

REVISITING VATICAN II'S THEOLOGY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD AFTER FORTY-FIVE YEARS OF CATHOLIC-JEWISH DIALOGUE

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Lumen gentium described biblical Israel as a preparation and figure of the church, the new people of God. Jews do not belong to this people but are ordained to it. In light of Nostra aetate and the ensuing Catholic-Jewish dialogue, the article supplements Lumen gentium's typological account of biblical Israel as a prefiguration of the church with an eschatological theology of Christians and Jews as a broken people who nonetheless remain covenant partners in pilgrimage to the mountain of the Lord.

In the days to come, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest mountain and raised above the hills. All nations shall stream toward it; many peoples shall come and say: "Come," let us climb the Lord's mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may instruct us in his way, and we may walk in his paths" (Isa 2:2–3, NAB).

ISAIAH'S PROPHECY OF A DAY when all people of the earth shall worship the Lord and dwell in peace has inspired the eschatologies of both Jews and Christians. Within Christian eschatological visions, the place granted to Jews has varied. In the second century, Justin Martyr cited Isaiah's words in the context of his *Dialogue with Trypho*, in which he took the position that the old covenant is abrogated by the advent of the new law of Jesus Christ and that Christians are the true people Israel.¹ Nearly two

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¹ *Justini Martyris Dialogus cum Tryphone*, ed. Miroslav Marcovich (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997) 24.3; 11.2; 135.3; E.T., *St. Justin Martyr: Dialogue with*

millennia later, the Second Vatican Council proclaimed Isaiah's words of peace to a world shadowed by the threat of nuclear war² and affirmed that the Jews remain very dear to God, who does not repent of gifts bestowed (Rom 11:28–20).³ The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*) described biblical Israel as a people chosen to prepare and prefigure the new and perfect covenant given through the Word of God made flesh in Jesus Christ, who called together a new people of God (no. 9). According to *Lumen gentium*, the Jews do not belong to this people but are ordained to it (*ordinantur ad*) (no. 16).

In this article, I first offer a historical perspective on Vatican II's approach to Catholic-Jewish relations by considering the origins of both *Nostra aetate*'s statement on the Jewish people and *Lumen gentium*'s theology of the people of God. Particular attention is given to the contribution of Yves Congar, a leading conciliar *peritus* who had great expertise in ecclesiology but limited experience with Judaism. The second part of the article discusses the postconciliar development of the Catholic Church's first sustained dialogue with postbiblical rabbinic Judaism. Fruits of this dialogue include the affirmation that Jews and Christians share in the covenantal life of the God of Israel, remorse for the sins of Christians against the Jewish people, appreciation for the ongoing spiritual vitality of rabbinic Judaism, and a reconsideration of dichotomous theologies of Christian-Jewish relations. In light of these developments, the article supplements *Lumen gentium*'s typological theology of the relation between biblical Israel and the Christian church with an eschatological theology of Jews and Christians as a broken people who nonetheless remain covenant partners in pilgrimage to the mountain of the Lord.

THE ORIGINS OF *NOSTRA AETATE*'S THEOLOGY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

When Archbishop Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli served as the apostolic delegate to Turkey and Greece from 1935–1944, he helped Jews obtain visas for Palestine to spare them deportation to Nazi concentration camps.⁴ In 1959, as the newly elected Pope John XXIII, he excised the term *perfidis* from the Solemn Intercession of the Good Friday liturgy that had exhorted,

Trypho, Selections from the Fathers of the Church, vol. 3, trans. Thomas B. Falls, ed. Michael Slusser (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2003).

² *Guadium et spes* no. 78 (citation of Isa 2:4).

³ *Nostra aetate* no. 4.

⁴ See Peter Hebblethwaite, *Pope John XXIII: Shepherd of the Modern World* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985) 186–96.

"Oremus et pro perfidis Judaeis."⁵ Nonetheless, when John XXIII convened Vatican II, the relation of the Catholic Church and the Jewish people was not part of the original agenda. In the 15 volumes of conciliar *vota et desideria* solicited from bishops, superiors general, Catholic universities, Bible institutes, and Roman curial congregations, one finds scant references to Catholic-Jewish relations. Nineteen Jesuits at the Pontifical Biblical Institute did request that the council take up the topic of the Jewish people, noting that they should never be alleged to have been rejected by God.⁶ Another response, markedly different in spirit, urged the council "to condemn international freemasonry, controlled by the Jews."⁷

The declaration *Nostra aetate* would not have become part of the conciliar corpus had it not been for Jules Isaac, a French Jewish scholar and principal founder, together with Edmond Fleg of Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne de France, a federation of associations that fostered mutual understanding and respect between Christians and Jews. Although others had hoped that the council would take up the matter of the church's relation to the Jewish people,⁸ it was Isaac who reached the heart of Pope John XXIII. Isaac had lost his wife and daughter to the Nazi genocide and was himself persecuted under the Vichy regime. In June 1960, at the age of 81, he traveled to Rome for a papal audience and delivered a memorandum and documentary dossier that chronicled the history of Catholic teaching, legislation, and action toward the Jewish people.⁹ "How in a few minutes," he wrote in his memoirs, "was I to make the Pope understand that at the same time as a material ghetto, there had been a spiritual ghetto in which the Church gradually enclosed old Israel?"¹⁰

⁵ See J. Oscar Beozzo, "The External Climate," in *History of Vatican II*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak, 5 vols. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1995) 1:357–404, at 394. The Latin term *perfidis* means simply "unbelieving," although it is often translated as "perfidious." In any case, Dutch Bishop Johannes van Dodewaard noted that the Jews are better described as *populus ille fidelis* (a believing or faithful people) because of their relationship to God. See John M. Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler, 5 vols. (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969) 3:1–136, at 48.

⁶ Oesterreicher, "Declaration" 8–9.

⁷ Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P., "Holy Diplomacy: Making the Impossible Possible," in *Unanswered Questions: Theological Views of Jewish-Catholic Relations*, ed. Roger Brooks (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 1988) 51–69, at 54–55. On the *vota et desideria* see Étienne Fouilloux, "The Antepreparatory Phase: The Slow Emergence from Inertia (January 1959–October 1962)," in *History of Vatican II* 1:55–166, at 123, 137.

⁸ On other voices, see John M. Oesterreicher, *The New Encounter between Christians and Jews* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1986) 116–28.

⁹ Beozzo, "External Climate" 395–97; Oesterreicher, "Declaration" 2–4.

¹⁰ Cited in Stransky, "Holy Diplomacy" 51.

The Christian theology of contempt (*mépris*) that Isaac documented portrayed Judaism as a legalistic religion, held the Jews collectively responsible for the crime of deicide because of the role some Jews played in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and interpreted the Roman Empire's destruction of the Temple in 70 CE as a divinely sanctioned punishment for Jewish crimes.¹¹ Isaac appealed for a reform of this teaching that was in his judgment so counter to the gospel of love. John XXIII asked Isaac to meet with Cardinal Augustin Bea and, in September 1960, the pope entrusted Bea's Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity with the responsibility to prepare conciliar material on "the Jewish question." Bea appointed a Sub-Commission for Jewish Questions, whose members included Abbot Leo Rudloff and advisors Gregory Baum and John Oesterreicher.¹²

"If I had been able to foresee all the difficulties we would have encountered," Bea told a friend many years later, "I do not know whether I would have had the courage to undertake this task."¹³ Bea's subcommission drafted the *Decretum de Judaëis*, which was approved at the Secretariat's November–December 1961 plenary meeting in Ariccia.¹⁴ In June 1962, however, the Central Commission¹⁵ removed the topic from the agenda of the council scheduled to open in October. Cardinal Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, the Vatican's Secretary of State, was sensitive to the opposition of Arab political leaders who believed that any conciliar statement favorable to Jews would strengthen the position of the state of Israel.¹⁶ Cicognani's concerns were exacerbated by the protests that followed the announcement of the World Jewish Congress that Dr. Chaim Wardi, an official of the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs, would represent them as an unofficial council observer.¹⁷

In December 1962, Bea presented a memo directly to the pope emphasizing the pastoral and theological need for discussion of the Jewish Question at

¹¹ Jules Isaac, *L'Enseignement du mépris: Vérité historique et mythes théologiques* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1962); E.T., *The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965).

¹² Oesterreicher, "Declaration" 18.

¹³ Stjepan Schmidt, *Augustin Bea, the Cardinal of Unity*, trans. Leslie Wearne (New Rochelle, N.Y.: New City, 1992) 500.

¹⁴ Oesterreicher, "Declaration" 40–41; Giovanni Miccoli, "Two Sensitive Issues: Religious Freedom and the Jews," in *History of Vatican II* 4:95–193, at 137.

¹⁵ The pope or his representative presided over the Central Commission, which was charged with establishing the specialized commissions of the council and coordinating their activities. One of these 16 commissions was Bea's Secretariat for Christian Unity. See Fouilloux, "Antepreparatory Phase" 157.

¹⁶ Miccoli, "Two Sensitive Issues" 137–38; Oesterreicher, "Declaration" 42.

¹⁷ Oesterreicher, "Declaration" 41–42; Joseph A. Komonchak, "The Struggle for the Council during the Preparation of Vatican II (1960–1962)," in *History of Vatican II* 1:167–356, at 271; Beozzo, "External Climate" 397–98.

a later point in the conciliar process. Pope John supported Bea's appeal, and this decision was honored by Pope Paul VI, who was elected to succeed John XXIII on June 21, 1963. A declaration on the Jews was presented to the Council Fathers the following fall as part of the text *De oecumenismo*.¹⁸ When Bea addressed the worldwide congregation of bishops on November 18, 1963, he cited texts from the Gospels and Paul attesting that the Jewish people were not rejected by God. He also emphasized that the tradition that charged the entire Jewish community with the crime of deicide has no sound theological basis. Anti-Semitism, he stated, did not originate in the teaching of the church, but anti-Semitic ideas did exist among Catholics and must be addressed for reasons that were not political but strictly theological. Above all, this was a matter of fidelity to the love of Christ.¹⁹

Some European and American bishops expressed support for the declaration on the Jews, while Eastern patriarchs were unanimous in opposition.²⁰ The patriarchs were sensitive to the protests of Arab governments and concerned that the proposed statement could lead to violence against Christian minorities in Arab countries. Vocal opposition also came from outside the aula of St. Peter's Basilica where the council met. During the first session, each bishop received a copy of *Complotto contra la Chiesa* ("Conspiracy against the Church") by a pseudonymous Maurice Pinay, who identified Jewry or the "synagogue of Satan" as the driving force behind the threat of international Communism.²¹ This was only the beginning of a stream of anti-Jewish books and pamphlets that would be distributed to the bishops over the course of the council proceedings.²²

In April 1964, Cicognani reported at a meeting of the Coordinating Commission²³ on the hostility with which the declaration on the Jews had been received in Arab nations and the risks posed to Christians in the East.

