

*In conjunction with the*



## Jews and Christians throughout History



13th c. Statues of *Synagoga* and *Ecclesia*  
from the South Portal of Strasbourg Cathedral.  
Photo courtesy of flickr user [Johnathon Khoo](#).

This course will explore a number of issues which emerge from the history of Christian theology: How did a negative image of Judaism develop within Christianity? In what ways did these unfavorable teachings contribute toward violence against the Jews over the centuries? What is the relationship between Christian anti-Jewish teachings and Anti-Semitism? Is there any corresponding Jewish hostility towards Christians? In what ways have Jewish authors reacted to developments within the Christian tradition?

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Rabbi Michael Signer is Director of the Notre Dame Holocaust Project, and is the Abrams Chair of Jewish Thought and Culture.

Prior to joining the faculty in 1992, he served as Professor of Jewish History at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles.

His interest in interreligious affairs began during his doctoral studies at the Center for Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto, and he later participated in the Priest-Rabbi dialogue at St. John's Seminary, where he and others founded the St. John's/Hebrew Union College academic exchange.

He has taught in universities in Berlin and Augsburg, and was American Jewish Committee Scholar at Catholic Institutions in Poland.

Rabbi Signer is the author and editor of five books on topics that range from Medieval Latin biblical commentaries to contemporary Jewish-Christian relations, and is one of the four authors of *Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*.

## **Syllabus**

### **Course Description**

In the final days of the II Vatican Council the publication of *Nostra Aetate* (Declaration on non-Christian Religions) reversed a negative attitude of the Catholic Church toward Judaism and the Jewish people as

well as toward Muslims and Hindus. This remarkable change promoted "dialogue" with Jews, and positive changes in the ways in which Judaism was presented in Liturgy and Catechesis. Reactions from the Jewish communities were diverse: from rejection to welcoming. Subsequent documents produced by the Vatican as well as Bishops' Conferences have brought more Jews into dialogue with the Catholic Church.

This course will explore a number of issues which emerge from the history of Christian theology: How did a negative image of Judaism develop within Christianity? In what ways did these unfavorable teachings contribute toward violence against the Jews over the centuries? What is the relationship between Christian anti-Jewish teachings and Anti-Semitism? Is there any corresponding Jewish hostility towards Christians? In what ways have Jewish authors reacted to developments within the Christian tradition?

As we survey the past, we shall also want to explore the possibilities of a more constructive theological relationship between the two communities for the future. How can Jews and Christians develop religious responses to modernity? In what senses can a study of Judaism by Christians, or Christianity by Jews, help either community to understand itself better? How can Christians and Jews develop a theology of "the other" which is not triumphalist, but empathetic and based on love and justice?

## **Course Objectives**

1. The students will be able to define and evaluate basic concepts that have been the subject of controversy between Christians and Jews.
2. The students will discern the distinctive characters of pre-modern and modern Christianity and Judaism.
3. The students will be able to reflect critically on the subject matter of the course, and evaluate how it affects their own theological ideas.

## **Prerequisites**

None

## **Required Textbooks**

**Harold W. Attridge, *Hermeneia - A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews***

Hardcover: 437 pages.

Publisher: Augsburg Fortress Publishers (April 1989)

Language: English.

ISBN-10: 0800660218.

ISBN-13: 978-0800660215

**Mary C. Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding***

Paperback: 416 pages

Publisher: Paulist Press (March 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0809139316

ISBN-13: 978-0809139316

**Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law; Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (The S. Mark Taper Foundation Imprint in Jewish Studies)**

Paperback: 461 pages

Publisher: University of California Press; 1 edition (November 11, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0520218701

ISBN-13: 978-0520218703

**National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Catholics Remember the Holocaust***

Product Code: 5-290

ISBN: 1-57455-290-2

<http://www.usccbpublishing.org/searchproducts.cfm>

**Frymer-Kensky et. al. *Christianity in Jewish Terms***

Paperback: 464 pages

Publisher: Westview Press; Reprint edition (March 19, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0813365724

