<sup>5</sup> Elie Wiesel "Ishmael and Hagar" in The Life of Covenant ed. Joseph A Edelheit pp 235-249, p 247. See our Ch 11 comments at line 11 of the eucharistic prayer.

<sup>6</sup> A note should be made on the word *μονογενής* (only-begotten) in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed of 381. The sense of 'only' certainly appears to resist any other. However, its main focus is on the concentration of hope in this one and the enormity of the loss when this one is lost to death. The Hebrew '*yachad*' (literally 'only child') is a relatively rare word and virtually all the uses in the Hebrew Scriptures are where the only child is doomed to die: for example Isaac and Jephthah's daughter. See John Ashton Understanding the Fourth Gospel Oxford University Press 1991 p 320 where he discusses the translation of '*yachad*' by ἀγαπητός. Similar overtones will be there for *μονογενής*.

to know about in order to be in relationship with God.<sup>7</sup> None of these uses of Jesus as 'only Son' need be interpreted as excluding the closeness of the Jewish people to God.

It would be possible to say of Jesus "he is an only child who has brothers and sisters" on this interpretation of 'only'. It could be argued that "Jesus is the only Son whose brother is Israel".<sup>8</sup> So far some uses and senses of the 'only Son' language have been explored, and none of them have been found to necessarily exclude the Sonship of Israel.<sup>9</sup> Using locutions such as "Jesus is the only Son whose brother is Israel" is to stretch language beyond its customary senses. It is 'a proposal to redescribe reality'. We saw in Chapter 4 that Herwi Rikhof drew attention to the purpose of metaphor as 'a proposal to redescribe reality'.

*To hold Jesus as the 'only Son' of God together with the Sonship of Israel would be an original suggestion. It would require some sense of recognising the preeminence of one over the other, and this we have sought to achieve by the terminology of prototypical. To speak of one sense of sonship as prototypical*

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<sup>7</sup> cf. the 39 Articles of the Church of England speak of "all things sufficient for salvation" in The Book of Common Prayer 1662.

<sup>8</sup> Although sympathetic to the need for inclusive language this does not work if changed to "Jesus Christ is the only Son whose sibling is Israel". This is because if the sibling were a girl it would not stand in tension with Jesus as the only Son.

<sup>9</sup> Moses addresses God at Numbers 11.4 "Did I conceive all this people? Did I bring them forth?", implying the people is God's offspring. Hosea 11.1 "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." Both make good sense of God as Mother as well as Father.

for the other indicates theological priority. We suggest that *the sonship of Israel has priority over the sonship of Jesus Christ*. One might look to Israel as Son of God to illuminate Jesus Christ as Son of God.

What this might involve for a Christian doctrinal system will now be imaginatively explored.

### A Model of the Christian Trinity: 'The Sheepskin Hay' Dance Figure

The imagery of the dance is sometimes used to portray the dynamic and interpersonal characteristics of the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>10</sup> This is generally linked with a serious engagement with the concept known as *perichoresis* or *circumincessio*, whereby the three persons interact and coinhere intimately.<sup>11</sup> This is one way of ensuring the unity-in-action of the divine persons.<sup>12</sup> Without some grounding in a unifying interrelationship of divine persons the use of the dance imagery could encourage tritheism.

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<sup>10</sup> Stephen Verney The Dance of Love Fount 1989 is one example.

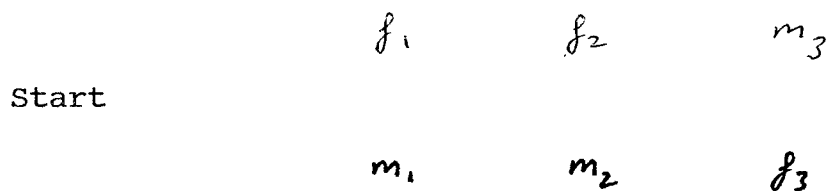
<sup>11</sup> The concept of *perichoresis* is refined and passed on by a number of Christian theologians. Thomas F Torrance attributes it first to Athanasius in the context of sanctification. See The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church T+T Clark, Edinburgh 1988, p 10 + pp 229-231.

<sup>12</sup> Judaism as an ethical monotheism has a similar concept of unity-in-action in the *halakhic* response of faithfulness to Torah. Sometimes this is associated with Kabbalistic notions of reuniting aspects of God through sacred human acts and the concept of *Tikkun Olam* (Mending the World).

There has seldom been any suggestion of which specific dance might be theologically most appropriate. It is my suggestion that one of the traditional English Playford dances might have the potential to be suitably adapted. The dance is known as 'Picking up Sticks' and it is the final figure entitled 'The Sheepskin Hay' which has greatest potential. First the dance figure will be described, and then some layers of theological interpretation will be suggested.

The figure is danced by six people: three men and three women. My suggestion is to reverse the positions of the third pair: that is, putting male opposite female rather than female opposite male. The general movement of the dance is for the bottom row of three to dance around the top row, using the middle person as a pivot: this is the first movement. It is then repeated with the top row dancing around the bottom row using the middle person as a pivot: this is the second movement.

#### First Movement



From this basic starting position the first sequence will be presented in 7 figures, as follows. There will then be an extended explanation with suggested associations.

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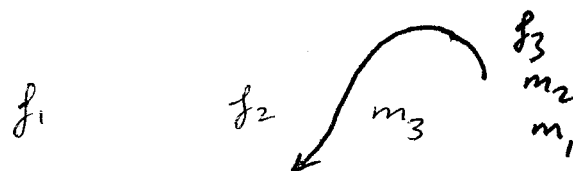
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#### First Movement

|       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|       | $f_1$ | $f_2$ | $m_3$ |
| Start | $m_1$ | $m_2$ | $f_3$ |

From this basic starting position the first sequence will be presented in 7 figures, as follows. There will then be an extended explanation with suggested associations.

Fig 1



At that point male:1 carries on going around female:2 rather than following the others from his row.

Fig 2

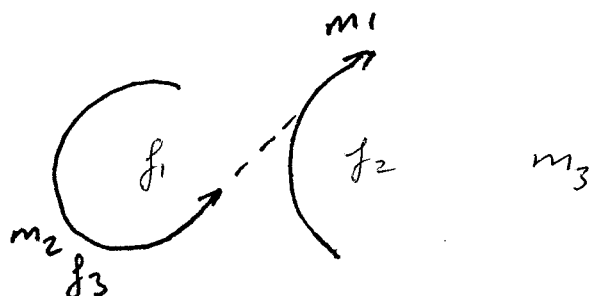
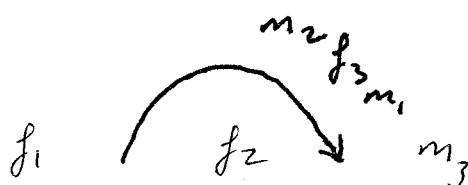


Fig 3



Male:2 now continues around female:2.

Fig 4

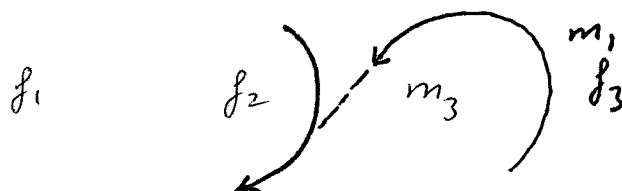
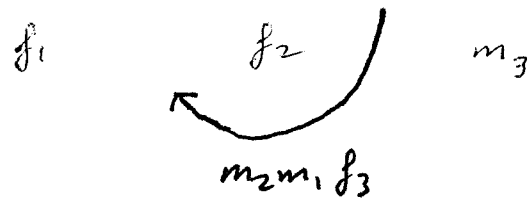


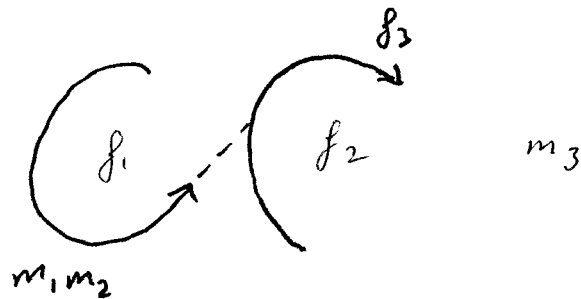


Fig 5



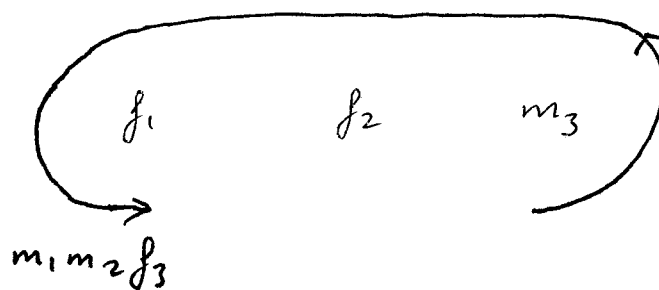
Female:3 continues around female:2.

