Remembering the Covenant: Judaism in an Anglican Theology of Interfaith Relations

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Christian–Jewish relations are widely recognized to be distinctive within the wider field of interfaith relations, but the nature of that distinctiveness is contested. A variety of paradigms are held among Anglicans; the Church of England document Sharing One Hope? *(2001) maps out four of these. Contemporary consideration of these relations is increasingly dominated by the issue of attitudes toward the State of Israel. The complexity of Anglican history in this area means that there are three significant strands of thinking on this within the Anglican tradition: the "Messianic," the "Jewish solidarity," and the "Palestinian solidarity." This essay suggests that the theme of a "sacrament of otherness" is a fruitful interpretive key to understanding Christian–Jewish relations today.*

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, as other contributions to this volume make clear, there has been a significant movement of theological reflection among Anglicans on the questions raised by Christian encounter with other faith communities. Within this wide arena of interfaith relations, it is natural to ask whether Anglican theology treats Christian–Jewish relations as a special case.

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1. Distinctiveness and Christian–Jewish Relations

There is one obviously affirmative answer to that question, in that every relationship between Christians and people of another given faith will be special, uniquely shaped by the particular themes which arise in encounter with that faith. Theological reflection will in each case address those particular themes. However, in the case of Christian–Jewish relations, there may be more than this at stake; the question is really about "special specialness": is there for Anglicans some qualitative difference between Christian–Jewish relations and other interfaith relations? If there is, in what does that distinctiveness consist?

Note that I have framed the question here in terms of a special theological quality in Christian–Jewish relations, rather than a special theological quality in Judaism as such. In this respect, I am following the language of the document *Generous Love* presented to the 2008 Lambeth Conference.[1] *Generous Love* described itself as "an Anglican theology of inter faith relations," not as "an Anglican theology of other faiths." The point might at first appear pedantic, but it is potentially significant: a view of Christian–Jewish relations as qualitatively distinctive from other interfaith relations might indeed rest on a view of Judaism as qualitatively distinctive from other faiths, but it might also refrain from making such an evaluation; it does not seem that there is an immediately necessary implication from one to the other.

Within the wider world of Christian theology, it is apparent that at least two different kinds of "distinctiveness" for Christian–Jewish relations are offered for consideration. One of these reads from the Bible a teaching that the Jewish people have been given a wholly exceptional status before God, and deduces from that principle that Christian–Jewish relations are also wholly exceptional as compared to other interfaith relations. Christians and Jews each have a distinctive place within the dispensations of God's plan for the world, and it is the asymmetry of those dispensations which mandate how Christian–Jewish relations should be conducted in practice. This view of a distinctive relationship does in fact rest on a view of the religion of the Jewish people as qualitatively distinctive, literally *sui generis.* Thus, whereas all other non-Christian religions are human constructs,

[1] Anglican Communion Network for Inter Faith Concerns, *Generous Love: The Truth of the Gospel and the Call to Dialogue—An Anglican Theology of Inter Faith Relations* (London: Anglican Consultative Council, 2008).

more or less false in their assumptions and misguided in their aims, the religion of Israel is—or was—built on true revelation from God, as testified by the Bible. As the ambiguity of tenses suggests, among Christians who share this approach there are then different opinions over the relationship between contemporary Judaism and this originally authentic religion of Israel, and those differences in turn lead to different views of Christian–Jewish relations. For some Christians, the Israel of today is in essence the same Israel that was once and is still chosen by God; the Jewish people, and by implication Judaism itself as their religion, continue to have a uniquely favored position in the divine purpose. For others, all this has changed since the coming of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The contemporary Jewish people no longer hold a particular place in God's favor, and such distinctiveness as Judaism has is a function rather of its uniquely abrogated status than of its continuing validity. Thus, the same overall premise of "exceptional distinctiveness" can lead to radically different views of Christian–Jewish relations, and of Judaism itself: to use common slogans which require further interrogation, it can support both "supersessionism" and "dispensationalism."

