



## Jesus and the Jews - Today

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A lecture Rabbi Marmur of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto gave at Regis College, Toronto.

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By Dow Marmur

I

#### Personal Experiences

Marcus Borg begins his book, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time* -- that has given rise to this series of lectures in which I'm honoured and privileged to participate -- with a personal account of his encounter with Jesus in the *milieu* of the Scandinavian Lutheran Christianity of his childhood. I'd like to begin this presentation in a similar vein.

For I, too, first encountered Christianity in the context of Scandinavian Lutheranism. But whereas Borg was reared in it, I was very much the outsider, perhaps even the outcast. On the other hand, whereas Borg's brand of Christianity was transmitted to him at a distance, "in a small town in North Dakota near the Canadian border,"<sup>1</sup> mine was, strangely, more immediate, for I spent the most formative years of my life in Sweden.

Before emigrating there with my parents, at age 13, I had no direct experience of Christians or Christianity. I was only four when, at the outbreak of World War II, we escaped the German invasion of our native Poland to what was then the Soviet Union. I have no recollection of having encountered Christians in those years. I went to school only sporadically, and my sole, vaguely religious, memory is being told of *Ded Maroz*, Father Frost who, I subsequently realized, was the Communist version of Santa Claus.

The little religion I did encounter, other than Judaism, was not Christianity but Islam, for out of our seven years in the Soviet Union, we spent five in a small village in Uzbekistan. The Uzbeks are Muslims. In the course of our two years in staunchly Roman Catholic Poland after returning from Uzbekistan and before emigrating to Sweden, I had no contact with Christians, for antisemitism was so rampant in post-War Poland that I had to go to a Hebrew-speaking Jewish Day School in a neighbouring town, so as not to be exposed to the physical and mental torture I was bound to encounter in the state school.

But there were then no Jewish Day Schools in Sweden. In any case, our aim now was to be integrated as quickly as possible, not to remain apart. That meant going to the local state school and thus, of necessity, learning a lot about Christianity. For despite the alleged secularism of the Swedish educational system, there was then still much Christianity on the curriculum, celebrated, for example, in the compulsory daily school assemblies.

I recall vividly the readings of the Passion Story before each Easter and how I -- one of only two or three Jewish students in the school -- would be made to feel personally responsible for having crucified Jesus. All eyes were on me each time the Jews --or the High Priest, or Judas -- were

mentioned. As I did not know the context, I was perplexed and very uncomfortable by the text. Some of that discomfort has stayed with me to this very day. There are times when I still have an exaggerated need to defend myself, my community and my Judaism before Christians.

My Easter discomfort turned into panic the year, soon after our arrival in Sweden, a member of the Swedish Royal Family, Count Folke Bernadotte was assassinated in Israel. He had been the President of the Swedish Red Cross during World War II and, in that capacity, he was instrumental in bringing thousands of Jewish women out of the Nazi concentration camps in the last weeks of the War, among them the girl who would become my wife and her mother, as well as my mother's two surviving sisters, who brought us to Sweden. On the strength of his humanitarian record, Bernadotte had subsequently been appointed a United Nations mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict. After a short spell in that role, he was assassinated by Jewish terrorists.

Once again, I was, of course, personally responsible. Now the two stories -- the Crucifixion more than 1900 years previously and the assassination a few days earlier -- became linked in the minds of my teachers and peers, perhaps even in mine. I still recall the sense of panic, as if it happened only yesterday.

But that was by no means my only encounter with those who testified to the presence of Jesus in their lives. Thus, not many years later, I found myself in a high school in Gothenburg, Sweden, where one of the teachers was a Lutheran theologian. Not only did he teach his subject brilliantly -- stimulating, for the first time in my life, an interest in religion -- but he also made me study Judaism, first for a presentation in class and then for its own sake.-- He's probably most responsible for the vocation that has become my path in life. I'm most grateful to him.