¹⁸ English translations of the multiple drafts of the text that ultimately became the declaration *Nostra aetate* are reprinted in the appendix of *The Catholic Church and the Jewish People: Recent Reflections from Rome*, ed. Philip A. Cunningham, Norbert J. Hofmann, S.D.B., and Joseph Sievers (New York: Fordham, 2007) 191–200.

¹⁹ For the full text of Bea's statement, see *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani Secundi* (hereafter *AS*), 32 parts in 5 vols. (Vatican City: Vatican, 1970–86) II/5:481–85; for an English synopsis, see Miccoli, "Two Sensitive Issues" 139.

²⁰ Miccoli, "Two Sensitive Issues" 141.

²¹ Oesterreicher, "Declaration" 117; Miccoli, "Two Sensitive Issues" 158 n. 235.

²² Oesterreicher, "Declaration" 117–22; Miccoli, "Two Sensitive Issues" 157.

²³ The Coordinating Commission was established in December 1962 and given authority over conciliar commissions in regard to the revision of schemas. Cicognani served as its president. See Jan Grootaers, "The Drama Continues between the Acts: The 'Second Preparation' and Its Opponents," in *History of Vatican II* 2:359–514, at 365–83.

In a letter sent to Bea following this meeting, Cicognani stated that *De oecumenismo*'s appendix on the Jews was to become a broader "Declaration on the Jews and Non-Christian Peoples." It was to articulate the connection between the church and the Jewish people, avoid any reference to the charge of deicide, and affirm that other non-Christian peoples are also children of God.²⁴ The excision of any explicit renunciation of accusations against the Jews related to Christ's Passion, notes Giovanni Miccoli, would "radically change the balance and scope of the discourse by emptying it of all its original motivations."²⁵

Charles Moeller and Yves Congar were called on to help draft a new text.²⁶ Congar proposed making the additions necessary to broaden the scope of the declaration while preserving nearly the entire original text of Bea's secretariat, removing the word "deicide" but expressing the same idea in other terms.²⁷ The new statement, *De Judaeis et de non-Christianis*, circulated among the General Secretariat, the pope, and the Coordinating Commission. Bea then addressed the conciliar assembly on September 25, 1964.²⁸ In the two days of intense debate that followed, the majority of the Council Fathers strongly supported the declaration.²⁹ "There were moments," Oesterreicher recalls, "when an atmosphere of awe lay upon the Council. It could be perceived that what was being dealt with here was not a matter of abstract principle, but the most concrete of all questions—the encounter of man with man, and of man with God."³⁰ Some did voice strong objections. The Oriental patriarchs reiterated their position that the statement was inopportune, while some expressed views that reflected the long history of Christian anti-Judaism. One cardinal stated that "the Jews support and promote the pernicious sect of the Masons" that is always "plotting against the Church."³¹ And one bishop maintained that the "hardness of heart with which the chosen people opposed the divine plan is no less serious than the killing of Christ," and that all Jews suffer the result of this crime, "namely the loss of the divine election and the wretched state of the firstborn son who left his Father's house."³² Despite the opposition, the discussion concluded with

²⁴ Miccoli, "Two Sensitive Issues" 143–44.

²⁵ Ibid. 144.

²⁶ Yves Congar, *Mon journal du Concile*, ed. Éric Mahieu, 2 vols. (Paris: Cerf, 2002) 2:70.

²⁷ Ibid. 2:71, 74.

²⁸ For Bea's remarks, see AS III/2:558–64.

²⁹ AS III/2:579–607; III/3:11–55, 141–42, 155–78. For English versions of many of these speeches, see Oesterreicher, "Declaration" 67–80.

³⁰ Oesterreicher, "Declaration" 68.

³¹ AS III/2:586; translation in Miccoli, "Two Sensitive Issues" 156–57.

³² AS III/3:157; translation in Miccoli, "Two Sensitive Issues" 165.

a request from the majority that Bea's subcommission clarify and strengthen the text.³³

This was not the end of the drama that the proposed declaration had provoked. On October 8, 1964, Bea was informed that there would be no declaration on non-Christians peoples and the Jews—just an abbreviated statement to be formulated by a special commission and included in the chapter *De Populo Dei* of the schema *De ecclesia*.³⁴ Concerned by this turn of events, Bea and others made a number of interventions, and work on a full declaration ultimately did proceed with efforts to expand the sections of the text on non-Christian religions.³⁵ Finally, at the conclusion of a complex process, the statement on the Jews and others who are not Christian became its own self-standing declaration, *Nostra aetate*. Despite ongoing vocal objections, the final version was promulgated on October 28, 1965, with a vote of 2221 bishops in favor, 88 opposed, and 3 votes discounted as invalid.³⁶ The final form of the declaration reflects the work of both the consultors and the bishops, whose voices in the discussion shaped *Nostra aetate* in important ways. Oesterreicher explains:

The images of the olive-tree, the return to the Pauline profession of Christ as the founder of peace between Jews and Gentiles, indeed as himself being that peace, the new conception of the Church's eschatological hope, the strengthened warning against a biased, one-sided interpretation of Scripture, the clear rejection of any Jewish collective guilt—all these vital changes, which gave the draft that followed the great debate its special character—derive from suggestions made by the bishops.³⁷

In the end, a declaration that originated in the appeal of a Jewish scholar for justice for his own people became a statement in which the church recognized that the establishment of a proper relationship with the Jewish people is not only a matter of justice for the Jews, but also a matter of the integrity and catholicity of the Catholic Church itself.³⁸

Nostra aetate begins with a reflection on the unity of the human community and the ultimate questions it holds in common (no. 1). The declaration then affirms that the religions of the world are a response to a hidden power in our human search for meaning and that "the Catholic Church rejects

³³ Miccoli, "Two Sensitive Issues" 166.

³⁴ Oesterreicher, "Declaration" 83; Miccoli, "Two Sensitive Issues" 167.

³⁵ Miccoli, "Two Sensitive Issues" 166–93.

³⁶ Oesterreicher, *New Encounter* 276; Mauro Velati, "Completing the Conciliar Agenda," in *History of Vatican II* 5:185–273, at 211–31. By comparison, the final vote in December 1963 on *Sacrosanctum concilium* was 2147 in favor and 4 opposed; in November 1964, *Unitatis redintegratio* was promulgated with a vote of 2137 in favor and 11 opposed, and *Lumen gentium* with a vote of 2151 in favor and 5 opposed. *AS* II/6:407; III/8:782–83.

³⁷ Oesterreicher, "Declaration" 81.

³⁸ On this point, see Stransky, "Holy Diplomacy" 59–60.

nothing of what is true and holy in these religions" (no. 2).³⁹ A section specifically devoted to Islam follows (no. 3), after which appears the statement on the Jewish people. *Nostra aetate* affirms the "spiritual ties which link the people of the new covenant to the stock of Abraham" (*vinculi, quo populus Novi Testamenti cum stirpe Abrahae spiritualiter coniunctus est*) (no. 4). It acknowledges that the church has received the revelation of the Old Testament from the people of the ancient covenant, the good olive tree onto which the wild olive branches of the Gentiles have been grafted (Rom 11:17–24). The Israelites are the sons and daughters of God to whom "belong the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises" (Rom 9:4–5), and this covenant is enduring, for "God does not take back the gifts he bestowed or the choice he made" (no. 4). Although *Nostra aetate* includes no explicit disavowal of the term "deicide people," it emphasizes that "neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time [of Jesus Christ], nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his passion" (no. 4). It is true, the declaration continues, "that the church is the new people of God, yet the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy scripture" (no. 4).

It was, writes Thomas Stransky, founding staff member of Bea's Secretariat for Christian Unity, both too late and too soon for the Catholic Church to begin the reformulation of its teaching on the Jews: too late insofar as the nightmare of the Holocaust had already been unleashed in Europe, and too soon in that there had been so little development in Catholic theology on the place of the Jewish people in God's plan of salvation or the relation of church and synagogue.⁴⁰ The relationship of Judaism and Christianity, Oesterreicher echoes, was "really the Cinderella of theology."⁴¹ The scholarly labors that paved the way for the council were primarily a work of *ressourcement*—a theological renewal rooted in Scripture and tradition—and most of this tradition was forged in the context of the polemics of the Christian-Jewish schism.

THE ORIGINS OF *LUMEN GENTIUM*'S THEOLOGY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

It was the labor of *ressourcement* that brought to the council an alternative to the theology of the church as a *societas perfecta* that had dominated

³⁹ Citations from the documents of the council are from *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (Northport, N.Y.: Costello, 1996).

⁴⁰ Stransky, "Holy Diplomacy" 55–58. On the ill-preparedness of the Council Fathers for theological reflection on Judaism, see also Oesterreicher, *New Encounter* 157–58.

⁴¹ Oesterreicher, "Declaration" 39.

Roman Catholic ecclesiology since the Counter Reformation. In response to the Reformation's critique of Catholicism and the eclipse of Christendom by the emerging European nation states, the *societas perfecta* ecclesiology had emphasized the visible and institutional dimensions of the Catholic Church. This approach remained dominant until Vatican II, although there was growing interest in other ecclesiological models. The theology of the church as the Mystical Body of Christ had been advanced by both Johann Adam Möhler (1796–1838) and the 19th-century Roman school, which synthesized Scholastic theology with biblical and patristic themes. The theology of the Mystical Body was also developed by a variety of 20th-century Catholic theologians (including Romano Guardini, Karl Adam, Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, Jean Daniélou, Erich Przywara, Sebastian Tromp, and Emile Mersch) and Pope Pius XII's 1943 encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*. In the 1920s and 1930s, there was a profusion of publications on the theology of the Mystical Body and a surge of interest in this topic among the Catholic populace.

This was followed in the 1940s and 1950s with a wave of scholarly interest in a theology of the church as the people of God. The church had been designated a "people" (*laos*) in New Testament texts (2 Cor 6:16; Rom 9:25–26; Tit 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9–10; Acts 15:14). In the Epistle of Barnabas (ca. 70–135 CE), the church is the second of two peoples, destined like Jacob and Ephraim to become heir to the covenant in a reversal of the typical pattern of succession.⁴² Both Origen and Augustine developed reflections on the church as the people of God, an ecclesiology that continued to play a role throughout the tradition.⁴³ In the first half of the 20th century, scholars such as Harold F. Hamilton, Nils A. Dahl, Ernst Käsemann, and Hermann Strathmann initiated the retrieval of this theology, which served the need of Protestant ecumenists for an ecclesiology that would encompass the whole of the Christian body.⁴⁴ Within Catholicism, the emphasis among some theologians on the history of salvation as the context for theological

⁴² Epistle of Barnabas, chaps. 13–14, in *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library 24 and 25, ed. and trans. Bart Ehrman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 2003) 2:60–63.

