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THE RELATION OF COVENANT TO JEWISH

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THE RELATION OF COVENANT
TO JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

Linda E. Greene

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ABSTRACT

For centuries, some people have followed the Hebraic tradition and considered God's covenant with Israel to be their fundamental groundwork, while other Christians, have considered the covenant through Jesus Christ to be the new and decisive one. These different views have lead to misunderstandings and tension. Can there be meaningful dialogue between the two religions? Can Hebrews or Christians see a possibility for enlarging their ideas of covenant to embrace the other?

This thesis sought answers to these questions and has offered a foundation of principles to promote an effective dialogue and a reciprocal understanding between the followers of Judaism and Christianity. An investigative research of prominent theologians who were affected by early misconceptions and have thus concentrated on the concept of single and double covenantal theology was included which later lated to substantial recommendations toward the dialogical process between the religions. It was necessary to point out three important factors regarding the nature and process of dialogue. Scholars of theology and pastoral leaders can use these procedures as guidelines for themselves and for their communities. Also, meaningful suggestions on how to proceed with an interreligious
dialogue on the local level were included. Examples were drawn from a few students who talked about their experience in religious studies and interfaith activities in and outside the university classroom.

A final example of interfaith understanding discussed those Jews and Christians who have actually begun a meaningful and productive covenantal relationship within the Jewish Chaplaincy at Georgetown University and an African-American congregation in Southeast, Washington, D.C.

The relation of covenant to Jewish-Christian dialogue is constantly growing. Although there are still some debatable issues between Christianity and the world religions, there are also many who continue to seek better ways to make the dialogue more accessible as they approach the twenty-first century.
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis has attempted to demonstrate how productive interaction between the Hebraic and Christian religions could result from exploring the most salient points of the Covenants of Jews and Christians. Further, it has suggested ways in which tensions between members of these religions might be reduced, and ways in which understandings could be fostered, and relationships enlarged and strengthened. However, these goals are for the present and future. Historically, obscure religious cults (such as Judaism and Christianity in the Roman world) have always been considered dangerous by the mainstream members of human societies. In the past, this was true whether the distrust involved the historical presence of Jews in Ancient Egypt, Druids in Britain, Scottish Celts behind Hadrian's Wall, Basques in Spain, or early Christians within the Roman empire.

Through the centuries, the religions of both Jews and Christians had evolved from patriarchal family units into gigantic movements composed of followers numbering in the millions. At present, the sheer size of these religions has had far-reaching implications for worldwide peace, order and security. However, the growth of these religions has not lessened the continued opposition Jews and Christians have received from the millions who embraced other faiths. Would it not be logical for Jews and Christians, with strength in numbers behind them and similar religious principles, especially their belief in one God, to work together against formidable but uninformed
adversaries, with whom both would like to make friends? On the basis of logic the answer to this question would be 'yes.' However, Jews and Christians have often misunderstood each other's Covenants and this has prevented positive associations from developing. In fact, misunderstandings about Covenants have long been responsible for supporting suspicions and misgivings between Jewish and Christian constituents instead of using the fundamental precepts of Covenants to foster cooperation and collaboration. But, let us move on from the misconstruction and dissension of the past involving Jews and Christians to the present and emphasize areas in which a more meaningful and fruitful dialogue may be achieved by them.
CHAPTER ONE

AN HISTORICAL VIEW OF TWENTIETH CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS

Pursuance of Jewish-Christian dialogue can be dated from the third and fourth centuries. However, the emphasis here is to consider some of the Twentieth Century developments between these two religions. The research in this section and the following, "The Concept of Covenant," will rely heavily on John Pawlikowski's comments in *Jesus and the Theology of Israel*.

Pawlikowski notes that in 1965, the Second Vatican Council issued its historic proclamation on Roman Catholicism's relationship to non-Christian religions entitled *Nostra Aetate* which included a groundbreaking section on the Church's continuing bond with the Jewish People through the doctrine of Jesus Christ.\(^1\) Indeed, this announcement had significant influence on both Catholic and Protestant thinking which pertained to the Jewish question. *Nostra Aetate* was followed by over fifty additional accounts from individual Christian leaders and regional church bodies in North America, Western Europe and South America.\(^2\)

It can be noted that the principal Protestant pronouncements include the 1980 Rhineland Synod statement and the study document entitled, 'Ecumenical

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\(^2\) Pawlikowski, 9.
Considerations on Jewish-Christian Dialogue' submitted to its member denominations in 1982 by the World Council of Churches. In addition, Pawlikowski remarks that the Second Vatican Council followed Nostra Aetate with a set of guidelines for implementing its section on the Jewish People in 1975.³