A rather different account of distinctiveness can be found in the contemporary teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, at least from the time of the Second Vatican Council. Here too, Christian–Jewish relations are qualitatively distinctive, but they are not thereby wholly divorced from relations with all other faiths. The theological distinctiveness is expounded in the Council's 1965 declaration *Nostra Aetate*, which in addressing Christian–Jewish relations affirmed that it was "sounding the depths of the mystery which is the Church."[2] It is also significant that the practical development of the leads given in *Nostra Aetate* was entrusted to the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, which is organizationally part of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, not of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue. In other words, the Commission's primary point of reference is in Christian ecumenism rather than in wider interfaith relations. On the other hand, the text of *Nostra Aetate* itself moved from an initial draft focused entirely on the topic *De Judaeis* to become a statement speaking also about relations with Muslims, and more widely with Hindus, Buddhists, and other religions. This

[2] Vatican II, "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*" (1965), §4.

expansion of the text was at one level governed by political factors, but underpinning the process there can be discerned a theology which sees the distinctiveness of Christian–Jewish relations as being in some sense paradigmatic for all other interfaith relations: the church's primary relation to the Jewish other is to shape its relation to all religious others in a multifaith world.[3] This has been eloquently expressed by Cardinal Walter Kasper, in an evocative phrase to which I shall return later: "Judaism is as a sacrament of every otherness that as such the Church must learn to discern, recognize and celebrate."[4]

How would an Anglican theology of interfaith relations position itself on the question of the distinctiveness of Christian–Jewish relations, bearing in mind these two types of distinctiveness? My contention is that, insofar as an authoritative shape of Anglican theological teaching can be recognized and articulated in this area, it has on the whole shifted from the first type to the second, from "exceptional distinctiveness" to "paradigmatic distinctiveness." The "insofar" is an important qualification, for discerning the theological position of Anglicanism on this, as on many other issues, is not a matter of simply locating and expounding a definitive piece of teaching. Rather, it is a question of gathering and interpreting elements scattered among church reports, conference resolutions, liturgical prayers, and the writings of individual theologians whose views command respect; together these can be taken to provide evidence of the thinking of "Anglicanism" as a whole. In fact, they generally provide evidence of several different strands of thinking, and there is then a further task of assessing the relative weight of each strand. This clearly involves a major exercise of discernment; in this short paper I will necessarily be very selective in the evidence I can consider.

2. "Deutero-Augustinian" Patterns of Theology

Generous Love quotes at one point a document from an earlier Lambeth Conference, *Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue* (1988), which asserts that "a right understanding of the

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[3] Alberto Melloni, "*Nostra Aetate* and the Discovery of the Sacrament of Otherness," in Philip A. Cunningham, Norbert J. Hofman, SDB, and Joseph Sievers, eds., *The Catholic Church and the Jewish People: Recent Reflections from Rome* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 150–151.

[4] Walter Cardinal Kasper, "Address on the 37th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*" (October 28, 2002); http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/kasper/650-wk02oct28.

relationship with Judaism is . . . fundamental to Christianity's own self-understanding"[5] and adds that we must "reject any view of Judaism which sees it as a living fossil, simply superseded by Christianity."[6] The Swedish theologian Jesper Svartvik has described such a position as "deutero-Augustinian,"[7] meaning thereby that like St. Augustine it sees theological significance in the continued existence of Jewish life in the world after Christ. For Augustine, the more immediate question was that of the continued toleration of the Jewish people in an empire which had become legally Christian.[8] Unlike pagans or heretics, Augustine argued that the Roman authorities should safeguard the continuance of Jewish life; one specific reason for this is shown by his description of the Jews of his time as *librarii nostri* ("our scribes")[9] and *custodes librorum nostrorum* ("our librarians")[10] —they were in some sense stewards of the revelation of the God of Israel.

However, that Christians should in this way see theological significance in Jewish people *post Christum* does not in itself imply a "right understanding of the relationship with Judaism," as the always contested and often poisonous history of Christian–Jewish interaction shows.[11] Augustine's own view was that contemporary Jewish misery was an encouraging proof to Christians of the truth of the gospel, since it was for him clearly a divine punishment for their rejection of the Messiah. Similarly, six hundred years later St. Bernard of Clairvaux argued strongly that Jews should not be killed, but did so on

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[5] *Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue,* Appendix 6, §13, in *The Truth Shall Make You Free: The Lambeth Conference 1988, The Reports, Resolutions and Pastoral Letters from the Bishops* (London: Anglican Consultative Council, 1988), 302.

