

"Die Judenfrage" and the Hegelian Paradigm

Text 1.

ANTI-SEMITISM: PARADIGM SHIFT IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Sister Rose Thering, Nun Dedicated to Bridging Gap With Judaism, Dies at 85

By ROBERT D. McFADDEN

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The New York Times

Sister Rose Thering, a Roman Catholic nun and a former professor at Seton Hall University who battled anti-Semitism within her church and contributed to a historic Vatican declaration that Jews were not collectively responsible for the death of Jesus, died on Saturday at a convent in Racine, Wis. She was 85.

The cause was kidney failure, said Catherine Memory, a university spokeswoman. She said Sister Rose died at the Siena Center of the Sisters of St. Dominic, where she entered religious life in 1936 and had lived since retiring last year as professor emerita of education at Seton Hall, in South Orange, N.J.

Sister Rose — who wore a Star of David fused to the cross on her neck, used words like "chutzpah," and closed her letters with "shalom" — devoted most of her adult life to writing, lecturing and traveling the world in a quest to promote greater understanding in the often-strained relationships between Christians and Jews.

As a member of a commission appointed by Gov. Thomas H. Kean, she helped write a 1994 law mandating the teaching of the Holocaust and genocide in all elementary and high schools in New Jersey. At Seton Hall, where she joined the faculty in 1968, she established workshops on Judaism for church leaders and teachers and led student groups on 54 tours of Israel.

In 2004, "Sister Rose's Passion," a 39-minute documentary film on her life, won an award at the Tribeca Film Festival, and it was nominated for an Academy Award in 2005. She also received more than 80 humanitarian awards, including the Anti-Defamation League's Cardinal Bea Interfaith Award in 2004, the first to go to a woman.

"The death of Sister Rose Thering is an immense loss for the entire Seton Hall family, indeed for all men and women who seek to forge a world of greater understanding," said Msgr. Robert Sheeran, the president of Seton Hall. "For a half-century, she was an uncommon, inspired voice of reconciliation and dialogue among Christians and Jews."

On a Wisconsin farm in childhood where Jews were spoken of in whispers, in her parochial school catechisms and other religious texts that portrayed Jews as Christ-killers, Rose Thering learned the coded messages of intolerance early in life and found them unsettling. Later, as a teacher, she examined the Catholic textbooks of her students more critically and was shocked by what she found.

"I had ordered the most widely used Catholic religious teaching material from high school and grade school," she recalled in 2004. "When I began to read, it almost made me ill." She cited a passage that asked, "Why did the Jews commit the great sin of putting God himself to death?" and another declaring, "The worst deed of the Jewish people was the murder of the Messiah."

She was in her 30's and had been teaching for years when she resolved to act against what she saw as a fundamental flaw in church teaching. The result was a study of anti-Semitism in Catholic texts and a dissertation for her 1961 doctorate at St. Louis University that propounded the evidence: textbooks and preachings that abounded in calumnies against Jews and Judaism.

Her work was published later in an anthology, "Faith and Prejudice" (Paulist Press).

In 1962, when Pope John XXIII convened the ecumenical council known as Vatican II, Cardinal Augustin Bea used Sister Rose's study to draft portions of the 1965 Vatican document "Nostra Aetate," ("In Our Age"), which reversed church policy and declared of Christ's death that "what happened in his passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today," and, as for teaching, added: "The Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God."

"They were 15 lines in Latin," Sister Rose recalled later, "but they changed everything."

In Catholic texts, in sermons, and in other pronouncements of the church, a new attitude toward Jews was officially adopted, and while centuries-old wounds remained, dialogues between the church and Israel and between Catholics and Jews have been elevated to a more respectful plane over time.

Sister Rose became an activist teacher.

She was hired at Seton Hall by Msgr. John Oesterreicher, an Austrian Jew who fled the Nazis in 1938. He converted to Catholicism, became a priest and in 1953 founded the Institute of Judeo-Christian Studies at Seton Hall, a groundbreaking program that included priests, nuns and rabbis on the faculty and offered seminars for clergy, teachers and others.

In 1974, Sister Rose presented a menorah to Pope Paul VI at the Vatican. In 1986, she went to Austria to protest the inauguration of President Kurt Waldheim, the former United Nations' secretary general, who had served in a Nazi army unit implicated in the deportation of Jews from Greece in World War II. In 1987, she went to the Soviet Union to protest the government's treatment of Russian Jews.

Rose Elizabeth Thering was born on Aug. 9, 1920, in Plain, Wis., the sixth of 11 children in a German-American farm family that prayed together daily. She joined the Sisters of St. Dominic at 16, and earned a bachelor's degree from the Dominican College in Racine in 1953, a master's degree from the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul in 1957 and a doctorate at St. Louis University four years later.

In recognition of her interfaith work, the Rose Thering Endowment for Jewish-Christian Studies was established at Seton Hall in 1992; it has given scholarships to 350 teachers for graduate studies on the Holocaust and other subjects.

She is survived by two brothers, Raymond Thering, of Reedsburg, Wis., and Dr. H. R. Thering, of El Paso, Tex.; and four sisters, Lucille Neuheisel, of Sauk City, Wis., Imelda Missfish, of Prairie du Sac, Wis., Bernice Leigel, of Muscoda, Wis., and Mary Phillips, of Middleton, Wis.

Text 2.

The "Wise anti-Semite"

(by Jean-Paul Sartre).

(from Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*. New York: Schocken Books, 1976), p. 17

You can take "Jew"
out & apply
to others;
- Mexican
- etc.

"There is a disgust for the Jew, just as there is a disgust for the Chinese or the Negro among certain people... If a man attributes all or part of his own misfortunes and those of his country to the presence of Jewish elements in the community, if he proposes to remedy this state of affairs by depriving the Jews of certain of their rights, by keeping them out of certain economic and social activities, by expelling them from the country, by exterminating all of them,

we say that he has anti-Semitic opinions.

But anti-semitism is more than a mere "opinion" about the Jews. It is a worldview that is false and dangerous. I refuse to characterize as opinion a doctrine that is aimed directly at particular persons and that seeks to suppress their rights or to exterminate them.