Pawlikowski further remarks that the breakthrough in understanding the Jewish-Christian relationship brought about by the Second Vatican Council had a pre-history. Immediately after World War II, and largely as a result of the trauma caused by the annihilation of six million Jews, several prominent European theologians began to explore possibilities for Christian theological affirmation of the Jewish covenant in the light of the Christ Event.⁴ The concrete experience of Jews and Christians cooperating on many projects in North America, though it did not lead to much systematic theological reflection on the connection between Jews and Christians, did inspire an indisputable and uncontroversial atmosphere toward a rethinking of each other's religious views.⁵ Moreover, this American experience of constructive religious pluralism proved to be decisive in the passage of Nostra Aetate.⁶

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³ Ibid.
⁴ Pawlikowski, 10.
⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Ibid.
Pawlikowski demonstrates that initial attempts at theological reconstruction of the Christian-Jewish relationship began to chip away at two long major trends in Christian thought. The first, which predominated in Roman Catholicism, centered around the concept of prophecy and fulfillment. Jesus fulfilled the Messianic prophecies of Judaism and thus inaugurated the Messianic era for which Jews had hoped and prayed throughout the centuries.\(^7\) It is said that their own spiritual blindness prevented most Jews from recognizing this fulfillment in the Christ Event. As a divine admonishment for this blindness Jews were extricated in the covenantal relationship by those baptized into the 'New Israel.'

The second trend, heavily identified with continental Protestant theology, saw religious freedom as the principal effect of the Christ Event. Through his preaching and ministry and in a very special way through his death and resurrection, Jesus freed humankind from the "burden of Jewish Torah" which was so spiritually inhibiting. However, the whole Jewish covenantal experience of the people's union with God through faithful observance of the Torah precepts integral to the divine-human bonding forged at Sinai was displaced by the immediate, individual covenantal union between the individual believer and God through Jesus Christ.\(^8\) The preceding endeavors moved from these 'displacement' theologies of Judaism towards a viewpoint more accepting of

\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) Pawlikowski, 10, 11.
ongoing post-Easter Jewish covenantal presence which continued to remain uncompromising on the centrality of Christ and the fulfillment resulting from the Incarnation and the Resurrection. No real attempt was made to erase the apparent contradiction between the affirmation of Jewish covenantal continuity and fulfillment in Christ. Rather, theologians appealed to the 'mystery' theology of the Jewish-Christian relationship in Romans 9-11, written by the Apostle Paul.⁹

Following Paul's lead, these theologians insisted that the Church needed to make these twin proclamations as part of its fundamental faith statement although ultimate reconciliation lies beyond human comprehension. In other words, it was believed to remain a perpetual mystery understood by God alone who remains Sovereign to both Jews and Christians.¹⁰ Since the time of the Second Vatican Council, however, an increasing number of theologians, and several important church documents, have removed themselves from this 'mystery' theology. Instead, theologians have offered a model of the Jewish-Christian relationship in which the notions of the exclusive centrality of Christ and his complete fulfillment of Messianic prophecies have been modified in varying degrees.¹¹

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⁹ Pawlikowski, 11.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.
One may question, then, if all of God's sovereign power operates within these two religions, how do theologians look at the concept of covenant? What is the relation of covenant to these two religions? How profitable is the single covenant? What do theologians say about the double covenant? Is it feasible that the two covenants could become one? Are the double covenants really separate? Which model seems to be the most convincing? What does Holy Scripture say about these two covenants?
CHAPTER TWO
THE CONCEPT OF COVENANT THEOLOGY

To answer the prior questions, Pawlikowski acknowledges that it had become routine to categorize those theologians who had worked within an epistemological framework of Jewish-Christian dialogue as holding either a single covenant or a double covenant perspective. The former conceived of Jews and Christians as basically part of an ongoing, integrated covenantal tradition appropriated by each in somewhat different ways.\textsuperscript{12} The Christ Event in this regard expedited the entry of non-Jews into a covenantal relationship that Jews never lost. On the other hand, the double covenant position emphasized the distinctiveness of each covenantal tradition but upheld that both were ultimately critical for the complete advent of the divine reign.\textsuperscript{13}

Several years ago, several Catholic and Protestant scholars such as Monika Hellwig, Marcel Dubois, Cardinal Martini of Milan, Michael Remaud, Bertold Klappert, and Peter von der Ostensacken hold their viewpoints toward the single covenant perspective. It is necessary at this time to look at some of these various models of covenantal theology. Monika Hellwig, a Roman Catholic theologian, remarkably notes that,

\textsuperscript{12} Pawlikowski, 11.

