

Dialogue Between Christians, Jews and Muslims: The Concept of Covenant as Basis

By

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RDA

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I declare that the bibliography format is consistent and conforms to the requirements of the Turabian Style (Turabian, Kate L. 2007. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. University of Chicago Press.); or that, alternatively, permission has been granted to employ another style.

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I hereby certify that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution and affirm that to the best of my knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Abstract

This thesis examines in what manner and on what basis communities of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the Abrahamic faiths, can engage in conversation-dialogue relating to the concept of covenant to enable a greater awareness of their relationship with God and the relationships between each of their communities. To achieve this task, this study critically examines the primary texts of each faith in the context of human history, their origins, development and interaction through a series of five epochs which has been identified and constructed as an integral part of this study.

Recommendations are made based on the conclusion that dialogue relating to that concept is not only possible but is vital to enable progress towards stability and harmony in human affairs, and a clearer understanding of humanity's relationship with God. A number of other intimately related conclusions have been reached.

Each of Judaism, Christianity and Islam have been called into existence by divine initiative as a consequence of major breaches of covenant by their successive predecessors, namely Yahwism, then Judaism, then Christianity. Those successive initiatives do not mean that any covenant has been abrogated. They are each extant and their operation is cyclical in accord with the conduct of their adherents. Each covenant involves a common obligation as well as responsibilities specific to each faith. The currency of each covenant, and a partnership between each faith, is shown by the convergence of prophecy related to continuing breaches of covenant which were generated within each of them. This has culminated in the establishment of the State of Israel – the central fact of the Common Era – and also in the relative status of the White Western Christian Bloc and the World Majority Peoples being reversed. This requires recognition of the partnership between the three Abrahamic faiths, and dialogue and cooperation on that basis.

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Abbreviations

A. (in text refs.)	Qur'anic Ayat (verse)
ANDCMJ	Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims and Jews
ARIL	Association for Religion and Intellectual Life
ISAT	International Scholars' Annual Trialogue
ATS	Association of Theological Schools (USA and Canada)
BCE	Before the Common Era
BCEIA	Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Affairs
BSA	British Sociological Association
B.T.	Babylonian Talmud
CCAR	Central Conference of American Rabbis
CCEE	Council of European Bishops' Conferences
CE	Common Era
CHAI	Children of Abraham Institute
CME	Crisis ion the Middle East
DPLFI	Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
GTU	Graduate Theological Union
IAC	InterAction Council
ICCJ	International Council of Christian and Jews
IICDR	International Islamic Council for Da'Wah and Relief
IIID	Institute for Interreligious, Intercultural Dialogue
JCMA	Jewish Christian Muslim Association (Australia)
Jerusalem (ref)	The Jerusalem Bible
JP (ref)	Judaica Press Tanakh Online, Rashi English Commentary
JVL (ref)	The Tanakh. Jewish Virtual Library / JPS Electronic Edition,
MCD	Melbourne College of Divinity
MECC	Middle East Council of Churches
MHUDC	Mature Hebrew Understanding of Divine Covenant
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCCI	National Council of Churches in India
NCS	National Council of Synagogues
NGO	Non-Government Organization

NIEO	New International Economic Order
NRSV (ref)	The Bible: New Revised Standard Version Oremus Browser
NT	New Testament
OAPEC	Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OT	Old Testament
PCIRD	Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue
PCV	Presbyterian Church of Victoria
PIAIS	Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies
RJ	Reform Judaism
S. (in text refs.)	Qur'anic Sûrat , Sûrah (chapter)
SSR	Society for Scriptural Reasoning
TR	Textual Reasoning
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN / UNO	United Nations Organization
US or USA	United State of America
USBCEIA	US Bishops Com. for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs
USNCS	US National Council of Synagogues
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCRP	World Conference of Religions for Peace
WOCATI	World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions
WMP	World Majority Peoples
WWCB	White Western Christian Bloc
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two
WZO	World Zionist Organization

Chapter One

Introduction: Covenants – templates for the future

1. The study

The thesis of this study is the proposition that the concept of covenant, being a relationship between God and humanity, is intrinsic to each of Christianity, Judaism and Islam; that their interpretation of it is basic to their self-understanding and conduct; that next after the concepts of God and Creation, it is the fundamental concept of Abrahamic Monotheism; and that each of those faiths, having been called into existence under covenant by God, is obligated to exemplify it, as partners, in full view of all humanity.

In a landmark study in 1964 David Noel Freedman wrote that there can no longer be any doubt of the central importance of the covenant theme in the Old Testament, that archaeological data supported studies to that effect by Walter Eichrodt ¹, and that: “It can therefore be affirmed that the covenant principle is intrinsic to the Biblical material and that it defines the relationship of God to his people.” However he then qualified that affirmation, saying: “The covenant theme, of course, is not a universal key to the Scriptures, for no single theme could be sufficiently comprehensive to encompass the great variety of the Biblical material.”²

Therefore the principal question which the thesis seeks to address is: “In what manner and on what basis can the communities of the three primary Abrahamic faiths, Christianity, Judaism and Islam, be engaged in conversation-dialogue relating to the understanding of covenant to enable humanity-at-large to respond to a greater awareness of its relationship with God?”

1 Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 1st English ed., Two vols., vol. One, Theology of the

2 David Noel Freedman, "Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: The Covenant Theme," in *Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: Selected Writings of David Noel Freedman*, ed. John R. Huddleston (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997). p. 168.

2. Immediate objectives

Research to answer that question has been focussed on three immediate objectives.

To examine the circumstances in which the concept of covenant was enunciated and the understanding of it has evolved. This involves considering the interpretations of it within each faith and the impact of these interpretations on the relationships between them, their attitudes towards each other, their conduct in dealing with each other, and their capacity for interaction with each other and with people of non-Abrahamic faith or no recognized faith at all.

To demonstrate from that examination of the concept of covenant that each of the faiths are legitimate divinely inspired instruments of Divine Will and therefore share responsibility to pursue Divine Will both under their separate identities and as partners.

To use that examination to identify the conditions and requirements for non-defensive dialogue conversations between authorities and scholars of each of Christianity, Judaism and Islam which can provide a basis for peace with justice through reconciliation when the deliberations and outcomes of those conversations are relayed to, understood by, and adopted within the communities of the three faiths.

3. Definitions and use of texts

Primary Abrahamic faiths

In this thesis the term ‘primary Abrahamic faith’ refers to Judaism, Christianity and Islam as they have evolved and are practiced in numerous streams or denominations in the current era. The term “communities of Abrahamic faith” is applied slightly differently, encompassing certain communities which have been established either as a consequence of disagreement with one or more aspects of those faiths or, alternatively, on the basis of subsequent inspiration or revelation acknowledged by their adherents which demonstrates a relationship to one or more of the primary Abrahamic faiths and which have been shown to be very significant in the evolution of covenantal understanding. Two are identified by name, Mormonism and the Baha’i Faith. The circumstances of the establishment of Mormonism are discussed within the scope of this study. Other communities which have been established as a consequence of disagreement with the primary faiths, including Scientology and the Unification Church, are excluded from consideration.

Covenant

Current usage of the term “covenant” is both complex and confusing. As well as being used in various books of the Bible to describe statutes and agreements between individuals and parties, and even with inanimate objects or creatures (as in Job), it has been adopted to refer to a wide range of legal, commercial or personal agreements or undertakings entered into between individuals, corporate entities or communities, whether under government statute or privately, and whether or not between parties of equal status or influence.³ This thesis is concerned only with covenantal relationships between God and humanity. Therefore, hereafter, the term ‘covenant’ will be used to refer to a ‘divine covenant’ between God and an individual, a specified community or all humanity. If an alternative meaning is intended, the term will be qualified.

Dialogue conversations

The term “dialogue conversations,” rather than “dialogue,” is used in this thesis to describe the process of face-to-face theological discussion to distinguish it from the range of activities that may involve people from more than one faith which are planned to achieve particular objectives in any forum, from a local community to an international arena, other than consideration of theology. However, because dialogue conversations also have a particular objective they must also be undertaken on a carefully constructed basis.

The analytical method developed by George Lindbeck⁴ for considering texts which is based on examination of the way alternative Christian theologies work through their internal logic and grammar, has greatly facilitated conversations between streams within the Christian Church by identifying ‘Common Ground’. Although he sees no way to apply that method to interfaith dialogue, this thesis shows that the ‘common ground’ notion is of paramount importance as a basis for dialogue conversations between religious leaders and scholars of the three Abrahamic faiths. Obligation and response, being primary attributes of covenant, provide that common ground, and the concept of covenant becomes the basis for work towards reconciliation and mutual acceptance.

3 Lester L. Grabbe, "Did all Jews think alike? 'Covenant' in Philo and Josephus in the Context of Second Temple Judaic Religion," in *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C. R. de Roo (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2003). .p. 258-264.

4 George A Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*, First ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984).

Reconciliation arising from an understanding of that common ground, mutually acknowledged, will oblige each of them to maintain certain patterns of conduct and to reject others. In reaching that position they will have acknowledged, ipso facto, that the core understandings of Christians, Jews and Muslims can enable those traditions to develop, together, a theology of the relationship between the totality of humanity and God which can draw on each of their covenantal understandings.

Biblical and Qur'anic references

All quotations from the Tanakh are from either the Judaica Press Online English Translation with Commentary by Rashi, (JP), or the Jewish Virtual Library online edition, (JVL), unless stated otherwise. It is acknowledged that the Tanakh in this form is a set of documents of the religion of ancient Israel, which were subject to progressive selection, additions, revision or editing and possibly deletions, and redaction throughout the First Epoch. Subsequently, from Roman times, with the rising influence of the Rabbinic Sages in Babylonia and Palestine in the late 1st cent. BCE the Tanakh morphed smoothly from being the sole authority for teaching the faith into the principal historic documents of Rabbinic Judaism. Then, during the Second Epoch, (explained in section 4, following), in the wake of the destruction of the Temple and the Jewish Commonwealth, midrashic interpretation and exegesis of matters including covenant, and the evolution of Jewish religious law, halakhah, encompassed within the Talmud, complemented plain reading of those ancient documents which have provided the theological and cultural foundation for Jewish narrative and self-understanding. Thus the understanding of covenant within Judaism has been subject to circumstantial internal interpretation during the second and subsequent epochs just as it has been within Christianity and Islam. These matters are noted in parallel in the relevant chapters.⁵

All quotations from the Christian Old Testament and New Testament are from the Anglicized Edition of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV).⁶

⁵ "The Tanakh: Judaica Online English Translation with Commentary by Rashi," ed A. J. Rosenberg. (New York: Chabad-Lubavitch Media Center / The Judaica Press), http://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/63255/jewish/The-Bible-with-Rashi.htm.

⁶ *The Bible: The New Revised Standard Version (Anglicized Edition)* Oremus Bible Browser ed. (New York: Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America 1995).

References to books of the Apocrypha are to either Metzger or the Jerusalem Bible, and references to books of the Pseudepigrapha are from Barnstone.⁷

The principal source for Qur'anic textual quotations is the English translation with commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, published by IFTA. However, for convenience in copying, the same translation, but without commentary, available through the online service of Dr. Stephen Wright has been used. Very few discrepancies have been identified, and when differences may be significant the IFTA translation has been placed at appropriate points in *[parenthesis]*. References to Hadith are from Sahih Al-Bukhari.⁸

4. An overview

This thesis demonstrates that the development of different understandings of the concept of covenant in each faith, and the different emphasis placed on it by each faith, is consistent with the progressive revelation and evolutionary development of religious understanding, and that it has occurred circumstantially during five epochal periods which are identified as:

Epoch 1: Exemplary Revelation

Epoch 2: Shared Responsibility

Epoch 3: An Extended Network

Epoch 4: A Brutal Demonstration

Epoch 5: Application

These epochs, which illustrate certain aspects of that circumstantial evolutionary development to date, are identified in the timeline, Chart Three, and examined sequentially in six chapters of the thesis, chapters 2 to 7.

⁷ Bruce M. Metzger, ed. *The Oxford Annotated Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); *ibid.* "The Jerusalem Bible," ed. Alexander Jones (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968).

Willis Barnstone, ed. *The Other Bible: Ancient Scriptures*, Second ed. (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 2005).

⁸ "The Holy Qur'an: Trans. Yusuf Ali," ed. IFTA Presidency of Islamic Researches (Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah: King Fahd Holy Qur'an Printing Complex, 1990).

"The Holy Qur'an," (Wright-House.com, 1996).

Al-Imam Az-Zubaidi, ed. *Sahih al-Bukhari* (Riyadh: Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, 1994).

However there may be an additional epoch to recognize in due course: Epoch 6: Progressive Fulfilment. It would be an era in which humanity-at-large, having recognized its relationship with God, reaches a degree of harmony, stability, love and justice that equates to the messianic age in the expectation of Moses Maimonides, or an age of fulfilment as envisaged by each of the Abrahamic faiths. The evidence indicates that this development is dependent on how the three Abrahamic faith communities respond to an understanding of the first five epochs, whether they accept that they have each been called into existence circumstantially to work as partners, and whether they cooperate or decline to cooperate as partners in resolving the crisis in the Middle East which has developed during the first six decades of the current epoch.

This study leads to these primary conclusions.

1. A covenant is a relationship which involves several component aspects. It is imposed by ultimate authority. It is neither negotiated nor agreed. It is inescapable and operative in perpetuity. The second party, whether an individual or a community, is subject to the covenant whether or not it is conscious of the fact, and whether or not it acknowledges and endeavours to respond to the relationship or denies, rejects or ignores it.
2. A mature and comprehensive understanding of the concept of Covenant was attained progressively within the Hebrew community during Stage Two of the First Epoch, and is fully encompassed within the Tanakh.
3. The component concepts and the mechanism or administration of the Mosaic Covenant and of each community-specific covenants subsequently invoked, are consistent with that mature Hebrew understanding.
4. The mature Hebrew understanding has been subject to circumstantial or contextual adaptation within the various streams of Judaism. It has been lost within the Christian Church because of the adoption of the notion of Supersession and the development of a Christology-based self-understanding. It has been subject to circumstantial or contextual adaptation also within the various streams of Islam. As a result, contemporary understandings of covenant lack the dynamic of the understanding developed during the first epoch.⁹

⁹ Ochs, Peter. "Wounded Word, Wounded Interpreter." In *Humanity at the Limits*, edited by M. Signer, 148-60. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000. Ochs notes that: "We must also bear in mind the

5. The consequent lack of balance in the approach of each of the covenanted communities to a core aspect of covenant has influenced the self-understanding and conduct of their adherents and facilitated massive exploitation and oppression of other peoples during the late second, third and fourth epochs. Those core aspects are quite specific in each case: Christianity, undue emphasis on personal salvation for its adherents; Judaism, undue emphasis on the promise of territorial benefit and communal survival for its adherents; Islam, undue emphasis on retribution for communal oppression and neglect of guidelines for conduct. However, in all cases these core aspects are linked to the neglect of the notion of judgement within the perpetual cyclical application of covenant.
6. The outcome of this series of linked failures of understanding and breaches of covenantal obligation and trust resulted in circumstances in which prophetic expectations generated within each of the Abrahamic faiths converged during the later years of the fourth epoch, (the first half of the 20th cent.), in a manner which illustrates every aspect of the mature Hebrew understanding of covenant.
7. In the early phase of the fifth epoch, the manner of administration of the penal clause of both the Universal and community-specific Covenants is being further confirmed by the progressive inversion of economic and political relationships between the White Western Christian Bloc of countries (the WWCB) and Non-Western countries which are referred to from this point as the World Majority Peoples (WMP). The relationships being inverted were established early in the fourth epoch and have been maintained through the early decades of the current epoch by policies and conduct in continuing breach of covenant. Circumstantial evidence shows that the inversion is to the benefit of the WMP and to the disadvantage of the WWCB, and that it has reached a sensitive and critical phase.

The level of importance placed on covenant, and the level of understanding of the concept of covenant varies greatly within and between each faith. An understanding of those matters is fundamental to the ability of world leaders to interpret current international

evolutionary relationship among text traditions of the various covenants: particularly as they are marked by Israel's response to various catastrophes in its relation to God -- for example, enslavement in Egypt, wars against the Philistines and the establishment of kingship, the First Destruction and Galut, and the Second Destruction and Galut. Each catastrophe conditions Israel's re-evaluation of the character of its Covenant with God."

crises and to understand steps required to encourage harmony and stability in humanity's affairs. This leads to the conclusion that the complexity of these circumstances makes it imperative that the conflicting contemporary interpretations of covenant in each faith be systematically reassessed by scholars of each faith working together in intimate collaboration. This requires conversation-dialogue at peak confessional professional level which may be, initially, intense and discomforting, concurrent with enhanced programs of dialogue of life and action at intermediate professional and community levels.

This analysis does not imply that only the church and its associated communities have fallen short of their obligations. The leadership and adherents of all three faiths have contributed to the current situation. However, the WWCB achieved its position of dominance through the abuse of covenant, and that its abuse of that dominance determined the manner in which the current situation developed.

The circumstantial evolution of Judaism, Christianity and Islam as separate faiths is consistent with divine intervention and a means to very directly illustrate that circumstantial human response to a breach of covenant is a mechanism in the administration of divine judgement. It follows that in the current complex and critical situation the body which bears the greatest share of responsibility for the crisis also bears the greatest share of responsibility to resolve it. This and other issues have become apparent as the world population has increased and the structures of communities, socio-economic and political systems have become intertwined. People of Abrahamic faiths have to live together and interact with people of non-Abrahamic faiths. Closed religious communities are untenable. People of one faith cannot live in isolation as if they have their own god, a superior god, or none at all.

Several propositions follow from this research.

First: each faith came into existence by Divine initiative in such a manner that they are each subject to a specific role and obligations and also one role which is common to each of them. By virtue of that common role, they are partners. The adoption of the belief by the early church that it and the Jewish community were competitors, thus forcing the Jewish and Muslim communities to respond on that basis, and that their understanding is either exclusively correct or superior reflects a misunderstanding of the circumstances in which Christianity and subsequently Islam were called into being.

Second: the self-understanding that each stream has developed, and the policies and decisions adopted as a consequence, have contributed to a social environment in which, as a group, the Abrahamic faiths have become divided from the non-Abrahamic faiths in significant attitudes and policies which might or might not be in accord with the basis on which they were called into existence. As a consequence, communication and cooperation between them is significantly impeded by their interpretation of the fact that they came into existence through Divine influence. They confuse role and obligation with privilege within their covenantal relationship with God, and assume a position of superiority such that, either as individuals or communities, they are entitled to special influence and recognition.

Third: there are commentators and communities within all three faiths who recognize certain stages in a succession of divine revelations but respond as if revelation was complete at the point at which their faith was called into existence and resist acknowledging that revelation is an ongoing process. They are not representative of their whole stream, but their influence has been significant, leading to the assumption that their faith takes precedence in one sense or another. In the thinking of certain communities this imputes to them final and absolute revelation and annuls the possibility that they may be subject to divine judgement in such a way that their status, relative to other communities, may change.

Fourth: there have been, and still are, situations in which, on the basis of their belief in precedence and finality, authorities have sought to isolate communities on the basis of their faith and to prevent interaction. (See Chapters Six and Nine.)

Together with Lindbeck's view, already noted, that there is no common foundation for religions to come together and that formulation of a single ground for dialogue applicable to any and every religious encounter is not possible¹⁰, there is a widely held view that because covenant is a divisive and polarizing consideration it must be avoided in interfaith discussion. This thesis challenges those views, and asserts that if interfaith understanding and relationships remain as they are, violence and conflict between faith communities which are linked to their traditional covenantal self-understanding will prejudice the human future by making the attainment of harmony and stability, and thus epoch six,

¹⁰ Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*. p. 55..

impossible. Therefore, because of the importance of these matters, Lindbeck's views are considered at this point.

Lindbeck states that a religion can be viewed as a cultural and/or linguistic framework that shapes the entirety of life and thought.¹¹ He acknowledges that "different religions seem in many cases to produce fundamentally divergent depth experiences of what it is to be human,"¹² and that "interreligious dialogue and cooperation (is) urgently needed in a divided yet shrinking world."¹³ He notes that a ground for interreligious dialogue should not involve "what for many believers is the impossible condition of surrendering exclusivist claims."¹⁴ He contrasts two approaches to dialogue, saying that in one, "the various religions are diverse symbolizations of one and the same core experience of the Ultimate," while in the other it is hard to think of religions as "having a single generic or universal experiential essence of which particular religions ... are varied manifestations or modifications."¹⁵

Reviewing the intra-Christian matrix, Lindbeck said dialogue participants deceived themselves in their desire to combine ecumenical harmony with denominational loyalty if they expected doctrinal reconciliation without doctrinal change; agreement can only be reached if one or both sides abandon their positions, and there is little possibility of doctrinal reconciliation without capitulation.¹⁶ Then, pursuing the urgent need for interreligious dialogue, Lindbeck said that a non-theological theory of religion should not argue for or against the superiority of any one faith, but it must allow the *possibility* of such a superiority, and it must not exclude the claims that religions make about themselves.¹⁷ He suggested that the approach favoured at the time of writing (1984), cooperative exploration of common experiences, was not likely to remain dominant. There are other possible theological grounds for dialogue which do not presuppose that religions share an experiential core, he said, and Christian churches are called to imitate their Lord by selfless service to neighbours quite apart from the question of whether this promotes

11 *ibid.* p. 33.

12 *ibid.* p. 41.

13 *Ibid.* p. 23.

14 *Ibid.* p. 11.

15 *Ibid.* p. 23. Contrasting an experiential-expressive (symbolic) model with a cultural-linguistic outlook for which he expresses a preference, p. 30.

16 *Ibid.* pp. 15-16.

17 *Ibid.* p. 46.

conversions, on the authority of passages such as Amos 9:7-8 which show that: Nations other than Israel – and by extension, religions other than the biblical ones – are also peoples elected (and failing) to carry out their own distinctive tasks within God's world.¹⁸

When the concept of covenant is considered in the light of these concerns for urgently needed dialogue it can be seen as the common ground which Lindbeck is looking for. The expression 'the same core experience of the Ultimate' surely refers to either the experience of creation or the experience of the Divine entity, God, and implies either a sense of responsibility towards it, or a relationship with it. Either a sense of responsibility toward creation or a relationship with the Divine Entity is a basis of covenant, and the theological ground on which to recognize 'peoples elected (and failing) to carry out their own distinctive tasks within God's world.' If, as Lindbeck says, religious understandings shape the entirety of life and also cause conflict because believers find it impossible to surrender exclusivist claims, then it is not a reason to avoid them, but to reflect on them and to resolve them.

Concerning the Jewish covenant, Peter Ochs says the issue is of a *relationship* with God, of how that relationship is characterized in the Torah, and of the *consequences* of what the Torah says for Israel, and that Covenant is that which binds the people Israel to each other by way of God, and to God by way of each other. He adds that Torah is the tangible vehicle of that covenantal relationship which does not exclude God's covenants with other nations.¹⁹ If Torah is the tangible vehicle for a non-exclusive relationship between God and Israel, then the Synoptic Gospels are the equivalent for Christianity, and the Qur'an is for Islam. This is in direct contradiction of the view, exemplified by Thielman,²⁰ that covenant equates to law, and that the covenant that God made with Moses at Mount Sinai is considered obsolete, and in its place Paul has substituted 'the law of Christ.'

Thus this thesis argues that the concept of covenant can provide the ground for dialogue in a range of formats, and in particular for conversation-dialogue to bring Christians, Jews and Muslims together in meaningful cooperative ventures and collaborative research to

¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 53-4.

¹⁹ Peter Ochs, "Wounded Word, Wounded Interpreter," in *Humanity at the Limits*, ed. M. Signer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000). pp. 148-49; *ibid*.

²⁰ F. Thielman, *Paul and the Law: A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 1994). Cited in Todd A. Wilson, "The Law of Christ and the Law of Moses: Reflections on a Recent Trend in Interpretation," *Currents in Biblical Research* 5, no. 1 (2006). p. 126.

face and to endeavour to resolve, together, the ever-deepening world crisis which affects people of all faiths. Concern for doctrinal disputation should be lessened because conversations can be based around principles of faith, fundamental pillars or core beliefs, and the interpretation of revealed laws, truths and hadith which provide the basis or guidelines for action, rather than dogma, doctrinal formulations and creeds which result from a centralized system of teaching authority and which, according to Lindbeck²¹, hamper intra-Christian dialogue. Furthermore, if leaders of each Abrahamic faith are able to accept and approach conversation dialogue on the basis of the following three-point understanding, tension and the likelihood of antagonism during the process will be ameliorated.

The basic understanding that I anticipate will develop incorporates these points.

- The three primary Abrahamic faiths – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – are each subject to a critical conditional covenant in perpetuity and, in spite of their history of intense competition, deep antagonism towards each other, and episodes of devastating conflict between their communities, and also with non-Abrahamic faiths, they will recognize that they are partners in a common task.
- Their origins and continued separate existence are legitimate and consistent with the pattern of a network of covenants and covenantal obligations. They are each equally subject to the penal provisions of covenant, and their obligations and their fates are inextricably linked within the network of covenants.
- Their continued separate existence in this manner will confirm, perpetually, the manner in which God participates and intervenes in humanity's affairs, and that God has not withdrawn after the fact of creation and left humanity to a fate of its own making. Thus recognition of the inversion of relationships between the WWCB and the WMP as an outcome of the current crisis in world affairs, noted above, will be the point at which humanity-at-large becomes more aware of its relationship with God, engages in a search for a clearer understanding of that relationship, and recognizes and acknowledges the responses which it requires.

In conjunction with continuing research, covenant-based interfaith dialogue programs can be expected to contribute to the development of harmony and stability in world affairs, they can exemplify the concept of Covenant and, in so doing, indicate the nature of Divine

²¹ Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*.

Intention for humanity. More scholars of non-Abrahamic faiths are likely to welcome the opportunity to move from observers to participants in conversation-dialogue, and thus facilitate humanity's progressive understanding of its relationship with God.

However, an examination of the schisms, disagreements and conflicts of interest or interpretation which have led to the establishment of diverging streams or denominations within each primary faith shows that these schisms and divisions cannot be seen in the same light as the divinely inspired establishment of the primary faiths. Therefore, because they exacerbate differences in covenantal and self-understanding between the primary faiths, inter-religious dialogue is likely to be inhibited unless those schisms are also subject to conversation dialogue on an ecumenical basis concurrent with the inter-religious programs and focusing on the context in which they occurred. This is especially the case with schisms within Shī'a Islam.²²

5. The stimulus for this research

The nomination of the concepts of covenant and dialogue, together, as the subject for this research project was an outcome of my concern about the nature and consequences of the series of 20th and early 21st cent. conflicts in the Middle East. It is widely acknowledged that the primary cause of these conflicts was the bitterly contested decision to partition the mandated territory of Palestine to establish the State of Israel.²³ The partitioned territory, the heartland of Biblical history, had been a theatre of strategic competition and battle between European powers in World War One (WWI) and had subsequently been governed by Great Britain for twenty seven years under a Mandate of the League of Nations.²⁴

It has been less widely acknowledged publicly, at least in the WWCB, that the roots of those conflicts lie in disagreement about matters of theology and religious belief, and

22 Bulend Shanay, "Islam: Charts and Explanatory Essays," in *Philtar Religion: Overview of World Religions*, ed. Elliott Shaw (Carlisle: University of Cumbria, 1998).

23 Alfred M. Lilienthal, *The Zionist Connection: What Price Peace?* (New York: Middle East Perspective Inc., 1979).

Ian R. Fry, *Trouble in the Triangle: Christians, Jews and Muslims in Conflict*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Fitzroy: Compton Arch, 2000/2). The history of the difficult and corrupted passage through the UN of the proposal to partition Palestine is set out in detail in chapters 27 and 28, pp. 1363-1549. Details of voting in the UN and statistics for the populations and religious affiliations of countries involved and those not involved are set out in endnotes 29, 30 and 31 of chapter 28.

Mark Aarons and John Loftus, *The Secret War Against the Jews*, First ed. (Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1994).

24 Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration* (London Vallentine, Mitchell, 1961).

policies pursued and actions taken on the basis of theology and religious belief over an extended period.²⁵ However, there has been widespread reluctance to acknowledge that the conduct of the European powers and the United States during the first half of the 20th cent., and the gross exploitation of the region in the period during and subsequent to the partition process, was in sharp contrast to Biblical teaching and any reasonable interpretation of obligation under covenant.

6. The Yom Kippur War

The immediate stimulus for my concern was the political, economic and social impact of actions taken in connection with the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Specifically, it was the barrage of propaganda about the partial oil embargo imposed on the US in a non-military strategy by allies of the Palestinians, in retaliation for US support of Israel, and attempts to deflect responsibility for the economic damage caused by cuts in oil supplies imposed by the United States on European countries (and non-European countries which supported the Palestinians) to coerce them into supporting Israel. That manipulation of oil supplies by the US confirmed that the conflict in the Middle East is of world and not regional significance.

The circumstances in which I became involved in studies of the conflict and its theological implications are set out in an autobiographical statement provided as Appendix F, and letters from Dr. Alan Brash, Deputy General Secretary of the WCC, Appendix G. (See also Appendix I).

The reality of the immediate cause of that war, Israel's attempt to divide and rule the Palestinians and thus avoid its obligation to the UN to ensure a viable Palestinian state, and its implications for the future were in contrast to commentary which dominated media reports and discussion within the churches in the Western World at that time. US interests took steps to suppress both research and media reporting concerning the possibility that theological considerations were involved in the war.²⁶ Some of those measures are referred to in this thesis, together with a systematic examination of the anti-Semitic and

25 This reluctance to acknowledge the roots of the conflict is indicated by the suppression of debate at the first assembly of the WCC and the 'pause' in related publications by Christian theologians for some years after WWII. See chapter 8.

26 Willem Adolf visser 't Hooft, ed. *Man's Disorder and God's Design. The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches: The Official Report Vol V*, Second ed., 5 vols., vol. 5 (London: SCM Press, 1949).

exploitative policies of the church and its associated powers which generated a heritage of hatred which only varied in degree from the early days of the church to the Shoah. It was this heritage of hatred which placed the Jewish community in the situation in which it resorted to long-standing colonial policies.

Other factors which focused my attention on the significance of the Yom Kippur War included the contradictory effects of dramatic rises in the price of crude petroleum imposed by OPEC and OAPEC; the allocation of aid funds by Muslim oil producers to countries in Africa and Asia and the likelihood of a rise in the influence of Islam; Western determination to undermine a series of resource producer associations that were modelled on OPEC; the diversion of funds by Western financial institutions into WWCB projects against instructions that funds which were being invested with them by OPEC members were to be made available for programs in developing countries; the related rejection by Western governments of proposals for a New International Economic Order, and the rise of international civil society organizations.

7. Covenant as a consideration in the Yom Kippur War

A relatively limited action taken a full generation before the attacks on the US in September, 2001, by a group of countries which were not directly involved in the Yom Kippur War, but which supported the weaker of the warring parties by imposing a partial oil embargo against the US, could have gone almost unnoticed. However the response by the US drew world attention to the difference in understanding of responsibility or obligation under Covenant of the people of all three Abrahamic faiths.

The AOPEC group was motivated by what they each acknowledged as an obligation under covenant to a relatively small sub-community of their wider community. The obligation was that they should counter the injustice and oppression which that community was suffering because of a particular view of a right and an obligation which were being pursued by the other party to the conflict, Israel, under a covenant which it acknowledged and which was widely understood.

The right which the Israeli's claimed was the occupation of the region of Canaan promised to them by God under the Mosaic Covenant, and which they were determined to maintain whether their restoration to the land was by divine intervention or through their own efforts. The obligation was to ensure the security of the Jewish faith by ensuring the

security of the community and, in particular, the protection of its young people. It was to them that the responsibility to honour the obligation of continuity of the faith would fall in the event of any future attempt at genocide. Their fear of that, they believed, was justified by the well-documented history of the church's policies and teachings, and the propensity for people to revert to former prejudices when they are under stress. In the context of their restoration to the land of Canaan, they believed the security of the faith required the integrity of the whole region and this certainly included the West Bank as it had in the days when Joshua led the sons of Israel to occupy it.²⁷ (Num. 34:1-12, Deut. 34:1-12.) This matter and its consequences are examined in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

8. Deteriorating relationships

Subsequent to the Yom Kippur War relationships between the Jewish community and the Muslim community steadily deteriorated. Since the events of September 11, 2001 an additional factor has become critical. It is an amalgam of Islamophobia²⁸ and anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism, accompanied by the active denigration, oppression and exploitation of Jewish communities, had begun immediately the church's authority was established through links with imperial powers, and it was an accepted aspect of Christian culture until it reached a peak of intensity at the time of the *Catastrophe*, the *Shoah*, during World War Two (WWII). Due to the shock of the Shoah anti-Semitism subsided somewhat for a period. But the response to the Shoah by the Christian powers,²⁹ the partition of Palestine to enable the establishment of the State of Israel, became the cause of systematic oppression of the Palestinian people and encouraged anti-Semitism within countries and communities that had opposed partition.

From the time of the Yom Kippur War, that oppression of the Palestinians was accompanied by denigration of the predominantly Muslim countries that were the principal supporters of the Palestinians. Islamophobia, which had largely subsided in response to

27 Eugene B. Borowitz, *Studies in the Meaning of Judaism*. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2002). These matters referred to by Borowitz were impressed on me by senior Israeli officials during my week in Israel in 1975, and by conference participants in Landegg, 2002, and Melbourne, 2003.

28 The term 'Islamophobia' came into use at the time of the Yom Kippur War as if the phenomenon was new. Its origins are similar to those of anti-Semitism: the reluctance of the Christian Church to accept the legitimacy of a faith-competitor and its efforts to denigrate and suppress the competitor.

29 Mark Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). p. 261. Details anti-Jewish riots the day after the UN General Assembly endorsed the partition resolution on November 29, 1947

Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Antisemites* (New York/London: Norton, 1986). p. 256.

Napoleon's policies relating to culture, ethnicity and religion began to rise again. Those circumstances provided the rationale for the launching of Al-Qaeda and its expansion from a small base in 1988 into a sophisticated highly integrated network capable of mounting devastating attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001.

Those attacks, in turn, provided the rationale for the US-sponsored 'War on Terror' and encouraged a further upsurge of Islamophobia which destabilized multi-faith communities, causing communal tension and episodes of conflict in countries in which Islam is either the majority or a significant minority religion throughout the World. Then, as a consequence of the complex interaction between the Western Christian powers and the State of Israel and the upsurge of Islamophobia, leaders of both Muslim and Christian communities began organizing Christian-Muslim dialogue programs parallel with Christian-Jewish programs with a sense of real urgency.³⁰ But concurrent Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism, and parallel conversations introduced uncertainty and disquiet in existing Christian-Jewish conversations, with some concern about Jews being deserted or a reversion to former policies, and called for new approaches to interfaith conversations.

There is now widespread recognition that Inter-religious conversations relating to the crisis in the Middle East and its consequences can no longer be considered solely in terms of dialogues between two parties held in isolation from the third.³¹ It is not only agreed that they must involve all three faiths in trialogue, because the process has become both more urgent and more difficult, but there are strong efforts to broaden the process to include all world faiths.³² Initiatives have been taken at an unprecedented rate in most countries of the

30 Zeynep Şahin, "Interfaith Dialogue Organizations as Actors of Peace Building: Case of Rumi Forum " in *Alternative Perspectives of the Gülen Movement* (Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.: fethullahgulen.org, 2008). "Although the interfaith movement (has existed in a formal sense) for about a century with the emergence of Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893, it has recently experienced rapid growth, specifically after September 11."

Australian examples: JCMA, (Jewish Christian Muslim Association), established 2003; ANDCMJ, (The Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims and Jews) 2003/2004, a joint initiative of the National Council of Churches in Australia, the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, was established "in the light of heightened tensions in the Middle East and the possible export of tensions and violence to societies such as Australia."

31 Having left office, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair established a foundation to foster greater understanding between the three Abrahamic faiths, and former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami has established the Foundation for Dialogue among Civilizations.

32 Such efforts include:

1.) The InterAction Council (a group that involves a number of former heads of state and other eminent persons) has been working towards multi-faith programs since 1983. (See: <http://www.interactioncouncil.org/index.html> accessed July 10, 2006)

Western World, but the situation has also become more complicated, and in some influential sections of the Christian Church and the Jewish community, notably in the United States, opposition to the process has also increased. It is therefore noteworthy that, in his inauguration address, President Obama indicated that under his administration there would be a definite change in emphasis and that his administration would seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect. He has also asserted that no religion, be it Christianity, Islam, Buddhism or Hinduism, teaches hatred, and he will reach out to world leaders to foster a more productive and peaceful dialogue on faith.

9. The need for this research: to facilitate cooperation between Christians, Jews and Muslims as partners

Continuing conflict between communities linked to the primary Abrahamic Faiths has prevented the development of world harmony and stability and threatens the future of humanity. Such conflict has either been caused or aggravated by actions taken by each of those faith-linked communities, and the people involved have sought to justify their actions on the basis of heritage, communal self-understanding, or human rights. The self-understanding of each community is distinctly different. None is uniform and each is intimately linked to its contemporary interpretation of covenant. They have a heritage of animosity and competition, for which the Church has been mainly responsible, and this inhibits an appreciation that they each have a common task under Covenant: to enable humanity to develop a greater awareness of its relationship with God and to live in harmony and stability characterized by love and justice.

This has prompted many scholars and leaders within each faith to organize programs of dialogue with the aims of understanding “the other”, reconciliation within and between communities, and cooperation in the search for peace. This thrust began with the Parliament of the World’s Religions in 1893 but lapsed and no further significant initiatives were taken until the very late stages of WWI. It accelerated in the final quarter of the 20th cent. and reached a milestone when, in 1999, the UN General Assembly

2.) On March 4, 2009, formation of a coalition to advance a "United Nations Decade for Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding, and Cooperation for Peace." (WCC News Release, March 11, 2009)

3.) A Consultation of Eminent Persons in Kuala Lumpur in October 2010, agreed to proceed with an international Multi-Religious Action Plan, and the Initiative on Shared Wisdom was established shortly after.

adopted a proposal by Iranian President Seyyed Mohammad Khātāmī to declare 2001 the Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations.

However, that initiative was initially sabotaged, but then given greater significance in theological education, by an attack on the US in September that year which became the justification for an aggressive ‘war on terror’ instead of a year of dialogue which prompted the Superior General of the Society of the Divine Word, Antonio Pernia, to note that:

the 21st cent. is and needs to be an age of dialogue – both in the sense of the urgent need for dialogue in our deeply divided world and in the sense of the tremendous possibilities for dialogue offered by our globalized world (and) women and men of the 21st cent. need to dialogue in order to ensure their own – and the world’s – very survival.³³

Numerous initiatives have been proposed. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2009 the International Year of Reconciliation. The year 2010 was declared the International Year of Rapprochement of Cultures, and a proposal was submitted in 2008 to declare the years 2011-2020 as the UN Decade of Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace.

The importance of such initiatives is widely acknowledged but, in view of the urgency of the international situation, these and most initiatives in dialogue are being planned to ameliorate or offset current crises without adequate consideration of historical influences in a longer-term epistemological context. Discussion is, in most cases, restricted to contemporary circumstances or short term history, and, as a consequence, the widespread assumption that the world’s religions, and the relationships between them, have always been as they are at present is perpetuated and progress towards stability and harmony is perilously slow.

Therefore, to optimize the effectiveness of dialogue programs it must be acknowledged that the evolution of religious thought has occurred over a period of about forty thousand years with much of it concentrated into the most recent four thousand years; that a series of streams which emerged independently and in regional isolation have impacted on each other, and that a patchwork of beliefs and practices resulted. The examination of the circumstances in which the evolution of Abrahamic Yahwism occurred, indicates that its fragmentation into three streams was by Divine initiative, but the subsequent further

33 Larry Nemer, "Prophetic Dialogue: A New Way of Doing Mission?," *South Pacific Journal of Mission Studies*, no. 36 (2007).

fragmentation of each stream – one aspect of the continuum of evolution in religious thought – was essentially a consequence of human interaction resulting from the inability of those concerned to recognize the considerations which led to the Divine initiatives in calling into being the second and third covenanted communities.

Competition between the fragments of the Christian and Muslim streams, and to a lesser extent the Jewish stream, led to the perceived need to formulate standardized doctrinal statements supported by the collection of selected documents into canon of scripture. It also led to dogmatics, apologetics, canon law, systematic teaching and regulation of teaching authority and disciplinary procedures,³⁴ the adoption of the concept of heresy, and the establishment of penal tribunals. Competition degenerated into opposition, tension, and conflict which was said to be justified by either the conduct of “the other” communities or the theological beliefs upon which their conduct was based.

Because tension and conflict occur at a range of levels, between local communities or congregations, at regional level, and internationally, leaders of the faiths must be prepared to engage in dialogue at each of these levels, and the immediate aim of each dialogue event, the planning of it, and the participants involved, must be related to its specific circumstances.

10. Dialogue to date

Dialogue programs to date have been essentially defensive, and have not adequately addressed the theological concepts which have determined the self-understanding and attitudes of each community and inhibited an understanding of the relationships between each of them, and between them and God. A defensive approach has been adopted to avoid discussion of the substantive causes of the underlying conflict and any issue that threatens the prevailing self-understandings of the major communities of faith, and might lead to recrimination.

34 Reference has already been made to schisms in Shi'a Islam, page 27. Pope John Paul II's *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, an Apostolic Constitution on Catholic universities, 1990, was seen as necessary to offset the drift away from Catholic teaching since the annulment of the Oath Against the Errors of Modernism which had been obligatory for all clergy in teaching or pastoral positions, world wide, from 1910 to 1967.

According to Wesley Ariarajah³⁵, the level of resistance to self-exposure, confrontation over doctrine, fear that dialogue would lead to syncretism or that it would compromise faith in the uniqueness and finality of the revelation in Christ, and fear of the loss of ecclesiastical authority, resulted in many organizations issuing guidelines for dialogue that have been positively and rigidly proscriptive. These include the Vatican and the World Council of Churches. In some situations theological education curricula have been deliberately designed to emphasize interpretations that avoid apparently contradictory theological positions of each faith in order to minimize the demands for serious theological dialogue.³⁶ In 2002 Ariarajah wrote:

Within the ecumenical family interfaith dialogue will continue to remain a profoundly important, if controversial, issue. The challenge it brings to the ecumenical movement is far-reaching. It summons the church to seek a new self-understanding in its relation to other religions. It requires it to look for deeper resources to deal with the reality of plurality, and it calls the church to new approaches to mission and witness.³⁷

Since then there has been only gradual relaxation of the guidelines for dialogue programs. Initiatives that have been taken, and the factors and decisions that have inhibited their development are discussed in chapter nine. It is noteworthy that the Rector of the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies participated in the Kuala Lumpur Multi-faith Consultation in October 2010, together with nominees of the WCC, and that following the establishment of its Indigenous Peoples Consultancy in 2008, the WCC has undertaken consultations with theologians from Indigenous cultures that have survived since their evolution during the first epoch.³⁸

However, the paramount need is for barriers against non-defensive dialogue conversations between Christians, Jews, and Muslims to be dismantled to facilitate development of common understandings on matters that are deeply divisive. This means that formal

35 S. Wesley Ariarajah, "Interfaith Dialogue," in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, ed. Nicolas Lossky and et al (Geneva: World Council of Churches - William Eerdmans, 2002).

36 Personal conversations with Fr. Daniel Maddigan SJ, Director, Institute for the Study of Religion and Culture, Pontifical Gregorian University, December 2002.

37 Ariarajah, "Dialogue."

38 The WCC's website, www.oikoumene.org, states that its 9th Assembly in Brazil, 2006, reaffirmed its commitment to accompany indigenous peoples in their struggles for justice and rights. It is initiating and nurturing local and regional networks, and local-level leadership; supporting grassroots' movements for justice, development, land, identity and self-determination to enable indigenous peoples to contribute to the life and ministries of churches and the ecumenical movement, and supporting their participation in international meetings.

guidelines should be reviewed so that dialogue becomes a part of the process of research, allowing evolutionary understanding or revelation of divine intention to continue on the basis of the Hebrew prophetic era, examined in chapter two, 'exemplary revelation.' If the formal guidelines are amended to facilitate conversation-dialogue on the theological concepts around which the faiths divide and which determine the self-understanding of each of the faith communities and their attitude towards each other, the potential for conflict can be reduced.

The extent of dialogue and research undertaken by non-religious institutions since the Yom Kippur War (chapter nine) indicates that the process will continue, with or without the support and involvement of religious institutions. If it proceeds without institutional support, or in the face of institutional resistance, then it can be expected that confidence in the institutions will decline further and their relevance will be questioned.

11. The need for a vantage point

For non-defensive dialogue conversations to take place without judgement being passed on the truth or falsity of any position, and with minimal recrimination and loss of ecclesiastical influence, there is a requirement for a workable vantage point that opens or exposes the internal logic of the theology of each faith to a critical understanding by each of the other traditions so that they may each move forward together. At the level of intermediate or subordinate institutions, regions, and congregations that vantage point must be accessible without aggravating fears that have inhibited main stream religious authorities in their approach to dialogue: fear of the consequences of self-exposure and confrontation over doctrine; fear that dialogue would lead to syncretism or, in the case of the church, that it would compromise faith in the uniqueness and finality of the revelation in Christ, and fear of the loss of ecclesiastical authority.

However, while some progress has been made it is argued in this thesis that if real progress is to be made towards world peace, justice, stability and harmony, an exception must be made with conversation dialogue at peak-of-faith level. The basis of dialogue at that point must be the comprehensive mature Hebrew understanding of covenant within a framework of the points of agreement anticipated on p. 25. Furthermore, the critical individual aspect of that mature understanding – obligation or responsibility – can also be the vantage points for non-defensive dialogue conversations between scholars or communities of each of the Abrahamic faiths at all levels concurrently.

As already noted, this thesis is concerned only with the relationship between God and humanity. No other type of covenant is considered. The evolution of the mature Hebrew understanding of covenant, the components of which are the basis of the covenants under which each of the Abrahamic faith communities exist and are obligated, is examined in detail in chapters two and three, epoch one. The New Covenant and the Qur'anic Covenant are then examined in chapters four and five. Complex developments in Christian Reformation covenant theology, and developments within reform movements in both Islam and Judaism are then discussed in chapter six, with references to Mormonism and the Baha'i Movement.

Since the Reformation within the Christian Church, covenant studies by scholars, and dogmatic pronouncements by religious leaders, have resulted in the publication of many schemes, classifications and definitions of covenants, and much debate and disagreement. These became a major consideration in Epochs 4 and 5.

In his 1964 study³⁹ Freedman drew attention to the typology of covenants recorded in the Hebrew texts and introduced the terms "conditional covenant" or "covenant of human obligation", and "unconditional covenant" or "covenant of divine commitment". Since then, scholarly examination of Biblical covenants has tended to involve consideration of whether a covenant falls into either one type or the other. They were briefly explained by Freedman and Miano⁴⁰ as follows. In a conditional covenant the terms and stipulations are imposed on the human party by God, and the maintenance of circumstances favourable to the human party under the covenantal relationship is dependent on compliant behaviour by that party and its adherence to the terms. In an unconditional covenant it is expected that God will meet certain conditions in favour of a third party. But those conditions have not been initiated or imposed by the third party in any sense. They have been undertaken as a commitment by God of God's own accord.

By this reckoning, according to Freedman and Miano: "A conditional covenant can only be valid if the human party lives up to it, but the unconditional covenant must last

39 Republished in 1997 as paper No.17 in *Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: Selected writings of David Noel Freedman*.

40 David Noel Freedman and David Miano, "People of the New Covenant," in *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C. R. de Roo (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2003).

indefinitely.”⁴¹ However this contradicts the concept that a conditional covenant of human obligation applies in perpetuity and cannot be repudiated, and indicates that the authors have taken abrogation of the Mosaic Covenant and supersession as a given in their definition. That contradiction becomes apparent when continuity in the evolution of understanding of covenant is recognized and considered in the context of the establishment of the Christian community and the formation of Christian theology and self-understanding.

The mainstream Jewish understanding of the term ‘covenant’ is illustrated by the statement of delegates of the US National Council of Synagogues⁴² issued jointly with delegates of the US Bishops Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs in August 2002. The delegates noted the words of Exodus 19:4-6, that God told Israel “Now, then, if you will obey me faithfully and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all the peoples.. Indeed all the earth is mine, but you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” They then said: “To Jews this is not divine flattery but the burden of divine obligation. And this, then, is the theological definition of the Jews: a physical people called upon to live in a special relationship with God. That relation has special content. There are rewards for its observance, punishment for its abandonment.”⁴³

However, some Jewish leaders apply a different interpretation, imputing to their people the capacity to negotiate, even if not as equals, and to accept or reject the terms of a covenant. Rabbi Michael Gold of Temple Beth Torah, Tamarac, Florida⁴⁴, teaches that the heart of the Jewish religion is covenant, that God made a covenant with all humanity, symbolized by the rainbow, and then made a second covenant with a particular people, known as the people Israel. Consequently:

Covenant means mutual commitments and responsibilities. God had promised the people Israel that we would be as uncountable as the stars and through us would the nations of the world be blessed. God has also promised us a land. (Today the nation Israel is known as “the Promised

41 Stanley E. Porter, "The Concept of Covenant in Paul," in *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C. R. de Roo (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2003). p. 9.

42 US National Council of Synagogues, "Reflections on Covenant and Mission.," (Washington: US Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002).

43 *ibid.*, 8.

44 Michael Gold, "God's Covenant with Humanity: A Covenant People.," Heartfelt Communications, www.rabbigold.com/covenant.htm.

Land.”) In return, we Jews promised to be loyal to God, to teach our children the ways of righteousness, and to obey God’s commandments.⁴⁵

The literature, interpretation and exegesis of the New Covenant in Christian teaching is also very diverse, (as noted in the section following, ‘previous research in this field,’ and examined in chapter three), but while the principal creeds of the church, (Athanasian, Nicene and Apostles), contain statements of fundamental belief they do not use the term ‘a New Covenant’ nor introduce the concept of covenant. The only relationship described as covenantal in the *Code of Canon Law* of the Roman Catholic Church is the “marriage covenant”⁴⁶ or the “conjugal covenant”⁴⁷ “by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership for their whole life, and which (has) been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.” It is not described as a covenant.

In preaching and teaching in Christian churches it is often implied, on the basis of the Biblical narrative, that Abraham took a leap out of a religious vacuum and that Judaism then developed under divine guidance, more or less in isolation, but there was no isolation. As Chart Three and discussion in chapter three indicate, there were a number of religious traditions being practiced by, or having a bearing on, the people of Babylon at the time that Terah is reputed to have migrated from Ur to Haran.⁴⁸ It is said that the Patriarch, Abraham, reacted against the dominant religious practices at Haran, but must have been favourably influenced by others.⁴⁹

Subsequently, Zoroaster’s stringent monotheism influenced both Cyrus of Persia and the writer of Second Isaiah in exile. They both concluded that Israel’s God and Persia’s God were one. But Second Isaiah also realized that God has a covenant with all humanity and that Israel is to exemplify the nature of that relationship. That realization was backdated

45 *ibid.*

46 *Code of Canon Law*, book IV, part 1, title VII, canon 1055

47 *Code of Canon Law*, chapter 1, canon 1063.4

48 Joseph Naveh, *Early history of the Alphabet: an introduction to West Semitic Epigraphy and Palaeography* (Jerusalem: Magnes Prss - Hebrew University, 1982).

Trevor Ling, *A History of Religion East and West* (London: Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1968).

Eli Barnavi and Denis Charbit, eds., *A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People*, Revised ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 2002).

49 Giovanni Pettinato, *The Archives of Ebla*.

Cyrus H. Gordon, ed. *Eblaite: Essays on the Ebla archives and Eblaite language* (Eisenbrauns, 1987).

by editors of the Hebrew Scriptures and placed in Genesis and Exodus as if it had been a fundamental belief from the earliest days of Abraham and his predecessors.

Subsequently Jonah, also inspired by the experience of exile, realized that God's love and compassion is for all who repent, not only those who were obligated under the Abrahamic or Mosaic Covenants. Editors acted again, inserting an array of critical passages into Genesis and Exodus which had been compiled from three to four centuries earlier.⁵⁰ The insertions included a greatly expanded statement of the Abrahamic Covenant plus the expanded creation story and the Universal Rainbow Covenant. In due course the writer of Jubilees asserted that this was the basic covenant and that both the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants were continuations or renewals of the Universal Covenant. (Jubilees 5:3)

Jubilees was cited in the Damascus Document of the Qumran community as one of its central legal documents and it was in circulation among the Essene communities, but scholars of the Dead Sea Scrolls⁵¹ agree that although it is based on Genesis and Exodus and written in the form of a revelation from God to Moses, the author drew on the Aramaic Levi Document from the 3rd cent. BCE, and additional traditional sources, and it was composed only shortly before the establishment of the Qumran community.

The prominent assertion in Jubilees that the Universal Covenant is basic to religious belief and obligations, and that the Noahide Laws which were Noah's response under covenant are basic to every system of moral laws which were to follow, is linked to heavy emphasis on the requirement for Israel to return to strict adherence to the subsequent Law of Moses.⁵² That linkage is clear in the Damascus Document which refers to –

...those who “did their own will and did not keep the commandment of their Maker until his anger was kindled against them (and) in it (their own will) the sons of Noah and their families went astray; in it they were cut off. Abraham did not walk in it, and he was accounted as God's friend.”⁵³

50 J. Philip Hyatt, "The Compiling of Israel's Story," in *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Charles M. Laymon (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971).

51 James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994).

52 Crawford Howell Toy and Kaufmann Kohler, "Book of Jubilees," in *Jewish Encyclopedia.com* (West Conshohocken, PA JewishEncyclopedia.com, 2002). The authors assert that:

53 Millar Burrows, "The Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Other Bible: Ancient Scriptures* ed. Willis Barnstone (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984).

It is consistent with the Qumran community's self-understanding that its members were an enlightened remnant of the consecrated Eternal Communion with the task of reforming Israel, ensuring its continuance as God's People, and reinstating the Torah (which they saw as long perverted) as the basis of Jewish life.⁵⁴ However, being excluded from the principal Hebrew Scriptures and recognized only as Jewish Pseudepigrapha, Jubilees and its emphasis on the Universal and Abrahamic covenants attracted meagre attention until the 1947 discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Qumran Caves – possibly because of that fundamental assertion.

It was only in the wake of the Yom Kippur War that the Rebbe of the Hasidic Chabad Lubavitch Movement, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, initiated and led a campaign to encourage recognition and adoption of the Noahide Laws as basic to civil law and to generate recognition of the Universal Noahide Covenant as fundamental to humanity's relationship with God that it began to receive wider attention. Schneerson's campaign evolved rapidly into a well-resourced Noahide movement, B'nei Noah, which has demonstrated significant influence.

In 1989, US Congressional Joint House Resolution 173 noted that the ethical and moral principles of all civilizations come in part from the seven Noahide Laws, and President George Bush Snr. proclaimed April 16 to be "Education Day USA". Two year later (1991) a joint sitting of Congress resolved that the principles of the Noahide Laws are "the bedrock of society from the dawn of civilization ...(without which)... the edifice of civilization stands in serious peril of returning to chaos".⁵⁵ Following the Rebbe's death in 1994, Public Law 102-14 determined that "Education Day USA" was to be celebrated on his birthday⁵⁶, and the movement's influence increased in 2006 when the nascent Sanhedrin, gathered in Israel, recognized a High Council of B'nei Noah as an international Noahide organization and its bridge to Noahides worldwide.⁵⁷ Subsequently the spiritual leader of the Druze Community in Israel called on all non-Jews in Israel to observe the

54 Gaster, T. H. (1976). *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, New York: Anchor Press, pp. 4-6.

55 Institute of Noahide Code. Source: <http://www.noahide.org/article.asp?Level=91&Parent=0> Accessed January 8, 2009

56 <http://www.noahide.org/article.asp?Level=352&Parent=85> accessed 2009-01-08

57 Concerning the 'Nascent Sanhedrin:' see its complementary English language website maintained by supporters in the USA, http://www.thesanhedrin.org/en/index.php/The_Re-established_Jewish_Sanhedrin, or the High Council of B'nei Noah website: <http://www.highcouncilofbneinoah.org/Home.aspx> both accessed 2009-01-09

Noahide Laws, and ambassadors to the USA for six countries⁵⁸ responded to an invitation from Chabad-Lubavitch and declared their support for the universal teachings of Noahide Laws.⁵⁹

From this is it clear that recognition of certain aspects of a common covenant are firmly on the international public agenda and, with international recognition of all three faiths, two other factors can also be recognized.

First: there is a firm basis for lasting cooperation between them towards the fulfilment of their fundamental role and an end to the pattern of rejection, antagonism and conflict that has marked their relationships for much of their history.

Second: this situation provides an illustration of a mode of divine intervention in human affairs and thus a rationale for people of all cultures to recognize their relationship with God, their ultimate dependence upon God, and the pattern of personal and communal conduct which is incumbent upon them all.

12. Principal propositions

The following propositions support findings arising from this study which are stated under 'the study' and 'contributions of this research.'

1. The mature and comprehensive Hebrew understanding of the concept of covenant, achieved during stage two of the first epoch and encompassing a number of subordinate concepts, was the critical development in the religion of ancient Israel and was a template for each successive community-specific covenant.
2. The pronouncement of a covenant was preceded by a call or a command to the person around whose ministry the community or the faith developed. It involved the imposition of an obligation on the people of that community; a divine promise or undertaking conditional on the people complying with the obligation; a penal clause under which the community shall be judged on the basis of its response, and under which punishment may be administered in the event of non-compliance with the obligation; and an indication that the covenant applies in perpetuity.

⁵⁸ Poland, Latvia, Mexico, Panama, Ghana and Japan

⁵⁹ Source: <http://www.noahide.org/article.asp?Level=510&Parent=88> accessed 2009-01-09

3. During the period of about three centuries straddling the destruction of the Hasmonean kingdom in 63 BCE, which marks the end of the first epoch and the start of the second, Jewish scholars offered conflicting interpretations of critical events. These were influenced by their interaction with communities with different heritage and belief systems, dissatisfaction with the policies and conduct of the Hasmonean rulers, and interaction with the Roman Empire through its vassal administrators. (Chapter Three)⁶⁰
4. This led to the progressive construction of variant statements of belief, and the concept of covenant became subject to diverse interpretations and usage. The circumstances in which those divergent interpretations continued to evolve have determined the perception of covenant by individual adherents of each faith and within each community of faith, and how these perceptions impact on their self-understanding, attitude to the others, conduct, and interaction between them.
5. Within Christianity, these circumstances influenced the development of a number of specialist fields of study, including Christology, soteriology, eschatology and hamartiology; systematic, doctrinal and sacramental theology; missiology, ecclesiology, hermeneutics and religious philosophy.
6. Reliance on particular interpretations of the composite concept of covenant by communities of each faith to support critical claims, political positions and religious activities has contributed to injustices, provoked conflict and resulted in the crises that now compel us to seek reconciliation and to strive for peace with justice.
7. Within the churches there is currently general agreement that three types of dialogue should all proceed. These are: ecumenical, about the shape of Christian belief; intra-Christian, about claims to goodness and truth; and with other religious traditions, about understanding reality.

Those considerations provide an opportunity for the systematic re-examination of the concept of covenant by religious leaders, scholars and community leaders within the Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions. They also provide a basis on which those scholars

⁶⁰ Although the kingdom ceased to exist, the Hasmonean dynasty remained influential for a further quarter of a century during a period of Jewish semi-independence and intense intrigue until it was forced to accept the status of Roman vassal with Herod as king.

and leaders can work in collaboration, through conversation dialogue, and there is therefore the potential that this will lead them to: —

1. recognize that each of the three faiths exists as a consequence of divine invocation, adheres to, and is under an obligation to act upon, a valid imposed covenant;
2. acknowledge that while they have been called into existence sequentially, no one faith has a prior claim on God's attention or protection;
3. acknowledge that they therefore have a relationship as partners in pursuing divine intent for humanity within the entirety of creation;
4. continue conversation-dialogue on other concepts and matters that are considered to be important but are also divisive;
5. facilitate reconciliation between their communities to alleviate international conflict;
6. open passages to peace with justice.

Concurrent with conversation dialogue, other forms of dialogue conducted on a community or regional basis and focused on programs of practical cooperation, and based on obligations that each faith accepts under covenant, can lead to rapid improvement in relationships at community and regional level.

Unfortunately it is apparent from press reports that in spite of the general agreement about the need for interfaith dialogue, not all communities or practitioners of theology in any of the Abrahamic faiths are prepared to participate in conversation-dialogue, are attuned to it, or will be acceptable to practitioners in the other faiths as conversation-dialogue partners. However, the circumstances and personal qualities or characteristics that will draw people into the process and which facilitate it have been discussed by a number of authors including Lindbeck, Swidler and Gangadean⁶¹, Chia⁶², and Pawlikowski⁶³, and the basics have been confirmed by my own experience during research for this thesis, and are addressed in chapter nine.

61 Leonard Swidler and Ashok Gangadean, *The Power and Promise of Deep Dialogue* (Global Dialogue Institute, 2000).

62 Edmund Chia, *Towards a theology of dialogue: Schillebeeckx's method as bridge* (Bangkok, Thailand 2003).

63 John T. Pawlikowski, "Reflections on Covenant and Mission Forty Years After *Nostra Aetate*," *Cross Currents* 56, no. 4 (2006).

13. Previous research in this field

In contrast to the intense debate and re-examination of covenant among Jewish theologians in the post-Holocaust period and the early decades of the Fifth Epoch (Chapter Seven), there was a distinct pause in publications related to covenant theology within mainstream Christianity following the establishment of the State of Israel, (Chapter Nine). That pause has been followed by the publication of a relatively large number of books and journal articles devoted to commentary and explanations of the concept of covenant during the past thirty-five years⁶⁴, consistent with a significant increase in interest in the concept that has accompanied, and been provoked by, the worsening crisis in the Middle East in the same manner that the crisis inspired the fledgling dialogue movement.

However no research or publications prior to that period were located in which the concept of covenant has been explored as a factor linking the three faiths, or from the perspective of practical theology, at least within Christian scholarship. The most recent review of relevant research reports covering the years 1986 to 2005, by Scott Hahn,⁶⁵ with a bibliography of seventy publications for that period, does not identify any research-based publications with that perspective, Covenant in the Old and New Testaments. Hahn noted that:

At least four one-volume surveys of Biblical covenant themes have appeared in the past decade. The authors differ widely in confessional commitments and methodological preferences, but all four attempt to produce readable, accessible condensations of contemporary covenant scholarship and its theological ramifications.⁶⁶

He opened his review with the observation that “The flowering of research on covenant in the modern era was inaugurated by George E. Mendenhall’s form-critical studies comparing the Old Testament covenants, particularly the Sinai covenant (Exod. 19–24), with Hittite suzerainty treaties”⁶⁷ He then referred to a number of other influential

64 For major contributions see Louis E. Newman, "Covenant and Contract: A Framework for the Analysis of Jewish Ethics," *Journal of Law and Religion* 9, no. 1 (1991). p.1.

65 Scott Hahn, "Covenant in the Old and New Testaments: Some Current Research," *Currents in Biblical Research* 3, no. 2 (2005/2).

66 *ibid.*, 270.

67 George E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: Biblical Colloquium, 1955).

contributions between 1955 and 1985 before reviewing “the state of covenant research in the past decade (1994-2004),” thus:

Although the mass of scholarship on the subject is not great, some significant advances have been made, especially in overcoming certain reductionistic tendencies of older scholarship, acquiring greater precision in the definition and taxonomy of covenant, and grasping the canonical function of the term and concept in Scripture.⁶⁸

He divided the works surveyed into foundational studies, surveys and studies on particular covenants, and noted that the common element of all the studies termed ‘foundational’ is their move beyond reductionistic categories to explore the richness of the covenant concept reflected in the Biblical text⁶⁹ Then, in the course of reviewing ‘Studies of Particular Covenant’ (Noahic, Abrahamic, Sinai, Davidic, in the Prophets, Deuterocanonicals, Non-Canonical Second Temple, Qumran, New Testament, Jesus and the Gospels, in Paul and in Hebrews) he made specific comments on the propositions of nearly forty authors (with cross-references to a similar number) and on some of the fields of covenant.

Concerning Covenant in the Qumran Texts:

The concept of covenant was central to the theology and self-identity of the Qumran community ... (and both, Bilhah Nitzan (2001) and Craig Evans (2003) concluded that:) The ‘new covenant’ of the Qumran community was in essence the same covenant established with Israel at Sinai. The Qumran covenanters saw themselves as an ‘elect within the elect’, who alone followed the one covenant properly.⁷⁰

Concerning Covenant in the New Testament:

New Testament scholarship has been crowded with studies of aspects of ‘covenant’ in the past decade, but the vast majority of this work debates the merits of E.P. Sanders’s concept of Second Temple Jewish ‘covenantal nomism’ and its implications for Pauline theology. When these studies are excluded as belonging to a genre of their own, we are left with very few direct treatments of covenant concepts in the New Testament.⁷¹

He completed his review expressing a degree of disappointment at its limited scope.

⁶⁸ Hahn, "Research," 264.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 270.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 280.

⁷¹ *ibid.*

Covenant is a multifaceted theme encompassing a variety of phrases, terms and concepts (e.g. the ‘covenant formula’), and is tied to other important Biblical themes such as creation, wisdom and the eschaton (and) while treatment of other covenants (Sinaitic, New) and the role of covenant in Second Temple and Qumran literature has been adequate, research on covenant in the gospels and the life of Jesus has been meagre.⁷²

However Hanh makes no mention of one stream of theologians which, although small in number, is growing and is encouraging an approach to New Covenant Theology and investigations along lines quite different to mainstream Christian covenant theology. Its founders were all from Reformed Baptist circles and it is centred on four institutions and an annual conference in the U.S., the first of which was held in 1983.⁷³ It is described by one its leaders, Dennis Swanson, as:

a reactionary movement against the key aspects of Covenant Theology, that is, the Covenant of Redemption, the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace. Seemingly, it also is a reaction against a real or perceived dilution of traditional Baptist distinctives that the adoption of Covenant Theology has brought into Reformed Baptist circles.⁷⁴

Larry Pettegrew⁷⁵ explains why those concepts are rejected. He describes John Calvin as the main sponsor of the “renewed Old Covenant viewpoint”, or the single covenant concept; asserts that the proper approach to covenant theology is: first, the formulation of a Biblical theology from the OT; next, the formulation of a Biblical theology from the NT, and, finally the production of a systematic theology by harmonizing all Biblical inputs to theology; and concludes by saying:

New Covenant Theologians have taken a large step in recognizing that the New Covenant is really a new covenant—that Christians live under the commandments of the law of Christ, as the NT states it (1 Cor. 9:19-21). New Covenant Theologians’ spiritual maturity and honest desire to interpret the Scriptures accurately is obvious in their literature. However, replacement of Israel by the church in New Covenant passages is Biblically unwarranted, and represents extreme continuity in the continuity/discontinuity debate.⁷⁶

72 *ibid.*, 285.

73 The four institutions are Providence Theological Seminary, Sound of Grace Ministries, The Master’s Seminary and In-Depth Studies. The conference series is the annual John Bunyan Conference.

74 Dennis M. Swanson, “The New Covenant and New Covenant Theology,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 18, no. 1 (2007). p. 151.

75 Larry D. Pettegrew, “The New Covenant and New Covenant Theology,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 18, no. 1 (2007).

76 *ibid.*, 198.

In similar vein, because Hahn's review dealt only with research related to Covenant in the Old and New Testaments it was not to be expected that he would review works relating to Covenant in the Qur'an. However, as those covenants are dealt with in the Qur'an, and the idea is promoted, erroneously, in some quarters that Jews and Muslims both lay claim to Palestine on the basis of competing covenants,⁷⁷ the lack of publications to report suggests a significant omission from research by scholars within Christian and Western institutions generally. Apart from general studies of world religions, very few publications were found which acknowledged Muslim interest in the concept of covenant. Three stand out: F. E. Peters, Leonard Swidler, and Race and Shafer.⁷⁸ Few scholars appear to have taken note of an observation by Swidler in one of that suite of papers which helped initiate interfaith conversation-dialogue. After noting the commonalities in their religious heritage, he wrote :

There are many more things that the three Abrahamic faiths have in common, such as the importance of covenant, of law and faith, of the community (witness in the three traditions the central role of the terms "People," "Church," and "Ummah," respectively).⁷⁹

14. Contribution of this research

This research into the evolution of the concept of covenant, the diverse interpretations of it within each of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the consequences of attitudes, policies and conduct of adherents of each of them that have been developed on the basis of their divergent interpretations, is original and explores a field that has not been traversed before.

77 This is not an attitude I have ever encountered among Muslims, but an Evangelical Christian group based in Colorado Springs, All About Religion.org, states: —

"The problem is that the Qur'an teaches that Ishmael was the child of promise (Sura 19:54; compare Sura 37:83-109 with Genesis 22:1-19) and so Muslims believe that God's covenant promises were meant for Ishmael's descendants, not Isaac's. Muhammad descended from Ishmael and so Muslims seek to lay claim to these covenant promises, namely the land of Palestine. Since Israel's U.N.-sanctioned return to Palestine in 1948 there has been unceasing hostility between Israel and her Arab neighbours, with major armed conflicts in 1948-49, 1956, 1967, 1973-74, and 1982. That Israel remains today is a miracle in-and-of itself." Source: <http://www.allaboutreligion.org/origin-of-islam.htm> Accessed February 24, 2009.

78 F. E. Peters, *Judaism, Christianity and Islam: From Covenant to Community*, First ed., 3 vols., vol. 1: *From Covenant to Community*, Judaism, Christianity and Islam: The Classical Texts and Their Interpretation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990a).

Leonard Swidler, *Theoria > Praxis: How Jews, Christians, and Muslims can together move from theory to practice* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998).

Alan Race and Ingrid Shafer, eds., *Religions in Dialogue: From Theocracy to Democracy* (Aldersgate: Ashgate, 2002).

79 Swidler, *Theoria > Praxis*: 8.

15. Methodological approach of the study

This investigation was warranted by the evidence in scholarly literature, dialogue activities of churches, and informed international debate that significant international conflicts have been, and currently are, at least in part, a consequence of disputes that originated in disagreements over theological concepts between Christians, Jews and Muslims, and, in particular, disregard for the concept of covenant with intimately linked component aspects of divine promise, human obligation, and the application of a penal clause in the event of action contrary to the obligations.

Therefore, as already indicated, this research project was designed to address the question: “In what manner and on what basis can the communities of the three primary Abrahamic faiths, Christianity, Judaism and Islam, be engaged in conversation dialogue relating to the understandings of covenant of each faith to enable a greater awareness of their relationship with God and the relationships between each of their faiths?”

While the focus throughout the research has been firmly on *relationships* and interaction, an examination of the history of those relationships through the writings of each faith has been required. Those writings include prophetic expectations about the possible consequences in the event of adversarial or antagonistic interaction between the faith communities. In the event that there had been no such interaction there would not have been any consequences to consider and the validity of the prophetic expectations would have remained a matter of conjecture. No prophetic pronouncements which may have been read as predicting definite or fixed-date events have been considered, whether they occur in original sources or in subsequent commentaries, except in certain isolated cases to note that they have been subject to historicist methods in a bid to support particular projections or interpretations.⁸⁰

80 Circulation of the Book of Revelation provided a base for early historicism which expanded during the Medieval period so that biblical references were used to identify the Papacy as the Antichrist, but it was not widely espoused until the Reformation when it became a mechanism for two-way accusations of apostasy. More recent illustrations include Methodist enthusiast George Bell's prediction of a dramatic end for the world on 28th February, 1763, Kenneth G. C. Newport, "Charles Wesley in Historical Perspective," (Gresham College, 2007).; and William Miller's similar prediction in 1833 of the imminent Second Advent of Jesus Christ, Sylvester Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1853). Millerism then led, directly, to the establishment of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Fernand Fisel, "Edson's Cornfield Vision, Frisson or Figment? [Revised]," *Adventist Currents* 1, no. 1 (1983). However, while certain Qur'anic passages might support claims by some Muslim writers that Muhammad's personal ministry was foretold by both Moses and Jesus, (Sura 46:10, n.4783; Sura 61:6, nn. 5436-8), they can reasonably be interpreted as an indication that Muslim teaching has also been

The approach taken in this research

The evolution of religious belief is a fundamental aspect of human evolution. Every religion has absorbed or has been built on some aspect of the experience of communities with which it has come in contact, or with which it has emerged. It is a matter of record that communities in many regions experienced significant religious activity prior to the Abrahamic Era,⁸¹ and therefore the circumstances in which Judaism, Christianity and Islam were established, and the interaction between them as they emerged as separate streams of Abrahamic faith, are examined in that context.

Because the concept of covenant, as formally stated, is most often associated with the Abrahamic faiths, there has been an assumption that it originated either within Yahwism or somewhat earlier in the valleys of Mesopotamia which are the setting for the Biblical myths of the Garden of Eden and Noah. However that is now known not to be the case.

As indicated in Chart Three, the Evolution of Systematic Religion, (inserted in chapter two at p. 69, and enlarged as Appendix C), there is now evidence of religious consciousness from c. 17,000 BCE among the Indigenous people of Australia,⁸² and the earliest indication of an awareness of a covenantal relationship between humans and God was among the same people, c. 4,000 BCE, long before the rise of the Abrahamic belief system.⁸³

The appropriate starting point for the examination of covenant as a matter of religious belief is therefore a brief reference to what is now known about the most fundamental aspect of divine intervention, creation, to place humanity in the context of the totality of universal creation, before following the path to the Abrahamic Era. The age of the universe, its potential future 'life,' and the course of biological evolution have now been estimated within a scientifically acceptable range of probability, and these things must be recognized and taken into account in any consideration of the concepts of divine

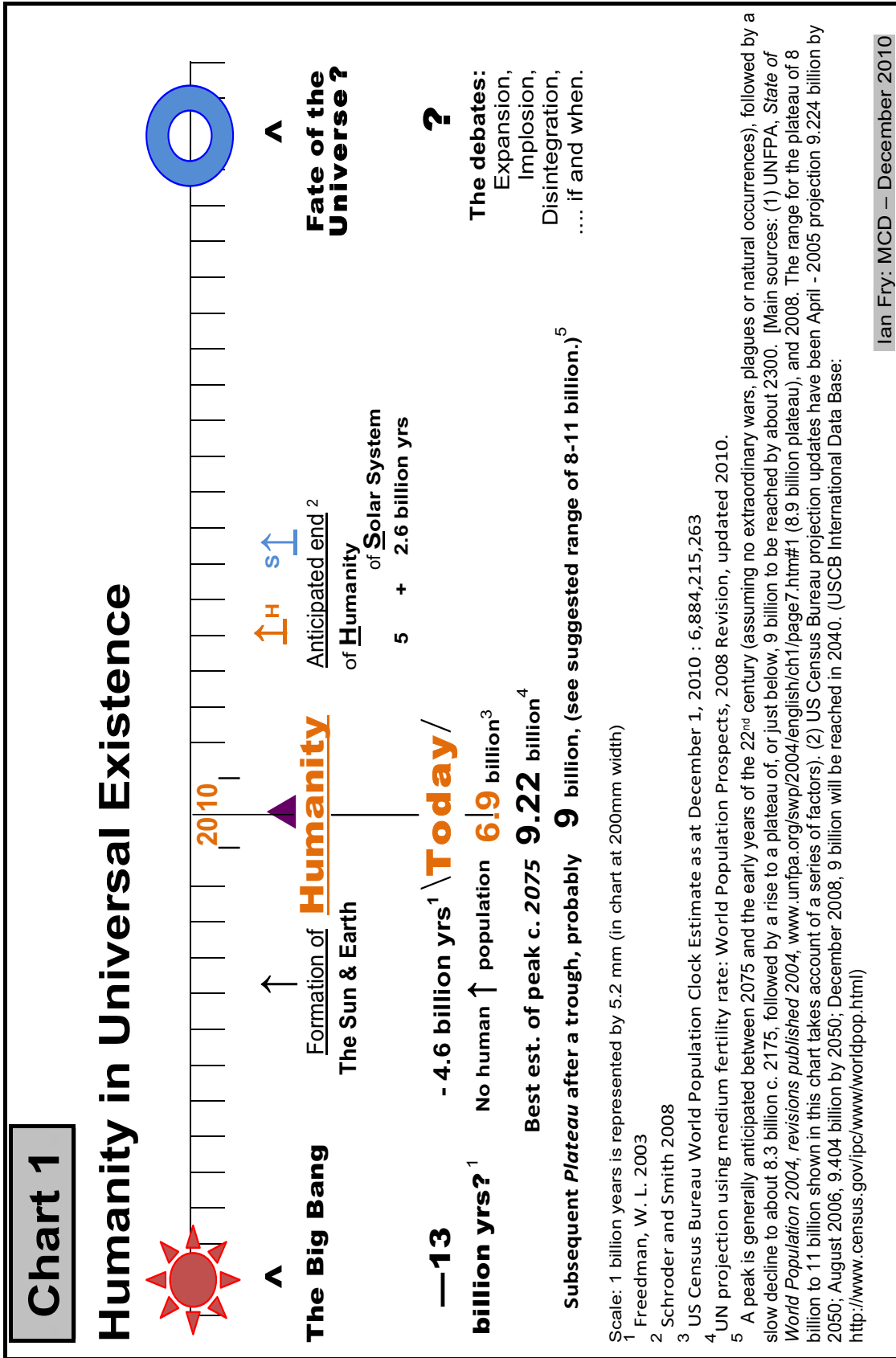
affected by historicist interpretations through the editing of those passages in the authorized version of the Qur'an which was issued in 653.

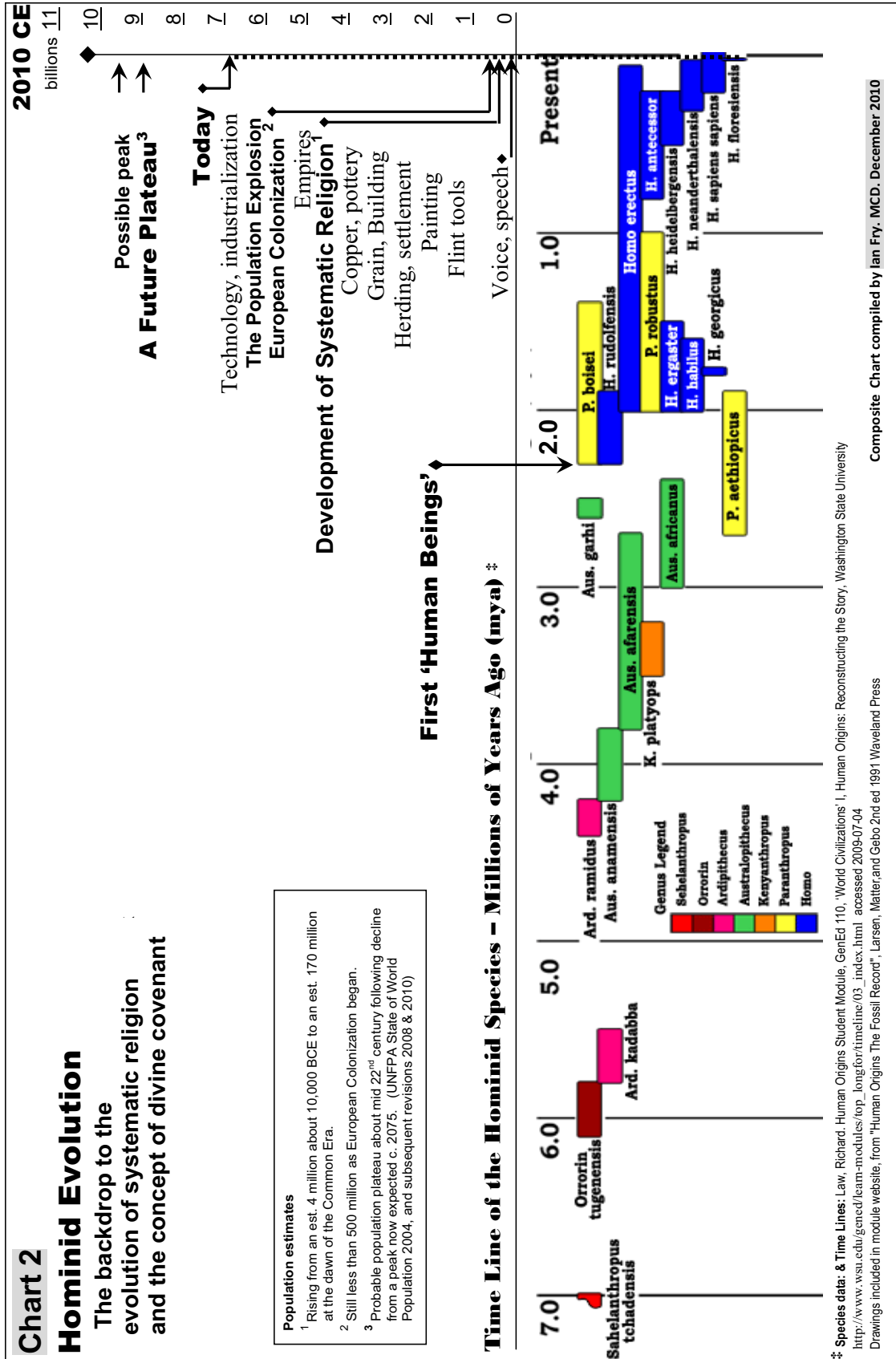
81 Bernard J. Verkamp, *The Evolution of Religion: A Re-Examination* (Scranton, PA.: University of Scranton Press, 1995).

82 Peter Michaelsen et al., *Australian Ice Age Rock Art May Depict Earth's Oldest Recordings of Shamanistic Rituals*, vol. 41, *Mankind Quarterly*: Council for Social and Economic Studies. Provided by ProQuest LLC (2000).

83 Paul SD. C. Tacon, Merideth Wilson, and Christopher Chippindale, "Birth of the Rainbow Serpent in Arnhem Land rock art and oral history," *Archaeology in Oceania* 31, no. 3, October 1996 (1996).

intervention in the ongoing affairs of humanity and the revelation of a covenantal relationship, or relationships, between God and humanity. Simplified charts of universal history and humanity's entry into that history are therefore provided here, as chart one, and chart two, and in enlarged format as Appendix A and Appendix B.





Biblical texts make reference to the concept of covenant prior to the Abrahamic era,⁸⁴ but the people who became known as the Hebrew community did not mention or recognize the concept until the advanced stages of the Abrahamic tradition, during the Exilic Period. The Hebrew Biblical texts, as they are generally available, are a compilation of edited material, and, according to the source dating sequence Julius Wellhausen's Documentary Hypothesis, references to the origins and development of law and the unfolding understanding of covenant are not presented in those texts in the historical sequence in which they occurred.⁸⁵ Therefore, to trace the evolution of awareness and understanding of that concept chronologically from the Abrahamic era to the present, and to enable a proper understanding of these matters, it has been necessary to draw on recognized works for the dating of editing and insertion of relevant records during the compilation of the critical Hebrew texts.

This approach to the use of texts and historical resources has facilitated consideration of particular factors and events that have influenced the understanding of the application and the consequences of component concepts in covenants in the context in which they occurred. In turn, an appreciation of the social and political context in which communal interaction has occurred has enabled me to identify and delineate the five epochs in the progressive or evolutionary revelation of the nature and administration of divine covenant. That pattern of progressive revelation through five epochs then enabled me to formulate conclusions about the relationship between covenant and prophecy generated within the three faiths, and to identify a basis for conversation dialogue between them.

The five epochs are indicated in Chart Three, described at that point, and examined in that and the following five chapters. This diagrammatic representation of the five epochs indicates the principal phases and influences in the evolution of systematic religion and the understanding of covenant that can be demonstrated by my research. Together with Charts One and Two, this chart visually illustrates the continuum in the evolution of those two concepts, systematic religion generally, and covenant in particular, in conjunction with the

84 Genesis 3, 7.

85 Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel: with a reprint of the article from the Encyclopaedia Britannica*, trans. J. Sutherland Black and Menzies. Allan, Third edition with preface by W. Robertson Smith ed. (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885/1).

W. Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* (New York: Oxford/Clarendon, 1998).

parallel development of the three Abrahamic faith streams and the schisms and divisions within each of them which are discussed substantially in chapters two to six.

From these resources cause and effect relationships have been identified which are involved in interaction between the institutions of religion, the adherents of the three communities of faith and secular authorities which have influenced their self-understanding, their conduct, consequent interaction and, at times, their circumstantial participation in the mechanisms of the penal clause of either the Universal or a community-specific covenant. As discussed in Chapter Two, the primary mechanism for the application of a punishment or retribution for a breach of covenant is a reaction by a wronged or disadvantaged party against the actions of the party which perpetrated the wrong. Any suggestion that a natural disaster is, by virtue of its occurrence, a punishment for misconduct, or is always one aspect of divine retribution for evil deeds, is explicitly rejected and excluded from this thesis.

Two additional charts, Chart Four, 'The Human Population Explosion: The Abrahamic Faiths, Rise, Competition and Conflict,' and Chart Five, 'The Yom Kippur War and the OAPEC Oil Embargo,' will be found where the first reference to the subject matter occurs, on pages 204 and 327 respectively. Considered in sequence, this set of charts illustrates that the progressive revelation of the nature of covenant is a part the continuum in human evolution and is a guide for the future conduct of humanity. It is not simply a matter of confirming the historicity of relationships that God has established with certain specific communities. For convenience of reference, the set of five charts is provided as a set in expanded format in the file of appendixes.

Methodology

Covenant is a theological concept and this research project is an investigation into theology. With the exception of the first-order concepts of creation and incarnation, covenant is arguably the most critical concept in the entire theological system of the Abrahamic faiths, and it, too, is a consequence of divine intervention in humanity's affairs over a long period. However it cannot be considered in isolation. It requires consideration of a wide range of concepts and circumstances, and the research for this thesis therefore involved both historical and sociological considerations, and in view of this complexity, an extensive study of texts.

Biblical and Qur'anic texts can be read as both history and theology. They were inspired at different times and many of them were transmitted as oral tradition for extended periods before being committed to writing for posterity as records and worship or teaching aids. They reflected – either consciously or otherwise – the composer's interpretation of the oral material, and they were subsequently edited, in some cases many times, before being considered by religious authorities and accepted for inclusion in canon or rejected, possibly to be destroyed or just set aside.⁸⁶ Such processes inevitably resulted in disputes over authenticity, accuracy and reliability both within and between communities of the three faiths, and there is internal evidence in some texts that pragmatism in the interpretation of historical texts gave way to the concealment of circumstances in order to convey the emphasis that the composer wished to perpetuate.⁸⁷

To be able to establish the pattern of evolutionary development and to construct the epochs in the revelation of the concept of Covenant it was necessary to understand the progressive construction of the Biblical and Qur'anic texts, the way in which sacred history has been shaped, and sociological developments. This required a study of non-canonical texts and commentaries, and works of recognized historians, as well as canonical texts of each faith, and the processes by which those canonical texts were constructed or edited, and both the constitutional and non-constitutional authorities who were involved in the processes. Because the recorded links are not always complete, extensive extrapolation was required.

The data required has been obtained from the following sources.

First, and basic to this research, were the primary scriptural sources of each faith: the Hebrew Bible, the Christian Gospels, and the Qur'an. These were complemented by a selection of the literature of writers and scholars of each faith whose recollections and interpretations were shaped by their particular theological perspectives and the context in which they were working, and whose writings have influenced the subsequent theological understanding of their communities. These sources, including portions of the Talmud, Hadith, Letters of the Christian Apostles, and works of Doctors and Reformers of the Church, have been basic to my construction of the epochal pattern, and claims made in constructing the series of epochs.

86 G. E. Von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*, trans. Katherine Watson, First ed. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1970).

87 For example, see the insertion of the Oracle of Nathan (1 Chr. 22:1-19 and 2 Sam.7:5-16) and subsequent Christian interpretation of the passage, Chapter Three, page 115.

They have also been basic to the development of the hypothesis concerning the origins of significant current international conflicts, stated above under ‘Study’ and ‘Stimulus for this Research.’ This will be argued progressively in chapters four, five, six, seven and eight with reference to the principal Holy Texts of each faith, and published scholarly literature.

In addition, to assess and gain an understanding of the attitudes of clergy and scholars of each faith concerning the covenantal status of each faith and relationships between them, data has been gathered in a qualitative research project which involved semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire based on the research question. It is reported in chapter eight.

The questionnaire was drafted to solicit responses which would show how the participating professional practitioners of Christianity, Judaism and Islam personally understand or view the concept of covenant; how their understanding relates to the normative teachings of their faith or denomination; whether the concept can either provide a basis for dialogue programs, or complement ideas or systems that are currently employed to enhance relations within and between communities of those faiths, and to reduce tension or conflict where these are significant; and what circumstances or personal attributes can be identified which might either help or hinder such programs. Clearance for the project was granted by the MCD Human Research Ethics Committee on that basis within the broader context of ascertaining whether there is general recognition of a number of related matters. These included whether Judaism, Christianity and Islam are each regarded as legitimate, divinely inspired instruments of Divine Will, linked as partners by common obligations under covenant, and whether this covenantal partnership provides a foundation for cooperation, reduced tension and conflict, and greater harmony and stability in humanity’s affairs.

Invitations to participate in the project were initially addressed to fifteen persons of each faith, but in view of the denominational diversity within the Christian faith an additional four invitations were extended to Christians, making a total of 49 persons invited. The intention was to involve equal numbers of people from three basic professional role areas: clergy in pastoral or religious leadership roles, designated as Group ‘P’; academics in tertiary institutions, not necessarily clergy, Group ‘A’; and practitioners in interfaith dialogue programs or in interfaith studies, Group ‘D’. Participants in the Christian group were designated C-R, Reformed; C-C, Roman Catholic; and C-O, Orthodox. It was not

possible to designate either Jewish or Muslim participants on the basis of their streams within their faith groups. Participants are identified by a reference code, being letters for their faith group and their professional status, and a sequence number, but not by either their country or gender. The aim was to involve participants from a wide range of countries, both men and women, and the respondents include people from Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, Europe, the Indian sub-continent, South East Asia and the Middle East. Thus, for example: C-R/A1 is the Christian-Reformed/Academic, reference No.1.

Although lay people are widely and increasingly represented in the administrative and leadership structures of each community of faith (in many cases being equal in number to clergy), it is to the three groups identified that the role and responsibilities of opinion leaders and decision makers generally, and naturally, devolve. Lay members of congregations in each case are, and will increasingly be involved in practical programs of dialogue, widely referred to as dialogue of life, action and prayer, and to a lesser extent conversation or prophetic dialogue programs. This is consistent with Pope Benedict's statement in November 2008, that intercultural dialogue which deepens the cultural consequences of basic religious ideas is important,⁸⁸ but few will be attracted to, or equipped for, the critical field of non-defensive conversation dialogue, previously referred to as theological discourse. Some will find that involvement in, or exposure to, a process in which theological beliefs and religious practices which they have accepted without question are subjected to critical examination, possibly in contentious debate, is confronting, challenging and even a traumatic experience.

This is not to suggest that clergy will be free from such stresses. Because of their role as teachers, many find a challenge to belief just as difficult to respond to as the people for whom they have pastoral responsibility, and all dialogue programs must be planned to minimize personal distress or social disruption for worshiping congregations, and be conducted with sensitivity and maturity. However, by virtue of their specialized training, being constantly immersed in theological discussion and debate, and especially if their pastorate is in a multicultural community, they are better equipped to respond in an appropriate manner to conversation dialogue. Three exceptions were encountered. Two were circumstantial or blind introductions, and after receiving the formal requests to

88 Rizzo, Alessandra. November 24, 2008. 'Pope: Dialogue among religions should be pursued'. Washington Post.

participate their attitudes changed from passive participation to some degree of resistance. The third was a senior church cleric who simply refused to participate. He could not tolerate the idea of a process which implies a challenge to the church's self-understanding or its still-dominant Supersessionist theology.

The groups of people approached are those who have taken, or been involved in, the bulk of new initiatives in dialogue since the devastating attacks on New York and other cities in the United States in 2001, and it is noteworthy that academics working in secular institutions, but collaborating with clergy and fellow academics in religious teaching institutions, and laity, have been more prominent in initiating new endeavours in dialogue than clergy working in religious institutional administration and pastoral roles. (Chapter nine.)

Over a period of thirty five years close personal discussions with many people in this range of positions have been possible, either as a result of participating in conferences with them, being referred to them, or approaching them directly as research respondents in connection with earlier publications. In particular, extensive collaboration was involved in research for *'Trouble in the Triangle'* (set of two books, 2000), *'A review of interfaith relationships with proposals for scholars of Abrahamic faiths to jointly reassess the concepts of covenant, incarnation and messianism'* (Landegg International University, Conference paper, 2002), and *'Interfaith relations: our critical place in universal history and the imperative – reassessment of theology'* (University of Melbourne Flagship Conference, paper 2003).

Discussions with that wide range of people related to their experience of contact, theological disputation and dialogue with people of the other two faiths and the way in which their experience has influenced them. While those discussions were not formally structured, they were approached with a pattern of discussion in mind to explore how they perceived an extensive range of related issues.

Those issues have included the following: how they perceived the nature of the Abrahamic communities of faith; obligation to God and living under divine authority; a structured covenantal relationship; Divine influence and intervention; separate identities; their dominant perception of God in terms of immanence, gender specificity, historicity, transcendence, omnipotence, creativity, intervention; delegation of authority; omniscience, requiring submission to an eschatological judge; a manifestation of existence, "the Force

that makes for Salvation”, or “the Power that makes for Social Regeneration”;⁸⁹ Conflict and judgement; the causes of conflict, contemporaneous, continuing, or progressive; eschatology; the linkage between Covenant, obligation and judgement; continuing personal or communal responsibility or obligation for the future of humanity; protection of the environment; Biblical or Qur’anic precedents for contemporaneous or progressive imposition of divine judgement or retribution; the role of Abrahamic faiths in relation to the non-Abrahamic faiths, and any sense in which the Abrahamic faiths may be in a partnership with a common role.

As a consequence of that extensive experience, all invitees except the three noted above, were personal acquaintances, and encounters with them were taken in account in preparing the questionnaires. Each participant was asked to respond in writing to twelve questions after reflecting briefly on the research question which assumes that each of the primary Abrahamic faith communities exist in a relationship with God, that they each recognize the concept of covenant, and that they each acknowledge an historical relationship between them. They were also asked to agree to a brief follow-up telephone conversation if it was felt that this would be advantageous. Such conversations were arranged with about half of the respondents.

That diversity of data confirms that there is not a common understanding of the concept between the Abrahamic faith communities, and corresponds with the confusion among Christian theologians which is apparent from published works.

The limited number of responses, 23 from 49 requests, did not warrant using them as a base for the whole thesis. However, the responses received complement the primary research methodology and confirm that confusion within the church inhibits ecumenical and interfaith cooperation. Also, in view of the careful selection of the people approached, the pattern of responses supports the belief that the centrality of covenant is acknowledged at the level of personal consciousness among Christians. However it is of such sensitivity in view of the church’s long-expressed supersessionism that a number of those approached did not want to go through the process of systematically reflecting on the matter, or did not wish to commit themselves in writing, even given the assurance of research confidentiality.

89 Mordecai M. Kaplan, *The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion*, Second, 1962 ed. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994; reprint, 1994), 40,104. The founder of the Jewish Reconstructionist Movement in the United States, Kaplan saw Judaism as an evolving religious civilization with a common history that was the source of its covenant and the motivation that commands the community to ‘live Jewishly’.

It is acknowledged that a statistical analysis of the responses would not be valid, and that an extensive research effort by a three-faith research team would be necessary for that purpose, but the need for conversation dialogue relating to covenant is far greater and more urgent than the need for such research. The percentages of the people who received research forms and agreed to participate, and the percentages who completed and returned were: Christian, 95% and 47%; Jewish, 60% and 33%; Muslim, 87% and 60%; overall, 82% and 47%. An overall summary of the responses is included in chapter eight, and they are taken into account in chapter nine. The letter of request, the questionnaire, and a table of the response rate is provided as Appendix J. Appendix K is a summary of all responses, condensed and tabulated. Appendix L is a summary of responses to each question in sequence, and the perspectives of each faith are set out succinctly in Appendix M.

16. Limitations of this thesis

This research examines how a matter involving both academic and practical theology – the interpretation of covenant – has contributed to conflict and how a conversation-trialogue may help to resolve it. The circumstances in which the research question is asked and examined are very complex. There are many factors that may contribute to conflict between communities of the three faiths, factors which impinge on any particular consideration, and which must be identified and acknowledged but which cannot be comprehensively examined within the confines of this thesis. The sources examined during this research have included principal references of each faith and an extensive list of interpretative works (as indicated by the reference list), but the intensity of internal scholarly interaction has been great, and the available literature is vast, especially in the case of Judaism, as noted by Ochs:

For the communal study of TR (Textual Reasoning), the primary texts are Mishnah, Talmud, anthologies of midrash and readings of Tanakh. Secondly, TR also examines the history of commentaries on Tanakh and on the rabbinic literatures, including legal, aggadic, kabalistic and literary-historical commentaries.⁹⁰

It has therefore not been possible to consider or to give adequate emphasis to every aspect of covenantal debate and related interaction within each faith. This may give the

⁹⁰ Peter Ochs, "Scripture and Text [Pragmatism and Talmud Torah: Textual Reasoning in Modern Jewish Philosophy]," in *The Cambridge History of Jewish Philosophy: The Modern Era*, ed. Martin Kavka, David Novak, and Zachary Braiterman, *Cambridge History of Jewish Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, Pending: 2012). p. 11 of pre-publication copy.

impression that the current need to reconsider the application of divine covenants relates principally to Christianity and Islam. This is not the case, and critical considerations in the life of each faith have been identified to enable sources to be selected to place research emphasis on interaction between the faiths because, as Michael Stone says:

The historical enterprise is an interpretative one; there is a great danger inherent in the study of the origins of one's own tradition. Modern and medieval "orthodoxies" tend to interpret the time before they existed in terms of themselves.⁹¹

Stone proposes that the books of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, which were written during the period from completion of the books of the Tanakh to the beginning of the era of substantial Rabbinic and Christian Gospel and letter writing should be studied for several reasons.⁹² They embody an expression of the human spirit in which central religious questions, and above all, the justice of God, are dominant. Concentration on the segment of the past in which Judaism took on its present form, and in which Christianity emerged, has the potential to pervert truth; and "it is the Pseudepigrapha that provide us with evidence of vital aspects of Judaism that would otherwise have remained unknown."⁹³

However, Jacob Neusner maintains that there are few really comprehensive accounts of the history of a single idea or concept; the treatment in the available accounts of early rabbinic Judaism of one topic after another must be characterized as "unhistorical and superficial;" there is no critical text of the Babylonian or Palestinian Talmuds; there are scarcely any critical work(s) comparing various versions of a story appearing in successive compilations; and "the only document satisfactorily edited, with reliable, contemporary exegesis as well, is Tosefta [an appendix to the Mishnah], the work of Saul Lieberman."⁹⁴ Therefore, while it is reasonable to assume that the works named by Stone influenced a number of factors, including the development of Christology, the adoption of the notion of Supersession, and the deviation from the mature Hebrew understanding of covenant, it is the consequences of those factors which influenced relationships and events in later

91 Michael E. Stone, "The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha," Jewish Virtual Library, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/apocrypha.html>. p. 4.

92 Ibid. p. 3.

93 Ibid. pp. 4-5.

94 Jacob Neusner, "The History of Earlier Rabbinic Judaism: Some New Approaches," *History of Religions* 16, no. 3 (1977). p. 222 incl. footnote 10.

periods. They have also influenced the circumstances which, on the basis of this research, now require intensive conversation dialogue with the concept of covenant as the basis.

Similarly there are many religious concepts and practices that have a bearing on the relationships between the three faiths and which may cause friction between their communities, but which are not attributes of, or directly related to, the concept of Covenant. They include social, economic, health and educational policies and practices that impact coincidentally on the socio-economic environment; political and foreign policy issues such as immigration and defence that impact on relationships between communities of faith but which might originate from non-religious considerations, and the globalization of communications and trade.

Thus, while the following matters may all be important – together with the understanding and administration of Covenant – in assessing the contribution which intensive conversation dialogue at peak-of-faith level can make toward resolution of the world crisis, it is not possible to deal with them in the confines of this thesis. Further research focusing on these matters may complement the contribution of this thesis to the resolution of faith-related conflict.

- The influence of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in the development of Christology and Supersessionism, and the deviation from the mature Hebrew understanding of covenant, in the early church.
- The circumstances and consequences of the schisms and divisions within Shī'a Islam.
- The Reformation in Sunni Islam concurrent with upheavals in European Christianity due to sequential Inquisitions.
- The relationship between the promulgation of the papal document *Dictatus Papae* and the establishment of radical Islam in North Africa.
- The initiation of Mormon and Baha'i faiths concurrent with Reform Movement in Judaism.
- Massive abuse of obligations under Covenant in the processes of colonization and industrialization, Epoch Four.
- The manipulation of concepts of faith and faith communities for political purposes, introduced by Napoleon and applied without scruple during World Wars One and Two.
- The evolution and application of Marxism.

- Consideration of factors involved in interaction between the British Government, Britain's Jewish community, and Zionist interests during the critical period between the failed Evian Conference and Hitler's unwritten "Führer Order for the Final Solution."
- The promotion of the development of nuclear weapons in the first instance as a means of eliminating Hitler before he could implement his anti-Jewish program⁹⁵, and the significance of its actual first use in an alternative sphere of conflict when it was not developed in time for its initial purpose.
- Australia's protracted and negative deliberations about pre-war and wartime settlement of Jewish refugees, and the effect of this on immediate post-war policy decisions concerning resettlement and the Palestine Mandate, long-term interfaith relations, and foreign policy direction during the deepening crisis in the Middle East.
- The impact of the policies and actions taken by the warring powers during WWII relating to the Jewish Question, and how they related to rapid post-war decolonization.
- Similar consideration of the impact of the Jewish Question in the rise of the Human Rights Movement, especially in the USA and Southern Africa.

The extent to which those considerations are relevant to this research thesis is indicated in the section 'Stimulus for this research,' and by brief references progressively through the thesis.

17. Structure of the thesis

This study is presented in a total of ten chapters.

Following this introductory chapter, Chapters Two to Seven examine each of the five epochs in succession, with critical attention to the circumstances in which the understanding of covenant developed. Epoch 1, Exemplary Revelation, which relates to the period of religious evolution up to the year 63 BCE, is examined in two stages in Chapters Two and Three.

⁹⁵ Concerning Einstein's conversion from a pacifist, Hitler's occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1939, a letter to President Roosevelt, and the threat to the Jewish community, see: Banesh Hoffman and Helen Dukas, *Albert Einstein: Creator and Rebel* (New York: Viking, 1972). Robert William Reid, *Tongues of Conscience: War and the Scientists' Dilemma* (London: Constable, 1969). Walter La Feber, *America, Russia and the Cold War; [1945-1984]* (New York: Knopf, 1985). William Burr, ed. *The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II: A Collection of Primary Sources*, No. 162: 202/994-7000 ed. (Washington: National Security Archive, 2007).

Chapter Two, Stage One of Epoch One, ‘Exemplary Revelation,’ examines a period of divine challenge and initial community preparation, up to the event that marks the embryonic beginning of the nation of Israel: the migration of Jacob’s family to Egypt as refugees.

Chapter Three, Stage Two of Epoch One, ‘A Mature understanding,’ examines a period of promise, with great expectation, the development of a mature understanding of major aspects of covenant through the experience of failure and reprieve recorded in the Tanakh, completed c. 400 BCE⁹⁶, and closes at the point at which the Qumran Community believed it was ready to assume the mantle of Pharisaic Judaism in succession to the Hasmonean Kingdom.

Chapter Four, Epoch 2: ‘Shared responsibility,’ opens with the demolition of the Hasmonean Monarchy c. 63 BCE, and the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth which mark the opening of the epoch which is characterized by Pentecost and the rise of the embryonic Christian Church. It encompasses another amalgamation of religious and sovereign power – the church and Imperial Rome – with further abuse of covenantal obligation, and the command to Muhammad to undertake a reforming or corrective ministry.

Chapter Five, Epoch 3: ‘An Extended network,’ opens with the Hijra, 622 CE, and the rise of Islam as a third stream of Abrahamic faith living under specific covenantal obligation as a consequence of the self-understanding of the Christian Church and its interaction with other faiths and ethical traditions.

Chapter Six, Epoch 4: ‘A Brutal demonstration,’ covers the period from 1453/55 to 1948 when the church was involved in further conflict with each of the other faiths, and in which each of Christianity, Judaism and Islam experienced periods of reformation and renewal.

Chapter Seven, Epoch 5: ‘A period of application,’ examines the critical years from the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 through a period of turmoil to the present.

Chapter Eight, ‘Covenant in Fifth-Epoch understanding,’ examines the multiple strands and confusion in current understanding of covenant; the immediate consequences and the

⁹⁶ Stone, "Pseudepigrapha". p. 1.

implications of the Second Vatican Council; the dramatic impact of Dispensational theology, and the range of considerations raised in responses to my research questionnaire.

Chapter Nine, 'Dialogue in the Fifth Epoch,' examines early initiatives in face-to-face dialogue programs; the development of techniques and guidelines; reluctance within the churches to proceed, and restraints imposed; circumstantial pressure, and signs of change.

Chapter Ten, 'No Turning Back,' presents conclusions from this study, that covenant is not only intrinsic to each of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, but basic to their self-understanding and conduct; and that effective conversation dialogue between them is a matter of urgency.

Appendixes

A series of appendixes are provided to complement matters considered in the thesis or to indicate the complexity of issues relevant to this research and which have been taken into account but which are beyond the confines of the thesis.

Chapter Two

The first epoch – stage one

Prehistory, the Abrahamic era to Israel's migration

1. Introduction

Proposals to enhance dialogue between the three primary Abrahamic faiths must be considered in the context of the current understanding of the relationships between them, and the evolution of religious belief, taking account two factors. First, what has been established through scientific research concerning the existence of the planet Earth and humanity inhabiting it. Second, the nature and recognized status of texts on which current patterns of belief, understanding and relationships have been based. This chapter therefore opens with examination of the origins and compilation of the Hebrew texts. Charts 1, 2 (pp. 52, 53) and chart 3 provide an outline of current understanding of universal and human history. An overview of early stirrings of religious belief and an examination of the Abrahamic tradition as understood from Biblical and Qur'anic texts follow, with an assessment of the Abrahamic Covenant and the affairs of Abraham's descendants to the point of the migration of Jacob's family as refugees to Egypt that marked the embryonic stage of the nation of Israel.

2. Compilation of the Torah

The circumstances of their release or escape from bondage in Egypt in the Exodus, and their eventual settlement as a community in Canaan, reminded the embryonic Israelite nation that it was to play an exemplary role in God's relations with humanity, and, it can be assumed, stimulated its efforts to preserve an understanding of its origins and history for posterity. However it was not until the establishment of the monarchy, between 200 and 400 years after the Exodus that the written recording of its history began, and gathering and recording that history from oral tradition took several centuries and various stages of editing translation and compilation. While the establishment of the monarchy, with Saul as king, is generally accepted as taking place during the last two or three decades of the 11th cent. BCE, the dating of the Exodus, and whether it was a single event or a series of migrations over an extended period, is widely disputed, but Eriksson's explanation that the

critical first stage of the Exodus took place c. 1479 BCE is persuasive, and that date is used in my Chart Three. (Alternative approaches to dating the Exodus are noted in Appendix P).

The scholarly understanding and interpretation of subsequent events recorded in biblical history, and an assessment of the revelation and application of covenant are influenced by the date accepted for the Exodus. An extensive review of literature to determine which dating should be used in this research showed that in some matters significant confusion results if alternative dates of compilation and redaction are applied. The extent of confusion is indicated in the chart below, and further details considered in the review are provided in Appendix Q. Confusion is most notable in the case of the P source material for which Kaufmann and Friedman found 6th century dating most supportable. Conclusions reached in this research are not materially affected by transposing the critical P source texts from the late 5th cent. to the 6th cent.. The dating of Marks, Gray and Hyatt, modified by substituting the earlier date for the P source, has therefore been applied in this research.

Dating summary by Nicholson, 1998 p.21				Dating applied in this research
The Wellhausen 'school'	Dillmann & supporters	Marks, Gray & Hyatt	Kaufmann & Friedman	
J: c. 840 BCE	E: 900-850 BCE	J: c. 950 BCE	J: Before 722 BCE	J: c. 950 BCE
E: c.700	J: 800-750	E: 8 th cent.	E: After 722	E: 8 th cent.
D: c.623	P: 800-700	D: c. 550	P: c. 715-687	P: c. 715-687
P: c.500-450	D: 650-623	P: c. 400 (late 5 th cent.)	D: c. 622	D: c. 550
Final Redaction Torah: c. 458			Torah: c. 458	Torah: c. 458

3. The dawning of an understanding of covenant in divine intervention

The understanding of a relationship between God and humanity, or a covenant, was not spontaneous. As indicated in Chart Three, the Evolution of Systematic Religion, inserted below and expanded as Appendix C, there is now evidence of religious consciousness from c. 17,000 BCE among the Indigenous people of Australia,⁹⁷ and the earliest indication of an awareness of a covenantal relationship between humans and God was among the same people, c. 4,000 BCE, long before the rise of the Abrahamic belief system.⁹⁸ Aboriginal Dreaming indicates that humans were obliged to a superior being to care for their environment and if they refused, or failed, they had to expect a penalty of some kind.

⁹⁷ Michaelsen. Australian Shamanism.

⁹⁸ Tacon. Arnhem Rock Art.

Current belief concerning people on the northern land mass is that shaman were universally present from about the eighth millennium BCE.⁹⁹ Their influence was dependent on the belief that they could invoke some form of supernatural intervention, and early Mesopotamian mythology contains allusions to such occurrences, confirming the presence of shaman in the region. This indicates that an elementary concept of an external divine authority and divine intervention in the affairs of humanity were probably recognized very soon after the close of the most recent cyclical glacial era (c. 10,000 BCE) when Neolithic humans began to spread from South West Asia into Mesopotamian. The region was prone to periodic extensive flooding and a number of Mesopotamia's myths refer to floods that swept through its valleys. It is therefore reasonable to expect that if belief in any form of covenant, as an extension of belief in supernatural intervention and involving both favour and punishment, was part of the culture at the time of such floods it would be reflected in its mythology.

There are no references to a covenant in the Mesopotamian flood heritage or mythology, although the first book of the Tanakh, Genesis, includes a story of such a flood and a covenant made by God with humanity through a person named Noah in the earliest phase of human history as it was understood at the time of editing the Torah. (Genesis 9 and 10) There are no further references in the Tanakh to the concept of covenant involving a direct relationship between one or more persons and God, a reciprocal promise or undertaking, an obligation and a penal clause or provision for judgement, until the Abrahamic era.

On the basis of Biblical textual analysis it is now known that although the reference to a covenant between God and a figure referred to as Noah is placed chronologically prior to the Abrahamic Era it was not composed until the turn of the 8th/7th centuries BCE, between eleven and thirteen centuries after Abraham. It was added to the documents of ancient Israel as part of the Priestly "P" source material and it does not occur in any of the J or E sources composed in the tenth or the eighth centuries. However, the earliest tablets with texts of the Babylonian Atrahasis Epic that present the flood story in a context comparable to Genesis have been dated c. 1650 BCE. According to Frymer-Kensky,¹⁰⁰ this is evidence

99 Daniel Rogers, "The Contingencies of State Formation in Eastern Inner Asia," *Asian Perspectives: the Journal of Archaeology for Asia and the Pacific / University of Hawaii Press* 46, no. 2 (2007).

Jonathan Z. Smith, "HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion," in *HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion*, ed. Jonathan Z. Smith and William Scott Green (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), 977-9.

100 Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "What the Babylonian Flood Stories Can and Cannot Teach Us About the Genesis Flood," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 4, no. 4 (1978).

that it was composed not later than the beginning of the second millennium BCE, and therefore prior to the Abrahamic era. Therefore, because references to successive covenants from Abraham and his sons to Moses at Sinai occur in the J and E sources two conclusions can be drawn.

First: Abraham, his successors and the early Israelites almost certainly knew of Babylonian flood myths but had not developed a notion of universal covenant through Noah, and a new world order was not part of ancient Israel's oral tradition and played no part in Jewish understanding during that period. Second: the Universal Covenant was added by authors who adapted early epics to accommodate or to give substance and continuity to the Hebrew community's evolving understanding of humanity's relations with God and the development of covenant theology at the time that Hebrew Yahwists were thrust into direct contact with the traditions of other communities. Acknowledging mankind's sinfulness, they substituted God's decision to deliver a set of laws for human conduct to the remnant population in place of the notion of destructive over population that was the focus of the Atrahasis Epic.¹⁰¹

This draws attention to the origins of Yahwism, the faith of Ancient Israel and, subsequently, Judaism. It has been widely assumed that Yahwism, as the basis for the subsequent beliefs, evolved spontaneously in a religious vacuum, but that is certainly not the case. Two Sumerian codes of ethics (the Ur-Nammu and Lipit-Ishtar) and one Akkadian code (the Bilalama) had been introduced to Ur prior to the migration, (the Ur-Nammu code possibly 300-400 years earlier). The Amorite Hammurabi Code was introduced at the time of the invasion, at the beginning of the 18th cent. BCE. In addition, Aryan Hurrians from Iran invaded the region during the 18th cent. BCE, and on the basis of the names of the gods worshipped by the Hurrians, it is assumed that the 18th cent. invaders brought with them the beliefs and practices of Vedic Aryans from India.¹⁰² Thus Abraham did not grow up and migrate – nor did the evolution of Israel's religious thought begin – in religious isolation.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*, First ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996; reprint, 2004). Flood notes that the origins of Hinduism lie in two civilisations: the Indus Valley civilisation which dates from the Neolithic period (7000 – 6000 BCE) but flourished from 2500 – 1500 BCE, and the Aryan culture which developed during the second millennium BCE and was influential for the next 2000 years. He also notes that while some authors date the composition of the sacred RgVeda Samhita (the earliest and most important of the Hindu texts) from a much earlier period a “more sober chronology” of 1500 – 1200 BCE is proposed by Max Müller. Because he favours that range I have used it in chart 3.