Fig 6



And they return to place by processing behind the opposite row.

Fig 7



The top row now work the same figure around the bottom row using the middle person as their pivot. Having completed it they return to position and the figure is ended.

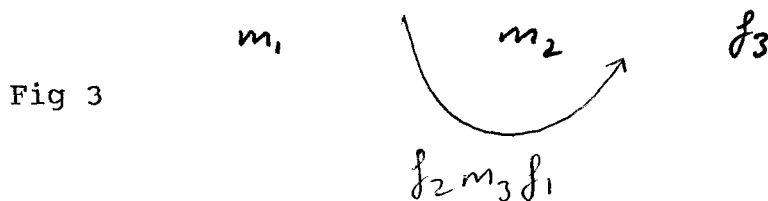
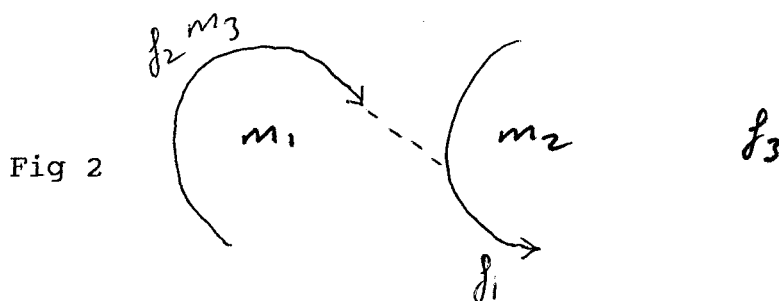
## Second Movement



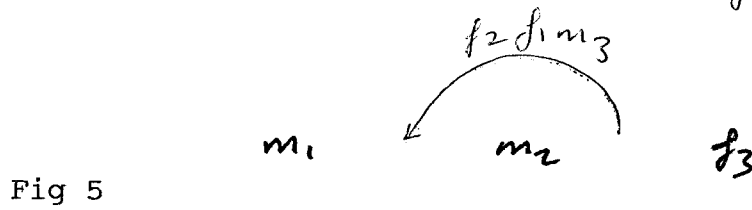
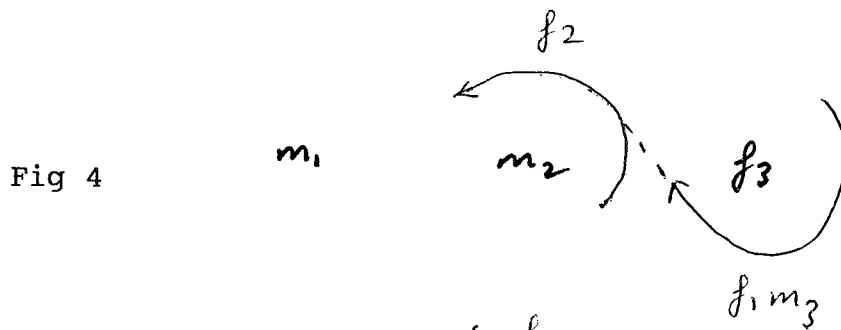
From this basic starting position the first sequence will be presented in 7 figures, as follows. There will then be an extended explanation with suggested interpretations.



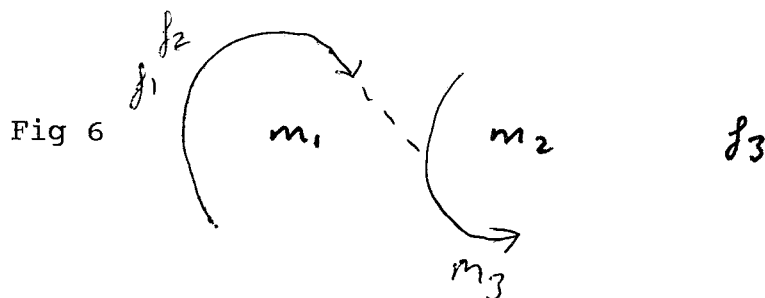
At that point female:1 carries on going around male:2 rather than following the others from his row.



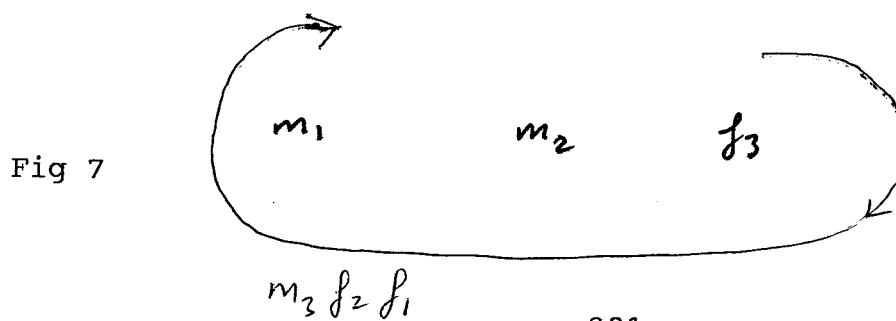
Female:2 now continues around male:2.



Male:3 continues around male:2.



And they return to place by processing behind the opposite row.



## Interpretation

Having seen the figure through it is now appropriate to attempt some layers of theological significance. The first movement portrays the humanisation of God. The second movement portrays the divinisation of humanity and the rest of creation.<sup>13</sup> Divinisation is a useful theological concept so long as it is recognised that in our increasing openness to God we remain by nature creatures, and do not become gods.

f1 represents creation becoming conscious

f2 represents humanity becoming co-partners with God

(prototypically Jesus of Nazareth)

m3 represents communities who actively strive with God

(prototypically *Knesset Israel* <sup>14</sup>)

These three portray a progression towards increasing involvement in the ways of God. The prototype of m3 is Israel (literally: 'strives with God'). Prototype is used here in a maximally inclusive way: to speak of Jesus as the prototypical copartner

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<sup>13</sup> Athanasius holds that '(The Word of God) assumed humanity that we might become God': Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνὶ ἡμεῖς ἐνθρώπων ἦν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν. *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* §54. Cf 2 Pet 1.4. See also AM Allchin Participation in God: A Forgotten Strand in Anglican Tradition Darton, Longman + Todd 1988 for a basis in Anglican tradition and Panayiotis Nellis Deification in Christ: Orthodox Perspectives on the Nature of the Human Person New York, St Vladimir's Seminary 1987 for an Orthodox perspective.

<sup>14</sup> 'Knesset': assembly, is used to signify the liturgical assembly as the zenith of the community. See Chapter 9.

of God means simply that in this Christian model one looks to Jesus to typify what is involved in copartnership with God.

m1 represents the Father

m2 represents the Son (Christ/Israel)

f3 represents the Holy Spirit <sup>15</sup>

The significance of the reversed couple, female:3 and male:2, is to more accurately portray the "age of the Spirit" in which Christianity now lives. To speak of this age as "the age of the Spirit" is not to imply that the Spirit only came into being with the first coming and going of Christ.<sup>16</sup>

Christianity lives between the first and second comings of her Lord Jesus Christ. It is the age in which God has already revealed his ways in Christ and effectively leaves humanity to respond to the clues. The Holy Spirit encourages and guides human communities but does not force or too actively intervene. Christians are to take an active interest and follow the signs,

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<sup>15</sup> Feminist apologia: This idea communicates best from its basis in a country dance figure with imagined male and female figures. There is great potential in the portrayal of the Holy Spirit in a female form f3, as is gaining increasing recognition in theological writings. There is also great potential in suggesting some degree of androgyny within the two natures of Christ (m2 + f2). Against this potential will have to be put the sense of a female will (the Spirit) being carried out in a male human world with its prototypical form in the community of Israel.

<sup>16</sup> This is ruled out by a fully trinitarian theology holding all three persons to be present eternally. This can however be held together with the suggestion that the working of one person is uppermost in each successive age: Father, then Son, and now Spirit.

thereby becoming copartners with God. Individually they are following Christ, the prototypical copartner. As a community, Christians are following Israel, the prototypical community. This more active interest may include arguing with God and striving with a God who hides his face and his blessings.<sup>17</sup>

### First Dance Movement

Figure 1: The Spirit leads off into the creation and skirts the communal 'access point': m3. God deals with groups and with individuals only in-so-far as they are individuals-within-a-community.<sup>18</sup> That involvement with a community is expressed on this model as faithfulness to a liturgical assembly. All three persons of the Trinity are united in the same activity (*opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*).