I'm sharing these fragments of autobiography to make the point that my experience of Christianity is by no means only negative. Even though I may owe some of my neuroses to its manifestation in the Swedish school curriculum, I owe much of my religious orientation to the inspiration and guidance I received from a man who taught that curriculum and whose life and work testified to his encounter with Jesus. That's, incidentally, why I was so pleased to endorse Lois Sweet's recent book, *God in the Classroom*,<sup>2</sup> which advocates open and tolerant religious instruction in Canadian schools. Whereas blatant indoctrination can poison the minds of students, the absence of an exposure to the world of religion may starve these minds of content and purpose in life.

As a rabbi, I have tried to put both the negative and the positive experiences of my early years in a wider context. Perhaps that's why I've been actively involved in Christian-Jewish cooperation. One of my most delightful projects is to teach Judaism to Christians -- every Spring Semester at St Michael's College in Toronto and a couple of days each year in the Continuing Education Program of the Toronto School of Theology, in addition to the various lectures and seminars at which I am asked to speak, tonight being one such occasion.

My projects have included several visits to Israel with Christians. Perhaps my interest in the theology of the land of Israel has its roots in these visits. I recall particularly one of them, under the leadership of the Reverend Dr Stanford Lucyk, now of Kingston, who has become a close and dear friend.

We were at the Sea of Galilee, in a place the Arabs call Tabgha, allegedly a corruption of the Greek Heptapegon, which means seven springs (and to my ears bears some resemblance, despite the very different geography, to the biblical Abraham's Beer-Sheva, the seven wells). From the fourth century onwards, three episodes in the life of Jesus were linked to this place in Galilee: (a) Jesus' appearance after the resurrection to confer leadership on Peter; (b) the multiplication of the loaves and fishes; (c) the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>3</sup>

The group I was with celebrated communion there. Though I can only understand this central

Christian ritual intellectually and historically, I was deeply moved by the emotional and spiritual impact it had on the communicants. Though as an outsider I cannot, and do not wish to, be part of the celebration, as a friend of those who celebrate, I cannot but respect and learn from what they testify to in their encounter with Jesus.

The most important lesson I've learnt from all this comes with the realization that, for a non-Christian, it's not enough just to read the books about Jesus and to evaluate the doctrines of the Church. What ultimately matters is how the books and the doctrines manifest themselves in the lives of believing Christians. I don't meet Jesus the way a Christian meets Jesus, but I am aware of the effect that the encounter with Jesus has on my Christian friends, whom I respect. This makes me something of a post-modernist, I suppose, for I'm more concerned with what Christianity *means* to its adherents than "the literal truth" of its texts.

I relate to my own Jewish faith in the same way, too: I'm more interested in the meaning of Judaism for contemporary Jews than the "correct" interpretation of the texts. I invite Christians to view Judaism from the same vantage point, because I believe that, for Christians to know Judaism, it isn't enough to read the books; Christians must also encounter believing and practicing Jews in order to experience the effect of Judaism on its adherents.

## II

### 1 Anti-Judaism

I've disregarded my natural inclination to keep autobiography out of theology. Normally, whenever possible, I try to make a distinction between the narrative of Scripture and Rabbinics on the one hand -- which can make for theology -- and personal musings on the other, which I suspect of rarely rising above narcissistic self-indulgence. But I've broken my own rule today, because of Marcus Borg's opening, autobiographic, chapter, and because of my belief that, by saying something about myself, I may be able to illustrate at least three dimensions in the range of attitudes of Jews toward Christianity in general and its founder in particular. They are: (1) The Jews' suspicion of Christian anti-Judaism in the name of Jesus; (2) The Jews' opportunities to be enriched by the encounter with followers of Jesus; (3) The scope of cooperation between the followers of Jesus and Jews through events such as the one this evening and, perhaps more directly, by exploring our roots together in the land both Christians and Jews describe as holy.