4. The Biblical starting point: creation, Adam and Eve

When Jewish religious leaders sought to bring system or order into their community's recognized writings following the Babylonian Exile they placed the stories of the Creation and Adam and Eve ahead of the history of Israel. It is apparent that their purpose was to draw attention to the need to acknowledge and respond to an external and divine authority, superior to themselves, who they believed had influenced their circumstances and their conduct, and to give appropriate priority to that belief. It also provided a logical sequence in which to illustrate the way their community had responded to the demands of religious belief, its special relationship with the divine authority, and a means by which to introduce the concepts of right and wrong, and covenant, through the legend of Adam and Eve.

There are two versions of the Creation myth in Genesis. The first version, (Gen. 1:1-2:4), with which the entire Bible opens, is a very precise composition from the P Source material. It sets out the Hebrew understanding of the sequence of Creation, was probably compiled in either the late 8th or early 7th centuries, and was inserted in its present sequence at the turn of the fifth/fourth centuries for the reason already stated.

The second version, (Gen. 2:2-4:26) a portion of J source material which was among the earliest compilations, dated to the 10th cent., is placed next in Gen. 2, 3 and 4. It is more extensive, sets out the legend of the Garden of Eden, deals with several basic issues and recognizes that all necessities for human life are provided in advance of the need by divine authority. The capacity to act with honesty or dishonesty, to understand right from wrong (wisdom), and to understand justice and punishment was developed as a consequence of human interaction and experience. There are norms of conduct for human interaction and the use of available resources that lead to stable and harmonious relations, or personal and communal fulfilment, and freedom is conditional upon obligation and responsibility. These matters were recognized as a result of human interaction and perverse conduct, and the experience of using and misusing available resources. These outcomes indicated a common external, absolute and divine source for both the provision of all that humanity needed, and the demonstration of norms for human conduct. The expansion of the human population through sexual reproduction and progressive settlement in both urban and nonurban areas is a natural process that should be governed by the norms recognized within this J source material.

The J strand of the Creation legend is complemented by the introductory P strand in Gen. 1, the opening four verses of Gen. 2 (which serve to provide a link with the J strand), and Gen. 5, in which the myth of Adam and Eve is extended with a genealogy purporting to link the Creation, the flood events and human progress.¹⁰³ The effect of this construction is to enhance the inspired Hebrew perception of a number of matters.

First, that humanity exists by divine authority and is subject to divine authority; Second, humans are provided with the capacity to develop or acquire skills, to utilize and to harness (subdue or conquer) all other components of Creation; third, humans did not assume that capacity or authority independently or spontaneously; fourth, humans are also provided with the capacity to reason and therefore to progressively recognize and to comprehend their delegated or subordinate authority and responsibility to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships and to act in a manner consistent with the sustainability of the human environment; and fifth, the manner in which those capacities are utilized or exploited is always subject to divine intervention, judgement and discipline.

Although it is clear from those passages that gratitude and obedience are due to the divine authority, the concepts of homage, or worship, and covenant were not introduced until the account of the great flood legend. The editors and redactors introduced those matters in logical sequence, immediately following the creation stories.

5. The concept of covenant: the flood, Noah and the Universal Covenant

The account of the flood opens with an acknowledgement of divine judgement and punishment for human sin, wilfulness and corruption. "When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, ... (and) ... The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and ... the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and ... said, 'I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.' (Gen. 6:1,5-7) That portion parallels the thrust of the Atrahasis version of the flood story, except for the vital distinction that "The Lord" (singular) is substituted for the multiplicity of gods. The biblical account then indicates

¹⁰³ Hyatt, "Israel's Story." says it is possible that the J strand originally included a version of the story of the creation of the universe but, if it did, the P strand was substituted for that material, and no evidence of it remains. If that is the case, it is a further indication that Hebrew thinking and understanding had evolved during that early phase of the preparation of the Hebrew scripture.

that Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord; that the Lord decided that he and his family should live to repopulate the earth, saying "... I will establish my covenant with you," and instructed Noah to construct an ark and take selected people, animals and birds on board. He did so, survived the flood, and when the flood receded he built an altar to the Lord and offered burnt offerings in an apparent act of gratitude or homage. The distinction is not clear from the text, but that action by Noah is then represented as prompting the Lord to pronounce the Universal Covenant and a blessing on Noah and his sons.

That the Hebrews had developed an understanding and acceptance of the concept of an overriding and all-encompassing covenant with humanity, introduced or implied in the legend of Adam and Eve, is here made definite and absolute in the legend of Noah with the Lord's promise coupled with an undertaking required of Noah and his successors (the whole of humanity), and punishment for transgression.

The promise was: to never again curse the ground because of man; to maintain seedtime and harvest, day and night "while the earth remains"; to enable humanity "to be fruitful and multiply (and) to bring forth abundantly on the earth and multiply in it"; and to provide food for all humanity. The obligation or undertaking required of Noah and humanity included: refraining from eating flesh with the blood of life, and not taking the life of another person. The punishment: a "reckoning" for every beast, and the life of a man for every man's brother. God and God alone will be the judge and will demand an account from every beast and from man. That statement of covenant places "beasts" together with man as worthy of consideration. It indicates that man cannot avoid judgement by seeking to conceal facts, (they will be disclosed by his fellows), and that any punishment that is a consequence of divine judgement will *not* be a matter of God waving a divine wand. It will be reaction and interaction of those sinned against. "Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person's blood be shed; for in his own image God made humankind." (Genesis 9)

Those passages leave no doubt that the covenant into which God entered was not a matter of negotiations or agreement, and provide a very logical prelude to the delivery of the Law which was to follow. Noah was not consulted or given any option. The covenant was imposed and could not be debated, questioned, denied or rejected. It was simply to be acknowledged. It was all encompassing, not being restricted to either the people of any existing ethnic or religious community (there were no others because they had all been

eliminated by the Flood) or that might be established at some future date. There was a direct line of communication between God and all living creatures, both human and nonhuman. There were to be no intermediaries, only messengers. The covenant was forever – or for whatever period God might determine at God's sole discretion as the term of existence of humanity and all Creation.

The reference to water and a flood as a mechanism for retributive or penal destruction in this legendary explanation of the origins of the Universal or Noahide Covenant is purely illustrative. It is not directly comparable with either of two other classical Biblical episodes in the illustration of the revelation of the nature of covenant: the destruction of Sodom and Gomorra, and the destruction of an Egyptian army in the deliverance of the Hebrew people. These episodes occurred during the early phase of Hebrew history, and while there is much dispute about their historicity and the extent to which religious teaching and myth may be intertwined,¹⁰⁴ and alternative scenarios are offered for their siting, dating and circumstances, there is archaeological evidence that is offered to support each of them.¹⁰⁵

The escape of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt in the Exodus, which serve to illustrate both the protective and penal attributes of covenantal relationships, is a special case. The occurrence of disease and deaths by supernatural intervention, and a natural disaster involving a tidal wave-type flood, possibly associated with a volcanic eruption, is accepted as a matter of historical fact by scholars of all three faiths even though the precise circumstances and dating cannot be verified and are widely disputed.¹⁰⁶

104 Andrew L. Slayman, "Sodom and Gomorrah Update," *Archaeology* Vol. 49 no. No. 4, July/August 1996 (1996). Responses were mixed when Graham Harris and Tony Beardow argued in the Quarterly Journal of Engineering Geology that the two cities may have been swallowed when land near the Dead Sea literally liquefied in an earthquake, ca. 1900 B.C.

"This is Noah's Ark stuff," says ARCHAEOLOGY Contributing Editor Neil Asher Silberman. "The real challenge for biblical archaeologists today is not to search for long-lost cities, but to understand why the ancient Israelites formulated these powerful myths."

105 Jessica Cecil, "The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah," BBC, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/cultures/sodom_gomorrah_01.shtml.

Michael S. Sanders, "Sodom and Gomorrah Found? Satellite Spots Submerged Sodom & Gomorrah?," Biblical Mysteries - Gateway Films, <http://www.biblemysteries.com/library/satellite.htm>.

106 Doug Petrovich, "Amenhotep II and the Historicity of the Exodus Pharaoh," Associates for Biblical Research, <http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/02/04/Amenhotep-II-and-the-Historicity-of-the-Exodus-Pharaoh.aspx>.

Kathryn Eriksson, "Thera: Redating the Exodus (Provisional)," in *Australian Institute of Archaeology 2006 Petrie Oration* (LaTrobe University Melbourne 2006).

Each of those situations illustrate a phase in the evolution of covenantal understanding, or revelation of the nature of divine intervention through natural disasters either to destroy people whose conduct was contrary to divine will or to save people whose actions have been consistent with divine will or who have been obligated to a particular role. However there is no evidence that the authors of those passages intended to imply that a natural disaster is necessarily, or is always, divine retribution for evil deeds, and any such suggestion is explicitly rejected by the writer and excluded from this thesis.¹⁰⁷ The primary mechanism for the application of a punishment or retribution for a breach of covenant is a reaction by a wronged or disadvantaged party against the actions of the party that perpetrated the wrong. However the *possibility* of a natural disaster as an aspect of a subsequent act of divine retribution cannot be discounted. To reject it is tantamount to denying the validity of the Torah and the legitimacy of the three faiths that exist as a consequence of its delivery.

Thus, while natural disasters in general cannot be regarded as acts of divine retributive intervention, Biblical evidence is that divine intervention is not limited to one mechanism or another; it is reasonable to acknowledge that the Universal Covenant is a reality, and that divine intervention in one manner or another will be applied to avoid the total destruction of humanity or a segment of Creation (such as the Earth) through human agency or action. People may be involved either in policies and events that threaten total human destruction, or in processes to prevent total destruction and to administer justice and retribution. However, on the basis of what is known of Hominid Evolution (Chart Two), if the total or near-total elimination of *Homo sapiens-sapiens* were to occur either through human megalomania or through divine retributive intervention, a successor species could evolve during a much shorter period than is represented by the exaggerated hairline used to illustrate the presence of humanity in Chart One, (Humanity in Universal History).

6. Compilation, redaction and historical distortion

There was no person “Noah” to experience a flood in the manner of the Biblical story, to acknowledge the imposition of a covenant on behalf of all humanity, or to give his name to

¹⁰⁷ In the case of a penalty under Aboriginal Dreaming, (p. 69), the penalty may have been experienced as a natural disaster, but it would be a consequence of the person’s or a community’s own actions, such as erosion resulting in flooding or loss of water or food supplies as a result of unwise vegetation destruction. In the modern era, as a result of the population explosion illustrated in Chart 4, and the greater scale of human environmental intervention, the consequences of such actions, whether simply illogical or illegal, may be far more devastating and traumatic.

the Noahide Covenant. As discussed above, the account of the Flood in Genesis is based on myths which originated in a region that was prone to dramatic floods in an era long before the Abrahamic era, the establishment of the Jewish nation, and the evolution of Judaism. There were ritual myths and origin myths, but there was no Babylonian covenant myth for the composers of the P source texts to adopt.¹⁰⁸

It must therefore be concluded that the Hebrew writers composed the Covenant of the New World Order on the basis of the understanding of the Divine (Yahweh or G-d) and the understanding of humanity's relationship with the Divine which had evolved as a consequence of their community's experience of, and exposure to, divine intervention from the time of Abraham to the time of the Babylonian Exile. That experience and that exposure were to be an illustration and a pattern around which the whole of humanity would be enabled to develop or accept an understanding of its relationship with the Divine and with all of Creation. They were, therefore, instruments of Divine intervention.

Their use of pre-existing Babylonian myths, coupled with others that related to the actual construction of towers for religious purposes under regimes that preceded Abraham, is confirmation that the writers who composed both the J and P source texts acknowledged the existence and the influence of their predecessors on the evolution of Jewish understanding. They openly used those myths to illustrate their own evolving theology, and in 200 BCE Jewish writers elaborated or embellished the story of the Tower of Babel as it appeared in Gen. 11 to say that the builders were giants who survived the Flood and who meant to ascend to heaven via the tower. A version of this Midrash with Hellenistic overtones was later incorporated into rabbinic literature.¹⁰⁹

However, when the J, E, D and P source materials were integrated during the fifth/fourth centuries BCE to illustrate the matters noted above, there was no reference to the influence of either prior or contemporary religious understandings in the evolution of the religion of the First Temple period, or the sequence of its writings. This imputes a history to that phase of religious evolution much longer than the reality by introducing totally implausible genealogies from the time of Creation to the Flood and then from the Flood to Abraham.

108 S. H. Hooke, *Babylonian and Assyrian Religion*. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963).

109 Judah Gribetz, Edward L. Greenstein, and Regina Stein, *The Timetables of Jewish History*, First Touchstone ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 41.

In plain reading terms, the P source material in Genesis 5 linked to the J source material in Genesis 1 and 4, notably Gen. 4:25-26, purports to, but does not, establish a genealogy for the early generations of the Jewish community, or even for a community from which the Jewish community was founded. Neither does it establish that recognition of The Lord God occurred at such an elementary stage in humanity's communal development and the evolution of religious understanding. These passages were intended to complement or supplement the JED source materials and to provide continuity and logic in their total presentation for the community for which they were written, and the writers could not foresee that they would become a cause of confusion and dispute in a later era after the Yahwist stream had become further divided circumstantially.

They were, as Nahum Sarna suggests, illustrating "the nature of the one God who is Creator and supreme sovereign of the world and whose will is absolute," and, in the same narrative, constructing "the biblical polemic against paganism" and the notion of a hierarchy of gods which were the thrust of the Babylonian and Sumerian myths then in circulation¹¹⁰, and which they built on to introduce the concepts and beliefs which flow progressively through the biblical literature.¹¹¹ Sarna notes that the Pentateuch is not a unitary work, that its source fragmentation is a consequence of processes for selection and rejection of texts that redactors used in composing the sources and we cannot know whether they omitted earlier texts that may have contained the same ideas and understandings as the extant sources. Similarly, there is no record of tests that biblical editors applied at later stages in canonizing the Tanakh, and it is not possible to know whether the assessed dates of sources indicate the earliest time at which those understandings had been reached. The composers and redactors were using all the resources available to them for what they saw as a divinely imposed purpose.

Schiffman¹¹² sees the purpose of Genesis and the beginning of Exodus as to set out a variety of theological concepts and views of humanity's relationships with God and the

110 Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis (The Heritage of Biblical Israel)* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), p. 3. Sarna believes the *Enuma Elish*, tablets of which were discovered in the ruins of Ashurbanipal's library in Nineveh, dated to the 7th cent. BCE and published in the 1870s CE, is the most important because it is thought to have been composed not later than the 11th cent. and possibly as early as the 18th cent. BCE, and is presumed to have been current during the Exile.

111 However, some Jewish scholars were trapped into literalist plain reading of the biblical genealogies as well as Christians. In 150 CE the Jewish chronology, *Seder Olam Rabbah*, placed the Exodus at 2,448 years after creation and 500 years after the birth of Abraham. Gribetz, Greenstein, and Stein, *Timetables*.

112 Lawrence H. Schiffman, "The Biblical Heritage," in *From Text to Tradition* (Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, 1991).

world. These, he says, include the evolution of civilization from hunter-gatherer to agriculture and crafts stages, the oneness of humanity through common descent, and the dangers of urbanization and decline in moral standards, which became the basis of Judaism. Sarna, Schiffman and Frymer-Kensky¹¹³ each insist that finite genealogies were not used to describe the periods from human evolution to the flood, and from the flood to Abraham, in order to delineate the age of the earth in the manner of Archbishop Usher¹¹⁴ and other 17th cent. scholars.

A number of creation timelines and genealogies were known at the time the biblical composers set to work, and although their purpose is not clear, they relate to king lists beginning with mythical figures in the antediluvian era, and convey a sense of prevailing world views and continuity in authority from either creation or the origins of particular cultures to their time of composition. The Isin list of Mesopotamian Dynasties has been dated c. 2000 to 1800 BCE. Another list was prepared by Berossus, a Hellenistic Babylonian priest of Marduk (the patron deity of the city of Babylon) c. 290 BCE. Both lists have ten antediluvian monarchs, a number thought to have been used in other lists also, and being suggestive of a systematic pattern in human affairs leading to climactic events or leadership. Very soon scholars would also have an additional classical timeline to consider.¹¹⁵

However, as Sarna suggests, the Hebrew writers had sound reasons to adopt that system to express the fundamental biblical teaching that history is not a series of haphazard incidents. It illustrates a progressive and meaningful pattern of events under the perpetual scrutiny of God. The revelation of covenants to Noah and Abraham were climactic events that showed their predecessors to be in constant fellowship with God, that all humanity is traceable to common ancestry, and that the divine injunction to be fertile and increase is being fulfilled.¹¹⁶ Schiffman notes that the Genesis patriarchal list relates to progressive selection which led, eventually, to Israel's role as the recipient of the revelation of the Torah, and that the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants illustrate the

113 Frymer-Kensky, "Babylonian Flood."

114 James Ussher, *The Annals of the World*, trans. Not identified, Early translation from Latin ed. (London: E. Tyler for F. Crook and G. Bedell, 1658).

115 Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*. pp. 109-113. During the First Temple Period, the brahmanical tradition of Vedic ritual. During the Second Temple Period, the great Hindu Epics. During the 3rd and 4th centuries CE the Epics and Purāna, complemented with a complex timeline of *Yuga* ages to illustrate the vastness of the Hindu concept of time since creation.

116 Sarna, *Understanding Genesis (The Heritage of Biblical Israel)*.

development of the monotheistic ideas of early Israelite religion. However he also proposes that “in each new generation, an unsuitable son – Ishmael, Esau – finds himself excluded from the line which eventually becomes Israel.”¹¹⁷ That proposition is not consistent with the assessment in Section 9.

Frymer-Kensky also proposes that the Biblical authors have adapted Babylonian epics to introduce and illuminate fundamental Israelite ideas, but of the epics known from that period he proposes that they adapted the Atrahasis Epic rather than the *Enuma Elish*. He notes especially that law and the sanctity of human life are the prerequisites of human existence; that the Biblical flood was brought to cleanse the earth of its blood guilt and its affront to the sanctity of human life; that God gave Noah and his sons basic laws intended to prevent future pollution of the earth and to offset or supersede the earlier myths, and that the concept of covenant was introduced in Genesis.¹¹⁸

It is clear from J source material, Gen. 12:1-9, that Abraham responded to the divine command to leave his country and his father’s house to go to another land without seeking to know the identity or the name of the divine authority from whom he received the command. According to Gen. 12:6-8, he acknowledged an identity for God only when confronted by Divine Authority at the Oak of Moreh.

However this is in contrast to the first reference to the divine authority, in the third person, in the reference to the Lord attributed to Eve in the statement: “Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, ‘I have produced a man with the help of the Lord.’” (Gen. 4:1) Another reference occurs at the end of this mythical J source passage, Gen. 4:26, where it is said of the grandson born to Adam and Eve’s third son: “To Seth also a son was born, and he named him Enosh. At that time people began to invoke the name of the Lord.” It is therefore reasonable to assume that the compiler used those expressions to acknowledge involvement and intervention by God, the external, absolute and divine source of influence from the moment, and in the act of, creation.

However that usage gives the impression that The Lord God had been recognized by name continuously from the point of Creation and had been understood throughout that period in

¹¹⁷ Schiffman, "Heritage."

¹¹⁸ Frymer-Kensky used the expression that God “offered” Noah and his sons a covenantal promise not to again bring a flood to destroy the world, but as noted above (p. 94) this is not consistent with the command term “shall” which is used consistently in Genesis 4 to indicate that the covenant was imposed by God and not offered or negotiated, notably Gen. 4:18 and 22. (Judaic Press English translation)

the context of absolute divine authority. That approach to compilation and translation, using or substituting a term out of the expected context, contributes to difficulty for people not accustomed to it in understanding the text and, especially in this case, to reconciling the evolutionary nature of Creation, the validity of the biblical text, and the progressive recognition of both the absolute authority of God and the concept of covenant.

As already noted, the J source material was composed first, but even that was not composed until after the young Jewish community had already been exposed to religions, philosophy and technological developments in Egypt, had experienced the Exodus, and had acknowledged the Covenant of Sinai. When the P source material was composed at the turn of the 8th / 7th centuries the writers had been exposed to the conquest of Samaria, the fall of the kingdom of Israel (722), Samaria's depopulation by deportation, and the assimilation of its remnant people into Assyrian culture by re-population with Assyrians. The exiles had come directly under the influence of the religions and mythology of Babylon – and experienced the destructive struggles between Assyria and Babylon – while in Judah King Hezekiah was defending Jerusalem under siege and implementing religious and political reforms guided by Isaiah. It is reasonable to conclude that this accounts for the tighter structure of the P strand of the Creation story, with very specific steps in Creation set out in contrast to the more general situations dealt with in the J source material. Subsequently the Hammurabi Code was inserted into the Pentateuch as Exodus 20:23 –23:33 at the same time that redactors may have been integrating the JED sources of history, c. 550 BCE, to enhance the presentation of the Hebrew law that had been in use prior to that time.¹¹⁹

The Hebrew writers of both the J source material in the 10th cent. and P source material in the 8th / 7th centuries BCE were clearly concerned with the fundamental issues of Creation, God's intention for humanity, and continuity in human affairs. They sought to provide a base of logic for the progressive evolution of Jewish belief in the absolute authority of Yahweh and the pattern of teaching for personal and community relationships and conduct that was developed in the following books of the Pentateuch. The genealogies offered in both the J and P source material are intended to illustrate continuity in human affairs from Creation to the establishment of the Jewish community as a consequence of the divine commands to Abraham and the evolution of early Israelite religion and, subsequently,

119 John van Seters, *A Law Book for the Diaspora*, First ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). pp. 125-27, 172-75.

Judaism. However these stories refer to periods well before Abraham, and therefore, by composing the material as we have it, their authors have acknowledged *either* prior recognition of a supreme divine authority that predated that evolutionary period, *or* that parallel religious developments during the formative era of Israelite religious belief influenced its evolution.

In due course the progressive editing of the Hebrew historical texts in this manner, especially placing of the legend of Adam and Eve ahead of the stories of Abraham, his successors and the Mosaic Law, and in using incredible extended life spans to illustrate conceptual periods without intending to illustrate actual genealogy, as discussed above, proved to be a major distraction. The imputation of historical continuity from Creation to the divine command to Abraham was strengthened when redactors integrated traditions from all four sources to produce the Pentateuch in near-final form only a generation or two after the incorporation of the Creation and Flood stories, in the 4th cent. BCE.¹²⁰ This had major consequences following a series of subsequent developments. First, during the split of the Judaic stream into two parallel partner streams: the continuing stream of Judaism, and Christianity. Second, in the wake of publication of the Vulgate translation of the Bible in the 4th century CE. Third, when two streams became three with the establishment of Islam. Fourth, at the time when tension between their communities led to conflict over the proposition of Biblical inerrancy following the publication of the King James Strand in the 17th cent. CE.

Human progress was retarded when the church challenged scientific discoveries and philosophical propositions on the basis of its claim to unquestionable knowledge and absolute authority to rule on all things by divine delegation or deputation.¹²¹ The leaders of the embryonic church and the Gospel writers were confused, and with incredible insistence on Biblical inerrancy, the church became embroiled in controversy whenever a scientific or archaeological discovery challenged its interpretation of Creation, the universe, human history, evolution or, even more so, the basis of its teaching authority.

Confusion or disagreement about the historicity of the Biblical Creation stories aggravated divisions within the Jewish community as well as causing problems for the church. This is

¹²⁰ Hyatt, "Israel's Story," 1084.

¹²¹ J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, eds., *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, Third ed. (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1978), 51-54.

illustrated by the different approaches that scholars and teachers take to the festival of the New Year (or Head of the Year) Rosh Ha-Shana, also known as Yom Ha-Din, Judgment Day¹²² Inconsistencies in the Hebrew text also contributed to tension after the division of Judaism gave rise to Christianity and subsequently Islam. It is therefore necessary to relate the Hebrew text to certain Qur'anic texts in this chapter before considering the ministry of the Prophet Muhammad, the dictation of the Qur'an and the establishment of Islam in sequence in chapters four and five.

7. Abraham's origins and response: precursor to a covenant

The Biblical account of the initial communications between God and Abraham, including the command to leave Haran and found a new nation, does not indicate the circumstances of those communications except that the first is reported as a spoken command, "And the Lord said to Abram ..." (Gen. 12:1 JP), to which there was no spoken response, and Abraham simply acted upon it. The second is reported as visionary, and Abraham is again reported as taking action in response, although there was no command to do so. It was after the family's arrival at Moreh that 'the Lord appeared to Abram, and He said, "To your seed I will give this land," and there he built an altar to the Lord, Who had appeared to him.' (Gen.12:7 JP)

Those communications, either singly or together, did not constitute a covenant. They did not involve the essential components of a promise, an obligation and a penal clause, either explicit or implied, in the event that the obligation was not honoured. There was a promise associated with a command, but there was no penal clause: only the implication that the promise might not be fulfilled if the command was not acted upon. What prompted the initial communication is not recorded in the formal Hebrew texts, but some post Biblical Jewish literature ascribes Abraham's recognition of an external power to a childhood intuition long before his father's decision to migrate to Canaan and his own subsequent experience of THE LORD's self-revelation.¹²³ The command to leave Haran was therefore only a precursor to a covenant, and it cannot be assumed from the Hebrew texts that a childhood experience of Abraham's, or any similar experience of his father, influenced his

122 Ronald L. Eisenberg, *The J P S Guide to Jewish Traditions* (Jewish Publication Society, 2004); *ibid.*

123 Barnavi and Charbit, *Jewish History Atlas*, 2. Abraham.

Tracey R. Rich, "The Patriarchs and the Origins of Judaism," in *Judaism 101*, ed. Tracey R. Rich (JewFAQ.org, 2010).

father's decision in a way that it could be taken as the point of initiation of the Jewish community.

The Biblical text indicates a gap of many years after God's initial communication with Abraham before the next partial pronouncement of the covenant. That occurred only after he had obeyed the first command and he, his family and his entourage had been subjected to a range of circumstances and testing experiences, including years of famine, migration to the Negeb, expulsion when Abraham compromised his wife, and family disputes until, in difficult circumstances, Abraham parted company from Lot, giving him the choice of the best land, and was, in effect, rewarded by God for his action.. '...all the land that you see I will give to you and to your seed to eternity. And I will make your seed like the dust of the earth ...' (Gen. 13:15-16 Judaic Press) The complete covenant was still to be revealed, invoked and reinforced in several stages. It is against all of those experiences that it must be considered.

8. The Abrahamic Covenant

Some time after the family separation Abraham invoked the name of THE LORD in declining a corrupt offer of land in return for allowing the enslavement of Lot and his family by the king of Sodom, and received an assurance from God of protection and great reward, ("Fear not, Abram; I am your Shield; your reward is exceedingly great ...I am the Lord, Who brought you forth from Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to inherit it." Gen 15:1,7 JP). Then, having prepared a sacrifice as God instructed, Abraham received a dramatic promise that his descendants ("the one who will spring from your innards ... your seed," Gen 15:4,13 JP) would inherit the region.

Being conditional upon him, an aged childless leader, having a son and heir, that promise appeared unfulfillable, and Abraham was traumatized upon having a vision in which THE LORD told him his descendants would be exiled as strangers in a land that is not theirs, and they would be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years; that the fourth generation would return with great possessions, and judgement would *also* be passed on the nation that enslaved them because its wickedness had not ended. (Gen 15:13-16 JP)

Finally, God delineated the land commitment that "To your seed I have given this land, from the river of Egypt until the great river, the Euphrates river" (Gen. 15:18 JP); confirmed the divine commitment; and added the obligation which Abraham and his

descendants were to uphold – ‘walk before Me and be perfect ... keep My covenant, you and your seed after you throughout their generations ... circumcise the flesh of your foreskin ... and at the age of eight days, every male shall be circumcised to you throughout your generations, one that is born in the house, or one that is purchased with money, from any foreigner, who is not of your seed.’ (Gen. 17:1.4.9.11.12 JP) However God also indicated that rejection of the covenant, or failure to honour it, would attract the penalty of rejection and exclusion from the benefits of the covenant, telling Abraham that “an uncircumcised male, who will not circumcise the flesh of his foreskin -that soul will be cut off from its people; he has broken My covenant.” (Gen. 17:14 JP)

That was the point at which the communication between God and Abraham took on the full dimensions of a covenant.¹²⁴ There was an *obligation* on Abraham and his descendants to worship God (the initiating party) and to maintain a level of conduct acceptable to God. There was a *commitment by God* to Abraham and his descendants (the subject party or respondent) that they were entitled to occupy a region nominated by God, and that commitment was *subject to judgement* by God that the conduct of the responding party was worthy of it, with a *penalty clause* to be activated in the event that the obligation was not honoured.

The commitment by God became the trigger for a chain of traumatic events of far-reaching consequences and significance. It prompted:

- a proposal by Abraham’s wife that he should father a child through her slave-girl so that God’s promise could be fulfilled (Gen. 16:1-2)
- coercion of the slave-girl to become a surrogate mother (Gen. 16: 3-4)
- a consequent family feud and expulsion of the slave-girl (Gen. 16:5-6)
- God’s intervention, the return of the slave-girl, and the birth of Abraham’s first son, Ishmael (Gen. 17:7-14)
- Abraham’s assumption that the divine promise of the growth of the tribe into a great nation would be fulfilled as a matter of course (Gen. 15:6)

As noted in Chapter One, the fact of the penalty clause was confirmed by God at Sinai in telling Moses: “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians ... now, if you obey Me and

¹²⁴ Thomas Edward McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985).

Freedman, "Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: The Covenant Theme." p. 169.

keep My covenant, you shall be to Me a treasure out of all peoples ... These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel." (Ex. 19:4-6 JP) However, at the Oak of Mamre the pattern of conduct required by God was not specified. The fact that judgement and penalties would be imposed in the event of conduct that was unacceptable to God implied that specific rules, codes of conduct or laws should not be necessary and that human conscience, intelligence and capacity to determine right from wrong should be adequate to ensure that the party under covenant acted appropriately.

It was not until Ishmael was thirteen years of age that God again invoked the Abrahamic Covenant and imposed specific provisions. (Gen. 17:1-22)

1. God's promise and undertaking: to increase Abraham's family greatly and to make him the father of a multitude of nations of which his issue would be kings; to bless his wife with a son born to him to give his descendants the whole land of Canaan to own in perpetuity, and to maintain the covenant with his descendants generation after generation through the son to be born to his wife - in perpetuity - and to bless Ishmael, making him the fruitful father of a great nation of twelve princes.
2. Abraham's obligations: to accept name changes for himself (from Abram) and for his wife (from Sarai to Sarah), and to name their future son Isaac; to circumcise himself and all members of his household, and to ensure that all male children whether natural born or enslaved were circumcised at the age of eight days, generation after generation, as a bodily mark and sign of the covenant; to maintain the covenant personally through recognition and worship of THE LORD, and to ensure that his descendants did likewise generation after generation, in perpetuity.
3. A penal clause. The nature and parameters of God's judgement were not specified, nor the terms of the penal clause. It is implied that judgement would be exercised and punishments imposed on Abraham's household and successors in the use of the expression: "I will pass judgement *also* on the nation that enslaves them." The word "also" would have been superfluous if judgement was not to be imposed on Abraham's household, and the context establishes that exile and enslavement were to be imposed as punishment for breaches of the Covenant that, again by implication, included abuse and oppression of neighbours. The uniqueness, also the sole and absolute authority of God are apparent in God's demand for recognition, allegiance, worship and obedience

from Abraham, his relatives and his household, but to this point there is nothing to indicate that other forms of worship should be suppressed. That was still to come.

In imposing a Covenant on Abraham, God made it clear that judgement on his descendants would be based on their adherence or non-adherence to the Covenant, but that God would exercise comparable authority to judge other communities on the basis of their wickedness, meaning abuse or oppression of their neighbours, and not on the basis of their worship. The exclusive application of the worship provisions of God's relationship with humanity at that stage is established by the words: "With him (Isaac) I will establish my Covenant, a Covenant in perpetuity, to be his God and the God of his descendants after him." (Gen. 17:19) That in no way qualifies or contradicts either the direct relationship between God and all humanity, or God's love, mercy and justice for all humanity – free of any exclusivity – established by the Creation stories, (especially as interpreted in the Qur'an; S2:21-28; S79:27-41; S39:5-6; S55:1-45; S4:28,122; S62:6), or the Covenant with Noah, or the covenantal obligations that rested on the elder sibling, Ishmael, and on all of Abraham's other children whose births apparently spanned a considerable period.

9. Isaac and Ishmael: divided inheritance, anomalous records and conflict

In due course, after Isaac was born, weaned and was old enough to play with his older half-brother, Ishmael, the jealousy and feud between Sarah and Hagar that had been caused by Hagar's pregnancy, some 15 or 16 years earlier, again caused a crisis and deep division within the family when Sarah insisted on the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael. The Biblical record indicates that Abraham also fathered six sons by a second wife, Keturah, and additional unnumbered offspring by concubines. (Gen. 25:1-6) The sequence of the Biblical record, with the birth of the children to concubines and Abraham's second marriage placed after the report of Sarah's death at the age of 127 years, implies that there were no other offspring prior to the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael.

Whatever the reality, incomplete recording of the family's history, and inconsistency in the Hebrew records were to become of vital significance at a time and in a situation in the distant future that could not be anticipated or imagined when the half-brothers, Ishmael and Isaac, were growing up together or during the generations immediately following the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael. The significance did not become apparent until nearly four thousand years later. It is my assessment that the significance might not have become

apparent – ever – if Abraham’s successors had not divided into three streams. Even after the divisions it might have remained simply a matter of literary interest if relationships between the three streams of faith had been friendly, or at least on an even keel. The significance of the inconsistency in the Biblical records became apparent only progressively from the mid-19th cent. CE after Darwin’s research stimulated greater interest in Biblical textual research.

That increased research coincided with both a resurgence of Jewish self-confidence and institutional renewal, and increased oppression of Jews by the church and political and institutional bodies associated with it across Europe. Critical events, referred to in Chapter Six, the Fourth Epoch, included the disenfranchisement of Jews in Germany, a wave of massacres and pogroms across Russia, and an effort to eliminate all Jewish presence from the French army. That situation further undermined relations between Christians and Jews, stimulated latent desires among Europe’s Jews to find a homeland in which they could be free of such oppression, and prompted Theodore Herzl’s strenuous efforts in 1895, in the wake of the Dreyfus case, towards the establishment of such a homeland in Palestine.¹²⁵ Then – in quick succession – followed the establishment of the World Zionist Organization, 1897; the Balfour Declaration, 1917; the *Shoa*, 1941, the establishment of the State of Israel, 1948, and consequent disadvantage for the successors of Ishmael and other siblings of Isaac who had been expelled - reluctantly - by Abraham.

As a consequence, differing interpretations of the situation recorded in the sacred texts of three streams, the Hebrew Bible, the Christian Gospels and the Qur’an, have become a consideration in conflict that has brought the world to a state of crisis. (Chapter Six) The Qur’anic texts and the implications of differences between them and the Hebrew texts will be examined in Chapter Five.

The Biblical and Qur’anic texts are consistent in acknowledging Abraham’s reluctance to accept Sarah’s demand that Hagar and Ishmael be banished, and the assurance that God’s commitment that Ishmael would also lead a great nation was still valid, even though specific aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant would rest with Isaac’s line. However there are several anomalies in the Biblical record as well as significant differences between the

125 Jean-Denis Bredin, *The affair : the case of Alfred Dreyfus* trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (New York: G. Braziller, 1986). A great miscarriage of justice occurred in France when senior army officers colluded to have Captain Dreyfus falsely charged, court-martialled and publicly degraded to free the army of its only Jewish officer

canonical and non-canonical Jewish texts and the Qur'anic interpretation that raise questions as to the validity of the Genesis account of the banishment.

(God said to Abraham) ... in Isaac will be called your seed. But also the son of the handmaid I will make into a nation, because he is your seed." And Abraham arose early in the morning, and he took bread and a leather pouch of water, and he gave [them] to Hagar, he placed [them] on her shoulder, and the child, and he sent her away; and she went and wandered in the desert of Beer Sheba. And the water was depleted from the leather pouch, and she cast the child under one of the bushes. (Gen. 21:12-15 JP)

The implication that Abraham would either sentence them to die in the desert or leave them to find a family somewhere with whom they would be safe is hardly consistent with Abraham's demonstrated love for his firstborn son or the level of responsible conduct that one would expect under the Covenant he had accepted. Furthermore, the text does not make it clear whether Ishmael walked or was carried by his mother and the Jerusalem translation uses the expression that Abraham "put the child on her shoulder and sent her away." A mother would hardly take a strapping youth of 15 or 16 on her shoulders as she wandered off! On both grounds the story cannot be regarded as biographical or factual history and its significance is therefore the promise that God had repeated to Hagar, that her son would found a great nation in spite of not being given principal responsibility for the perpetuation of the Covenant.

The Biblical record does not have sufficient evidence to be certain about what expectations for the future the two main branches of Abraham's descendants held following his death. The uncertainty is compounded by the fact that in settling the disputes between them Esau (Isaac's elder son who had married a daughter of Ishmael) emigrated, leaving Jacob/Israel in control of Canaan, and merging, (in a regional sense) with the larger branch of the family to the east and south of Canaan. In addition, there are numerous accounts that indicate a continuing relationship between Abraham and Ishmael, and between Ishmael, Isaac and other members of the family during Abraham's later years.

The Book of Jubilees, Jewish Pseudepigrapha, notes that in the forty-second jubilee Abraham called Ishmael, Isaac, Keturah, and their sons, commanded them to observe the way of the Lord, to work righteousness, and to love their neighbours so as to be a blessing on the earth.¹²⁶ He told them all nations would bless their sons in his name. Then he gave

126 R. H. Charles, ed. *The Book of Jubilees in The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913; reprint, Scanned and Edited by Joshua Williams), Ch.20:1-13.

Ishmael, Keturah and their families gifts, sent them away, and gave everything else to Isaac. They went together and settled from Paran to Babylon, mingling with each other as Arabs, and Ishmaelites. That appears consistent with Gen. 28:6-9 which records that Esau, Isaac's disinherited elder son, having married outside the Hebrew clan the first time, had been instructed that he was not to do so again, and went to Ishmael to seek an additional wife and married his cousin, Mahalath, Ishmael's daughter. The passage in Genesis which relates the circumstances of Abraham's death, Genesis 25:7-10, notes that after breathing his last Abraham "was gathered to his people", and his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah opposite Mamre. These passages suggest continuing contact between the two wings of the family, but there are clear indications of continuing tension in the contrasting interpretations of the final verse of that passage, and complete rapprochement could hardly be expected in view of the circumstances of Ishmael's banishment.. While the NRSV rendering of Gen. 25:18 indicates that Ishmael "settled down alongside all his people," and the JP notes that "before all his brothers he dwelt," according to the Jerusalem translation "he (Ishmael) set himself to defy his brothers."

It is clear that when the writers of Israel's histories were prompted to begin their task – no less than two centuries after the events of Sinai and between 500 and one thousand years after the division in Abraham's family – there seemed little point in seeking to include the history of the much greater population that made up the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac's other siblings. However some Rabbinical literature of the 4th Cent. BCE, the scholar Josephus (writing in *Antiquities*), and an anonymous 12th cent. rabbi each discuss some aspects of the development of the Arab nation as descendants of Ishmael, and their influence, and in addition, about 440 CE, Sozomen took the matter further. According to Sozomen¹²⁷, the Saracens owed their origins to Ishmael but adopted the appellation "Saracens", after Sarah, (to avoid the charge of bastardry), and followed the Hebrew practice of circumcision. They refrained from eating swine long before the Law of Moses, but they were disrupted in their ancestral practices by pagan demon-worshippers, and in many cases adopted Hebrew customs and laws after being reacquainted with their ancestry. In effect they were seeking to revert to Abrahamic custom, consistent with the fact that Abraham is venerated as the father of the Arab Nation through Ishmael's line of descendants: a status and veneration amply justified by these passages.

127 Peters, *Classical Texts*, vol. 1, 1: From Covenant to Community: VI, 30-31. Citing Sozomen, *Church History*,

Ibn Kathir ¹²⁸ relates a tradition that Abraham took Hagar and Ishmael to Makkah (Mecca) while she was still suckling the child: a story that bears strong similarity to a portion of the Genesis 21 account of Hagar being banished at the insistence of Sarah. The coincidence of these accounts raises the question whether Hagar and Ishmael were actually banished on two occasions: first when Ishmael was a baby, then again later when he was approaching full adulthood. The Qur'an ascribes the building of the Ka'ba at Makkah to Abraham and Ishmael, (S2:125-129, 3:96-97), and traditions in the Hadith and stories of the prophets expand upon those passages in terms that indicate that Ishmael would certainly not have been a young boy. The fact that the Ka'ba tradition has not yet been confirmed by archaeological discoveries does not make it any less valid than many traditions from the same era that have not been so verified, and the Qur'anic texts are quite explicit.

And remember that Abraham was tried by his Lord with certain commands, which he fulfilled: He said: "I will make thee an Imam to the people." He pleaded: "And also (Imams) from my offspring!" He answered: "But My Promise is not within the reach of evil-doers."

Remember We made the House a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; and take ye the Station of Abraham as a place of prayer; and We covenanted with Abraham and Ishmael, that they should sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or use it as a retreat, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer).

And remember Abraham said: "My Lord, make this a City of Peace, and feed its People with fruits, – such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day." He said: "(Yea), and such as Reject Faith, – for a while I will grant them their pleasure, but will soon drive them to the torment of Fire, – an evil destination (indeed)!"

And remember Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House (with this prayer): "Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us: for Thou art the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing." (S 2:124-127)

The following passage then proclaims categorically –

And Abraham enjoined upon his sons and so did Jacob; "Oh my sons! Allah hath chosen the Faith for you; then die not except in the state of submission (to Me). Were ye witnesses when Death appeared before Jacob? Behold, he said to his sons: "What will ye worship after me?" They said: "We shall worship thy God and the God of thy fathers, – of Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac, – the One True God; to Him do we submit." (S2:132-3)

128 Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets*, Revised ed. (Riyadh: DARUSSALAM, 2003).

10. 'The Binding'

The experience that both Abraham and his son had to endure when Abraham was commanded by God to sacrifice the boy can be considered to be one of many things. It has been described as one of the ongoing tests of Abraham's faith in God; the supreme test of his obedience and fidelity, and the act that verified the merit of the Hebrew people as worthy of God's election; an atonement for communal sin; a necessary act to placate God in His anger for other failures; and a means of pleading for protection from conflict, famines or other calamities. In the early church the belief developed that this episode was a foreshadowing of the death of Jesus, who, in Christian belief, was simultaneously God's only son and God Himself. A 2nd cent. Apologist, Justin, claimed to have adopted Christianity purely by identifying Christ in Hebrew scripture in which the Logos had manifested Himself in various forms to Abraham, Isaac and Moses, appearing in the semblance of fire, and finally manifesting Himself as a man, Jesus, born from the Virgin. The late 1st cent. writer of 'the Epistle of Barnabas', regarded as an Apostolic Father, "detected a prophecy of the Saviour's name and His crucifixion in the number (318) of Abraham's servants"¹²⁹, and wrote that Jesus was the fulfilment of "that which was foreshadowed in Isaac, who was sacrificed upon the altar."¹³⁰

In addition, those who supported the practice of human sacrifice saw the Angel's countermand of the command that Abraham sacrifice his son as a demonstration that, although God did not require it, on this occasion it was a legitimate means of paying homage to God.¹³¹ Numerous subsequent passages in the Hebrew Bible describe human sacrifice as a great abomination, but child sacrifice did not disappear from Biblical history at that point¹³², so this circumstance cannot be regarded as the divine command that ended the practice among Hebrew communities and led to the substitution of animal sacrifice for human sacrifice, nor the practice of "banning" an enemy town in war by slaughtering all, or a specified portion of the population.

129 J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1958), 31, 66, 145.

130 Barnabas 7:3, Trans. Kirsopp Lake. 'The commandment was written, "Whosoever does not keep the fast shall die the death," and the Lord commanded this because he himself was going to offer the vessel of the spirit as a sacrifice for our sins, in order that the type established in Isaac, who was offered upon the altar, might be fulfilled.'

131 G. Gilbert Yates, *A Guide to the Old Testament* (London: Epworth Press, 1965), 41.

132 See Judges 11:29-40 and also II Kings 16:3 and 17:17

However, there are several very important aspects to the aborted sacrifice experience, and because the distinction between breach of covenant and obedience and readiness to honour an obligation is basic to the concept of covenant, they must be examined.

First: the resolve of the people of his small community (still numbered only in hundreds) to submit to divine will was steeled by the realisation that Abraham was prepared to submit to the One who he acknowledged to be his God. He was seen to be prepared to sacrifice his son and possibly prejudice the role in humanity's evolution that had been promised to him through Isaac as his successor as, together, they moved forward into a future with a role and a host of challenges which they could neither anticipate nor understand. Although they were not descendants or successors to Abraham they were, in effect, marked to be a foundational part of the community through which humanity would be enabled to better understand and to respond to its relationship with God.

Second: it established Abraham's unquestioning submission and obedience to God.

Third: it was the paramount illustration of the fear of God – or fear of the consequences of disobeying God – which motivated Abraham and was a dominant consideration in every decision he made and every action he took. Submission and obedience are not necessarily products of fear. They are better regarded as the products of respect and self-discipline.

Fear of THE LORD sat together with the realisation that THE LORD was the one God having absolute authority for the totality of Creation which, according to Hebrew tradition, led him to break from the polytheism of his ancestors, and also to the confidence that God would unerringly act on every promise made to him. According to the Biblical text, on other occasions Abraham was prepared to discuss or even debate with God the appropriateness of decisions which God advised him to take.

However on this occasion Abraham was too fearful of what might happen to him if he did not obey, or if he even argued with God. He had been seized by terror when God confronted him and told him that his descendants would be exiled and enslaved in a foreign land for sins they would commit but which he could not possibly understand or anticipate. (Gen. 15:12) Now, being confronted with the command to sacrifice his son, he was too fearful to ask what sin he had committed to be so severely punished that the promise was to be annulled – absolutely – by the death of his son at his own hands. That is made abundantly clear in the Hebrew text with the words: '(An angel of God) said, "Do

not stretch forth your hand to the lad, nor do the slightest thing to him, for now I know that you are a God fearing man, and you did not withhold your son, your only one, from Me." ' (Gen. 22:11-12 JP) At that critical moment there is no reference by the angel, or God, to faith, but, together with fear, *obedience* is implied by recognition of the antonymous: non-refusal.

The descendants promised to Abraham, but not yet born at the time of the promise, were to be his descendants only by virtue of the fact that they were also to be the descendants of a son as yet unborn. That circumstance – that Abraham was without issue at the time that God foreshadowed the exile, oppression and subsequent return of his descendants – must be considered in the light of conflicting evidence about which son he was commanded to sacrifice, his age and the circumstances at the time, and whether alternative conclusions that have been reached have any consequences for our understanding of Abraham's response.

The Hebrew Torah, now incorporated as part of the Christian Bible, refers to Isaac by name as the son to be sacrificed, and it attributes to God the statement addressed to Abraham that "your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac, and I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his seed after him.." (Gen. 17:19 JP) However it also attributes to God the identification of "the boy" as "your son, your only one, whom you love, yea, Isaac" (Gen. 22:2 JP) and indicates that he was old enough to carry a load of wood up a mountain, with the words: "Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering, and he placed [it] upon his son Isaac, and he took into his hand the fire and the knife, and they both went together." (Gen. 22:6 JP). In contrast, the Qur'anic revelation (Sura 37:100-113) does not identify the son to be sacrificed by name, but as the first born, and translations differ in describing his circumstances. One translation reads "when (the son) reached (the age of) serious work with him", but other translations qualify his circumstances further.¹³³ All translations indicate that Abraham discussed with the boy a dream in which he had seen that he offered him in sacrifice and

133 "The Holy Qur'an: Trans. Yusuf Ali." The translation by Al-Hilali and Khan identifies the son as "old enough to walk with him"

George Sale's, (1869), reads: "when he had attained to years of discretion, and could join in acts of religion with him"

Those by Mahmud Y. Zayid (1980) and Dawood (1974) both read "when he reached the age when he could work with him"

asked “what is thy view?”, at which the boy acquiesced, saying: “Oh my father! Do as thou art commanded: Thou wilt find me, if Allah so wills, one of the steadfast.”¹³⁴

The Hebrew Biblical text is quite definite that Isaac was not the firstborn son. Nor was he ever the *only* son. The elder son was definitely alive throughout Abraham’s life and present at his funeral. (Gen. 25:9) On that basis the interpretation accepted almost without exception by Qur’anic scholars is that the son who was subject to the command to sacrifice him was Ishmael, not Isaac. Current Jewish and Christian interpretations of the text justify the assumption that it was Isaac who was offered by the fact that Ishmael had been banished and Isaac, having been shown God’s favour and being the only one present at the time, was thus the only son in Abraham’s consideration.

Neither son had been born at the time that Abraham experienced the terrifying vision and it was only in the light of that vision that Sarah made the decision to offer her slave, Hagar, to bear a child by Abraham so that the divine prophecy could be fulfilled. (Gen. 16:2) Ishmael had not been banished at the time that the expanded terms of the Covenant were imposed by God. He was circumcised at the age of thirteen years together with his father, and it was not until at least four years later when Isaac, who was born subsequent to divine revelation some time after the covenantal circumcisions, was still a toddler playing with his much older brother, that Hagar and Ishmael were finally banished together. Ishmael, then not less than eighteen years of age, was certainly capable of carrying firewood up a mountain and of understanding the implications of the venture. The Hebrew text records that the angel of THE LORD told Hagar: "Behold, you will conceive and bear a son, and you shall name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard your affliction And he will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be upon all, and everyone's hand upon him, and before all his brothers he will dwell." (Gen.16:11-12 JP)

Consistent with the Qur’anic contention that the person to be sacrificed was of working age and able to discuss the situation with his father, it is suggested by some Jewish authors, including sages of the Talmudic period and the historian Josephus, that Isaac was a mature adult at the time of the binding.¹³⁵ However it follows that the expression “your only

¹³⁴ *ibid.* S.37:102.

¹³⁵ The historicity of none of the alternative versions can be established, and each of these versions at first seem implausible on the basis that a strong adult would be most unlikely to passively allow an aged person to bind him and lay him on an altar. However there is a case that is apparently well documented which occurred some 400 to 600 years after the binding, in which the only daughter of Jephthah

child ... whom you love” could apply only if either Ishmael was the person referred to, or if, in THE LORD’s view, Ishmael was no longer considered a son of Abraham after being banished and that time had elapsed for Isaac to mature to the point described. The circumstances of the situation and the jealousy shown by Sarah towards her slave, Hagar, and Abraham’s trauma on bowing to his wife’s demand that he should banish Ishmael and his mother while Isaac was still a toddler playing with his elder brother, might suggest that Abraham could consider Isaac to be his only son, but that is not consistent with the intervention attributed to the angel of THE LORD in the Hebrew text, and Ishmael’s subsequent circumcision. (Gen.: 16:9-10,15, 17:23.)

The difficulty of assessing the significantly different records and interpretation of the circumstances of the imposition of the Abrahamic Covenant and the offering of one of Abraham’s sons as a sacrifice is compounded by the way in which the Hebrew Biblical record has been transmitted and edited with the integration of the various sources. Using the source identification of Marks, a series of passages describing 34 significant incidents have been analysed. These relate to matters from the initial command to Abraham to leave home and go to a land he would be shown, to God’s final appearance to Jacob at Beersheba in which the instruction to take his family to Egypt in what proved to be the circumstances foreshadowed to Abraham prior to Isaac’s birth. Within those passages there are 56 segments that are identifiable and six that are listed as ‘not known’. The segments are from: J, 28; E, 14; P, 8; unknown, 6; D, nil, indicating that no further editing of those critical passages was considered necessary by the D editor(s). The passage of seven verses relating to the birth, naming and circumcision of Isaac, Gen. 21:1-07, is especially complex in its construction, being successively, J,P,J,P,P,E,J. The critical naming and circumcision verses are P, and glaring errors and inconsistencies are apparent.

Perhaps the most critical is the fact that the reference to the naming of the son to be sacrificed is accepted as E source, compiled probably in the 8th cent. but included in the stage one redaction in the 7th cent., while the reference to the future conception, birth and naming of Sarah’s child is accepted as P source, compiled late in the 5th Cent. but included in the stage three redaction in the 4th cent.. In the circumstances of the time it is quite conceivable that either the compiler of the P source material or the redactors sought to

acquiesced in her own sacrificial death because her father had made a vow to THE LORD. (Judg. 11:30-31,35-39)

achieve a degree of historical and textual harmony when inserting the chronologically earlier reference. It would have been done with the best of intentions and with no basis at all on which to anticipate the subsequent division of the faith and questioning of textual accuracy. They were preparing historical text solely for the use of their own community.

However in this case questioning of the historicity of each or any part of the central story does not change the importance of the command to Abraham to sacrifice his son, and his response. Nor does it require a determination of whether it was Isaac or Ishmael who was the subject of that divine command. Whether the interpretation by Qur'anic scholars (that it was Ishmael) or the Hebrew Biblical record (that it was Isaac) is correct makes no difference to either the meaning of the Abrahamic Covenant and the communities that were subject to it, or the succession through Isaac and Jacob to the eventual imposition of the Mosaic Covenant of Sinai on a small proportion of Abraham's successors. The fact that the sacrifice was not carried out does *not*, however, make those inconsistencies in the Biblical record irrelevant. It draws attention to a different consideration. Who was being tested by the command to sacrifice the son: the father, Abraham, or the son, or both, and what have been the consequences of the event?

Concerning Isaac, it is said that the chronological details of his life are confusing and difficult to put together as a coherent whole. There is no indication of any reaction by him after the reprieve, and "Commentators have noted that Isaac appears in the narratives chiefly in a passive role (as) the 'one in the middle' whose activities are more constricted than those of his father and son" and is seen as simply preserving the tradition intact.¹³⁶ The absence of any recorded reaction – no shock and horror or great relief and gratitude to God, and no sign of either intense reflection or dynamic leadership in the evolution of Judaism that could reasonably be expected in view of the enormous obligation and responsibility placed on his shoulders by God in the statement of covenant – is almost inexplicable.

Concerning Ishmael, if the sacrificial event occurred prior to his being banished at the behest of Sarah, then the absence of any record of his reaction in the Hebrew scripture would be totally understandable, as would antagonism between him and Isaac, and the

¹³⁶ Louis Jacobs, "The Jewish Religion: A Companion," in *The Jewish Religion: A Companion*, ed. Louis Jacobs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 271.

latter's apparent reticence when the principal obligation under the covenant already rested on him.

The obligations to worship THE LORD and to circumcise all males, and the right to occupy the region initially specified in the Covenant applied equally to all of Abraham's descendants. Adherence to any particular code or Law is not a consideration because no specific laws had been invoked beyond the demands referred to in stories of the Garden of Eden and the Flood, even though a reference is attributed to THE LORD that Abraham "hearkened to My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My instructions." (Gen. 26:5 JP)

However the factor or motive that determined adherence to the Covenant must be considered, and an examination of texts relating to the Abrahamic Covenant leads directly to examination of the imposition of the Mosaic Covenant of Sinai and the subsequent declaration of the New Covenant. It was not the banished Ishmael's family that was subjected to refugee status and subsequent slavery-like conditions for breaches of the covenant. It was the family of Isaac as a consequence of the massive breaches of covenant by Jacob/Israel and his kinsmen. That chain of events, (following in this chapter), would arguably have been the same irrespective of which sibling was the subject of the sacrificial event, and the nature of both the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants would not have been any different.

The question whether the level of "bibliomania" and focus on sacrificial narratives in contemporary Israel which Feldman discussed would be the same if it were shown that Ishmael were that subject and not Isaac, is clearly debatable, but there have been so many sacrificial events through the course of Jewish history that Ben Gurion or any other politician would have had no need to rely on the name of Isaac to generate a nationalistic and ultra-defensive Jewish self-understanding in the wake of the declaration of the State of Israel.

Fear of the consequences of a misdemeanour or a breach of an agreement, code or law is a basic motivation for not breaking the law in many cultures, and knowledge of the existence and impact of that fear has been used to establish and maintain discipline through codes of conduct in both civil and religious societies. Fear of their fate if they did not obey the instructions from THE LORD for preparation for the Passover in Egypt, which were conveyed through Moses, and fear of the consequences of disobeying the Law and the

codes of conduct delivered at Sinai, again through Moses, was basic to the evolution and strengthening of Judaism.

In due course Jesus was scathing in his criticism of the Jewish authorities for their continued reliance on the Law and codes of conduct. He changed the *emphasis* in Deuteronomy, but *not* the *reality*.

And now, O Israel, what does the Lord, your God, *demand* of you? *Only* to *fear the Lord, your God*, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, and to worship the Lord, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the *commandments* of the Lord and His statutes, which I *command* you this day, *for your good*. (Deut. 10:12-13 JP Emphasis added)

His response to a question about which commandment in the law is the greatest was:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.’ (Mt. 22:37-40)

This change in emphasis illustrates the evolution of understanding that occurs in the light of the knowledge of the experience of prior generations or eras. With a growing understanding and acceptance of what God requires under covenant, fear need no longer be the dominant consideration in one’s approach to religious belief and life. Given an appropriate environment, that evolution in understanding and response is progressive and may be exponential.

Enhanced understanding leads to enhanced recognition of God’s absolute authority over all of creation, love for all humanity, provision of human capacity for reasoning, and provision of the facility of free will which is balanced by God’s judgement and penalties when that free will is abused. If the enhancement continues and is not interrupted or reversed, a flowering or maturing of understanding leads further: to a change in the emphasis in human response from fear to respect, honour and homage, then love, with service and the pursuit of justice as logical and sequential outcomes. Love can become the focal point of all relationships and fear can recede as love becomes dominant, but the knowledge of judgement is always at hand to temper free will.

Fear should therefore have no prominence in religious life and teaching, but in spite of that, and in blatant disregard for Jesus’ teaching about undue reliance on the Law and

codes of religious practice and discipline, fear and codes are nowhere more apparent than in the history of influential streams of the Christian Church. That history shows that the enhancement has been interrupted and, in critical circumstances, inhibited and even reversed. However, an examination of their interlocking histories in this research shows that each of the Abrahamic faiths has failed to live up to its covenantal obligations and have contributed to the interruptions and reversals.

It is no wonder that in the circumstances of the time, Abraham was wracked with fear upon receiving God's command to sacrifice his son. The fact that he remained obedient, did not argue, and did not try to evade the penalty or fight back, even though he could not understand what sin of his had caused God to impose a judgement of such magnitude, confirmed for God that Abraham was an appropriate model and leader for the people who were nominated or set apart to guide all humanity to an understanding of its relationship with God.

The Covenant imposed on Abraham by God was therefore confirmed – on the basis of his obedience – when the command to sacrifice his son was withdrawn.

‘An angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven., And he said, "By Myself have I sworn, says the Lord, that *because you have done this thing and you did not withhold your son*, your only one, That I will surely bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand that is on the seashore, and your descendants will inherit the cities of their enemies. And through your children shall be blessed all the nations of the world, *because you hearkened to My voice.*" (Gen. 22:15-18 JP Emphasis added.)

11.The Exemplary Covenant with Abraham passes to Isaac

In due course, after ‘The Binding’ and the division in the family, the exemplary Covenant was reconfirmed with Isaac. The context was not changed: all of Abraham's descendants were still subject to the foundational Covenant with its components of divine promise, obligations and a penalty clause, and there was substantial ongoing contact between the branches of the family.¹³⁷ However, although the specific obligations had not been revealed, the primary responsibility for continuity of the exemplary covenant, for which

¹³⁷ The region which some scholars believe Ishmael and Ketura's sons migrated to at the behest of Abraham includes the district of Paran, where Ishmael's half-brother Midian settled, and also extended into central Arabia. Isaac's descendents passed through Paran on their way to and from Egypt.

Isaac had been specifically designated would pass through two generations of Abraham's descendants, with little distinction and lengthy periods of apostasy, before family affairs again triggered dramatic developments.

The circumstances in which the Covenant was confirmed demonstrate that Abraham's successors, and in particular his grandson, did not have the same level of faith, commitment to obedience, honesty and justice, or readiness to submit, as their Patriarch. This was consistent with the warning of the fate of his descendants that Abraham received from THE LORD prior to the birth of Isaac, while he and Sarah were still childless.

The formal Hebrew Canon does not record a great deal about Isaac's life and conduct, but it is clear that he lived in the shadow of his revered father and that he well understood the importance of the Covenant and the circumstances in which he became responsible to ensure that it was honoured, and for the future of his people in the lands that Abraham had been promised. It appears that he must have wavered in his confidence for his people's security under the Covenant when they again faced famine and he was tempted to go to Egypt just as his father had done – but it had subsequently been placed beyond the boundaries of the Covenant. THE LORD appeared to him directly for the first time and delivered a message: the warning and an instruction not to leave his territory. There was no mention that he had merited the continuing covenant in any way, and it was divine confirmation that the Covenant was in return for his father's obedience.

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and I will bless you, for to you and to your seed will I give all these lands, and *I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham, your father.* And I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens, and I will give your seed all these lands, and all the nations of the earth will bless themselves by your seed, *because Abraham hearkened to My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My instructions.*" (Gen. 26:3-5 JP Emphasis added)

Isaac stayed, but he promptly repeated an error that his father had made by identifying his wife, Rebekah, as his sister and exposing her to danger as the price for personal security. The discovery of his deceit invoked a vigorous response which must have contributed – together with jealousy in view of his rapid business and farming success – to disputes over water supplies which made it necessary for him to move further inland, towards Beersheba. At that point THE LORD appeared to Isaac again to support and encourage him, but, as before, making it clear that it was not his conduct but his father's that warranted the support, saying: "I am the God of Abraham, your father. Fear not, for I am with you, and I

will bless you and multiply your seed for the sake of Abraham, My servant." (Gen. 26:24 JP Emphasis added.)

Isaac also experienced division within his family. The first born of his twin sons, Esau, surrendered his birthright and succession to the second born Jacob, in circumstances of trickery and disinterest that did neither any credit. He then incurred Isaac's displeasure by contravening Abraham's instructions under the Covenant and marrying outside the Hebrew community. In due course, when Isaac was blind and infirm, Jacob fraudulently and deceitfully invoked his father's blessing under the Covenant and caused Esau, his elder brother, great anguish by thus cheating him out of the role of leader of the community. In spite of that, Isaac refused to revoke the blessing and ordered Esau to serve his younger brother. Jacob, on his father's orders and with his blessing, fled in fear of his life for Padan-aram near Haran, the home from which Abraham emigrated at God's command to establish a new nation:

"May the Almighty God bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and you shall become an assembly of peoples. And may He give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you, that you may inherit the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham." (Gen. 28:3-4 JP Emphasis added)

On his way he dreamed that he encountered God standing over him and announcing: "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac" the Lord confirmed the Covenant in the terms Isaac had prayed for, with the words "the land upon which you are lying, to you I will give it and to your seed. And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall gain strength westward and eastward and northward and southward; and through you shall be blessed all the families of the earth and through your seed." But there was a proviso "I am with you, and I will guard you wherever you go, and I will restore you to this land, for I will not forsake you until I have done what I have spoken concerning you." On waking, Jacob unwittingly demonstrated that his faith and understanding were not of the same order as those of his grandfather. He said, "Indeed, the Lord is in this place, and I did not know [it]." And he was frightened, and he said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (Gen. 28:13-17 JP) He then confirmed his less-than-total faith with the very conditional vow:

"If God will be with me, and He will guard me on this way, upon which I am going, and He will give me bread to eat and a garment to wear; and if I return in peace to my father's house, and the Lord will be my God; then this

stone, which I have placed as a monument, shall be a house of God, and everything that You give me, I will surely tithe to You.” (Gen. 28: 20-22 JP Emphasis added.)

There is no indication that the significance of God’s closing words registered with Jacob: “I will not forsake you until I have done what I have spoken concerning you.” If he had grasped those words and recalled the words that had struck fear into Abraham’s heart his response would surely have been different. “You shall surely know that your seed will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and they will enslave them and oppress them, for four hundred years.” (Gen. 15:13 JP)

There was trouble ahead and the community’s contradictory conduct and neglect or rejection of the Covenant would certainly lead to retribution. It was already failing to maintain the conduct God required. The use of the term here translated as “leave you”, (and elsewhere translated variously as “desert”, “forsake”, “depart from”, or “be with you constantly until I have finished”), does not imply annulment of the Covenant because the punishment was temporary – for four hundred years – after which God’s blessing may be experienced again.

Jacob had been warned that the community’s partial response to the Covenant was not good enough. He was the new leader of the community: the person to set the standard. But he had not so far demonstrated that capacity or integrity, and his conduct did not improve. He continued with fraud and deceit in his dealings with his relatives (at what place is unclear) and they responded in like manner. His marriages and the births of his children to a mix of wives and concubines were enmeshed in deceit, bitterness and hatred, and when he fled for the second time he was again pursued. It was left to his cousin Laban to bring some stability into their relationships by proposing a treaty of non-belligerence, or a civil covenant.

When Jacob then set out again for home he knew that he also had to reach rapprochement with his elder brother, Esau, on the way; he realised the reputation he had to overcome, and he accepted that Esau had good reason to attack him and his travelling household, and he planned some deceitful conciliatory manoeuvres. When he halted to camp overnight he recalled the Covenant and sought solitude to reflect on it. He pleaded with God (Whom he had acknowledged only provisionally) to save him from his brother’s wrath, admitted his unworthiness, and sought to justify the way he had accumulated great wealth by reminding the Lord of the promise that he, Jacob, would be made to prosper, that he should return to

his own country and his family, and that his descendants would be beyond counting. Left alone, he was confronted by “a *man* (who) wrestled with him until dawn,” and, seeing that he could not master Jacob, struck him and dislocated his hip. The J source narrative continues:

He (the angel) said, "Let me go, for dawn is breaking," but he (Jacob) said, "I will not let you go unless you have blessed me." So he said to him, "What is your name?" and he said, "Jacob." And he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, because you have commanding power with [an angel of] God and with men, and you have prevailed." And Jacob asked and said, "Now tell me your name," and he said, "Why is it that you ask for my name?" And he blessed him there. And Jacob named the place Peniel, for [he said,] "I saw an angel face to face, and my soul was saved." (Gen. 32:25-31 JP)

His provisional acknowledgment of God gave way to something approaching recognition, but it was not with honour, gratitude and humility, and certainly not absolute belief and acceptance because he still had not arrived home with all his wealth. It appears that he interpreted the words “because you have been strong against God, you shall prevail against men” as a compliment. He ought to have understood that he was being challenged because his conduct was against or contrary to a worshipful response to God’s wishes, and that God recognized that he would “prevail against men” in a competitive sense because of his deceitful conduct and in spite of God’s foreshadowed imminent withdrawal of support. He survived his deceitful reunion with his brother; paid lip service to the presence and generosity of God to justify his wealth; then chose to settle among pagans at Shechem rather than complete the journey home. This series of episodes, together with his response to the rape of his daughter, Dinah, and subsequent negotiations for a matrimonial alliance with the then uncircumcised Shechemites whose leader’s son was the guilty person, was proof that he was certainly not observing and did not understand the requirements of the Covenant under which he was obligated.

According to the interwoven traditions from the three sources available when Genesis was composed in its present form, God confronted Jacob again, ordered him to move on to Bethel and to build an altar to “the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.” He did so, destroying the pagan gods his household was carrying as he went, and named the altar to acknowledge, with palpable reluctance, that God had appeared to him and that he had indeed returned safe and wealthy. God thereupon confirmed Jacob’s change of name to Israel and reconfirmed the Covenant in these terms:

"I am the Almighty God; be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a multitude of nations shall come into existence from you, and kings shall come forth from your loins. And *the land that I gave to Abraham and to Isaac*, I will give to you, and to your seed after you will I give the land." (Gen. 35:11-12 JP Emphasis added)

The text then acknowledges that God had completed the undertaking given to Jacob that "I will not forsake you until I have done what I have spoken concerning you." with the words: 'And God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him.' Israel was left to his own devices. There is no further reference in the text of the canon to any demonstrations of devotion to God by Israel, or divine intervention in his affairs, until his later years. Division, conflict and ill will – consistent with the pattern of his personal conduct in earlier years – characterised the affairs of his enormous family of twelve sons and twenty-one daughters. That ill will culminated in his favoured youngest son, Joseph, being sold into slavery in Egypt by his envious brothers in a piece of criminal intra-family dirty business. The traders were all great-grandsons of Abraham and distant cousins: the sellers, through Isaac's branch, and the buyers (Ishmaelites) through Ishmael's branch.

Protected and guided by divine intervention Joseph rose to a position of great influence, and when famine forced his brothers to seek help in Egypt he was able to arrange their resettlement in very favourable circumstances, even though they were, to all intents and purposes, famine-induced refugees. When Joseph insisted that they bring their father, Israel, with them to reunite them as a family, he was reluctant and it was only then that God responded to his appeal for divine guidance. Using his former name, and thus reminding Israel of his misconduct, God said:

"I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid of going down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up, and Joseph will place his hand on your eyes." (Gen. 46:3-4 JP)

Thus Joseph saved his criminal brothers and their families from famine, and they grew into a community, but their relationships with their neighbours fractured and they were subject to oppression. In due course a later descendant on Isaac's line, Moses, who had married into the apostate line of another of Abraham's children, Midian, was called by God to intervene with the Egyptian ruler and ensure the Israelites release. He succeeded, aided by Divine intervention, and, in traumatic circumstances the Israelites experienced the Exodus and reached Sinai under Moses' guidance. Moses was then assisted in organizing the People Israel into a cohesive community by his father-in-law, a priest, and also a

descendant of Abraham through that apostate Midianite line. What had appeared to Israel to be an act of migration under an invitation in response to a crisis brought on by famine was, in reality, three things.

First: the fate of refugees. Israel and his family were, in reality, refugees fleeing famine in much the manner that vast numbers of people are forced into refugee status, and seek escape from their circumstances and assistance as “boat people”, asylum seekers, “queue jumpers” or on long marchers to the protection of the United Nations and welfare agencies today. Thus, while their kinsman welcomed them and provided very favourable circumstances, when his son Joseph was no longer in power they lost all privileges and were subjected to bondage – also in much the manner of today’s unwelcome refugees in Australia and many other countries, being deprived of job opportunities, permanent residence, education and health services, and even being charged for their enforced bondage.

Second: it was the imposition of the fate of Abraham’s descendants foreshadowed by God at Hebron as a penalty, under Divine Judgment, for failing to maintain conduct appropriate to the Abrahamic Covenant, and in particular the unquestioning and total recognition of, homage and obedience to THE LORD as their God.

Third: it was the beginning of the process of building the nation of Israel, initially within Egypt, triggered by virtue of God’s intervention through Joseph who thus became the next in a line of descendants with responsibility to ensure that the Abrahamic Covenant was honoured in perpetuity. Israel acknowledged this in pronouncing his death-bed blessings on his sons and naming Joseph, “the one who was separated from his brothers,” as his successor, and bypassing his eldest, the uncontrollable Reuben, to whom he declared “you shall not have superiority” because of his disgraceful conduct.

Chapter Three

The first epoch – stage two

A mature understanding of covenant ready to go!

1. Introduction

The second stage of the First Epoch opened with Jacob's small clan of descendants seeking security in Egypt but about to be subjected to the life of refugee immigrants in a foreign land as they sought to retain cohesion as a community, precisely as had been foreshadowed to Abraham when he received his Divine Commission at Hebron. By the time it closed Israel's prophets had developed a comprehensive and mature understanding of every aspect of Covenant, but the nation's leaders had gone missing.

This chapter examines four basic issues. First, the composition of the community which constituted the embryonic nation of Israel. Second, the trials and tribulations they faced when they failed to maintain good relations with those among whom they had been preferentially settled, were oppressed to the point of despair, and led out of Egypt by Moses to settle, temporarily, in the region around Mount Sinai. Third, the basis of their territorial claims under covenant, their role as a covenanted community, and their false hopes for a perpetual Davidic succession. Fourth, the focus of this thesis: the progressive development of a mature Hebrew understanding of the concept of Covenant identified by clustering relevant texts according to the time of writing instead of their chronological placement in the current Biblical record.

2. Israel in formation: Moses, Sinai and periods of regression

The embryonic new nation-in-bondage, Israel, settled in Egypt by invitation of Joseph, their enslaved family member, was only a fraction the third generation of Abraham's descendants and could not number more than one hundred people. The bulk of that generation, including descendants of Ishmael through twelve sons and an unrecorded number of daughters¹³⁸ ; the families of six children born to Keturah and his concubines, and families born to Israel's brother, Esau, and his three wives, all settled in the huge area

138 Jacob's family is listed in Genesis 35:22-26, and Esau's in Genesis 36:1-5,9-14. The families of Ishmael and Ketura are indicated, without details, and their migratory settlement is noted in Jubilees XX. 12-13.

designated as Abraham's inheritance, including Canaan. They remained subject to the basic Abrahamic Covenant.

The Israelites, whose land would have simply passed to their relatives, were unwittingly confirming the words of the Lord to Abraham at Hebron and, in due course, became subject to the much more specific and detailed Mosaic Covenant imposed on them at Sinai. Having experienced the period of bondage that God had foreshadowed, they experienced every aspect of Divine Judgment and retribution in quick succession.

In the first phase, as refugees in Egypt, they became so successful and wealthy as a community of immigrants, (possibly through coercive and corrupt conduct similar to that which had caused Jacob to be driven out twice), that their dominance resulted in fractured relationships, caused distress and envy, and resulted in oppression and bondage or partial enslavement. At that point Moses was called to intervene, and when Pharaoh reneged on an undertaking to allow the Israelites to leave, his people suffered a series of plagues, a hailstorm, darkness over the land, and finally the death of the first born of every family in the community. (Exodus, Chapters 7-13) The Egyptian communities were subject only to the Universal or Noahide Covenant and not a specific faith-based covenant, and their fate was the second aspect of Divine Judgment and retribution that had been foreshadowed by God at Hebron, in initiating the Abrahamic Covenant.

In the second phase the penal clauses of the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants were invoked concurrently when the Israelites, having received a comprehensive code of laws and practices from the Lord which they were expected to adhere to absolutely, did not, and fell apostate under the influence of their cousins, the Midianites, from whom they had received strong support. The Lord sternly rebuked them both, and ratified both the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant with severe retribution in such circumstances that they should have readily recognized the reality of the interlocking component clauses of covenant. The Israelites were required to impose the full force of the Lord's judgement under covenant on their cousins, and then to fight their way to re-occupy the promised land and impose retribution on other communities which had also fallen apostate. In so doing they were to develop the obedience and cohesion that was required of them.

Thus Moses, who was called by God through the phenomenon of a burning bush to a task that, like Abraham, he did not want, became the instrument by which the Israelites were

relieved of their oppression. However, in addition, judgement was imposed first on the Egyptians, and second on the Midianites (Num. 31) in spite of the fact that Moses had married into the apostate tribe and received much help from his brother-in-law (Num. 10) and his father-in-law (Ex. 18); leadership was provided at a critical time during the revelation of the Mosaic Covenant of Sinai and the introduction of God's Law to the people Israel; and judgement was subsequently imposed on other apostate communities also. All constituent considerations in a perpetual conditional covenant had thus been confirmed, absolutely, when events foreshadowed by the Lord at Hebron had come to pass.

The preamble to the Covenant of Sinai, in Exodus 19, written in the context of the Hebrews' arrival at Sinai three months after their traumatic exit from Egypt, and a key statement within the Decalogue that followed, both confirm the absolute relationship between obligation and judgement under both the Abrahamic Covenant and the Covenant of Sinai. Exodus is a complex compilation of texts from all of the recognized sources – J, E, D and P – with significant additions from unidentified sources which are presumed to be products of the period of the final redaction in the 5th cent.. It is very rigid in the requirement for Israel to remain faithful as a worshipping, priestly, holy nation, absolutely free of idolatry, and very explicit on God's continuing love for those who do remain faithful. (Ex. 19:4-6, 20:4-6)

Those passages, compiled at a mature stage in the evolution of the Hebrew scriptures, (the first from D, c. 550 BCE, and the second being from an unidentified late source, possibly from the 4th cent.), clearly indicate that by that time Hebrew scholars and prophets had developed a definite understanding that a person cannot shrug off the known wrong-doing of an ancestor with the comment that "I didn't do it, it's none of my responsibility." They had accepted that there is a clear responsibility under covenant to take action to offset the earlier wrong-doing if continuing or eventual (deferred) punishment is not to be imposed and experienced by the wrong-doer's descendants, and that the Lord required the whole community to acknowledge Divine Direction – not only those who relayed the divine command as messengers.

3. Territorial rights under covenant

There are many definitions of the territory to be granted to, and occupied by, the Hebrew community recorded in its Scripture, but they do not correspond. Therefore a careful examination is necessary for several reasons. First: territorial claims made by certain

sections of the Jewish community on the basis of either the Abrahamic or Mosaic Covenants are a major source of conflict between Israel and its supporters and Palestinians and their supporters. Second: Israel's territorial claims are also a cause of dispute within the Jewish community. Third: the community's rights were subject to the over-riding condition that its people were not to adopt the religious beliefs of peoples who they were about to displace. Fourth: all benefits identified in the Mosaic Covenant were, and still are, subject to the conditionality and penal clause of that Covenant.

In sequence, key passages as they appear in Hebrew Scripture are: a composite of Gen. 12:1,5,6-7, and 13:12-18; Gen. 15:18-21; Gen. 17:6-8; Gen. 26:2-3; Ex.23:31-33; and the composite texts of Ex.33:1-2, 34:11-13; and the detailed description, Num. 34:1-12.

From consideration of all of these descriptions of the territory to be granted to Abraham's descendants, and specifically to the people Israel, the following conclusions can be drawn.

In each case in which the territory is described in terms of physical boundaries or tribes and kingdoms to be displaced, with the exception of Gen. 15:18-21 and Ex. 23:31-33, those boundaries or tribes and kingdoms are the ones which were current at the time that the passages were written or edited into the Hebrew Scripture. The writers were simply recognizing the reality of their time and justifying the extent of territory then under administration by reference to the generality of the promise of a home for a new nation in a region to which Abraham was being guided by the Lord. This is supported by the fact that the detailed boundaries set out in Num. 34:1-12, purporting to be the bounds of Canaan that the Israelites were to occupy, were Israel's approximate boundaries during the post-exilic period when Numbers was compiled.

Because there had been substantial population movement and territorial changes during the several centuries between the time of Abraham and the compiling of the J strand in the reign of David or Solomon, the list of tribal or kingdom territories in Gen. 15:18-21 could not have been accurate at the time of Abraham and is not based solely on oral history of the Abrahamic period. This is consistent with the conclusion that writers and editors were taking into account the bounds of tribes and kingdoms with which Israel was in conflict, or expected to confront, at the time of writing rather than oral history of the earlier period.

The near-coincidence of the list in Ex. 33:1-2 and Gen. 15:18-21 supports the conclusion that the Genesis list was not based on oral history of the period, and that the promise of

territory in the Abrahamic Covenant must have been of a less specific nature, in the style of Gen. 12:1,6-7, and 13:14-15,17-18. Egypt, the well-established power under which Abraham's descendants were held in circumstances of oppression, was not identified in the statement of covenant. It is therefore not logical to look for a precise statement of the peoples whom Abraham's descendants would be ordered to expel much further into the future. Shortly before the event: yes. Far into the future: no.

The addition of physical bounds and a list of tribal names to the earliest 'J' source portion of Gen. 15:18 is particularly significant. It is an embellishment that reflects the fact that from c. 970 to 928, when the J strand is believed to have been compiled, the kingdoms of David and Solomon, including vassal states, did actually extend from the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba to Tiphseh, a settlement somewhere on the western reaches of the "the great river", the Euphrates.¹⁶⁶ The expansion of those kingdoms was achieved by means contrary to the terms of the Mosaic Covenant and, as a consequence, incurred divine retribution. They included portions of tribal and imperial territories which, at the time, extended east of the Jordan or north of Canaan and encompassed all of the territory described in physical terms in Gen. 15:18 and Ex. 23:31-33, but were never occupied.¹³⁹

The second exception, Ex. 23:31-33, was added at the same time as the Covenant Code, based on Hammurabi, after the Exile, when the community was struggling to re-establish under severe constraint as a province of Persia. The use of the description of borders "from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates" reflects the description in Gen. 15:18, but bore no relationship to the capacity of the post-exilic community and must have been added in an effort to boost morale. While other passages added to the scriptures included references to occupants at the time of writing who were to be displaced, in the context of being a subordinate province it would have been ludicrous to include such names.

It may be argued that these references to territorial boundaries should be considered on the basis of exegetic interpretation in the same manner as the use of illustrative genealogies in the creation stories, after considering the extent of editing and redaction to which the

166 Barnavi and Charbit, *Jewish History Atlas*. Maps, pp. 15,17.

139 Territories that extended beyond Canaan and the kingdoms of David and Solomon included those of the Hittites (north of the Litani River to Anatolia), the Amorites (from Tyre through Syria to Mesopotamia) and the Kenites (the Levant generally). If the words "the River Euphrates" after "the great river" were part of the addition to Genesis 15:18-19 and were not part of the original tradition of the 'J' strand, the probability of this confusion becomes more likely.

relevant passages have been subjected. However, the two situations are not comparable. The territorial boundaries passages were written in quite specific historical circumstances, and the plain reading sense is applicable. Therefore the territorial descriptions which can be regarded as credible are Gen. 17: 8; Gen. 26:2-3 and Num. 27:12-14.

"I will give you (Abraham) and your seed after you the land of your sojournings, the entire land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will be to them for a God." (Gen. 17:8 JP Source: P.)

And the Lord appeared to (Isaac), and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land that I will tell you. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and I will bless you, for to you and to your seed will I give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham, your father. (Gen. 26:2-3 JP source, J.)

The Lord said to Moses, "Go up to this mount Abarim and look at the land that I have given to the children of Israel. And when you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother was gathered. Because you disobeyed My command in the desert of Zin when the congregation quarreled, [when you were] to sanctify Me through the water before their eyes; these were the waters of dispute at Kadesh, in the desert of Zin. (Num. 27:12-14 JP Source, P strand, late 5th cent..)

4. What role for a people under covenant?

At the same time that the young community of Israel had to establish itself as a nation, it was required to show maturity to put its role under covenant into effect, and adapt to a change of leadership, from Moses to Joshua. In this context the reference in Gen. 26:2-3 to the Lord fulfilling the oath sworn to Abraham can be seen as a reference only to the provision of land and the development of many sovereign nations. It does not refer to the role of leadership and to being, eventually, a blessing to mankind that was subsequently imposed on Abraham's successors. The first reference to that wider role occurs in connection with the command to Abraham to sacrifice his son and the subsequent reversal of the command. The entire sacrifice sequence Gen. 22 is from the E strand, compiled somewhat later than J, and the passage dealing with the *role* of Abraham's successors, rather than their status and privileges, Gen. 22:15-19, is a later addition of uncertain origin.

There was no suggestion that the Hebrews' covenantal relationship with the Lord involved a special role or obligation other than obedience in return for privilege and protection. That was consistent with their belief that the Lord was exclusively their God, and that other peoples were dependent upon, or worshipped, other gods. The first reference in the

J strand to a wider role for the Hebrew people under covenant does not occur until after the Exodus when the Lord confronted Moses on Mount Sinai.

Moses hastened, bowed his head to the ground, prostrated himself, and said "If I have now found favor in Your eyes, O Lord, let the Lord go now in our midst [even] if they are a stiff necked people, and You shall forgive our iniquity and our sin and thus secure us as Your possession." And He said: "Behold! I will form a covenant; in the presence of all your people, I will make distinctions such as have not been created upon all the earth and among all the nations, and *all the people in whose midst you are shall see the work of the Lord how awe inspiring it is that which I will perform with you.* (Ex. 34:9-10 JP Emphasis added.)

A reference from the sequence of the Sinai experience, placed earlier in Exodus, when the Lord called Moses from the mountain, is from the D strand of the 6th cent..

Moses ascended to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "So shall you say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel, You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and [how] I bore you on eagles' wings, and I brought you to Me. And now, ***if you obey Me and keep My covenant***, *you shall be to Me a treasure out of all peoples, for Mine is the entire earth. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of princes and a holy nation.*' (Ex. 19:3-6 JP Emphasis added.)

This establishes that in spite of their understanding that they had a special privileged relationship with the Lord under a covenant, it was not until well into the recording of their history and that special relationship that the Hebrew people realized that it involved a special *role* on behalf of the Lord in addition to a status of privilege. It was that special role and the over-riding obligation to strictly observe requirements set down by the Lord that set them apart from the other, much larger, branch of the Abrahamic family. However as they entered the Promised Land with all of the Mosaic Laws fresh in their minds, and under new leadership, it was not the special role (which they did not fully understand) but their special territorial privilege which determined their expectations and their self-understanding. It was because of their failure to strictly observe the conditions of the covenant that they almost forfeited the privileges before they took effect.

In contrast, the other branch was under no such constraints. They were obligated under the Abrahamic Covenant to worship no other god than the Lord; to circumcise their male children; and to maintain the way of the Lord by just and upright living (Gen. 18:19, addition to J) on the basis of the ethics, morality and personal values shaped prior to their expulsion. Those values were shaped under the influence of exposure to Sodom and

Gomorra and the knowledge of family discord and misconduct. Their lesser privilege was the assurance of plenty of space to settle within an enormous ill-defined and sparsely populated area, broadly east and south of Canaan, without the restrictive regional definitions that applied to the Israelites, already noted, and without the need for traumatic conflict to take control of the areas they were to occupy. Their expectation was to enjoy a normal communal lifestyle.

5. Special role, special privilege – subject to conditions

The special conditions that applied to the Israelites could not have been more definite. Failure of the community to observe the covenant in full would result in a challenge and loss of the territory. Moses committed all of the commands of the Lord to writing, using clay tablets,¹⁴⁰ directed certain holocausts and had the blood of the bullocks collected in bowls, read the covenant in full, cast half of the blood on the altar, dashed the balance on the people and declared: ‘See the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.’ (Ex. 24:8)

But the people’s patience and commitment was weak. When Moses returned to the mountain to receive two tablets of the Testimony “inscribed by the finger of God” and was delayed, they asked Aaron to make them a god to go ahead of them. He obliged by casting an effigy of a calf from their gold rings. They offered holocausts and communion sacrifices then “sat down to eat and drink” before amusing themselves. Such immediate and blatant apostasy angered the Lord, bringing a decision that they would be destroyed and that a new nation would be built from Moses, and an abject appeal from Moses for a second chance, upon which the Lord granted a reprieve.

Then, consistent with the fact that they did not understand their special role, the worship of multiple gods did not stop and the Israelites did not become Monotheists after Sinai in spite of the dramatic stand taken by Moses. There was little cohesion and a great deal of competition between the various tribes of Israel as they spread across Canaan and progressively dominated the existing populations. The coexistence or integration of Yahwist and pagan communities and their systems of religious belief, and syncretism, was therefore both natural and inevitable, as was widespread acceptance of a pantheon of Gods,

¹⁴⁰ Because of the subsequent destruction of the tablets it is not known what scrip Moses used. Hebrew scrip had not yet been developed.

among which Yahweh (THE LORD), the God of the Jews, was widely accepted as being supreme. Discipline in religious practice was an ideal that was difficult to achieve.

Similarly, there was no spontaneous adoption of laws and codes of conduct for which Moses had been the conduit between God and the Israelites. From several circumstances it can be concluded that the adoption of uniform laws and codes was a long drawn out process under priestly influence and parallel to, or concurrent with, similar developments in other regions. Neither the J or E source texts give the law and codes any prominence; the breaking of divinely inscribed tablets is referred to only in the context of the Israelites defiling the worship of the Lord by setting up the golden calf; it was not until the addition of the P source texts that the Hebrew Scriptures introduced instructions for building a sanctuary and the conduct of ministry and worship; and it was not until the addition of the Decalogue and portions of the Hamurabi Code in the 6th cent. BCE that any prominence was given to absolute rules for personal conduct,

In the circumstances “the moral disintegration of the tribes of Israel, torn by fratricidal wars” was also virtually inevitable; and the editor of the Book of Judges “was expressing a clear political message (that) despite the obvious inadequacies of a monarchy, the people of Israel needed a king” when he closed that book with the words: “In those days there was no king in Israel, and every man did as he pleased.”¹⁴¹

6. Samuel: the monarchy, Saul, David and the Oracle of Nathan

In such circumstances Samuel, a mere youth, responded to God’s command to relay a message to Eli, the priest whose authority spread over all Israel, that: “I condemn his House for ever because he has known that his sons have been cursing God, yet he has not corrected them. Therefore – I swear it to the House of Eli – neither sacrifice nor offering shall ever expiate the guilt of the House of Eli.” Samuel grew in stature as a prophet; experienced Israel’s defeat by the Philistines; the capture of the Ark of the Covenant and the death of Eli; assumed the role of Judge under divine guidance, and came under great pressure from the people to anoint a king in order to bring stability and security. In due course (c.1020 BCE) he anointed Saul, pronounced THE LORD’s blessing on him and inscribed a royal constitution.

141 Barnavi and Charbit, *Jewish History Atlas*. . p. 14.

However, when Saul failed to resolve Israel's troubles it was again Samuel's task to act as God's messenger to tell Saul that as he had rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord had rejected him. David, an aide of Saul, was anointed (c.1004) to take his place and, after a lengthy period of conflict and intrigue, the death of Saul in another battle with the Philistines, and the death of Samuel, he was proclaimed king of Israel also. (c.998). He captured Jerusalem, (c.990), made it his capital, and oversaw the return of the Ark of the Covenant and its placement in the Citadel of David in very controversial circumstances.

In his elation at the presence of the Ark and the blessings that he expected for Israel as a result, David proposed to construct a building appropriate for God to dwell in but, for whatever reason, he did not complete his plan, only collecting the materials required and leaving construction to his son and successor, Solomon. According to one version of the event he realized ("... the word of THE LORD came to me") that because of his own ruthless conduct in war he was not a worthy person to build a temple to honour the Lord's name. (1 Chr. 22:1-19) According to another version (2 Sam.7:5-16) Nathan, the palace official who was effectively the successor to Samuel (whose sons had been deemed unworthy for the role of judge), supported David's plan at first but then, next day, invoked the authority of THE LORD in telling David that it was not appropriate. Instead, Nathan pronounced the establishment of a permanent monarchy as the focal point of promises by THE LORD to David and his successor.

The inconsistency between the two versions is of little consequence because the principal promises in each case (2 Samuel 7:12-13 and 1 Chronicles 22:9-10) are basically the same, but, as set out in the Oracle of Nathan, the "Davidic Covenant" became the basis for a sequence of significant beliefs, expectations or assumptions. They include the adoption of special prayers and benedictions based on doctrinaire claims that the Davidic Covenant took precedence over the Covenant of Sinai, belief that the Messiah will be a scion of David, Christian claims based on II Samuel 7:13 that Jesus was in direct line of descent from David and entitled to the Kingship of the Jews, and the expectation that the Jewish community would again return and rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem following its expulsion in 135 CE.. Maimonides' expectation that in the wake of the Crusades the Davidic Monarchy would be re-established and would usher in the Messianic Age became a trigger for the Inquisition, the 19th cent. view that the Covenantal obligation of Jews is to ensure that the promise becomes a reality, and the belief, in some sections of the Christian Church, that complete control of either the Biblical Promised Land or the region of

David's Kingdom by the Jewish nation is a prerequisite to the return of Christ and the unfolding of the Messianic Age.

A composite promise: not a Davidic Covenant

However, that composite promise does not have the form of a Covenant. There is no record of a direct communication on the matter between the Lord and David, the composition purports to show that Nathan conveyed a promise, or promises, to David from the Lord but the Biblical narrative indicates that The Lord directed Nathan to annul his advice to David. The narrative is considered to be the end product of the editing of a number of traditions from sources that cannot be identified with any certainty; it changes in construction, and shows evidence of one or more editors adding personal interpretations or comments; there is no reference to succession, and David's motive for building the Temple was questioned. The expanded promises in II Samuel 7:8-17 have been identified as a later amplification of the original promise which was divided into verses 11b and part of 16,¹⁴² There is no reason to regard the suggestion that a 'Davidic Covenant' took precedence over the Mosaic Covenant, and the Qur'an does not consider that David was subject to a covenant. For these reasons it can be concluded that the Oracle of Nathan is not a step in the revelation of the concept and administration of Covenant.

7. From covenant dishonoured to monotheism: progressive prophetic understanding of covenant

Although both David and Solomon played important roles in the establishment of Israel as an instrument through which humanity was to be enabled to understand its relationship with God, neither of them reached the point of realizing that THE LORD is the *sole* God. Solomon, like the first king, Saul, failed to honour a vital aspect of the Covenant of Sinai – the exclusion of worship of all gods in the pagan realm – and established alliances with pagan powers, “made diplomatic marriages with foreign princesses ... included their gods in the royal cult, and built temples for them in the hills outside Jerusalem” in a bid for peace.¹⁴³ When he died, c.928 BCE, the unified Yahwist kingdom that was supposed to stand in perpetuity divided into competing northern and southern kingdoms. Among some

142 John William Wevers, "The Second book of Samuel," in *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Charles M. Laymon (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971). . p. 174

143 Karen Armstrong, *Islam: a short history*, Revised ed. (New York: The Modern Library, 2002). . p. 63, citing I Kings II:5, 7-8, and Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: the Lord and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (New York and London 1990), pp. xxiii-xxv.

critical thinkers there was growing awareness that neither kingdom was living according to the requirements of the Mosaic Covenant, but there was no spontaneous outburst of understanding about the complexities of a covenantal relationship. The development of that understanding was a slow process.

All significant statements concerning covenant attributed to leaders and prophets during the first and second epochs have been examined, and by placing them in clusters by date of writing on the basis of the strand in which they have been placed, (J, E, D or P), a pattern of evolved understanding has been identified which corresponds with ‘the Mature Hebrew Understanding of Covenant’ (MHUDC), immediately prior to the collapse of the corrupt Hasmonean Monarchy. That pattern is substantially different from the historical sequence in which they have been placed by the editors and redactors in the Bible in its present form.

A total of 70 references have been placed in eight clusters from the time the recording of Hebrew history began in the 10th cent. to the start of the Common Era which marked the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, and a similar number since that time. The clusters include texts composed or edited during the periods indicated. The first three clusters are all compositions from the 10th cent. or soon afterwards. Their circumstances were such that it is logical to conclude that the first concern of the writers and editors was to record their circumstances at the time and during the period immediately prior to Sinai, the Exodus, their circumstances in Egypt, and how they came to settle there. Then, as the implications of their circumstances and their relationship with God required, they endeavoured to record the circumstances, events and lives of people in the preceding era.

As a demonstration of the nature of divine revelation, the sequence in the progressive understanding of covenant by the prophets, one after another, through the inspired recognition of the consequences of broken relationships and obligations not honoured is both very clear and quite remarkable. When necessary to support the assessment made in each of the following cluster examinations, data for particular passages is included. However, to include 70 detailed passage references in these pages would be an unnecessary distraction. The complete listing is therefore provided as a supplement in Appendix O. For each passage it includes, as far as possible, a reference number; text identification; strand designation; century and place of *writing*; century and place of the

event; and the nature of the event, the new understanding or the revelation which has been recognized.

First Cluster: 10th -8th cent.

Some writings in this cluster have already been discussed. It includes texts written during the period in which the Kingdom of Israel was established and the documentation of Israel's immediate history began. The key issues were recognition of Israel's rescue and special relationship with the Lord, and acceptance of Israel's specific obligations under the Mosaic Covenant of Sinai. These include the requirement that Israel was to bow to no other god, and to accept that there would be serious consequences in the event of apostasy and failure to honour obligations under covenant; the Lord's acceptance that other people could continue to acknowledge other deities until they had been led to the realization that the Lord was God alone, either through the priesthood of Israel ordained by God, or through other earthly experience; the corollary, the Lord's threat to destroy apostates and to narrow the base of the covenant community to succession through Moses; Moses' appeal, and the Lord's retraction.

Second Cluster: 10th cent.

Efforts to enhance and stabilize the kingdom on a cohesive religious base encouraged the recording of oral Hebrew traditions of Abraham's background and call. This required consideration of how the concept of Covenant came to be recognized; the Lord's Command to Abraham, with recognition of the absolute authority of the Lord; that not only Israel but all of Abraham's descendants were therefore to bow to no other God; that there were therefore multiple streams of Abrahamic succession, through Isaac, Ishmael and Abraham's other children, and that the ongoing responsibility of the Hebrews was to honour all aspects of the basic Abrahamic Covenant as well as the specific obligations of the Mosaic Covenant. Thus all entries in this cluster refer to events in the 18th/17th cent or earlier: the Lord's initial command to Abraham, and events during the migration from Haran to Hebron.

Third Cluster: 10th cent. and later.

Compilation of Israel's history and pre-history continued. New writings related to the division of Abraham's family; succession through Isaac and Jacob; Jacob's failure, bondage and rescue; pre-history, the first view of creation as an act of God; Adam and Eve, corruption; the punishment of the flood, and reconciliation of humanity through the

Noahide Covenant which is thus seen as an over-riding covenant with all of humanity. All entries in this cluster also refer to events in the 18th/17th cent, or pre-history.

Available records indicate that after the establishment of the monarchy and the push for empire resulted in wider sponsorship of pagan worship for political convenience it was not until the mid-9th cent. that there were demands for the exclusive worship of the Lord, led by the Prophet Elijah. Whether Elijah had reached the point of proclaiming the Lord as sole God or was simply pressing for the rejection of other gods is not clear. However it must be assumed that he did not, because it is a matter of such fundamental importance that Israel's historians would certainly have made a strong point of it. The stories of miracles that he performed, or the myths that are used to illustrate his open conflict with King Omri (882-871) and King Ahab (871-852) deal only with the issue of exclusive worship of the Lord within Israel and not the rejection of all foreign deities, and it appears that he still accepted the legitimacy of worship of Baal in other kingdoms. However, in the circumstances, the Israelites were required to think seriously about the implications of an exclusive covenant, and that was a turning point in the evolution of Hebrew covenantal theology. When their leaders accepted the concept of the Lord's pre-eminence in a system of divine collegiality, the forced separation and the unsubtle impact on their self-understanding and attitudes towards others caused serious social and economic consequences.¹⁴⁴

Subsequent to that first glimmer of prophetic insight from Nathan and Elijah during the monarchic period, when the arrogance, misconduct and broken relationships of the Israelite monarchies contributed to two phases of deportations and exile (to Assyria, 722, and Babylon, 597-586), the fall of both kingdoms, and the destruction of both Samaria and Jerusalem, a wave of prophets was inspired to try to change the direction of contemporary religious thought. They demanded repentance, an understanding of monotheism, and a new emphasis on the people's obligations to the Lord under the Mosaic Covenant of Sinai.

Fourth Cluster: 8th cent.

In the first rigorous phase of Israel's prophetic era, Hosea, Amos, Isaiah and others led a progressive understanding of what covenant involved on the basis of reflection on Israel's history and circumstances. They insisted that Yahweh's authority is universal; that

144 ———, *The Great Transformation: The Beginning of our Religious Traditions*, First ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 2006).

judgement and corrective punishment is imposed on both individuals and communities or nations; and that the human agency for punishment under divine judgement may be no less corrupt or unworthy than the party being punished; and that Israel will recover to be a blessing to mankind as foreshadowed by the Lord to Abraham.

The particular message from Hosea was that all aspects of the Mosaic Covenant were effective in perpetuity regardless of the failures of its monarchy or the people. When Israel rejected God's law, reverted to paganism, and could make no claim to rights under the covenantal promise, God told Hosea 'your children have sinned.' The prophet's response was quite contrary to Moses' earlier appeal for communal forgiveness and a second chance. He showed an initial misunderstanding, saying, in effect, that God should annul the covenant and 'exchange them for a different people.' For that he was chastised and told that although the chosen children for whom God had special love had violated the covenant of *Adam* (Hos. 6:7 Jerusalem) and would 'search (for God) in their misery,' they could never be exchanged for another people. When they atoned for their sins, God's love would again be evident.¹⁴⁵

Fifth Cluster: late 7th, early 6th cent

In 622, only 26 years before the decisive battles which saw Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon defeat Neco of Egypt in a battle in Syria, and then crush an uprising by Judah, led by Jehoiakim, King Josiah had initiated renovations to the Temple and a series of religious reforms in Judah. They were justified as an attempt to bring Judah back to the worship of Yahweh and to reassert Judean political independence. It appears that the second motive, political independence, was more important to him than religious reform, except to the extent that religious uniformity might achieve political support and stability. (See Constantine, Chapter Four.)

Textual evidence indicates that those circumstances prompted editors to bring together material from the 10th and 8th cents. and new material from the P source to prepare a history of the conquest of Palestine under Joshua as successor to Moses. Directly relevant to the Covenant of Sinai is the mass circumcision of males of all ages, (Josh. 5:2-9), because the People Israel had failed to honour that fundamental covenantal obligation after leaving Sinai en-route to Canaan, as confirmed by God's words to Joshua: 'This day have I

145 Moshe Reiss, "Hosea: A Schizophrenogenic Prophets I "
 http://www.moshereiss.org/articles/26_hosea.htm.

rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you.' (Josh. 5:9 JVL).¹⁴⁶ More than a century later editors added an additional note. (See Cluster six)

The writer of Deuteronomy 12-16 (Ref. 27) notes that during the course of the temple renovations the Deuteronomic Code was discovered and adopted as national law, giving Judah a standard by which she might examine both her practices and her history. The books involving the code, Exodus and Deuteronomy, are believed to have been edited on the basis of that discovery. However there were other considerations. According to Norman Gottwald the editing is not clear.

The laws of chapters 12-16 (of Deuteronomy) are most closely related to those of the Covenant Code of Ex. 20:22-23:33 ... Approximately half the laws in the Covenant Code are duplicated in Deuteronomy, but the differences are sufficient to cast serious doubt on the hypothesis that Deuteronomy used the Covenant Code directly and on the otherwise attractive view that Deuteronomy was intended to replace the Covenant Code. It appears rather that both codes drew on a larger body of laws.¹⁴⁷

The reason has since become apparent. In 612 Ninerva fell to the Babylonians and its massive libraries became available for exploration. They included the Hammurabi Code which had been instituted in the 18th cent.. Later, towards the end of the second millennium BCE when the city-states of Babylon were consolidated into one by Nebuchadnezzar I, he instituted Hammurabi's god, Mardak, as the supernatural focus for the entire state. The Hammurabi Code thereupon received the seal of approval of the chief deity, its validity was recognized over a large region, and it was still being copied well over a thousand years later.

When the Judeans were exiled to Babylon in 586 they learned of that code – either from the original tablets discovered in the library or because it was actually in use in some form – and according to John van Seters¹⁴⁸, sections of the critical Hebrew Covenant Code (Ex. 20:23-23:33) were drawn directly from the Amorite Hammurabi Code and integrated with earlier Deuteronomic Codes. It had already had a significant influence on civil conduct across several empires (even if not on military conduct) but its lasting impact came from its inclusion in the Hebrew Deuteronomic codes during the exile. On this basis the editing

¹⁴⁶ Moses had already experienced God's wrath, during his return to Egypt, for having failed to circumcise his son. (Ex. 4:24-26)

¹⁴⁷ Norman K. Gottwald, "The Book of Deuteronomy," in *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Charles M. Laymon (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971). p. 100.

¹⁴⁸ van Seters. *Law Book*.

of the Deuteronomic codes should no longer be considered pre-exilic, but should be included in the period of the Exile (cluster six). The D strand editors also compiled the Book(s) of Kings, (*Ref. 17*), from existing material and oral histories and, as noted in the third cluster, placed it in event sequence approximating chronological order.

The writer of Jeremiah 31:30-33, (*Ref. 28*), notes that during the period prior to the exile, the second phase of Israel's prophetic era, Jeremiah developed an enhanced understanding of the Mosaic Covenant and incurred the wrath of Jehoiakim by opposing the planned uprising. He saw that an enemy was not simply an ambitious competitor, or one whose anger had been aroused. The enemy could be the Lord's instrument for punishment when the community had fallen short of its obligations under the covenant, and he believed that was the case in the circumstances of the time. He anticipated that Israel would again be subjugated, by Babylon, but that it would rise yet again; that it was to have a continuing role in Yahweh's plan, and that there is a personal relationship between the Lord and each person as well as a communal relationship between the Lord and Israel. He, also, saw that the Mosaic Covenant is permanent and immutable. It does not matter whether or not he knew of the Hammurabi Code and its incorporation into the Hebrew Codes before he died in exile in Egypt six years after the catastrophic uprising. He was referring to the Mosaic Covenant as a covenant irrespective of the specific codes adopted under it.

His papers carried the personal authority of the Prophet. Many were dictated to Baruch to replace the originals which were destroyed by temple officials angered by his prophecies of destruction of the monarchy and the temple. His works concerned Judah's imminent subjugation by Babylon; the enemy as Yahweh's instrument to punish Israel for its failure to honour the covenant; that restoration would follow punishment; there would be a continuing role for Israel in God's purpose; that Yahweh demanded total obedience; and that there is a personal relationship between Yahweh and each person as well as a communal relationship between Yahweh and Israel; the covenant is permanent and immutable.

However the passage that attracts most attention, and controversy because the stylistic differences raise the question of whether Jeremiah actually composed it, is this:

Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, and I will form a covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, a new covenant. Not like the covenant that I formed with their forefathers on the day I took them by the hand to take them out of the land of Egypt, that they broke My covenant,

although I was a lord over them, says the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will form with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will place My law in their midst and I will inscribe it upon their hearts, and I will be their God and they shall be My people. And no longer shall one teach his neighbor or [shall] one [teach] his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know Me from their smallest to their greatest, says the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will no longer remember. (Jeremiah 31:30-33 JP)

That passage refers specifically to “the house of Israel and the house of Judah” and it does not introduce any additional obligations or change the divine relationship in any way, but debate focuses on whether the writer was anticipating the restoration of Jerusalem and reforms along the lines Josiah initiated, or prophesying a totally new covenant to supersede the Mosaic Covenant. Together with the Oracle of Nathan (the ‘Davidic Covenant’) it was to become a key consideration in several matters which are considered in this chapter and the next: Jewish thinking at the time of decay under the Hasmonean dynasty; Christian self-understanding and claims of superior access to salvation in the early church; and the development of theories of supersessionism and replacement theology.

The third composite passage in this cluster, (Ref. 29, II Samuel 7:11b,16), concerns the message conveyed by Nathan from Yahweh to David at Jerusalem, during the 10th cent after he was anointed king, the capture of Jerusalem and security for his monarchy, but rejection of his proposal to build a temple. The text of uncertain origin was inserted between 11b and 16. As noted above (‘Samuel: the Monarchy, Saul, David and the Oracle of Nathan’) the editing appears to have been intended to support the proposition that the Davidic Dynasty was unconditionally eternal by divine decree and that the Messiah will be a scion of David. It is plausible that the editing of this passage and Jeremiah 31:31-34 (Ref. 28) was coordinated.

Sixth Cluster: 6th cent. Prior to and during Babylonian Exile

During the Babylonian Exile, under the influence of Zoroaster’s virtual monotheism which had been adopted by Cyrus of Persia and exposure to the accumulated mythology of the earlier phase of Babylonian history, the ‘Second Isaiah’ and other prophets came to several dramatic conclusions. They saw that Israel’s God and Persia’s God were one and thus the Lord was not exclusively Israel’s god. The realization that God has a covenant with all humanity and that God’s love and compassion is for all who repent – not only those under Abrahamic or Mosaic Covenants – was very important indeed. But there were two considerations that were critical: realization that Israel is to exemplify the impact of that

relationship, and that each person is subject to individual obligation, responsibility, judgement and retribution quite independent of communal or familial considerations under covenant.

During this period, immediately preceding and during the exile, a number of prophets in addition to Second Isaiah and Jonah were active and some are also credited with having significant influence. One is Ezekiel who is of interest for two reasons. First, because he is widely assumed to have been a prophet in exile, and Freedman and Miano¹⁴⁹ refer to a passage from the book that bears his name to illustrate certain ideas and expectations that were current in Israel during the Second temple Period and were carried into Christian covenantal theology. They wrote:

... the people of Israel still maintained a hope that God would once again **renew** his conditional covenant(s) with them. Ezekiel speaks of dry bones being refleshed and brought to life (Ezek. 37:1-14), which is an illustration not only of Israel's physical restoration but of covenant **restoration** as well, since material blessings can only be given to those within a valid covenantal relationship with the Deity.¹⁵⁰

However, in some instances it was the editing and redaction applied to a prophet's work that gave it its importance, and, according to W. H. Brownlee,¹⁵¹ of the first passage cited, only verses 37:7-11 are original Ezekiel. The others are additions by one of many editors who added to and embellished Ezekiel's writings in a series of stages from c. 597 to as late as c. 300 BCE. Brownlee cites evidence that Ezekiel lived and prophesied only in Palestine and was never in exile; that all of the exilic material comes from editors of later times; that "once he was taken to be an exilic prophet later editors seized on this assumption and emphasized it as an important basis for the apologetic arguments implicit in their work"; that inserted passages "sometimes misinterpret the earlier passages to which they are attached", and that late editors did such a thorough job of rearranging and elaborating that "a superficial study of the book gives a false sense of literary unity."

That is the case with the two late insertions in Joshua which complement the report of Israel's mass circumcision. (Cluster five.) In the first, c. 550 or later, Joshua is said to have

149 Freedman and Miano, "Covenant People."

150 Ibid. p. 11.

151 William Hugh Brownlee, "The Book of Ezekiel," in *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Charles M. Laymon (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971).

reminded his people in his farewell speech that God had never failed to honour a promise, but that evil would befall them and they would lose the land if they reverted to the sin of intermarriage with pagans.

If ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you; know for a certainty that HaShem your G-d will no more drive these nations from out of your sight; but they shall be a snare and a trap unto you, and a scourge in your sides, and pricks in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which HaShem your G-d hath given you. (Josh. 23: 12-13 JVL)

In the second, perhaps added by a later editor of the D circle¹⁵², he is said to invite the people to choose between serving Yahweh and worshipping pagan gods:

If it seem evil unto you to serve HaShem, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve HaShem. (Josh 24:15 JVL)

He invokes a response that is said to be a covenant with God at Shechem, that they will reject other gods and loyally obey all of Yahweh's commands. But the suggestion that they could have opted out, or either renewed the Covenant of Sinai or negotiated a different one, is erroneous. That covenant is in perpetuity - every aspect of it - and Joshua had already told them that they were still subject to it and that to reject it would be catastrophic. It would not be annulled. They could not opt out, and there would be no new one. They were subject to it and they could only resolve to honour it absolutely or take the consequences.

The references to renewing and restoring the Mosaic Covenant contradicts the understanding developed by Hosea (ref. 22) and Jeremiah (ref. 28) that Israel's conditional covenant of human obligation is perpetual and is not abrogated by one or more failures. The reference to material blessings only being given to those within a valid covenantal relationship with the Deity, implying a specific relationship, ignores the concurrent acceptance of the perpetual Noahide Covenant (ref. 47) which had already been added, or was about to be added, to Genesis 9.

¹⁵² Robert Houston Smith, "The Book of Joshua," in *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Charles M. Laymon (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971). pp. 122-3, 133.

The second reason to reflect on Ezekiel's understanding of covenant is that he initiated a significant change in emphasis. In the passage Ezek. 18:1-32 the writer broadened the considerations within covenant significantly, referring explicitly to individual personal obligation, responsibility, judgement and retribution as a consideration together with communal obligation, responsibility, judgement and retribution. He contrasts it with family and communal obligation but positions it as an additional and complementary consideration and not an alternative. That emphasis differs from the thrust of covenantal understanding in other extant Hebrew scriptures that were compiled prior to the exile.

Seventh Cluster: Post exile 6th/early 5th cent; Early Second Temple Period

The circumstances of the partial exile proved to be a prelude to a five hundred year period of personal trauma and massive communal disruption which would usher in, and become the drawing board for the re-orientation of Jewish settlement and identity, and re-direction of Jewish endeavour and scholarship as the First Epoch thundered to a close and the Second Epoch opened. The focus on Jerusalem as the central place of worship - with or without the Temple - faded. The several communities of exiles in Babylon developed a more or less common cultural base, especially after the Judean king-in-exile, Jehoiachin, was elevated in status and granted a royal dole. The community of refugees who fled to Alexandria and other centres in Egypt did likewise, and the remnant community in Palestine was weakened by becoming just one imperial province among several and by the influx of Edomites with their uncertain heritage of descent from unidentified pagans of the Abrahamic era, powers which had conquered the region from time to time, but principally Ishmael, his siblings other than Isaac, and Esau.

Three centres of influence were thus established; the foundations of the Diaspora and future cultural division between German-based Ashkenazim and Spanish-based Sephardim were laid; and there was stimulus for a number of scholars to question prevailing interpretation of the Torah and Israel's role, and, as with Ezekiel, to adopt a different approach to covenant

Biblical redaction continued and, as with the previous cluster, the editing involved some critical additions to Genesis and Exodus concerning the era of the 15th cent or earlier and relating to material compiled three to four centuries earlier. The passages relating to the creation, Noah and the Universal Covenant are all attributed as P, 8th / 7th cent., but there is uncertainty about whether they were composed pre or post exile because they reflect

exposure to the mythology of Mesopotamia, and they are placed, in Biblical time, in the fourth and third millennia BCE.

Confirming that revelation of divine covenant is an ongoing process, Talmudist David Weiss Halivni¹⁵³ wrote that Moses' revelation on Sinai was a continuing revelation that was not completed until the work of Ezekiel, (assumed to be in Exile), and of Ezra, after he returned to Jerusalem with the inspired support of King Artaxerxes in the fifth century BCE.¹⁵⁴ Ezra began to re-teach the Mosaic Torah to a generation of Jerusalemites who had forgotten much of it and who were then speaking Aramaic of Babylonia, and Halivni argued that classical Judaism lent Ezra a status near, or in ways equal to, that of Moses. He also credited Ezra with introducing a new approach to Torah reading which led to later rabbis distinguishing between "plain sense" reading and "interpretative" reading.