⁴³ F. Ledegang, *Mysterium Ecclesiae: Images of the Church and Its Members in Origen* (Leuven: University, 2001) 355–511; Joseph Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche* (Munich: Zink, 1954) 127–87. For a survey of the theology of the people of God in the tradition, see Max Keller, "Volk Gottes" als Kirchenbegriff: Eine Untersuchung zum neueren Verständnis (Zürich: Benziger, 1970).

⁴⁴ Harold Francis Hamilton, *The People of God: An Inquiry into Christian Origins*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford, 1912); Nils A. Dahl, *Das Volk Gottes: Eine Untersuchung zum Kirchenbewusstsein des Urchristentums*, 2 vols. (Oslo: Jacob Dybwad, 1941); Ernst Käsemann, *Das wandernde Gottesvolk: Eine Untersuchung zum Hebräerbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939); Hermann

reflection led to a reaffirmation of the church's relation to biblical Israel and a recovery of an ecclesiology of the people of God.⁴⁵ This ecclesiology served the developing liturgical movement and Catholic Action, both of which emphasized that the church is composed of people who respond to God's call.⁴⁶ Catholic contributors to the recovery of a theology of the people of God included Mannes Dominikus Koster, Lucien Cerfaux, Yves Congar, Anscar Vonier, and Frank Norris.⁴⁷ In the 1950s and 1960s, German scholars, including doctrinal historian Michael Schmaus and Joseph Ratzinger, contributed to the growing body of literature on the topic, although memories of the way the notion of *Volk* had been manipulated by the Nazis in the 1930s and 1940s led some to express reservations about this approach.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, the ecclesiology of the people of God remained attractive because it expressed the biblical, historical, anthropological, and eschatological dimensions of the church. The people of God, Congar reflected, is a "beautiful notion" with which "the Holy Spirit must secretly have inspired everyone . . . sometime between 1937 and 1943."⁴⁹

The continuing interest in this ecclesiology culminated in the decision of Vatican II to add the chapter *De Populo Dei* to what would become *Lumen gentium*. The editing of the proposed chapter on the people of God was entrusted to a subcommittee on which Congar served together with other *periti* and bishops. Congar noted in his council diaries that he took

Strathmann, "Laos," in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, 10 vols., ed. Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1939–1979) 4:29–57.

⁴⁵ Yves Congar, O.P., "The Church: The People of God," in *The Church and Mankind*, ed. Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., *Concilium* 1 (Glen Rock, N.J.: Paulist, 1965) 11–37, at 14.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 14–15.

⁴⁷ Mannes Dominikus Koster, *Ekklesiologie im Werden* (Paderborn: Bonifacius, 1940); Koster, *Volk Gottes im Wachstum des Glaubens: Himmelfahrt Mariens und Glaubenssinn* (Heidelberg: F. H. Kerle, 1950); Lucien Cerfaux, *La théologie de l'église suivant saint Paul* (Paris: Cerf, 1942); Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P., "Pourquoi le Peuple de Dieu doit-il sans cesse se réformer?" *Irénikon* 22 (1948) 365–94; Congar, "La Maison du peuple de Dieu," *Art sacré* 1 (1947) 205–220; Congar, *Jalons pour une théologie du laïc* (Paris: Cerf, 1953) 474–80; Congar, "The Church: The People of God"; Anscar Vonier, O.S.B., *The People of God* (London: Burns, Oates, & Washbourne, 1937); Frank B. Norris, S.S., *God's Own People: An Introductory Study of the Church* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1962).

⁴⁸ Michael Schmaus, *Die Lehre von der Kirche*, vol. 3 of *Katholische Dogmatik* (Munich: Max Hueber, 1958) 204–39; Joseph Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche*. On hesitations about the expression "people of God" in the aftermath of German history, see the comment by Fergus Kerr, O.P., in his "Yves Congar and Thomism," in *Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church*, ed. Gabriel Flynn (Louvain: Peeters, 2005) 67–97, at 74 n. 11.

⁴⁹ Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P., foreword to Norris, *God's Own People* iii–v, at v. These are the very years of the genocide against the Jewish people in Europe, where most of this scholarship is taking place.

responsibility for the first draft of much of sections 9, 13, 16, and 17 of this chapter,⁵⁰ and the text of the final version of *Lumen gentium* is consistent with Congar's own work.⁵¹

Council commentators repeatedly note the significance of the placement of the chapter *De Populo Dei* between *Lumen gentium*'s first chapter on the mystery of the church and the third chapter on the ecclesial hierarchy, a structure that suggests that the church is foundationally composed of all the baptized prior to any distinction between members of the hierarchy and laity. Congar believed that the council's addition of the chapter on the people of God was one of the most important decisions made at the council, a decision that "has the greatest promise for the theological, pastoral and ecumenical future of ecclesiology."⁵² In the analysis of Edward Hahnenberg, "the language of people of God rose in prominence to become arguably the most important way of describing the Church present in [*Lumen gentium*]."⁵³ But it was a language that had been forged in Christian biblical and theological circles—not in the crucible of Christian-Jewish dialogue—as is evident in the case of Congar himself.

JUDAISM AND CONCILIAR *PERITUS* YVES CONGAR

Yves Congar was one of the foremost contributors to the ecclesiological *ressourcement* that was the theological backbone of Vatican II. As a child in the French Ardennes, Congar enjoyed the companionship of the children of his parents' Protestant and Jewish friends. It was ecumenism, however, that would become a major focus of his life's work, not bridge-building between Christians and Jews.⁵⁴ His adult years were spent primarily at the Saulchoir, the Dominican house of studies situated in Belgium when he first joined the Order of Preachers and later moved to France. At the onset of World War II, Congar joined the French army as a reserve officer and was captured by German forces and detained from 1940–1945.⁵⁵ In the camps of Mainz, Colditz, and Lübeck, he encountered Jewish

⁵⁰ Congar, *Mon journal du Concile* 2:511.

⁵¹ For Congar's commentary on *Lumen gentium*'s theology of the people of God, see his "The People of God," in *Vatican II: An Interfaith Appraisal*, ed. John Miller, C.S.C. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 1966) 197–207.

⁵² Ibid. 197.

⁵³ Edward P. Hahnenberg, "The Mystical Body of Christ and Communion Ecclesiology: Historical Parallels," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70 (2005) 3–30, at 15.

⁵⁴ Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P., "Preface" to his *Dialogue between Christians: Catholic Contributions to Ecumenism*, trans. Philip Loretz, S.J. (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1966) 1–51, at 4.

⁵⁵ Jean Puyo and Yves Congar, O.P., *Jean Puyo interroge le Père Congar: Une vie pour la vérité* (Paris: Centurion, 1975) 88–93.

prisoners,⁵⁶ but despite this proximity to the Shoah, there is scant reference in his writings to the genocide and near-complete destruction of the Jewish communities of Europe. In 1954, exiled from France because of Rome's displeasure with his work, Congar spent a year at Jerusalem's École Biblique where he wrote *The Mystery of the Temple*, but there is little indication in this text of any sustained encounter with the living Judaism of Jerusalem.⁵⁷ At this time the city was divided; with East Jerusalem under Jordanian rule, the Dominican École Biblique had no contact with the faculty at Hebrew University.⁵⁸

Congar was friends with Jesuit Pierre Chaillet, a heroic advocate of children and Jews,⁵⁹ and Congar does occasionally reference Jewish authors.⁶⁰ During the council, he met with the Jewish community of Strasbourg, who impressed upon him that "the first council after Auschwitz cannot fail to speak of the Jews."⁶¹ When *Complotto contra la Chiesa* was distributed to the assembled bishops, it was Congar who attempted in vain to secure a formal conciliar denunciation of the book.⁶² And when Bea's subcommission for the Jewish Question added additional advisors to prepare a broader statement on the church's relation to all non-Christians, it was Congar, as we have seen, who advocated preserving an explicit rejection of the theology of the Jews as a deicide people even if the term "deicide" itself had been disallowed. Nonetheless, despite this vitally important contribution to what would become *Nostra aetate*, engagement with postbiblical Judaism simply was not one of Congar's priorities. "I have never been anti-Semitic," he told Jean Puyo in an extensive interview. "As I have told you, from my childhood, I have had Jewish friends. But in that era I did not enter into the

⁵⁶ Ibid. 92–93.

⁵⁷ Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P., *The Mystery of the Temple or The Manner of God's Presence to His Creatures from Genesis to the Apocalypse*, trans. Reginald F. Trevett (London: Burns & Oates, 1962).

⁵⁸ Conversation with Thomas F. Stransky, September 16, 2010.

⁵⁹ On Chaillet see Thomas F. O'Meara, O.P., "A French Resistance Hero," *America* 176.18 (May 24, 1997) 12–16.

⁶⁰ He mentions, e.g., Rabbi Kaplan's critique of the Christian use of the word "mystery" in reference to Israel. "L'Etat d'Israel dans le dessein de Dieu," *Parole et Mission* (July 2, 1958) 168–87; trans. Philip Loretz, S.J., "The Religious Significance of the Restoration of the Jewish State and Nation in the Holy Land," in Congar, *Dialogue between Christians* 445–61, at 447.

⁶¹ Congar, *Mon journal du Concile* 1:357.

⁶² Mgr. Ancel was agreeable to the request, but referred Congar to Cardinal Joseph-Charles Lefebvre who could make an intervention with more weight. Lefebvre in turn referred Congar to Cardinal Achille Liénart, who told him that the council could not get into the practice of responding to all the literature that was distributed in the periphery. *Mon journal du Concile* 1:308–9.

profound religious and even dogmatic depths of the Jewish question in the manner of someone like [Jacques] Maritain.”⁶³

Absent a sustained engagement with the Jewish tradition or the Shoah, Congar’s preconciliar theology is notable in that it affirms the enduring character of God’s election of the Jewish people in language that anticipates *Nostra aetate*.⁶⁴ In other respects, Congar perpetuates long-standing Christian approaches. *The Wide World My Parish: Salvation and Its Problems* is his most sustained reflection on the relation of the church to non-Christians.⁶⁵ In this collection of essays, he speaks for the most part in very general terms of “the others,” a broad category that includes members of non-Christian religions, Jews, unbelievers, and anyone who did not or has not had the opportunity to hear the gospel. He writes specifically of Jews in a reflection on the character necessary to recognize truth through sign and parable:

The refusal by the “Jews”—in St. John’s sense of the word—always appears as a refusal to go any farther, a refusal to re-examine accepted, well-tried, established positions. “It is known . . . , it is settled. . . .” Openness to, acceptance of, the Good News, is, on the other hand, a positive response to an invitation to “come out of oneself.” It is always a matter of choosing something—more exactly, someone—in preference to the egotistical self.⁶⁶

This use of Jews or Judaism as a negative foil against which to articulate a positive Christian identity is common practice in the Christian tradition, a convention employed at several other points in Congar’s work.⁶⁷ Although *Wide World My Parish* offers an original interpretation of the axiom

⁶³ Puyo, *Jean Puyo interroge le Père Congar* 93.