ISBN-13: 978-0813365725

**Katharine T. Hargrove, *Seeds of Reconciliation***

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: D. & F. Scott Publishing (June 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0941037401

ISBN-13: 978-0941037402

**Joseph Kimhi, *The Book of the Covenant***

Paperback: 88 pages

Publisher: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies (November 1998)

Language: English  
ISBN-10: 0888442610  
ISBN-13: 978-0888442611

**Hyam Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial***

Paperback: 245 pages  
Publisher: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization; New Ed edition (June 1993)  
Language: English  
ISBN-10: 1874774161  
ISBN-13: 978-1874774167

**Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Many Religions, One Covenant: Israel, Church and the World***

Paperback: 113 pages  
Publisher: Ignatius Press (September 1999)  
Language: English  
ISBN-10: 0898707536  
ISBN-13: 978-0898707533

***Encyclopaedia Judaica Hardcover***

Publisher: Keter Publishing House Ltd. (1972)  
ASIN: B000ENG764

**Mary C. Boys [editor], *Seeing Judaism Anew: Christianity's Sacred Obligation***

Paperback: 320 pages  
Publisher: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. (April 28, 2005)  
Language: English  
ISBN-10: 0742548821  
ISBN-13: 978-0742548824

**Adele Reinhartz, *Befriending the Beloved Disciple, A Jewish Reading of the Gospel of John***

Paperback: 208 pages  
Publisher: Continuum International Publishing Group (October 2002)  
Language: English  
ISBN-10: 082641446X  
ISBN-13: 978-0826414465

**Michael Fishbane, *Judaism Revelation and Traditions (Religious Traditions of the World Series)***

Paperback: 149 pages  
Publisher: HarperSanFrancisco; 1 edition (December 23, 1987)  
Language: English  
ISBN-10: 0060626550  
ISBN-13: 978-0060626556

## **Robert Seltzer, *Jewish People: Jewish Thought***

Paperback: 873 pages

Publisher: Prentice Hall (October 9, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0024089400

ISBN-13: 978-0024089403

## Readings

1. *Unanswered Questions*, Ed. Roger Brooks, Notre Dame Press, 1986
2. *The Church and the Nineteenth Century*, Raymond Corrigan, The Bruce Publishing Company, 1938, pgs. 289-295.
3. *The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. by Fr. Jack Sparks, Light and Life Publishing, 1978, pgs. 263-301. (Session 3)
4. *Melito of Sardis in The Christological Controversy*, trans. and ed. by Richard A. Norris, Jr., Augsburg Fortress Press, 1980, pgs. 33-47 (Session 9)
5. *In Answer to the Jews, Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects/The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, St. Augustine*, ed. Roy J. Deferrari, Catholic University of America Press, 1955, pgs. 391-413. (Session 9)
6. *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, Volume II/Tractate Baodesh, ed. by Jacob Lauterbach, Jewish Publication Society, <http://www.jewishpub.org/product.php?isbn=0827606788> 2004, pgs. 229-236. (Session 10)
7. *Midrash rabbah*, English, London, Soncino Press, 1939, pgs. 50-53. (Session 10)
8. Bavli Gittin: Tractate Gittin, Folio 56b-57a, *Soncino Talmud*, 1961, <http://www.come-and-hear.com> (Session 10)
9. *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, R. Travers Herford, Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1975, pgs. 82-83, 118-119, 146-147, and 178-179. (Session 10)
10. *The Jew in the Medieval World*, Jacob Rader Marcus, Atheneum Publishing, 1975, pgs. 121-157. (Session 13)
11. *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*, Gavin I. Langmuir, University of California Press, 1990, pgs. 263-300. (Session 13)
12. Soloveitchik's article in *A Treasury of Tradition*, ed. by Norman Lamm and Walter S. Wurzberger, Hebrew Publishing Company, 1967, pgs. 55-80. (Session 17)
13. *Jewish Perspectives on Christianity: Leo Baeck, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Will Herberg, and Abraham Heschel*, ed. by Fritz Rothschild, Crossroads Publishing Company, 1990, pgs. 132-153, 206-226. (Session 15, 16, 18)
14. [A Jewish Legal Authority Addresses Jewish-Christian Dialogue: Two Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein](#), by Rabbi David Ellenson, The Chronicle of Hebrew Union College, Volume LII, Nos. 1&2, Fall 2000-2001. (Session 17)
15. *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity, Essays*, Abraham Joshua Heschel, ed. by Susannah Heschel, Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1996, pgs. 235-285. (Session 18)
16. *Tractate on the Jews: The Significance of Judaism for Christian Faith*, Franz Mussner: Trans. and with an introduction by Leonard Swidler, Augsburg Fortress Press, 1984, pgs. 1-52.
17. *Humanity at the Limit: The Impact of the Holocaust Experience on Jews and Christians*, ed. by Michael A. Signer, Indiana University Press, 2000, pgs. 63-103. (Session 20)