Ezra had, in a real sense, anticipated the enormous difficulties that the notion of biblical inerrancy would generate in later eras. There are Talmudic traditions that the Torah texts were transmitted by the priestly scribes to Ezra as "oral Torah" to be transcribed, that he was not only the principal Torah redactor in 458 BCE, but the chronicler of both Ezra and Nehemiah, and possibly Malachi whose prophetic writings are dated c. 450 BCE, (see Cluster Eight), and there is a rabbinic saying that if the Torah had not been given to Moses it would have been given to Ezra.¹⁵⁵ However, research for this thesis indicates that if Halivni proposed that revelation was *complete* with the work of Ezekiel and Ezra, he was mistaken. It remains a continuing process.

According to Charles Fritsch,¹⁵⁶ under Nehemiah's governorship, the composite population of Jerusalem, being returned exiles, descendants of the remnant Jewish population in the city, and immigrant Moabites, renewed their covenant relationship with God. However,

153 David Weiss Halivni, *Peshat and Derash: Plain and Applied Meaning in Rabbinic Exegesis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). Cited in Peter Ochs, *The Free Church and Israel's Covenant: The 2009 J.J. Thiessen Lectures* (Winnipeg: CMU Press, 2010).

154 Ezra 7:1-13, 25-26; 10:4-6 JVL.

155 Judah J. Sloki, *Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah* (London: Soncino Press, 1951). Cited in Jacobs, "Companion." For discussion of alternative dating and authorship of these books, and whether the persons named were contemporaries or successive figures, and his assessment that the Chronicler wrote in the first decades of the 4th cent. BCE, see Charles T. Fritsch, "The Book of Ezra," in *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Charles M. Laymon (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971). Introductory notes in "The Jerusalem Bible." state that the two books of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah were all compiled by the same hand in the 3rd cent. BCE.

Hyatt, "Israel's Story."

156 Fritsch, "Nehemiah." p. 230.

the term 'renew' implies that the community had the capacity to negotiate the reinstatement of the covenant after its abrogation by God, and the Tanakh shows clearly that Nehemiah's understanding of covenant was indeed mature. In contrast to Hosea's initial reaction that God could and should annul the covenant and 'exchange (Israel) for a different people,' he knew that it was operational in perpetuity.

Nehemiah was determined to gain acceptance by the people that the exile and 'failed state' circumstances of the community were the result of their ancestor's failure to honour their covenantal obligations; that their contemporary conduct was no better, and that the only way to prove to God that they understood their role and obligations, and that they deserved God's love and protection under covenant was to obey all the Laws of Moses absolutely. He therefore reprimanded them and, in collaboration with Ezra, imposed his authority on the people and had them swear allegiance to God and commit themselves to absolute obedience to the Law. (Neh. 5:6-16; 9:1-5; 10:1,29-30; 13:30-31. JVL) Nehemiah did not add anything new to covenantal understanding, but, as the First Epoch reached its climax, he helped to demonstrate its reality through his intense personal belief, commitment and intervention.

Then, more or less concurrently, whoever it was, the writer of Malachi 1:11-14 and 2:17-3:5, believed and promoted recognition that the monotheistic worship of neighbouring peoples (specifically Persian Zoroastrianism) was worship of the Lord by different terminology. He argued that priestly failure and general community disobedience had led the Lord to desert Israel; that a messenger would appear to prepare for a return to a proper relationship with Yahweh; that prophets would no longer be active, and that a new wave of priests dedicated to the Mosaic Covenant would arise.¹⁵⁷

Eighth Cluster: 5th to 1st cent; Late Second temple Period

References in this cluster include works from the Pseudepigrapha and the Qumran Community as well as canonical Hebrew texts. It is widely accepted that efforts by religious and civil authorities to restore the religious life of the former kingdoms of Judah and Israel, and the commitment of the Jewish people to the Lord, languished as the Second

¹⁵⁷ Jacobs, "Companion." cites the Talmud (Megillah 15a) in naming Malachi, Haggai and Zechariah as the last of the prophets, and Schiffman, "Scriptures." says later rabbinic tradition asserts that prophecy ceased with the conquest of Alexander the Great in 332 BCE, and that books composed subsequently were not included in the prophetic canon. In view of Malachi's belief that prophecy in Israel had ceased, and this Talmudic statement that Malachi was one of the last prophets, the suggestion in Jacobs, attributed to Sloki, that one source identified Ezra with Malachi would appear to have no validity.

Temple Period degenerated into an era of uncertainty and upheaval as rival powers fought for control of Palestine on the strategic Eastern Mediterranean coast, culminating with the catastrophic Hasmonean monarchy. As a consequence, the literature of the later stages of that period is dominated by challenges to the dominant religious authorities, attempts to find new directions for religious life, new approaches to honouring the Mosaic Covenant, and progressively rising messianic expectations.

There were possibly twenty four heretical groups which each claimed to be the true Israel, only some of which were totally opposed to the Jewish authorities who controlled the Jerusalem Temple.¹⁵⁸ Their existence and their circumstantial responses were intimately related to the Hasmonean monarchy, and the writings in the eighth cluster are therefore examined in the Next section which deals with that monarchy.

8. A new regime. The Hasmonean Era. The covenant message not heard

When the Seleucid regime gained control of Judea, or the region of Canaan, from the Ptolemies in 201 BCE, Antiochus III, sought Jewish cooperation against threats from competing imperial interests through taxation reductions, political privileges and a decree recognizing Judea's peculiar ancestral law, the Torah. Although the origins of the Qumran Community are obscure, variously dated from c. 197 BCE to c. 150 BCE, James Vanderkam suggests that the Essenes and that community came into existence as a penitential community shortly after that Seleucid occupation, c.197 BCE, and that a Teacher of Righteousness appeared c.177 BCE. (See below)¹⁵⁹ The circumstances of the time would certainly have encouraged such a development. The region, and especially the territories of Israel and Judah, had been caught up in the military and political struggles of the powers around them – Persia, Syria, Greece, Macedonia, Rome, Carthage and Egypt – for a very long time, and this had generated uncertainty and the growing pangs of nationalism, with Jewish religious practices in a dynamic state of flux.¹⁶⁰

Very shortly, in the first decades of the 2nd cent. BCE, c. 190-180, at a time that Temple worship was focused on an animal offering, priestly libations, Levitical singing and prayers for the well-being of Israel, Jeshua ben Sira,

¹⁵⁸ Hershel Shanks, "The Dead Sea Scrolls— Discovery and Meaning," (2012). p. 22.

¹⁵⁹ VanderKam, *Dead Sea - VanderKam*. p. 100. Dead Sea Scrolls p. 100

¹⁶⁰ J. R. Davila, "The Damascus Document and the Community Rule," (St. Andrews, Fife: University of St Andrews, 2005). discusses alternative views on the dating of the Damascus Document and suggests that the origin of the Qumran Community might be somewhat later than 197 BCE.

whose work is preserved as Ecclesiasticus, insisted that no quest for atonement was of any value unless it was based on genuine contrition and repentance. The Lord's forgiveness is a contingent aspect of covenant and cannot be taken for granted. "Do not say, 'His mercy is great, he will forgive the multitude of my sins', for both mercy and wrath are with him, and his anger will rest on sinners." (Ecclus.5:6) But the Law is not arbitrary, thus "reason must be the beginning of every activity, reflection must come before any undertaking." (Ecclus. 37:16)

"Wisdom was created before all other things," he said. (Ecclus. 1:1) "The Lord created humans ... filled them with knowledge and understanding and showed them good and evil ... established with them an eternal covenant and revealed to them his decrees ... their iniquities are not hidden from him ... he will rise up and repay them ... and bring their recompense on their heads, yet to those who repent he grants a return, and he encourages those who are losing hope." (Ecclus. 17:1,7,12,20-24 NRSV)

Ben Sira's unique, dynamic contribution to an understanding of covenant was to show that apart from the particular obligations imposed on Israel as "the Lord's own portion," (Ecclus. 17:17) the basis of all humanity's obligations under the universal covenant, and one's relationship with God, was ethical conduct, sound relations with others based on wisdom or reason, and fear of the Lord which is the root of wisdom and delights the heart. (Ecclus. 1:12,20)

However, freedom of worship did not last long. In 175 BCE, 26 years after Antiochus III recognized Jewish worship, his successor, Antiochus IV, adopted an alternative policy. Greek citizenship was offered to everyone throughout the empire who adopted its culture and lifestyle. The benefits of Greek citizenship appealed to many Jews and some underwent surgical reversal of their circumcision to be able to play in the gymnasium games.¹⁶¹ Jason, the newly appointed High Priest, offered to increase Judea's tribute payments in return for construction of a gymnasium and the Hellenization of Jerusalem, and massive intrigue followed. Menelaus, without the pedigree for appointment as High Priest, gained the post. In conjunction with Antiochus IV he suppressed Jewish customs, and in 168 BCE renamed the Temple Zeus Olympus, introduced pagan practices and cults, and banned circumcision.

The reaction from non-Hellenized Jews, and in particular the Hasmonean priestly family, was intense. Composition of the Book of Daniel began promptly, c.167, from a blend of

161 Gribetz, Greenstein, and Stein, *Timetables*. p. 42.

current and oral history,¹⁶² with a dual emphasis on Israel's covenant continuing regardless of the fate of Jerusalem, and God's kingdom embracing not only all of humanity, but the totality of creation forever, and the situation resulted in to two critical developments. The first was an explosive nationalistic uprising led by the priestly Hasmonean family in 165 BCE. A truce was reached for a time, but later in the year Judas ("The Hammer") Maccabee, with the support of the Hasideans, confronted the Seleucid fortress at Jerusalem, rejected terms, and, *without* Hasidean support, marched into Jerusalem, and occupied and rededicated the temple.

Antiochus IV reversed his suppression order but failed to achieve reconciliation between the Hellenized and Orthodox Jews, and the second critical development was fragmentation of the Jewish community. Intrigue for control of the Temple, and uprisings against Hellenization continued, and three recognized religious communities consolidated into competing sects or parties, Sadducees, Pharisees and Essenes.¹⁶³ The critical passages of Daniel 7:13-28; 9:1-27; 11:40-12:13 (Ref. 59) which are apocalyptic rather than prophetic, were written in the wake of the devastation of Jerusalem by Apollonius, the desecration of the Temple and enforced Hellenization of Judea, and were added to existing historical passages at the time of the Hasmonean revolt, c. 164 BCE. The writer sought to encourage those who refused to accept Hellenization and the banning of Judaism. He proclaimed that the God of Israel does not change; that God's covenant was sustained previously when Israel was subjugated; it will be sustained again if Jerusalem is again destroyed, and a 'son of man' will appear to establish God's kingdom.

Having begun as an attempt to relieve religious oppression, the Hasmonean/Maccabean revolution proceeded to engage in politicking, treaty and allegiance breaking and expansionist policies which fragmented the Jewish alliance. From 134 BCE John Hyrcanus, having been proclaimed Hasmonean leader in Jerusalem, formed an alliance with Rome against Seleucid demands; strengthened his regime by conquering Beth-Shean, Shechem and Transjordan; razed the Samaritan temple, and proceeded with political intrigue to abuse every aspect of the Mosaic covenant.

162 Ibid. p. 44, identifies 165 as the year of composition of the critical chapters 7-12.

163 Otto Morkholm, "Antiochus IV," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism: The Hellenistic Age*, ed. David Davies and Louis Finkelstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; reprint, 2003).

Concurrent with the early phase of the Hasmonean Monarchy, from c. 150 BCE, the writer of Jubilees attempt to tighten Jewish belief and practice, especially during the expansionist reign of John Hyrcanus. (Ref. 62). He, proposed that the Universal Covenant with humanity through Noah was the basis of God's relationship with humanity; that the Mosaic covenant was a continuation or renewal of the Universal Covenant,¹⁶⁴ and that the Mosaic Law was an Israel-specific expansion of the Noachian Laws. He provided a rigid apocalyptic Pharisaic reinterpretation or commentary on Genesis and Exodus, and sought to tighten the exclusivity of Israel's Covenant, insisting that Israel was subject to God while other nations were subject to subordinate spirits. (Jubilees i:23-26)

Jubilees declares Hebrew to be the heavenly language from Adam to Noah and to have been rejected by his sons, and restored by Abraham (Jubilees xii:27 ff); that the Noachian laws were the foundation of Judaism and extended through Moses (Jubilees vii:20-29); marriage with gentiles was forbidden (Jubilees xxx:7-14); all sins are recorded until Condemnation or Judgment Day, except that Israel should obtain pardon by annual repentance on Atonement Day (Jubilees iv:21 ff, v:13-18); and that the Feast of Weeks was instituted in heaven, ordained for Noah, adapted by Abraham as the Feast of Circumcision and renewed by Moses as the Feast of Covenant (Jubilees vi:15-22).

Controversy erupted over the Book of Jubilees, and abuses of the Temple and the composition in Hebrew of the key chapters, 7-12, of the Book of Daniel all contributed and, in the circumstances, encouraged the settlement of more penitential reformist Essenes at the established Qumran Community, c.150 BCE.¹⁶⁵ However John Hyrcanus continued with his expansionist program, and in an act of retaliatory Judaization in 128 BCE he forcibly circumcised the Idumeans. That act was an abuse of the foundational and most sacred practice required of Jews, and an act of sacrilege of monumental proportions. Many Jews were alienated, he lost the support of the Pharisees, and turned to the Sadducees for support. He imposed conversion to Judaism on the populations of all occupied territories; looted the tomb of David to pay his mercenaries; weakened the resolve of the fragmented Jewish religious leadership and caused a great moral vacuum in Israel.

¹⁶⁴ Jacques van Ruiten, "The Covenant of Noah in *Jubilees* 6.1-38," in *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C. R. de Roo (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2003). p. 190.

¹⁶⁵ VanderKam, *Dead Sea - VanderKam*. pp. 42-46.

In 120 BCE the Samaritans fixed their own version of the Torah and determined to remain a separate religious group,¹⁶⁶ and a number of books were compiled in quick succession: the messianic Psalms of Solomon, Maccabees I, II and III (opposing any interference in traditional Jewish worship and temple practice), additions to the Scroll of Esther, and editing of the Damascus and other documents of the Qumran Community.

In sharp contrast to the tone of Ecclesiasticus, Maccabees I and II, written after Mattathias led the Jews in justified resistance against forced apostasy which erupted into a successful but murderous uprising against Hellenization – but apparently before the monarchy fell into gross misconduct – are full of praise for his actions. They call for the resistance to continue; remind the current generation repeatedly of the benefits and protection provided for their forebears under God's covenant with Israel, and which they can expect also; encourage prayers for continuity of prosperity, protection and defeat for Israel's enemies; and Maccabees I introduces two divergent notions. It proposed that to accept pagan practices for personal benefit was to abandon the covenant, and it encouraged martyrdom in defence of the faith.

They have built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, such as the pagans have, disguised their circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant, submitting to the heathen rule as willing slaves of impiety. (I Macc. 1:14 Jerusalem)

This is the time, my children, for you to have a burning fervour for the Law and to give your lives for the covenant of our ancestors ... Remember that ... Phinehas, our father, in return for his burning fervour received a covenant of everlasting priesthood. (I Macc. 2:49-50, 54 Jerusalem.)

Similarly, with the story of Eleazar, who chose death by execution, II Maccabees illustrates belief in the nature and honour of martyrdom as a covenantal obligation.

Even though for the moment I avoid execution by man, I can never, living nor dead, elude the grasp of the Almighty. Therefore if I am man enough to quit this life here and now I shall prove myself worthy of my old age, and I shall have left the young a noble example of how to make a good death, eagerly and generously, for the venerable and holy laws. (II Macc. 6:26-28 Jerusalem)

It also promotes the belief in physical resurrection through statements attributed to four of seven sons who were all executed for refusing to renounce their faith.

¹⁶⁶ Gribetz, Greenstein, and Stein, *Timetables*. p. 47.

The second said “you may discharge us from this present life, but the King of the world will raise us up, since it is for his laws that we die, to live again for ever.” The third said “it was heaven that gave me these limbs; for the sake of his laws I disdain them; from him I hope to receive them again.” The fourth said “ours is the better choice, to meet death at men’s hands, yet relying on God’s promise that we shall be raised up by him; whereas for you there can be no resurrection, no new life.” (II Macc. 7:9,11,14 Jerusalem)

Craig Evans ¹⁶⁷ illustrates the socio-religious environment with his statement that Israel’s ancient covenant – primarily the Mosaic Covenant of Sinai – and its renewal constituted the *raison d’être* for the Qumran Community. Among the early Essenes who developed the Qumran Community, its documents and systems of discipline, was one known as the Teacher of Righteousness who possibly saw himself as called, both in the context of the teaching of the Book of Daniel and the end of the 390-year period of punishment for Israel prophesied by Ezekiel (Ezek. 4:4-5). He apparently became the leader of a pietistic sub-set of the Qumran Community whose members proclaimed personal allegiance to him as the “prophet like Moses” or the “New Moses” with whom God was in direct communication, so the Damascus Document records that, as scripture had promised, “HE raised up for them a Teacher of Righteousness to guide them in the Way of HIS Heart.”

According to Evans, “interest in the Covenant, in obeying it as perfectly as possible, provides the rationale for the formation of the community, the guidance for community development, and the hermeneutic for interpretation of the Scriptures.”¹⁶⁸ The preamble to the Damascus Document refers to the division of Israel into two camps, the obedient and the disobedient, and notes that there will be a period of God’s wrath, but it does not suggest the Covenant is about to be abrogated.

The ‘children of the light’ avoid the ways of evil (line 1), but the faithless ‘have not obeyed the voice of Moses’, instead they ‘have gone about spreading lies about His laws, and from the Covenant of God’ they have gone astray (lines 15-17). Because of this failure to keep God’s Laws, ‘a period of God’s wrath is decreed’, but the obedient will be given insight in order that they may ‘understand future events before they come upon them’ (4Q268 frag. 1, line 5, 7-8) Therefore, the righteous are advised to give careful heed, knowing that God will judge the wicked (CD 1.1-2).¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Craig Evans, "Covenant in the Qumran Literature," in *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C. R. de Roo (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2003).

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 55.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 58.

The same understanding – exclusion from “the household of Law” for those who reject “the commandments” and continuity of favour for the faithful – is expressed in other passages.¹⁷⁰ Martin Abegg¹⁷¹ explains that the Qumran Sectarrians¹⁷² recognized continuity in an extended chain of covenants from Noah through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Levi, Phinehas and David, plus the ‘covenant of the kingdom’ and the ‘covenant of the eternal priesthood’ to the ‘New Covenant’, presaged by Jeremiah and entrusted to the Qumran Community in a process in which the ‘old standard’ of Sinai would be either refreshed or renewed (cleansed and reinvigorated perhaps) but not abrogated.

In Israel, “promise-making and promise-keeping were the essential elements in every connection between persons. Religion became such a matter of covenant,”¹⁷³ and for the Qumran Community the concept of covenant was absolutely central. According to its Manual of Discipline, section I, (Ref. 61, c.100-75 BCE), entering the Covenant is an acknowledgment of the continuing validity of the Mosaic Covenant of Sinai, Israel’s past, and its contemporary failings. However, it saw the covenantal relationship as restricted to those who adhered to a statement of very highly disciplined conduct required of those who sought its membership and who, after their preliminary ‘testing’ period, were admitted into the community. The Damascus Document, (Ref. 62, c.100-75B CE), which precedes the key manual, above, is an austere set of commandments laid down to regulate the life of the community, and a tirade against Israel’s forebears and the hierarchy of the Hasmonean Monarchy for failing to uphold the covenant.¹⁷⁴

The life and expansion of the Qumran Community certainly represented a determined attempt to establish a separate community dedicated to honouring the Covenant in succession to, or as a replacement for, the religious institutions which its members regarded as failed, and, following the gutting of Jerusalem they must have been confident that the future was in their hands. However, as a community, they survived for little more than a century into the Second Epoch.

170 Including CD 20.8b-10a; 4Q266 2 i 1-6, and 4Q268 frag. 1, lines 1-8.

171 Martin G. Abegg, “The Covenant of the Qumran Sectarrians,” in *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C. R. De Roo (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

172 Ibid. Abegg uses the term ‘Qumran Sectarrians’ instead of Qumran Community to avoid examining the question of whether the documents and beliefs of the entire Essene community corresponded with those at Qumran.

173 H. R. Niebuhr, *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture* 41 (1970) quoted in Newman, “Ananalysis,” p. 89.

174 Gribetz, Greenstein, and Stein, *Timetables*. p. 50, identifies 75 as the year of composition.

Many of the other documents written during the final three centuries of the first epoch related to one aspect or another of covenants, treaties, contracts, agreements or oaths, but they added nothing to the mature understanding of divine covenant, and some made no reference to 'covenant' at all. Those which did, referring to matters between God and a particular party, saw it in a very legalistic sense and reflected the widely accepted doctrine of reward and punishment, and the sense of desperation, foreboding and doubt in the wake of the Babylonian Exile. This is alluded to in Ecclesiastes which was composed about the same time that the Torah was being translated into Greek as the LXX version, c. 280 BCE, but with no direct reference to covenant at all, and its writer(s) may have been influenced by the Greek philosophers of the two centuries prior. "It is a sore task that G-d hath given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith, (Eccl. 1:13 JVL), and "the wise man, his eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness. And I also perceived that one event happeneth to them all." (Eccl. 2:14 JVL)

In any case, intrigue and social and political turmoil continued through the 1st cent. BCE under the Hasmonean monarchy, and in 67 BCE, two competing brothers, Aristobulus II (allied with the Sadducees) and Hyrcanus II (allied with the Pharisees), sought support from Rome to resolve their disputed leadership. In 63 BCE, 65 years after the Judaization of Idumea, when Pompey arrived after subjugating Syria to resolve the dispute – and to absorb the region – it took a three-month siege to subdue Jerusalem, and the breaching of the city walls triggered factional reprisals among the defenders, great confusion, the massacre of 12,000 Jews and the partial firing of the city. Judea was stripped of much of its territory and reduced to a vassal state. This officially eliminated the Hasmonean regime and brought the First Epoch towards a painful close, but it did not mean an immediate end to Hasmonean influence. That continued, with dynastic power struggles, wars and assassinations until Pompey put an end to it by marrying a granddaughter of John Hyrcanus II and having her sole remaining sibling, High Priest Aristobulus II, murdered in 35 BCE.

9. A mature understanding of covenant ... waiting to be implemented

During a millennium dated from the delivery of the Covenant of Sinai, Israel's prophets had developed, and refined, a comprehensive understanding of the concept of covenant. The understanding was not spontaneous. It had been garnered from Israel's exposure to the Lord's demands and the experience of both the dramatic highs and traumatic lows of the

consequences of being subject to a very specific covenant. Their role in enabling Israel to understand and to act on the community-specific role that had been imposed on it, as a people, was critical.

Their work, and the way in which they responded to the enormous responsibility placed on them, provided a sound basis for the people to move forward with confidence. However, when Israel became embroiled in regional power conflicts, the nation's leaders ignored it. They were more interested in securing political and economic advantage as adjacent imperial powers competed to secure Canaan as a compliant territorial buffer zone. Self-interest, a significant factor in the exercise of humanity's God-given freewill in decision making, resulted in a leadership focus on the *promise* of the Mosaic Covenant which they interpreted as territorial sovereignty and power, and which became a distraction from the big picture and, in particular, the obligations which the whole nation was required to honour.

The consequence was that the comprehensive evolved understanding of covenantal relationships would remain little more than theological hypothesis pending Israel's involvement in interaction between communities that interpreted religious matters, and in particular covenantal relationships, differently. In fact the communities with which that interaction would soon take place did not yet exist. Their leaders had yet to receive their divine circumstantially-invoked commissions. The Hebrew prophets had not left a neat concise statement of covenantal understanding. It was all available scattered through the Tanakh. It just had to be pieced together. If they had done so, it could have looked like this.

The Mature Hebrew Understanding of Divine Covenant

- A covenant is invoked or initiated by God, the first party.
- A covenant is non-exclusive and the invocation or initiation of a covenant is entirely a matter for God.
- It is a means by which God reveals the Divine will, intentions for humanity and all of creation, and a means of enabling humanity to gain a meaningful understanding of its relationship with God.
- Interaction between parties which are subject to identifiable community-specific covenants may be a means of exemplifying either an aspect of covenant or as aspect of divine intention.

- A covenant involves a relationship which is imposed on the second party. It is not an agreement.
- It is non-negotiable and inescapable.
- It is perpetual in application and operation, and thus will never be revoked or annulled.
- It is cyclical, not static.
- The relationship between the parties and the phase of the cycle that is dominant at any time are dependent entirely on the response and the conduct of the second party.
- The conduct of a second party to a covenant is subject to guidance, and misconduct may be proscribed, but the party's conduct is entirely determined by unrestricted free will, and it cannot avoid any adverse circumstances that result.
- The principal component aspects of a covenant are four, viz:-
 - A divine call or command by which the covenant is identifiable
 - A divine undertaking or promise that is conditional upon adherence to linked obligations.
 - Obligations associated with a role or roles that may be identified together with the call or command, or may be latent and recognizable circumstantially.
 - A penal clause under which rejection of a covenantal obligation or failure to adhere to it may involve divine judgment and the application of a penalty.
- A penalty is not necessarily invoked immediately upon the relevant inaction or misconduct of the second party. By the nature of Divine Will it may be applied and become apparent progressively, after a substantial circumstantial delay, or it might not become apparent until subsequent generations.
- It is very likely to involve a retaliatory reaction by a third party which has been adversely affected by the relevant inaction or misconduct.
- It might involve temporary negation or withholding of a Divine undertaking which has been recognized as basic to the covenant, and which will be reinstated, subject to the second party returning to God's favour through repentance and recompense for the third party.
- It might also involve a new role or a variation in emphasis within the existing role, not anticipated or announced in a previously understood manner, and invoked by God in relation to a Divine undertaking that is already understood and recognized as an aspect of a different community-specific or universally applicable covenantal relationship.

- In that case the cyclical pattern of repentance, recompense, adherence to the obligations of the new role and a return to God's favour will be entirely consistent with all aspects of the covenant to which the second party has been subject since its initiation.

In the specific case of Israel in current circumstances, that sequence may be vital in enabling humanity-at-large to recognize the validity of divine covenants, humanity's relationship with God, and the reality of the statement relating to Abraham and attributed to HaShem that "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him." (Gen. 18:17-18 JVL)

Chapter Four

The second epoch: shared responsibility

1. Introduction

This chapter opens with an examination of Jesus' background and the joint ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus. The basis of the New Testament is then considered in some depth before the consequences of Paul's intervention and the development of Christology within the young church. This is followed by discussion of the establishment of the Christian Church as the second body subject to a community-specific covenant, and the parallel establishment of Rabbinic Judaism with the development of Midrash, the Mishnah the Talmud and completely new approaches to biblical exegesis.

In sequence there are then examinations of the remarkable change in the circumstances of world Jewry as the Diaspora became home for most of its people, the impact of Paul's teaching, the failure of the leaders of the church-in-process-of-formation to recognize that the mature Hebrew understanding of covenant had been lost during the later stage of the First Epoch, and the corruption of the imperial church which became the stimulus for the prophetic ministry of Muhammad, the rise of Islam as the third body subject to a community-specific covenant, and the Qur'anic understanding of covenantal relationships.

Those matters were also external challenges which compounded the internal challenges for the Jewish community as it contemplated whether it was still subject to the Mosaic Covenant of Sinai, and, if so, in what manner, or whether the covenant had been annulled due to misconduct and failure.

2. Jesus' background

Jesus was a Jew. His religious identity as a Jew, the depth of his commitment to Judaism and the Covenant of Sinai, and his acute awareness of a special relationship with God is unquestionable. He was a Jew because he was born into a Jewish family, but his ethnicity and an extended Hebrew heritage cannot be verified. The attempt by the writer of Matthew to establish unbroken descent from Abraham to Jesus through David and thus to demonstrate or justify kingship of Israel on the basis of the "Davidic Covenant" – the Oracle of Nathan – is, as already noted in chapter three, unsustainable.

There was no tradition of recording genealogies in that manner for family records, although extended symbolic genealogies were used in Genesis to assist in community understanding in matters of creation. (pp. 96-101). Furthermore Fleming's history of Nazareth¹⁷⁵ establishes that Joseph's forebears could not have settled in Nazareth until after the Seleucids defeated the Ptolemies and Antiochus III issued a decree requiring Jews to obey their ancestral law rigidly, and it does not provide any clues to Joseph's ancestry. Nor does it provide any clues to the origins or ethnicity of Mary's forebears, and it leaves open the possibility that they were either paganized Samaritans or foreigners who were subject to Judaization under either John Hyrcanus in 128 or Aristobulus I in 104 BCE.

The writer of the Gospel of Luke indicates that the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, (Lk. 1:26-27). He notes that all people were required to go "to their own towns to be registered" for a census, and that "Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David." (Lk. 2:3-4) This does not establish that Joseph had lived there: only that he was *not* Judaized under the Hasmonean campaigns. It purports to show that his forebears had lived in the vicinity of Bethlehem at some time but it does not substantiate the claim that he was "of David's line," especially as the writer of Matthew lists 27 supposed forebears between David and Jesus, but omits two generations during the 60-year period of the exile.

The conclusion is that Jesus was *not* of David's line, and that the church's claim to authority based on the notion of an hereditary covenant is not sustainable and is an outcome of the flawed development of Christology.¹⁷⁶ However this research task does not require examination of Christology *per se*. Therefore, in view of the extensive evidence, and noting that Qur'anic teaching is even more explicit in proclaiming Jesus' virgin birth (S.3 A. 35-51) than the Gospels, the notion that Jesus was born by divine intervention of a virgin mother is not questioned. Thus, in accord with the three principal creeds of the

175 James Fleming, "Nazareth History: The Importance of Nazareth in the Christian Tradition," (LaGrange, Georgia: Biblical Resources 2009).

176 Mark L. Y. Chan, *Christology from within and Ahead: Hermeneutics, Contingency, and the Quest for Transcontextual Criteria in Christology*. (Boston: Brill, 2001).

Vincent P. Branick, "'Dominus Iesus' and the Ecumenical Dialogue with Catholics.," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*. 38, no. 4 (2001). Branick examines a number of paradoxes in 'Dominus Iesus' and the difficulty it caused for Catholic-Reformed relations.

churches,¹⁷⁷ one thing is taken as given. No male of David's line had anything to do with Jesus' birth, which occurred in Bethlehem to a family whose home was Nazareth, by Divine intent. If it were to be established that a male of David's line was Jesus' biological father, it would raise more questions for the church to consider than are within the scope of this research project, but the circumstances make it virtually impossible to establish that Joseph was of David's line.

On the basis of Divine Intervention Jesus was born within the exemplary community of the Mosaic Covenant, as a Jew, but of Humanity's line, not David's, and while Joseph's ethnic heritage cannot be established, neither can that of Mary, his mother. Islamic tradition maintains that Mary and Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, were cousins rather than only kinswomen (Luke 1:36) and that Mary can be presumed to be from a priestly family¹⁷⁸, but this does not make her ethnic heritage any more certain than Joseph's. At the time of Jesus' birth, the community of Nazareth was a small and insignificant agricultural village settled by no more than a few dozen families. Its history is very complex; it ceased to exist as a town for some time; it was not an homogenous Jewish community,¹⁷⁹ its population had been subject to violently enforced circumcision and Judaization under the Hasmonean regime, and it was a relatively poor rural village when Jesus is understood to have been born, in the year of the first Roman census of Jews, 4 BCE.¹⁸⁰

On that basis, Jesus would have been ten at the time of the second census, and about 14 when the Pharisaic Torah debates are understood to have been in progress.¹⁸¹ In view of the statement in Lk. 2:41-50 that already – at the age of twelve – he had stayed behind in the Temple in Jerusalem for three days after his parent's annual Passover visit to listen and join in discussion with the doctors of the law, it is reasonable to assume that he would have been aware of the debates.

177 *A Prayer Book for Australia*. First ed. (Alexandria NSW: Broughton Books for the Anglican Church of Australia, 1995). Athanasian Creed: "The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten." Nicene Creed: "He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man." Apostles' Creed: "He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary."

178 Yusuf Ali, 1985, Qur'an translation, footnotes 375 and 382 to S.3 A, 35 and 44.

179 Fleming, "Nazareth History: The Importance of Nazareth in the Christian Tradition."

180 The family's relative poverty is attested by Mary's sacrificial offering for the ceremony of Purification, 40 days after Jesus' birth: a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons, as required of a poor woman who could not afford a lamb. (Lk. 2:24)

181 The dates of the debates are uncertain, but they are usually referred to in general terms as beginning at the time of controversy over Roman administration and the requirement for the second census.

Then, as he approached adulthood there were a series of writings and events which may have contributed to his experiential environment. He was about nineteen when Scholar Hillel, according to tradition, instituted the *prozbul* to ease economic distress by channelling loans through a court that was not subject to sabbatical year restrictions. The *prozbul*, consistent with the Deuteronomic Code, was to offset manoeuvring in the Temple by money lenders who would refuse to make loans to the poor close to the sabbatical year when, according to the Torah, unpaid debts were to be forgiven.¹⁸²

At that time a young protégé of Hillel, Yohanan ben Zakkai, was appointed a judge in Galilee, close to the reconstructed city of Sepphoris which housed one of Palestine's three Pharisaic centres.¹⁸³ He was dismayed at the lack of religious commitment of the people of Galilee and their reluctance to accept his teaching that Torah study and strict observance brought salvation rather than messianic hope.¹⁸⁴ It can be assumed that by "observance" ben Zakkai meant acting on them and not simply knowing them by rote. If it were otherwise, he would not be considered a reformer. If so, his view was exactly what would become the basis of Jesus' teaching on covenantal obligation for action on his social Gospel. The Pharisaic Centre was only five miles from Nazareth and it can be assumed that Jesus visited it to worship or for discussions on occasions and that he was aware of ben Zakkai's work and views.¹⁸⁵

Thus it is clear that Jesus was not acting in isolation when he mounted his challenge for religious renewal within the Jewish community on the basis of adherence to the Mosaic Covenant. The 'updated' version of the Testament of Moses was compiled in 25 CE, when Jesus was probably about 29 and it is likely that he knew it had been revised to assure Jews that an apocalypse would follow the death of Herod. Similarly, it is thought that he knew some Greek¹⁸⁶ and therefore he might also have known the early writings of Philo. Then there was his relationship with John, the Baptist.

182 Gribetz, Greenstein, and Stein, *Timetables*. p. 15.

183 The others were at Jerusalem and Javneh.

184 Gribetz, Greenstein, and Stein, *Timetables*. p. 57.

185 It was Yohanan ben Zakkai who, forty years later, secured a way out of Jerusalem under siege, negotiated in Rome for the protection and subsequent re-establishment of the Jabneh Academy, the preservation of all available Jewish scripture, and rabbinical training programs.

186 N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, First ed., vol. 2 (London: SPCK, 2001; reprint, Third Impression 2001). p.147.

3. The Dual Ministry: John the Baptizer and Jesus of Nazareth

Because there are no verifiable records, anything written about Jesus' activities prior to his ministry is pure conjecture, but there are limited additional records of John the Baptist's life, and it can be assumed that Jesus was in contact with his 'kinsman',¹⁸⁷ John who, in due course, baptized him, to a greater extent than is acknowledged in the New Testament. John, his elder by only six months, was born in the Judean hills (Lk. 1:36-39) within reach of Jerusalem (Neh. 11:1-36), and spent much time living and preaching in the wildernesses east of the Jordan, north into Samaria, along the west coast of the Dead Sea and elsewhere in Judea as well as in the Jordan Valley.

John's ministry, and his community of disciples, was well established before that of Jesus. His preaching strictly followed Mosaic Law, as did the Essenes, and contrary to Joan Taylor's view, W.R. Farmer believes that John was in contact with them and might have spent time with an Essene community as a child.¹⁸⁸ John was well known to both the Jewish religious authorities and the Roman authorities with whom he had clashed. Farmer demonstrates that the Roman authorities feared his influence and had reason to want him eliminated as a factor. Salome's demand for his execution on the grounds of personal offence appears to have given Herod an opportunity to oblige.¹⁸⁹

John "was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel" (Lk.1:80); he and Jesus were clearly familiar with each other and he knew that Jesus was following him (Mt. 3:11-15; Mk 1:7. It is apparent that they had been together from time to time and that they spent extended periods together during their early adulthood. They knew each other well enough for John to say to Jesus: "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" eliciting the response "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness." (Mt. 3:14-15) Jesus remained in the Wilderness, some say working as

187 Lk. 1:36 refers to Elizabeth as a "kinswoman" of Mary but does not indicate the nature or closeness of the kinship.

188 W. R. Farmer, "John the Baptist," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990; reprint, 18th printing). pp. 959-960. It is known that some Essene communities adopted boys, and it is quite likely that John's childhood in the wilderness was spent with some such community.

Joan E. Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997). Taylor says that on the evidence available John should not be associated with the Essenes, especially during his childhood, and although he baptized in close proximity to some of their settlements and "he likely knew about a community there and about Essenes in general," "geographical proximity does not in itself require influence or connection." (Pp. 42-48)

189 Farmer, "John the Baptist." p. 961.

John's subordinate, an assistant or a disciple¹⁹⁰ for a period after his baptism, and he and his disciples then began baptizing in Judea while John was baptizing in Samaria, until John's arrest and incarceration in the remote military stronghold of Macherus.¹⁹¹ While John was in prison there was contact between him, his disciples and Jesus which establishes that there was a relationship between their ministries. Jesus returned to Galilee at that time, and Farmer suggests that his *decision* that he too must suffer and die may have been in part a *response* to the news of John's death.¹⁹² "Realization" and "may have been influenced by" are more appropriate expressions.

The evolution of their ministries and the relationship between them must be considered on the basis that the births of Jesus and John, only six months apart, are both attributed to divine intervention, as was Isaac's about one thousand eight hundred years earlier, and Samuel's, about one thousand years earlier. This places all four of them in a very special category, and it is reasonable to conclude that:

- The births of Jesus and John were divinely ordained in that manner so that their ministries would be complementary; (Lk.1: 121-17, 41-43.)
- Jesus and John saw their ministries in that light as a partnership under divine direction, or at least ministries-in-tandem;¹⁹³
- there was no sense of rivalry in their ministries, only between their followers, and those who compiled the history of their ministry for the Church's records deliberately 'played down' John's role;
- John's martyrdom led Jesus to recognize that he was bound to suffer the same fate;
- The loss of John steeled Jesus' determination to confront the authorities in Jerusalem, to press home their dereliction of duty under the obligations of the Mosaic Covenant,¹⁹⁴ and to lead a renewal of understanding and commitment to God under that Covenant.
- These considerations do not negate or contradict either the special messianic role that is attributed to Jesus but not to John, or the expectation of Jesus' return in glory at the

190 Ibid. pp.360-362,372-374.

191 Macherus was in the extreme south of Perea, fifteen miles down the east coast of the Dead Sea.

192 Farmer, "John the Baptist." p. 962.

193 Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "John the Baptist and Jesus," *Revue biblique* 98(1991). pp.365-366. says that the ministries of John and Jesus were a coordinated campaign among Jews and Samaritans and that by being baptized by John, Jesus showed that he was in agreement with him.

194 Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism*. p. 29. suggests that while John the Baptist called for repentance with great vigour there is no evidence to show that he shared Jesus' view that the Temple had been defiled by the priestly dereliction of duty.

time of judgement, which is strongly supported by the Qur'an, (S. 43 A.61), and various Hadith, when there is no such expectation of John.

The facts that their proclamations differed in emphasis, that John did not fully understand Jesus and that Jesus did not fully understand John¹⁹⁵ serve to illustrate human difference and that no two people who are designated as instruments of divine will ever be the same. They do not negate the proposition that their births and ministries were divinely ordained and complementary.¹⁹⁶ Taylor addresses this issue¹⁹⁷, discusses their common "possession" of the Holy Spirit, the Biblical use of the expression 'a beloved son' to designate a special prophet, and their different approaches to their tasks, and poses the question: "What, then, of the relationship between John and Jesus as prophets? Were they opposed or supportive of one another?" She concludes that if Jesus did describe his visionary experience in the Jordan in such a manner he must also have considered himself 'a beloved son', and poses another question: "If both John and Jesus were so close to God, what was their relationship?"¹⁹⁸

An assessment that John and Jesus were divinely ordained in such circumstances that their ministries would be complementary requires that the nature of their joint ministry be taken into account in considering all aspects of the covenant that is recognized in Calvinism and subsequent Reformed theology as a consequence of Jesus' ministry. In turn, recognition of a divinely inspired joint ministry introduces a basis for reconsideration of Christology. However that is not a matter for this thesis which is concerned only with matters directly relating to covenant.

Because of the size of the Essene community, (about 4,000),¹⁹⁹ its location in the Jordan Valley quite close to the point of Jesus' baptism, its well organized presence in a quarter of Jerusalem, and the noteworthy presence of the Qumran Community,²⁰⁰ it is quite implausible that Jesus was not familiar with their teachings when he commenced his

195 Ibid. p. 281.

196 See Robert L. Webb, "John the Baptist and His Relationship with Jesus," in *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994). p. 229.

197 Joan E. Taylor, *Two Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997). pp. 277-288 .

198 Ibid. p.280.

199 E. Graham, "Essenes.," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. (New York: Robert Appleton Company. , 1909).

200 Bargil Pixner, "Jerusalem's Essene Gateway: Where the Community Lived in Jesus' Time," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, no. May/June 1997 (1997).

ministry c. 27 CE, at the age of 31. The Qumran community had already been living in its isolated rigorously-ascetic community expecting to succeed the existing religious establishment and to uphold the Mosaic Covenant, for between about 80 and 125 years. Some scholars claim that without naming them, Jesus rejected certain Qumran teachings.²⁰¹ If those claims are valid it is confirmation that he had at least some direct contact with them. While the Qumran community totally dissociated itself from the Temple, it is not improbable that some Essenes attended discussions in the temple, with Jesus and other scholars, and that he was equally familiar with their attitudes and teachings as with those of the Pharisees and Sadducees.²⁰²

The community remained in existence until its settlement was destroyed by the Romans c. 73 CE. It was therefore active not only through his formative youth but the whole of Jesus' ministry, Philo of Alexandria's writing career, Josephus' command of Jewish forces against Rome in Galilee prior to the destruction of Qumran,²⁰³ and while Paul's letters were being written. It was destroyed about twenty or thirty years before the earliest of the Gospels was written. It took a different approach to securing Israel's role under covenant to those who had previously attempted it. It condemned the gross misconduct during the Hasmonean expansion; rejected sacrificial practices; anticipated renewal of the Covenant of Sinai through a faithful few²⁰⁴; and it imposed rigid discipline and conduct as a condition for communal and personal covenants on those seeking to join its "remnant community".²⁰⁵

However, the Qumran Community remained firmly within mainstream Judaism, it would have continued to contribute to the life of the community alongside other denominations if

201 E. C. S. III Leavenworth, "CHRISTIANITY AND QUMRAN: The Relationship Between The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christianity," Goodnews Christian Ministry, http://goodnewspirit.com/pdf4514qumran_christ.pdf.

202 Barnavi and Charbit, *Jewish History Atlas*. p.42, citing Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XIII.

Farmer, "John the Baptist." pp 959-960.

David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck, "Eerdmans dictionary of the Bible" (William B.Eerdmans Publishing). pp. 425-426. Also Josephus, *Jewish War* 5, p.145.

ibid. p. 426.

203 Jacobs, "Companion." pp. 377, 289. Philo died 50 CE. Josephus survived the destruction of Rome, joined the Roman imperial circle and advocated that the Jews abandon their futile resistance against Rome.

204 Evans, "Covenant in Qumran." p. 59.

205 Some of its disciplinary demands, such as the prohibition of sexual relations in Jerusalem, were barely credible except in a celibate community. Magen Broshi, "The Temple Scroll," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Discovery and Meaning*, ed. Hershel Shanks (Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2012). p. 28.

it were not destroyed by the Romans, and its action in preserving its literature has proven to be a major contribution to religious scholarship. Hershel Shanks describes the Dead Sea Scrolls as the principal Jewish religious literature for a period of about 350 years from the Book of Daniel, c. 150 BCE, to the compilation of the Mishnah, c. 250 CE, and notes that the Hebrew manuscripts found among them were the same as the base texts that were ultimately translated into the Greek Septuagint, thus confirming the validity of that translation.²⁰⁶

4. Jesus' message: 'Reform. You are under Covenant'

The entirety of Jesus' ministry and teaching was related to covenant. The first thrust of his preaching after his baptism, a period of reflection and challenge in the wilderness, and John's arrest, was a call for repentance: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." (Mk. 1:15) The message was simple and consistent with his responses in the wilderness. Without repentance you will not experience the kingdom. "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him," (Mt. 4:10) and "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." (Mt. 4:7) Salvation is prominent in Jesus' teaching, and always in the context of an aspect of covenant. It does not stand alone. If the need to maintain conduct consistent with an obligation was not a part of a relationship in which judgement and a penal clause were other aspects, there would be no need to call for repentance.

Similarly, John's first message was a dynamic call for repentance: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance" (Lk. 3: 7-9) An act of repentance is recognition that one has committed a sin. For Jews that meant an act contrary to conduct required under the Mosaic Covenant. Compliance with the Mosaic Law was fundamental to the covenant, but the Law did not cover every possible action and reaction. That brief passage was a compelling outline of the basis of covenant: divine undertaking and personal obligation linked to judgement and punishment in the event of failure. It was not necessary for John to refer to the prospect of loss of the territorial security which was the aspect of God's undertaking which was normally foremost in the peoples' minds instead of personal salvation. John's reference to personal redemption, or the loss of it, was the key to the covenant and made any reference to territory redundant.

206 Shanks, "Scrolls." pp. 20-21.

A person's conduct could be compliant in matters of ritual and formal worship, but not be compliant in personal dealings with the principles on which the law was based. John's message was, in effect, that every act had to be consistent with the principle underlying the law, and not only those actions that were specifically listed. The "fruits worthy of repentance" were actions consistent with the underlying principles. Also, acknowledgement of the person whose life was the focal point of the origin of religious faith did not entitle one to expect priority in admission to salvation and offset the debit points of transgression. It was not even required under the covenant. God was the focal point of the covenant. John's words leave no room to doubt the imminence of judgement or the finality and permanence of judgement.

In sequence, the next clear reference by Jesus to responsible conduct taking precedence over rigid observance of customary law concerns an act of compassion on the Sabbath is Mk.3:4-5. One of Jesus' key addresses to his disciples then followed, well over a year into his ministry. He was addressing them as Jews who, like him, were subject to the Mosaic Covenant and Israel's responsibility as the exemplar of God's will. He was not addressing them in the context of a breakaway sect at Pentecost. However, about two years later²⁰⁷, when it became apparent that a minority community would have to take up the ministry that he would no longer be able to pursue in person, the responsibilities indicated in that passage rested on *both* the continuing Jewish community and the Christian sect or church-in-formation.

- 'You are the salt of the earth ...
- 'You are the light of the world ...
- 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil.. (Mt 5:13-20)

The message is powerful and clear. Whether people are subject to the Mosaic Covenant or the New Covenant (which had not, at that time, been declared), they are to be exemplars to all humanity. Their every word, intention and action must have the essence of worship and bring glory to God. Nothing in the Mosaic Law was abrogated, but the Law was to be interpreted on the basis of the principles that Jesus' proceeded to enunciate progressively and with illustrations from everyday life that almost everyone could understand. God's

207 On the basis of dating by John Featherstone Stirling, *Philips' Atlas of the New Testament*, 3rd ed. (London: George Philip & Son., 1959).

judgement remains paramount, and exemplary conduct – not perfection but righteousness exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees of that time – is required for salvation. The basis of the covenant to which Jews and followers of Jesus were subject, whether of Jewish heritage or not, had not changed. Jesus reinforced it and indicated that any backsliding or half-hearted commitment amounted to failure or even implied rejection of the covenant. (Lk. 9:57-62.)

He confirmed that basis when he acknowledged a young lawyer's understanding of the requirement to inherit eternal life as to '... love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself,' (Lk. 10:27) and proceeded to tell the parable of the good Samaritan.

Then, as the climax of his ministry approached, Jesus confirmed that judgement and punishment for breach of covenant are absolute and permanent with the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. (Lk. 16:24-26.) However, that permanence of individual penalty, once determined, does not contradict either forgiveness upon repentance or the non-abrogation and cyclical nature of communal covenant. Furthermore, a breach of covenant that leads another into a breach of covenant also is condemned most strongly: "Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to anyone by whom they come! ..." (Lk. 17:1-2)

Clearly, because God's judgement is absolute and permanent, the final word on the related issues of tolerance, forgiveness and redemption also rests with God, as Jesus then illustrated with the parable of the rich ruler. Those who heard Jesus say, "Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God," asked "Then who can be saved?" He replied, "What is impossible for mortals is possible for God." (Lk.18:25-27) At the climax of his ministry, Jesus made references to the operation of the Mosaic Covenant several times in quick succession. In proclaiming that Israel had in fact failed to honour its obligation under the Mosaic Covenant, Jesus confirmed the basis of that and all covenants: the responsibility to seek and maintain peace; that enemies may become instruments for punishment in the event of failure or rejection of covenantal obligations; and that the consequences of such failure or rejection may be felt beyond the generation responsible for it. He said, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." (Mk. 11:17) He wept over Jerusalem, and described the devastation he expected. (Lk. 19: 41-44)

Jesus used the parable of the wicked tenants to illustrate that Israel's abuse of covenant was about to cost it the promised land: not necessarily permanently – the loss of a lease does not imply irrevocable change of occupancy – but traumatically. (Mt. 21: 40-41) The exchange continued, and Jesus indicated that Israel's role as the principal vehicle for bringing humanity to an understanding of the kingdom of God would pass to another entity with a very blunt question which is often referred to as justifying a policy of Supersessionism.

“Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’? Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.” (Mt. 21:42-44)

He then poured contempt on the scribes and Pharisees for denying any responsibility to offset the effects of the historic persecution of prophets, and for attending to the inconsequential and ignoring the “weightier matters” of the Mosaic Law – justice, mercy and faith – which are basic to covenantal obligation. (Mt. 23:1-36) When Jesus preached on the judgement of the nations, or the parable of the sheep and goats, he was not referring only to social responsibility, or obligations under covenant, he was confirming that judgement with eternal effect was fundamental to covenant.

Then (the people will also ask), “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?” (And) he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (Mt. 25: 44-46)

It was not until the penultimate point of his ministry that Jesus raised the question of his personal role in the economy or pattern of “the covenant.” Three of the Gospel writers refer to the incident. Two, Mark and Matthew use the term “covenant” without qualification. Luke qualifies it with the description “new”. The writer of John makes no mention of it at all.²⁰⁸ Jesus reference to the bread as his body “broken for you” is a dual

208 The three passages, for comparison, are: Mt. 26:26-29, Lk. 22:19-20, Mk. 14:22-24.

reference to sacrifice (being broken) and sustenance (being edible). His reference to the wine as blood is, without doubt, intended to equate the blood which he was about to lose on being crucified with the blood of bullocks which Moses cast towards, or ‘dashed on’, the people at Sinai with the words: “See the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.” (Ex. 24:8) Jesus’ use of the word ‘you’ broadened the context of the pronoun ‘you’ from plural/communal which is strongly evident in Deuteronomy 7, to encompass the personal in a new light compared with the Ten Commandments of Deuteronomy 5.

The question must therefore be considered: Was Jesus saying that his sacrifice related directly and only to the Mosaic Covenant, to an additional covenant, to a replacement covenant, or to both the Mosaic and an additional or “new” covenant?

5. What defines ‘The New Covenant’?

N. T. Wright considered this question at some length, but preceded that discussion by proposing that when Jesus spoke of the forgiving of sins he was “offering the return from exile, the renewed covenant, the eschatological ‘*forgiveness of sins*’ – in other words, the kingdom of god.”²⁰⁹ Concerning the challenge to live as a New Covenant People, he wrote that Gerhard Lohfink was ‘near the mark’ in saying that Jesus did not intend to found a church because there already was one, the people of Israel itself, and his intention was to reform Israel, not to found a different community altogether.²¹⁰

Wright then suggests that Jesus intended to establish cells of followers, mostly continuing to live in their towns and villages, who by giving their allegiance to him and adopting his praxis, his way of being Israel, would be distinctive within their local communities, and that he succeeded in doing so. He wrote that Jesus’ “construal of the symbolic world of Judaism involved, as with the Essenes, a sharp critique of the Temple and the clear understanding that his movement was *in some sense a replacement* for it.” He said Jesus challenged his followers to a distinctive lifestyle, living “as the people of the new covenant, those who were truly returned from exile, those for whom and in whom the

²⁰⁹ Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 2. p. 272.

²¹⁰ Ibid. p.275.

prophesies were coming true at last.”²¹¹ He then suggested that for a Jew the context of behaviour was the covenant, but for Jesus, the *context* was the *renewal* of the covenant.²¹²

Referring to the kingdom story, Wright says that:

From Jesus’ point of view, the narrative of YHWH’s dealings with Israel was designed to contribute to the larger story, of the creator’s dealings with the cosmos, (and) this shows ... that Jesus’ promise, implicit and explicit, to the nations beyond Israel’s borders came as part of an affirmation, not a denial, of the unique elected role of Israel within the purposes of YHWH.

²¹³

It is significant that Wright used the term ‘renewal’ when referring to the covenant. He used the term ‘replacement’ only in referring to a possible role for Jesus’ community in relation to the Temple, and none of the Gospel writers suggest that Jesus used it in referring to the covenant.

If it were a replacement, then *all* aspects of the one which was being superseded would have been annulled immediately. They include the divine undertaking and any prospect of it ever becoming identifiable; the obligation, and any need to attempt to fulfil it; the prospect of judgement and a consequential penalty; and any prospect of redemption. The people-Israel would have become free agents with absolutely no role in the Divine Plan and no need to reflect on their relationships with other people. It would have been for them as if two thousand years of religious evolution had not taken place.

Jesus was saying two things. First, that his life had been, and his sacrifice would be, on behalf of the people-Israel who were, and are, bound under the continuing *corporate or communal* Mosaic Covenant. Second, that his life and sacrifice also instituted a New *personal* Covenant that stood, and stands, together with, and in parallel with, the Mosaic Covenant.

Jesus commanded his disciples to accept a New Covenant with the obligation which Israel, at that point, had failed in miserably. The fundamentals of the New Covenant were the same as those of the Mosaic Covenant, with four changes.

²¹¹ p.276-7.Ibid.

²¹² Ibid. p.280.

²¹³ Ibid. p.310; *ibid.*

- First: the people of the New Covenant were not to inherit the territory of Canaan in the sense of it being a base from which to demonstrate humanity's relationship with God through exemplary relationships with neighbouring nations. Being the principal city of the region in which the covenantal relationships between God and humanity were revealed, the City of Jerusalem would become the geographic focal point for people of faith. This is not to discount the role of Zoroaster and the revelation which he received. The distinction is that one was revelation of relationships between God and humanity, and the other was revelation of the fact that God is God alone.
- Second: as would be made very clear at Pentecost, the world was to be their area of positive activity and the obligation to fulfil that role was couched in positive terms. This contrasted with the terminology of the Mosaic Covenant which required essentially passive responses from the Jews who were, in effect, anchored to their base in Canaan.
- Third: the people of the New Covenant were not subject to the rigid religious practices and the means of identification as a community that were still required of the People Israel.
- Fourth: the New Covenant was not restricted to people of one ethnic identity. It went beyond both the Mosaic Covenant with its restriction to descendants of Jacob/Israel, and the Abrahamic Covenant which was restricted to the wider community of descendants of Abraham. It was open to people without restriction: essentially the people of the Noahide Covenant which encompasses people of both prior specific covenants as sub-communities within the total human family.

However the New Covenant and the Noahide Covenant are not intrinsically the same. The Noahide Covenant is, by Freedman's definition unconditional: instituted by God with a divine commitment and universal obligations which no one is free to opt in or out of²¹⁴ The New Covenant is conditional: an open invitation requires recognition of the person extending the invitation, acceptance of a personal commitment, and acknowledgement that divine authority (judgement) is paramount. It means recognition of a personal covenant with God in a manner that shines a spotlight directly on humanity's relationship with God.

It was not a completely new light. Ezekiel²¹⁵ had lit a torch, but it had been allowed to go out. Nicholas Gier²¹⁶ shows that while a shift in emphasis actually began *within Judaism*

214 Freedman and Miano, "Covenant People." p.8.

215 See cluster seven, reference No. 42 in chapter three, Ezek. 37:1-14; 18:1-32.

with the prophet Ezekiel's writing during the Babylonian Exile, his inspiration might have been triggered by Zoroaster's teaching on ethical individualism. However the level of decadence in Jewish religious leadership and communal conduct was such that in spite of the efforts of Ezra and Nehemiah, the mid-Second Temple recovery was short-lived and little notice was taken of the shift in emphasis until it became a focus of the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus.²¹⁷

Jesus' disciples were certainly well instructed in the new emphasis but, at the time of their last supper with him, they were still uncertain of their future role. They had to wait for clarification until just prior to Jesus' ascension for his final message.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. (Mt. 28:19-20)

From that moment the world had two communities specifically covenanted as exemplars of God's will, each committed to enabling all people to understand their relationship with God, and the reality of God's absolute authority and love for humanity within the totality of creation. The leaders of the older one were determined to adhere to the plan they had devised to gain freedom from their overlords as a precursor for their communal salvation which they had come to see as the focal point of their covenant. The leaders of the younger one had received a command under a covenant in highly traumatic circumstances, and after Pentecost they floundered, with no idea how to put the command into effect.

6. Post-Pentecost disarray: Paul's intervention. The early church

From the circumstances it is apparent that it was quite inappropriate to refer to the New Covenant as a replacement for the Mosaic Covenant. However the small band leading those who held high hopes as a result of Jesus' ministry had to work through a series of questions before they could either understand the covenant under which they were bound or adequately respond to the command.

216 N. F. Gier, "Religious Syncretism," in *Theology Bluebook* (University of Idaho, 1994). p. 4.

217 Ibid. p. 4. Gier (Gier 1994 p. 4) says: In Zoroastrianism the supreme God, Ahura Mazda, gives all humans free-will so that they may choose between good and evil. Zoroaster may have been the first to discover ethical individualism. The first Hebrew prophet to speak unequivocally in terms of individual moral responsibility was Ezekiel, a prophet of the Babylonian exile. Up until that time Hebrew ethics had been guided by the idea of the corporate personality – that, e.g., the sins of the fathers are visited upon the sons (Ex. 20:1-2).

The questions started with who or what, really, was the person who had issued the command? Then, what was the context in which it was issued? What were its implications for their relationship with others in the community of which they were an integral part? What was to be their relationship with people beyond the community of which they were a part? There was also a very practical consideration. They had lost their leader on whom they were totally dependent. Who, or what group or structure would fill the void?

Jesus had not asked for his teachings or a record of his ministry to be written down, and none of his disciples had kept a record. Known as ‘the Nazarenes,’ they apparently continued to live and work within their Jewish communities or synagogues where these existed, and met only in a very loose network of colleagues within the Roman Province of Judea.²¹⁸ They were a disparate group, held together by a common affinity with their former leader. They were discontented with the customary leadership of the covenant community within which they still lived and worked, and they were uncertain of their relationship with it. They developed a simple support-group plan but without cohesive leadership, and they had no agreed statements of mission or belief. Each person set about preaching as they saw fit on the basis of their personal experience and third hand oral reports, and their preaching and their interpretation of the person Jesus and covenant varied greatly.

The conversion of Saul/Paul brought dramatic change a few years after Jesus’ crucifixion, c. 36 CE,²¹⁹ when he initiated systematic evangelical missions. Conflict developed both within the group of Nazarenes and between them and the synagogue leadership. Some years later, c. 49 CE, a council was held in Jerusalem to resolve the tensions and plan coordination. Shortly after that council Paul, and some unidentified persons, began writing letters (usually addressed to a particular community) that became the Nazarene’s first teaching documents. Paul’s letters are believed to have been written between 50 (Thessalonians) and 55-56 (Romans). However it was within the range of fifteen to twenty five years after the council that the first of the gospels, Mark, was written in an effort to preserve a record of the available oral histories and to interpret Jesus’ life and work.²²⁰

218 According to Gribetz, Greenstein, and Stein, *Timetables*. prior to the destruction of the Temple there were synagogues functioning in Caesarea, Dor, Tiberias, Capernaum “and elsewhere.”

219 Stirling, *New Testament Atlas* suggests c. 36-38. Other writers suggest dates as early as c. 31 CE.

220 Floyd V. Filson, "The Literary Relations Among the Gospels," in *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Charles M. Laymon (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971). The difficulty of

That places it either just before or just after the pivotal event in determining the future pattern of the relationship between the mainstream Jewish population and the Nazarenes: the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE and the Qumran Community, 73 CE, in which their leader, Eleazar ben Yair, and five hundred members took their own lives rather than face the fate of prisoners of Rome.

It was that twin event which combined with several other factors²²¹ to make structural separation virtually inevitable. The Christians, still unable to answer key questions to the satisfaction of their wider community, and fearful of the consequences of remaining within it, had to explain the background to their scattered community. Like the Hebrews a thousand years earlier, they needed to construct a history. It was a generation after the destruction of the Temple, or between forty and fifty years after the council, c. 90-100, before a record of the life of the young sect and its missionaries was circulated as *The Acts of the Apostles*.

It is clear from the prior deaths of key participants, (especially the Disciples to whom the writing of the Gospels was attributed), the inadequacy of human memory and the inevitable embellishment of orally transmitted history that the church's documents are no more accurate or reliable than those which the Jewish community prepared from oral history during the tenth to the eighth centuries BCE and subsequently redacted. It is possible that they are less credible, because the Christian records were compiled in a very competitive atmosphere and under the influence of documents already in circulation. They were not simply records of data and Jesus' statements. They were preaching and teaching materials which conveyed interpretations which the writers wanted their readers to accept in the same manner as the writers and redactors of the Hebrew Scriptures, notably in the case of John's Gospel, but also Matthew,²²² with distinct bias against the Jews in some letters. Paul's letter to the Romans and the letter to the Hebrews, attributed to him for some

dating the compilation of the Gospels, and their sequence, is discussed. Filson notes that the solution most widely held is that Mark was written first, probably c. 65-70 CE.

221 The other factors included the political ambitions of Jewish community leaders and the Zealot uprisings which precipitated the destruction of the Temple, progressive migration and the eventual deportation of much of the Jewish population.

222 Peter M. Mareddy, "Anti-semitism, Christianity, and the Catholic Church: Origins, Consequences, and Responses.," *Journal of Church and State* 47, no. 2 (2005).

time, are both widely criticized, but scholars such as Williamson²²³ offer some defence for Hebrews, suggesting misinterpretation of the writer's intention.

Jacob Neusner demonstrated the problem of textual credibility in his analysis of literary evidence in Hebrew textual development and redaction.²²⁴ He noted scholarly reliance on the assumption that sayings are to be assigned to the rabbis to whom they are attributed and therefore may be used to describe that person's thought. He questioned whether a saying attributed to a first-century authority in a document known to be redacted after five hundred or a thousand years can be taken as valid and representative of opinion in the century in which it was first written and believed true and authoritative. He also questioned the relative credibility of statements first appearing in documents redacted in the 5th, 10th or 15th centuries, and noted the well-known tendency of medieval writers to put their opinions into the mouths of the ancients, as in the case of the Zohar.

The circumstances of both faith communities, and especially the inconsistencies in documents which purport to be records of the first century of the church's activity, suggest that writings in the Christian Canon should be subject to some of the considerations Neusner proposes apply to the Hebrew Canon. He says there are few really comprehensive accounts of the history of a single idea or concept, that the treatment in available accounts of early rabbinic Judaism of one topic after another must be characterized as unhistorical and superficial, and that there are scarcely any critical works comparing various versions of a story in successive compilations.

Separation meant that the Nazarenes became known as Christians, Christianity was from that time in direct competition with Judaism, and it was necessary for the church to justify its separate existence, to determine its teaching, and to resolve its understanding of covenant. It had real difficulty in developing and expressing a cohesive explanation of those matters, as is illustrated by contradiction and convoluted arguments in the letters of Paul, and the scope of documents which were omitted when the Christian Canon was being adopted. It was Paul, who saw himself as "set apart before he was born" (Gal. 1:15), who arguably had a greater influence on theological evolution in the early church than any other writers.

223 Clark M. Williamson, "Anti-judaism in Hebrews?," *Interpretation*.ProQuest LLC 57, no. 3 (2003).

224 Neusner, "Rabbinic Judaism." pp. 221-2

As Bornkamm²²⁵ makes clear; “Paul’s theology is not a repetition of Jesus’ preaching of the coming of God’s kingdom (and) Never does he make the slightest effort to expound the teaching of the historical Jesus.” According to Bornkamm:

Jesus Christ himself and the salvation based on and made available through his death on the cross, his resurrection, and his exaltation as Lord form the subject of Paul’s proclamation. This means that a complete shift came about which the modern mind finds hard to understand and often deplores. It has exposed the apostle to the reproach of having falsified Christianity and thus of having rather shadily become its real “founder.” Paul, it is alleged, turned Jesus’ good tidings into a gospel of redemption replete with Jewish ideas and Hellenistic mythologies.²²⁶

7. The Church loses a vision of covenant

Because the early church leaders were unable to grasp the relationship between the Mosaic Covenant and the New Covenant, they floundered, searching for a way to understand Christ, and developed a line of reasoning that placed personal salvation before all else. They developed doctrines that made salvation, or justification, solely dependent on faith in Christ. Paul’s letters illustrate and possibly established the problem, but it was exacerbated during the Reformation when letters by other writers were used by scholars searching for a rationale to oppose the corrupt use of indulgences and to justify continuing anti-Semitism.

Concerning faith in relation to conduct as a basis for redemption, Paul refers to Abraham’s faith in God having justified him, and the faith of Christians in Jesus as justifying them. (Rom. 4:1- 5, 5:1-2, repeated in Gal. 3:6)

(Scripture says) ‘Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.’ Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness. (Rom. 4:3-5)

In doing so he cites Genesis 15:6 which is translated in the Tanakh (JVL) as “and he believed in HaShem; and He counted it to him for righteousness,” in the NRSV as: “and he *believed* the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness,” but in the Jerusalem translation as “Abraham put his *faith* in Yahweh, who counted this as making him *justified*.” However Genesis 15:6 is an insert from an E source placed between J source

²²⁵ Gunther Bornkamm, *Paul*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker, First English ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971; reprint, Second impression, 1972). pp. 109-110.

²²⁶ Ibid. p.109.

material, and according to subsequent references to responsibility for the covenant passing to his descendants, Abraham and they were each told by God that this was in recognition of Abraham's *obedience*. The term 'faith' was not used. The Tanakh records God's words to Abraham thus:

'By Myself have I sworn, saith HaShem, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son ... thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies ... because thou hast hearkened to My voice.' (Gen. 22:16-18 JVL)

and the NRSV translation reads:

'By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son ... your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies ... because you have *obeyed* my voice.' (Gen. 22:16-18 NRSV, emphasis added.)

Paul's inconsistency in the way in which he deals with faith as the foundation for redemption, and his ambivalence in references to the fate of the Jews provided many opportunities, or incentives, for virulent anti-Jewish pronouncements by later Christian writers. He could say:

'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' (Rom. 10:11-13)

And even those of Israel, if they do not persist in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. (Rom. 11:23)²²⁷

Key points of one of the first letters attributed to another writer, Hebrews,²²⁸ make its purpose very clear: to denigrate Judaism and distance it from Christianity. It said that in speaking of 'a new covenant', God has made the first one obsolete and it would soon disappear (Heb. 8:13); Jesus became the guarantee of a better covenant (Heb. 7:22); Jesus' promises are superior (Heb. 7:7); and Jesus, who obtained a more excellent ministry, is the mediator of a better covenant, enacted through better promises (Heb. 8:6). Its climax is that The Lord abolished the first covenant in order to establish the second (Heb. 10:9), and that if the first had been faultless, there would have been no need to look for a second one. (Heb. 8:7)

²²⁷ Equally significant are the following passages: Romans 11:28-29, Romans 11:11-12, Romans 11:28-29

²²⁸ Date uncertain. Various proposed as c. 60 to c. 90.

The writer of a letter from the middle period of gospel and letter writers, Ephesians, c. 90-95, denied that gentiles had any relationship with God until the ministry of Jesus, quite specifically contradicting the prophetic Hebrew acknowledgement of a Universal Covenant.

remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth ... were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. (Eph. 2:11-12)

Christ Jesus came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God ... (Eph. 2:17-19)

Similarly, the writer of the fourth and last of the gospels, the Gospel of John, writing c. 91-107, one generation after the destruction of the Temple, sought to negate Judaism and the Mosaic Covenant. He either ignored or deliberately contradicted the prophetic Hebrew acknowledgement of a Universal Covenant, the evolved understanding of the non-abrogation of covenants, and the belief that God is god of all humanity, and attributed to Jesus the words: 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' (Jn. 14:6) That gospel is described by J. N. Sanders²²⁹ as "perhaps the single most influential book of the NT in the fashioning of early Christian dogma."²³⁰

The impact of that passage is complicated by Jesus' condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees, and, in particular, as it is recorded in Mat. 23:36-39.

Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation.

'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you, desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord." '

That has usually been interpreted to mean that divine condemnation of the Jews is permanent, that there will be no bodily return of Jesus until "the Jews" (universally) accept Jesus as Messiah, and as a basis for Supersessionism. That interpretation ignores the use of

229 J. N. Sanders, "Gospel of John," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962; reprint, 18th printing, 1990). pp. 932-946.

230 Ibid. p. 932.

the words “this generation,” which imply non-permanence, and two qualifying aspects of the mature Hebrew understanding which was the context in which Jesus was speaking: that the penal consequence of breach of covenant may be experienced by future generations, and the non-abrogation of the covenant. However an alternative interpretation of the words ‘you will not see me again until you say, “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord”’ which is more persuasive is that the Jewish community will not be able to understand and respond to Jesus’ ministry until its leadership acknowledges the legitimacy of that ministry and that he did, in fact, come “in the name of THE LORD.” On that basis they should not be interpreted as a call for blessings for a person who comes in the name of *Jesus* as THE LORD.

In view of such teachings and growing antipathy, Christians were placed under official anathema, which carried a ban from Synagogues, by Rabban Gamaliel II of Jabneh, c.90-100 CE, rabbinic houses of study, *batei midrash*, were established, as was the first synagogue near Rome where the church was seeking to strengthen its position, and relations deteriorated further. Unpredictable Roman swings from acceptance of one faith or the other to rejection, prohibition and back again compounded confusion and antagonism. Emperor Trajan's advice to Governor Bithynia in 112 in effect made it punishable to be a Christian and resulted in waves of martyrdoms²³¹ (#Franzen 50-51) , and then in 116 CE, when Hadrian forbade circumcision and decreed that the Temple was not to be rebuilt, he had to suppress another Jewish rebellion. He slaughtered or expelled all Jews on Cyprus, forbidding any to return. When Simon Bar Kokhbab led his messianic rebellion 16 years later Hadrian had to suppress that, too, but it took four years, 600,000 casualties, the enslavement of thousands and the paganization of Jerusalem as *Aelia Capitolina*.

The strength of the Roman Empire was its system of standardized law, and every aspect of society, including the practice of religion, was expected to be uniform and standardized. Fragmentation was seen as a threat to stability. Pressure to standardize a Christian tradition was building, but the same applied to the Jewish community.

The church’s ability to respond was being undermined by confusion in Christian understanding of covenant compounded progressively by such paganization, by the reintroduction of circumcision in 138 CE, and by Justin Martyr and Marcion of Sinope,

231 August Franzen and John P. Dolan, *A Concise History of the Church*, trans. Peter Becker, First English ed. (London: Burns & Oates, 1969). pp. 50-51

c.140 CE. Justin insisted that the Jewish scriptures did not belong to the Jews, but to the Christians, and Marcion preached a form of dualism, saying that there was no continuity between Israel and the church. Yahweh was the wrathful God of evil, he said, while Christ was the supreme God of good.

In the Jewish stream, a digest of the Oral Torah, the Mishnah, was compiled at the turn of the 2nd / 3rd cent. by Rabbi Judah while the church argued over Gnosticism, Montanism (demanding asceticism, moral rigidity and readiness for martyrdom), and Chiliasm, with its adherents gathering to await the arrival of Christ for the Last Judgment. Subsequently, c. 400, compilation of the Palestinian Talmud (Yerushalmi) began with the collection of teachings, debates and discussions among the sages, (primarily the Palestinian Tannaim, but additionally the Amoraim), covering all aspects of the Mishnah. They were divided broadly into Halakhah (laws, rules and regulations for religious life), and Aggadah (ethics, history, philosophy, medicine and anything not specifically law-related).

The publication of a Galilean Midrash of Exodus in Israel at that time introduced a new dimension to Jewish literature, complementing the digest of the Oral Torah, the Mishnah, which Rabbi Judah had completed two centuries earlier. The Rabbinite and *batei midrash* pushed ahead to provide a comprehensive literary resource for their people, confident in the covenantal relationship under which they believed themselves bound, and over the next 300 years Midrash were completed on each book of the Pentateuch. The composition and study of Midrash continued as a vital aspect of Jewish life until the 12th cent. However, scholars differ in their descriptions of the relationship between the Mishnah, Midrash and the Talmud. For some time Midrash composed in Palestine were published separately from the Talmud, while the Babylonian policy from 499 was to incorporate Midrash directly into the Talmud. These divergent policies apparently continued until, in circumstances of conflict with the Karaite Sect, both Talmuds were “closed.”

While work began on the Palestinian Talmud and the Midrash of Exodus was being circulated, the parallel Christian stream was preoccupied with the Pelagian Controversy which raged in the wake of Pelagius’ effort to counter Augustine’s proposition that humans were predestined to sin in order to be corrected.²³² Pelagius showed remarkable perception of the prophetic Hebrew understanding of the relationship between God and humanity

232 E. Phillips Barker, ed. *A Treatise of Saint Aurelius Augustine Bishop of Hippo On the Catechizing of the Uninstructed* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1912). Chapter 18, paragraph 30.

which is the basis of a covenantal relationship and which is reflected in the three synoptic gospels. His teachings, condensed here from a summary by J. N. D. Kelly,²³³ show that:

- God endows humans with the privilege of unconditional freewill
- Humans are responsible for their own actions and the choices they make
- The opportunity to choose good entails the opportunity to choose evil
- Humans can opt for conduct which they deem acceptable to God and therefore leading to divine acceptance, or opt for conduct not acceptable to God and therefore subject to judgement and condemnation
- There are three aspects of any action: the power to perform; the will to do so; the realization of the action. The first is provided exclusively by God. The others are determined by the human.
- No person can withdraw from God's absolute authority and sovereignty
- Divine law proclaims to humans the course they should follow and provides guidance
- The supernatural alternatives of acceptance and reward, or condemnation and pain are set out before them
- Human will is not biased towards wrong-doing as a result of 'fall'
- No soul comes into the world soiled by an 'original sin'
- God is forgiving of the sins of individuals and does not load them with the sins of others
- Sin follows the exercise of free will

According to B.R. Rees,²³⁴ Pelagius was "victim to over-simplification and culpable misrepresentation" which concealed the fact that at stake was a "much more basic conception of what the very nature of human existence is according to Christianity." Pelagius was overpowered by Augustine, who had recently published *Ad Simplicianum* as a step towards persuading Christians that, as Kelly encapsulates it, "mankind (is) a 'lump of sin', unable to make any move to save itself and wholly dependent on God's grace."²³⁵

Without a formal pronouncement, the Creed of Saint Athanasius was progressively introduced in the Western Church sometime between 381 and 428.. It negated the mature Hebrew concept of covenant; stated that Christ "suffered for our salvation"; insisted that

233 Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*. pp. 359-361.

234 B. R. Rees, *Pelagius: Life and Letters* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998).

235 Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*. p. 357.

every person outside the Catholick Faith was condemned; noted that “it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he (a person who wants salvation²³⁶) also believe rightly” in a list of dogmatic statements, and stated its core message four times.

Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick Faith. Which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. ... He therefore that will be saved: must thus think of the Trinity ... This is the Catholick Faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.²³⁷

It was not a matter of enhancing faith by clarifying teaching. There was no mention of the love of God or Jesus Christ, and no guidelines for conduct except that “they that have done good shall go into everlasting life; and they have done evil into everlasting fire.” It was a case of imposing religious discipline by fear, and abrogating the teaching of Jesus. It made normal relations between Christians and non-Christians virtually impossible. In particular, it placed a barrier between Christians and Jews and pagans who, in the 5th cent., were the only other people citizens or suzerain subjects of the empire were likely to meet, unless they were adherents of a declared heretical sect.²³⁸

It is apparent that the church hierarchy believed that its straightjacket approach to religion was necessary in view of the need which it perceived to strengthen its relationship with the empire which was intent on achieving political stability within the empire through religious uniformity. Imperial fortunes were rising and falling as one theological controversy followed another. Waves of invaders swept into Europe from North and East Asia, and Persia threatened it from the east as well. In the Arabian Peninsula Mecca was a growing trading centre on the Red Sea serving the Mediterranean and linking India and Syria by a land route, so Byzantine imperial authorities became interested in the Bedouin regions of Northern Arabia, Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and the Yemen in Southern Arabia. Cooperation with heretics and non-Christians was necessary in several places, especially Southern Arabia and the Yemen which could complement the existing land route.

²³⁶ Words inserted for clarification.

²³⁷ *A Prayer Book for Australia*. Extracts, Creed of St. Athanasius, Creed. Pp.836-837.

²³⁸ Some heretical beliefs and communities had developed on the fringes of the empire. Others had filtered to the fringes to avoid persecution. They included Gnostics, Montanists, Donatists, Bardesanes, Marcionites, Ebionites, Audiani, Apollinarians, Manichaeans, Monophysites, Copts, Jacobites, Armenians, Abyssinians, Priscillians, Valentinians, Arian Goths and Vandals, Semi-Arians, Anamoeans, Homoeans, and Nestorians.

In the early years of the 6th cent., just after the Babylonian Talmud, or Bavli, is thought to have been compiled on a similar basis to the Yerushalmi, the despised Monophysite Christian stream, (established as a result of one of the church's Christological controversies and formally regarded as heretical), extended its influence into the Yemen and cooperated with Byzantium in forcing the Himyarite king of Yemen, Dhu Nuwas, to flee inland. He adopted Judaism which had spread in the region after the destruction of the Temple, made an alliance with Persia, and returned later to persecute the Abyssinian Christians and slaughter large numbers.²³⁹

Religious and political turmoil continued as each imperial power sought to control the Yemen as a key part of the Arabian Peninsula, the Red Sea, North Africa and Persia, but in due course Meccan national pride was strengthened when Abraha, the dominant Abyssinian Christian general, was repulsed, c. 560,²⁴⁰ and a direct effect of such competition with repeated invasions and counter-invasions was political and social disintegration. As a result, when the Ma'rib dam, the economic base for the region, burst for the third time in 570 – the year in which (according to tradition) the Prophet Muhammad was born – there was no will for the neighbouring communities to cooperate in its reconstruction. The region progressively disintegrated, and Bedouin reoccupied large tracts of land.²⁴¹

In 609, continuing syncretism and proselytizing, the pope consecrated the main temple of pagan cults linked to Pantheism in Rome, the Pantheon, as a Christian church for the honour of Our Lady and the Martyrs, and emperor Heraclius followed with total prohibition of Judaism and enforced persecution wherever Catholicism was re-established.²⁴² Then, needing funds for defence against Persia he stopped subsidy payments to the Ghassanids of Northern Arabia and converted them into enemies.

239 This episode, about 50 years prior to the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, is alluded to and condemned in "The Holy Qur'an: Trans. Yusuf Ali." S.85 and footnote 6055, and attested in an online Jewish Encyclopedia, reference, <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/5159-dhu-nuwas-zur-ah-yusuf-ibn-tuban-as-ad-abi-karib> (retrieved December 2011) .

240 Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1966). p. 34.

241 Von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*. p.19.

242 Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews*, Revised ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1974; reprint, Fifth). p. 146.

8. A second covenant rejected: A third invoked. The rise of Islam

Thus, six centuries after the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth had been initiated through their personal responses to divine commands in circumstances of failure by the Jewish leadership, and the second specifically covenanted stream of faith had been called into existence, the divine command to Muhammad to preach was made in similar circumstances of failure of religious leadership. Institutional Christianity had abused the New Covenant under which it was obligated in no less abject a manner than the Hasmonean monarchy whose gross misconduct had heralded the various attempts at reform within Judaism and the ministries of John and Jesus.

The year of the Hijra had arrived, the faith and community of Islam had been established, and the ministry of the Prophet Muhammad was about to blossom, but the people of the third community-specific covenanted faith stream were not gathered in Palestine which had been the immediate home base for both Judaism and Christianity. They were in the adjacent region in which a proportion of Abraham's descendants through Ishmael, his siblings other than Isaac, and his cousins had settled after being expelled when the principal responsibility for covenantal succession fell to Jacob, plus the descendants of Esau. although no continuity of belief and practice can be established with certainty, there is no doubt that they had an Abrahamic heritage and kinship, albeit distant, with the people of both the Jewish and Christian communities which had been established circumstantially during those six centuries.

In circumstances of long-running religious intrigue, infighting and imperialism which had wracked the region and contributed to confusion, conflict and political and social disintegration, the Prophet Muhammad responded reluctantly to a Divine command to preach against the corruption and paganism of the merchants, and that there is no god but God. He was critical of both Christians and Jews. His vigorous campaign brought him and a small band of followers into conflict with the merchants of Mecca in circumstances reminiscent of the conflict between Joshua and the apostate settlers of Canaan, and in 622 CE, they fled to Medina.

It is now apparent that the church's rigorous supersessionist teaching prevented it from contemplating either of two alternatives: that it might also be about to be superseded, or that it might be required to work in partnership. The possibility that John and Jesus had been born by divine intervention and called into their ministries precisely because of the

circumstances of Jewish failure under covenant at that time, and that God might have invoked a similar call because of failure on their part, was firmly rejected by leaders of the church at that time, although it became a factor in conflict between Rome and Constantinople at a later stage. Similarly, because the church insisted that there was only one community of faith acting on the authority of God, and not two, its leaders could not comprehend that God was, in fact, initiating a third such community of faith and that all three were obligated to work concurrently and in partnership under linked but community-specific covenants.

Each covenant would involve basically the same components: a commitment by God; an obligation to be honoured by the subordinate party; the fact of ongoing divine judgement, and the prospect of punishment in the event of failure to honour the obligation. However they would each be subject to specific obligations according to the circumstances in which they have been commissioned, and the matters that had brought about Muhammad's commission included the following.

1. In place of the love which Jesus had preached and exemplified as the basis of God's kingdom, the church had substituted fear, ("... This is the Catholick Faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved." Athanasian Creed), totally disregarding the understanding that all humanity lives in both a personal and communal covenantal relationships with God under the Universal Covenant in which, by virtue of creation, love is the focal point of every relationship.
2. The church had *either* lost sight of the understanding that one failure or breach of covenant does not invoke abrogation of a covenant – merely a penalty – *or* it rejected the understanding that although the Jewish community was being subjected to severe punishment because of its failure to honour the Mosaic Covenant, that covenant was still in effect and the Jewish community therefore continued to have a role in the divine plan to enable humanity to develop an understanding of its relationship with God. It had, accordingly, expended major efforts to ban Judaism and forcibly convert or isolate, persecute or execute those who held to that faith.
3. Instead of relieving the load of religious ritual and practice for which Jesus had condemned the Scribes and Pharisees, the church had increased it dramatically and declared its procedures to be, exclusively, the route to salvation.

4. Jesus said the Law, as a basis for personal, civic and communal conduct had not been abrogated but had been complemented or completed by his illustrative teaching: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.” (Mt. 5:17-18) The church had not only banned observance of the Law, it had ridiculed and worked against it to such an extent that social order and security had been undermined with traumatic consequences.
5. The church ignored Jesus’ advice to the Jewish clergy that “(you) have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practised without neglecting the others,” (Mt. 23:23-24) and to those who would have stoned a woman, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” (Jn. 8:7) The tolerance and mercy which he had preached (“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” Mt. 5:9) had been replaced with heresy hunting, persecution, condemnation and execution.
6. The church’s self-understanding and its insistence that the New Covenant under which it was blessed with God’s favour was – unlike the Mosaic Covenant – in perpetuity, such that its leaders could not see that because their conduct was *contrary to* guidelines spelled out by Jesus and because they were subject to divine judgement in the same manner as the Jews, they might have incurred divine wrath and face punishment accordingly.

It was as if the lessons of two thousand years of Hebrew history were not intended as lessons for the church and that the understanding that no leader and no nation can avoid divine judgement, even if its temporal power makes it appear possible, was forgotten. Now Muhammad had been called.

The manner of the call to Muhammad has similarities to the calls to a number of the Hebrew prophets. The unexpectedness of it; the personal doubt, fear and sense of inadequacy; a time of solitude in the wilderness in a challenging search for an understanding of divine purpose and expectation, a struggle against established authority, and the gathering of a small band of followers with a progressive maturing or realization of the call.

The “call” was a command, rather than a call. It was of the same nature as the commands to Abraham (to leave home and to establish a covenant community), and to Moses (to rescue God’s covenant people). It was not a command to establish a new faith or to rescue a covenant people in distress. The critical aspect of the command was directly related to, and comparable with, the command to the young man Samuel who was commanded to be a messenger to the ill-fated family of Eli. The key passages that show that relationship are 1 Sam. 3:11-13, and the Qur’an, *Sura* 96:1-19.

It is clear from the Qur’an that Muhammad’s task was to initiate reform: to warn the covenanted religious authorities of that time that they had failed to honour their obligations under covenant; to remind them of those obligations, and of the fact that they were especially subject to judgement and punishment for disobedience because they had already received “The Book”. It is also clear that he understood and accepted his limitations.

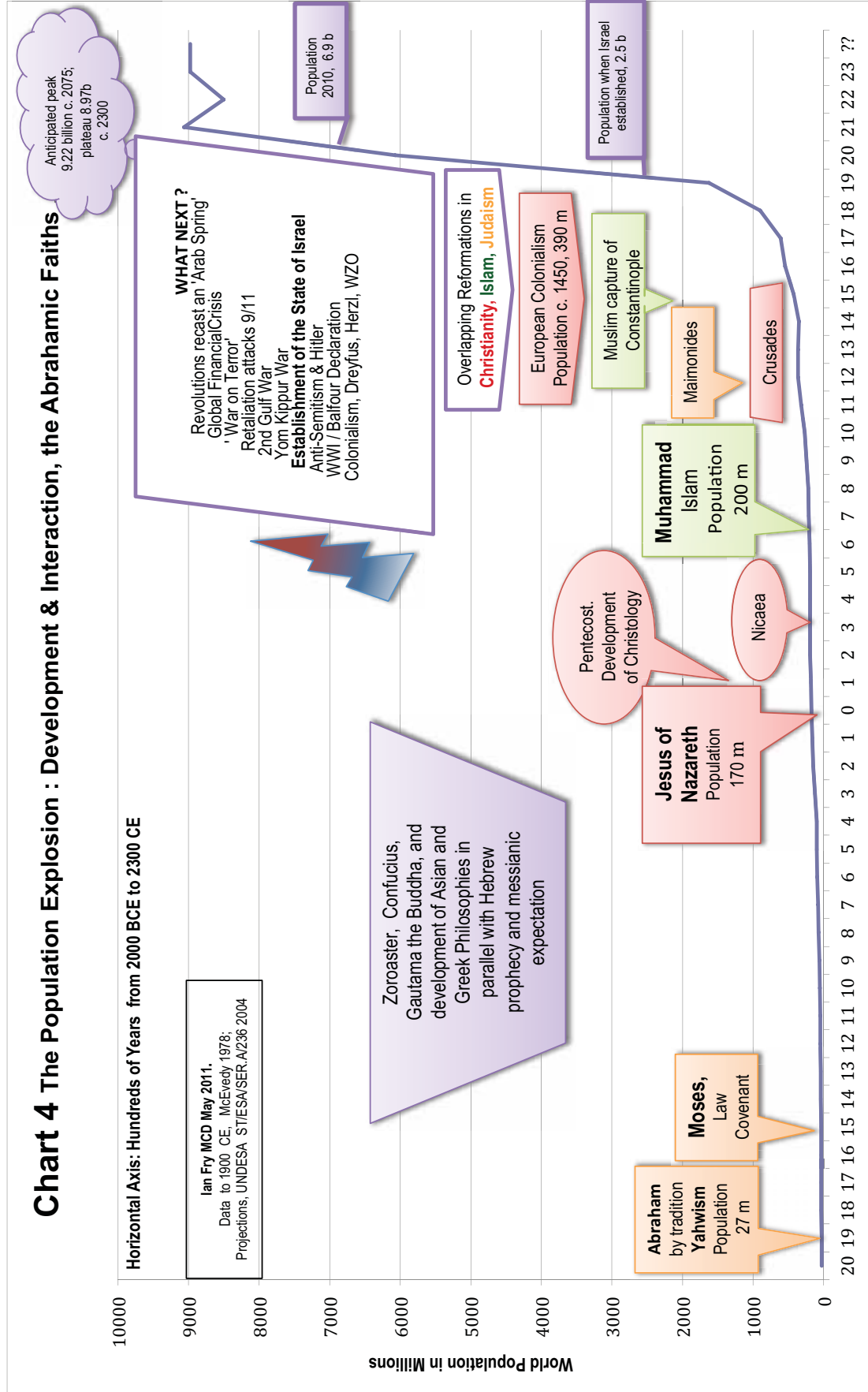
Do they not reflect? Their companion is not seized with madness: he is but a perspicuous warner. (Qur’an *Sura* 7:184)

They ask thee about the (final) Hour - when will be its appointed time? Say: "The knowledge thereof is with my Lord (alone): None but He can reveal as to when it will occur. ... If I had knowledge of the unseen, I should have multiplied all good, and no evil should have touched me: I am but a warner, and a bringer of glad tidings to those who have faith." (Qur’an *Sura* 7:187-188)

He had to clarify and spell out very directly the essential components of covenant and the essential requirements of the Law and the Gospel which had completed the Law. His task was essentially to call the church and the Jewish community to rethink their circumstances, their failures and the obligations they had, as yet, to fulfil.

Muhammad’s task was not to write a history of the evolution of faith or to revise the teachings that had already been delivered. His starting point was the melting pot of imperial political and religious intrigue and corruption in which Rome, Byzantium, Persia and the Avars were battling for control of the Eastern Mediterranean, Western Europe and North Africa into which he had been born. It was a critical point in human affairs and the evolution of religious understanding. Just how critical that point was could not have been apparent to Muhammad or his colleagues, but it has become apparent with the passage of time.

The dynamic growth of population could not have been anticipated at that time, nor could the expansion of human capacity to use and abuse technology. Humanity was about to hit the cliff face of exponential population growth with the dramatic increase in demand for living space and resources, the consequent rise in tension with the probability of conflict, and thus the critical need for community structures and relationships to enable all humanity to understand its relationship with God and to live in circumstances of harmony and stability, and to honour and bring glory to God in doing so. That cliff face is illustrated in chart 4, following, expanded as Appendix D. That chart also indicates the subsequent interaction between the three faith communities which has brought us to the current circumstances of crisis and which requires the world's faith leaders to understand their common obligation under covenant and to work in cooperation as partners to fulfil that obligation.



There can be no difficulty to the Prophet in what Allah has indicated to him as a duty. It was the practice (approved) of Allah amongst those of old that have passed away. And the command of Allah is a decree determined. (It is the practice of those) who preach the Messages of Allah, and fear Him, and fear none but Allah. And enough is Allah to call (men) to account. Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things. (Qur'an *Sura* 33:38-40)

The evidence indicates that Muhammad clearly understood that he was required to draw attention to the failures of the two existing/prior covenant communities which were embroiled in the affairs of the Arabian Peninsula in a manner that was contrary to their covenantal obligations and prejudicial to the achievement of harmony and stability in human affairs, and that in that sense he was the final prophet, or the seal of the prophets, confirming messages that had already been delivered. He also understood himself to be a partner with the prophets of the twin covenant communities of Judaism and Christianity, but no more than a partner.

Muhammad was very conscious of his own humanity and fallibility, and his focus was anchored securely to the worship of God. He absolutely rejected any suggestion of divinity, superiority over earlier prophets, or entitlement to adoration or worship. He resisted pressure to establish an additional or breakaway religious sect or community until he realized that he was being belittled by Jewish and Christian leaders who had not understood the nature of his call, were resisting every suggestion for reform of their teaching and their practices, and were quite unable to consider reassessing their theology in isolation because of their developed self-understanding. It was only then that, yielding to the prevailing circumstances, he raised another community of faith in order to put into effect the divine command that he had received.

Muhammad developed different worship procedures and changed the direction of prayer from Jerusalem to Mecca. The embryonic Muslim community accepted the challenge under a Covenant of Trust (*Amanah*). The Qur'an recognizes each of the Mosaic, Christian and Universal Covenants as ongoing and valid, but asserts that sections of both the Jewish and Christian communities had breached their specific covenants. However they were, and still are, subject to judgement accordingly.

And We sent Noah and Abraham, and established in their line Prophethood and Revelation: and some of them were on right guidance. But many of them became rebellious transgressors. Then, in their wake, We followed

them up with (others of) Our apostles: We sent after them Jesus the son of Mary, and bestowed on him the Gospel; and We ordained in the hearts of those who followed him Compassion and Mercy. (Qur'an *Sura* 57:26-27)

(Both) the Jews and the Christians say: "We are sons of Allah, and his beloved." Say: "Why then doth He punish you for your sins? Nay, ye are but men,- of the men he hath created: He forgiveth whom He pleaseth, and He punisheth whom He pleaseth: and to Allah belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between: and unto Him is the final goal (of all)" (Qur'an *Sura* 5:18)²⁴³

The Qur'an also recognizes that the scriptures of all three Abrahamic faiths validly comprise 'The Book,' but maintains that access to Paradise and salvation is not limited to their adherents. It is for all who live according to God's will, even if they are of a community outside the 'People of the Book' and an apostle has not yet reached them to give warning. The following passage shows remarkable coincidence with the teaching of the much-maligned Pelagius. (p. 200.)

Every man's fate We have fastened on his own neck: On the Day of Judgment We shall bring out for him a scroll, which he will see spread open. (It will be said to him:) "Read thine (own) record: Sufficient is thy soul this day to make out an account against thee." Who receiveth guidance, receiveth it for his own benefit: who goeth astray doth so to his own loss: No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another: nor would We visit with Our Wrath until We had sent an apostle (to give warning). (Qur'an *Sura* 17:13-15)

If any do deeds of righteousness,- be they male or female - and have faith, they will enter Heaven, and not the least injustice will be done to them. Who can be better in religion than one who submits his whole self to Allah, does good, and follows the way of Abraham the true in Faith? For Allah did take Abraham for a friend. (Qur'an *Sura* 4:124-125)²⁴⁴

According to the Qur'an, Sinai did not abrogate either the Abrahamic Covenant which continues to bind all descendants through Ishmael to Muhammad as the 'Seal of the Prophets', or the universal covenant that relates to all living creatures, not only humanity. It is of special significance that the Jews are declared to be still part of the Divine plan, subject to covenant. This totally contradicts the notion of Supersession, and therein is an important aspect of the prophecy of the Night Journey. (See Chapter Six.)

243 See also *Sura* 4:171-172; 19:30-31,34,36-39

244 For additional references to the teaching that judgement and salvation are dependent upon one's conduct and not upon whether one has been exposed to one of the three religions of The Book, see: the Qur'an *Sura* 5:119-120; 21:35,47; 36:51,53-57.

These circumstances highlight the fundamental purpose behind the divine command to Muhammad and also establish why there is a very heavy emphasis in the Qur'an the nature of personal response and obligation, judgement and retribution. This emphasis is encapsulated in four of the eight pre-requisites (sharṭs) of faith (Īmām): acting in obedience to Allah's commands; refraining from acts that Allah has forbidden; having anxiety to gain Allah's mercy, and fearing Allah's chastisement.²⁴⁵ While Islam teaches complete submission to God's will, it is not in the sense of obedience to every canon law and the authority of the clergy, but with complete free will to choose between acting in accord with God's will and rejecting that path. Ibn Ahmad Lebbai explains it thus:

Allah has granted us knowledge of many things but He has not granted us knowledge of the future. The knowledge he has granted us is that we should carry out all His Commands and refrain from doing those acts that He has forbidden. It is therefore up to us to act according to this knowledge, and not to delve into matters of which we have no knowledge.²⁴⁶

The conclusion can be drawn that there would *not* have been a call/command to Muhammad if the church had understood these matters, honoured God and its obligations, and had not acted in the manner of the Hasmonean household and proselytized with dual contemptible practices. First, community absorption by cultural syncretism, and second, by forced mass conversions using the full force of imperial armies as brutal as any that preceded the call to Abraham. A further conclusion is that in different circumstances the church would have been left supported, encouraged and unhindered in carrying out its obligations under covenant. The mechanism of divine intervention in humanity's affairs, and in particular in the manner of changing or adding to leadership in the covenantal task, had not changed: Abraham → Moses → Jesus → Muhammad. Questions for which there were no obvious answers were whether the three Abrahamic faith communities would realize that they were bound in partnership under covenant, how long such realization might take, and how traumatic it might be.

The concept of trusteeship (al-amānah) is basic to Islam. It binds Muslims under covenant to constantly remember that God, the holder of *absolute* authority, reposes trust in *all* humanity, not only Muslims.

²⁴⁵ Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Lebbai, *A Compendium of Muslim Theology and Jurisprudence*, trans. Saifuddin J. Aniff-Doray, Second ed. (Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen, 1999). p. 22.

²⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 16.

Allah doth command you to render back your Trusts to those to whom they are due; And when ye judge between man and man, that ye judge with justice: Verily how excellent is the teaching which He giveth you! For Allah is He Who heareth and seeth all things. (Qur'an 4:58)²⁴⁷

The Covenant of Trust is accepted in a relationship of Khalīfa: engaged surrender to the divine as a trustee or vice-regent, Khalīfat-Allāh, in consciousness of one's servanthship in fulfilling obligations. It requires that priority be given to the worship of God, to justice and charity to neighbours as a guide for other communities to do likewise, and to taking seriously the protection of the totality of creation.

Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, inheritance (of power), as He granted it to those before them; that He will establish in authority their religion - the one which He has chosen for them; and that He will change (their state), after the fear in which they (lived), to one of security and peace: 'They will worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me. 'If any do reject Faith after this, they are rebellious and wicked. (Qur'an 24:55)

According to Doi ²⁴⁸ the fundamental human rights of man in Shari'ah rest on the premise that man is the Khalīfa of Allah on earth and hence the centre of the universe, and this binds every person to recognize the human rights of every other person on the basis of the principles of the Qur'an. However Khalifa is no more a guarantee that a believer will behave as God requires than are either circumcision or baptism. Nor does it guarantee a place in paradise. One's actual conduct, not just the acknowledgment of obligations, determines both judgement and salvation. Reinforcing the obligation of trusteeship now imposed under Qur'anic covenant, Enayat cites²⁴⁹: —

We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it;- He was indeed unjust and foolish;- (With the result) that Allah has to punish the Hypocrites, men and women, and the Unbelievers, men and women, and Allah turns in Mercy to the Believers, men and women: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Qur'an S.33 A.72-73)

Quite dramatically, with little warning, and certainly unexpectedly, the world found itself with three competing Abrahamic communities of faith. Each was bound under covenant

247 See also Qur'an 2:284; 2:283; Qur'an 2:286.

248 'Abdur Rahman I Doi, *Shari'ah: The Islamic Law*, First ed. (Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen, 1984; reprint, Sixth Print 2002). pp.422.

249 Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2001). p.37.

with essentially the same responsibility as it unknowingly approached the challenges of population growth and technological development. There had been one faith for a few hundred years from the moment of the divine command to Abraham until the delivery of the Law and the Covenant of Sinai established Judaism as a separate and distinct faith. Certainly the primary Faith of Abraham, or Yahwism, continued to exist among the communities of the bulk of Abraham's descendants for some time, scattered through the Eastern Mediterranean and the Arabian Peninsula. However there are no substantive records from which we can trace their course, describe their activities, confirm their belief, or ascertain how long they maintained the faith of Yahwism as they interacted with successive waves of invaders for two and a half thousand years.

Then Christianity was established and there were three Abrahamic faiths: two active, Judaism and Christianity, and one, The Yahwism of Abraham, perhaps latent. Finally Islam was called into being. If it can be determined that any communities were still faithful to Abraham's Yahwism at that time, it would be correct to say that Islam became the fourth contemporary Abrahamic faith. If not, it is probably correct to say that it became the third *active* Abrahamic faith. However, in view of the Qur'anic reference to Abraham and Ishmael visiting Mecca together and building the Ka'ba, (S. 2 A.125-127), whether or not the historicity of the Meccan event can be established, it is appropriate to consider that upon the call to the Prophet Muhammad, Yahwism, as the Faith of Abraham, was subsumed into Islam. From that point there were three Abrahamic faith communities who should have each been able to reflect on and understand the situation and to appreciate that they were required to work in partnership.

The Byzantine Empire struggled to survive against the dynamic expansion of its new neighbour, the Arab Caliphate, and the emperor was one of the few people who recognized that Islam had been called as a challenge to certain aspects of the church's theology and practices. The dominant stream of the church, in Rome, could only think in terms of threat, and took steps to break its dependence on Byzantium and, with the aid of Pippin, Boniface and Charles, it reinforced its control over all Christian structures and activities within its reach²⁵⁰, Christianized northern Europe by the sword in a manner that made the Hasmonean Monarchy seem almost angelic, and finally re-established the Holy Roman Empire in 800.

250 Ian R. Fry, *Trouble in the Triangle: Christians, Jews and Muslims in Conflict*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Fitzroy: Compton Arch, 2000/1). documents the circumstances at some length.

Chapter Five

The third epoch: an extended network, and a new kind of war

1. Introduction

This chapter introduces a new kind of war and examines changes in the understanding of the relationship between humanity and God, and the nature of covenant, as the church struggled to retain a position of pre-eminence through the proclamation of a series of declarations and papal bulls, notably *Dictatus Papae* and *Romanus Pontifex*.

The Christian church was the first institutional religion which sought to take advantage of its association with an empire to proselytize. In contrast the expansionist program of Islam was specifically to introduce religious reform.

2. Two and a half thousand years of revelation

The changing emphasis in the understanding of covenant during the first and second epochs and the early phase of the third epoch can be summarized as follows.

The first ten to fifteen generations of Abraham's descendants understood that the covenant by which they were bound assured them of communal security and the status of a blessing for all humanity in return for obedience and acceptance of certain obligations. They were not expecting eternal salvation. That concept was not mentioned as an aspect of life or of the Abrahamic covenant.

The Mosaic covenant delineated a specific section of the Abrahamic community that was to be directly responsible for maintaining a separate identity, the worship of God, and exemplary conduct under a pattern of law that was more rigidly defined, and, in return, it was to be the beneficiary of the security clause. Then, progressively, in the light of experience, and the faith and perception of a number of prophets, a more comprehensive understanding of the universality of God's love and covenant was revealed. The emphasis shifted gradually to include personal as well as communal-corporate privilege, obligation and judgement, but with little consideration of post-mortal circumstances. However, with population growth and interaction with neighbouring communities, much of that message

was lost. A clear communal understanding of the covenant faded, with a drift from commitment to gross abuse of covenant.

The ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus placed a new emphasis on the personal relationship with God concurrent with the communal-corporate relationship. A heavy emphasis on personal conduct replaced religious observance, authority and power. God's love and salvation in an ongoing post-mortal relationship became an inspiration, and divine judgement was seen to be tempered by the opportunity for repentance and forgiveness. Unfortunately much of that message was also not understood, and in an evangelical push for communal expansion, the new understanding of covenant was widely abused. The shift away from rigid religious observance was reversed; clerical authority and power were increased and linked to military excesses; clerical authority was abused, and the personal relationship was also misinterpreted as a case for privilege, selfishness and lack of regard for others.

The revelation of the Qur'an brought another change in emphasis: a corrective. Without undoing the personal relationship and the understanding of universal divine love, it refocused the emphasis in the covenantal relationship onto constant awareness of God's presence, trusteeship, obligation, justice, charity and judgement – being deprived of a loving, ongoing and post-mortal relationship with God as a consequence of one's conduct. It is a simple message focussing attention on continuing recognition of the relationship that each covenanted community enjoyed with God.

That message was that one God is to be recognized, worshipped and obeyed on the basis of the Law and the Gospel, the certainty of Divine Judgment on the basis of personal conduct, and acceptance of the validity of several prior covenants, viz. Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. However, that revelation was not readily or widely recognized in Mecca, Constantinople or Rome, and the expectation of ready acceptance of the simple message of Islam was soon frustrated.

3. Potent mix: religious fervour and nationalism – again

The region of the Arabian Peninsula had a history of successive imperial conquests, abuse and ethnic fragmentation of the communities, trading success and economic disaster, and of being swept by every religious belief from North Africa to Persia and Europe. It was in need of a burst of nationalism and leadership that might provide meaningful nationhood. It

was therefore ready for effective and charismatic leadership, but it was not Muhammad's aim to assume such a role. He simply responded, reluctantly, to a call on the basis that there was a need for the religious corruption within his community to be cleaned out, and a small group of followers who understood his message gathered around him.

After initial rejection and skirmishes, notably the Battle of Badr in 624, Islam gained a foothold in Medina and Mecca by brute force, and religious fervour carried a number of major victories which generated fear within the church of the loss of its imperial power base. The Jewish community suffered at first for rebuffing Muhammad, intriguing with his enemies and planning to attack him from the rear. The reprisal began with the destruction and expulsion of two villages at Medina, in 625, and was completed with the annihilation of a third, by execution, in 627, in a manner reminiscent of the slaughter of their apostate relatives, the Midianites, by the Hebrews under Moses about one thousand eight hundred years earlier,²⁵¹

Then, in 629, after having rebuffed a message from the Prophet, Emperor Heraclius acted in league with the church and returned the 'True Cross' to Jerusalem, was trounced at the River Yarmuk by Khalid's Arab army,²⁵² and Islam's prestige and influence soared. Khalid recruited the large armies needed for assaults on Syria, Damascus and Jerusalem. Persian resistance had already crumbled, Byzantium was in disarray, and an era of leadership and control by the Caliphates was dawning.

Following Muhammad's death in 632 the leadership group around the Prophet of Islam was just as divided over issues of leadership succession and theology as Jesus' disciples had been, but whereas the disciples only had fledgling belief to work with, the Prophet's successors had highly motivated armies at their command. The religious basis for military campaigns was largely subsumed in the wave of Arab nationalism which had resulted from the long periods of imperial adventures by the surrounding powers and which Muhammad had already used to pursue his cause. Because of that Islam has long been criticized on two grounds.

251 Von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*. p. 36.

W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, First Paperback 1964 ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1969; reprint, Second Reprint). Watt discusses the circumstances of the execution of the Jews at some length. See: Numbers 31:7-10

252 H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, Third Revision: Raymond Postgate ed. (London: Cassell and Company Ltd, 1951). p. 610.

First: that the Qur'an has no religious credibility because of historical errors and misquotations from the Bible and other sources and was therefore not a legitimate cause for the establishment of a religious community.²⁵³ Its critics failed to recognize that it was to be a vehicle for reform, to clarify the nature of covenant, to warn Christians and Jews that they had failed to honour obligations under covenant, and to reinforce the notion that divine judgement was pending for those who failed to correct their errors. Comparison were made on that basis, that both Hebrew and New Testament texts were correct and that Qur'anic history was therefore false and lacked historical consistency.

Second: that some passages of the Qur'an were inspired by the Prophet's need for tactics to win wars of expansion rather than by angelic visitations, and that in turn these passages enabled some of the victories of the Arab nationalists-cum-Muslims and therefore it was an improper base on which to build a religious community.²⁵⁴

4. The Night Journey

Sura 17 of the Qur'an, *Al-Isrāa*, is critical to an understanding of subsequent developments. It was criticised on the basis that it resulted from the Night Journey, a visionary experience of the Isra and Mi'raj in March 621, the year before the Hijra. Extended hadith based on discussions between Muhammad and his colleagues explain the vision on which that Sura is based and describe a journey by the prophet in company with the angel Gabriel "from the Sacred Temple (of Mecca) to the Farther Temple (of Jerusalem)."²⁵⁵ The hadith include a great deal of detail about preparation for the journey and meetings with Jesus, the prophets, Moses, Abraham, other figures of Jewish history, and God, and it is impossible to be certain where the vision as dictated by Muhammad, his discussions with his colleagues and later myths begin and end. Many Muslims do not

253 Answering Islam Anonymous, "Historical Errors of the Qur'an," (2009), <http://www.answering-islam.org/BehindVeil/btv7.html>.

Joseph Smith, "The Qur'an; Apologetic Paper (Joseph Smith) - May 1995," *The Muslim-Christian Debate Website* (1995), <http://debate.org.uk/topics/history/quran.htm>. Accessed June 23, 2010

254 Mark Hartwig, "Spread by the Sword?," (2009), http://www.answering-islam.org/Terrorism/by_the_sword.html.

James M. Arlandson, "Islamic Martyrdom? What a bargain! The Economy of Death in the Quran," (2009), http://www.answering-islam.org/Authors/Arlandson/death_economy.htm. Accessed June 23, 2010.

255 Arthur Jeffery, ed. *Islam: Muhammad and His Religion* (Indianapolis: The Boobs-Merrill Company, 1958; reprint, 6th printing). pp. 35-46 Citing al-Baghawi's compendium of Traditions, Masbaih as-Sunna (Khairiyya edition; Cairo, A.H. 1318=1900A.D.)

regard the incident as a vision but as literal history. Within the church this has distracted scholars from assessing the meaning of the episode, but it should be considered in the same light as other supernatural events such as the appearance of Moses and Elijah with Jesus in the Transfiguration (Mark 9:2–8), Jesus' appearances to the disciples in locked rooms in Jerusalem (John 20:19–29) or the events of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–36).

In prophetic form, the passage of the Night Journey indicated very specifically that if the Jewish community were to transgress against their neighbours again they would again suffer divine retribution. It has two critical sections. One sets out Qur'anic understanding of the nature of divine judgement. Individual judgement is a matter purely between each individual and God; it is based on personal conduct; it is absolute, and there is no room for intervention. Communal judgement, however, is a measured divine determination based on the response by the community at large if those who are derelict do not change their ways after due warning.

Every man's fate We have fastened on his own neck: On the Day of Judgment We shall bring out for him a scroll, which he will see spread open. (It will be said to him:) "Read thine (own) record: Sufficient is thy soul this day to make out an account against thee." Who receiveth guidance, receiveth it for his own benefit: who goeth astray doth so to his own loss: No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another: nor would We visit with Our Wrath until We had sent an apostle (to give warning). When We decide to destroy a population, We (first) send a definite order to those among them who are given the good things of this life and yet transgress; so that the word is proved true against them: then (it is) We destroy them utterly. How many generations have We destroyed after Noah? and enough is thy Lord to note and see the sins of His servants. (S.17 A.13-17)

The other section deals explicitly with the future of the Jewish community. It is a prophetic pronouncement on the fate of the Jewish community in the event that the community, as a whole, were to 'return to mischief' or again transgress against its neighbours.

We gave Moses the Book, and made it a Guide to the Children of Israel, (commanding): "Take not other than Me as Disposer of (your) affairs." O ye that are sprung from those whom We carried (in the Ark) with Noah! Verily he was a devotee most grateful. And We gave (Clear) Warning to the Children of Israel in the Book, ²⁵⁶ [*And we decreed for the Children of*

256 My principal source for textual quotations is the English translation of the Qur'an by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1985, IFTA. However, for convenience in copying, I have used the original translation available through the online service of Dr. Stephen Wright's Wright House Library, at <http://www.wright-house.com/religions/islam/Quran.html>. Very few discrepancies have been identified, but in this case the difference in translation is significant. I have therefore placed the IFTA translation at appropriate points in [parenthesis]. Accessed July 15, 2009

Israel in the Book] that twice would they do mischief on the earth and be elated with mighty arrogance (and twice would they be punished)! When the first of the warnings came to pass, We sent against you Our servants given to terrible warfare: They entered the very inmost parts of your homes; and it was a warning (completely) fulfilled. Then did We grant you the Return as against them [*Victory over them*]: We gave you increase in resources and sons, and made you the more numerous in man-power. If ye did well, ye did well for yourselves; if ye did evil, (ye did it) against yourselves. So when the second of the warnings came to pass, (We permitted your enemies) to disfigure your faces, and to enter your Temple as they had entered it before, and to visit with destruction all that fell into their power. It may be that your Lord may (yet) show Mercy unto you; but if ye revert (to your sins), We shall revert (to Our punishments): And we have made Hell a prison for those who reject (all Faith) ... (S. 17 A. 2-10)

That Night Journey prophecy is consistent with the Hebrew understanding that divine justice, or retribution for breach of covenant may be administered through retaliatory action by a body or a community that has been wronged, and possibly at some distance and at a later date. The church rejected the validity of the Qur'an, but it was quite ready to see that passage as support for its efforts to suppress the Jewish communities in the Diaspora during the Inquisitions. The Night Journey also complements the interpretation of the following passage.

Permission (to take up arms) is hereby given to those who are attacked, because they have been wronged. Allah has power to grant them victory: those who have been unjustly driven from their homes, only because they said: 'Our Lord is Allah.' Had Allah not repelled some men by the might of others, the monasteries and churches, the synagogues and mosques in which Allah's name is frequently remembered, would have been utterly destroyed. But whoever helps Allah shall be helped by Him. Allah is truly Powerful and Mighty: (He will assuredly help) those who, once made masters in the lands, will attend to their prayers and pay the alms-tax, enjoin justice and forbid evil. Allah controls the destiny of all things. [S. 22 A. 39-41]

That passage, referring to the divine defence of places of worship of each of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, confirms that Muhammad's mission and personal intention was not to supplant one or both of his partners in Abrahamic faith. They were to complement the partner faiths and to clarify or draw their attention to aspects of covenantal theology which they had rejected or neglected, and practices and conduct which subverted or reduced their capacity and their ability to act in accordance with divine will and to fulfil the purposes for which they were established. The Prophet's supreme confidence in the absolute, unqualified and unqualifiable supremacy of God and God's ultimate control of all things is illustrated by the final sentence of that passage: "Allah controls the destiny of all things."

The first section of the passage was well understood in Constantinople where the Patriarch related it to Qur'anic condemnation of iconography and Maryology, both of which were widely practiced in the East, but it was rejected in Rome as heavy-handed judgementalism in contrast to the personal salvation offered under the church's authority through its sacraments. The second section was not understood, except as support for the church's oppression of Jews, and it was neglected, pending recognition of its significance in a later epoch.