⁶⁴ The question, Congar wrote, “is governed by the biblical texts affirming that God will not repent of his gift and that ‘The Lord will not reject his people’ (Ps 93:14; cf. Rom 9:6; 11:26, 27, 29)” (“Religious Significance of the Restoration of the Jewish State” 448).

⁶⁵ Yves Congar, O.P., *The Wide World, My Parish: Salvation and Its Problems*, trans. Donald Attwater (Baltimore: Helicon, 1961).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 108–9.

⁶⁷ For example, in his major work on the character of true reform in the church, Congar emphasizes that the church must guard against two dangers, which he names *pharisaïsme* and *la tentation de devenir “synagogue.”* *Pharisaïsme* means to allow something that should be a means of spiritual life to become an end in itself, and “*synagogue*” names the temptation to absolutize a dated or partial form of religious life in a manner that blocks or obfuscates the ongoing development of God’s work. Congar uses examples from Christian history to illustrate both temptations. Nonetheless, the terms *pharisaïsme* and “*synagogue*” used to name these pejorative paradigms have Jewish connotations. Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P., *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l’église* (Paris: Cerf, 1950) 155–95. Catherine Clifford has noted the problem with this approach; see Michael Attridge, “Yves Congar Ecumenical Colloquium,” *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 59 (2004) 121–23, at 122.

"outside the church no salvation," which Congar explicates as a statement about the indispensability of the church in God's plan of redemption rather than a statement about the status of any given individual before God,⁶⁸ there is only a hint of the dramatic changes in Catholic approaches to Judaism that will take place in the decades after the council.

What were the consequences of Congar's posture toward Judaism for his theology of the people of God? In "The Church: The People of God," Congar emphasized that one of the primary reasons the people of God is such an important ecclesiological image is that it expresses the continuity between the church and Israel.⁶⁹ But by "Israel," notes Erik Borgman, "he not so much means the Jewish people of his time, but Israel as it appears in the Old—or First—Testament."⁷⁰ Linking the church to biblical Israel through a theology of the people of God enabled Congar to stress that the church is not only an institution that mediates sacramental grace but also a historical, social, and covenantal body with an eschatological vocation to witness to God's holy name.⁷¹ The link to biblical Israel also served Congar's emphasis on the corporate character of the church, and he repeatedly referenced Wheeler Robinson's work on the corporate realism of the theology of the Hebrew people in Old Testament texts.⁷²

The corporate people of Israel prefigure the church of Jesus Christ. "The history of the people of Israel," Congar explained, ". . . has a typological value for the people of God which is the Church."⁷³ His appropriation of

⁶⁸ Regarding Congar's position on salvation outside the church, see Francis A. Sullivan, S.J., *Salvation outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (New York: Paulist, 1992) 129–30; See also the essays in *Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church*, including Thomas F. O'Meara, O.P., "Yves Congar: Theologian of Grace in a Wide World" 371–99; Stephen Fields, S.J., "Mediating the Non-Christian Religions: Congar, Balthasar, Nature and Grace" 401–26; Terrence Merrigan, "The Appeal to Yves Congar in Recent Catholic Theology of Religions: The Case of Jacques Dupuis" 427–57.

⁶⁹ Congar, "The Church: The People of God" 19.

⁷⁰ Erik Borgman, "The Ambivalent Role of the 'People of God' in Twentieth Century Catholic Theology: The Examples of Yves Congar and Edward Schillebeeckx," in *A Holy People: Jewish and Christian Perspectives on Religious Communal Identity*, ed. Marcel Poorthuis and Joshua Schwartz (Leiden: Brill, 2006) 263–77, at 265.

⁷¹ Congar, "The Church: The People of God" 19–21.

⁷² For one example of Congar's use of Robinson, see "Perspectives chrétiennes sur la vie personnelle et la vie collective," in *Socialisation et personne humaine: Compte rendu in extenso*, Semaine sociale de Grenoble 1960 (Lyon: Chronique sociale de France, 1961) 195–221, at 201.

⁷³ Yves Congar, "Considérations sur le schisme d'Israël dans la perspective des divisions chrétiennes," *Proche-Orient chrétien* 1 (1951) 169–91; trans. Philip Loretz, S.J., as "Some Reflections on the Schism of Israel in the Perspective of Christian Divisions," *Dialogue between Christians* 160–83, at 167.

the typological tradition was complemented by his use of the work of Swiss Protestant Wilhelm Vischer, who described the people of Israel as a *pars pro toto*, a sacramental bearer of a promise that will later be extended to all humanity.⁷⁴ This theological framework accounts for the relation between biblical Israel and the church but leaves limited place for recognition of the contributions of postbiblical rabbinic Judaism to the living history of the people of God. This is evident in Congar's reflection "The Religious Significance of the Restoration of the Jewish State and Nation in the Holy Land" offered in 1955 at the Parisian convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion. Congar affirmed that the constitution of Israel as God's people is an essential part of the mystery of God's plan of salvation.⁷⁵ Since the coming of the Messiah, however, the people of God is the church, and there has been a "transference to her of the privileges and characteristics of the true Israel."⁷⁶ The church is the new people of God in the biblical sense of *kainos* rather than *neos*—"new" in the sense of a renewal of the life of a subject rather than a substitution of one subject by another. "The Church is Israel, the 'true' Israel, the inheritor of the promises which are henceforth registered to its advantage."⁷⁷ This does not abrogate God's promises to the original subject of election, for God does not repent of God's gifts (Ps 93:14; Rom 9:6; 11:26, 27, 29) in spite of the trespass of the Jews (Rom 11:12). Nonetheless, "the dispensation of Moses is entirely superseded as a religious régime" by a new dispensation of a quality different from the old—a religion of the true circumcision not of the flesh but of the Spirit.⁷⁸ The Jewish people are invited to a renewed and qualitatively superior way of life in the church, a tree onto which has been grafted whatever was valid in ancient Israel.⁷⁹

REVISITING *LUMEN GENTIUM* AFTER FORTY-FIVE YEARS OF CATHOLIC-JEWISH DIALOGUE

Lumen gentium's chapter "The People of God" to which Congar contributed so much begins with the affirmation that God desires to save men and women not as individuals but as a people. God therefore established a covenant with the people Israel and instructed them in holiness. This covenant is a preparation and figure of the new and perfect covenant promised through the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 31:31–34) and

⁷⁴ Yves Congar, O.P., "The Old Testament as a Witness to Christ," in *The Revelation of God*, trans. A. Manson and L. C. Sheppard (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968) 8–9. The reference is to Wilhelm Vischer, *Das Christuszeugnis des Alten Testaments* (Zollikon: Evangelischer, 1946).

⁷⁵ Congar, "Religious Significance of the Restoration of the Jewish State" 445–46.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 448.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 448–49.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

instituted in the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 11:25) who calls “a people together made up of Jews and Gentiles which would be one, not according to the flesh but in the Spirit, and it would be the new People of God” (no. 9).⁸⁰ Christ is the head of this new messianic people whose law is love and whose destiny is the kingdom of God, begun on earth and brought to perfection at the end of time when creation is free from corruption. All women and men are called to the catholic unity of the people of God which prefigures and promotes universal peace (no. 13). The Catholic faithful, catechumens, and other Christians belong to the people of God in varying ways (*variis modis pertinent*); those who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept the entire structure of the society of the church and all the means of salvation are fully incorporated into the new people of God; catechumens moved by the Spirit who explicitly desire incorporation are by that wish made part of the church; and the church is also joined (*coniunctam*) to baptized Christians who do not profess the faith in its entirety or have not preserved communion under the successor of Peter (nos. 14–15). Persons who have not yet accepted the gospel do not belong to the people of God but are in various ways called and ordained to it (*ad Populum Dei diversis rationibus ordinantur*) (no. 16; see also no. 13).⁸¹ First among these are the Jewish people “to whom the covenants and promises were made, and from whom Christ was born in the flesh (cf. Rom 9:4–5), a people in virtue of their election beloved for the sake of the fathers, for God never regrets his gifts or his call (cf. Rom 11:28–29)” (no. 16).

Eleven months after the promulgation of *Lumen gentium* on November 21, 1964, Vatican II approved the declaration *Nostra aetate*, which encouraged biblical and theological discussions between Christians and Jews in order to foster mutual understanding and appreciation (no. 4). A flourishing of initiatives followed. In 1974, Pope Paul VI established the Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews; its statements include: Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the

⁸⁰ Stransky notes that the council deliberately capitalized the term *Populus* here, an intention that is not reflected in Flannery's English edition of the council documents (conversation with Stransky, September 16, 2010). In this and other direct citations of *Lumen gentium*, I follow the capitalization of the original Latin text.

⁸¹ Although not noted in *Lumen gentium*, the use of the term *ordinari* to describe the relation of non-Christians to the church has precedent in Pius XII's encyclical *Mystici Corporis* (1943), which stated that those who do not belong to the church are “oriented toward it by a certain unconscious desire and wish” (*inscio quodam desiderio ac voto ad mysticum redemptoris corpus ordinari*). (*Mystici Corporis, Acta apostolicae sedis* 35 [1943] 243). On the distinct manner in which the term *ordinari* is used in *Mystici Corporis* and *Lumen gentium*, see Jacques Dupuis, S.J., *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1979) 348–49; Congar, “The People of God” 204.

Conciliar Declaration “Nostra Aetate” (no. 4) (1974) and Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church (1985).⁸² Through the International Catholic Jewish Liaison Committee (ICJLC), the Commission conducts dialogues with the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC). The ICJLC has issued declarations on anti-Semitism, the family, the environment, the protection of religious freedom and holy sites, education in Catholic and Jewish seminaries and schools of theology, justice and charity, and health care and HIV/AIDS.⁸³ Pope John Paul II advanced Catholic-Jewish relations with a number of important speeches and initiatives that fostered trust between the Catholic Church and the Jewish community.⁸⁴ In 1993, the Holy See established diplomatic relations with the state of Israel.⁸⁵ The bishops of France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, the United States, and other nations have made important statements on Catholic-Jewish relations.⁸⁶ The Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, the community to whom Congar gave his address on Israel, have moved from their founding commitment to work for the conversion of the Jews to the position that “our vocation gives us a particular responsibility to promote understanding and justice for the Jewish community, and to keep alive in the Church the consciousness that in some mysterious way, Christianity is linked to Judaism from its origin to its final destiny.”⁸⁷ Catholic universities have established institutes for Catholic-Jewish learning, and theologians such as Gregory Baum, Mary Boys, Philip Cunningham, Manfred Deselaers, Eugene Fisher, Hanspeter Heinz, John Pawlikowski, and many others have built relationships with members of the Jewish community and engaged in theological exchange of a character and quality

⁸² See http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_19741201_nostra-aetate_en.html; and http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_19820306_jews-judaism_en.html (all URLs cited in this article were accessed on May 23, 2011).