This presentation has few scholarly pretensions, first of all, because the subject isn't really my field of academic interest, and secondly, because there's nothing I may have to say today that this audience doesn't know much better. Therefore, all I can do is to testify to some of my experiences -- not of Jesus, for that is outside my world, but of those who speak and act in the name of Jesus and whom I encounter as a member of the society in which I live. The presentation will be, therefore, by its very nature, at least in part, anecdotal.

Before I finish I will try to make at least one additional point. But let me first deal with the three already listed: (1) Christian anti-Judaism and its effect on Jews today; (2) the blessing of encounter between Christians and Jews; (3) the opportunities given us today to work together. To get the most painful aspect out of the way, I begin with anti-Judaism.

Most Jews in this country and in the United States, as well as in other parts of the Western world (except Israel), originate in Eastern Europe. As a result, they carry memories of Christian anti-Judaism from the old country into the new. Here are but two examples from the writings of men who have dedicated their lives to Christian-Jewish understanding and, therefore, cannot be accused of prejudice or hate mongering.

The first quote is by the late Samuel Sandmel, distinguished scholar and one of the most significant interpreters of Christianity to Jews, and of Judaism to Christians. In his book, *We Jews and Jesus*, Sandmel wrote:

My parents fled Eastern Europe to escape pogroms which began with the ringing of church bells. My mother used to say that even after decades in America the ringing of church bells could still occasionally frighten her. When I was a boy, I was more than once described as Christkiller, especially by gangs of boys. I recall a few occasions when such gangs chased me; I don't recall if they ever caught me. Most Jews my age have had at least the former experience.<sup>4</sup>

My second reference is from an opening paragraph of an essay by Leon Klenicki, one of the best known rabbis working today for Christian-Jewish understanding:

On Saturday morning after services, while going home, it is there, waiting for me, challenging me. It is the cross of a nearby church. Why does it disturb me? The sanctity of the day is marred by an image projecting memories of the past, memories transmitted by generations, by my parents. They are images of contempt for my people. I am overwhelmed despite my own religious feelings of fellowship and my commitment to an ongoing dialogue with Christians. The cross is there, a challenge to my own belief!<sup>5</sup>

Let me stress again that these quotations come from persons dedicated to Christian-Jewish understanding. Yet, their individual and collective memory of the rupture between Judaism and Christianity, and the resulting victimization of Jews and Judaism, are inescapable components of their perception of Jesus as reflected in the actions of his followers.

One of the many puzzles that Jews struggle with in their encounters with Christians is how difficult Christians find it to accept the reality of the Jewishness of Jesus and how, at the same time, they readily acknowledge that Judas Iscariot was a Jew -- in fact, the quintessential Jew, because only a Jew would betray the Messiah for 30 pieces of silver. Jesus is good; therefore, not really a Jew. Judas is bad; therefore he *must* be a Jew.

Hence, despite the efforts of current impartial scholarship to place both Jesus and Judas in historic context, old perceptions persevere. The main cause is, of course, Christian supersessionism. Jesus is still seen by many of his followers as the consummation of whatever good there may have been in Judaism, now greatly superseded through the life and death of Jesus, and the realization of the promise that Judaism failed to deliver.

Instead of a discourse -- an anecdote: Years ago I was speaking about Judaism at a meeting of the Council of Christians and Jews in a fashionable part of London, England. At question time, a lady with aristocratic bearing and a voice that went with it, asked me if Judaism had a moral code. In the hope that I didn't understand what she was saying, I asked for clarification. "Well," she said, "we Christians have the Ten Commandments. What do you Jews have?" Never missing an opportunity to be frivolous, I replied: "Madam, where do you think you got them from?" To which, with obvious indignation, she retorted: "But you Jews gave them up, didn't you?"

