

Jewish-Christian Relations



Insights and Issues in the ongoing Jewish-Christian Dialogue

Aumann, Moshe, Conflict and Connection: The Jewish-Christian-Israel Triangle

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Moshe Aumann, Conflict and Connection: The Jewish-Christian-Israel Triangle New York/Jerusalem, Gefen Publishing House, 2003. 292 pp.

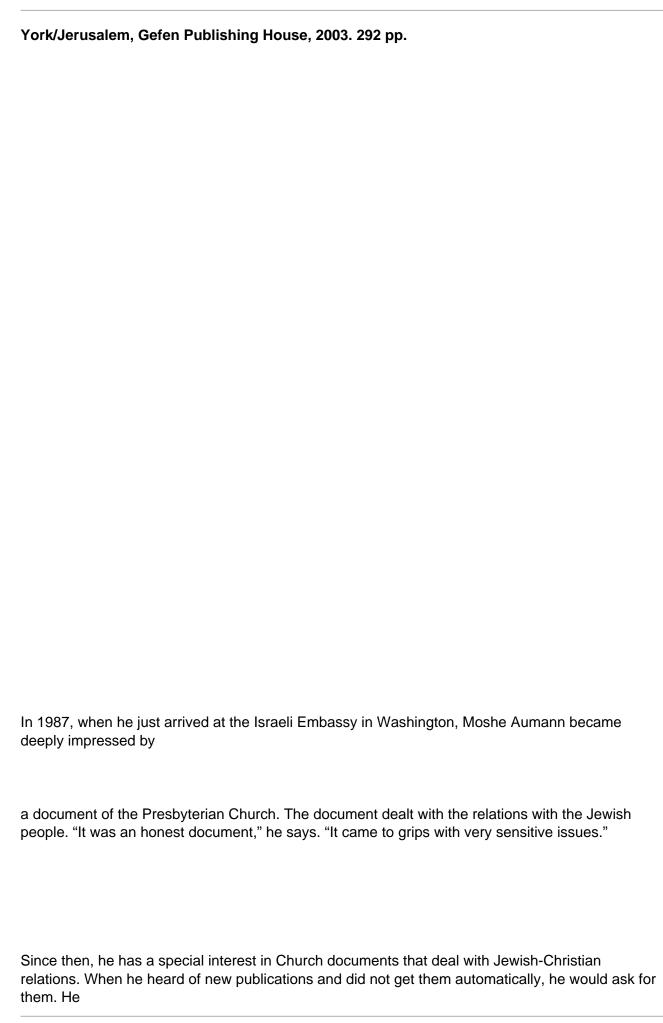


Possible End to Strained Relations Between Jews and Christians

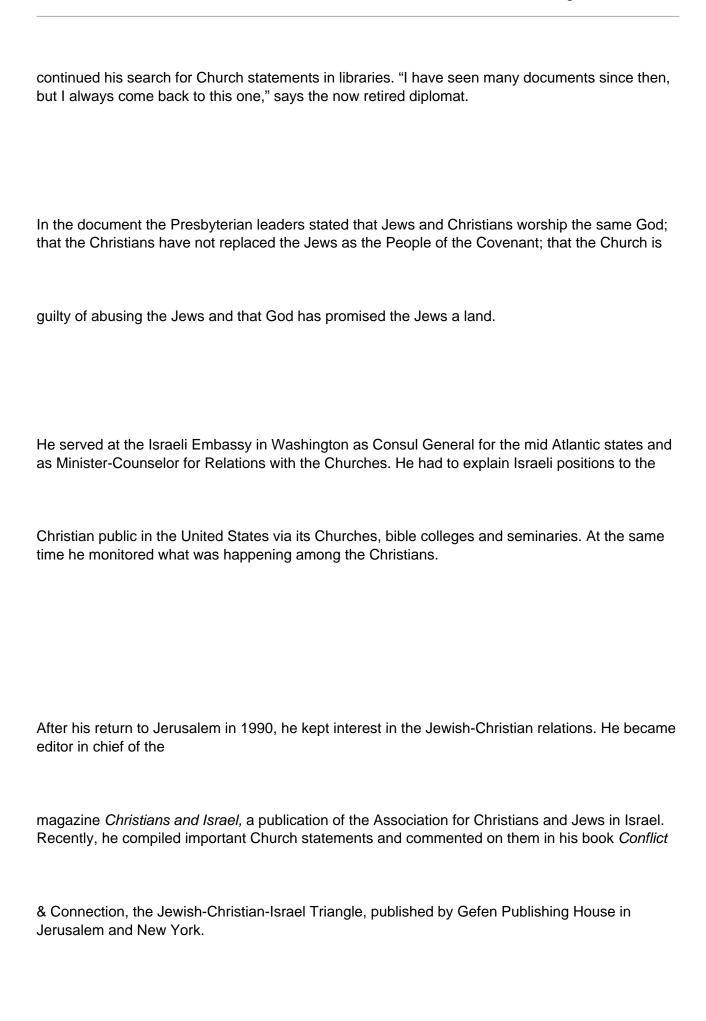
Alfred Muller

Moshe Aumann, Conflict and Connection: The Jewish-Christian-Israel Triangle. New

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"Two millennia of estrangement and hostility, rancor and hatred, persecution, conflict and strife may finally have come to an end," he writes in the epilogue. "Our generation is witnessing a swelling tide of new thinking and new speaking in Christendom" The two factors that brought about the change were the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The rebirth of Israel, the massive return of Jews to their ancient homeland and the establishment of a prosperous state, was not compatible with the Christian theology of the past 2000 years. In Aumann's view Christians faced a choice: either to revise their theology or to rebel against this whole development. The rebirth of Israel, the massive return of Jews to their ancient homeland and the establishment of a prosperous state, was not compatible with the Christian theology of the past 2000 years. In Aumann's view Christians faced a choice: either to revise their theology or to rebel against this whole development. **Assemblies**

Assemblies condemned anti-Semitism and disapproved of ministers identifying them-selves

prior to the establishment of the Jewish state about "the salvation of national Israel". In 1945 the

Most of the documents mentioned in his book were published after the Holocaust, with as

than 20 years

exception the statement of the Assemblies of God in 1927. The Assemblies of God spoke more

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with those who were engaged in anti-Se	emitism. "The main reaso	on why no Christian	should be anti-
Semitic is that our Saviour was a Jew,"	the document noted.		

Aumann's book also includes excerpts of _Luther's anti-Semitic writing "On the Jews and Their Lies" (1543). Luther's statements are contrasted with a statement of the Seventh General

Convention of the American Lutheran Church in October 1974. The American Lutherans say in it that "no Christian can exempt himself from involvement in the guilt of Christendom. But Lutherans bear

a special responsibility for this tragic history of persecution, because the Nazi movement found a climate of hatred already in existence"

Interest

The Church declarations appear at a time when Jewish-Christian contacts increased. However an asymmetry occurred: Christians were more interested in dialogue than Jews. Christians would like to

start a theological dialogue as well, whereas Jews show little interest in the theological views of Christians.

