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Jewish-Christian Dialogue

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In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis affirmed the relationship that exists between Judaism and Christianity:

[W]hile it is true that certain Christian beliefs are unacceptable to Judaism, and that the Church cannot refrain from proclaiming Jesus as Lord and Messiah, there exists as well a rich complementarity which allows us to read the texts of the Hebrew Scriptures together and to help one another to mine the riches of God's word. We can also share many ethical convictions and a common concern for justice and the development of peoples.¹

Pope Francis' 2013 statement acknowledges the differences between Judaism and Christianity, but he affirms this “rich complementarity” between the two traditions. This affirmation sums up and builds upon the growing, open and learning relationship between Judaism and Christianity in modern times, especially since the Second Vatican Council, a point to which we shall return a little later. Though, as history teaches us, this has not always been the case. Antisemitism, an expression first coined in Germany in the 1870s, finds its roots back in the first centuries.²

In this essay I seek to explore the nature of Jewish-Christian dialogue. However, some background is needed. First, I briefly summarize the history of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, explore the New Testament roots of antisemitism, examine the new rapprochement that emerged in the post-WWII period and, for Catholics, especially in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. After summarizing key themes on Jewish-Christian dialogue expressed through the pontificates of John-Paul II, Benedict and Francis, I offer some practical consequences for Jewish-Christian dialogue for those of us who come to this from a Christian perspective.

A Very Brief History

The gradual separation between Jesus followers and Jews who belonged to the Pharisaic-Rabbinic tradition that enabled Judaism to survive beyond the destruction of the temple in 70 CE took place over several centuries. Archaeological and literary evidence suggest that in parts of the Mediterranean and European world Jews and Jesus followers lived together with relative ease.³ In other places and at different times, especially in European cities during the Middle Ages, Jews were isolated into racially segregated city areas, one could call them quarters or even ghettos, shunned by their fellow citizens, treated with contempt, accused of crimes, even murder.⁴ Two of the most famous instances of such contempt in Medieval

Europe was the (Christian) reaction to the alleged “blood libel” belief, that Jews sacrificed Christian children, namely William of Norwich (1144) and Thomas of Trent (1475), to use their blood for ritual purposes.⁵ These attitudes continued in different forms, sometimes subtle, other times expressed in blatant antisemitism.⁶ The holocaust, the product of a long history of antisemitism and the Nazi definitive solution, to exterminate all Jews during WWII, resulted in the deaths of six million Jewish men, women and children.⁷ The holocaust was the ultimate, particular systematic expression of racial and ethnic hatred against a people regarded as undesirable and evil.⁸ This did not happen, though, in a historical vacuum. Several factors led to it.

The origin of such Jewish contempt resides in the very foundational documents of the Christian movement, the New Testament. In the post-70 period, when the gospels were being written, the emerging tensions between the Jesus movement and rabbinic Judaism were “read back” on to the story of Jesus. The “Pharisees” (in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke) and “the Jews” (in John’s gospel) were portrayed as antagonistic towards Jesus and his disciples and the epitome of faithlessness. In John’s gospel, Jesus tells “the Jews” that their “father is the devil” (Jn 8.44). Such attitudes appear to naïve readers of the gospels, devoid of any historical critical consciousness of the gospels’ formation, as accurate historical realities confirmed by Jesus’ judgement on the Jewish leadership and its people.⁹ In time the Jews are charged with deicide (“God killers”) because of their alleged execution of Jesus, God’s Son. Their punishment was God’s rejection of them. Their role as a covenanted people ceased and their place was taken over by Christianity. This jaundiced historical and theological view of Judaism, evidenced throughout history by essays, pogroms and Jewish urban enclaves in European cities, became the bedrock of their rejection. Its worst expression was the WWII Nazi program of Jewish extermination through the holocaust.

Following WWII two events occurred which reconfigured the relationship of Christianity to Judaism, enabled Christians to acknowledge the roots of antisemitism and Jewish rejection, reclaim the deep historical and theological link of Christianity to Judaism, and lay the constructive foundation for inter-religious dialogue. These two events were the gathering of Jews and Christians at Seelisberg, Switzerland, and the Second Vatican Council in Rome.