[6] *The Way of Dialogue,* §16.

[7] Jesper Svartvik, "Christological and Soteriological Reflections in the Wake of Half a Century of Intense and Improved Jewish–Christian Relations," *Current Dialogue* 44 (December 2004); http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd44-12.html.

[8] On the Augustinian tradition see Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1999).

[9] Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 56.9, CCSL 39:700.

[10] Augustine, *Sermo* 5.5, CCSL 41:56.

[11] For a detailed and careful study of the tradition, which traces the interaction of Christian attitudes to Jewish people and the development of Christian theology in the medieval period in particular, see Jeremy F. Worthen, *The Internal Foe: Judaism and Anti-Judaism in the Shaping of Christian Theology* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009).

the ground that "they are living tokens to us, constantly recalling our Lord's passion."[12] It is easy to see how this Christian *adversus Judaeos* tradition, while on the one hand preserved a Jewish presence in Christian Europe, also on the other hand shaped the "teaching of contempt" (*enseignement du mépris*), which was identified by the French historian Jules Isaac as running through much of Christian history. This ancient teaching of disparagement in turn shaped the conditions, and provided much of the imagery, which made possible the rise of that modern European anti-Semitism which culminated in the Holocaust, albeit the latter was on one level a negation of the principle of preservation implied by the older Christian anti-Judaism.

The Second Vatican Council categorically rejected the teachings and practices of both anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism: "The Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed. . . . Indeed, the church reproves every form of persecution against whomsoever it may be directed. . . . It deplores all hatreds, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time or from any source."[13] Together with other churches, Anglicans have followed this lead in repudiating the poisonous heritage of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, as *The Way of Dialogue* and *Generous Love* both show. But if a negative account of Israel is rightly judged to be unacceptable, how now can Augustine's project be realized, of seeing theological significance in the Jewish people and in Judaism *post Christum*? Svartvik proposes a move from seeing Jews as *librarii nostri*, keepers of a deposit of truth which they misunderstand, to recognizing them as *sacramentum nostrum*, a God-given means of grace in their life alongside us.[14] This of course echoes Cardinal Kasper's description of Judaism as a "sacrament of otherness." How convincing an approach is this, and how does it relate to Anglican thought and practice?

Anglican theological method generally begins with the attempt to understand and interpret for our times that which is given in the Bible. Here, an obvious starting point for Christians reflecting on the continuing significance of Israel is to be found in St. Paul's intense, and intensely personal, writing in Romans 9–11. In these chapters, Paul brings together a number of passionately held convictions which

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[12] Bernard, *Epistles,* 363. On Bernard's ambiguous attitude to the Jews, see David Berger, "The Attitude of St. Bernard of Clairvaux toward the Jews," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 40 (1972): 89–108.

[13] *Nostra Aetate,* §4.

[14] Svartvik, "Christological and Soteriological Reflections."

on the face of it are extremely difficult to harmonize: the newness, gratuity, and reality of the life offered to believers in the Christ event (10:4) together with the continuing vitality of Jewish life in quest of God (10:2); the universality of the gospel offered to all (10:12) together with the particularity of the covenant made with the Jews (9:4); the failure of all human beings, Jews or Gentiles, before God (11:32) together with Paul's deepest and most recurrent theme, the unchanging faithfulness of God in his self-revelation (9:6, 9:11, 9:14, 11:1, 11:30). A huge amount of interpretative energy has over the years been expended in the effort to clarify exactly what Paul's theology of Israel is in Romans 9–11, yet there are still major disagreements among scholars. The apostle's writing in these chapters is intricately dialectical, expressive of a personal anguish which in some passages gives it an almost tortured feel, and which issues in statements of intense paradox: "Just as you [Gentiles] were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, so they [Jews] have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy" (11:30–31).

It seems clear that the complexity and strangeness of a verse like that simply cannot be ironed out, harmonized with other verses to produce a systematic account of Paul's theology. The apostle is wrestling at every level, from personal biography through the life of the nascent Christian community, up to the divine purpose for Israel, with the challenge of reconciling his own identity before God with a recognition of the other (or, rather, of that which has become other to him), and doing so in a situation where knowledge of God comes through that other. He is looking for a way of speaking of the other which avoids total separation yet does not fall into easy assimilation.