⁸³ See appendix 2 of *Catholic Church and the Jewish People* 201–22.

⁸⁴ Many of these texts are reprinted in John Paul II, *Spiritual Pilgrimage: Texts on Jews and Judaism 1979–1995*, ed. Eugene J. Fisher and Leon Klenicki (New York: Crossroad, 1995). For theological reflection on his legacy, see *John Paul II and the Jewish People: A Jewish-Christian Dialogue*, ed. David G. Dalin and Matthew Levering (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

⁸⁵ The “Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel, December 30, 1993” is included as appendix 4 in *Catholic Church and the Jewish People* 233–39.

⁸⁶ Some of these statements are available at <http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/cjrelations/backgroundresources/documents/catholic.html>.

⁸⁷ The 1984 Constitution of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, cited in Mary C. Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding* (New York: Paulist, 2000) 21.

unprecedented before Vatican II.⁸⁸ Biblical scholars have emphasized the Jewish faith of Jesus Christ⁸⁹ and the complexity of the process by which rabbinic Judaism and Christianity eventually became two distinct religious communities in the aftermath of Rome's destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.⁹⁰ Jews, in turn, despite the painful memories of their history, have shared their stories and traditions and opened themselves to dialogue with Christians. In September 2000, an interdenominational group of leading Rabbis and Jewish scholars published *Dabru Emet* ("To Speak the Truth"), a statement on Christians and Christianity that acknowledged the dramatic changes that have taken place in Christian approaches to Judaism and offered in response a reflection on the possibility of a new relationship.⁹¹

These developments have taken Catholic-Jewish relations to a point beyond their state in 1963–65. There is today in the Catholic Church: (1) an affirmation of the enduring character of God's covenant with the people of Israel who are irrevocably part of the people of God; (2) a spirit of remorse for historic sins of Christians against the Jewish people; (3) a growing appreciation for the contributions of postbiblical rabbinic Judaism to theology, spirituality, liturgy, and ethics; and (4) a reconsideration of some of the theological dichotomies that have shaped Christian understandings of our relationship to Judaism. Below I address each of these points and reflect on their significance for a theology of the people of God that takes these developments into account.

Enduring Character of God's Covenant with the People Israel, Irrevocably Part of the People of God

Both *Lumen gentium* and *Nostra aetate* invoke Paul's letter to the Romans, which states that the Jewish people are "in virtue of their election

⁸⁸ For testimony of some of these scholars, see *Faith Transformed: Christian Encounters with Jews and Judaism*, ed. John C. Merkle (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2003). Hanspeter Heinz shares a personal reflection in "Your Privilege: You have Jewish Friends": Michael Signer's Hermeneutics of Friendship," in *Christ Jesus and the Jewish People Today*, ed. Philip A. Cunningham et al. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2011) 1–13.

⁸⁹ See, e.g., John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, Anchor Bible Reference Library, 4 vols. (vols. 1–3: New York: Doubleday, 1991, 1994, 2004; vol. 4: New Haven, Conn.: Yale, 2009).

⁹⁰ See, e.g., Judith M. Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2002); Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004); James D. G. Dunn, *The Parting of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM, 2006).

⁹¹ The statement that originally appeared in the *New York Times* is reprinted together with scholarly essays in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, ed. Tikva Frymer-Kensky et al. (Westview, Colo.: Westview, 2000).

beloved for the sake of the fathers, for God never regrets his gifts or his call (cf. Rom 11:28–29)” (*Lumen gentium* no. 16; *Nostra aetate* no. 4). Paul’s theology of a personal God whose gifts and call are freely given without regret (*ametamelēta gar ta kharismata kai hē klēsis tou theou*) (Rom 11:29) is expressed in the NRSV with the words, “the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable,” and this terminology has been employed in English translations of papal statements that cite this passage. In an important 1980 address in Mainz, Pope John Paul II referred to the Jewish audience as “brothers and sisters” and spoke of a dialogue between “the people of God of the Old Covenant, never revoked by God [cf. Rom 11:29], and that of the New Covenant.”⁹² Pope Benedict XVI reiterated the Pauline theology of God’s irrevocable gift and call when he visited the synagogue in Rome in January 2010.⁹³

How precisely God’s enduring covenant with the people Israel and the new covenant in Jesus Christ are related are matters of ongoing discussion.⁹⁴ Is there one covenant or two? How are we to interpret a biblical tradition that includes not only Romans 11:29 but also Hebrews 8:13, which states that the old covenant is growing aged (*gēraskon*) and near vanishing (*aphanismou*)? Should Christians and Jews mutually encourage each other to deepen our fidelity to our own faith traditions, or should Christians encourage Jews to become Christian, given our conviction that all creation is redeemed through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and

⁹² John Paul II, “Address to the Jewish Community–West Germany,” November 17, 1980, in *Spiritual Pilgrimage* 14–15.

⁹³ Benedict XVI, Address at the Synagogue of Rome, January 17, 2010, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2010/january/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20100117_sinagoga_en.html.

⁹⁴ For historical surveys of Christian theologies of the covenant with Israel, see Steven J. McMichael, “The Covenant in Patristic and Medieval Christian Theology,” in *Two Faiths, One Covenant? Jewish and Christian Identity in the Presence of the Other*, ed. Eugene B. Korn and John T. Pawlikowski, O.S.M. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005) 45–64; Jennifer A. Harris, “Enduring Covenant in the Christian Middle Ages,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 44 (2009) 563–86. Sources on the contemporary discussion include David J. Bolton, “Catholic-Jewish Dialogue: Contesting the Covenants,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 45 (2010) 37–60; Mary C. Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing?*; Boys, ed., *Seeing Judaism Anew: Christianity’s Sacred Obligation* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005); Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Jews and Christians: People of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003); Cardinal Avery Dulles, “The Covenant with Israel,” *First Things* 157 (November 2005) 16–21; Norbert Lohfink, *The Covenant Never Revoked: Biblical Reflections on Christian-Jewish Dialogue* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 1991); Eugene B. Korn and John T. Pawlikowski, eds., *Two Faiths, One Covenant?*; Didier Pollefeyt, ed., *Jews and Christians, Rivals or Partners for the Kingdom of God? In Search of an Alternative for the Theology of Substitution* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997).

the gift of the Holy Spirit?⁹⁵ These questions are not new, and in the Christian tradition we can find practices that range from forced baptisms of Jews to an acceptance of the Jewish people rooted in Augustine's position that the Jews have a specific role to play in salvation history even after the incarnation.⁹⁶ Today, we ask questions about the relationship of Jews and Christians in a new context, and there is not yet consensus as to their resolution. "We are still very far away from a comprehensive Catholic theology of Judaism, . . ." explained Cardinal Walter Kasper in his former capacity as president of the Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews. "This means that the question of the theological relationship between Judaism and Christianity remains unsolved."⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Different approaches to these questions are evident in the discussions surrounding Reflections on Covenant and Mission, the statement of a consultation between representatives of the National Council of Synagogues and scholars who served as an advisory group to the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). See Reflections on Covenant and Mission, August 12, 2002, <http://www.jcrelations.net/en/?item=966>; Avery Dulles, "Covenant and Mission," *America* 187.12 (October 21, 2002) 8–11; Mary C. Boys, Philip A. Cunningham, and John T. Pawlikowski, "Theology's 'Sacred Obligation': A Reply to Cardinal Avery Dulles," *America* 187.12 (October 21, 2002) 12–16; USCCB, Committee on Doctrine and Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, "A Note on Ambiguities Contained in 'Reflections on Covenant and Mission,'" *Origins* 39 (2009) 113–16; USCCB, Statement of Principles for Catholic-Jewish Dialogue, October 2, 2009, <http://www.usccb.org/seia/StatementofPrinciples.pdf>; American Jewish Leaders, "Letter to U.S. Bishops Expressing Concern about the Future of Interfaith Dialogue," *Origins* 39 (2009) 209–10; John Borelli, "Troubled Waters," *America* 202.5 (February 22, 2010) 20–23.

⁹⁶ Augustine believed that Jews should be protected, for "by the evidence of their own Scriptures they bear witness for us that we have not fabricated the prophecies about Christ. . . . It is in order to give this testimony which, in spite of themselves, they supply for our benefit by their possession and preservation of those books, that they themselves are dispersed among all nations, wherever the Christian Church spreads" (*De Civitate Dei* 18.46 [CCSL 48.644–45]; *The City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson [Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1972] 827–28.) See also Paula Fredriksen, "Excaecat Occulta Justitia Dei: Augustine on Jews and Judaism," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3 [1995] 299–324. More recently, the Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews has affirmed the ongoing role of the Jewish people in the economy of redemption, stating that "the permanence of Israel (while so many ancient peoples have disappeared without trace) is a historic fact and a sign to be interpreted within God's design" (Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church [1985] VI.1, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_19820306_jews-judaism_en.html).

⁹⁷ Cardinal Walter Kasper, "Paths Taken and Enduring Questions in Jewish-Christian Relations Today: Thirty Years of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews," in *The Catholic Church and the Jewish People* 3–11, at 10.

Reconsidering *Lumen gentium*'s theology of the people of God in light of *Nostra aetate* and the subsequent postconciliar discussion can provide a constructive framework in which the conversation about this relationship can proceed. *Lumen gentium*, as we have seen, distinguished those who belong (*pertinent*) to the new people of God from those who are ordained to (*ordinantur ad*) this people, and the conciliar constitution placed Jews in the latter category together with others who have not yet accepted the gospel. *Nostra aetate*, promulgated eleven months after *Lumen gentium*, describes the church's relation to the Jewish people in terms that can support the position that the Jews do in fact belong (*pertinent*) to the people of God. The Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions describes the Jewish people as "that good olive tree onto which the wild olive branches of the Gentiles have been grafted (see Rom 11:17–24)" and emphasizes "the spiritual ties which link the people of the new covenant to the stock of Abraham (*vinculi, quo populus Novi Testamenti cum stirpe Abrahae spiritualiter coniunctus est*)" (no. 4).⁹⁸ A feminine form of the masculine singular Latin participle *coniunctus* is used in *Lumen gentium* to describe the relation of non-Catholic Christians to the church: although non-Catholics do not profess the faith in its entirety, they belong (*pertinent*) to the people of God, and the church is united (*coniunctam*) to them through faith in God the Father and Christ the Son, the rule of Scripture, baptism, and other sacraments. Congar explains:

Regarding non-Catholic Christians the Council formally avoids the expression *ordinari ad*, nor does it speak of belonging in (implicit) desire, *voto*; it uses the word

⁹⁸ The placement of this discussion of the special character of the relation of the church and the Jewish people within a declaration on non-Christian religions is imprecise, although understandable given the historical genesis of *Nostra aetate*. Ratzinger commented in 1966 that the decision to develop an initial Declaration on the Jews into the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions "may not have been the best thing to do." Citing Romans 9, he explained: "These words give the Jews a special place in salvation history and in theology, an image which must not be clouded over" (Joseph Ratzinger, *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*, trans. Henry Traub, Gerard Thormann, and Werner Barzel [Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 1966] 157). More recently, he stated that "our dialogue with the Jews is situated on a different level than that in which we engage with other religions. The faith witnessed to by the Jewish Bible (the Old Testament for Christians) is not another religion to us, but is the foundation of our faith (*non è un'altra religione, ma il fondamento della nostra fede*)" (Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, "L'eredità di Abramo dono di Natale," *L'Osservatore Romano* 140.299 [December 29, 2000] 1). Similarly, Kasper stated in his former capacity as president of the Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews that "Catholic-Jewish relations are not a subset of interreligious relations in general, neither in theory [n]or in practice" (Walter Cardinal Kasper, "Dominus Iesus," address at the 17th meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, New York, May 1, 2001, http://www.bc.edu/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/articles/kasper_dominus_iesus.htm).

coniunctam, “to be united.” The idea is that of a real but imperfect communion by means of one or other of the elements that make up the goods of the Covenant entrusted to God’s People, the totality of which is required in order that there be complete or pure and simple communion.⁹⁹

Through elements of the goods of the Covenant, the church is also united (*coniunctam*) to the Jewish people.