## Websites

Students should utilize the following websites for additional bibliography. They contain documentation and articles relating to problems in Jewish-Christian relations. Additional sites can be found under "links" on the instructor's web-page.

- [Jewish Christian relations](#)
- [Vatican](#)
- [Center for Christian Jewish Learning](#)

## Lectures

Lesson	Topic	Video
	<b><u>INTRODUCTION</u></b>	
1	The three "registers" of Jewish-Christian relations: "disputation", "deliberation", "dialogue". Read: Boys, <i>Has God Only One Blessing?</i> 5-14; Freymer-Kensky, <i>Christianity in Jewish Terms</i> , 1-24	
	<i>Nostra Aetate</i>	
2	Read: <i>Nostra Aetate</i> off the <a href="#">Vatican's website</a> in the archives section. Read: Boys, <i>Has God Only One Blessing?</i> 15-74 Roger Brooks, <i>Unanswered Questions</i> , 13-47 (READING)	<a href="#">Lecture Two Video</a>
	<b><u>BACK TO THE SOURCES:</u></b> <b><u>ORIGINS OF HOSTILITY</u></b>	
3	The Problem of Christian Origins and Jewish-Christian Relations Read: Boys, <i>Has God Only One Blessing?</i> 87-174 Gospels: Matthew and John	<a href="#">Lecture Three Video</a>
4	Read: Di Sante, "The 'Old' and 'New' Covenants" in Hargrove's <i>Seeds of Reconciliation</i>	
5	Paul: Epistle to Galatians and Romans Read: Di Sante's "The Torah as Law in Judaism" in Hargrove's <i>Seeds of Reconciliation</i>	
6		

Paul: Epistle to the Romans  
Read: Epistle in the Bible  
*Apostolic Fathers*, by Fr. Sparks 263-301 (READING)

- 7 Epistle to the Hebrews  
Read: *Hebrews* by Harold Attridge, 1-34, 198-205

Time for Refection: Is there One  
Story of Origins?

- 8 Read: Boys, *Has God Only One  
Blessing?* 75-86

[Lecture Eight Video](#)

### **THE PARTED WAYS**

Jews in Ancient Christian Writers

Read: Epistle of Barnabas  
(READING)

- 9 Melito of Sardis, "On the passover"  
(READING)

[Lecture Nine Video](#)

St. Augustine, "In Answer to the  
Jews" (READING)

Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law* 23-94

The Rabbis on Pagans, Sectarians,  
Christians

Read: [Mekhilta de-Rabbi  
Ishmael](#)(READING)

- 10 Midrash rabbah (READING)  
[Bavli Gittin](#)(READING)

[Lecture Ten Video](#)

Christianity in Talmud and Midrash  
(READING)

"Disputations and Polemics", Encyc.  
Judaica: Volume 6, pgs 79-103.