If relationship with this other is of key importance for Christians in God's purposes, it is perhaps in this sense that we can interpret Kasper's description of Judaism as a "sacrament of otherness" at the outset of the church's life. A sacrament is, in Anglican understanding, a divinely established sign that reliably conveys to believers the grace and life of God.[15] To speak of the Jewish people in the language of "sacrament" is thus at the very least to say that encounter with them can be for Christians a source of blessing, a way of being called back

[15] The Church of England's *Catechism* included in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, using language deriving from St. Augustine, defines a sacrament as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given to us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof."

to holiness. The suggestion that Christian–Jewish relations constitute a sacrament for Christians, though, is claiming more than the simple possibility that grace can be mediated through this encounter, for a sacrament has about it the further character of reliability based on God's pledge. It is an assured sign of grace set within a relationship of promise on God's part and of response on ours; that is to say, it is theologically located within the covenant God has made with his people. *Generous Love* stresses the generosity of God's grace, which by the work of the Spirit can engage Christians through encounters with people of any faith and in quite unexpected places,[16] but to speak of a "sacrament of otherness" is to claim something more than this. It is to claim that, under some conditions at least, encounter with the contemporary reality of the Jewish people can be confidently relied on to be a means of God's grace to us through the vehicle of the Jewish "other." Is this a plausible theological claim for Anglicans to make?

3. Counting Covenants

Given the grounding of sacramentality in a framework of covenant, it is necessary first to ask about Anglican understandings of the theological placement of the Jewish people with respect to the new covenant established in Jesus Christ. There is considerable diversity of view, and no little dispute, among Christians on this question, and that diversity and dispute are certainly evident among Anglicans. This can be illustrated from a report produced in 2001 by the Church of England's Inter Faith Consultative Group with the title *Sharing One Hope?*[17] Subtitled "a contribution to a continuing debate," the report sought to map out various issues in the area of Christian–Jewish relations on which English Anglicans were agreed, and various issues on which they were not agreed—which the report rather optimistically described as "areas of continuing debate." In a preface to the report, the then Bishop of Southwark, Tom Butler, remarked, with a measure of understatement: "Given the strength and diversity of feeling aroused by the issues with which it deals, this document has not been easy to write."[18] Among those issues was precisely the question addressed by this paper, that of the theological status of the relationship

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[16] *Generous Love*, 11.

[17] Inter Faith Consultative Group, *Sharing One Hope? The Church of England and Christian–Jewish Relations: A Contribution to a Continuing Debate* (London: Church House Publishing, 2001).

[18] *Sharing One Hope?*, v.

between Christianity and Judaism. *Sharing One Hope?* outlined four identifiable positions held by Anglicans on this, and it explicitly rejected the first of these.

Thus, the report stated that there was now agreement among Anglicans on the unacceptability of "replacement theology." This is a contested term, variously defined, and sometimes also referred to as "supersessionism." *Sharing One Hope?* defined it as "the theory that the Christian Church has simply superseded or replaced the Jewish people, who no longer have any special place in God's calling."[19] This would appear to imply a rejection of the view that Christian–Jewish relations have no distinctiveness at all; the positions repudiated would also include the "negative exceptionalism" of the *adversos Judaeos* tradition described above as being exemplified by Augustine and Bernard.[20] The report argues that teaching of this kind must be rejected because of the disastrous consequences to which it has led historically through the *enseignement du mépris*, because it does not recognize the contemporary vitality of Judaism, because it fails to do justice exegetically to the complexity of St. Paul's witness in Romans 9–11, and because its theology denies the fundamental principle of the unchanging faithfulness of God: the first covenant cannot be regarded as having been simply annulled, as that would implicate God in a lack of constancy to his promises.

Having ruled out replacement theology, *Sharing One Hope?* goes on to describe two further views, in both of which the idea of covenant is central; the two differ as to how many covenants there are in God's purposes.[21] The second position is a "one covenant" model, which draws on Paul's language of the "grafting in" of a wild olive tree into the root of a cultivated olive tree (Rom. 11:17–24) to insist that a single covenant has been established with the people of God, in which Christians are enabled to share through the work of Christ. A "one covenant" approach is adopted by many theologians, including Archbishop Rowan Williams.[22] It is a position which places at its center the principle of God's unchanging fidelity, and it is perhaps within an

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[19] *Sharing One Hope?*, 20.