Figure 2: The action revolves around female:2. F2 portrays the humanity of Jesus as prototype of the human co-partner with God. It is almost as though the divine trio have most to do here,

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<sup>17</sup> Peniel, Gethsemane, Shoah can all be interpreted as God hiding his face and his blessings. God hiding his face (*Hester Panim*) is a technical rabbinic term. See also Samuel E Balentine The Hidden God: The Hiding of the Face of God in the Old Testament Oxford University Press, Oxford 1983.

<sup>18</sup> All Jews are included in the Jewish community unless they put themselves outside. Our definition of *Kneset Israel* is inclusive of ethnic Jews though hopeful that they will grow deeper into traditional roots. All baptised Christians are included in the Christian community with the hope that they will become religiously involved in the eucharistic community.

and each one takes his or her turn concentrating here. The first to act is m1, the Father. The Father has final responsibility for creation, redemption, and consummation, so it is most appropriate that the Father begins the work of the deep healing of the human condition.

In this model sin is regarded as hiding from God and as driving God's presence from ourselves and God's creation.

Figure 3: The Father now leads off.

Figure 4: It is now the Son who cooperates with the humanity of Jesus. Here is a two-nature Christology at work, opening up the way to increasing human involvement in the ways of God. This close involvement may involve hiding, struggle, and wounding.

Figure 5: The Son leads off and gives way to the Spirit. The Spirit embraces this situation out of a deep compassion.

Figure 6: The Spirit embraces exhausted humanity to prepare it for resurrection and glory. As the Spirit leads the trio back into their positions, resurrection occurs. The Spirit leads off past m3 (the communities) as a reminder that resurrection is properly a communal concept. Jesus' resurrection is first-fruit of general resurrection. When God calls God's own at the general resurrection, both Jesus Christ, incorporating Christians, and

Israel, incorporating Jews, will be brought home.<sup>19</sup>

### Second Dance movement

God draws to a close the divine/human drama and full personhood is revealed. *Kneset Israel* leads off with the humanity of Jesus and creation coming to consciousness behind.<sup>20</sup> *Kneset Israel* is greeted by its Father, the God of Israel.

The focus of attention is the Son (Israel/Christ). *Kneset Israel* greets its counterpart divine nature before the humanity of Jesus does the same.<sup>21</sup> Creation coming to consciousness is welcomed in the heavenly realm and it gives the praise of consummation to its Creator.

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<sup>19</sup> "Home" can be used here in a polyvalent sense. Each religion has a variety of ways of envisaging a final or original home: eg. the world to come, the nearer presence of God.

<sup>20</sup> This may well read as unbalanced to one expecting comparable roles for Israel and Christ. However the imbalance is a consequence of the prototypical nature of Israel's sonship at the communal level.

<sup>21</sup> This may appear to require a formal 2-nature talk for Israel as well as for Christ. This need not be so, but it is not inconceivable. John Ashton draws attention to some evidence which could be construed as a divine counterpart for Israel hidden away in God's quiver. Understanding the Fourth Gospel Clarendon, Oxford 1991, pp 342-346. Ashton draws on Genesis Rabbah on Gen 28.12, a midrash on Is 49.3, and the Prayer of Joseph. "Abraham and Isaac were created before any work. But I, whom men call Jacob but whose name is Israel, am he called Israel, ie. a man seeing God, because I am the first born of every living thing to whom God gives life." See also A F Segal Ch 11 of EP Sanders, AI Baumgarten, Alan Mendelson eds. Jewish and Christian Self Definition Vol.2: Aspects of Judaism in the Greco-Roman Period SCM 1981 for growth of Jacob/Israel as mediator figure.



The humanity of Jesus is welcomed as the critical locus of divine involvement with all that resists God in the world. This welcoming is the glorification of all humanity.

The final movement sees *Kneset Israel* as the prototypical community seated at the heavenly table. *The Church is welcomed as she has reconciled herself to the ongoing existence of a Synagogue alongside the Church.*<sup>22</sup>

Full personhood is revealed as 'persons-in-relation-in-community on behalf of the whole creation'. Such a view is commensurate both with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and the Jewish understanding of Torah.

On this model Jesus Christ is 'humanised God and divinised humanity in intimate embrace, for the benefit of the whole creation'. The same description at the communal level could be given for *Kneset Israel*. Both fit well the dynamic interrelationship developed in section three of the thesis: a 'divine/human communal point of gracious exchange'.

#### Conclusion: A Model For a 'Church with Israel'

It is important now to explore some of the implications of the trinitarian model portrayed in this chapter for the life of a Christian community which seeks to understand itself as a

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<sup>22</sup> Whether Israel's acceptance depends on some relationship to gentiles is not for me to say. We noted in Introduction I that Judaism also has a problem with describing difference non-hierarchically.

'Church with Israel'. A 'Church with Israel' should seek to learn from the self-understanding of Israel as 'the one who strives with God'. As a church living in the age of the Spirit, between the first and second coming of her Lord Jesus, she may feel that it is hard work to understand the ways of God in this inbetween time.<sup>23</sup> The Jewish people has valuable and longer experience at living in a religiously ambiguous world.

The main point concerns the interpretation of the 'only begotten' Son language of the Christian tradition. We attempt to resist interpreting such language exclusively. The language of 'only Son' does not need to be abandoned, but the attitudes and actions in association with the language should not be such as to undercut the special intimate relationship between God and Israel. Indeed it may require some sense of the attitudes and actions of the Church bearing witness to that relationship.

The final movement of the dance has both *Kneset Israel* and the Church welcomed in the heavenly courts. This includes the suggestion that the depth of the Church's welcome may depend on her own welcoming of the Synagogue alongside the Church. Our suggestion for the Christian Trinity is functioning here as a model for Christian community. It encourages the Church to be reconciled to life *with* Israel, not *instead of* Israel, or even

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<sup>23</sup> In this thesis I make use of a dialectical motif of the presence/absence of God. See for example Alan Eccleston's metaphor of 'the eclipse of God' in The Night Sky of the Lord Darton, Longman + Todd 1980 Ch 12. The sun is still there despite being obscured.

as Israel.<sup>24</sup>

This sense of Church *with*, rather than instead of or as, Israel is deeply significant. The 'Church against Israel' logic feeds off the representational logic of the identification of Jesus as Israel.

At its most profound level, the identity of the Church with the Israel of God was a step based upon a developed Christology. It was a step which could hardly be taken apart from the explicit assertion that Jesus is 'Israel'. It is very significant that it was Justin, the first to call Jesus 'Israel', who was the first to call the Church 'true Israel'. ... it was especially the lively awareness that Jesus is God's own anointed Son who fulfils in himself all that Israel was meant to be that led to the Church being identified as the 'Israel of God' by c. AD 160.<sup>25</sup>

If we can exalt Jesus the Son without denying the Sonship of Israel there will be progress. It may await the conceptual revolution which values difference as equality. Yet even if it is currently impossible this does not mean that we may not register our desire to say the currently unsayable.

In the model presented in this chapter the doctrine of the Trinity is given central place, as is the humanity of Jesus as the pivot of God's consummation of the cosmos. And so, many of

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<sup>24</sup> Some writers try and make something positive out of Jesus as Israel in the sense of a representative leaving open the place for the one represented, or using the theme of recapitulation. See Franz Mussner Tractate on the Jews SPCK/ Fortress 1984 pp 130-1. However, there are limitations to the logic of both representation and recapitulation. This thesis prefers Jesus and Israel, as the use of the Sonship theme in this chapter has demonstrated. It assists the framework of two separate liturgically/halakhically formed communities.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Richardson Israel in the Apostolic Church Cambridge Monograph Series Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1969, pp 205-6.

the traditional Christian ways of thinking are retained. However, there is *in addition* a high place accorded to the Jewish People as the Assembly of Israel, the prototypical community. As Franz Mussner says:

The 'recognition' of Jesus of Nazareth will become the 'recognition' of Israel - and in both cases the 'objective' genitive is meant ... .<sup>26</sup>

In this chapter we have worked with an admission that the concept of Sonship belongs prototypically to Israel at the corporate level as it does to Christ at the individual level. The Church as a corporate body has much to learn from the ongoing relationship of God with the Jewish people. The portrayal of the Christian Trinity in this chapter has functioned both as a model of God and a model for Christian community. The trinity can thus be harnessed to assist the formation of a 'Church with Israel'.