5. Division in Islam

The power of its final message, that Allah controls the destiny of all things in a relationship of Khalīfat-Allāh, engaged surrender, was not sufficient to prevent division. The divisions and internecine struggles which wracked Dār al-islām during the three centuries from the Hijra to the settling of Orthodox Sunni belief involved the same basic issues as the crisis of the Hasmonean Kingdom for the Jewish community, the church's era of heresy hunting, the Christianization of Scandinavia and Northern Europe, and the 16th cent. reformation within the church. They were tribal succession and power struggles; the authority of Holy Scripture and the status of the person leading the religious community; incarnation; and the basis on which to carry out the fundamental covenantal obligation to enable all humanity to understand its relationship with God.

The tribal succession crisis began immediately on the Prophet's death, and centred on whether he had nominated a successor or a process to determine succession, and if not, the process that should be adopted and the character of the persons being considered. In circumstances of uncertainty, Abû Bakr, who Muhammad had asked to represent him at prayers during his illness, was appointed caliph. Two years later, on his deathbed, Abû Bakr nominated as his successor 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb whose ten-year rule is regarded as the greatest of his time.²⁵⁷ When 'Umar was murdered by a vengeful slave the elective committee of six people, all from one ethnic group, agreed to appoint one of their members, a son-in-law of the Prophet, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān.

'Uthman was soon accused of nepotism and misrule, and incurred the wrath of one stream of believers, the Kharijites, who said a profession of faith was not enough to make a person a Muslim; righteousness and good works were necessary; and the community could only

²⁵⁷ Von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*. p. 55.

be led by one who was pious and righteous. In addition, and contrary to the majority view and practice, the Kharijites interpreted the Qur'anic command to enjoin good and forbid evil to mean the implementation of their beliefs by means of the sword, and that it was acceptable to overthrow a ruler whose conduct fell short of these ideals.²⁵⁸ 'Uthman deepened the animosity towards him in 653 when he ordered that all revelations received by the Prophet were to be collected and put in order by a commission, that those not authorized were to be destroyed, no other versions were to be used, and interpretation of Qur'anic law was strictly a matter for the appointed leadership. He was accused of abusing sovereign power to impose moral absolutism and to stifle tribal autonomy. Territorial disputes broke out, his opponents laid siege to Medina, and he was assassinated in 656.²⁵⁹

The people of Medina immediately called on Ali, the Prophet's remaining cousin and son-in-law, to accept the office of caliph. He did so against rebellious opposition from the Prophet's wife 'A'isha, a daughter of Abû Bakr, and an Ummayyad leader, Mu'awiyya. Two years later he made an error of judgement, in the eyes of the Kharijites, in accepting human arbitration instead of imposing Qur'anic principles by force in negotiations for territorial adoption of Islam. When the Khārijites withheld their support Ali's loyal forces turned against them, slaughtering four thousand Khārijites. When a Khārijite assassinated Ali in 661 the succession struggle continued. When Mu'awiyya outmanoeuvred Ali's sons to gain the caliphate they remained silent, hoping to regain the office on his death. They did not. It went to his son. In a subsequent rebellion one of Ali's sons, al-Husayn, his family and seventy followers were massacred, triggering a schism which was theological as well as tribal. The Party of Ali, Shī'at 'Alī, was established, permanently dividing dār al-islām and resulting in a series of disputes over theology and authority, and ongoing struggles for control of the caliphate.²⁶⁰

The primary Shī'a claim was that the Imamate (dual religious and political leadership) should have gone to Ali and his descendants by divine right and on the basis that the Imam is both the political and religious leader of Dār al-islām; infallible in doctrinal pronouncements, free of sin, and with unique spiritual status enabling him to mediate

²⁵⁸ Bulend Shanay, "Kharijiyyah Islam," in *Philtar Religion: Overview of World Religions*, ed. Elliott Shaw (Carlisle: University of Cumbria, 1998).

²⁵⁹ Von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*. p. 59.

²⁶⁰ Bulend Shanay, "Shi'a Islam - Doctrines and History," in *Philtar Religion: Overview of World Religions*, ed. Elliott Shaw (Carlisle: University of Cumbria, 1998). p. 1.

between the human world and the invisible world.²⁶¹ This claim, which is rejected by main stream Sunni Islam, is noteworthy because of the similarity between it and claims subsequently made for the papacy by Pope Gregory VII in *Dictatus Papae* three centuries later, (p. 190).

On other theological grounds the Shī'at 'Alī gradually diverted further from the main stream Muslim community which became known as Sunni. Shi'ism splintered over time into a number of streams, usually on the basis of succession disputes and which imam each community considered to be the final valid office holder, and those divisions are a significant factor in the current crises in the Middle East.

6. Differing battle strategies

The criticism of the armies of Islam during its first two hundred years became a major matter of condemnation, disputation and fear mongering by the Church of Rome as it sought to avoid discussion of theological abuse and disputes which had resulted in the Divine call to Muhammad and the challenge to the church. Both faiths claimed to be acting in accord with covenantal commitments and to be developing theocratic states.²⁶² Muhammad had drawn up quite precise rules for the conduct of wars of religious conversion and the treatment of subdued communities. He imposed taxes on those who chose not to convert, and entered into treaties with Nestorians whose teachings were closer to Islam, and for special protection of their places of worship. Compulsion to convert was not imposed, and for the first generation after occupation the number of converts to Islam was low.²⁶³

The policy was so flexible that when Arabs temporarily occupied the Khazar Khanate, north of the Caucasus and the Caspian and Black Seas, in 737, in circumstances that are not clear, a vassalage was not imposed. The Arab armies soon withdrew, and the Khan,

²⁶¹ ———, "Shi'a Islam - Origins," in *Philtar Religion: Overview of World Religions*, ed. Elliott Shaw (Carlisle: University of Cumbria, 1998). p. 1.

²⁶² Hartwig 2009, notes that given the history of Western-Islamic relationships, it's not surprising that the Arabic word jihad has long had an ominous ring. In the century immediately following the death of Muhammad (632), Muslim forces conquered lands stretching from the borders of China and India to Spain's Atlantic coast.

²⁶³ Von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*. pp. 45-46, 64. The author provides various illustrations of this policy. Concerning Tabuk, Northern Arabia, 630, he writes: "without any fighting ... the Christian settlements ensured for themselves the protection of the Prophet and free exercise of their religion by undertaking to pay an annual tribute (and a Jewish settlement handed over weapons as well); the agreements created an important precedent."

having regained independence and the opportunity to consider each of the Abrahamic faiths, chose to adopt Judaism. In doing so at a time of widespread religious instability and intolerance he strengthened the Jewish community significantly. According to Rachel Rosen,²⁶⁴ Jewish refugees from the Byzantium, Persia and Mesopotamia regions, fleeing from persecution by Christians, settled in the Kingdom, integrated into the society and married Khazar inhabitants. Khazars from royal families converted to Judaism, and others soon followed, with some adopting Hebrew as their official written system.

At that time, the Byzantine emperor, Leo III, decided Muslim opposition to icons was legitimate, and imposed a policy of iconoclasm. No such policy was permitted in the West, and relations between the two regions were undermined. Pope Gregory III sought the services of an English monk, Boniface, who converted the Lombards to Catholicism, achieved a settlement with the Franks, and thus recovered the strength of the papacy in France after its overthrow by the Arians. He was then able to pursue his policy of conversions to Christianity: peace by baptism, or death. Under the papal decree, *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, 4,500 people were slaughtered in one day in an exercise that make the Hasmonean abuse of covenant by enforced circumcision seem of little import. For his services, and to undermine the Byzantine emperor, Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman Emperor, he extended that policy to Scandinavia, and the Vatican had achieved its version of a theocratic state. The far-sighted Swedish Merchants Guild moved first, and invited him to send some missionaries and to leave his swords sheathed.

7. Threads of covenant and two (attempted) theocracies

Two centuries after the birth of Islam, c. 820, two massive religious systems faced each other across the Bosphorus – jockeying for position and authority beyond their immediate sphere of influence and both claiming a mandate under covenant to bring all humanity into a proper relationship with God in circumstances of harmony and stability: the Holy Roman Empire and the Muslim Caliphate.

However neither the church nor Islam had a clear vision of how to fulfil its obligations under covenant. Islam was reluctantly facing the reality that expansion by military conquest might no longer be feasible or desirable. The church, having lost a great deal of

264 Rachel Rosen, "The Virtual Jewish History Tour: Ukraine," American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/ukraine.html>. Retrieved 20/02/2012.

territory and a great number of people to Islam was more determined than ever that recovery and expansion was to be by military means, and it was again adapting and exaggerating the tactics of the Hasmonean Kingdom with absolute disregard for any considerations of covenant. Whatever sense of partnership the Prophet of Islam had sought to engender was lost. Islam and Christianity were competitors.

From the church's point of view the third and senior partner, Judaism, still had a presence but it was a matter of scorn and partly submerged in the power struggle, held down by the church at every opportunity. In 825 the Muslim rulers of Babylonia withdrew their recognition of the exilarch as the sole authority to speak on behalf of the Jewish community because of Christian disputation.²⁶⁵ In fact measures taken progressively by the Rabbinate had strengthened its community's position in the Diaspora somewhat.

It may be argued that the Caliphate lost the initiative and the opportunity to expand the empire of Islam by allowing the Khazar Khan's decision to adopt Judaism and providing an opportunity for the small scattered nation state to expand. However, as well as resulting largely from its military insecurity at the time, the caliphate's decision illustrates the difference between Muhammad and his followers and the papacy in their understanding of covenantal obligations and their war aims. From Rome's or Byzantium's perspectives it might be possible to eliminate the khanate with the aid of divine intervention or a military alliance. It was, but the eventual destruction of the khanate due to the church's intervention, actually helped strengthen the Jewish community.

8. Judaism: strengthening a sustainable base for the future

Concurrent with reforms introduced by Benedict at Cluny during the 10th cent., teams of scribes and Torah scholars, the Masoretes, based mainly in Palestine in the cities of Tiberias and Jerusalem, and in Babylonia, were working to produce a text of the Tanakh that would be accepted and authorised for use by all Jewish communities throughout the Diaspora. The need for a standardized text was very real because communities had been scattered in waves over many centuries and over three continents, taking with them texts that might not have included the more recent books or editing changes, and because manuscripts had either originated or been copied and relayed from many scattered regions with various transcribing changes or errors. Work had begun during the infancy of Islam,

265 Gribetz, Greenstein, and Stein, *Timetables*. p. 92.

partly in response to tension and disputes that arose when Muhammad received and reacted to texts that did not conform to mainstream Jewish belief and was critical of them, or was ridiculed for accepting hearsay or third party interpretations of scripture. Other factors included the discord within the Jewish community over the nature of the Talmud which resulted in the Karaite controversy.

The task was considered complete by the end of the 10th cent..²⁶⁶

The new Eastern European Jewish community in the Khazar Khanate survived for 250 years, until the Khaza Jews suffered the same fate as their co-religionists of earlier times. In 969, after a 47-year period of religious intrigue between Rome and Constantinople for control of the church in the Russian Principality there was an extension of forced Christianization into Eastern Europe, competition for control of trade between Scandinavia and the Black Sea, and an impetuous attack on the khanate capital by Russian Prince Sviatoslav.

The first effect of Sviatoslav's sortie was to bring him into contact with Muslim settlements and to consolidate his determination not to be absorbed by either of the Christian forces. He considered adopting Islam as the religion of the principality, and although he did not do so because of diplomatic intervention from Constantinople, it gained a substantial following. It was left his son, Vladimir, to sort out the complications and the principality's religious affiliation. He adopted Byzantine Christianity, married a sister of the emperor, invited the Patriarch to send missionaries throughout Russia, and was left with no option other than a joint military venture with Byzantium to eliminate the khanate with its mix of Jewish and Muslim influence.²⁶⁷

Over the next ten to fifteen years much of the Jewish population was forced out and deprived of its property as settlers moved in from the Russian principality, Byzantium and the Caliphate to the south. The number of refugees and their destinations are not known,

266 Theosophy Dictionary Contributors, "Masoretic Text," in *Theosophy Dictionary on Masorah, Masoreth* (Stockholm: Global Oneness Community, Times Foundation, 2009).

267 The circumstances of the destruction of the Khaza Khanate, and its significance are widely debated. Sources consulted in this research include:

Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (Harmondsworth: Penguin/Peregrine, 1977). pp. 35-6, 157.
 Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, ed. Owen Chadwick, First ed., 6 vols., vol. 6, *The Pelican History of the Church* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1966; reprint, Reprint 1966). p. 89.
 Alfred M. Lilienthal, *What Price Israel?* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953). pp. 220-22.
 Martin Gilbert, *Jewish History Atlas* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976). p.26. Roth, *History of the Jews*. pp. 158-62.

and the extent of conversions to Judaism is disputed, allowing no reliable basis for estimates. Some sources suggest that only the royal family and the government and commercial elite converted, that the number of refugees was negligible, and that their descendants cannot possibly be more than twelve percent of the current Ashkenazi population, and probably less than four percent, but this is disputed.²⁶⁸ According to Roth²⁶⁹ the governing classes had become thoroughly Judaized, their example was followed by many of the ordinary people so that throughout its golden age the Khazar state was considered essentially Jewish, but the subsequent redistribution of the population is obscure. Others suggest possibly the whole population, but in view of the very tolerant attitude of the Khan and the diversity of the base population, a high level of conversion appears unlikely. (See previous note, p. 258)

However, whatever the numbers, the main impact of the expulsions was to add to the Jewish communities in various centres in Europe, including Hungary, Poland, Italy, Germany and Spain. This influx contributed to rejuvenation that was just beginning, especially as it is acknowledged that conversion involved mainly the elite, and it added to the ethnic diversity of the Jewish community which had already been established as a result of earlier proselytizing and intermarriage in North Africa, Persia, India and China. Thus the exclusivity of the tribal link between Judaism and Palestine was severed. Just how real the tribal link had been from the time of Antiochus IV is questionable in view of the Seleucid Hellenization program, the mass forced conversion by circumcision under the Hasmonean monarchy, and consistent proselytizing in North Africa and Rome until Tiberius banned it in 19 CE.

The new situation lifted Judaism beyond the tribal limits which the building of the Temple at Jerusalem had tended to place on its people's thinking. It did not need a Messiah to tell them to go into all the world and preach. The Sages had realized that in 70 CE. Yahweh was God of all, and the Noahide or Universal Covenant was for all. Judaism encompassed that message, and through their dispersion people of Jewish faith were enabled to convey it wherever they went. Jerusalem was more than ever a focal point for faith and a symbol of

268 Kevin Alan Brook, "Tales about Jewish Khazars in the Byzantine Empire Resolve an Old Debate," *Los Muestras: European Sephardic Institute* 54(2009).

Nicholas Wade, "In DNA, New Clues to Jewish Roots," *New York Times - Science*
<http://www.palestineremembered.com/Acre/Articles/Story1396.html>. Accessed 29 November 2010.
 November 29, 2010.

269 Roth, *History of the Jews*. p. 265.

hope for the full flowering of the Messianic age. The church's assumption that without an ancestral connection between Judaists and Palestine as a homeland Judaism would disintegrate was undermined. The basis on which Judaism could set about preaching to the world had been revitalized and it was in real competition with Christianity for believers. It was a clear illustration of the understanding held by both Jesus and Muhammad that the Mosaic Covenant had not been abrogated.

9. Liturgy, fires, rebuffs, tantrums, decrees and stabilized texts

The national boundaries and rulers of kingdoms, khanates and principalities in the Christian north, and caliphates, emirates and sultanates in the Muslim south of Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean changed from time to time during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Byzantium was fairly stable, holding Greece and Turkey, adding Armenia and Bulgaria, and Christians had no trouble in visiting Jerusalem and other places of pilgrimage in the Fatimid Caliphate – until the church introduced “miraculous” descending fire liturgies at Easter at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. On attaining the age of 15 in 1000 CE the young caliph, who had objected to them during his childhood, ordered a stop to them. The order was ignored, so for several years he ordered random arrests, executions and destruction of churches. Still no response, so in 1009 he ordered the Holy Sepulchre and hospice destroyed.²⁷⁰

Pope Sergius, outraged, called for a “Battle of the Lord,” and was ignored. A peace was signed in 1040 and rebuilding of the church began in 1048. Twenty-three years later, 1071, the Seljuk Turks, who had absorbed the emirates in 1037 but not the caliphate, swept through Turkey and relieved the Byzantine Empire of half its territory, captured Jerusalem and attacked Christians there – as well as forcing the Jewish community to disband and flee.. Pope Gregory VII assumed office in 1074 and called his princes to rally for the defence of Eastern Christianity. On being rebuffed too, he had the Vatican draft a doctrinal justification for a holy war and set out to tighten his personal authority to be able to order his rally to the church.

270 New World Encyclopedia contributors, "Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah," *New World Encyclopedia*, http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Al-Hakim_bi-Amr_Allah?oldid=915492 (accessed November 1, 2010)

He completed his *Dictatus Papae* in 1075.²⁷¹ It sets out twenty seven points which Gregory VII sought to impose and which became the basis for Catholic tradition thereafter, and it relates closely to the Shī'a doctrine of the status of the Imam, but it was, in effect, an extension of the Athanasian Creed, and whether Gregory VII took note of the Shī'a doctrine is a matter of speculation. The claims of immediate concern are the non-validity of any other faith; set the person of the pope above all other humans; set the pope above all kings and princes with sole authority to appoint and depose kings; placed the pope above all law, not subject to judgement, and the final arbiter of the law, judgement and penalty; the Roman church was of divine origin, had never been in error and never would be; the pope controlled the bishops who controlled the people, and by virtue of office the pope was undoubtedly a saint. As he drafted that note he would certainly have known that Rashi's commentary on the Bible and the Talmud had been in circulation for a few years and that it was so well accepted that, in due course, it would be taken as a model for editions of the Talmud in territories he sought to control: France and Germany.

Dictatus Papae has been described as a measure to reform the church and overcome the corruption which had debased the papacy and the church; that it led to the resolution of the Investiture Controversy, and that Pope Gregory VII's actions and policies were justified by the claim that the pope, in his role as head of the Church, is the vice-regent of God on earth, so that disobedience to him implies disobedience to God: or, in other words, a defection from Christianity. He has been credited with putting into effect the reforms which had been initiated at Cluny by transforming the Christian empire into a model of two swords ruling a unified Christendom by law in the name of "freedom of the church" (*libertas ecclesiae*). His successors were able to throw off their political patrons and protectors, established the Catholic Church as the superior legal and political authority of Western Christendom, claim more than a spiritual and sacramental power over its own affairs, (a spiritual office within the Christian empire), and claim a vast new jurisdiction with political authority to make and enforce laws for all of Christendom.

271 Pope Gregory VII, "Dictatus Papae, 1090 " in *The Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, ed. Paul Halsall (New York: Fordham University / Online Reference Book for Medieval Studies, 1075). Line paragraph formatting removed. The complete document is provided as Appendix S.

The date of promulgation of *Dictatus Papae* is disputed. Some authorities say 1075, others 1090. See Paul Halsall, ed. *Internet History Sourcebooks Project*, Online Reference Book for Medieval Studies (New York, Fordham University: Fordham Center for Medieval Studies, 2006). , Harold J. Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983). p. 96. and Tierney, *Crisis of Church and State*, pp. 59 - 60.

However some writers interpret Gregory VII's influence rather differently. Harold Berman²⁷² states that Gregory VII turned the reform movement within the church *against* the very imperial authority which had led the Cluniac reformers during the tenth and early eleventh centuries. As a consequence of the period of "papal revolution" which began about 1050 and focussed on Gregory VII's *Dictatus Papae*, a fundamental change took place in western Europe in the nature of law both as a political institution and as an intellectual concept during the late eleventh, twelfth, and the early thirteenth centuries. Law became disembedded. The combination of these two factors, the political and the intellectual, helped to produce modern Western legal systems, not only as a result of the implementation of policies and theories of central elites, but also a response to social and economic changes "on the ground" and from the influence of religious factors as well.²⁷³

However an examination of theological considerations (above) indicates that these changes did not occur because of the application of the concepts of the New Covenant. They occurred because of the interaction between factors which were a consequence of the contradiction of those concepts. Berman says it was the total upheaval resulting from the papal revolution that gave birth to the Western legal tradition.²⁷⁴ Moreover Gregory's aggressive stance did not ensure perpetual papal authority over Europe's monarchs.

In 1095, twenty years after *Dictatus Papae*, and only ten years after an unsuccessful attempt to raise a campaign to recapture Moorish Toledo and Badajoz, Pope Urban II called for "the servants of God" to drive out the "evil race" of Muslims - claiming the role of "Pontiff of the whole earth (and) a messenger to reveal the divine will." He was responding in part to an appeal by Emperor Alexius I at the Council of Clermont for help in defending Byzantium against the Seljuqs, and partly to the victory in Spain of Yusuf bin Tashfin, a puritanical Almoravid Muslim from Morocco. Contemptuous of the decadence of the ruling Muslim courts in Spain, Yusuf had ended their moral and religious laxness and annulled the excessive privileges they had granted for Christians and Jews.

Claiming that it was "imperative" for "the servants of God" to "make a stand against the enemy" in response to "the voice of Christ which commands your obedience," and as an incentive for princes and paupers alike to join a campaign he announced his offer. "By

272 ———, *Law*, p. 94.

273 Ibid. Pp. 85-86.

274 Ibid. p. 520.

right of the gift of God's power to me," he said, an indulgence with remission of all penances would be granted to those who "took the cross" and lost their lives as martyrs in battle against the infidels. In addition, whatever lands or properties of the infidels the Crusaders managed to locate (discover) or seize (possess) would belong, as spoil, to the Christians who first seized it.²⁷⁵ The first of nine crusades over two hundred years (followed by other assorted campaigns spread through the next two centuries) was declared a success in 1099 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the barbaric massacre of its population described by the Archbishop of Tyre, thus:

The rest of the (Christian) soldiers roved through the city in search of wretched survivors who might be hiding in the narrow portals and byways to escape death. These were dragged out into public view and slain like sheep. Some formed into bands and broke into houses where they laid violent hands on the heads of families, on their wives, children and their entire households. These victims were either put to the sword or dashed headlong to the ground from some elevated place so that they perished miserably. Each marauder claimed as his own in perpetuity the particular house which he had entered, together with all it contained.²⁷⁶

Two centuries after Gregory VII's *Dictatus Papae*, Pope Boniface VIII tried to reverse the decline in the church's influence, to prevent monarchs from taxing church officials without papal permission, and to control the never ending conflicts between the kings of France and England by issuing another bull. When both King Philip IV of France and King Edward I of England rejected it Boniface issued yet another, *Unam Sanctam*, in 1302. Its message was very clear: "Now, therefore, we declare, say, determine and pronounce that for every human creature it is necessary for salvation to be subject to the authority of the Roman Pontiff."²⁷⁷ Philip responded by having the Pope arrested, and he died a few weeks later. Three years later a French Pope, Clement V, was escorted by the King to Avignon, France, beginning the so-called "Babylonian Captivity" of the papacy.

It is widely considered that it was Pope Boniface VIII rather than Gregory VII who determined the power relationship between the church and Europe's monarchs, and, according to Witte,²⁷⁸ it was Boniface who propounded a two-swords theory, (Mark 12:13-

²⁷⁵ Régine Pernoud, *The Crusaders: The Struggle for the Holy Land - Urban II: The Pope of the First Crusade* (Ft. Collins, CO: Ignatius Press, 1959).

²⁷⁶ Frederick Turner, *Beyond geography : the western spirit against the wilderness* (New York: Viking Press, 1980). p.80.

²⁷⁷ J. P. Kirsch, "Unam Sanctam," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1912).

²⁷⁸ John Jr. Witte, "Facts and Fictions about the History of Separation of Church and State," *Journal of Church and State* 48, no. 1 (2006).

17), in which Jesus indicated his understanding of the relationship between commitment to faith and commitment to civil authority: "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." Witte wrote:

(the) late medieval system of church government and law was grounded in part in the two-swords theory ... that the pope is the vicar of Christ, in whom Christ has vested his whole authority (which was) symbolized in the "two swords" discussed in the Bible a spiritual sword and a temporal sword. Christ had metaphorically handed these two swords to the highest being in the human world – the pope, the vicar of Christ.²⁷⁹

10. A Golden Age lost: stimulus for religious renewal

The Catholic recovery of Spain, the *Reconquista*, initiated in the 8th cent., accelerated under Gregory VII and continued in stages to Las Nevas, 1212; Cordoba, 1236; Seville, 1248; and finally Granada in 1492. Although the Golden Age of Spain had faded from the end of the 11th cent., several scholars arose within its Muslim and Jewish communities whose contributions to the development of covenantal understanding were of paramount importance.

Ibn Rushd (Averroes) a Muslim scholar born in Cordoba, was one of the first secular thinkers and a 'spiritual father' to Western Europe.²⁸⁰ He encouraged the study of philosophy on the basis that there is no conflict between religion and philosophy, and that they are different ways of reaching the same truth. This was a challenge to all religions which relied on revelation as the basis of their determination of all questions, but especially to Islam, in which there was growing emphasis on acceptance of Shariah law in determining all matters, and the church, which claimed to be the sole arbiter in matters of factual truth, and that there could be no debate after it had made a pronouncement on the basis of faith. He challenged the dominant role of men in Islam, especially in matters of legal evidence, proposing that women were equal to men in all legal capacities, but that challenge also applied equally to the church.

Ibn Rushd's starting point was that the Qur'an and the Law command the study of philosophy,²⁸¹ and his support for the concept that existence precedes essence also drew

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Majid Fakhry, *Averroes: His Life, Works and Influence*. (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2001). p. 62.

²⁸¹ H. Chad Hillier, "Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (1126 - 1198 CE)," in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. James Fieser and Bradley Dowden (Tennessee Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy., 2005).

attention to the relationship between God and all beings, especially humanity, and therefore the interpretation of personal responsibility within that relationship. His view on intellect was an even more direct challenge. He proposed that “the human soul is a separate substance ontologically identical with the active intellect; and when this active intellect is embodied in an individual human it is the material intellect...”²⁸²

Ibn Rushd (1126-1198) and two rabbinical physician-scholar-philosophers, Judah Halevi (c. 1080-1141), and Moses ben Maimon, (Maimonides, 1135-1204), were near-contemporaries. Each was affected by the collapse of Muslim imperial unity and religious tolerance, the accelerating Reconquista, and being overrun by fanatical Almohad Berbers who suppressed practices which had evolved as a blend of Judaism and Islam.²⁸³ Ibn Rushd was forced to flee to Almeria, on the Mediterranean coast. Halevi left Spain to live in Israel, but in what circumstances is not clear. The Maimonides family fled first to Almeria then Fez, Morocco.

Halevi tried to break the philosophical mould which he said had entrapped earlier religious thinkers, and he defended Judaism the attacks of non-Jewish philosophers and those he viewed as heretics, especially the Karaites. His most influential work, *The Kuzari*, was written as if it was a dialogue between the king of the Khazars and representatives of various belief systems, the rabbi last. As Halivni explains it, he applied the idea of a God-given Oral Torah to turn the Karaite criticism of rabbinic Oral Law, being human and subjective, back upon the Karaites themselves, arguing for the received legacy of the rabbinic sages. Halivni discusses the works of several other scholars in support of the Talmudic dual-Torah concept, but an extract from *The Kuzari* encapsulates the discourse.²⁸⁴

All thou sayest is convincing, because the Law enjoins that there shall be 'one Tōrāh and one statute.' Should Karaite methods prevail there would be as many different codes as opinions. Not one individual would remain constant to one code. For every day he forms new opinions, increases his knowledge, or meets with someone who refutes him with some argument and converts him to his views. But whenever we find them agreeing, we know that they follow the tradition of one or many of their ancestors. In such a case we should not believe their views, and say: 'How is it that you

282 Ibid.

283 The Almohad were successors to Yusuf's Almoravid regime (p. 273) and much more fanatical.

284 David Weiss Halivni, *Breaking the Tablets: Jewish Theology After the Shoah*, ed. Peter Ochs (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007). p. 78.

agree concerning this regulation, whilst reason allows the word of God to be interpreted in various ways?" If the answer be that this was the opinion of Anan, or Benjamin, Saul, or others, then they admit the authority of tradition received from people who lived before them, and of the best tradition, viz. that of the Sages..²⁸⁵

Maimonides read all three religions, trained as a physician, wrote prolifically, migrated to Egypt, rose to be personal physician to Saladin, and was the appointed leader of the country's Jewish community. He insisted that the entire, essential Law, as practiced by the rabbinic Jews of his age, had been given to Moses explicitly, partly in written form and partly in an incorruptible oral tradition, and David Weiss Halivni says that in the context of his time and his philosophy his desire to assert that the entirety of Jewish law as codified by the classical sages had been revealed directly by God is easily understandable.²⁸⁶

Two of Maimonides' works are most relevant to the evolution of covenantal understanding. First is the *Code of Jewish Law*, the *Mishneh Torah*, written during the years 1175 to 1185, which he planned as a code to make the study of the enormous and complex Talmud unnecessary for those who merely wanted to know the law, and which Holtz says was the greatest of the true medieval codes.²⁸⁷ Second is the *Guide of the Perplexed*, 1195.

The last fourteen volumes of the *Mishneh Torah*, *The Laws of Kings and Their Wars*²⁸⁸, cover Talmudic teaching and comments on the appointment of kings, their responsibility in war, the future resettlement of Eretz Yisrael, relations between Jews and gentiles, the Jews' obligation to teach gentiles the seven key commandments, the re-establishment of the monarchy, and the future Messianic Age. While Maimonides worked on that, the Christian Spanish formulated the Law of Teruel which regulated relations between Christians and Jews and stated (with reference to compensation payments) that "the Jews are the serfs of the king and the absolute property of the royal treasury"; and Pope Alexander III and the Third Lateran Council adopted their canon on relations between Christians and Jews which stated that Jews were prohibited from having Christian servants,

285 Judah Halevi and Hartwig Hirschfeld (trans), "Kitab al Khazari (Kuzari)," Wikimedia Foundation, http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Kitab_al_Khazari. Part 3, para. 38.

286 Halivni, *Tablets*. p. 78.

287 Barry W. Holtz, "Midrash," in *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts*, ed. Barry W. Holtz (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006). pp. 161-2.

288 Moses Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah: The Laws of Kings and Their Wars*, ed. Eliyahu Touger, trans. Eliyahu Touger, First of new translation with commentaries ed., 14 vols., vol. 14 (New York: Moznaim Publishing Corp, 1987).

that Christian testimony against Jews was to be accepted in all lawsuits and that Jews who converted to Christianity were not to be deprived of their possessions.

In this context Maimonides must have been writing with both Pope Leo II's Holy Roman Empire and Gregory's *Dictatus Papae* in mind, as well as the Talmud, when he wrote that at some time in the future the Messianic King will arise, renew the dynasty of King David, return it to its initial sovereignty, build the Temple and gather the dispersed of Israel. He said that anyone who does not believe in him or does not wait for his coming denies not only the statements of other prophets but also the Torah and Moses. He then set out a series of references to the prophets and the Torah to support his contention, beginning very deliberately with Deuteronomy 30:3–5 which is to the effect that:

God will bring back your captives, have pity on you and gather you once again from among the peoples where He has scattered you. Had you wandered to the ends of the heavens God would gather you even from there, reclaim you and bring you back to the land your fathers' possessed so that you in your turn might make it your own, prospering there and increasing even more than your fathers.²⁸⁹

Maimonides was confirming that his view coincided with those of Jesus and Muhammad: neither the Abrahamic nor Mosaic Covenants had been abrogated. The Jewish community had to wait for an indication that either the imposed divine retribution had run its course or that God had another task within their designated role for the People Israel.

He said that if a king can demonstrate that he is from the line of David, is learned in the Torah, observes the commandments, compels all Israel to walk in the way of the Torah, fights the wars of God, builds the Temple and gathers the dispersed of Israel, then he is definitely the Messiah. However he added a qualification based on Zephaniah 3:9 and Daniel 11:35 that if the king did not also improve the entire world by motivating all nations to serve God together it would show that although he was a proper king of the line of David, God had caused him to arise “to test the many.”²⁹⁰

Maimonides put Jesus of Nazareth into that category, more or less comparing him with Bar Kozibah, saying that he had aspired to be the Messiah and was executed by the court in line with the prophecy in Daniel 11:14 that “the vulgar among your people shall exalt themselves in an attempt to fulfil the vision, but they shall stumble.” Then, in a scathing

²⁸⁹ This is a paraphrase of the English Jerusalem translation of Deut. 30:3–5.

²⁹⁰ Eliyahu Touger, ed. *Maimonides Mishneh Torah* (New York: Moznaim, 1987). p. 234.

attack on the church for having elevated a false messiah to the status of a unit of a Trinitarian God, Maimonides asked whether there could be a greater stumbling block than Christianity. He said that all the prophets spoke of the Messiah as the redeemer of Israel and its saviour, one who would gather their dispersed and strengthen their observance of the commandments. Yet the church, which claimed Jesus as Messiah, and of the line of David, caused the Jews to be slain by the sword, scattered and humbled their remnant people, altered the Torah and led the majority of the world to err and serve a god other than the Lord.²⁹¹

However Maimonides went on to recognize a constructive role for both Jesus and Muhammad. “It is not within the power of man to comprehend the intention of the Creator,” he said, because “His ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts, but ultimately all the deeds of Jesus of Nazareth and that Ishmaelite who arose after him will only serve to prepare the way for the Messiah’s coming and the improvement of the whole world by inspiring the nations to serve God together.”²⁹² His use of the disparaging expression “the Ishmaelite who arose after him” instead of saying “the Prophet Muhammad” indicates that he was not prepared to acknowledge divine inspiration in the Prophet’s mission because to do so would mean having to acknowledge, as Muhammad did, that Jesus of Nazareth was, and is, the Messiah of Hebrew scripture. However by conceding that they were both serving to prepare the way for the Messiah he was, in effect, agreeing with the Qur’an that each of Judaism, Christianity and Islam had a legitimate role in God’s economy.

In the circumstances of his day, either Maimonides was so close to the action that he could not see or was not prepared to admit that they are each living under, obligated under, and subject to judgement and retribution under covenant in the same manner as the People Israel. It had been said by Malachi, c. 450 BCE (chapter three) that Israel would lose its prophetic capacity and that in due course a new wave of ‘priests’ dedicated to the Mosaic Covenant would arise. Maimonides was in a remarkably difficult situation. He was contributing to the evolution of covenantal understanding step by step in exactly the same manner as his predecessors. He was proving Malachi correct. He was in the same mode as the major prophets of Hebrew history. With remarkable foresight and understanding of the

²⁹¹ Ibid. p. 236.

²⁹² Ibid. p. 236.

interaction of the three faiths he could perceive the next phase of the evolutionary process and he was providing a platform for his successors to build on.

As the finale to the entire Mishneh Torah, Maimonides added his key assertions. In the Messianic Age the nature of the world will not change, nor will there be innovations in the work of creation. The world will continue according to its pattern. The words of the prophecy in Isaiah 11:6 that the wolf will dwell with the lamb and the leopard will lie down with the young goat are a metaphor and a parable meaning that Israel will dwell securely, together with the wicked gentiles, he said. The “wicked gentiles” are described in Jeremiah 5:6 as a wolf from the wilderness and a leopard which shall stalk their cities. However Maimonides maintained that they will return to the true faith, that they will no longer steal or destroy, that they will live at peace with Israel, and that everyone will understand what has been implied in the parables. The only difference between “the current age” and the Messianic Era will be the emancipation of the Jews from subjugation by the gentile kingdoms, he said. Then he added his own “simple interpretation” of the prophets’ words: the war involving Gog and Magog will take place at the beginning of the Messianic Age, but before that war a prophet, Elijah, will arise to make Israel upright, to prepare their hearts to serve God and to establish peace within the world.

Acknowledging that the coming of the Messiah was a matter of controversy, Maimonides noted that some sages expected Elijah’s coming to precede the coming of the Messiah. He said that such matters were not defined in the prophets’ words, that the wise men had no established tradition on them, and that they could not be known definitely until they occurred. Furthermore the timing and order of the events or their details were not matters which people should concern themselves over because they are not “among the fundamental principles of faith” and their study will bring neither fear nor love of God.

He wrote: “Do not presume that in the Messianic Age, the nature of the world will change or there will be innovations in the work of creation. Rather, the world will continue according to its pattern.”²⁹³ One should simply wait and believe in the general concept, he said, knowing that the Sages did not yearn for the Messianic Era in order to have dominion over the world, to rule the gentiles or to have special privileges, but simply to be free to work within the Torah so that they would merit the world to come. In that era there will be neither famine nor war, envy or competition, but good will flow in abundance, “the

293 Ibid. p.240, Mishneh Torah chapter 2, para. 1. Mishneh Torah chapter 2, para. 1.

occupation of the entire world will be solely to know God, ... the Jews will be great sages and know hidden matters, attaining knowledge of their Creator to the full extent of human potential, as (Isa. 11:9) states: 'The world will be filled with the knowledge of God as the sea fills the ocean bed'"

In the *Guide*, Maimonides continued to pursue his passionate belief that the Messianic Age would not differ materially from his own era but that it would involve a society with moral and intellectual conduct patterned on, or determined by, humanity's fuller understanding of God and God's absolute righteousness, and that there would therefore be no dictators, oppressors or master races: just peace.²⁹⁴ But he extended his reasoning by describing Judaism as a rational religion. Controversy had broken out in 1188 around his interpretation of the resurrection of the soul and the body in his *Codex*. He had included belief in resurrection as an article of faith and when he was questioned he referred to resurrection as the cornerstone of the Torah and said that it must be considered as "the soul's return to the body." This satisfied no one and instead of reducing the level of controversy it made the situation worse and in some rabbinic circles he was subjected to scorn and ridicule.²⁹⁵ Then, when he wrote of Judaism as a rational religion, the scorn and ridicule which greeted his earlier works turned to bitter denunciation and cries of heresy. Although the progressive intellectuals welcomed the opportunity to develop a rational view of religion, the Jewish conservatives attacked him with vigour.²⁹⁶

Christians joined the debate and argument raged. If those statements were directed at Muhammad and Islam then, in the church's view, they were correct. However if they were directed at Christ then of course they were wrong and had to be destroyed. If it did occur to the church that they could have been written with the fathers of the church in mind rather than Christ, then that was just as bad anyway. The church's position was that it is quite impossible that Muhammad could have received direct revelation, but that did not mean that revelation stopped with the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.²⁹⁷ Numerous Christians, enjoying the exclusive benefit of the Holy Spirit, had received visions and

294 Isidore Epstein, *Judaism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1959). pp. 208-216, Meir Meiseles, *Judaism thought and legend: an anthology ...* trans. Rebecca Schonfeld-Brand and Aryeh Newman, First ed. (Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 1964; reprint, 1977). p. 575.

295 Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Maimonides: A Biography*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel, First English ed. (New York: Farrar-Straus-Giroux, 1982; reprint, Second, 1983). p. 9.

296 Meiseles, *Judaism: anthology*. p. 476-477, quoting Maimonides. *Yesodei ha'Torah*.

297 Hilda Graef, *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* (London: Burns & Oates, 1963). p. 60.

revelations, like Patrick in Ireland, Constantine and Bridget, as well as Stephen and Peter during the Apostolic period.

Maimonides talk of the Messianic Age being heralded by a war between Gog and Magog; the King Messiah restoring the kingdom of David and rebuilding the Temple; and the gathering of the dispersed of Israel, were even worse. The Messiah had already arrived, been rejected by the Jews and appointed the church as His sole successor. If Maimonides was correct, the church had to re-examine its self-understanding, the covenantal basis of its existence, and its treatment of the Jewish community.

Maimonides, recognizing that such a re-examination was far in the future and faced with the threatened destruction of Jewish communities, accepted that Jewish martyrdoms would continue, but taught that they were not inevitable, and acknowledged the Sanhedrin ruling that, up to certain limits, a Jew was permitted to transgress any except three specified precepts of the Torah (idolatry, murder and prohibited sexual acts) to avoid that fate, except where the intention of heathens is to compel a Jew to demonstrate his disloyalty to the Jewish religion or if there is a government decree against Jewish observance, even in private. However he ruled that since Islam is not an idolatrous religion, martyrdom is not required if Jews are faced with the option of conversion to Islam or death, and if martyrdom is not required but is still suffered, a Jew is guilty of the offence of suicide.²⁹⁸

11. Commissioned response: Thomas Aquinas and Boleslav's alternative

The church was not interested in a self-re-examination. Its simple response was to encourage the destruction of all of Maimonides' works, and the Talmud. In 1242 a search and grab exercise resulted in 24 wagon loads of books being destroyed in Paris alone. Subsequently, in 1261, Raymond of Pennafort looked for a more effective solution. He "desired to have a philosophical exposition and defence of the Christian Faith to be used against the Jews and Moors in Spain." Thomas Aquinas, being highly regarded for his scholarship and lecturing, was given the task of preparing material. His response was

298 Abraham Halkin and David Hartman, *Crisis and Leadership: Epistles of Maimonides* trans. Abraham Halkin (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985). Cited in Jacobs, "Companion." pp. 336-7.

Concerning Christianity, the Rabbis advised that Jews should flee to avoid martyrdom. Some also argued against Maimonides, saying to adopt Islam meant to reject the Torah of Moses and this demanded martyrdom. Ibid.

Summa Contra Gentiles – “A perfect model of patient and sound apologetics,”²⁹⁹ in which he contradicts significant points from one book or chapter to another in a confusing manner that supports continuing intervention by the church in all matters, casts doubt on creation and, in ignoring the concept, effectively repudiates the notion of covenantal relationships. For example, concerning faith and reason, Thomas said:

some matters are within the scope of human reason but others are concealed and relayed through the church as matters of faith, and where the understandings differ, it is “(not) permissible to believe as false that which we hold by faith ...”³⁰⁰

Pope Urban IV ordered that Jews were to be forced to remit usurious charges and that until they complied they were to be denied any contact at all with the Christian community, and Thomas Aquinas continued work on Summa Theologica which was to be the church’s ultimate statement of theology to secure its position in competition with “the wild fantasies of the simple Jews.”³⁰¹ In contrast, King Boleslav of Poland decided there were alternative approaches to relations with Jews: cooperation. Knowing of their plight in other countries, Boleslav issued a model charter for the protection of liberties for Jews in 1264 to encourage them to migrate.³⁰² They were assured of relative freedom from molestation as well as freedom of opportunity to an extent which was quite rare in Christian Europe at that time,³⁰³ and they migrated from France, Italy and elsewhere to establish businesses and professional offices. Poland’s economy boomed.³⁰⁴

Rome’s authority had been challenged, but within a few years it was able to re-exert it and ensure that the intent of the charter was annulled. It imposed the same controls on Jews which applied in other countries, insisting that they be kept in social isolation and economic servitude, and with great difficulty for Hebrew congregations. It became onerous indeed for scholars and others who relied on professional practices as doctors or solicitors

299 D. Kennedy, "St. Thomas Aquinas," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Kevin Knight (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912).

300 Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles Book 1: God*, ed. Joseph Kenny, trans. Anton C. Pegis, 5 vols., vol. 1 (New York: Hanover House, 1955). Bk. 1 Ch. 7 (1).

301 Summa Contra Gentiles Bk. 1 Ch.20 (36)

302 In the wake of the major Mongol invasion of 1241, immigrants had been recruited from Germany and other countries to the west to rebuild Poland’s infrastructure and protect its cities. Subsequently, after the minor invasion of 1259-60, additional migrant workers were needed for further reconstruction and to generate industrial and commercial recovery.

303 Roth, *History of the Jews*. p. 266.

304 Edward A. Synan, *The Popes and the Jews in the Middle Ages* (London: McMillan, 1967). p110.

for an income to serve as rabbis with no financial recompense other than exemption from communal taxation. The progressive change to a fully professional rabbinate with a town's rabbi receiving emoluments from his congregation under contract of service began. So did Jewish migration: south east into the Ukraine and north east into Lithuania where opportunities were better as Poland-Lithuania was consolidated.

Two centuries and an additional two crusades after Boleslav's Charter Rome again exerted its authority in several situations which illustrate that it saw no reason to determine a doctrine of covenant. Its understanding of the New Covenant was that "no one ever conceived from man and woman has been freed from the dominion of the devil, except through Jesus Christ our Lord, the mediator between God and men" (*Cantate Domino*, 1442 Florence), and the papacy had been granted full and exclusive authority by Christ as his delegate on earth – and therefore God's.

Three circumstances and papal documents promulgated in response to the challenges will be examined. One was the imposition of conditions for the normalization of relations between Rome and break-away churches which proved unacceptable to the Jacobite Christians and undermined the cause of reconciliation. Those conditions were set out in the Bull of Union with the Copts, issued during the papacy of Eugenius IV and the Fourth Council of Florence in 1442³⁰⁵

The next was the bull *Dum Diversas*, issued by Pope Nicholas V ten years later, in June 1452, when the rapid expansion of the Ottoman Empire and growing Muslim influence in Europe posed a real threat to Rome's role and papal ambitions. The Balkans and several states in Eastern Central Europe had either come under the control of the Ottoman Empire or, being threatened by it, were accommodating its interests, and the remnants of the Byzantine Empire were isolated and directly threatened. *Dum Diversas* encouraged Portugal to extend the boundaries of Christendom southward into Africa, to offset the church's loss of influence in Europe and the growing influence of Islam in Africa. In doing so, it gave papal authority to Alfonso V of Portugal to reduce any "Saracens (Muslims) and pagans and any other unbelievers" to perpetual slavery, and thus legitimized and facilitated the Portuguese West African slave trade.

305 Pope Eugenius IV, "Bull of Union with the Copts: Ecumenical Council of Florence, ," ed. Norman P. Tanner (Florence: The Virumcision Reference Library, 1442); *ibid.*

The other was the promulgation of the Bull of Crusade to the whole of Christendom, *Romanus Pontifex*, by the same pope in January 1455, only two and a half years after *Dum Diversas*. The decision to extend the benefits of papal authority to additional Christian kingdoms while concurrently protecting Portugal's rights and forbidding other countries from encroaching on them was precipitated by dramatically changed circumstances.

Dum Diversas was shocking. It can be regarded as the last act of the Third Epoch. However *Romanus Pontifex* was an absolute travesty of the Gospels and the concept of covenant. It provided confirmation that the pope and the church hierarchy had totally rejected the concept of Universal Covenant and the guidelines for conduct towards one's neighbours. It ushered in the Fourth Epoch and will be examined in chapter six.

Chapter Six

Fourth epoch: a brutal demonstration.

Conflict and abuse of covenant expose its reality

1. Introduction

This chapter begins with reflections on the document which provided the rationale for the abuse of covenant, *Dictatus Papae*, as a link to the other critical encyclical, *Romanus Pontifex*, which confirmed it and triggered the Fourth Epoch, the church's strenuous efforts to suppress Islam, and the rationale, or motives, behind the papacy-driven scramble for colonies. The major consequences of those encyclicals and the importance of covenant theology in the Reformation in Christianity are then examined. The manner in which the reality of covenantal relationships was then demonstrated by the abuse of obligations which precipitated WWI, the dramatic manipulation of Jewish interests in connection with the Balfour Declaration, and the dominant importance of 'the Jewish Question' in WWII are then each examined. An examination of the corruption involved in manipulating the UN processes to ensure the establishment of the State of Israel follows. Other matters of importance during the fourth epoch include the reformations in each of Christianity, Islam and Judaism, the appearance of Mormonism, the impact of Darwin's research, and the work of Wellhausen and others in reviewing the compilation of the Biblical Scriptures.

2. *Dictatus Papae*: Gregory's guidelines

The subordination of the state to religious authority in the manner of *Dictatus Papae*, Pope Gregory VII's absolute denial of any wrongdoing, either personally or by the institution of the church, and his claims to exalted personal status, above judgement, were not consistent with the relationships envisaged by Jesus for the community of the New Covenant. They were also in sharp contrast to the limitation which Muhammad expressed concerning his status and authority as the 'Seal of the Prophets'. Key clauses, as numbered in the papal document, *Dictatus Papae* are:

- 2. That the Roman pontiff alone can be called universal
- 7. That for him alone is it lawful, according to the needs of the time, to make new laws, to assemble together new congregations

- 9. That of the pope alone all princes shall kiss the feet.
- 10. That his name alone shall be spoken in the churches.
- 11. That this is the only name in the world.
- 12. That it may be permitted to him to depose emperors
- 17. That no chapter and no book shall be considered canonical without his authority
- 19. That he himself may be judged by no one.
- 20. That no one shall dare to condemn one who appeals to the apostolic chair
- 23. That the Roman pontiff, if he have been canonically ordained, is undoubtedly made a saint by the merits of St. Peter.
- 27. That he may absolve subjects from their fealty to wicked men

The church-state partnership had been successful in extending the church's stabilizing influence with every imperial conquest, jointly imposed in the Low Countries, Central and Northern Europe by fear and the sword. However the relationship soured as the Vatican demanded the protection of the states under the Holy Roman Empire, and according to Berman, by the reign of Gregory VII Christendom had had become "a beleaguered citadel which only survived because its greatest enemy, Islam, had reached the end of its lines of communication, and its lesser enemies were organized only for raids and for plunder" and not for expansionary conquest. Gregory VII, he says sought to adapt that church-state relationship further by equating his personal ecclesiastical power to that of universal dictator, reinforced by the policies of *Dictatus Papae*.³⁰⁶

3. Working to the Guidelines: Eugenius, Nicholas and *Romanus Pontifex*

In his 1442 Bull of Union with the Copts, more than three centuries after *Dictatus Papae*,³⁰⁷ Eugenius IV drove a wedge through the Coptic community and prevented reconciliation between Christian communities, as well as between Christians and Jews, by substituting one law for another and, in particular, banning circumcision. Ten years later, in 1452, Pope Nicholas V went further in the encyclical *Dum Diversas*. Citing Apostolic Authority, he legitimized previous African coastal expeditions, and granted the kings of Spain and Portugal full and free permission to invade, search out, capture, and subjugate the Saracens

³⁰⁶ Berman, *Law*, p. 110. Berman cites Southern, *Western Society*, p. 27, and says Southern points out that "both the Greek and the Islamic systems were immensely richer, more powerful, and intellectually more sophisticated than that of Western Europe. The West was the poor relation of Byzantium."

See also Franzen and Dolan, *A Concise History of the Church*.

³⁰⁷ Eugenius IV, "Union."

and pagans and any other unbelievers and enemies of Christ wherever they may be, as well as their kingdom and other property, and to reduce their persons into perpetual slavery.³⁰⁸

Then, only a few months later, in May 1453, the church and all of the Christian powers of Europe had to contend with the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople and the end of Byzantium. Rome lost access to the Black Sea states and much of its trade and influence over the churches in the states that had relations with the Ottomans. States neighbouring the Ottoman Empire found an accommodation with the Ottomans necessary, and there was no will among the princes for an attempt to recover Constantinople. The expressed view of the Roman Catholic Church was that the future of Christianity was at risk.³⁰⁹ In reality, it was only the influence of the papacy. Seven months after the fall of Constantinople, Pope Nicholas promulgated *Romanus Pontifex* in a bid to offset those risks by giving basically the same authority to all Catholic kings and princes, as Spain and Portugal. His aims were the prior occupation of the new countries, a final overwhelming crusade against the heart of Islam from the rear, and raising funds to finance that crusade. The theological justification for the bull is the statement attributed to Jesus that:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. (Mt. 28:18-20)³¹⁰

However Jesus said nothing about subjugating, enslaving, exploiting and instructing them in canon law, church creeds or doctrine, and the Qur'an anticipates and insistently teaches that the return of Jesus will precede the Hour of Judgment with either a preparatory or a participatory role in the process of judgement. The church therefore has no basis for its teaching that Muslims are enemies of Jesus and must be destroyed. The two critical ayat are complemented by about 70 hadith entries in the Sahîh Al-Bukhâri, one of which follows.

308 Pope Nicholas V, "*Dum Diversas*. Bull," in *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages*, ed. Paul Halsall (London: George Bell 1910).

309 James Lees-Milne, *Saint Peter's - the story of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1967)..

310 The relevant Gospel references are Mk 16:15-16, Lk. 24:47-49, Jn. 3:17-18, 14:6-7, 20:21,23, 21:15-17, and Mt. 16:15-18.

And there is none of the People of the Book but must believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Judgment he will be a witness against them. (S.4:157-159)

And (Jesus) shall be a Sign (for the coming of) the Hour (of Judgment): therefore have no doubt about the (Hour), but follow ye Me: this is a Straight Way. (S.43 A61-64)

"By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, son of Mary (Jesus) will shortly descend amongst you people (Muslims) as a just ruler and will break the cross and kill the pig and abolish the Jizya.³¹¹ (Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 3. Hadith no. 425)

Many of Europe's crowned heads preferred to make peace with the Ottoman Empire. They were not interested in more papal wars, but they would not allow Portugal and Spain to take exclusive control of whatever world was "out there" to be discovered and exploited. They acted independently. Thus the pope's bid to gain total control of world affairs by sponsoring subordinate monarchies and principalities had far-reaching consequences.

Romanus Pontifex was, at that time, the critical factor in determining the pattern of world events and relationships between world communities of faith and, in particular, relationships between Christianity, Judaism and Islam. The decision to promulgate that bull, and every major consequence of it, involve neglect or abuse of obligations under covenant. Its immediate effect was to legitimize the expansion of slavery and the age-old practice of military colonization. Numerous scholars support the conclusion that while none of Judaism, Christianity or Islam have unblemished records, attacks on Jews and Muslims for involvement in slavery are essentially defensive exercises by Christians.³¹² The legitimizing of slavery and imperial domination demonstrated absolute rejection of the church's basic obligation under the New Covenant, and made its primary responsibility under the covenant unattainable without a comprehensive reassessment of its self-understanding.

311 A tax paid by non-Muslims under the protection of the Muslim government.

312 See Thomas Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery*, First; ed. (London: Croom Helm Ltd, 1981; reprint, Croom Helm 1983; Routledge 1988, 1992, 1994).

Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press., 2005).

Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam: A History of the Evolution of Ideas of Islam with a Life of the Prophet* (London: Christophers, 1922).

Ehud R. Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998).

The next major effect of *Romanus Pontifex* was the gross exploitation and abuse of the rights and resources of those communities that were not formally annexed or enslaved. It eliminated any need for the explorer/invasers to exercise care and responsibility because they had papal assurance of divine blessing for their ventures and forgiveness for foul play, plus the invocation that the invaders were actually responsible to God to bring all those hapless and otherwise ill-fated peoples within the influence of the church for conversion and the prospect of salvation: ‘the White Man’s Burden.’³¹³

Many of the communities which were about to be subjugated had highly developed systems of belief in a Creator-God with organized religious practices and advanced ethics. However, in the *Requerimiento* the armies of the Conquistadores were accompanied by Spanish Catholic priests who baptized pagans by the thousands, instilling into them the Inquisition era version of Christianity. With missionary zealotry they read to each native group a declaration, in Spanish, that henceforth they were obligated (requerido) to convert to Catholic Christianity, to submit to baptism, to participate in activities and organizations led by the priests, and to submit to their new master, the King of Spain, with acts of fealty and payments of tribute. Those who refused were forced to do so by the Army or were simply slaughtered.³¹⁴

Romanus Pontifex triggered competition and territorial wars; accelerated European colonization;³¹⁵ and, in 1478, initiated the Spanish Inquisition. John Dalton has established that the Spanish Inquisition was essentially a religious exercise, not political.

... with a pure desire of preserving intact the Catholic religion, Ferdinand and Isabella solicited from Pope Sixtus IV permission to revive the functions of the Inquisition in Castile, which for some time had gone into abeyance. Their request was complied with by his Holiness expediting a bull, dated November 1st 1478, authorizing them to appoint two or three ecclesiastical inquisitors, of irreproachable manners, who were to be

³¹³ The policy was well in place, but Kipling’s paper characterizing it was 400 years away. It was published shortly after the Spanish surrender of the Philippines to the United States of America, 1898, and President McKinley’s decision that the country would be annexed and not given independence as a republic.

³¹⁴ Timothy Charles Brown, "Nahuas, Gachupines, Patriarchs and Piris: Nicaraguan History through Highland Peasant Eyes," *Journal of American Culture* 20(1997).

³¹⁵ Frances Gardiner Davenport, *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies*. (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington. , 1917).

bachelors in divinity or doctors in canon law. Hence, the Inquisition originated not so much in political, as in religious motives.³¹⁶

To take advantage of the dynamically changing world situation, the integration of Spain and Portugal followed,³¹⁷ and to ensure religious purity Jews and Muslims had to go, or convert. Muslim Granada was occupied and declared free of Muslims in January 1492. A decree expelling all Jews was signed in March, and between May and July 100,000 departed for North Africa and Turkey.³¹⁸ Complete Spanish Union with Portugal was agreed to in 1496 on the basis of the marriage of Manoel, heir of King John, and Isabella, daughter of Isabella and Ferdinand, subject to the condition that all non-Christians who had entered Portugal from Spain would be expelled. However, fearing the economic consequences, Manoel 'commuted' expulsion for the majority to enforced conversion to Christianity and the seizure, enforced baptism and adoption by Catholic families of all Jewish children aged four to fourteen. Muslim children were excluded, for fear of reprisals in Muslim-dominated countries.

4. Pressure for reform

Pressure for reform of the church and the papacy gradually increased during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. One factor was the frequent imposition of capital punishment for activities that did not constitute a crime against 'the state.' The church's determination to maintain a grip on punitive civil law is a major reason for its failure to develop and preach an understanding of the New Covenant consistent with the *formula* which had been recognized progressively during the evolution of Judaism and complemented by both Jesus' Gospel and Qur'anic teaching. If the church acknowledged that its covenantal task was to teach principles for living in peace and harmony, and counselling, leaving matters of discipline to "Caesar," its rationale for integrating the roles of teacher, counsellor, prosecutor, judge and executioner which were fundamental to its self-understanding, became totally unsustainable.

316 John Canon Dalton, "Preface to Life and Times of Cardinal Ximenez," (London: Thomas Baker, 1859). p. xxxi.

317 Ferdinand, heir to Aragon, assumed the throne in 1479; and Isabella, heir to Castile, in 1474.

318 The Inquisition initially had no authority to act against Jews or Muslims. Its purpose was to deal with heretics within the church, or, essentially, crypto-Jews and the few crypto-Muslims who remained after the slaughter of Muslims during the earlier reconquest of Spain Cecil Roth, *The Spanish Inquisition*, First paperback ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1937; reprint, 1996). pp. 131-151.

There is close congruence between the separation of powers of priest and judge in Judaism; in the particular belief *imposed* in the Athanasian Creed, that judgement for mortal sin is *strictly* a matter for Jesus Christ; in the teachings of Jesus himself, and in Qur'anic teaching.

Judaic Law set out procedures and guidelines for civil hearings very clearly, although within that framework its oft quoted guideline of “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” has been roundly condemned by those who promote justice based on Jesus’ teachings.

The Qur'an teaches that:

Every man's fate We have fastened on his own neck: On the Day of Judgment We shall bring out for him a scroll, which he will see spread open. (It will be said to him:) "Read thine (own) record: Sufficient is thy soul this day to make out an account against thee." (S.17 13-14)

Jesus, for whom the church claimed to be surrogate, is reputed to have said: “If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone. (Jn. 7:8)

The Athanasian Creed states very dogmatically that:

(Jesus) ascended into heaven ... sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty: from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies: and shall give account for their own works.

None of its own primary creeds suggest that the church has delegated authority for administering justice. Judgment for one's conduct is stated to be a matter for Jesus' divine authority, in abeyance until a time when “He *will come again in glory to judge* the living and the dead.”³¹⁹ The claims and conduct of the church thus diverged sharply from all of them.

However there was a progressive change in the papacy's approach, with an increasing emphasis on John 20:21,23, (“If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained”), and Matthew 16:15-18, (I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church), in an apparent attempt to justify its claim to

³¹⁹ *A Prayer Book for Australia*. An extract from the Nicene Creed. The Apostles' Creed reads “he will come to judge the living and the dead,” omitting the words “again in glory.” The Athanasian Creed reads “he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.”

permanent and paramount authority as king-maker, determiner of governments, law maker and judge. Thus, prior to the Reformation attacks on the papacy and efforts at reform had been concerned with process and conduct. Theology was rarely involved, so when Martin Luther raised an objection and triggered the Reformation based on the theology of salvation,³²⁰ it was bound to draw strong support from some clergy, and disagreement from others. Luther's initial statement of *Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences* (the 'ninety five theses') in 1517 was essentially an attack on process. He supported the concept and the pope's right to *grant* indulgences, and opposed only the abuse of the practice: the *sale* of offices, exemptions, and bulls of indulgence.³²¹ When his emphasis shifted to salvation, disputation spread rapidly.

If, as the church maintained, its primary role was to save souls rather than teach and guide, then the first consideration had to be process. How were souls to be saved? If salvation required a decision, was it to be made by God, Jesus, an intermediary, or an intercessory? If it was God or Jesus, was access required, or was it direct? The church insisted that access, delegated to the pope, was required, so a penitent only needed access to its clergy. If the authority of the clergy was disputed, what else? Sacraments? Debate shifted from sacraments to scripture. Keys in the Bible: Biblicalism? If covenant was involved, how? If covenant meant salvation, was it conditional, by justification, election, predestination, redemption, works, grace, or intercession, and did judgement, penalty, purgatory, penance, or indulgences, play a role?

5. Luther: repentant, faithful and anti-papist

The concept of covenant was not prominent in Luther's thinking. Justification was paramount. He said "it is wrong to hold that the sacraments of the New Law differ from those of the Old Law in point of their effective significance."³²² This reflects the decision the Council of Trent in 1547, that a person's individual relationship with God is within the constraints of predestination and response to the church's practice of penance. This made

320 Owen Chadwick, *The Reformation*, ed. Owen Chadwick, 2nd Revision ed., 6 vols., vol. 3, *The Pelican History of the Church* (Harmondsworth: Penguin/Pelican, 1977; reprint, 5th printing).40.

321 Markus Wriedt, "Luther's Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,, 2003).

John Dillenberger, ed. *Martin Luther: Selections from his writings*, 1st ed. (Garden City, New York: Anchor/Doubleday & Company, 1961).489-500.(Hereinafter, Dillenberger, "Luther's Writings".)

322Martin Luther, "The Pagan Servitude of the Church," in *Martin Luther, Selections from his Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (New York: Doubleday, 1961).

the notion of a communal or personal covenantal relationship with God either redundant or irrelevant, and incompatible with the church's developed self-understanding.

Luther held the dominant view that Judaism had failed. Supersession, with the role of God's exclusive vehicle for determining the conduct and the future of humanity passing from Judaism to Christianity was a consequence. However he saw the Turks as a scourge sent as agents of the Biblical apocalypse by God to punish Christians and to destroy the Roman Church and the papacy which he had come to see as the antichrist. In '*On war against the Turk*' he wrote "Let the Turk believe and live as he will, just as one lets the papacy and other false Christians live."³²³ Later, in 1542, he read a Latin translation of the Qur'an and although he said it was a tool of the devil, he opposed moves to ban it.³²⁴ Considered together, his writings suggests that he interpreted the *Night Journey* as applying to the Catholic Church either because it had abused its authority as God's delegate, or that, having superseded Judaism, it had to accept the punishments which otherwise were due to its predecessor. His writings show that he accepted the mature Hebrew understanding of covenant with the attributes of divine undertaking or promise, reciprocal obligation or role, divine judgement, and retribution or a penalty clause, and that he accepted it as reality, having application during the Common Era.

However, Luther was adamant that the Mosaic Covenant and the Jewish community had been superseded by the church as an outcome of Jesus' ministry, but he did *not* apply the same components or provisions of covenant to the church-at-large as to the Jews. It was as if the covenant ceased at that moment to have an all-embracing corporate-obligation component linked to a judgement/penalty component; that, if it was extant, such a component applied only to the corrupt Catholic Church through the agency of Islam as an instrument of retribution against it, and that the only extant component with general application was the promise of justification-*cum*-salvation through faith alone for sinners who repented.

323 Andrew Cunningham, ., 2000, ISBN , 141; Mullett, 239–40; Marty, 164., *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Religion, War, Famine and Death in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).141.

Michael A. Mullett, *Martin Luther* (New York: Routledge, 2004).239-240.

Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985).364.

324 ———, *Martin Luther*.354.

In ‘*On Jews and their lies*’, 1543, late in his ministry Luther set out to prove that Judaism is fundamentally a “works-righteousness” religion; that its people had failed in their obligations under covenant; that their rejection by God was permanent, and that authorities should follow his recommendations and deal with Jewish communities because “they live among us (and) we dare not tolerate their conduct, now that we are aware of their lying and reviling and blaspheming.”³²⁵ He placed heavy emphasis on faith in Christ as the only means of access to salvation, and he maintained that original sin was only offset by sovereign grace with each person’s sin imputed to Christ, and that dependence on law and charity, or works, is wrong.

6. Luther’s contemporaries: Zwingli, Oecolampadius and Bullinger

Ulrich Zwingli disagreed with Luther’s limitation on valid classes of covenant; supported the notion that two covenants, works and grace, were both legitimate; rejected the abuse of pilgrimage, the notion of purgatory, saints, monasticism and celibacy, and split from Luther by insisting that the mass was purely symbolic and played no part in a covenantal relationship.³²⁶

Oecolampadius introduced the notion of a Covenant of Redemption as an extension of Luther’s doctrine of justification by faith alone. He proposed that the Father made a covenant with the Son and that the Covenant of Grace was an outworking of this. He described the covenant of grace as one-sided in origin and two-sided in administration: unconditional because the elect do not prepare for or cooperate in it but simply believe the promise; conditional because of the administration of the covenant in the life of church, with Christians obligated, as a response to grace, to attend to the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments.³²⁷

Bullinger saw the covenant as “the heart of Biblical revelation” and developed Zwingli’s belief that there was only one covenant in history to the point that “the covenant idea encompassed (his) entire thought (and) permeated not only his theology of grace but also

325 Franklin Sherman, ed. *Luther's Works, Volume 47: Christian in Society IV*, 56 vols., vol. 47, Luther's Works (Minneapolis: Fortress Press & Augsburg Fortress 1971).

326 Dillenberger, *Luther*.

327 R. S. Clark, "A Brief History of Covenant Theology," *Christian Renewal* (2001).

his ideas about Christian society.³²⁸ He believed that the one covenant was mutual, bilateral and eternal, that God first made it with Adam, then renewed it with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Christ, promising to be all-sufficient for those who kept the conditions of the covenant. Those conditions were faith in God, and piety of life or love of neighbour with the moral law as a framework,³²⁹ he said, and a pastor's function did not include discipline or even authority to deny the Eucharist to a worshiper.³³⁰ In his view a magistrate, as successor to Old Testament kings, had the sole authority to establish religion, to enforce the covenant condition of love within Christian society, and for discipline.

7. Calvin's influence: parallel reformations

Calvin was deeply committed to the theonomic view that, by means of the Bible, God provides the basis of both personal and social ethics, and Gary North notes that his theology of covenant had a "Biblically covenantal structure" based on five points of belief which were "not narrowly theological but cultural in the broadest sense," but this "theonomic legacy" was soon neglected. He says Calvin believed in the sovereignty of a Creator God who reveals himself in history, lays down fixed laws, brings predictable sanctions in terms of these laws, and who (probably) raises up His people to victory in history.³³¹ Those five points encapsulate the primary aspects of the mature understanding of covenant at the time of Jesus' ministry, but they place a heavy emphasis on communal rather than individual-personal aspects of covenantal relationships.³³²

Like Bullinger, Calvin saw that humanity and history are moving towards fulfilment in a developmental continuum, that the Biblical record must be read as one, and that the New

328 J. Wayne Baker, "Church, State, and Dissent: the Crisis of the Swiss Reformation, 1531-1536.," *Church History* 57, no. 2 (1988).137

329 Angus Stewart, "The Development of the Doctrine of the Covenant - Pt. 7 Heinrich Bullinger, the First Covenant Theologian," *British Reform Journal* (2010).19

330 Baker, "Church, State, and Dissent: the Crisis of the Swiss Reformation, 1531-1536. ."136-8

331 Gary North, "Publisher's Preface to Calvin, *Covenant Enforced: Sermons on Deuteronomy 27 and 28*," in *Covenant Enforced: Sermons on Deuteronomy*, ed. James B. Jordan (Tyler, Texas: **Institute for Christian Economics** 1990).vii

332 That emphasis is apparent in the series of 15 sermons on Deuteronomy 27 and 28 which Calvin preached, during his more mature years, in February-March 1556.

John Calvin, *Covenant Enforced: Sermons on Deuteronomy 27 and 28*, ed. James B. Jordan, trans. Arthur Golding and James B Jordan, 1st of second translation ed. (Tyler, Texas: **Institute for Christian Economics**, 1990).

Testament must be read in the context of that continuum.³³³ Calvin insisted that the authority of God is absolute, authority and power given to church officers was not personal but by virtue of their office. This had applied to Moses, the Levitical priesthood, the Prophets, the Apostles and to Christ himself, and the papacy's unbridled licence and unjustified assumption of power, had destroyed the purity of doctrine.³³⁴

Calvin attempted to integrate three streams of influence: Athanasian Christology, Biblicalism and mature Hebrew covenantal understanding. This stimulated, the development of a range of covenantal interpretations and disputes over Supersessionism, Dispensationalism, and New Covenant theology³³⁵ and, indirectly, the subsequent rise of Christian Zionism. He acknowledged a fixed subordinate position for humanity as one aspect of a covenantal relationship, and in referring to Christ as the only person to whom the secrets of the Father are known, he elevated Christ even above the status proposed by the Athanasian Christological formula of the coeternal Father and Son. In doing so he contradicted other passages in *Institutes*, in which he acknowledges communications between God and the Hebrew patriarchs and prophets. He also elevated the status of the New Testament to God's word in writing so that that "the priests might there seek what they were to teach the people,"³³⁶ but then supported the traditional role of the priesthood, and restrained those who would rush into Biblicalism.

Referring directly to the covenants, Calvin said "there is nothing in them to prevent the promises of the Old and the New Testament from remaining the same, Christ being the foundation of both."³³⁷ He proposed that the "earthly blessing" of Canaan had been held forth to the Hebrews by the Lord "as a foretaste" of their "heavenly inheritance" as a reward for maintaining the Law; that some people saw that land as "the only reward of the Divine Law to its worshippers" so that their expulsion was "the severest punishment" by the Lord for their transgression against the Law. However, because "the gift of future life,

333 John Owen, ed. *John Calvin, Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah and the Lamentations*. (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1852; reprint, 1979. Grand Rapids, Baker).126-6

334 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion Vol. II*, trans. Henry Beveridge, Second. New translation ed., 2 vols., vol. II (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd, 1957).389

335 Lawrence J. McCrank, "Religious Orders and Monastic Communalism in America " in *America's Communal Utopias*, ed. Donald E. Pitzer (Chapel Hill, NC.: University of North Carolina Press., 1997).204-5

336 Calvin, *Institutes, Vol. II*, II: 392.392

337 ———, *Institutes of the Christian Religion Vol. I*, trans. Henry Beveridge, Second. New translation ed., 2 vols., vol. I (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd, 1957).387

now more clearly and lucidly revealed by the gospel, leads our minds directly to mediate upon it, the inferior mode of exercise formerly employed in regard to the Jews (is) now laid aside.”³³⁸ This proposition, which had not previously been relied upon to justify the authority claims of the Catholic Church, was adapted in the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, Vatican II.

Although Calvin recognized the validity of the Hebrew prophets, he discounted that part of divine revelation through them which indicated that the covenant would not be abrogated, and that recovery and renewal would follow retribution for transgression or the rejection of obligations. In doing so, he missed the opportunity to review the prevailing Christian claims of supersession, and confirmed his support for it by saying that “the covenant of God was truly realized, made new, and eternal, when it was sealed with (Christ’s) blood.”³³⁹

8. The stimulus and motives for continuing reform

Reform meant different things to different people. In W. P. Stephens’ view, the question of salvation was at the heart of the Reformation,³⁴⁰ but the focus of bitter, erratic debate shifted from concern for theological justification for the church’s actions, to civil governance and power structures, then back towards theology. No theologians in either camp directly considered the concept of covenant from the stand point of the comprehensive Hebrew understanding that had evolved progressively and reached a peak with Jesus’ ministry. There was heavy Reformation emphasis on one aspect of covenant, forgiveness and salvation, with an exhaustive range of covenant related issues debated, but at the expense of a balanced recognition of promise, obligation, judgement and retribution.

Within the Catholic Church the concept of covenant was rarely an issue. Critical issues were the authority of the papacy and the clergy³⁴¹, the status of sacraments, the supremacy of liturgy in worship, and the elimination of the corruption which everyone came to recognize as the cause of the Reformation. It established new orders to strengthen its

338 Ibid.388

339 Ibid.391

340 W. P. Stephens, *Zwingli: An Introduction to His Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University,, 1992).61

341 Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes. Volume I. The History of Creeds. The Helvetic Consensus Formula. A.D. 1675.*, Sixth ed., 3 vols., vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Brothers / Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1876). Sec. 61

position rather than reforming existing ones, and it sought alternative approaches to maximizing its influence on governments and other civil powers.

The *Articles of Religion*, composed as a British government initiative to encourage consensus and political stability was adopted by the Church of England in 1562,³⁴² To minimize contention, the term 'covenant' was not used at all, but the themes of predestination, election and grace were developed, and good works were promoted as evidence of true faith. The *Heidelberg Catechism*,³⁴³ adopted and published by a Lutheran Synod on the orders of the pious Elector Frederick III the following year, 1563, refers specifically to either God's Covenant, the New Covenant, the Old Covenant or *the* Covenant in four clauses, each reference highlighting a particular usage. While these two documents proved conciliatory in some situations, they were divisive in others, and a series of other confessions and declarations followed, including *The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord* (the Bergic Book), the Augsburg Confession, and the Edict of Nantes.

9. The challenges of reform: stage two

After more than two generations of trauma and civil war in Europe and Britain a new phase of the Reformation began in Holland with a challenge to the theology and social philosophy of Calvinism. Jacobus Arminius rejected the notions of absolute predestination and the lack of human free will capacity to influence acceptance or rejection of salvation. His ideas spread to other countries and a number of denominations formed as break-a-ways from state churches. Most placed heavy emphasis on social action, covenantal commitment, rejection of fixed-form liturgies and a return to the simplified worship of early Christianity, and, in some cases, re-examination of the relationships between Christianity and Judaism.

New movements included the Arminians and General Baptists³⁴⁴ in Holland; a community of English Puritans, or Precisianists, who fled on the *Mayflower*, and established the first

342 Anglican Church Australia, ed. *A Prayer Book for Australia*, First ed. (Alexandria, NSW: Broughton Books (E. J. Dwyer (Australia) Ltd) for The Anglican Church of Australia, 1995; reprint, Third Printing, May 1996).825

343 Zacharius Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus, "Heidelberg Catechism," ed. Lutheran Synod in Heidelberg (Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1563).

344 Dewey D. Jr. Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination: Grace in English Protestant Theology, 1525-1695*. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 107-8.107-8

of a series of covenanted community of believers in North America, at New Plymouth³⁴⁵. In addition, Thomas Brightman's works on prophetic signs from the Book of Revelation became building blocks for both Dispensationalist Premillennialism and Christian Zionism.³⁴⁶ John Owen also proposed a dispensational system, and George Fox founded the Quakers.³⁴⁷

Then, among the last of the great Christian Reformers, John Wesley adopted a completely fresh approach to covenant. He gave it a central and practical meaning in worship, personal and communal life,³⁴⁸ and insisted that every doctrine must be defensible rationally³⁴⁹ while retaining a strong evangelical approach to justification by faith. On that basis he rejected both election and predestination, which he described as blasphemous.³⁵⁰ He insisted that God willed all men to be saved through prevenient grace, and described the concept of apostolic succession as "a fable which no man ever did or can prove."³⁵¹ He established evangelism and pastoral care services provided by non-ordained preachers, and 'General Rules' in contrast to books of canon law.

Wesley also introduced a Service of Covenant with a prayer that placed a direct individual covenantal relationship with God at the centre of life and worship. That initiative was a major contribution to Reformation thinking with potential to realign Christian self-understanding with Christ's teaching equal to any theological initiative since Luther's 'ninety five theses.' It conveyed definite recognition of subordination and obligation to

345 Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion and Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism to 1638*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2004). Brenda Martin, "Puritans - The Mayflower," (AllExpts.com, 2006).

346 Donald Wagner, "Reagan and Begin, Bibi and Jerry: The Theopolitical Alliance of the Likud Party with the American Christian "Right"," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1998).

Thomas Brightman, *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos* (London 1585).

Crawford Gribben, "Divine Discourse: The Theological Methodology of John Owen.," *Renaissance Quarterly, Renaissance Society of America* 57, no. 1 (2004).

347 Thomas C. Kennedy, *British Quakerism, 1860-1920: The Transformation of a Religious Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 12-14. James 2:20, 22. Qur'an S. 17:13

Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, *The Story of the Christian Church*, Revised 1970 ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), p. 160. Jews and Muslims

348 Don Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral* (Emeth Press, 2005). p. 97.

349 United Methodist Church, *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville, TN.: United Methodist Publishing House, 1984).

350 Abel Srevens, *The History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century, called Methodism: Volume I*. (Carlton & Porter, 1858).

351 Harrington William Holden, *John Wesley in Company with High Churchmen* (London: Church Press Company, 1869; reprint, READ BOOKS ISBN: 9781408606612 1970). p. 51.

God; an expression of the intimacy in the divine relationship without an assumption of privilege; an aspiration to attain to Christian Perfection; a sense of trusteeship or servanthood very similar in thrust to the Qur'anic understanding of *khalifa* and *amanah*, and a commitment to community service in line with Gospel teaching. Wesley believed the established churches had failed in these things because of their stress on election and predestination. He referred to the Qur'an on occasions in sermons, and might well have been influenced by it in preparing his covenant program.

10. Developments in Judaism: a Polish crisis and Shabbethai Zevi

While Christian Reformation debate and the later stages of the Catholic Inquisition continued across Europe and in the New World, Jewish and Muslim theologians also engaged in reforming debate. Many Jews expelled from Spain settled in the Ottoman empire, either Turkey or Egypt, where their skills were valued and they were welcome. Safed, a Galilean commercial centre connecting Egypt, Jerusalem, Damascus and Beirut attracted a number of scholars, who formed a highly productive cabalistic circle from c. 1520. In due course they included Joseph Karo (1488-1575), Solomon Alkabetz (1505-76), Moses Cordovero (1522-70), and Isaac Luria (1534-72).

Karo, studied and worked in Turkey for more than forty years and wrote a commentary on Maimonides' code. He then moved to Safed in 1536 and worked with Alkabetz on Kabbalah ritual of Tikkun Leil Shavuot. Being inspired by the combination of mysticism and Halakhah, he changed emphasis somewhat. His major work, the Beit Yosef, based on a commentary on an earlier code of Jacob ben Asher, became a voluminous attempt to codify all of Jewish law. It was completed in 1542. He then condensed it for general use as a simple guide of legal decisions, the *Shulchan Aruch*. However, his Sephardic background restricted its use, and a Polish rabbi, Moses Isserles, added a commentary of Ashkenazic customs. The combined work, published as *Isserles' Mappah*, 'Tablecloth', in 1569 was promptly accepted as a major legal work while British Reformers struggled to reach agreement on the Thirty Nine Articles.

Luria, who studied at Safed with kabbalist Moses Cordovero, developed a revolutionary approach to Kabbalah philosophy with strong emphasis on millennial messianic expectations and redemption, the covenantal aspects of the latest round of Jewish exile from Spain, and the prophetic requirement that they be a purified lamp unto the nations. Until then, kabbalah had been an elitist field of study, but, although he wrote no lengthy

works, his dynamic preaching and his colleagues' papers were so influential that his formulation became widely adopted as "the Lurianic kabbalah" and recognized especially for its messianic expectations.

In Turkey, a young scholar of Spanish parentage, Shabbethai Zevi, studied Talmud, Kabbalah and the Zohar, and was ordained a rabbi, aged 18, in 1644. He was apparently intrigued by the Zohar, the classical texts of Kabbalah, which its adherents claimed foreshadowed the arrival of a messiah in 1648, and which gained somewhat more credibility because of the messianic overtones of Lurianic kabbalah.³⁵² Millenarian ideas of the redemption of the Jews, and the approach of the Messianic Era had, by then, gained a degree of notoriety in England. Some writers had proposed that 1666 was to be the year of Apocalypse, and Manasseh ben Israel wrote to Oliver Cromwell, proposing that Jews should be readmitted into England because many Christians believed that the time for Jews to return to their native country was very near. During Cossack uprisings in Poland-Lithuania in the critical year 1648 Zevi, who is reported to have been psychologically unstable and experienced either messianic delusions or aspirations, at the age of 22, declared to his followers in Smyrna that he was the foreshadowed Messianic redeemer.³⁵³

Over the next seventeen years he was expelled from several cities as he alienated many rabbis but he also gathered support, and in early 1665 his assistant announced that the Messianic age would begin the following year. He 'confirmed' it, declaring himself the Messiah in the synagogue in Smyrna, and called for preparation for "the imminent establishment of the Kingdom of Israel" with messianic rule, "dominion over the nations", and redemption on the basis of the Hebrew Scriptures and covenantal expectations.³⁵⁴ Later that year Zevi set out for Istanbul to challenge the Sultan and establish his messianic kingdom, but on arrival in early 1666 he was arrested and imprisoned, but with near-royal privileges. Exaggerated stories "engulfed most Jewish communities from London to

352 The Zohar, which only came to public attention late in the 13th century through the support of Ramban, purports to contain divine mysteries with messianic overtones revealed to a 2nd cent. teacher, Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai. Its authorship, dating and validity are widely disputed. An overview of the disputation is set out in Mitchell G. Bard, "The Zohar," American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Zohar.html>.

353 There are wide variations in details and dates given for the life and travels of Shabbethai Zevi by various writers, but there is general agreement on the basics noted.

354 Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). p. 123; *ibid.* Citing Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah 1626-1676*, trans. R. J. Zwi Werblowski, Bollingen Series (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973).

Poland and from Amsterdam to Yemen.³⁵⁵ The initials, 'S. Z.' were posted, his picture was printed with that of King David in prayer books, and a special prayer was introduced in many synagogues: 'Bless our Lord and king, the holy and righteous Shabbethai Zevi, the Messiah of the God of Jacob,'³⁵⁶ and there was near frenzy when the Great Fire of London from September 2nd to 5th appeared to confirm the apocalyptic predictions.

However, after six months imprisonment, and by coincidence only ten days after the great fire, Zevi was arraigned before the imperial council. Given the option of death or conversion to Islam he chose conversion, was released and tutored in Islam, given a salaried post and the role of imam, and taught in both mosques and synagogues.³⁵⁷ In Turkey there were mass conversions to Islam in some regions, but, according to Stephen Sharot, Zevi's totally unexpected conversion was an unequivocal disconfirmation of his messianic role. It caused cognitive dissonance among his followers, with shock, confusion, disbelief, rejection, disillusionment and some conversions to Christianity, but the majority regarded Zevi as an imposter who denigrated Judaism by saving his own unworthy life, and they were able to return to their "normal" state of exile.³⁵⁸ Those who accepted the matter as divine intervention to confirm Zevi's role, sought to preserve the cause of Shabbethaianism.³⁵⁹

Zevi's colleagues had taught a messianic theology that showed remarkable correspondence with Christ's teaching to his own Jewish community that they were "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)³⁶⁰; with Reformed teaching that baptized members constitute "the body of Christ"; and with the Catholic Church's teaching that Christendom was to act as the vehicle for its delegated power to drive out evil and to determine all patterns of human conduct. Thus Shabbethaianism, which also adopted the basic tenet of Calvinism – that the

355 Joseph Dan, ed. *The Heart and the Fountain: An Anthology of Jewish Mystical Experiences*. (New York: Oxford University Press., 2002). p. 36.

Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Empire*. pp. 123-5-6.

356 Kaufmann Kohler and Henry Malter, "Shabbethai Zebi B Mordecai " Kopelman Foundation http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view_friendly.jsp?artid=531&letter=S. p. 5 of 7. Citing V11p222001.jpg Shabbethai Zevi in Festive Attire.(From an old print.)

357 According to Stephen Sharot, Stephen Sharot, *Messianism, Mysticism, and Magic: A Sociological Analysis of Jewish Religious Movements*. , Studies in religion (Chapel Hill, N.C.) (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982). it was an honorary post.

358 Ibid. p. 117.

359 Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Empire*. p. 129.

360 Dan, *Anthology*.

Messiah is the only mediator between a human and God, and the only point of entry to salvation – posed serious challenges to both Orthodox Judaism and Christianity.

For Christians it questioned whether the church could be wrong about Jesus being the only mediator between humans and God; about who exercised mediatorial powers, and how the church could claim intercessory powers for its clergy. If there was access to salvation outside the church, what did that mean for the Reformed doctrines of predestination and redemption? If the spiritual power of the people-Israel could be concentrated towards overcoming evil, how could the church justify its claim to exclusive power in that matter?

Shabbethaism blurred the distinction between Christian and Judaic theology and accelerated the evolution of both contemporary Messianic Judaism and Christian Zionism. For Judaism, Zevi's death in 1676 raised the spectre of incarnation theology, and challenged the nature of Rabbinical spiritual leadership because many groups or sects of Shabbethaism were led by people who claimed to be either reincarnations of the messiah or his heirs. Communal leadership and the Rabbinical system became stressed and very diverse, and according to Michael Meyer, Shabbethaism "divided the Jewish world for generations."³⁶¹ Several small communities are still active in Turkey.³⁶² There was also increased emphasis on Kabbalah and a resurgence of Jewish spirituality and mysticism early in the 18th cent. through the rise of the Hasidic Movement,³⁶³ led by Baal Shem Tov, a stipendiary teacher at Miedzyboz, Podolia.³⁶⁴ Subsequently, when many of the Hasidic community leaders (Rebbe) who survived the Shoah migrated to either Israel or the United States, Hasidism became influential in those countries, and because many Talmudic scholars regard Hasidism as "rank heresy,"³⁶⁵ deep divisions remain. In addition, a Neo-Sabbatian Kabbalah is currently maintained in the United States through a virtual

361 Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism*, First ed. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988; reprint, Wayne, 1995).

362 Kaufmann Kohler and Richard Gottheil, "DÖNMEH;" in *JewishEncyclopedia.com*. (2002)..

363 Dan, *Anthology*. p. 38.

364 Dan Ben Amos and Jerome R. Mintz, "Baal Shem Tov," in *The Jewish Religion: A Companion*, ed. Louis Jacobs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). p. 42.

365 Gershon David Hundert, Louis Jacobs, and Gershom G. Scholem, "Hasidism," in *The Jewish Religion: A Companion*, ed. Louis Jacobs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). p. 219.20.

Kaufmann Kohler and Louis Ginzberg, "Ba'al Shem-Tov, Israel B. Eliezer," in *Jewish Encyclopedia.com* (2002(b)).

community, Donmeh West, by Reb Yakov Leib HaKohain (the Hebrew birth-name of Lawrence G. Corey).³⁶⁶

11. Circumstantial reform in Islam

From the late 17th cent. Islam was affected by two debilitating influences. One, attributed to Sufi mysticism, veneration of saints, and syncretism, prompted Vani Mehmed Efendi's bid to reform Islam. The other, according to Isma'il Al Faruqi, was conservatism towards interpretation of holy texts.³⁶⁷ This inhibited the capacity of those communities to take advantage of technological developments, contributed to a stalemate in social policy thinking, encouraged the European powers in their competitive strategies to invade, annexe and seize the resources of North Africa, and prompted movements for reform.

Al Faruqi lists seven "deadly symptoms" of the "sick society disease ... *Tasawwuf* ... otherwise known as Sufism:" *Kashf*, Gnostic illumination; *Karamat*, little miracles; *Tawakul*, total reliance on the spiritual factor; *Qismat*, passive acquiescence; *Adam*, unreality, ephemerality or divorce from a non-important world which displaced *khilafah* (khalifa), or vice-regency as a bridge for God's moral values; *Ta'abbud*, forgoing social, political and economic activity for pious activity; and *To'ah*, absolute unquestioning obedience to the *shayhk* of one's Sufi fraternity.³⁶⁸

The Wahhabi Movement is seen by many Western commentators as the basis of "Muslim terrorism" and the key to reform, but there was no single focal point for reform as in the church. The phases of reform can be followed from India in 1745, when Shah Wali Allah published the first of some 50 books, to Arabia, Nigeria and North Africa about 1860 when Muhammad Ali- al-Sanusi established a chain of training centres.

Of four leading figures, one, Shah Wali Allah, was initially concerned mainly with philosophy, metaphysics and intellectual synthesis. Two, Muhammad Ali al-Sanusi, and Shah Wali Allah, show clearly the impact of invasive European Christianity, but for the other two, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and Uthman Ibn Fudi, that was not a major consideration. It was only from the late 20th cent. that the "Wahhabi factor" became

³⁶⁶ <http://www.donmeh-west.com/yakov.shtml>

³⁶⁷ Isma'il R. Faruqi, "The Ideal Social Order in the Arab World, 1800-1968," in *Readings on Church and State*, ed. James E. Wood (Waco, TX: J. M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies., 1989).

³⁶⁸ Ibid. pp.374-6

dominant. The common thread in all four of the regional reform movements was concern for the practical application of Islam within a framework of *al-amānah* and *khalīfa*, or covenantal responsibility.

Napoleon Bonaparte introduced a new factor into warfare with his conquest of Egypt in 1798. In history's first case of manipulation of religion for national political purposes, he tried to persuade the Egyptian Government that he was a friend of Islam, that he was there to form an alliance for their mutual benefit, and if they would help with a land invasion of India, England could be forced out and the benefits would be substantial. He held out the prospect of mass conversions to Islam, and gained some concessions for his army, but not support for an invasion of India. Constantine had already successfully manipulated the Christian community of Rome in his bid for personal power, but not for national dominance over another sovereign power.

Thirty years later, when the French invaded North Africa in force to colonize, establish commerce and civilizing missions of both Catholics and Protestants, Sanusi took a different approach to mission and education. He set up chains of Sanusiya training centres, *zawiya*, for the Idrisiya (Ahmadiya) order of Islam, chose withdrawal over confrontation, and adopted a policy of authoritative tolerance towards foreign interference. He argued against zealotry in any tradition, saying that imams were not infallible and might quite possibly sin; that the zealotry of the masses was in their "blind imitation of fallible men,"³⁶⁹ that ultimate authority was vested in the texts of the Qur'an and the hadith; it was the obligation of every Muslim to try to extract their scriptural commands; and hadith is the best basis of jurisprudence and a commitment to the covenantal concepts of *al-amānah* and *Khalifa*, the obligation of trusteeship, without antagonism towards Western Christianity.

12. Multiple challenges to the Churches

Direct challenges to the churches during the 19th cent. included works of Joseph Smith, J.N. Darby, Wellhausen, Darwin, Marx, and the American Civil War. In addition, the development of the Bahá'í Faith was a broad-based challenge, not only to the church but to each of the primary Abrahamic faiths.

369 Ahmad Dallal, "The Origins and Objectives of Islamic Revivalist Thought, 1750-1850.," *The Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113, no. 3 (1993). . pp. 356-57.

In 1830, in highly controversial circumstances, Joseph Smith Jr. retrieved, deciphered or translate messages from a set of plates said to have been revealed to him by an angel and published them as *The Book of Mormon* which was regarded as “a work of blasphemy (by) a religious imposter.”³⁷⁰ He contradicted much main stream Christian teaching and taught within a highly Christocentric but anti-Trinitarian genre.

The Book of Mormon, addressed to both Jew and Gentile, is emphatic on the concept of covenant, shows marked parallels with dispensational restorationism, and a “preoccupation with the relationship between Israel and the Saints.”³⁷¹ It affirms Israel’s covenant while maintaining that Jesus Christ is the manifestation of God to all the nations,³⁷² and it anticipates the building of Zion through interaction between religious communities, and renewal, based on three considerations.

- Gentiles will learn the Will of God through the preaching of Jews. (Mormon 3 Nephi 15:21-22)
- Salvation (or the Messianic Age) will come circumstantially when Gentiles witness and acknowledge the fulfilment of the Covenant.
- There is no call for conversion of the Jewish community to Christianity.

The key passage illustrating this, Mormon 3 Nephi 16, from 5-20, is condensed as follows, with verses identified.

The Gentiles have been blessed for their belief (6); they will see evidence of the truth of covenant through the consequences of Jewish unbelief, being smitten (7); having failed to honour the Gospel covenant the Gentiles will be subject to the fullness of it (10-11); dispersed Jews will be gathered in furtherance of the covenant (12); if Gentiles then repent they will be numbered among God’s people (13-14); if they do not, Israel will be an instrument to “tread them down” and they will be as “salt that has lost its flavour” (15); the words of the Prophet Isaiah will be fulfilled (17), Jerusalem will be redeemed (19); the

370 Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985). pp.30-32.

Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York Knopf, 2005). 421-425.

Steven Epperson, *Mormons and Jews: Early Mormon Theologies of Israel* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books., 1992).

371 ———, *Mormons and Jews: Early Mormon Theologies of Israel*. p. 210.

372 "The Book of Mormon," (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1974). The Foreword.

Lord's arm will have been seen by all nations (20), and Salvation shall reach the ends of the earth (20). (Mormon 3 Nephi 16, from 5-20)

The similarity between the thrust of that passage and the Qur'anic Night Journey is remarkable. Both passages anticipate the consequences of failure under covenant, retribution, renewal and recurring failure, but the passage from the Book of Mormon relates to the interaction between two covenanted parties: the communities of Judaism and Christianity.

Darby, an Irish-born Anglican clergyman, accepted the Calvinist interpretations of predestination and election, but he rejected the idea that an ordained clergy possessed intercessory capacity because it inhibited recognition that the Holy Spirit could speak through any member of the Church. He also rejected Supersessionism. His 'On the Nature and unity of the Church of Christ', 1828, and 'The Prophetic Enquiry', 1829, were the basis of his eschatology, but his Geneva lectures in 1840 are regarded as the foundation for Dispensationalism³⁷³

Darwin's work, which came to public attention with publication of *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, provoked a crisis of faith for much of the church which feared the moral implications of a materialist science of humankind, although others welcomed the pressure on the church to abandon and reject literalist reading of the book of Genesis (and Biblical Inerrancy) which had been adopted to avoid the alternative: accepting church authority as the only acceptable textual interpreter.³⁷⁴

During the four-year American Civil War, which erupted in 1861 on the election of anti-slavery President Abraham Lincoln, defenders of slavery exploited this by insisting that an attack on literalism was an attack on the Bible itself, and that heretical teachings questioning the Bible's account of a common human origin, (or) the age of the earth, indicated clearly the kind of teaching that questioned the depiction of slavery in both Old and New Testaments, and heresies concerning Adam and Eve as well as on the geological

373 Stephen Sizer, "Theology of the Land: A History of Dispensational Approaches," in *The Land of Promise*, ed. Philip Johnston and Peter Walker (Leicester: IVP - Inter-Varsity Press, 2000).

374 H. Allen Orr, "Darwin and Darwinism: the (Alleged) Social Implications of the Origin of Species.," *Genetics* 183, no. 3 (2009). pp. 770-71.

record "are assaults of infidel science upon the records of our faith, and both have found their warmest advocates among the opponents of slavery."³⁷⁵

Darwin did not challenge the concept of a Divine Creator: only the notion of a fixed and final form creation, but because so much Christian theology was based on that notion, his challenge was effectively to the basis of the self-understanding and developed theology of all three streams: Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Reformed. If humans evolved progressively, then there was no single first couple, Adam and Eve; therefore there was no "Original Sin", and the Biblical stories of the Garden of Eden and the Great Flood must have been myths. If there was no original sin to be offset by divine administration of election and predestination, the developed concepts of election and predestination were unsupportable, and the whole field of Reformation covenant theology had to be re-examined, using the evolved mature Hebrew understanding of covenant as a foundation.

The Vatican's responses were a Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic faith; Pope Pius IX's *Syllabus of Errors*; and a subsequent declaration of Papal Infallibility. Archaeological investigations and Wellhausen's *Prolegomena*, 1882, complicated the debate, undermining contentions that the books of the Bible had been written in sequence by generally acknowledged authors.

13. Discord and division in Judaism

As with its partner faiths, so with Judaism. While the church struggled with issues of reform and authority, the Jewish community struggled with related issues. It divided into Orthodox, Conservative and Progressive or Reform streams³⁷⁶ and a Reform conference in Philadelphia in 1869 adopted seven defining principles with messianic and covenantal theology at the forefront. The key issues were that the Messianic aim of Israel is not the restoration of the old Jewish state under a descendent of David; that the destruction of the second Jewish commonwealth was not as a punishment for the sinfulness of Israel, but a

375 Mark A. Noll, "The Bible and Slavery," in *Religion and the American Civil War*, ed. Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson (New York: Oxford University Press., 1998). p. 51. Citing Mark Pattison, "Tendencies of Religious Thought in England, 1688-1750," in *Essays and Reviews* (London, 1860), 328. and Thornwell, "Our National Sins," in *Fast Day Sermons*, 50.

376 There is also, as with the Christian Church, division related to regional/ethnic original, (notably Ashkenazi, Sephardic and Mizrahi), and further division corresponding, more or less, to denominationalism within the church.

result of the divine purpose revealed to Abraham, that Judaism is to lead the nations to the true knowledge and worship of God.³⁷⁷

That was, in effect, an adaptation of the acknowledged cyclical nature of the covenant. It suggests that the Reform conference acknowledged continuity of the role of the Jewish community under covenant after an extended period of uncertainty, but coupled that with either denial that the covenant had been breached, or the perception that the penal clause had been waived. A second, larger conference at Pittsburgh in 1885 clarified and confirmed the distinctions while seeking to establish a new understanding of the relationship between Judaism and other faiths,³⁷⁸ and confirming that Reform Judaism waived any claim to Palestine. It noted that:—

in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect ... hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men (and) we consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor ... the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state. (Principle 5)³⁷⁹

However the participants do not seem to have been aware how quickly and dramatically the Catholic and Orthodox Churches could respond to changing political circumstances in Europe. Following the assassination of Russian Tsar Alexander I, a 255,000-signature petition demanding the disenfranchisement of Jews was presented to Germany's Bismarck on April 25, and a barbaric massacre of Jews, with Russian officials and troops involved, occurred two days later in Elisavetgrad. Pogroms, spread over two weeks, followed in Kiev and Odessa, then 'spread' to 160 other centres during following months.

With a highly organized anti-Semitic program in full swing in both countries, deep bitterness between Christians and Jews soon affected the whole of Europe,³⁸⁰ and prompted contradictory responses, including some support within the church. William Blackstone's summary of end-of-time pre-millennial doctrines in '*Jesus is Coming*' encouraged financial contributions by several leading business people towards Jewish settlement programs, but these prompted the Turkish authorities to ban further Jewish entry to

377 Norman Solomon, *Judaism: A Very Short Introduction*, Reissued ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 19-285390-2, 2000).

378 Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism*, First ed. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988; reprint, Wayne, 1995). p. 268.

379 Kaufmann Kohler, "Declaration of Principles - The Pittsburgh Platform of Reform Judaism" *Issues*, no. Spring 2000 (2000).

380 Roth, *History of the Jews*. pp. 348-49.

Palestine, and, in turn, the first conference of Hibbat Zion was held to formally foster immigration and re-settlement.³⁸¹ The starry-eyed commitment to a mature Hebrew understanding of the Mosaic Covenant, and the optimism of Pittsburgh Conference participants that Christianity in Europe would change, were soon shown to be premature. However, in the following resolution they effectively invited the three Abrahamic faiths to put their *partnership* into practice.

Christianity and Islam, being daughter religions of Judaism, we appreciate their providential mission, to aid in the spreading of monotheistic and moral truth. We acknowledge that the spirit of broad humanity of our age is our ally in the fulfilment of our mission, and therefore we extend the hand of fellowship to all who cooperate with us in the establishment of the reign of truth and righteousness among men. (From Principle 6.)

Within a few years the French General Officers' bid to rid the army of its only Jewish officer, Alfred Dreyfus, erupted, and Theodor Herzl, a journalist who had previously supported assimilation, adopted the Zionist platform that only resettlement in Palestine would relieve the Jewish community of oppression in Christian Europe, published a proposal for the establishment of a Jewish Homeland, *Der Judenstaat*, and convened the First Zionist Congress in Basle, August 29-31, 1897.

14. The pace quickens towards twin critical transgressions

From that point the circumstances that would demonstrate the convergence of prophecy generated within all three streams of faith, and thus confirm the legitimacy of each of them, unfolded rapidly. Herzl's proposal was enthusiastically adopted by the Congress, but divided both the Jewish community and the churches, prompted support for Dispensationalism and Christian Zionism, and was opposed by Roman Catholic and mainstream Calvinist Protestant churches. Shortly after the Basle Conference, the semi-official Vatican periodical *Civiltà Cattolica* (edited by the Jesuits) gave its *Biblical-theological* judgement on political Zionism:

1827 years have passed since the prediction of Jesus of Nazareth was fulfilled ... that Jerusalem would be destroyed ... that the Jews would be led away to be slaves among all the nations, and that they would remain in the dispersion till the end of the world. ... According to the Sacred Scriptures, the Jewish people must always live dispersed and wandering among the other nations, so that they may render witness to Christ not only by the

³⁸¹ Donald Wagner, "Christians and Zionism: British stirrings.," *Daily Star*, First part, 10 September 2003. Fifth part, 10 December 2003. 2003.

Scriptures ... but by their very existence. As for a rebuilt Jerusalem, which could become the centre of a reconstituted state of Israel, we must add that this is contrary to the prediction of Christ Himself.³⁸²

Herzl made a number of alternative approaches, starting with Britain and Rome. The British Government confirmed that neither it nor the nation-in-general had any serious concern for their neighbours. They showed little understanding of responsibility under either the Universal Covenant, which is intrinsic to the Biblical material, or their community-specific New Covenant which is one of the three which establish the concept of divine covenant as next after the concepts of God and Creation as the fundamental concept of Abrahamic Monotheism. It proposed Jewish colonization of Uganda, annexed under the European Christian carve-up of Africa eighteen years earlier.³⁸³

That lack of understanding may be attributed to either of two factors. First: the church's heavy emphasis on personal salvation as the primary consideration in the covenant which it 'owned.' Or, second, its rejection of any responsibility towards the wider human population which was outside the church and therefore, in its view, beyond salvation and not deserving of any consideration except a mechanism, be it evangelism, syncretism or proselytism to bring it within the fold. In that sense there was little distinction between the dominant Roman Catholic stream and the lesser Orthodox and Reformed streams.

To Herzl's dismay, Pope Pius X confirmed the very specific position of the Catholic Church in audience in 1904, saying: —

We cannot encourage this movement. We cannot prevent the Jews from going to Jerusalem – but we could never sanction it. The ground of Jerusalem, even if it were not always sacred, has been sanctified by the life of Jesus Christ. As the head of the Church I cannot tell you otherwise. The Jews have not recognized our Lord, therefore we cannot recognize the Jewish people.

Against vigorous opposition which almost destroyed it, the WZO accepted the British offer,³⁸⁴ but in August 1905, after the death of Herzl and an examination of circumstances in Uganda, the Seventh WZO Congress adopted three critical decisions: that the proposed

382 Thomas F. Stransky, "A Catholic views Zionism and the State of Israel - Part I," Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, <http://198.62.75.1/www1/ofm/mag/MAen9901.html>. Sergio I. Minerbi, *The Vatican and Zionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). p. 96.

383 Moshe Medzini, "Zionist Policy," in *Zionism*, Israel Pocket Library (Jerusalem: Keter Books, 1973). p. 84.

384 Getzel Kressel, "Zionist Congresses," in *Zionism* (Jerusalem: Keter Books, 1973).

Uganda Settlement Scheme be rejected; that any other large scale settlement proposals except in Erez Israel and the immediate vicinity would also be rejected; and that practical settlement activities would *not* be delayed until after a charter or public rights had been obtained from the Ottoman Sultan, and settlement would begin at once.³⁸⁵

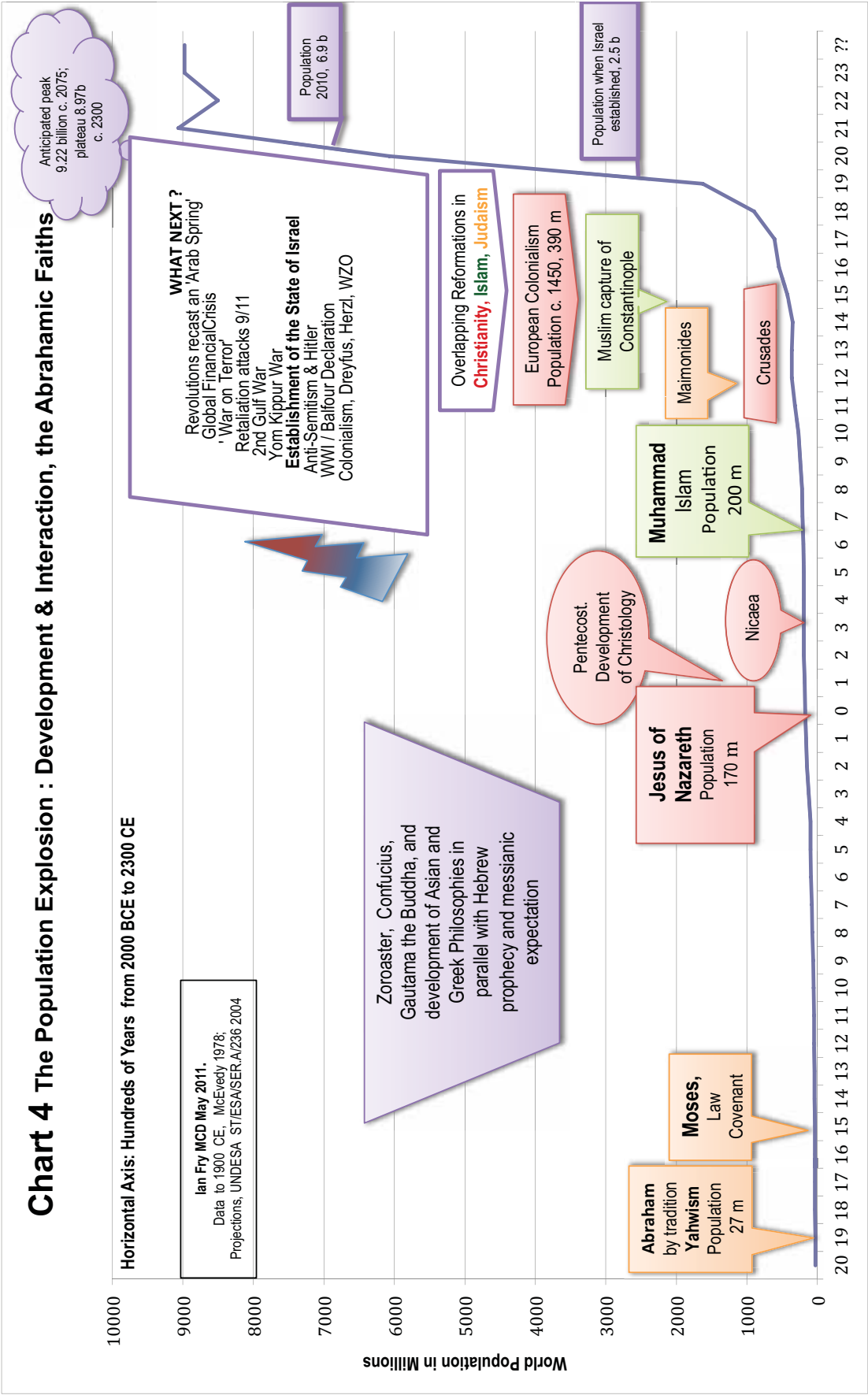
At that point the WZO not only rejected the covenantal understanding of Rabbinic Judaism, it confirmed transgression against its new neighbours in terms of the Qur'anic Night Journey. Some members recognized this, and significant private investment, which was intended to ensure that a greater Jewish presence would have political value in negotiations for a charter, was delayed due to division over the consequences of such a breach of covenantal trust.³⁸⁶

Dispensationalism and Christian Zionism then received a substantial boost by publication of Scofield's Reference Bible, 1909, promoting his belief in seven eras in God's dealings with humanity between creation and the final judgement. About the same time Abraham Kuyper complicated Calvinist understanding of covenantal theology by elevating speculation about eternal justification to a central place, identifying it with the Covenant of Grace, and concluding that the church baptizes on the basis of presumed regeneration rather than on the basis of covenantal command and promise.

Rapid population growth at the foot of the cliff face (chart four) was causing increased demand for resources for industrial and commercial growth, with intense competition, especially for portable energy resources, coal and petroleum, and minerals. Tension increased as competing European powers lurched towards a network of conflicts over the newly-discovered resources of the Ottoman Empire, Africa, the Balkans, Iberia, the Caucasus, the Caspian, the Adriatic (notably a corridor to the sea for Serbia), and regions of Western Europe which were disputed by France and Germany.

³⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 245.

³⁸⁶ Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin, eds., *The Israel-Arab Reader*, Fourth, revised ed. (New York: Pelican, 1984).



With an uneasy peace prevailing, the British Commons resolved in mid-June 1914, to buy a controlling interest in Anglo-Persian Oil, a partner with German interests in the proposed Turkish Petroleum Co. Two weeks later, June 28, the Grand Vizier announced the government's intention to grant major concessions to that company. That raised the stakes and competition intensified. As a move in the Adriatic feud, the Greater Serbia Association had engineered the assassination of Austria's Archduke Francis Ferdinand for that day, taking advantage of his state visit to Sarajevo.

Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Italy, Serbia, Turkey, the United States, the Holy See and the World Zionist Organization all had "national interests" to protect.³⁸⁷ After four weeks of frantic undiplomatic activity to decide with whom they ought be allied in the deadly game of winners-take-all, Austria-Hungary moved first and invaded Serbia on July 28, 1914. Russia, being uncertain which group to join, alerted Kaiser Wilhelm to a French plan, with Britain's cooperation, to isolate both it and Germany by seizing the Bosphorus. His reaction was immediate. He demanded that England have "the mask of the Christian peace-lover publicly torn from her face," and penned a note that:—

our Consuls in Turkey and India, our political agents, etc. must inflame the whole Moslem world to a savage uprising against this hateful, devious, unscrupulous nation of shopkeepers; for if we are to bleed to death, then England shall at least lose India."³⁸⁸

Liker Britain, the Kaiser was simply adopting Napoleon's policy of religious manipulation. Then, when the main alliances were settled as France, Britain and Russia against Germany and Austria-Hungary, manipulation of religious affiliation, lies and deceitful deals became a hallmark mark of the ensuing "Great War" as each belligerent sought to generate rebellion by minorities in each anti-alliance country on the basis of race, religion or false promises of post-war independence. Britain planned to take advantage of the movement for Arab independence from the Ottoman Empire in its bid to out-manoeuvre Germany and gain complete control of the Mesopotamian oil region and, in "the McMahon letter" to the Sherif of Mecca dated October 24, 1915, promised recognition and support for independence for an integrated Arab nation in the region south of Turkey, with Persia to the east and the Mediterranean and Red Sea top the West, in return for recognition of

³⁸⁷ Fry, *Triangle Bk. 1*, 1, pp. 508-510.

³⁸⁸ Z. A. B. Zeman, *A Diplomatic History of the First World War* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971). p. 89.

Britain's authority and regional interests. Only two districts, Mersina and Alexandretta (actually in Turkey), and "portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo" were to be excluded because they were not regarded as "purely Arab."³⁸⁹

In February 1916, U.S. President Wilson advised Britain that he was prepared to host peace talks, and that if Germany did not agree to reasonable terms, the United States would probably intervene on the side of the Entente. Britain was interested, but when it became apparent that negotiations might result in the U.S. administering a mandate over Turkey, controlling the Bosphorous, being adjacent to the vital oil resources they were all fighting over, and wanting territorial compensation for Germany "outside of Europe" – a euphemism for a bigger share of African riches at the expense of France, Britain or Belgium – there was no further interest. The war could continue.³⁹⁰ Britain took steps to tighten its grip on Mesopotamia. It opened discussions with France immediately, and signed the Sykes-Picot Agreement on the post-war administration of the Middle East in May. It provided material aid for the Arab uprising which began on the basis of the McMahon letter in June, sent Lawrence to Arabia (as liaison officer to ensure that the British plan was adhered to) in October, and entered into discussions with Chaim Weizmann, the Zionist Movement spokesperson in Britain, about the same time.

Then, during the early weeks of 1917 Germany gained the upper hand through its submarine war in the Atlantic and, with Britain facing the real prospect of defeat, the certain loss of access to its Eastern Empire and, very probably, the forfeiture of a substantial portion of that empire and the resources and wealth that flowed from it, the Weizmann discussions assumed greater importance.³⁹¹ Weizmann accelerated negotiations. Broad agreement was reached that the influential Jewish financial community would support Britain; the wider Zionist community would use its influence to help secure control of Palestine and the route to the Mosul oil fields; it would seek to keep Russia in the war against Germany to weaken its front against Britain, and it would encourage the United States to enter the war as an ally of Britain. For its part, Britain would support the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

389 Laqueur and Rubin, *The Israel-Arab Reader*. Document 6, The McMahon Letter, pp. 15-17.

390 Zeman, *Diplomatic History*. pp. 169 - 188. J. A. Marriott, *A History of Europe 1815-1939* (London: Methuen, 1966). pp. 529-530.

391 ———, *A History of Europe 1815-1939*. p. 512.