Seelisberg (1947)

From 30 July to 5 August 1947, 65 Jews and Christians from twelve countries, representatives from several European universities and the World Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference and leaders of other churches gathered at Seelisberg, Central Switzerland, for the “International Emergency Conference on Antisemitism”.¹⁰ The purpose of the conference was to reflect on the current state of antisemitism, its causes and to suggest practical short- and long-term strategies to combat it. The conference built upon the impetus from an international conference a year earlier in Oxford conducted under the auspices of the British Council of Christians and Jews. It was in a third conference at Fribourg a year after Seelisberg that the International Council of Christians and Jews was formally established. All three conferences, in Oxford, Seelisberg and Fribourg, contributed to the main elements that provided Christian self-reflection on its history. It realized the sentiment expressed in an earlier 1928 London conference to found a “society of Jews and

Christians” that would address religious misunderstanding and intolerance, and promote good will and collaboration between Jews and Christians.¹¹ But it was the Seelisberg conference almost twenty years later that articulated, in “Ten Points”, the main theological elements that would become the initial basis for Jewish-Christian dialogue and Christian introspection.¹²

The first four points of the Seelisberg document encourage Christians to “remember” essential truths about its origins, and the last six, to “avoid” misrepresenting Judaism. The document urges Christians to remember that God speaks through both the Old and New Testaments, that Jesus, his mother and the first generations of Jesus followers were Jewish, and that the most fundamental commandment of love enjoined on Christians is Old Testament teaching endorsed by Jesus. Christians are urged to avoid mis-representing Judaism to extol Christianity, identifying “the Jews” and the whole Jewish people as though enemies of Jesus, interpreting the gospel stories of Jesus’ passion and death as an act of odium perpetrated by the Jewish people accompanied by God’s judgement upon them (as literally interpreted in Matthew’s cry of the people in 27.25, “Let his blood be upon us and our children”), and stereotyping Jews as reprobate and accursed.

The 2009 ICCJ Berlin Document: “A Time for Recommitment”

In 2009, over sixty years after the publication of the “Ten Points”, the ICCJ met in Berlin to reflect upon what emerged at Seelisberg and to look again at its statement. This time, in the wake of deeper theological reflection that had taken place since Seelisberg and encouraged by what had happened in the Second Vatican Council—to which we shall move shortly—and the emergence of more robust and intentional inter-faith, and especially Jewish-Christian dialogue globally, the ICCJ saw a need to expand on what had been produced earlier at Seelisberg. The title of the Berlin document expressed the main focus: “A Time for Recommitment: Building the New Relationship between Jews and Christians”.¹³ The document reflected the need to renew the importance of Jewish-Christian dialogue, to expand the call to Christians and Jews to identify aspects of their respective traditions that required attention and to offer a common voice in attending to concerns of mutual interest. Rather than addressing only the Christian community, as at Seelisberg, the Berlin document acknowledged the need for Jews to identify issues that affected them and influenced their contribution to Jewish-Christian dialogue and participation.

The document’s introduction offered an overview of the history of Jewish-Christian relations in the modern era, and the context for the writing of the Berlin ICCJ statement. These were summarized in 12 points. The first four points encouraged Christians to combat religious, racial and other forms of antisemitism, promote dialogue with Jews, develop theological understandings of Judaism that affirmed its distinctive identity, and pray for the peace of Jerusalem. The second four invited Jewish communities to acknowledge Christian efforts at attitudinal reform, re-examine Jewish texts in the light of Christian reforms, differentiate between fair-minded criticism of Israel and antisemitism, and offer encouragement to the State of Israel to honour its founding documents. The last four points addressed both Christians and Jews. The document called on both traditions to collaborate to enhance interreligious and intercultural education, promote interreligious friendship and cooperate in global social justice actions, engage in intentional dialogue with economic and political bodies, and network with all whose work responds to the demands of environmental stewardship.