\textsuperscript{13} Pawlikowski, 12.
The Messianic event is understood to be unfinished and mysterious, intricate and extensive. Judaism and Christianity are both envisioned as pointing towards the identical eschatological event which continues to remain very much of a future reality. The two religions share a common mission in helping the final eschatological age unfold, though each may carry out this mission in somewhat different ways.\textsuperscript{14}

It was observed that Hellwig's theological vision lucidly depends on Christian willingness to concede a very important unfilled dimension to the Christ Event, to admit forthrightly that eschatological tension has not yet been totally resolved. She further comments that the covenant formed with Israel at Sinai was not annihilated with the coming of Jesus Christ. It remains fully in force.\textsuperscript{15}

Again, Pawlikowski asserts that this affirmation of continuing divine faithfulness to the covenant with the Jewish people compelled Hellwig into rethinking the integral significance of Jesus as the Christ. He notes that,

Hellwig's response is to see in the Christ Event not primarily the completion of Messianic prophecies, but the possibility of all Gentiles encountering the God of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. Jesus, the Jew, opened the gates for Gentiles to enter the covenantal election first granted the People Israel and to experience the intimacy with God that this election brought them.\textsuperscript{16}

Hence, Christians must learn to look to God's continuing revelation in the contemporary Jewish experience to grasp fully God's self-communication today and at all times. While

\textsuperscript{14} Pawlikowski, 16.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
some ambiguity remained in Hellwig’s thought on this point, she also seemed to have implied that the revelation given to humankind in and through the Christ Event serves as one barometer for the expression of Jewish faith. Her theology of Jewish-Christian linkage thus ultimately involved some rethinking of respective self-definitions by both faith communities.\textsuperscript{17} Apparently, Hellwig prefers to stay with the vocabulary and imagery of a single covenant. This theological perspective seems to have a solid biblical basis and contains what Hellwig calls "a germ of ecumenism capable of further unfolding." Additionally, she feels that this single covenant concept will help remind Christians that there is but one God and one unified, meaningful creation which makes possible a communal destiny and fulfillment.\textsuperscript{18}

Meanwhile, Roman Catholic scholar, Marcel Dubois, points his view of the single covenant by claiming that there was an immense burden on the Cross of Jesus Christ as a unifying point for Jews and Christians. Jesus of Israel finally became the crucified Jesus of Israel. Dubois associates Jesus' sufferings on the Cross with those experienced by the Jewish people during the Holocaust, or as Jews now prefer to name

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{18} Pawlikowski, 17.
this period, the Shoah (annihilation).\textsuperscript{19} Thus, Israel symbolizes, even if unconsciously, the mystery of the Passion and the Cross.\textsuperscript{20}

Dubois is observed to be one of the few Christian theologians who chose to reflect theologically on the Jewish-Christian relationship in the context of a Cross/Shoah nexus. Pawlikowski notes that,

Most scholars have tended to avoid using this framework as the basis of a new constructive theological model of the Jewish-Christian relationship both because of the significant Christian complicity (direct and indirect) in the Holocaust and because, while Jesus' passion and death have always been understood as core elements in a freely chosen redemptive mission, the extermination of six million Jews had absolutely no voluntary dimension to it.\textsuperscript{21}

Although Dubois' viewpoint differs from that of Hellwig's thought concerning the unfolding of Jewish-Christian linkage, readers of Scripture can actually see how spiritual realities are compared in order to arouse a deeper understanding of God's Word (I Corinthians 2:11-13). Therefore, these two models of covenantal theology can be viewed as "different but of the same Spirit" (I Corinthians 12).

Interestingly enough, Gregory Baum comments in Faith and Fratricide, that Christians look with a genuine admiration upon those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and scriptural teachings which, though differing in many particulars from what the

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
church holds and sets forth, nevertheless often reflect a ray of Truth which enlightens all men. Likewise, Rabbi Milton Steinberg in his book, *Basic Judaism*, characterizes the ideals, beliefs, and practices in the religious life of Jews by describing seven strands that were woven to make up their system of teaching:

1. A doctrine concerning God, the universe and man;
2. A morality for the individual and society;
3. A regimen of rite, custom, and ceremony;
4. A body of law;
5. A sacred literature;
6. Institutions through which the foregoing find expression;
7. The people, Israel's central strand out of which and about which the others are spun.\(^3\)

Jewish theology has thus shown that the credo of Judaism is a strong unifying force. Besides, if there is a credo in the faith of Judaism, it is the prayer that is known as the "Shema."

Arthur Zannoni in *Jews and Christians Speak of Jesus*, notes that Philo of Alexandria, a very wealthy man who was as learned as he was rich, maintained that, on the Sabbath, Jews throughout the world gathered in "schools" where they learned what he calls their "ancestral philosophy." This "philosophy," he notes, falls under two headings: duty toward God and duty toward other humans; that is, the Jewish "philosophy" consisted of the two tables of the Jewish law. When they wanted to


summarize these two divisions of the law, Jews quoted two central passages from the Hebrew Scriptures. One is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5,

Hear O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

The second passage enjoins, as Philo put it, fellowship with all humans and philanthropia, love of humanity. Philo, along with other thoughtful Jews, read the Scriptures as divine commandments requiring love of all humanity. The word, 'One' actually stands for the unity of God, while prayer refers to 'an affirmation.' Therefore, the most significant aspect of God operating within society is that of uniting His people in every aspect of life. Additionally, Deuteronomy 6:4-5, seems to be a very important excerpt for the people of Israel. They, however, were about to enter a land with many gods during that time. But then and still today, there are people who prefer to place their trust in many different gods. It is written in Zechariah 14:9, that, "The Lord will be the King over all the earth. In that day there shall be one Lord his name alone will be worshiped."