Negotiations were extended to the US, and although American Zionists were divided about Zionist-British cooperation, Wilson asked Congress for an immediate declaration of war, and it was agreed on April 6, on a very specific basis. America was at war against Germany, but not Austria-Hungary, and it was fighting in association with the Alliance but not as a member of it. America could read British intentions as well as anyone else.³⁹²

With the balance of power reversed, Pope Benedict XV found a new interest in ecumenism and Zionism. On May 1, determined that the Vatican would play a major role in deciding the future of Palestine, he announced the formation of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, and three days later received Nahum Sokolow in audience, commented on the change in circumstances since Rome destroyed Palestine nineteen hundred years earlier, and made a volte-face on the Vatican's rigid Supersessionism and insistence on permanent rejection of the Jews by God. He said it was Providential and in accordance with Divine Will that the Jews should return to the country from which they had been expelled. He said that the Zionist idea had "great significance", that the rebuilding of Judea by the Jewish people would be an "historical turnabout" which is also "providential. God has willed it." He believed that satisfactory agreement could be reached on the question of the Holy Places which was "of utmost importance" together with the preservation of the sacred rites, that the church and the Jews would be good neighbours, and that Britain was "the greatest and most experienced colonizing power in the world" and would provide a "good school for settlement."³⁹³

It appears that the pope was aware of some aspects of British Government briefings; that he assumed the Vatican or one of its allies would be given control of central Palestine, including Jerusalem; that the Jews were to be restricted to the adjoining or 'neighbouring' territories; and that he expected Zionist support for the Vatican's bid for a seat at the Peace Conference and its effort to undermine the Orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe.

15. The twin transgression: by Britain

America's declaration of war did not mean an immediate end to hostilities, but no announcement of the provisional UK-Zionist accord was made. Negotiations were not yet complete. Prime Minister Lloyd George had previously clashed bitterly with Lord

³⁹² Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin, eds., *The Israel-Arab Reader*, Third, revised ed. (New York: Bantam, 1976). Doc. 7, p. 18.

³⁹³ Zeman. *Diplomatic History*. P. 334.

Rothschild over his domination of government budget policy.³⁹⁴ When firm agreement was reached late in August the High Commissioner in Cairo was alerted and told that, because the Zionist question was sensitive and might undermine Arab cooperation, no announcement should be made. In due course the government's decision was promulgated by means of a personal note addressed to Lord Rothschild, "the Balfour Declaration," to ensure maximum public acceptance based on the personal prestige of both people and the Foreign Secretary's status as a scholar of religion. The note was approved and signed on October 31, delivered on November 2, but not released publicly until November 9 – after the Bolshevik Revolutionary Command had imprisoned the Provisional Russian Government earlier in the morning.

The Balfour Declaration sounded innocuous enough, but it concealed another great transgression against Covenant. The British Government, the pre-eminent Christian power at that time, had absolutely rejected its responsibilities in a number of ways. By insisting on prolonging the war out of sheer greed for resources which it knew it could have shared, it condemned its own people (and those of many countries) to avoidable death and trauma. It did so with the knowledge that the Jewish community faced a difficult situation, and it placed a stumbling block in the way of Zionist leaders who thus reconfirmed their intention to ignore their covenantal obligation to their neighbours, against the wishes of many of their number.

The note was drafted to satisfy British Jews who held anti-Zionist views, to avoid antagonizing American Jews who were not happy with the British preferential position, and to avoid loss of Arab cooperation against the Ottoman Empire. It expressed the government's sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations, and said the government viewed with favour the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people it use its best endeavours to facilitate it. It also gave an assurance that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."³⁹⁵

In the United States, opposition to Zionism waned among Jews who had regarded it as an aberration of Judaism, and pressure on the government to play a full role in the war and to

394 Steven L. Spiegel, *The other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). p. 11.

395 Minerbi, *The Vatican and Zionism*.p. 17.

dispatch troops increased. Jews flocked to the recruiting desks. The first US troops sailed in March 1918 and by the end of September there were forty two divisions with 1,567,000 men in Europe, of whom approximately 250,000, or sixteen percent, were Jewish. The war lurched back in favour of the Allies and victory was soon in sight.³⁹⁶

A major allied propaganda offensive was undertaken to generate resistance, subversion and even mutiny in Germany.³⁹⁷ The British government plumbed new depths in manipulating a religious community by dropping leaflets over German and Austrian towns explaining the Balfour Declaration, and distributing them widely from Poland to the Black Sea.³⁹⁸ In public perception it locked the Jewish communities of Germany, Austria, Poland and Russia into the role of a fifth column. It was the most devastating accusation of rejection of covenantal obligation that could be levelled against a community. It was contrary to the sentiments expected of a partner in a program designed to benefit both parties, especially as the agreement was basically planned to help the community escape from state-sponsored and religious oppression.

The WZO had been pushed beyond the point of no return. It was partner to inciting its followers to help an enemy defeat those among whom they lived as neighbours and with whom they shared citizenship in Europe, and to either inflict maximum damage on their homelands or to divert national policies for their sectional interest. At the same time they were to accelerate the deprivation of their new neighbours whose homeland they were intent on occupying. They had thus re-confirmed their rejection of normative Jewish understanding of the Mosaic Covenant, and their transgression in terms of the Night Journey.

The British Government showed sheer hypocrisy in matters of religious faith. In provoking allegations of treason against an entire community it ignored Gospel teaching about conduct towards one's fellows, and showed an arrogant assumption of election and forgiveness regardless of the nature of its corporate transgression. Britain's Christianity had been so sacrosanct, and the affairs of the church so vital, that it had been an excuse for several naval and military excursions against less powerful nations in Asia. Now it had to

³⁹⁶ Zeman, *Diplomatic History*. p. 338.

³⁹⁷ Lionel Kochan, *The Jews in Soviet Russia Since 1917* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978). pp. 34-35, 78.

³⁹⁸ Zeman. *Diplomatic History*. p. 296.

accept, and promote, the interests of two faiths it had most consistently denigrated. That was part of the price for what the government saw as a much more vital material interest in West Asia. Oil.

16. Wilson's demands help trigger a crisis

The United States was also about to demonstrate its self-understanding as the New Chosen People of God and to exert authority which it believed went with that status. When President Wilson offered to host a peace conference in February 1916, then reactivated the offer in January 1917, the basis was to be “Peace without Victory.” But that was cast aside three months later, in April 1917. Germany had threatened an alliance with Mexico if U.S. sales of oil and munitions to the Central Powers were cut to support Britain, and Wilson used that as justification for his request that Congress declare war. In January 1918, two months after the Balfour Declaration, he announced a fourteen point peace plan which required concessions and had lost any suggestion of peace without victory. Then on August 30, in response to the papal peace note, he advised Pope Benedict XV, but not the world, that the Kaiser must abdicate before any negotiations with Berlin. The massive subversive propaganda campaign began eleven days later, on September 10, and on October 4 both Germany and Austria advised the U.S. they were ready and able to accept Wilson's fourteen point demands.

At that point Wilson made public his additional demand that both Kaiser Wilhelm and the Austrian Habsburg Emperor Charles I, who was still recognized by the Holy See as successor to the title of Holy Roman Emperor, must both abdicate as an additional condition. They both accepted that humiliation, and on October 23 their governments accepted the full terms. But it was no longer enough. The US self-understanding as God's model nation had come to the fore and Wilson insisted on not only abdication, but the abolition of the monarchies and the establishment of U.S. style republics. Wilson wanted a spectacular morale boosting “final victory” which would establish the superiority of the Allies in their own eyes as well as everyone else's. From that point the Allies, including Britain and others that did not want to give up their monarchies, threw all the munitions available at the German Western front, including vast quantities of mustard gas.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁹ Zeman, *Diplomatic History*. pp. 128, 354., 362.

A few days later the Habsburgs agreed, but Kaiser Wilhelm did not. Germany was thrown into chaos with a naval rebellion, and total collapse. On November 9 Wilhelm abdicated and an armistice was signed two days later: nineteen days after the morale boosting final avalanche began.

The Christian Churches had been claiming legitimacy, superiority and exclusivity on the basis of Supersession and nomination as God's sole designated interpreter of Divine Will. The Reformed wing generally shared an understanding of covenantal salvation based on predestination, election and baptism, and dependent on faith in Christ alone, which were substituted for the sacraments and intercessory authority of the Catholic Church's priests.

Now, the British Government, whose titular head and monarch was supposed to be the most Christian Defender of the Faith, had turned it all upside down with a set of agreements which was intended to ensure the continuity of the national and religious self-understanding which it saw as necessary to preserve its imperial status and which made it dependent for that status on the support of the two peoples who it had constantly denigrated. One was the people of the superseded faith with a covenant that it claimed had been abrogated. The other was the people whose founder and faith were not even recognized as legitimate.

For a time there was no mention of the principle of maintaining political stability through religious conformity. Furthermore, the most sacred city on earth, and the birth place of the Messiah, which had been fought over by Christians for centuries, was about to be handed over to the people who the church insisted had killed God and who were supposed to be destined to suffer the consequences until the end of time. Many of the Christians who had died, had done so in the belief that their sacrificial martyrdom, or purchased indulgences, had bought them a guarantee of salvation, because the infallible head of the church whose name, according to *Dictatus Papae*, was greater even than the Messiah, had said so.

In addition, in order to undermine their system of governance and to seize control of their natural resources it had deceitfully promised sections of the Ummah forms of sovereignty it had no intention of implementing. In doing so it drove a wedge between the Arab and Jewish communities and generated conflict which became basic to WWII, and the current crisis in international affairs.

Thus the Balfour Declaration was a critical point in the revelation of the mechanism of covenant for all humanity, not only for the three Abrahamic faiths. It provides a key to understanding that the nature and consequences of a sequence of events that started many years earlier and culminated in the establishment of the State of Israel is consistent with prophecy generated within each faith during earlier eras. The sequence is intimately linked to Christian anti-Semitism and Supersessionism. It prompted reactions and interaction between communities of the three faiths on the basis of their differing interpretations of covenant; it called into question the legitimacy of those interpretations, and it forced the world into circumstances of crisis which now require coordinated and collaborative reflection on those interpretations and the way forward for humanity.

During the peace treaty and mandate negotiations, to justify the British government's action, haste, reversal of such deeply held religious beliefs about the role and fate of the Jewish community, and its bid for the League of Nations mandate, Balfour said:

in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country ... The four great powers are committed to Zionism, and Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land⁴⁰⁰

17. The traumatic home Run

Corporal Adolph Hitler was among the thousands of troops who were killed or wounded during the four-week spectacle for a "morale boosting" final victory which Wilson insisted on. Gassed, blinded, hospitalized and traumatized by the humiliation of the nation through the Kaiser's forced abdication and abolition of the monarchy, Hitler experienced an intense messianic vision in which he heard voices summoning him to save Germany. His sight returned in due course, but the vision stayed with him for life, as he responded with determination to his interpretation of the divinely inspired covenant under which he believed he was bound.

Hitler was a product of Christian Europe by family upbringing and schooling. He idolized the Benedictine Abbot of his school and he absorbed all of the Jesuit anti-Semitic propaganda of the time, and he was greatly influenced by the anti-Semitism of the

400 Wagner, "Christians and Zionism: British stirrings. ." Pt. 1. citing Balfour 1919.

Christian Socialist mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger.⁴⁰¹ Not all fault rests with the church and Christian Europe however. Hitler was also a product of the Zionist Organization's determination to achieve its aims by manipulation of national powers, the Balfour Declaration, and the US President's determination to reshape the world in his country's image, beginning with Germany. Upon demobilization he worked as a political organizer and propaganda officer, and one of his early tasks was to write a statement on the dangers of Jewry at the time when the Vatican was stepping up its public campaign against the British mandate.⁴⁰²

Osservatore Romano and the Jesuit organ *Civiltà Cattolica* both pursued 'the Zionist illusion,' and the official Vatican journal *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (XIII 282–283), carried an appeal by Pope Benedict XV to "the governments of Christian nations, even non-Catholics," to make a joint protest to the League of Nations.⁴⁰³ Hitler absorbed it all, and the thrust of his statement became:

Anti-Semitism on purely emotional grounds will find its ultimate expression in the form of pogroms. The anti-Semitism of reason, however, must lead to the planned legal opposition to and (the) elimination of the privileges of the Jews. Its ultimate goal, however, must absolutely be the removal of the Jews altogether. Only a government of national power and never a government of national impotence will be capable of both.⁴⁰⁴

The Holy See had lost sovereign authority to negotiate government-to-government when Garibaldi annexed the Papal States to Italy in 1870. Having Catholic powers on both sides during WW I then weakened its influence. Then, when Karl Barth's Commentary of Romans drew attention to its problem, Pope Pius XI's determination to regain recognizable papal sovereignty increased.

Barth said that the risen Lord "is no founder of a new religion," that Christ had not erected any new Church which might be compared or contrasted with other churches, that the Reformation had been a failure, that the churches had to think very carefully about their theology and their status, that Israel and the Jews had not been cast off, and if they have

401 D. C. Watt, "Introduction to Mein Kampf" in *Mein Kampf* (London: Hutchinson, 1974). p. xxvi-xxviii.

402 Ibid.

403 Pinchas Lapide, *The Last Three Popes and the Jews* (London: Souvenir Press, 1967). pp. 84-85.

404 Alan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*, First Fontana ed. (Hammersmith, London: Fontana-HarperCollins, 1993). P. 75, citing Ernst Deuerlein in VJZ (Vierteljahresheft für Zeitgeschichte, Munich) 1959, 2. Pp. 201 ff.

See also John Toland, *Adolf Hitler* (New York: Ballantine, 1977). P. 122.

been “veritably entrusted with the oracles of God, their claim to peculiarity and to special attention is not necessarily presumptuous.” Salvation, Barth said, “concerns all Israel, the whole church, every church” as the fulfilment of prophecy and as the messenger of Christ, but the “elect” do not come from any particular school of thought or group of men, and cannot be identified.⁴⁰⁵ He issued a frontal challenge to the churches as institutions, but also to their alternative covenantal theologies of Supersessionism and Dispensationism⁴⁰⁶

While Hitler was in prison for inciting violence in a failed coup, and writing *Mein Kampf*, Mussolini, in minority government, provoked further instability in Italy to justify his plan to rule dictatorially. That led to protracted negotiations with the Vatican, which wanted the restoration of its authority in return for its support for his dictatorial ambitions. Three linked documents were signed in 1929: the Lateran Treaty, the Italian Concordat and a Financial Convention. Extracts from Pope Pius XI’s statement illustrate how little attention he paid to the New Covenant and that he agreed with Gregory VII’s *Dictatus Papae*, and either ignored or did not understand Barth’s challenge. All powers and authority are vested in the Catholic Church, he said, and it is “with the deepest satisfaction that We are persuaded that We have given God back to Italy, and Italy to God.”⁴⁰⁷

Mussolini had no further need for a ballot box: the pope had agreed to re-impose the prohibition on Italian clergy enrolling and working in political parties, and several social encyclicals were promulgated in quick succession. These had the effect of civil law in Italy, were imposed as the international standard throughout the Catholic Church, and were largely accepted by default by Reformed communities worldwide simply because of the dominant influence of the Roman Catholic Church.

Hitler’s opportunity to secure the backing of the Catholic Church came in similar circumstances. His Nazi Party had risen to a strong minority role in parliament, and both the Holy See and the ruling Centre Party were eager to agree the basis for a concordat to restrict him, but negotiations broke down because Chancellor Brüning refused to exclude the Reformed churches. When Germany also became politically very unstable, several elections were held in quick succession. Hitler’s Nazi Party gained a strong majority

405 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns, Sixth ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968). pp. 396-99, 344.

406 David L. Mueller, *Karl Barth*, ed. Bob E. Patterson, *Makers of the Modern Theological Mind* (Waco: Word Books, 1976). p. 142.

407 Sergio Kuhner, *Encyclopedia of the Papacy* (London: Peter Owen, 1959). p. 328. See also p. 340.

through the massive financial support of 39 leading industrialists who petitioned President Hindenburg to appoint Hitler as Chancellor. Hitler's authority was then undisputed, but he wanted *absolute* power. This required an enabling act to transfer legislative power from parliament to the cabinet: to him.

18. A covenantal concordat after the style of Dictatus Papae

Cardinal Pacelli, Vatican Secretary of State, wanted a concordat and to get it he agreed to Hitler's dictatorial powers in advance. He imposed his will on the bishops and the Catholic Centre Party's Deputies to ensure support for Hitler, and the bill was carried. It would not have been if the Catholic Centre Party had voted against it. Hitler later told Catholic leaders to their faces that he determined to do what the church had always tried to do and failed: to eliminate the influence of Jews in Germany. He told them "I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: *by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.*"⁴⁰⁸

Hitler's antagonism towards those in the churches who did not share his view was strong.⁴⁰⁹ He directed that the 28 provincial Evangelical Churches be harnessed and merged into one Reich Church which would operate on the basis of Hitler's theology, Mein Kampf and the "Aryan Paragraph," but he faced pockets of opposition from people such as Martin Niemöller, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.⁴¹⁰ He set in motion a massive propaganda blitz and thuggery against Jewish traders, and began a program to coerce Jews to emigrate.

Unfortunately those who gained access to the United States between the world wars through the "barrier of stingy immigration quotas" faced secular communities openly hostile towards Catholics, Negroes and Jews in which most people with wealth who supported organised religion did so because it justified an ethics of acquisition, while the poor linked it with capitalist exploitation. Most second generation Jews from Eastern Europe "abandoned religious Judaism entirely (with) only a minority affiliating with Conservative or Reform congregations," and, according to one study, more than three-

408 Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim, Revised with Introduction by D. C. Watt ed. (London: Hutchinson, 1974). p. 60.

409 Ibid.

410 John A. Moses, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Zprioritization of Church Unity (Oekumene)," *Journal of Religious History*, no. May 2000 (2000). pp. 12-13.

quarters of Jewish schoolchildren in New York had not received any instruction in Jewish religion.⁴¹¹

19. Contrasting covenants: Columbus and Evian

Concern for covenantal obligations waned as influential rabbis reacted to the impact of Nazism in Germany. Mordecai Kaplan and Emanuel Gamoran adopted "a naturalist theology that made God an impersonal moral force and Jewish observances folkways rather than divine commands," and Gamoran and Yehezkel Kaufmann regarded religion as "the chief and indispensable cause for Jewish survival" so that in addition to ethical values religious schools must teach "survival values" with less doctrine and moralising.⁴¹² Consistent with that, student opinion moved strongly in favour of Zionism, and in 1937, in adopting the Columbus Platform, the Central Conference of American Rabbis resolved that "the time has now come for all Jews, irrespective of ideological differences, to unite in the activities leading to the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine,"⁴¹³

In spite of that shift, Reform Judaism still retained theism as its dominant belief, and still "applied its prophetic ethics directly and radically to social issues," and that platform recognized Israel's mission to witness to the Divine; beheld the promise of renewed life in the rehabilitation of Palestine; and affirmed the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its upbuilding as a Jewish homeland by endeavouring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also a centre of Jewish culture and spiritual life. It then stated that Israel's Messianic goal was cooperation with all men in the establishment of the kingdom of God, of universal brotherhood, and of justice, truth and peace on earth. It did not use the terms 'Zion' or 'Zionism.' Nor did it use the term "covenant," but by construction it was a statement of covenant. It referred to each of the principal components of the mature Hebrew understanding of divine covenant: responsibilities and relationships, revelation as "a continuous process, confined to no one group and to no one age," and to justice without mentioning either judgement, nor retribution.⁴¹⁴

411 Meyer, *Modernity*. pp. 296-7.

412 Ibid. pp. 300-1.

413 Ibid. pp. 302,330,317,309.

414 Ibid. pp. 319-320.

Circumstances changed rapidly in Europe, Jewish settlement in Palestine increased, and the mandated territory fell into a pattern of communal disturbances, terrorism and conflict that British security forces could not prevent. Britain's mandate, which it expected to provide territorial expansion, security for the Suez Canal, and a monopoly over oil and other resources in the Arab territories, was becoming a burden. Hitler's position was strengthening by the day. The only European power he needed to be concerned about was Britain. It was the beneficiary of the Balfour Declaration and therefore the obligated protector of Jewish interests, and it could call on the manpower and resources of its dominions and colonies. Russia did not want a war and peace negotiations were simple and direct. No other country was powerful enough to fight a war single handed.

Hitler out-manoeuvred Britain at every move. He had the support of the Arabs because of Britain's Zionist settlement. He announced the German, Japanese and Italian AntiComintern Pact; met Halifax and learned that Britain could not defend Eastern Europe and wanted a territorial settlement; manoeuvred to be able to surround the prominent Jewish Rothschild family-controlled Vitkowizt industrial, military and mining complex in Czechoslovakia; achieved the reunification of Germany and Austria; watched while a US-sponsored conference on re-settlement of Jewish refugees held at Evian, France, failed, and gloated when *La Civiltà Cattolica* and an Italian group of university professors both pressed for the policy he was pursuing: expulsion of Jews. On day three of the eight-day conference, *La Civiltà Cattolica* published a long study of "the question of the Jews in Hungary."

The "supremacy" of Jews had become particularly "disastrous for the religious, moral, and social life of the Hungarian people" and it was therefore not a question of proposing a theory of "segregation." It was now a matter of "approving its concrete application in a country (which is) the most solid and indestructible fortress of Christianity."⁴¹⁵

A week later the group of university professors published a '*Manifesto of the Italian Race*', a ten point summary of Italian Fascism's new position on the question of race under the title *Dichiarazione della Razza*.

"Jews do not belong to the Italian race (and) represent the only population that has never been assimilated in Italy, because it is constituted by non-European racial elements which differ absolutely from the elements from

415 Georges Passelecq and Bernard Suchecky, *The Hidden Encyclical of Pius XI*, trans. Steven Rendall (New York: Harcourt Brace/Harvest, 1997). p. 128.

which Italians descend.” Union was admissible only within the circle of European races, and “the purely European character of Italians is altered by crossing with any extra-European race that bears a civilization different from the ancient civilization of the Aryans.”⁴¹⁶

Totally confident that Britain and France could not resist, Hitler summoned their leaders to Munich; issued an ultimatum for the territorial breakup of Czechoslovakia and made Britain and France deliver it; took advantage of the distraction of extravagant Vatican celebrations for the enthronement of a new pope to march forty divisions of troops to the Czechoslovak border; heard Chamberlain tell the Commons on March 14, 1939, that he would continue appeasement; ordered the occupation of Vitkowizt that evening, and in doing so gained overwhelming military capacity. After occupying the whole of Czechoslovakia next day he concentrated on Poland. He secured his Russian flank with a treaty concerning Poland; offered Britain territorial guarantees and support in return for a free hand in Poland on August 23; forced some territorial concessions from Poland and waited 72 hours while the government hesitated and negotiated with the Jewish Agency for Palestine, then, on August 26 ordered the invasion of Poland for September 1.

20. The centrality of the Jewish Question

As a consequence of their multiple breaches of covenant in the Balfour Declaration, the Jewish Agency and Britain were both locked into a relationship and circumstances that neither wanted. Britain was in a desperate situation. The government knew it could not survive a war on two fronts on its own. Without the empire its economy would collapse and it would have to sue for peace. It could not defend the empire, and if it lost Suez it would lose the empire too, and the Arabs were supporting Germany because of the Palestine issue. Facing hostility in both the Commons and the Lords, Chamberlain was forced to declare war against Germany on the morning of September 3, 1939.

If Britain did not go to war against Hitler’s Germany to defend the Jews of Poland, using whatever pretext it could grasp except the reality, Palestine would be lost either through the deepening civil war or because the Jewish Agency would turn to the USA for support and Britain would be elbowed out. Without control of the Suez it was certain to lose control of its Eastern Empire either to Japan and Germany in alliance, or to the USA as it

416 Ibid. pp. 115-18.

moved in first. Hitler would be in effective control of the whole of Europe, and the independence of Britain itself would be at risk.

If the Jewish Agency did not support Britain, the British Government would not attempt to justify to a sceptical public a war with Germany to support Poland, and the Jewish communities in all of Europe as it progressively came under Hitler's control would be left in concentration camps as slave labour or awaiting deportation to ... where? Britain could certainly not open Palestine.

In quick succession Hitler asked for Russian support in Poland, and negotiated its partition; offered Britain a peace agreement based on him having freedom of policy in Poland; set November 5 as the date for westward invasion when Britain rejected the offer, swept through Scandinavia and invaded Holland on May 10, 1940. Chamberlain resigned as Prime Minister and advised the king to call Winston Churchill to form a government.

There were several opportunities to call a halt. All of them centred on Britain arranging mass Jewish emigration to solve Hitler's "Jewish Question." Churchill would not agree at any stage. He was trying desperately to protect the Jewish position, but he could not do it by opening Palestine, and the Zionist Organization would not agree to any alternative. The first opportunity came when Hitler's forces had the Allies trapped at Dunkirk on May 24, 1940. Hitler offered Britain an armistice, expected negotiations, and ordered a cease fire. However Churchill would not negotiate a settlement which required the Jewish community to emigrate – totally – from Germany and the countries that it then controlled. He ordered a silent evacuation from Dunkirk instead of negotiations.

Hitler quietly negotiated the Tripartite Pact with Italy and Japan, and announced it on September 27. Britain had again been completely outmanoeuvred. If it was to avoid defeat, and have any chance of finding a solution to the Jewish Question, Britain needed the active support of the United States. Churchill instructed his diplomats that America's isolation was to be broken; "the entry of the United States into war either with Germany or Italy or with Japan is fully compatible with British interests."⁴¹⁷ Jewish pressure on the United States increased too, but Roosevelt did not have public support to go to war. He needed a justification: a direct threat to the United States. Japan was eager to push the European powers out of Asia and the plot became extremely complicated.

417 Anthony Best, *Britain, Japan and Pearl Harbour: Avoiding War in East Asia* (London: Routledge, 1995). p. 127, citing PRO FO371/24729 F 4634/60/23 Churchill to Halifax 4 October 1940 M.161.

In October 1940 Lt. Commander Arthur McCollum, head of US Far Eastern Naval Intelligence, prepared a five-page memo for Roosevelt, setting out a plan to induce Japan to commit an overt act of war against the United States and thus provide the justification for it to enter the war.⁴¹⁸ Roosevelt acted immediately, ordering the US fleet to be based in Hawaiian waters,⁴¹⁹ and the total isolation of Japan by embargoes on all significant resources, to provoke a response. On July 23 Japanese forces landed in Indo China and took control from the Vichy French. The US announced a freeze on all Japanese assets and Britain had to do the same. Churchill was being manoeuvred into a two-front war, in Europe and the Pacific. The US had broken Japan's codes and manipulated each Japanese move pending the overt operation that it wanted.

In the meantime on June 22, 1941, Hitler, pursuing his territorial ambitions, claimed that the Soviet Union had broken its treaty with Germany, and launched an invasion of Russia. Churchill had been endeavouring to manoeuvre Hitler into a two-front war to ease the pressure on Britain, so Hitler's invasion, committing Germany to war with the atheistic Communist Soviet Union as well as with Western Christian powers was welcome. On July 30, to strengthen Soviet resolve, Foreign Secretary Eden announced a British-brokered agreement between Russia and the Polish Government-in-exile that the Soviet-German agreement of 1939 for the partition of Poland was no longer valid. A Polish Army would be established on Russian soil and be subject to the Soviet Supreme Command, and that Britain, as underwriter for the agreement, did not recognize any change from pre-war boundaries.⁴²⁰

21. Hitler confirms his understanding of a personal covenant

Hitler's response was immediate. He had had enough. It was intolerable that if Germany were to lose the war Poland would become a base for the return of Europe's Jews. That would not happen. Forced emigration was no longer feasible, but the Jews still had to be eliminated. Next morning, July 31, 1941, Goering, widely believed to be acting on an unwritten "Führer Order for the Final Solution," ordered Heydrich to solve the Jewish

418 Robert B. Stinnett, *Day of Deceit: The Truth About FDR and Pearl Harbour* (New York: Simon & Schuster / The Free Press, 2000). Appendix A, pp. 262-268. McCollum, Arthur. Memorandum to the Director, Office of US Naval Intelligence, October 7, 1940. Box 6, special US Navy collection in RG 38, Military Reference Branch, Archives H, January 24, 1995. Reproduced in full.

419 Ibid. p. 10, citing the New York Times, October 4, 1940. p. 1.

420 Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: The Grand Alliance* (London: The Reprint Society, 1950; reprint, 5th impression). p. 316. Chapters XX & XXI generally; *ibid.*

question and to make all necessary organizational, practical, and financial preparations for the execution of an overall solution of the Jewish question in the German sphere of influence in Europe.⁴²¹ The techniques of gas chambers used in Hitler's 1930s euthanasia programs for the insane, crippled and criminal were reintroduced on a massive scale in six purpose built facilities for disposing of trainloads of Jews by gassing and incineration.

Hitler's gas-induced vision of his personal covenantal obligation to end Jewish influence in Germany was being put into effect. Evidence of any governmental or church discussion about the Qur'anic Night Journey being brought to fruition is hard to find. Similarly there is little to indicate that the Vatican officials who so vigorously pressed for a solution to the Jewish Question realized that their wishes were being put into effect or that they saw any breach of covenantal obligation in their provocative actions or that they accepted any responsibility for the mass murders to which they contributed.

On August 9, Churchill and Roosevelt met, at the President's request, in Newfoundland, to plan strategy for the conduct of the war and the post-war peace. Roosevelt's policy coincided remarkably closely with Japan's new international order: elimination of all imperial preference arrangements, self determination and freedom of choice of system of government. Churchill resisted. He knew that the dismantling of its Empire was inevitable if Britain fought on without US aid, but the basic price for that aid might be the same end result.

Churchill's memoirs suggest that it is very unlikely that he thought in terms of that imperial fate being a penalty for Britain's breach of covenant over a very long period, or the immediate past in particular. Similarly there is little evidence of discussion within the churches. The mainstream churches were showing no recognition of that concept and they denigrated anyone who dared raise the idea. It was a part of the Jewish religious heritage, and that had been abrogated with the renunciation of the Mosaic Covenant under Divine Supersession. It did not apply to the church or Christians.

22. Roosevelt's covenant: with whom?

On December 8, 1941, Asia time (the 7th US time) Japanese forces landed at the British base of Kota Bharu, Malaysia. Roosevelt said nothing. He knew that Japan's next move had to

421 Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews; 1933-1945* (Hamondsworth: Penguin, 1977). p. 170.

be against the US Pacific fleet base. He had been alerted on the afternoon of the 6th, two days before the Kota Bharu attack, that a very important Japanese message had been decoded and would be delivered to him that evening. He knew what it would be. Naval command Pearl Harbour was *not* advised. A second message followed, but it was delayed in delivery and bombs started dropping on Pearl Harbour seven minutes after he read it while having lunch next day, December 7th. The McCollum strategy had worked.

Roosevelt's Coordinator of Information, William Donovan, is reported as saying that the President's "overriding concern" was public reaction to the attack. He sought, and was given, an assurance that the attack was "a clear case of a first Japanese move that would unite Americans behind a declaration of war against the Axis powers."⁴²² Europe's war had become the whole world's war. The *Shoa* was soon in full swing. The war eventually ground to a halt in two stages in 1945, but the Jewish Question still had to be resolved.

Roosevelt had used US armed forces and civilians as decoys for an excuse to go to war. It was no more likely that he reflected on his covenantal obligations than Churchill had. If he did so, he may have considered himself partly responsible for the deaths of his people at Pearl Harbour, and perhaps the millions who were about to be dragged into a world war. Neither Churchill nor Roosevelt or their advisers seem to have been conscious that the entire Jewish Question was a matter of the church's breach of covenant and doctrinal anti-Semitism over about 1,840 years.

When the UN Charter was signed in June 1945, and mandates were about to be determined, the British Government debated its commitment to the Zionist cause at length. Ministers knew the trade and military dependence problems it involved and that abdication of responsibility for Palestine would be taken as abdication of great power status, and Britain's influence in the region would crumble.⁴²³ In June, 1946, the British authorities arrested key Jewish Agency leaders to coerce them into a workable agreement. In retaliation the Irgun blew up the British military headquarters in the King David Hotel, killing almost one hundred people, and it was clear that military defence of its Palestine policy had become impossible. The government decided it had no choice. Domestic stability came first.

422 Stinnett, *Day of Deceit: The Truth About FDR and Pearl Harbour*. p. 3. citing notes by William J. vanden Heuvel of conversations between him and Donovan.

423 Lilienthal, *Zionist Connection*. pp. 727-33.

After numerous UN enquiries and commissions, relations between Britain and the Zionist Organization broke down, and Britain made its last proposal: two locally self-governing provinces, one Arab and one Jewish. Reference to the UN was opposed by the Zionists, and Cabinet knew that a pro-Zionist policy would provoke an Arab uprising and probable hostility throughout the Muslim world. An Arab proposal that the mandate be terminated and Palestine be declared independent was defeated in a UN Committee vote, and eventually it was decided that the UN General Assembly as a committee of the whole would decide whether to partition the territory or place it under UN administration. President Truman instructed the American delegation to support partition.

When the recommendation for partition was put to a preliminary vote it was one short of the two thirds majority required on matters of a mandate. With four days to the final vote, Zionist lobbyists campaigned to change 'No' to 'Abstain' and 'Abstain' to 'Yes'. According to Aarons and Loftus they targeted a number of countries directly with bribes and threats that economic aid would be withheld if their votes were not changed, but their most devastating use of blackmail was against Nelson Rockefeller who agreed to intervene directly with a number of heads of Latin American governments. The result was that Brazil and Haiti switched from 'No' to 'Yes'; Nicaragua, Bolivia and Ecuador switched from 'Abstain' to 'Yes'; and Argentina, Colombia and El Salvador switched from 'Against' to 'Abstain'.⁴²⁴ The final vote for partition was thirty-three in favour, thirteen against, ten abstentions and one vote declared invalid. Britain announced that it would withdraw on May 14, 1948, and hand authority to the UN Commission.

23. Covenants confirmed: by triple prophetic convergence

On the afternoon of May 14, while the UN General Assembly was still debating the internationalization of Jerusalem and the form that the government of Palestine should take, Truman's statement recognizing the State of Israel was read to the UN General Assembly.⁴²⁵ The State of Israel had come into existence. The Jewish Question had been resolved. Perhaps.

Earlier in the day a Vatican 'opinion' on the subject had been published in Rome in *Osservatore Romano*. It read in part: "Modern Zionism is not the true heir of Biblical

⁴²⁴ Aarons and Loftus, *Secret War*. pp. 164-68.

⁴²⁵ Lilienthal, *Zionist Connection*. p. 84.

Israel, but a secular state ... therefore the Holy Land and its sacred sites belong to Christianity, the True Israel.”⁴²⁶ There was no indication that the Vatican-at-large had understood the consequences of the church’s doctrinal position and its abject rejection of the mature Hebrew understanding of covenant, covenantal obligation, and penalty for breaches of obligation. It had long ago reverted to Supersessionism and anti-Semitism after very brief recognition of the legitimacy of Jewish interest in a homeland in Palestine by Pope Benedict XV on May 4, 1917, when he discussed plans for the future of Jerusalem with Nahum Sokolow.

At dawn next morning Arab armies crossed the new borders and were at war with the State of Israel. There were 10,000 Egyptian troops, 4,500 Arab Legionnaires, 7,000 Syrians, 8,000 Iraqis and 3,000 Lebanese – a total of 32,500 troops – confronting 30,000 troops of the Jewish Hagana.⁴²⁷ One epoch had closed. Another was just about to open.

⁴²⁶ Lapid, *Three Popes*.

⁴²⁷ Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel from the rise of Zionism to our time* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979). p. 317.

Chapter Seven

Epoch five: covenant applied

1. Introduction

World War Two was the bridge between the Fourth and Fifth Epochs in the revelation of the covenantal relationship between God and humanity. It was the episode in human history which brought into play every aspect of that relationship and made it possible to appreciate the totality of the concept of covenant. It was the drawing board for the central fact of the Common Era: the establishment of the State of Israel.

This chapter examines events subsequent to, and consequent upon, the establishment of the State of Israel; conflict resulting from contradictory expectations based on covenantal understanding; the WWCB's increasing dependence on non-western countries to maintain their economic stability, and the rising tide of resentment towards the social and ethical norms of the WWCB.

In particular it shows that the People Israel are now fulfilling the role of a catalyst in bringing changes in the relationships between the WWCB and the balance of the world's religious communities which they neither sought nor anticipated, but which is consistent with the passages already noted from Maimonides' Mishneh Torah, the Book of Mormon, and the mature Hebrew understanding of divine covenant.

2. Validation of covenant understandings: Judaism, Christianity and Islam

When WWII in Europe ground to an end with the death of Hitler, by suicide, with his messianic vision unfulfilled, there was great relief and much celebrating. However when the scale of the Shoa became widely known, a guilt complex began to creep across the WWCB at its failure to prevent Hitler's 'final solution.' The question of resettlement of the remnant Jewish population, suppressed until then, had to be discussed and resolved.

Popular reasoning was that the crisis for the Jews was either of their own making, or all Hitler's doing, and it had little to do with the churches, except for their neglect. The WWCB only had to stay clear and let the crisis to pass. Of course, as a matter of Christian

compassion, the world would support giving Palestine to the Jews as their homeland. However, critical information can seldom be suppressed for ever. Information gradually became available, and when the extent of the church's complicity became known, and in particular that of the Roman Catholic Church, the guilt complexes grew.

When it became known that the cardinal archbishop of Berlin had instructed all parish priests in his archdiocese to “hold a solemn Requiem in memory of the Fuhrer and all of those members of the Wehrmacht who have fallen in the struggle for our German Fatherland,” the churches were forced further onto the defensive.⁴²⁸ Any mention of support by church press for Hitler’s policies of Jewish expulsion, or lack of concern at genocide, was discouraged, and governments were reluctant to admit they knew of Hitler’s extermination program for at least three years. Church officials defended the Pope’s policies and congregational protection for Jews in Rome and elsewhere, and refused to acknowledge that the Church’s theology and conduct were significant in the Shoa.⁴²⁹ News that the Vatican arranged safe passage for professionally useful Nazi war criminals to the United States, Canada, Australia and Latin America to escape trial in Europe and concealed the major Croatian war criminal after war crimes charges were laid against him brought muted denials but no immediate apology.⁴³⁰

Similarly, there was resistance to seeing any significance in the writing of Maimonides, to seeing the British Government’s religious *volte-face* in negotiating the Balfour Declaration as anything other than a goodwill gesture, or to giving any credibility to the newer groups on the fringe of the church, including Mormons. The views of Muslims were to be disregarded because Islam was little more than a focal point for Arab Nationalism, and a distraction, and many Arab populations had supported Germany against the Allies in the early days of the war. It was therefore, in the view of the church-at-large, simply natural justice that Palestine should be “given back” to the Jews as their homeland.

To relate those attitudes to the concept of covenant and circumstances during the Fourth Epoch and at the close of the war requires consideration of United Nations deliberations and actions taken to partition Palestine in the light of the Qur’anic Night Journey,

428 John Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (London: Penguin, 1999). p. 317.

429 Michael O'Carroll, *Pius XII: Greatness Dishonoured* (Chicago: Transcendental Herald Press, 1980). pp. 73 ff, 99.

430 Mark Aarons and John Loftus, *Ratlines: How the Vatican's Nazi Networks Betrayed Western Intelligence to the Soviets* (London: Mandarin, 1991). notably pp. 71-91.

Maimonides' prophetic expectations, and a key passage relating to covenant in the Book of Mormon.

The import of the Night Journey, *Sura* 17: 2-10, is that, when read in conjunction with the Hebrew Scriptures and with other passages of the Qur'an, it confirms the centrality of the People Israel in whatever *mechanism* or *administration* is necessary to achieve *the end point of human experience*. That end point is an understanding of the relationship between humanity and God, which involves, *ipso facto*, harmony and stability in human affairs in an environment which enables that state to be maintained through human endeavour and engagement for whatever may be the term of its existence. The opening reference to Israel having received the *Book* makes it quite explicit that the context in which the Night Journey was revealed is the mature, comprehensive Hebrew understanding of the Mosaic Covenant.

The key points in that confirmation, (with references to the relevant verses in *Sura* 17), are that Israel, as a body of people to whom the Book was delivered, is the exemplar of God's expectations and requirements for human communal conduct (S.17 A.2), and the people of Israel, as individuals, are therefore also to be exemplars of personal conduct. (S.17 A.2) The people Israel received the promise of occupation of Canaan as a homeland in perpetuity on the basis of the obligation imposed on them, but subject to the condition that they honour that obligation, and with clear warning that non-compliance may result in ejection. (S.17 A.5, 7) If the terms of the covenant were not in perpetuity, there would have been no restoration after rejection. Furthermore, all peoples are subject to the same penal clause, individually and communally, as Israel, on the basis of the Noahide Covenant, except that their covenant and their possible penalties do not relate to the occupation of a particular region or homeland. (S.17 A.3, 60) Every person and every community, whether of Israel or not of Israel, is judged on the same basis. (S.17 A.13-17)

The fact that the Jewish people were subject to the Mosaic covenant at the time of the Qur'anic revelation, and the perpetual nature of that covenant, are re-confirmed by the specific warning of the dire consequences for the community if it were to again transgress against its neighbours (or return to sin, in some translations). At that time they were scattered, low in numbers and in no position to commit an offence of non-compliance in the manner referred to, and such a reference would have been totally irrelevant if they were not subject to the covenant. Furthermore, the nature of the punishment foreshadowed was

quite different to the defeat in battle, expulsion from their homeland, or exile and enslavement which had previously been foreshadowed by the Hebrew prophets, and applied. It was: "If you return to your sins (or mischief, transgression or evil) We shall return with punishment (or to scourge, or with chastisement). We have made Hell a prison(house) for the unbelievers." (17:8)

Given the circumstances, this passage can be understood as: first, a strong revelation about the perpetual nature of covenant; second, an equally strong statement to the Christian Church that Judaism was alive and well and that there was no basis for the church's Supersessionism; and third, a direct warning to the Jewish rabbinical leadership and community that their role as exemplars was still intact, and that if circumstances required, their punishment would be exemplary in the extreme. However the corollary to that, is that if they were then to acknowledge their transgression and their circumstances, and made a determined and demonstrative effort to fulfil their continuing obligation, the recognition and the benefits in accord with the Covenant would also be exemplary in the extreme.

From within the Jewish stream, the import of Maimonides' prophetic expectations in the Mishneh Torah, written 555 years later during a period of great religious upheaval, is equally as significant. Maimonides' rabbinical family was wedged between the papal Reconquista and the ruthless fundamentalist Muslim Almohades in Spain. The family migrated from Cordova to Morocco, then to Egypt where Moses became physician to Saladin, was appointed leader of the Jewish community in Egypt, and wrote the Mishneh Torah over a ten-year period while Saladin battled from victory against the Crusaders, at Damascus, to defeat, at Mont Gisard, and to victory again, at Aleppo.⁴³¹

Concerned essentially with the suffering and the fate of the Jewish community, he wrote that neither the Abrahamic nor Mosaic Covenants had been abrogated; the community must wait for an indication that either the imposed divine retribution to which it had been subjected had run its course, or that God had another task within their designated strategic role before seeking to return to Canaan. Their return, he said, would be associated with a war involving Gog and Magog which would take place at the beginning of the Messianic

431 Heschel, *Maimonides*. Maimonides.

Age, but before that war a prophet would arise to make Israel upright, to prepare their hearts to serve God and to establish peace within the world.⁴³²

In the Messianic Age there would not be innovations in the work of creation, he said; the world would continue according to its existing pattern, but Israel would dwell securely, together with the wicked gentiles, who would return to the true faith and no longer steal or destroy, but live at peace with Israel. Everyone would understand what has been implied in the parables, he said, and the only difference between “the current age” and the Messianic Era would be the emancipation of the Jews from subjugation by the gentile kingdoms.⁴³³

From the mid-19th cent. fringe Christian Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 16, the passage discussed in Chapter Eight, shows a remarkable relationship to both the Night Journey and the Mishneh Torah and, in effect, combines the thrust of both of them. Paraphrased, it says that the Gentiles (meaning the Christian community) have been blessed for their belief and they will see evidence of the truth of covenant through the consequences of Jewish unbelief, being smitten. But having failed to honour the Gospel covenant they, the Gentiles, will be subject to the fullness of it, and dispersed Jews will be gathered in furtherance of the covenant. If the Gentiles then repent they will be numbered among God’s people but if they do not, Israel will be an instrument to “tread them down” and they will be as “salt that has lost its flavour.”⁴³⁴ The words of the Prophet Isaiah will be fulfilled, Smith said; Jerusalem will be redeemed; the Lord’s arm will have been seen by all nations, and Salvation shall reach the ends of the earth.

Few Christians paid any more attention to Smith than their predecessors had to either Muhammad or Maimonides. It was said that the Book of Mormon was no revelation, and Smith was merely deluded.⁴³⁵

3. Abuse of covenant: the church under scrutiny

The interpretation of the words attributed to Jesus of Nazareth, “I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it,” (Matt. 16:18) became a principal justification for the church’s claim of delegated authority

432 Maimonides, *Mishneh* 14. P. 244, 234.

433 Ibid. p. 242

434 "The Book of Mormon." 3 Nephi 16:15.

435 Epperson, *Mormons and Jews: Early Mormon Theologies of Israel*.

to speak and act on behalf of Jesus as Messiah and thus, on the basis of the Trinitarian Athanasian Creedal statement that Jesus is co-eternal and co-existent with God, to act and speak on behalf of God. Once that was adopted as a basis for the church's self-understanding there was no room for recognition of a covenant applying to the church and its members on the basis of either the Abrahamic Covenant or a variation of the Mosaic Covenant as illustrated by Jesus in his teachings.

The subsequent promulgation of *Dictatus Papae* and the power which the Holy See was able to exercise with the reigning pope as the lynch pin in a hierarchy or network of fear, which the church intended to become universal, left no room for consideration or understanding of a covenantal relationships. It also ensured that after the series of linked bulls and encyclicals in the mid-15th cent., culminating in *Romanus Pontifex*, the hierarchy of top-down authority, was reinforced and the abuse of covenant became virtually universal, with very little opportunity for redress against the abuse of power.

European colonial policies were underpinned by the Divine Right of Kings that was exercised by authority of the pope, not on the understanding of a covenantal relationship with God. The Doctrine of Discovery, based on declarations including *Inter Caetera* of Pope Alexander VI⁴³⁶, and the cultural and religious belief that Christians were the new 'Chosen People' who will "one day fulfil God's will by taking over all the non-Christian parts of the earth as a promised and everlasting possession." That belief is reflected, for example, in the Johnson Rulings that determined the reallocation of land occupied by Indigenous Americans.⁴³⁷

Linked to the 'chosen people' notion was the denial of Indigenous humanity. The first wave of Spanish officials assumed that Amerindians were sub-human, without souls, not entitled to basic human rights, and therefore subject to 'elimination' without baptism.⁴³⁸ Their treatment was so atrocious that Pope Paul III issued the encyclical *Sublimus Dei* in

436 Pope Alexander VI, ""Inter Caetera" in "European Treaties bearing on the History of the United States and its Dependencies to 1648" ", ed. Frances Gardiner ed. Davenport (Washington DC: Manataka American Indian Council, 1493). Accessed June 23, 2010

437 Steven T. Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land*, first ed. (Golden, CO 80403: Fulcrum Publishing, 2008), 46. Paul Gottschalk, *The Earliest Diplomatic Documents on America: The Papal Bulls of 1493 and the Treaty of Tordesillas Reproduced and Translated* (Berlin 1927)

438 Tracy Assing, "With a Carib Eye: Review of Forte, M. C., *Ruins of Absence*," *The Caribbean Review of Books*, no. February 2006 (2006): 18.

Angelo J. Disalvo, "Spanish Dominicans, the Laws of the Indies and the Establishment of Human Rights," *Romance Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (1993): 91.

1537 to correct the situation, saying “the Indians are truly men (and) they are not only capable of understanding the Catholic Faith but . . . they desire exceedingly to receive it.”⁴³⁹ However, 20 years later Pedro de Santander still advised the Spanish king “to put them all to the knife.”⁴⁴⁰

Relentless Anti-Semitism continued as if harnessed to the Doctrine of Discovery. Union between Spain and Portugal was only agreed subject to the conditional marriage of Isabella junior, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, to Manoel, heir of King John of Portugal. Isabella senior would enter Portugal only if all non-Christians who had fled from Spain were expelled. Royal decrees requiring all Jews and Muslims to be gone from the combined territories within ten months were signed one month after the marriage treaty.⁴⁴¹

Competitive evangelism, social disruption, and division then went in tandem with almost every colonial venture. When Britain claimed Kenya and Uganda in 1885, and empowered the East Africa Company to administer the region, conflict between promoters of Anglican Christianity, Roman Catholic Christianity, Islam and ancient African animist religions led to civil war between the tribes of Uganda in 1890⁴⁴². Those episodes of imperial/colonial exploitation, maladministration and widespread abuse of covenantal obligations, without the perpetrators having more than a vague notion of the concept, coincided with significant events in Europe. These included the ‘inverted *Kultur Kampf*’, the Russian Bloody Sunday exercise, the Dreyfus Case, pogroms across Europe, and continuing inflammatory anti-Semitic propaganda, provided mainly by Vatican-related media.

A logical outcome – on the basis of accepted human responses – was the establishment of the World Zionist Organization. This was followed by the continuing competitive push by various European Christian powers to seize and exploit the resources of other countries. and its consequence. Of most immediate significance were the ‘Great War’; the opportunity for the World Zionist Organization to exploit Britain’s parlous position for its own ends; and the Balfour Declaration which enabled the WZO to pursue the long-held

439 Pope Paul III, "Sublimus Dei: the enslavement and evangelization of Indians," (Rome: The Vatican: Papal Encyclicals, 1537).

440 Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land*: 50. Quoting from John Keats, *Eminent Domain: The Louisiana Purchase and the Making of America* (New York: Charterhouse, 1973), 62.

441 Davenport, *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies.*: 1-12. J. C. Revill, *World History* (London: Longmans, Green, 1953), 275.

442 Sam Kobia, "Denominationalism in Africa.," *The Ecumenical Review / World Council of Churches* 53, no. 3 (2001).

Jewish hope of *returning* to the land of Canaan. That hope led to an intention to return and to claim the region of Palestine as a *homeland* from which, according to the accepted belief of many generations of Jews as well as Muhammad and Maimonides, they had been expelled under covenant.

The processes of the WZO in pursuing its aim, and the collaborative processes of the Balfour Declaration, changed the emphasis in the role of the People Israel from oppressed to dual oppressor. In a dual action they were exposed to the legitimate accusations of transgression against their neighbours in both Germany and Palestine, and in both cases their transgression was facilitated, aggravated and exposed by the actions of its collaborator – Great (Christian) Britain – which was also in dual breach of covenantal obligations. It had used the Jewish community as a survival mechanism or a tool in its war with equally Christian Germany, and it had entered into, exploited, and then reneged upon agreements with Muslim Arabs who it had manipulated into serving as lackeys in its campaign to overthrow the Ottoman Empire and thus gain control of resources in Arab-occupied territories of the Ottoman Empire.

The key considerations in the Night Journey and the Mishneh Torah were beginning to mesh. The Jewish community was deeply divided over the direction its covenantal obligations should take it, and because there was no general acknowledged of Islam they gave no attention to the Night Journey. Similarly, Christian leadership was showing no interest in either work, nor in the over-arching concept of covenantal relationships.

The Jewish position can be understood on the basis of Maimonides' trenchant criticism of the Prophet Muhammad and his anomalous attitude towards both Muhammad and Jesus. He condemned Muhammad as the Ishmaelite who came after the false prophet; rejected the notion that either of them had any divinely invoked authority, and rejected Qur'anic understanding that Jesus was Israel's Messiah, either as saviour of the body politic or the person born to confirm the Torah and to convey the Gospels in elucidation of it.⁴⁴³ However, he still proposed that they both served a purpose in preparing for the Messianic Age.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴³ Qur'an S.4, A. 157-159; S.5, A. 70-75; S. 43, A.56-59

⁴⁴⁴ Touger, *Maimonides Mishneh Torah*. p. 234.

The church's position had much the same basis. Muhammad was not a prophet, so anything he said could be ignored except if it could be interpreted as supporting the church's anti-Jewish policies, which the Night Journey certainly could.

4. Unexpected consequences

US President Wilson's decision to prolong the Great War as a means of imposing republican-style government on people in Europe, whether they wanted it or not, and his effort to eliminate the notion of the Divine Right of Kings, reinforced the German perception of Jews as enemies of the nation. However it also resulted in Hitler's gas-induced blindness and his associated messianic visions, and compounded his underlying anti-Semitism. The direct support of the Holy See and European, British and US business and political leaders for Hitler's economic and political policies without consideration of his social and religious policies which were extensively publicized through the mass distribution of *Mein Kampf*,⁴⁴⁵ then enabled him to seize dictatorial power and to pursue his anti-Semitic policies.

Then several factors combined to trigger Hitler's decision to totally exterminate Europe's Jewish population instead of relying on 'cleansing' by emigration. They began with non-compliance with fundamental covenant or Gospel-based obligations towards oppressed people by wealthy countries of the WWCB at the Evian Conference in July 1938. That policy of suppression and non-assistance was strongly reinforced three months later by an article by Fr. Enrico Rosa, in *La Civiltà Cattolica*, the influential Jesuit bi-weekly which was normally distributed through diplomatic channels.

Rosa supported a "segregationist solution" to the Jewish Question, which had been characterized as "permissible anti-Semitism in contrast to the confiscation of goods and banishment from Italy which were "not permissible anti-Semitism." He then "conceded," or in reality promoted the idea, that "if the Jews are on our soil, they have not come to it innocently, but rather in order to take it away from us Christians, or to plot against our faith," since ultimately "they are an enemy whose goal is to appropriate our land and deprive us of heaven." Then, as if to goad Hitler into proving that it was possible, he noted that a remedy such as "expulsion of Jews as foreigners" would not be possible in a

445 Watt, "Introduction to *Mein Kampf*". pp. xv-xvi Sales: 1929, 23,000 vol. 1, 13,000 vol.2. Thereafter in one volume. 1930, 62,000; 1931, 52,000; 1932, 80,000; 1933, total sales passed 1.5 million. Thereafter, in 15 languages.

generalized way, especially if it had to be applied in all civilized countries. “Indeed,” he noted, “it would contravene God’s plan,” which requires the preservation of Israel, even though it is dispersed, as a “concrete argument for the truth of Christianity.”⁴⁴⁶ The fate of Europe’s Jews was rapidly being sealed.

Then on November 22, two weeks after Goebbels’ devastating Kristallnacht (Crystal Night) attacks on Jewish homes, synagogues and other properties across Germany in retaliation for the failure of Evian, the British cabinet rejected the admission of 10,000 children whose emigration had already been approved by Hitler. In retaliation, on the 24th, Hitler issued secret instructions for the occupation of Danzig. More provocation came on the 26th when Britain announced that a proposal to partition Palestine would not proceed and that a conference of Arabs and Jews would be held three months later. So, after a bit more haggling over territory and the fate of Europe’s Jews, the powers of great evil, Gog and Magog, went to war in September 1939. Churchill’s refusal to consider an armistice and mass emigration of Germany’s Jewish population when the Allies’ forces were trapped at Dunkirk at the beginning of June 1940, (thereby subjecting his own people to the Battle of Britain), then became another major factor. The final straw was the involvement of the Zionist lobby in the British-negotiated Polish-Russian Accord when Hitler postponed a planned invasion of Britain and acted to occupy Eastern Europe first.

In a very real sense, by issuing the Fuhrer Order on July 31, 1941, Hitler adopted the position of a scourge, and the final aspect of the Qur’anic revelation of the Night Journey was being played out. Roosevelt then joined both Hitler and Churchill in exemplifying the abuse of the covenantal obligation of leadership to support and protect ones’ people by manipulating Japan to bring it into the war and so justify the decision he had already taken, to enter it. His abuse of covenant was to facilitate the so-called surprise attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941 with the expectation that it would raise American anger to the point that his people would support a US entry into war.

5. Confirmation ignored: no backup plan

Five months later, in May 1942, the Jewish underground in Warsaw was able to send a message to the Polish Government in Exile in London, and on June 2, in spite of

⁴⁴⁶ *La questione giudaica e "La Civiltà Cattolica"*, in *La Civiltà Cattolica*, year 89 - Vol. IV - October 1st 1938 - quaderno 2119, cited by Passelecq and Suchecky, *Hidden Encyclical*. pp. 131-36.

ensorship, the BBC broadcast a report that 700,000 Jews had been victims of Nazi atrocities. The report was officially relayed to Allied governments on June 10, a press conference on July 9, was reported by one newspaper,⁴⁴⁷ and irrefutable evidence that Hitler had decided to systematically destroy all the Jews of Europe using poison gas was suppressed on the orders of US Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles.⁴⁴⁸ The first public announcement was not made until December 17, 1942. Fundraising for a rescue effort were then discouraged by both British and American governments,⁴⁴⁹ and Jewish representatives were excluded when a conference to discuss post-war refugee re-settlement was held in Bermuda in April 1943.⁴⁵⁰

The real concern of both governments was that any plan to rescue Jews required an explanation of why they needed to be rescued; why they had been subject to oppression; where they would be resettled; who would be disadvantaged if they were taken to the place of their choice, Palestine, and what the consequences might be for the Allied powers if a rescue plan went ahead. The answers in each case threatened the Allied war effort either directly or through damaged relations with the Vatican, and public discussion had to be suppressed.⁴⁵¹

Soon after, in November, 1943, the Allies announced that the Axis Powers were on notice that those found guilty of “atrocities” would be brought to Justice. Details of the location of gas chambers became available to the Allies a short time later, and in June 1944, Jewish authorities proposed that they, or the railway lines to them, be bombed. The proposal was rejected because a decision had been taken in February that armed forces would not be “employed” to rescue victims of enemy oppression unless such rescues were the direct result of military operations conducted to defeat enemy armed forces.

According to David Wyman, “To the American military, Europe’s Jews represented an extraneous problem and an unwanted burden.”⁴⁵² Leni Yahil suggests that the same could be said for Britain in which, at the time, the British Foreign Office, was the Jewish

447 Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry* (Oxford: Oxford, 1991). p. 607.

448 Ibid.

449 Sachar, *A History of Israel from the rise of Zionism to our time*. p. 238.

450 Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry*. p. 608.

451 Fry, *Triangle Bk. 2, 2*. pp. 1223-1230.

452 David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York 1984). p. 307.

Agency's only access to the Royal Air Force.⁴⁵³ About six million gas chamber deaths later, and being at the point of post-war financial and imperial collapse, it reneged on its key undertaking under the Balfour Declaration, announced that it was unable to manage a homeland for Jews in Palestine, and relinquished its mandate over the territory.

The Jewish refugee crisis was deepening and there was intense debate on two fronts. These were within the United Nations over alternative proposals for the governance of the region, and within the Jewish community in the United States over theology and the policy to adopt. While Conservative and Reconstructionist communities saw Zionist endeavours in Palestine as a means of achieving renaissance in Jewish life in America as well as elsewhere, Orthodox circles remained divided. Reform rabbis remained "the staunchest opponents of Zionism," but the small, articulate Agudat Israel group saw it as a secularist ideology, and the *Satmarer rebbe* and his followers condemned Zionists for trying to hasten the coming of the Messiah and the final redemption by establishing a "heretical state," while the American Jewish Committee leadership saw "Diaspora Nationalism" as a threat to its patriotism. They looked for Jewry's security through universal recognition of human rights under United Nations protection. In addition, the American Council for Judaism split from the CCAR and became "the most articulate and extreme anti-Zionist spokesman," maintaining that its members were Jews by religion alone which made it incumbent upon them to take only a universalist position, opposed to strong ethnic bonds and Jewish nationalism.⁴⁵⁴

6. A decision imposed on Un-united Nations

The United States President was under intense pressure from two lobbies: the oil industry, and Zionist and Orthodox Jewry. He was eager to inherit the benefits of strategic control of the Middle East which had been Britain's aim, and to support an important electoral constituency. He decided to support the Zionist Partition Plan. However there was not sufficient support among UN member states for the plan to pass. The Zionist lobby applied intense pressure directly on the United States to coerce it into obtaining the numbers. The industrialist and future Governor of New York and Vice President of the United States, Nelson Rockefeller, was blackmailed into forcing a number of member states to change their votes, and, using the same tactic as was applied to him – blackmail –

⁴⁵³ Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry*. p. 639.

⁴⁵⁴ P. Fishman, *The Jews of the United States* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974). pp. 232-234.

he succeeded in changing sufficient votes for the Zionist Partition Plan to pass. According to Aarons and Loftus, after Rockefeller made phone calls to “every dictator, caudillo, and businessman he had in his hip pocket and told them the facts of life” Brazil and Haiti switched from ‘No’ to ‘Yes’; Nicaragua, Bolivia and Ecuador switched from ‘Abstain’ to ‘Yes’; and Argentina, Colombia and El Salvador switched from ‘Against’ to ‘Abstain’.⁴⁵⁵ The final vote was thirty three in favour, thirteen against, with ten abstentions and one vote declared invalid. The Zionists were overjoyed. The Arabs were dumbfounded.

In fact, the decision had only meagre minority support world wide. The 33 delegates who voted in favour of partition represented 58 per cent of the votes cast, but they represented only 28 percent of the UN community or 20 per cent of the world population. The people whose delegates did not vote for partition, plus those who were not represented in the vote at all, outnumbered those whose delegates actually voted in favour of partition by four to one.⁴⁵⁶

The membership of the United Nations and the structure of its agencies had been determined in such a manner that very few non-Western countries were seated at the table.⁴⁵⁷ At the time of the partition vote, countries specifically excluded from the voting structure accounted for 28 percent of the world population. The WWCB was able to retain control of world political, economic, and social policy, and the ability to exploit the resources of the non-Western world, virtually uninhibited, and its leaders expected to do so virtually indefinitely.⁴⁵⁸ Even while debate continued in the UN General Assembly on the form the governance of Palestine should take, and the internationalization of Jerusalem, President Truman announced U. S. recognition of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948.

The Zionist plan had been accomplished but very little thought was given to the context in which it had been accomplished. The circumstances corresponded with the terms of the Qur’anic Night Journey. The Jewish community had, in a communal or corporate sense, transgressed against its neighbours and had been scourged in the most Hellish manner

⁴⁵⁵ Aarons and Loftus, *Secret War*. pp.56-7, 166-71.

⁴⁵⁶ Fry, *Triangle Bk. 2*, 2. Chapter 28, pp. 1510-15, note 29, pp. 1955-56. Source, UN World Population Statistics.

⁴⁵⁷ Alf Ross, *The United Nations: Peace and Progress* (Totowa N.J.: The Bedminster Press, 1966).

⁴⁵⁸ Allen W. Dulles, "The Marshall Plan," in *The Marshall Plan (1947)*, ed. Michael Wala (Providence, R.I.: Berg, 1993). For extracts and analysis of Dulles' Marshall Plan proposal, the Dunbarton Oaks and San Francisco United Nations planning conferences, and the Bretton Woods Monetary Conference of 1944, see Fry, *Triangle Bk. 2*, 2. pp. 1466-70; 1278-1281; 1285, 1318-1324.

imaginable. The circumstances also corresponded with Maimonides' primary expectation: the People Israel returned to Canaan in association with a war between powers of great evil.

However most people involved in decision making about the future – those in the WWCB – preferred to think that there had been only one power of evil, that the Messianic Age was already in place, and that the Jews were mistaken in still thinking that Maimonides' expectation of the Messianic Age was yet to be fulfilled. In spite of that fundamental disagreement, there seemed little point in contemplating the implications for the WWCB of the predictions of the Book of Mormon. All that appeared necessary to most WWCB leaders was to settle the Jewish refugees comfortably in their new home: the State of Israel. Among those who disagreed was Pope Pius XII. A Vatican 'opinion' had been published in *Osservatore Romano* on the morning of May 14. It read in part: "Modern Zionism is not the true heir of Biblical Israel, but a secular state ... therefore the Holy Land and its sacred sites belong to Christianity, the True Israel."⁴⁵⁹

Within six hours of Truman's announcement everyone received a sharp warning that "the Jewish Question" had not been resolved. Resolution would take time. At dawn on May 15, 1948, Arab armies crossed new borders and were at war with the State of Israel. That is the point at which the Fifth Epoch began and the establishment of the State of Israel became the central fact of the Common or Christian Era – and the dominant influence in the human future.

7. Opportunity for a fresh start: opportunity ignored

In the three years immediately following WWII, when the reality of the Holocaust was fresh in people's minds, there was generally a strong emphasis on Christian-Jewish reconciliation and a blossoming of literary and professional activity within the Diaspora. There was a reluctant consciousness within the church of Maimonides' expectations, a conscious effort to rise above the circumstances of the two previous generations, and a sense of relief that the trauma was all in the past. There was pride in the lives of people such as Bonhoeffer, and shame that the Vatican's response to a Vichy government enquiry about its Jewish deprivation law of June 1941 was that "in principle, there is nothing in

⁴⁵⁹ Lapide, *Three Popes*.

these measures which the Holy See would find to criticize.”⁴⁶⁰ At that time few people were aware of another incident the following year, 1942. When Archbishop Kametko of Nitra was approached to intervene against the deportation of Slovakian Jews. His reply is reported thus.

It is not just a matter of deportation. You will not die there of hunger and disease. They will slaughter all of you there, old and young alike, women and children, at once - it is the punishment that you deserve for the death of our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus Christ - you have only one solution. Come over to our religion and I will work to annul this decree.⁴⁶¹

Clearly there was ample reason and opportunity for Christians to seek reconciliation, but most of the meaningful reflection and publication was done by Jewish scholars. Few Christian scholars were prepared to undertake the fundamental reassessment that was necessary and there was a prolonged pause in their camp in contrast to the intense activity among Jewish scholars.

8. A nation's first generation: eight wars in 25 years

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, in spite of the intense reflection on the meaning of the Holocaust, there has been a series of eight wars or episodes of major civil unrest directly related to the establishment of Israel, and each one has been associated with two phenomena. First: the rise of interfaith tension world wide and episodes of conflict in regions not directly related to the establishment of Israel, but often concerned with foreign intervention to competitively secure oil or other resources, boundary disputes, or ‘Cold War’ and other political security issues. Second: a corresponding rise in initiatives in interfaith dialogue and reconciliation following each related war.

In succession those wars have been the Arab-Israel War of 1948; the Suez Crisis, 1956; the Six day War, 1967; the Yom Kippur or Ramadan War of 1973; the First Intifada and the Peace in Galilee or Lebanon War, 1981; the First Gulf War, 1991; the Second Intifada, the ‘9/11’ Twin Towers event and the continuing ‘War on Terror’, 2000-2010; and the Second Gulf War, 2003. The associated wars have been the Iranian crises of 1979-81 and the

460 Irving Greenberg, "Cloud of Smoke, pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and modernity after the Holocaust," in *Contemporary Jewish Theology*, ed. Elliot N. Dorff and Louis E. Newman (New York: Oxford, 1999). p. 308. citing Saul Friedlander, *Pius XII and the Third Reich: A Documentation* (New York: Knopf, 1966). p. 97.

461 Greenberg, "Cloud of Smoke, pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and modernity after the Holocaust." P. 308; *ibid.*

present; the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-88; the Kosovo War, 1998-99; and the Israel-Lebanon War of 2006.

The Arab-Israel War at the time of the partition of Palestine solved no problems, and an atmosphere of crisis persisted, with Israel finding it necessary to depend on its new mentor, the United States, for a security umbrella. It used that umbrella to avoid reaching a group settlement with its neighbours, knowing that group negotiations, facing all of its neighbours-cum-enemies together would place it at a disadvantage in boundary negotiations. This would have facilitated the establishment of a State of Palestine. Under US pressure a series of 'bought peaces' were reached during 1949 with Egypt, February; Lebanon, March; Jordan, April; and Syria, July. Iraq did not reach an agreement but also withdrew its forces in March.

The next major war involving Israel resulted from a mix of resource conflict between decolonized neighbours, Egypt and Sudan over the use of the Nile waters; Egypt's intention to deny Israel the use of the Suez Canal and, ultimately, to eliminate the state altogether; Saudi Arabia's effort to induce Jordan to join a confrontation with Israel; Western intrigue to deny Egypt the funds and the opportunity to construct a dam on the Nile; and Egypt's decision to nationalize the British-owned Suez Canal in August 1956 to fund the dam and also deny Israel the use of the canal, and United States efforts to weaken the status of both Britain and France as colonial powers in the Middle East.

The Suez Canal Crisis erupted when Britain, France and Israel collaborated in an attempt to seize control of the canal from Egypt following its nationalization and attacked at the end of October. The outcome of a short war was that Israel strengthened its position, but its relations with its neighbours sank further.

According to Mitchell Bard,⁴⁶² until the mid-1960s, the US State Department and Pentagon officials argued that Israel did not need American arms because it was strong enough to defend itself (as evidenced by the Suez campaign), it had access to arms elsewhere, and US aid could alienate Arab states and provoke requests for Soviet and Chinese weapons that would stimulate a Middle East arms race at the height of the Cold War. The US policy of isolating the Soviet Union by means of surveillance bases in Iran and the Baghdad Pact of

462 Mitchell Bard, "U.S.-Israel Relations: A Special Alliance," American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/special.html>.

Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Britain, established in 1955, required that stability be maintained between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

When Israel planned to divert water from the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee for its preferential use and to deprive the Palestinians of supplies, thirteen Arab heads of state met in Cairo in January 1964 to consider their response.⁴⁶³ The Palestine Liberation Organization was constituted four months later, in May, and in June the Group of 77 was constituted, bringing together the countries of the Organization of African Unity, many of which had only recently gained independence, the Arab League, and developing economies of South East Asia, Latin America, and Oceania in the hope of exerting some muscle towards fairer world trade policies. The similarity of their circumstances ensured that there was a broad common affinity with the struggle of the oppressed Palestinians, especially as most of them had opposed the partition of the mandated Palestinian territory. As a result there was strong support for the decision of another Arab Summit in September to confront Israel by diverting water from the Jordan upstream from the point at which it planned to divert water from the Palestinians.⁴⁶⁴

The matter came to a head on June 5, 1967, with the Six Day War. Israel annexed Arab East Jerusalem, surrounding areas and additional border areas; the Soviet Block severed diplomatic ties with it and threatened to intervene to support Syrian if Israel continued to advance towards Damascus; and the presidential ‘hot line’ between Moscow and Washington was used twice to keep the great powers out of the conflict before an armistice was agreed.⁴⁶⁵

However, another factor was largely ignored. Immediately the war erupted several Arab states imposed a ban on the export of crude oil, but the United States simply side-stepped it by increasing domestic production of crude by one million barrels per day to supply Britain and France and by drawing on its enormous reserves. The ban therefore had no effect other than reducing Arab income, and it was soon lifted. However, as a result of that experience, and knowing from the way in which the British and United States governments and their oil industries had previously wielded the “oil weapon” with devastating effect against countries which were out of favour, the Arab governments recognized the need for

463 Tessler, *Israel-Palestine Conflict*. P. 363.

464 Ibid. p. 373

465 Gribetz, Greenstein, and Stein, *Timetables*. P. 587.

a regional grouping within the OPEC. The concept of withholding resources to safeguard their interests, notably in relations with Israel and the USA as its main supporter, had to be fine tuned, in case of another such emergency. The Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) was established.⁴⁶⁶

Four months later an incident occurred with the prospect of another full scale war and a more effective oil embargo. On October 21, Egyptian naval vessels sunk an Israeli destroyer, Eilat, which they claimed had violated Egyptian territorial waters and was heading for Port Said in a provocative manner. Israel responded with a massive artillery barrage, destroying two oil refineries at Suez.⁴⁶⁷

Following a cease-fire, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 242 on November 22, 1967, calling for a withdrawal from all occupied regions. The Israelis were willing to view any conquests except East Jerusalem as bargaining chips, but they insisted on Arab recognition of the right of Israel to exist and firm guarantees against future attack. The Arab states were at first not willing or politically free to give such guarantees, and courted Soviet and Third World support against the US-Israeli alliance. Positions hardened, and no aspect of the crisis was resolved.⁴⁶⁸ Israel remained greatly enlarged but with shorter, more defensible borders, which required it to administer more than a million Arabs in Gaza and the West Bank. There was no effective refugee plan; the UN was unable to enforce the agreed Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories, or ensure free navigation through each of the international waterways. Egypt simply left scuttled ships in the Suez Canal and refused permission for their clearance. Israel had access to the Eilat, but all naval and trade shipping had to take the Cape of Good Hope route. The canal remained closed for eight years

Twelve months later, in December, 1968, Johnson announced the sale of Phantom jets to Israel, established the United States as Israel's principal arms supplier, introduced a policy to give Israel a *qualitative* military edge over its neighbours – and prepared the ground for a blunder of monumental proportions.⁴⁶⁹

466 Shireen Hunter, *OPEC and the Third World* (London: Croom Helm, 1984). P. 17.

467 Tessler, *Israel-Palestine Conflict*. P. 415

468 Ibid. pp. 414-424.

469 Gribetz, Greenstein, and Stein, *Timetables*. P. 594

Twelve months later, tensions were building with fears of an impending coordinated Arab attack on Israel, and Jordan had ordered the destruction of the PLO headquarters from fear of Israeli reprisals against cross-border attacks. The Soviet Union thus had an enormous strategic advantage in the Cold War. The Suez Canal was still blocked and Israel still occupied the Sinai Peninsula; sporadic border engagements continued, and the United States still guaranteed Israel's supplies. The Arab countries had turned to the Soviet Union for arms supplies because the United States would not supply them without a guarantee of non-use against Israel, and the United States lacked a strategic base close at hand.

Desperate for a means to stabilize the region and influence Arab policies, the United States talked first to Russia, proposing that Israel be asked to accept minimal boundary changes under a four-power guarantee. Then it talked to Israel about arms support, and gained its agreement to withdraw from the West Bank. Next, it talked to the Arabs, hoping that buying oil in sufficient quantity to improve their trade balances would influence their approach to Israel.⁴⁷⁰ The American oil majors were eager. They could reduce home production and increase cheap Middle East imports progressively.

The theory was – in the public justification process – that the more rapid depletion of Arab oil reserves, by US purchase, would prevent the use of an embargo as a weapon and strengthen America's grip on the region, and conserve its own resources for the future. Thus Johnson's successor, Richard Nixon, approved a very deliberate Administration decision to reduce domestic production of crude oil and to increase purchases from countries in the Middle East. The reality was that the United States was making its own economic and political security dependent on its ability to maintain peace in the Middle East. When the four-power plan was announced, Israel objected that its withdrawal was to appease the Arabs.⁴⁷¹ But when the new oil policy became public in February, 1970, all parties concerned—Israel, the Arabs, and the Soviet Union—knew exactly what the United States had done. Israel demanded a massive increase in arms supplies. Cross border attacks continued, and the Arabs wanted more security, too, through higher oil prices to fund additional arms purchases.

470 US Cabinet Task Force, "The Oil Import Question: A Report on the Relationship of Oil imports to the National Security " (Washington DC. : US Cabinet Task Force on Oil Imports Control. , 1970).

471 Tessler, *Israel-Palestine Conflict*: 448.

The United States had triggered an unprecedented arms race in the Middle East, it had played into the Soviet Union's hand, and it had to increase its own "defense preparedness" and establish additional overseas military and communications bases. But its oil deal also came at a critical time and aggravated the United States' trade imbalance with a greater outflow of paper dollars convertible to gold at a fixed rate. Under strain because of the war in Vietnam, the dollar was weakening against other currencies, and several countries demanded redemption of paper dollars for gold. On August 15, it unilaterally terminated convertibility of the dollar to gold, and in doing so, caused chaos in the international monetary system.⁴⁷² The United States had made its blunder of monumental proportions, and it did not have to wait long for another war.

9. The big one: Yom Kippur

The Yom Kippur War erupted on October 6, 1973 with invasions by Egypt and Syria, joined later by Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Kuwait. When Iraq nationalized remaining U.S. oil assets, the companies closed its export taps, and, in collaboration with the U.S. State Department, cut oil supplies to Europe by half with the blunt message: "support Israel against the Arabs or pay the price."⁴⁷³

President Nixon ordered a massive arms-resupply airlift; OPEC imposed a crude oil price rise from \$US3 to \$US5 on October 16, and next day several Arab countries announced progressive production cuts which would continue until Israel withdrew from the Occupied Territories. An armistice was agreed on October 24, but, disillusioned with the United States and Israel, OPEC announced a major price increase to \$US11.65 per barrel from January 1, 1974. Three years of world economic and political instability followed. In 1977 the United States guaranteed Israel \$US3 billion in annual aid to persuade it to sign its first peace accord with an Arab state: Egypt. Chart 5, 'The Yom Kippur War, OAPEC Embargo, US Aid to Israel,' illustrates the situation.

⁴⁷² Luca Einaudi, "The Generous Utopia of Yesterday Can Become the Practical Achievement of Tomorrow": 1000 Years of Monetary Union in Europe. , *National Institute Economic Review*. (2000).

⁴⁷³ From the writer's personal conversations with oil industry executives in Baghdad, January 1976.

10. Reinvigorated Ummah: new status for Islam ...

As a direct consequence of the chaos of the Yom Kippur War the Muslim world community gathered strength and Islam gained recognition and status which Israel, the US and the Christian churches neither anticipated nor welcomed.

Between 1970 and 1980, direct development assistance to disadvantaged countries from OPEC members increased 23 fold from \$US0.4 billion to \$US9.1 billion, while OECD aid increased only three fold, from \$US6.9 billion to \$US 27.3 billion⁴⁷⁴. Direct aid from Muslim OPEC members was for hospital, school, university, and mosque construction, welfare services, and general budget support to offset the burden of high oil prices. The status of Islam rose strongly.

However the euphoria was short lived. Prior to 1973 only three oil producers had financial institutions to manage such funds. Although nine new funds were established between 1974 and 1976⁴⁷⁵, the bulk of funds were still placed with United States and European institutions. Investment capacity and control stayed with those institutions which placed the bulk of investments in the West, not in the developing world. After a dip during the peak of the crisis the disparity between the WWCB and the developing countries widened.

OPEC's success in forcing the restructuring of one major resource sector encouraged developing countries to establish a number of additional resource producer groups⁴⁷⁶, and this development, linked with proposals for a NIEO by the Group of 77 had the potential to redress the historic exploitation of the Non-Western World. However, few countries of the WWCB gave it significant support, and it was opposed by corporations and institutions of the WWCB which controlled those product groups.

11. ...but no pause in the crisis

Events in the Middle East moved at great speed, in relative historical terms. An Islamic Revolution against the Shah of Iran, the titular head of Shia Islam, partially paralysed the

⁴⁷⁴ Hunter, *OPEC and the Third World*: 178.

⁴⁷⁵ Ian Seymour, *OPEC: Instrument of Change*, First ed. (London: Macmillan, 1980), 236-39.

⁴⁷⁶ Fry, *Triangle Bk. 2*, 2: 1993-2001. Commodity groups covered bauxite, iron, copper, lead/zinc, tin, phosphate, peanuts, rubber, cocoa, coffee, cotton, olive oil, sugar, wheat, bananas and wool. See Appendix B, pp. 1993-2001 for details of member countries, their religious, political and regional affiliations.

country from August to December 1978. The Shah fled in mid-January 1979 leaving senior Shia Muslim clerics whose paramount leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, had been forced into exile for years, in control. The trigger for revolution was resentment at Western secularization of Iran under the influence of the Shah's alliance with the United States, his agreement to supply Israel with its petroleum requirements via the Strait of Tiran and Eilat, and the divisive influence which that was having in the Middle East. Khomeini returned to Iran at the end of January and within a few months he was Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On March 26, 1979, an Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty was signed as an outcome of the Camp David conference. Israel withdrew its troops and settlers from the Sinai in exchange for normal relations with Egypt and the promise of a lasting peace – underwritten by massive ongoing aid and arms package from the US for both countries: a bought peace along the lines that Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had anticipated. The unprecedented four billion dollar military aid package for Israel (see chart six) was to ensure Israel's self-defence in the event that other Arab nations refused to follow Egypt's lead. They did not. Egypt was expelled from the Arab League, which re-located its headquarters to Tunis, and Egypt was suspended from the Organization of the Islamic Conference for five years.

Crisis followed crisis. Instability in both Iran and Afghanistan led to two hostage crises, US efforts to secure intelligence listening bases in Afghanistan to replace those it lost in Iran, and Soviet efforts to prevent it by the collaborative occupation of Afghanistan. The US stepped up efforts to prevent it, supported local opposition to the Soviet presence by funding groups including the Taliban. The next year, Iraq took advantage of Iran's distractions to invade to seize the Shatt l-Arab waterway which served both countries oil exports. An eight-year war followed, and the US took advantage of Iran's troubles to gain influence through illegal arms deals: the Iran-Contra Affair.

While the Iran-Iraq War dragged on the level of conflict between the PLO and Israel rose and fell; King Hussein expelled the PLO to Lebanon in a remove any reason for Israeli attacks; this transferred the burden of attacks to Lebanon; resulted in Israel's blistering war called 'Peace in Galilee'; led to the expulsion of the PLO again, to Tunis, and Israeli attacks on that city; until, in 1985 Hussein allowed the PLO to return to Amman. Then in August 1986, frustrated by its reluctance to recognize Israel, he ordered the PLO offices

closed and took direct responsibility for Palestinian welfare under a five year plan. It lasted less than two years. Israeli oppression pushed the Palestinians to breaking point.

The First Intifada erupted with spontaneous civil uprising against Israeli civil and military authority on December 8, 1987, and refusal to pay any Israeli taxes. The PLO, Israeli authorities and Hussein were all caught by surprise. Initially the PLO leadership could only indirectly influence the events, and a new local leadership emerged: the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU) and Hamas, established by a paraplegic teacher, preacher and Gazan Muslim Brotherhood leader in 1985, grew rapidly.

12. Critical intervention to resolve the crisis

On July 30, 1988, King Hussein intervened decisively “to liberate Palestinians from Israeli aggression and the land and sanctities from Israeli occupation.” He dissolved the Jordanian parliament, which included representatives from both banks of the Jordan, and ceded the West Bank to the PLO to facilitate the establishment of an independent state of Palestine “on the occupied Palestinian territory after its liberation, God willing.” ⁴⁷⁷

With control of the West Bank formally ceded it to, the PLO had territory and the justification for a state to be established under the generally recognized Palestine Charter. Arafat visited Europe seeking support for a two-state solution. Israel did not respond, so on November 15, 1988, after meetings with King Hussein and Egyptian President Mubarak, the PLO National Council voted to declare the establishment of “a Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital” and followed with a vote overwhelmingly accepting UN Resolutions 242 and 338. When Israel objected, aiming to incorporate – annexe – that territory in due course, the attempt to proclaim a state of Palestine was blocked.

However one person heard the appeal: Saddam Hussein. With Iraq’s war with Iran resolved he again focused his attention on Palestine. His assessment was that the prospect of a successful invasion might persuade Israel to accept the establishment of a state of Palestine, but he found reluctance from Iraq’s fellow Arab states to cooperate because of the peace agreements engineered by the US and their dependence on their oil trade. He did not need troops. All he needed was for them to close their pipelines. When Saudi Arabia refused to cooperate, Saddam Hussein was vitriolic, saying its neglect of the Palestinians

⁴⁷⁷ bin Talal Hussein, "Address to the Nation: Palestine," (Amman: Government of Jordan, 1988).

under Zionist oppression made it illegitimate and an unworthy guardian of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. He especially wanted the cooperation of Kuwait because it offered a logical twin approach route to Israel and control of the major Gulf petroleum export points and Mediterranean pipelines. Kuwait did not then want to be involved, even though it was a founder member of OAPEC, hosted its conferences and had taken part in the Yom Kippur War. On August 2, 1990, to be in a position from which Iraq could control the petroleum ports and lead a push against Israel, Saddam Hussein ordered the occupation of Kuwait.⁴⁷⁸

13. A challenge to Israel through the US is not permitted

The politicking became more intense than ever. The US could not allow an invasion of Israel. Nor could it allow a significant proportion of its oil supplies to be cut off. Great pressure was applied to Saudi Arabia and members of the Arab League which was deeply divided over the issue.⁴⁷⁹ No Security Council members wanted a major war in the Middle East, but neither did they want to put pressure on Israel to agree to the Palestinian request. It was not difficult for the US to get a Council resolution declaring Iraq's annexation of Kuwait illegal. A blockade followed, and the invasion was not far behind. With the Soviet Union in a state of economic and political collapse the US knew that, as an ally of Iraq, it could not act.

Saddam Hussein offered to withdraw if Israel also withdrew from the West Bank and Syria withdrew from Lebanon. Neither the US or Israel were interested. Desert Storm was launched on January 16, 1991, but not as an exercise to relieve Kuwait. It was an operation to pursue and destroy the Iraqi army. No one was allowed to challenge Israel: the Americans were under an obligation to it. Iraq was officially liberated on February 28, 1991.⁴⁸⁰ From that point, the US did everything it could to inhibit the recovery of Iraq. Against all UN and humanitarian advice it insisted on vindictive sanctions that prevented Iraq from selling oil for six years, until the 'oil for food' program was permitted; it restricted sale of medicines and antibiotics for spurious reasons. Confronted by UN

478 The writer's personal telephone conversation with a senior officer of the World Muslim League in Saudi Arabia on February 22, two days before the launch of Operation Desert Storm.

479 Tessler, *Israel-Palestine Conflict*. P. 737.

480 The US calculated the cost of its war as \$61.1 billion; Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States reimbursed it for \$36 billion; \$16 billion was contributed by Germany and Japan, leaving the US paying only about \$7 billion. Source: Fred Horan / fh10@cornell.edu , http://people.psych.cornell.edu/~fhoran/gulf/GW_cost/GW_payments.html Accessed September 2008.

agencies with figures for child mortality rates as a direct result of the sanctions its response was "It's Saddam Hussein's fault".⁴⁸¹

On September 5th, 1991, the Soviet union was officially dissolved, and people around the world hoped that the end of the Cold War meant a move into fresh air, and an end to power politics, and territorial conflicts, but the conduct of the United States indicates that the politics of competitive cold war have given way to the politics of hegemony, and that dominant leadership in Israel is dependent on it to maintain its claims to all of Canaan under covenant.

By February 1993 the PLO leader, Arafat, and Israel's Prime Minister Rabin, were both very frustrated. They sought a means of negotiating peace outside the existing US-sponsored programs which were aimed at agreements between Israel, Jordan, the Palestinians and Syria, but without success, and secret concurrent negotiations were hosted by Norway. The 'Oslo Accord' was disclosed on September 13 in Washington at a summit hosted by President Clinton, and detailed negotiations for Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Palestinian autonomy began immediately. The international response was immediate and dramatic with guarantees of funds from Europe, the US and the World Bank, and at the next session of the UN no Arab member challenged Israel's membership.

However Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Hamas both pledged to undermine it. The settlers insisted on integration with Israel with no Palestinian state or autonomy. Hamas rejected it on the grounds that it was one-sided and refused to recognize 'the Zionist Entity.' A like-minded group, Hezbollah, maintained pressure on Israel with periodic bombardment of Israel's northern frontier from southern Lebanon. Six months later, March 1994, Benjamin Netanyahu became leader of Likud on a platform of opposition to the accord, and in April 1996, Israel mounted "Operation Grapes of Wrath" to halt Hezbollah's activities.

14. A plan for US hegemony

During the US Presidential election campaign in 2000, the Project for the New American Century published a report targeting the presidential candidates, their party officials and

481 Rahul Mahajan, "Full Spectrum Dominance: US Power in Iraq and Beyond - Iraq after the Gulf War Sanctions," Seven Stories Press - The Future of Freedom Foundation.

the voting public to influence the new administration's foreign and defence policies.⁴⁸² It offered a blue print of military, political and economic strategies for the US to build on its hegemonic status and gain indisputable control of the resources of the Middle East. It discussed likely regions of conflict, advised on the nature of US military build-up, and promoted the idea that Saddam Hussein's government was a problem for the US and its allies. It then noted that "At present the United States faces no global rival. America's grand strategy should aim to preserve and extend this advantageous position as far into the future as possible."⁴⁸³ To do this it recommended repositioning US forces to Southeast Europe and Southeast Asia; developing US Space Forces to control both outer and cyber space; rejecting the nuclear test ban treaty and returning to nuclear weapon development⁴⁸⁴; not reducing the air presence in the Iraq region "as long as Saddam Hussein remains in power"; and retaining a "semi-permanent" base in Saudi Arabia as "an essential element", even after Saddam Hussein, and it noted that "Iran may well prove as large a threat to US interests in the Gulf as Iraq has."⁴⁸⁵

The Council on Foreign Relations tabled its Report on 'Strategic Energy Policy Challenges for the 21st cent.' to be available to President Bush prior to him taking office in January 2001. Its priorities relating to Israel and the Middle East crisis were similar.⁴⁸⁶ It appears that President Bush took careful note of these reports because former US Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill subsequently provided documents to a Senate Enquiry showing that ten days after taking office in January, 2001, he instructed his aides to look for a way to overthrow the Iraqi regime. A secret memo entitled "Plan for post-Saddam Iraq" was discussed in January and February 2001, and a Pentagon document dated March 5, 2001, and entitled "Foreign Suitors for Iraqi Oilfield contracts", included a map of potential areas for petroleum exploration.⁴⁸⁷

482 Thomas Donnelly, "Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century," (Washington: Project for the New American Century, 2000). p. 8.

483 Ibid. p. ii. The "Grand Strategy" referred to was economic and political manipulation to isolate and undermine the Soviet Union, including conditional trading with Third World countries during the post-oil embargo years of effort to introduce a NIEO, and provoking and financing anti-Soviet uprisings in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia during 1987-90.

484 Ibid. p. 7.

485 Ibid. p. 17.

486 Edward L. Morse and Amy Myers Jaffe, "Strategic Energy Policy Challenges for the 21st Century," (New York: Council on Foreign Policy, 2001). p. 9.

487 Michael C. Ruppert, "A Timeline surrounding September 11.," *From the Wilderness: E-Newsletter*, July 13, 2002.

A plan to build a barrier to enclose the Palestinian West Bank had been mooted in 1992 by Prime Minister Rabin, and the first section was built in 1994. Seven years later and about nine months into the Intifada, in June 2001, political pressure in Israel for the completion of the barrier increased following a suicide bomb attack on a discotheque in Tel Aviv.

15. Bin Laden, US-Israeli politics and organized religious influence

At the same time, June 17, a number of streams of intelligence reached both Israel and the US CIA indicating that a Middle Eastern group was “planning to hijack commercial aircraft to use as weapons to attack important symbols of American and Israeli culture,” and on July 18 FBI agents in Arizona prepared a memorandum that a suspicious group of “Middle Eastern men” were taking flying lessons in Phoenix. At that time negotiations involving US diplomats, other officials and a US services company were in progress with the Taliban governing Afghanistan concerning planned gas pipelines, financial assistance for the Taliban – and the handing over of Osama Bin Laden – and on September 9, 2001, a detailed war plan to overthrow Al-Qaeda was handed to President Bush.⁴⁸⁸ The attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre and other facilities occurred two days later.

There is much evidence in published papers that indicates that the structure of the multi-party preferential voting system in Israel was basic to the Government’s inability, or unwillingness, to negotiate when King Hussein provided the basis and the opportunity for an effective two-state solution. According to Harris and Doron,⁴⁸⁹ that constitutional structure has ensured that a minority who insist on a policy of ‘no two-state solution’ has been able to determine governments – and therefore policy on this matter – without serious challenge. This also indicates why Israel’s dominant leadership has become progressively more confident that, in line with its founders’ intentions, it can progressively occupy the whole West Bank, make any alternative two-state proposal unachievable, and recover full and sole use of the Temple Mount. Mearsheimer and Walt consider this matter at some

488 Ibid. Ruppert cites specifically *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 14, 2001, concerning German BND intelligence warning to “the CIA and Israel”; the *New York Times*, May 14, 2002, concerning negotiations; the *Los Angeles Times*, May 22, 2001, concerning financial aid, and MSNBC, May 16 2002, courtesy of Professor Peter Dale Scott, concerning the war plan.

489 Michael Harris and Gideon Doron, "Assessing the Electoral Reform of 1992 and Its Impact on the Elections of 1996 and 1999.," *Israel Studies*. 4, no. 2 (1999).

See also Don Peretz, Rebecca Kook, and Gideon Doron, "Knesset Election 2003: Why Likud Regained Its Political Domination and Labor Continued to Fade out.," *The Middle East Journal* 57, no. 4 (2003).

length, with extracts from writings or speeches by Ben Gurion, Benny Morris, Moshe Dayan and others.⁴⁹⁰

This was illustrated by an action taken by Ariel Sharon, Opposition Leader at that time, on September 28, 2000, while talks on the exact areas to be transferred to Palestinian control, access from zone to zone, the right of return, compensation for refugees and the final status of Jerusalem were stalled. In a very provocative manner he broke a 1967 rabbinical law that prohibited Jews from entering any part of the Temple Mount.⁴⁹¹ Accompanied by a guard of about 60 police, he entered the Temple Mount and, by doing so, indicated to the world that he intended to resume full and exclusive control and use of the Mount. By that provocative action Sharon triggered the Second Intifada, and raised the crisis to new heights. Riots and violence swept the country, numerous popular resistance committees were set up, and fund raising for resistance greatly increased.

Three weeks later, on October 21, an extraordinary Summit conference of the Arab League in Cairo backed the hard line adopted by the Palestinians and commended the leaders of the Intifada. A US Commission was set up to investigate and make recommendations; President Clinton called the Israelis and Palestinians together again in December, but the conflict continued to worsen. Assassinations were common place and suicide bombers began to appear.⁴⁹²

Friends of the Palestinians and opponents of Zionism sought new ways of attacking the State of Israel either directly or indirectly through its principal backer: the United States. Among them was Osama Bin Laden, a devout reformist Wahhabi Saudi Arabian who had joined the Maktab al-Khidamat to help expel the Russian army from Afghanistan when the US was working to secure both surveillance bases and future access to resources.

490 John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, First ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007). See also ———, "SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT: A Response to Critics of "The Israel Lobby", (Harvard University, 2006).

491 The Crusaders banned Jews and Muslims from the Second Temple upon conquering Jerusalem in 1099. All access rights were restored upon its reconquest by the Muslims in 1187 and it was placed under the direction of the Waqf. Access to Jews was banned by Jordan as a step of retaliation for the partition of Palestine in 1948. Upon capturing it during the 1967 Six Day War Israel left it under the control of the Waqf and the Rabbinical Council ruled that Jews should still not visit it in order to avoid walking on the Holy of Holies, the actual position of which could not be determined – or perhaps to reduce the risk of conflict. That ruling was confirmed in 2005.

492 The first Hamas suicide bombing had occurred eight years earlier, April 16, 1993, in the West Bank, but it was an exceptional occurrence.

After 1984 he chose a different more militant role and established Al-Qaeda to fight in the interests of Islam and social reform.

When Iraq occupied Kuwait on August 2, 1990, in his bid to raise an Arab coalition to force the issue of Palestine with Israel, Bin Laden urged King Fahd and the defence minister not to allow non-Muslim troops onto Saudi territory. He told them that the Americans were no friends of Islam, and that the crisis should be handled within the Muslim world community. When he was rebuffed he turned his attention to the US and its relationship with Israel, and was responsible for a series of attacks on US embassies and other facilities in Africa. It was widely known that those attacks were directly related to US support for Israel's Palestine policy, but that was suppressed in Western media which placed heavy emphasis on Bin Laden's supposed jealousy of US wealth and civil freedom.

Thus, when Al-Qaeda launched its aerial suicide attacks in the US on September 11, 2001, media manipulation remained the same, with virtually no reporting of the Israel policy connection.⁴⁹³ This introduced a new dimension to the crisis in the Middle East, and every linked crisis. Osama bin Laden, and Al-Qaeda, soon became household names. The US Administration's response had the hallmarks of concealment of intelligence information⁴⁹⁴ as in the case of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour sixty years earlier.

In panic reactions to the new understanding of security risks and the economic impact of the attack, the US established a new Department of Homeland Security; introduced discriminatory immigration and travel regulations; allocated funds to avoid the collapse of its airline industries; made special defence allocations and became more isolationist. Muslims had long been regarded as an undesirable minority, but now, in the USA and most

493 My personal experience confirms this. When I submitted an opinion piece to a newspaper in Australia setting out the circumstances and my assessment of the implications, the editor concerned phoned me and told me he liked it, but he would not be publishing it. When I asked why, he replied that it was against management policy to run anything of that nature.

494 Ruppert, "Timeline." Ruppert cites specifically *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 14, 2001, concerning German BND intelligence warning to "the CIA and Israel"; the *New York Times*, May 14, 2002, concerning negotiations; the *Los Angeles Times*, May 22, 2001, concerning financial aid, and MSNBC, May 16 2002, courtesy of Professor Peter Dale Scott, concerning the war plan. The toll included 560 Palestinians killed and 150 Israelis killed in 124 incidents to the end of September. For the year October 2001 to September 2002: 223 incidents with 1,050 Palestinians killed and 433 Israelis killed. Then during the following twelve months, October 2002 to September 2003, the frequency fell towards the level of the first twelve months, with 131 incidents, 631 Palestinians killed and 230 Israelis killed.

Western Countries, Islam and Muslims personally were denigrated and abused.⁴⁹⁵ The Christian Zionist movement and many so-called “right wing Christians” became vitriolic in their attacks, but this immediately stimulated a greater awareness of the need for religious tolerance in mainstream churches and within academia, and dialogue and community support programs were developed very quickly.

In Palestine the reaction was rather different. The frequency and trauma on incidents during the twelve months after September 11, 2001 was almost double the frequency during the previous twelve months, even though the Second Intifada was in full swing. From the triggering of the Intifada on September 28 to the end of September 2001 there were more than a hundred incidents involving the deaths of hundreds of Palestinians and Israelis.⁴⁹⁶

The US Administration was under pressure to retaliate against the 9/11 attacks, but it could not identify a static target. Great pressure was applied to countries in the Middle East and Africa to locate Bin Laden and to extradite him to the US. The administration went into damage control on the question of religion and avoided any reference to Israel, except to reinforce its close friendship with the Jewish State and its role as a protector. It repeated ad nauseam the idea expressed in the by the Secretary of Defense (February 6, 2006) that:

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, our nation has fought s global war against violent extremists who use terrorism as their weapon of choice, and who seek to destroy our free way of life. Our enemies seek weapons of mass destruction and, if they are successful, will likely attempt to use them in their conflict with free people everywhere.⁴⁹⁷

Then, having made the decision to invade Iraq and to recruit a “Coalition of the Willing” President Bush and his administration sought to justify it on various grounds. The first was the claim that Saddam Hussein had a connection with Al-Qaeda. The came Hussein’s abuse of human rights, his possession of weapons of mass destruction, the financing of families of Palestinian suicide families, the benefits of introducing ‘democracy’ to Iraq,

495 For example, threats were made against the family of the Chairman of the Islamic Council of Victoria, in suburban Melbourne, and their car was vandalized. (Source: personal conversations.)

496 Ruppert, "Timeline." Source: Mideast Web 2010, Time Line of Second (Al-Aqsa) Intifada www.mideastwb.org/second-intifada-timeline accessed 2010-03-03 ‘Incidents’ includes a small number of diplomatic initiatives to arrange a cease fire, but they are included to give an indication of total war-related activity. Whether the fall in the incident rate in 2002-3 reflects greater success in diplomatic intervention to separating the belligerents, or the distraction of the invasion of Iraq is difficult to assess.

497 "Quadrennial Defense Review Report," (Washington: U.S. Department of Defense, 2006).

and a passing reference to his misuse of his oil resources. However it was not until a later stage that the notion of “regime change” which Bush had initially referred to ten days after taking office as ‘the overthrow of the Iraqi regime,’ became his justification for an invasion. There was never a mention of Israel or Zionism even though Bush was under intense pressure from Israel to invade. It is apparent that if he mentioned it, he would have lost a great deal of international support and generated highly divisive debate within his domestic constituency.

The pressure that he was under was confirmed to me in a personal conversation at a conference in Switzerland⁴⁹⁸ on Thursday, November 28, 2002, by an Israeli university professor who had personal experience of earlier peace negotiations. He and I disagreed about the legitimacy of the invasion which was being promoted with massive propaganda as inevitable because Saddam Hussein was a danger to the world, and I said, and repeated, “Surely saner advice will prevail in the White House.” He became rather terse, and agitated, and insisted that America must invade because Saddam Hussein was the only Arab leader who had not reached a peace accord with Israel and who insisted on a military solution to the Palestinian question. He said that if America did not invade Israel would. When I expressed concern at such influence he was adamant that Israel had ways and means of insisting that the White House did not waiver from its decision.

At that time, in spite of a ruling by the International Court of Justice that Israel’s West Bank barrier was contrary to international law, and against strong international objections, construction of the encircling wall went ahead with great urgency to ghettoize the West Bank in a practice that was very familiar indeed to the Jewish community. The foreshadowed invasion of Iraq began on March 20, 2003, and President Bush claimed ‘mission accomplished’ on May 1, although resistance continued, the country was in chaos, and world opinion was deeply divided over the legitimacy of the war.

In due course attention was drawn back to the core problem of Israel and Palestine. Professor Alexis Keller, with the help of progressive politicians from both sides, had privately initiated the preparation of a comprehensive Permanent Status Agreement in 2002, and it was launched on December 1, 2003 at a ceremony in Geneva. However,

⁴⁹⁸ The writer’s personal conversations during the Second International Conference on Modern Religious Movements in Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the Babi and Baha’i Faiths, Landegg International University, November 2002.

because it had no official status and had been prepared without their knowledge, leaders of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, radical religious parties and members of the government who had opposed the Oslo Accord firmly rejected the Geneva Initiative. Undeterred, the Geneva team continued research and consultation towards a comprehensive treaty proposal.

16. Triple focus: the ME, economic interdependence, WWCB instability

The US economy, already in recession prior to 9/11⁴⁹⁹ had been boosted by a series of stimulus measures to offset possible flow-on effects to international trade and investment as a result of the first successful foreign attack since Pearl Harbour. However the situation continued to deteriorate and in July 2007 the reality became apparent with the collapse of the investment bank, Bear Sterns. An international economic crisis developed rapidly. Countries of the WWCB, all with highly developed and tightly structured economies took measures to stimulate consumption to boost production and maintain employment. Most developing countries could not. They were expected to be more severely affected as food supplies dwindled, foreign reserves again fell in value, and aid funds were cut back, even for the World Food Program for natural disaster relief. They became more dependent on the IMF, the World Bank and concessional trade that could be negotiated with the aid of the WTO. That was all difficult, but they proved more resilient than the WWCB block whose members found themselves surprisingly dependent for their stability on trade with the major countries of the developing world, both in imports and exports, and assurances that they would not undermine the West by heavy withdrawals of bond funds, other securities, or market and exchange rate manipulation.

The World Bank admitted that developing countries had rescued the global economy, picking up the slack of the advanced economies which were more severely affected by the financial crisis. Its President, Robert Zoellick, stated that “The developing world is becoming the driver of the global economy, (and) led by emerging markets, developing countries now account for half of global growth and are leading the recovery in world

499 Olivia A. Jackson, "The Impact of the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks on the US Economy," *Journal of 9/11 Studies* 2008(2008). According to the National Bureau of Economic Research's Business Cycle Dating Committee, the 2001 recession began in March and ended in November. Accessed October 31, 2010

trade.” He also acknowledged that as economic power has shifted, a multi-polar world economy was emerging.⁵⁰⁰

The relationship of dependence has changed so much that the United States has found it necessary to apply pressure on China and India to adjust their exchange rates on the dubious basis that it is in their interests to maintain consumption in the United States in order to maintain their own export markets and income. In response, Chinese leaders advised the US that its primary interest is to secure its own economy and not that of the US, and the International Monetary Fund and leaders at the G20 Summit meeting (October 2010) supported calls for restraint.⁵⁰¹

What the Group of 77 was not able to achieve in the wake of the oil embargo and the financial crisis linked to the Yom Kippur War – structural change in the international economic order - has suddenly become achievable, at least in part. Sufficient WWCB countries resisted change that, according to the Bretton Woods Project, the final outcome document from the 2009 summit was stripped of many concrete proposals.⁵⁰² However, first, the G20, which incorporates the countries of the G8, middle economies and developing economies, has been recognized as the principal international finance policy and decision making body in place of the G8. Second, the structure of the IMF has been changed to include additional developing countries as shareholders, and to include all of the BRIC group (Brazil, China, India and Russia) in the top ten shareholders, with Canada and Saudi Arabia relinquishing seats. In addition the resources available for loan distribution will be doubled, and the board will consider a proposal which requires constitutional change, that the Executive Board be elected.⁵⁰³

The economic upheaval and the consequential changes in relationships between the WWCB and the rest of the world are essentially the result of the WWCB’s greed; the

500. Anup Shah, "Global Financial Crisis," Globalissues.org, <http://www.globalissues.org/article/768/global-financial-crisis>.

501 Christian Fleming, "China Says RMB Exchange Rate Not Up for Discussion at Upcoming G-20 Summit," *Asia Business Newsletter*, June 23, 2010.

502 Bretton Woods Project, "G20 "trillion dollar magic trick" " (Bretton Woods Project, 2009, April 3.). Although the allocation of Special Drawing Rights effectively means new money is printed (rather than being member-subscribed) it is expected that of the \$500 billion in new resources and \$250 billion in the issuance of SDRs, referred to here, only \$100 billion will go to “emerging market and developing countries,” while the majority will go to wealthy countries. It is also expected that of the putative \$1.1 trillion, \$50 billion, or less than five percent, is likely to be for the 49 poorest countries in the world.

503 IMF, "G20 Agreement on Quotas and Governance," (Washington: International Monetary Fund, October 23, 2010).

manipulative financial innovations which they had introduced, or accepted, to extract the maximum profit possible by encouraging excessive, wasteful consumption; unethical financial practices; risky, ill-considered management decisions; and practices which were not only immoral and contrary to the general interest, but also contrary to criminal law.⁵⁰⁴

However there is an additional factor in the parlous state of the US economy: the drag of its military and related expenditure. As a percentage of the federal budget, US defence budget has risen each year since 1999, and for successive years 2009, 2010 and 2011 it is the largest item.⁵⁰⁵ The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute estimates that US military spending for 2009 was 43 percent of world expenditure, and that it rose to 47 percent in 2010.⁵⁰⁶ The next 15 countries account for 38.8 percent together, leaving 14.7 percent for all other countries. China is second ranked with 6.6 percent of the world budget, or one seventh of the United States, and Russia is fifth at 3.5 percent, or one fourteenth of the US.⁵⁰⁷ The base budget includes staffing and maintenance of at least 865 bases overseas, of which an estimated 180 are in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁵⁰⁸ It is inconceivable that this level of expenditure, with a high percentage of non-offset overseas expenses, does not have an adverse effect on domestic infrastructure and welfare services of the United States. The gross US federal budget for 2011 was 3,834 billion dollars. Military spending is therefore either 19.7 percent on the government's cost grouping, or 26.8 percent on the CRG's basis, and the budget for 2011 is 33 percent deficit funded.

This raises three matters. What proportion of current total defence expenditure the United States might require if it were not committed to a policy of hegemonic domination involving the protection of the State of Israel? Who ought share the responsibility for a disproportionate level of expenditure? For what purposes consistent with covenantal obligations could the funds saved by a policy change be reallocated? Whether or not the

504 Joseph Stiglitz, "Causes of the Global Financial crisis unveiled," (Perth, WA: Murdoch University, 2010).

505 US Office of Management and Budget. 2011 budget details in 'A New Era of Responsibility Renewing America's Promise', <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy10/pdf/fy10-newera.pdf> Accessed December 30, 2010.

506 Carl Conetta, "Military Expenditure: World, US and rest-of world 2000-2009," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/resultoutput/trendgraphs/worldus2010>.

507 Shah, Anup. "World Military Spending." Global Issues, Updated: 07 Jul. 2010. Accessed: 31 Oct. 2010. <<http://www.globalissues.org/article/75/world-military-spending>>

508 David Vine, "Too many overseas bases," Foreign Policy in Focus / Institute for Policy Studies. Ed. Greco, Emily Schwartz, 25 Feb. 2009.

people involved in either the domestic economic fiasco or the exaggerated defence environment would consider themselves religious and subject in any sense to a covenant, they are, on the basis of this thesis, in breach of the general covenant under which all humanity is bound.

That assessment must be considered in the light of the long established legal maxim, (based on Blackstone⁵⁰⁹ but of uncertain origin), *ignorantia juris non excusat*, or ignorance of the law does not excuse. Its application is now widely disputed, especially in the United States and Australia, and many legal scholars and practitioners, for example Kumar⁵¹⁰, contend that "it has operated harshly as a rigid legal rule instead of serving the law better by operating as a limitation to a general defence of ignorance or mistake of law," that it should apply generally only to civil cases, and for criminal cases it should be a guiding principle rather than a basis of law. However, the circumstance that ignorance may be accepted as a defence under contrived or evolved human law, is not a basis to propose it as a consideration in divine law, especially as each of the Abrahamic faiths recognize that divine judgement is exercised *with discretion* either by God⁵¹¹, or by Jesus⁵¹².

In this context, the nature of the obligations of the United States and Israel, and the manner of judgement and retribution under covenant which applies to them equally as to all other people, must be seen in the same sense as other breaches of covenant during the Fifth Epoch which have already been considered. Neither ignorance of divine covenant, nor non-recognition of covenantal relationships, obligations and judgement give a person or a community the right to anticipate exemption from them when compared with the exemplary experience of earlier generations of the human community – either when the Hebrew understanding of divine covenant was approaching maturity during the first epoch or when it was being confirmed during the second, third and fourth epochs. The sixth decade of the Fifth Epoch of the revelation, or evolution, of covenantal understanding has therefore closed with extreme examples of communal rejection of, or failure under, covenant which encompass all aspects of the comprehensive mature Hebrew understanding

509 William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, First ed., 4 vols., vol. 4 (New Haven: Yale University, Lillian Goldman Law Library, 2008).

510 Kumar, "The Ignorantia Maxim: ignorantia juris non excusat." (Canberra: ANU School of Law), <http://law.anu.edu.au/criminet/kumar.html>.

511 Num. 14:11-25; 28:12-14; Qur'an S.39, A.53-63.

512 Mt. 16:27; 25:31-34; 2Cor. 5:10; Athanasian Creed.

of the concept – and which is in complete accord with both Gospel and Qur’anic teaching as well.

The likelihood of an Israeli attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities must be regarded as very real in view of President Obama’s “warning” to Iran’s main trading partner, China, on December 16 2009, that the US would not be able to keep Israel from attacking the facilities for much longer. During the President’s visit, Chinese officials refused to reduce their dependence on Iran as China’s principal supplier or to accept cheaper Saudi-US sponsored supplies as an inducement to join trade sanctions against Iran.⁵¹³ Thus, six decades into the Fifth Epoch, successive Israeli Governments are demonstrating by their actions that they either agree with the theology of their settlers and their religious leaders that the entire area of Canaan is theirs by right under their interpretation of the divine Mosaic Covenant of Sinai which has not been abrogated, or it is prepared to use it to justify a clan-based colonial demand for territory.

The circumstances of the Fifth Epoch to date illustrate the validity of the mature Hebrew understanding of the concept of Covenant, and also that it is a period in which communal interaction is being shown to be a mechanism in the administration of divine judgement and punishment, or correction, in the event that a party either rejects an obligation or abuses the promise of privilege under covenant. The rapid deterioration in the international status of the United States, and a corresponding decline in the status of the WWCB overall, was not widely expected at the turn of the millennium. That is confirmed by the publication of the two reports noted above and the nature of the recommendations which their authors made.

The decline is the result of a number of factors related to abuse of covenant, the consequences of unbridled greed, and broken relationships which result from the exploitation of people who do not have the capacity to negotiate for a reasonable outcome. However, the changing relationships are enabling the people of the WMP to negotiate from a stronger position and to influence decisions on how the world’s economy and socio-political systems function. This means they can bring fresh ideas and new initiatives to the table. The development of a NIEO and revised systems of world governance now appear to be achievable.

513 Barak Ravid and Mozgovaya, "Obama told China: I can't stop Israel strike on Iran indefinitely," *Haaretz*, December 17, 2009.

At the same time, social reform is certainly on the agenda. One reason is that economic decline means less consumer purchasing power, more restrained advertising, more frugal living with less extravagance and less pressure to go beyond the norms of social conduct. Another is that people of the cultures who are offended by the licentious conduct of the WWCB are in a position to exercise influence either by negotiation, regulation or exemplary influence, and in particular the people of the Muslim Umma.

It is a matter of regret that the first signs of a push for such reform comes from violence against either the privileged who live by the benefits of exploitation, or communities which are seen as associated with, and therefore in some way responsible for the policies and practices which are in dispute. This means that in present circumstances there are increasing numbers of attacks against Christian communities who are not directly connected with the disputed policies. The first reaction from the mainstream Christian communities in the security of their homes far away is to go on the defensive, fight back, and aggravate the situation. Fortunately some authorities understand the causes and are pressing for reconciliation through economic and social reform, but their task is difficult indeed.

The signs are bright. The prospects for reform that brings balance into world affairs are improving by the day!

Chapter Eight

Covenant theology: current strands and views

1. Introduction

This chapter examines the way theologians have tried to explain covenant during the epoch to date in the wake of the Shoah, the establishment of the State of Israel, the pause in writing by Christian theologians, and in the light of the deepening crisis resulting from the establishment of Israel. The central fact of the Common Era had arrived, but few people were prepared to acknowledge it.

Some practical consequences of the interpretation of authority claimed by the church on the basis of covenant are also examined, and there is then a summary of views expressed by clergy and scholars in their responses to the thesis research questionnaire on the nature of covenant and the way it is applied, or could be applied, in current circumstances.

The responses received from members of the three communities complement the primary research methodology of the thesis and confirm the confusion among theologians which is apparent from published works.

2. The pause: the Mosaic Covenant question

Following the establishment of the State of Israel, theologians of each of the Abrahamic faiths had to contemplate a future in which a state based on a resurgent Judaism was a reality, and not a theoretical circumstance that could either be contemplated in an academic exercise, or ignored. It could not be ignored. It had to be acknowledged, and in being acknowledged, either its acceptance had to be justified or its rejection had to be validated.

In either case, theological, practical and pastoral grounds had to be consistent. New or revised theological and philosophical positions develop in the context of extant socio-political circumstances.⁵¹⁴ Several factors intimately related to the theology of covenant, but generally regarded as matters of sociology, intruded, had an immediate impact on

⁵¹⁴ Coincidentally the theological turmoil encouraged a significant number of scholars to question whether the existing methodologies and hermeneutics are appropriate to the new circumstances, but that affected all fields, and not only covenantal and interfaith studies.

community attitudes towards religion, and continue to have a debilitating effect on the churches and society.

One factor of major importance was publication of the Kinsey report on human sexuality⁵¹⁵ on May 1, 1948. Kinsey's research was prompted by students at Indiana University who were concerned about the effects on them of the promulgation of a series of social encyclicals, notably *Casti Connubii*, on New Year's Eve 1930/31. The report led to much additional research, changes in social attitudes, policies and legislation, and a crisis of confidence in and between the churches, but its implications are extensive and beyond the scope of this thesis.