The Berlin document honoured the partnership in dialogue and social collaboration that had grown between Jews and Christians since WWII, explicitly addressed the Jewish community about its reception of Christian attempts at reform and the contribution that Christianity could make to enhance (not substitute) Jewish self-understanding, and, in its last point, reflected a growing global awareness of the social issues facing humanity, especially ecologically.

Two points in the document are worth highlighting, given the current state of affairs between those living in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. These points are addressed to members of the Jewish community. They urge just and fair-minded criticism of Israel on the one hand, and, on the other, encouragement to the State of Israel to live out its ideals as expressed in its founding documents. This implies, and is explicitly stated, the achievement of “a just and peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict”. The document further expresses the importance of ensuring the rights of religious and ethnic minorities living within the State of Israel. Such political critique needs to be distinguished from antisemitism. In other words, criticism of the State of Israel in its policies and practices, when it moves away from the intentions of its founding documents and compromises its non-prejudicial protection of the rights of all who live within its borders, especially minorities, is necessary. But this is not antisemitism. This clear distinction which the document makes is sometimes lost on those who would like to engage in interfaith, Christian-Jewish dialogue. For some, criticism of Israel’s policies and military practices entails a natural criticism of Jews. Thus, the blurring of the lines between the political entity and those who uphold Jewish life leads to a rejection of Jews and a subtle (though at times, not-so-subtle) form of contemporary antisemitism.

It is here, as the Berlin document engages in reflection on the role of the State of Israel and urges Christians to appreciate the centrality, survival and security of this political entity for Jews, that the relationship between land and religious identity emerges. Religious dialogue is not only about spiritual, theological and textual or biblical matters. It also responds to the deep-seated needs of the interlocutor whose identity is intimately connected to space and land. The importance of this cannot be understated for Jews who, up until the foundation of the State of Israel after WWII, were dispersed throughout the world. The establishment of the State did not happen without its struggle, nor without consequences for those who inhabited Israel prior. For this reason, the affirmation in the Berlin document, for the resolution for a “just and peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict” is a balancing clause. It acknowledges that those involved in interreligious dialogue are also involved in political and ethical issues that encourage peace. They can offer insights from their respective traditions that would support those who work towards peace. A final point made in the document encourages Jews and Christians to work together for justice for all.

This commentary on “A Time for Recommitment” highlights the development that occurred in Jewish-Christian relations since 1928 when a “society of Jews and Christians” was first mooted, and the proposals formulated in the Oxford, Seelisberg and Fribourg conferences held between 1946 and 1948. The 2009 ICCJ Berlin conference affirmed more explicitly the Jewish contribution to dialogue, the social, ecological and political setting in which this dialogue takes place, and the partnership needed between Jews and Christians for the enhancement of social change and religious receptivity in the global context.

A major stimulus for this development came from the Catholic Church and the Second Vatican Council with the 1965 proclamation of a watershed Declaration, *Nostra Aetate* (“In Our Time”) concerned about the Church’s relationship with non-Christian religions.¹⁴

The Declaration: “Nostra Aetate” (1965)

The spirit of the Declaration reveals a fundamental shift in the Catholic Church from being a closed, “perfect society” to one open to the world and cognizant of God’s presence within it, especially in religions other than Christianity. The Declaration recognized that the church needed to be receptive to the “truth and holiness” present in other religious traditions.¹⁵ This affirmation is momentous and leads to the encouragement for Christians to be engaged in “dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions”.¹⁶ One cannot underestimate this encouragement. Up until this formal statement by the Bishops of the Catholic Church, Christians, especially Catholic Christians, would have seen themselves without need for dialogue with devotees of other religious traditions. These outside the Church, especially adherents of non-Christian religions, would have been viewed either suspiciously, in terms of their religious convictions and God’s communion with them, or pagan. *Nostra Aetate* definitively changes this assessment. It affirms the religious contributions which Hinduism and Buddhism make to humanity, expresses esteem for Islam, acknowledges the history of hostility between Islam and Christianity, and urges mutual understanding and the fostering of social justice, moral values, peace and freedom.¹⁷