Cardinal Martini of Milan, former head of the Biblicum in Rome introduces the idea of 'schism' into the discussion of the basic theological relationship between Jews and

Christians. Martini applies this expression to the original separation of the church and
the synagogue. He interjected two important concepts into the dialogue:

For 'schism' is a reality that ideally should not have occurred (Christianity and
Judaism should have remained permanently bonded), and which is seen as a
temporary situation rather than a permanent rupture. Therefore, 'schism' which
previously has been used exclusively in connection with inter-Christian division,
implies a certain contemporary mandate to heal this division.

Arguably, Martini feels that the Catholic religion has suffered a certain lack of
stability in its expression of faith and have been limited and deprived of significant
richness in its doctrine. He insists that "in no schism was this more true than in the
original separation with the Jewish people." This breakage, therefore, has frequently
distorted the articulation of Christian faith and particularly, increasing faith in Jesus as
the Christ. Martini adds that this kind of division has proved to be detrimental for the
church and its growth. Conceivably, this is the reason why the hearts and minds of
God's people have been perforated and encouraged to come to the realization of God's
monotheistic power toward all mankind, both laity and ministerial, by acknowledging the
severe need to become educated in each other's religious traditions. In that connection,
this is what aids in the promotion of interreligious dialogue as it is becoming richly enhanced.

The single covenant model continues with Catholic theologian, Michael Remaud who totally discounts any 'displacement' theology of the Jewish-Christian relationship or any theology of 'substitution' in which the church totally appropriates for itself the covenantal identity of the Jewish people, leaving the latter an empty shell. It is observed that a unique dimension in Remaud's writings consists of a reinterpreted form of the earlier "mystery" solution to the problem of the church and synagogue co-existence. Both Israel and the church seem to participate in this same spiritual reality which has several dimensions. Israel's extraordinary role is to highlight the Messianic hope in this spiritual reality; the church, on the other hand, bears witness to the already existing hope made present through the Christ Event that is central to this one, through complex, spiritual reality.

Protestant theologians, Bertold Klappert and Peter von der Osten-Sacken gives their viewpoint of single covenant theology. Klappert's goal is to construct a Christological credo devoid of anti-Judaism. But more positively, such a Christology would involve at its core a continuing link with the Jewish biblical tradition as well as

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29 Pawlikowski, 19.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.
with contemporary Judaism. Osten-Sacken also avows that a renewed Christology must affirm the continuity of the Christ Event with both the Hebrew Scriptures and contemporary Judaism. But he adds that the best way to declare the church's ongoing relationship with the Jewish people theologically is through development of an 'Israel-affirming Christology' as a replacement for the old displacement theology.\footnote{Pawlikowski, p. 22.}

Catholic and Protestant scholars continue to look at the relation of covenant but from the double covenant position. Pawlikowski interjects that "there is no more consistency in this school than among the single covenant theologians." It is essential to look at the models of Catholic scholars, Clemens Thoma and Franz Mussner, along with Protestant scholar James Parkes.

Catholic scholar, Clemens Thoma, bases his version of the double covenant perspective according to the Scriptures which likewise highlighted a unique feature in the Christ Event. He assertively rejects any attempt to describe the basic theological tension between Israel and the church as rooted in the acceptance or rejection of Jesus. Thoma arguably notes that there was no consistent, univocal notion of the Messiah in Jewish thought at the time of Jesus. Many diverse understandings were floating about in a period of great creative renewal within Judaism. Yet, some Jews had reached the conclusion that the notion of Messiah should be infinitely eliminated. Hence, there
exists no one Jewish expectation to which Jesus can be compared and no grounds for alleging Jewish rejection of Jesus' fulfillment of this expectation.\textsuperscript{33} He further comments:

The uniqueness of Jesus is ultimately located in the unqualified fashion in which he attached the kingdom of God to his own activities and person. In so doing, Jesus was following a trend already present in apocalyptic interpretations of Judaism. But his sense of intimacy with the Father went beyond what any branch of Judaism was prepared to acknowledge.\textsuperscript{34}

Another Catholic voice in the double covenant model is that of German scholar, Franz Mussner. Mussner's perspective has some similarities to that of Clemens Thoma's. Mussner became utterly convinced about Jesus' immeasurable, positive connection to the Jewish heritage. He rejected any interpretation of the Christ Event over Judaism in terms of Jesus' fulfillment of biblical Messianic prophecies. Rather, the uniqueness of the Christ Event was derived from the complete identity of the work of Jesus, as well as his words and actions, with the work of God. As a result of the revelatory vision in Christ, the New Testament is able to speak about God with an anthropomorphic boldness which is not found to the same degree in the Hebrew Scriptures.\textsuperscript{35} Pawlikowski declares that the most distinctive feature of Christianity for Mussner when contrasted with Judaism is the notion of Incarnation rather than

