

We often have been moved by her story and her remarkable method of survival. One of the things she said to me, on the way home, was that she felt better to be a victim than a victimizer. She said she couldn't have lived with knowing that she or other people had been responsible for such actions against other people, which I thought was a very interesting statement, and something which I've been thinking about all weekend.

But as we have been dealing with the issue of Christianity and the Holocaust, several times, of course with Dr. Ross and then with several films on the issue, I felt it appropriate to bring in Dr. Willis, Dr. Robert Willis, from Hamline University, to talk about the same subject in a different way. Hamline University has a department of religion, which we do not have here. And he teaches New Testament.

No.

No?

No, not really.

You don't teach the book?

No, theology and that stuff.

Theology. Theology-- it's all the same.

[LAUGHTER]

(LAUGHING) It's not the same.

[LAUGHTER]

That's what happens in state university.

That's it. That's it. Anyway. He has dealt extensively with the Holocaust, from a Christian point of view, especially the post-Holocaust theology. And he'll bring us some of his information, his assessment, here, today, as well as some observations on the Adversus Judaeos tradition.

Thank you, Steve. I'm very happy to be here. I wish I could see you, but I can't. This is a first for me. I've never been videotaped before. And I suppose it's at least somewhat analogous to one's first sexual encounter. You're sort of eager to find out what it's like, but not quite sure what to do.

[LAUGHTER]

So here I am all hooked up. And I was asked whether this is enough wire for me. And I think it is. I usually don't wander out of the room at any rate, when I'm talking. The handouts I think are-- a couple of them, at any rate, will be for the most part self-explanatory. This one is from the book by Lucy Dawidowicz-- ah, wonderful, now I can see you. Good-- The War Against the Jews. And what it gives is a nice, quick, statistical overview of the extent of the destruction, which, of course, was most concentrated in Poland and Ukraine, because that's where the majority of the European Jewish community was centered.

I asked Steve if you had had that. And he said you hadn't. I thought it might be a useful reference point. The bibliography, the list of books from both Jewish and Christian thinkers, I thought might be helpful in case some of you would like to follow up on some of the things that we're going to be talking about a little bit today. These are all, incidentally-- I think this is correct-- available in paperback. The only exception to that, that I know of, is the book by Alice and Roy Eckardt, Long Night's Journey Into Day. That came out only two years ago, and it might not yet be available in paperback but the rest are.

And if you wanted to pick one volume, from that whole list, that would let you get into both Jewish and Christian thinking on the Holocaust, I guess I would recommend the one by Eva Fleischer, *Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era?* Because in that, you have both Jewish and Christian thinkers trying to wrestle with this event and come to terms with it, not necessarily to understand it or make sense out of it but to probe it, to wonder where one goes after an event of that magnitude, whether within the Christian or within the Jewish tradition.

The other two handouts were going to be talking about in a little bit. One contains some passages from the New Testament. And I want to talk a little bit about the role that the New Testament played in shaping certain kinds of cultural attitudes, which became eventually identifiable as antisemitic.

And the other comes from a period slightly beyond the New Testament, roughly the second through the fourth centuries, when the Church was in the process of forming an initial theology, that is in the process of working out its own self-understanding. And as we'll see, it did this precisely in relationship to Judaism and the Jewish people. And so that took a polemical turn.

We can also discern polemics present in the New Testament. And what we have is what is now referred to as the *Adversus Judaeos* tradition in early Christian theology, the theology of the Church Fathers, so to speak. And that term is quite appropriate, since, so far as we know, there were no church mothers writing at that time. Or if they were, they weren't published.

So we have two components, then, of what became an ongoing and lengthy development, namely the development of antisemitism in the West. And I want to concentrate, to a large extent, on the contributions of the Christian tradition to that without ignoring the fact that there are forms of antisemitism other than religious.

Contemporary antisemitism, for example, modern antisemitism, which begins toward the end of the 19th century, is based on the theory of race and racial superiority and racial inferiority that gets tied in with a form of social Darwinism, survival of the fittest. And out of that, one has a slightly different concept of race. That race obviously operated in the context of Nazi ideology. But it was also present, earlier, in the 19th century.

And in 1880, for example, in the "Antisemites Petition," which was which was sent to the German government, at the time, to try to curtail Jewish immigration into Germany. There was a great concern about that, on the part of many individuals in Germany, even though the Jewish community in Germany had gone through a process of assimilation. That is they moved away from an earlier identity, as a kind of separate religious grouping, within the nation, and had become more and more assimilated. That is they had left behind certain Jewish traditions, certain Jewish motifs, dress, diet, and so forth, and had become more and more germanized.

Despite that, there were very strong negative feelings directed toward the Jewish community. And so one can talk about a secular or non-religious antisemitism. And yet in the end, those two are really very closely connected, because the Nazis and Hitler, in particular, in *Mein Kampf* and in other writings and speeches, built fairly directly on the imagery, the negative imagery, the stereotype of the Jew, the theological Jew, if you will, that had come out of the context of the Christian tradition.

And so I want to spend a little time talking about that. But I wanted to back up for just a moment and raise a prior question. And that is why should one, whether Christian or not-- why should one spend time focusing on the Holocaust, as an instance of evil in the contemporary world, when there are so many other possibilities available?

One might focus, for example, on the Turkish massacre of the Armenians in 1915. One might focus on the tragedy of Biafra. One might focus more recently on what happened in Cambodia under the Pol Pot regime. There are a lot of candidates for atrocity. There are a lot of candidates for genocide. One might focus, in our own context, on the treatment accorded, systematically, over the centuries, to either Blacks or Native Americans.

So that if we focus on the Holocaust, it seems to me one initially has to provide some sort of justification for that. In other words, it's not self-evidently the case that that ought to serve as a kind of paradigm, a central example, if you will,

of the enormity of evil in our time.

A book was written a few years ago entitled, *The 20th Century Book of the Dead*, in which an estimate was made that something in the neighborhood of 100 million human beings have been killed, violently killed, not through natural causes, not through famine or earthquake or disease or that sort of thing, but killed in conflict situations and killed in genocidal situations, since the turn of the century. That's an incredible number of people. That's a little under half the population of the United States simply eliminated.

Well, it seems to me that there are at least a couple of things about the Holocaust that do set it apart. And one of them certainly was the role played by technology and bureaucracy, the systematic nature of the killing, the killing process, especially in the death camps that were created in Poland, where German engineering firms competed, submitted competitive bids to be allowed to construct the gas chambers and crematoria, where the whole process was run on as a model of efficiency, in which various individuals did nothing more than simply carry out their job, their normal occupation. Trainmasters, civil servants, record keepers of all sorts, it was systematically put together. It was systematically engineered. It was systematically brought off.

And now, remember this is an event which, in a sense, became focal to the Nazi cause, to Nazi ideology. I think Lucy Dawidowicz makes that clear in her book, *The War Against the Jews*. But if we say, for a moment, that there was a larger context in which war was being conducted, and that had to do with this whole concept of *Lebensraum*, the need to create greater room for Germany, so that Germany might begin to recognize and realize its manifest destiny. That was not something new with Hitler, of course. That piece of ideology is found as far back as Fichte, in the early 19th century, and can be traced in a continuous way beyond that point.

But if you look, for a moment, at that setting, which began with the invasion of Poland, then one has to say that, within that larger context, there was this extremely concentrated effort, whose only end was the extermination of the Jewish community in Europe. And there is no indication whatever, in the context of Nazi ideology, that it would have ended there. I mean it was envisioned as a final solution to the Jewish problem.

And now, one striking aspect of that, and this has to do with the reliance on bureaucracy and efficiency and rationality, because what Hitler aimed at was rational antisemitism not irrational antisemitism, not spontaneous outbreaks against the Jewish community, not pogroms, not unplanned uprisings, as it were, on the part of the populace. Not mob action, as occurred in 1938 in *Kristallnacht*, for example, when the synagogues were burned throughout Germany and glass was shattered in German shops throughout the country. That was one of the last examples of irrational antisemitism. Hitler wanted rational antisemitism.