The most important focus of the Declaration is found in section 4, when the Council Fathers reflect on the relationship between Christianity (Catholicism) and Judaism.¹⁸ This is a groundbreaking piece of inter-religious study. It explicitly reverses the historical attitudes that typified Christians in their charge of Jewish deicide and their belief that Judaism had become accursed and replaced by Christianity.¹⁹ Instead, the Declaration asserted the spiritual bond which the Church shares with Judaism in its origins, its spiritual patrimony from the patriarchs, especially Abraham, the revelation it has received from the Old Testament, and the Jewish roots of Mary, Jesus and his disciples. This reclamation of the church’s Jewish origins becomes one of the reasons in the Declaration for Christians to foster mutual understanding and respect through biblical and theological study and dialogue.²⁰ Towards the end of the section, the Bishops affirm the necessity of correct catechesis in the presentation of the Jews in Christian teaching and deplore any expressions of antisemitism.²¹

The fruits of the formal Catholic teaching on Judaism that have come from *Nostra Aetate* are seen in subsequent documents, statements and religious educational texts.²² They are also reflected in the teachings of Popes St John-Paul II (pontificate, 1978-2005), Benedict (2005-2013) and Francis (2013-).²³

Post-Vatican II Papal Teaching on Jewish Relations

John Paul’s memory of pre-war Krakow and his friendship with Jews as a youth shaped his attitude later as Pope. Vatican II’s teaching from *Nostra Aetate* resonated deep with him and acted out its implications in his papacy. He was the first Pope to visit the Auschwitz concentration camp (1979), Rome’s Great Synagogue (1986), Israel’s Holocaust memorial, *Yad Vashem*, and to pray at Jerusalem’s Western Wall (2000).

In his visit to the synagogue in Rome, John Paul II re-affirmed the teaching of *Nostra Aetate*, asserted the unique relationship which the church has with Jewish people affirming them as

siblings (“brothers”), even elder siblings, and that they are “beloved of God, who has called them with an irrevocable calling”. John Paul II declared that God’s relationship with the Jews continues and deepens as they move forward towards God in a manner that is unique, definitive and irreversible.²⁴

The prayer that the Pope inserted into the Western Wall expressed the bond between Christianity and Judaism, the common paternity and sadness caused by those (Christians?) who have caused pain amongst the Jewish people, and forgiveness:

God of our fathers, you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring your name to the nations. We are deeply saddened by the behaviour of those who, in the course of history, have caused these children of yours to suffer, and asking forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine [fraternity] with the people of the Covenant.²⁵

The prayer recognised the tragedy of the Holocaust and iterated a theme that John Paul II would repeat often, his sadness at the actions of Christians perpetrated against Jews throughout history and his desire to correct this. In different ways, Popes Benedict and Francis built upon the Jewish-Christian legacy they inherited from John Paul II.

Pope Benedict on Jewish-Christian Dialogue

Pope Benedict explored more fully the meaning of dialogue between Jews and Christians. He considered dialogue with Jews quite different from dialogue with other faith traditions, given the particularity of Jewish spiritual heritage and Jews’ unique relationship to God. Their faithful witness of God was the foundation of the faith of Jesus and every subsequent generation of Jesus followers.²⁶ In the spirit of St Paul’s *Letter to the Romans*, Benedict in his earlier theological teaching before becoming Pope (as Joseph Ratzinger), acknowledged God’s providence revealed in the Jewish people and Israel’s particular mission in this “time of the Gentiles”.²⁷

He believed that inter-religious dialogue, though, was not about unification. He wrote:

Let us speak plainly. Anyone who expects the dialogue between religions to result in their unification is bound for disappointment. This is hardly possible within our historical time, and perhaps it is not even desirable.²⁸

What he meant by “unification” is not clear. Was it about institutional communion where religious identities become fused into one? It was in a later part of the same piece that he articulated what he believed dialogue to be about: it was the search for what was positive in the other’s belief, with a spirit of openness in the common search for truth, the “pearl” of religion.²⁹ This engagement in dialogue was not aimless. It concerned the truth of religion that is in the other, this experience of God, which also assisted in deepening one’s inner truth of God. It was open to receive self-criticism, even criticism of one’s religion.