\textsuperscript{33} Pawlikowski, 36.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{35} Pawlikowski, 37.
fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies. And even this Christian particularity is an outgrowth of a sensibility that is profoundly Jewish at its core.\textsuperscript{36}

Mussner talks about the 'prophet Christology' and 'Son Christology' in his discussion. 'The prophet Christology' is chronologically the older of the two Christologies. His analysis shows that Jesus is seen as:

Belonging to the line of prophets who manifested the 'pathos' of God and joined their words and actions to the divine plan for human salvation. Christianity never completely abandoned this 'prophet Christology,' not even in the Gospel of John where the 'Son Christology' most clearly predominates. The two Christologies do not stand in fundamental opposition. But the 'Son Christology' adds a dimension of superiority to Jesus as prophet that makes the differentiation between Christian and Jewish belief more pronounced.\textsuperscript{37}

This paradigm further demonstrates that the 'Son Christology' has some foundation in the Jewish legacy. The claims in the past for an essentially non-Jewish basis for this 'high' Christology are unfounded. The 'Son Christology', however, owes much of its language and imagery to the Wisdom literature. Calling attention to the link between 'Son Christology' and the Jewish tradition would remove all opposition to it on the part of Jews. This kind of understanding provides an opening for discussing the issue within the framework of the Jewish-Christian dialogue.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{37} Pawlikowski, 38.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
Anglican scholar, James Parkes, centers his version of the relation of the double covenant according to the Sinai-Calvary experience. He remarks that the experience at Sinai (during the time of Moses) was understood to be basically communal in nature, while Calvary (during the time of Jesus) focused more toward an individual's connection with God. Parkes remarks that,

What occurred at Sinai was the full development of a long, gradual growth in humanity's perception of community. Calvary, on the other hand, represents the completion of a process that goes back to exilic Judaism, where there began a growing concern with the destiny of the individual Israelite over and above the ongoing concern with the fate of the People Israel as a whole.  

Parkes seemed to have been convinced that,

The revelation unveiled through Calvary in no way replaced Sinai, a claim frequently made for the Christ Event throughout church history. But neither could Sinai merely absorb this new revelation without some fundamental alterations.

It is further understood that in the life and teachings of Jesus the two revelations co-exist in creative tension. Jesus' abiding concern with the individual as person does nothing to vitiate the importance of the gradual completion in history of the initial revelation associated with Sinai. Judaism and Christianity are thus inextricably bound to each other as equals.

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39 Pawlikowski, 32.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
Certainly, Parkes' analysis has some similarity to some of the recent language of Pope John Paul II and the Vatican Notes. But Pawlikowski states that,

There is some tension that still remains between the church and the Jewish people which is rooted in something other than a metaphysic forced upon history from without. Rather, it is symbolic of the perennial and inevitable experience of tension in ordinary human life between the human person as social being and individual creature, as an ultimate value in himself, as formed uniquely in the image of God.

Parkes claims that this pressure stretches to the whole of life and would continue until God's final sorting. Therefore, the continuing bond between Jews and Christians would also include a permanent gulf as well. The Christ Event was the original cause of both.43

42 Ibid.

43 Pawlikowski, p. 33.
CHAPTER THREE

JESUS IN THE LIFE OF JUDAISM

Protestant and Catholic theologians have used various biblically based events to support their viewpoints to the relation of covenant theology between Jews and Christians. But what do theologians say about Jesus' life as a Jew. How has his doctrine been understood in the context of the Jewish religious tradition and its impact on interpersonal relations between Jews and Christians.

Zannoni clearly characterizes Jesus' life as a Jew when Jesus lived in the land of Galilee. Jesus was known to be a Jew of the House of David. Christianity in its earliest days was seen as a Jewish movement. Both the social context of Jesus in his lifetime and his teaching reflect the Judaism of his time.44 Some studies show examples of Jesus as a Jew, in regard to social matters, can be placed in the camp closest to the Pharisees and furthest from such sectarianists who left behind the Dead Sea Scrolls.45

Zannoni adds that Jesus' teachings have much in common with the Pharisees. There are debates in the earlier texts against the Pharisees, the group with whom Jesus had contact. This group of religious leaders served to discriminate oneself from others with whom one might be perplexed. They served to define and separate their own group as opposed to groups that might be mistaken for it or against which it might be

44 Zannoni, 38-39.
45 Zannoni, 39.
appalling. The groups in question have to be moderately close in outlook and formation for this relationship to obtain.\textsuperscript{46} Zannoni uses one example to emphasize that:

We do not generally expect to find the Democratic party arguing against communism in modern-day America. Rather, they argue against the Republican party. Whoever wrote these accounts of Jesus portrays him as constantly arguing with the Pharisees although they are closest to him on social issues.\textsuperscript{7}

Several examples according to the Gospels signify close accounts of the later Talmudic sages. Indeed, this particular study shows how the two covenants (single and double) can be positively perceived, received, and utilized when Jews and Christians commit themselves to quality reading, studying, and application. One example comparatively analyzes how Jesus ministered on anger to his disciples from the Sermon on the Mount in the New Testament. Similarly, the Talmudic sages lucidly declares:

"Whoever gets angry, all kinds of (punishments of) Gehenna (hell) rule over him... Whoever gets angry, even the Divine Presence must not be important to him; or Whoever gets angry, it is as if he worshiped idols."