In such difficult circumstances, Christian theologians who were active before the Second World War had continued their work during and after the war. After a perceptible break of about two decades, accentuated by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, they were joined by growing numbers of new comers who had been able to take their time. Churches were concerned that a comprehensive review of the origins of the church, its relations with Judaism, and the development of Christian theology might be required. After tedious and careful reconstruction and translation the first series of scrolls were published in 1955.

Within the WWCB, when new-epoch writings were published, the writers who supported the Israeli political position tended to place heavy emphasis on the right of the state to exist and to occupy Canaan on one or more of three bases: the status of Jews as the chosen people with the covenantal promise of the land of Canaan in perpetuity, guilt by association and the need to compensate for the Shoa, or ethnic nationalism. Those who opposed it, tended to do so on the basis of supersessionism and rejection of the notion of continuity of covenantal right, historicity of occupation, or reversed human rights abuse.

3. Catholic reflection prompts a comprehensive review

Unrest and a strong desire for reassessment of theology among some of its theologians had surfaced within the Catholic Church immediately after the war. The trigger issue was the inhibiting influence of policies that had been imposed by the Vatican to minimize the influence of modernity, but it was intertwined with the Mosaic Covenant question, Jewish

515 Alfred Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1948).

renaissance and a range of issues including the church's struggle with Communism in Europe and China, the South African government's use of the Gospel and its interpretation of the New Covenant to justify its Apartheid policy,⁵¹⁶ black unrest in the United States and the rise of the justice and peace movements in Latin America. The inhibiting policies all fell under the umbrella of Ultramontanism and involved the Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1903, the Oath Against the Errors of Modernism which had been obligatory for all clergy in teaching or pastoral positions world wide, since 1910, and the series of encyclicals promulgated during the 1930s, including the social encyclicals noted above.⁵¹⁷

A number of Catholic theologians became very aggressive in their efforts to encourage fresh thinking. Noteworthy among them were Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner, Edward Schillebeeks, and Hans Kung.⁵¹⁸ Those theologians became a spearhead for a serious program of reform within the church, and their influence is said to have encouraged Pope John XXIII to announce, on January 25, 1959, his intention to convene an Ecumenical Council (Vatican II) to review a wide range of issues in the life and teaching of the Catholic Church.⁵¹⁹ However the timing of his announcement, after only three months in his office, suggests that he was also reacting personally to the way in which major issues of pastoral and political concern, notably Christian-Jewish relations and the rise of Communism, had been managed during the pontificate of his predecessor, Pope Pius XII.

Pius XII is said to have been involved in the suppression of a draft encyclical, *Humani Generis Unitas*, which had been prepared during 1938 under the direction of Pope Pius XI for the purpose of refuting Hitler's racial policies and relieving pressure on the Jewish community.⁵²⁰ He had maintained anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist policies throughout the crises of Palestine partition and Israel's UN membership application, and his trenchant opposition to Communism had been a major factor in the Cold War.⁵²¹ Then he put China's

⁵¹⁶ Eric P. Louw, *The Rise, Fall and Legacy of Apartheid*. (Westport: Praeger, 2004) p. 37.

⁵¹⁷ The Oath was repealed in 1967 and replaced with less restrictive regulations.

⁵¹⁸ David F. Ford, ed. *The Modern Theologians: An introduction to Christian theology in the twentieth century*, Second ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997). Ford. Modern Theologians. From commentary on the individuals.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Passelecq and Suchecky, *Hidden Encyclical*.

⁵²¹ See Fry, *Triangle Bk. 2*, 2. pp. 1399-1405. for extensive discussion of US-Vatican interaction in Italian politics to offset the popular swing towards election of a Communist government in Italy.

Christians at risk with his encyclical '*Ad Apostolorum Principis*,' calling for Catholics to resist the control of the Beijing Communist government, even though it had come to power with overwhelming popular support as a result of the abuses of the former US-backed Christian right wing dictator Chiang Kai-shek.

In his opening address to Vatican II on October 11, 1962, John XXIII made it clear his call for a conference was a sudden inspiration and his aim was to break with traditional thinking and to enhance relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the world beyond.

Divine Providence is leading us to a new order of human relations which, by men's own efforts beyond their expectations, are directed towards fulfilling God's designs. Everything, even human differences, leads to the greater good of the Church but there has been

for more than nineteen hundred years a cloud of sorrows, trials and problems confronting the world which expects doctrinal penetration, consciousness and conformity to authentic doctrine⁵²²

Keys to that step forward were to include the early adoption of a Declaration of Religious Liberty, '*Dignitas Humanae*,' a revised Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*; and a document to address "the Jewish Question." *Lumen Gentium* was adopted on the last sitting day of the third session, November 1964, but the other two were only completed after personal intervention by Pope Paul VI (following the death of John XXIII), and extensive redrafting, in time for the Council's final session, and the document on the Jewish Question was merged into the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, '*Nostra Aetate*.'

Preparation of a paper on "the Jewish Question" was not intended to be, nor was it expected to be, a big issue. It was not added to the planning agenda for the Council until August or September, 1960, at the specific request of Pope John XXIII who gave Cardinal Bea a mandate to prepare an appropriate paper after he had met French Jewish historian Jules Isaac in a private audience. That paper, known as 'The Decree on the Jews,' was handed to the pope in November 1961. It said the salvation of Israel, God's chosen people, was prefigured in their deliverance from Egypt; that God had graciously made the Old Covenant with them; that the church was Israel's spiritual continuation and rejoices in them being "two in one body;" from them sprang Christ the Lord, Mary and the Apostles;

522 Pope John XXIII, "Second Vatican Council," (Vatican City: The Holy See, 1962). Condensed extract.

the church believes in the union of the Jews with “herself”, and protests strongly against all injuries done to Jews, past and present.

That was not what conservative Catholics wanted to hear. They wanted a statement that conformed to the church’s long-held teaching and self-understanding. That meant continued supersessionism; no acknowledgement of a continuing covenant or a role in humanity’s salvation; no admission of guilt for the Holocaust, and no recognition of a Jewish State. However there could be conciliatory words, support against discrimination and violence, a statement of non-confirmation of deicide and their rejection by God, and an invitation to acknowledge Christ and join the church. There would be four more drafts before *Nostra Aetate* was adopted, and it had to be related to the theology of each of the other key documents. In the end they got what they wanted: clear statements that “the Church is the new people of God,” and “the burden of the Church’s preaching is to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God’s all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows. Furthermore, the statement in the 1870 Dogmatic Constitution which indicated that the church’s authority was a consequence of succession from the Apostle Peter, was replaced in the new Constitution by statements of the church’s contemporary self-definition.

It said the Church had been foreshadowed in a remarkable way throughout the history of the people of Israel and by means of the Old Covenant; it was now constituted and made manifest by the outpouring of the Spirit as “that Jerusalem which is above;” it is the spotless spouse of the spotless Lamb whom Christ loved and “for whom he delivered Himself up that He might sanctify her “ whom He unites to himself by an unbreakable covenant, and whom, once purified, He willed to be cleansed and joined to Himself.⁵²³ Christ is the image of the invisible God and in Him all things came into being. He is before all creatures and in Him all things hold together. He is the head of the Body which is the Church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the first place. By the greatness of His power He rules the things in heaven and the things on earth, and with His all-surpassing perfection and way of acting He fills the whole body with the riches of His glory⁵²⁴

523 Pope Paul VI, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: *Lumen Gentium*," (Rome: Secretariat of the Second Vatican Council, 1964). from Ch.I, Par. 2, 6.

524 Ibid. Ch. I, Par.7.

(And God) chose the race of Israel as a people unto Himself. With it He set up a covenant. Step by step He taught and prepared this people, making known in its history both Himself and the decree of His will and making it holy unto Himself. All these things, however, were done by way of preparation and as a figure of that new and perfect covenant, which was to be ratified in Christ, and of that fuller revelation which was to be given through the Word of God Himself made flesh. "Behold the days shall come saith the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel, and with the house of Judah . . . I will give my law in their bowels, and I will write it in their heart, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people . . . For all of them shall know Me, from the least of them even to the greatest, saith the Lord. Christ instituted this new covenant, the new testament, that is to say, in His Blood calling together a people made up of Jew and gentile, making them one, not according to the flesh but in the Spirit. This was to be the new People of God."⁵²⁵

The Jews were to know that they had been superseded by the Church, and also that Christ had existed prior to creation, that it was through Him that Israel had come into existence, and that it was through Him that they were, and remained, displaced from salvation unless they, too, became united with him in His Body which is the Church. The third draft of *Nostra aetate* (not counting Cardinal Bea's excessively friendly Decree on the Jews which had been put aside) was accepted for consideration by the Council on November 20, 1964, the day before *Lumen Gentium* was promulgated. It was then further revised during the following eleven months before being resubmitted to the final session of the Council on October 28, 1965.

However, the church and its theologians had blundered into a "regular theological minefield."⁵²⁶ To start with, *Gaudium et Spes*, which was adopted on the final working day of the Council, (with the Declaration of Religious Liberty, '*Dignitatis Humana*'), said, in part:

the world today is aware of its unity and how one man depends on another but it is torn into opposing camps by political, social, economic, racial and ideological, which, through war would reduce everything to ashes while man searches for a better world. It devolves on humanity to establish a political, social and economic order which will serve man and help individuals as well as groups to affirm and develop the dignity proper to them."⁵²⁷

⁵²⁵ Ibid. Ch. II. Par.9.

⁵²⁶ Michael Barnes, *Theology and the Dialogue of Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). p. 36.

⁵²⁷ Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Vatican II, extracts from clauses 4 & 9.

In effect that statement repudiated two documents in one stroke: ‘*Divini Redemptoris*,’ an encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Atheistic Communism of March 19, 1937, and Pius’ encyclical ‘*Ad Apostolorum Principis*’ noted above. But although it was not as “Jew-friendly” as Bea’s original draft decree, ‘*Nostra Aetate*,’ was quite exciting. The following points encapsulate the thrust of the document. The complete text is provided as Appendix T.

- The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in [Non-Christian] religions, regards their conduct, precepts and teachings which reflect that Truth with reverence, encourages dialogue and collaboration with their followers ... (Clause 2, condensed)
- The Church regards with esteem the Moslems who adore the one God (and) since centuries of quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, it urges all to forget the past and work for mutual understanding ... (Clause 3, condensed)

The passages dealing with the Jews and their faith were even more exciting.

- The Church remembers the bond that spiritually ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham’s stock. It acknowledges that, according to God’s saving design, her faith and election arise from the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets; professes that all who believe in Christ are included in the same Patriarch’s call; and that the salvation of the Church is foreshadowed by the chosen people’s exodus from the land of bondage ...
- It believes that Jewish authorities and their followers pressed for the death of Christ but this cannot be charged against all the Jews alive then or now without distinction; the Church is the new People of God, but Jews should not be said to be rejected or accursed by God as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures; and that everyone should ensure that in catechetical work and preaching they teach only what conforms to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ. (Clause 5, condensed.)

Those clauses entailed an admission that Christians cannot have salvation without salvation for all, and therefore acknowledged that the benefit to be received – salvation – involved a corresponding obligation – to ensure salvation for the Jews – and that was an admission of monumental proportions. It involved two things. First, the repudiation of policies and conduct by the church over 1,700 years, and, in view of the church’s absolute rejection of the ministry of the Prophet Muhammad which had triggered the establishment of the triple partnership, the clause relating to Muslims involves an admission of *error*

rather than misunderstanding. Second, the linking of benefit and obligation in that manner brought into question the concepts of predestination, election, absolution and priestly intercession, and moved the church an important step closer to acknowledging the mature Hebrew understanding of covenant.

But the church could not bring itself to deal with those matters or to accept that the Covenant of Sinai was still, and always had been, firmly in place. Thus, being unable to recognize or to accept that fact; being unable to accept the validity of the Qur'anic prophecies (even though it had come to accept Muslims as persons and sincere believers); and being unwilling to acknowledge the mature Hebrew understanding of the integrated components of a covenant, it still could not acknowledge or comprehend the meaning and consequences of the evolution of the interlocked partnership of three faiths.

However its words indicate that *Nostra Aetate* probably exceeded in scope whatever Pius XI had hoped to achieve in the Hidden Encyclical, The Jews were not to be kept in subjection, and in the closing liturgy the Pope had a word for those who hold in their hands the destiny of men on this earth, to all those who hold temporal power - especially the great powers – on their need to consider the Will of God.

We proclaim publicly: We do honour to your authority and your sovereignty, we respect your office, we recognize your just laws, we esteem those who make them and those who apply them. But we have a sacrosanct word to speak to you and it is this: Only God is great. God alone is the beginning and the end. God alone is the source of your authority and the foundation of your laws.⁵²⁸

That was indeed a remarkable statement. There was no claim of superior or prior authority for the church. With that concluding statement Vatican II under John XXIII and then Paul VI had done more than sweep aside Pius XII's effort to maintain the absoluteness of the church's self-understanding. It had negated Gregory VII's *Dictatus Papae* upon which all of the church's subsequent claims, policies and subordination of monarchs had been based. It was indeed a remarkable statement. It had all the hallmarks of the foundation for a basement-upwards reformation. It was what the church had long feared from the resurgence of Judaism and the possibility of a theocratic Jewish state competing with the church and challenging its authority and theology. However, while no steps have

⁵²⁸ Pope Paul VI, Closing address and liturgy, Fourth Session of the Second Vatican Council, December 8, 1965. Source: New Advent Internet Service, <http://www.rc.net/rcchurch/vatican2/lumen.gen> Accessed November 26, 2009.

been taken to pursue such a reformation, a number of scholars promptly took advantage of the authority to enter dialogue programs, (Chapter Ten), and the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* stands as a milestone in rapprochement between Christians and Jews.

In the meantime, during the pause, while the Catholic Church faced that internal challenge, the challenge to the Reformed Churches was polarized: internal-external. Numerous groups wanted to revitalize the church, including the Pentecostal or Charismatic Movement whose members were dissatisfied with the approach of the mainstream Protestant churches. The Assemblies of God became the umbrella organization for many congregations, and the Protestant Churches were seriously embarrassed by the drift of members who were eager to join a push which, according to Walter Hollenweger,⁵²⁹ was to reconcile the different Christian denominations, to return to the church of the New Testament,⁵³⁰ and to overcome dogmatic barriers. Until recently the Assemblies of God rejected the World Council of Churches, saying that “setting itself up as an ‘ecumenical’ ecclesiasticism the council has refused to adopt as a basis of fellowship the absolute minimum of fundamental evangelical Christian doctrine necessary to such a body.”⁵³¹ The rationale for the movement’s existence, as stated by Hollenweger, reflects precisely that of George Fox when he challenged the Church of England in 1647. (Chapter six)

4. Whither covenant theology?

Scholars of mainstream churches were slow to consider the concept of covenant in the wake of the Shoa, the establishment of the State of Israel and *Nostra Aetate*, but those in the streams of New Covenant Theology, Christian Zionism and Dispensationalism did so with enthusiasm. They took as targets for critique, Calvin and Barth, the pre-eminent Reformation theologian between the two world wars. Karl Barth had previously placed such emphasis on the unbroken covenantal communication between Jews and God⁵³², that when he developed his dogmatic Trinitarian Christology⁵³³ he had difficulty in defining a

⁵²⁹ Walter Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, trans. R. A. Wilson, Third ed. (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1988). p. 505.

⁵³⁰ Ibid. p. 424.

⁵³¹ Ibid. p. 516, citing 'United Evangelical Action' 13.1.1955. The rejection is softening. The General Secretary of the WCC accepted an invitation to address its triennial conference in August 2010. WCC Document date: 25.08.2010, p. 8017

⁵³² Barth, *Romans*. Romans.

⁵³³ ———, *The Doctrine of the Word of God: Prolegomena to Church Dogmatics*, trans. G. T. Thomson, Revised, 1932 ed., vol. I, Pt. 1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936).

clear covenantal relationship between God-the-Father and Christians. He could not, therefore, think in terms of the mature Hebrew understanding of covenant applying to Christians, but neither could he countenance a priestly intermediary between a Christian and Christ or God-the-Father.⁵³⁴

Notwithstanding that conditionality, Barth “went forth announcing Christianity as the mystery of the ‘Word of God’, not as the projection or confirmation of man’s highest aspirations and ideals, but as the judgement of God upon them.”⁵³⁵ Michael Wyschogrod says Barth was aware of the centrality of Israel in God’s relation with man,⁵³⁶ but had remained “not only a critic but also a proponent of a kind of theological anti-Semitism,” saying that although Jesus Christ was “an Israelite out of Israel,” the Jews had rejected him and therefore have “only the transient life of a severed branch, and the sure and immediate prospect of withering away.” Thus, says Wyschogrod, “the solidarity between Christians and Jews that Barth so vigorously advocates is based upon the quiet assumption that Judaism does not exist.”⁵³⁷

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose life exemplified commitment, appears to have faced the same problem. He said Jesus had *vindicated* the *Law* of the Old Covenant and *affirmed* the Old Covenant per se, and that God vouches himself for this Old Covenant⁵³⁸ but neither in ‘The Cost of Discipleship’ nor in his lectures, ‘True Patriotism’, did he deal with a direct *covenantal* relationship between God and Christians. He placed Jesus as the mediator/intervenor, thus eliminating a direct relationship with God-the-Father while, at the same time, suggesting some uncertainty and qualifying his position.⁵³⁹ In ‘Act and Being’ he testifies to God’s sovereign freedom and that God has revealed Himself, and says that God freely *bound* Himself to man and is free for man. This reverses the mature

534 Timothy Stanley, "From Habermas to Barth and Back Again.," *Journal of Church and State*. 48, no. 1 (2006).

535 Nils Ehrenstrom, "Movements for International Friendship and Life and Work," in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement: 1517-1948*, ed. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1993). p. 569.

536 Michael Wyschogrod, ""Why was and is the theology of Karl Barth of interest to a Jewish theologian?,"" in *Footnotes to a Theology: The Karl Barth Colloquium of 1972. SR Supplements.*, ed. Martin Rumscheidt (New York: Oxford, 1972).

537 Peter Ochs, "Judaism and Christian Theology," in *The Modern Theologians*, ed. David Ford (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997). Citing Michael Wyschogrod.

538 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*. (New York: Macmillan, 1963).pp. 135,141.

539 Martin E. Marty et al., eds., *The Place of Bonhoeffer: Problems and Possibilities in His Thought*. (New York: Association Press, 1962).

Hebrew understanding of the relationship and in effect places an obligation on God to attend to man's requirements instead of announcing a promise to provide for humanity in an environment of love, with the restraining influence of the knowledge of the potential for judgement.⁵⁴⁰

In his introduction to 'The Modern Theologians' David Ford noted that post-war scholars had been "engaged in a recovery of Christianity in the face of unprecedentedly devastating sophisticated and widely disseminated dismissals of both Christianity and theology [and] there has been a hectic period of assimilation, reinterpretation, and controversy."⁵⁴¹ Then, indicating the diversity of approaches to theology, and especially inter-religious studies, he identified five basic types of theology: those that, first, repeat 'traditional' Christian theology; second, give priority to Christian community self-description while acknowledging that it needs continual rethought; third, introduce dialogue with modernity in a theology of correlation; fourth, integrate Christianity with modernity, philosophy and conceptuality; fifth, give complete priority to modern secular philosophy or worldview, and treat Christianity as only valid in as far as it fits that worldview. However Ford qualifies those types, saying he is "painfully aware" of having to omit theologies including "complex, lively and influential" Pentecostalism which, if space permitted, merited inclusion, and each major world religion would "ideally receive the individual treatment that only Judaism has in this volume."⁵⁴²

There is no mention in the entire work of the extensive publications of either the Christian Zionist, Dispensationalism or Covenantal Theology movements; not even an index listing of 'covenant,' and the only significant discussion of the concept is left to Peter Ochs⁵⁴³ in his chapter 'Judaism and Christian Theology.' Ochs was able to acknowledge several favourable developments in Christian understanding and teaching. A number of the 'radical' theologians, including Roy Eckardt, acknowledged that the Shoa was the culmination of 1900 years of Christian anti-Semitism and called for Christians to go beyond refashioning their relations with Jews and to make radical reforms to the basic tenets of their faith. Rosemary Ruether argued that anti-Judaism is inseparable from central

540 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being*, trans. Bernard Noble (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962). p. 90

541 Ford, *Modern Theologians*. P. 6.

542 Ford, *Modern Theologians*. p. ix.

543 Ochs, *Judaism and Christian Theology*. Ochs, a Jewish scholar, is founder of The Society of Scriptural Reasoning, and joint founder of the Children of Abraham Institute.

doctrines of the New Testament read in its plain sense. and that Christians can no longer afford to perpetuate such doctrines. However she also argued that Israel too – state and people – must apply prophetic judgement to itself as well as to others. George Lindbeck had helped to reduce misunderstanding and tension, and maintained a productive dialogue with Jewish philosophic theology by a new approach to scriptural reading and reflection.

Ochs noted Wyschorod's comment that Marquardt had made a great contribution through his understanding of Israel by displaying the continuities of major Christian theological categories with the Biblical history of Israel. He showed, for example, how incarnation is a Jewish notion displayed in God's indwelling in the people Israel. Marquardt argues, he said, that "by saying no to Jesus, Israel draws attention to the fact that the world is not yet redeemed and that there is a waiting in creation to which Israel witnesses."⁵⁴⁴ He also noted that Hans Kung maintains that Judaism is the indispensable content of Christian theology, that "without Judaism there would have been no Christianity," and that he had called for a "critical solidarity of Christians with the state of Israel," and clear diplomatic recognition of the state, but without uncritical identification with all of its policies.⁵⁴⁵

Comments during this period that relate directly to the question of covenant rather, than Christian-Jewish disputation generally, illustrate the sharply divergent understandings within the church. Gustavo Gutierrez wrote that:

When the infidelities of the Jewish people rendered the Old Covenant invalid, the Promise was incarnated both in the proclamation of a new Covenant, which was awaited and sustained by the 'remnant,' as well as in the promise which prepared and accompanied its advent.⁵⁴⁶

In contrast, according to Pawlikowski,

Eckardt sees Israel and the Church standing in dialectical tension to each other within the one covenant ... Israel's primary role remains to turn inward to the Jewish people, while Christianity is outer-directed towards the Gentiles. The corresponding temptations are that the Jews may allow their election to produce self-exaltation. The Church's reliance on grace as

⁵⁴⁴ Ochs, "Theology." p. 611.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid. citing John Pawlikowski, *Christ in the Light of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue* (New York 1982). pp. 47-48, and Hans Kung, *Judaism* (New York 1995). pp. 563-4

⁵⁴⁶ Ochs, *Judaism and Christian Theology*. citing Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY. 1973). Cited by Ochs, p. 616, from Otto Maduro (Ed.) 1991.

given, on the other hand, may lead to a false sense of freedom from all duties prescribed by the Torah.⁵⁴⁷

5. Dispensationalism, Christian Zionism and New Covenant Theology

Dispensationalism

Based on the teachings of John Nelson Darby (Chapter six) Dispensationalism became the basis of the Plymouth Brethren Movement, and, subsequently, the Exclusive Brethren; gained a strong following in the United States during the second half of the 19th cent.; and gained prominence with the publication of the Scofield Reference Bible by Oxford University Press from which it gained greater respectability in 1909.

The website of a key Dispensationalist college, Clarks Summit,⁵⁴⁸ sets out the basis of its faith. It says it teaches the pre-tribulational rapture and bodily resurrection of the Church at Christ's imminent coming; that believers will give account for their works at the Judgment Seat of Christ, which will follow the Rapture; there is a distinction between the nation of Israel and the Church, the Spirit- baptized Body of Christ; the Church is not the collection of all believers of all times; that God will fulfil the Biblical covenants made with the nation of Israel; and that although they are now dispersed among the nations, they will be re-gathered in the land of Israel and saved as a nation at the premillennial coming of Christ to the earth. At that time, they teach, Christ will begin his Davidic rule over the world for 1,000 years and continue to reign in the eternal state. The organized Dispensational faith community is relatively small but vigorously evangelical and according to Stephen Sizer⁵⁴⁹ its apparent presence is greater than its numbers because it is a springboard to Christian Zionism.

Christian Zionism

According to John Hubers⁵⁵⁰, Christian Zionism is also strongest, as a religious phenomenon, in the United States where it first came to notice at the time of Darby, drawing on his stream of theology, and becoming a fringe phenomenon, intimately

547 Ochs, *Judaism and Christian Theology*. citing Pawlikowski, *Christ in the Light of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue*. p. 15.

548 Summit Baptist Bible Church. http://www.summitbaptist.org/10249/content/content_id/89621/Core-Beliefs

549 Sizer, "Theology of the Land: A History of Dispensational Approaches."

550 John Hubers, "Christian Zionism: A Historical Analysis and Critique," CMEP (Churches for Middle East Peace), <http://images.rca.org/docs/synod/ChristianZionism.pdf>. Accessed November 4, 2010.

associated with Dispensationalism, because of the support of J.D. Rockefeller. A Christian Council on Palestine was established in 1942, but by mainstream theological heavyweights Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, Daniel Polling, and William Albright, who used it as a vehicle to promote Jewish immigration to Palestine on the basis of humanitarian concerns. However Hubers says they “betray[ed] a lack of similar humanitarian concern for Palestinian Arabs” when Niebuhr made a submission on behalf of that council to the Anglo American Committee of Inquiry, in 1946, which later become a standard Christian Zionist assertion:

The fact that the Arabs have a vast hinterland in the Middle East, and the fact that the Jews have nowhere else to go establishes the relative justice of their claims and of their cause . . . Arab sovereignty over a portion of the debated territory must undoubtedly be sacrificed for the sake of establishing a world Jewish homeland.⁵⁵¹

New Covenant Theology

In the words of Larry Pettegrew, New Covenant Theology is a branch of Reformed theology that proclaims that the entire Mosaic Covenant has passed away as a law code, and that Christians are supposed to live under the New Covenant. Its proponents reject the notion that the New Covenant is an updated Old Covenant and that parts of the Mosaic Covenant continue on into the New Covenant era and serve as a standard of ethics for New Testament Christians. It is described as fitting between Covenant Theology and Progressive Dispensationalism,⁵⁵² and is based on the work of a group of either Baptist or non-denominational scholars “who reacted against key tenets of Covenant Theology in rejecting such doctrines as the Covenant of Redemption, the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace.”⁵⁵³

The principal beliefs and theological structure of New Covenant Theology are summarized in the Providence Theological Seminary Student Doctrinal Statement. Posted on the seminary website, it advises that students are not required to hold to all of its doctrinal standards in order to enrol, but they are expected to be “cognizant of the doctrinal position held and taught by the PTS faculty,” and students, on entering, are required to agree with the following “ten doctrinal essentials.”

⁵⁵¹ Ibid. citing Sizer, “Theology of the Land: A History of Dispensational Approaches.”

⁵⁵² Pettegrew, “New Covenant.” p. 181.

⁵⁵³ Swanson, “New Covenant.”

The authority and inerrancy of Scripture; (2) the Trinity; (3) the full deity and humanity of Christ; (4) the spiritual depravity of fallen mankind; (5) the substitutionary atonement and bodily resurrection of Christ; (6) salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone; (7) the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit; (8) The church as the body of Christ; (9) the future, bodily and visible return of Christ; and (10) eternal condemnation for the unbeliever and eternal blessing for the believer.⁵⁵⁴

6. Fresh stimulus: a new look at covenant, and the end of the pause

David Noel Freedman⁵⁵⁵ is prominent among newcomers who were affected by the ‘perceptible break’ syndrome and the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁵⁵⁶ He progressively examined a number of key concepts, leading to the new understanding of the nature of covenants referred to briefly in chapters one and two. In 1960 he clarified the way in which God’s participation in human history was progressively understood by early Hebrew writers. In 1963, midway through Vatican II, he dealt with the new understanding of the textual character of the Hebrew Bible, and the way in which Judaism and Christianity are built on the twin foundations of Law and Prophecy, with Jesus Christ being the “chief witness” to that with his statement: “Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets.” Then in 1964 he reached the key issue for this research. After acknowledging the importance of Walther Eichrodt’s 1933 ‘Theology of the Old Testament’⁵⁵⁷ which was constructed entirely around the theme that covenant provides the theological basis for a defined relationship between God and his people, he wrote:

It can therefore be affirmed that the covenant principle is intrinsic to the Biblical material and that it defines the relationship of God to his people. Further, the term “covenant” itself was consciously applied by the Israelites to their relationship with Yahweh, from the earliest times.⁵⁵⁸

He reclassified covenants into series on the basis of the relationship between promise and obligation which they demonstrated. Then, emphasising the importance of obligation, judgement and divine retribution as components of covenant, he said specifically:

554 Providence TS, "Student Doctrinal Statement " Providence Theological Seminary, <http://www.ptsc.org/students.htm>.

555 Freedman, "Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: The Covenant Theme."

556 Freedman’s early papers, of 1960, 1963 and 1964, are all included in *ibid*.

557 Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, One. Published originally in German, this is said by Anthony Thiselton to be generally regarded as opening the era of Biblical theology in the 20th cent.. Anthony C. Thiselton, "Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics," in *The Modern Theologians*, ed. David F. Ford (Cambridge Mass: Blackwell, 1997). pp. 521-2, 526-7.

558 Freedman, "Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: The Covenant Theme." p. 168.

Thus the prophets acknowledged that the destruction of the nation was the inescapable consequence of its defiance of the divine suzerain and of its deliberate and persistent violation of the terms of the covenant with God.⁵⁵⁹

The Pontifical International Theological Commission was set up in 1969, and according to Jaques Dupuis, the treatment of the theology of religions as a 'distinct theological *subject*' dates from the early 1970s. Before that, in most of the Christian churches relations with people of other faiths were considered within the doctrine of salvation.⁵⁶⁰ New interest in covenantal relationships among mainstream Christian scholars became apparent from the 1980s. It is logical to conclude that it resulted from the new freedom of scholarship which Vatican II encouraged, and a growing awareness of the circumstances of the establishment of the State of Israel, its role in expanding crises in the Middle East, the establishment of the "embassy" in Jerusalem, and public interest in the United States in the telemarketing of worship services of evangelical, dispensationalist and Christian Zionist groups.

Among early contributors to the new wave was Thomas McComiskey⁵⁶¹ who, in 1985, took a different approach to Freedman in the classification of covenants. He proposed that each of the recognized redemptive covenants were structured bicovenantally, with promissory and administrative aspects.⁵⁶² He put great stress on God's promise as basis for covenant; worked through each of the Old Testament promises, made special note that the Davidic covenant "affirmed that the dynasty of David was an important link in the continuum of redemptive events;" that the Davidic house was not the ultimate fulfilment of the promise of a royal progeny; and that David's house was the line from which would spring the king par excellence, the Messiah, who would take the government upon his shoulders. He said that when Christ was born of David's lineage, the ancient promise to Abraham received its climatic fulfilment.

McComiskey's overall conclusion was that the authority of God's redemptive dealings lies in covenanted word and deed; basic to the bicovenantal structure is the fact that "God made a promise to which he asks only the response of faith;" true faith is manifest "in loving obedience which results from a consciousness of the inner motivation of the Holy Spirit;" to all who respond to God in faith he gives a glorious inheritance that can never

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 164.

⁵⁶⁰ Barnes, *Theology and the Dialogue of Religions*. p.7, citing ; Jacques Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997).

⁵⁶¹ McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants*.

⁵⁶² Ibid. p. 10.

perish, spoil or fade, “kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”⁵⁶³ In responding to McComiskey with scathing criticism of a series of major points Meredith Kline concluded that: “In particular, the reclassification system does not work. It does not fit the conventional realities. Rather than explaining and clarifying, it obscures and confuses.”⁵⁶⁴ McComiskey had succeeded in establishing one point: there is confusion in the interpretation of covenant.

In 1991, N. T. Wright,⁵⁶⁵ dealing only with the Christian-Jewish relationship in the context of the Apostle Paul’s writings, challenged the church to think in terms of “the” covenant, the covenant between God and humanity initiated through the Hebrew people, from a quite different perspective. For Wright, the notion of two covenants, either in the context of Supersession or dual covenants, is questionable. The questions to be considered are, in effect, to whom does the covenant apply, in what circumstances, is entry or acceptance through the Torah (Law) or faith in Jesus Christ, and has there been either rejection, abrogation or failure?

Wright says that the cross ends any suggestion of Jewish national privilege, because if covenant ‘membership’ was solely through the Torah, then Christ died in vain, and this is the ‘scandal of the cross’ which prevents Israel from hearing the message about Jesus and which lies at the heart of the revelation of God’s covenant faithfulness and justice.⁵⁶⁶ Many Christians have come to agree that since the Holocaust the church has no right to evangelize towards Jews because it is implicitly anti-Semitic or anti-Judaic to suggest that since Jesus is the true Messiah for Jews as well as Gentiles, Judaism is somehow incomplete. He adds that:

Within scholarly circles, this concern has emerged particularly as the ‘two-covenant theory,’ which suggests that God has, on the one hand maintained his covenant with ethnic Israel intact, and on the other hand has inaugurated the Christian ‘covenant’ as his regular way of saving Gentiles.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶³ Ibid. p. 231.

⁵⁶⁴ Meredith G. Kline, "The Covenants of Promise: A theology of the Old Testament covenants. B. McComiskey," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 30, no. 1 (1987).

⁵⁶⁵ N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, First ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991).

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 242.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 253.

Wright says the church has not become an exclusively gentile possession, and because the gospel opposes all ethnic claims, it cannot erect a new racial boundary. It is therefore ironic that late in the 20th cent., it has advocated (non-evangelization of Jews) which Paul regards as anti-Semitic in order to avoid anti-Semitism. He adds: "The two-covenant position says precisely what Paul forbids the church to say, namely, that Christianity is for non-Jews."⁵⁶⁸

In 1998 Joann Spillman⁵⁶⁹ expressed concern at the extent of disputation among theologians about the nature and understanding of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, saying that if Christian theologians maintain that Judaism and Christianity share a single covenant, then they cannot claim that God repudiated or replaced the Jewish covenant without claiming that God repudiated or replaced the Christian covenant as well!⁵⁷⁰ She preferred the two-covenant model, but did not wish to identify the two covenants with specific expressions of the covenants or with particular grantings of the covenants in the Hebrew Scriptures to the exclusion of other covenant stories. She admitted that its use does provide an extremely effective guard against supersessionism, and it is impossible for Christians to claim that God has rejected the Jewish covenant if that covenant is one with the Christian covenant."⁵⁷¹

The following year E. W. Nicholson⁵⁷² wrote that:

"So far from being merely one among a wide range of terms and ideas that emerged, flourished, and had their day, 'covenant' is a central theme that served to focus an entirely idiosyncratic way of looking at the relationship between God and His chosen people, and indeed, between God and the world. As such it deserves to be put back squarely on the agenda for students of the Old Testament."⁵⁷³

He noted that Wellhausen had triggered debate about antiquity and the meaning of covenant; that Max Weber had led scholars to see it as a social institution rather than an

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 253.

⁵⁶⁹ Joann Spillman, "The Image of Covenant in Christian Understandings of Judaism," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*. 35, no. 1 (1998).

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 74.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid. footnote #39.

⁵⁷² Ernest Wilson Nicholson, *God and his people : covenant and theology in the Old Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁵⁷³ Ibid. Preface p. v.

idea; and that the development of the idea of a vassal treaty had followed, and Perlitt had shifted the idea from institutional to progressive theological development.⁵⁷⁴

Nicholson suggested that as a theological theory, covenant was a late development as a result of the preaching of the great prophets; that before them, beginning with Moses, the relationship with God was regarded as a ‘natural bond’, like that of a son and his father, and that it came into its own in the Deuteronomic circles in years leading up to the Exile. The concept of a covenant between Yahweh and Israel is, he said, in terms of ‘cash value’, the concept that religion is based, not on a natural or ontological equivalence between the divine realm and the human, but on choice: God’s choice of his people and their ‘choice’ of him, that is, their free decision to be obedient and faithful to him.

7. Changing Jewish perspectives

In spite of the resurgence of Jewish scholarship at the end of the 1940s, by the early 1950s some Reform Rabbis in the US were seriously examining the sombre theologies of religious existentialism, and in the mid 1950s they found that one traditional concept, *Berit*, covenant, represented their position better than any other.⁵⁷⁵ *Berit* is seen as setting the Jewish people apart and binding it together as a covenant community. It reflected the work of Eugene Borowitz whose ‘Crisis Theology and the Jewish Community’ was published in 1961 and set out a series of tasks for modern Judaism if it was to satisfy its responsibility to God and to mankind.⁵⁷⁶ Two other scholars, Irving Greenberg and David Weiss Halivni, joined a growing debate which illustrated widely divergent conclusions and became very disruptive within the Reform community.

In spite of the strains, renewal continued within the Reform movement, and in 1976 a revised San Francisco Platform was adopted. By deliberate decision, in order to provide a unifying statement that would be acceptable by consensus and help “heal the wounds in our movement” it did not mention the concept of Covenant, (*berit* or otherwise), by name.⁵⁷⁷ But neither had Pittsburgh, 1885, nor Columbus, 1937.

⁵⁷⁴ Nicholson, *Legacy*. citing Julius Wellhausen, *Sketch of the History of Israel and Judah*, Third ed. (London & Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1891). o, 469.

⁵⁷⁵ Meyer, *Modernity*. p. 362.

⁵⁷⁶ Eugene Borowitz, "Crisis Theology and the Jewish Community," *Commentary*, no. July 1961 (1961).

⁵⁷⁷ Meyer, *Modernity*. pp. 383-84

The centenary platform of 1976 included statements that the affirmation of God has always been essential to the will of its people to survive; that Torah results from the relationship between God and the Jewish people; the survival of the Jewish people is of highest priority and in carrying out its responsibility it helps move humanity toward its messianic fulfilment; Judaism emphasizes action rather than creed as the primary expression of a religious life, and Reform Judaism shares this emphasis on duty and ethical obligations; it has become self-evident to most Jews that Judaism should interact with modern culture; the Holocaust shattered Reform Judaism's easy optimism about humanity's inevitable progress; the ethics of universalism implicit in traditional Judaism must be an explicit part of our Jewish duty; the State of Israel, established and maintained by the Jewish will to live, and its survival, is warrant for human hope; Reform Judaism has both a stake and a responsibility in building the State of Israel, assuring its security and defining its Jewish character; and encouragement of *aliyah* for those who want to find maximum personal fulfilment in the cause of Zion.⁵⁷⁸ It was a definitive document of the times and, in fact, a clear statement of the covenantal understanding of Reform Judaism.

The crisis in the Middle East reached a critical point which could have been decisive in resolving the conflict on July 30, 1988, when King Hussein ceded the West Bank to the PLO. Israel rejected the opportunity. On November 15, the PLO issued its notice of intent to declare statehood. Israel rejected that, too. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein intervened to press the issue and occupied Kuwait on August 2, 1990. The United States intervened in turn to deflect the threat, and when its intervention was ignored it secured support for a different kind of intervention: Desert Storm. The invasion of Iraq began on January 16, 1991.

Borowitz' 'Renewing the Covenant,' was published shortly after, about three years after King Hussein's act of cession. His conclusion is that the Jewish self has its roots in the Jewish people's historic relationship with God, effectively excluding them from further consideration within the Noahide construct.⁵⁷⁹ The pattern of evolutionary development in Hebrew understanding of covenant which he identifies, flows from family to messianic vision in seven stages. It revolves around the covenant experience of choice, promise,

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid. Appendix pp. 391-94.

⁵⁷⁹ Eugene Borowitz, *Renewing the Covenant: A Theology for the Postmodern Jew*, First ed. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991). p. 215.

demand, redemption and mission, and the liturgy reviews it daily in such a manner that believing Jews live in the reality of the covenant.⁵⁸⁰

This leads to the notion of Jewish responsibility to, and within, community, and Jewish communal responsibility to humanity-at-large, or “primary spiritual challenges,” in the context of the Covenant of Sinai. These, Borowitz splits two ways. One, he says, is taken up most notably by the Jews of the State of Israel, the other by Diaspora Jewry, but both communities share the other’s concerns. In Borowitz’ view, “Zionism at its best has pursued (the) Covenant-ideal, and in the many ways the State of Israel has fulfilled this unique theo-political vision it has exalted the spiritual life of Jewry worldwide.” At best, he says “Diaspora Jewry has pursued the other great spiritual opportunity of this era: to discover what it might mean to be an enfranchised self as a believing Jew.”⁵⁸¹

Later, Borowitz says that nowhere can Jews hope to better fulfil the multi-layered responsibilities enjoined on them by the Covenant than in the land of Israel organized as a politically sovereign, self-determining nation, and that “every Jewish self must face the Covenantal challenge of the desirability of moving there to join the Jewish people in working out its uniquely full response to God’s demand that we sanctify social existence.”⁵⁸² However, he referred to concern around the world for the impact of that extensive Jewish presence and its leadership decision-making at the time of writing, about 1988/89, by counselling caution on several fronts.

He said that many Israelis and much of world Jewry, while agreeing on the need for Jewish survival, and being proud of Israel’s “exceptional moral accomplishments” press the corollary Covenant commitment to high humane standards. With continued military administration of the West Bank as the Intifada expressed a Palestinian will for independence, increased Jewish irredentism and the destabilization of Lebanon, the discord between Jewish self-interest and universal values had split Israelis into more or less equal opposing camps, Diaspora Jews, reflecting their less ethnic and more humanistic situations, began to distance themselves from Israel. Few Jews, he said, could argue that Jewish particularity or universality alone could satisfy the demands of Jewish

580 Ibid. p. 2.

581 Ibid. p. 216.

582 Ibid. p. 290.

responsibility,⁵⁸³ and “the incongruity of Israel’s political behaviour in the light of its Covenant ideals” prompts theological wonder that God did not choose another social form for them rather than subject them to the awesome risk of collective power.” He suggested two responses to that query: one substantive and one functional.⁵⁸⁴

First: God made Abraham’s family a nation to show that collective power can be sanctified through subordination to God’s rule, but his does not require Israel to fulfil its covenantal responsibilities through political autonomy or any other particular social structure. The specific form in which the people should organize at any given time depends on the circumstances in which they find themselves. Thus, Borowitz said, “Israel could be content with a loose federation and occasional charismatic leaders until the Sea Peoples threatened its existence, bringing about a shift to monarchy.”⁵⁸⁵

Second: as an organized ethnic group Israel must live in intense fealty to God while interacting with nations who may ignore them, leaving them to develop multiple ties that ethnicity may engender and help them endure while suffering an uncommon burden, with relative indifference, illiteracy and faithlessness that is unacceptable under the covenant, perhaps in the manner of the Middle Ages. This form of scattered socialization carries such potential power that the People Israel can continue to exist as Israel but it results in demonstrative and corrective divine intervention in such a manner that God’s reality becomes know to humanity as Israel fights to live.⁵⁸⁶

Writing in the first person, as a Jewish scholar, Borowitz said he had used generalities, but “it would be a denial of Jewish responsibility to avoid applying them to the critical locus of our contemporary clash of values, the State of Israel.” Jewish ethnic individuality has a universal telos that affects and directs it, he said, “but since its purpose must be achieved in history, it can only be achieved in premessianic times by this particular group in quite local ways.” He said that modern Jews have believed that favourable politics would promptly ensure universalism and they sought to sublimate their particularity to it. However, he concludes that:

583 Ibid. pp. 233-34.

584 Ibid. p. 231.

585 Ibid. p. 231.

586 Ibid. p.232.

(while) the nations have so often abused us that self-concern has blinded us to our involvement with humanity ... we cannot avoid the dialectic of duty imposed on us by our people's Covenant with God, which teaches us of God's covenant with all human beings.⁵⁸⁷

Borowitz was clearly suggesting that if Israel fails to honour its covenantal obligations to its neighbours, its overthrow by supporters of its neighbours would be consistent with prophetic understanding of both divine judgement under covenant, with retribution administered through the agency of the oppressed or their allies, and continuity of their role under the Mosaic Covenant.

8. More conflicting interpretations

Then, as the millennium drew to a close and the new one dawned, there were four pronouncements a few months apart that illustrated conflicting interpretations of certain aspects of covenant. The first and second related to certain assumptions of human authority for the administration of justice in the event of a breach of covenantal obligation. The third illustrates how the Israel-Palestine conflict was provoking serious reflection on theological as well as political issues within units of the Reformed Church. The fourth illustrated circumstantial human intervention in the manner of Borowitz understanding.

The first two concerned the divisive practice of indulgences in Roman Catholicism and revived some of the tensions of the Reformation era. A statement issued in September 1999 announced publication by the Vatican of a new Manual of Indulgences for use in connection with Catholic celebration of 2000 as a Jubilee Year. Protestants were aghast.

The third was a decision by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May 2001 to appoint a study group to reach an understanding of the Israel-Palestine conflict; whether the contemporary State of Israel can be considered coterminous with Biblical Israel; if so, whether Christians must support the secular state of Israel; and the validity of the assertion that Israel has covenantal rights to the land of Palestine and its resources which take precedence over the rights of other people. The report of the study group,⁵⁸⁸ acknowledged disagreement within it, and said that this was a reflection of the range of beliefs and disputation within the wider church; advised that any theological response should take

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 232.

⁵⁸⁸ Stanley Brook et al., "Theology of land and CVovenant," (Edinburgh: Church of Scotland General Assembly Study Group 2003).

account of discussions with Jews, Muslims and Christians of both Jewish and Arab heritage; and set out some considerations for Christian-Jewish dialogue. These included the need to acknowledge that Judaism has its own integrity, distinctive practices and theological traditions; Christians have no right to dictate any Jewish responses; the church must rejoice in its debt to its Jewish heritage, acknowledge that much of its theology is understandable only in the context of the Old Testament, and oppose anti-Semitism in any form; that criticism of certain actions of the State of Israel “must not be taken as an inevitable sign of anti-Semitism;” and increasing numbers of Jews within Israel and the Diaspora question the impact of Israel’s actions on the human rights of Palestinians and the need for “recognition of a viable Palestinian state existing side-by-side with Israel.”

In the fourth, a group of supporters of the Palestinians unleashed an horrendous aerial attack against the United States on September 11, 2001. They were inspired or led by Osama bin Laden, the man who had spoken up in an attempt to prevent the destruction of Iraq by the United States in its bid to avoid Israel having to negotiate with the PLO, (chapter eight). As the following extracts from his addresses broadcast to the world between October and December 2001 show, Bin Laden made it perfectly clear that the attack was a response to the fact that America had made it possible for Israel to avoid fulfilling its covenantal obligations to its neighbours⁵⁸⁹ It was as if he had read Borowitz and was trying to confirm his belief.

When the sword comes down (on America), after 80 years, hypocrisy rears its ugly head. They deplore and they lament for those killers, who have abused the blood, honour and sanctuaries of Muslims. ... They have followed injustice. They supported the butcher over the victim, the oppressor over the innocent child. May God show them His wrath and give them what they deserve.

... I swear ... neither America nor the people who live in it will dream of security before we live it in Palestine, and not before all the infidel armies leave the land of Muhammad.⁵⁹⁰

The reference to “80 years” is to the League of Nations mandate, so the sequential references to “butcher/victim” and “oppressor/innocent child” can be interpreted as “the WZO/people of the mandate” and “Israel/Palestine.”

⁵⁸⁹ Osama bin Laden, "Osama bin Laden Speeches. October 7, 2001. ," The Archives of Global Change in the 21st Century, <http://www.september11news.com/OsamaSpeeches.htm>; *ibid.* Accessed November 10, 2010

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.* Address of October 7, 2010, translated by USA Today.

Bin Laden then said that when the Palestinians, Lebanese and Iraqis retaliated “the whole world has been shouting,” but, with hypocritical double standards, few people said anything while Israeli tanks went to Jeanine, Ramallah, Beit Jalla and other lands of Islam every day.⁵⁹¹ He said those who refer “our tragedies” to the United Nations for solutions are hypocrites because Palestine’s tragedies are the making of the United Nations which determined the division of Palestine in 1947 “and surrendered the land of Islam to the Jews.” Those Arab leaders who have accepted American [‘bought peace’] deals since 1947 and who are now cooperating with the United Nations are “infidels in the eyes of the message of Mohammad,” so no Muslim should resort to it under any circumstance. He then linked both Kashmir and Afghanistan to the common crisis, saying “our brethren in Kashmir have been, for more than 50 years, subjected to torture (and) slaughtered,” and today, “without any evidence, (that the people of Afghanistan have anything to do with our campaign against America) the United Nations is peddling resolutions in support of America, the oppressive despotic (tyrant) against the weak who have just emerged from a massive war (waged) by the Soviet Union.”⁵⁹²

That outline of the event is one of history’s clearest, most spectacular and most traumatic illustrations of the mature Hebrew teaching that people who have been oppressed or otherwise disadvantaged by abuse of a covenantal obligation or rejection of divine law may become the instruments through whom punishment under the penal clause of the covenant is administered. Similarly, the continuing chain of events involving one military intervention and retaliation after another, and a series of self-inflicted economic crises one after another, illustrates the teaching that the consequences of a breach of covenant may continue and be experienced over several generations. It does not suggest that Bin Laden was an instrument of divine will as such, nor does it suggest that he, or others involved in the retaliation are free of divine judgement. Divine discretionary judgement when the Book ‘hung around a person’s neck’ is opened on the Day of Judgement, by which ever interpretation that is understood, is paramount, and, in terms of both Gospel teaching, (Mt. 25:31-46), and Qur’anic teaching, the sin of one killing is not annulled because it has been provoked by another.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid. Address of October 7, 2010, translated by USA Today

⁵⁹² Ibid. Reuters translation, address of November 3, 2001, broadcast by ABC TV.

9. A Church confused

Due to cooperation between the Israel Lobby, the media and US authorities,⁵⁹³ very few references to the role or influence of either Israel or the USA in the crisis were made in Western reports of the events of 9/11 and bin Laden's addresses. That cooperation was consistent with minimizing the likelihood that any Western governments would withdraw their support for the US-Israeli Alliance, and increasing the likelihood of a sympathy-inspired increase in support for the US response.

Six months after the 9/11 events, the Bishops Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the Catholic Church in the US and the US National Council of Synagogues held their semi-annual consultation and examined how the two faiths currently understood Covenant and Mission. A joint statement was published to encourage congregational reflection and dialogue, with separate sections explaining the Catholic and Jewish perspectives. The overview paragraphs read, in part:

A deepening Catholic appreciation of the eternal covenant between God and the Jewish people, together with a recognition of a divinely-given mission to Jews to witness to God's faithful love, lead to the conclusion that campaigns that target Jews for conversion to Christianity are no longer theologically acceptable.

The Jewish reflections describe the mission of the Jews (as having) three aspects. First, obligations that arise as a result of the loving election of the Jewish people into a covenant with God. Second, witness to God's redeeming power in the world. Third, a mission that is addressed to all human beings. (They urge) Jews and Christians to articulate a common agenda to heal the world.⁵⁹⁴

The Catholic perspective then outlined *Nostra Aetate*, decisions of Vatican II, and current understandings, thus: The mission of the Church is, in one word, evangelization; on the basis of *Nostra Aetate*, there is Catholic recognition that its mission of preparing for the coming of the kingdom of God is shared with the Jewish people, even if Jews do not conceive of this task Christologically; both the Church and the Jewish people abide in covenant with God; Jesus' command requires the Church to bear witness to the Good News of Christ to prepare for the fullness of the kingdom of God; however, this

⁵⁹³ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy," (Chicago & Boston: University of Chicago & Harvard University, 2006).

⁵⁹⁴ BCEIA-NCS, "Reflections on Covenant and Mission," International Council of Christians and Jews <http://www.jcrelations.net/en/index.php?id=966&format=print>. Accessed November 10, 2010.

evangelizing task no longer includes the wish to absorb the Jewish faith into Christianity and to end the distinctive witness of Jews to God in human history; and, respecting fully the principles of freedom of religion, conscience and witness, the church must not curtail these freedoms by seeking the conversion of the Jewish people to Christianity.

The Jewish perspective noted that: the Jews are the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the physical embodiment of God's everlasting covenant with these ancestors which involves the Land of Canaan as an everlasting holding, and circumcision of all males on the eighth day of their lives; God required their obedience with the injunction that "if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples ... you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation;" that special relationship involves the burden of divine obligation to witness that there is a God who is the world's Creator, with rewards for its observance and punishments for its abandonment; Israel's redemption from bondage will show that the Lord, God of Israel, restores His people to His land; seeing this, the people will know that God will judge among the nations and arbitrate for the many peoples; and "they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks."

The reaction when that statement was issued on August 12, 2002 was immediate and, according to John Pawlikowski, "a firestorm in sectors of the Catholic Church with Cardinal Avery Dulles taking a lead in attacking the document."⁵⁹⁵ He said no single document within mainline Protestantism has elicited quite the same vigorous response, although a number of European ecumenical statements have. The discussion of the theology of the Jewish-Christian relationship and its implication for the churches' understanding of mission relative to the Jews had moved centre-stage in recent years, he said. The basis for the outbursts was precisely the same as for the Vatican's opposition to the establishment of a Jewish state. Its self-understanding as the sole delegated deputy on earth for God in all matters, and its authority base, were seriously threatened.

For centuries Christian theology, beginning with writings of major Church Fathers in the 2nd cent., was infected with a viewpoint which saw the Church as replacing 'old' Israel in the covenantal relationship with God. This replacement theology relegated Jews to a miserable and marginal status which could only be overcome through conversion,⁵⁹⁶ but

⁵⁹⁵ Pawlikowski, "Covenant after Nostra Aetate." p. 70.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 71, citing Edward Flannery, 1965, *The Anguish of the Jews*, New York, Macmillan.

now they were to be seen as integral to the ongoing covenant, and therefore with recognized authority.

Pawlikowski summarised his personal understanding of the theological developments in Christian-Jewish relationship thus:

(1) an appreciation that the Jewish covenant remains valid after the coming of Christ; (2) Christianity is not automatically superior to Judaism, nor is it the simple fulfilment of Judaism as traditionally claimed; (3) the Sinai covenant is, in principle, as crucial to Christian faith expression as is the covenant in Christ. There was no 'Old Testament' for Jesus and there should not be for us; and (4) Christianity needs to reincorporate dimensions from its original Jewish matrix in a central way in its contemporary faith expression.⁵⁹⁷

He then discussed some arguments put by theologians (not previously mentioned in this research) either in support of Supersessionism or the move away from it after Vatican II. He said some of these “pioneering scholars,” (included among the ‘post-pause’ group), were forced to conclude that:

It is not possible for the Church to go beyond saying what Paul himself said, i.e., that reconciliation between an assertion of redemptive 'newness' in Christ and the concomitant affirmation of the continued participation of the Jewish People in the ongoing covenant remains a 'mystery' presently understandable to God. Only at the end time might we come to see the lack of contradiction in these twin theological statements.⁵⁹⁸

Pawlikowski cites an unpublished paper by former WCC Dialogue Director Wesley Ariarajah⁵⁹⁹ to suggest that while he acknowledges Jesus' connections with the Jewish community of his day, and the continuing authenticity of Judaism as religion, Ariarajah sees efforts “to return Jesus to his Jewish context” as futile in the context of Christian faith expression in a non-European context, and that early ethnic or religious connections carry no theological significance today. If that accurately represents Ariarajah’s view, then it is because he has a different view of covenant, and does not lock it into the narrow pathway to salvation, competitive or otherwise, which it has become for most Christian theologians.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 73.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 74.

⁵⁹⁹ S. Wesley Ariarajah, Towards a fourth phase in Jewish-Christian relations: An Asian perspective, unpublished paper. Conference on Christian-Jewish Dialogue Temple Emmanuel, New York, co-sponsored by the Center for Interreligious Understanding and the Office of Interreligious Affairs of the World Council of Churches, November 2003.

Pawlikowski then characterised the four decades since Vatican II as a period of the emergence of two distinct streams in the understanding of the theological relationship between the Christian Church and the Jewish People in terms of covenantal inclusion, a single covenant and a double covenant, both affirming a central linkage between Judaism and Christianity but with different nuances from scholar to scholar, and with a few scholars calling for an understanding of the Jewish-Christian relationship within a multi-covenant framework.

Like Spillman, Pawlikowski has concerns about the single covenant proposal which sees Jews and Christians as basically united within one covenantal tradition with its origins at Sinai, and which was in no way ruptured through the Christ Event. He favours the double covenant concept which maintains the bond between Jews and Christians despite their somewhat distinctive appropriation of the original covenantal tradition. This, he says, highlights the distinctiveness of the two communities, their traditions and experiences after the separation of church and synagogue. However he says it needs qualifying because Christians associated with this perspective insist on the view that through the ministry, teachings, and person of Jesus a vision of God emerged that was distinctively new in terms of some central features.⁶⁰⁰

The two cannot possibly be the same (in terms of the salvific or redemptive emphasis in Christian concepts of covenant) because one involves a relationship with God, Absolute, and the other with God, Triune. Pawlikowski acknowledges this when he says:

In recent years it has become evident that neither the single nor double covenantal perspectives adequately address all the important issues, at least from the Christian side. Clearly we cannot forge a new covenantal theology in terms of the Christian-Jewish nexus without explicitly taking up the Christological question.

He also acknowledges the very narrow base of the range of Christian covenantal concepts by citing the affirmation in the ecumenical statement '*A Sacred Obligation*' which clearly demonstrates that 'Affirming God's Enduring Covenant with the Jewish People has consequences for Christian understandings of salvation.'

Christians meet God's saving power in the person of Jesus Christ and believe that this power is available to all people in him. Christians have therefore taught for centuries that salvation is available only through Jesus

600 Pawlikowski, "Covenant after Nostra Aetate." p. 83.

Christ. With their recent realization that God's covenant with the Jewish people is eternal, Christians can now recognize in the Jewish tradition the redemptive power of God at work. If Jews, who do not share our faith in Christ, are in a saving covenant with God, then Christians need new ways of understanding the universal significance of Christ.⁶⁰¹

10. Reflection and reassessment: a long slow process

The confusion within the Christian Church relating to the understanding of covenant that this research has exposed has been greatly compounded by the events of the Fifth Epoch. However it did not originate in this epoch which opened with the establishment of the State of Israel. Because of the difficulty the early church faced in attempting to enunciate a clear Christology, which Pawlikowski has alluded to, there has been confusion in the understanding of covenant throughout the life of the church. However it became a non-issue from the pontificate of Gregory VII. Under the influence of *Dictatus Papae*, the absolutely dominant authority assumed by the church hierarchy, and the imposition of the concepts of priestly intercession, indulgences and penance there was no opportunity for adherents of the church to contemplate a direct relationship between God and themselves, either as individuals or as community.

The situation began to change in the early stages of the Reformation, even before Luther's 95 theses, when some clergy began to study the Babylonian Talmud with rabbis as their tutors. The break with Rome made it necessary for the Reformers to justify their decisions, and while the Calvinist concept of covenant replaced the concepts of priestly intercession, indulgences and penance, and was generally adopted, the Christological definition caused problems. The Reformation compounded the theological questions instead of resolving them. In succession a stream including Brightman, Arminius, Fox, Witsius, Wesley, Darby, Smith, Blackstone and Barth each added their interpretations until, finally, Hitler was left to bring the matter to a head with his parody of the church's theology: *Mein Kampf*.

Mein Kampf reads as if Hitler's eyes and ears acted as selective filters on a slush pump. They filtered out much that was compassionate, sympathetic to the aspirations of mankind at large and constructive in human relationships. They let through much that was cruel, unbalanced, perverse and destructive of human relationships, to be strung together with

601 A Sacred Obligation: Rethinking Christian Faith in Relation to Judaism and the Jewish People: A Statement by the Christian Scholars Group on Christian-Jewish Relation, 1 September 2002 (Boston: Center for Christian-Jewish Learning, Boston College).

bitter reactions to Germany's treatment by the Great War Allies and a few fine sounding statements of community ideals, both of which ordinary Germans could readily identify with. The whole lot formed the ultimate in nationalistic and racist propaganda, a blueprint for disaster and a mocking archive for the discredited ideas and misconduct of the Christian West, but it was readily accepted and was not recognized as the ultimate parody of the Christian West.⁶⁰²

Thus we moved into the Fifth Epoch and, from a Christian perspective, all questions of theology have to be considered within the framework which the church has sought to avoid: competition with resurgent Judaism linked to a state which wishes to be acknowledged as a Jewish state with a self-understanding comparable to that of the Vatican. However there are three faiths: not two, and with the circumstantial resurgence of Islam as well, the world needs to know how to relate the beliefs of all three, and the confusion is greater than ever.

11. Structured research questionnaire responses summarized

Overall, the responses to the research questionnaire indicate strong endorsement for enhanced dialogue programs, and the acceptance by all respondents, except for one, that each Abrahamic faith exists under covenant is very encouraging. That one does not accept the notion of covenant at all.

Outcomes which participants expect from enhanced dialogue programs include the breaking down of religious division; acceptance of religious pluralism; greater respect and a lessening of exclusiveness and claims of superiority; greater communal inclusiveness or cohesion; an end to talk of evil powers; more readiness and openness towards discussion of theological issues; rejection of violence as means of achieving one's aims; the elimination of suspicion and prejudice, and, although an impact on world affairs might take some time,

602 Some of the sources for the anti-Semitism which obsessively dominated Hitler's "new philosophy" are listed by D. C. Watt in his introduction to *Mein Kampf*. They include *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* which Bernstein had shown to be based on a deliberate parody on the earlier papal prop, Napoleon III; the Social Catholic journal *Deutsches Volksblatt*; the Catholic paper *Das Vaterland*; the journal *Ostara*, published by a Cistercian monk, Lanz von Liebenfels; Henry Ford's 'Dearborn Independent'; writers such as Goethe; the intensely nationalist and racist composer Richard Wagner; and even leaders of the Reformation, including theologian Martin Luther. Other influences included the writings of Houston Chamberlain, Count Arthur de Gobineau, Herbert Spencer, Charles Davenport, Alfred Wiggam, and Calvin Coolidge, but Darwin's theories of evolution which had challenged the church's self-understanding and teaching but, ironically, prompted widespread social theories which were used to support the racist Athanasian Creed and to establish the science of eugenics.

the fostering of responsible attitudes and policies – and progress toward harmony, stability and peace.

There is more cohesion or commonality in the responses from Jewish and Muslim respondents than from Christians, and there is no norm in the understanding of either the New Covenant or the notion of a covenant in general among Christians in professional roles represented in this research project. Their one common assumption is that Jews believe they are entitled to claim the occupation of Palestine under a covenant granted to them by God through Moses at Mount Sinai. The majority say that the particular obligations differ from faith to faith; a small minority believes the obligations are essentially the same, but there is deep division within the Christian group on this matter.

There is a wide gap between Christians and people of their partner Abrahamic faiths in their apparent understanding of the evolution of religious belief and practice, and the concept of covenant in particular. This suggests a very restricted approach to the teaching of the history of religion in Christian training institutions, and the confusion and complexity of the debate within the church relating to Christian-Jewish heritage and covenantal status is reflected by the fact that every major aspect of the post-Vatican II debates is reflected in responses received from Christians, plus the one refusal to participate, already noted.

Recognition and acceptance of obligations under covenant is far stronger within the Muslim respondents than either the Jews or the Christians. Muslims are also much more conscious of both personal and communal responsibility for the future than people of their partner faiths, and more conscious of the divine triple partnership imposed on them. The Christian responses indicate sharp division on the matter, with a tendency to a qualified acceptance of the notion of being an agent for harmony and stability, but a key focus on personal discipleship and justification. The Jewish responses illustrate a sense of particularity and separateness, and a sense of continuing communal isolation which directs their main commitments to communal support and security.

Concerning divine judgement as a consideration in covenant, there is qualified support among the Christian respondents and general consensus among the Jews and Muslims, showing that judgement is a consideration in the covenantal understanding of all three faiths. However, there is strong disagreement among Christian theologians concerning the

mechanism or administration of divine judgement, and differing emphases within each faith.

With the exception of one Christian scholar, there is general agreement that a breach of covenant by one community in its relations with another can lead to massive trauma. The one scholar who rejects the notion of covenant nevertheless recognizes that trauma can result from the conduct of faith-related communities while not acknowledging that it is related to a breach of covenant. However there was uncertainty – perhaps because of the way the question was worded – on the matter of whether a ‘backlash’ reaction by a traumatized community can be considered a penalty against the community which caused the initial trauma. Some agreed that it can, others disagreed, and some could not see the connection.

There were contradictions and qualifications in each faith group concerning the introduction of the notion of covenant and obligation into dialogue programs. Support from Jews and Muslims is stronger than from Christians, some of whom were sensitive to the difficulties which it has the potential to raise and who therefore prefer to see dialogue focused on practical cooperation and local conflict resolution. However one Christian said conversation dialogue should be engaged in all circumstances, but in particular in times of conflict and misunderstandings, when communities lose sight of the most important and busy themselves with the insignificant matters that often further divide rather than bring harmony and stability. Others also said ‘yes, go ahead on this basis,’ while some propose that there should first be agreement on the nature of covenant, and some Christian responses suggest that the respondents feel hemmed in between two other faiths who are seen as competitors rather than partners, and who hold stronger views on the relevance of the concept of covenant. One said covenant is such an emotional topic that it is not a good starting point.

There is a dominant view that the ground should be prepared carefully for conversation dialogue and that it should only be introduced where a framework exists in which participants are already favourably known to each other. Views expressed include that country and cultural recognition is important; that the term ‘obligations’ should be interpreted very carefully; that the term ‘responsibilities’ is preferable; and that the idea of the ‘Divine Image’ and the obligations that entails should be explored. One respondent said conversation dialogue can only go ahead if Christians have already rejected the notion

of Supersessionism. Two, both Muslim, suggest that in all dialogue programs there should be concurrent educational and media programs to support the dialogue process.

A significant qualification to assumptions from the responses which must be considered is that the responses are from 23 of 49 people invited to participate. None of those who did not respond to the written invitation to participate were further contacted, and any concerns with the research coordinator were not raised, so any conclusions about their reasons for non-participation is speculative or hypothetical at best.

It may be that some either overlooked the invitation or follow a policy of not responding to survey requests. This may be valid for a small number. Certainly some were simply too committed to devote the time to it, but the conclusion is that some found the questionnaire challenging, either from the point of view of a direct challenge to their religious beliefs or because it required them to carefully reflect on their beliefs and they were uncertain about how to respond to some questions. As the collated summary shows, some respondents did not provide answers to all questions.

However, the invitees were selected on the basis of prior contact and demonstrated professionalism and commitment to their faith, and not at random from a data base. The fact that nine of the 13 who agreed but then did not return the questionnaire are Christians, suggests that a number may either hold to supersessionism (as with the person who refused point blank to participate) or are not prepared to concede that all three faiths are subject to covenants. Similarly, that fact that none of the 18 Christians failed to respond to the invitation suggests that some of them thought at first glance it was an easy exercise and agreed, while the Jews and Muslims gave it more careful consideration before deciding whether to respond or not.

While these considerations do not affect the validity of the responses received, they do suggest that overall support for dialogue programs and for consideration of matters of covenant is not as strong as in the responses received.

12. Covenant: an overview of each faith's current perceptions

Each community of faith accepts that the others have covenantal understandings, but: Jewish scholars do not concede that Divine Authority legitimizes the covenantal understandings of Christians and Muslims; Christians continue to debate whether the

Mosaic Covenant is extant or abrogated, and are divided over whether Islam is subject to Covenants; but Muslims recognize that God took covenants from each of Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus.

The understanding of covenant was not spontaneous. As indicated in Chart Three, the Evolution of Systematic Religion, Appendix C, there is now evidence of religious consciousness from c. 17,000 BCE among the Indigenous people of Australia,⁶⁰³ and the earliest indication of an awareness of a covenantal relationship between humans and God was among the same people, c. 4,000 BCE, long before the rise of the Abrahamic belief system.⁶⁰⁴

The present circumstances are both a challenge and an opportunity for all humanity, not only people of the three Abrahamic faiths, to reflect on what is being revealed about its relationship with the Divine Presence.

603 Michaelsen et al., *Shamanism*, 41.

604 Tacon, Wilson, and Chippindale, "Arnhem Rock Art."

Chapter Nine

Dialogue: development and current status

1. Introduction

Circumstances now exist such that if the powers involved in crises arising from the establishment of the State of Israel ignore the lessons of the Fourth Epoch, trauma on an unprecedented scale may be anticipated as the principles of covenant continue to apply. This chapter pursues the proposition that the anticipated trauma may be ameliorated through planned programs of interfaith dialogue in which religious, civil, military and business leaders at all levels of society in the WWCB are persuaded to recognize and adopt the principles and relationships involved in divine covenant. It opens with an examination of the hesitant start to interfaith dialogue programs and the restrictions placed on them by religious leaders, then traces developments and new initiatives which are being taken in view of the current critical circumstances.

2. Dialogue to date: efforts to provide a systematic base

There have been five distinct waves of activity in interfaith dialogue and efforts to establish organizations to facilitate the process, or to take new initiatives in dialogue, that can be identified during that period since the Shoah. They have each been triggered by major crises in the Middle East related to the establishment of the State of Israel. The first wave began in 1946-47 and coincided with efforts to increase Jewish settlement in Palestine or to partition the territory that Britain still governed under UN mandate. The major initiative at that time was the establishment of the International Council of Christians and Jews which now encompasses 38 councils in 32 countries. The second wave was triggered by the Six Day War in 1967, the third by the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the fourth, by the Gulf War and the coincidental collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the fifth, by the cumulative stimulus of the Renewed Intifada in October 2000 and the events of September 11, 2001.

To date, dialogue programs within the three Abrahamic traditions have not adequately addressed the theological concepts around which the faiths divide. These are the concepts which have determined the self-understanding of each of the faith communities and their attitudes towards each other. Those self-understandings have inhibited an understanding of

the relationships between each of them, and between them and God. Dialogue programs have, until now, been approached essentially as defensive mechanisms to reduce the level of antagonism and to progressively generate goodwill while avoiding discussion of the fundamental causes of the underlying conflict. Any issues that have been considered as a potential threat to the prevailing self-understandings of the major communities of faith, or having the potential to result in recrimination because the *consequences* of current self-understanding and actions, have been avoided. As a result dialogue conversations related to such issues have been superficial and have achieved very little.

The level of resistance to self-exposure, and fear of confrontation over doctrine, inhibited the World Council of Churches in its early efforts to establish dialogue programs. In his 2002 dialogue report, (see chapter one, p. 36), in addition to his observations of ecumenism, Wesley Ariarajah noted that:

“Suspicion of interfaith dialogue among some Christians surfaced in the open controversy at the WCC’s fifth assembly (Nairobi 1975). For the first time, five persons of other faiths were invited to a WCC assembly as special guests and took part in the discussions of the section on ‘Seeking Community’, where the dialogue issue was debated. Plenary discussion of the report of this section highlighted the deep disagreement within the church on the issue of dialogue. Fears were expressed that dialogue would lead to the kind of syncretism against which the 1928 Jerusalem meeting warned, or that it would compromise faith in the uniqueness and finality of the revelation in Christ, or that it would threaten mission seen as fundamental to the being of the church itself.”⁶⁰⁵

Fear of the loss of ecclesiastical authority actually resulted in many organizations, including institutions of the Vatican, the World Council of Churches, tertiary theological teaching institutions and principal authorities of many religious bodies and denominations issuing guidelines for dialogue that have been positively and rigidly proscriptive in these respects. Since 2002 there has been only gradual relaxation of the guidelines for dialogue programs and it is important now is to find a basis to proceed which will overcome, or circumvent, the opposition and restrictions that are in place.

The paramount need is for non-defensive dialogue conversations between Christians, Jews, and Muslims which may bypass barriers by facilitating common understandings on matters that, in current circumstances, are deeply divisive. In such conversations the theological concepts around which the faiths divide, which determine the self-understanding of each of

605 Ariarajah, "Dialogue."

the faith communities and their attitude towards each other and thus precipitate conflict, may be addressed. It must necessarily involve academics from a wide range of disciplines and must not be restricted to clergy in pastoral or administrative roles. This was recognized by organizers of the Religion Study Group of the British Sociological Association in announcing its conference for April 2011.⁶⁰⁶

3. Concerning restrictions on dialogue

Key events in the movement towards interfaith dialogue have included international missionary conferences in Edinburgh in 1910, at which the question of Christian understanding of, and relationship to, other religions was a central issue,⁶⁰⁷ another in Jerusalem in 1928,⁶⁰⁸ the establishment of a Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews in 1930, and the establishment of a Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) in Britain in 1942 by William Temple (later Archbishop of Canterbury) and Chief Rabbi Hertz. However the catastrophe of the Shoah was the catalyst for substantive efforts in Christian-Jewish reconciliation, understanding and theological accommodation, and the establishment of the International Council of Christian and Jews in 1947.

Although those councils involved many senior clergy and academics they did not involve or lead to the immediate formal establishment of dialogue programs or the appointment of staff to specialist positions with responsibility for dialogue within Christian churches as institutions. In fact, the Vatican was sufficiently alarmed at the prospect of priests and rabbis appearing together that in 1954 it instructed Cardinal Griffin, the head of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, to leave the CCJ; and Catholics did not return to the organisation until the Second Vatican Council a decade later.⁶⁰⁹

606 BSA call for papers , Religion and Social Theory: Developing a New Agenda for the Sociology of Religion, Association website, accessed November 16, 2010.

Gordon Lynch, call for papers relayed via AASR email dated Nov. 16, 2010

607 Ariarajah, "Dialogue."

608 The International Missionary Council met in Jerusalem at Easter 1928, shortly after Pope Pius XI had condemned the Ecumenical Movement in the encyclical *Mortalium Animos*, and the Vatican Holy Office had decreed the suppression of the Friends of Israel Association. Unperturbed, it issued a statement saying that Christ is the revelation of what God is and of what man, through Him, may become, and that the Father had nowhere left Himself without witness. For taking such an enlightened approach it was attacked on several grounds: syncretism; watering down the faith to gain converts it could not attract by evangelism; being excessively influenced by Karl Barth and the Mizrahi Movement, and falling under the spell of meeting in a Muslim region.

609 The Council of Christians and Jews. <http://www.ccj.org.uk/history.html> accessed 2008-11-23

Pope Paul VI's institution of a special department within the Roman Curia for relations with people of other religions (the Secretariat for Non-Christians) in 1964, which preceded the Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*) by a year, was the first formal step into interfaith dialogue by an individual Christian church.⁶¹⁰ However deep controversy over the intentions and practices of dialogue inhibited the real work of dialogue within the Roman Catholic Church and it was not until 1984, five years after the secretariat's first plenary assembly, that formal guidelines with a statement of theological rationale were issued by Pope John Paul II under the title '*The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission.*' The categories of permitted dialogue were identified as dialogues of life, action, theological discourse, and spirituality.⁶¹¹ The publication of those guidelines exacerbated the controversy. In 1985 the Secretariat was upgraded and reconstituted as the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and additional guidelines were issued the following year.⁶¹² In subsequent endeavours to refine the categories of dialogue and to avoid tension due to the use of the term 'theological discourse' alternative terms were used, and in 2000, the XV General Chapter of the Divine Word Missionaries described them in these terms.⁶¹³

- Dialogue of Life – living in cooperation out of respect for fellow community members of a different faith
- Dialogue of Action – practical cooperation with fellow community members of a different faith in matters of community concern
- Dialogue of Prayer – enhancing respect and seeking peace and cooperation with fellow community members of a different faith
- Prophetic Dialogue – announcing God's message and reflecting on Biblical meanings in partnerships they may involve: a) faith seekers or people who have no faith

610 Pope John Paul II, "The world is in God's hands," (New York: Catholic World News E-mail news service, 2003). Address to the Members of the Secretariat for Non-Christians. Libreria Editrice Vaticana; http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1979/april/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19790427_segret-non-cristiani_en.html accessed 2008-12-20.

611 Edmund Chia, "Is interfaith Theology Possible?," *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 18, no. 2008/1 (2008). cited 'The Attitude of the Church towards Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission,' Vatican, 1984

612 Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. 1989. *Criteria for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Cooperation in Communications*. Vatican city, October 4, 1989. Source: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc... Accessed 20/12/2008.

613 Divine Word Missionaries in Dialogue with the Word, Nr. 1, September 2000: Documents of the XV General Chapter (IDW-1), quoted in Nemer 2007.

community or religious affiliation; b) people who are poor and marginalized; c) people of different cultures, and d) people of different faith traditions and secular ideologies.

In the meantime, during the thirty six years following the establishment of the Committee on the Christian approach to the Jews, and prior to Pope John Paul II issuing the first formal statement of attitudes, reflections and orientation in dialogue in 1984, there had been significant increased activity. In 1961, when the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council merged, the Committee was reconstituted as the WCC Committee on the Church and the Jewish People. The Broadly dialogical *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* was founded in 1963. At a landmark conference in 1967 the Vatican Secretariat was involved in ecumenical discussions on interfaith matters with the WCC's committee for the first time, and the Council's sub-unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies (DPLFI) was established four years later, in 1971.

The sub-unit's programs were accelerated in the wake of the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and senior dignitaries of other faiths were invited as Observers at the council's Fifth Assembly in Nairobi in 1975, noted above. In due course they witnessed deep disagreement within the church when dialogue was debated.⁶¹⁴ As a consequence, the Council's Central Committee authorised a major theological consultation in Thailand in 1977 to examine the issues raised during the assembly and to formulate guidelines for dialogue. The guidelines were formally adopted in 1979⁶¹⁵

Concurrent with preparation of the WCC guidelines, and taking account of the Camp David Peace Process, the Institute for Interreligious Intercultural Dialogue (The IIID) and the Kennedy Institute Jewish-Christian-Muslim Trialogue were established in 1978. An American initiative of Leonard Swidler and involving two universities and the Catholic Bishops' Conference, the Kennedy Trialogue held sessions at six-monthly intervals until September 1984 – the year of Pope John Paul II's statement. It was linked to the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* and both the Institute for Interreligious, Intercultural Dialogue and its 'daughter', the Global Dialogue Institute, but its direction had not been entirely acceptable to the Vatican.

614 Having been a participant in the WCC's preparatory consultation in Geneva on 'Christian Responsibility with regard to the Crisis in the Middle East,' at the invitation of the General Secretariat I was present at the assembly and fully involved as a participant with the Dialogue sub-unit in discussions with the Non-Christian Observers.

615 Ariarajah, "Dialogue."

During twenty four years since the initial statement by Pope John Paul II, the scope of interfaith discussions has been widened, the frequency of dialogue initiatives has increased dramatically, a series of institutes and academies have been established and dialogue has become an accepted tool in efforts to avoid catastrophic communal, regional and international conflicts. Many efforts have been made to diversify the practical approaches to dialogue and conflict resolution and to circumvent the implicit restrictions of the categories approved by the churches through refining critical thinking and by developing communication methodologies. These include the 'Deep-Dialogue' approach of the Global Dialogue Institute and the multidisciplinary/multi-tradition approach of the World Wisdom Council, an initiative of the Club of Budapest.⁶¹⁶ Other institutions and groups of scholars forming associations specifically drawn together to work within that strategy are the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life (ARIL), publisher of the journal *Cross Currents*; and the International Scholars' Annual Trialogue (ISAT), also an initiative of Leonard Swidler (1987). However dialogue programs directly organized or sponsored by churches are still proscribed with very little encouragement for conversation dialogue and, at times, strong opposition to it.

This is illustrated by the "firestorm in sectors of the Catholic Church with Cardinal Avery Dulles taking a lead in attacking the document *Reflections on Covenant and Mission*," August 2002, after extensive consultation between the National Council of Synagogues in the USA and the US Catholic Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs⁶¹⁷

Subsequently, as recently as November 2008, Pope Benedict XVI wrote in a letter to Italian centre-right politician and scholar Marcello Pera that his book *Why We Must Call Ourselves Christian* "explained with great clarity (that) an interreligious dialogue in the strict sense of the word is not possible (and) in theological terms, a true dialogue is not possible without putting one's faith in parentheses." He added that although dialogue among faiths should be pursued even as it is impossible on strictly religious issues because "intercultural dialogue which deepens the cultural consequences of basic religious ideas" is important, "the cultural consequences of basic religious decisions" should be confronted in public forums.

616 Swidler, *Theoria > Praxis*.

Swidler and Gangadean, *Deep Dialogue*.

617 Pawlikowski, "Covenant after Nostra Aetate."

That letter, cited by Rachel Donadio (New York Times) and Alessandra Rizzo (Washington Times), was consistent with two themes that are regarded as central to Pope Benedict's papacy but which are not entirely compatible: seeking improved interfaith relations while also seeking action on what he perceives to be an urgent need for Christians: to recognize, preserve and "stay true" to the Christian roots of an increasingly secular Europe.⁶¹⁸ Donadio noted that "to some scholars, the pope's remarks seemed aimed at pushing more theoretical interreligious conversations into the practical realm,"⁶¹⁹ a policy that might bring immediate benefits to some communities, but does not alleviate tensions which precipitate conflict.

In his attack on *Reflections on Covenant and Mission* in 2002, Dulles had deepened the controversy related to the propositions that there were either double independent Jewish and Christian covenants or a single Jewish-Christian common-core covenant by asserting that "Jews are not saved through the Sinai covenant alone but only through the completion of the one covenant through Christ's death and resurrection."⁶²⁰

The Christian churches, enmeshed in the systems and politics of the West, caught in retaliatory attacks on US, NATO and other forces as a result of the 'War on Terror', facing increased terror attacks against churches and other Christian institutions with many deaths and heavy casualties, have taken many initiatives in dialogue in quick succession to reduce the tension. Some clergy have urged Christians remaining in Iraq to leave for their safety, and a similar crisis affects the churches in Palestine in spite of the efforts of the Arab Working Group on Muslim-Christian Relations. But the churches have resisted reassessment and, as the diary of events shows, their teaching institutions have put more emphasis on critical Trinitarian teachings in a bid to reinforce the distinction between their teachings, and those of its younger partner, Islam, as well as its parent, Judaism. However, every move the US and its Western coalition partners make reinforce the non-Western perception that the crisis is developing into Christianity and Judaism linked in battle with Islam.

618 Alessandra Rizzo, "Pope: Dialogue among religions should be pursued" *Washington Post*, November 24 2008.

619 Rachel Donadio, "'Pope Questions Interfaith Dialogue'," *New York Times*, November 24 2008. citing quotations from the letter which appeared in *Corriere della Sera*, Italy's leading daily newspaper.

620 Pawlikowski, "Covenant after Nostra Aetate."

In contrast to the churches, independent institutions have moved to integrate teaching and research across interfaith boundaries, and additional dialogue centres have been established by universities in Australia, the Middle East, the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States since September 11, 2001.

4. Reassessment in progress.

Circumstances are changing so decisively that some senior members of the Catholic hierarchy have taken steps to review some aspects of the church's theology, policies, practices and relationships. This is reflected in the decision by the ATS to develop systems of accreditation for theological institutions as well as programs of leadership, communication and theological education. It was also a factor in the establishment of the Conference of European Churches in 1959. Such concerns were increased by the Suez Crisis of 1956 and the deteriorating Cold War, and in January 1959 Pope John XXIII announce his intention that a full council of the Church should be held – the first since Vatican I closed in 1870. (See chapter seven) He also softened the Vatican's attitude to the Ecumenical Movement and gave approval for five Catholic Observers to attend the WCC Third Assembly in 1961.

These issues, and the growing realization that the self-understanding, teaching and influence of the Christian Church were under increasing challenge, were all reflected in the decisions to establish two new bodies in 1962 – the World Conference on Religions for Peace (WCRP), and the Graduate Theological Union (GTU – and the shift in Ecumenical relations was such that in 1964 a Catholic theological college sought admission for the first time. The radical doctrinal changes adopted by Vatican II between 1962 and 1966, relating to the concept of covenant and dialogue, have already been examined.

The next crisis to further aggravate interfaith relations and add pressure towards understanding, recognition and reconciliation was the Six Day War of 1967. The UN took the territorial route, approving Resolution 242 as a basis for settlement and reconciliation between the Palestinians and the Israeli polity. The churches floundered, but they were goaded into further ecumenical collaboration and into even more defensive moves to sustain their influence – and into some interfaith cooperation at the level of theological teaching. Additional associations of theological colleges were established, and in 1968 the first of several affiliate centres which now include Jewish and specialized black and women's centres, joined the Graduate Theological Union. Then, in 1971, the WCC took an

enormous leap forward. It established a specialist sub-unit for dialogue with other living faiths.

Although both the WCC and the Vatican had previously shown total resistance to the idea of collaborative reassessment of the theology concepts that are the basis of division between the Abrahamic faiths, the crisis was gradually forcing them closer together and in 1978 the first ‘theological encounter’ was arranged between the CEC and the Council of European Bishops’ Conferences (CCEE). Subsequently, in the interests of consolidating the Christian position in relation to the other faiths, the Reformed churches have gone to great lengths to accommodate aspects of theology, liturgy and other practices of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches that were previously criticized trenchantly. They have placed increased emphasis on the use of the creeds and fixed liturgy in worship, become highly defensive of Trinitarian belief and statements in an effort to distinguish the Christian Church from its partner faiths, and have amended guidelines for membership which had the effect of precluding Pentecostal groups from membership.

However, outside the churches, there were further moves towards the goal of interfaith theological exchange, and to consolidate the position and increase the influence of the other Abrahamic faiths. The Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations was established at Birmingham University in 1976. Muslim governments supported the rapid growth of Islamic schools and universities. There was similar action within the Jewish community, noteworthy being the establishment of the Shalom Centre and its network in the US, and the establishment of the Temple Institute, an ultra-conservative Jewish educational, research & lobbying organization dedicated to rebuilding the Hebrew Temple on Mt. Moriah, in the Jewish Quarter of Old Jerusalem.

The Baha’i faith had already experienced rapid expansion, beginning in the 1960s, and its Universal House of Justice was established in 1963. By the early 1980s the principal building of its permanent centre was completed in Haifa and there were some 26,000 local assemblies. Since then it has grown to have more than 150 national spiritual assemblies (national governing bodies) and about 20,000 local spiritual assemblies, and its efforts are concentrated on education and peace building. However its relations with Christianity and Islam have been uneasy. Christian commentators denigrate it, and it has suffered badly, especially in Iran, with the upsurge in radical Islamism.

A rash of initiatives to strengthen the overall position of the Christian Church followed the 1990 Gulf War and the collapse of the Soviet Union and international Communism under the combined pressure of Western political and economic policies to isolate them. Two significant moves were made in quick succession.

First, the Porvoo Declaration on intercommunion and recognition of ministries provided the basis for rapprochement and cooperation between a number of churches around the world and not only the British, Irish, Nordic and Baltic Anglican and Lutheran Churches which were signatories to it. However, at the same time, the Vatican's efforts to take maximum advantage of the collapse of the Soviet Bloc by re-establishing its Eastern hierarchies and establishing diplomatic relations with member states of the former USSR, brought it into conflict with the Orthodox Churches, and, regrettably, the Second Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago, 1993, exposed as many tensions as it resolved. About 150 persons from all major world faiths affirmed a proposal for a Global Ethic as a step towards understanding and reconciliation, but some Orthodox clergy withdrew because of the presence of neo-pagans, and four Jewish organizations withdrew because of the presence of The Nation of Islam.

Second, the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI) was established to foster cooperation across the entire range of churches in theological education at all levels, and to support confessional organizations in their specific faith traditions through shared visions and their alternative approaches to Christian tradition and theology. The fact that the Honorary President and Secretary of WOCATI both accepted invitations and participated in an international consultation on collaboration between all faiths in Kuala Lumpur in October, 2010, might signal a change in its policy towards joint faith training.

However during the same period some people have placed more importance on the wider implications of the crisis in world affairs and have looked for solutions through interfaith collaboration and education: not isolation. The Quandt Foundation of Germany commissioned research by Birmingham's Graduate School of Theology for guidelines for Abrahamic Trialogue curricula. The UNESCO Chair in Interfaith Studies was established in 1999 with objectives including to establish long-term cooperation among participating institutions in the study of the encounter between the three Abrahamic faiths and their

interaction with culture and society, and to participate in development of an international network of cooperating academic institutions working in related fields.

It was then of great concern to both non-Christians and Christians of the Reformation when, on August 16, 2000, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued the Declaration '*Dominus Iesus*', on the authority of Pope John Paul II, which was widely interpreted as contradicting the intent of Vatican II's '*Nostra Aetate*' (chapter seven). There was concern within the Vatican offices as well as much debate within the Protestant churches and the media concerning its implications, and working relations between the Vatican and the WCC were affected for some time due to no liaison person being available to it in Geneva.⁶²¹

The world slid deeper into crisis, and fundamentalist interpretations of scripture by groups within all three faiths aggravated the situation. The birth in March 2101 of a red heifer declared by rabbis of the Temple Institute to be kosher and suitable for purification rites (Num. 19) spurred right-wing Jewish demands for the Temple Mount and encouraged further demands for the Israeli Government to support and protect Jewish settlements on the West Bank. Christian Zionist groups in the US campaigned strongly for their government to support Israel in those matters on the grounds that it would bring on Armageddon, after which all Jews would convert to Christianity. That alliance focused attention on the growing belief among Muslims in the Middle East (and elsewhere, also) that Christianity and Judaism are in league against Islam and encouraged recruitment into radical Islamist groups.

In contrast, about the same time, in the Spring of 2001, the Society for Scriptural Reasoning established the Children of Abraham Institute (CHAI) as its political-outreach Institute, to articulate the "hermeneutics of peace" that might be implicit in the study practices of the Society and which might be applied to bringing Jewish, Muslim, and Christian religious, social, and political leaders into shared study, not only of the texts of Scripture, but also of the paths and actions of peace that those texts demand. CHAI also served to coordinate teaching and research in the University of Virginia's schools of Abrahamic religious studies. It was a move as significant for interfaith studies as Swidler's Kennedy Institute Dialogue of 1978 and the Quandt Foundation's initiative.

621 Advice received in personal conversation in Geneva and Rome, December 2002.

5. The shock and stimulus of the Twin Towers attack

The world was then rocked by terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. Because the focal point of the event, the destruction of the Twin Towers, was at the centre of the American global commercial empire, the response was more dramatic and spontaneous than the response to the so-called “surprise” attack on Pearl Harbour sixty years earlier. People moved swiftly without waiting to learn how the US Administration would react. Fearing civil turmoil if their communities turned violent against Muslims, Christian and Jewish leaders in many countries called for calm and for support for their Muslim minorities, stressing that there were no known links between them and the terrorists.

In Australia the leaders of the peak bodies of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths met in urgent session, decided it was time to cooperate, and only three days after the attacks, announced the formation of a standing committee to be known as the Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims and Jews. They had reason for concern, because, in like manner to much of the WWCB, Islamophobia took hold and for several years there were virulent pulpit and media attacks on Muslims from “fringe” Christian groups which had the effect of inciting attacks on Islamic schools, the homes of officials and, on occasions, people. It was necessary for governments to introduce anti-vilification laws.

The basis of the Islamophobia was the assumption that 9/11 represented the beginning of a Muslim onslaught on the whole of the WWCB out of jealousy for its highly developed high-consumption and very comfortable way of life. That assumption was fuelled by the US Administration to justify its intention to invade Afghanistan and its need for the support of as many allies as possible: not only members of the NATO Alliance.

There is little doubt that if the United States conceded that it was being attacked, systematically in whatever countries were hosting its military bases and had vulnerable facilities, in retaliation for its support of Israel which made possible that State’s continuing denial of a settlement with the Palestinian’s it would not have received the support which it required. In that case the basis of its foreign policy would have been questioned, and “the Jewish Question” would have been back on top of the agenda. The United States Administration could not allow that to happen. As in WWI and WWII, truth was to be the first victim of the war, and it was to be left to a future generation to resolve the hate complex and to restore “normality” after its objective had been achieved.

Ten weeks later, on December 20, 2001, the Arab Working Group on Muslim-Christian Dialogue which included personnel from the Middle East Council of Churches and Muslim bodies in six countries, adopted an Arab Muslim-Christian Covenant which set out guidelines for Dialogue and Coexistence. The group had been established in 1996, and a statement of covenant had been commissioned following discussion of the American Law Concerning Religious Persecution in 1998, after the MECC, cooperating with authorities in American churches, launched an attempt to explain the Arab Christian position on this law and its likely impact upon Muslim-Christian relations.

Driven by the sufferings of Jerusalem, its people and blessed land, and in solidarity with Lebanon ... to speak with one voice to the whole world near and far ... No power in the world has the right to Judaize Jerusalem, internationalize it, or strip it of its Arab and Christian-Muslim character.⁶²²

The working group believed that:

the objectives of the law ... fostered by an alliance of the American extreme religious right wing and Zionist forces, was that by intervening this way ... especially in the Muslim world — on the pretext of defending religious freedom and punishing states, organizations and individuals seen to be implicated in ... religious persecution — the United States illegitimately arrogates to itself the right to accuse, judge, sentence and punish in a manner that serves the interests of Israel and that does damage both to Muslim-Christian relations and to American-Arab relations⁶²³

The covenant declared that they were engaged in a Dialogue of Life involving intellectual research and programs conducted jointly by adherents of both faiths “to facilitate a common stance against the dangers faced by the nation in the social, educational, moral and cultural spheres,” and to strengthen national unity in the face of external interference and efforts to exert domination over the Arab world. It noted fear for the future; that one of the most important factors being “the Israeli threat;” while some people “portray the local situation as an extension of the putative worldwide confrontation between Muslims and Christians in our Arab countries.” The covenant set out a comprehensive program for cooperation in education and youth activities, culture, political freedoms and civil rights.

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622 Riad Jarjour, "Dialogue and Coexistence," in *Arab Working Group on Muslim-Christian Dialogue* (Cairo December 18-20: Arab Group for Muslim-Christian Dialogue, 2001).

623 Ibid.

624 Muslim-Christian-Working-Group, "A Covenant: Dialogue and Coexistence," in *Arab Working Group on Muslim-Christian Dialogue*, ed. Riad Jarjour (Cairo: Middle East Council of Churches, 2001).

An interfaith Summit of Middle East Muslim, Christian and Jewish leaders issued the First Alexandria Declaration on freedom of religion, joint recognition, and a call for a cease fire in Palestine. A broad Ecumenical Mission was set up to work with peace activists of both Israel and Palestine in a Global Advocacy Network with the aim of ending the Israeli occupation, and the WCRP initiated a European Council of Religious Leaders to engage political decision makers concerning Europe's increasingly multi-religious community.

In November 2002, the WCC revised its guidelines for clergy and laity to encourage more open dialogue without the cautionary restrictions which were implied in the 1979 guidelines, and to reflect and encourage greater acceptance of religious diversity. Then, as guidance, they said dialogue must be a process of empowerment informed by the context; in it we grow in faith, affirm our hope, nurture relations, and strive for mutual respect in inclusive, cooperative and collaborative activities while we show respect for the other religious tradition.

About that time, Fethullah Gulen, Turkish reformer and sponsor of interfaith cooperation, said Muslim-Christian dialogue is indispensable because the natural sciences, which should lead people to God, instead cause widespread unbelief, a trend strongest in the West and influencing Christianity. He noted Islam's tradition that Jesus will return during the last days, meaning that, for Muslims, values such as love, peace, brotherhood, forgiveness, altruism, mercy and spiritual purification will have precedence. Furthermore, because Jesus was sent to the Jews, and all Jewish prophets exalted these values, dialogue must be established as well as a closer relationship and cooperation among the three faiths. He referred to many common points for dialogue, but added that "Christendom's historical portrayal of Islam as a crude distorted version of Judaism and Christianity, and the Prophet as a fraud, still rankles."⁶²⁵

Islam faces the world with a peculiar sense of mission, Gulen said, "not confused and not torn apart by a mass of theological subtleties, not buried beneath a heavy burden of dogma, this sense of mission draws its strength from a complete conviction of the relevance of Islam ... and ... when those who have adopted Islam as a political ideology, rather than a religion in its true sense and function, review their self-proclaimed Islamic activities and

625 Fethullah Gulen, "The Necessity of Interfaith Dialogue," (Gulen Movement Website, 2002).

attitudes, specially their political ones, they will discover that the driving force is usually personal and national anger, hostility and similar motives.”⁶²⁶

However, in another effort to offset the challenge of Islam, a meeting of the CEC and the CCEE advised affiliates to adopt a more coherent theological, biblical and patristical youth education program with serious teaching about other faiths, and a meeting of theological faculties and educational institutions in Europe proposed partnerships of institutions across confessional ties, and establishment of an Ecumenical Conference of Faculties and Institutes.

Fortunately the theological fortress mentality did not preclude practical dialogue, and a joint Catholic-Islamic committee of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue (PCIRD) and the International Islamic Council for Da’Wah and Relief (IICDR) has condemned racism, affirmed the equality of all people before God, and agreed to promote a culture of dialogue. In a radical shift in Catholic attitudes to Jews, the Bishops’ Committee for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Affairs (BCEIA) of the US Bishops’ Conference joined with the National Council of Synagogues in a statement that targeting Jews is no longer theologically acceptable. However, that statement brought a sharp rebuke from a senior cardinal and a “clarification” was issued a short time later.

6. The evolving situation: dependence on lay leadership

There has been a dramatic rise in interfaith initiatives with each new phase of the crises in the Middle East, and the availability of professionally experienced people to cooperate in such programs. Since 1950 the number of interfaith organizations has increased at twice the rate of population rise, and total interfaith event activity, at 27 times the population rise. The number of universities, and therefore the number of academics available to take part in dialogue programs, have also risen at a rate far higher than the world population, but how this relates to religious faith communities is not clear.

The data supporting these figures is provided in Appendix R and supports the conclusions of Tom Smith and Ian Smith⁶²⁷ that:

⁶²⁶ ———, "Dialogue is a must," (Gulen Movement Website, 2003).

⁶²⁷ While reliable data is not available for all countries, it is widely accepted that the trend is for lower participation rates in the WWCB and higher participation rates elsewhere, notably in Africa, and that Muslim participation is rising, overall, at a significantly faster rate than Christianity.

- interest and activity in interfaith dialogue within each of the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities and other faiths has increased during the Fifth Epoch;
- interest is greater within Islam than either Christianity or Judaism;
- that greater interest among Jews and Christians does not always translate into activity either because of fear of not being readily accepted or scorn at the churches long-held antagonism toward them;
- the increased interest among Christians is driven by the world crisis and fear of being swamped by changing circumstances and suffering, or at least losing a position of privilege as the numerical balance changes,
- the number of Christian clergy involved in organizing dialogue events, as a proportion of total Christian participants, is small, but the proportion of clergy to laity differs between the Roman Catholic and Protestant streams;
- that differential in representation of clergy is partly circumstantial, but in the case of the Catholic Church it suggests a policy of keeping such matters in the hands of the clerical hierarchy.

This situation might retard the achievement of attitudinal change and inhibit the adoption of changes in teaching which might rationally occur as an outcome of the dialogue process and collaborative consideration of theological matters which is basic to the purpose and effectiveness of dialogue. Many clergy and officials of religious institutions have been involved in interfaith initiatives, usually by invitation in functions organized by third parties, but the number of dialogue specialists employed by the churches is small, and the number of functions which they can organize is quite small in relation to the total number. If the churches are not prepared, or not able, to support additional clergy in interfaith dialogue roles it means that by default the initiative will remain with lay academics who appear, on the basis of current participation patterns, to have a greater awareness of the need.

The World Council of Churches publishes details of dialogue programs which it conducts; the Vatican releases reports of significant events which it conducts or in which it takes part; some regional councils of churches and individual church centres, such as St. Philip's Centre for Study and Engagement, Leicester, UK, are prepared to discuss their programs

Tom W. Smith, "Religious Change around the World," (Chicago: NORC/University of Chicago, 2009).

Ian Smith, John W. Sawkins, and Paul T Seaman, "The Economics of Religious Participation: A Cross-Country Study," *Kyklos* 51, no. 1 (2008).

while few make reports public, and it is therefore very difficult to graph such functions together with those of the civil society or NGO sector and universities. The reasons for this are evident from the attitudes and policies of the churches noted above, but information received indicates that in some cases reports have deliberately not been released because of concern that there might be an adverse public reaction, and even violence, if publicity was given to consultations that have been held.

In such circumstances, a spontaneous or rapid increase in dialogue activity by the churches, especially based on fundamental theological concepts such as Covenant, cannot be expected. However the gravity of crises which is directly related to either the abuse of obligations under covenant, or a response to such abuse, is such that they, and their opposite numbers in their partner faiths, Judaism and Islam, must sit at the same tables, confront the issues, and resolve them. Without evidence that this is taking place, and without the encouragement or the circumstantial pressure that this will provide, there can be no expectation of change in the level of understanding of the theological basis of the crises among political, military or business leaders, or in the policies which they pursue. Therefore, without religious leaders sitting at the same table, confronting the issues and resolving them, there can be little prospect of change with peace through negotiated settlements. If that situation persists, then change can only come through the mechanisms of the mature Hebrew understanding of covenantal judgement and retribution for abuse or neglect of covenantal obligations.

The requirement therefore is to examine current practices of conversation dialogue, decide how they can be implemented or adapted to best effect, and encourage all churches to invite their partner faiths to join them around the table forthwith. The evidence set out in this thesis supports the conclusion that it is the churches that must initiate the process because it is the theological basis on which they have either imposed or acquiesced in policies and practices which has brought the world to the current state of crisis. Muslim leaders have taken a series of key dialogue initiatives in recent years but they can not realistically be expected to initiate the conversation dialogue process. However it is established by the responses to the research questionnaire and supported by the evidence of their participation in other forms of dialogue from 1973 to now, that they are ready and more prepared to take part than the people of the Church. Thus the outcome of the crisis, if it is left to run its course, is likely to be determined by confrontation between the People

Israel (Judaism), supported by some allies from the WWCB, and the people of the Umma (Islam), supported by allies in the WMP.

It is of great concern that while many Western leaders parade their religious credentials, they are remote from an understanding of the theology of the religious traditions on which their societies are based. They cannot grasp the concept of communal judgement and the possibility that Divine Judgment is being exercised, and they and their systems are being called to account through the mechanism of cause-and-effect-related interaction between three partner-parallel-streams of Abrahamic faiths. His policy statements and initiatives prior to and immediately on taking office suggest that President Obama is an exception, has a keen understanding of covenantal relationships and is intent on moving his constituency in that direction. There is also evidence that domestic circumstances in the United States, coupled with the determination of those who influence its policies to retain an hegemonic grip on the world economy, are such that he is inhibited in implementing the necessary initiatives.

7. A starting point

As a starting point in a process of reconciliation to ameliorate the deepening crisis, the West must acknowledge that it is responsible for the circumstances in which the State of Israel was established and is now at the heart of the crisis. Even that will be a matter of great trauma and will take a lot of soul-searching. When the church is prepared to recognize that the establishment of the State of Israel *is a direct consequence* of long-term misconduct by the Christian West on the basis of its erroneous interpretation of the theology of covenant, and its self-understanding, it will have taken the first major step towards resolving the crisis.

However the Church is not the only body facing such a challenge. Jewish scholars and supporters of the State of Israel must also consider, equally carefully, their role and the nature of the Covenant of Sinai. If the Covenant is still in place with its three components (a promise, an obligation and a penal clause to be invoked in the event of failure to honour the obligation), which it is, then the penal clause is still in place just as firmly as the Divine assurance. When that is considered with Qur'anic passages relating to transgression and judgement, their leaders may be inspired by new insights into the partnership of the Peoples of the Book and the nature of both Divine intervention and covenantal obligation.

As already discussed, organized interfaith dialogue has been accelerated in a bid to offset the trend towards even greater conflict, but leadership groups of all three faiths have, until now, been unwilling to tackle the basis of the problem. Western leaders have regarded dialogue as a mechanism for alleviating conflict while they seek to protect their communities' immediate material interests by various means, including negotiation between government authorities. Working to strengthen the pastoral cohesion of their communities of faith is a secondary consideration, and they do not see dialogue as a path towards collaborative reassessment.

The WCC has actually reinforced its Trinitarian basis for membership,⁶²⁸ and, through the various associations of theological institutions, it has pursued policies of theological differentiation from its partner faiths.⁶²⁹ This reflects its member churches' long-standing opposition to dialogue, the reluctance that marked their acceptance of the process⁶³⁰, and the fact that when the initial guidelines for participation in dialogue were prepared by the Council in 1979, constraints were imposed on those involved, and the study of intertextuality was deliberately discouraged. Matters of theology and relationships which might be attributed to belief in, or rejection of, the concept of the Triune God were to be avoided for several reasons. One was to minimize the likelihood of personal faith being undermined by contradictory argument and "penetrating questions about the place of these people (of other faiths and ideologies) in the activity of God in history." Others were to avoid an antagonistic reaction caused by any tendency to be seen as manipulating the other party, and to avoid any impression that dialogue was "a secret weapon in the army of an aggressive Christian militancy."⁶³¹ This resulted in intertextual study being neglected by theologians and institutions of the Christian Church at the very time that it was urgently needed.

In fact it was not only intertextual study, but study of text *per se* which was neglected. This was discussed by Chad Pecknold in an introduction to the CHAI University Groups

628 WCC Membership Study Group, *Proposals for changes to the Rules of the World Council of Churches: Appendix A*, [Geneva: World Council of Churches, June 24, 2002]

629 Personal discussions with officials of the WCC, Geneva, and the Vatican, Rome, December 2002.

630 The first significant shift in institutional attitudes within the Christian Churches to non-Christian faiths occurred in 1961 when, in the presence of five Catholic Observers whose attendance had been authorized by Pope John XXIII, the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) urged its member churches to do all in their power to resist every form of anti-Semitism.

631 WCC Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies [Geneva, 1979, source: <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/77glines-e.html> accessed May 5, 2004]

and the Society for Biblical Reasoning at Cambridge University.⁶³² Circumstances have now forced a greater level of activity in dialogue programs involving the institutions of each faith, and they assume an urgency which religious leaders reluctantly admit, but the basis of dialogue programs has changed only slowly. In general terms it can be summarised as: understand the other's position, rights and belief, and develop cooperation and reconciliation, but do not explore bases of beliefs to the point of questioning one's own beliefs, because to do so may lead to reassessment, doubts about validity, and pressure for change.

The situation is illustrated by extracts from the report of the Moderator of the Central Committee of the WCC, HH Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia, in August, 2003.

- "Religions may generate mistrust and intolerance, and even fuel ethnic and political conflicts unless a common ground for a harmonious co-existence is found among them. Therefore, inter-religious collaboration, undergirded by serious theological dialogue, is imperative and urgent. Furthermore, the churches and the ecumenical movement must seek a deeper theological understanding of religious plurality, which shapes the very context in which the church is called to witness to God in Christ.
- "All religions potentially contain, in all aspects of their life, elements of eschatological vision. Is it safe then to look at religions as provisional realities moving towards eschatological convergence, towards God's future? Is it correct then to consider dialogue as the way leading the religions to the fulfilment of God's plan of salvation? Religious plurality is God's gift."⁶³³

The Moderator also noted that the guidelines have been revised to take account of the emerging realities affecting the nature and scope of dialogue. They read, in part:

It is the task of interreligious relations and dialogue to help prevent religion from becoming the fault line between communities.

For Christians, involvement in dialogue produces constant reappraisal of our understanding of the Biblical and theological tradition. Dialogue drives

⁶³² Chad Pecknold, "Welcome to the Children of Abraham Institute "
<http://www.people.virginia.edu/~pwo3v/chai/pages/university.htm>.

⁶³³ HH Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I, "Report of the Moderator " (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2003).

all communities to self-criticism and to re-thinking the ways in which they have interpreted their faith traditions.⁶³⁴

Those statements raise questions about research and educational techniques, rational assumptions, or conclusions that provide a starting point *if* the process of dialogue is to be more than an exercise in maintaining the status quo. They also highlight the need for a new awareness of the intertextuality of the Holy Books and recognition that there is absolutely nothing that can inhibit the Divine Authority in determining to whom, or to how many people, a divine injunction shall be directed so that, ultimately, a divine intent is achieved, or such that people are prompted to move in a manner consistent with divine intent.

The focus and the role of systematic religions has shifted. There are no longer two clearly definable roles or objectives. They have merged. There is now one primary objective: to facilitate a change in human relationships and understandings so that humanity is enabled to move expeditiously into an era of stability and harmony in which it can reach and sustain a viable population plateau for whatever may be the term of human existence.

In the context of the world crisis as it is, it is not sufficient for the theologians who must lead us out of the crisis search the texts, with one at their right, one at their left and their favoured one in front of them, with one or two colleagues for company, to find common threads or parallel teachings that will encourage them to recognize, to tolerate and to trust people of other faiths; to accept their Holy Books as legitimate guides to human conduct; and to lead, gradually, to intellectual and religious enquiry. The CHAI model⁶³⁵, developed at the University of Virginia following the establishment of the Society for Scriptural Reasoning⁶³⁶, certainly has great potential to enhance the base of understanding and commitment among those in training to lead future generations of each faith community, and for dialogue at regional levels.⁶³⁷

However, as important as it is, the trickle-down benefit from such a process will come only slowly: too slowly. It is vital that the process be accelerated by mature, experienced

634 WCC, "Ecumenical considerations for dialogue and relations with people of other religions," *Current Dialogue* 2002.

635 Peter Ochs, "The Rules of Scriptural Reasoning" (University of Virginia: Society for Scriptural Reasoning, 1999)., provides a rationale for the establishment of the Society for Scriptural Reasoning, the program of study and the methodology recommended by the author.

636 The Society for Scriptural Reasoning was a product of the third wave of dialogue initiatives since moves to establish a Jewish State were intensified in the wake of the Shoah.

637 Peter Ochs, "The CHAI Community: How to start a CHAI Kindred Center - A Brief Recipe," ([University of Virginia, 2002).

academics and clergy who are already established authorities in their particular faith streams collaborating in fundamental reassessment of theological concepts on the basis of an examination and understanding of the historical textual continuum. In a metaphorical sense all of the Holy Books and inspired writings must be set out, together, in chronological sequence, (and not only those which have been included in the canons of each faith), for study in the context of human history and communal evolution.

Clergy who are trained to work mainly in pastoral work and whose time is committed to that cannot be expected to undertake critical reviews in this manner. They have been trained for, and their whole purpose is maintaining those fundamentals and the status of their faith. Therefore the reconsideration must be done with scholars of each faith working in intimate collaboration with clergy of each faith. While some of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith are the most critical, no faith community can stand aloof and say: "We are not affected. Let's go our own way."

There is a continuum in the evolution of humanity and its social, communal and religious patterns, and therefore every factor in that continuum must be taken into account as the process of dialogical review progresses. There is purpose in comparing selected passages in each of the Holy Books to identify common threads and to assist and enhance dialogue programs at several levels at the same time, that method can be misused. When it is used in the techniques of apologetics to show that the texts have similar meaning in order to avoid further critical scrutiny, and to maintain the existing relationships between people and their community beliefs, it is an abuse of process.

No text can be properly considered or a concept reassessed in isolation from consideration of the writer's motive, the historical context in which it was written, and the context in which it is being considered, including the social, economic, political and literary influences impacting on it at the time. The circumstances in which interfaith relations must now be considered are totally different to those of any prior time. There has not been, until the advent of the nuclear age, a situation in which the human future has been at risk due to religious disputation. Some previous religion-based conflicts already discussed have been of enormous consequences for the communities directly involved, and some have resulted in near-elimination of ethnic communities which have been subject to genocidal invasion. It is therefore a matter of great concern that while the three countries which are motivated by real or potential religious conflict, Israel, Pakistan and India, are holding relatively

minor stocks, they show no interest in a nuclear weapons reduction. This means that we have to implement current methodology for dialogue as a matter of urgency, or develop new approaches.

8. Why the Delay?

The history of interaction between the communities of Christians, Jews and Muslims shows that dialogue between them has been an urgent need from the time that one faith became two, and two became three. It is a history of failure of leadership subsequent to the foundation of each faith – not of the founders – and it is due to the self-understandings they have developed as a consequence of warped or misunderstood theology, and in particular the theology of Covenant, and resistance to reflection and change. When tension or conflict has indicated a need for dialogue, the people in a dominant position have seen no justification for it. Dogmatic claims to special relationships with God and for the finality and correctness of their particular beliefs and practices have been principal factors. The most influential statement of belief in this respect is one that was introduced within the Western Christian Church without formal promulgation and which became known as the Creed of Saint Athanasius. (Chapter Five) Critical sentences of the statement read:

Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick Faith. Which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. ... He therefore that will be saved: must thus think of the Trinity. ... This is the Catholick Faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.⁶³⁸

That statement was introduced essentially as a weapon of coercion against dissidents, or heretics, within the church who followed Arius and maintained Christological definitions different to the leaders who determined what everyone was to believe, but it was equally effective in pursuing and disciplining people of the fringe faiths, such as Manichaeism. By simple extension it was easy to apply it to Jews as well and, as demonstrated in Chapter Five, such abuse of theology and covenant was a contributing factor in the divine call to Muhammad two centuries later to reform the religious practices of his region.

It was subsequently used against Muslims as well, and became a near-absolute barrier to dialogue and co-operation in relations with both its parent faith, Judaism, and Islam, and it triggered catastrophic consequences. It serves to focus attention on the evolution of

⁶³⁸ *A Prayer Book for Australia*. P. 836.

religious understanding and the structured development of theology as vital aspects of humanity's continuing evolution. Its importance is far greater than that of Emperor Constantine's attempt to secure political stability by ending interfaith turmoil by means of his decree in 324 CE that Christianity was to be the state religion, and it subsequently provided the backbone for Pope Gregory VII's *Dictatus Papae*.

Eugene Borowitz illustrated the process of evolution in Judaism and the significant influence of unfolding events and Covenant on self-understanding when he proposed that "Jewish spirituality has been decisively moulded by six momentous folk experiences: Covenant, Settlement, Rabbinism, Diaspora, Emancipation, and post-Holocaust disillusionment." He emphasized that he was referring to the experience of the Jewish people as a community and not to that of either one or another individual or humankind universally, and added: "Were I concerned with religion in general, either of those considerations would be worthy starting points."⁶³⁹

According to Ninian Smart,⁶⁴⁰ the synthesis of civilizations and their religious traditions in late antiquity provided the cultural matrix of much of our history in the West.