[20] On the ambiguities and limitations of "supersessionism" as applied to traditional Christian anti-Judaic teaching, see Worthen, *The Internal Foe.*

[21] *Sharing One Hope?*, 23, citing John Pawlikowski, *Christ in the Light of the Jewish–Christian Dialogue* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1982).

[22] Archbishop Rowan Williams's paper for the Fifth International Sabeel Conference, "Holy Land and Holy People" (April 14, 2004), includes a characteristically nuanced one-covenant approach.

approach like this that the idea of encounter with the Jewish people as a "sacrament of otherness" has the most coherence.

A different view, the third identified in *Sharing One Hope?,* speaks of Judaism and Christianity, not as sharing in one covenant, but rather as engaged in two separate, parallel, in some sense complementary, covenants. This idea was promoted, for example, by James Parkes, one of the pioneers of Anglican involvement in Christian–Jewish relations, and has been developed by John Pawlikowski. Parkes saw in the two religions two equally valid expressions of the mercy and faithfulness of God: on the one hand, the covenant at Sinai, communally oriented, with a focus on the life of the people as a whole, and on the other hand the covenant given by Christ, with a personal focus, inviting individuals into a relationship which would transcend the boundaries of time and space. *Generous Love* at one point remarks that the work of the Spirit is understood in Anglican theology as integrating and balancing both the cultivation of "inwardness" and the flourishing of social life. Drawing on Parkes's theory, it could be argued that on this view an encounter with Jewish life could have a particular function in calling excessively interiorized Christians back to the fullness of their faith expressed in community. In that sense, a "two covenant" model too might allow space for a view of Christian–Jewish relations as "sacramental."

The fourth and final view of Christian–Jewish relations described in *Sharing One Hope?* eschews the language of covenant, on the grounds either that this is not a centrally important motif in one or in both religions, or that its meaning is different between the two. Rather, it chooses to stress and to value the differences and incommensurability between Judaism and Christianity. This is, for example, the position adopted with some trenchancy by Jacob Neusner, who describes the two traditions as "completely different religions, not different versions of one religion. . . . Different people talking about different things to different people."[23] From a perspective like this, there appears to be no scope for speaking of encounter with the Jewish reality as in any sense sacramental for Christians; Neusner's emphasis on radical difference leaves indeed no shared theological framework in which a perception of sacramentality could be set. Judaism and

[23] Jacob Neusner, *Jews and Christians: The Myth of a Common Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 1991), cited in *Sharing One Hope?*, 24.

Christianity are in principle left with no more in common than any other two faiths.

This can in one sense be seen as a loss, but it may also include a salutary element of correction to a tendency to assimilate the otherness of Judaism too easily into a Christian understanding. The language of the sacramental, after all, is Christian language; while it is entirely right for Christians to use it when they reflect on the effect of encounter with the Jewish "other" on their own discipleship, they must not abuse it by evacuating the human reality of that other, instrumentalizing it to be nothing more than a sign to bring blessing to Christians. What is of significance theologically is in fact the indomitable persistence of the Jewish people after the Christian revelation, their very defiance of pressure to reduce them into conformity with Christian categories.

This is perhaps the paradox which is incorporated into Kasper's memorable phrase "sacrament of otherness." Jewish people by the very continuity and vitality of their existence defy all attempts to reduce them into mere bearers of Christian meaning, to accommodate them too comfortably within a Christian universe of discourse; and it is precisely through this irreducibility that they are a blessing to the church. Michael Barnes, drawing on the "heterology" of Michel de Certeau, expresses the point thus: "The Jewish other is always returning, always present, 'haunting' the space carved out by the dominant Christian 'same'."[24] Barnes goes on to argue that there is then a wider application for Christians in interfaith relations of this "return of the Jewish other," since it is in remembering and revisiting this first encounter with irreducible difference that the church is equipped to engage with every other form of the human other before God. However, this engagement is no straightforward matter, and it cannot be separated from the socio-political realities within which the Jewish other returns. In order to grasp some sense of the distinctiveness of Christian–Jewish relations in Anglican thought and practice, then, it is necessary to ask briefly how Anglicans have related historically, and relate today, to those realities.