More importantly, one should not expect exact correspondence between Jesus' teaching and what the rabbis taught. Chronologically, the rabbis came at a later time, even if it is observed that many rabbinic traditions reflect the general Pharisaic milieu of earlier on. Hence, similar concepts may have been available in different formulations in Jesus' own time. Second, as any committed Jew might have been, Zannoni notes that Jesus was not

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
a rabbincally trained disciple who would have drawn his teachings from a proto-Mishnah or Talmud. However, Pharisaic values were to a great extent the milieu of Palestinian Judaism of this period and, therefore, one can expect Jesus to reflect many of these teachings.  

Another way of looking at this covenantal relationship is by the parent-child concept. Hayim Perelmuter talks about Christianity and Judaism as siblings. He specifically declares that traditional knowledge shows that Judaism is the parent and that Christianity is the child. In considering the great religions of the western world, we often hear that both Christianity and Islam are described as 'daughter faiths' of Judaism. This is certainly correct on the assumption that both faiths derive from the Bible. Both Christian and Muslim vie with the Jew in claiming authentic patrimony from Abraham (Genesis 17). Yet, the three faiths have struggled with regard to different religious views. Judaism and Christianity, in particular, have expressed their approach to the Messianic destiny. But with the aid of the various covenantal concepts, the relationship and its works are expanding.

Another important example of the interpersonal relationship between Judaism and Christianity demonstrates all those who were aware that Jesus speaks at length about

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48 Zannoni, 40.

loving one's enemies (Matt. 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-28, 32-36). Zannoni talks about how this doctrine was drawn from the Hebrew Scriptures where the Jewish people were instructed to give aid to one's enemy under certain circumstances (Exodus 23:4-5; Proverbs 25:21-22). They were even taught not to rejoice when one's enemy is in trouble (Proverbs 24:17-18). Even more so, the rabbis spoke of these matters in numerous Talmudic passages. They taught the importance of loving the enemy even while hating what he does. One may hate the activity of sin, but never the sinner. The entire notion of even hating an enemy is constantly described in rabbinic sources. This is all based on the prohibition of hatred in Leviticus 19:17, and several other Levitical teachings. Constantly, one encounters the rabbinical exegesis of biblical stories in which conflict is always being reduced and in which the biblical figures are portrayed as making up with their enemies.⁵⁰

Similarly, Halakah, Jewish law, emphasizes the importance of forgiveness. Undoubtedly, the words of Jesus strongly teaches about forgiveness in the Gospels. Other supporting examples of the Gospels and the Jewish law are parallel to the teaching of almsgiving, the purifying of food before partaking, and healing on the Sabbath.

Zannoni points out how Jesus wandered through the Dead Sea area and thus came into contact with the various sectarians who were usually identified along with the Essenes. During this time, Jesus read the scrolls and imbibed the teachings of these

⁵⁰Zannoni, 41.
'proto-Christians,' left Qumran, and thus went out to teach Christianity. According to such a view, Christianity would be a copy of, or expansion on, the religion of the sect of the Dead Sea Scrolls.\[^1\] Whether theologians perceived Jesus as a Jew or, Jesus as the Christ, his doctrine and ministry has great affect on many people.

\[^1\] Zannoni, 46.
CHAPTER FOUR

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERRELIGIOUS
DIALOGUE AND CONCLUSION

Chester Gillis, a pluralist theologian at Georgetown University, offers several recommendations toward interreligious dialogue in his book, *Pluralism: A New Paradigm in Theology*. Many of these recommendations were found to be extremely helpful in fostering meaningful exchange between Jews and Christians.

Gillis notes that the rise of the pluralist hypothesis is partially the result of better knowledge of other religions, increasing dialogue between the religions, and more frequent contact between persons in the various traditions.\(^{52}\) Constructive interreligious dialogue does not only encourage and foster simple tolerance, but it aids people of various religions to understand each other’s religion. Gillis remarks that dialogue is not an end in itself but it is a primary ingredient of the contemporary theological approach.\(^{53}\)

Contemporary theology simply cannot be done adequately from a single-source vision. The very nature of theological discourse itself is affected by the dialogical exchange between and among religions. Theology for the twenty-first century must be

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\(^{53}\) Ibid.
attentive to interreligious dialogue as a resource, and interreligious dialogue must seek reliable theological insight.\textsuperscript{54}

Gillis clearly explains the process of dialogue in that it is not simply an exchange of information or an exchange of views. While dialogue is a learning experience, it is also an encounter in which an individual is willing to rethink his or her position or convictions in the light of the exchange. This, however, embraces the real challenge, and the risk of genuine dialogue. Dialogue also implies that the convictions and beliefs that individuals share are subject to a new hermeneutic whereby the exchange itself unlocks for participants to learn and understand.\textsuperscript{55} Gillis offers three important factors regarding the nature and process of dialogue:

1. Information collected from seminal writings of another tradition or from a representative member of another tradition dispels stereotypes and negates misinformation in the mind of the reader or hearer.