### **THE MEDIEVAL ENCOUNTER: DISPUTATION**

Jews and Christians in Medieval

- 11 Europe  
Read: Cohen, *Living Letters of the  
Law* 95-218

*Encyclopaedia Judaica* "History"  
Volume 8, pgs 651-692

- 12 Private Disputation Manuals  
Read: Joseph Kimhi's, *The Book of the  
Covenant* (whole book, but focus on



pgs 32-42)

At the Extremes: Blood Libel, Host  
Desecration

- 13 Read: J.R. Marcus, *The Jew in the  
Medieval World* 121-157 (READING)  
G. Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of  
Antisemitism* 263-300 (READING)

The Public Disputations: Christian  
Evangelism and Jewish Response

- 14 Read: Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial* 19-  
150, 153-167  
Katz's *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*,  
106-113  
Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law* 387-  
389

### **INTO MODERNITY: THE GERMAN-JEWISH QUESTION**

- 15 Martin Buber  
Read: "Church, State, Nation, Jewry"  
and "Two Types of Faith"  
(READING)

[Lecture Fifteen Video](#)

- 16 Franz Rosenzweig  
Read: "Star of Redemption"  
(READING)

### **AFTER THE ABYSS. CONTEMPORARY DIALOGUE**

Disputation Continued?

- 17 Joseph Soloveitchik and Moses  
Feinstein  
Read: Soloveitchik "Confrontation"  
(READING) and Ellensen's  
[JewishLeglAuthAddresses](#)  
(READING - this will be sideways)

Dialogue Renewed: Abraham J.  
Heschel

- 18 Read: "No Religion is an Island" and  
"The Jewish Notion of God and  
Christian Renewal" 235-285  
(READING)

19

Rethinking the Christian Relationship  
with Judaism

Read: *Boys Has God Only One  
Blessing?*, 177-278, 18-20

Systematic Rethinking

Read: Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*,  
1-51 (READING)

Read: Pope Benedict XVI (Ratzinger),  
*Many Religions, One Covenant:  
Israel, Church and the World and  
Introduction to "The Jewish People  
and Their Sacred Scriptures in the  
Christian Bible* (2001) from [the  
Vatican Website](#)

### **CONFRONTING THE SHOAH: FIFTY YEARS LATER**

Read: *Catholics Remember the  
Holocaust* (whole thing)

20 Klenicki, "On Christianity: Towards a  
Process of Historical and Spiritual  
Healing" in Hargrove's *Seeds of  
Reconciliation*

Signer, *Humanity at the Limit: The  
Impact of the Holocaust Experience  
on Jews and Christians*, "Theology  
from the Depths: New Directions in  
Germany" (READING)

### **DABRU EMET AND A SACRED OBLIGATION**

21 Read: [Dabru Emet](#)  
"A Sacred Obligation" and BC  
website form (READING AND  
WEBSITE)

## **Session Two Notes: Nostra Aetate**

*Nostra Aetate* Lecture Questions

**"What is the problem in Jewish Christian relations?"**

I would like you to think about the following questions as you prepare for our discussion.

1. What view of the Church, Truth and World emerges from the 'syllabus of errors'?
2. What view of 'modernity' does the 'syllabus of errors' in Vatican I convey?
3. How does *Nostra Aetate* fit into the larger themes of II Vatican Council? [This would be a question for those of you with appropriate backgrounds] What other documents of the Council might shed light on *Nostra Aetate*?
4. What view does *Nostra Aetate* take on non-Christian religions? animism? Buddhism? Islam? Hinduism? Buddhism?
5. What are the most important themes of N.A. 4? What previous teachings of the Church do they correct?

If we can get through these questions we will have set ourselves up nicely to begin the historical issues.

## **Session Three: The Christian Story and the Jewish People**

1. How does the formulation of the "Christian story" contribute to a negative image of Judaism and the Jewish People?
2. How does modern biblical scholarship help faithful Christians rethink their Christian story in order to develop a renewed and revised image?

Note the questions on p. 88. How can they be answered by subsequent readings?

c.6 look at the complexity of the physical and intellectual world of Jesus.

c.7 look at Jesus within the context of Temple practice and purity. How can we recontextualize this?

c.8-9- What models do we have for the parting of the ways?

## **Sessions Five and Six: Pauline Epistle Lecture Notes**

Pauline Epistles to Galatians and Romans

1. How does the first Christian writer assess the Jewish community and their witness to Jesus Christ?
2. Is Paul an unambiguous source of anti-Judaism?