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[24] Michael Barnes SJ, *Theology and the Dialogue of Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 62, referring to Michel de Certeau SJ, *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

4. Anglicans and the Return of Israel

The continuing "return" of Judaism to the contemporary church, with all its theological significance, is in fact embodied in several different socio-political contexts. Each of these is different and creates its own dynamic of interaction, but there are also close interrelations and cross-influences between the different contexts. Three in particular must be mentioned. The first arises from the presence of diverse and vibrant Jewish communities alongside Christians in several Western countries and beyond, some of them with histories as long as that of the church. While these communities form small minorities, they often show a marked willingness to engage with other groups in seeking the common good of their societies as a whole. The 1988 Lambeth text *Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue*, drawing on the Jewish idea of *tikkun olam* ("restoring the world"), even suggested that there could be a "mission to the world" shared by Christians and Jews in promoting the values of the kingdom of God.[25] More broadly, *Generous Love* points out the opportunities for Christians and Jews to share with people of all faiths in "the Holy Spirit's mission of restoration and renewal" as they "work in partnership for the common good of peace, justice and the integrity of creation."[26] At the same time, the destructive force of anti-Semitism is by no means spent in Western societies; indeed, the impact of the Middle Eastern conflict has in some cases stirred up its latent power. Dialogue and cooperation in Western societies cannot be insulated from the issue of Israel/Palestine.

A second setting, where Barnes and de Certeau's language of "haunting" is especially apposite, is constituted by the absence in many places of once flourishing Jewish communities, particularly as a result of the Holocaust, but also through subsequent Jewish migration to Israel and elsewhere. Ruth Ellen Gruber, in her fine study *Virtually Jewish*, has spoken of the "Jewish space" in many Central and Eastern European countries which has been created by this absence. She describes some of the ways in which this space is being filled, often by Gentiles with a more or less informed enthusiasm for Jewish culture, life, and spirituality.[27] The intensity of the vacuum left, for

[25] *The Way of Dialogue*, §15.

[26] *Generous Love*, 11.

[27] Ruth Ellen Gruber, *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002).

example, by the Holocaust in the Polish city of Krakow is captured by the émigré Polish writer Rafael Scharf in these words: "'There is a multitude of them—nowhere' says Jerzy Ficowski. That crowded, eternal absence is far more tangible here than anywhere else in the world."[28] To visit the spaces left by vanished Jewish communities is a profoundly moving experience, not only in terms of human story, but at the level of the Spirit also. Even in those places where Jewish life has gone, the traces it leaves are sometimes so powerful that they can mediate the reality of that specific otherness through which there is encounter with the Holy One of Israel. This encounter through absence, moreover, is no wistful melancholia; the traces of the Holocaust impel Christians to remember, and through remembering to commit themselves to ensuring that its destructive force is never again repeated in any genocide. It is for this reason that Archbishop Rowan Williams has spoken of the observance of the United Kingdom's Holocaust Memorial Day as a "foundation for an enduring legacy of hope."[29]

However, the most challenging "return of Israel" for Christians today is neither in the presence of the diaspora communities nor in their absence, but in the current political reality of the Jewish state. It is here that theologically significant reality achieves political actuality, and in so doing poses real challenges for Christians of all kinds, not least for Anglicans—perhaps particularly for Anglicans, given the complexity of the history which implicates them in this issue.[30] As with many dimensions of Anglican life, that history can only be understood by recognizing that it involves a number of different strands of interaction between Christians and Jews. Three in particular can be characterized, roughly in the order in which they successively came to

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[28] Rafael F. Scharf, "Cracow of Blessed Memory," in Rafael F. Scharf, *Poland, What Have I to Do with Thee . . . Essays without Prejudice* (Kraków: Fundacja Judaica, 1999), 73. Jerzy Ficowski (1924–2006) was a distinguished Polish poet and wartime resistance fighter, much of whose writing focuses on the experiences of the gypsy and Jewish communities. The quotation by Scharf is taken from Ficowski's *A Reading of Ashes* (1979).

