Christology after Auschwitz: A Catholic Perspective

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It can be called a drama of history that Jesus, who symbolizes the bond of unity between Jews and Christians, has all too often become the sign and the origin of dissension and even violence between these faith communities. Jesus of Nazareth embodies the paradox of uniting Jews with Christians and of separating Jews from Christians. What makes the encounter between

Judaism and Christianity so important as well as difficult is the fact that the major differences between the two religions show up in their radically different interpretations of precisely those matters that unite them and none is more crucial than their understanding of Jesus of Nazareth. In short, between the Church and the Synagogue stands the Crucified, dividing Jews and Christians.

Historically speaking, Christians were only able to interpret the Jewish "no" to Jesus as an absolute mockery of their own Christian identity. In the on-going existence of Judaism as a living religion Christians saw, and sometimes continue to see, only the threat of Christianity"s exposure as a dubious and perhaps even deceitful religion. As such, Christians could not tolerate the survival of Judaism alongside themselves.

For example in 1933 Cardinal Michael von Faulhaber gave a sermon in which he claimed that after the death of Christ, Israel was dismissed from the service of Revelation. "She [Israel] did not know the time of her invitation. She had repudiated and rejected the Lord"s Anointed, had driven Him to the Cross. (...) The Daughters of Zion received the bill of divorce and from that time forth [the Jews] wander, forever restless, over the face of the earth." According to this perspective, the covenant with Judaism was abrogated with the appearance of Christ. In history, Christians have often inquired whether Israel was still the people of God, whether the church has replaced Israel. An affirmative answer to the latter inquiry is often described as the "theology of substitution", as well as "displacement theology" or "supersessionist theology". Christians assumed that, thanks to their belief in Jesus as the Messiah, the election of the

Jewish people had been definitively and exclusively transferred to them. The Church had taken the place of Judaism for all time and completely. The implication of this theology is that there is no longer any place for Israel in God"s plan of salvation, that Israel no longer has a role to play in the history of revelation and redemption. The Jewish "no" to Jesus, the Messiah, meant the end of God"s involvement with Israel. The new chosen people, the true, the spiritual Israel, the new covenant now occupies center stage. Accordingly, Christian exegesis, liturgy and catechesis represented the relationship between the First and the Second Testament in terms of "promise and fulfillment", "old and new", "temporary and definitive", "shadow and reality". The ultimate consequence of these supersessionist expressions is that, while Israel was the beloved of God at one time, after she missed her invitation, she lost her election, and

thus her right to existence – she is now a cursed nation or, at best, anachronistic.

This theology of substitution came to prominence so early in Christian thought that it is hardly surprising that it was for centuries an uncontested element of Christian faith and teaching in the churches of the West and the East. Already in the second century, Tertullian (± 160-225) speaks about the “disinheritance of the Jewish covenant and the Jewish election in favor of the Christians." This supersessionist construction was even grounded in the Gospels, especially in the passion narratives, which portrayed the Jews as the enemies of Christ and responsible for his death, and so no longer the people of God. The events of Good Friday marked the end of Jewish history.

A consequence of this theology of substitution is a moralistic, apologetic and

intolerant Christian attitude towards the Jewish people: if your understanding about the things concerning Jesus of Nazareth are not identical with ours, then you are an enemy of the truth and fit only to be cast aside. In this way, the theology that sees the historical vocation of Israel as fulfilled with the coming of the church of Christ, that her role in sacred history was ended, became the cornerstone of theological anti-Judaism. Judaism, in itself, is not accorded any continuing and definitive salvific value, but only in so far as it contributed to the history of Christianity.

For our purpose, it is important to note that Christology played a decisive role in the legitimation of the age-long history of calamity that was the result of such theological anti-Judaism. Ruether even calls "anti-Judaism the left hand of Christology". In light of the substitutive relationship between Judaism and Christianity, we

would call these kinds of Christologies "Christologies of discontinuity" (as have McGarry and Eckhardt). Christian protagonists of these "Christologies of discontinuity" assert the brokenness of Israel"s original election. Christianity is the "successor" of Judaism, is the "faithful remnant" that truly carries forward the sacred role of Israel. Common among "Christologies of discontinuity" is an emphasis on the unique and universal salvation efficacy of Christ. Each of these Christologies understands Jesus of Nazareth as the perfect fulfillment of all Old Testament messianic prophecies. In Christ, Israel"s election found its fulfillment and new embodiment – Christ is the new elect of God, and his Church, his body, is the new people of God. Christologies of discontinuity consequently stress:

- the uniqueness and finality

of Christ;
- the universality of Christ as the sole mediator of salvation;
- Christ as the fulfillment of Jewish hopes and prophecies;
- Christ as the leader and embodiment of the New Israel, successor to Judaism;
- Christ as Messiah;
- and the necessity of preaching Christ to the Jewish people.