However, from a christocentric perspective, Ratzinger also saw dialogue and mission as interrelated. The proclamation of the Gospel to the “other” was, he believed, an articulation of the truth which the other in some way was already convinced about.³⁰ The Gospel shed new light upon this conviction in a process that was bilateral. The bringer was also the receptor of truth from the one who also received this truth.

[T]he one who proclaims is not only the giver; [but] also the receiver. In this sense ... the dialogue of religions should become more and more a listening to the Logos, who is pointing out to us, in the midst of our separation and our contradictory affirmations, the unity we already share.³¹

The effect of open, respectful and humble dialogue resulted, in Ratzinger's understanding, in a deepening in truth ("Logos") which interlocutors experienced as communion.³² This theme of dialogue and the pursuit of truth (the "Logos") so prominent in Ratzinger's early theological career threads itself consistently in a continued nuanced fashion throughout his papacy.

In the first days of his pontificate he reaffirmed the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, including *Nostra Aetate*, and interpreted the Council with a "hermeneutic of reform".³³ He stressed the importance of dialogue and collaboration between Jews and Christians, reiterating Christianity's shared spiritual patrimony with Judaism blessed by God's irrevocable promises.³⁴ In his August 2005 address in Cologne's Roonstrasse synagogue, Benedict reinforced the importance of trustful and loving dialogue:

We must come to know one another much more and much better. Consequently, I would encourage sincere and trustful dialogue between Jews and Christians, for only in this way will it be possible to arrive at a shared interpretation of disputed historical questions, and, above all, to make progress towards a theological evaluation of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. This dialogue, if it is to be sincere, must not gloss over or underestimate the existing differences: in those areas in which, due to our profound convictions in faith, we diverge, and indeed precisely in those areas, we need to show respect [*orally*: "and love"] for one another.³⁵

Benedict believed that this kind of dialogue would lead to shared insight into theological truths that had been a source of disputation, historically contextualised, renewed understanding, friendship and practical witness and action in issues that concern human rights, justice and peace. Benedict's appreciation of dialogue as the quest for truth that he considered ultimately christological was explicated more fully in this excerpt from his September 2008 address to the French Catholic Bishops on "Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue" in Lourdes, France:

The goal of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, which naturally differ in their respective nature and finality, is to seek and deepen a knowledge of the Truth. It is therefore a noble and obligatory task for every believer, since Christ himself is the Truth. The building of bridges between the great ecclesial Christian traditions, and dialogue with other religious traditions, demand a real striving for mutual understanding, because ignorance destroys more than it builds. Moreover, only the Truth makes it possible to live authentically the dual commandment of Love which our Saviour left us. To be sure, one must follow closely the various initiatives that are undertaken, so as to discern which ones favour reciprocal knowledge and respect, as well as the promotion of dialogue, and so as to avoid those which lead to impasses. Good will is not enough. I believe it is good to begin by listening, then moving on to theological discussion, so as to arrive finally at witness and proclamation of the faith itself.³⁶

The quest for the Truth in interreligious dialogue, Benedict believed, would lead to the discovery of Christ who “is the Truth”. Though he moved towards a christocentric end-point as the fruit of dialogue, Benedict explicated its principles: dialogue which was to be respectful, sought mutual understanding. It began first with listening before engaging in theological discourse. It concluded with witness and proclamation.

Pope Francis on Dialogue

In the spirit of John-Paul II and Benedict, Pope Francis continued to explore the implications of Vatican II’s *Nostra Aetate* in pastoral practice and teaching. He affirmed the Jewish roots of Christianity and decried acts of antisemitism.³⁷ Further, he continued to underscore the importance of dialogue between members of different faith traditions. His many visits to Jewish, Muslim and Christian (Latin and Orthodox) countries reveal his desire to engage all, irrespective of their faith traditions, and his commitment to religious truth and expression.³⁸ Francis believed that authentic dialogue was central to all aspects of human existence and that the Church could make its own contribution to the search for truth. Dialogue was important for this search which was at the heart of the Church’s process of evangelization:

Evangelization...involves the path of dialogue. For the Church today, three areas of dialogue stand out where she needs to be present in order to promote full human development and to pursue the common good: dialogue with states, dialogue with society – including dialogue with cultures and the sciences – and dialogue with other believers who are not part of the Catholic Church. In each case, “the Church speaks from the light which faith offers”, contributing her two-thousand-year experience and keeping ever in mind the life and sufferings of human beings. This light transcends human reason, yet it can also prove meaningful and enriching to those who are not believers and it stimulates reason to broaden its perspectives.³⁹

For Francis, as with Benedict, dialogue was essentially interpersonal:

Dialogue is much more than the communication of a truth. It arises from the enjoyment of speaking and it enriches those who express their love for one another through the medium of words. This is an enrichment which does not consist in objects but in persons who share themselves in dialogue.⁴⁰

The value which Pope Francis placed on dialogue, especially inter-religious dialogue, is clear. His approach builds on the openness to dialogue expressed by his predecessors. His pastoral visits and willingness to engage with the leaders of different faith traditions reveal a keenness to continue to pursue the path of peace, communion and social commitment. For Francis, these result from an openness in dialogue with faith leaders. This is evident, for example, in his visit to the United Arab Emirates (February 2019), his meeting with Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed el-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of al-Azhar, and their joint signing of “A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together”.⁴¹ Both affirm the necessity of a “culture of dialogue.” They declare “the adoption of a culture of dialogue as the path; mutual cooperation as the code of conduct; reciprocal understanding as the method and standard”.

The Nature of Jewish-Christian Dialogue

In the light of this history of Jewish-Christian relationship over the centuries, the inspiration that has emerged from *Nostra Aetate* and recent papal teachings, several insights can be explicated concerning the nature of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

1. *Dialogue is interpersonal.* It is based on respectful relationship between the dialogue partners in their quest for truth and mutual insight. Dialogue is not about “winning over” or “converting” the other to a point of view. It is about the journey of discovery of what is essential for religious truth and conviction.

2. *Dialogue is an expression of love.* As Pope Francis indicated, dialogue can be enjoyable and an expression of love “through the medium of words.” This appreciation moves dialogue beyond an intellectual pursuit, but a true encounter with the other person in a way that reveals deep love.

3. *Dialogue is listening.* This is the primary and essential component in inter-religious dialogue. It is not about telling or explaining, but an open heart that respects the dialogue partner and listens to understand the truth revealed in words.

4. *Dialogue has social consequences.* Conversation between friends leads to the pursuit of goodness and its expression with the cultural and social structures that frame the conversation. Dialogue is not for the mutual satisfaction or enjoyment of the interlocutors. Its fruit is social harmony, peace and the common good. It has a social dimension.

5. *Dialogue is truthful.* As Benedict indicated in his 2005 Roostasse synagogue address, dialogue does not shy away from what one believes or “gloss over” the differences that interlocutors perceive. In the act of truth-telling, each comes through respectful listening to understand the position or truth of the other without reservation or correction.

6. *Dialogue brings communion.* As the inter-religious conversation emerges and each of the parties listens deeply to the other, to the depths of their heartfelt convictions of the religious truths out of which they live, a deep sense of communion unfolds. This comes about in the listener who recognises in the other, granting the religious differences that exist between them, that the ultimate depth of truth which is expressed concerns the “Other”. This “Other” is the expression of the divine presence, of God. The experience of communion is the encounter with God. Benedict names this experience as wisdom or “Logos”.

7. *Dialogue can bring “holy envy” and “holy enjoyment”.* The theologian and Lutheran Bishop of Stockholm Krister Stendahl made popular the phrase “holy envy”. By this expression he identified the experience one has in the encounter of the richness and goodness of another’s religious tradition.⁴² The experience of “holy envy” allows us to see the beauty in traditions and practices of others, while also recognizing the distortions and deficiencies in our own traditions.⁴³

Stendahl further considered that the experience of “holy envy” leads to *three rules* for interreligious understanding. These confirm elements of Jewish-Christian dialogue enunciated above:

- Let the other define herself (“Don't think you know the other without listening”);
- Compare equal to equal (not my positive qualities to the negative ones of the other);
- Find beauty in the other so as to develop “holy envy”.