[29] Archbishop's Holocaust Memorial Day Statement 2010: "The Legacy of Hope"; http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/937/archbishops-holocaust-memorial-day-statement-2010-the-legacy-of-hope. The theme of hope also appears in the Archbishop's HMD Statements for 2008 and 2012.

[30] See, in more detail, the report of the Anglican Communion's Network for Inter Faith Concerns, *Land of Promise?: An Anglican Exploration of Christian Attitudes to the Holy Land, with Special Reference to "Christian Zionism"* (London: Anglican Consultative Council, 2012).

prominence, as respectively the "Messianic," the "Jewish solidarity," and the "Palestinian solidarity" strands.

Although the readmission of the Jews to England in 1656 owed something to Messianic speculation, it was in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that Christian Zionism really became prominent in Britain, with a growth in the belief that the coming of the Messiah was linked to the conversion of the Jews and their restoration to the promised land of Israel. The London Jews Society, founded in 1809 as an interdenominational society but by 1815 reconstituted in purely Anglican terms, was from the beginning committed to the twin goals of evangelizing and restoration, and in 1841 a joint scheme for a Protestant Bishopric in Jerusalem was realized with the Prussian political and ecclesiastical authorities. The first bishop, Michael Solomon Alexander, was a converted rabbi, and his charge was primarily to conduct mission among the small Jewish community in the city, at the same time encouraging the return of diaspora Jews there. Contemporary evangelicals enthusiastically hailed this as the "restoration" of the apostolic Hebrew Christian church in Jerusalem, suppressed since the first Christian century, and looked eagerly to the beginning of the Messianic age. Bishop Alexander died in 1845, and under his successor there was a marked change in the direction of Jerusalem Anglicanism overall. The London Jews Society, however, continued at Christ Church, Jerusalem, subsequently becoming the Church's Mission to the Jews, and now the Church's Ministry among Jewish People. This Messianic strand still plays a part in Anglican life, with its emphasis now generally on the importance for Christians of valuing the witness of Jewish believers in Jesus.

A second strand increasingly marking the Church of England during the latter part of the twentieth century emphasizes a sense of solidarity with Jewish people, irrespective of any commitment from them to belief in Christ, and largely unconnected with any eschatological expectation associated with their dispersal or restoration. This was given profound, sometimes extreme, articulation by the scholar James Parkes, who combined a rather eccentric reputation with a close friendship with Archbishop William Temple and other mid-century Anglican leaders. It found its first organizational expression in the formation of the Council of Christians and Jews in 1942 as a joint venture of the Archbishop and the Chief Rabbi. Following the effective endorsement of the teaching of *Nostra Aetate* by the 1988

Lambeth Conference, there is an emphasis on the importance of positive Christian–Jewish relations which draws on the ecumenical consensus of the last fifty years in this area. Recognizing that some sense of solidarity with the State of Israel is an important dimension of communal life for most Jewish people today, this strand has increasingly become involved with the situation in the Middle East also. This was demonstrated, for example, in the Joint Declaration made by Archbishop Rowan Williams and the two Chief Rabbis of Israel in September 2006, which affirmed that "a relationship between our communities, nationally and internationally, has grown from the steady work of encounter, discussion, reflection and reconciliation," and which established the work of a continuing Anglican–Jewish Commission.[31]

A third strand affecting Anglican's relations with Israel has been the sense of solidarity with Palestinian people. This has become an increasingly significant influence in recent years, both with a heightened awareness in British society of the sufferings of the Palestinian people, and with the growing involvement of Anglicans around the world with Muslim communities, who will often raise the question of Israel/Palestine as an issue in interfaith dialogue. However, its most persuasive force arises from a sense of solidarity with Anglican Christians in the Holy Land, who are overwhelmingly of Palestinian Arab background and generally strongly pro-Palestinian in their political orientation. In 1887 the Jerusalem see was reconstituted as a purely Anglican bishopric, and the new bishop George Blyth was entrusted with an ambassadorial role to build good relations with Orthodox Christian Arabs. This inevitably led to tension between the increasingly high church, Arab-oriented diocese and the low church, Jewish-oriented Christ Church, leading eventually to the construction of a new cathedral, St. George's. This polarity has continued to the present day; it can perhaps be seen positively as an important instance of the Anglican vocation to hold together difference in tension. Whereas Christ Church remains in many ways an exemplar of the first, "Messianic" approach to Jewish people, for Palestinian Christians living under a Jewish state the traditional dynamic of Christian–Jewish