The position of sharp discontinuity almost seems to say that Jesus was the Christ *in spite* of the fact he was a Jew rather than *because* he was a Jew. Theologians with such a Christological view are not interested in Jewish-Christian dialogue. The Jews do not have a distinctive position among non-Christians in the universal mission of the Church. The contemporary existence of the Jewish people does not imply specific

questions for their own theological stance.

The Christologies of discontinuity claim that evil was conquered once and for all in the Christ event. The history of humankind before the coming of Christ is regarded as a period of unredeemedness. Belief in Jesus as the Christ allows humankind to enter the new Messianic time. In her famous study, *Faith and Fratricide*, Rosemary Ruether shows how Christians could have understood Jesus only as fulfilling the prophecies by a twofold process of historicizing the eschatological (primarily Luke, who, in absence of Christ"s return, interpreted the Church as the beginning of the kingdom"s establishment, superseding the old Chosen People) and spiritualizing the eschatological (primarily John and Paul, who made the eschatological events of the messianic era a matter of internal, undetectable

transformations rather than observable events in an undefined future). The consequence of this process has been a spiritual, political and ecclesiastical triumphalism of the Church and of Christians, which rendered them blind to concrete evil, especially that within and/or caused by their own Christian story.

A specific exegetical consequence of these Christologies of discontinuity is that the Jews are considered blind to the deeper theological and spiritual meaning of their own Scriptures, whose only proper understanding is Christological. Christologies of discontinuity will recommend "typology" as the exegetical method to approach the Hebrew Scriptures. Typology is a way of reading the Bible, where events of the New Testament are presented as the fulfillment of events in the Hebrew Scriptures. In our Christian liturgies, for example, the Hebrew Scriptures

are often reduced to allegorical significance. A typological approach has allowed Christians to interpret Hebrew scriptural characters and events as "types" or "figures" which proleptically prefigure characters and events in the New Testament. Typology can best be summarized with the well-known adagium of Augustine: “The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New.”

Typology in itself is not wrong. It can be a fruitful exegetical method that was, in fact, already applied in the Tanach and that also belongs to the New Testament, as I will indicate later. Historically speaking though, the consequences of a typological exegesis have almost always been negative and injurious to Judaism, especially insofar as typology became an instrument of Christologies of discontinuity. The covenant between God and Israel is typically seen as

only a preparatory phase in salvation history, without any intrinsic value, having meaning only in relation to the coming of Christ. This kind of typology then becomes an apologetic instrument, which, as in *Adversus Judaeos*, is employed to challenge the intrinsic value of Judaism. In the hands of Christian interpreters, Cain is typologically the murderous elder brother (i.e., the Jews) who kills his younger brother (i.e., Christ). Cain is then forced to flee, the prototype of the "wandering Jew", and carries with him a mark distinguishing him from others (i.e., circumcision). Typology has thereby allowed Christians to read the "Old" Testament with Christian eyes. And because the Jews did not (do not) have this sight, they saw (see) only the literal meaning of the texts and were (are) blind to its deeper meaning.

In typology, the Old Testament becomes a temporary truth that would ultimately

be replaced with the coming of Christ, as a shadow is replaced by the light, as the old is replaced by the new. This way of presenting the coming of Christ makes the history that preceded him in itself empty and senseless. It tends to the opposition of two images of God (justice or love), of cult (ritualistic or spiritual), of salvation history (announcement or realization), of morality (imperfect or perfect) and of life (under the influence of fear or of love).

It is important to note that Christologies of discontinuity do not automatically imply religious intolerance. Theologians who hold this Christological position today will accompany their theories with exhortations to Christian respect for people of all religions.