We have to remember, within that context, life went on in an incredibly ordinary way, even within the setting of the death camps, themselves. And I brought along an example that I think brings that home. This is from a book by Gitta Sereny on Franz Stangl. Franz Stangl was the commandant of Treblinka, one of the death camps in Poland. And this is testimony which she took from people who had been involved in that, one of whom is named Suchomel. I refer to his name in reading this.

He said the cleaning of the SS quarters was done by Jewish girls. The cooking, however, by Polish, non-Jewish women. I have not seen this fact mentioned in any of the histories of the period. Oh, yes, Suchomel, there were three Polish girls working in the German mess. And they lived there, too. Of course, they had their days off and could go and see their families. Oh, yes, they all survived.

If the mind boggles, Sereny continues, at the idea of people having a job at Treblinka, from which they had days off to go and see their families in the surrounding villages, this is perhaps a deficiency in our imagination. For the car entrance to the camp and the section where the Germans and Ukrainians, too, live was, it would appear, anything but forbidding. The street, the mess, the barracks, Stangl's house, the munition depot, the garage and petrol station, all of it was banked with flowers. It was difficult, said Stangl, to describe it adequately, now, but it became really beautiful.

That whole aspect, it seems to me, the systematic attempt to eliminate an entire people, an entire community carried on as a more or less normal enterprise, with all the trappings of an ordinary business occupation, is one aspect of the

Holocaust that seems to me to set it apart from other instances of evil or horror or even genocide in our time.

In that connection, I want to say that I think it's a mistake, at any rate, to try to talk about evil in general. I think that always demeans the victims of whatever evil it is that we're talking about, whether we're talking about what happened to the Armenians, under the Turks in 1915, or what happened to the Cambodians, under Pol Pot, or what happened to Jews, under Hitler. Evil is always particular. And when we focus on evil as simply abstract question, then we lose sight of the particularity of suffering.

So in saying that there are certain features of the Holocaust that set it apart, I do not mean in any way to suggest that the suffering of others, in different situations, was any less real. I do want to suggest, however, that-- at least I am persuaded that there is a sense in which what happened to Jews during the Holocaust, and not only to Jews, to homosexuals and Gypsies and others defined as subhuman or as enemies of the state-- let's keep that in mind as well-- but still, the Jews were the target people. Hitler talks about Jews in Mein Kampf not about Gypsies and homosexuals.

And the role of Jews in Hitler's ideology is absolutely central. Jews were the evil of Germany. And they had to be eradicated. And so the whole notion of a "Final Solution" to the "Jewish problem" was a focused concern. It spilled over. It included other groups. But I want to emphasize the importance of keeping sight of the particularity of suffering, particularity of evil. So in building a kind of case for making the Holocaust at least a central paradigm of evil, I don't want to suggest that we denigrate or reduce the significance or the suffering of other peoples at all.

Now, there's a second aspect to the Holocaust that I think is worth noting. And that has to do with the lengthy history that led up to it and made it possible. Because one simply cannot understand the virulence of the Nazi hatred of Jews and Hitler's obsession with Jews without taking into account the whole long history of the interaction, the tragic interaction between the Jewish and Christian communities, and what happened to the Jewish community within a dominant culture defined, to a large extent, by Christianity. And so we have to take that into account.

We have to take into account, then, the legacy of the New Testament. We have to take into account the legacy of the negative image of Judaism and the Jewish people that developed within the context of Christian theology. We have to see that extended into the Middle Ages, the flowering of a Christian culture, which brought many strengths and many virtues to Western European life. There's no question about that. Made significant contributions. But also, there was this dark strand, this dark thread running through that. And it had to do, centrally, with the role of Jews.

One can see what happened under Hitler and the outcome of Nazi ideology, in a sense, as the coming together of three fairly discernible strands within European history. One is the one I've just mentioned, the lengthy history of antisemitism within the Church, Christian antisemitism, Christian hatred of Jews.

A second strand comes out of the context of the Enlightenment, of the humanism of the Enlightenment, the humanism coming out of the 18th century, the belief in rationality and progress and tolerance and equality which produced revolution in France, and which permitted the opportunity for Jews to become assimilated, to enter into the mainstream of political life, as it were, on the assumption that they would be given all the rights and prerogatives pertaining to citizens, on one condition, namely that they give up any distinctive identity as Jews.

And many in the Jewish communities in the West, in England, France, Germany, to some extent, Italy, did that, entered into the process of assimilation. So that by 1933, for example, when Hitler came to power, one finds a Jewish community in Germany that is very largely an assimilated community, a community in which Jews tended to identify themselves as German first and as Jewish secondly. There were still Orthodox communities in Germany, communities of those who continued to remain observant, observant to Jewish law and to live out of that context. But they were a minority in Germany.

We look at Eastern Europe, that's a different situation. There, Orthodoxy retained a much firmer hold. And the process of enlightenment and, therefore, the process of assimilation was much more reduced. But now, it turned out that the process of assimilation simply did not yield what it was supposed to have yielded, namely a new status for Jews.

Because one can also discern, running throughout the 18th and 19th and into the 20th centuries, an ongoing hostility

toward and suspicion of Jews, assimilated or not, the suspicion that Jews somehow were not really Germans, were not really Frenchmen, but constituted, as it were, a nation within a nation, and, therefore, contained the seeds of subversiveness, could not be trusted. And one finds this accusation surfacing, again and again.

And so one thing that the Holocaust does, in that sense, is to raise the question about the validity and the significance of a certain kind of liberal humanism that emerges out of the context of the 18th century, and the ideals of rationality and tolerance and progress that they gave rise to. That's another strand, it seems to me, that intersects, in 1933 and beyond, with the strand of Christian antisemitism.

And the third strand, of course, much more recent, is that of Nazi ideology and the worldview of Hitler, itself, which focused on Jews, which saw Jews as unremittingly evil, something that needed to be rooted out, totally, from German life, and, indeed, from the world, and which led Hitler, in the end, to describe Jews as bacilli, as germs, as carriers of disease, as the major consistent threat to the purity and the goodness of German culture.

The two former strands then come together in a significant way in Nazi ideology, even though Hitler, of course, was in no sense Christian. He'd been raised in a somewhat Catholic environment. But he, himself, was not a believer in Catholicism or in Christianity. He held instead to a kind of resurgent German paganism, which celebrated the blood and soil, the fatherland, German destiny, rural values, family.

Hitler was very big on family, ostensibly, and sought to return, then, to those values and saw the Jews-- because Jews represented, from his point of view, pacifism, democracy, and internationalism. And therefore, they subverted the central values of German life. That, it seems to me, is another factor to the Holocaust that sets it aside, the historical process leading up to it, the ideological dimension of it, which has to be traced back, finally, if we're talking about Christian antisemitism, all the way into the context of the New Testament.

And I wanted to spend a little bit of time talking about that with you. And I want to say, at the outset, that I am not suggesting that Christianity somehow caused the Holocaust. Because I don't think that case can be made. What I do think one can argue, however, is that Christianity was a necessary factor, in the Holocaust, in that it supplied some central ingredients that fueled Nazi ideology. It supplied a ready-made set of images, negative images, that came directly out of the context of the Christian tradition.

One might argue, it seems to me, that Christianity provided a necessary condition but not a sufficient condition. That is Christianity, in itself, would not have led to the Holocaust, did not ever lead to a Holocaust, did not lead to genocide, although it led to enough horrors. It led to pogroms. It led to expulsions, at various points in history, from Spain, from England, from France. But it did not lead to an outright plan of extermination.

And the reason it didn't was because Jews still played a role, in Christian theology, albeit a negative role Jews came to function as the negative image of Christians, who would, one day, finally be converted. When Christ returned, when God's final judgment would be leveled upon humankind then, at that point, at the end of history, Jews would be converted. And those who were not converted, like the rest of the world that remained unconverted, would then be consigned to final damnation.