Anti-Semitism does not fall within the category of ideas protected by the right of free opinion. Indeed, it is something quite other than an idea. It is a passion. No doubt it can be set forth in the form of a theoretical proposition. The "moderate" anti-Semite is a courteous man who will tell you quietly: "Personally, I do not detest the Jews. I simply find it preferable, for various reasons, that they should play a lesser part in the activity of the nation." But a moment later, if you have gained his confidence, he will add with more abandon: "You see, there must be something about the Jews; they upset me physically."

D → Anti-Semitism involves the entire personality of the anti-Semite. Enemy of the Jews, the anti-Semite has need of them.

Anti-Semitism is a doctrine that is aimed directly at particular persons and that seeks to suppress their rights or to exterminate them.

Anti-Semitism is a free and total choice of oneself, a comprehensive attitude that one adopts not only toward Jews but toward men in general, toward history and society;

it is at once and the same time a passion and a conception of the world."

Contrary to a widespread opinion, it is not the Jewish character that provokes anti-Semitism but, rather, it is the anti Semite who creates the Jew. The primary phenomenon, therefore, is anti-Semitism, a regressive social force and a conception deriving from the prelogical world...

The anti-Semite has a complex nature. A man may be a good father and a good husband, a conscientious citizen, highly cultivated, philanthropic, and in addition an anti-Semite. He may like fishing and the pleasures of love, may be tolerant in matters of religion, full of generous notions on the condition of the

ignore all highlight

— Main point

Sartre opposed
"institution"
of any kind i
wanted to be free

Sartre
rejected
Nobel Peace
Prize?

Sartre & wife
well.. partner..
lived like married
but didn't want
institut° of
marriage

natives in Central Africa, and in addition detest the Jews. If he does not like them, we do not accept that a gentleman such as he, can possibly be a racist or an anti-Semite. We call him a wise anti-Semite. We think that he is not really anti-Semite, but rather a man who is careful, prudent and cautious. We hasten to justify him in our mind. We say that if he does not like them it is because his experience has shown him that they are bad, because statistics have taught him that they are dangerous, because certain historical factors have influenced his judgment. Thus this opinion seems to be the result of external causes, and those who wish to study it are prone to neglect the personality of the anti-Semite. But anti-Semitism is not created by the external causes, by the negative characteristics of the Jews. Rather anti-Semitism is something that enters the body from the mind. An anti-Semite person has a "predisposition" to anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is an involvement of the mind, one so deep-seated and complete that it extends to the physiological realm, as happens in cases of hysteria. This involvement is not caused by experience. Far from experience producing his idea of the Jew, it was the latter which explained his experience. If the Jew did not exist, the anti-Semite would invent him...

I have questioned a hundred people on the reasons for their anti-Semitism. Most of them have confined themselves to enumerating the defects with which tradition has endowed the Jews. "I detest them because they are selfish, intriguing, persistent, oily, tactless, etc." A painter said to me: "I am hostile to the Jews because, with their critical habits, they encourage our servants to insubordination." A young actor without talent insisted that the Jews had kept him from a successful career in the theater by confining him to subordinate roles. A young woman said to me: I have had the most horrible experiences with furriers; they robbed me, they burned the fur I entrusted to them. Well they were all Jews." But why did she choose to hate Jews rather than furriers? Why Jews or furriers rather than such and such a Jew or such and such a furrier? Because she had in her a predisposition toward anti-Semitism.

A classmate of mine at the lycee told me that Jews "annoy" him because of the thousands of injustices that "Jew-ridden" social organizations commit in their favor. "A Jew passed his aggregation the year I was failed, and you can't make me believe that that fellow, whose father came from Cracow or Lemberg, understood a poem by Ronsard or an eclogue by Virgil better than I." But he admitted that he disdained the aggregation as a mere academic exercise, and that he didn't study for it. Thus, to explain his failure, he made use of two systems of interpretation, like those madmen who, when they are far gone in their madness, pretend to be the King of Hungary but, if questioned sharply, admit to being shoemakers. His thought moved on two planes without his being in the least embarrassed by it. As a matter of fact, he will in time manage to justify his past laziness on the grounds that it really would be too stupid to prepare for an examination in which Jews are passed in preference to good Frenchmen. Actually he ranked twenty seventh on the official list. There were twenty-six ahead of him, twelve who passed and fourteen who failed. Suppose Jews had been excluded from the competition; would that have done him any good? And even if he had been at the top of the list of unsuccessful candidates, even if by eliminating one of the successful candidates he

would have had a chance to pass, why should the Jew Weil have been eliminated rather than the Norman Matthieu or the Breton Arzell? To understand my classmate's indignation we must recognize that he had adopted in advance a certain idea of the Jew, of his nature and of his role in society. And to be able to decide that among twenty-six competitors who were more successful than himself, it was the Jew who robbed him of his place, he must a priori have given preference in the conduct of his life to reasoning based on passion... Others base their anti-Semitism not on their personal experience, but on history. Leaving the question of experience to one side, must we not admit, they say, that anti-Semitism is explained by certain historical data? For after all it does not come out of the air. It would be easy for me to reply that the history of France tells us nothing about the Jews: they were oppressed right up to 1789; since then they have participated as best they could in the life of the nation, taking advantage, naturally, of freedom of competition to displace the weak, but no more and no less than other Frenchmen. They have committed no crimes against France, have engaged in no treason, even if people believe there is proof that the number of Jewish soldiers in 1914 was lower than it should have been... People quite easily talk about "Jewish treason" as the cause of contemporary anti-Semitism... Let us take the case of Poland and Russia. In the course of the bloody Polish revolts of the nineteenth century, the Warsaw Jews, whom the czars handled gently for reasons of policy, were very lukewarm toward the rebels. By not taking part in the insurrection they were able to maintain and improve their position in a country ruined by repression. I don't know whether this is true or not. What is certain is that many Poles believe it, and this "historical fact" contributes not a little to their bitterness against the Jews. But if I examine the matter more closely, I discover a vicious circle: the czars, we are told, treated the Polish Jews well whereas they willingly ordered pogroms against those in Russia. These sharply different courses of action had the same cause. The Russian government considered the Jews in both Russia and Poland to be unassimilable; according to the needs of their policy, they had them massacred at Moscow and Kiev because they were a danger to the Russian empire, but favored them at Warsaw as a means of stirring up discord among the Poles. The latter showed nothing but hate and scorn for the Jews of Poland, but the reason was the same: For them Israel could never become an integral part of the national collectivity. Treated as Jews by the czar and as Jews by the Poles, provided, quite in spite of themselves, with Jewish interests in the midst of a foreign community, is it any wonder that these members of a minority behaved in accordance with the representation made of them?