The history of Christian anti-Judaism, however, is dramatic proof of the violent

potential that is implicit in this Christian theology. When Cardinal von Faulhaber spoke in that symbolic year 1933, in his sermon about the "bill of divorce" the Jews had paid, he did not know that the Jewish people had yet to pay the highest price for their being Jewish. Holocaust scholars have often identified a parallel between the nazi "final solution" (*Endlösung*) and much in the traditional attitudes and practices of Christians and their churches. However fundamentally different Christian moral presuppositions may have been from those of the Nazis, the Hitler program can be seen as a radical application of the Christian world"s age-old warning: "Beware of the Jews!" And a major reason why the Nazis could go as far as they did was that Western culture had been so thoroughly steeped in a very negative theological understanding of the Jewish people. Gregory Baum is very astute in his articulation of this

insight: "The Holocaust acted out the Church"s fantasy that the Jews were a non-people, that they had no place before God and that they should have disappeared long ago by accepting Christ".

Auschwitz means the definitive end of Christological salvation triumphalism. The Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim has queried whether Good Friday then has not again overwhelmed Easter? It does not surprise Fackenheim that most Christian theologians today, to protect the wonder, ignore the horror of the holocaust, minimize and flattens it out into a universalized horror that is at the same time everything and nothing. We can say, however, that Vatican II was a theological response to the holocaust and meant a new beginning in Jewish-Christian relations, even if the overwhelming hermeneutical principle at work in the Vatican II

Documents regarding the Old Testament are still primarily understood as a preparation for the Christian belief in Christ as the fulfillment of prophecy and the finality of revelation. Still, the conciliar declaration regarding the Church"s attitude to non-Christian religions, *Nostra Aetate* (1965), speaks another language. It dedicates its fourth paragraph completely to the relationship between the Church and Judaism and includes the challenging statement that “(...) the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy Scripture". Pope John Paul II has made the Jewish-Christian encounter one of the priorities of his pontificate. Last October, the Holy Father received the scholars attending the Vatican symposium on "Roots of Anti-Judaism in the Christian Milieu". In a speech, referring to Vatican II, he said that the Jewish people "are the people of the Covenant. Further, John Paul II

criticized Christologies "which regard the fact that Jesus was a Jew and that his milieu was the Jewish world as mere cultural accidents, for which one could substitute another religious tradition from which the Lord"s person could be separated without losing its identity", as "not only [ignoring] the meaning of salvation history, but more radically [challenging] the very truth of the Incarnation".

Recognizing the continuing validity of Judaism and accepting that the fact of Jesus" Jewishness is crucial to his identity and to the faith of the Church, has important Christological implications. In dialogue with the Jewish faith, and in acknowledging the abiding validity of the Jewish religion, one is challenged to describe one"s faith in Jesus differently. If Judaism is admitted to be a continuing, valid religious expression, can one still say that Christ has fulfilled the messianic promises

contained in the Hebrew Scriptures, especially when Judaism"s continued existence is the very evidence that it does not believe Christ to be the Messiah? Can a Christian admit the continuing validity of Judaism without compromising his/her belief in the uniqueness and the finality of Jesus Christ? I would like to show how reflections on the Jewish people affects the way the Church understands and defines itself. A proper Christology for the Church today should free the Church to affirm God and itself in Christ without having to negate others.

Contemporary "Christologies of continuity" try to answer these challenges. They argue that, with the Coming of Christ, the election, chosenness and love of God for Israel were not transferred to the Christian Church, leaving the Jewish people without a God, a mission or validity. In other words, Christologies of continuity are

decidedly non-supersessionist. For McGarry, "Christologies of continuity" stress Christianity as the continuation of Israel"s covenant, which Christ does not abrogate, but which He opens up to the Gentile world. These Christologies speak about:

- the abiding validity of the covenant with Israel;
- the positive witness of the Jewish "no" to Jesus as a constructive contribution to the ultimate salvation of humankind, not as an act of unfaithfulness or haughty blindness;
- the positive Jewish witness to the unredeemed character of the world;
- Christ as *partial* fulfillment of Jewish messianic prophecies;
- and the eschatological unification of

all God"s people.