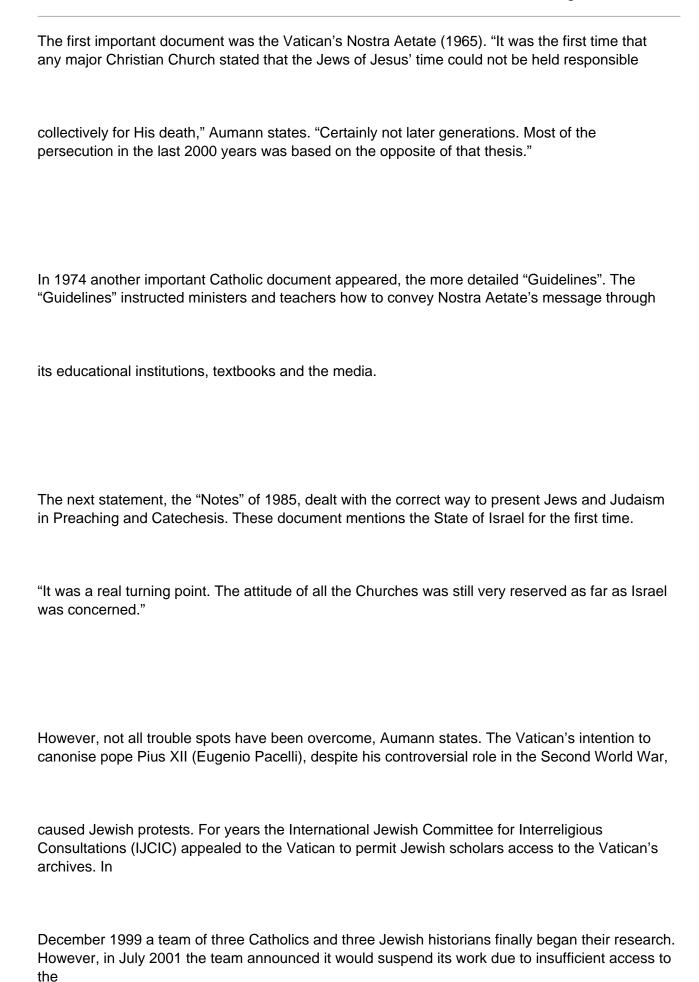
Nearly all Jews who participate in the dialogue with Christians are secular, Reform or Conservative Jews. The Orthodox Jews were hardly ready to join the dialogue. Aumann assumes this is because of

the centuries long persecution by Christians. These have caused feelings of anger and suspicion. On top of this, many feel that the dialogue is yet another attempt to proselytise.

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However, there are some exceptions. The late rabbi and scholar Joseph Soloveitchik approved Jewish-Christian dialogue as long as it would deal with social and humanitarian issues. Religious or
theological topics were not to be touched. Another exception is rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, the founder of "The International Fellowship of Christians and Jews". His organisation channels American
Christian support for Israel.
The author says that the attitude of Christians towards the Jewish people vary. Orthodox Churches in 1972 started to show interest in the dialogue with the Jews. Orthodox Christians did not have
the same amount of guilt feelings about the Holocaust as their Western fellow believers. On the contrary, they viewed themselves as victims of the Nazi regime as well.
Nevertheless, in October 1997 the Eastern Orthodox Ecumenical Patriach Bartholomew, while visiting the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, vigorously denounced anti-Semitism. He described
the State of Israel as a "guarantor" of the Jewish people's survival.
Nostra Aetate