The notion of Judaism as the religion of law and Christianity as the religion of love may be too simplistic for scholars, but it's seen as "Gospel truths" by many ordinary faithful followers of Jesus. Often, "Love your neighbour as yourself" is mentally expurgated from the Book of Leviticus in the Hebrew Bible, whereas the injunction in the Book of Exodus, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" is regarded as standard Jewish practice to this very day, often brought as "evidence" when Israeli soldiers shoot at Palestinians in the West Bank or in Gaza.

Many Christians, for reasons totally consistent with what they understand to be the will of Jesus, proclaim their solidarity with the Palestinians, because the Palestinians are seen as the

downtrodden and oppressed. One of the tasks I've set myself of late is to try to explain the place of Israel in contemporary Jewish theology, but that isn't my subject tonight. However, I'd like to make the point here that Christians who express their solidarity with the Jews and appear to be friends of Israel at times frighten me much more than the critics of Israel. For behind many of these expressions of support is the belief that, once all Jews have been brought to their homeland, they will "see the light" and, indeed, meet Jesus again for the first time. Such "friends" may love Jews, but they hate Judaism. To my mind, they are the followers of the biblical Balaam who, briefed to curse Israel, had nice things to say about "the tents of Jacob and the dwellings of Israel."<sup>6</sup>

I dare speak as I do tonight out of a need to make the point that, though active persecution of Jews may no longer be on the agenda, the attempt to obliterate Judaism by missionary means remains a live option in some, perhaps in many, Christian circles. Jewish defensiveness in such situations -- for example, in response to the heavily subsidized and often subversive activities of the so-called Jews for Jesus, sponsored by known Christian missionary organizations in this country and elsewhere -- should be seen in this context. What was once contempt of Judaism, expressed through hostility to Jews, may have now become disdain for Judaism, expressed through the love of Jews.

## 2 Encounters

Enough of that. Let me now turn to more cheerful aspects of our theme. For, while the attitudes described alluded to so far in this lecture repel Jews from what Jesus is made out to be by some of his followers, much in Christianity greatly impresses, even attracts, Jews. Thus I'm reliably informed that a book is about to appear in Britain, written by a well known rabbi, with the title, *My Love Affair with Christianity*. Another British rabbi, Michael Hilton of Manchester, has written a book of some 300 pages, called, *The Christian Effect on Jewish Life*, in which he documents the phenomenon.

Rabbi Hilton takes to task all writers, Jewish and Christian -- among them none other than Hans Küng and his monumental book on Judaism<sup>7</sup> -- for assuming that there was only a one-way traffic; that Judaism influenced Christianity, but not the other way around. To make his point, the author includes on the title page the oft quoted German-Yiddish saying, *Wie es sich Christelt, so Juedelt es sich*, which cannot be adequately translated but must be paraphrased as, "Whatever happens in the Christian world is reflected in the Jewish community." How could it be otherwise, given the power of Christianity in the world in which Judaism existed? Though it would take us too far to try to summarize the evidence, this quote may convey something of the book's flavour:

It can be concluded that an understanding of Christian influence on Judaism is of paramount importance for the history of the faith, especially in the first centuries of the Christian era, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the last 250 years. These Christian influences have rarely been acknowledged.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, in our own century, the flourishing of synagogues of all denominations in America is a direct reflection of the success of the American churches, and the languishing of synagogue life in France, for example, is a reflection of the low esteem in which the Church is held there. Similarly, various manifestations of neo- and pop-mysticism in American Jewish life have come about under the influence of their Christian counterparts. The recent claims by an ultra-orthodox Jewish sect, the Lubavitcher Hasidim, that the Messiah has already come should be seen in this context, too.

Rather than offer a long list of illustrations, and unable to resist a frivolous detour, let me relate this story, as told by the late Harry Golden, the editor of a small and influential weekly called, *The South Carolina Israelite*. It's about a Jewish community in a small town in America. It appears that the synagogue there needed rebuilding. But where to hold services in the meantime? The leaders

approached the local Methodist Church to enquire if the Church Hall would be available for hire. It would. More than that: The Minister asked if he would be allowed to attend. Of course, he would. Soon after the first service in the new location, the Methodist minister walked down the High Street and greeted the Jewish shopkeepers, as he normally would, but this time he added this when speaking to many of them: "I didn't see you in synagogue on the Sabbath." The following week, the Jewish service had a record attendance, and so it went on week after week. The Minister's presence brought them out, if not out of piety then out of embarrassment.