In these "Christologies of continuity", Christian exegesis as typology can have a specific meaning and positive value. The Christological reading of the First Testament has then to be regarded as the discovery of a new layer of meaning in the texts, but not the only and certainly not the first or most original layer of meaning. Christian typology must leave room for other ways of reading the Hebrew Scriptures that are just as valuable. I can refer here to the extremely rich, diversified, classic and contemporary Jewish readings of the First Testament. Paul Ricoeur has pointed out that the Hebrew Scriptures are themselves filled with this kind of typological methodology. We can find in it a succession of different covenants, where each covenant is a re-interpretation of the former one and where the idea of a "new covenant" can already be found (in Ezekiel and

Jeremiah). Hence, the typological link between Judaism and Christianity needs to be seen as a continuation of the constant re-interpretation of the covenant inherent to the Hebrew Scriptures. In other words, if typology is to be acceptable as an exegetical method in contemporary Christian theology, it must be withdrawn from the apologetic and substitutional scheme, "imperfect-perfect", and it must be interpreted anew as one method to use the rich, complex and continuous tradition of biblical explanation so typical of Christianity and Judaism, for the enrichment of the mutual belief of Jews and Christians in Yahweh. Christian (eschatological) typology should always bear in mind that it is not exclusive, but that it is in fact situated inside the internal typological pluralism that is part of Judaism and of which it elaborates only one branch, namely, the eschatological. Seen like this, typology can even

become the expression of respect for the primordial, irreducible value and inextinguishable richness of the First Covenant, which is and remains open for a non-Christological hermeneutical reading.

In an insightful/convincing article, *Ein Bund oder zwei Bünde?*, John Pawlikowski divides the Christologies of continuity basically between those which see Judaism and Christianity as two basically distinct religions despite their shared biblical patrimony and those which believe in the simultaneous and complementary participation of Judaism and Christianity in the same covenant. These are respectively the double and single covenant theories. Single covenant theories tend to view the Christ event as the extension of the one basic covenant, originally made with the Jewish people and still in their possession, to the non-Jewish world.

Judaism and Christianity participate simultaneously and complementarily in the same covenant. They ultimately belong to one covenantal tradition, which began at Mount Sinai. The Christ event is not so much the anticipation of Messianic prophecies, but presents the possibility for the Gentiles to become incorporated in the Covenant of God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In the presence of original Israel, the gentile question is no longer: "How can the Jew be saved?", but becomes "How can I be included in the unbroken Covenant of God with Israel?" An example of this one covenant theory is Franz Rosenzweig, who sees Judaism as "the star of Redemption", and Christianity as the rays of that star. The second, two covenant school prefers to look at Judaism and Christianity as two distinct covenantal religions that are different, but complementary in an ultimate sense. The two covenant theories recognize

an enduring bond between Judaism and Christianity, but then they focus upon the differences between both traditions and communities, showing how the service, teaching and person of Jesus mediate an image of God which is surely new.

In our view, Pawlikowski is right in criticizing the single covenant theories. In these theories, Christianity becomes Judaism for Gentiles. The one, continuous covenant can be described as new after the Christ event only in the sense that now it embraces both Jews and Christians. The two covenant theories are more adequate in representing the relation between Judaism and Christianity, historically as well as theologically. The Christ event is more than Judaism for Gentiles. Why, Pawlikowski asks, then not simply reintegrate the Church in the Synagogue, then why bother with a separate faith community? The two covenant

theories are in need of answering the question if the granting of the vision to the Gentiles through Jesus add anything to the vision. Unless Christianity is able to articulate some unique features in the revelation of Christ, then it should fold up as a major world religion.

In his study on Judaism, Hans Küng has warned us that today, out of fear for anti-Judaism, we paint Jesus and Judaism as grey on grey, making it very difficult to recognize Jesus" own distinctive profile, and even impossible to understand why a religion different from Judaism came into being. Paul Van Buren has pointed out that Israel"s negative witness is to Christ"s novelty: the Jewish rejection says that Jesus Christ is something new and different. What has happened with Jesus" coming and going is not simply part of Israel"s story. Jesus has also caused a break in the continuity of the covenant. It is essential to see that

the task of Christology after Auschwitz is not to make it appealing to Jews. A Christology for the Jewish-Christian reality is not a Christology formulated by the Church that Jews might come to accept it or at least not find offensive. On the contrary, a Christology for the Jewish-Christian reality will be a Christology for a Church that acknowledges that the reality in which it lives is rightly understood only when Israel"s continuing covenant with God is both recognized and confessed as essential to it.

This means that we have to explain both continuity and discontinuity between both faith communities. In one respect, Christianity is entirely grounded in Judaism; in another respect, Christianity is a different religion from Judaism. It is a distinct religion based on salvation in Christ and in this way Christian. At times we have to set ourselves intellectually on the side of discontinuity

and difference, and at other times on the side of continuity and unity. We must seek to mediate between these two sides, to relate each to the other, and to go beyond both.