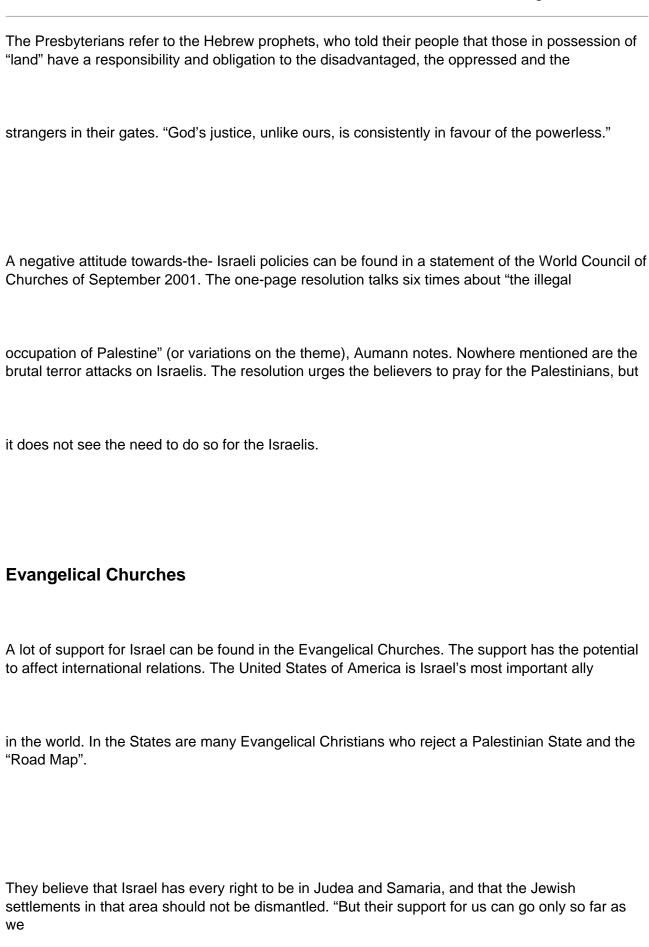
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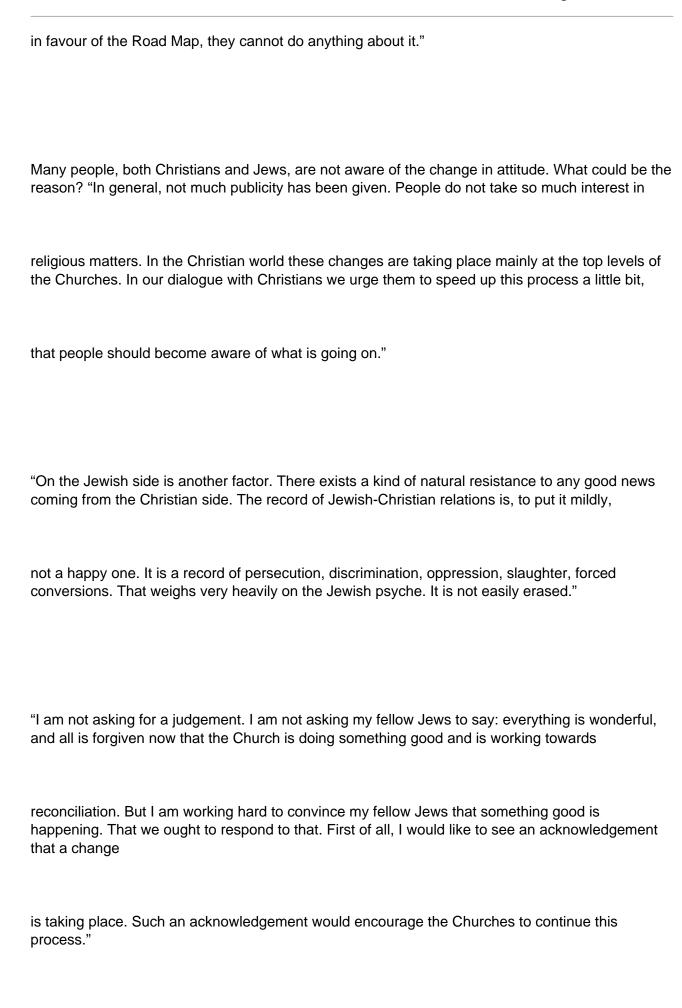
archives.
The State of Israel
Aumann's conclusion appears in the sub-title of the book. The three components - Judaism, Christianity and the State of Israel - should go together. Acknowledgement of Judaism should lead to
acknowledgement ' of the national aspirations of the Jewish people.
"What I found most interesting to see in the development is, that the attitude of a given Church towards the Jewish people and the Jewish religion, was not always reflected in its attitude
towards the State of Israel," the diplomat says.
The document of the Presbyterian Church of 1987, for instance, shows a major change of attitude towards the Jewish people, but not towards the Jewish state. The document states: "As Reformed
Christians, how-ever, we believe that no government at any time can ever be the full expression o God's will. All, including the State of Israel, stand accountable to God. The State of Israel is a
geopolitical entity and is not to be validated theologically."

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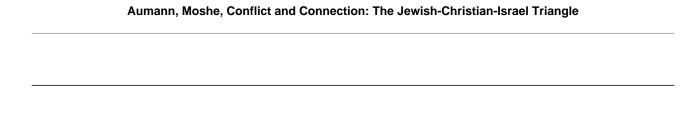


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ourselves want to go in Jerusalem," Aumann says. "If our prime minister and our government vote



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Alfred Muller is a freelance journalist living in Jerusalem. This book is available through www.israelbooks.com and the ISBN number is 965-229-299-0

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