In short, the essential thing here is not an "historical fact" but the idea that the agents of history formed for themselves of the Jew. When the Poles of today harbor resentment against the Jews for their past conduct, they are incited to it by that same idea. If one is going to reproach little children for the sins of their grandfathers, one must first of all have a very primitive conception of what constitutes responsibility. Furthermore one must form his conception of the children on the basis of what the grandparents have been. One must believe that what the elders did the young are capable of doing. One must convince himself that Jewish character is inherited.

Thus the Poles of 1940 treated the Israelites in the community as Jews because their ancestors in 1848 had done the same with their contemporaries. It is therefore the idea of the Jew that one forms for himself which would seem to determine history, not the "historical fact" that produces the idea.

People speak to us also of "social facts." But if we look at this more closely we shall find the same vicious circle. There are too many Jewish lawyers, someone says. But is there any complaint that there are too many Norman lawyers? Even if all the Bretons were doctors would we say anything more than that "Britanny provides doctors for the whole of France"? Oh, someone will answer, it is not at all the same thing. No doubt, but that is precisely because we consider Normans as Normans and Jews as Jews. Wherever we turn it is the ideas of the Jew which seems to be the essential thing. Anti-Semitism precedes the facts that are supposed to call it forth; it seeks them out to nourish itself upon them; it must even interpret them in a special way so that they may become truly offensive.

Finally there is the religious history. The facts of the problem appear as follows: a concrete historical community is basically national and religious; but the Jewish community, which once was both, has been deprived bit by bit of both these concrete characteristics. Its dispersion implies the breaking up of common traditions. Its twenty centuries of dispersion and political impotence forbid its having a historic past. If it is true, as Hegel says, that a community is historical to the degree that it remembers its history, then the Jewish community is the least historical of all, for it keeps a memory of nothing but a long martyrdom. It is neither their past, their religion, nor their soil that unites the sons of Israel. If they have a common bond, if all of them deserve the name of Jew, it is because they have in common the situation of a Jew, that is they live in a community which takes them for Jews. In a word, the Jew is perfectly assimilable by modern nations, but he is to be defined as one whom these nations do not wish to assimilate. What weighed upon him originally was that he was the assassin of Christ. Have we ever stopped to consider the intolerable situation of men condemned to live in a society that adores the God they have killed? Originally, the Jew was therefore a murderer or the son of a murderer – which in the eyes of a community with a pre-logical concept of responsibility amounts inevitably to the same thing – it was as such that he was taboo. It is evident that we cannot find the explanation for modern anti-Semitism here; but if the anti-Semite has chosen the Jew as the object of his hate, it is because of the religious horror that the latter has always inspired. This horror has had a curious economic effect. If the medieval church tolerated the Jews when she could have assimilated them by force or massacred them, it was because they filled a vital economic function. Accursed, they followed a cursed but indispensable vocation; being unable to own land or serve in the army, they trafficked in money, which a Christian could not undertake without defiling himself. Thus the original curse was soon reinforced by an economic curse, and it is above all the latter that has persisted. Today we reproach the Jews for following unproductive activities, without taking into account the fact that their apparent autonomy within the nation comes from the fact that they were originally forced into these trades by being forbidden all others. Thus it is no exaggeration to say that it is the Christians who

have created the Jew in putting an abrupt stop to his assimilation and in providing him, in spite of himself, with a function in which he has since prospered.

But modern society has seized on this memory and has made it the pretext and the base for its anti-Semitism. Thus, to know what the contemporary Jew is, we must ask the Christian conscience. And we must ask, not "What is a Jew?" but "What have you made of the Jews?" The Jew is one whom other men consider a Jew: that is the simple truth from which we must start. In this sense the democrat is right as against the anti-Semite, for it is the anti-Semite who makes the Jew. But it would be wrong to say that the distrust, the curiosity, the disguised hostility the Israelites find around them are no more than the intermittent demonstrations of a few hotheads. Primarily, anti-Semitism is the expression of a primitive society that, though secret and diffused, remains latent in the legal collectivity. We must not suppose, therefore, that a generous outburst of emotion, a few pretty words, a stroke of the pen will suffice to suppress it. That would be like imagining you could abolish war by denouncing its effects in a book. The Jew no doubt sets a proper value on the sympathy shown him, but it cannot prevent his seeing anti-Semitism as a permanent structure of the community in which he lives.

What then shall one do to overcome anti-Semitism? Some "liberals" have tried. But their methods are totally faulty....For a Jew, conscious and proud of being Jewish, asserting his claim to be a member of the Jewish community without ignoring on that account the bonds which unite him to the national community, there may not be so much difference between the anti-Semite and the democrat. The former wishes to destroy him as a man and leave nothing in him but the Jew, the pariah, the untouchable; the latter wishes to destroy him as a Jew and leaving nothing in him but the man, the abstract and universal subject of the rights of man and the rights of the citizen. Thus there may be detected in the most liberal democrat a tinge of anti-Semitism; he is hostile to the Jew to the extent that the latter thinks of himself as a Jew... The anti-Semite reproaches the Jew with being Jewish; the democrat reproaches him with willfully considering himself a Jew. Between his enemy and his defender, the Jew is in a difficult situation; apparently he can do no more than choose the sauce with which he will be devoured. We must now ask ourselves the question: does the Jew exist? And if he exists, what is he? Is he first a Jew or first a man? Is the solution of the problem to be found in the extermination of all the Israelites or in their total assimilation? But what kind of assimilation? Isn't assimilation itself another way of killing the Jewishness of the Jew, and therefore another way of exterminating the Jews? Some people think that anti-Semitism will disappear when Jews become fully Frenchmen. Thus they ask Jews to hasten this integration. And some propose drastic means to speed the process of assimilation. Thus some advocate the policy of mixed marriages and a rigorous interdiction against Jewish religious practices – in particular, circumcision. There are even some Jews who suggest that all Jews be forced to change their names. I say quite simply: these measures would be inhumane. No democracy can seek integration of the Jews at such a cost. Such a policy of integration aims at nothing less than the liquidation of the Jewish race. It represents an extreme form