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<sup>26</sup> Mussner op. cit. p 131.

Conclusion: Doctrine and Liturgy as Theological-Symbolic Therapy  
for the 'Church against Israel' Malady

In this thesis we have reconsidered Christian theological identity 'in the face of and together with the Jews' (J B Metz). It has been articulated at an unsophisticated level as a move from a 'Church against Israel' position nearer a 'Church with Israel' position. At a more sophisticated level, there has been suggested an ideological programme for influencing Christians through liturgy and doctrine towards an increased sense of solidarity with the Jewish people.

One of the greatest barriers to reconsidering Christian identity in relation to modern Judaism is a conceptual one. It is the prevalent hierarchical concepts at the heart of the Christian faith: anything different must somehow be something less. A second, but interrelated, barrier to recreating Christian identity in relation to modern Judaism is the persistence of the anti-Judaic myth throughout the centuries. It is one thing to recognise and retract the excesses of the 'teaching of contempt' (Jules Isaac), quite another to recognise and reformulate an unthinking continuation of 'Christian identity at the expense of Judaism'.

We need ways of thinking through difference non-hierarchically. This is, of course, not just a problem for Christianity. Jacob Neusner considers this 'thinking through' of difference as the most important task facing religion itself:

The single most important problem facing religion for the next hundred years, as for the last, is an intellectual one: how to think through difference, how to account, within one's own faith and framework, for the outsider, indeed many outsiders.<sup>1</sup>

We have presented a very particular case of trying to think through difference: how Christianity can understand itself in relation to modern Judaism.

A philosophy of otherness or alterity would be a great help towards a non-hierarchical conception of difference. Such a philosophy is evolved by the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas.<sup>2</sup> The work of Levinas is of great importance for its philosophical treatment of otherness: especially the otherness of time, and the call of ethical responsibility towards one's neighbour. Levinas has been particularly influenced by Husserl's phenomenological philosophy, especially his desire "to contest that the place of Truth is in Representation".<sup>3</sup> Representation presumes that one can stand in for the other at significant

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<sup>1</sup> Jacob Neusner "Thinking about 'The Other' in Religion: It is Necessary, but is it Possible?" in ModTh Vol 6 No.3 1990 pp 273-285, p 273.

<sup>2</sup> Emmanuel Levinas Ethics and Infinity Pittsburgh, Dusquesne University Press 1985 trans R A Cohen *Ethique et Infini* 1982; Time and the Other Pittsburgh, Dusquesne University Press 1987 trans. R Cohen *Le temps et l'autre* 1947; Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism Athlone 1990 trans Séan Hand *Difficile Liberté* Paris 1963/76; Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority Pittsburgh, Dusquesne University Press 1969 trans. Alphonso Lingis *Totaité et Infini* The Hague, M.Nijhoff 1961.

<sup>3</sup> Difficult Freedom p 292. He is not however uncritical of Husserl, rejecting his view that "The basis of objectivity is constituted in a purely subjective process" Totality and Infinity p 210.

points: it may become a subtle form of forgetting.<sup>4</sup> Speaking of Jesus as Israel or Jesus as Torah may become the forgetting of Israel and Torah.

Levinas describes his Totality and Infinity as opposing philosophies which reduce the other to the same:<sup>5</sup> a philosophy of alterity contrasts with philosophies of transcendental sameness which are generally unable to constitute others as others. Judaism in particular will suffer if theorised by a Christian philosophy of transcendental sameness. For example, Levinas draws attention to Hegel's ability to "bring Antisemitism within" his system and hence "within the absolute".<sup>6</sup> Levinas' philosophy is largely progressed in contradistinction to what he terms Heidegger's "philosophy of the Neuter" and Hegel's "impersonal reason".<sup>7</sup>

This thesis is progressed in the hope that *the intolerance of difference that is Christian anti-Judaism* is no philosophical absolute. Real progress in Jewish-Christian relations awaits a conceptual revolution which will allow difference to be handled

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<sup>4</sup> "Whatever one represents, one inscribes in memory, and this might seem a good defense against forgetting. It is, I believe, just the opposite." Jean-François Lyotard Heidegger and 'the jews' University Minnesota Press Minneapolis 1990 trans. A Michel + M Roberts Original 1988, p 26.

<sup>5</sup> Totality and Infinity p 294.

<sup>6</sup> Difficult Freedom p 236.

<sup>7</sup> Totality and Infinity p 298. See also p 289. Although taking the basic plurality of humankind as male and female, Levinas' portrayals of 'the feminine' are suspect. See § 4 B "The Phenomenology of Eros". The feminist Luce Irigaray has been influenced by critical appreciation of Levinas. See her *Parler n'est jamais neutre* Paris 1985, *Sexes et parentés* Paris 1987.

as equality. In the meantime we have proposed the concept of *isomorphisms* for providing some sense of dynamic interrelationships between diverse elements in the systems of separate religions. One has to admit, however, that the patterns suggested will be those which your own system has encouraged you to find. There is no privileged neutral standpoint.

One of the most sensitive areas within which a theology of otherness is desperately needed is the issue of divine election of a people. Indeed, as far as Hans-Joachim Kraus is concerned, the central issue of Christian theology in relation to Judaism is that of election.

The basic fault of the whole of Christian theology is the denial, displacement or appropriation into a *delusion of substitution of the Election of Israel*. No one can speak biblically of God who negates the Election of Israel, who disregards it or who explains that it has been annulled.<sup>8</sup>

We have argued for a certain distancing from 'speaking biblically' in favour of reading scripture through a Christian liturgical or Jewish *halakhic* tradition. Nonetheless, Kraus' point about Christian *substituting for* the election of Israel remains a key concern. Chapter 8 argued that far from substituting for Israel's election, Christians are dependent upon it. It was also found that the very conception of election can

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<sup>8</sup> Hans-Joachim Kraus p 136 *Systematische Theologie im Kontext biblische Geschichte und Eschatologie* Neukirchen-Blyn, Neukirchener Verlag 1983, trans. by Stefan Schreiner in *ChJRel* Autumn/Winter 1989 italics mine.



create problems in the context of extreme suffering.<sup>9</sup> However, to accept suffering as divine encouragement to be recommitted to one's tradition may be handling suffering in socially creative ways.

We have argued for the two religions as two separate liturgically-formed peoples who both stand in a relationship of continuity and discontinuity with respect to biblical Judaism. This would go some way towards precluding a Christian substitution of Israel's election. Our suggestion whose is in line with the following insight of Wolfgang Wirth:

Christianity can never take the place of Israel but must strive alone, as a community co-elected, co-summoned and accepted with God's Covenant, to live in its own way in accordance with instructions of the people of God.<sup>10</sup>

We have accepted the co-elected and co-summoned aspects of Wirth's proposal. This has been expanded as 'living in its own instructed way' as respectively Christian sacramental and Jewish *halakhic* faithfulness. This would involve Christian acceptance at some level of the theological value of the Torah of Moses to Jews. For as Gavin Langmuir remarks:

the followers of Jesus could become anti-Jewish or anti-Judaic only if they accept Christ rather than Moses as their most fundamental contact with their god and the primary symbol of their identity and *refused to accept the authority of any Judaic religion*, even though they might

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<sup>9</sup> See the discussion on Richard Rubenstein's After Auschwitz in the Appendix.

<sup>10</sup> Wolfgang Wirth "In Search of the New Humanity: Significance of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue" in ChJRel 16 No.4 1983 pp 3-10, p 8.

still symbolize themselves as Jews.<sup>11</sup>

To accept Christ *rather than Moses* as primary contact is to devalue Moses as a supreme theological symbol. What is needed is a way of making Christian identity around the focus of Christ without undermining the authority of Jewish identity around the focus of Moses. This has meant for us engaging with the Jewish symbols *Knesset Israel* and Torah.

In Chapter 3 we gave a detailed explanation of the rise of Christian christological and sacramental thinking, demonstrating the interlinking between doctrinal development and liturgical formation. This highlighted the *mimetic* quality of christological thinking: imitating Jewish concepts, notably of Torah and *Knesset Israel*. The keynote of the 'Church against Israel' mechanism is the progression *from acquisitional mimesis to conflictual mimesis*:<sup>12</sup> the desire for the Jewish scriptures and the Jewish God leads to conflict with Judaism and Jews. This leads on to the projection of the cause of the conflict back to the very foundation of the world.<sup>13</sup> Part of breaking this mechanism

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<sup>11</sup> Gavin I Langmuir History, Religion and Antisemitism Berkeley, University of California Press 1990, p 279. Highlights mine. Note 4 remarks that Langmuir holds from this that the "Jews for Jesus" movement would be considered anti-Judaic.