Indeed, the histories of both Judaism and Christianity are dependent upon their interaction with the religious traditions of these civilizations. ... The power of these religious traditions was not limited to their immediate successors. ... The rediscovery of classical traditions from ancient Greece and Rome during the Renaissance and the recovery of ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian texts in the 19th cent. have been crucial influences in the formulation of the modern spirit of humanism. These religious traditions, now separated from us by at least 2000 years, have continued to exert their power in the way we construct our history and our identity.⁶⁴¹

While Borowitz identified six particular experiences that were formative in Jewish spirituality, Smart, whose early works in developing new approaches to religious education coincided with (and greatly influenced) early attempts to establish interfaith dialogue programs, examined religious experience from the point of view of components or dimensions and the influences that were evident from them. He initially identified six dimensions: myth or sacred narrative; doctrine or philosophy; ritual or practical worship

⁶³⁹ Borowitz, *Renewing*. p. 1 10/04/12 See also Chapter Nine.

⁶⁴⁰ Ninian Smart and Richard D. Hecht, *Sacred Texts of the World: A Universal Anthology*, First ed. (London: Macmillan, 1982). p.1

⁶⁴¹ Ibid. p.2

and pilgrimage; social and institutional expression; experience and emotion; and ethics or legal considerations. To these he added material or symbolic manifestations.

These assessments establish that development of religious understanding, doctrine, practices and relationships has been, and still is, an evolutionary process influenced by many factors and increasingly involving both academic and secular contributions as well as formal ecclesiastic and conciliar review. Religious belief, theology and relationships are not fixed and final. They are major factors in the course of human affairs, but there is no point in modern or ancient history that can be determined on the basis of Biblical chronology as a starting point to appraise the development, validity and continuity of the concept of Covenant.

That appraisal requires an examination of pre-Abrahamic understanding of divine intervention in human affairs, whether that level of understanding of divine intervention also involves a degree of divine revelation, and the circumstances in which Yahwism evolved as the foundation of the Abrahamic faiths. That examination cannot be conducted in isolation. The context must be current knowledge of the origin and history of the universe, the evolution of humanity, and recognition of the evolution of a multiplicity of faith systems. On that basis conclusions may be reached about the purpose of systematic religion and the special role under covenant of the Abrahamic faiths. (Charts numbered 1 to 4 are intended as an aid in this respect.) This is supported by the decision of the World Council of Churches in 2002 to undertake a study of 'Religious Plurality and Christian Self-understanding,'⁶⁴² noting that:

“... dialogue, reconciliation, and peace building across the religious divides have become urgent, and yet they are never achieved through isolated events or programs. They involve a long and difficult process sustained by faith, courage, and hope.”⁶⁴³

Several decisions and events subsequent to that study have already been noted, but the specific issue of dialogue between Christians and Muslims was brought into sharp relief in September 2006 by a remarkably undiplomatic lecture by Pope Benedict XVI at the University of Regensburg which was widely interpreted as a rebuff to Islam and Muslim scholars, and an effort to minimize and dialogue contact with them. In due course the

642 WCC-CWME, "Religious plurality and Christian self-understanding - Document n° PB-13," (Geneva: World Council of Churches: , 2005a).

643 ———, "Religious plurality and Christian self-understanding - Document n° PB-14," (Geneva: World Council of Churches: , 2005b).

address backfired, and the result was that he had to agree to an ongoing program of direct conversations between Vatican officials and scholars, and a group of leading academics from Islam's leading international institutions, but for a year those who were involved in such dialogue were engaged in rebuilding bridges rather than dialogue. The pope's lecture was consistent with his policy of reducing the status of interfaith dialogue. Ten months after assuming office, in February 2006, he moved the highly regarded President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, to a post in Cairo, and merged that council with the Council for Culture a month later. The adverse reaction within the Vatican,⁶⁴⁴ from people involved such work in other churches, and from Muslim scholars was such that he reinstated the PCIRD in May 2007 under its current president, Cardinal Tauran, whose task was made much more difficult by the pope's lecture four months later.

Pope Benedict opened and closed a lecture to the scientific community on 'Faith, Reason and the University,' with remarks taken from a discussion between "the erudite Byzantine emperor Manuel II Paleologus and an educated Persian on the subject of Christianity and Islam, and the truth of both." The discussion returned repeatedly to "the relationship between - as they were called - three 'Laws' or 'rules of life': the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Qur'an." The emperor had said: "Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached." With total disregard for the church's history of violence in forced conversions, the Inquisitions and the burning alive of heretics at the stake he proceeded to discuss "this argument against violent conversion," saying "To convince a reasonable soul, one does not need a strong arm, or weapons of any kind, or any other means of threatening a person with death...". He closed his lecture with another quotation: 'Not to act reasonably, not to act with logos, is contrary to the nature of God', said Manuel II, according to his Christian understanding of God, in response to his Persian interlocutor.⁶⁴⁵

Muslim authorities and scholars responded formally with a carefully moderated open letter to Pope Benedict, signed by 38 eminent persons one month later, October 13, 2006, to

644 Confirmed to me during discussion with officials in Rome in November 2007 when the controversy was at another peak.

645 Pope Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University," (Vatican City: Zenit - Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2006).

“point out some errors in the way you mentioned Islam as a counterpoint to the proper use of reason, as well as some mistakes in the assertions you put forward in support of your argument.” They acknowledged various apologies, clarifications and affirmation of Islam which had followed the pope’s lecture, and added: “We hope that we will all avoid the mistakes of the past and live together in the future in peace, mutual acceptance and respect.”⁶⁴⁶ A year later, on October 13, 2007, after no substantive action by the Vatican, another letter was addressed to 28 Christian leaders, with Pope Benedict as the principal addressee, signed by 138 eminent Muslim scholars. It was an unconditional invitation intended to cover joint study of all aspects of the teaching of both faiths: to build on those that were in agreement, and to resolve matters that are in contention.

In summary, the 30-page letter said that Muslims and Christians together make up well over half of the world’s population. Without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world. The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians, In the Holy Qur’an, God Most High enjoins Muslims to issue the following call to Christians (and Jews—the *People of the Scripture*): *Say: O People of the Scripture! Come to a common word between us and you ...* Thus in obedience to the Holy Qur’an, we as Muslims invite Christians to come together with us on the basis of what is common to us, which is also what is most essential to our faith and practice: the *Two Commandments* of love.⁶⁴⁷

9. Subsequent developments

On November 19, 2007, more than a year after the Muslim scholars’ initial approach, Pope Benedict responded and opened the way to possible collaboration in various areas. In a letter to Cardinal Bertone on December 12, Jordanian prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal agreed to the groundwork for collaboration with a meeting of Officials of the Vatican and the Muslim world in Rome to establish the procedures and subject matter of this dialogue. It was set for March, 2008. However the response from Rome was somewhat negative. Catholic AsiaNews service editor Samir-Samir indicated the approach the Vatican group would take, reversing the use of the term ‘fundamental’ and applying it to matters of immediate practicality. He wrote:

⁶⁴⁶ 38 Muslim Scholars, "An Open Letter and Call from Muslim Religious Leaders to Pope Benedict XVI " (Amman: The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, Jordan., 2006).

⁶⁴⁷ 138 Muslim Scholars, "An Open Letter and Call from Muslim Religious Leaders to Pope Benedict XVI and 27 others," (Amman: The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, Jordan., 2007).

it's possible that all this work will go right down the drain. It seems to me, in fact, that the Muslim personalities who are in contact with the pope want to dodge fundamental and concrete questions, like human rights, reciprocity, violence, etc., to ensconce themselves in an improbable theological dialogue "on the soul and God".⁶⁴⁸

That meeting did take place; the PCIRD agreed to ongoing half-yearly talks; these have been extended to include talks with other key Islamic research and dialogue bodies, and subsequent events indicate that there is now an awareness within the Vatican of the need to prepare for more fundamental conversations with both Muslims and Jews.

In May, 2009, Pope Benedict acknowledged the correctness of the initial report by the meeting of the American Bishop's committee and the Synagogue committee on the questions of Covenant and Mission (Chapter Nine) which had drawn a sharp rebuke from senior Catholic hierarchy. In conversation with the Chief Rabbis in Jerusalem he "agreed that the Catholic Church will cease all missionary activity among Jews."⁶⁴⁹ The Pope's statement was greeted warmly and went some way toward offsetting the impact of *Dominus Iesus*, but continued heavy emphasis on Mariology, the beatification of saints, and the promulgation of the apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia*, indicating that evangelization of Asia is to be a priority, still undermines the confidence and readiness to participate of many Jews and Muslims who might otherwise be available as partners in dialogue.

Following a meeting of the Vatican's Synod of Bishops from the Middle East in October, 2009, a PCIRD delegation met with the Centre for Inter-Religious Dialogue of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization for their seventh colloquium, in Tehran, in November 2010. According to the Holy See Press Office the following points were agreed⁶⁵⁰

1. Believers and religious communities, based on their faith in God, have a specific role to play in society, on an equal footing with other citizens.
2. Religion has an inherent social dimension that the State has the obligation to respect; therefore, also in the interest of society, it cannot be confined to private sphere.

648 Samir Khalil Samir, "Benedict XVI's improbable dialogue with 138 Muslim scholars," *Catholic Internet news service*, January 9 2008.

649 Abe Selig, "'Vatican to stop missionizing Jews'," *Jerusalem Post*, May 12, 2009 2009.

650 Holy See Press Office, "CONCLUSIONS OF INTER-RELIGIOUS MEETING IN TEHRAN," (Vatican City: Vatican Information Service, 2010).

3. Believers are called to co-operate in the search for common good, on the basis of a sound relation between faith and reason.
4. It is necessary for Christians and Muslims as well as all believers and persons of good will, to co-operate in answering modern challenges, promoting moral values, justice and peace and protecting the family, environment and natural resources.
5. Faith, by its very nature, requires freedom. Therefore, religious freedom, as a right inherent to human dignity, must always be respected by individuals, social actors and the State. The cultural and historical background of each society which is not in contradiction with human dignity should be taken into consideration in applying this fundamental principle.
6. Education of the young generation should be based on the search for truth, spiritual values and promotion of knowledge.

Participants emphasized the “necessity of continuing on the path of a genuine and fruitful dialogue,” however its real significance lies in the first point. The use of the words “Believers and religious communities ... have a specific role to play” are an implicit admission or confirmation that their role is an obligation under Covenant. There is therefore no justification for continuing to oppose Conversation Dialogue on those matters: Covenant and Obligation.

It is now evident that the churches, either individually or in cooperation through ecumenical councils are undertaking ventures in dialogue which they would not consider a few years ago. There is no doubt that the stimulus is crisis, and the motive is stabilisation of local, regional or international relationships, but it is a trend in the right direction. For those for whom a dialogue venture is a new experience in uncharted waters, there are many patterns or models that can be used as a base to develop appropriate programs, and resources which can be adapted to a wide range of circumstances. One is the Dialogue Resource Manual for Catholics in Asia, edited by Edmund Chia for the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences. It has application for regional clergy retreats, urban and rural

community development, conflict resolution gatherings and student preparation and training.⁶⁵¹

The WCC has established an annual intensive month-long workshop program at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute, 'Building an Interfaith Community', convened by Odair Mateus, to bring together 30 people from the three traditions, aged 25 to 35, under the joint leadership of Council's Program on Inter-Religious Dialogue and Cooperation, the Muslim Inter-knowing Foundation, and the Jewish Racines et Sources Foundation.

Similarly, three scholars experienced in dialogue, are coordinating the establishment of The Abrahamic Council which is planned as a permanent global council with 30 honorary members whose focus will be fact finding and gathering viewpoints and perspectives which will be documented for interest groups of rabbis, clergy and imams who are seeking common ground of matters that can be agreed upon. The coordinators are Mohamed A. Mohamed, Northern Arizona University Religious Studies Department; Yehuda Stolov, Israel's Interfaith Encounter Association; and Hans Ucko, formerly of the WCC Dialogue Unit.⁶⁵²

The Claremont Lincoln University has been established in California as an multi-faith institution which, according to South Africa's Ambassador to the United States, is embarking on an uncharted journey of desegregating religious education, focusing its energy on finding solutions rather than occupying the ramparts of ideology and doctrine. This shows that many organizations are 'thinking outside the box' to develop crisis reconciliation programs for situations related in one way or another to the circumstances of the Middle East, including Turkey, Egypt and Nigeria.

The crisis in Kashmir illustrates such a situation in which the National Council of Churches in India is endeavouring to ameliorate the crisis by means of its Kashmir Dialogue Program. The NCCI has gained credibility with the communities concerned because it has few adherents in the region and is accepted as an unbiased party. The crisis dates from the failed British boundary negotiations between India and Pakistan at the time of independence in 1947 which left the Jammu and Kashmir Valleys in dispute. In 2008, the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) sought to defuse the situation by

651 Edmund Chia, ed. *Dialogue resource manual for Catholics in Asia* (Bangkok-Petaling Jaya: FABC-OEIA, 2001).

652 The Abrahamic Council. <http://www.a-c.org/index.html> Searching Scripture Together.

removing or reducing the significance of religion as a factor in the dispute without seeking to influence the negotiations or decision on the boundary and national sovereignty issues.

The Council's Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation authorised a program of Dialogue planned by Executive Secretary, R. Christopher Rajkumar. It has involved public meetings to gauge community attitudes and assess what might be acceptable, and small group meetings with expelled former leaders and professionals invited back to meet their counterparts. These proved highly emotional home-comings which helped to relieve deeply held wounds, and generated very warm responses from those on the fringes. Currently the focus is on a group of academics, journalist and artists from each community working together to gather archival material, papers, records and artworks to recall the richness of the multi-cultural community in the pre-crisis days, for exhibitions and publications (if they can raise the funds from sources which are not regarded as prejudiced), while further strategies are considered to enhance the recovery which is taking root.⁶⁵³

This examination of the deepening crisis, early reluctance to act on it and measures that have been taken to offset it during the past four decades shows that progress has been made. However, no one approach is appropriate in every situation, and the development of a range of interfaith dialogue programs is necessary. Until now there has been resistance to engaging in conversation dialogue, but the crisis is now so deep that it can no longer be restrained because of fears of disengagement from the church or weakening of faith, and a proposal for a vigorous program of multi-level dialogue with conversation dialogue at peak-of-faith level is considered in chapter ten.

⁶⁵³ Source: personal discussions in India, October 2010.

Chapter Ten

No turning back: conclusions and recommendations

Based on and discussion in preceding chapters, the following conclusions have been reached.

1. Principal Conclusions

The concept of a community-specific divine covenant is intrinsic to each of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Next after the concepts of God and Creation, divine covenant is the fundamental concept in Abrahamic Monotheism. Their Community-specific divine covenants differentiate the Abrahamic faiths from all others.

The first community-specific covenant was invoked and imposed on Abraham in the early years of the second millennium BCE and a comprehensive mature understanding of the concept and its administration was developed by Hebrew prophets prior to the Common Era. Subsequently the nature and application of covenant has been revealed, demonstrated and confirmed through the five epochs identified below. Circumstantial critical events and interaction have marked the close of one phase of revelation and the beginning of the next phase in each case.

Epoch 1: Exemplary Revelation	closed 63 BCE
Epoch 2: Shared Responsibility	closed 622 CE
Epoch 3: An Extended Network	closed 1455 CE
Epoch 4: A Brutal Demonstration	closed 1948 CE
Epoch 5: Application	current

The successive circumstantial invocation and evolution of Judaism, Christianity and Islam has occurred in such a manner that illustrates the nature of divine intervention to penalize a covenanted community for non-compliance with its obligations, and to ensure continuity in the exemplification of Divine Will.

2. The current situation

- The communal penal code is now being put into effect against the WWCB through the inversion of relationships between the WWCB and the WMP in such a manner that

humanity is enabled to - and might - recognize, both the reality of divine covenant and its relationship with God. Furthermore, in doing so, humanity might also recognize the following matters.

- The establishment of the State of Israel has become the central fact of the Common Era and that the *People Israel* are unwittingly involved in the process of inversion as a catalyst-under-covenant.
- The penalty for the WWCB's breach of covenant is being implemented through the retaliatory response of Muslim communities to long-running exploitation in their interaction with both Israel and the WWCB in Islam's role as an agent of reform and renewal under covenant.
- Humanity might, if it responds to those matters, enjoy stability, justice and harmony as a result of the continuing cyclical application of each of the community-specific covenants together with the Universal Noahide Covenant.

3. Covenant in brief

- The invocation or initiation of a covenant is entirely a matter for God, the first party. It is not activated by request or negotiated; it is non-negotiable, critical conditional, perpetual, cyclical and inescapable. It will not be abrogated or annulled, and is neither superior or inferior to another which preceded it or which was initiated subsequently.
- Covenant is a means by which God reveals the Divine will and intentions for humanity and all of creation, and a means of enabling humanity to gain a meaningful understanding of its relationship with God.
- Interaction between parties which are subject to identifiable community-specific covenants may be a means of exemplifying either an aspect of covenant or as aspect of divine intention.
- A covenant involves a relationship which is imposed on the second party. It is not an agreement in any sense.
- It is not static, and the status of the relationship between the parties and the phase of the covenant cycle which is dominant at any time are dependent entirely on the conduct of the second party.
- The conduct of a second party to a covenant is subject to guidance, and misconduct may be proscribed, but the party's conduct is entirely determined by unrestricted free will, and it cannot avoid any adverse circumstances which result.
- The principal attributes or aspects of a communal covenant are four, viz:-

- It has been initiated by a divine call or command to a person who, in responding to the call, has become the founding leader of an identifiable community which is subject to a community-specific covenant thereafter.
 - It involves a divine undertaking or promise which is conditional upon adherence to linked obligations.
 - It involves an obligation or obligations associated with a role or roles which may be identified together with the call or command, or may be latent and recognizable circumstantially.
 - It involves a penal clause under which rejection of a covenantal obligation or failure to adhere to it may involve divine judgment and the application of a penalty.
- A penalty is not necessarily invoked immediately upon the relevant inaction or misconduct of the second party. By the nature of Divine Will it may be applied and become apparent progressively, or after a substantial circumstantial delay, or it might not become apparent until subsequent generations.
 - It is very likely to involve a retaliatory reaction by a third party that has been adversely affected by the relevant inaction or misconduct.
 - It might involve the temporary negation or withholding of a Divine undertaking which has been recognized as basic to the covenant, and which will be reinstated, subject to the second party returning to God's favour through repentance and recompense for the third party.
 - It might also involve a new role or a variation in emphasis within the existing role, not anticipated or announced in a previously understood manner, and invoked by God in relation to a Divine undertaking which is already understood and recognized as an aspect of a different community-specific or universally applicable covenantal relationship.
 - In that case the cyclical pattern of repentance, recompense, adherence to the obligations of the new role and a return to God's favour will be entirely consistent with all aspects of the covenant to which the second party has been subject since its invocation.
 - The common primary role and obligation of each Abrahamic faith is to exemplify and teach the fundamental universal covenantal relationship between humanity and God.
 - The penalty/retribution may involve the withholding of the divine undertaking.
 - The divine undertaking may be reinstated subsequently and circumstantially on the basis of cyclical continuity in perpetuity.

- The Mosaic, Christian and Qur'anic Covenants were invoked circumstantially; they do not stand alone; they are linked in partnership; none have been abrogated, and the restoration of an undertaking under one covenant does not annul any other.
- The exemplary demonstration of that partnership was the convergence of prophecy from the Qur'an, Maimonides, and the Book of Mormon in the Shoah and the establishment of the State of Israel. Thus the establishment of the State of Israel is the central fact of the Common Era.
- The key understanding that the components of the MHUDC also applied to the Christian community as well as to the Jews was undermined or lost when the church adopted Supersessionism, rejected the key aspects of communal obligation and judgement, and developed a Christology-based self-understanding which became the basis of its unhealthy interdependent relationship with the dominant imperial power.
- The application of the penal clause for non-compliance with covenantal obligations is now apparent in the inversion of the relationship between the WWCB and the WMP in which the People Israel are an unwitting catalyst in a process involving interaction between each of the covenanted faiths.
- The fact of that inversion, that the State of Israel came into existence due to competitive interaction between the three faiths, and their continued separate existence, will provide perpetual evidence of the manner of God's participation in the affairs of the world and, humanity in particular.
- Although no one covenant takes precedence over another in contemporary application, Israel remains the focus of the Abrahamic traditions as indicated in 'Basic considerations,' following.

4. Basic considerations in the current global crisis

The historical relationships: How each sees the others

Judaism, being the first of the three Abrahamic faiths to be organized institutionally, being the first to prepare written historical records, and being the clan-based exclusive community into which Jesus Christ was born and from which Christianity separated in due course, is recognized, on that basis, by Christians and Muslims as having precedence. The Hebrew Scriptures are acknowledged by both Christianity and Islam as foundational scriptures. They are incorporated in the Christian Bible and are recognized by Islam as the first of three portions of "The Book" which consists of the canonized scriptures of Judaism

and Christianity and the Qur'an, and the Pentateuchal writings are accepted by all three as the basis of the Law.

However, the New Testament Scriptures, all of which were written by third persons in the Post-Pentecostal period, are given precedence by the churches as the basis of Christian belief and doctrine. In spite of the manner in which both the Old and New Testament Scriptures have been written, compiled and edited, some denominations and adherents regard the entire collection as inerrant, although the majority do not. Similarly, the Qur'an is given precedence in Islam as the final portion of The Book, and although it has also been subject to some editing and structural rearrangement, it is regarded by Muslims as fully revealed to the Prophet Muhammad and dictated by him to scribes during his lifetime. On that basis, when there are differences in interpretation of revelation or historical information, the Qur'anic interpretation is always defended strongly.

Judaism is absolute in its Monotheism. Its scholars overwhelmingly reject the notions that Jesus and/or Muhammad were divinely inspired prophets, and in Christianity's earliest phase, Jewish teachers saw it as a Jewish heresy; uncensored versions of the Talmud and Midrash refer to it as a heretical sect believing in a form of dualism; during the Middle Ages it was regarded as idolatrous; during the 16th cent. a number of Rabbis assisted some Christian Reformers in their study and interpretation of Hebrew Scripture and the Talmud, but were roundly condemned by others, including Luther; and within Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism there is intense opposition to the 'Jews for Jesus Movement' as misguided.⁶⁵⁴

Maimonides, confronted by the wrath of the *Reconquista*, was scathing in his condemnation of Jesus as a vulgar one who aspired to be Messiah, of Christianity as the greatest stumbling block, and of Muhammad as "that Ishmaelite who arose after him", saying that their deeds "will only serve to prepare they way for the Messiah's coming and the improvement of the entire world."⁶⁵⁵ However, in the modern era Jewish scholars have seldom condemned Christianity out of hand, and in recent years, according to Jacobs, because it is the dominant world community of faith, it has become accepted as a competitive religious movement and "there has been a growing realization that the two have enough in common to enable them to work in harmony for human betterment."

654 Jacobs, "Companion." pp. 79-80.

655 Maimonides, *Mishneh* 14. Chapter 11, pp. 234,236.

Many Jews now welcome Jewish-Christian dialogue as enabling each side to understand the other and even learn from it.⁶⁵⁶

Muslims, equally absolute in their Monotheism as Jews, have never disputed the validity of Judaism as a legitimate continuing faith, and the Qur'an recognizes that God "took" solemn covenants from each of Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus.⁶⁵⁷ There is no suggestion that any of these covenants have been abrogated, and very strong indications that their adherents are bound by the instructions that each of them delivered. In an open letter to church leaders in October 2007, 138 Muslim scholars who responded to Pope Benedict's provocative Regensburg Lecture specifically invited Christian leaders to work with them as partners "on the basis of what is common to us."⁶⁵⁸ This clearly indicates that the Qur'an and Muslim scholars do not endorse the Christian Church's interpretation of Jesus' status or the "New Covenant."

And remember We took
From the Prophets their Covenant:
And from thee:
From Noah, Abraham, Moses,
And Jesus the son of Mary:
We took from them
A solemn Covenant. (S.33 7.)

Concerning seniority of the faith system, Islam concedes nothing to Judaism, relying on Qur'anic text to establish that Islam and Judaism both arose during Abraham's lifetime. The verses S.2 A.125-132 relate that Abraham and Ishmael built the Ka'ba at Mecca, that God covenanted with them there, and that they undertook to submit and to sanctify the House.

And Abraham enjoined
Upon his sons
And so did Jacob:
"Oh my sons! Allah hath chosen
The Faith for you; then die not
Except in the state of submission (to Me). (S.2 132)

⁶⁵⁶ Jacobs, "Companion." pp. 79-80.

⁶⁵⁷ The use of the term "took" in authorized English translations implies a more definite, positive and authoritative action than the terms "gave", "accepted" or "entered into."

⁶⁵⁸ Scholars, "Muslim Scholars' Letter."

Muslim scholars, generally, acknowledge that continuity of belief or organizational structure from the time of Ishmael's descendants to the Meccan community is not verifiable, and that God first "gave the Book to Moses" (S.11 A.110). When it was disputed and corrupted, God then revived and rejuvenated His message through Islam⁶⁵⁹, and the Qur'an maintains that those who turn away from the religion of Abraham "debase their souls." (S.2 A.130)

Mainstream Christian Churches acknowledge Judaism as their parent faith and that Jesus was born a Jew, but while individual scholars conceded the continuing validity of the faith and the institution, the churches did not. They vigorously held to Supersessionism and claims that the Mosaic Covenant had been abrogated and that scattered Jewish communities existed only to demonstrate that they were remnants of a dead faith that had been superseded by Christianity. They claimed exclusive Apostolic succession and authority by virtue of Peter being Jesus' designated successor and the first bishop of Rome, and this left no room for a competitor Prophet or faith. In doing so, they chose to ignore a key statement attributed to Jesus.

'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Mt. 5:17-20)

Jesus did not condemn Judaism. He remained within it. He condemned only those who distorted it or failed to comply with its teachings.

Thus, even though Muhammad established a special relationship with Christians, recognizing them as brothers, the church learned nothing from him, totally rejected him, his prophetic ministry and Islam, and set out to destroy it. It is only now, in the early decades of the Fifth Epoch, that the Roman Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches and many of its member churches have formally rejected Supersessionism, and, with much debate and reluctance, accepted the validity of both Judaism and Islam. Even so, they have not been able to take the next step and declare that they are partner faiths;

659 "The Holy Qur'an: Trans. Yusuf Ali." See footnote 1613 by A. Yusuf Ali to that reference, S.11 A.110.

some sections of the Roman Catholic Church openly defy the Pope Benedict XVI's statement that there will be no more evangelical missionary activity towards Jews,⁶⁶⁰ and, in its major document, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, the Vatican still maintains or tries to justify the notion that there is a hierarchy of faiths with the Catholic church at the pinnacle.

A meeting of the College of Cardinals in November 2010, heard the prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, Archbishop Angelo Amato S.D.B., reflect on the controversial Instruction 'Dominus Iesus' which was promulgated in 2000. He noted that the document "served to clarify certain fundamental Christological and ecclesiological truths, and to relaunch ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue on the basis of a precisely defined Catholic identity." He was also reported as saying "it did not close the lines for research into the great question of the salvation of non-Christians, as indicated by Vatican Council II," and by warning against a poorly-understood pluralism, it remains a valid call to doctrinal and pastoral clarity, as a foundation for catechesis, new evangelisation and "mission ad gentes".⁶⁶¹

That comment is somewhat akin to Charles Wesley's 18th cent. view that the universal phenomenon of conscience is a sign of the universality of God's Grace "not only in all Christians, but in all Mahometans, all pagans, yea the vilest of savages," and the God whom he served was "not the God of the Christians only, but the God of the Heathens also."⁶⁶²

It is also consistent with evidence from surveys by the PEW organization in the United States that church-going Christians are now less likely than in earlier generations to accept without question what is said from the pulpit, and that there is increasing awareness that the church has a Trinitarian faith, and worships a Triune God, sandwiched in time and succession between the two world faiths which are dynamically absolute in their Monotheism.

660 Selig, "'Vatican to stop missionizing Jews'."

661 Archbishop Angelo Amato, "'Dominus Iesus': Reflections after ten years," in *College of Cardinals* (Vatican City: Vatican Information Service, 2010).

662 Stephen Skuse, "Towards an Authentic Wesleyan Inter-faith Understanding," *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 19, no. 1 (2009).

5. Not one, but a series of interlinked crises

The nature and potential consequences of current world crises, firmly focussed on the Middle East, are quite different to any previous crisis in world affairs. It is not a crisis based on confrontation between two great power blocks or empires, nor simply a crisis over occupation of a piece of land, or a crisis over control of a resource, water. These are the things that draw it to our attention. It is a crisis over the human future, a crisis of human misconduct, and a crisis of theological understanding. It is a crisis of covenantal obligations rejected.

It is focused on, and in the immediate sense it is based on, a confrontation between two communities. One, Israel, is small but powerful, ranked eleventh as a nation in global fire power, well ahead of its immediate neighbours and potential combatants,⁶⁶³ and able to call on the might of the world's hegemonic power which accounts for 46.5% of the total global defence budget for 2011.⁶⁶⁴ The other, the Palestinians, comprise a smaller stateless community living within a state but without borders or a country name,⁶⁶⁵ and which is totally dependent on friendly countries for military (non-police) support: the Palestinians. But the crisis, with Israel as a catalyst wedged between two power Blocs or interest groups, is bringing significant changes. The two Blocs are the WWCB, and the WMP, and the impact, if a war erupts, may be great indeed.

The changes resulting from the establishment of the State of Israel, negotiations leading to it, wars in which it has been involved, and measures taken in its defence by its big ally, the US, have changed attitudes and altered relationships significantly. They include:

- The establishment of new and influential interest groups including the League of Arab States;⁶⁶⁶ the Organization of the Islamic Conference; and the Arab Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

663 GlobalFirePower.com data base, November 2010. Israel 11th, Egypt 17th, Iran 18th, Saudi Arabia 24th, Syria 34th, Libya 39th; Turkey, near but not an immediate neighbour, 10th. Population: 7.35 m of whom 5.6 m are Jewish and 1.75 m are non-Jewish (almost all Arab) Source: US CIA Fact Book

664 Stockholm International Peace Research Yearbook 2010.

665 The Palestinian National Authority has an organizational structure and governs people, but the land they live in does not have an internationally recognized name. (UN Non-Member Observer list) Population: West Bank 2.5 m, Gaza Strip 1.6 m, total 4.1 m, but claiming the allegiance of many of the estimated 1.7 m Arabs who live in Israel. Source: US CIA Fact Book.

666 A Special Resolution of the founding meeting of the Arab League reads in part:

Palestine constitutes an important part of the Arab World and that the rights of the Arabs in Palestine cannot be touched without prejudice to peace and stability in the Arab World.

- greater cohesion within the countries of the non-WWCB which have coalesced around the plight of the Palestinian people, including the countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Organization of African Unity, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77, and The Organization of American States, strengthening their negotiating positions
- a dramatic boost in the recognition and influence of Islam as a consequence of the trading changes and provision of aid from AOPEC following the Yom Kippur War
- antagonism towards the US, especially, for the militarisation of governments which accepted peace treaties with Israel against the wishes of their own people
- The weakening of the United States' economic position due to the demands of additional regional defence commitments made necessary by its guarantees of defence protection for Israel
- the establishment of various terrorist organizations whose aims are to discourage support for Israel and to punish countries which continue to support it, and in particular the attacks on the United States in September 2001
- all operations which the US has launched as a consequence of those attacks, and extreme travel security measures which the US expects the whole world to introduce in order to reduce the prospect of further attacks in the US.
- The destruction of Iraq to prevent an invasion of Israel and the closure of oil supplies from the Gulf to the US.
- The prior destruction of Iraq's nuclear facility; the subsequent undermining of the Nuclear Disarmament Treaty by its own insistence on building and retaining nuclear weapons, and the current destabilizing influence of its threat against Iran for the same reason.

However, from the point of view of the need to resolve the current world crisis through dialogue between the three faiths involved in the Middle East the vital concern is that at an early stage of the crisis, when the Middle East was a sub-theme in the Cold War, the United States, by its own decision, became dependent for its own economic and political

Pledges binding the British Government ... for the cessation of Jewish immigration, .and ...independence for Palestine ... would constitute a step ... stabilization of peace and security.

The Committee ... is second to none in regretting the woes which have been inflicted upon the Jews of Europe by European dictatorial states ... these Jews should not be confused with Zionism ... there can be no greater injustice and aggression than solving (their) problem by ... inflicting injustice on the Arabs of Palestine of various religions and denominations.

stability on its ability to maintain stability between Israel and its neighbours. (Chapter seven.)

That situation has not changed. It greatly inhibits the capacity of the US to put pressure on Israel to make concessions to achieve long term peace, and another critical stage in the CME has been reached. Israel fears that Iran is about to take the place of Iraq in trying to force the issue of Palestinian statehood when King Hussein withdrew and ceded the West Bank to the Palestinians, but it still rebuffs United States' efforts to negotiate a resolution and, believing that the US is still locked in, insists on more support, and wants to "do an Iraq" on Iran.

6. Deepening crisis: changing attitudes

It is certain that supporters of the Palestinians and people in the countries neighbouring Israel will keep the pressure on Israel irrespective of the measures which the United States and Israel, together, take to 'Balkanize' the region and to maintain 'bought peace' relationships with their governments through arms deals, trade or threats. That pressure has increased as a consequence of Israel's attack on a Turkish-led flotilla of aid ships which were attempting to break Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip in May, 2010, and Turkey's review of its relations with Israel. That domestic pressure can be expected to increase further and not to subside following the Tunisian rebellion in January, 2011, and the so-called 'Arab Spring'.

Many factors influence the basic relationships and global perceptions. The gulf between the WWCB and the WMP is widening. The immediate apparent cause of the rebellions which erupted into the Arab Spring cycle was corruption, economic policies, and disparity between the wealth of the elite and the poverty of the wider populations. However the admissions and other evidence of long term planning, coercion and undermining of governments to enhance the capacity of the United States, some allies and Israel, to benefit from 'regime change' in the Middle East and North Africa, (the MENA region), is overwhelming.

The 'Project for the New American Century' was discussed in Chapter Seven, but just as critical in understanding the US-Israeli Alliance and its impact in MENA is the document

'A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm',⁶⁶⁷ for which Richard Perle was the lead author. It was compiled in June 1996 as a working paper for the incoming Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and published by the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies as IASPS Research Papers in Strategy #1.

The preamble reads, in part, that some will counsel continuity but Israel has the opportunity to make a *clean break*; and to forge a peace process and strategy based on an entirely *new intellectual foundation* which restores strategic initiative and provides the nation with room to engage every possible energy on rebuilding Zionism. The eight-page document then includes proposals for undermining Syria, Iraq and Iran, collaboration with Jordan and Turkey, forging a new basis for its relations with the United States, and changing the nature of its relations with the Palestinians, including upholding the right of hot pursuit for self defense into all Palestinian areas and "nurturing alternatives to Arafat's exclusive grip on Palestinian society."

Displaying *moral ambivalence* between the effort to build a Jewish state and the desire to annihilate it by trading "*land for peace*" will not secure "*peace now*." Our claim to the land—to which we have clung for hope for 2000 years—is legitimate and noble. It is not *within our own power*, no matter how much we concede, *to make peace unilaterally*. Only the unconditional acceptance by Arabs of our rights, *especially* in their territorial dimension, "*peace for peace*," is a solid basis for the future.

It said Israel's quest for peace *emerges* from, and does not *replace*, the pursuit of its ideals, and the Jewish people's hunger for human rights — burned into their identity by a 2000-year old dream to live free in their own land. However, the heavy hand with which it has pursued that dream has so disenchanted people around the world that when the Palestinian Authority was able to take its application for membership to UNESCO it was admitted with 107 countries voting in favour, only 14 voting against, 52 abstaining and 21 not present. The pressure applied to countries to vote against Palestinian membership was enormous, and while 73 did not vote, the 14 countries which voted 'No', including the United States, Israel, Australia and Canada, amounted to only 7.2 % of the world population, compared with an estimated 80 % of the population in the 107 countries which voted 'Yes.'

667 Richard Perle, "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm," (Washington / Potomac, Maryland: American Enterprise Institute, 1996). Retrieved from <http://www.iasps.org/strat1.htm> 29/12/2011

The world is tiring of reading the extent to which the United States underwrites Israel's capacity to resist a settlement with the Palestinian people and has promoted, assisted, financed and trained subversive opposition groups in each country in which it wants regime change, and in which it supports American NGOs to act as conduits. In April 2011 Michael Posner, assistant US Secretary of State for Human Rights and Labour, was quoted by AFP as saying the "US government has budgeted \$50 million in the last two years to develop new technologies to help activists protect themselves from arrest and prosecution by authoritarian governments." The US "organized training sessions for 5,000 activists in different parts of the world. A session held in the Middle East about six weeks ago [February 2011] gathered activists from Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon who returned to their countries with the aim of training their colleagues there." He added, "They went back and there's a ripple effect." Author Tony Cartalucci noted that the ripple effect was the "Arab Spring," and in Syria's case, unrest threatening to unhinge the nation and provide a rationale for foreign intervention.⁶⁶⁸

In an extensive report on November 18, 2011, Rick Rozoff detailed recent US military aid and cooperation with Israel and "friendly" Arab Gulf States and the joint exercises with Israel that were planned for early 2012. He cited the Jerusalem Post as saying "The purpose of the exercise (Juniper Cobra) is to create the necessary infrastructure that would enable interoperability between Israeli and American missile defense systems in case the US government decided to deploy these systems here in the event of a conflict with Iran, like it did ahead of the Gulf War in Iraq in 1991." He also cited an Ha'aretz report attributing to Andrew Shapiro, Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs, the statement that the missile drills would represent the "largest" and "most significant" joint military manoeuvres ever held by the U.S. and Israel.

Growing concern at the consequences of such policies has encouraged additional governments to ratify the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development which was launched in 2006. To date the signatories, totalling 112, do not include either the United States or Israel. These matters provide a sobering background to the national self-understanding of the United States as assessed by the PEW Public Religion Research Institute.⁶⁶⁹ It reports that 58 % of Americans agree that "God has granted America a

668 Tony Cartalucci, "Syria's Opposition Is Armed," *Land Destroyer Report* - AFP 2011.

669 Adam Muhlenford, "Emerging Religious Issues: Findings from the 2010 Post-Election American Values Survey," ed. Daniel Cox (PEW Public Religion Research Institute, 2010).

special role in human history.” By religious affiliation the levels of agreement are: white evangelicals, 83 %; mainline Protestants, 53 %; Catholics, 54 %. In contrast, 67 % of those with no Christian religious affiliation reject the idea. Agreement levels by political affiliation also differ widely: Tea Party, 76 %; Republican, 75 %; independents, 54 %; Democrats, 49 %. Those without Christian religious affiliation are more likely to oppose the use of torture, 57 %, than those affiliated, about 50 %.

If the responses to the question of American Exceptionalism reflect an understanding of covenant, it suggests that the majority of those polled think of covenant basically from the point of view of divine protection or the granting of the right to pursue personal benefit through a policy of resource hegemony. The high agreement among white evangelicals is consistent with that segment’s Christian Zionist belief that America has a responsibility to God to protect Israel until Christ’s return. (Chapter Eight)

7. The Context for Enhanced Dialogue

The world is in a state of crisis, but that is nothing new. For the whole of the 20th cent. the Great Powers blundered from one crisis to another. At the end of WW II, when peace was supposed to prevail, the confrontation between the socio-economic and political philosophies of Western Capitalist countries and Soviet-led Socialist-Communist countries of Eastern Europe and Asia, threatened far greater disaster than humanity experienced during WW II.

It was as if the system of economic management one lived under was more important than life itself. In a massive nuclear arms race the two blocks adopted policies to dominate ‘first strike’ capacity, aiming to maintain “peace” through a policy of ‘mutually assured destruction’. Those policies required resource exploitation, global deployment of military capacity, and matching economic strategies of ‘globalization’ such that the socio-economic gap between the WWCB and the WMP widened and social and cultural traditions in the non-WWCB countries were undermined, often openly denigrated by Western authorities and correspondents. The natural response was the development of anti-Western sentiment, and as the West was seen as an instrument of Christianity, the sentiment assumed an increasing level of antagonism to the churches – and to Christian minorities in those countries.

During the period from the 1950s to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, every war and lesser conflict was seen as related to the 'Cold War,' and many were, indeed: Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Afghanistan and some in Latin America and Africa as well. Component conflicts of the crisis in the Middle East were caught in that net, also: notably the Suez Crisis, the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War, Syria and Iraq. So after the Cold War all was supposed to return to 'normal': peace and stability.

However, without the 'background noise' of the Cold War, people were able to hear and recognize the Crisis in the Middle East more clearly. The writings of Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington in particular drew attention to the disruptive impact of Western intervention in the Muslim World, and the antagonistic response it brought, and politicians and academics began writing openly about 'Islam against the West.'⁶⁷⁰ It would have been more appropriate to term the situation 'The West against Islam.'

The significance of the series of wars involving Israel from 1948 to the 1990s (chapter seven) and the progressively deteriorating situation became apparent, but from a Western perspective it was just "the Arabs against Israel" with little consciousness of multiple Christian involvements. The Christian involvement had several aspects.

- Christian Arabs born, living and working in Israel (some with Israeli citizenship) and in the neighbouring countries, and enjoying close and cordial cooperation with Muslims in all programs, including calls for UN and foreign government support for Palestine⁶⁷¹;
- organized groups from the WCC, the MECC, and councils of churches in other countries including especially the USA, acting in dual roles as independent peace facilitators and educators, and providing aid for Palestinian communities;
- Christian Zionist organizations and some evangelical Christian groups working with Israel through the Christian Embassy in Jerusalem;
- official US military and non-military aid budgets for Israel; and

⁶⁷⁰ Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *The Atlantic Monthly*, , no. September (1990).

Samuel Phillips Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations " *Foreign Affairs* no. Summer (1993).

Edward Said, "The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations,," (University of Massachusetts,, 1998).

Ian R. Fry, "Globalization: the trigger for reconciliation through collaborative theological reassessment," in *AASR 1999: "The End of Religions? Religion in an Age of Globalization"* (Sydney University1999).

⁶⁷¹ Jarjour, "Dialogue and Coexistence."

- official, but relatively token, US aid for neighbouring Arab countries which had accepted “bought peace” agreements with Israel.

On this basis, although Christians were directly involved in Palestine, in support groups and peace efforts, Muslim countries saw Christian aid as overwhelmingly supporting Israel to enable it to maintain its exclusiveness and to resist pleas and pressure for a viable Palestinian State. However the relationship between the communities has not always been that close.

The Crisis in the Middle East has a complex three-thousand-year history. That requires a concerted reassessment of relationships between each of the Abrahamic faiths, a review of policies and practices they have adopted on the basis of their particular religious self-understanding, and a change of direction to accommodate the rights and needs of humanity for an epoch we can barely comprehend. The State of Israel is the focal point of a process of change which is seeing the WWCB forfeit its undeserved position of dominance and privilege, and which is enabling the peoples of other affiliations to benefit from that change.

This situation is totally consistent with the Hebrew understanding of Divine Covenant developed prior to the Common Era, with the Qur’anic understanding, and with aspects of Covenant which continue to apply to the WWCB under the Christian Covenant as well. Neither Israel nor the communities of Dār al-Islām are to blame for the present crisis, nor for the consequences if steps to alleviate it are not taken soon, even though some of their people are contravening their obligations under covenant by using oppression or terrorism to achieve their aims in the manner of their terrorist forces during the 1920s and 1930s, prior to the establishment of the State of Israel.

8. Whose task? Three Partners.

If Israel cares to take the lead, and to reach a settlement to the satisfaction of the Palestinians, it can anticipate gaining the support of the worldwide communities of faith, and, in so doing, facilitate the diversion of funds and technology on a massive scale to the developing countries that have suffered such oppression and exploitation over a long period. It will thus focus attention directly on the basis of its divine covenant, and bring humanity closer to the realization of the second strand of Maimonides’ expectation: a world focused on an understanding of its relationship with God. But that is not a task for Israel on its own.

Primary responsibility for the crisis lies with the churches and the governments of the WWCB. So also does the responsibility to seek and to implement a solution, and to accept a reduction in status, privilege and influence in recompense for a history of broken covenants.

However, the three Abrahamic faiths are each legitimate, established by divine inspiration, and circumstantially, and they are obligated to fulfil a common role. That role is to enable humanity to enjoy harmony and stability for the full term of its existence, and to move towards an understanding of its relationship with creation and the Creator. To do this they must first acknowledge that they are partners. Then they must work in intimate collaboration, picking up the threads of reform for which Islam was called into existence but which its older partners denied, and which now requires a coordinated effort.

The specific obligations under covenant for each of the faiths can be expressed quite simply, and when they are set, together, in common publications for communal use, they can provide a clear statement of basic Abrahamic self-understanding.

For Judaism: to be exemplary in personal and communal dealings with neighbours of other faiths, to be conspicuous so that others will know that they are in favour or out of favour in relation to their covenantal obligations, as they certainly are conspicuous at present, following the convergence of prophecy from all three faiths, the demonstration of divine judgement and the requirements of a covenantal relationship with God. Its people may marvel at the operation of the covenant and be better able to follow the flow of history, to practice the Law scrupulously, and to perform the practices of *mitzvot*, required by the Torah, and maintain kosher and Sabbath prayers

For Christians: to put into practice the teachings of the Gospels which elucidate the teachings of the basic Law, and which can be easily applied in a developed community, and to teach others to follow them also, They are to spread the Good News that Love comes before judgement but does not exclude it; that all is not lost after a transgression, if recompense and repentance are genuine and not superficial, knowing that to be basic to the operation of Divine Grace, and not to look for a quick ticket to heaven. And at the level of personal practices, to share bread and wine together in remembrance of Jesus, to use the Lord's Prayer and to look for Baptism in the name of the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost.

For Muslims: to be faithful in conduct consistent with amanah and kalifa; to practice the five pillars of the faith to their best ability: maintaining faith or belief in the Oneness of God and the finality of the prophethood of Muhammad; establishing daily prayer practice; showing concern for the needs of others, and almsgiving to the needy; Self-purification through fasting; and making the pilgrimage to Makkah if able to do so, and being happy in engaged surrender to the demands and judgement of Allah.

When the three faith communities live and work together, not competing nor trying to suppress another, and leading others to an understanding of God by example, then the way may be open to a sixth epoch – after Maimonides.

9. The Political reality

The world-at-large assumes that the only power which may be able to negotiate and/or enforce a solution is the United States. However its fundamental situation has not changed – except that because of the self-inflicted Global Financial Crisis it is in a critical economic condition. Realistically, it cannot finance another war without dire domestic upheaval and economic consequences, and on moral – covenantal – grounds it should not be able to find partners for another “coalition of the willing” to act against Iran. It cannot disentangle itself except by breaking the chain that links its own security and stability to the conflict between Israel and its immediate neighbours. It therefore appears to have four options.

First: coerce Israel into an accommodation with Palestine. The probability is that this can only be achieved by financing additional ‘bought peace’ measures, but such measures will not provide certainty and satisfy Palestine, and the groundswell of opposition in frontline states might prejudice their governments’ current arrangements with the United States. Israel’s intransigence over additional Jewish settlements in the West Bank, the disdain with which it rebuffs every initiative, and, as a consequence, its relations with Iran, indicates that the United States has very little opportunity to manoeuvre.

Second: similar to the first, but with different emphasis. Leave the initiative with Israel and accept whatever initiative Israel and its support network propose in negotiating a settlement that is acceptable to the Palestinians. Whatever that initiative might be, the situation will be as in 1970 and the demands of the Arab neighbours and Iran are bound to be substantial. And there is no certainty that a bought peace will hold.

Third: do nothing, accept the risk that Israel will continue to resist pressure for settlement of the Palestinian question, and face the consequences of another war in the Middle East with the near-inevitable destruction of oil fields or embargoes such as it feared when Israel refused to accept the establishment of a Palestinian state in 1990; Iraq stepped in to try to force the issue, and the United States had to exercise its influence and force a war against Iraq to maintain Israel's security umbrella and its own economic security. It can no longer take that course in the Persian Gulf without catastrophic consequences, but it has been considering the risk and the alternatives—supply Israel or go to war itself. Israel's influence is such that in January 2010 the U.S. government contracted for 195 smart guided "Blu" bunker busters to be transported to Diego Garcia. Dan Plesch, director, Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy, University of London, is reported as saying that the U.S. Military made the preparations, but the final decision rests with President Obama who "may decide that it would be better for United States to act instead of Israel."⁶⁷²

Fourth: acknowledge three things: its role in compounding the crisis during its fourth and fifth epoch phases; its inability to impose its will in the rapidly changing circumstances; and the basis of the fractured relationships between the three Abrahamic faiths. Then, on that basis, acknowledge the critical need for leadership in guiding the world during the current change phase, and take the initiative to bring the international leadership of the world's faiths together to resolve the crisis through intense conversation dialogue.

10. A Critical Consideration: the covenantal obligation to secure Judaism

An important factor that is rarely mentioned is that Jewish religious leaders and scholars have no confidence that the Christian churches will genuinely and meaningfully repudiate their long-held belief in Supersessionism. Because that belief has been a foundation for anti-Semitism, pogroms and worse – the gas chambers – they have a real fear that there will be a reversion to such practices if circumstances change and radical anti-Semites gain power as they did in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁶⁷³ That fear is justifiable and legitimate. They understand that one of their covenantal obligations is to ensure the security of their young people and thus ensure the continuity of Judaism and the ethnic

⁶⁷² Rob Edwards, "Final Destination Iran?," *Sunday Herald Scotland*, 14 March 2010 2010.

⁶⁷³ Personal conversations in conference at Landegg, 2002, and Melbourne 2003.

Jewish community which provides the experiential basis on which humanity can better understand its relationship with God. Without a guarantee on that matter they will not budge on the question of a secure territorial base, and although Borowitz (chapter eight) demonstrated that a formally constituted and exclusively Jewish state is not necessary for the fulfilment of Jewish covenantal obligations, and could lead to counter-productive responses,⁶⁷⁴ those who currently dominate Israel's policy making firmly insist that the only acceptable territorial base is an expanded exclusively Jewish state: Israel in its present form, with expansion.

The vigour of Supersessionist claims is such that if the Jews were again expelled from the land of Canaan, (meaning either the former region of Palestine or the constituted State of Israel), and dispersed over the globe, the Supersessionists would claim victory, and the probability of a return to the circumstances of the period 1871 to 1941 would be very high indeed. However, it is apparent that by insisting on Israel's current Zionist policies and its continued intransigence and transgression against its neighbours, its supporters might precipitate exactly that which they fear.

It is reasonable to expect that given the reality that Divine involvement in humanity's affairs is being demonstrated through the processes of Divine Covenant by one course or another, with Israel as catalyst, that the people most directly affected would prefer it to be by their own positive decision rather than by their negative decision. However, Israel and its supporters are exposed to the possibility that the reality of the MHUDC could be reconfirmed by the cyclical application of its penal clause, and that would be accompanied by the accelerated transfer of economic and political influence from the WWCB to the WMP as a consequence of the war which would be involved in their expulsion from Israel. Ejection from their recently acquired homeland and re-dispersion would be bad enough, but it is the likely vitriolic reaction from people of the WWCB as a response to the accelerated decline in their economic and political status and influence would bring a return to the 'kick-a-Jew syndrome' which they fear: "It's all the Jews' fault, let's take it out on them."

A verbal assurance of the repudiation of Supersessionism from current leaders is not sufficient to satisfy the concerns of the people Israel. My assessment is supported by the result of a newspaper poll conducted in Israel in November 2009 in which 52.3 % of the

⁶⁷⁴ Borowitz, *Renewing*. For discussion see chapter eight.

6,400 respondents said that ethnic cleansing – the forced transfer of Palestinians to another Arab country – was the best solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Only 30.8 per cent of the respondents supported the US two-state proposal.⁶⁷⁵

For such a guarantee of the repudiation of the concept of Supersessionism to be taken seriously and acted upon, a mechanism is required to ensure that all such references are expunged from all teaching, preaching, prayer and worship materials. This means starting with documents that are basic to the operations and teaching of all Christian institutions, and includes declarations based on Calvin's Institutes, Luther's papers, and documents under which churches and their operating institutions are constituted, incorporated or organized. In this regard the critical document is the Dogmatic Constitution of the Catholic Church, *Lumen Gentium*. (Chapter Eight)

11. Principal proposal arising from this research

For the reasons stated, in the short to medium term there will not be a lasting resolution to the Israel/Palestine crisis by military or political means alone, and an immediate dual approach is necessary: theological and politico/economic.

A politico/economic approach by an interested and trusted third party is required to achieve a disengagement – another episode of 'bought peace' – or a temporary solution, and to relieve the pressure on the negotiators. A theological approach, with peak leaders of each faith talking face to face with Israeli and Palestinian political leaders, with others in the background and prepared to participate if requested, is a vital parallel function.

Significant theological revisions – amendments to statements of belief and teaching – will be required by religious institutions which are driven and sustained by self-understanding and traditions developed over a very long time. This will, in turn, require the nurture and pastoral support of millions of adherents who must be kept informed during the lengthy and difficult process. The difficulties in the process envisaged are well illustrated by the time and disputation involved in negotiations to resolve much less complicated matters, such as the Roman Catholic Church's internal concerns over the Tridentine Mass⁶⁷⁶; the

⁶⁷⁵ The newspaper poll was conducted by Israeli National News and reported on November 19, 2009.

Because the respondents were self-selecting readers of the newspaper the result is statistically unsupportable, and as estimate of the national mood it is dubious because the newspaper has been described as "a right-wing rag" (Yaniv Reich, 'Hybrid States', November 19, 2009). However it must be acknowledged as reflecting the attitude of a significant and influential section of the Israeli public.

⁶⁷⁶ Reuters, February 28, 2007. Williamson says Vatican-SSPX talks are a dialogue of the deaf

negotiations between the WCC and the Vatican concerning Eucharist and Baptism⁶⁷⁷; between the Vatican and the Lutheran churches concerning Justification⁶⁷⁸; between the Vatican and Orthodox churches concerning primacy of the Bishop of Rome⁶⁷⁹; between Orthodox and Reformed Jewish authorities over recognition of marriages and citizenship rights in Israel⁶⁸⁰; and between Sunni and Shiite authorities concerning criminalization of hatred and a common code of ethics⁶⁸¹. These disputes all concern constructed or secondary concepts and not one of the few concepts that is fundamental to the faith of all three communities.

This is indeed a situation which requires a completely new approach. The process will take time, and it should surely be initiated and conducted through conversation dialogue at the highest level, and at an early opportunity. However the current crisis, brought on by the abuse of the concept, and being basis to all consideration of the human future, has been a long time in the making. The situation is of such importance that no lesser procedure is an acceptable substitute. Failure is not an option to be contemplated, so time spent in an effort to achieve a rapprochement will be time well spent.

Thus, on the basis of this research, it is proposed that the MCD University of Divinity, having had supervising and examining responsibility for it, refer the matter to one or more of the peak religious bodies with which it has an affiliation, or with which it is in contact, and invite it, or them, to initiate conversations with a view to the proposal being undertaken.

For the process to be credible and effective it is very important, virtually vital, that the participants be people who are at the peak levels of the principal streams of each faith: basically four streams within Christianity, four within Judaism, and two within Islam,

677 Stephen Brown. ENI-03-0250, June 2, 2003 Vatican says it's committed to ecumenism, but not shared communion

678 Anli Serfontein. ENI-09-0859, October 30, 2009. German Protestant bishop 'disappointed' on talks with Catholics

679 VIS. September 15, 2009. First visit to Rome of Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk.

680 Ephraim Tabory. Reform Judaism in Israel: Progress and Prospects. Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations

681 Hasan Alsaffar, Alarabiya.net, 5 / 1 / 2010. The Sunni-Shiite Dispute Is Still Ongoing

except that the divisions within the Shia stream are so complex and intense that additional representation must be considered.⁶⁸²

There are reasons for all four streams of the church to be involved. The theology and conduct of the Church of Rome have been critical to the broken relationships from the early Apostolic days when the claims for supersession were being formulated, even before any formal doctrinal statements were adopted. The Reformed churches had the opportunity to correct the situation, and made some progress, but then regressed and key leaders were as deeply entrenched in their anti-Semitism as the Vatican. The Eastern Orthodox churches have generally been more moderate in their beliefs and their relations with Jews, and they have always been in close contact with them in the Middle East, while the Russian Orthodox Church, in spite of supporting the BiraBidzhan Jewish Resettlement Project, was central to Russia's reputation as "the classical home of Anti-Semitism." It supported formal Anti-Semitic policies of isolation in the Pale of Settlement, it saw two million Jews leave as refugees between 1860 and 1930, and it was responsible for the circulation of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.⁶⁸³ The young Pentecostal stream claims to command the allegiance of 588 million Christians, or about a quarter of 2.1 billion world wide, and is pressing for a return to doctrine-free Christianity.⁶⁸⁴

Islam has had an assortment of relationships with Judaism, and until the establishment of the WZO and its early efforts to resettle Palestine, the relationships were generally fairly harmonious. Jews are said to have enjoyed a golden age under Muslim rule in Spain; they held prominent positions in Ottoman courts and under Saladin in the days of Maimonides; and Jews and Muslims together have suffered badly at the hands of the church and Christian powers, especially during the Crusades and reconquest of Spain. But since the Balfour Declaration, during constant civil war between Jews and Arabs under the British mandate, and since the enforced partition of Palestine and campaigns to force the emigration of Palestinians in 1948, there has been great bitterness towards Israel throughout the Muslim world, and very few majority Muslim countries have diplomatic

682 Including the Pentecostal stream with the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Reformed streams of Christianity, and grouping all of the non-Zionist Jewish communities as one stream for this purpose.

683 Kochan, *The Jews in Soviet Russia Since 1917*. References from Leonard Schapiro pp. 1,2; S. Levenberg, p. 43; Jacob Miller p. 46; Chimen Abramsky pp. 64-77.

684 The WCC cites the World Christian Database for these figures quoted on its Church Families pages at **Pentecostal churches**, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/church-families/pentecostal-churches.html>, January 2011.

relations with Israel. Five countries have Shiite majorities, including two which have been prominent in support of the Palestinians in recent years, Iraq and Iran. The others are Oman, Bahrain and Azerbaijan.

If an invitation were to be extended by it, the Universal House of Justice, Haifa, Israel, Bahá'í being the one world faith which recognizes and incorporates the teachings of each of the Abrahamic faiths, would be an eminently appropriate base for the necessary consultations.

The United States is the logical body to negotiate yet another interim settlement to the crisis for several reasons. Because it has made its own political and economic stability dependent on the maintenance of peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours it is, in effect the stakeholder with most to lose from failure. It was the country most directly involved in the corruption of United Nations procedures to facilitate the partition of Palestine, and it has been involved in every major peace negotiation since. It is arguably the most profligate exploiter of the World Majority Peoples within the WWCB which is seeing its relationship with the World Majority Peoples being progressively inverted. And its current President has demonstrated a better understanding of all world faiths and the relationships between their people than any other world leader, and is in the best position to encourage and nurture the necessary procedure.

If the Israel-Palestine crisis can be resolved by a breakthrough in Christian Jewish relations through the absolute repudiation of Supersessionism and the expunging of all references to it in Christian constitutional and teaching materials, the favourable consequences will be very far reaching. As noted above, Israel can anticipate gaining the support of the worldwide communities of faith, and, in so doing, facilitate the diversion of funds and technology on a massive scale to the developing countries that have suffered such oppression and exploitation over a long period. It will focus attention directly on the basis of its community-specific divine covenant, and bring humanity closer to the realization of the second strand of Maimonides' expectation: a world focused on an understanding of its relationship with God.

12. The challenge for the Roman Catholic Church

If the Crisis in the Middle East is settled in this manner, with attention drawn more firmly than ever to Jerusalem, it will pose a major challenge for the Roman Catholic Church,

whether or not Israel chooses to establish a theocratic Jewish state or to remain a parliamentary democracy with Judaism as its state religion, for the following reasons.

The idea to seek to establish a Jewish state was initiated and pursued relentlessly because of the abuse of obligations under Divine Covenant when the Church of Rome was the only substantial branch of Christianity. The people and powers who carried out the abuse did so on the basis of their self-understanding which was the consequence of the church's teachings based on *Dictatus Papae* and *Romanus Pontifex*.

The Jewish community's claims over the territory of Palestine are based solely on its interpretation of the Covenant invoked when it was the only covenanted stream.

Muslims who are adopting methods to undermine the Jewish State which are contrary to Islamic principles, and are therefore in breach of their obligations, justify their actions on the basis of covenantal obligations which they say are breached by the Jews.

The Catholic Church opposed the establishment of the State on the basis that the Jews had forfeited any rights to it because of their breach of covenant, that the covenant had been abrogated and the Church became the divinely designated New Israel with legitimate responsibility for Palestine. In cyclical fashion, it developed a theology of Supersession to justify the oppression of Jews which then provoked the moves to re-establish a Jewish Homeland. It then adapted the theology of Supersession as the basis for a Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *subsequent* to the establishment of the State of Israel and in order to deny the state any legitimacy (chapter eight) and to maintain its claims for administrative rights over certain sacred places within the state.

That Dogmatic Constitution was drafted on the basis of a hypothetical scenario of a Divine Covenant conceived by God *prior* to Creation with a defined direct line of responsibility for the Church in all matters salvific to be administered by the Pope as God's nominated infallible delegate or surrogate. It says the line passes through the previously delegated people, the errant Israel, whose authority was abrogated through a process of Supersession, to Christ whom the Father "foreknew and pre-destined to become conformed to the image

of His Son, that he should be the firstborn among many brethren" and who existed with God *before* the people into whom he was to be born.⁶⁸⁵

The church has maintained a proselytizing ministry to Jews on the basis of the *abrogation* of the Covenant of Sinai and Supersession until well into the Fifth Epoch, and it declined to enter into dialogue on the same premise until 1965, immediately *after* promulgating the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.

Statements issued by senior members of the church hierarchy show continued deep division over these matters, and in spite of statements by Pope John Paul acknowledging that the Covenant has never been revoked, no moves have been made to rescind the relevant sections of the Dogmatic Constitution.

If the church is prepared to enter into face-to-face dialogue conversations with Jewish leaders in order to provide the assurance on the absolute repudiation of Supersessionism which is necessary, then it cannot avoid rewriting that Dogmatic Constitution in such a way that it confirms that the Mosaic Covenant is still extant, in parallel with the New Covenant, and it must provide a line of covenantal contact which does not, in some miraculous way, either pass through or bypass the 'superseded' Israel. As noted above, the rescinding of that section would require substantial review of many related aspects of the churches doctrine, teaching, authority systems, and its claims to surrogacy of delegation of Divine Authority. If it constitutionally accepts that Judaism is valid and that its people live under a divine covenant imposed by the same God it is, *ipso facto*, acknowledging a partnership with shared responsibility. If it does not, then it will be saying that the Church and Judaism are still in competition, and that will be a negation of the Pope's statement that there will be no more evangelizing to the Jews.

Clearly, the fact that such a far-reaching reassessment would logically follow, is not a reason to refuse direct theological dialogue with Jews and Muslims over the future of Palestine on the basis of obligations under covenant which can be conducted without immediately confronting the wider issues. The critical issue is that of Supersession consequent upon denial of a continuing Covenant, because Jews cannot be persuaded that there will not be a return to genocidal anti-Semitism in the event of world trauma while the

685 First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ, *Pastor Aeternus*, Chapter 4, n. 9, promulgated by the First Vatican Council, Session IV, July 18, 1870: confirmed by the Second Vatican Council in *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25.; November 21, 1964.

church's constitutional self-understanding is based on Supersessionism. The human future is too important to place at risk by refusing dialogue based on covenantal understanding and obligations in relation to Palestine when all three faiths which are subject to specific covenantal relations with God and all humanity are directly involved in the crisis, and two of the three are ready to participate in such dialogue in an effort to resolve the crisis.

13. Parallel Programs: Enhanced Dialogue of Life, Action and Prayer

In addition to the major program of conversation dialogue at peak level, it is highly desirable that the peak faith bodies, on acknowledging that they are each obligated under Divine Covenant, encourage the development of ongoing programs of dialogue between their adherents at a range of levels and as matter of urgency. If they are not comfortable with the notion of a partnership at this stage, that is of little consequence. The partnership will become self-evident in due course. The levels envisaged are the peak faith bodies themselves; regional bodies crossing national boundaries, especially where their conciliar bodies approximate each other; national or semi-national; and local or district bodies based on the work of presbyteries or their corresponding bodies, and clusters of congregations. The series of dialogue programs should be seen not merely as mechanisms for intervention in situations of tension or conflict, "to put out spot fires," but as a foundation for the development of effective community cohesion based on respect, understanding and cooperation, and incorporating

- education in communal religious and life issues;
- community development, welfare, and service programs;
- conflict resolution and counselling

All programs should focus on one aspect or another of a covenantal relationship, using the MHUDC as the basis, and appropriate to the needs and the circumstances of the people involved. The Qur'anic understanding, comprised of a number of aspects, parallels the MHUDC very closely. The process will get nowhere if a program is limited to modes or processes in endeavouring to attain personal justification or salvation based on Calvin's teaching. (Chapter six)

Dialogue, Level 1

At the local and district levels most programs would be planned around the people's understanding of responsibilities under covenant such as care and support for those in

need, provision of local health services, enhancement of the local environment, and supplementary schooling programs – all with the aim of everything that can be done together being done together and not on a stand alone basis. Certainly they should take account of, and be focused on how people perceive their responsibilities under covenant in their daily lives as they live out their faith within their community.

To enhance the sense of community cohesion and reinforce the commitment to cooperation, the congregations or units of each faith taking part in a joint program could be encouraged to enter into a declaration of covenant similar to that adopted in Beaumaris and Black Rock, Victoria, Australia, included as Appendix N.

This example involved only churches, but it can be adapted to suit any group of mosques, synagogues and churches, on the basis of whatever they undertake to do together. These programs equate to what the Divine Word Missionaries term dialogues of life and of action,⁶⁸⁶ but it is not desirable to label program aims. They should come out of preliminary discussions among the people about how they wish to work, and it is important that they relate to the current levels of religious experience and participation. As argued in chapter nine, there is no need to reinvent the dialogue wheel. There are ample models available for leadership guidance at all levels.

Dialogue Level 2

At the mid to more senior or experienced levels, the focus would shift towards dialogue of prayer with regular meetings of clergy adopting such approaches as the IID terms Deep-Dialogue, or intensive small group programs based on the work of the Scriptural Reasoning Society; discussion of each other's forms of worship; the rationale behind the liturgy and festivals; and cooperation in social action to offset existing or unintentional bias or disadvantage in service provision. In addition they can relate to support for people who choose to marry across traditional barriers; and cooperation in education, and especially how to handle concerns about different constructed beliefs. These are beliefs which have been developed during early periods of a religion's evolution on the basis of cultural syncretism and tradition rather than logical extension. They are the ideas around which much local communal religious conflict erupts.

686 Divine Word Missionaries in Dialogue with the Word, Nr. 1, September 2000: Documents of the XV General Chapter (IDW-1), quoted in Nemer 2007.

At this level there are also opportunities for very significant practical cooperation dialogue projects in both environment enhancement and community service development based in the Caux Round Table Model which involves lay business and professional people undertaking to apply the beliefs of their faith to more responsibly manage their businesses, either commercial or non-commercial, to ensure that they have minimum environmental impact. The organizers do not refer to their program as based on covenantal responsibilities, but the expression they use means exactly the same. They refer to the Stewardship of Creation based on Abrahamic Social Thought. And while they do not refer specifically to establishing joint ventures, they offer strong encouragement to consider it.⁶⁸⁷

Dialogue, Level 3

Clearly the peak bodies would be concerned with jointly considering the developed interpretations of fundamental theological concepts including Theism, God, Divine Presence, Creation, Divine Covenant, Responsibility, Obligation, Divine Law, Canon, Rabbinic or Shariah Law, Divine Judgment, Salvation, Redemption, Justification, Prophecy, Messianism, Incarnation, Resurrection, Predestination, Election, Freewill, Sin, Repentance, Atonement, Worship, Prayer, Clergy (role of), Authority, Tradition, Discipline, Eucharist, Transubstantiation, Intercession, Devotion to Saints, Beatification, Sacrifice, Penance, Indulgence, and for the planning of whatever changes may be involved to guidelines, regulations, canon law, education programs and teaching materials when it is decided to vary the teaching on any matters. At this level the need for contextual consideration of each concept, and intertextual study based on the SRS model is self-evident.

14. Proposals for additional work

On the basis that this project has shown that the church's failure to recognize the ongoing validity of the mature Hebrew understanding of divine covenant has had catastrophic consequences, it is proposed that further research be directed at doctrine, creeds, canon law and educational tracts to correct the long term imbalance. Charts one, three and four, dealing with the evolution of religious understanding, population growth and interaction

⁶⁸⁷ The statement issued following the Caux Round Table meeting in September 2010 can be accessed via the internet at www.cauxroundtable.org/view_file.cfm?fileid=165.

between the Abrahamic faith communities should be of help in these matters. Thus matters for research could include:—

1. The consequences of recognition of Judaism, Christianity and Islam as partners and not competitors on the self-understanding of communicant members, adherents, and those who live in nominally Christian communities but outside of the churches, and policies required to enable church communities to more readily understand and meet their obligations when they recognize covenant in a new light.
2. Changes to church documentation and approaches to Christian education and counselling required by rejection of the notion of supersessionism and the pastoral management required by the change in teaching and, again, the impact on self-understanding and attitudes to ‘the other.’
3. The circumstances in which, and the basis on which the concept of original sin was adopted as an article of faith; its influence as a factor in inhibiting recognition of the MHUDC, and whether revision of that teaching can assist towards a better understanding of covenant.
4. Other significant doctrines or teachings that have been developed and adopted over time, which may have been appropriate in their time and space but have become anachronistic and misleading in the wake of current information, scientific and historical.
5. A reappraisal of the basis on which the possibility of divine inspiration outside the church was denied, leading to the church’s rejection of the ministry of Muhammad, Maimonides and others whose works relate directly to one aspect or another of covenant, or other contested teachings of the church.
6. An appraisal of the relationship between personal responsibility and communal or corporate responsibility in each of the community-specific covenants.
7. The response of former church adherents who have drifted away to these matters of partnership, non-supersession and covenantal revision.
8. The reaction within, and the impact on, the ecumenical movement.

15. Contribution of this research

This research into the evolution of the concept of divine covenant, the diverse interpretations of it within each of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the consequences of attitudes, policies and conduct of adherents of each of them that have been developed on the basis of their divergent interpretations, is original and explores a field that has not been traversed before. It provides a basis for the church to reflect on the following matters.

A Divine Covenant is a matter of relationships with a number of complementary aspects, none of which can be considered in isolation.

The early church became so preoccupied with questions of Christology and authority that it was distracted from a more comprehensive understanding of Jesus' teachings, and its capacity to adequately understand and respond to either the community-specific Christian New Covenant or the Universal Covenant was inhibited. Subsequently, when the Reformation was triggered by matters of process and intercessory authority, it was very difficult for theologians to break free from that mould. It is only since the dawn of the fifth epoch with the convergence of a series of prophecies, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the resurgence of both Judaism and Islam, that there has been the need, the opportunity and the theological space or environment to enable Christian theologians and laity to look at traditional teachings with fresh eyes.

Thus, by an examination of the understanding of Covenant in each of Judaism, Islam and Christianity in context and in parallel, (rather than examining the concept as understood within Christianity in isolation), this thesis demonstrates that neglect of the aspects of obligation, response and judgement has left a gap, or a blind spot, which has made it difficult for Christians to enjoy a comprehensive understanding of humanity's relationship with God and the totality of creation.

The church's failure to recognize the ongoing validity of the mature Hebrew understanding of divine covenant, or the validity of either the Mosaic or Islamic Covenants under which the Jewish and Muslim communities are equally obligated has been catastrophic for relationships between communities of the three faiths, has greatly prejudiced the welfare of the Non Western World at large, and is also prejudicial to the human future.

Its failure to recognize that revelation through divine inspiration was not exclusive to the church after Pentecost inhibits the church's ability to communicate with its adherents and the population at large concerning matters of significance to them.

Imputing exclusive revelation and indisputable knowledge of prior events to a claimed exclusive covenant has resulted in the church retaining doctrine, creeds and teachings which are no longer supportable in the light of historical, archaeological, scientific and textual research, and further inhibits its ability to communicate with its adherents and an educated population.

There are three specific contributions made by this research to religious studies and interfaith relations.

First: by relating prophetic expectations which have been generated within each of the Abrahamic faiths, and which concern obligation under Divine Covenant, it has demonstrated that those faiths are each legitimate instruments of Divine Will, divinely invoked or commissioned, and sharing in the total revelation of understanding of God *to this stage* in an ongoing process of evolutionary revelation. As such, the three faiths are *partners* with a common responsibility: to enable all humanity to understand more clearly its relationship to God and to develop and maintain a total environment in which it can live in love, harmony, stability and justice for whatever may be the term of its existence.

Second: this research has identified the concept of Supersession as a key factor in the complete breakdown in relations between the partner faiths which has inhibited their capacity to fulfil their specific responsibility with regard to human obligation, and shown that they must reject their long-standing status as bitter competitors and work together to fulfil that responsibility. Furthermore, although they are partners, sharing a common role, they each also have specific but non-competitive responsibilities.

Judaism: to remain conspicuous, faithful to preserve the original law, exemplary in every type of relationship in the knowledge that the community's fortunes will rise and fall according to the manner in which it either perceives and responds to God's Will, or fails to honour it, and that in remaining conspicuously separate the community will be a perpetual reminder to humanity of the fact of God's interaction with humanity.

Christianity: to live by, to teach and to carry throughout the world the elucidation of the Law which Jesus conveyed in the Gospels, and in particular that God's love takes precedence over judgement and the penal clause of covenant, but does not exclude it.

Islam: to confirm the divine validity of covenants in the name of Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus; that the three sets of holy texts comprise, together, "The Book"; and to correct and reform beliefs and practices which had become corrupted within the two prior partners and which are now contributing to the global crises.

Third: this research has provided a paradigm as the basis on which the continuing revelation of Divine Covenant can be understood and studied so that the breakdown in relationships can be understood, visualized and redressed, and within which scholars and pastors may now lead the way towards Epoch 6: which can be characterized as Maimonides' Messianic Age in which all humanity is one and "the occupation of the entire world will be solely to know God."⁶⁸⁸

If the principal proposal arising from this research is taken up and a major military confrontation is avoided by a new understanding between the three partners, and if the church, especially, re-examines the way in which it developed many of its doctrines and dogma, and, as appropriate, revises them, a significant step may have been taken towards the sixth epoch.

Consistent with the finding that the Abrahamic faith communities are partners with a common responsibility, this research has established that the divine covenants acknowledged by each of them are complementary and cannot be regarded as contradictory or competitive when they are examined in the context of the evolution of the human community and the circumstances of their revelation.

It is therefore established that there is a critical need for a clearer appreciation of how, and why, divergent interpretations and antagonistic self-understandings have developed, in order that the broken relationships between the Abrahamic faiths may be addressed more effectively. Furthermore, the critical importance of an understanding of covenantal relationships and obligations has been demonstrated, and the experience of the fourth and fifth epochs now requires that covenant should be located centrally in Christian teaching and worship.

⁶⁸⁸ Maimonides, *Mishneh* 14. p. 252.

It will encourage communities to undertake programs of joint study and practical community cooperation within the framework of recognized programs of interfaith dialogue, and it will encourage more effective implementation of those programs if they are shown to be consistent with covenantal obligation accepted by each faith community. It matters little whether they are regarded as dialogue of life, action or prayer. They should be focused on each faith's understanding of community responsibility and needs.

Similarly, it will facilitate open *dialogue conversations* at appropriate levels so that concepts and practices which have been divisive, causing interfaith controversy, can be considered on the basis of the parallel examination of the holy books in an historical context. This will lead to improved prospects for consensus or non-defensive acknowledgment of alternative theological approaches to a number of matters which are discussed in chapter eight.

But, furthermore, this thesis establishes that conversation-dialogue can proceed at peak-of-faith level, on the basis outlined above under 'Principal Proposal,' and that in view of the world crisis, there is a critical need for it to be undertaken at that level in order to bring about reconciliation between Christians, Jews and Muslims as a vital step to enable the world to progress without fear of catastrophic conflict fuelled by theological disputation.

If interfaith understanding and relationships remain as they are, violence and conflict between faith communities which are linked to their traditional covenantal self-understanding, will prejudice the human future by making the attainment of harmony and stability, and thus epoch six, impossible. A comprehensive understanding of covenant as developed by the Hebrew prophets, with twin aspects of community-specific obligations and personal relationships with God, which were enhanced by Jesus, provides a template for the future. It demands a long-overdue review of theological absolutes that have brought the world to the current state of crisis, and recognition of a three-way partnership on the basis of 'The Book.'

There can be no turning back.

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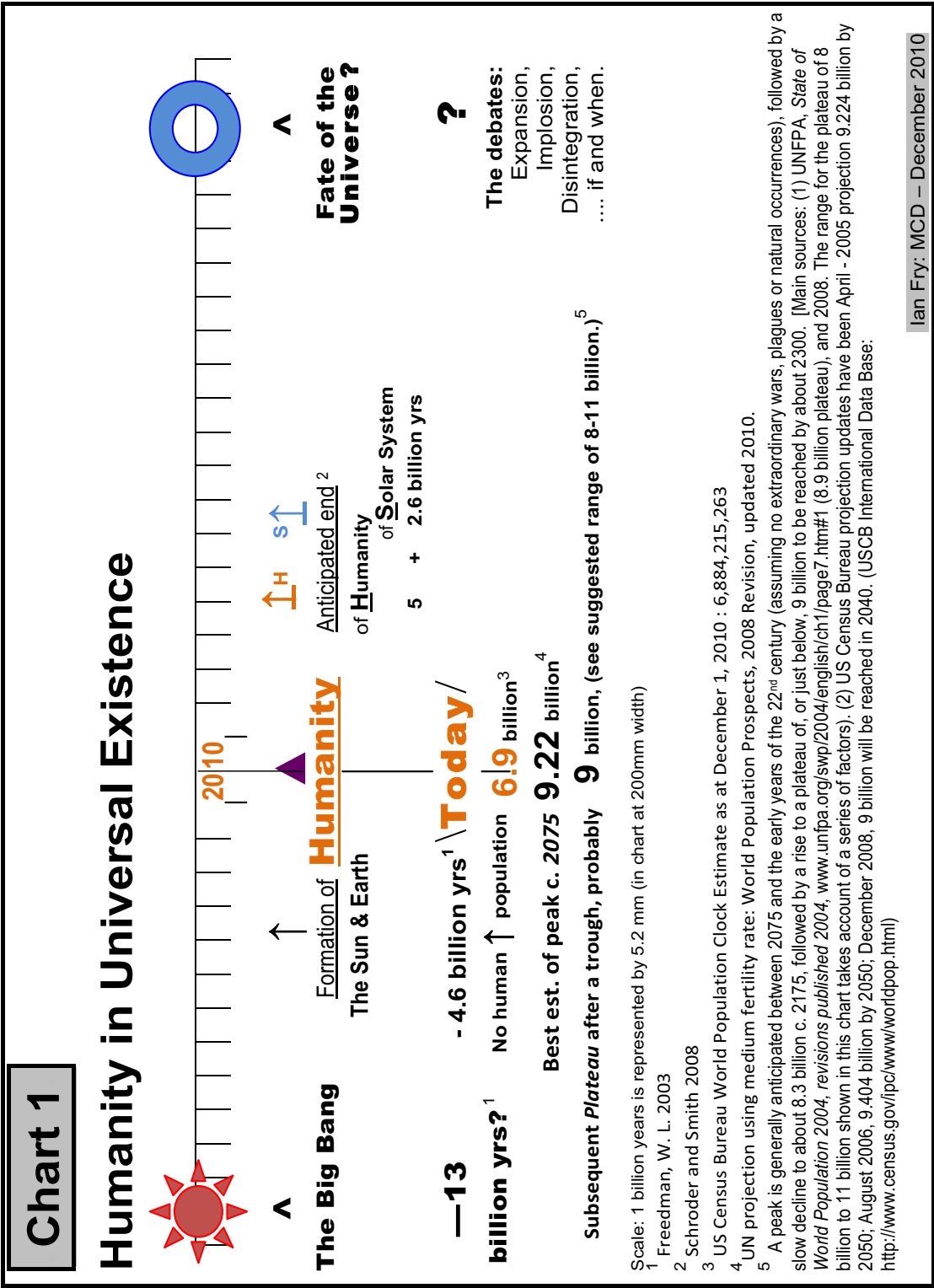
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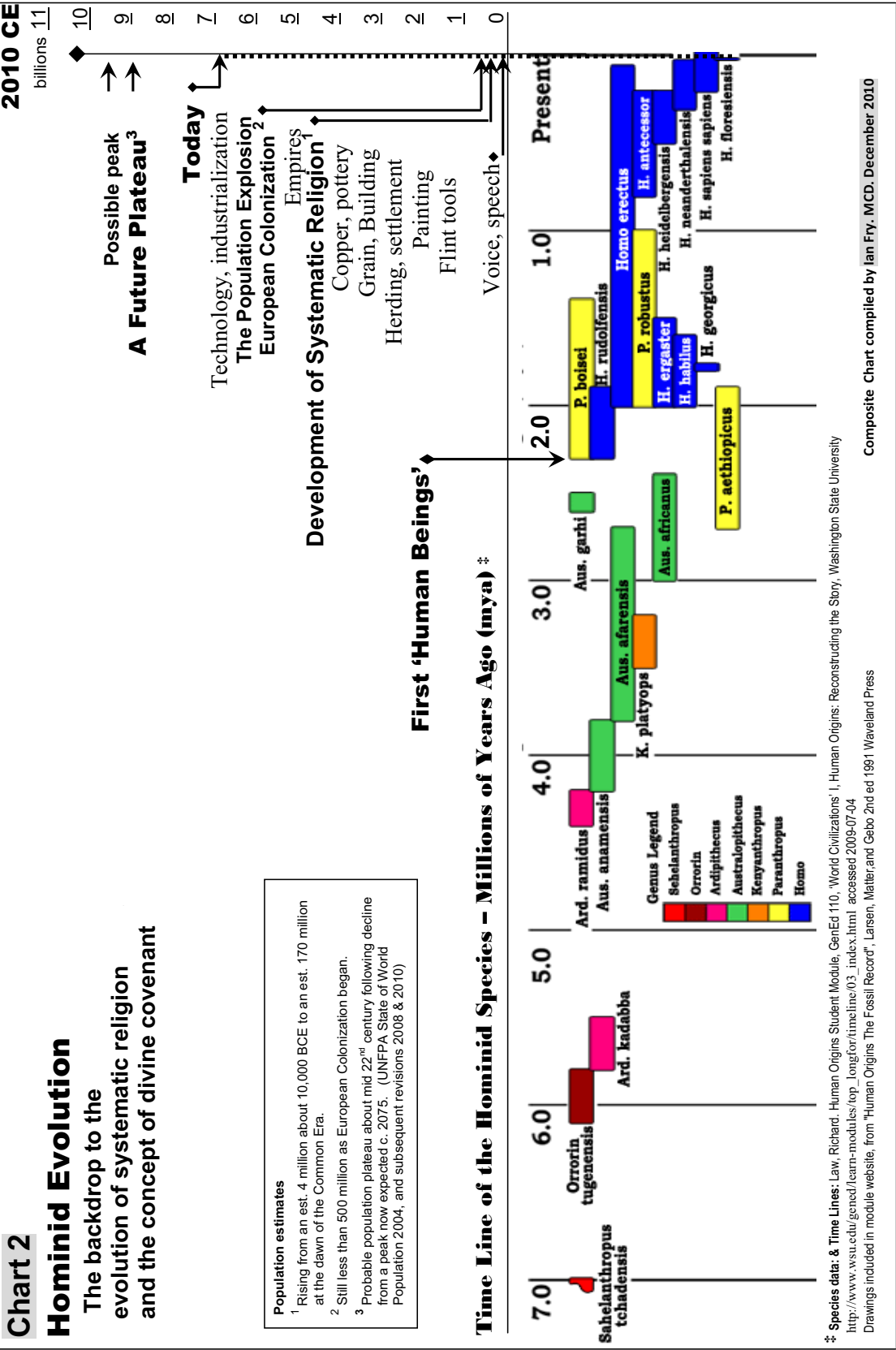
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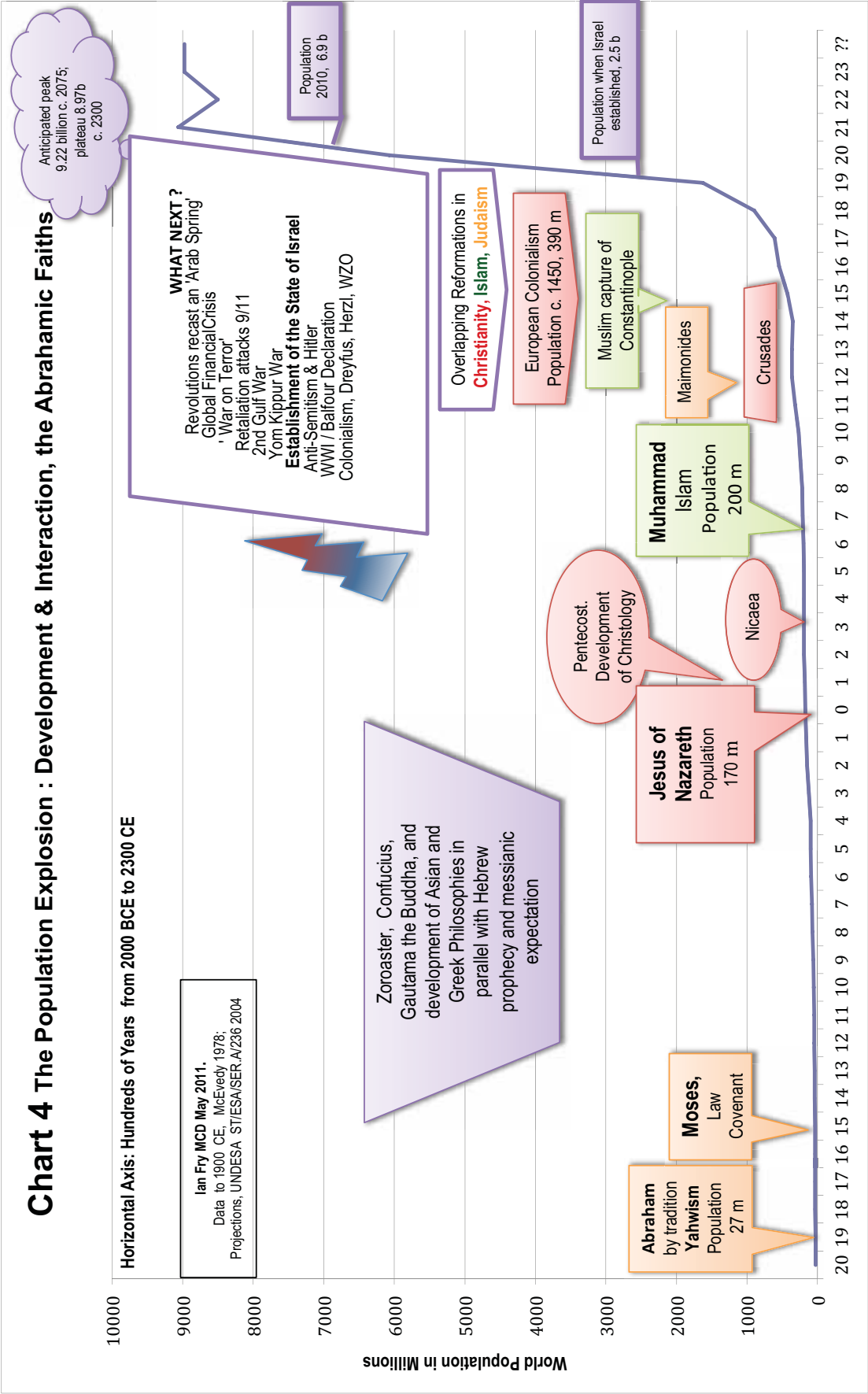
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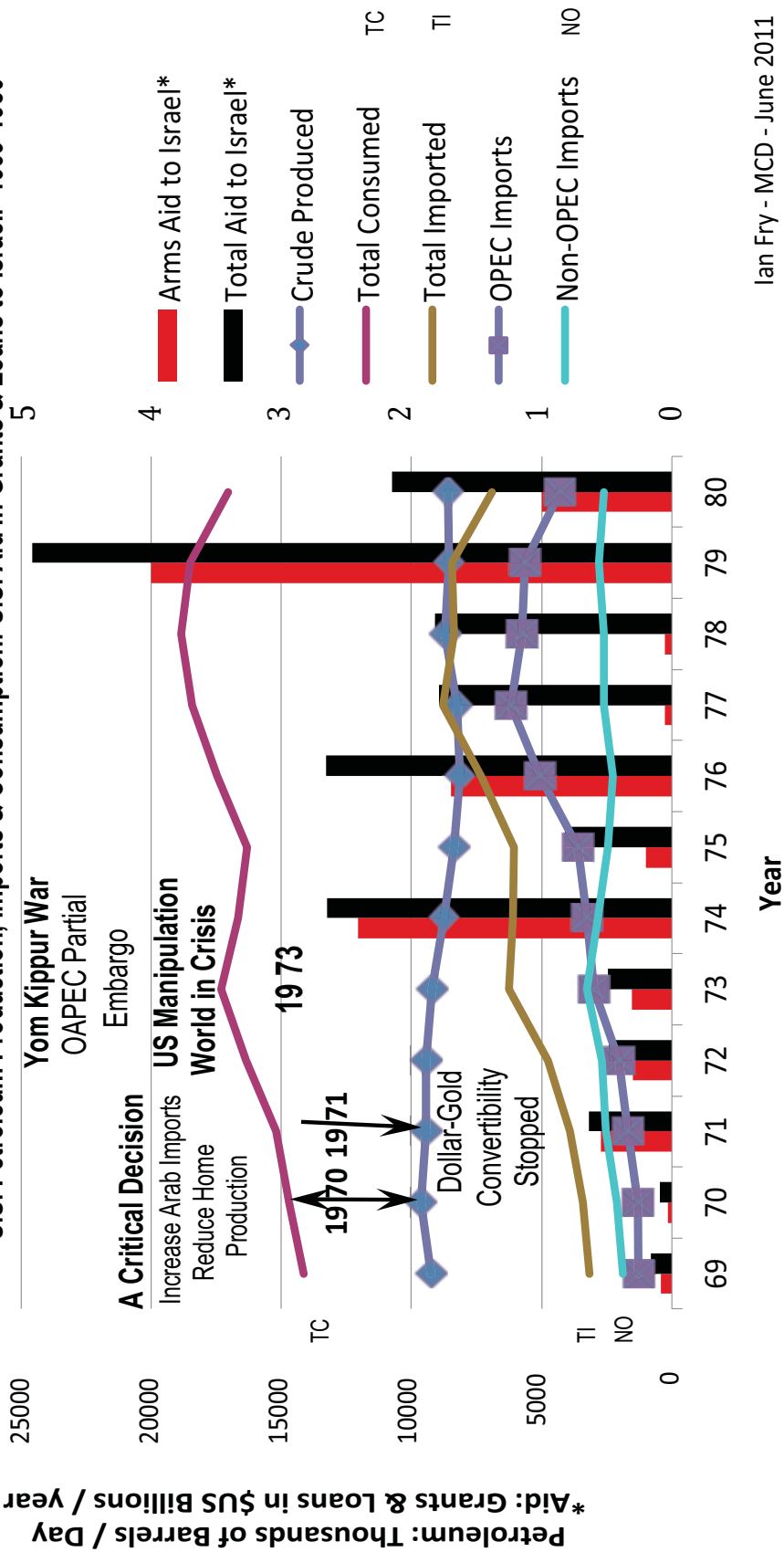




Yom Kippur War, OAPEC Embargo, US Aid to Israel

U.S. Petroleum Production, Imports & Consumption: U.S. Aid in Grants & Loans to Israel. 1969-1980

Chart 5



Ian Fry - MCD - June 2011
Sources, Oil: U.S. Energy Information Administration
Aid: Jewish Virtual Library

Appendix F

Personal Statement

Autobiographical Background of the Researcher, Ian Fry.

At the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War I was in the process of leaving a management position with an international petro-cum agrochemicals company to take up an appointment as Communications Officer for the Board of Local mission of the Presbyterian Church in Victoria. I had been a member of the state and national assemblies and various committees of the church for some years, and for ten years immediately prior to that appointment I had working in the agricultural chemicals industry. While with my immediate past employer for three years I had been privy to policies, practices and conduct which were unethical, manipulative, exploitative in both domestic and international arenas, and to the detriment of countries in which they were applied. These were in sharp contrast to my experience of the previous seven years, and totally contradictory of my understanding of the Gospels and responsibility under covenant.

Having some knowledge of the circumstances involved, I was concerned that the Yom Kippur War and the associated partial oil embargo presaged a turning point in world history that was not recognized; that the struggle for control of Palestine had deep theological implications, and that scholars and theologians of Christianity, Judaism and Islam should work together in a reassessment of the theological concepts around which disputation occurred. I prepared a proposal for consideration by churches in Australia that an initiative should be taken to establish an international interfaith working group for that purpose, and distributed it to senior clergy of member churches of the Victorian Council of Churches. The overall response was negative. I therefore undertook an intense program of personal research and reflection, and distributed three somewhat more substantial papers.

689

Under considerable tension, I stayed with the board in media and deputation roles and assisting the joint Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational coordinating Committee as required from October 1973 to June 1975 in its preparations toward the pending formation of the Uniting Church. Then, when my request to work half time to enable me to research and write was rejected after having initially been accepted, I resigned.

With the support of my wife I was able to research full time and commenced correspondence with the Australian Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches through its Deputy General Secretary, Dr. Alan Brash. The WCC's response was very positive. [A facsimile of a letter from Dr. Brash to the Australian Council of Churches is provided as Appendix G.] A consultation in Geneva on 'Christian Responsibility with Regard to the Crisis in the Middle East' was being planned to facilitate debate on related matters at the Council's Fifth Assembly in Nairobi; its scope was

689 The first paper, of 55 pages, dated February 1975, was titled '*The Oil Embargo and the New Relationships: Christianity, Islam and Judaism*'.

The second paper was titled '*The Middle East: Australia, Israel and the Middle East*'.

The third paper, of seven pages plus tables was titled '*Towards World Development Through Planned Resource Trading*'. It was subsequently expanded to, '*A Proposal to Accelerate Development Through International Resource Trading in Accordance with Real Needs*'.

extended somewhat in view of the concerns I had raised, and an invitation was extended through the Stated Clerk for me to participate. It was referred to the Assembly, accepted, and thus the PCV and WCC jointly funded my visit.

That invitation enabled me to propose a schedule of in-depth research in the Middle East. The invitation was thereupon adjusted by the WCC General Secretariat to include the assembly in Nairobi, and Council program staff provided contacts to assist me in arranging a three-month schedule of meetings in Geneva, Israel/Palestine, Amman, Cairo, Nairobi, Arusha, Addis Ababa, Jeddah, Riyadh, Teheran, Damascus and Baghdad. Beirut was omitted when civil war broke out during the consultation.

I was persuaded by that round of discussions that a book reviewing the development and consequences of the relationship between Judaism, Christianity and Islam was necessary to generate interest in collaborative reassessment, and I set a target of six months to complete such a thing. However the extent of the research required soon made it apparent that my initial target had to be discarded in favour of a more comprehensive work. I therefore returned to work – initially full time with the Central Methodist Mission in Melbourne, and subsequently part time with Broadglen/Leader Newspapers. But my status soon changed from journalist to editor to group editor, and the directors' demand that I work full time meant that my research dragged on, especially as I again accepted a heavy load of Uniting Church, ecumenical, interfaith and community commitments.

Ecumenical and interfaith: in 1984 I accepted an invitation to revise my 1975 resource trading proposal and present it at the fourth assembly of the World Conference of Religions for Peace in Nairobi. That led to an invitation from the General Secretariat of the Islamic Conference to attend the international conference of the consultative organization 'Islam and the West' in Seville. Then in 1987 I was invited to join a six-person delegation of WCRP International in a consultation between eleven Christian, Muslim and Hindu leaders from South Africa, led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and nine members of the Central Executive of the African National Congress (in exile) in Lusaka.

In 1990 my wife and I undertook a two-year posting as Australian Volunteers Abroad in Papua New Guinea where I established the country's first provincial tabloid newspaper for the Milne Bay Community Resource Development Association. My research ground to a halt. Our stay stretched to five years when, following the death of the former general manager, I was asked to accept appointment as general manager of Word Publishing Company, (a consortium of the Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican and United Churches), which published *The Times of PNG*. In that role I became acting chair of the PNG Media Council while the industry successfully fought government licensing and censorship plans.

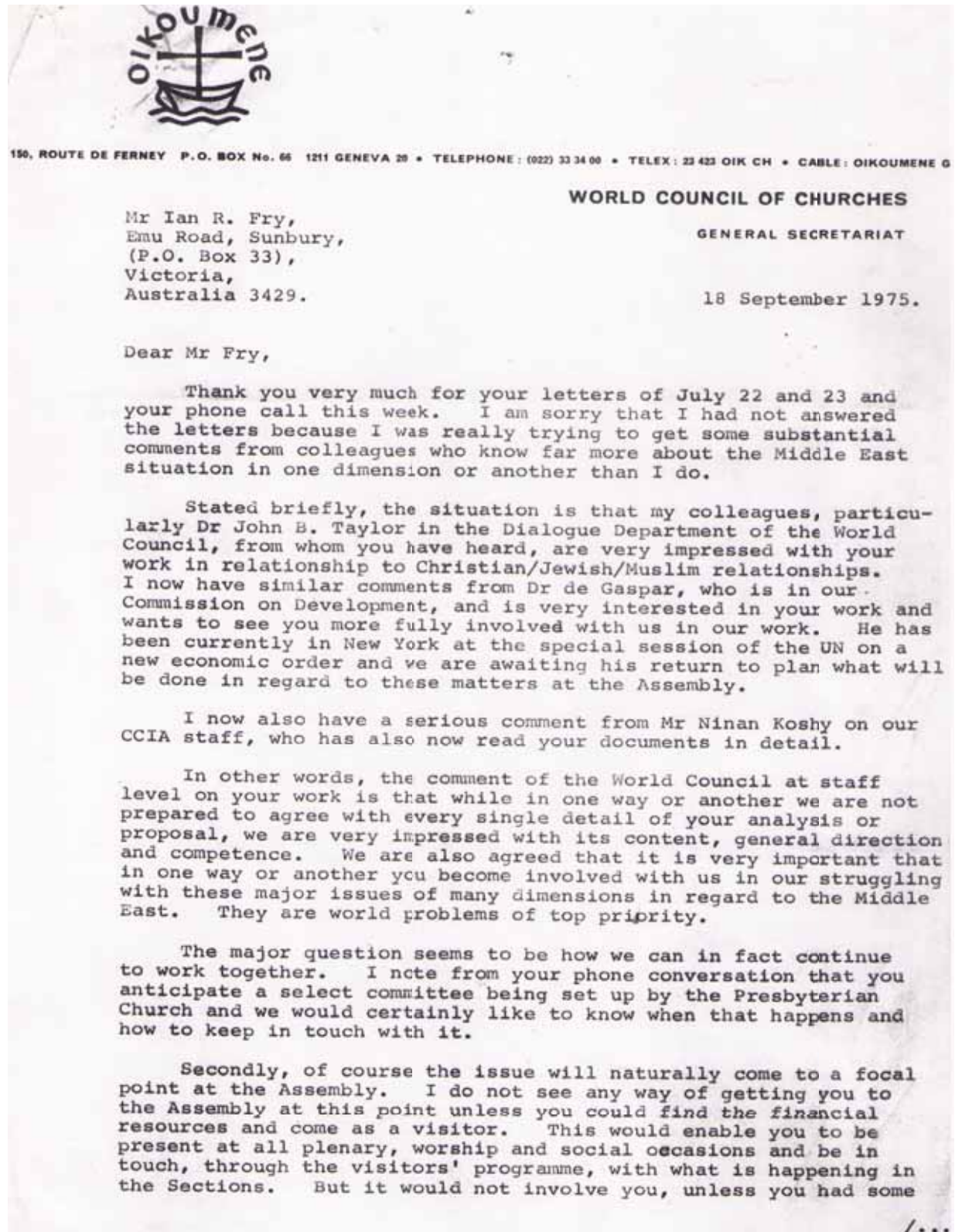
Against the board's wishes, I retired in 1996 to return home to continue research and writing, and *Trouble in the Triangle* was eventually published privately as a set of two books in October 2000. I had previously received an assurance of support for its publication from the then Secretary General of the World Muslim League, Dr. Abdullah Naseef, but due to changed circumstances that assurance could not be acted upon, and because the scale of the work and its implications were rather daunting I could not secure an agreement with an international publisher, thus the decision to publish privately. A facsimile of a letter from the Director of the Institute for Muslim Minority Affairs is also provided, as Appendix H. Since 2000 I have continued research, focusing specifically on the concept of Divine Covenant, and formalizing the process upon being admitted to this doctoral program.

Also, in parallel with this research project, I continue to work for interfaith cooperation and collaboration and to apply the practice of interfaith dialogue on the basis of my theological reflection and complex experience. I continue to expand my overseas research contacts by arranging a number of meetings and interviews with every opportunity to travel, and these have so far included twelve international conferences since the initial WCC consultation. In 2003, together with Rabbi Jonathan Keren Black, I co-founded the Jewish Christian Muslim Conference of Australia and was honorary secretary for two years. In 2008 I was secretary cum conference organizer for the Seventh International Interfaith Conference 'Globalisation for the Common Good'.

Currently, following a very successful multi-faith consultation in Kuala Lumpur in October 2010, for which I was secretary assisting the international convening group, I am assisting in the establishment of an international Core Group which will implement the international Multi-Religious Action Plan agreed to at the consultation. That plan includes programs of research, education, publication and consultation through networks of international scholars and religious and civic leaders, to be coordinated by a secretariat based in Malaysia, by courtesy of the Universiti Sans Malaysia as project host. The participants look forward to contributing to lifting international interfaith cooperation in practical and academic programs to a new level.

Appendix G

Letter: Brash to Fry, with letter to Engel attached



- 2 -

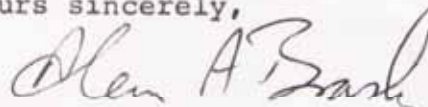
other official status provided by the churches in Australia, in the detailed discussions in the Sections, Hearings and Policy Reference Committees. It would certainly be good to have you there but I just do not see how it can be organized at this time.

I have also mentioned to you that the Middle East Task Force, which is a representative group of staff, are organizing a colloquium on "Universal Christian Responsibility with regard to the Middle East" near the end of October. The detailed topics will be the political situation, the Jews and Muslims in dialogue, the question of Jerusalem and the overall Christian responsibility in regard to the area. Clearly this covers all the issues on which you have been concentrating. Do you think it is possible for you to find any resources financially in Australia to enable you to participate in this colloquium, which will be here in Geneva. I need to get confirmation but I think the dates are October 24-28. I think we would try and find some contribution towards that cost and I am having discussions with my colleagues about this at the moment, but I very much doubt if the conference budget could afford to pay the entire cost of your journey from Australia and back. There is no question but that if we could solve this financial problem we would want you to be there.

As promised, I enclose a copy of the letter which some time ago I sent to Frank Engel.

With all best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Alan A. Brash
Deputy General Secretary

cc. Diogo de Gaspar
Ninan Koshy
George Tssetsis

The Rev. Frank Engel,
The Australian Council of Churches,
P.O. Box J111,
Brickfield Hill,
N.S.W. 2000 Australia.

29 August 1975.

Dear Frank,

I am regretful that I have not yet answered your letter of 1 August regarding the work of Mr Ian Fry. I would like to explain our response to that work.

1. In the first instance, it came to us more as a deep concern about inter-religious relationships and was commented on in our staff by Dr John B. Taylor, our Islamic specialist. He did not agree with all Mr Fry's conclusions but he took his work with extreme seriousness and I understand there was some correspondence between them.

2. When his further papers came I submitted them to two different parts of the World Council, namely Dr Diogo de Gaspar in CCPD, to get an economist's reaction, and International Affairs Department. I have not had a response from the latter but I want to quote you some of the comments made to be personally by Dr de Gaspar.

3. "I have been deeply impressed by what I read. I could subscribe for most of the analysis made and apprehensions formulated by Mr Fry. As for the proposals to remedy the situation, they contain sound basic reasoning. If the Australian Council of Church has someone such as Mr Fry among its staff it would be of great help to CCPD (I suspect also for CCIA) and would be of great value for SODEPAX when they launch the series of consultations on the New International Economic Order. May I add that the proposal he offers on page 2 of his letter of July 22nd for the Nairobi Assembly is very much in line with what CCIA and CCPD are considering now."

You will see by the above that his work is treated with a good deal of seriousness in this house.

I do not have any comments from CCIA yet as to whether or not they have any reaction to some of the extreme statements made by Dr Kissinger. We certainly felt the same way about them as you did whether we think it would be fruitful to take any action in response is something I am not competent to judge at this moment.

I hope these comments are of some value.

With all best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Alan A. Brash

cc. D. de Gaspar, D. Koshy Deputy General Secretary

Appendix H

Letter: Abedin-JIMMA-Fry

JOURNAL

Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs

P.O. BOX 8856, JEDDAH 21492
SAUDI ARABIA

November 30, 1988

Dr. Ian R. Fry
Lot 39, Emn Road
RSD Sunbury
Victoria 3429
AUSTRALIA.

Dear Dr. Fry,

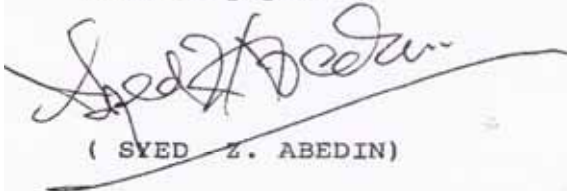
I am writing this at the behest of H. E. Dr. Abdullah Naseef. We have found a publisher who has expressed interest in your manuscript that you gave Dr. Naseef, Trouble in the Triangle. Enclosed is their initial Questionnaire. Kindly complete it and return it to me as early as convenient so that we can do the needful.

Please note that this is not a promise to publish, but an expression of interest, although from our previous experience with this group, a serious one.

I may also add that if and when an agreement is signed it will not involve any financial commitment on your part. Nor would distribution or marketing be your responsibility. Although the agreement to publish will be signed by you, the Rabita may consider any other obligations arising from the contract.

With best wishes.

Sincerely yours,



(SYED Z. ABEDIN)

P.S.: I enclose a copy of one of our publication for your reading pleasure.

Appendix I

Supplementary Statement: Yom Kippur War

These notes⁶⁹⁰ provide information on the Yom Kippur War which was the immediate trigger for my decision to undertake research relating to the religious and theological considerations involved in the crisis in the Middle East, and the need for repaired relations and collaboration between Christians, Jews and Muslims.

On October 6, 1973, during the Muslim month of Ramadan, and on the Jewish Day of Atonement, Egypt and Syria launched coordinated attacks against Israel in a bid to recover the Golan Heights and Sinai.

The war took Israel completely by surprise. It had been pursuing policies aimed at “pacifying” the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza with the immediate aim of ending all guerrilla activity, but which many Israeli politicians hoped - and expected - would involve the Palestinians in the management of their own local affairs to the extent that they would lose interest in the concept of independence enshrined in the Palestine National Charter. That, so they reasoned, would enable Israel to remain in permanent occupation of those regions and to eventually incorporate them into the State of Israel, in defiance of UN Resolution 242 which required it to withdraw. Failing that, they preferred to return the West Bank to the Kingdom of Jordan and to retain the Gaza Strip, but in either case there would be no independent state of Palestine. Israel, pursuing a policy of “the carrot and the stick” had been lulled into a sense of confidence by the way in which many of the local Palestinian elite had responded to the “carrot” of local municipal elections in March and May 1972, and concessions which were proving commercially favourable. It was a revised version of Britain’s Indian ‘divide-and-rule’ policies. Those who were able to accept either permanent Israeli occupation or re-incorporation into a United Arab Kingdom of Jordan were given preferential treatment compared with those who wanted the more “radical” program of Palestinian independence.

Life in Gaza, which was home to the majority of the radical Palestinians who were involved in commando raids against Israel, was “paralyzed.” For two years it had been subjected to house to house searches, in which the families of suspects would be rounded up and transported to detention centres in occupied Sinai. About 12,000 people had been rounded up and transported in that manner prior to July 1973. The suspected commandos were subjected to treatment such as being forced to stand waist deep in the Mediterranean under armed guard for hours while the searches were carried out, and economic sanctions were imposed on their villages. In July 1973 the Israeli military commander decided that the refugee camps should be further thinned out, to make compliance operations easier, and an additional 13,000 people were rounded up and transported to the Sinai detention centres. During the weeks which followed, large numbers of suspects were gunned down in raids on the camps. The program was successful to the extent that fedayeen raids in Gaza were fewer, fragmented and less effective.⁶⁹¹

690 The notes, including the chart, are extracts from Ian Fry, *Trouble in the Triangle: Christians, Jews and Muslims in Conflict*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Fitzroy: Compton Arch, 2000/2). pp. 1783-1791.

691 Mark Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). pp. 472-74.

President Sharon was winning the war of the weapons. But he seems to have ignored the fact that the Palestinians were not a small separated ethnic community which could be suppressed in isolation. They were a fully integrated part of the total Arab nation, and the Arab nation was essentially Muslim, under the umbrella of *dār al-islām* regardless of the fact that a small percentage of the population was Christian. That complete sense of community and integration was clear from the Palestine National Charter, from the broadcasts by Nasser, from the statements and policies of the Arab League, and now from the statements and policies of the Organization of the Islamic Conference as well. *Dār al-islām* was just as cohesive as World Jewry. Much more cohesive than the amorphous Christian gel.

So: motivated by a complete sense of community with the Palestinians, Egypt and Syria struck without warning. Their training and security had improved enormously under the professional eye of their Soviet military advisers since the Sinai-Suez debacle, and their planning and preparations had been so good that the element of surprise was complete. Israeli intelligence had been unable to give its government any warning at all and their front line units had been lulled into a sense of over confidence. In its initial assault, on October 6, the Egyptian army smashed through the Israeli fortifications along the western edge of the Sinai, then leap-frogged over them to divide the Israeli forces and make great progress across the peninsula. Similarly, the Syrian armour smashed through Israel's eastern positions on the Golan Heights and forced the Israelis to retreat to new defensive positions in the southern sector of the Golan Heights. The Arab advances were so rapid and decisive that Israel ordered the mobilization of reserves and Defence Minister Dayan, after visiting the Syrian front told the commander of the Israeli air force that desperate measures were required and the fate of "the Third Temple" was at stake.⁶⁹² Israel appealed to the US for help.

Next day, the 7th, Iraq expropriated the American quarter interest in the IPC subsidiary which was still operating, in retaliation for US support of Israel. All of the major oil companies immediately stopped lifting Iraq's oil from the Mediterranean terminals altogether. On the 8th American controlled Aramco halved the flow of oil from Saudi Arabia to the Mediterranean and subsequently stopped shipments from Sidon. In collaboration with the State Department it was cutting supplies to Europe to say to those governments, in effect and in very blunt terms: "come on board and support Israel against the Arabs." Iraq entered the war in support of Egypt and Syria on the 10th, then talks which had been in progress between OPEC's negotiators and the oil companies on revised pricing, participation and buy-back arrangements broke down when the companies stalled for time on the 14th. Next day, the 15th, with Israel having stalled the progress of both the Syrian and Egyptian forces, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait also entered the war.

President Nixon announced next day, the 16th, that the US would not allow Israel's security to be jeopardized and directed the 6th fleet to the eastern Mediterranean. OPEC negotiators announced that an agreement would no longer be sought with the companies and henceforth prices would be fixed by the producing governments unilaterally. An immediate increase of 70 per cent in posted prices was applied. On the 17th, with the tide turning against the Arabs in the war, OAPEC announced that several of its members would cut production rates by five per cent each month until Israel withdrew from all territory which it had occupied in 1967, and that some members had imposed an embargo on shipments to the USA, Holland and countries through which they might be supplied.

692 Ibid. p. 476.

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On October 24, after another very short war of only 16 days, an armistice was agreed. Logic would suggest that with the armistice everything would quickly return to normal. The troops could go back to their barracks; the governments could go through the motions of shaking hands again and, perhaps, agreeing on small revisions to their boundaries. Even full voting rights might be possible for the Palestinians in a state which they did not want to call home.

Nixon realised that a warning from certain senior public servants that his response to the Oil Import Question could result in oil restrictions being used as a political tool against the US was correct. However he reckoned it was a bigger tool in his hands and he would do as the West had did when, acting in the name of the United Nations, it determined to establish the State of Israel and made the Arabs pay the price for the Western world to salve its conscience over the Shoah. He was about to go to war with everyone who disagreed with US support for Israel. A turn of the oil screws would discourage those countries from supporting the Arabs in future. It was going to be quite simple, and almost painless for the US which held a strangle hold over the terminals, the supply lines and the tanker fleets. And in addition, the major oil companies would support him because they could not afford to let the Arabs win.

The United States and the oil industry set about a massive media blitz of innuendo, incomplete information and misrepresentation and succeeded in confusing the world-at-large about its role in the October War and the oil embargo and persuading it that the Arab countries were holding the rest of the world to ransom. The facts were quite different: the oil price and oil embargo were, and are, quite separate issues. The protracted price negotiations were between the oil companies and all members of OPEC including Venezuela, Iran, Nigeria and Indonesia – not just the Arabs. The embargo was a political matter between the Arabs and the United States. The outbreak of the Arab/Israeli war enabled the United States and the oil companies to confuse the two issues, and thereafter they certainly were linked. The oil industry and the United States administration hoped that by placing all the ‘blame’ on the Arabs at that time that the world might be stung into opposition, resulting in OPEC retracting its decision, and in other countries adding their weight to the US-Israeli Alliance against the Arabs.

The US and its oil industry used the oil weapon before the Arab states by closing the Mediterranean oil ports, thus cutting Europe’s supplies by 1.7 million barrels per day, initially, in an effort to coerce European governments into an anti-Arab posture through self interest and, at the same time, applying more pressure on the allies of the Palestinians by reducing the income available to them. The Arab states decided on economic warfare only after the American President threatened military and naval intervention and moved a troop-carrying fleet to the region. The production cut first announced was equal to about the rate of imports of Arabian petroleum into the United States. The clear intention of these countries in coupling productions cuts and embargoes was to apply pressure to the United States, and not to the world generally. However, the effective control of transport which the United States was able to exercise enabled it to buffer itself and to divert the supply cuts against whoever they wished. The US made big issues out of the fact that Iraq did not impose productions cuts and Saudi Arabia imposed bigger cuts than other OPEC members, implying division within the ranks. Those actions were in fact highly complementary.