of the tendency we have noticed in the democrat, a tendency purely and simply to suppress the Jew for the sake of the man. But the man does not exist: there are Jews, Protestants, Catholics; there are Frenchmen, Englishmen, Germans; there are whites, blacks, yellows. Certainly Jews would wish to integrate themselves in the nation, but as Jews, not as abstract men. All persons who through their work collaborate toward the greatness of a country have the full rights of citizens of that country. What gives them this right is not the possession of a problematic and abstract "human nature," but their active participation in the life of the society. This means, then, that the Jews – and likewise the Arabs and the Negroes – from the moment that they are participants in the national enterprise, have a right in that enterprise; they are citizens. But they have these rights as Jews, Negroes, or Arabs – that is, as concrete persons. In societies where women vote, they are not asked to change their sex when they enter the voting booth; the vote of a woman is worth just as much as that of a man, but it is as a woman that she votes, with her womanly intuitions and concerns, in her full character of a woman. When it is a question of the legal rights of the Jew, and of the more obscure but equally indispensable rights that are not inscribed in any code, he must enjoy those rights not as a potential Christian but precisely as a French Jew. It is with his character, his customs, his tastes, his religion if he has one, his name, and his physical traits that we must accept him.

What is needed to overcome anti-Semitism is not to appeal to the generosity of the Aryans – with even the best of them, that virtue is in eclipse. What must be done is to point out to each one that the fate of the Jews is his fate. Not one Frenchman will be free so long as the Jews do not enjoy the fullness of their rights. Not one Frenchman will be secure so long as a single Jew – in France or in the world at large – can fear for his life.

(Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*. New York: Schocken Books, 1976); p.17.

Text 3.

Christian Theology and Anti-Semitism

(A case of epistemic violence and theological terrorism).

From Leonard Swidler, *After the Absolute The Dialogical Future of Religious Pluralism*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990); pp.114-11

Book available online:

<http://global-dialogue.com/swidlerbooks>.

Chapter 7. JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

All of the reasons given up until now for Christians entering into dialogue with Jews and Judaism have been fundamentally for the Christian's sake. There is another reason why Christians must turn toward Jews in dialogue that is only partly for their own sakes, and partly other-directed.

a. Antisemitism and Jewish-Christian Dialogue

I am speaking of our heinous history of hostility and hatred toward Jews and Judaism for two thousand years. Thank God there are a few spaces of light; Jewish culture, learning and life did in fact flourish in Christendom in certain places and at certain times. Particularly some Christian princes and bishops and often the papacy supported and defended the Jews. But as can be seen from careful histories of the Jews, as that of the Catholic historian Frederick M. Schweitzer,¹ this was a minor theme in a symphony of destruction. There are whole libraries detailing the ignominy to which Christians have subjected Jews, and consequently with which they have besmirched their own souls.

Let us recall only a tiny number of our most saintly antisemites (I would have thought that such reminders were completely superfluous today with the recent calling to consciousness of the horrors of the Holocaust, but just a short time ago at a Protestant-Catholic clergy retreat I found priests and ministers proclaiming the righteousness of the Church in the history of its relations with the Jews. Is such ignorance, or perversity, possible in present-day Christian clergy? Sadly, it is.)

Recall the words of the "golden-tongued" St. John Chrysostom (344-407 A.D.), which were uttered not among a small gathering of learned clerics, but were flung from the pulpit in Antioch for all Christians to hear, both there in that heavily Jewish city, and also reverberating through all the subsequent centuries of Christian antisemitic preaching. He thundered that

"Jews are the most miserable of all men.... lustful, rapacious, greedy, perfidious bandits.... inveterate murderers, destroyers, men possessed by the devil.... whose debauchery and drunkenness have given them the manners of the pig and the lusty goat. They know only one thing, to satisfy their gullets, get drunk, to kill and maim one another.... They have surpassed the ferocity of wild beasts, for they murder their offspring and immolate them to the devil."

As to Judaism, symbolized by the synagogue, it is:
an assembly of criminals... a den of thieves... a cavern of devils, an abyss of perdition.... far from venerating the synagogue because of the books it contains, hold it in hatred and aversion for the same reason.... I hate the synagogue precisely because it has the law and prophets.... I hate the Jews also because they outrage the law.

The early ninth century was the time of the Carolingian Renaissance in Western Christendom, and at the height of it we find St. Agobard (779-840 A.D.), powerful Archbishop of Lyons, and known as "probably the most cultured man of his time." St. Agobard's words about the Jews sound as if he was standing in a St. John Chrysostom echo-chamber.

"Jews are cursed and covered with malediction, as by a cloak. The malediction has penetrated them as water in their entrails and oil in their bones. They are cursed in the city and cursed in the country, cursed is their coming in and their going out. Cursed are the fruits of their loins, of their lands, of their flocks; cursed their cellars, their granaries, their shops, their food, and the crumbs of their tables.

The official Church at the highest level also played out the same role of the antisemite. There was the twelfth Ecumenical Council, Lateran IV (1215 A.D.), which visited a number of disabilities on all Jews, including enjoining them from appearing in public during Eastertime, barring them from holding public office, and declaring a moratorium on crusaders' debts to Jews. Father Edward Flannery, in his pioneer history of Christian antisemitism, remarks:

Thus far, there was nothing new in these enactments, which merely extended to the universal Church what earlier centuries had applied more locally. The unique and most extraordinary measure taken by the Council was the prescription of a distinctive dress for Jews and Saracens. (At a later date, heretics, prostitutes, and lepers were included.