Harry Golden has a twist to his story: Emergency funds were raised in the Jewish community and their synagogue was rebuilt in record time. They now have a beautiful sanctuary and everything is back to normal. The services are sparsely attended, for the local minister isn't there anymore.

### 3 Cooperation

My frivolous story brings me to the third point I'd like to make in this part of the presentation: In addition to the sordid history of anti-Judaism and the ignored history of mutual influence, there's the prospect of genuine cooperation. Christians, who testify to the encounter with Jesus in our time, and Jews living in once predominantly Christian countries, who testify to a different path to God, now live in the same open, secular, society. They're facing the same problems and the same challenges. They need to cooperate in their joint effort to try to overcome them.

There was a time when the Church triumphant would have regarded it as ludicrous to work together with the Synagogue blindfolded (as the two are depicted, for example, at the entrance to the Cathedral in Strasbourg). At that time, the Synagogue, too, would consider it dangerous to seek cooperation with Christians in the firm belief that this was only a Christian ploy to convert the Jews. Today, however, Christians are less confident -- for the same open, secular, society has often reduced Christians to a defensive minority -- and Jews are less suspicious, no longer in dread of persecution and less fearful of conversion.

To bring about effective cooperation, Christians and Jews alike must learn not to forget the past, but seek to overcome it. For, as Michael Hilton argues, for Christians only to see Judaism in terms of the religion of Jesus, since superseded by the accounts of his life and teaching as recorded in the New Testament, is to limit the scope of self-understanding. Similarly, for Jews to refuse to go beyond the litanies of persecution is to miss the other side of Christian teaching in ages past, and their beneficial influence on Judaism in our time.

The most fruitful realm of Christian-Jewish cooperation is, of course, in the field of social action. Whatever the original differences in emphasis between the two religions -- whereof more later -- today, believing Jews and believing Christians alike are engaged in the struggle to make this a better world and ours a better society. The formulation by Marvin Wilson -- a Christian theologian and Bible scholar who has written much about Jewish-Christian relations -- sums up the task:

Orthodoxy (correct or straight thinking) must lead to orthopraxy (right doing). In Judaism and Christianity, theory is always wed to practice. The concept of election in Scripture is not a summons to self-contemplation but a call to service. Christianity, in particular, must be careful that it does not allow *dogma* (the way to believe, prescribed by creed) to overshadow *halakha* (the way to walk or live). Both concepts must be held in balance.<sup>9</sup>

I've learnt much from encounters with Christians and from reading Christian theology. But I've learnt most from working with Christians on social issues and related matters. I hope that they, too, find the cooperation to be fruitful.



## The Jesus of History

But rather than trying to report on such bridge-building, let me devote the last part of my lecture to an attempt to address our subject as directly as I can by asking: What does it mean for a Jew to meet Jesus again for the first time? Marcus Borg's distinction, based on contemporary scholarship, between the *Jesus of history* and the *Christ of faith*<sup>10</sup> is helpful. I begin with a reaction by this Jew -- for there is no one "official" Jewish view on the subject -- to the reality of the historical Jesus.

In the light of available evidence, it would be foolish to question the historicity of Jesus the Jew.<sup>11</sup> But that doesn't mean that I can affirm him as the role model for my religious life, though I recognize and affirm so many of his teachings in my own tradition and in the way I live as a Jew -- without the need to embrace Christianity. And then there are characteristics of Jesus which, for all his Jewishness, are unacceptable to me as a Jew.