The question now becomes whether there is a way to repudiate any supersessionist theology and Christology while trying to maintain the uniqueness of the singular grace of Jesus Christ. Is it possible to confess him as the Christ, and at the same time to hold on to the idea that the divine choice of original Israel retains a positive, constructive effect?

Explaining what separates Christianity from Judaism, Jesus from the Jewish tradition is a precarious enterprise. For the most part, the lines drawn between the Jewish and Christian faith are false and supersessionist. Most familiar is the dichotomy according which, in praise of either a

schizophrenic Bible or a schizophrenic Lord, an "Old Testament God of wrath" is pitted against a "New Testament God of love". On an entirely different level, though still largely supersessionist, are the society-person, rituality-spirituality, law-grace or fear-freedom dualities.

Jürgen Moltmann"s Christology seems helpful for entering into a genuine dialectic between Judaism and Christianity. His Christology can be seen as a strong and authentic example of a Christology of continuity, but which shows respect for the different covenantal realities of Judaism and Christianity.

Moltmann stresses that, although Christians trust that the Messianic times have definitively begun in Jesus and that the Kingdom of God is among us, they are also aware that not all biblical prophecies about the Messiah have been fulfilled yet. The Messianic sign that embodies

the end of all evil, and the end of oppression for all people, has not yet come. Moltmann indicates that this is the innermost reason for the Jewish "no" to Jesus. At this point, we can quote with Moltmann the famous statement of Martin Buber in which he explains why the Jews do not believe in Jesus as the Messiah: "The church rests on its faith that the Christ has come, and that this is the redemption which God has bestowed on humankind. We, Israel, *are not able* to believe this". Moltmann correctly points out that it is not a question of Jewish unwillingness, nor of hard-hearted defiance. It is an "inability to accept". It is well-known that Buber had a deep respect for Jesus; but his statement of the inability was grounded in a even deeper personal and collective Jewish experience: "We know more deeply, more truly, that world history has not been turned upside down to its very foundations - that the world is not yet redeemed. We *sense* its unredeemedness.

(...) We can perceive no *caesura* in history. We are aware of no centre in history - only its goal, the goal of the way taken by the God who does not linger on his way".

Based on their experience of the unredeemedness of the world, they are unable to believe in Jesus as the Redeemer of the world. This is the Jewish question to Christian existence: "if the Messiah has come, why is there so much evil in the world?" Christians answer this challenge by saying they live in the tension between the "already" and the "not yet." In the Christ event God"s full victory is assured, but not completely realized. Each Messianic statement about Jesus must be spoken in the future tense, not as a contemporary reality. Jesus will become the Christ only at the end of times. Moltmann sees here also the possibility for a positive Christian theological acceptance of the Jewish "no" to Jesus, not merely as an act of infidelity

or haughty blindness. "Even the raised Christ himself is "not yet" the pantocrator. But he is already on the way to redeem the world. The Christian "yes" to Jesus" Messiahship, which is based on believed and experienced reconciliation, will (...) accept the Jewish "no", which is based on the experienced and suffered unredeemedness of the world. (...) The Christian "yes" to Jesus Christ is (...) not in itself finished and complete. It is open for the messianic future of Jesus." If Christians and Christian communities would have heard the meaning of this Jewish "no", they would have been better protected against all kinds of triumphalism and self-idolatries, as Eckardt remarks.

Moltmann refers to Saint Paul"s Israel chapters (Rom. 9-11), where Paul saw God"s will in Israel"s "no". "Their rejection is the world"s reconciliation" (Rom. 11:15). It is not the "no" of

unbelievers, but a special "no" that must be respected. God imposes on the whole of Israel an inability to say the "yes" of faith in Jesus, in order that the gospel may pass from Israel to the Gentiles. Had the Jewish people as a whole somehow come to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, how could the Covenant have been opened to all nations, Moltmann asks? The non-recognition of the Messiahship of Jesus by most of historic Israel falls within the sovereign purposes of God, for through this series of historical events his redeeming grace could be extended to the pagan realm. Without the Jewish "no", the Christian Church would have remained a messianic revival movement within Judaism itself. Moltmann hopes that also Israel, in spite of its own observance of the Jewish "no", can view the Christian "yes" to Jesus also as a positive contribution to the ultimate salvation of humankind, as the *preparatio messianica* of the nations.