Raul Hilberg in his *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York, 1961), pp. 5f., lists twenty-two conciliar or synodal decrees which were severely restrictive of Jews (from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries) and were paralleled by specific Nazi decrees. He states that the list of Church measures was taken in its entirety from J.E. Scherer, *Die Rechtsverhältnisse der Juden in den deutsch-österreichischen Länder* (Leipzig, 1901), pp. 39-49. The list is as follows (only the first date of each measure is listed):

- 1) *Prohibition of intermarriage and of sexual intercourse between Christians and Jews, Synod of Elvira, 306, C.E.*
- 2) *Jews and Christians not permitted to eat together, Synod of Elvira.*
- 3) *Jews not allowed to hold public office, Synod of Clermont, 535 C.E.*
- 4) *Jews not allowed to employ Christian servants or possess Christian slaves, 3rd Synod of Orleans.*
- 5) *Jews not permitted to show themselves in the streets during Passion Week, 3rd Synod of Orleans.*
- 6) *Burning of the Talmud and other books, 12th Synod of Toledo, 681 C.E.*
- 7) *Christians not permitted to patronize Jewish doctors, Trulanic Synod, 692 C.E.*
- 8) *Christians not permitted to live in Jewish homes, Synod of Narbonne, 1050 C.E.*
- 9) *Jews obliged to pay taxes for support of the Church to the same extent as Christians, Synod of Gerona, 1078 C.E.*
- 10) *Prohibition of Sunday work, Synod of Szabolcs, 1092 C.E.*
- 11) *Jews not permitted to be plaintiffs or witnesses against Christians in the courts, 3rd Lateran Council, 1179 C.E., Canon 26.*
- 12) *Jews not permitted to withhold inheritance from descendants who had accepted Christianity, 3rd Lateran Council, Canon 26.*
- 13) *The marking of Jewish clothes with a badge, 4th Lateran Council, 1215 C.E., Canon 68 (copied from the legislation by Caliph Omar II, 643-44 C.E., who had decreed that Christians wear blue belts and Jews yellow belts).*
- 14) *Construction of new synagogues prohibited, Council of Oxford, 1222 C.E.*
- 15) *Christians not permitted to attend Jewish ceremonies, Synod of Vienna, 1267 C.E.*

- 16) Jews not permitted to dispute with simple Christian people about the tenets of the Catholic religion, Synod of Vienna.
- 17) Compulsory ghettos, Synod of Breslau, 1227 C.E.
- 18) Christians not permitted to sell or rent real estate to Jews, Synod of Ofen, 1279 C.E.
- 19) Adoption by a Christian of the Jewish religion or return by a baptized Jew to the Jewish religion defined as heresy, Synod of Mainz, 1310 C.E.
- 20) Sale or transfer of Church articles to Jews prohibited, Synod of Lavour, 1368 C.E.
- 21) Jews not permitted to act as agents in the conclusion of contracts between Christians, especially marriage contracts, Council of Basel, 1432, Sessio XIX.
- 22) Jews not permitted to obtain academic degrees, Council of Basel, Sessio XIX.

Then there are the scourging words of the father of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther, who shortly before his death wrote a violent diatribe entitled *About the Jews and Their Lies*, in which among other things he wrote that

*Jews "are thirsty bloodhounds and murderers of all Christendom, with full intent ...they had poisoned water and wells, stolen children and hacked them apart, in order to cool their temper secretly with Christian blood."*⁶

His conclusion was that their synagogues should be burned and their books seized, that they should be forced to work with their hands, or better still, be expelled by the princes.⁷

They should be forced to hardest labor as handymen of serfs only; they should not be permitted to hold services; every Christian should be admonished to deal with them in a merciless manner; if you suffer, strike them on the jaw; if I had the power, I would assemble them to prove to us that we Christians do not worship God, under penalty of having their tongues cut out through the backs of their necks.

Is it any wonder that Christians with this long heritage of hatred allowed and even abetted the cataclysmic horrors of the Holocaust, with its choking of the air with the smoke and ash of incinerated living Jewish children? Presumably no readers of this book share a direct responsibility for that Teutonic terror, but—and here let me shift to the first person—all of us Christians share gladly in the Christian heritage that made it possible. We cannot claim only the good of that heritage and make believe that the evil is not also there. That Christian heritage is now our heritage, and therefore our responsibility. There is no way that we can exorcize the demon of antisemitism from its past, present and future unless we first become aware of it. We must study it and face it honestly, and then our first response must be repentance. We cannot undo the overwhelming injustices of the past, but we can and we must acknowledge and repudiate them. Then we must go on to make whatever recompense we can in an attempt to redress the imbalance of justice between Christian and Jew—inadequate though this attempt must of necessity be. Moreover, we must not expect the Jews immediately to embrace us, forgiving and forgetting. We Christians have had a two-millennia-long history of tricking and betraying Jews. They are understandably suspicious about our motives and sincerity. We must be patient and prove ourselves not only with words but also with many deeds. Then perhaps they will turn to us in a dialogue in which there is no hidden Christian agenda of conversion. We will then meet as equal partners, *par cum pari*, each coming to learn from the other.

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<http://global-dialogue.com/swidderbooks>.

The impact of Christian philosophy of world history and Biblical Studies on Anti-Semitism.

Text 4.

Hegel's Philosophy of religion and Antisemitism

Mainstream Christianity has often built a binary opposition between Christian values and the values of other religions. In so doing it follows a worldview largely prevalent in European intellectual heritage. Hegel captured well this "invention of otherness" in his philosophy of world history and in his demonstration of the superiority of Christianity over Judaism.

Hegel's philosophy of world history and his reflection on the rationality of Christianity have had a tremendous impact in Christian theology, and especially on missionary theology which shaped the perception of non-Europeans in the world in a decisive way up to this day. Hegel's exclusion of Africa from history and humanity itself was not only a simple matter of bigotry, but rather an outcome of his rigorous philosophical thinking and his theological conception of Christianity. Well before his statements on Africa, Hegel had applied his philosophy to Judaism.

While the anti-semitism of Martin Heidegger is now a matter of common knowledge and gave way to various publications, Hegel's anti-semitism has been investigated rather modestly. I will limit myself here to a recent publication by John D. Caputo who made an enlightening comment on the "fears and tears" of Jacques Derrida with regard to what he terms "the terrorism of Hegelianism."

Meditating on Hegel's philosophy of religion, Jacques Derrida worried over what becomes of the Jew once Christianity is said to be a representation of the absolute truth. Similarly the main question is "what becomes of the African" once Christianity is said to be the embodiment not only of the absolute truth and revelation but also of goodness and reason. It will become clear that Hegel's logic which excluded the Jew from the world of true religion, beauty, freedom and goodness was applied to Africa with the same tragic conclusions.