I first met Eugene Borowitz, the most significant liberal Jewish theologian in our time, in London, England, in 1967 when he came to give a series of lectures on topics of the day. Again, this is a man who has written extensively on Christianity in the service of true dialogue and partnership.<sup>12</sup> One of his lectures was about the then fashionable "death of God" theology. Let me quote a paragraph from it in response to the claim of these theologians that Jesus, perhaps no longer *the Christ of faith*, should nevertheless be seen as the perfect human model:

I would offer three major objections to taking the man, not the Christ, as a model for our lives. In general he does not serve as a worthy model of the areas where we live our lives. In the first place, trivial though it may seem, he wasn't married. Most of us discover who we are and determine what we become in the give and take, in the tug and tussle, the war that is a love made marriage. How can Jesus serve as our model if he never showed us how it was possible to fulfil his greatest and yet most normal human challenge?

Secondly, most of us have our lives intimately tied to our social order. One can hardly live without being involved in it.... Jesus does not seem to be concerned with the social order as best we can tell from reading about him. Certainly compared with the prophets he has little involvement with the ills of society and little interest in criticizing or transforming its structure.

More important, he ignores that institution which controls a great deal of our life: the state.... You and I are determined that we shall resist an evil government. In Jesus' time that was not the priests of the Temple but the Roman rulers. They were rapacious, greedy, brutal and murderous, according to the Roman historians themselves. A model for a modern man should in those days have been protesting against the government, not turning over the tables of the money changers in the Temple. It was not they but the Roman rulers who were immoral and destroying that country. And Jesus never protested against the Roman rule.<sup>13</sup>

Of course, the Church that speaks in the name of Jesus has made marriage a sacrament, social action an important part of its teaching, and a critique of tyranny central to its message. But, please bear in mind, that Borowitz is not speaking here about the Jew encountering the Church, but, as it were, meeting Jesus again for the first time. Christians find it very difficult to fathom why not all Jews are "for Jesus." Even if they cannot accept *the Christ of faith*, why don't they follow *the Jesus of history*? The response I quoted in the name of Borowitz may help to answer that question, whether Christians agree with it or not.

And, please, bear in mind that Borowitz is a liberal theologian engaged in countless projects of Christian-Jewish cooperation, thus illustrating the fact that you don't have to agree with the other in order to work with the other.

In the book to which I've already referred, which deals with Christian-Jewish dialogue and partnership, Borowitz makes an additional point, relevant in this context. His aim is not to argue against Christianity, only to explain the Jewish perspective.

From a Jewish standpoint there is something troubling about centering one's life around a personal paradigm, in this instance, Jesus the Christ. The equivalent Jewish teaching is the Covenant at Sinai made between God and the people of Israel. The difference is significant. To a Jew, no historic personage is worthy of the status accorded to Jesus, particularly when God is immediately accessible and the Torah tradition is in our hands. Jesus as paradigm would seem too easily to lead on to individualism. Centering one's life around the Jewish people's religious experience gives individual existence what Jews believe is a most appropriate social context.<sup>14</sup>

## The Christ of Faith

On the basis of what has been said so far, it shouldn't be difficult to understand why Jews cannot share the faith even of those Christians who question the divinity of Jesus. This puzzles many Christians. They say: After all, you Jews who affirm the Hebrew Scriptures and regard the Hebrew prophets as your teachers, why don't you accept the truth about the messiah, of whom the Bible speaks and whom the prophets anticipate? The thrust towards the ideal future is very strong in both biblical and later Judaism. So why not affirm Christianity as a cogent and powerful attempt to bring humanity closer to the messianic ideal?