Now, that might sound like a negative point in itself, and it is, but it's important to see that, as a part of theology, it prohibits, it sets a limit to the extent of actual negative hostile behavior that the Church can legitimately engage in. The Church could not mount, could not underwrite, could not support a program of extermination, precisely because Jews still continued to play a role in Christian theology, were still part of the Christian story, albeit a negative part. And that's a significant difference. Christianity, in the end, stopped short of genocide, despite all the negative imagery, despite the very real presence of Christian antisemitism, it stopped short of genocide. It did not sanction that. It did not underwrite that.

Now, I want to look, for just a moment, at some of the passages that I gave you. And if you look at the ones from the New Testament, first, we'll say just a couple of words about that. First, one is from the Gospel according to John, and that is the latest of the Gospels in the New Testament. Probably about the end of the first, early part of the second century is when many New Testament scholars date that.

But one can see, in that first passage from the fifth chapter, the way in which the early Christian community began to take over Jewish scripture, which, after all, was its scripture at the beginning. It was the only scripture it had. Because the early Christian community emerged from within the context of first century Judaism, was not initially a Gentile movement. It was initially a movement within first century Palestinian Judaism, and only toward the end of that century did it begin to spread outside and become more and more a Gentile religion.

But what we can see going on in that passage is the use of Jewish scripture, the appeal, you see, there to Moses, to make a negative judgment on those who fail to respond in an appropriate way to the figure of Jesus. So in the Gospel of John, Jesus is made to say, "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father. It is Moses who accuses you, on whom you set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me."

In other words, if Jews understood-- that is those Jews who had failed to respond, in an affirmative way, to the proclamation of the early Christian community or the early community of those who gathered around the figure of Jesus-- that Jesus was, in fact, the promised and expected messiah, the deliverer of Israel, if those Jews, who failed to respond affirmatively, had understood their scriptures correctly, they would have seen that Jesus was, in fact, the messiah. That's the use of scripture to make a judgment against those who fail to respond in a certain way.

There's nothing new about that, incidentally. There was another community, contemporary, which began earlier, began, I think, about the second century before the Common Era, the Qumran community, located along the north shore of the Dead Sea, which also took an uncompromising position toward those other Jews who failed to see things its particular way. So the Qumran community, the community of Essenes ended up leaving the larger Jewish environment and going off and founding a separate community-- very strict discipline, exceptionally strict interpretation of law and condemnation for those who failed or who saw things differently. So there's a pattern that gets repeated, in that sense, on the part of the early Christian movement.

If you look at the second passage, you encounter one of the most violent, if you will, and also one of the standard judgments leveled against the Jewish community.

"You are of your father, the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and has nothing to do with the truth. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God." There again, the charge of Jewish falsehood.

Where do those Jews come from who reject Jesus? They come from the devil. Your father is the devil. That became a very popular image during the Middle Ages. There are various woodcuts depicting Jews in precisely that role, as satanic, evil figures, capable of unlimited evil, a constant presence and threat to the Christian community. So later on, one finds Jews being accused of all sorts of things, poisoning of wells during the plague, desecration of the host, and so forth.

And of course, the charge of blood guilt that comes out of the third passage, from Matthew's Gospel, "His blood be on us and on our children." And that entered into the mainstream of Christian thought and became a consistent basis for alleging the total guilt of all Jews, everywhere, at all times, universal guilt. Not even limited guilt, not even guilt limited to those who were present at the trial of Jesus, and who may have had something to do with the fact that he was put to death, but a universal charge of guilt, presumably acceded to by the Jewish people, themselves. "His blood be on us and on our people."

And in the next passage, from the Book of Acts, from the speech of Stephen, "Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the righteous one, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."

Judaism has failed, first of all, to keep the law-- it has always been disobedient in that sense-- the law given to Moses at Sinai, the law which formed the basis of the covenant between Israel and Yahweh. And secondly, it is systematically killed those who rose up within the ancient Israelite community to call them back to obedience, the prophets. And so one has a consistent pattern set up there. In that sense, that Jews put Jesus to death should come as a surprise to no one.

If you read Stephen's speech, the obvious question is, well, what else would one expect? The Jews have always been a disobedient people. They have always put the prophets to death. Therefore, Jesus, the final prophet, would unavoidably have been put to death. There was no way this people, this stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears you see, not really yet within the covenant so far as hearing is concerned, could possibly have heard and understood and responded to the figure of Jesus.

Now it's true enough that, in the prophetic literature of Jewish scripture, one finds some very harsh judgments, indeed, being leveled against the people of Israel. There's no question about that at all. But you should note what's happening here.

What's happening is that the early Christian community takes that negative aspect of the prophetic literature, the aspect of judgment, and levels it exclusively on the Jewish people and leaves no opportunity, then, as the prophets always did, for restoration, for repentance, for turning back to God, and for obedience to the law. Those are excluded now. And so we have only the negative aspect applied to Judaism.

Where does the positive aspect go, then? Well, it goes to the Church. It goes to the Church, because, remember, the whole of Christian scripture is predicated on this fundamental distinction between the Old Testament and the New Testament, the old covenant and the new covenant.

And Christians understood themselves, then, to have replaced the people of the original covenant, because the people of the original covenant were consistently disobedient, murdered the prophets, and eventually murdered the final prophet, who was interpreted by Christians as being the figure of God, himself, and so were guilty of the charge of deicide, had actually put God to death as a final testimony to their disobedience.

And so you have this movement, from disobedience to obedience, from an original covenant now set aside, no longer having any force, and the people, along with it, equally rejected and set aside, and a new people called into being and a new covenant issuing from the figure of Jesus.

And the last passage gets at that point, directly, from the Book of Hebrews. "The covenant he mediates is better," that is Christ, "since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second." In speaking of a new covenant, he treats the first as obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. One could not ask for a more precise or explicit statement of the status of the original covenant and the people of that covenant in contrast to the new. The old is vanishing away. From the point of view of the writer of the Book of Hebrews, it's obsolete. It is no longer binding.

Now, when you move on to the subsequent developments in Christian theology, from the second to the fourth centuries, the so-called *Adversus Judaeos* tradition, one can see that some of these same themes are picked up and continued and extended. And what you have is a theology, which, on the one hand, is an attempt to think through certain central issues for the Church. The relationship between Jesus and God, for example, what is that relationship precisely? It led, eventually, to the doctrine of the Trinity. And the nature of Jesus-- how is it that Jesus is both human and divine, both God and man?

And along with those concerns, also a concern to position the Jewish community, to identify Jews as those who consistently rejected and continued to reject the truth made manifest in the figure of Jesus. And so we find all sorts of accusations being made during the development of this theological period.

In that first selection from Tertullian, for example, Jews are accused of, idolatry "because they did degrading service to idols and, abandoning the divinity, surrender to images. They did, again, worship gold and kine and groves and enslaved themselves to Baal." That's the one side. The other side is that, "our lesser and posterior people quit the idols." That is those who now form the Church, those who now form the Christian community. "And converted to the same God from whom Israel departed."

That's an important point. Tertullian is not arguing that Christians worship a different God. He's arguing, rather, that

Christians worship the same God but in an appropriate way. Christians then are, by definition, those obedient people who now form the new covenant community. And Jews are, by definition, the disobedient people which forms the rejected covenant community, the old covenant, which is now becoming obsolete.

In the third passage from Hippolytus-- this is from the third century-- we find the opening of a rhetorical question. "Why was the temple made desolate?" He's referring, there, to the destruction of the second temple in the year 69 or 70 of the Common Era. And Hippolytus has an answer. And you should note carefully what kind of answer it is. It's a theological answer. Hippolytus is not asking any sort of empirical question. He's not asking about the relationship between the Jewish uprising and the destruction of the temple. His answer is couched exclusively in theological terms.