It is worth noting that Hegel supplied a veritable encyclopedia of Christian Europe and a logic of European Christianity, and taking inspiration from Christian theology, he organized his theory around the

notion of LOVE. He identified Christianity and love first with the European spirit and secondly with philosophy, itself seen as a proprium of the European mind. For him the truth of Christianity is philosophy and no ontology is possible before the Gospel or outside it. Hegel articulated the most ambitious philosophy of the superiority of Christianity over all other religions and represents the culmination of Western Christianity to put as much metaphysical and theological distance as possible between Christianity and the Jews by attaching ~~attaching~~ Christianity as closely as possible to a Greco-European spirit and by detaching it from the Jew, the tendency to view Christianity as spiritually Greek, not Jewish. In Hegel, the history of Christian Europe and the figure of the European Christianity take the form of a philosophy of history and of the Spirit, that is of philosophy itself, an onto-theologization of the Christian spirit of which the Jew is a negative moment. In the history of Christian philosophy, Hegel represents the final triumph of Christian querelle with world religions, initiated by that old dispute between Paul and Peter. Hegel embraced the winner Paul, the Jewish roman citizen, against Peter, the symbol of the legalism of Jerusalem, and articulated his philosophy of religion on Paul's notion of Pleroma ouon nomon he agape (the love which outdoes and perfects the law). Paul's opposition between Jewish law and Christian Love offers Hegel a ground for the articulation of a philosophy of history which disqualifies not only Jewish religion but also Jewish history and Jewish people. When it comes to Jews, Hegel does not take any prisoners. As Jacques Derrida pointed out in a careful analysis of Hegel's philosophy, Hegel painted a very hateful portrait of the Jew as a result of his own understanding of the nature and logic of Christianity as a representation of the absolute truth. Hegel accomplished this on both grounds of theological and philosophical arguments. Following Paul's notion of Christian love, Hegel undertook a powerful attack upon the Jews, and this, in the very name of love, a hateful defense of the religion of love over and against the hatefulness of the Jews. Hegel used very skillfully that old strategy of Christian polemics: love as weapon against Jewish religion. As Caputo pointed out Love has been Christian's most cunning and most effective weapon against non-Christian religions. Hegel used it ruthlessly and even brilliantly as the point of departure of his thought and as his first model of the *Aufhebung*. Using Paul's notion of the pleroma of love, Hegel like Paul put Jewish law in its place and in so doing he also put the Jewish people in their place, that is in no place, for by making Christian love and Christianity itself the logic of history, of freedom, of the Spirit, Hegel made the Jew historically, philosophically,

and theologically a figure of unfreedom and alienation. Stuck in the mud of ritual and literalism, and in the blood of the mohel, the Jew, according to Hegel, understands only the language of force and violence, not the language of love, and politically he becomes a figure of perdition, guilty of the perfidious execution of the Man of Love who came to liberate humankind from alienation. For Hegel, the Jew not only clings to a religion historically dead, replaced by Christianity, and to an old Mosais law replaced by love but constitutes a philosophical type, the very figure of alienation from love. The Jew is stone cold and heartless, an Abrahamic figure capable of killing whatever he loves, and a legalist and pharisee, possessing only the outer shell of ethical life. Hegel skillfully turns Jewish monotheism into a caricature. According to him, the Jew despises idols because he is incapable of appreciating the sensuous embodiment of the infinite. And because he is incapable of giving sensible form to the supersensible, of letting the infinite shine with beauty in finite figures, the Jew is incapable of appreciating beauty, for beauty is the way the invisible makes itself visible, palpable, felt. Being incapable to see the infinite in the finite world, the Jew is incapable of meditation for he is ignorant of incarnation. For Hegel, Jesus, the man of freedom as opposed to the spirit of the law, was the becoming un-Jewish of the Spirit, for law is for children not for the grown up. Such is the prototype, the type and the stereotype of Hegel's metaphysics. The most interesting thing is that Hegel's antisemitism is expressed in a sophisticated philosophical and theological reasoning. The Hegelian metaphysics and rhetoric deconstructs the Jew as the anti-phenomenological thing that the Spirit expels and vomits in its triumphant march toward fulfillment. In Hegel's system, the Jew stands as everything that the Spirit casts out as un-beautiful, un-reconciled, un-historical, un-harmonized, un-true, or un-phenomenalizable, that is the phenomenological figure, the *Gestaltung* of a divided, ugly spirit. For Hegel, the Jewishness of Jesus is something for the Spirit to surpass. The empirical actuality of Jesus had to break up, in order to allow the Spirit to flow and leave Jesus behind, letting Christianity become itself, become Greek, beyond Jesus while letting the circumcised bury the circumcised.

Finally Hegel turns the Torah against the Jew and uses it as evidence that the Jew is ignorant of the concept of Human rights. He starts with a definition of law. Law, he says, is not truth, but a command, not the manifestation of the infinite in the finite, but a distant, empty and contentless imperative. Since Jewish society is governed by the Torah, there is no freedom in this world, no spirit, no true polis that embodies

political reason, no political subjects with rights who recognize themselves in the whole, but only violence, imperative, the rule of the master over the slave. This, in Hegel's view, is the difference between Moses and Solon, between the Mosaic law and the democratic laws of Athens. Jewish life is an economy of expropriation, where ownership is cut off and everything is on loan, a system devoid of civil rights and family property and laws of inheritance, which are canceled in the year of the jubilee. One may argue that once Hegel has presented the Jew as the enemy of Human rights, the elimination of the Jew comes as a necessary step for the protection of Human rights in the world. As this analysis shows, Hegel used a fourfold approach:

- a) absolutization of Christianity as the only religion of truth, love and reason;
- b) the identification of the Christian spirit with European civilization;
- c) the exclusion of non-European cultures from the realm of philosophy, true religion and civilization;
- d) the "elimination of the brute" as a way of saving civilization.

It is exactly this same reasoning that has often been applied to non-Christian people. These people have been defined in mainstream scholarship as the exact opposite of reason, law, morality, and indeed the very antithesis of genuine humanity. Moreover Hegel's way of thinking about non European people is consonant with the development of Christian theology in its perception of the pagans and savages. Christian theology understands God as a God of history, a God who intervenes in human history, a God who guides the events of world history. This notion is critical to the understanding of Hegel's vision of world history and the role he assigns to Africa in that history, a role which seems to be the will of God according to the inner logic of Hegel's thinking.