<sup>12</sup> For the general development of *mimesis* see René Girard with Jean-Michel Oughourlian + Guy Lefort Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World Athlone Press 1987 trans. from French ed. 1978 by Stephen Bann + Michael Metteer, Ch 1 especially pp 7-47.

<sup>13</sup> Acts 2.22-23 "Men of Israel, ... this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men". Highlights mine.

involves uncovering its workings and denying the culpability of the 'victim'.<sup>14</sup> This has been achieved throughout the thesis, specifically by engaging with the anti-Jewish myth's tendency to find the Jewish people culpable because of a rejection of Jesus' messiahship.

### Responses to an Analysis of Formative Christianity as 'Church against Israel'

This thesis largely stems from a felt need to respond in some way to the analysis that it was Formative Christianity which displayed the characteristics of a 'Church against Israel'.<sup>15</sup> I have consciously chosen to direct more energy into the search for a creative response than to the description of the problem by concentrating on what it takes to move a 'Church against Israel' towards a 'Church with Israel'. Others have covered the descriptive work and there is a need to avoid reduplication.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> "Once understood, the mechanisms can no longer operate; we believe less and less in the culpability of the victims they demand". René Girard The Scapegoat Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1986 from *Le Bonc émissaire* Paris 1982, p 101. I consider this first comment overoptimistic: it takes more than understanding to render such mechanisms ineffectual.

<sup>15</sup> 'Formative Christianity' is an umbrella term encompassing the Christianities canonised in the Christian scriptures. Although there are a range of such Christologies there is nonetheless movement towards dominance by a formative ideology.

<sup>16</sup> For example, Charlotte L Klein Anti-Judaism in Christian Theology SPCK 1978 trans. Edward Quinn *Theologie und Anti-Judaismus* Chr. Kaiser Verlag, München, Jules Isaac The Christian Roots of Antisemitism 1960 Parkes Library/Council of Christians

There needs, however, to be a recognition that there may indeed be no solution. This cannot be ruled out *a priori*. Christian identity may indeed be as Richard Rubenstein describes the dilemma:

At the heart of the problem is the fact that it may be impossible for Christians to remain Christians without regarding Jews in mythic, magic and theological categories.<sup>17</sup>

Christians may be unable to remain Christians without regarding Jews in theological-symbolic terms. The Church may be unable to remain Church *per se* without needing to be Church in relationship to the Jewish people. This is the asymmetry of the relationship: the Jewish people can be Jewish without needing to be in relation to the Church. The real test is whether that relationship can progress from being 'Church against Israel' to being 'Church with Israel'.

The problem may be insoluble in our present conceptual terms. And yet, *being unable to formulate a solution does not absolve us from taking steps towards a solution*. Christian theology has before had to take courage and work towards new conceptual forms.<sup>18</sup> To admit the need of new conceptions is a major step towards them. It is a recognition that the current

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+ Jews 1965.

<sup>17</sup> Richard L Rubenstein After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism Bobbs Merrill, Indianapolis 1966, p 56.

<sup>18</sup> For example, the 'conceptual revolutions' of *homoousios* and the Cappadocians' clarification of hypostatic language. This enabled a more fully trinitarian concept of divinity than had conceptually been possible before.

system is inadequate to the reality as it is now perceived. Christian identity at the expense of Jewish identity is no longer adequate.

The early writings of Rosemary Radford Ruether drew attention to the problem of anti-Judaism and its centrality to Christian identity. Her description was of anti-Judaism as the left hand of Christology.<sup>19</sup> We offer a dialectical affirmation of Ruether. We consider that the relationship between Christian identity and anti-Judaism is necessary but not strongly necessary. *It will not be strongly necessary where there is the will for transcending the 'Church against Israel' attitude and cooperating with a reorientation towards a 'Church with Israel' attitude.* By speaking of transcending the 'Church against Israel' attitude rather than avoiding it altogether this yields a partial acceptance of Ruether's thesis.<sup>20</sup> There is a sense in which it does involve the acceptance of a weak form of necessity: it is the necessity of inheriting a tradition which has canonised material closely bound up with the 'Church against Israel' stage.<sup>21</sup> However, it is not a strong sense of necessity if one

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<sup>19</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism Seabury New York 1975, p 228 and p 246.

<sup>20</sup> If the canon agreed at the anti-Judaic stage were remade it would no longer be Christianity.

<sup>21</sup> This is therefore a deeper analysis than Miriam Taylor's. Inherited Anti-Judaism meant for her from past Christian writers or a pagan environment. Although speaking under Theological Anti-Judaism of 'the christological hermeneutic of Scripture' (op. cit. p 215-7) she does not directly address anti-Judaism in scripture and liturgy.

can ameliorate that tradition by reading it through a compensating 'Church with Israel' lens. Fundamental to this transcending and reorienting process is the confession of Christianity to senses of unrealized eschatology, especially in its Christology. Until new conceptual terms become available, it is likely that questions will remain as to whether this is possible.

The resistance of any necessary connection, strong or weak, between Christology and anti-Judaism has Jewish support from Eugene Borowits:

Ruether's assertion about the relationship between christology and anti-Semitism would have to be revised. It would now say that classic christology was closely associated with anti-Semitism, and while some remnants of it are to be found among traditional theologians, other traditionalists as well as liberals and post-liberals have found anti-Semitism antithetical to their understanding of the Christ.<sup>22</sup>

For Borowits there is *close association* between Christology and anti-Judaism but sufficient evidence that thinkers are not bound by the inevitability of it. It is of course possible that there is self-deception taking place amongst such Christian thinkers. This should not be underestimated.

A similar resistance to a strong necessity would be found in John Gager's conclusions that:

neither in paganism nor in Christianity is there evidence for a consistently negative understanding of Judaism... the real debate was never between Christians and Jews but among Christians. Eventually the anti-Jewish side won. Its

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<sup>22</sup> Eugene B Borowits Contemporary Christologies: A Jewish Response Paulist Press, New York 1980, p 185.

ideology became normative.<sup>23</sup>

For Gager Christian anti-Judaism is not theologically necessary but rather *the consequence of the triumph of the anti-Judaic voices from within the plurality of Christian positions* in relation to Judaism. However, our analysis accepts that anti-Judaic voices are given canonical precedence.<sup>24</sup> Any unmediated biblical perspective will allow anti-Judaic voices great credibility. We need a sophisticated hermeneutic which accepts the ongoing theological validity of the Synagogue alongside the Church. This may be possible through the sophisticated hermeneutic of symbol systems in their functioning context of ritual.

Whatever one's portrayal of the strength of the link between Christian theology and anti-Judaism we have accepted that Christian development passed through a 'Church against Israel' stage. In my view, the responses to this analysis can be usefully analyzed under three options. Although clarified for analytical purposes they are not however mutually exclusive positions. And it is likely that they are also not exhaustive responses.

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<sup>23</sup> John G Gager      The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Towards Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity Oxford University Press, Oxford 1983, pp 268-9.

<sup>24</sup> It is an interesting, but hypothetical, question to consider whether there would have been a Christian Church without the preeminence of anti-Judaic voices.

### Option 1: Reduce Christology to meet some form of Judaism

In this option a *high Christology* is regarded as the source of difficulty. And so Christology is reduced with the intention of 'meeting' some form of Judaism. One could then, for example, concentrate on Jesus the Jew who worshipped the One Jewish God and suggest that this provides potential 'common ground' between Christianity and Judaism. One major difficulty with this option is that it has to decide *which* Judaism it is intending to meet. And so it may opt for a Galilean form of Second Temple Judaism (Vermes), or the religion of biblical Israel (van Buren), or some other sort of Judaism. Another major difficulty is lack of credibility with more traditional forms of Christianity which hold a high Christology to be indispensable.

Our position differs from this option in seeking to retain a high Christology. It is therefore able to draw on much of classical and traditional Christianity. A high Christology is no longer a problem once it is realized that such thought forms fit quite reasonably into a Palestinian Jewish milieu. It was argued in Chapter 3 that much of what became a high Christology was dependent upon Christian *mimesis* of Jewish building blocks. As Martin Hengel observes:

the whole development of christological doctrine *could* have taken place completely within Palestinian Judaism. There it was possible to find several pre-existent heavenly mediators. ... The problems which led to the persecution of the Christians there did not consist primarily in 'dogmatic' questions, but in questions relating to the specific observance of the Torah. Even a christology of preexistence and of the Son of God is intrinsically not



'Hellenistic' nor even 'un-Jewish' nor 'un-Palestinian'.<sup>25</sup>

It was argued in Chapter 12 that a strong sense of Sonship belongs as much, if not more, to a Jewish context as to a Christian context.