3. To what extent does Paul limit the notion of Judaism to the idea of *nomos* or “law?”
4. Does Paul indicate that there is no retrieval or hope for those who remain Jews until the eschaton?
5. Do the epistles to the Galatians and Romans have identical images and roles for those Jews who do not accept a belief in Jesus Christ?

## **Session Seven: Epistle to the Hebrews Lecture Notes**

### Main Theme

The Epistle to the Hebrews presents a Christian guide for the interpretation of the Old Testament [Hebrew Scriptures]. Paul presents a dialectical tension and ambiguity about the relationship of Jews and Christians. Hebrews sets forth a smooth flow of God’s message from the creation through the incarnation. Hebrews presents both “rules for interpretation” and “examples of interpretation.” The rules for interpretation utilize the idea of ‘typology’ and ‘shadow’ and ‘light.’ The presumption is that things that are a unity or simple are superior to things that are complex. Later Christian authors will follow the pattern of Hebrews.

### Hermeneutical Rules

1:1-4  
10:1-5

### Examples

3:1-4 Jesus superior to Moses  
5:1-8 Priesthood of Jesus superior to Aaron  
9-10 Sacrifice of Jesus superior to atonement sacrifices

Rewriting the History of Israel by Faith  
11

## **Session Ten: Rabbinic Judaism and Late Antiquity Notes**

### **Rabbinic Judaism and Late Antiquity Lecture Notes**

-70 C.E. Destruction of the Temple

-200 B.C.E. – 135/40 C.E. (Alexandrian community)

-70-90 C.E. Jamnia or Yavneh Period [transition from Pharisees to Sages to Rabbis]

-90-200 C.E. Period of **Tannaim** (Our Sages of Blessed Memory/Rabbis)

**-200 C.E. Mishnah**

**-200-700 PERIOD OF AMORAIM**

-“Babylonia” Successor to Persian Kingdom

-Sura/Pumpeditha/Nehardea

-Gemara: **Babylonian Talmud** (by 800)

-“Eretz Yisrael” successor to Judea and Byzantine Jewry

-Tiberias, Sefhorris, Beit Shearim

-Antioch

-Rome

-Iberia

-Cologne

-Literary Works

-Targumim

-Gemara: **Talmud Jerushalmi**

-Midrash Literature (biblical homily)

-Conflicts with surrounding culture

-Pagan xenophobia against Judaism

-Sabbath

-Dietary Laws

-Atheism

-Christianity becomes official religion of the empire

# Session Eleven through Fourteen: Medieval Europe Notes

Jewish-Christian Encounter: The Middle Ages Lecture Notes

## **Bibliography**

Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Jews and Christians in the 12th Century Renaissance*

David Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages*

Robert Chazan, *Medieval Jewry in Northern France*

-----, *Daggers of Faith*

Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*

-----, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity*

Gilbert Dahan, *The Christian Polemic against the Jews in the Middle Ages*

Gavin Langmuir, *History, Religion, Antisemitism*

R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*

Robert Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*

Michael A. Signer/ John H. Van Engen: *Jews and Christians in 12th Century Europe*

Kenneth Stow, *Alienated Minority*

Edward A. Synan, *The Popes and the Jews in the Middle Ages*

Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations are in your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*

## **Geographic Framework**

Iberian Jewry [Sephardim]: pre-Christian origins/Islamic hegemony

Northern European Jewry [Ashkenazim]: 9th century origin/Christian hegemony

## **Chronological Framework**

Period I: 800-1050: Origins

-small Jewish population

-Latin documents

-Jewish legal status

Period II: 1050-1215: Expansion and Resistance

-growth of Jewish population

-Crusading movement

-private disputations: *Adversus Judaeos* Literature

-collaboration in biblical studies: Abbey of St. Victor, Paris

-ritual murder charges

Period III: 1215-1500: Breakdown

-IV Lateran

-Rise of Mendicant Orders

-Public Disputations: Paris (1240), Barcelona (1263), Tortosa (1413-1414)

-Expulsions: England (1290), France (1306), Spain (1492)