Text 5.

The Hegelian Paradigm and Biblical Studies: the "Kittel scandal"

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Once Hegel has presented the Jew as the enemy of the religion of Love, the elimination of the Jew comes as a necessary step for the promotion of love in the world. But this Hegelian paradigm was not limited to Christian philosophy or Christian theology. We also find it at the heart of biblical studies as exemplified by the brilliant and legendary Biblicist Gerhard Kittel.

The role played by Christian ways of theologizing in the rise of anti-Semitism, from Church fathers to Martin Luther has been object of extended studies. I shall limit myself here to a recent prominent case which is enlightening because of the intellectual qualities of the scholar and his work, and also because of his connection with one of the most extreme ideologies of human rights violation, i.e. Nazism. The case of Gerhard Kittel (1888-1948) here is worth mentioning in order to grasp the impact of some theological ways of thinking on anti-Semitism and, subsequently, the role played by Christian theologies in the promotion not only of colonialism, but also in the creation of the idea of primitive savages. The Kittel scandal is particularly interesting because it concerns the sacred texts which are the source of Christian theology.

Gerhard Kittel is an eminent German Evangelical New Testament scholar who stands as a monument in contemporary development of biblical studies. At the same time Kittel entered into world history as a "leading theologian under Hitler." This expression coined by Robert Ericksen refers to the fact that Kittel became the eminent symbol of the anti-Semitic dimension of Christian theology. His anti-Semitism was so blatant that in 1945, at the close of the second world war, he was arrested at his home in Tübingen by French police for his Nazi membership and his active role in suspect organizations. He was then relieved of his scholarly and academic responsibilities and imprisoned. The eminent Christian biblical scholar William Fox Albright declared that Kittel "became the mouthpiece of the most vicious Nazi anti-Semitism, sharing with Emanuel Hirsch of Göttingen the grim distinction of making extermination of the Jews theologically respectable." Although many Christian theologians struggled ambiguously with the Jewish question, Kittel, as Albright observed took the position to its extreme conclusion:

In view of the terrible viciousness of his attacks on Judaism and the Jews, which continued at least until 1943, Gerhard Kittel must bear the guilt of having contributed more, perhaps, than any other Christian theologian to the mass murder of Jews by the Nazis.

Kittel did not limit himself to pure scholastic pursuit of knowledge. He clearly considered three options for dealing with German Jews: extermination, deportation to Palestine, and assimilation, and analyzed which option was more efficient. Examining the case of extermination, he argued that

Extirpation of Jewry by violence is not worthy of serious discussion: if the systems of the Spanish Inquisition or the Russian pogroms did not manage it, it will certainly be impossible to achieve in the twentieth century. There is no inner sense in this idea either. A historical state of affairs, as exemplified by this people, can be resolved by the extirpation of the people only in demagogical slogans but never in history itself. The sense of a historical situation always consists in that it sets us a task we have to master. To kill all Jews does not mean, however, to master the situation.

Kittel, who as a good historian, understood the impossibility of these three options rejected them on a pragmatic ground and proposed a system of "apartheid." He argued that Jews be stripped of their German citizenship and be given the status of guests, and that they live separately from Germany's Christians. In other words, he argued for the abolition of the emancipation act which had led to the integration of Jews in the German society and the return of Jews to the situation of pre-Enlightenment ghettos. All that for the benefit of the German nation.

The most important point here is not Kittel's life and choices, but the theological logic he brought to biblical studies. As Max Weinreich pointed out in his book on Hitler's Professors (1946), Kittel not only was a Nazi through and through but also he played a crucial role in the rise of an Anti-Jewish science, thus contributing to legitimizing Nazi anti-Semitism and making it academically and religiously respectable. According to Alan Rosen, Kittel was one of the leading scholars in a Nazi research Institute and gave lectures and published articles and books that provided a Christian religious basis for the policies decreed by the Nazi government. Hence, the scholarship he pursued in biblical studies not only refrained from challenging the status quo but rather worked within and benefited from Nazi institutions. He split his scholarly work during the second

world war between Tübingen and the University of Vienna, publishing much of his wartime research under the auspices of the Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des Neuen Deutschlands (Institute for the History of the New Germany). This institute emphasized a study of history based on the category of race, and enjoyed close and amiable relations to the upper echelon of Nazi officials. All this had to do with his understanding of world history and the nature of Christianity, and understanding which found its way in his famous work, the nine-volume Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament). This dictionary enjoys in both Protestant and Catholic Theology such a reputation that it continues to be regarded as a foundational tool for students of biblical texts the world over. And yet this highly scholarly work grew out of a tainted theological atmosphere. It should be noted that Kittel was a man deeply rooted in Christian tradition. His own father Rudolf Kittel was an eminent specialist of the Old Testament, and Gerhard Kittel began his research with an amazing openness to Judaism. According to Alan Rosen, in the 1920s, his work was exceptionally generous to Judaism, in contrast with other Christian scholars of his time. While under the influence of Adolf von Harnack's The Essence of Christianity, many scholars favored the notion that Christianity drew its inspiration and substance primarily from its Greco-Roman milieu, Kittel, who had become expert in the relationship between the New Testament and the rabbinic literature operated a revolution by emphasizing the Jewish roots of Christianity. Opting for a position which was not popular during his era and bucking the then dominant trend, he argued in his Jesus und die Rabbinen (1914) that most of Jesus' teaching has its parallel in the Talmud thus challenging what others saw as the distinctive character of Christianity. But Kittel's discovery was also the beginning of his trouble. Confronted as a Christian with the question of the specificity and uniqueness of Christianity, Kittel moved into a direction which was to lead him to anti-Semitism. Starting with the premise that the distinctive character of Christianity layed not in its teachings, which it shared with Judaism, but rather with the divinity of Jesus, which Judaism had rejected, Kittel turned the notion of rejection into a dominant theological theme. The rejection of Judaism became an indispensable way of affirming the validity of Christianity. And finally the rejection of Judaism as a religion lead to the rejection of the people who reject Jesus, that is to the extermination of the Jews. In 1933, allying the word and the world, Kittel who was the professor of New Testament at the University of Tübingen, joined the Nazi party and welcomed National