Our position in this thesis seeks to engage with a modern orthodox Judaism which tries to speak 'maximally inclusively' of all modern Judaisms.<sup>26</sup> Although this may seem to be the same difficulty decried above: choosing one of the many forms of Judaism, this is only partially the case. For it does so in a way which admits the *provisionality* of both modern Judaism and modern Christianity. The concept of *isomorphism* included in this thesis will hold over the change of provisional systems. It will always be available to seek for similarity in dynamic interrelationship even after inevitable system innovation. It is not dependant upon the form of Judaism and Christianity currently under consideration.

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<sup>25</sup> Martin Hengel The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ ET SCM 1989 trans. John Bowden, p 55.

<sup>26</sup> Soloveitchik makes an attempt to argue that a spectrum of different Jewish responses, from traditional through to secular, are involved in responding to the 'voice of the Beloved' (ie. God) in the context of the State of Israel. For instance, in Kol Dodi Dophek he encourages 'Torah Jewry' to be committed to the sense of shared fate in the State of Israel even if it is a secular state, and he values political and secular Zionisms because there needs to be a sense of united peoplehood in order to progress from being a camp people to being a holy nation. ET by Lawrence Kaplan in Theological and Halakhic Reflections on the Holocaust ed Bernard H Rosenberg 1992 pp 96-105.

## Option 2: Educational Problem requiring Radical Change

This option locates the problem in *lack of education*. It accepts that there is a real problem and seeks to overcome it by radical change. Ruether, for instance, advocates an ambitious programme of 'education for a new relationship', targeting Christian seminaries.<sup>27</sup>

However, the success of such proposals is dependent on winning agreement to both problem and solution from those responsible for training programmes. This is unlikely to be the case bearing in mind Gager's analysis of a plurality of Christian positions and our analysis of an unmediated biblical view as exalting the anti-Judaic voices. There would still remain the practical constraints of shortage of money for education and resistance to regarding this issue as the greatest priority.<sup>28</sup>

The greatest presuppositions of this option, however, are that the problem is one that can be tackled head-on and that it can be handled by rational education. I would challenge both of these liberal presuppositions. If indeed Miriam Taylor is correct in her analysis that the problem is more properly a **Theological-Symbolic** problem,<sup>29</sup> then it is likely that neither a head-on

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<sup>27</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism Seabury New York 1975. Chapter 5.6 entitled "Education for a New Relationship", pp 257-261.

<sup>28</sup> Some may agree with the analysis but not regard it as a problem: 'the Christian faith is supposed to set itself against other faiths' may be the answer.

<sup>29</sup> Miriam Sophia Taylor op. cit.

approach nor a rational educational strategy will be successful. Such an approach may indeed have the reverse effect and backfire in its intent. Lack of success may only strengthen the anti-Jewish Christian voices within the Christian plurality. There may be active resistance and the stronger restatement of the 'anti-Judaic myth'. Greater ingenuity than a head-on rational approach is required in meeting ideological ends. And so we pass to the third suggestion under consideration.

### Option 3: Theological-Symbolic Therapy for a Theological-Symbolic Problem

This admits that there is a real problem, and so it agrees with the radical analysis. The problem is however located as a *theological-symbolic* one. It holds that the enormity and nature of the problem precludes a head-on rational approach to a solution. This follows from its very close association with the heart of Christian identity. Seriously question the heart of someone's identity and you can expect an uncooperative response.

Rather, what is needed is *theological-symbolic therapy* to a theological-symbolic problem. Consider the analogy of an enormous cruise liner in motion. One must change track in a liner by small adjustments in course and not by large changes. A large change will only break the rudder from the force of the water or violently disturb the fee-paying passengers. An ecclesial community is like an enormous cruise liner: she is already

underway with incredible power and weight and must be handled appropriately.

We have argued for a strategy drawing from alternatives in Christian doctrine and liturgy. It is based in the analysis of a community formed by allegiance to a festal calendar and observation of a Christian sacramental or Jewish *halakhic* tradition. The strategy itself comprises alternative wordings to a Christian eucharistic prayer and a model of the Christian Trinity. Putting the strategy into effect would necessitate institutional change. For the Anglican tradition, for instance, this would involve the influential voices on the Liturgical Commission being converted to the cause before it could be put into practice.<sup>30</sup> When it is put into practice it will influence the ecclesial community subconsciously. It does not require the whole people to have a conscious rational intellectual conversion before it can take effect. This is the beauty of theological-symbolic therapy.

To suggest what might seem like only minor changes is not to downplay the enormity of the problem. Indeed the reverse could be argued. The analysis of the 'Church against Israel' problem has been a radical one underlining the extent of the problem. However the analysis should extend to the nature of the body to be influenced: here the Church. An ecclesial community is most

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<sup>30</sup> The Liturgical Commission was instrumental in putting the Alternative Services Book 1980 to the General Synod which accepted it as a canonically authorised alternative to The Book of Common Prayer (1662). Already there are calls for further updates.

deeply influenced at its point of highest self-understanding. And that was seen to be when involved in its most characteristic *formative* activity: gathering to celebrate its very nature as a eucharistic community.

It is important now to give some indications of how this option has been put into practice in the course of the thesis.

Putting Option 3 into practice: Moving towards a 'Church with Israel'

What I have argued for is thus:

- a) the acceptance by a few individuals of the analysis that Christian development passed through a 'Church against Israel' stage and
- b) the desire of those few to move the Church beyond that stage.

This then proceeds to a recognition of:

- c) the character of that position as a **theological-symbolic problem**, for which
- d) *theological-symbolic therapy* is required.

Having affirmed two separate religious systems, one is able to argue that the Christian system is at liberty to be reformulated around a 'Church with Israel' key in response to the growing disquiet with a 'Church against Israel' position. This

disquiet might be located in a trajectory from the writings of James Parkes and Jules Isaac, through the work of Rosemary Radford Ruether, to the recent analysis of Miriam Taylor. Alongside this academic trajectory there is a liturgical and ecclesiastical chain of movement representing the institutional responses to that disquiet.

As a response to the prevalence of the 'Church against Israel' attitude the phenomena of liturgy and doctrine were isolated as sources of possible reformulation towards a 'Church with Israel' attitude.

#### a) Liturgy

Although liturgy has been part of the problem it has also the potential to be part of the solution. Liturgy continues to be updated and so has a certain openness to alteration in the light of changes in perception. *Liturgy can act as the lens to ameliorate the 'Church against Israel' materials* canonised in the New Testament, especially when these are used in prominent periods of the Christian Year.<sup>31</sup>

The Eucharist can provide regular opportunities for the communal self-transcendence and communal reorientation involved in the gradual moves towards a 'Church with Israel'. One of the Anglican eucharistic prayers was taken for comment, and some

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<sup>31</sup> See Mary Kelly "Reading the Passion in Holy Week" in *ChAtJJ* 53 1977 pp 13-15 for a concrete example of ameliorating 'Church against Israel' materials. The two major problem periods are Holy Week and Advent.

suggestions for future alternatives put forward. It was treated as an example of the alternatives other Christian denominations could consider, not to suggest that Anglicans are leading or could lead the way in this area.

Working from the 3rd eucharistic prayer of the Anglican Alternative Services Book 1980 our exemplary alternative is highlighted as follows:

It is indeed right,  
it is our duty and our joy,  
at all times and in all places  
to give you thanks and praise,  
holy Father, heavenly King,  
almighty and eternal God,  
through Jesus Christ your only Son our Lord.

For he is your living Word;  
through him you have created all things from the beginning,  
and formed us in your own image;

Through him you have freed us from the slavery of sin,  
giving him to be born as a Jew and to die upon the cross;  
you raised him from the dead  
and exalted him to your right hand on high;  
Through him you have sent upon us  
your holy and life-giving Spirit

and made us a people for your own possession  
even as you made Israel a people for your own possession  
by giving them the Torah.

It would be possible to transform other Eucharistic prayers across all Eucharistic Christian denominations in similar ways. The stress is on emphasizing the Jewish humanity of Jesus and suggesting that *God is engaged in ongoing mutually formative relationship with the Jewish people as well as with the Christian people*. This can be achieved without reducing the high Christology which is foundational to a eucharistic prayer. It requires some sense of respecting the authority of the Jewish Torah to Jews.