Like the Jews, the Christians are waiting hopefully for the final Coming of the Kingdom of God on earth. This is known in Christianity as the Second Coming of the Messiah. That is how Christians wait. But they are not alone. The unredeemed world is a problem for the Jew as well. This is a Christian question to Jewish existence: "If there is so much evil in the world, why is the Messiah not coming?" As such, Christians and Jews wait together, in spite of their differences of belief, dreaming of and working toward the same goal. Küng speaks here of a perspective on the future whose consummation Jews and Christians wait for together. In accord with this, Metz calls for a "Koalition des messianischen Vertrauens" ("A coalition of Messianic trust") between Jews and Christians.

From the Jewish side, the solution of Moltmann and others, to see Jesus

as Christ in the fullest sense only at the end of times, and to understand his Messiahship in a proleptic, anticipatory way, has been severely criticized. It is said that the original essence of Israel means something infinitely more than the non-acceptance of Jesus as the Christ, and for that matter, infinitely more than service as a corrective instrument *vis-à-vis* the Christian church. In Moltmann"s solution, the Synagogue is in the end still subordinated to the Church. And although this eschatological solution of the problem creates theological room for Judaism in the present, one can still ask whether this might only be deferring the question. The Jewish thinker Manfred Vogel has criticized this modern trend of placing the resolution of Jewish-Christian tensions in the end times: "[This] deferment of the problem from the present to the future (...) [enables] one to accept the *status quo* for the time being. (...)

[This] means that the messianic claim of Jesus *vis-á-vis* the Jewish people is cancelled for the present. If the first coming of Jesus makes a messianic claim on the world, the Jews are exempt! (...) Thus the Christian can overcome the Jewish non-acceptance of Jesus only by surrendering for the time being the messianic claim." Eckardt has likewise argued that Christians might be doing nothing more than pushing the classic concept of Judaism"s invalidation by the Christ event only one step back to the end of times. The great Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig once said: "Whether Jesus was the Messiah, will become evident for Jews when the Messiah comes." Küng interprets this remark like this: "When the Messiah comes, then, as Christians are convinced, he will be none other than Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified and risen one." The same critique can be uttered here. Anti-Judaism is merely tempered, not finally overcome in this

theological stance. The final fulfillment is postponed to the end of times, but Jews still need Christ to reach the Kingdom.

We nevertheless believe Moltmann"s eschatological solution of the Jewish-Christian relationshisp is not a step back. It at least neutralizes the potential violence between Jews and Christians by opening ways of mutual respect and collaboration for the kingdom of God on earth in the present. Do the Jews then still need Christ to be saved? Elie Wiesel states that "Jews don"t like to make the world more Jewish, but more human. Christians often think that the world can only become more human by becoming more Christian." In this regard, a helpful distinction can be found in Schubert Ogden"s distinction between a constitutive and a representative understanding of the saving character of Jesus. In a constitutive interpretation of the saving nature of Jesus" life, Jesus is

not simply representing salvation. His life and work *constitute* salvation. Traditional Christology has claimed some sort of efficacious quality to Jesus" life, whose life definitively revealed the Father and constitutes salvation, and through whose life men and women have the possibility of resurrection, forgiveness and life. In a constitutive Christology, the life and work of Jesus bring about salvation in a way that can never happen in any other way. In a *representative* interpretation of Jesus" saving life, the possibility remains open to recognizing the potentiality of salvation earlier than (and after) the coming of Jesus, primarily given with the beginning of creation. This does not mean, of course, that Jesus is not *confessionally* constitutive for Christians, but it is to say that he is not *ontologically* constitutive.

While a constitutive Christology will inevitably end up in

substitution, a representative Christology opens the possibility of confessing Jesus as the Christ without repudiating the covenantal representation of salvation in the First Covenant with the Jews. It is only in such a representative Christology that the salvific meaning of Jesus can be described as a representation of the covenantal commitment of God expressed in creation and validated at Sinai. In the same representative way, the covenant of Sinai is an articulation of the covenant of God with humanity given from the beginning of creation. And this does not exclude the possibility of seeing Sinai as *confessionally* constitutive for the life of Israel, just as the Christophany of Easter is *confessionally* constitutive for Christian life. The resurrection and Christ-experience function in a paradigmatic way for Christians in the same way as Exodus functions as hope for the Jewish people. In a representative

interpretation, the confession of Jesus as Messiah does not have to lead to a theology of contempt and substitution. Jesus, seen in the perspective of Sinai, represents the covenant mediated there as well. Jesus is perceived by Christians as the One who generously re-presents this covenantal reality.