Socialism as "a renewal movement based on a Christian moral foundation" and regarded this Nazi Parti as an antidote to the decadence and immorality of the Weimar republic. But the most important point here is his use of biblical scholarship to justify the persecution of Jews. In 1933, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the German Student Union in Tübingen, he delivered a public lecture on Die Judenfrage ("The Jewish Question"), in which he defended Hitler's anti-Semitic legislation, on the ground, among other things, that the Scriptures themselves teach the rejection of the Jews because "by rejecting Christ the Jews had themselves incurred rejection." Kittel who started his research with the appreciation of rabbinic influences on Christianity moved progressively in the opposite direction. The need to define the uniqueness of Christianity will lead him and his team to the need for the "purification of Christianity from Jewish influences" and more concretely to the problematic movement of the "Dejudification" of the Christianity and the German Church so well promoted by the Institut zur Erforschung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben (The Institute for Research on the Jewish Influence on German Church Life). With regard to the worldview of the Dictionary, Kittel who assumed its editorship from 1929 to 1945 authorized the publication of articles which were clearly anti-Semitic and gave voice to authors who were even more anti-Semitic than himself. This is for instance the case of Walter Grundmann and G. Bertram who contributed thirty-nine articles to the first four volumes and who embodied the problematic worldview of the Dictionary. Grundmann and Bertram were both members of the Institute for Research on the Jewish Influence on German Church Life whose goal was the Dejudification of the Christian Church and theology. Grundmann connected this "defense" of Christianity with the patriotic struggle for the protection of the Christian German nation. Such a protection required the conceptualization of the Jew as the enemy of both Christ and the German people. He made it clear that to achieve its goal of dejudification, the institute intended to lead a war against Jews and Judaism. In 1943 he explicitly wrote that "in the fateful battle of the Greater Germany which is a fateful battle against World Jewry and against all destructive and nihilistic forces, the work of the institute gives the tools for the overthrow of all religious foreignness... and serves the belief of the Reich. clearly wrote that the goal of the institute." The scholarly task of dejudification led by this institute comprised the radical separation of the New Testament and the Old Testament and the attempt to demonstrate that Jesus was not a Jew. In the article "Megaz" (Greatness) he published in the Dictionary,

Grundmann articulated a reflection reminiscent of Hegel. In his need to explain the uniqueness of the Gospel's message he built a binary opposition by contrasting Jesus and the Scribes. After noting that while the teaching of Jesus is the greatest commandment of love, the scribes focus on the law, he concludes that this difference carries with it "the radical overthrow of Jewish nomism and in some sense of Judaism itself as a religion."

It would be simplistic to regard Kittel as a vulgar anti-Semite. His understanding of the biblical view of the Jews was part of a long tradition of Christian theology. As Kittel's collusion with Nazism shows, Christian theology of the "fulfillment of the Mosaic law by Jesus" leads to anti-Semitism. What happened with regard to Jews, also happened to women, native Americans, Africans and many other so-called "savage pagans". Although Kittel and his colleagues had other reasons for their anti-Semitism, what is interesting for our study of minority religions is the inner logic of biblical studies, specifically the notion of the fulfillment of the Mosaic law which stands at the core of New Testament scholarship and its notion of the uniqueness of Christianity. In both cases of Hegel and Kittel, what is important to examine is the logic which theologizes the worth of non-European people and non-Christian religions. Kittel's biblical studies and Hegel's philosophy of religion indicate that the notion of Christianity as the perfect and superior religion, the embodiment of love and rationality renders the spiritual values of other religions meaningless. Subsequently, as Eboussi Boulaga rightly pointed out, the ideology of the "uniqueness of Christianity" turns the Christian concept of Revelation into a tool of domination, exclusion and exploitation.

Text 6. THE "JEWISH PROBLEM."

Dwelling in the great cosmic story of Torah, Israel survived its journey through the medieval world of persecutions and expulsions, until it was splintered by the Enlightenment in the nineteenth century and nearly shattered by the Holocaust in the twentieth century. That journey is both a tale of tragic precedents to the coming of the Holocaust and yet a story of amazing spiritual endurance and creativity that enriched and expanded the house of Torah in which Israel dwelled – especially through the emergence of Kabbalistic mysticism and Hasidic piety.

The situation of the Jews deteriorated with the decline of the Roman Empire and the rise of Christianity. While Jews in Israel were under the colonial rule of the Romans in the first four centuries, they were unique in enjoying a protected status as a legal religion within the empire, even though they refused to worship the gods of the official state cult. When the emperors and the empire became Christian, the colonial domination of the Jews became more severe. That domination did not really end for Jews until the establishment of the state of Israel in the twentieth century. In 381 the first Christian emperor, Theodosius, declared Christianity the only legal religion of the empire. With that, all pagan religions were outlawed, and Judaism was placed in a restricted legal status. Under the Theodosian law code of the early fifth century, although Judaism was not made illegal, Jews were severely discriminated against, religiously and economically. Then in the sixth century the emperor Justinian produced the Justinian law code, which was even more severe and removed Judaism from the status of a legally protected religion. The Christian view that they superseded or replaced the Jews as God's chosen people led to what in later centuries would be called "the Jewish problem" – namely, why Jews still existed at all. Jews came to be seen as an "obstinate" and "stiff necked" people who refused to see the truth of Christianity and convert (or in later modern secular culture, refused to give up their Jewishness and assimilate).

Due to their impoverished legal status, Jews became extraordinarily vulnerable to discrimination and persecution by the overwhelming Christian population that surrounded them. However, by the year 712, an Islamic empire was created that stretched from India into Spain, subsuming the vast majority of Jews under Muslim rule. In general, while Jews did not enjoy full equality under Islamic rule, they usually fared better than under Christian rule. Nevertheless, they experienced sporadic periods of discrimination and persecution from Muslims as well. For example, it was under the Fatimid caliph of Egypt, al-hakim bin-Amir Allah (996-1021) that Jews were first forced to wear special clothing as a "badge of shame" (a practice later adopted by the medieval Catholic Church, and later still by the Nazis).

John L. Esposito, Darrell J. Fasching, Todd Lewis, *World Religions Today*,
(Oxford University Press, 2002), pp140-143