Clearly Jews and Christians are not one people of God in *Lumen gentium*’s sense of a people with a common sacramental life with Christ as its head and organs of visible social unity.¹⁰⁰ There are fundamental theological and liturgical differences between Jews and Christians, and we remain divided by the schism that took place when the Christian Church and rabbinic Judaism emerged as two distinct communities in the aftermath of Rome’s destruction of the Temple. Nonetheless, Christians and Jews share in the covenant faith of the one God of Israel. We understand and practice this covenant faith in different ways, and in this sense we are a divided people who bear the mark of our schism. Yet, writes Kasper, if we take the theology of *Nostra aetate* seriously, “then post-biblical Judaism and the church are not two covenant peoples: they are the one covenant people.”¹⁰¹ The ongoing discussion of questions in covenantal theology should therefore proceed within the context of a conversation between Christians and Jews working together as a people of faith who each belong (*pertinet*) in a distinct way to the new people of God.¹⁰²

Remorse for the Sins of Christians against the Jewish People

Christians and Jews are a people of God divided not only by fundamental theological and liturgical differences but also by a tragic history of polemics, ostracism, and violence. Despite Isaac’s testimony to Pope John XXIII, neither *Lumen gentium* nor *Nostra aetate* acknowledged the way in which Christians have fractured the life of the people of God through our

⁹⁹ Congar, “The People of God” 204.

¹⁰⁰ On the continuity and difference between the people Israel and the church within the theology of *Lumen gentium*, see Aloys Grillmeier, “The People of God,” in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* 1:153–85.

¹⁰¹ Walter Cardinal Kasper, foreword to *Christ Jesus and the Jewish People Today* x–xviii, at xv.

¹⁰² A recent example of this kind of conversation is the Consultation on Jewish-Catholic Relations: Interpreting Scripture and Current Self-Understanding, a gathering of 30 Catholic and Jewish scholars convened at Georgetown University by John Borelli, Special Assistant to the President [of Georgetown University] for Interreligious Initiatives, on February 28, 2010. Borelli discussed the theological need for this gathering in “Troubled Waters” 23.

anti-Jewish practices and theologies of contempt.¹⁰³ Archbishop Léon-Arthur-Auguste Elchinger of Strasbourg is among those who called on the conciliar assembly publically to recognize these wrongs and ask the Jewish people for forgiveness.¹⁰⁴ The painful history of our relationship includes canon 50 of the Council of Elvira (ca. 304), which states that any cleric or member of the faithful who has taken food with Jews should make amends by abstaining from communion.¹⁰⁵ The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) decreed that Jews are not to hold public office, and that they must wear distinctive clothing to enable Christians to limit social relations and avoid a “damnable mixing.”¹⁰⁶ Christian rulers expelled the Jewish population from England in 1290, from France in 1306, from Spain in 1492, and from Portugal in 1496.¹⁰⁷ In 1555, Pope Paul V segregated Jews in Rome within a ghetto, a practice that continued for more than three centuries.¹⁰⁸ Throughout the second millennium of Christian history, theologies that blamed Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and false allegations of ritual murder and host desecration were used to justify mob violence and pogroms against Jews in hundreds of communities throughout the Rhineland (1096); Westphalia (1292); Austria (1294); Franconia (1298); Alsace, Austria, Styria, and Swabia (1336–38); Poland and the Ukraine (1648–49); Russia (1881); and other locales.¹⁰⁹ Given this history, the U.S. Conference

¹⁰³ For surveys of this history, see Anna Foa, “The Difficult Apprenticeship of Diversity,” in *Catholic Church and the Jewish People* 41–53; Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism*, rev. ed. (1965; New York: Paulist, 1985); Robert Michael, *A History of Catholic Antisemitism: The Dark Side of the Church* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

¹⁰⁴ AS III/3:28; Miccoli, “Two Sensitive Issues” 160; Oesterreicher, *New Encounter* 207. Archbishop Patrick O’Boyle of Washington, D.C., and two others made similar recommendations. See Oesterreicher, *New Encounter* 201 and 229.

¹⁰⁵ Charles Joseph Hefele, ed., *A History of the Christian Councils from the Original Documents*, trans. William R. Clark, 5 vols. (1894; New York: AMS, 1972) 1:159.

¹⁰⁶ Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (Washington: Georgetown, 1990) 1:266–67.

¹⁰⁷ See Robin R. Mundill, *England’s Jewish Solution: Experiment and Expulsion, 1262–1290* (1998; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 2002); William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1989) 214–38; Joseph Pérez, *History of a Tragedy: The Expulsion of the Jews from Spain*, trans. Lysa Hochroth (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2007); François Soyier, *The Persecution of the Jews and Muslims of Portugal: King Manuel I and the End of Religious Tolerance (1496–7)* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

¹⁰⁸ Kenneth R. Stow, *Catholic Thought and Papal Jewry Policy, 1555–1593* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1977); Stow, *Theater of Acculturation: The Roman Ghetto in the 16th Century* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2001).

¹⁰⁹ See, e.g., Christopher Tyerman, *God’s War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 2006) 100–106; Jonathan Riley-Smith, “The First Crusade and the Persecution of the Jews,” in *Persecution and*

of Catholic Bishops acknowledged that although Christian antagonism toward Jews alone does not account for the Shoah, it "did lay the groundwork for racial, genocidal anti-Semitism by stigmatizing not only Judaism but Jews themselves for opprobrium and contempt."¹¹⁰ On March 12, 2000, the first Lenten season of the new millennium began at St. Peter's Basilica with a litany of confession that included remorse for "sins against the people of Israel."¹¹¹ Two weeks later, Pope John Paul II tucked a prayer into a crevice in the Western Wall in Jerusalem that read:

God of our fathers, / you chose Abraham and his descendants / to bring Your name to the nations: / we are deeply saddened by the behavior of those / who in the course of history / have caused these children of Yours to suffer / and asking Your forgiveness / we wish to commit ourselves / to genuine brotherhood / with the people of the Covenant.¹¹²

"We Remember: A Reflection on the *Shoah*," the 1998 statement of the Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews,

Toleration: Papers Read at the Twenty-Second Summer Meeting and the Twenty-Third Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society, ed. W. J. Sheils (Padstow: Basil Blackwell, 1984) 51–64; Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 1999) 48–54; William B. Helmreich, foreword to Nathan Hannover, *Abyss of Despair (Yeven metzulah): The Famous 17th Century Chronicle Depicting Jewish Life in Russia and Poland during the Chmielnicki Massacres of 1648–1649*, trans. Abraham J. Mesch (New Brunswick, Conn.: Transaction, 1983) 2; I. Michael Aronson, *Troubled Waters: The Origins of the 1881 Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1990); Edward H. Judge, *Easter in Kishinev: Anatomy of a Pogrom* (New York: New York University, 1992) 40–44; Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 2001) 65.

¹¹⁰ Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Catholic Teaching on the Shoah: Implementing the Holy See's We Remember* (Washington: USCCB, 2001) 10.

¹¹¹ "Universal Prayer: Confession of Sins and Asking for Forgiveness," *Origins* 29 (2000) 645–48, at 647. In preparation for this Lenten prayer, the International Theological Commission prepared the statement, "Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and Faults of the Past," *Origins* 29 (2000) 625–44. On the topic of social ecclesial sin, see also John Paul II's apostolic exhortation *Reconciliation and Penance* (December 2, 1984) no. 16, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_02121984_reconciliatio-et-paenitentia_en.html; Bradford E. Hinze, "Ecclesial Repentance and the Demands of Dialogue," *Theological Studies* 61 (2000) 207–38; Michael B. McGarry, "Apology, Regret, and Intellectual Humility: An Interreligious Consideration," in *Learned Ignorance* 210–24.

¹¹² The text of the prayer is available at http://www.bc.edu/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/catholic/johnpaulii/westernwall.htm.

acknowledged Christian complicity in the Shoah, while carefully distinguishing the church itself from her sinful sons and daughters.¹¹³ Critics of this distinction argue that it fails to account for the institutionalized character of anti-Judaism in the Catholic tradition, while defenders underscore the sinless and divine foundation of the church that is the Mystical Body of Christ.¹¹⁴ Yet insofar as the church is not only Christ's Mystical Body but also the people of God, Congar emphasized, it is composed of sinful people. "As Dom Anscar Vonier saw so well this [the people of God] is the locus in the Church where there are failures and sins, the struggle for a more perfect fidelity, the permanent need for reform and for the effort this involves."¹¹⁵ The church, Ratzinger wrote in his council commentary, "as the People of God on pilgrimage, is also always the Church under the sign of weakness and sin. It is a Church in continual need of God's forgiving kindness."¹¹⁶

Growing Appreciation for the Contributions of Rabbinic Judaism

In this ongoing pilgrimage of the people of God, there has been in postconciliar Catholicism a growing appreciation for the contributions of rabbinic Judaism to theology, spirituality, liturgy, and ethics. In the past, notes David Neuhaus, attitudes toward Jews were shaped largely by narratives of Old Testament heroes and villains, New Testament accounts of those Jews who handed Jesus over to the Romans for crucifixion, and theological constructs of the blind and wandering Jew. "The paradigm change after the Council," he continues, "insisted that the imaginary, textual, and often mythic Jew of Catholic traditional teaching had to make

¹¹³ Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews, "We Remember: A Reflection on the *Shoah*," *Origins* 27 (1998) 669–75. Various other statements are collected in Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Catholics Remember the Holocaust* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1998).