There are many ways in which Jews answer these questions. One set of answers comes from Ellis Rivkin, distinguished Jewish historian, who has written that, though the roots of Christian messianism are Jewish, "there is a point in time, however, when the Christian concept of the Messiah ceases to be Jewish." He explains: "Once the Law is abandoned and once the church is predominantly gentile, Messiah for the Christians becomes the central core of their faith; whereas for Jews, he continues to remain, as he had earlier, an open and ambivalent possibility."<sup>15</sup>

Another Jewish respondent was the late Leo Baeck, theologian and leader of German Jewry during the Nazi period. Baeck made a distinction between what he called horizontal and vertical messianism and suggested that the Hebrew prophets were primarily concerned with a future rooted in time and space; the ideal kingdom on earth. Their messianism was horizontal; it's Jewish messianism. The emphasis is on *tikkun olam*, mending the world in space and time by seeking to make it a better place for all its inhabitants.

Exponents of Christianity, on the other hand, concentrated on redemption "from above;" Jesus, the Son of God. Their messianism was vertical, apocalyptic. Baeck traced the shift of emphasis from the prophetic to the apocalyptic to the Book of Daniel. Not that there are no vertical-apocalyptic elements in Judaism, or that the horizontal-prophetic dimension is absent from Christianity. Nevertheless, Baeck maintained, the prophetic is much stronger in Judaism than is the apocalyptic, and the apocalyptic is much stronger in Christianity than is the prophetic. The difference in emphasis is sufficiently pronounced to mark a clear distinction between the two faiths.<sup>16</sup> That's why *the Christ of faith* belongs to the Christian faith alone. The fact that the faith of the believing Jew is very different from the faith of the believing Christian doesn't mean that the Jew cannot appreciate the depth of feeling and the strength of conviction that permeates commitment in Christianity. Thus Eugene Borowitz, to whom I have referred before, concludes his Jewish response to contemporary Christian theologians with these words:

I remain very much moved by the spirit of the men and women I have been exposed to here. For all that I differ with them and have, at given points, been roused to indignation by their ideas, I know myself to have been in the presence of believers, some of the profundity of whose faith I could palpably feel and share. In their struggles to sense and articulate their Christian belief I have



seen something of what I and others concerned with thinking rigorously about Judaism have been going through. In their effort to be realistic about personal and social existence while being true to what God wants and Christian belief demands of them today, I have been touched by their courage and wisdom. For me this has been a most uncommon intellectual experience because it has been so existentially moving. I deem it appropriate, therefore, to give thanks to God who has given me this privilege.<sup>17</sup>

To which I can only say, Amen. I'm grateful for the privilege to address you this evening and for having forced me to try to formulate a Jewish response to the theme of these lectures. As a believing Jew, I am very respectful of Christianity and most appreciative of countless Christians. At the same time I am also trying to be as honest in what I'm saying and as truthful as I possibly can to what I believe to be normative Judaism. This has been a genuine effort to do my best on both counts.

#### Notes

1. Marcus J. Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time* ( San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1995), 3.
2. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1997.
3. For a detailed description see Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 233ff.
4. Samuel Sandmel, *We Jews and Jesus* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1965), 141.
5. Leon Klenicki, "Toward a Process of Healing: Understanding the Other as a Person of God" in Leon Klenicki (editor), *Toward a Theological Encounter: Jewish Understanding of Christianity* (New York & Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1991), 1.
6. See *Numbers* 24:5.
7. Hans Küng, *Judaism Between Yesterday and Tomorrow* ( New York: Crossroad, 1992).
8. Michael Hilton, *The Christian Effect on Jewish Life* (London: SCM Press, 1994), 242.
9. Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 332.
10. *op. cit.*, 10ff,
11. The best exposition of the subject I know is Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (London: William Collins & Sons, 1973). .
12. See Eugene B. Borowitz, *Contemporary Christologies: A Jewish Response* (New York/Ramsey: 1980).
13. Eugene B. Borowitz, *Facing Up To It*, pamphlet published by the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, London, 1967, 13f.
14. *Contemporary Christologies*, 62f.
15. Ellis Rivkin, *What Crucified Jesus?* (New York: UAHC Press, 1997), 176.
16. See Leo Baeck, *Judaism and Christianity* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1958), particularly essay, "The Son of Man," 23ff.
17. *Contemporary Christologies*, 187f.

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