"It was because they killed the son of their benefactor for he is co-eternal with the Father." Now that nails down the charge of deicide in an even more precise way than what one finds in the Book of Matthew, Gospel of Matthew, or the Gospel of John in the New Testament.

That phrase, "co-eternal," is a significant phrase that identifies Jesus as having the status of God and, therefore, as being co-eternal with the Father. We're on the way, here, to what will become finally the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. Father and Son are co-eternal, alike in substance. To that was added the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and then you have the completed doctrine of the Trinity.

So that, in putting Jesus to death, it was not simply an action whereby a human being was executed, was brought to trial on false accusations and done in. It was an act whereby God, himself, was put to death. And so what Hippolytus does is to make the charge of deicide explicit. Jews are guilty not only of killing Jesus, Jews are guilty of killing God, of murdering God.

And finally, in the selection from Prudentius, from the fourth century, we have one of the favorite images to enter into Christian consciousness. And that's the image of the homeless Jew, the "Wandering Jew." We even have a plant by that name, right? So we probably have a plant in your home called the wandering Jew. I can't help but cringe mildly every time my wife talks about needing to water the wandering Jew.

[LAUGHTER]

Even though I know she's not antisemitic. Still, one has to ask the question, how do we ever come up with a name like that? That's a weird name. Why not the wandering Swede? The wandering Norwegian? It's only Jews who wander? Why do Jews wander? Because they're supposed to. Because they're homeless.

And in back of that phrase, you see, is a whole sort of subverting of history, namely the notion that, after the destruction of the second temple, all the Jews were expelled from Palestine. They began to wander. Where did they wander? They wandered all over the world. Why do they wander? They wander, because they have been made homeless by God.

"Suffering the penalty for murder and having stained his hands with the blood of Christ, this noble race is scattered and enslaved. It is in captivity under the younger faith. It is in captivity under the younger faith." That's a very potent phrase. That's a very potent phrase.

And it's significant that that was penned in the fourth century, because it was in the early fourth century that Christianity achieved at least quasi-official status within the empire. It was about 313 or 312 that the Emperor Constantine was converted. He had a vision one night, on the eve of a battle. A great cross appeared in the sky. And on it were, written in Latin, of course, the words, "with this sign, conquer." And so he went out to battle the next day and used the cross, and he won. And he decided that there must be something to Christianity. And so he converted.

And in that context, when the emperor converted, that pretty much signaled to people, generally, that it would be a good thing if they thought seriously about Christianity. So Christianity automatically gained a kind of ascendancy and a kind of power and was on its way to becoming an official religion. It hadn't been official before that time. And I might say, incidentally, that alongside the polemic from Christians that we've been looking at, directed towards Jews, there were equally sharp retorts from those within the Jewish community.



But after 313 of the Common Era, one can begin to see that shift. Because Christianity becomes more and more the official religion and gets tied up with the state and, therefore, gets tied up with political power and, therefore, can literally make life and death decisions about people who remain marginalized.

And Jews remain marginalized, within a dominant Christian culture, precisely because they refused to convert, even though there were ongoing and countless efforts throughout the whole development of the culture of the Middle Ages. Forced disputations, in which Jewish thinkers were brought before Christian theologians and asked to defend their views-- one can find this beginning as early as the dialogue between Justin and Trypho from, I think, the third century.

Trypho is a Jew. And Justin's a Christian philosopher. And guess who wins? Obviously, Justin demonstrates the superiority of Christian faith to this would be Jewish thinker. And that pattern was repeated down through the centuries. There were also occasions of forced baptism, many such occasions, when Jewish communities were given the option either of converting or being expelled. And so within the context in which Christianity is not only the dominant religion but allied very closely to the power of the state, the position of the Jewish community, as a marginalized community, became much more precarious, much more subject to threat from without.

And all of this was undergirded-- this is an important point to see, folks. All of this was undergirded by the dominant Christian theology, which positioned Jews and the Jewish community, in a certain way, in a negative fashion.

Steve said that he had given you the sheet from Raul Hilberg's book, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, which parallels Church legislation with Nazi legislation. I think that's a very good thing to go back and look at. If you haven't studied that closely, you ought to look at it more carefully. Because one of the things that happened after 1933, in Germany, was a subversion of the law.

The law was defined in a certain way. It was used as a tool to exclude, to harass, to persecute. And one finds, in the development of Christian culture and Christian societies, similar efforts to use the law to circumscribe the legitimate sphere within which Jews would be allowed to operate. And so one finds restrictions on intermarriage, one finds restrictions on the use of the Talmud, one finds restrictions on who Jews are able to hire. They cannot hire Christians as servants nor have Christians as slaves and so on.

All of that legislation enacted by the Nazis-- and students are always shocked to realize this-- had its predecessor in the practice of Christians toward Jews much earlier. Once again, what the Nazis did not come out of a vacuum. There was a model. There was a pattern, ready to hand, that could be followed.

Well, Christian antisemitism is a very black stain on the history of the Church. So too, is the Church's treatment of women, but that's another story, isn't it? It's enough for the moment to note the treatment of Jews at the hands of Christians. And the fact that Christianity prepared the way, significantly, for the advent of something as horrendous as national socialism and the ideology of Jews that it contained.

Now, the question is, of course, what can be done about it? Is there any hope that that sort of thing can be overcome? Steve also said he read the passages to you from Luther's diatribe against the Jews, written in 1543, "Against the Jews and Their Lies." And he also pointed out that 20 years earlier, in 1523, Luther had written what seemed, at the time, to be a conciliatory tract, "That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew."

And in that earlier tract, you might recall, he counseled patience and kindness on the part of Christians in dealing with Jews. Whereas Luther believed that the reason Jews hadn't converted up to that time was because they simply had been led astray by all of the evils and falsehoods of the Roman Church, which Luther was in full revolt at that time.

But that once they heard Luther's new understanding of the gospel, which he also thought was proper understanding of the gospel-- the notion of justification by grace through faith, that we don't earn our way to favor with God. We can't sort of work our way into grace. Grace is given us a gift. All we can do is receive the love of God and live out of it accordingly.

Luther was pretty sure that once Jews heard that, they would say, well, yeah. That's right. That sounds good to me. And it was just the Papacy, and all that money going out of Germany, down there, to rebuild Saint Peter's, and all of this nonsense about indulgences and so forth. Yeah, let's give Christianity a chance. But unfortunately, they didn't, of course.

What happened was that Jews, in effect, listened, thought about it, and said, well, thank you very much, but no thanks. We'll stay Jews. And so by 1543, Luther turned bitter and issued this diatribe, in which, if you read it-- and it's a very long writing. And for many, many years, it was not published, at all. I mean it wasn't translated, rather, for what might seem a good reason. But it's published now. It's available in a brand new translation of all of Luther's works. And there it is, "Against the Jews and Their Lies," takes up an entire volume. It's a very long piece of writing.

The little excerpt that you have or that I have, in this volume, *The Jew in the Medieval World*-- it's a very good book, incidentally, a very nice collection-- is very short. But what it indicates is that, in Luther's writing, is laid out a program for dealing with Jews, which is tantamount to a final solution. Because Luther calls for the elimination of Jewish property, forbidding of Jewish prayer and the use of the Talmud, travel by rabbis, and on and on, none of which was enacted in his time.

Luther sent this off to the princes, appealed to them to put it into operation. But they didn't. They ignored it. But it was there. It was there. And it was enacted, eventually, by the Nazis. The Nazis, in that sense, had a very nice blueprint for what to do with the Jews. Did Luther cause the Nazis, then? Of course not. Of course not.

But if you're asking how or what hope is there for eliminating this infection of antisemitism, can we get rid of it? The answer is probably not. Probably not. I'm not overly hopeful about that. Steve?

I just wanted to relate something that Hinda brought up, afterwards. She mentioned that she occasionally, when she speaks to groups, she starts off with a statement or an alleged statement that someone had suggested a law killing all bicyclists and Jews. And she asked people to respond to that. And the usual response is, why the bicyclists?