## **Session Fifteen: Stepping Stones to Modernity Notes**

### **Late Middle Ages:**

Christian interest in Hebrew language and Kabbalah (Jewish mystical literature)  
Ghettoization of Western European Jewry  
Migration of Jewry to Poland and the East

### **17th Century Humanism**

-Amsterdam: Spinoza and the birth of legal studies  
-England: Tolerance—Readmission of Jews to England under Cromwell

### **18th Century Enlightenment**

-Civil Emancipation  
-France: Voltaire and the Philosophes  
-debates on citizenship after the Revolution  
-Germany: “Aufklaerung”—Kant/Lessing  
-Moses Mendelssohn (1727-1786)  
-Religious Reform

### **19th Century: Romanticism, Historicism, Nationalism**

-Eastern European situation  
-Wissenschaft des Judentum (Scientific Study of Judaism): Protestant Paradigm  
-late 19th century brings two reactions  
-German Unification  
-rise of racial antisemitism  
-Zionism

### **20th Century: Migration, Relocation, Destruction and Rebirth**

-Move to North America  
-German Jewry during last of the Empire  
-World War I reshapes Europe  
-German Jewry during Weimar  
-Shoah  
-birth of the state of Israel

## **Session Nineteen: Systematic Approaches Notes**

### **Franz Mussner (Professor of Theology, Regensburg Germany)**

-begins with Auschwitz  
--p. 148 Auschwitz as hermeneutic function [relates to N.A.]  
--Election of Israel  
--note Romans 9:11-13

- continuing election of Israel [p. 148]
- Land of Israel [p. 151]
- note B. Klappert's three models of "promise of land of Israel" [p.154]
- God's continuing covenant with Israel [p. 154]
- "Joy in Torah" [p. 155]—counters the myth of 'legalism'
- Israel as saved in Rom. 9:4 [p. 157]
- Rom. 11:26
- models of salvation—p. 166
- post-Christum* salvific model of Israel [p. 168 ff]

**Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger** (as Prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; Cardinal of Munich; Professor of Theology)

"Israel, Church and World" (essay title)

Theological reflection which is grounded in Scripture

Begins with Auschwitz

Goal is reconciliation

--Emphasis is that the unity of Scripture [NT/OT] means that Christians can never be in conflict with Judaism

--see p. 36-37

--Focuses on Catechism to reveal the emphasis on Jesus within the context of the Jewish people

--no collective Jewish guilt p.42-43

--Christian sin crucifies Jesus [Council of Trent] p. 43

"The New Covenant" (essay title)

--focus on the meaning of 'testament' or 'covenant'

--the 'fulness of the covenant in Christ' does not diminish the Sinai covenant p. 59-60

--Covenant established by God in Christ is present in the Hebrew Bible["faith of Israel"] p. 63-67

--Covenant is relationship p. 74-77 [Martin Buber]

problems with Ratzinger

--entirely self-contained

--no way out of the system?

--what is the purpose and meaning of the Jewish people *post Christum*? [in contrast to Mussner]

## Session Twenty-one: Dabru Emet

### National Jewish Scholars Project

*DABRU EMET*

A JEWISH STATEMENT ON CHRISTIANS AND CHRISTIANITY



In recent years, there has been a dramatic and unprecedented shift in Jewish and Christian relations. Throughout the nearly two millennia of Jewish exile, Christians have tended to characterize Judaism as a failed religion or, at best, a religion that prepared the way for, and is completed in, Christianity. In the decades since the Holocaust, however, Christianity has changed dramatically. An increasing number of official Church bodies, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, have made public statements of their remorse about Christian mistreatment of Jews and Judaism. These statements have declared, furthermore, that Christian teaching and preaching can and must be reformed so that they acknowledge God's enduring covenant with the Jewish people and celebrate the contribution of Judaism to world civilization and to Christian faith itself.

We believe these changes merit a thoughtful Jewish response. Speaking only for ourselves - an interdenominational group of Jewish scholars -- we believe it is time for Jews to learn about the efforts of Christians to honor Judaism. We believe it is time for Jews to reflect on what Judaism may now say about Christianity. As a first step, we offer eight brief statements about how Jews and Christians may relate to one another.