Michael Reid Trice explores “holy envy” from another perspective, the experience of what might be called “holy enjoyment”:

I experience your expressions of the “holy” as beautiful. I admire that beauty, and am also somehow formed by it, and even yearn for those very expressions in my own faith life or community. I do not covet the beauty in you as though to control it; I am not required to convert from my own beauty as though to lose it. I experience this beauty as a gift, and invitation, and as a preamble to new cultivation and further invitation in the future.⁴⁴

Conclusion

Trice’s comment offers an important insight that might conclude this essay on Jewish-Christian relations and the nature of dialogue.

The valuable fruit that has emerged over the past decades and particularly since WWII concerns more than a rapprochement between Jews and Christians. It is about a fundamental recognition of the centrality of Judaism to Christian self-understanding, history and religious practice.

As the brief historical description of this relationship has shown and the theological elements that have emerged in Christian/Catholic circles since the Second Vatican Council indicate, Christianity cannot be understood without reclaiming its Jewish roots and history, acknowledging its wrongdoings of the past, and moving forward with an open, honest and sincere dialogue to forge a future of peace that has global implications.

Christian leaders and theologians now explicitly affirm the gift of Judaism to Christianity. It is not yet clear what contribution Christianity can make to Jewish self-understanding and identity. Nevertheless, Trice’s point remains. Through Jewish-Christian dialogue we come to admire the holiness and beauty that is in the religious “other”. We do not covet or control these, but see them as gifts which bring holy “enjoyment”.

- ¹ POPE FRANCIS, **The Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World: Evangelii Gaudium (“Joy of the Gospel”)**, (Vatican, 2013) section 249; http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html#II.%E2%80%82The_inclusion_of_the_poor_in_society.
- ² KUSHER, Tony, *Antisemitism* in **A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies** (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2018), pp64-72; LEVY, Richard S. S. *Antisemitism*, in **The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); DOI:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199211869.003.000
- ³ On the complexity of the “parting of the ways” between Judaism and Christianity, see ROSIK, Mariusz, **Church and Synagogue (30-313 AD): Parting of the Ways** (Peter Lang GmbH: Berlin, 2018).
- ⁴ BERNASCONI, Robert, *The Ghetto and Race*, **A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies** (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2018), pp340-347.
- ⁵ ROSE, EM. **The Murder of William of Norwich: The Origins of Blood Libel in Medieval Europe** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190219628.001.0001; JOHNSON, Hannah R., **Blood Libel: The Ritual Murder Accusation at the Limit of Jewish History** (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2012), pp30-128.
- ⁶ For an analysis of new or contemporary expressions of antisemitism, see ROSENFELD, Alvin H. **Deciphering the New Antisemitism: Studies in Antisemitism** (Bloomington, Ind., 2015).
- ⁷ WISTRICH, Robert S. *Antisemitism in How Was It Possible?: A Holocaust Reader* (University of Nebraska Press, 2015), pp6-17.
- ⁸ BAUMAN, Zygmunt *Holocaust* in **A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies** (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2018) pp64-72.
- ⁹ NEUSNER, Jacob and CHILTON, Bruce, **In quest of the historical Pharisees** (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007), pp407-424.
- ¹⁰ RUTISHAUSER, Christian M., *The 1947 Seelisberg Conference: The Foundation of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue*, **Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations** 2011 (2), pp34-53; <https://doi.org/10.6017/scjr.v2i2.1421>.
- ¹¹ See KLÖCKENER, Martin, *The International Council of Christians and Jews and the University of Fribourg*, 49; http://www.kas.de/upload/dokumente/2009/07/12_Berliner_Thesen/kloeckener_en.pdf.
- ¹² For the “Ten Points” of Seelisberg, see https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=dd58e3b4-74c4-35b1-dfd3-c96f787acf4a&groupId=252038
- ¹³ The text of *A Time for Recommitment* is available at http://www.iccj.org/fileadmin/ICCJ/pdf-Dateien/A_Time_for_Recommitment_engl.pdf
- ¹⁴ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (Nostra Aetate)*, 28 October, 1965, in **The Documents of Vatican II** (London, UK: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), pp660-668.
- ¹⁵ *ibid* p662.
- ¹⁶ *ibid* pp662-663.
- ¹⁷ *ibid* p663.
- ¹⁸ *ibid* pp663-667.
- ¹⁹ *ibid* p666.
- ²⁰ *ibid* p665.
- ²¹ *ibid* p667.
- ²² A survey of texts, document and teaching tools is found at: <https://www.ccrj.us/dialogika-resources>. This site from the *Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations* is an excellent resource of documents, statements and educational aids on Jewish-Christian relations from Catholic and Protestant churches.
- ²³ The dates indicate the years of each Pope’s time in office.
- ²⁴ The text of John Paul II’s speech in the Great Synagogue in Rome can be found at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/04/14/world/text-of-pope-s-speech-at-rome-synagogue-you-are-our-elder-brothers.html>
- ²⁵ For the text of the prayer, see <https://ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/pope-john-paul-ii/jp2-00mar26>
- ²⁶ RATZINGER, Joseph, *The Heritage of Abraham: The Gift of Christmas*, **L’Osservatore Romano**, December 200; <http://www.ccrj.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/pope-benedict-xvi/348-b16-00dec29>.
- ²⁷ RATZINGER, Joseph, **Many Religions, One Covenant: Israel, the Church, and the World** (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999), 104-105; <http://www.ccrj.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/pope-benedict-xvi/349-b16-99mroc>.
- ²⁸ *ibid* p109.
- ²⁹ *ibid* p111.
- ³⁰ *ibid* p112.