This, of course, does not dissolve the difference between Jews and Christians, but at least it overcomes the destructive concentration on the question of who is "with God" and who is not. Instead, it focuses on the best way of honoring and representing the covenantal reality of God with humanity within each religion. Representative Christology can be helpful in avoiding two imbalances: to think fulfillment first and foremost as *past* fulfillment in Jesus or in the church, or to think it only a thing to be accomplished in the *future*. The search for the novelty of Christ is mostly put

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in the past tense. Theologians ask what was different about him, what change took place with his coming and going? Putting the question in this way implies speaking of the resurrection as a past event and asking what really happened. For sure, these questions about the past play an important role in a living church, but they are not the most crucial ones. In the first place, should Christ always be present? We concur with Van Buren: "What was new about Christ in the past is what is new about him today or the Church"s faith is in vain. (...) Living faith will begin in the present, (...) look to the future, and then retell the past". Or in the words of Moltmann: "Every confession of Christ leads to the way, and along the way, and is not yet in itself the goal. (...) "I am the way", says Jesus about himself according to one of the old Johannine sayings (Joh 14:6)". This means that Christians recognize Christ-in-his-becoming, Christ on the way, Christ in the movement of God"s eschatological

history. We see here revelation in the first place as a mission in the present, more than as an accomplishment in the past or in the future. Christology should be open to a constant revision, because revelation stands before us as well as behind us. The story is not over. In different ways, each of the witnesses to Jesus as Lord made this clear. Paul is teaching in Rome "quite openly and unhindered" (Acts 28:31). Revelation in the present is also for us much more a quest than an accomplishment.

In this line, Moltmann emphasizes the different stages in God"s eschatological history with Jesus: the earthy, the crucified, the raised, the present and the coming One. A possible seduction in Moltmann"s approach is that in Jewish-Christian dialogue we now become too much fixed on the final end. When so much emphasis is placed on the Christological end of the story, Van Buren argues,

the intervening chapters we must write today in the story of Christ are in danger of being taken with less full seriousness. "To live in an unfinished story is to realize that one is contributing to its writing by that living. It is to realize that the story"s development *and its future course* depend not only on God but also on God"s partners" (van Buren).

In our view, this implies that the way Jesus will be the Messiah will depend upon the way we re-present him today. When the Church or some of its members fail to represent Jesus" cause authentically, to that extent Jesus" cause is set back and will affect the way in which Jesus will or will not be the Messiah. We must return here to the issue we find at the center of the dialectic tension between the two faiths, but that also points to their inner bond, the issue of the unredeemedness versus redeemedness of the world, as we pointed out already

with Moltmann. The basic difference between Jews and Christians consists fundamentally in the experience of realized eschatology in the Christ event. Christians are linked to, are baptized into, this eschatological event, and they must extend its meaning and its historical dimensions to human history, in time and space. Jews are witnessing to the "not yet" of the entire Messianic age. Schalom Ben-Chorin has adopted this argument as follows: "The Jew is profoundly aware of the unredeemed character of the world, and he perceives and recognizes no enclave of redemption in the midst of an unredeemed world. The concept of a redeemed soul in the midst of an unredeemed world is alien to the Jew, profoundly alien, inaccessible from the primal ground of his existence. This is the innermost reason for Israel"s rejection of Jesus, not a merely external, merely national conception of Messianism. Evil of

body and soul, evil in creation and civilization. So when we say redemption, we mean the whole of redemption. Between creation and redemption we know only one caesura: the revelation of God"s will". Christians must agree with the Jew that the world is not yet redeemed and recognize the importance of Israel"s continuing witness to this fact. They must also accept the critic that the Christian insistence upon redeemedness has occupied a central place in the church"s ideological justification of its own social dominance. In the light of this historical Christian triumphalism, what could it possibly mean that Jesus is the Redeemer of Israel? In the opinion of Eckardt, the Jew is obliged to ask the Christian a painful question: "When you set out the cup of communion wine in remembrance of the sufferings of Jesus, what possible *specific* meaning or lesson is embodied in this symbolic act? Are you ready to suffer as Jesus did? Tell me, where were

you when we Jews were living and dying in Auschwitz? In sum, just who are the witnesses of the Redeemer?"