[31] "Archbishop and Chief Rabbis Sign Historic Agreement," September 5, 2006; http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/1273/archbishop-and-chief-rabbis-sign-historic-agreement.

encounter is in some ways reversed, as they recognize themselves to be a small group living under difficult and precarious conditions, in a society which is both shaped by Judaism and profoundly secular.

It is the interplay and occasional confrontation of these three strands—Zionist, Jewish solidarity, and Palestinian solidarity—which shape Anglican attitudes to Israel today, and these political realities cannot be wholly divorced from theological principles. "Palestinian solidarity," for example, can at times turn to a kind of replacement theology to deny any Jewish claim on the land; Zionist Christians may either adopt a dispensationalist version of the "two covenants" theory or may stress the Christian dependence on Israel by being grafted into the one covenant; the "Jewish solidarity" strand draws support from both one and two covenant models, and from the "different religions" approach. There is a real challenge for Anglicans, shaped as they are by such different traditions and contexts, to establish some patterns of coherence in their theological approach to Christian–Jewish relations. One way of attempting this has been to identify: (1) positions for which there is a consensus of support among Anglicans; (2) positions which by general agreement are seen to lie outside the scope of acceptable Anglican theology; and (3) issues on which it is recognized that there is a genuine and legitimate diversity of opinion, and on which continuing debate is encouraged.[32]

5. Remembering the Covenant

Christian–Jewish relations will always have a profile disproportionate to the actual size of the Jewish community, and this is a consequence of the recurrent and unavoidable centrality of this particular encounter for any Christian engagement with people of other religions. It is no historical accident that at the Second Vatican Council the declaration *Nostra Aetate* began as a text addressing the church's relation with Judaism only, and subsequently grew to engage with Islam and other faith traditions also. A similar textual evolution at the Lambeth Conference 1988 broadened an originally Christian–Jewish document to include reference to Muslims also.[33] Among Anglicans

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[32] This methodology is followed, for example, in both the 2001 Church of England report *Sharing One Hope?* and in the 2012 Anglican Communion document *Land of Promise?*

[33] *Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue* did not extend to other faiths, however. For a treatment of the relationship between the two texts, see Mi-

as among Roman Catholics, there can be discerned here a deep theological connection, which in encounter with every religious other will always find an evocation of the first experience of otherness in the church's life, that between Gentile and Jew. As Paul's writings most notably show, a passionate wrestling with this division is inscribed in the New Testament, and through that is encoded in Christian ways of thinking, to emerge with a shaping role in any encounter with the religious other.

Most of all, as Judaism and the Jewish people throughout the church's history have refused to go away, their continuing vitality has posed a challenge to Christians who want a tidy solution to the problem of religious plurality. To quote Michael Barnes again: "If there is a 'first moment' in a Christian theology of religions, it arises from the strictly anarchic otherness to which the living tradition of Judaism witnesses; in faithfulness to that trace of the Infinite, Judaism continues to 'haunt' the process of Christian self-identification."[34] It is precisely because of the formative nature of this primal division within the people of God, this first Christian encounter with an "other," that the significance of Christian encounter with the Jewish reality is not limited to one part of interfaith relations. To the contrary, any serious engagement with a religious other will drive us theologically to revisit the first covenant in which the Jewish other shapes our Christian identity in relation to God. Recognizing that there is a paradigmatic distinctiveness to Christian–Jewish relations, Anglicans can indeed make their own the words of Cardinal Kasper: "Judaism is as a sacrament of every otherness that as such the Church must learn to discern, recognize and celebrate."[35]

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chael Ipgrave, "Understanding, Affirmation, Sharing: *Nostra Aetate* and an Anglican Approach to Inter-Faith Relations," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 43, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 1–16.

[34] Barnes, *Theology and the Dialogue of Religions*, 128.

[35] Kasper, "Address on the 37th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*."