Right.

Not, why the Jews, but why the bicyclists.

Yeah.

And I think this is what you're suggesting, that for centuries you have this conditioned response.

Right.

And it can be simplified to that degree.

Yeah. In fact, I used that story in an article that I wrote. And in my version of it, someone is at an early Nazi rally, where Hitler is speaking, and asks that very question of Hitler. I think it was something like this. Hitler's going along at a good clip. And suddenly, this questioner comes along and says, and what about the bicyclists? Because Hitler's been ranting about the Jews. And so this question comes, what about the bicyclists? And Hitler says, why the bicyclists? And the question is, why the Jews?

Of course, it's a little misleading, because it suggests that there is no more rationale for focusing on the Jews than there is on the bicyclists. And in sort of an absolute way, that might be true. If you're asking what had Jews actually done to merit the attention that they received, the answer is nothing, you see. And any more than they had throughout the development of Christian history.

I mean it's simply not the case that Jews were actually poisoning wells during the plague. Jews were dying just like everyone else. Nor is it true that they kidnapped children on the eve of Passover to use the blood of a Christian child to make the Passover wafers with, but millions of people believe that-- still continue to believe that, incidentally, in Spain and some other places. Sounds strange, doesn't it?

But yet, in another sense, I mean. If you take the history of antisemitism, as developed within the Christian tradition, into account, then one has to ask the question, what other target was there? I mean, if you're trying to mobilize people around an enemy, who's the enemy going to be? And remember, it has to be sort of a universally significant enemy. And it has to be an enemy that will suffice to account both for the threat of Bolshevism and for the threat of runaway capitalism.

The image of the Jewish banker, right, the Rothschilds? And the threat from the East, communism? Well, Jews were responsible for both of those in Hitler's mind. And he said, well, how can that be? They cancel each other out, don't they? I mean, it's either or. I mean either Jews are good capitalists or they're communists. They can't be both. I mean if they're mounting both those threats, then they're not as shrewd as we have given them credit for.

But to make that appeal, you see is to become far too rational in your analysis, far too rational. What you have to see is the way in which an ideology can take over one's consciousness and remove the possibility of rational analysis. One simply believes things.

Now, it would be unkind to suggest that, in the present administration, there might be some parallels in that process, in terms of our view of the threat of communism in our own hemisphere. So I invite you to think on that, because I'm not going to say anything about that. But you can think about that, right? I mean, there's a communist under every rock, right? Or almost every rock, certainly behind every wastebasket.

So if one asks whether we can get rid of antisemitism, my answer is no, probably not. Antisemitism is going to be with us. I brought along an article from the Minneapolis Star. This is from February 10th, 1982. But it's an article on Poland scapegoats. Jews take blame for economy, as always. And also for Solidarity-- why is there such a thing as Solidarity? Well, it's a Jewish plot.

Now, something you should know about the Jewish community in Poland today. There were about 3 and 1/4 million Jews in Poland before World War II and before the annihilation process. Today, there are about 6,000 Jews in Poland. 6,000 Jews and not a single rabbi in Poland. And yet, who gets blamed?

It raises an interesting question, it seems to me. What if there were no Jews at all in Poland or maybe anywhere? What if there were no Jews anywhere in the world? Well, the answer, it seems to me, is clear. We'd have to invent them, right? We'd have to conjure them up. If there were literally no Jews, because Poland is close enough, as it is, to having literally no Jews.

But there's antisemitism in this country, as well. It's been present for a long time in groups, like the Ku Klux Klan, white nativist political movements. It's present now in groups like Posse Comitatus and some of the fringe political groups, the survivalist groups, that operate out in the hinterlands, in Idaho and Wyoming. Wild stuff, really wild stuff. There's an interesting article, I think, last month's issue of the Atlantic magazine, an article about those folks out there, and how they view the world.

And how they view the world is peculiar. It's strange. It's frightening. It makes me glad I live in the Twin Cities. I don't know how things are here in River Falls. But in Twin Cities, folks, for the most part, view the world in what I think are ordinary ways. That is they don't see a plot every time they look over their shoulder. But people who get caught up in these groups do.

And the chief fomenters of those plots turn out consistently to be Jews, Jewish bankers, Jewish businessmen, Jewish television and movie personalities and producers. Jews are everywhere. Jews control this country. That's an old canard. That's an old argument. And it's still present. So I don't think antisemitism is going to go away.

On the other hand, there is some hope. Because, at least some within the Christian community-- and I think it's a growing number of Christian thinkers-- have begun to take seriously the significance of the Holocaust for Christian faith. And not only that, but church bodies, as well, have begun to think things in a somewhat different way as a result of the Holocaust.

There was a statement from the Second Vatican Council, for example, on religious liberty. The Second Vatican Council was held from 1962 to 1965. And it came out with a declaration on religious freedom, which was striking, because it allowed the validity of other traditions beyond Catholicism, beyond that version of Christian faith. And in particular, it pointed to the long relationship between Jews and Christians, between Judaism and the Church, that had endured over the centuries. And it deplored outright acts of hostility and antisemitism. Now, a lot of people said, well, that didn't go very far. But it was a start. It was a start.

In 1983, there was a meeting of the World Lutheran Federation-- Lutheran World Federation in Stockholm, which came out with a statement rejecting Luther's theology of the Jews in that one pivotal writing of his. And they said, at one point, "we hold that an honest historical treatment of Luther's attacks on the Jews takes away from modern antisemites the assumption that they may legitimately call on the authority of Luther's name to bless their antisemitism. We insist that Luther does not support racial antisemitism, nationalistic antisemitism, and political antisemitism. Even the deplorable religious antisemitism of the 16th century, to which Luther's attacks made important contribution, is a horrible anachronism when translated to the conditions of the modern world."

So there are some signs of hope. And in terms of what Christian thinkers are trying to do-- and I brought some of this material along with me today. You're welcome to have a look at it, after class, if you'd like. Some of the books are on the list I gave you.

It seems to me that one can talk about some key concerns that have emerged on the part of Christian thinkers. Because this whole notion that the Holocaust is an event that is equally significant for Christians and for Jews and, I would argue, for liberal humanists, as well--

| mean, I think anyone who still clings to the notion that human beings are somehow possessed of an eminent reason, rationality, and that, therefore, they can get a clear cut handle on the world and move it forward, as it were, the whole notion of progress, that we are rational beings, and, because we're rational beings, we can sort out the world in an appropriate way and move it forward, has to be looked at rather sharply given the conditions of our time.

Because, if one can make the case that reason, in the context of science and technology, politics, perhaps, have brought benefits, that democracy is an advance, when it appears and is maintained over totalitarian or fascist forms of government-- and I think most people would agree with that-- at the same time, we have to look at the downside of that, that is at the incredible problems that technology brings. If it brings solutions, it also brings problems.

But even beyond that, it seems to me that the kind of liberalism that grew out of the 18th and 19th centuries was one which made the position of Jews at best ambiguous. And it's not by accident, perhaps, that some of the most virulent antisemitic statements can be found emanating from the context of that sort of liberal humanistic outlook. So that's something that liberal humanists have to answer to, have to try to take into account.

And while I wouldn't want to identify myself as a liberal humanist, there's a sense in which we're all liberal humanists, because we're all children of the Enlightenment. I mean we live in a period a post-enlightenment period, for example, some might even say in a post-Christian period. But, nevertheless, we still live in a period in which a great deal of hope is placed on the virtue, on the power of reason, rationality, when extended into the context of technology, to solve the problems that we face today. And I think we need to examine that.

It's clear, of course, that the Holocaust is a crucial event in the Jewish community. There is no question about that, whatever. In fact, there are two crucial events in the contemporary history of that community. One is the Holocaust, and the second is the re-establishment of the State of Israel. And those form, as it were, the two foci around which a good deal of contemporary Jewish thought revolves.