¹¹⁴ Critiques include "Reflections on the *Shoah*: The Catholic Church's Share of the Blame and Responsibility," by the discussion group "Jews and Christians" sponsored by the Central Committee of German Catholics, in *Coming Together for the Sake of God: Contributions to Jewish-Christian Dialogue from Post-Holocaust Germany*, ed. Hanspeter Heinz and Michael A. Signer (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2007) 69–77. Statements of support include Avery Dulles, S.J., "Commentary," in *The Holocaust, Never to Be Forgotten: Reflections on the Holy See's Document We Remember* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 2001) 47–72, at 56–58.

¹¹⁵ Congar, "The Church: People of God" 23–24. See also *ibid.* 202; Congar, "Richesse et vérité d'une vision de l'Église comme 'peuple de Dieu,'" in *Le Concile de Vatican II: Son Église, Peuple de Dieu et Corps du Christ* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1984) 109–22, at 116.

¹¹⁶ Ratzinger, *Theological Highlights of Vatican II* 77.

way for the real Jew, the neighbor of the Catholic in a world composed of many neighbors.”¹¹⁷ As mythic stereotypes give way to real encounters with persons of a deep Jewish faith, the Catholic Church has begun to recognize postbiblical Judaism’s singular contributions to the ongoing life of the people of God. The spiritual heritage of the people Israel, stated John Paul II, is a “living heritage, which must be understood and preserved in its depth and richness.”¹¹⁸ The Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews speaks of Israel’s “continuous spiritual fecundity, in the rabbinical period, in the Middle Ages and in modern times,”¹¹⁹ and the U.S. Bishops’ Conference encourages homilists to “be free to draw on Jewish sources (rabbinic, medieval, and modern) in expounding the meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures and the apostolic writings.”¹²⁰ In 2001, the Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC) recognized the legitimacy of Jewish readings of the scriptural texts common to the Jewish and Christian canons. Even the “Jewish messianic expectation,” they noted, “is not in vain. It can become for us Christians a powerful stimulant to keep alive the eschatological dimension of our faith.”¹²¹

In this light, it is appropriate to revisit *Lumen gentium*’s typological account of God’s covenant with the Jewish people as “a preparation and figure of that new and perfect covenant which was to be ratified in Christ” (no. 9). From apostolic times, as the Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews notes, the problem of the relation between the Old and New Testaments has been resolved by means of typology.¹²² And yet, the Commission continues, “typology . . . makes many people uneasy and is perhaps the sign of a problem unresolved.”¹²³ This unease results in part from our deepening appreciation for Judaism as a living tradition that continued to develop in the centuries after the Jewish-Christian schism. The biblical accounts of the people Israel in the Law and the Prophets prefigure the church as a new people of God, but they are

¹¹⁷ David M. Neuhaus, “Engaging the Jewish People: Forty Years since *Nostra Aetate*,” in *Catholic Engagement with World Religions: A Comprehensive Study*, ed. Karl Josef Becker and Ilaria Morali (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2010) 395–413, at 398–99.

¹¹⁸ John Paul II, “Address to the Jewish Community,” in *Spiritual Pilgrimage* 14.

¹¹⁹ Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism VI.1.

¹²⁰ Committee on the Liturgy, USCCB, *God’s Mercy Endures Forever: Guidelines on the Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic Preaching* (1988) no. 31, <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/godsmercy.shtml>.

¹²¹ PBC, *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002) no. 21.

¹²² Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism II.3. On the origins of the typological tradition, see Jean Daniélou, *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers*, trans. Wulstan Hibberd (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1960).

¹²³ Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism II.3.

also the root of Judaism's own living tradition, which reads texts concerning the people Israel through the Oral Torah and centuries of liturgical and rabbinic interpretation.¹²⁴ The PBC affirms the method of typological exegesis properly practiced.¹²⁵ At the same time, it recognizes the Jewish reading of Scripture as "a possible one" from which Christians have much to learn.¹²⁶ Multiple postconciliar affirmations of Judaism's ongoing spiritual vitality imply that *Lumen gentium's* typological theology of the relation of ancient Israel and the church should be supplemented with theologies that account for the ongoing lived relationship between postbiblical rabbinic Judaism and the Christian church.

Reconsideration of Dichotomous Theologies of the Christian-Jewish Relationship

Postbiblical rabbinic Judaism and Christianity both evolved as distinctive religious traditions in the aftermath of Rome's destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. As Christianity emerged from its original Jewish matrix, one means by which we Christians have articulated our own distinct religious identity is by differentiating ourselves from the Jews with dichotomous formulations: for example, we have defined Judaism as a religion of law and Christianity as a religion of love. Postconciliar engagement with the Jewish tradition has led to a growing appreciation for the complexity of the Christian-Jewish relationship that cannot be expressed in simple dichotomous terms.

One long-standing formulation of this relationship that can be traced at least as far back as Justin Martyr is the distinction between Jews as a people

¹²⁴ On differences in the Christian and Jewish histories of interpretation, see Angela Kim Harkins, "Biblical and Historical Perspectives on 'the People of God,'" in *Transforming Relations: Essays on Jews and Christians throughout History*, in *Honor of Michael A. Signer*, ed. Franklin T. Harkins (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 2010) 319–39.

¹²⁵ The PBC emphasizes that theological exegesis must take into account the complexity of revelation and salvation history and avoid reductionist approaches. It must be historically grounded, and it must recognize that although the goal of the Old Testament is Jesus Christ, "this is a retrospective perception whose point of departure is not in the text as such, but in the events of the New Testament proclaimed by the apostolic preaching. It cannot be said, therefore, that Jews do not see what has been proclaimed in the text, but that the Christian, in the light of Christ and in the Spirit, discovers in the text an additional meaning that was hidden there" (*Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures* no. 21). On typology see also *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism II*.

¹²⁶ *Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures* no. 22. The Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews states that Christians can profit "discerningly from the traditions of Jewish reading" (*Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism II.6*).

“born of flesh and blood” and Christians as a people “of faith and the Spirit.”¹²⁷ According to *Lumen gentium*, Christ instituted a new covenant and called

a people together made up of Jews and Gentiles which would be one, not according to the flesh (*secundum carnem*), but in the Spirit, and it would be the new People of God. For those who believe in Christ, who are reborn, not from a corruptible but from an incorruptible seed, through the word of the living God (see 1 Pet 1:23), not from flesh, but from water and the Holy Spirit (see Jn 3:5–6), are finally established as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession . . . who in times past were not a people, but now are the people of God” (1 Pet 2:9–10) (no. 9).

The *Decretum de Judaeis*—the first draft of what ultimately became *Nostra aetate*—had in like vein described the Jewish people as “children of Abraham according to the flesh.”¹²⁸ Oesterreicher’s account of the genesis of the *Decretum* notes that a discussion about this terminology took place at a plenary session of the Secretariat for Christian Unity in Ariccia in November, 1961. In the wake of a Christian tradition that has denigrated the “carnal Jew,” Oesterreicher emphasizes that the expression “‘Israel according to the flesh’ has no pejorative meaning. It does not stigmatize the Jews for any supposed carnality, sensuality, or worldliness. It refers simply to the Israel that has come forth by natural generation, the offspring of the loins of Abraham.”¹²⁹

Nonetheless, the postconciliar experience of dialogue invites us to nuance *Lumen gentium*’s position that the new people of God is “one, not according to the flesh, but in the Spirit.” Jews do not understand themselves as a people who are one only in the flesh. The flesh, emphasizes Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, is “material for applying the spirit.”¹³⁰ The human being, writes Jewish scholar Michael Wyschogrod, is not a coupling of the spiritual and the material but a being of a basic unity that cannot be abstractly separated or divided.¹³¹ Jewish identity is indeed a matter of physical descent, he notes, but conversion to Judaism is nonetheless possible through a miracle in which a Gentile is reborn spiritually and quasi-physically as a Jew. This, he notes, opens the door to universalism that Christianity widens.¹³²

¹²⁷ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 135.6.

¹²⁸ *Acta et Documenta Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II apparando, Series II, Praeparatoria*, 4 vols. (Vatican City: Vatican, 1969) II/3:458; English translation in appendix 1 of *The Catholic Church and the Jewish People* 191–92.

¹²⁹ Oesterreicher, *New Encounter* 289 n. 23.

¹³⁰ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Man Is Not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Noonday, 1951) 264.

¹³¹ Michael Wyschogrod, *The Body of Faith: God in the People Israel* (1983; Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1996) 66–67.

¹³² *Ibid.* xviii–xxi.

Congar contrasted the blood bonds of fleshly kinship that unite the people of Israel with the spiritual unity of the church that comes not from birth but from baptism. But *Lumen gentium* emphasizes that God “made human nature one in the beginning and has decreed that all his children who were scattered should be finally gathered together as one (see John 11:52)” (no. 13). Insofar as the church truly mediates this eschatological communion of the entire human family, it is united by a fleshly bond of birth akin to that which binds the people of Israel. “‘All flesh,’” John the Baptist proclaimed citing the prophet Isaiah, “‘shall see the salvation of God’” (Lk 3:6; Isa 40:5), a promise that becomes reality through the mystery of the Word made flesh (Jn 1:14). From this eschatological perspective, the church and Israel are a people who are one both according to the flesh and in the Spirit of God.¹³³

A BROKEN PEOPLE ON ESCHATOLOGICAL PILGRIMAGE TO THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD

At the heart of *Lumen gentium*’s theology of the people of God is a vision of the communion of the entire human family united through Christ. The unity and universality of the new people of God is *Lumen gentium*’s repeated refrain.¹³⁴ The dialogue between Catholics and Jews that has transpired in the 45 years since *Nostra aetate* has heightened appreciation for this vision of reconciliation and deepened the spiritual bonds we share as a covenant people. At the same time, the dialogue also expresses our fundamental theological differences and the painful legacy of our past. Jews and Christians both belong (*pertinent*) to the one people of God, but we live this mystery through brokenness and fracture. In a 1997 Declaration of Repentance, the bishops of France reflected on the legacy of the hatred sown on the ground of Christianity’s anti-Judaism and lamented

¹³³ “Flesh,” “body,” and “Spirit” have distinct connotations within the theological traditions of Judaism and Christianity; dialogue that bridges these traditions can be enriching. Daniel Boyarin, in *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (Berkeley: University of California, 1993), describes the fundamentally different discourses of the body and corporeality that developed in patristic Christian theology and the rabbinic tradition. Among the consequences of the Christian-Jewish schism, notes Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, is “the difficulty of Christian praxis to develop a balanced attitude toward the body, toward sex, and toward the family” (“Reflections toward Christian-Jewish Dialogue,” in *Catholic Church and the Jewish People* 29–38, at 34).

¹³⁴ Congar notes Leonardo Boff’s observation that the words *unio* and *unitas* occur 54 times in *Lumen gentium*, not counting the occasions on which the term appears in verbal or adjectival form. Yves Congar, O.P., *Un peuple messianique. L’Eglise, sacrement du salut* (Paris: Cerf, 1975) 83.