The fact that Christians historically have not always represented the redemption in Jesus authentically does not mean that Jesus is no longer the Redeemer for Christians. It is and remains a fact of Christian life that Christians experience mercy, or justice, or forgiveness, or love for the enemy in particular lives and communities, and when they experience this radical novelty in the present, they can trace it to the newness of Christ in their lives.

Here we touch upon the unique quality of Jesus" life and message: redemption in the present, even for those who had wronged, as the strongest manifestation and anticipation of the Messianic times here and now. In a recent, and beautiful document of the French bishops,

Lire l''Ancien Testament. Réflexion du Comité épiscopal pour les Relations avec le Judaïsme, we find the following passage: "Jésus radicalise le commendement de l''amour en l''étendant au pardon des ennemis". The great Jewish scholar David Flusser also sees here an element of newness in Jesus" message, as John Pawlikowski clearly points out. Jesus" message of love for one''s enemy stands in contrast to Pharisaic teaching which only insisted that the person be free of hatred toward one''s enemy but never insisted in the same way on the need to show love toward him or her. As David Flusser has said:

"(...) According to the teachings of Jesus you must love sinners, while according to Judaism you must not hate the wicked. It is important to note that the positive role even toward the enemies is Jesus" personal message. (...) In Judaism hatred is practically

forbidden. But love of the enemy is not prescribed."

In this radicalization of the commandment of love in Jesus" message, we find the strongest sign that in his person and message, the redemption of the world becomes "yet" possible. This, however, is not something Jesus constituted in the past through his life and death ontologically, but something Christians have to re-present in the present, to open the Messianic future of Jesus. At this point, we need to point out that the relation between Judaism and Christianity cannot be reduced to a simplistic dialectic between "law and grace". Eckardt shows that the relation between Judaism and Christianity holds a much deeper complexity:

"*Relative to their Christian neighbors*, Jews tend to *talk* about unredeemedness, though not very much about sin, as meanwhile they

experience the sin of the world as a brutal fact, yet behave, nevertheless, in a more redeemed way. *Relative to their Jewish neighbors*, Christians tend to *talk* about the crying need of redemption while *behaving* more as though there were no such thing as redemption. There could be no more convincing evidence than this of both the barrier and a blurring of the lines between the two faiths".

The Christian response to the message of Jesus must always have a certain strange sound to the Jew whose knowledge of the Christian Cross is so vividly one of the Jew"s own suffering at the hands of Christians, rather than one of the suffering of Christians for the sake of their faith. Jews know from experience that sometimes Christians are the last ones to love their neighbors as themselves, not to mention their enemies. The dialectic between Jews and Christians

is thus a strange one. While Jews suffer more, they show greater social responsibility and utopism. While Christians suffer less, they show lesser social hope and more social irresponsibility. Christians like to whisper to themselves that were they to live the fullness of redemption in Christ here and now, the cost would be too great. And precisely this prompts Jews to point to the unredeemedness of the world. At the same time, the moral quality of life of the Jews is a partial refutation of their concentration on the unredeemedness of the world and shows what redemption could mean, even if it is not motivated by the power of Christ. We think here of the Jewish refusal to treat Christians the way Christians treat Jews.

Does this mean that Christians should give up their belief in Jesus as the Redeemer? On the contrary. The confrontation with Judaism asks

Christians to be more authentically Christian. The sole goal of Jewish-Christian dialogue, if there is one, is, as Fischer puts it, that Jews have the opportunity to become better Jews, and Christians more authentically founded in and representatives of their Christianity. Christians should thus not leave open the question of Jesus" Messiahship, but they should accept that Jews leave this question open (as Dietrich Bonhoeffer has said). Christians have to learn to live with the Jewish belief in the "no" to Jesus for the sake of their own Christology. The way Jesus will come as the Christ and the Redeemer of the world will depend on the way Christians re-present him in the present. When Christians are not able to bring his redemption to the world today, especially in relationship with the Jewish people, I"m afraid that at the end of times, they will not meet a triumphing Messiah, but what I would like to call a "weeping Messiah", a

Messiah weeping for the injuries and the unredeemedness that Christians have caused, especially to his own people. Then it would end with the fact that not Christians, with their triumphalistic Messianic perceptions, but the Jews will be the first one"s able to recognize the Messiah as the Savior of the World.

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