Jewish thinkers approach those issues, in different ways, and the Holocaust in particular. And I suppose, just to make a comment, for a moment, on that point, if I had to indicate where the breaking point is, it seems to me that it lies in the question whether the Holocaust really represents something radically new, in the experience of the Jewish community, or whether, in a sense, it is simply a continuation of the sort of catastrophe and tragedy that the Jewish community has

known over the centuries beforehand. And on that point, not surprisingly, one finds some strikingly different positions emerging.

One Jewish thinker, Richard Rubenstein-- I brought one of his books along, I think, *The Cunning of History*. Well, it was really his earlier book, I think, a collection of essays, entitled *After Auschwitz*, which explored that whole question. And Rubenstein simply came to the conclusion that, after Auschwitz, it was no longer possible to believe in the God of the covenant or, indeed, to believe in a God who somehow controls history and moves it providentially, from beginning to end, to some sort of appropriate conclusion. That if the Jewish people went up in smoke during the Holocaust, so, too, did the covenant.

And one cannot believe any longer in a covenant, in the God of the covenant, in the chosenness of the Jewish people. Although Rubenstein also recognizes that, psychologically, it's next to impossible to get rid of that notion, the notion of having been chosen, having been called to a certain kind of task and responsibility within the context of history.

But what Rubenstein proposed is, in its own way, somewhat interesting. He proposed, nevertheless, a retention of the tradition, a retention of the tradition of Judaism, the holidays, the festivals. Because those give individuals an identity. They root them in a community. And they are, therefore, important. They are psychologically and historically important even if not theologically important. That is they don't link us to any transcendent reality. They don't link us to God. Because after Auschwitz, one cannot believe any longer in the God of the covenant.

The concept of peoplehood remains central. The concept of family is important. And individuals grow to some kind of maturity and identity only within the context of the community not as isolated autonomous beings. And so Rubenstein retained the tradition at that level. He even talked about a kind of neopaganism that is a celebration of the Earth, a celebration of the givenness of life, a celebration of the dynamics that enters into that and set within the context of community.

But the problem or the irony, it seems to me, is that, in appealing to a kind of neopaganism, he veers uncomfortably close to the sort of thing that one found emerging in Nazi ideology. That, too, was a kind of neopaganism. That, too, was a celebration of blood and Earth and soil and identity within community. And the parallels, in that sense, are rather striking.

But now, there are other thinkers in the Jewish community who say, well, the Holocaust is significant, yes. But it's not significant in the sense that it requires a total recasting of the tradition, a total rethinking of the tradition. People like Jacob Neusner, for example, who teaches at Brown University, wrote an article a number of years ago, in *The Journal of Religion*, titled "The Implications of the Holocaust."

It was a very interesting article, because what Neusner did was to argue that the Holocaust, that is Holocaust theology-- and Holocaust theology, in either Jewish or Christian form, didn't emerge until toward the end of the '60s, early part of the '70s. It was a delayed reaction as it were. It took time for people to assimilate that event. First of all to come to know about it in any thorough way.

I mean during the event, itself, there were certainly people in all the Allied governments who knew about it, because they were told, again and again. And they did not act. But it was not known, generally. It was not known, generally. And so it took a while for the event to emerge and become assimilated. It took even longer for people in the Jewish and Christian communities to begin thinking about the event, to begin to see that, here, is an event that has theological implications, that requires theological thought.

And when that occurred, it was toward the end of the '60s and into the '70s, when both Christian and Jewish thinkers began to focus on the Holocaust and, in a sense, to make that a kind of point of departure for theological reflection and construction. Well, you also know that what was going on in the society at that time. Because we're talking, here, primarily about American thinkers within the Christian and Jewish communities.

We were involved in the civil rights movement. We were involved in massive protests against the Vietnam War, a debilitating war that seemed simply to drain resources and human lives, endlessly, on both sides, without any

perceivable outcome and, therefore, in the minds of many, to be an unjustifiable war, an unjust conflict.

Now Neusner ties that to the rediscovery of a kind of self-identity on the part of American Jews because of the State of Israel. What does that mean? It means that, finally, Jews have a place that is really their own, that they define, and where they are not beholden to or dependent on the goodwill or good wishes of any other group to sustain their rights. Israel is a Jewish state, which does not mean that other people can't live there. Other people do live there. Other groups live there. It does mean, though, that it is defined primarily by its Jewishness.

And that, too, is something of a problem, because there are tensions, at the moment, between Orthodox Jews and so-called secular Jews, that is Jews who no longer live within the context of the tradition. Now, what conclusion did Neusner draw from that?

Well, he said that we can understand this upsurge of interest, in the Holocaust and this attempt to build a theology on it, as a reflection of the general unrest and ennui that is present in American society at the present time. In other words, it's a passing thing. But he also argued that it was a mistake. Because you don't need to do anything, really, to come to terms with the Holocaust.

Jews have known how to deal with catastrophe since at least the year 70 of the Common Era and the destruction of the second temple, and certainly down through the resulting pogroms and expulsions that made up a good portion of their history within the context of the Christian culture. So in that sense, what Neusner argues is that the tradition suffices. Jews already know how to deal with catastrophe. And the Holocaust, then, is not unique. The Holocaust is simply another instance of what Jews have lived through countless times before.

And so at the end, as if to answer the implicit question in the title of the article, "The Implications of the Holocaust," Neusner said--

--this book, *The Tremendum*. And *The Tremendum* is simply a lengthy essay on the radical nature of the Holocaust and the challenges that it poses to Jewish belief and outlook. For Cohen, the Holocaust is something radically new. The near destruction of a people, in his mind, cannot be easily compared or paralleled with the expulsion of a people. That's different. There's a progression involved that sets the one event apart from the other.

Raul Hilberg, in his book, *The Destruction of the European Jews* sets up a kind of process of exclusion, if you will, as regards the Jewish community, that goes in three stages. And the first had to do with what Christians said to Jews, historically, which was that you have no right to live among us as Jews. That was the word from Christians.

The word from secular rulers was, you have no right to live among us-- the expulsion process. And the third came from the Nazis-- you have no right to live, period. Now there's a progression, there, that embodies significant differences in moving from the first to the last. There's a significant difference between saying, to Jews, you have no right to live among us as Jews, therefore convert. Or you have no right to live among us, therefore leave. And you have no right to live.

The last undergirds a policy of genocide, legitimizes a policy of extermination. The preceding two do not. And so in that sense and also in view of the very large degree to which the Nazi program succeeded in ridding Europe of Jews, Cohen sees it as something that is radically new and, therefore, that requires a rethinking of the nature of God and of what can be said about God in relationship to that event. Because what can be said about God in relationship to that event will contain implications as to what can be said about Jewish belief, about the Jewish people, about the covenant, and what can no longer be said.

In contrast to that, again, another thinker, who argues that the Holocaust can be contained within tradition, is Irving Rosenbaum, who wrote this very interesting book, *The Holocaust and Halakhah*. Halakhah has to do with the kinds of legal decisions or judgments that are made on the basis of Jewish law. What may Jews do in this or that particular situation?

And what Rosenbaum argues, in a very fascinating way in this book, because he gives example after example, is the

way in which, even within the context of the ghettos, which was the preliminary stage to being deported to the death centers in Poland, and indeed, even in the death camps themselves, even at Treblinka and Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz and so forth, Jews continued to rely on halakhah for deciding how they were to live and what they were to do.

For example, may Jews ignore the requirement of fasting on Yom Kippur if they already face starvation? May they ignore that requirement? And whom does one go to for an answer? Well, one goes to the rabbi. One goes to one trained in Jewish law to give an answer.

Another question-- if women know that becoming pregnant means that they will be automatically put to death, if they become pregnant, is it then legitimate to perform an abortion? That was another question that emerged. And this emerged within the context of the camps themselves. And again, the community went to rabbis for an answer.