³¹ *ibid* p113.

³² How is *Logos* to be interpreted? In his address at Regensburg University in September 2006, he concluded, “The courage to engage the whole breadth of reason, and not the denial of its grandeur - this is the programme with which a theology grounded in Biblical faith enters into the debates of our time. “Not to act reasonably, not to act with logos, is contrary to the nature of God”, said Manuel II, according to his Christian understanding of God, in response to his Persian interlocutor. It is to this great logos, to this breadth of reason, that we invite our partners in the dialogue of cultures. To rediscover it constantly is the great task of the university”;
http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html#_ftnref1.

³³ In contrast to what Benedict described as the “hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture”, see his address to the Roman Curia, *On the Interpretation of the Second Vatican Council*, December 22, 2005;
<http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/pope-benedict-xvi/359-b16-05dec22>.

³⁴ <http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/pope-benedict-xvi/353-jp2-05aprmay>.

³⁵ <http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/pope-benedict-xvi/356-b16-05aug19>.

³⁶ <http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/pope-benedict-xvi/431-b1608sep14>.

³⁷ <https://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/francis/address-to-the-international-council-of-christians-and-jews>; <https://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/francis/francis-2015apr20>.

³⁸ For a list of the countries Pope Francis has visited, see
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_pastoral_visits_of_Pope_Francis.

³⁹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, section 238.

⁴⁰ *ibid* section 142.

⁴¹ https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html

⁴² Stendahl was not the first to propose the concept of “envying” the rich religious traditions of others, but rather he made popular the phrase “holy envy”. Lee Yearley referred to “spiritual regret” in *New Religious Virtues and the Study of Religion*, lecture (Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University, 1994). Yearley affirmed “the recognition of a ‘religious good’ in the other person’s tradition that we cannot share” but nonetheless admire. See also KAPLAN, Edward K., *Spiritual Regret and Holy Envy*, *Spiritus* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2005), pp105–106.

⁴³ Mary Boys acknowledges that “the concepts of spiritual regret and holy envy express an important dimension of interreligious learning: when we drink deeply from the wells of another tradition, we may see more clearly distortions and deficiencies in our own”, in *Jewish-Christian Dialogue: One Woman’s Experience* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1997), p58.

⁴⁴ TRICE, Michael Reid, *The Future of Religious Identity: A Spirit of Generosity*, (unpublished manuscript), presented at the **International Symposium on Religious Identity and Renewal: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Explorations**, Seattle University, August, 2014.