2. One should enter the dialogue for oneself in order to become educated, enlightened and drawn toward a fuller appreciation of the complexity of a religious enterprise.

3. The dialogue can be structured and focused, but its ultimate direction must remain open. As the dialogue unfolds, new questions and different angles will emerge. What were seemingly points of accord may no longer be. What were initially differences may not be after exposure and explanation. The dialogical process itself will help to disclose areas of similarity and difference.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{54} Gillis, 24, 25.

\textsuperscript{55} Gillis, 44, 45.

\textsuperscript{56} Gillis, 45, 46.
These procedures can be helpful to scholars of theology and pastoral leaders of Christianity and other world religions. Gillis clearly points out that dialogues designed for specialists in religion presume a certain degree of competence on the part of each participant. This competence clearly includes a thorough knowledge of one's own religious tradition: its history, doctrinal claims, structure, disputed questions, nuances, and so forth. It also generally includes some familiarity with other traditions. Such specialization and competence cannot be expected within a congregational setting in which even committed and deeply religious persons may not have a sophisticated grasp of the official theological positions of their own tradition. In fact, they may not even be acquainted with some of those positions, let alone understand their nuances. The Apostle Paul clearly instructs us in Colossians 2:7, that we should be "rooted and established in our own faith..."

Interreligious dialogue can be an interesting and productive experience, especially, when individuals both laity and pastoral, have thoroughly learned about their own faith or religion. It is necessary to note that one can become absorbed in this beautiful learning experience without forgetting their own religion. Again, we are reminded in James 1:25, 26, that:

...Whoso looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, not having become a forgetful hearer, but an effectual doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.
It is essential to simply learn and become educated in this process for better understanding. This is why the entire dialogical process is referred to as 'Interfaith Understanding.' In that connection, Professor Gillis provides meaningful suggestions on how to proceed with an interreligious dialogue on the local level:

1. It is important to determine what the objectives are for the dialogue. a) to correct misinformation and caricature; b) to disseminate correct information; c) to experience the other both as 'other' and as similar.

2. The forum for the exchange is most important. When exchange of views between the religions incorporated into their worship services, it will have a much wider impact on the community.

3. Who represents whom is important. A fairly well-informed, articulate and sincere person who understands that the dialogue process is not an opportunity for proselytization but for mutual growth, will normally be well received.

4. The opportunity for exchange of questions and ideas must be afforded to the entire assembly.

5. The dialogue should be presented in an inviting, not threatening manner.

6. A shared project/concern is a good prelude/postlude to dialogue. Joining forces with the local members of the other religious body to address one of these issues is a reasonable way to become acquainted with persons from other traditions.

7. Provide for the core who wants more. There should be an opportunity to address the theological questions which arise within the dialogue. This provision can take many forms: bibliographies, a study group, future encounters. The point is to provide something further and more substantive for these individuals so that they may become better informed and offer leadership in this area.

8. Make the dialogue the focus of an on-going commitment. It is helpful to provide reminders to one's community that it is a part of a diverse and complex universe
of religions. This objective can be achieved via preaching, newsletters and announcements concerning the activities of other traditions locally.\textsuperscript{57}

CONCLUSION

For decades, theologians have aimed to promote Jewish-Christian dialogue long before the era of the Holocaust. But more importantly, the hearts and minds of God’s people have come to a realization that these misunderstandings between Judaism and Christianity can hinder religious character and spiritual growth.

Professor Gillis talks about the process of dialogue in the university classroom. He notes that:

What can happen in the pews is already happening in the classrooms of many colleges and universities. Courses with titles such as 'Pluralism and Christian Faith,' 'Christ and Other Religions,' and 'Christianity and World Religions' are being offered in the undergraduate classrooms of many private (church affiliated and non-affiliated) and public universities in theology, religious studies and religion departments. Thus, students are being exposed to the issues that consciousness of religious pluralism raises. Most often these courses are being taught by Christian theologians who are themselves coming to terms with the position of Christian claims in the light of similar claims by the other major faith traditions.\textsuperscript{58}

As this meaningful and educational activity proceeds into the university classroom, Georgetown University professor, Rabbi Harold White is very diligent and assiduous at working with Christian and Jewish students in order to promote interreligious dialogue and interfaith understanding in and outside of the classroom. Rabbi White teaches

\textsuperscript{57} Gillis, 48-52.