"our still open wounds."¹³⁵ Christians enter into dialogue with a Judaism that Wyschogrod describes as "deeply injured."¹³⁶

As a pilgrim people with a fractured history, our theology is *in via*, subject to development as our journey continues. There is not yet consensus in the Catholic Church on some of the fundamental questions in Catholic-Jewish relations. Nonetheless, at this point in the journey, it is clear that we are called to pursue our vocation as God's people in living partnership with the Jews who are the original people of God, chosen according to one rabbinic account not because God's love is exclusive but because other peoples refused to accept God's *Torah*.¹³⁷ "The concept of chosen people," Wayne Dosick comments, "means *not* that Jews were chosen for special privilege, but for sacred responsibility: to be *or la'goyim*, a 'light unto the nations' (after Isaiah 42:6, 49:6), a faith community reflecting God's light of love and law."¹³⁸ This covenant of love and sacred responsibility has never been revoked.

Through the incarnation of the Word of God in human flesh and the paschal mystery of death and resurrection, God has definitively overcome sin and evil and taken all humanity into the divine embrace. "The mission of Jesus," wrote Ratzinger, "consists in bringing together the histories of the nations in the community of the history of Abraham, the history of Israel . . . All nations, without the abolishment of the special mission of Israel, become brothers and receivers of the promises of the Chosen People; they become People of God with Israel through adherence to the will of God and through acceptance of the Davidic kingdom."¹³⁹ Jews do not

¹³⁵ French Bishops, "Declaration of Repentance," *Origins* 27 (1997) 301–5, at 304.

¹³⁶ Michael Wyschogrod, *Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations*, ed. R. Kendall Soulen (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2004) 150.

¹³⁷ "R. Jose b. R. Simon said: Before you stood on Mount Sinai and accepted my Torah, you were called Israel, just as the nations of the world were called by names like Sabteca and Raamah (in Gen 10:7//I Chron. 1:9). But when you stood at Mount Sinai and accepted my Torah, you were called 'my people.' Thus it is stated (in Ps 50:7): 'Hearken, O my people, and let me speak'" (*Midrash Tanhuma*, 3 vols., S. Buber recension, trans. John T. Townsend [Hoboken, N. J.: KTAV, 1997] II.2.1, p. 27). On the refusal of other nations to accept the Torah, see, e.g., *Sifre: A Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy*, Yale Judaica Series 24, trans. Reuven Hammer (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 1986) piska 343, 352–53. An anonymous referee of this article noted the potential fruitfulness of further inquiry into the distinct but comparable Christian and Jewish theologies of election-after-refusal-of-election.

¹³⁸ Rabbi Wayne Dosick, *Living Judaism: The Complete Guide to Jewish Belief, Tradition, and Practice* (San Francisco, Calif.: Harper, 1995) 19.

¹³⁹ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Many Religions—One Covenant: Israel, the Church and the World*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco, Calif.: Ignatius, 1999) 27–28.

believe that Jesus Christ is the messianic source of this reconciliation of nations, but the Jewish and Christian traditions nonetheless share a vision of all people of the earth united in worship of God.¹⁴⁰ Jews and Christians together serve this eschatological destiny through the power of the *Torah*/Word¹⁴¹ and the *Shechinah*/Spirit of God, active in distinct ways in the prayer, liturgy, lives, and traditions of both Jews and Christians. In the end, writes Kasper, Israel and the Church will be reunited, but in “the current eschatological interim, two concurrent parts of God’s one people . . . [are] co-existing as rivals in the positive as well as in the conflict-ridden sense of the word.”¹⁴²

On this side of eternity, there are irreducible and irreconcilable differences between Jews and Christians and deep fissures throughout the human community. Yet even as we stand in a world far different from that of our eschatological hope, the proleptic communion of the people of God must take visible and social form (*Lumen gentium* no. 9). In the present, the church is a sign and sacrament of the eschatological unity of the people of God when it fosters communion among its members who come from a great multiplicity of nations, prefiguring and promoting universal peace (*Lumen gentium* no. 13). The church gives visible and sacramental expression to this communion when it transcends the fault lines of nation, ethnicity, class, and gender that all too often shape the boundaries of our parishes. The Jewish people, in turn, serve the eschatological unity of God’s people when they are *or la’goyim*, a light reflecting God’s love and law unto all nations. Christians and Jews have begun to find creative new ways to give visible witness to the mystery of the covenant life we share, such as the establishment of formal partnerships between churches and synagogues and joint efforts to work for *tikkun olam*, the healing and

¹⁴⁰ See, e.g., Ratzinger, *Many Religions—One Covenant* 104. For two Jewish examples of inclusive eschatological visions, see Wyschogrod, *Abraham’s Promise* 38–39; David Novak, “The End of the Law,” in *Transforming Relations* 34–49.

¹⁴¹ I use “Torah” here in the manner of Jewish theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel, who distinguishes the supernal Torah and the Torah revealed at Sinai. The supernal Torah existed before the creation of the world and is equated with Wisdom (Prov 8:22). The Greek-speaking Jew Philo referred to this Torah as “Logos.” According to the Rabbis, Moses received Torah at Sinai—but not all of the Torah. See Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1955) 262 and 276 n. 7; Heschel, *Heavenly Torah as Refracted through the Generations* (New York: Continuum, 2005) 327.

¹⁴² Cardinal Walter Kasper, “The Relationship of the Old and the New Covenant as One of the Central Issues in Jewish-Christian Dialogue,” paper presented at the Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations, Cambridge, UK, December 6, 2004, http://www.bc.edu/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/articles/Kasper_Cambridge_6Dec04.htm.

repair of our broken world.¹⁴³ That partnerships between Christians and Jews are so strained in the Holy Land—and impossible throughout much of Europe where overgrown cemeteries are the only remnant of once vibrant Jewish communities—is an indication of the depth of the brokenness we now face.

At the same time, the new relationships that are developing between Jews and Christians after centuries of enmity are a true sign of hope in our broken world. I draw this article toward conclusion with a personal account that testifies to this hope. In the fall of 2000, I participated in a journey for Christian and Jewish students and faculty from Poland, Germany, and the United States to the Centre for Dialogue and Prayer in Oświęcim, Poland, at the edge of Auschwitz. The trip was organized by the German priest and theologian Manfred Deselaers of the Centre for Dialogue and Prayer; Michael Signer, the late Abrams Professor of Jewish Thought and Culture at the University of Notre Dame; and Betty Signer, director of the Notre Dame Holocaust Project. After walks through the death camps, lectures, and intense and difficult discussions, we gathered on Friday evening in the dining room of the Centre to welcome the Sabbath. Rectangular tables had been joined as one, draped in white cloth, and adorned with flowers. Sabbath prayers were said, the Sabbath candles were lit, and the *challah* bread was blessed, broken, and shared. There was laughter, conversation in four different languages, the sharing of a meal, and song. The song began at the head of the table, where three rabbinical students from Hebrew Union College led rousing melodies in Hebrew. Then the music moved to the center of the table, where a German priest sang *Salve Regina*. The singing swelled as the Polish students, the most numerous group in the gathering, joined the chorus, and then the music moved back to the rabbinical students, who sang *Hinei ma tov uma naim, Shevet achim gam yachad*. Immediately after they finished, the Polish students at the opposite end of the table began—in unison, without prompting—to sing exactly the same melody, with Polish words: *Zobaczcie, jak jest dobrze przebywać razem z braćmi*. “Behold,” Catholic Polish youth and Jewish rabbinical students

¹⁴³ E.g., at a 2004 meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee in Buenos Aires, participants joined together to assist children suffering from the economic crisis. See Kasper, “Paths Taken and Enduring Questions” 10. For a Jewish reflection on ways that Jews and Christians can work together for the healing of the world, see the Jewish portion of Reflections on Covenant and Mission. “As partners in dialogue,” John Paul II stated in an address to Jewish leaders in Miami, “as fellow believers in the God who revealed himself . . . we are called to collaborate in service and to unite in a common cause wherever a brother or sister is unattended, forgotten, neglected, or suffering in any way, wherever human rights are endangered or human dignity offended; wherever the rights of God are violated or ignored” (*Spiritual Pilgrimage* 109).

were singing together, “how good it is when brothers and sisters dwell together as one” (Ps 133:1).¹⁴⁴ This event, in the terms of the theology of *Lumen gentium*, was an act of the new people of God that prefigures and promotes universal peace (no. 13).

CONCLUSION

“In the genesis of no document,” Stranksy wrote of his experience with the composition and promulgation of *Nostra aetate*, “have I experienced more deeply the interaction of God’s design and the concrete historical process, the dynamism of progress yet not perfectly a successful one, the holy step forward which closes a period of history yet opens a less definite future.”¹⁴⁵ The deliberations of Vatican II took place in the context of this juncture of history. There was among some cardinals, bishops, and theologians a real openness to a new relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people, yet the council participants worked necessarily with their extant theologies. *Lumen gentium*’s theology of the people of God was shaped by Protestant and Catholic biblical and theological scholarship that assumed a primarily typological relationship between the biblical people Israel and the Christian church, as evident in Congar’s influential ecclesiology. *Nostra aetate*, meanwhile, set in motion a dialogue that is establishing a living relationship between postbiblical rabbinic Judaism and the Catholic Church. This is a distinct approach that invites us to revisit *Lumen gentium*’s formulation of the theology of the people of God.

As Kasper has stated, we do not yet have a comprehensive Catholic theology of Judaism, and many theological issues remain unresolved. Nonetheless, in light of the developments that have taken place since the promulgation of *Lumen gentium*, it is evident that God’s covenant with the Jewish people is not only a prefiguration of the new covenant in Christ but also an ongoing reality. The Jews belong (*pertinent*) to the new people of God as the “good olive tree onto which the wild olive branches of the Gentiles have been grafted” (Rom 11:17–24; *Nostra aetate* no. 4), an olive tree that has continued to develop and bear fruit in the aftermath of the Jewish-Christian schism. The new people of God composed of both Jews and Gentiles is divided by fundamental theological differences and tragically fractured by a sinful history of polemics and violence; the olive tree of

¹⁴⁴ Some participants in the gathering speculated that the Jewish melody for this psalm entered Catholic Polish culture at a time before the Shoah, when Jews comprised 10% of the population of Poland. The Polish lyrics are adapted from Psalm 133 by Giuseppe Gennarini.

¹⁴⁵ Thomas F. Stranksy, C.S.P., “The Declaration on Non-Christian Religions,” in *Vatican II: An Interfaith Appraisal* 335–48, at 336.

which Paul spoke is scarred and wounded. In the midst of this brokenness, however, partnerships between Jews and Christians and acts of reconciliation prefigure the eschatological communion of the entire human family. Jews and Christians are a people whom God loves both in the flesh and in the Spirit and calls to walk together in pilgrimage to the mountain of the Lord.