#### b) Doctrine

Although it was admitted that doctrine was part of the problem, retaining the marks of its 'Church against Israel' origin, doctrine too was found to have potential for being part of the solution. It too is part of Christian identity open to change. Far from treating it as the major problem and playing down Christology and trinitarian thought, as for example both options 1 + 2 might suggest, the reverse was argued for. We argued for a high Christology but one more open to becoming a 'Church with Israel' Christology. And so a trinitarian model open to recognising the prototypical nature of some Jewish concepts was developed. It was notably the Sonship of Israel which was



regarded as prototypical.

The argument progressively sought a third way to the common choice between either exalting Christ, as the Church Fathers did at the expense of Judaism, or of exalting Israel, as some modern Christian authors do at the expense of a high Christology. We have sought to maintain *both Christ and Israel as theologically significant entities*. This was reinforced by resisting the Christian arguments for undermining the holiness of *Knesset Israel*. As Marquardt has observed, in both Jesus and Israel God binds himself to both and both to God.<sup>32</sup>

The Methodology of Isomorphisms as assisting a Non-Hierarchical 'Church with Israel'

Out of this desire to exalt both Christ and Israel, without arguing for a quadritarian Godhead, arose the conceptual difficulty of how their similarities in their respective systems were to be described. This was attempted with the concept of *isomorphism*, arising out of a mathematical discipline. There are isomorphs of Christ in other religions. In the light of this suggestion it would be possible to speak of 'one Jesus and many Christs'. *Knesset Israel gathering in faithfulness to the Torah of God has an isomorphic structure to the Church gathering with, through, and in Jesus Christ*. This is because Jews can be

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<sup>32</sup> Marquardt *Christology* 2 p 52. This is because both are called Son of God in theologically significant contexts ie. in a stronger, more primary, sense than faithful Jews and Christians being sons (read 'children') of God.

regarded as coming to the Father with fellow Jews, through the Torah, and in Knesset Israel. The dynamic interrelationship in the separate systems have the same 'with, through, and in' shape.

The concept of isomorphism makes no assumptions about dependence of one system on another. It does not for example follow that Judaism is in any way 'trinitarian'. It merely argues for interactive relationships in the respective Jewish and Christian systems which can have significance for an intuitive observer. That a Christian intuitive thinker will see interrelationships of greatest significance in the Christian system merely reinforces that he or she is formed by commitment to that system. There is no neutral system from which he or she can speak.<sup>33</sup> *A Jewish thinker using the concept of isomorphism would see Jewish interrelationships.* There is no ideal super-system forming a genus incorporating Judaism and Christianity as species. That would presume a philosophy of transcendental sameness when what is needed is a philosophy of non-hierarchical difference. There is however a concept of isomorphism which holds across extant religious traditions and over inevitable system innovation.

It might still be possible for a sceptical reader to regard these options as merely making the Christian system more 'user-friendly'. However, the acceptance that there is a Christian

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<sup>33</sup> There is rather only a Christianity able to work on its own concepts in the light of their relationship to Judaism and willing to question the prevalence and persistence of hierarchical thinking.

anti-Jewish myth drives the insight that Christian systems are chronically unfriendly to Jews. In the light of that analysis any sense of becoming more 'user-friendly' would be theologically significant. It is likely that there is also a certain moral imperative involved in the Christian system becoming more 'user-friendly' to Jews. What is being argued for is actually much more significant than mere surface cosmetics: it involves *the remaking of the Christian system around a question taken as generating an urgent problematic for the Christian community as a whole: namely the relationship of Christianity to the Jewish people.*

The overall conclusion presents itself that in Christian self-interpretation in relation to modern Judaism it is possible to retain a strong interpretation of Christianity. However, this is so only as long as one's interpretation of modern Judaism becomes stronger as a direct result, and so long as one develops a methodology for conceptualizing equality between religions. This strengthening interpretation of the Jewish people bears itself out in this work in particular relation to the holiness of *Knesset Israel* and the Sonship of Israel. Both resist the anti-Jewish myth's insistence on the culpability of the Jewish people because of a 'rejection' of Jesus Christ. Rather than reappropriating the Jewish tradition within a Christian systematic framework the methodology should point out ways in which Christians can cultivate a positive attitude to the Jewish systematic framework and to the Jewish people themselves. This was achieved through utilising the concept of isomorphism.

I do not look to the Jewish people and see a Messiah-shaped hole filled by Jesus of Nazareth. I look at the world and see an Israel-shaped hole filled by the vigorous Jewish people. And I look to a Church which needs to become 'Church with Israel' for its own sake and for the sake of the future of the God-concept in the world.

## APPENDIX

### Auschwitz brings Theological Difficulties to the concepts of Covenant and Election

It was difficulties with the logic of covenant talk, particularly in the context of the Holocaust, which led Richard Rubenstein to forward some boldly revisionist proposals. Rubenstein's point is that from the internal consequences and logic of election for theodicy you can only accept divine election if you also accept Auschwitz as divine punishment.

The close parallels between the Jewish difficulties he isolates and the logic of Christian self-understanding justify engaging with his reservations at some length. I do not wish to deny the difficulties he uncovers as regards the link between divine election and the acceptance of Auschwitz as divine punishment.<sup>1</sup>

Rubenstein draws attention to the difficulties when election as a theological theme is taken to its seemingly logical conclusions. He compares two people he interviewed in Berlin in

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed in Chapter 8 I demonstrate a use of election talk in Christian atonement theory in ways which underline his points.

1961.<sup>2</sup> Countess Dr von Rittberg of the Evangelical Church had offered "the customary interpretation of Israel's destiny as being guided by a special divine concern", but she partially withdrew it in the face of Rubenstein's objection "that such thinking had as its inescapable conclusion the conviction that the Nazi slaughter of the Jews was somehow God's will." Her partial withdrawal consisted in saying:

Theologically this may be true, but humanly speaking and in any terms that I can understand, I cannot believe that God wanted the Nazis to destroy the Jews.<sup>3</sup>

Rubenstein contrasts this partial withdrawal on humanitarian grounds with an interview with Dean Heinrich Grüber of the Evangelical Church of East and West Berlin. In response to the question; "Was it God's will that Hitler destroyed the Jews?", Grüber is reported as replying; "For some reason, it was part of God's plan that the Jews died. God demands our death daily. He is the Lord, He is the Master, all is in his keeping and ordering".<sup>4</sup> It is thinking such as this which Rubenstein finds unacceptable.<sup>5</sup>

Rubenstein does admit that this reading of salvation has

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<sup>2</sup> Richard L Rubenstein After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1992 2nd ed. pp 3-13 After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism Bobbs Merrill, Indianapolis 1966 pp 52-58.

<sup>3</sup> Rubenstein 1st ed. p 53.

<sup>4</sup> Rubenstein 1st ed. pp 53-54.

<sup>5</sup> Rubenstein testifies to written responses denying these words, but for our purposes the case remains a telling example. 1st ed. p 46. 2nd ed. appears to have dropped this.

been shared by the majority of religious Jews, and asks:

Can we really blame the Christian community for viewing us through the prism of a mythology of history when we were the first to assert this history of ourselves? As long as we continue to hold to the doctrine of the election of Israel, we will leave ourselves open to the theology expressed by Dean Grüber, that because the Jews are God's Chosen People, God wanted Hitler to punish them.<sup>6</sup>

So Rubenstein suggests that Jews should reject or deconstruct the doctrine of the election of Israel.<sup>7</sup>

Rubenstein includes some modifications to this uncompromising view in the second edition of After Auschwitz, including a number of chapters explicitly drawing on the covenant theme.<sup>8</sup> Having had time to reflect on his inability to influence the vast majority of his fellow Jews, Rubenstein appears to remain convinced on his central stance just more philosophical about its unattractiveness:

I have ... become convinced that most religious Jews will eventually affirm faith in the God of covenant and election, even if such an affirmation entails regarding Auschwitz as divine punishment. Faith in covenant and election appears to be indispensable to the Jewish religious mainstream.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Rubenstein 1st ed. p 58.

<sup>7</sup> The first edition argues more strongly for rejection: the second for deconstruction. See 2nd ed. p 325 note 6 "Faith in the covenant between God and Israel has been absolutely fundamental to both biblical and rabbinic Judaism. Hence, my rejection of covenant and election in the first edition of After Auschwitz and subsequent writings was the most radical theological step I could have taken as a Jewish thinker."