Now, Rosenbaum's point is that the halakhah did not collapse during the Holocaust. The rule of law continued to be what it had always been, namely that focal point within the context of Jewish identity that sustains a community, through whatever catastrophe it faces, and enables it to emerge on the other side.

So Rosenbaum mounts a fairly strong argument for the consistency and the validity of the halakhah. Indeed, his opening statement, I think, is very interesting on that point. It comes in the very first chapter. "It has become almost an article of faith that the Holocaust was without precedent in Jewish experience. It was not. But the mistaken assumption that it was has not only spawned an entire literature of Holocaust theology but also has been responsible for an almost total unawareness of the role played by the halakhah in the lives and deaths of the Holocaust victims." What Rosenbaum, then, is saying that the Holocaust was not unique, in that sense, just as Neusner argued that in his article.

And when we turn to the context of Christian reflection on the Holocaust, then we encounter, obviously, a different set of circumstances. Christians are not asking whether the tradition was one that enabled them to cope with the Holocaust. They have a different sort of burden. Namely, they have to deal with the fact that their tradition contributed, indirectly at least, to making the Holocaust possible, that the negative view of Judaism and Jewish people, Christian antisemitism, was a factor in the attempt to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe. That's what Christians have to deal with.

And so this has given rise to a somewhat different agenda. Christians need to reexamine their tradition, from the ground up, and to enter into a sustained process of reconstruction at various points. And let me just mention four, that I think are absolutely crucial, and the fifth that is also important but that has not been taken up by as many.

The first thing that Christians need to think about is their fundamental relationship to Judaism. What is the relationship between those two traditions? How are Christians to understand Jews? And more pointedly, how are Christians to understand the fact that, for over 20 centuries, now, Jews have refused to become like them, have insisted on remaining who they are, on retaining their own identity? How can we make sense out of that?

Now, they don't mean how can we make sense out of it from any kind of empirical point of view, as though there might be some sort of hitherto undiscovered historical or psychological or sociological explanation that will unlock the key to that mystery and let us get on with the business then of converting Jews. But the question is rather different, namely, how can we understand that theologically, in a positive rather than a negative way? Is it possible, is it conceivable that there might be a positive reason why Jews have refused to convert, despite the best efforts of Christians down through the centuries? Why do Jews insist on remaining Jews?

And various thinkers have addressed themselves to that. One of the earliest was an Anglican theologian, James Parkes. That name is spelled P-A-R-K-E-S. Parkes wrote a number of studies, the best of which is-- I think it's "The Struggle Between the Church and the Synagogue," but it deals with the early historical development of Christianity as over against its parent religion. But he wrote a number of other books, as well.

And one thing that he argued for, very strongly-- same sort of thing that Rosemary Ruether argues for in her book, Faith and Fratricide, and that A. Roy and Alice Eckardt argue for in their book, Long Night's Journey Into Day, and that A. Roy Eckardt argued for in his earlier books, namely that Christians ought to stop trying to convert Jews, stop trying to make Christians out of them.

Why should they do that? Well, because Jews don't need to be converted. Jews are already with God. Jews already have a relationship with God. And they have that in and through the original covenant, which has not been set aside or abrogated but is still in force.

How do they justify that? Well, by a careful reading of Romans 9 to 11, those chapters in which Paul wrestled with the fact that most of his fellow Jews did not acknowledge Jesus as the Christ but stayed Jews. And Paul uses the image, there, of the root and the branch, Christian faith being the branch that has now been grafted onto the root of Jewish faith, out of which it comes, by which it is nourished and sustained.

And these thinkers argue in a similar way, that the Jewish people had the primary, the original relationship with God, the God of the covenant, the God of history. Christians are privileged to have a place, within the context of that covenant, through the figure of Jesus. Jesus is not one then who sets up discontinuity between Jews and Christians, between the synagogue and the church, but rather one who opens up the original covenant to Gentiles, to non-Jews.

Jews are already with God. Why would we convert them? It is Christians who need to be brought into the household of God. Its Gentiles who need to be brought into the household of God in and through the figure of Jesus. And so there can be no legitimate agenda of conversion. Christians have no need to try to convert Jews to their particular outlook.

Now, that raises some interesting possibilities for the notion of dialogue, which, it seems to me, in the case of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism is quite different than it is in the case of the relationship between Christianity and Buddhism or Islam or Hinduism or Daoism or any of the other major religious traditions of the world, in part because of the lengthy history that has developed between those two faith communities. We can't just ignore that.

Christians have not been intertwined, historically, with Buddhists the way they have with Jews. Buddhists have not been placed, identified, given a role in the context of Christian theology in the way that Jews have. Jews were given an identity by Christians, a largely negative identity, except at the end of history, if you will. But that didn't happen in the case of Buddhists or Muslims or Hindus. So that the fundamental context of dialogue, it seems to me, is charged in a completely different way.

And the other thing that makes dialogue between Jews and Christians different, it seems to me, is the fact that Christians still draw from and are nourished by certain key aspects of Judaism and the Jewish tradition. And here, I'm talking about Jewish scripture, which is still the larger part of Christian scripture. That's worth remembering. It's the larger part of Christian scripture or what became Christian scripture. 39 books in the Old Testament. And together, they comprise a body of writings that are much lengthier than the 27 writings, produced by the early Christian community, that make up the New Testament.

The language about God, the imagery, the concepts, all of those are drawn from the Jewish tradition. Christians didn't invent anything. They borrowed, later. They borrowed from Greek philosophy. They borrowed from Plato and later from Aristotle. They had to. If you're going to talk theology, you have to have some kind of conceptual framework in which to do it. And philosophy provides a conceptual framework. And in that context, it was Greek philosophy that provided the concepts. But that's a different issue.

If we're talking about fundamental concepts, like God, human, heaven, hell, covenant, grace, all of those concepts come straight out of Judaism. Christians didn't invent them. The right to pray, to give praise, adoration, where are the models for those taken from? From the context of Jewish worship. So in that sense, again, there is a unique dynamic present in any kind of encounter between Jews and Christians, any possibility of dialogue.

But now, at the same time, one has to say that the hardest thing to get rid of, the hardest thing to get rid of for Christians, because it keeps coming back, like Banquo's ghost, to form a hidden agenda, is this old conversionist motif, this old conversionist motif, that finally, somehow, some time, Jews really ought to think seriously about becoming Christians. Very hard to get rid of that-- extremely hard to overcome that. But at least, some within the Christian community are beginning to think about that. Not everyone.



It was only a few years ago that the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church-- are any of you involved in that, incidentally? Any Missouri Synod folks here? Any Wisconsin Synod folks here? The last thing I want to do is offend anyone.

The Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church produced a brochure. And it was a brochure that was designed to provide guidance in interacting with Jews. And the outcome of such interactions was to be the possibility of conversion. The only thing is, it didn't quite come off. It was a horrible thing. It was terrible. It used cartoons for one thing. And in those cartoons were present many of the traditional stereotypes of Jews, the notion that Jews, universally, have a certain kind of appearance and speak in a certain way and leer. Jews leer. Everyone knows that, right?

I remember the first time I went down to Vanderbilt University. It was a workshop on Judaism, a 10-day workshop on Judaism. And one Friday evening, we went to services at one of the local synagogues. And I remember. And I thought myself enlightened at the time. We all like to think of ourselves as enlightened, don't we? No one would ever identify himself or herself as unenlightened. So we automatically assume we're enlightened. But suddenly, here I was in the midst of these Jews for Friday evening service.

And I realized, with a shock, that they had blonde hair, lots of them, and they spoke in Southern accents. That was shocking. I mean, I assumed that, even though it was the South, Jews would still sound the same. They sound the way they do in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, right? I mean that's the way Jews are supposed to sound. But that's the way people are supposed to sound, isn't it? I mean everyone sounds strange if you go South of the Mason-Dixon line.