**Jews and Christians worship the same God.** Before the rise of Christianity, Jews were the only worshippers of the God of Israel. But Christians also worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; creator of heaven and earth. While Christian worship is not a viable religious choice for Jews, as Jewish theologians we rejoice that, through Christianity, hundreds of millions of people have entered into relationship with the God of Israel.

**Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book -- the Bible (what Jews call "Tanakh" and Christians call the "Old Testament").** Turning to it for religious orientation, spiritual enrichment, and communal education, we each take away similar lessons: God created and sustains the universe; God established a covenant with the people Israel, God's revealed word guides Israel to a life of righteousness; and God will ultimately redeem Israel and the whole world. Yet, Jews and Christians interpret the Bible differently on many points. Such differences must always be respected.

**Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel.** The most important event for Jews since the Holocaust has been the reestablishment of a Jewish state in the Promised Land. As members of a biblically based religion, Christians appreciate that Israel was promised -- and given -- to Jews as the physical center of the covenant between them and God. Many Christians support the State of Israel for reasons far more profound than mere politics. As Jews, we applaud this support. We also recognize that Jewish tradition mandates justice for all non-Jews who reside in a Jewish state.

**Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of Torah.** Central to the moral principles of Torah is the inalienable sanctity and dignity of every human being. All of us were created in the image of God. This shared moral emphasis can be the basis of an improved relationship between our two communities. It can also be the basis of a powerful witness to all humanity for improving the lives of our fellow human beings and for standing against the immoralities and idolatries that harm and degrade us. Such witness is especially needed after the unprecedented horrors of the past century.

**Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon.** Without the long history of Christian anti-Judaism and Christian violence against Jews, Nazi ideology could not have taken hold nor could it have been carried out. Too many Christians participated in, or were sympathetic to, Nazi atrocities against Jews. Other Christians did not protest sufficiently against these atrocities. But Nazism itself was not an inevitable outcome of Christianity. If the Nazi

extermination of the Jews had been fully successful, it would have turned its murderous rage more directly to Christians. We recognize with gratitude those Christians who risked or sacrificed their lives to save Jews during the Nazi regime. With that in mind, we encourage the continuation of recent efforts in Christian theology to repudiate unequivocally contempt of Judaism and the Jewish people. We applaud those Christians who reject this teaching of contempt, and we do not blame them for the sins committed by their ancestors.

**The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world as promised in Scripture.** Christians know and serve God through Jesus Christ and the Christian tradition. Jews know and serve God through Torah and the Jewish tradition. That difference will not be settled by one community insisting that it has interpreted Scripture more accurately than the other; nor by exercising political power over the other. Jews can respect Christians' faithfulness to their revelation just as we expect Christians to respect our faithfulness to our revelation. Neither Jew nor Christian should be pressed into affirming the teaching of the other community.

**A new relationship between Jews and Christians will not weaken Jewish practice.** An improved relationship will not accelerate the cultural and religious assimilation that Jews rightly fear. It will not change traditional Jewish forms of worship, nor increase intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, nor persuade more Jews to convert to Christianity, nor create a false blending of Judaism and Christianity. We respect Christianity as a faith that originated within Judaism and that still has significant contacts with it. We do not see it as an extension of Judaism. Only if we cherish our own traditions can we pursue this relationship with integrity.

**Jews and Christians must work together for justice and peace.** Jews and Christians, each in their own way, recognize the unredeemed state of the world as reflected in the persistence of persecution, poverty, and human degradation and misery. Although justice and peace are finally God's, our joint efforts, together with those of other faith communities, will help bring the kingdom of God for which we hope and long. Separately and together, we must work to bring justice and peace to our world. In this enterprise, we are guided by the vision of the prophets of Israel:

It shall come to pass in the end of days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established at the top of the mountains and be exalted above the hills, and the nations shall flow unto it . . . and many peoples shall go and say, "Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in his paths." (Isaiah 2:2-3)

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