\textsuperscript{58} Gillis, 53.
courses such as *Introduction to Jewish Life and Thought; The Book of Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs; Independent Studies: Jesus, The Jew; Introduction to Jewish Mysticism; and Comparative Mysticism*. William Garcia, a Catholic student and a junior in the School of Foreign Service at the University humbly commented:

Before coming to the East Coast, I only knew one Jewish family which I really cared for, but my knowledge of their beliefs was almost none. Since arriving here at Georgetown, my knowledge of Judaism has increased dramatically. I lived with two Mexicans (Catholics) and two Jews last year in an apartment on campus. This year, I am living with one of my best friends who is also Jewish.

This semester, I am taking my first course on Judaism with Rabbi White, "Introduction to Jewish Life and Thought." So far, I am enjoying the class very much. Not only am I learning more about Judaism, but I am learning how Christianity and Judaism are both similar and different. I would recommend this course for anyone with the desire to learn more about Judaism. Rabbi White does a great job in interpreting the Old Testament as he includes stories about his life experiences which only enhances the course.

Furthermore, I have attended some of the Jewish holiday festivities at the Jewish House. I have also invited some of my Jewish friends to attend Mass at Dahlgren Chapel in the past. This interaction of different religious beliefs provide Georgetown students with an opportunity to not only learn about the faith of others, but to learn more about their own faith. Lastly, I am a Catholic who was confirmed here at Georgetown University.

Another student, Samuel Gabremariam, an African-American senior in the Protestant tradition contributed his experience with interreligious dialogue in a classroom setting:

I am a Christian by faith and have studied Judaism at Georgetown. The two religions are so closely linked even if it does have differences and similarities. Studying, the Old Testament has enhanced a better understanding of the Bible and of my own religion. This course brings an academic challenge but it also lays
forth a spiritual element to the challenge that contributes to a better understanding of myself.

An additional comment was offered by Jason Haim, a Georgetown senior in the Jewish tradition:

I came from a predominantly Jewish area to a Catholic school which was quite a leap for me. At first, I felt a like an outsider in that I had to take days off for the religious holidays, explaining to one of my professors why I needed a test postponed. However, over the years since I have grown closer to my religion and faith, I've learned a tremendous amount about other beliefs, and have gained a great deal of respect for the teachings at a Jesuit university.

As the author of this thesis, I am employed at Georgetown as well as concentrating on the completion of an undergraduate degree in the Liberal Studies Program:

Courses in theological studies at Georgetown have been a challenging experience as well as an opportunity to enhance spiritual growth and development in the Christian faith. Participation in interfaith services and activities such as singing in a Diversity Choir with Muslims, Christians, and Jews has been a rewarding educational, spiritual, and cultural experience.

As a Christian, I have participated in the Mass of the Holy Spirit as well as experiencing a warm welcome to attend Shabbat Services. Occasionally, I may walk over to the St. Williams Chapel to play the piano as a part of my 'quiet-time' and reflection. A Buddhist woman quietly walked in once and I beckoned her to join me in worship. She was grateful! Every now and then, I see her on campus and we warmly embrace each other as we greet. These kinds of interfaith experiences show me that we really can be "one in the Spirit" even if our religious beliefs do differ.

As an employee in the University Chaplain's Office with Campus Ministry, I regularly participate in a luncheon gathering with the women in Campus Ministry who are of other faiths. We have prayer, fellowship, and sharing of our experiences. All of these various interfaith activities have been enlightening and
have allowed me to have an openness of heart and mind to actually see the circle of God’s love operating through all people.

In addition to interreligious dialogue in and outside of the classroom, interfaith services for Jews and Christians are held throughout the academic year as Rabbi White bonds this new outlook with the Prayer Temple Church in Southeast Washington, D.C. The activities consist of two programs held per year. During the Fall, students from Georgetown University attend Prayer Temple for a service and dinner while Rabbi White preaches and the Gospel choir sings. During the Spring, Prayer Temple comes to Georgetown University for a Friday evening service followed by dinner. Members of Prayer Temple serve as ushers at the High Holy Day services.

As Professor Gillis has laid the necessary procedures for proficient dialogue between the religions, laity and pastoral leaders will find these guidelines useful to enhance spiritual growth and development in their community. We can see how the previous prominent theologians, whether Christian or Jewish, have taken time to rethink their own religious tradition. They have sought various ways, through research, in order to look at the concepts of single and double covenant theology in hopes to unfold a bond of proficient communication and fellowship between these two families.

The relation of covenant to Jewish-Christian dialogue is constantly growing. Although there are still some debatable issues between Christianity and the world religions, there are also many who continue to seek better ways to make dialogue more accessible as they approach the twenty-first century.
When Christians, Jews, and people of other faiths come together to educate one another, it is necessary to be mindful that the world is wounded and that the continuity of preaching love and peace is strongly needed. Therefore, we must "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith God has called us, with all lowliness, meekness, and longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3).

Finally, an interesting thought came to mind to share prayerfully from The Midrash, a folkloristic biblical exegesis:

*Abraham's house was open to all the children of men, those going past and those returning, and day by day they came to eat and drink with Abraham. To those who were hungry he gave bread, and the guests ate and drank and were filled. Those who came naked to his house he clothed, and helped them to experience God, the creator of all things.*
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