So we all have these stereotypes locked fairly deeply in our psyches. And they're ferreted out at the oddest times and the oddest ways. For the Lutherans of the Missouri Synod, they came rolling out when they wanted to put together this little brochure that would help folks go out and encounter Jews. But the old agenda was still there, the old agenda called conversion. Some thinkers, at least, are beginning to move away from that.

A second area of concern has to do with the negative images of Jews in the New Testament. And we looked at some of those passages. What can be done about that? What do you do when every Holy Week-- and this happens because--

My wife and I like to go up to Saint John's University for Palm Sunday services, because I spent some time up there at the Ecumenical Institute. And I even went up and lived with the Benedictines for a month, which my wife thought was a little strange. But she let me do it anyway.

So we went up for services. And the reading, for Palm Sunday, was the entire story of the arrest and trial and crucifixion of Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew. And it was read straight without any commentary of any sort. Now, the question that one has to ask, the question the Christian community has to ask is what happens when we continue to use scriptures, which embody negative attitudes and hostility toward Jews, what happens when we continue to use those, straight, without any accompanying remarks that set those in a context, you see?

The context being that of the tension between two groups, within Judaism, in the first century, where one can understand that it was a political situation. And there were polemically charged comments floating back and forth. What we have, in the New Testament, is in a sense a record of one side of the polemics. The other side didn't get in. The other side didn't make it. How do we deal with that?

It seems to me that we have to begin to rethink the whole context of liturgy, the whole process of worship. We have to become morally attuned to the problems created for the Christian community by its own scriptures, and the degree to which those scriptures have supported and extended, over the centuries, an attitude of antisemitism within the Church, which is not quite the same as saying that the New Testament, itself, is antisemitic.

I think one can say that portions of the New Testament are anti-Judaic, if, by that, one means the larger context of Judaism that was contemporaneous with the emergence of what became the Christian community. But I don't think you can quite say that the New Testament, itself, is antisemitic. After all, the first Christians were, themselves, Jews.

What I think you have to look at is the difference between the impact of those writings in their own immediate context

and what happened, historically, when those passages get lifted out of context and used as ideological weapons. Fortunately, there are scholars who were also concerned with that, who are working on approaches to worship that will attempt to use those passages, yes. I mean, we're not talking about the sort of thing that Thomas Jefferson did.

You may know the story. Jefferson didn't believe in the resurrection. So what Jefferson did was simply to take his New Testament and snip out all those passages that talk about the resurrection. That's one way of dealing with the problem. But that's not likely to happen. We need to take the scriptures, as they are, but think about them and have that process of thought reshape our whole attitude toward liturgy in addition. And some people are beginning to work on that.

And there are also some very good studies that are emerging about the New Testament period and about the figure of Jesus, that set Jesus firmly in the context of his Jewish environment, that re-identified Jesus, as a Jew, if you will.

How far people have moved away from that is indicated, I think, by a remark made by Julius Streicher during the Nazi period, one of the outstanding Nazi propagandists of the day. He published something called *Der Stürmer*. Streicher said, at one point, that Jesus Christ was the greatest Aryan who ever lived. How would one say that? The only way one would say that is if one has somehow become convinced that Jesus was not a Jew. He wasn't a Jew. He was an Aryan.

And if you've seen some of the paintings that have been done of Jesus, one can see why one might believe that. Jesus is not usually painted-- well, I mean, flowing hair, usually sort of gold, light features, Nordic-type. And one can come to believe that Jesus really wasn't a Jew.

EP Saunders, English New Testament scholar, has written a book recently called *Jesus and Judaism*. It's a wonderful book, well worth reading, which tries to reset Jesus in the context of the Judaism of his day and tries to identify the central ingredients in the message of Jesus that might have antagonized the Jewish religious leaders of the day. Why was he put to death? It makes no sense on the face of it. Why was Jesus put to death? Saunders tries to answer that question.

A third question that Christian thinkers are dealing with-- let me just mention two more, fairly quickly. One is the whole area of Christology. That is how is Jesus Christ to be understood today, theologically? What is the significance of Christ? And that gets into the question of the original and subsequent covenant. Is Christ the ending of the first covenant? Do we begin, now, with only one covenant? And one gets then into theologies of discontinuity and theologies of continuity.

Some Christian thinkers still maintain theologies of discontinuity, that is Jesus represents a breaking, total breaking with the old covenant and the institution of a new. And there is no continuity between them at all. The problem with that approach is that it's very difficult, then, to eliminate the kind of latent hostility toward the original covenant that's likely to creep in.

But people, like Rosemary Ruether and A. Roy Eckardt, argue for a theology of continuity, in which the covenant established by Jesus is seen as an extension and confirmation of the original covenant, not a breaking with it. And that raises the possibility of a positive interaction, then, between the Jewish and the Christian traditions.

If you'd like a good, quick summary of approaches to Christology, this is a good book by Michael McGarry, *Christology after Auschwitz*. And what McGarry does, in that, is just to summarize all of the different approaches to an understanding of the figure of Jesus that have emerged, within the context of Christian theology, since the Holocaust or since the advent of Holocaust theology, and the way in which thinkers are wrestling with this key question, who is the figure of Christ, today, and how can we understand that figure, theologically, in such a way as not automatically to end by excluding the legitimacy of Jewish faith and life?

Another issue is the question of theodicy. That is, how can we justify the reality and nature of God in view of the suffering that was manifested in the Holocaust? What sort of a God can we believe in? Is it possible to believe in God at all? Christian thinkers are wrestling with that sort of question as well-- Jewish thinkers, also. People like Emil Fackenheim, for example, wrestle with that question.

In the Christian context, some of the writers in the Auschwitz volume that I brought, *Beginning of a New Era*, raise that question also. That's another issue. Can we believe in a God, who is both all powerful and all loving and in control of history? Can we believe in that God, any longer, after Auschwitz? That's the key issue.

And let me mention one final issue, because I know I've run on too long. And there isn't much time for questions. The State of Israel-- Christian thinkers are trying to come up with a theological understanding of the State of Israel, without seeing it as a kind of easy success answer to the tragedy of the Holocaust. I mean there's a tendency to do that, isn't there, if you think about it? And then you can almost see the parallels to traditional Christian theology coming into view, crucifixion and resurrection, Holocaust and State of Israel.

Elie Wiesel has argued strenuously against that sort of transition. But it has to do with the place of the land in Jewish theology. What sense can Christian thinkers make out of that story and its fulfillment, which, according to mainstream Christian theology, in its anti-Judaic form, was not supposed to have taken place but did. I mean, the re-establishment of Israel, you see, flies in the face of the notion of the "Wandering Jew." Because, in Israel, Jews have come home. They have a home, a place of their own, a space.

Now, the hope for the land has always been there. It wasn't envisioned as coming through a movement, like Zionism, out of the 19th century. It was envisioned as coming about through an act of God, which is one reason why many Orthodox Jews, even those who live in Israel, deny the legitimacy of the State of Israel. There's some interesting ironies tied up with that. But that's another thing that Christian thinkers have tried to sort through, the legitimacy of the State of Israel.

Finally, let me just indicate, in my judgment, there's a host of moral issues, as well, that come out of the Holocaust, having to do with professional ethics. Remember, doctors, lawyers, civil servants, all these folks became involved in the process of killing. And we need to be concerned about that and think about that.

The establishment of moral norms, the setting of moral limits, all of those are questions that come on the moral side, it seems to me, out of the context of the Holocaust. And I don't mean to suggest that one can separate, in any neat way, theology from morality. I think they're very closely connected. And the notion of a kind of universal rationality that we can appeal to, as a foundation for morality, I think that's called into question by the Holocaust.

If we had more time, I'd say more about that. But we're out of time, now. Thank you very much. You've been very patient. I'd be happy to try to respond to any questions, if you have them, for a little bit.

I'd like to officially thank you, since we're sort of out of time. I'd just like to say, officially, thank you. And if have questions, maybe we can handle it individually.

Sure. That'd be fine.

Stay and spend a few minutes. Thank you.

Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]