<sup>8</sup> Rubenstein After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1992 2nd edn. pp 168-176.

<sup>9</sup> Rubenstein 2nd ed. p 197.

Although he is unwilling to retract his *theological* challenge, Rubenstein admits coming back to the idea of covenant and seeing more in it than he had at first admitted.<sup>10</sup>

### Responses to Rubenstein's Difficulties

What would Rubenstein's argument imply for Jewish authors such as Michael Wyschogrod who make election central to their self-understanding?<sup>11</sup> Although Wyschogrod addresses himself to death repeatedly he does not directly address the challenges of the Holocaust.<sup>12</sup> His system may be deemed to avoid the question, but if so, it demonstrates that *the question can be avoided*.

Taking the Holocaust as a central challenge to traditional faith remains a controversial approach. Other Jewish writers admit challenges to traditional faith but wish to resist making the Holocaust into the major focus of that challenge. As Norman Solomon suggests:

Richard Rubenstein calls for a revision of the traditional concept of the intervening God. There are certainly problems with the traditional concept, but these have been

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<sup>10</sup> Rubenstein 2nd ed. p 326. Note at start of Chapter 7.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Wyschogrod The Body of Faith: Judaism as Corporeal Election New York, Seabury Press 1983.

<sup>12</sup> Holding to what he describes as 'carnal election', one can only assume that he would be subject to Rubenstein's charge: "God chose a carnal people, whose physical being in the world is a sign of the existence of God. This people ... cannot escape the service of God because its face is known in the family of man as that of the people of God." Wyschogrod op. cit. p 177. It will remain in God's service even when it is 'carnally' chastised.



with us since the days of Job.<sup>13</sup>

David Hartman has written more strongly against making Auschwitz the dominant organising category of Jewish life:

I believe it is destructive to make the Holocaust the dominant organising category of modern Jewish history and of our national renewal and rebirth. ... Auschwitz, like all Jewish suffering of the past, must be absorbed and understood within the normative framework of Sinai.<sup>14</sup>

Although not directly referring to the Holocaust, the Christian James Parkes can write appreciatively of the traditional Jewish response to suffering as divine punishment. He suggests that this acts as a check on 'facile' interpretations of the world as evil:

To an astonishing extent Jews regarded even the most brutal and unjustified sufferings inflicted by Christendom and Islam upon them, as God's legitimate punishment for their lack of faith in Him, and their failure to live according to His divinely revealed pattern of life. They did not take the facile line of escape of proclaiming that the world itself was evil, or under the power of evil, a temptation into which too often Christian Churches have fallen.<sup>15</sup>

For Judaism to interpret disaster in such socially-constructive ways is a great achievement.

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<sup>13</sup> For a general response to Rubenstein in the context of the Holocaust and reframing traditional Judaism see Norman Solomon "Dangers in Centralising the Holocaust" in Jewish Chronicle April 16 1993/ Nisan 25 5753, p 16 and ensuing correspondance. For greater detail see Steven T Katz Post-Holocaust Dialogues: Critical Studies in Modern Jewish Thought New York University Press, New York 1985.

<sup>14</sup> David Hartman Auschwitz or Sinai? Shalom Hartman Institute, Jerusalem, no date p 3 + p 6.

<sup>15</sup> James Parkes The Concept of a Chosen People in Judaism and Christianity New York, American Hebrew Congregations 1954, p 14.

This does not, of course, avoid the issue of God's involvement with the Holocaust. When it does need to be faced, I have found no better response than that embraced in Elie Wiesel's novel The Gates of the Forest by the Hasidic Rebbe of Brooklyn to his questioner:

He's guilty; do you think I don't know it? That I have no eyes to see, no ears to hear? That my heart does not revolt? That I have no desire to beat my head against the wall and shout like a madman, to give rein to my sorrow and disappointment? Yes, he is guilty. He has become the ally of evil, of death, of murder, but the problem is not solved. I ask you a question and dare you answer: "What is there left for us to do?"<sup>16</sup>

Traditional Jewish responses remain faithful to Torah and put the stress on moral relationships and closeness to the Torah-community. These can sustain community even when intellectual difficulties arise or where God appears to be at an infinite distance away. This quotation is just one example of our preference for a Torah-focus over a covenant-focus in this thesis.

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<sup>16</sup> Elie Wiesel The Gates of the Forest trans. Frances Frenaya Avon Books, New York 1967, p 17.

## Abbreviations

|               |                                                                                |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AngThR        | Anglican Theological Review                                                    |
| ANF           | Ante-Nicene Fathers                                                            |
| ARCIC         | Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission                               |
| ASA           | Association of Social Anthropologists                                          |
| BT            | Babylonian Talmud                                                              |
| CBQ           | Catholic Biblical Quarterly                                                    |
| CCJ           | The Council of Christians and Jews                                             |
| CD            | Church Dogmatics, Karl Barth                                                   |
| CE            | The Common Era                                                                 |
| ChAtJJ        | Christian Attitude on Jews and Judaism                                         |
| ChJRel        | Christian-Jewish Relations, previously Christian Attitudes on Jews and Judaism |
| CJT           | Canadian Journal of Theology                                                   |
| Common Ground | The Journal of the Council of Christians and Jews                              |
| CSEL          | <i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticum Latinorum</i>                              |
| EcumR         | The Ecumenical Review                                                          |
| Enc           | Encounter                                                                      |
| EncTod        | Encounter Today: Judaism and Christianity in the Contemporary World            |
| ET            | English Translation                                                            |
| EvQtr         | Evangelical Quarterly                                                          |
| ExpT          | Expository Times                                                               |
| FC            | The Fathers of the Church                                                      |
| Immanuel      | Immanuel, Jerusalem                                                            |
| JAAAR         | Journal of the American Academy of Religion                                    |
| JBL           | Journal of Biblical Literature                                                 |
| JES           | Journal of Ecumenical Studies                                                  |
| JJS           | Journal of Jewish Studies                                                      |
| JRel          | The Journal of Religion                                                        |
| JSNTS         | Journal for the Society of the Study of the New Testament                      |
| JSOTS         | Journal for the Society of the Study of the Old Testament                      |
| JSpect        | Jewish Spectator                                                               |
| JThSt         | Journal of Theological Studies                                                 |
| LNPNF         | Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers                                      |
| LouvSt        | Louvain Studies                                                                |
| ModCh         | The Modern Churchman                                                           |
| ModTh         | Modern Theology                                                                |
| NovTest       | Novum Testamentum                                                              |
| N.S.          | New Supplement                                                                 |
| NTS           | New Testament Studies                                                          |
| OCPHS         | Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies                                  |
| OR            | On Repentance, Joseph Soloveitchik's Oral Discourses                           |
| PG            | Patrologia Graeca, J-P Migne                                                   |
| PL            | Patrologia Latina, J-P Migne                                                   |
| PrincSB       | Princeton Seminary Bulletin                                                    |
| REtJ          | <i>Revue des Etudes Juives</i>                                                 |
| RScRel        | <i>Revue des Sciences Religieuses</i> , Strasbourg                             |
| RSR           | Religious Studies Review                                                       |

|           |                                                                |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| SBL       | Society for Biblical Literature                                |
| SC        | <i>Sources chrétiennes</i>                                     |
| SIDIC     | <i>Service International de Documentation Judéo-Chrétienne</i> |
| SJT       | Scottish Journal of Theology                                   |
| SNTS      | Society for New Testament Studies                              |
| StLit     | Studia Liturgica                                               |
| SST       | Society for the Study of Theology                              |
| StTheol   | Studia Theologica                                              |
| TantY     | The Tantur Yearbook, Jerusalem                                 |
| ThSt      | Theological Studies                                            |
| ThTod     | Theology Today                                                 |
| ThZ       | <i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i> , Basle                        |
| Tradition | Tradition: A Journal of Jewish Orthodox Thought                |
| UMI       | University Microfilms International                            |
| WCC       | The World Council of Churches                                  |
| WZO       | World Zionist Organisation                                     |

#### Short Forms of regularly used Long Titles

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Band 2 Christian Kaiser Verlag, München 1991

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(referred to in the text as Christology 1 and Christology 2)

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Part 2 : A Christian Theology of the People Israel 1983

Part 3 : Christ in Context 1988

(Used in the text in short forms: The Way, A Theology of Israel, Christ in Context.)

#### Method of referring to Jewish texts

M.Sanhedrin Mishnah Sanhedrin

BT Babylonian Talmud

without a prefix indicates Babylonian Talmud

so BM 59a indicates Babylonian Talmud Baba Mezia 59a

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