Iraq had nationalised much of its oil industry and the government directly controlled 1.6 million barrels per day which was almost all committed in government to government deals with Spain, Italy, France, Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Russia, Bulgaria, Brazil, India, Egypt and Turkey. The Arabs had no wish to interfere with the flow of oil to these countries but it was precisely those countries which were affected first, and dramatically because of the speed with which it was done, when the oil companies stopped lifting from the Mediterranean terminals. The balance of Iraqi production, 0.4 million barrels/day, was in the hands of British and French companies supplying those countries with the full support of the Iraqi government.

On the other hand Saudi Arabia’s production at that stage was entirely in the hands of American-controlled Aramco. More than 60 per cent of the Arab crude oil imported into the USA, was from Saudi Arabia, and this was 20 per cent of US imports. Saudi Arabia therefore was in a better position to affect supplies in the USA than any other Arab country. However the US was able to keep the Mediterranean port of Sidon closed to oil tankers for the duration of the war and three weeks afterwards. Baniyas (Syria) from which most of Iraq’s government-to-government supplies are shipped was attacked by the Israeli air force, severely damaged and closed, but it was operational again on a restricted basis within a few weeks. That was the end of Britain’s window of opportunity. While it was closed the Arabs risked damage to pipelines and pumping stations by forcing the

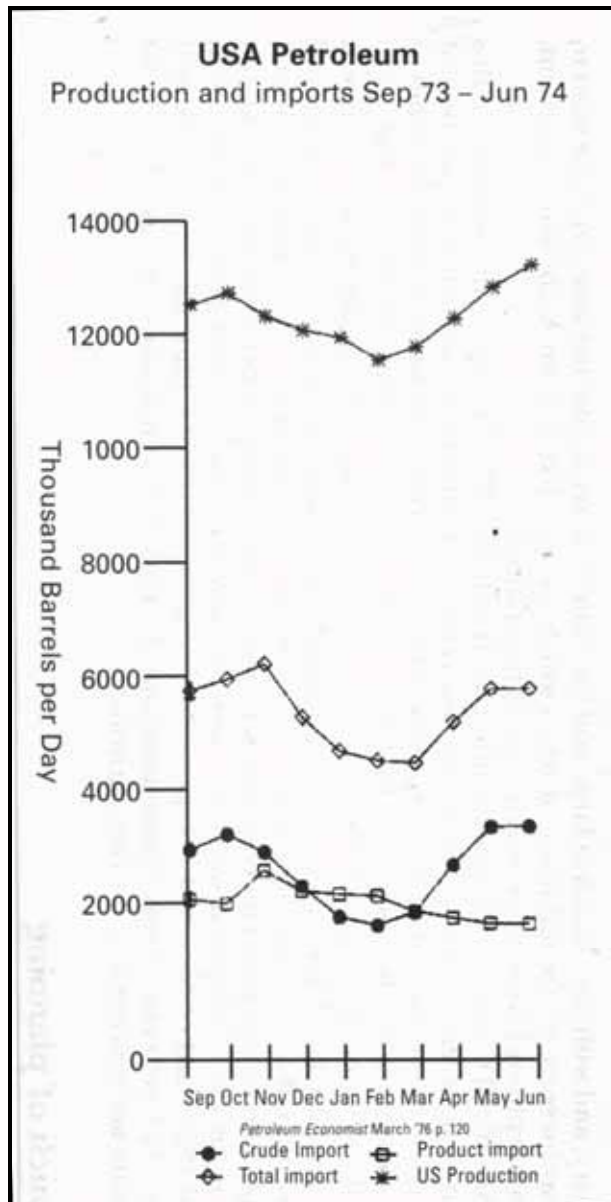
exceptional volume of 750,000 barrels per day through the Iraq-Tripoli pipeline which had a normal design capacity of 500,000 barrels per day.

By December 7th there was a shortfall in Bunker 'C' and marine diesel fuels of 25 per cent compared with actual requirements throughout the world. This must be related to the actual drop in crude oil production in Arab countries resulting from both Arab-directed costs and US manipulation of 5 per cent in October (approximately one per cent of gross world supplies) and 24 per cent in November (7 per cent), and also to the stocks normally held at major ports. By late November oil tankers were being laid up because of insufficient bunkers and marine fuel to carry crude oil and refined products. These lay-ups inevitably affected countries friendly to the Arabs or, more especially, those buying nationalised crude oil from Iraq. Shipments of wheat, coal, iron and other basic commodities between countries friendly to the Arabs were also affected to some extent from about this time.

Imports to Europe fell immediately the oil companies stopped lifting Iraqi Oil from Baniyas, before it was bombed by Israel, and a drop in imports to Britain was apparent immediately the embargo was announced. However imports to the United States were maintained at a record daily rate during November and were 7.7 per cent above the daily rate for September while it actually reduced domestic production to accentuate the apparent embargo effects and to justify its international policy to its own people who were just as subject to the propaganda war as the rest of the world. The graph 'USA Petroleum Production and Imports Sep 73 – Jun 74' illustrates these matters.

Export restrictions imposed by Canada, Venezuela and Ecuador contributed to the drop in US imports to a low point in February. The subsequent recovery in US imports was rapid. By May imports were above the base September level and they continued to climb steadily. The contrived stock shortages and massive price increases engineered around the world shook the economies of every developed country but had the most devastating effects in the USA, where the combined effect resulted in the large scale shut-down of the automobile industry and, by negative flow-on effects, other manufacturing industries and the construction industry.⁶⁹³

693 Sources: Personal conversations with the Teheran Representative of COSCO, the Oil Services Company, formerly known as "The Consortium", in 1975; international press reports in 1973, and Sampson, 1980, chapter 13.



Consequences of the partial oil embargo

The actions taken by the United States in close collaboration with the management of petroleum and other resource extracting or processing companies controlled in the Western-World produced catastrophic consequences for many countries whether they were allied with the Palestinians or not. However an outcome that the United States did not anticipate was that during the partial embargo it lost the ability to control world oil production and prices and stimulated collaborative intervention by governments of countries from which petroleum and other resources were being extracted. In particular, a *so-called* cartel of oil producing governments, OPEC, replaced the *actual* cartel of Western

oil companies as the principal group able to influence crude petroleum production rates and trading arrangements at that time.⁶⁹⁴

There were a series of unexpected consequences in quick succession, each of which contributed to the changing relationships the world is now experiencing. The inflationary impact of the "oil shock" caused industrial, social and political disruption, undermined some intergovernmental relationships and alliances, and caused the fall of certain governments. It also caused Western governments and oil companies servicing them to seek control of additional petroleum resources wherever possible, and in particular in countries that were not members of OPEC.⁶⁹⁵ The agreements reached for investment controls, profit sharing and infrastructure support were promoted as a golden wand that would bring development and prosperity to the new host countries. The subsequent reality has included political intrigue, social disruption along regional, ethnic or religious divides, and civil wars.

There was an immediate, substantial and dramatic rise in royalty and taxation payments to the governments of countries from which petroleum was being extracted at the time. These included countries of Central Asia, Scandinavia, Latin America and Russia as well as the Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa, but the countries that benefitted most were members of the Muslim 'block'. The prestige and influence of Islam and the confidence and determination of Muslim leaders rose dramatically as the governments concerned were able to allocate substantial funds to less fortunate Muslim countries while, as already noted, investing heavily in their own infrastructure. Muslim minority communities in other countries received aid for the construction and staffing of mosques, universities, schools, hospital and related services so that Islam gained greater prominence and influence through a presence that could no longer be ignored.⁶⁹⁶

However in most cases the governments of the countries from which petroleum and other resources were being extracted did not have the administrative and financial structures and expertise in place to handle the unexpected flow of funds. They had no real option but to invest their surplus funds with established Western institutions. They invested a proportion directly in assets in the USA and Europe; imported arms and capital equipment with a further proportion, and placed the rest on deposit with Western banks. The obvious first choice for many on the basis of security and stability was US Government bonds with guaranteed (although minimal) interest return. Their principal alternatives were the US capital, industrial, and real estate markets. In doing so they relieved the recessionary pressures in the West; and, with much manipulation by the United States,

694 Anthony Sampson, "The Seven Sisters; *the Great Oil Companies and the World They Made*," (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1980). pp. 89-93. The cartel's activities were coordinated through the Achnacarry Agreement, the 'Pool Association' and the London Committee, and involved territory-sharing, production quotas, and price fixing by the big seven oil companies.

Ian Seymour, *Opec: Instrument of Change*, First ed. (London: Macmillan, 1980), 121-25.

695 Fry. for extended discussion.

696 Shireen Hunter, *Opec and the Third World* (London: Croom Helm, 1984). The policies adopted and the motives that drove them are discussed, showing that the level of aid reached 6.01% of Saudi Arabia's GNP in 1975. However it was not maintained at that level.

became locked into the economic systems of the West to the extent that they soon lost the interest or ability to negotiate for a New Economic Order.⁶⁹⁷

The consequences of placing their funds in that manner included loss of the ability to determine or direct the use of their funds; the investment or lending of their funds in commercial or other ventures in the Western World under the absolute control of institutions in the Western World, rather than in the Non-Western World; the requirement for Non-Western governments and businesses to borrow from or to accept investment from Western institutions on their terms rather than under Islamic principles; little if any improvement in the control and management of their extractive industries; and greater dependence on the countries in which their funds were held, often with unsavoury political and economic conditions attached including the use of available funds to provide infrastructure which was required to service new extractive industries rather than communities in under-resourced regions. Thus a high proportion of the increased revenue from resource extraction was funding further exploitation of Non-Western countries and causing increased dependence of Non-Western countries on the stability of the United States and other Western Countries for their own stability.

Subsequent conflict

Subsequent to the Yom Kippur War, a series of interlocked conflicts in the Middle East, all originating from the same conflict, has contributed to, and continues to contribute to chronic political instability and progressive deterioration in world affairs. But now, in a definite and dramatic reversal of the pattern during the first generation after the Yom Kippur War, that political instability is now coupled with a progressive and accelerating shift in authority and influence away from powers that are loosely described as the White Western Christian World to the non-white, non-Western and predominantly non-Christian countries.

That shift is illustrated by two circumstances. First: the dependence of Western countries on trade with China, India and Russia's Asian sector, and investment capital from China to sustain their economic stability. Second: repeated adverse votes in the United Nations General Assembly as a result of the progressive admission of additional non-Western member states, and because of opposition to policies pursued by Western governments and private enterprise during that period. The United States has repeatedly relied on its veto power in the Security Council to impose its policies, and is vigorously avoiding moves to reform the constitution of the United Nations in a manner that would result in majority-membership decisions.

Leaders of the Western powers, generally, are now more fearful of the loss of privilege, economic status and other possible consequences (including the prospect of large scale population movements and consequential cultural and social change), as a result of the world-wide economic crisis triggered by the abuse of financial and market practices in the United States and elsewhere than at any time since the Yom Kippur War. They also fear that admission of the shift in authority will embolden non-Western countries and further

697 Altaf Gauhar, "Arab Petrodollars: Dashed Hope for a New Economic Order," *World Policy Journal* 4, no. 3 (1987). A comprehensive statement of all the issues and consequences involved is provided from the author's vantage point as Secretary General of the Third World Foundation. Concurrent with easing recessionary pressure, OPEC's investments aggravated inflation and caused both the dollar and the investments of the OPEC countries to fall in value, and their return on investments for the period 1972-79 has been calculated at between zero and minus 3.4 percent.

undermine confidence at home, thus causing the pace of change to accelerate, leading to an uncertain level of socio-economic chaos and the prospect of worldwide conflict involving a pattern of alliances quite different to those which have enabled the WWCB to maintain its dominance.

In contrast to their own considered research,⁶⁹⁸ they have therefore been reluctant to acknowledge publicly that the shift is occurring and continue to pursue trade, economic and political policies and alliances that are designed to reverse the shift and to maintain positions of dominance. These policies, prior to the President Obama taking office, provoked further negative responses, exemplified by the antagonism between countries of Latin America and the United States.⁶⁹⁹

However, the publication of *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* by the peak United States intelligence body, the National Intelligence Council, on November 20, 2008, marks the formal acknowledgement by the US Government that, in sharp contrast to the pattern for the years following the Yom Kippur War as outlined above, the transfer of relative wealth and economic power from West to East is occurring and it acknowledges that religion is a factor in the process.

The international system – as constructed following the Second World War⁷⁰⁰ – will be almost unrecognizable by 2025 owing to the rise of emerging powers, a globalizing economy, an historic transfer of relative wealth and economic power from West to East, (notably to the BRIC group, Brazil, Russia, India, and China), and the growing influence of non-state actors. By 2025, the international system will be a global multipolar one with gaps in national power continuing to narrow between developed and developing countries. ... Concurrent with the shift in power among nation states, the relative power of various non-state actors – including businesses, tribes, religious organizations, and criminal networks – is increasing.⁷⁰¹

698 U.S. National Intelligence Council, Washington: *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* (2008).

699 Bloomberg.com economic report, December 15, 2008, states that President Bush was excluded from a meeting of Latin American and Caribbean heads of state.

The Council on Foreign Relations task force on Latin America reports that “Latin America has never mattered more for the United States (but) the era of the United States as the dominant influence in Latin America is over.

On 17 March, 2009, after a meeting with President Obama, Brazil’s President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva used his weekly radio address to ask that the White House develop fresh Latin ties based on a “vision of partnership and not interference, of contribution and not intervention.” Source: Iran’s Press TV service: www.presstv.com/detail.aspx?id=88895§ionid=351020706 accessed 2009-03-19

700 The term “The international system – as constructed following the Second World War” is a reference to the establishment of the United Nations Organization and the Trusteeship system, the Bretton Woods Institutions (the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development, the ‘World Bank’), the World Trade Organization, and the Marshall Plan. Each of these was planned and constituted to ensure continuing control of the world economic and political systems by the Western Powers in an unrestricted free enterprise environment, and, in particular, the economic dominance of the United States. [See Fry, 2000/2 chapters 25, 26, 27, with extensive quotations from Alan W. Dulles on the philosophical basis of political and economic planning, and documents of the period.]

701 U.S. National Intelligence Council, Washington: *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* (2008), Executive Summary, p. vi.

Appendix J

MCD Questionnaire

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DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTIANS, JEWS AND MUSLIMS: THE CONCEPT OF DIVINE COVENANT AS BASIS

a thesis in preparation for submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

Ian Fry

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is being addressed to you as one of a small number of persons who hold positions of responsibility within their communities of faith and who are being asked to participate in a research project to explore certain aspects of dialogue with other faiths. Equal numbers are of Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith. Within each faith group some are clergy with mainly pastoral or administrative responsibilities, some are academics in theological or related tertiary institutions, and some have a major focus on interfaith dialogue. There is, of course, considerable overlap in these divisions of interest and responsibility, and the groupings are only indicative of an apparent major professional emphasis.

Please reflect briefly on the Research Question, and on each of the specific questions that follow, and provide your response to each of those questions.

This file is in .doc format, workable on screen. Please type your response to each question into the table box inserted after that question. The box will expand in depth to accommodate whatever response you wish to provide.

The Research Question

The principal question which the thesis seeks to address is:

In what manner and on what basis can the communities of the three primary Abrahamic faiths, Christianity, Judaism and Islam, be engaged in conversation-dialogue relating to the understandings of divine covenant of each faith to enable a greater awareness of their relationship with God and the relationships between each of their faiths?

The research question assumes that each of the primary Abrahamic faith communities – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – exist in a relationship with God, that they each recognize

the concept of divine covenant, and that they each acknowledge an historical relationship between them.

The research question *does not* assume, or relate to, the recognition of any particular divine covenant. Nor does it assume that the concept of divine covenant is defined by, or restricted to, particular components, circumstances or conditions.

Questions for your response

1. Does the fact that your community of faith exists in a relationship with God, and acknowledges the concept of Divine Covenant, mean that it accepts a particular role and is subject to an obligation to God to fulfil that role?

2. Is it reasonable to state that role in these terms: “to be an agent to enable all humanity to live in harmony and stability in such circumstances that it can recognize and respond to its relationship with God for whatever might be the divinely intended term of its existence”? Or how would you state that role?

3. If it is subject to such an obligation under covenant, does that obligation differ in any way from the obligations to which the other Abrahamic faiths are subject?

4. If an obligation is one aspect or component of a Divine Covenant, is judgement, accompanied or followed by a penalty in the event of failure to honour the obligation, also an aspect of a Divine Covenant?

5. If judgement, accompanied or followed by a penalty, is an aspect of a Divine Covenant, in what sense, or in what manner, do you see Divine Judgment being exercised: contemporaneously through specific identifiable events; the consequences of action and reaction between people; on a continuing or progressive basis through several generations; eschatologically, or in some other manner?

6. Can you identify any situations from the history of the past few hundred years that may be described as a breach of covenant by one community which caused large scale trauma for a second community?

7. Can you identify any situations in which the **second** community’s reaction to the trauma which it had suffered resulted in similar or greater trauma for the **first** community in such a manner that it may be interpreted as a penalty for the initial breach of covenant?

8. If you can identify such situations, in your view is it desirable for dialogue programs to be focussed on obligations under Divine Covenant to encourage and provide a basis

for *practical programs of cooperation* between communities at local, regional and international levels?

9. In your view, how can *conversation dialogue*, focussed on the obligations under Divine Covenant that are either common to each of the Abrahamic faiths or specific to one or another, be encouraged?

10. In what circumstances and in what manner should such conversation dialogue be conducted, and what theological concepts or religious practices should they address in order that each community of faith might fulfil a common role that each acknowledges, or a role which it acknowledges as specific to it?

11. Please reflect on the likely impact if a substantial program of conversation dialogue was to take place on the basis you have suggested in your response to questions 9 and 10, and then respond to this question.

What changes do you envisage in the working relationship between the three faiths; the practices of your own faith community; and the conduct of world affairs in the wake of a substantial program of conversation dialogue?

12. Can you envisage circumstances in which each of the three communities might act contrary to their obligations under covenant in such a manner that conflict between them could – in spite of their conduct – lead to the fulfilment of the *purpose* for which they were made subject to Divine Covenant?

Return of the Completed Questionnaire

When you have completed this questionnaire please sign the statement below and send the complete document to the researcher, Mr. Ian Fry, either by email, (this is preferred), by FAX transmission, or by secure air postal service.

His addresses are:

For Email

Either: ian.fry@gotalk.net.au

OR: ian.rex.fry@alumni.adelaide.edu.au

For FAX Transmission

To: Mr. Ian Fry +61 3 94158292

For Secure Airmail Postal Service

To: Mr. Ian Fry
18 Cremorne Street
Fitzroy
Victoria 3065
Australia

This completed research questionnaire is provided in response to a request from Mr. Ian Fry, a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the Melbourne College of Divinity, exclusively for use in the preparation of his thesis.

It is provided on the strict understanding that I will not be identified by name as the source of this research data either in the thesis or in any subsequent publication, and that when it is used it will be associated with a reference code which indicates only the faith group and professional interest of the research participant.

I have noted that within twenty eight days of this date I may withdraw my consent for this data to be used in any way, and that if I do so withdraw my consent this document will be marked "CANCELLED" and returned to me by airmail post (if I provided it by post or by FAX transmission), or my messages and the document file will be deleted from Mr. Fry's computer (if I transmitted it by Email) and I will be advised of the action taken.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (printed): _____

Position: _____

Preferred Contact Details: _____

Covenant Questionnaire

Response rate

FAITH GROUP	Number invited	Agreed	%	Refused	Did not respond	Withdrawn	Agreed but did not return questionnaire	Returned questionnaire	% of Total
Christian	19	18	95	1 ¹	0	0	9 ⁴	9	47
Jewish	15	9	60	0	6	3 ²	1 ⁵	5	33
Muslim	15	13	87	0	2	1 ³	3 ⁶	9	60
Total	49	40	82	1	8	4	13	23	47

Christian Group by Stream									
Roman Catholic	6	5	83	1	0	0	1	4	66
Orthodox	3	3	100	0	0	0	0	2	66
Reformed	9	9	100	0	0	0	6	3	33
Not Known	1	1	100	0	0	0	1	0	0

Notes: participation table.

1. Noted above, holds Supersessionist belief and would not grant relevance to other faiths and act contrary to his teaching to those under his pastoral care.

2. All cited excess commitments.

3. Inhibited by eye surgery

4. It is noteworthy that these nine were half of the Christians who had agreed to participate. None had ignored the invitation, and none formally withdrew, but all found reasons to delay. This is in contrast to that fact that six out of 15 Jews and two out of 15 Muslims chose not to respond, and four subsequently withdrew formally.

5. Travelling overseas, and unable to concentrate on it.

6. Communications contact with one was lost.

Appendix K

Tabulated Responses from Invited Research Project Participants

Participant categories:						
F: Faith. C, Christian; J, Jewish; M, Muslim						
G: Principle Professional Involvement, A, Academic; D, Dialogue; P, Pastoral or Administrative						
#: Identifier						
Questions >	1 Covenant Role	2 Agent	3 Obligations	4 Judgement	5 Breach	6 Trauma
	Does the fact that your community of faith exists in a relationship with God, and acknowledges the concept of Divine Covenant, mean that it accepts a particular role and is subject to an obligation to God to fulfil that role?	Is it reasonable to state that role in these terms: "to be an agent to enable all humanity to live in harmony and stability in such circumstances that it can recognize and respond to its relationship with God for whatever might be the divinely intended term of its existence"? Or how would you state that role?	If it is subject to such an obligation under covenant, does that obligation differ in any way from the obligations to which the other Abrahamic faiths are subject?	If an obligation is one aspect or component of a Divine Covenant, is judgement, accompanied or followed by a penalty in the event of failure to honour the obligation, also an aspect of a Divine Covenant?	If judgement, accompanied or followed by a penalty, is an aspect of a Divine Covenant, in what sense, or in what manner, do you see Divine judgement being exercised; contemporaneously through specific identifiable events; the consequences of action and reaction between people; on a continuing or progressive basis through several generations; eschatologically, or in some other manner?	Can you identify any situations from the history of the past few hundred years that may be described as a breach of covenant by one community which caused large scale trauma for a second community?
F	G	#	2 Agent	3 Obligations	4 Judgement	6 Trauma
C-R	A	2	See Q1. N/A.	See Q1.	See Q 4. N/A	I can recognize conflict and trauma resulting from the conduct of faith-related communities, but not acknowledge that it is linked to a breach of covenant.
C-R	A	3				
C-R	A	4	NO. Role: engage in dialogue around truth, expounding, interpreting life of person Jesus. Emphasis: truth rather than harmony. Pursuit of truth can threaten harmony, but that is not an aim.	NO. The (New) Covenant sets believers free from curse of law (old covenant). God keeps covenant because of God's own faithfulness [JRF: <i>unconditional covenant</i>]	NOT intrinsic to covenant nor reflecting God's intention. An outcome of choosing to step outside the covenant; to live by law rather than grace, or act to usurp God's rightful place. God does not remove judgement if we choose for self.	Tragedy happens when believers fail to act on pivotal principle of covenant relationship of grace, do not extend to others the same grace they receive from God. Example: German Third Reich treatment of Jews. Have been others.
C-C	A	5	The statement is NOT one that most Catholics would articulate, but whatever they said about following Christ could be described in the above terms, and in a Catholic theological community most members would be very comfortable with the statement and see it is a good articulation of what they believed about their covenant with God.	At this time I do not think most people in the Catholic Community see the expectations of following Christ as 'obligations'. The idea of obligations certainly was the attitude that was present up until Vatican II. There was a great deal of legalism, in fact, that surrounded such obligations as fasting, going to Mass on Sundays, sending your children to a Catholic School, etc.	Most Catholic theologians today would not see a penalty following upon judgement as a way that God acts with his people or Jesus acts with His Church. Bad things do happen to people and to the Church, but it is not seen as a consequence of breaking the Covenant. It could result from behaviour that goes against the covenant (e.g. wars), but these would not be put in terms of the covenant in the Catholic community.	I would see the Holocaust as a breach of the covenant that Christians have with God/Jesus.
C-?	A	6				

Appendix Thesis Tabulated Research Responses

C-C	A	7	One covenant does not negate other covenants. So there is no particular role as such.	It is our duty to see all humanity live in peace and harmony	That obligation is not different from that of the other sections of the Abrahamic Faith. The means may be different.	We cannot make a judgement about God's judgement.	I think this judgement will be on a progressive basis.	Christian Crusades, and the Jewish Holocaust
C-C	D	1						
C-R	D	2						
C-C	D	3						
C-C	D	4	In theory it might. But I am not sure if the members of my community would have that in the foreground.	It depends on who is stating this. The more rigid among them would add that this can only happen if humanity acknowledges and accepts the truth preached by Jesus Christ who is Lord of not only Christians but also everyone else.	I'm not sure if it would be perceived as such. Even if it shared the same roots, how that obligation is being expressed today differs quite substantially. Some from my community will simply say that "they" have deviated from the original and true covenant or have misunderstood it.	Unfortunately that seems to be a primary motivation or at least constitutes an important factor to why people do good. It is the fear of this judgement that keeps them from being unkind to another. They cannot be blamed as that remains the dominant theology that continues to be preached and taught in the pews.	I would see it contemporaneously through specific events, through consequences of one's actions in the here and now. Not only we reap what we sow but also that we reap what we fail to sow. In short, we are responsible for our actions and also inaction and we pay for it before death.	The Crusades come foremost; then the Holocaust. Others, implicit, such as colonialism and now neo-colonialism. In Asia: many other religious and racial conflicts, e.g. Buddhist-Muslim in Myanmar. Muslim-Christian in Pakistan, Hindu-Muslim in India. My sense: root causes of these, more economics and politics than religious affiliation. Religion is just a more potent tool to exploit in such situations.
C-C	D	5	YES, we believe that Jesus has instituted a new covenant that defines the relationship of God with humanity. It is a covenant in the blood of Jesus, that is, it was established by Jesus with his death and resurrection and is nourished sacramentally by his blood. As Christians we fulfil that role by living in accord with the teaching and example of Jesus.	YES, it would be reasonable to state that role in those terms.	Under such terms, all Abrahamic faiths would have similar obligations. At the same time there is a specificity of each religion, each of which has its own laws and responsibilities. Those of Christians would follow from our obligation to take on and live the values we find in Christ's life and teaching.	YES, judgment is an integral part of the Divine Covenant. Any understanding that the reward for good and for evil is identical is foreign to our Christian faith.	I understand it as being exercised eschatologically.	The failure of Christians in Europe, down through the centuries, to teach the evil and sinfulness of anti-Semitism and its incompatibility with Christian faith was partly responsible for the trauma of the Holocaust.
C-R	D	6	YES. With the emphasis on the generous and forgiving nature of God, justification needs to be followed by sanctification. All good works are through the grace of God rather than from a sense of obligation. An attempt to follow Jesus is a response to his generous love. The term 'covenant' is rather impersonal.	"To be an agent etc' is a fair translation of to work for 'the kingdom of God,' but I speak of discipleship and facilitating the Kingdom of God – understood in terms of Jesus' words in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4, 18-19), rather than achieving harmony, stability and reconciliation.	In my understanding of Christianity there is less sense of obligation than I see in Judaism and Islam. This is because of the emphasis on God's unconditional and accepting love. (Referred to Friedlander)	This is too punitive. Certainly the New Testament speaks of God's judgement, but this is more a growing self-awareness of our failure and sin rather than God imposing punishment. I believe God eventually will reconcile all people to God's self. Add: heaven and hell idea clearly implies punishment and is in a lot of Christianity, but everlasting punishment would not be heard from liberal preachers. God's love never stops seeking to redeem those whom are lost. There is a process of purification: I have an idea of purgatory although not in the traditional sense. (John 3) "I have come not to judge but to show people the way to life". Certainly our actions have consequences, but not necessarily in the form of punishments, so eventually the love of God can free us as we become more aware of what we have done.	NO. This is dangerous teaching, especially if we attempt to apportion blame for some disaster. Disasters or illness are not sent by God as punishment. They are a result of natural forces and sometimes of human sin (interaction), but as the Psalmist recognised evil men appear to flourish. (See Luke 13, 1-5)	NO, although I recognise that the Christian claim to have taken over the covenant from Jews was one cause of much suffering to Jews, and Colonisation and the Holocaust may be seen in this light. Add: Discussed and agreed a minority Jewish view of Holocaust was that it was punishment for failure. Also aids: disagreed with some views that it is punishment for immorality

Appendix Thesis Tabulated Research Responses

C-O	D	7	One covenant does not negate other covenants. So there is no particular (unique) role as such.	YES. It is our duty to see all humanity live in peace and harmony	NO. That obligation is not different from that of the other sections of the Abrahamic Faith. The means may be different.	We cannot make a judgement about God's judgement.	I think this judgement will be on a progressive basis.	Christian Crusades, and the Jewish Holocaust
C-O	P	1	As long as any community recognizes their exists between it and God a relationship, and acknowledges the concept of Divine Covenant, it has no other alternative but to accept the particular role entrusted to it and will continue to be under obligation to fulfill that role, whatever the cost.	Agents with a particular responsibility are not expected to divert from what was asked of them. Total commitment from their side is the least expected. And when what they are called for, is to bring harmony, stability, healing and reconciliation, then they are under obligation to fulfill their calling under whatever circumstances they may find themselves in.	Not really. It does not differ. However, the question will be addressed about the validity of this or that Covenant. It is most unfortunate that religions have been used, misused, and often abused. Those in the lead have often had their own way of interpreting the terms of this or that Covenant, and after making use of it, for ends other than those in the mind of God, allow themselves to mess up with the Covenant and its terms.	Judgment is an aspect and a component of Divine Covenant. Failing to fulfill the terms will bring the party to judgment.	Through specific events at different times and in different forms, generation after generation until liberation from this or that covenant. As LAND is but one. The other which is closely related to the former, are the happenings of the 1940's, i.e. the Nazi persecution of the Jewish Community in Europe, the escape of the hundreds of thousands of the Jews to Palestine, the endeavors to implement the goals of Zionism at the expense of Judaism: all these resulted in the uprooting of a whole community and the rise of the State of Israel in blood rather than in peace — is but one.	
C-R	P	2						
C-R	P	3						
C-R	P	4						
C-O	P	5						
C-R	P	6						
J	A	1						
J	A	2	YES. To be a 'light unto the nations' ; to demonstrate that living according to Divine law means a more compassionate, considerate, caring community, taking care of needy, concerned about the world; to model morality in all spheres. In turn, the Almighty protects us. The same would be true for all faiths in covenantal relationships. If we fulfill our part, G'd looks after His. Our (Jewish) role is unique, but so is that of each covenantal group. In every case, living in covenant must be for the good of the whole world.	No time-limit or other conditionality on the relationship, except to endure until 'the end of time' – whatever that means. Because our covenant is unique to us, and others may have their own covenants, it is presumptuous to discuss 'all humanity' in the way you do above. What I would say is that recognising that others, too, are living in covenant means an obligation to seek the common ground while respecting the uniqueness of each relationship.	Definitely. We have the 613 commandments to fulfill. We believe that other nations must just adhere to the seven Noahide principles.	YES. Punishment is felt on a national level, by means of our relationship with the Land. (There is not really a belief that the righteous individuals prosper and the wicked suffer in this life.) First, if we stray, there is no rain. If we still don't listen, we can be exiled. Exile from the Land is the ultimate penalty. However, even while in exile, G'd can remind us of our obligations by 'hiding His face', so that we feel abandoned further. In exile we are subject to and vulnerable to the whims of other nations.	See Q4. Destruction of the First Temple and exile to Babylon was seen as punishment for idolatry. Destruction of the Second Temple and exile for nearly 2000 years was seen as punishment for 'baseless hatred' (internal schisms). Eschatologically. Return to the Land is connected with Divine forgiveness and approaching the Messianic age. It is a human initiated response based, theologically, on the conclusion that we have 'served our term' and that we can hasten redemption by returning.	Some saw Crusades as Gog and Magog; innocent Jewish communities caught in battles between two evil empires. Position reassessed when Messianic age did not follow. Some contemporary theologians see the Holocaust (others saw late 19 th Cent. pogroms) as 'breach of covenant' by the Divine, necessitating reinterpreting our situation and taking matters into our own hands. (See Q5.) Our relationship with Divine is discrete – it cannot be affected by the Divine relationship with others.
J	A	3						
J	A	4						
J	A	5						
J	D	1	YES. That is precisely what the covenant is supposed to mean	YES. That is a fine statement	We do not have a position on what responsibilities the other Abrahamic faiths are obliged to do beyond the Noahide covenant which applies to all humanity to live in accord with basic moral law.	YES. There is judgement and penalty for our failure to honour our obligation.	The primary form of penalty is being enacted through the environmental crisis for all humanity; the secondary form of penalty is enacted through karmic consequences through the generations	Western imperialism and environmental irresponsibility is causing large scale trauma for the entire human race.

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J	D	2	Such an agent must first help each individual to an expanded identification that embraces all of life, re-connects to all creation. Role: provide wisdom, mentors, safe places for individuals to make decision to live by highest principles for greatest number. In times of stress main frame of reference is security of institution and nation.	NO. A covenant is a promise, decision, obligation to fulfil conditions to live inclusively by highest principles to help each person reconnect to each other and to whole of life: nothing smaller. The Abrahamic faiths are grounded in Abraham's insight, primitive at the time, that all is one, inextricably connected and inter-related.	Part of God is cause and effect. Life provides consequences for failure to live by principles. Humankind's promise/response to God is to procreate, spiritually planting seeds in fertile places, be midwife to new kingdom, new global community. Resist/retaliate not, because in doing so we become like that we are fighting or punishing.	Divine judgement can be entrusted to cause and effect, releasing humans to love, be religious. By default, people take sides, lose identification of these 'outsiders': fear hijacks the brain, rationalizes judgement, justifies anger, self-serving self-preserving retaliation.	The wars, many of which can be rationalized.
J	D	3					
J	D	4	Talk of relationship with God, divine covenant is usually words, organized egocentricity, not practice. Leaders capitulate to social, economic interests in institutions that are historic vessels that protect ancient wisdom, courage stories, but harbour misplaced power, fail to follow lead of small collectives and open, searching, evolving spiritual individuals.	Response depends on alternative uses of terms. Two basic groups: those who see their role as determined in some sense by God, and those who see it determined by their own ethical considerations and teachings of those they respect. Both might accept description of "an agent." Some: accept as appropriate statement of belief, but would not expect others to agree. Some assert that all Jews or all humans should subscribe to it. Others accept role, but not invoke a relationship with God as relevant to decision.	Some who recognize covenant also accept judgement and penalty for failure; consider it generally in clan or communal terms rather than personal, (idol worship, exile) with exceptions, eg Moses & King David. C & J focus more on personal sin, individual punishment, particularly after death. Sin has different meanings in classic Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Arabic. Not a major theme in Jewish scholarship.	No unanimity. One position: not for humans to have knowledge of Divine Judgement. Another: there are consequences when justice is not achieved: some pass through subsequent generations in predictable, highly observable patterns. Most J scholarship focuses on theory of how failure can hasten consequences in current lifetime or future generations; whether natural to world order, or supernaturally ordained. General agreement: there are impacts on individuals and communities when justice is impeded, and existence has inbuilt potential to respond to particular actions – not always in a predictable manner.	Examples: Native American and Black American communities traumatised by White governments, corporations and individuals; Aboriginal communities in Australia; Muslim minorities traumatised by Christian/Jewish dominant communities after 9/11; Australia's wider community being complicit in "breeding out" Aboriginal blood and culture; South Africa's oppression of the Black Christian and Muslim majorities by minority White Christians; dominant cultures permitting greater separation of poor from wealthy; German Christian complicity in fate of German minorities; growing separation of major countries producing pollution from those suffering the consequences.
J	P	1					
J	P	2					
J	P	3					
J	P	4	YES. The covenant leads to the obligation of fulfilling the 613 commandments of the Torah.	YES. Judaism's covenant with G-d is well defined in relation to the Torah and the Commandments. Judaism does not envisage others to be so obligated; rather they are urged to adopt the seven laws (and their derivatives) as given to Noah following the great Flood	Yes. Judaism's covenant envisages rewards for fulfillment and penalties and punishment for failure to fulfil these obligations.	Whereas in Temple times when Torah law was enforceable by the Rabbinic court system, the penalties imposed included a dimension of atonement. There was also an element that left it to the G-d's Will as to any further consequences which may result. Nowadays, when no penalties are enforced so we believe judgement and penalties are carried out by G-d in His time and manner according to His will alone.	As a Jew and viewing Jewish history there are many instances over millennia that can be identified. Many questions may be raised. Is the "breach" a consequence of failure to live up to the expectations of the Covenant? If so, is the community perpetrating the harm an "agent" of the Divine and so merely an instrument with no moral responsibility? Even though Judaism recognises the tragedies in Jewish history as a form of Divine implementation of the consequences of failure to live up to

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[illegible]

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			amanah (trust) that God has placed on them. In a larger sense, this amanah rests upon the entire human family.	to grips with the essence of the trust which is to uphold justice. Justice is central to Islam. Add: Divine Covenant is the understanding between God and the whole of human kind, not just Muslims, that God reposes trust in humanity, and humanity accepts this trust, in matters of fulfilling roles, obligations here on earth, and – fundamentally – justice, being closest to piety, and in line with the 99 names of God which indicate what is required under trust. The concept of Kalifa is not directly servanthip, but a relationship of a trustee or vice-regent. When conscious of that trust, one surrenders to the divine in an engaged surrender and then becomes conscious of servanthip – reaching a higher level in the relationship – and in order to fulfil that trust, submits wholeheartedly. Covenant does not guarantee a place in paradise. Engaged surrender is not a guarantee that one will behave. If one has behaved properly, ethically, in engaged surrender one would have the benefit of a closer relationship with God and in the here-after receive the benefit of having been a good person on earth.	Christianity and Judaism. Struggling for justice as an important part of that trust is also integral to these two religions, especially Judaism. Add: Obligation is not exclusive to Abrahamic faiths; equivalent of ethical requirements in other faiths. Identity, or compliance with religious practices, does not carry any exclusive benefits or rights.	community or people incurring God's wrath because they had deviated from "the straight path."	Judgement is exercised. Add: Judgement, in the sense that it occurs on earth, is a consequence of one's actions. The collapse of empires has been brought upon themselves by the policies they have pursued. There is a danger of misinterpretation of natural disasters as being the consequence of failure to adhere to rituals and practices. Nehru couldn't believe that founders of empire were followers of Jesus.	Muslims and others. Christian discrimination against Jews. Jewish usurpation of Muslim and Christian land in the case of Palestine.
M	D	2						
M	D	3						
M	D	4						
M	D	5	Covenant acknowledged. Role not discussed	Intense personal commitment is consistent with that suggested role, but unwilling to define it.	Trying to differentiate is a distraction from his aim of gaining cooperation and developing working relationships across all faith groups, not only JCM	No comment	No comment	Looking back is a distraction from looking forward.
M	P	1	YES, it does.	YES. You said it well.	Only in some matters of minor detail. On the major issues, those covered under the ten commandments, the covenant is identical: acknowledge the one supreme god, do not partner with him, and do good. Essentially the two major commandments: love god and love our neighbour	The penalty will be imposed on judgment day in the hereafter. In this life we are only to hold our fellow human beings and penalize them for those sins or crimes that hurt each other, such as: murder, theft, adultery, slander.	Personally I believe in a combination of these, but absolute justice is exacted on judgment day.	The acts of genocide against a people just for being of a particular religion or ethnicity is a major breach of covenant.
M	P	2						
M	P	3	As Muslims, we believe that man was created and placed on earth to uphold the Law. Perhaps the Ten	See Q1.	Since the Law has not changed, then all Abrahamic-faith adherents may be obliged to adhere to the same terms.	Could not understand the question.	An individual is judged on his/her deeds related to enforcing the Law in his/her life. Those who strive to enforce the Law are	Christian hegemony (Crusades and Colonialism) of mostly the Muslim world has caused many ever-lasting

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Questions >		7 Reaction	8 Dialogue	9 Conversation	10 Circumstances	11 Reflect	12 Interaction
		Can you identify any situations in which the second community's reaction to the trauma which it had suffered resulted in similar or greater trauma for the first community in such a manner that it may be interpreted as a penalty for the initial breach of covenant?	If you can identify such situations, in your view is it desirable for dialogue programs to be focussed on obligations under Divine Covenant to encourage and provide a basis for <i>practical programs of cooperation</i> between communities at local, regional and international levels?	In your view, how can <i>conversation dialogue</i> , focussed on the obligations under Divine Covenant that are either common to each of the Abrahamic faiths or specific to one or another, be encouraged?	In what circumstances and in what manner should such conversation dialogue be conducted, and what theological concepts or religious practices should they address in order that each community of faith might fulfil a common role that each acknowledges, or a role which it acknowledges as specific to it?	Please reflect on the likely impact if a substantial program of conversation dialogue was to take place on the basis you have suggested in your response to questions 9 and 10, and then respond to this question. What changes do you envisage in the working relationship between the three faiths; the practices of your own faith community; and the conduct of world affairs in the wake of a substantial program of conversation dialogue?	Can you envisage circumstances in which each of the three communities might act contrary to their obligations under covenant in such a manner that conflict between them could – in spite of their conduct – lead to the fulfilment of the <i>purpose</i> for which they were made subject to Divine Covenant?
F	#	7 Reaction	8 Dialogue	9 Conversation	10 Circumstances	11 Reflect	12 Interaction
C-R	A 2	See Q 6.	Such concepts as covenant or obligation do not have to be introduced to encourage or provide a basis for practical programs of cooperation.	I do not think that the idea of covenant is the right one on which to base Jewish-Christian-Islamic dialogue. It is a distinctively Jewish, Old Testament, idea. Its only appearance with Christian history, so far as I am aware, is in the small group of Calvinist 'covenant theologians' who began its continued use in some Puritan circles. But it cannot properly be said to be a central Christian idea - this would need more than its use within one fairly recent sub-strand of Christian history.	See Qs 1,2,3: N/A	N/A	NO.
C-R	A 3						
C-R	A 4	NO. Not known to us. Experience in ME was a community's reaction to the relations between Jews and Palestinians; NOT willing to narrow this to covenant breach.	NO. Not unless agreement on covenant. This approach could be fruitless. Common good and faith based concepts outside covenant might be more useful.	First recognize legitimate right of all to share God's earth; lay aside prejudice, suspicion and hostility. All dialogue must be conversation, not persuasion.	Go beyond formality, recognize common humanity, need to share space, understand origins and rituals, mutual acceptance, confront prejudice in own community. Aim is coexistence without hostility, not blending of religions.	Abrahamic faiths have excellent relations. Most unease, conflict, is cultural, political, economic. Politicians must not claim too much religious knowledge; identify best in their traditions; use resources for welfare, good governance.	Question not clear. God does not desire condemnation of anyone or destruction of earth. Purpose of covenant is that all might be saved. If we act contrary to that, purpose cannot be achieved. No good can come of it.
C-C	A 5	The establishment of the state of Israel was a community's reaction to the trauma the Jews suffered in Europe, and the Christian Community in Palestine is suffering as a result of it; but I do not think it can be interpreted as a penalty for the initial breach of the covenant.	Even though I cannot identify such situations I think it is desirable to have dialogue programs that focus on obligations that follow from one's concept of the covenant one has with God – a dialogue that can lead to practical programs of cooperation.	One's commitment to the covenant is such an emotional topic that I think it is not a good starting point for dialogue. Groups can explore the different meanings that communities have about covenant. And long conversations might lead to some common	Conversation dialogue has to be among friends so that there is openness and trust and no one will feel "pressured" to respond in a certain way. Starting any other way would like lead to a "debating atmosphere" and not to the kind of cooperation based on each one's	If such a conversation would take place among friends, I would think that the participants would come away with a greater respect for one another's religious commitments and could lead to programs of cooperation that might lead to further trust and therefore	I cannot. I do not think that conflict can lead to cooperation, which would be the purpose of the covenant as mentioned in Q 2. I think dialogue is the only viable option.

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					understandings. But it is not a place to start, in my way of thinking.	understanding of the covenant that one hopes for. Hopefully (properly planned) dialogue would lead beyond respect to allowing and even encouraging one another to be faithful to God in prayer and action according to the way one understood the covenant.	further conversation. Having an impact on world affairs would take a lot of time.	
C-?	A	6				These three communities shall engage in a series of dialogues based on their Holy Scriptures and various aspects like creation, sin, remission, judgement, paradise, hell etc can be studied together.	If these three religions can resolve all problems amicably, the whole history of the world would be different. For example, if we can make a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, the world could be a totally different one.	
C-C	A	7			There should be dialogues based on the scriptures and then the scope can be widened			
C-C	D	1						
C-R	D	2						
C-C	D	3						
C-C	D	4	Depends on power differential in the communities. Where a significant majority versus a small minority, usually the second communities' reaction is muted and less aggressive. Where both have more or less equal power, the reaction can be as equally damaging, if not even more catastrophic. An example: late 1990s conflict in Indonesia, in places such as Maluku. In cities with significant Christian population, the small Muslim community had it bad, and vice versa.	More basic and fundamental dialogue needs to be in place first: the dialogue of life. With or without any Divine Covenant, if such dialogues are happening on a regular basis, with peoples of different religious affiliation being good friends, they will automatically move on to cooperative ventures. Institutionally run dialogue programs can tend to be artificial and may be try to force cooperation and relationship where they have not been built in the first place.	See Q. 8. With neighbours engaging in everyday life, encouraging their children to play with "the other", a natural conversation dialogue is fostered. When such basic foundations have been built then all other conversations will happen – not only naturally but also very authentically.	If Q. 8 & 9 are already actualized, whatever concepts or topics are discussed won't really matter. If people are already great friends and have developed trust, differences in theology or religious practices are unimportant. If the conversation is to be successful, build really authentic relationship between the conversation partners. This usually does not happen in organized ways; it can only happen naturally, beginning with change of attitudes towards "the other".	People will have broken down the walls of religious division. Faith differences will no longer become an issue, avoiding the exploitation of religious difference. If the walls can indeed be broken (as it has in many communities or interfaith marriages) people will be operating more as human beings rather than as a Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, etc. This will spill over to the practices within faith communities because they will have to give up their exclusivist theologies and then also be more inclusive of "the other" in their practices. If the majority of the world community can actualize this, conflict in the name of religion will be a thing of the past (or at least not feature as prominently as it is now).	For some this might mean having to give up their exclusivist claims to truth in order to accommodate "the other" as dialogue partners who are to be treated as one's equal and not as subject of conversion.
C-C	D	5	The intransigence of the Israeli government and Israeli public opinion could be seen as (a penalty for the initial breach of covenant).	YES. Dialogue should be an activity of prevention. Once wrongdoing has been done, reconciliation is a much more difficult and fragile process.	I think the first step is bringing people together to come to know one another. It is only through direct contact that prejudices and preconceptions can be overcome. When friendships are formed, more substantial conversations can be undertaken, as well as projects for cooperation.	I don't think that theological issues are the most fruitful for conversation. It is more important to speak about the issues that each community faces in their daily lives. Questions of human rights, minority concerns, social questions etc.	In those places where programs of conversation dialogue have been able to make common statements on matters of universal concern, to urge their constituents to remain calm in times of tension and strife, and to engage in cooperative action for the good of all.	No. I don't understand the question.
C-R	D	6	NO, although there is now growing awareness among Christians that God's covenant with the Jews has never been abrogated.	Practical programs of co-operation, should be based more on our shared moral commitment and responsibility, as, for example, in the Global Ethic drafted by Hans Kung.	If you used the word responsibilities instead of obligations I would agree, otherwise this is not the basis on which I would encourage dialogue. Add: Agreed dialogue must be different at different levels. People tend to	There is a place for theological dialogue, as in the book <i>Abraham's Children</i> and for sharing spiritual practices, but dialogue can take place with various agendas. Some will be concerned for social cohesion, peace	1. Removal of suspicion and prejudice; 2. Rejection of violence and a more peaceful society; 3. Recognition that society must be based on shared moral values; 4. Awareness that as we grow closer to God we grow closer to each other.	The Qur'an says that God could have made all people members of the same community of faith, but did not, so that we should compete in good works. I recognise different emphases in different faiths and believe that by

[illegible]

Appendix Thesis Tabulated Research Responses

			waves of cause-and-effect.																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																								
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Appendix Thesis Tabulated Research Responses

					through this the establishment of a situation of building trust between the communities.	to the extent that other faiths comply with the seven Noachide commandments, their beliefs and practises are acceptable. The Noachide laws include: Courts of Justice (as opposed to "self Help"); Prohibition of blasphemy; idolatry; Incest; bloodshed; robbery; and eating flesh cut from a living animal. These laws were required of non Jewish people living within the Jewish state in the land of Israel as "permanent residents". These laws have derivative rules which can be extended into a viable system of law and life.			
J	P	5							
M	A	1	Invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan; the Arab-Israeli conflict.	YES, if pursued sincerely and where necessary accompanied by due acknowledgement of one or the other community's responsibility for the acts that disturbed the harmony.	Through education, media and religious leaders, provided it is accompanied by state policies and actions (support) that are not dictated by sectional or national interests.	After emphasising the core faith in the Creator , where theological definitions are avoided , the emphasis should be on spirituality, core moral values and support for justice for all.	Genuine respect for each other as individuals and communities, and their right to their beliefs and to be what they are, but nevertheless in harmony with other individuals and communities of different faith communities.	God works in mysterious ways.	
M	A	2							
M	A	3							
M	A	4	Palestine issue.	YES, I fully agree. Dialogue for the service of humanity, building of bridges and creating new structures of better life.	Focus on serving others regardless of their religions. Provide shelter to humanity and needy people. Focus on artistic and civilizational activities that concern the entire mankind.	Practice on daily life world. Dealing with neighbours, advancing the cause of justice, preaching about God, advocating good common human values are all examples. You can make formal or informal. It is good if it becomes a part of people's culture.	The most important change that needs to take place is more on our willingness and acceptance of the other faiths. We have to learn more about one another. Why not introduce subjects or training on other's faiths, and adopt them, and let our family children be involved and learn.	N/A	
M	A	5	American injustice in the Middle East; backlash/retaliation by those suffering is being felt. Hatred in Jordan is growing very fast. Situation is getting worse. The consequences of one's actions become the punishment. Human beings never perform to required level. Taliban had good aims: lost sight of them and is now facing backlash.						
M	A	6		Taliban had good aims: lost sight and now being facing backlash. American injustice in the Middle east; backlash/retaliation by those suffering; Hatred in Jordan is growing very fast. Situation is getting worse. Agreed: consequences of one's actions become the punishment. Human beings never perform to required level.					

Appendix Thesis Tabulated Research Responses

Panel	Question	Response
M	D 1	<p>Suicide attacks by Muslims against Christian/Western interests.</p> <p>It would help.</p> <p>Focus on issues such as greed and selfishness which are condemned by Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These are underlying causes of the various global crises. Now is the time for followers of the three Abrahamic faiths (and other religions) to come together and address them.</p> <p>To be effective, these dialogues should be conducted through the popular media. Sharing and giving, like restraint and self-control are in the ultimate analysis spiritual principles embodied in all the religious philosophies.</p> <p>Hopefully, a substantial conversation could lead to the demise of US-heralded Western hegemony. It would reduce the negative perceptions of the Jews in particular among the Muslims. Jews, Christians and Muslims may become more aware of their commonalities.</p> <p>Would the Israel-Palestine conflict lead eventually to the sharing of Jerusalem among the three Abrahamic faiths? Add: On changing relationships between power blocks linked to faiths: a divine call into being of a new community of faith or community of purpose to bring change and move towards the divine will would be consistent with establishment of another covenant community. Change need not come through transfer of power to another existing faith community.</p>
M	D 2	
M	D 3	
M	D 4	
M	D 5	<p>NO. We highlight values like compassion, mercy, hospitality, etc that all traditions – religious, ethnic, indigenous, national – share. We ask the participants in the program to articulate how their tradition "speaks to" a particular value. For example, "What is it in Islam/Judaism/Christianity that inspires you to be merciful?" People respond with examples of scriptures or heroes or stories from their different traditions. To focus on "obligation" would be a distraction for those who are not familiar with the concept.</p> <p>Not in our programs. We think the advantage of our values/service/mercy approach is that it invites traditions/communities for whom the idea of covenant is not central (like Hindus) or communities who may not have an idea of God (like Buddhists), to take part and respond. Show me a religion that doesn't care about compassion. Show me a religion that doesn't care about stewardship of the environment. Show me a religion that doesn't care about hospitality. We don't talk much about prayer or questions of salvation at IFYC. They are part of the private dimension. The public dimension is, what can we do together?</p> <p>There will be no peace in the world without religious pluralism, and no religious pluralism without the leadership of young people. We work to engage young people of all faiths with the realities of religious diversity through research, outreach, and the active use of available resources. We try to appropriate plurality to shape a positive pluralism in society by studying the religious communities themselves - their temples, mosques, gurdwaras and retreat centers, their informal networks and emerging institutions, their forms of adaptation and religious education. It is the practical programs that count. We say the blanket that you make will warm a refugee child when she goes to sleep, and the things that you say to the people next to you will give them a window into Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism that they might not have had before.</p> <p>Have not considered such an idea. We focus on positive outcomes from working together and avoiding conflict. We look for challenges and opportunities in cooperation. The world is dividing along a "faith line" between pluralists and religious totalitarians. We have to say to the people standing on the faith line, particularly the young ones, pluralism is the wish of the creator. It is the greatest opportunity for humanity. We encourage IFYC members to explore deeply their own faith as they learn to respect the traditions of others.</p>
M	P 1	<p>The relationship between Jews, Muslims and Christians over the past 1000 years appears to be a continuity of the dynamic you describe</p> <p>Reference given to books. Consider each other's culture and language. Clarify terms being considered: "Unconstitutional" in one culture might mean "Un-Islamic" in another. There should be no coercion. Logic does not always overcome belief. Perceive difference between religion as basis for law, and a religion-linked nation-state. Acknowledge impact of</p> <p>Ditto Q9. Place in international socio-economic context; recognize the identity of each community in the country; avoid descriptions that demonize one community or another; focus on the divine relationship to connect all humanity with God, and on the great deal off common ground and shared values.</p> <p>It would substantially improve international relations</p> <p>I would have to think about this.</p>

Appendix Thesis Tabulated Research Responses

				history and globalisation, and make religious language intelligible.				
M	P	2						
M	P	3	I think we're navigating our way across a mine field by assuming that we can interpret events in terms of Divine intervention in human lives. The game of politics has masked so many events to be interpreted as religiously motivated. The Crusades were more politically motivated than religiously, even when it was the pope of the Vatican who initiated them. Now can we interpret the reaction of some extreme Muslims (The 9/11 events, the London and Madrid bombings) as a Divine retaliation for breach of covenant? I would attribute such reactions to much the same factors that initiated the IRA to take arms against their oppressors. (Political retaliation)	Let's first identify the common grounds that the Abrahamic-faith communities share. In one of the events that involved a Muslim and a Jew, they discovered that they share more than 97% of values and beliefs. The only area that the three communities would have differences is that of the nature of the Divine. I think that the example of the four blind men and the elephant may apply to this situation quite appropriately.	See Q8.	Humility and respect should be the order of the day. With humility we acknowledge that no one knows the whole truth. Genuine respect of the other's belief is paramount for real and enriching dialogues to proceed. Perhaps the degree of adherence to the Ten Commandments may be some of the theological concepts to be considered.	Contemporary leaders of both the Christian and Jewish communities have assumed extensive political roles that may prevent them from dealing with the relevant issues of interfaith dialogue honestly and purposefully. In the Muslim world, leadership has been weakened so much that individual Muslims have lost, or are about to lose faith in their proclaimed leaders. This is a real problem that the whole world may have to help to resolve so that Muslim leaders may be held accountable for their charges in future. On local levels, ordinary people discover everyday that people are people: They all have, more or less the same ambitions and purposes. It is the political factor that is inhibiting that understanding from spreading to higher strata of the pyramid.	Muslims have no problem with this. Muslims consider their belief as a continuation of the heritage that Abraham has preached and then was refined by the release of the Torah on Moses to be further refined by the Gospel of Jesus and ultimately presented to the people in the Last Testament (The Qur'an).
M	P	4						
H	P	1						

Appendix L

Summary of Responses from Invited Research Project Participants

Covenant as a Basis for Dialogue between Christians, Jews and Muslims

Summary of Responses from Invited Research Project Participants

Researcher: MCD PhD Candidate Ian Fry

Question 1: Covenant Role

Does the fact that your community of faith exists in a relationship with God, and acknowledges the concept of Divine Covenant, mean that it accepts a particular role and is subject to an obligation to God to fulfil that role?

An overview

Responses to this very basic question indicate two things. First, a wide gap between Christians and people of their partner faiths in their understanding of the evolution of religious belief and practice, and the concept of divine covenant in particular. Second, the confusion and complexity of the debate within the church relating to Christian-Jewish heritage and covenantal status. Each aspect of the post-Vatican II debates is reflected in the nine responses received from Christians, plus one refusal to participate, which is noted.

Christian responses, 9: group A, 3; D, 5; P, 1; (plus 1).

Of the three Christian academics who responded, one rejected the notion that his faith existed in a covenantal relationship with God which required acceptance of any particular role or obligation, and he does not think of human relations with God in terms of moral obligations. The second said there is no reciprocity in the New Covenant: it is a divine gift of grace which implies there is no corresponding obligation, except to hold belief (faith) in Christ. The third said Catholics use the expression “covenant” in the Mass, but without discussion of its components or relationships, and that they think in terms of discipleship rather than covenant.

All five Christians prominent in dialogue agreed that each faith was subject to divine covenants. Three agreed that they involved reciprocal obligations, with two emphasising the reciprocity which Salvation under the New Covenant required – action in accord with Jesus commands. One said there is no unique role for Christianity and that the same basic covenantal relationship applies in each case. In a similar manner, the fifth said that while in theory Christianity had a particular role he did not believe that was prominent in the thinking within his community.

The one Christian in a primarily pastoral role who responded said that as long as any faith community believes it exists under a divine covenant it has no alternative but to accept the particular role entrusted to it and to fulfil the obligations linked to that role. Another, who refused to participate in the project did so on the basis that Christianity had superseded other faiths and he would not grant them any relevance by responding to questions which implied they had relevance and would be contrary to his guidance to those for whom he had pastoral responsibility.

Jewish responses, 5: group A, 1; D, 3; P, 1.

All Jewish respondents agreed that their community lived under a specific divine covenant which differed from those of the other faiths, but the emphasis varied. The

academic said that all three faiths had the same basic role, to be a light to the world, but the Jewish role was specific and the reciprocal benefit, if the community honoured its role, was divinely inspired protection. A rabbi with a primary pastoral role said that the response required of Jews under the covenant (of protection) was to fulfil the 613 commandments of the Torah. Each of those involved in dialogue programs agreed that the covenant was reciprocal. One said there was no unanimity on what was required, but it was usually seen as a communal response rather than an individual response, and people may see it as arising either from a direct relationship with God, from a process of human awareness, or from a learned vision rather than interaction with God. Another said talk of a relationship with God was “usually words” with organized egocentricity not backed by spiritual social action, and leaders capitulate to economic interests in institutions that protect ancient wisdom but harbour misplaced power.

Muslim responses, 9: group A, 5; D, 3; P, 1.

The sense of obligation and responsibility to God is stronger and more consistent in the responses from all Muslim participants than from either the Christian or Jewish groups. Three people, two academics and one Imam in a pastoral role, simply acknowledged the covenantal relationship without comment, but six made substantial comments. They refer to covenant being basic to Islam; that Muslims are required to constantly recall and respond to God’s absolute authority, with an emphasis on charity, and reverence and protection for the entire environment; that they must witness that Muhammad was the final prophet who confirmed Moses and Jesus, and that a person cannot be a Muslim without honouring them both.

The responses place emphasis on four concepts within a covenantal relationship: trust or trusteeship, amanah; servant-hood, khalifa; obligation, and judgement, and that servant-hood comes before the obligation to witness to the One God and to Muhammad as God’s final prophet. One respondent noted “an imperative role towards God, myself, my community, the rest of mankind and the entire universe,” and another, that amanah rests not only on the individual Muslim but on the entire human family. The second pastoral respondent noted that humanity was placed on the earth to uphold the law which may be summarized as the Ten Commandments, and that each person is held accountable for their actions in this regard.

No respondents referred to the benefits “due” or expected under the covenantal relationship with God, but the reference to personal accountability in the absence of any reference to any beneficence clearly implies that an adverse judgement brings the loss of what Christians refer to as “justification” or salvation.

Question 2: Agent

Is it reasonable to state that role in these terms: “to be an agent to enable all humanity to live in harmony and stability in such circumstances that it can recognize and respond to its relationship with God for whatever might be the divinely intended term of its existence”? Or how would you state that role?

An overview

Consistent with the responses to Question One, the complexity of their responses to this question indicates that Muslims are much more conscious of both personal and communal responsibility for the future than people of their partner faiths, and more conscious of that partnership as well. The Christian responses indicate sharp division on the question, with a tendency to a qualified acceptance of the notion of being an agent for harmony and stability, but still with a focus on personal discipleship and justification, while Jewish

responses illustrate a sense of particularity and separateness and, perhaps, a sense of continuing communal isolation.

Christian responses

Two respondents expressed outright disagreement, with one saying a Christian's key role is to interpret the life of the person Jesus, placing truth before harmony, and noting that the pursuit of truth can actually threaten harmony. On the other hand, four expressed general agreement with the notion that being an agent for harmony and future stability was a fair translation of discipleship.

One respondent who straddles D and A groups said it is not an idea that Catholics would articulate, but that in a Catholic Theological Community most members would be "comfortable" with the statement as an articulation of what they believe about their covenant with God. Another said the answer depends on who is considering the question, and that those of a more rigid view would say harmony can only be achieved if all humanity accepts Christ. And a respondent with heavy pastoral responsibilities in a situation of deep crisis said agents are not expected to divert from their task, and if that is to bring harmony, stability, healing and reconciliation, they are under an obligation to fulfil their task in whatever circumstances they may find themselves. The implication of that response is that the role might not be sustainable and that the "agent" might not be considered "justified" in the eyes of his/her community.

Jewish responses

Two respondents agreed that the statement of role is acceptable, while one said that an agent's first role is to provide mentoring wisdom and safe places to enable people to make decisions to live by the highest principles and to reach an expanded self-identification which embraces all of life and re-connects to all of creation, because in times of stress the main frame of reference is security of institution and nation.

Another respondent said there are two groups to consider: those who see their role as determined in some sense by God, and those who see it determined by their own ethical considerations and the teachings of those they respect. Some, he said, would assert that the statement applied to all Jews and all humans, while others would accept it, but would not invoke a relationship with God as relevant to the decision.

And another said it presumptuous to apply a common statement of role to all faith communities because "our covenant is unique to Jews," with no time limit or other conditionality, except to endure until the end of time, and others may see their covenantal obligations differently. He sees an obligation to seek common ground while respecting the uniqueness of each covenantal relationship.

Muslim responses

There was general agreement that the statement was a reasonable representation of covenantal obligation, but with a range of qualifications which indicate that it is not adequate. These include that: for each gift of God there is a corresponding obligation, and the prior role is to worship God, to show charity, to build civilization, to guide others to see the straight path through life and thus save them from the darkness (of God's judgement); if one community fails in its obligations under covenant another will be called in its place; harmony and stability are not sufficient role-aims, and justice (closest to piety) is central to the Covenant which is between God and humanity, not just Muslims.

Khalifa is not just servant-hood; it involves the responsibilities of vice-regency combined with trusteeship; engaged surrender is not a guarantee of good personal behaviour, neither is covenant a guarantee of a place in paradise, and ethical behaviour is a requirement to get a closer relationship with God. Each person has an opportunity to respond to the covenant, but one may be favoured in the basis of Taqwa, acting for the sake of God, and, doing more for society, will be more blessed.

Diversity is natural; spirituality does not lie in whether one is Muslim, Jew or Christian, and God does not want competition between them. The suggested role involves an intense personal commitment, but it is very difficult to define.

Question 3: Obligations

If it is subject to such an obligation under covenant, does that obligation differ in any way from the obligations to which the other Abrahamic faiths are subject?

Overview

As the compilation of responses (Appendix ...) shows, there were some significant changes in emphasis in participants' responses from Question One to Question Three. Most respondents seem differences in nature or emphasis in obligations under covenant, but not all. Apart from the respondent who rejects the notion of any covenantal relationships – and if there are none, there can be no changes in obligations under them – two Christians, one Jew and three Muslims say the obligations are the same.

Christian responses

The respondent who said the New Covenant is not reciprocal and does not involve obligations maintained that view, saying that the New Covenant set believers free from the curse of the Old Testament Law, and God keeps the covenant because of God's own faithfulness.

The majority views from other respondents include that: since Vatican II most Catholics do not see themselves as under obligations which applied previously when there was a great deal of legalism, some theologians will say that the other faiths have either deviated from, or misunderstood, the original and true covenant; there is less of a sense of obligation in Christianity because of its emphasis on God's unconditional and accepting love; and the obligations recognized by each faith are specific to the values of that faith.

The minority views were that the basic obligation is not different to that of partner Abrahamic faiths, but the means of fulfilling it may differ; and the obligation does not differ, but the question must be addressed of the validity of one covenant or another, because of the abuse or misinterpretation of covenant for "ends other than those in the mind of God."

Jewish responses

Apart from the one respondent who said that all three faiths are inextricably connected and inter-related through Abrahamic insights within a covenant of promise, decision and obligation which does not differ and requires them all to live inclusively by highest principles to help each other reconnect for the whole of life, there was a consensus that there are differences between the obligations to which each faith is subject.

One view is that Jews are subject to 613 commandments, while the other faiths, from the Jewish perspective, are subject to only the seven Noahide principles, and the Christian and Muslim faiths have developed different approaches to love, to welfare, and to peace. To Jews Shalom is wholeness and completeness; to Muslims Salaam is security and

safety, while to Christians Peace is the absence of war.

Muslim responses

As already noted, several said there is no real difference because the source of the covenants is the same, they are based on the same acknowledgement that God is supreme, and that the basic requirements are to love God and to love neighbour.

One respondent noted that the regularity and discipline of prayer make Muslims very conscious that as the community of the final prophet they must maintain the coherence of the teachings of the three Peoples of the Book. Others, that fulfilling God's trust and struggling for justice are common to all three faiths; that as a "middle community", sitting between the Jewish emphasis on the Law and Christian emphasis on love, Islam must help them both in the task of recovering the ethical dimension to obligations under covenant; and that for people to emphasize the differences between them is a distraction from the aim of cooperation and working together towards the goals of harmony and stability.

Question 4: Judgement

If an obligation is one aspect or component of a Divine Covenant, is judgement, accompanied or followed by a penalty in the event of failure to honour the obligation, also an aspect of a Divine Covenant?

Overview

This is a matter on which there is qualified support among the Christian respondents and general consensus among the Jews and Muslims, showing that Judgement is a consideration in the covenantal understanding of all three faiths.

Christian responses

Four respondents give unqualified acknowledgement that judgement is a factor in Christian theology, with two of them saying it is unfortunate because the fear of judgement, which is "the dominant theology that continues to be preached and taught in the pews," is a primary motivation that keeps many people from being unkind to others, and while the New Testament speaks of God's judgement the teaching of it is too punitive. One respondent notes that our actions have consequences, but not necessarily in the form of punishment, so eventually the love of God can free us as we become more aware of what we have done.

There is a view expressed that Judgement is not intrinsic to covenant, nor reflecting God's intention, and that it is an outcome of choosing to "step outside the covenant," to live by law rather than grace, and that "God does not remove judgement if we choose for self." And another respondent notes that Catholic instruction imposed a great sense of judgement and fear of punishment until after World War II, but since Vatican II that stress has been relieved.

Naturally, the person who rejects the notion of divine covenant also cannot acknowledge judgement as a factor, and one says that a judgement cannot be made about God's judgement.

Jewish responses

The understanding was generally expressed that judgement and penalties for failure to honour obligations are a factor in the divine covenantal relationship, but with various interpretations of how it is administered. It is apparent that while the mature prophetic Hebrew understanding of divine covenant is still strong, various streams show the impact

of the community's extended time in exile and its interaction with modernising philosophies and cultures.

Two respondents notes that punishment is felt on a clan, communal or national level through the community's relationship with the land. The ultimate punishment is exile from the land, although God can remind the people-Israel of its obligations by "hiding His face" so that its people feel abandoned and subject to the whims of other nations.

Differing views were expressed about judgement at the personal level. These include that Judaism's Covenant envisages rewards for fulfilment and penalties for failure to fulfil obligations; that the term 'sin' has different meanings in each of the major cultures, but it is not a major theme in Jewish scholarship; that God's judgement is experienced partly through cause and effect relationships in life, and that there is not really a belief that in this life the righteous prosper while the wicked suffer.

Muslim responses

In this community there is a more consistent emphasis on judgement and punishment as aspects of divine covenant than in its partner faiths. It is a core aspect of the faith, and the belief is strong that failure of obligation does entail consequences for both the individual and society, and one respondent said this regulates conduct more than specific civil law. Another said that if one community fails under covenant it might not be rejected totally, but another will be raised to illustrate the reality of covenantal obligations. People might not think they have been punished, but they should not think this means that their conduct has been "good" or acceptable. Ultimate judgment for injustice is certain, but only God knows in what manner.

Question 5: Breach

If judgement, accompanied or followed by a penalty, is an aspect of a Divine Covenant, in what sense, or in what manner, do you see Divine Judgment being exercised: contemporaneously through specific identifiable events; the consequences of action and reaction between people; on a continuing or progressive basis through several generations; eschatologically, or in some other manner?

Responses to this question, concerning the mechanism or administration of divine judgement, exposed deep disagreements among Christian theologians while showing differing emphases within each faith.

Christian responses

One senior academic insisted that there is no connection between covenant and judgement; that the connection is only seen in popular piety, and that clergy are instructed not to make judgemental statements. Another said that bad things do happen to people in the church, but this is not seen as a consequence of judgement for breaking the covenant even if it may have resulted from behaviour that goes against the covenant, and most Catholic theologians would not see a penalty following upon judgement as a way that God acts with his people or that Jesus acts with his church. A third said the notion is dangerous teaching, especially if it is applied to natural disasters, even though sometimes human sin or interaction is involved. [In the absence of an illustration, that view raises additional questions. In incidents such as devastating landslides following timber felling on steep unstable slopes, is he suggesting that some people might take the view that judgement has been imposed on the people affected by the landslide, or that judgement will be imposed on the people responsible for causing the landslide?]

On the other hand other respondents said that judgement is imposed contemporaneously,

through the consequences of one's actions; eschatologically at the time of death; on a progressive basis; through specific events at different times, in different forms, and through subsequent generations until liberation from the covenantal issue involved.

Jewish responses

One scholar said there was no unanimity in the Jewish community on the mechanisms of penalties following judgement, and this was illustrated by the series of responses, but there was unanimity in the belief of the reality of divine judgement and punishment for breeches of covenant.

Destruction of the First Temple was described by one as punishment for idolatry, and of the Second temple for baseless hatred, with the subsequent return to the land indicating Divine forgiveness after the community had "served its time." Others said the primary form of penalty is being enacted through the environmental crisis for all humanity, and the secondary form, through karmic consequences for future generations; and that the nature of penalty "can be entrusted to cause and effect."

Muslim responses

Divine judgement may be manifest in the life of individuals and society; through several generations spiritually and physically; instantly or over time; if it is not manifest during the offender's lifetime the consequences would be experienced in the hereafter, eschatologically at the time of judgement when one's record is examined; or it may be manifest in a combination of all forms.

One respondent discussed contemporary world political circumstances and communal judgement of the great powers in the context of these issues.

Question 6: Trauma

Can you identify any situations from the history of the past few hundred years that may be described as a breach of covenant by one community which caused large scale trauma for a second community?

Overview

Except for one Christian respondent who does not agree that widespread trauma has been caused by breach of covenantal obligations, there is general agreement with the view that a breach of covenant by one community in its relations with another can lead to massive trauma, and the scholar who rejects the notion of covenant nevertheless recognizes that trauma can result from the conduct of faith-related communities, while not acknowledging a connection with a breach of covenant.

Christian responses

Tragedy happens when believers fail to act on pivotal principles of the covenant of grace and do not extend to others the grace that they receive from God. Several respondents referred to the Holocaust as a breach of the covenant that Christians have with God or Jesus. The Crusades, conflicts in neo-colonial Asia, Buddhist-Muslim conflict in Myanmar, Muslim-Christian conflict in Pakistan, and Hindu-Muslim conflicts in India were all mentioned, with the suggestion that religious affiliation became another potent tool to exploit in economic and political disputes.

One respondent noted the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the implications of the Covenant and the Promises, and the closely related Nazi persecution of the Jews which encouraged pursuit of the Zionist settlement of Palestine, and resulted in great trauma for the Palestinians as well as the Jews is an illustration.

Jewish responses

Some saw the Crusades as a case of Gog and Magog, with the Jews caught between two evil empires, and one respondent says the Holocaust has been seen as a breach of covenant by the Divine which made it necessary for Jews to take the matter of their own protection into their own hands.

One respondent said the issue raises many questions. Is the “breach” a consequence of failure? If so, who failed to live up to the expectations of the Covenant in the case of the Holocaust? Is the community perpetrating the harm an “agent” of the Divine and merely an instrument with no moral responsibility? Even though Judaism recognises the tragedies in Jewish history as a form of Divine implementation of the consequences of failure to live up to the Covenant, nevertheless, the community imposing the harm is judged for the immorality of its actions. He specifically noted

the Holocaust perpetrated by the Nazis, the pogroms and persecutions in the Russian Empire and former Soviet Union, and the “Chelmnitzky” murders of 1648-9 of close to 300,000 Jews.

Muslim responses

Reference was made to a host of situations in addition to those already mentioned: Suffering and death experienced by Australian aborigines at the hands of early settlers; the bombing of mosques and churches in Indonesia; ecological damage to any aspect of the environment, especially forests and rivers, which results in tragedy for others; failure to enforce responsible management (through regulations) which allow others to commit direct breaches; the abuse of culture and the exploitation of human sexuality in a manner that has a degrading sociological impact; colonial invasion of other peoples freedom and lands; and the Israelite usurpation of Palestine.

One respondent notes that the destiny God decides always is always towards justice. He says Muslims make mistakes and fail too, so Allah does not favour them. America has done good things and now very bad things, and their future is not very bright. God will punish the believers because of their mistakes. In Russia, the believers could not be suppressed forever, and they are now recovering.

Question 7: Reaction

Can you identify any situations in which the *second* community’s reaction to the trauma which it had suffered resulted in similar or greater trauma for the *first* community in such a manner that it may be interpreted as a penalty for the initial breach of covenant?

Overview

Responses to this question also brought contradictions and qualifications in each faith group.

Christian responses

Some Christians could not agree that there could be a secondary response to the punishment for a breach of covenant, but others, from each faith, saw that the agent in a cause-and-effect punishment could also be in breach of covenant because of the way in which it responded to the primary breach, and was therefore also subject to judgement and punishment.

One Christian respondent noted that the establishment of the state of Israel was a community’s reaction to the trauma the Jews suffered in Europe, and the Christian

Community in Palestine is now suffering as a result of it, but he did not interpret this as a penalty for the initial breach of the covenant. However another said a series of conflicts in the West Bank and Gaza can be identified as secondary breeches and responses, and a third said the intransigence of the Israeli government and Israeli public opinion could be seen as a penalty for the initial breach of covenant by Christian Europe.

Jewish responses

One scholar said a linear model for considering interaction between communities does not do justice to the manner in which creation enables various ways for trauma and restitution, reward and punishment to develop. In many situations the 'penalty' experienced by the first community may be due to many other causes than the second community's responses, but in some isolated situations the chain of cause-and-effect is so obvious and so immediate as to allow no other explanation.

Another said No, he could not, but that in general, "the Jews have taken the view that the offending parties (usually the Christians) were tools in G'd's hands for punishing us for our transgressions." And a third said each war puts into motion the wrong means, and means determines the end, so each participant and all humanity experiences the travelling waves of cause-and-effect retribution.

Muslim responses

According to one respondent, American injustice in the Middle East brought a backlash/retaliation by those suffering, and this is now being felt. Hatred in Jordan is growing very fast, he said and the situation is getting worse. Human beings never perform to the required levels of the covenant, and the consequences of one's actions become the punishment for another's. The Taliban had good aims, he said, but lost sight of them and is now facing a backlash in turn.

Another said we are navigating our way across a mine field by assuming that we can interpret events in terms of Divine intervention in human lives. The game of politics has masked so many events to be interpreted as religiously motivated. The Crusades were more politically motivated than religiously, even when it was the pope of the Vatican who initiated them. Now can we interpret the reaction of some extreme Muslims (the 9/11 events, the London and Madrid bombings) as a Divine retaliation for breach of covenant? I would attribute such reactions to much the same factors that initiated the IRA to take arms against their oppressors. Political retaliation.

And as a way to short circuit the chain of events one respondent referred to the practice of an interfaith training youth group which works on a Shared Values / Service Learning approach. They have shown that exploring previous interaction is a distraction from seeking cooperation.

Question 8: Dialogue

If you can identify such situations, in your view is it desirable for dialogue programs to be focussed on obligations under Divine Covenant to encourage and provide a basis for *practical programs of cooperation* between communities at local, regional and international levels?

It is no surprise that responses to this question also brought contradictions and qualifications in each faith group, with some participants saying 'yes, go ahead on this basis,' and others saying 'no, not unless we can first agree on the nature of divine covenant.'

Christian responses: a selection

Such concepts as covenant or obligation do not have to be introduced to encourage or provide a basis for practical programs of cooperation.

Unless agreement on covenant can be reached, this approach could be fruitless. Common good and faith based concepts outside covenant might be more useful

I cannot identify such situations, but I think **it is desirable** to have dialogue programs that focus on obligations that follow from one's concept of the covenant one has with God – a dialogue that can lead to practical programs of cooperation.

Such is the way forward, whereby barriers are broken down, bridges of understanding replace barriers and separation walls, and practical programs of cooperation be designed to bring healing and overcome all that hinders the path of mutual recognition on the way to reconciliation.

Practical programs of co-operation, should be based more on our shared moral commitment and responsibility, as, for example, in the Global Ethic drafted by Hans Kung.

Jewish responses: a selection

YES. Whether such situations can be identified or not, appealing to a Covenant whether it is considered the identical covenant shared by both communities or even if they each perceive it differently, the mere **concept of a covenant can be a useful basis** for practical overtures and programs for peace.

Concerning common principles, we hold to **the idea of all humans being created in the Divine image**. This is a more potent driver for dialogue than the covenantal idea. Christians and Muslims may see their covenants as requiring them to proselytise. We would not argue – just insist that our covenant says something different.

Dialogue programs are desirable whether or not they related to the concepts of covenant and obligation or the A→B→A patterns of justice posed in Q7 & Q8. There is no agreement on whether a particular focus or format will be a useful rallying point for Jews. Anticipate limited support for a focus on obligation, but also dissent. Consider an interpretation of obligation such as community/ collective action that will avoid 'penalties'/adverse consequences for an entire community; forestall injustice, encourage justice and peace. Must include a monitoring/evaluation process. This added obligation to think/study/ reflect on change is consistent with Jewish mystical philosophy Tikkun

Muslim responses

YES, the interfaith dialogue movement is essential; to focus it on obligation under covenant is desirable.

YES. I fully agree. Dialogue for the service of humanity, building of bridges and creating new structures of better life.

YES, if pursued sincerely and where necessary accompanied by due acknowledgement of one or the other community's responsibility for the acts that disturbed the harmony.

NO. We highlight values like compassion, mercy, hospitality, etc. that all traditions – religious, ethnic, indigenous, national – share. We ask the participants in the program to articulate how their tradition "speaks to" a particular value. For example, "What is it in Islam/Judaism/Christianity that inspires you to be merciful?" People respond with examples of scriptures or heroes or stories from their different traditions. To focus on

'obligation' would be a distraction for those who are not familiar with the concept.

Let's first identify the common grounds that the Abrahamic-faith communities share. In one of the events that involved a Muslim and a Jew, they discovered that they share more than 97% of values and beliefs. The only area that the three communities would have differences is that of the nature of the Divine. I think that the example of the four blind men and the elephant may apply to this situation quite appropriately.

Question 9: Conversation

In your view, how can *conversation dialogue*, focussed on the obligations under Divine Covenant that are either common to each of the Abrahamic faiths or specific to one or another, be encouraged?

Overview

There is general reticence towards Conversation Dialogue and the majority of theologians prefer to work on programs concerning cooperation in immediately practical matters. That is natural, because of the sensitivity involved in dealing with matters of theological import. And this is apparent in most of the responses, but notably from Christians who give the impression that they feel 'hemmed in' between two other faiths – seen as competitors rather than partners – who hold stronger views on the relevance of the concept of divine covenant.

Christian responses

If you used the word responsibilities instead of obligations I would agree, otherwise this is not the basis on which I would encourage dialogue. It is agreed that dialogue must be different at different levels, but people tend to assume that every dialogue has to be the same.

It can be arranged with the intervention of sane and sound religious leaders who are not spiritually bankrupt and whose lives are rooted in divine actions, who are ready to recognize the 'otherness' in the other, the way they wish the others to recognize their own otherness. People noted for their high morals but who are also knowledgeable of the related issues.

I think the first step is bringing people together to come to know one another. It is only through direct contact that prejudices and preconceptions can be overcome. When friendships are formed, more substantial conversations can be undertaken, as well as projects for cooperation.

With neighbours engaging in everyday life, encouraging their children to play with "the other", a natural conversation dialogue is fostered. When such basic foundations have been built then all other conversations will happen – not only naturally but also very authentically

There should be dialogues based on the scriptures and then the scope can be widened

One's commitment to the covenant is such an emotional topic that I think it is **not a good starting point** for dialogue. Groups can explore the different meanings that communities have about covenant. And long conversations might lead to some common understandings. But it is not a place to start, in my way of thinking.

I do not think that the idea of covenant is the right one on which to base Jewish-Christian-Islamic dialogue. It is a distinctively Jewish, Old Testament, idea. Its only appearance with Christian history, so far as I am aware, is in the small group of Calvinist 'covenant theologians' who began its continued use in some Puritan circles. But it cannot properly

be said to be a central Christian idea - this would need more than its use within one fairly recent sub-strand of Christian history.

Jewish responses

Interpret the term “obligations” very carefully. Consider how to attract those who do not believe in a personal and/or interventionist God by giving a wide interpretation to the meaning and nature of “Divine Covenant” that exists with “the Universe” and within “Existence”.

They certainly ought to be. First and foremost the existence of a covenant should be identified as a **common denominator**. If the content differs an effort must be made to identify common features and principles and appeal should be made via these. Principles which differ should be identified, understood and be accepted by each side. If not capable of being wished away, serious attempts should be made to ensure that they do not amount to a block in progress in the ideals that are shared in common. Identifying these principles and dealing appropriately with them can best be done by conversation and dialogue and through this the establishment of a situation of building trust between the communities.

. True dialogue takes place when there is an acknowledgement that the introduction of a new covenant does not void pre-existing ones. Islam believes that its covenant superseded Christianity's and Christianity holds that its covenant superseded Judaism's. Unless (they) reject Supersessionism, there is not really room for dialogue.

Muslim responses

Do it through education, media and religious leaders, provided it is accompanied by state policies and actions (support) that are not dictated by sectional or national interests.

Focus on issues such as greed and selfishness which are condemned by Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These are underlying causes of the various global crises. Now is the time for followers of the three Abrahamic faiths (and other religions) to come together and address them.

Focus on serving others regardless of their religions. Provide shelter to humanity and needy people. Focus on artistic and civilizational activities that concern the entire mankind.

Question 10: Circumstances

In what circumstances and in what manner should such conversation dialogue be conducted, and what theological concepts or religious practices should they address in order that each community of faith might fulfil a common role that each acknowledges, or a role which it acknowledges as specific to it?

The responses to this question brought forward significant ideas from people who are already involved in dialogue, but not necessarily the specialist field of Conversation Dialogue. The selections which follow are not in sequence by faith group.

Every time and every place is right: no exceptions! No student should allow teachings to be rationalized to a frame of reference less than all creation, all humanity. An enemy is one whose story has not been heard. JCM each have scriptures encouraging annihilation of the other, and going up mountain together, each in name of own faith. Our weapons can wreck life, earth. War is obsolete. Religion can give life meaning. [Jewish]

In all circumstances, but in particular in times of conflict and misunderstandings, when communities lose sight of the most important and busy themselves with the insignificant matters that often further divides rather than bring harmony and stability. I need indicate

that if theological concepts and religious practices founded on truth are avoided, very little progress will be made. [Christian]

After emphasising the **core faith in the Creator**, where **theological definitions are avoided**, the emphasis should be on **spirituality, core moral values** and support for **justice** for all. [Muslim]

Explore the idea of the 'Divine image' and the obligations that entails; acknowledge the infinite manifestations of the Divine (every person is different) but each has common divinity within. **Noahide principles then become the basis for discussion**. Acknowledge G'd; behave with human decency towards each other ; value human life as a form of a divine manifestation. [Jewish]

Conversation dialogue has to be among friends so that there is openness and trust and no one will feel "pressured" to respond in a certain way. Starting any other way would like lead to a "debating atmosphere" and not to the kind of cooperation based on each one's understanding of the covenant that one hopes for. Hopefully (properly planned) dialogue would lead beyond respect to allowing and even encouraging one another to be faithful to God in prayer and action according to the way one understood the covenant. [Christian]

There is a place for theological dialogue, as in the book *Abraham's Children* and for sharing spiritual practice, but dialogue can take place with various agendas. Some will be concerned for social cohesion, peace and the protection of human rights. Others, to reduce poverty or protect the environment. [Christian]

Not in our programs. We think the advantage of our values/service/mercy approach is that it invites traditions/communities for whom the idea of covenant is not central (like Hindus) or communities who may not have an idea of God (like Buddhists), to take part and respond. Show me a religion that doesn't care about compassion. Show me a religion that doesn't care about stewardship of the environment. Show me a religion that doesn't care about hospitality. We don't talk much about prayer or questions of salvation. [Muslim]

If a framework for dialogue already exists, whatever concepts or topics are discussed won't really matter. If people are already great friends and have developed trust, differences in theology or religious practices are unimportant. If the conversation is to be successful, build really authentic relationship between the conversation partners. This usually does not happen in organized ways; it can only happen naturally, beginning with change of attitudes towards "the other". [Christian]

Careful thought is needed about how best to progress such talks. The atmosphere should be one of respect. Adherents to a covenant should not be expected to compromise their beliefs and practises and the tenets of their faith. However this will require a most sincere effort and intellectual ingenuity to find ways of bridging differences and emphasising commonalities. Sincerely respecting the religious needs of the other and not expecting them to compromise these is in itself an act of bridging and reaching out.

As Jews, we do not expect others to conform to our beliefs and to adopt our practises and precepts. We believe that to the extent that other faiths comply with the seven Noachide commandments, their beliefs and practises are acceptable. [Jewish]

Place in international socio-economic context; recognize the identity of each community in the country; avoid descriptions that demonize one community or another; focus on the divine relationship to connect all humanity with God, and on the great deal off common ground and shared values. [Muslim]

Question 11: Reflect

Please reflect on the likely impact if a substantial program of conversation dialogue was to take place on the basis you have suggested in your response to questions 9 and 10, and then respond to this question.

What changes do you envisage in the working relationship between the three faiths; the practices of your own faith community; and the conduct of world affairs in the wake of a substantial program of conversation dialogue?

These reflections confirm the need for expanded dialogue programs.

People will have broken down the walls of religious division. Faith differences will no longer become an issue, avoiding the exploitation of religious difference. If the walls can indeed be broken (as it has in many communities or interfaith marriages) people will be operating more as human beings rather than as a Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, etc. This will spill over to the practices within faith communities because they will have to give up their exclusivist theologies and then also be more inclusive of “the other” in their practices. If the majority of the world community can actualize this, conflict in the name of religion will be a thing of the past (or at least not feature as prominently as it is now).

[Christian]

In the immediate communities: more frequent meeting together of people who had previously lived in isolation from each other; meetings of many different types; working on projects; serving on committees and in service clubs together; studying together; informal social or family gatherings; exchange of ideas on websites and by email. On a wider basis: pressure being brought to bear (by those who have benefited) on their social and political leaders, including by collectives working together to put pressure for change on social and political leaders, organisations and institutions. Internationally; a switch occurring quickly from countries/ communities perceiving each other as “evil/harmful others”, once some “power brokers” can see the benefits of no longer viewing others as “evil”. [Jewish]

If such a conversation would take place among friends, I would think that the participants would come away with a greater respect for one another’s religious commitments and could lead to programs of cooperation that might lead to further trust and therefore further conversation. Having an impact on world affairs would take a lot of time. [Christian]

Acknowledgement of multiple covenants is the basis for dialogue. I am not convinced that the conduct of world affairs is governed by theological considerations. [Jewish]

Removal of suspicion and prejudice; Rejection of violence and a more peaceful society; Recognition that society must be based on shared moral values; Awareness that as we grow closer to God we grow closer to each other; Rethinking our own theology – e.g. in claims to uniqueness. [Christian]

Genuine respect for each other as individuals and communities, and their right to their beliefs and to be what they are, but nevertheless in harmony with other individuals and communities of different faith communities. [Muslim]

There will be no peace in the world without religious pluralism, and no religious pluralism without the leadership of young people. We work to engage young people of all faiths with the realities of religious diversity through research, outreach, and the active use of available resources. We try to appropriate plurality to shape a positive pluralism in society by studying the religious communities themselves - their temples, mosques, gurudwaras and retreat centres, their informal networks and emerging institutions, their

forms of adaptation and religious education. It is the practical programs that count. We say the blanket that you make will warm a refugee child when she goes to sleep, and the things that you say to the people next to you will give them a window into Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism that they might not have had before. [Muslim]

Question 12: Interaction

Can you envisage circumstances in which each of the three communities might act contrary to their obligations under covenant in such a manner that conflict between them could – in spite of their conduct – lead to the fulfilment of the *purpose* for which they were made subject to Divine Covenant?

Some responses

Perhaps, and only perhaps, if the three communities were to eliminate insistent or hard line attitudes about their desire to draw others into their way of belief as part of their covenant, but would merely rely on the free will of individuals to choose their faith based on the religious values they observe in them and are attracted to in their outreach to non adherents, this might form a useful invocation of their covenant. [Jewish]

I cannot. I do not think that conflict can lead to cooperation, which would be the purpose of the covenant as mentioned in Q 2. I think dialogue is the only viable option. [Christian] Would the Israel-Palestine conflict lead eventually to the sharing of Jerusalem among the three Abrahamic faiths?

Add: On changing relationships between power blocks linked to faiths: a divine call into being of a new community of faith or community of purpose to bring change and move towards the divine will would be consistent with establishment of another covenant community. Change need not come through transfer of power to another existing faith community. [Muslim]

For Jews, breaching the covenant cannot ever be good – not for us and not for the rest of the world. See blessing to Abram in Genesis 12 – ‘by you will all the nations of the world be blessed’. If G’d is unhappy with the Jews, everyone suffers! [Jewish]

If you are asking: “Can I do what I want and have my way?” NO. But if “leaders” congregants cling to old ways, decide to be Late Adopters in change process, change leadership may shift to Innovators and Early Adopters outside the traditional faith communities: citizens and small collectives who already better-understand Divine Covenant and their part. Challenge: translate precious ancient wisdom into lives lived and service to every neighbour forever. [Jewish]

Muslims have no problem with this. Muslims consider their belief as a continuation of the heritage that Abraham has preached and then was refined by the release of the Torah on Moses to be further refined by the Gospel of Jesus and ultimately presented to the people in the Last Testament (The Qur’an). [Muslim]

Any model can be used to mould the “facts” of history. The implied model may be used to describe history; so may a different model be used to describe what develops. A model is required that is likely to gain the intellectual and emotional support from proposed dialogue partners. An appropriate “model of history” can be used to justify building friendship rather than fighting wars. The challenge is to avoid models that further embed or inflame prejudice and stereotypes. In the political arena there are many that fail on that basis. [Jewish]

Have not considered such an idea. We focus on positive outcomes from working together

and avoiding conflict. We look for challenges and opportunities in cooperation. The world is dividing along a "faith line" between pluralists and religious totalitarians. We have to say to the people standing on the faith line, particularly the young ones, pluralism is the wish of the creator. It is the greatest opportunity for humanity. We encourage our members to explore deeply their own faith as they learn to respect the traditions of others. [Muslim]

Appendix M

Divine Covenant from the perspectives of the three Abrahamic faith communities

As noted in chapter 8, each of the Abrahamic communities of faith accept that the others have covenantal understandings. However there is no unanimity within the leadership of any faith on the matter, and it can only be said that in general terms Jewish scholars do not concede that Divine Authority legitimizes the covenantal understandings of Christians and Muslims; Christians continue to debate whether the Mosaic Covenant is extant or abrogated, and are divided over whether Islam is subject to Divine Covenants; but Muslims recognize that God “took” covenants from each of Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus.

The notes which follow summarize the situation sixty years into the fifth epoch of the revelation of divine covenant following the central fact of the Common Era – the establishment of the State of Israel – and at a critical point in humanity’s biological, social, communal and economic development.

1. Jewish perspective

Hebrew Biblical texts make reference to the concept of divine covenant prior to the Abrahamic era,⁷⁰² but the people who became known as the Hebrew community did not mention or recognize the concept until the advanced stages of the Abrahamic tradition, during the Exilic Period. However a consciousness of certain aspects of a divine covenantal relationship had been developing within the community, and once the process of recording its history began, writers collected the teachings of their prophets and these enable an assessment to be made of the pattern and progress of evolution in understanding the nature of the relationship and what it involves. In my assessment, (Chapter Three), I utilized the system of dating the Hebrew texts developed during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries; identified eight clusters of texts, and demonstrated that by the First Century BCE the Hebrew Prophets had a very clear, comprehensive and mature appreciation of all aspects of a divine covenantal relationship, and especially what was expected of them under the Mosaic Covenant of Sinai.

The aspects identified can be reduced to: an undertaking given or a promise made to the people made by God on certain conditions; the naming of the conditions, being obligations that the people must honour or carry out; notice that the people will be judged individually and as a community on the basis of whether they honour their obligations; provision for penalties to be applied in the event of rejection or failure; and confirmation that, on the basis of God’s love for them, the covenant will not be abrogated, it will operate in perpetuity, the relationship will remain as normal, privileges will be restored as God determines, but the cycle may be repeated, dependent upon any subsequent breeches.

The full mature understanding of the Mosaic Covenant, is summarized in chapter two.

Jewish scholars and Rabbis readily acknowledge that their people have either failed to honour their obligations or have rejected the covenant and fallen into apostasy at times, been judged and penalized, and have experienced the subsequent return to God’s favour.

702 Genesis 3, 7.

They unanimously believe that under the Mosaic Covenant they are still to be conspicuously the exemplars of God's absolute authority and love for all of creation, and subject to a covenantal relationship that has special extended obligations, while the balance of humanity (including Christians and Muslims) are required to meet only the seven obligations of the Noahide Covenant.⁷⁰³ These are also set out in chapter two.

The two considerations which appear to dominate Jewish thinking concerning the Mosaic Covenant are God's promise of the region of Palestine as a national homeland, and the obligation to maintain its faith in perpetuity by ensuring the security of the community. This entails protection of its young people in particular to honour the obligation of continuity of the faith against any future attempt at genocide, the fear of which, they say, is justified by the history of the church's well documented policies and teachings, and the propensity for people to revert to former prejudices when they are under stress.⁷⁰⁴

2. Islamic perspective

The Qur'an does not propose a specifically Islamic Covenant. On the basis of the view that it was called into existence through the ministry of the Prophet Muhammad to confirm the validity of the two prior Abrahamic faiths, to expose and correct errors in their teaching, and to provide a base for reform of the church's teaching and practices, there was no need for a separate statement of covenant. In fact the whole of the Qur'an is heavy with emphasis on covenantal relationships and obligations, and – much criticized by the church – matters of both personal and communal judgement for misconduct. In a couple of words: puritanical and reformist.

In my experience, Muslims have a more decided sense of a covenantal relationship with God than either Christians or Jews. The Islamic discipline of prayer and participation in worship encourages a real sense of submission to God and community cohesion, and Muslims demonstrate an understanding of *amanah*, *khalifa* and the related idea of *taqwa* in community attitudes to business, environmental matters and charity which is more apparent than in WWCB societies.

Their exposure to globalisation and migration has made them very conscious that Muhammad was called as the "final" prophet with a commission to correct and reform societies of the two prior faiths, and this has encouraged an attitude, at times, of superiority which may be seen as akin to the long-held attitudes of Christians which are gradually dissipating with the rise of non-Western cultures and economies. For the same reason, they are conscious of the possibility that Islam may be superseded, or subjected to divine judgement, if they fail to honour their obligations under covenant – in the same manner as Jews and Christians before them – and this factor was referred to by two research respondents.

That factor is perhaps the most evident difference, in both the research responses and my personal experience, between Muslim and other communities, but notably Christians: the ready acknowledgment of being subject to Divine judgement and punishment, which is a very strong thrust of the Qur'an and characterized by a record of one's life hanging around one's neck ready to be opened on the day of judgement. Salvation is not to be taken for

703 Source: True Faith Ministries.

704 These matters are referred to by Borowitz, *Studies in the Meaning of Judaism*. and were impressed on me by senior Israeli officials during my week in Israel in 1975, and conference participants in Landegg, 2002, and Melbourne, 2003.

granted. It may be forfeited by misconduct or failure to honour obligations under covenant. This is consistent with the circumstances in which Islam came into existence as the third Abrahamic faith, and it is the dominant characteristic of lived Islam.

This international exposure has also focused the attention of non-Muslims on another fundamental aspect of covenantal obligation. Jihad: for which it is difficult to identify an equivalent. Concept in Western culture. It is usually thought of in the WWCB in association with terrorism and for this reason it prompts emotions of fear, mistrust and hatred, rather than recognition as a driving force for reform. Fethullah Gülen⁷⁰⁵ explains it as using all one's strength while moving toward an objective, or overcoming a struggle, with all one's power and strength, and resisting every difficulty. He says this struggle occurs on two fronts: the internal and the external. The internal struggle can be described as the effort to attain one's essence; the external struggle as the process of enabling someone else to attain his or her essence. The first is the greater jihad; the second is the lesser jihad. The first is based on overcoming obstacles between oneself and his or her essence, and the soul's reaching knowledge and eventually divine knowledge, divine love, and spiritual bliss. The second is based on removing obstacles between people and faith so that people can make free choice between belief and unbelief. In one respect, he says, jihad is the purpose of our creation and our most important duty. If the opposite were true, God would have sent Prophets with that duty. According to Gülen,

Reaching spiritual perfection and helping others do so are points of consideration. Attaining internal perfection is the greater jihad; helping others attain it is the lesser jihad. When you separate one from the other, jihad is no longer jihad. Indolence is born from one and anarchy from the other. However, we expect one Muhammadan spirit to be born. As is always the case, this is possible only by following and conforming to God's Messenger. How happy are those who search for a way to salvation for others as much as they do for themselves. And how happy are those who remember to save themselves while saving others!⁷⁰⁶

Depending on circumstances, jihad is a matter of self-defence or removing obstacles in the path of exalting the Word of God ... However, the Qur'anic verses on jihad that were revealed for particular conditions have been generalized by some short-sighted individuals. While war is a matter of secondary importance, it is (sometimes) given priority as an essential issue. Such people do not understand Islam's true meaning and spirit. Their failure to establish a proper primary/secondary balance leads others to conclude that Islam advocates malice and hatred in souls.⁷⁰⁷

3. Christian perspectives - general

There is no generally agreed definition of divine covenant with the mainstream churches, nor a consistent understanding of its importance as a theological concept. The extent of

⁷⁰⁵ Gülen Web Site, "Introducing Fethullah Gülen," <http://en.fgulen.com/about-fethullah-gulen/introducing-fethullah-gulen>.

⁷⁰⁶ Fethullah Gülen, "Jihad with Its Lesser and Greater Kinds or Aspects," Gülen.com website, <http://en.fgulen.com/about-fethullah-gulen/gulens-thoughts/1255-jihad-with-its-lesser-and-greater-kinds-or-aspects.html> Fethullah Gülen.

⁷⁰⁷ Fethullah Gülen, "Jihad and Terrorism," Gülen.com website, <http://en.fgulen.com/content/view/1305/13/>.

fragmentation within the Reformed churches is documented in Chapter Eight. The Roman Catholic Church, for the most part, stood aloof from the debate, insisting on its self-proclaimed position as the only valid church, and operating by direct divine delegation. (See below.)

Prior to the Sixteenth Century Reformation there was no cohesive explanation for a divine covenantal relationship with God, and great emphasis was placed on believing what the church said had to be believed: the development of creeds and doctrinal statements. The church blessed, or sanctified, the authority of either the ruler of the day or the person it wished to see as emperor/ruler, and, in return, in the interests of political or imperial stability, the empire guaranteed the religious authority of the ruler of the church, and the security of its clergy and facilities wherever it chose to go – which was wherever the empire could reach. In that environment the Athanasian Creed was adopted, and there was no need for a doctrine or an understanding of a covenant. A believer had a chance to be “saved,” to rise from the dead in bodily form, and to go into “everlasting life” – on condition that he or she had “done good”. A non-believer, or one who had “done evil”, was condemned to Hell straightaway – into everlasting fire.”

The church’s authoritarian stance was reinforced and perpetuated by the Eleventh Century pronouncements of Pope Gregory VII, notably *Dictatus Papae*, which left even less room for a theology of covenant because the considerations which it involves were subsumed into the claimed authority of the papacy and the concepts of priestly intercession, the confessional, indulgences and penance. The consequences of *Dictatus Papae* were then compounded by *Romanus Pontifex* which launched the European Colonial Era in Pope Nicholas V’s bid to offset the loss of eastward access, trade and resources when Constantinople was lost to the Muslims. It was only when reformers chose to challenge that authority and those concepts at the beginning of the Fourth Epoch that it became necessary to enunciate a doctrine of divine covenant.

In recent years Christians have shown a greater awareness of responsibility to protect the environment and this might indicate a growing awareness of a divine covenantal relationship. The initial stirrings seem to have corresponded with an awareness raising address by Charles Birch to the WCC Assembly, Nairobi, 1975, but, recently, stimulus has been evident from a number of organized church papers including Benedict XVI’s encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* in which he referred to “strengthening that covenant between human being and the environment.” As worthy as that encyclical was, it might indicate an attempt to distract attention from the absence of teaching about personal covenants to a notion of general or ‘mechanical’ ones. A covenant can only be entered into between parties which have the faculties to do so. “The environment” does not. The covenant is between humans and God *with regard to* the environment, whether it is taken to be on the basis of the Noahide Code, or an aspect of either the Mosaic or the Christian New Covenant.

4. Christian - Roman Catholic

The Catholic position must be considered first, because of its juxtaposition to Judaism. It does not have a systematic theology of a divine covenantal relationship between either individuals and God or community and God, and in recent pronouncements it has rejected the concept of Supersessionism, so that on that basis it should envisage Judaism enjoying a covenantal relationship. However a contrary position was written into its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church in 1965, and that is now a critical consideration in my assessment which follows, below.

On the basis of a hypothetical scenario of a Divine Covenant conceived by God prior to Creation and constructed with language and images accessible to human minds which cannot conceptualize The Divine, the Roman Catholic Church defines a direct line of responsibility for itself in all matters salvific by direct delegation from God through the process of Supersession – the errant Israel having been displaced – and exercising such faculty that when its head, the Pope, speaks *ex cathedra*, he does so infallibly as God's nominated delegate or surrogate.⁷⁰⁸ The hypothetical assessment of the church's covenantal relationship with God could have been proposed in 1870 when the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church was first promulgated. It was not. The only factor that had changed in the 94 years between the First and Second Vatican Councils was that the People of Israel, who, according to Catholic definition, have been superseded, had returned in force to the region of Canaan and established a state with Orthodox Judaism as its state religion. That claim is spelled out in great detail in the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. In preparing it, the Vatican theologians had taken full advantage of their old foe, John Calvin. They picked up his words "there is nothing in them to prevent the promises of the Old and the New Testament from remaining the same, ***Christ being the foundation of both***," virtually written them out of God's plan, and declared them redundant. In doing so they also undermined any objection that the Reformed churches might have to their new definition. The Dogmatic Constitution, as noted in chapter eight, reads, in part:

God the Father did not leave men to themselves, but ceaselessly offered helps to salvation, in view of Christ, the Redeemer "who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature". All the elect, before time began, ***the Father "foreknew and pre-destined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that he should be the firstborn among many brethren"***. He planned to assemble in the holy Church all those who would believe in Christ. ***Already from the beginning of the world*** the foreshadowing of the Church took place. ***It was prepared in a remarkable way throughout the history of the people of Israel and by means of the Old Covenant. In the present era of time the Church was constituted and, by the outpouring of the Spirit, was made manifest.*** At the end of time it will gloriously achieve completion, when, as is read in the Fathers, all the just, from Adam and "from Abel, the just one, to the last of the elect will be gathered together with the Father in the universal Church. (*Lumen Gentium*, Ch.1, par.2, Emphasis added.)

The Church, further, "that Jerusalem which is above" is also called "our mother". It is described as the spotless spouse of the spotless Lamb, whom Christ "loved and for whom He delivered Himself up that He might sanctify her", whom He unites to Himself by an unbreakable covenant, and whom He unceasingly "nourishes and cherishes", and whom, once purified, He willed to be cleansed and joined to Himself, subject to Him in love and fidelity, and whom, finally, He filled with heavenly gifts for all eternity, in order that we may know the love of God and of Christ for us, a love which surpasses all knowledge. (*L.G. Ch. 1. Par.6.*)

At all times and in every race God has given welcome to whosoever fears Him and does what is right. God, however, does not make men holy and save them merely as individuals, without bond or link between one another. Rather has it pleased Him to bring men together as one people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness. He therefore chose the race of Israel as a people unto Himself. With it He set up a covenant.

708 First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ, *Pastor Aeternus*, Chapter 4, n. 9, promulgated by the First Vatican Council, Session IV, July 18, 1870: confirmed by the Second Vatican Council in *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25,: November 21, 1964.

Step by step He taught and prepared this people, making known in its history both Himself and the decree of His will and making it holy unto Himself. All these things, however, were done by way of preparation and as a figure of that new and perfect covenant, which was to be ratified in Christ, and of that fuller revelation which was to be given through the Word of God Himself made flesh. "Behold the days shall come saith the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel, and with the house of Judah . . . I will give my law in their bowels, and I will write it in their heart, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people . . . For all of them shall know Me, from the least of them even to the greatest, saith the Lord. Christ instituted this new covenant, the new testament, that is to say, in His Blood, calling together a people made up of Jew and gentile, making them one, not according to the flesh but in the Spirit. This was to be the new People of God. For those who believe in Christ, who are reborn not from a perishable but from an imperishable seed through the word of the living God, not from the flesh but from water and the Holy Spirit, are finally established as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people . . . who in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God".(L.G. Ch. 2, Par. 9.)

My research shows that this is critical. There was no reference to direct delegation from God via the Supersession of Israel in the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Pastor aeternus*, promulgated by the First Vatican Council in 1870. That document based claims to primacy only on the proposition that the Apostle Peter had the status of the first Bishop of Rome. This reference to succession to Israel as the People of God to fulfil a particular function was added when the Dogmatic Constitution was amended by the Vatican II and *Lumen Gentium* was promulgated on November 21, 1964.

Nostra Aetate was promulgated one year later, in December 1965, but, as the works of Cunningham, Barnes and Bolton demonstrate,⁷⁰⁹ although it is ground-breaking in that the Catholic Church was showing remorse for the trauma suffered by the Jewish community over nineteen centuries, it neither admits any responsibility nor addresses the issues of Covenantal relationships and mission. It says nothing directly or precisely about the status of the Mosaic Covenant, its ongoing validity or abrogation, or its salvific status, matters which have since become the theological heart of the dialogical encounter. Sixteen years later Pope John Paul II caused deep consternation within the church by a statement made on his own initiative that the Jews remain "the people of God of the Old Covenant, which has never been revoked"⁷¹⁰ Nothing has been said publicly, to my knowledge, about the need to reconsider *Lumen Gentium* on the basis of that papal admission.

Lumen Gentium and *Nostra Aetate* are decidedly contradictory in the tenor of their references to Judaism and Jews, and Philip Cunningham has noted that "Nostra Aetate had a very difficult gestation" and was a compromise document, because of the inclusion of consideration of the "unique Catholic-Jewish relationship" in the context of all the world's religions.⁷¹¹ As shown in Chapter Eight, the preparation of a statement on "the Jewish Question" was not the result of normal Vatican process and extensive reflection. It was the result of Jewish requests directly to Pope John XXIII, and his personal commitment to it. There was great opposition to the preparation of such a document, and the preparation of a

709 Philip A. Cunningham, "Recognizing Each Other's Religious Legitimacy: How Far Can We Go?," (Boston: Boston College, 2003). Barnes, *Theology and the Dialogue of Religions*. . David J. Bolton, "Catholic-Jewish Dialogue: Contesting the Covenants.," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*. 45, no. 1 (2010).

710 Bolton. Section II.

711 Cunningham, "Recognizing Each Other's Religious Legitimacy: How Far Can We Go?."

document dealing with all world faiths was agreed to be a solution that would be least contentious. Cunningham confirms that the pope's initial proposal was a single document dealing only with Judaism. He attributes to Cardinal Walter Kasper the comment that "In order to save the furniture from the burning house it was decided to integrate the envisaged Declaration as one chapter in the 'Declaration about the Non-Christian Religions'," and he then notes that there are still tensions surrounding *Nostra Aetate* bearing on the question of "how far can we go?" in recognizing each other's religious legitimacy. Bolton goes further, saying that during the decade to 2009 "this unresolved dilemma of a Catholic theology of Judaism has led to a heightened tension that today is very palpable."⁷¹²

The question must be asked: Why? It will be examined in the context of the following brief examination of the circumstances in which dialogue is urgently required.

As noted in Chapter Six, the Vatican has long feared that a resurgent Judaism, possibly linked to a theocratic state, would challenge its self-understanding, theology and authority. It had bitterly opposed Britain's mandate over Palestine, the UN proposal to partition that territory, the formal establishment of the State, and then its application for membership of the United Nations. It lost each time, and the challenge had arrived. Apparently a doctrinal statement which provided a rationale for its continuing claim to primacy seemed to offer an opportunity to deflect it, but the adverse reaction and tension resulting from *Lumen Gentium* showed that the argument was not acceptable. The long-deferred statement on Jewish-Christian relations was hurriedly modified and placed before the final session of the Council.

The Catholic Church had relied on its self-defined role as God's surrogate, acting under Divine authority on the basis of the Petrine link, to maintain a rigid system of Canon Law discipline, judgement and punishment through a priesthood that administered liturgy, the Confessional, penance and, on occasions, indulgences. It was able to maintain the system more or less intact despite the trauma of the Reformation, but the emphasis on priestly intercession meant that adherents very largely lost any sense of God's immanence which is conveyed through the notion of a covenantal relationship. The mystic teaching of Eucharistic transubstantiation which was formally adopted at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215⁷¹³ at the height of controversy over Maimonides; 'Guide of the Perplexed' inspired awe, mixed with cynicism, superstition and fear, but it did not invoke a sense of God's immanence.

This lack of sense of a covenantal relationship with God is reflected in the responses of two of the three Catholic participants (out of five invited) in my research project. (Appendix F and G). Participants CCA5 and CCD4, were decidedly negative in responding to questions 1,2,3 and 4, indicating that in their arenas there was little discussion or concern about covenant, and that, prior to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, they had experienced negative responses, even fear, because of disciplinary functions of the clergy. In contrast, Participant CCD5 gave a very positive response to the notion of judgement as an aspect of covenant and implied that there is also a positive response to the belief in transubstantiation in the Mass.

⁷¹² Bolton.

⁷¹³ Neuner, and Dupuis, eds. p. 386 item 1504.

5. Christian - Reformed

The confusion and the range of interpretations which the Reformation provoked is documented in chapter six. It included the development of Calvinist Covenant Theology, the reinforcement of the concept of Supersessionism, and Lutheran anti-Semitism, followed by the rebellion of Arminius. In succession came the Remonstrance Movement; the first stages of Dispensationalism; the movements of Fox, Hunnius, Witsius, Wesley and Smith, and the outright rejection of Supersessionism and the notion of the abrogation of the Mosaic Covenant of Sinai, by Darby in the Nineteenth Century.

Calvinism became dominant and remained so until the close of the Fourth Epoch with the establishment of the State of Israel.

At first reading, Calvin's understanding was not greatly different from mine, below, but then his conditionality becomes apparent. Calvin saw that humanity and history are moving towards fulfilment in a developmental continuum, that the Biblical record must be read as one, and that the New Testament must be read in the context of that continuum. North describes Calvin's theology of covenant as having a "biblically covenantal structure" based on five points of belief which are "not narrowly theological but cultural in the broadest sense."⁷¹⁴

He believed in 1) the sovereignty of a Creator God, 2) a God who reveals himself in history, 3) a God who lays down fixed laws, 4) a God who brings predictable sanctions in terms of these laws, and 5) a God who (probably) raises up His people to victory in history.⁷¹⁴

Those five points encapsulate the primary aspects of the mature understanding of divine covenant that the Hebrews had developed prior to Jesus' ministry, but there was little room for individual-personal aspects of covenantal relationships as he sought to show that the unbridled licence of the Papal church, based on the unjustified assumption of power, had destroyed the purity of doctrine. The authority of God is absolute, he stressed, and authority and power given to church officers was not given to them personally but to their office, and this had applied to Moses, the Levitical priesthood, the Prophets, the Apostles and to Christ himself.⁷¹⁵ But Calvin's teaching opened the way for the development of a range of variant views, expressing a modified Athanasian view of the infinite role of the church, acknowledging a prior Hebrew heritage, and implying that priests were obliged to teach only from the Word of God – the Bible. In doing so he acknowledged a fixed subordinate position for humanity, and one aspect of a covenantal relationship, but he elevated Christ even above the status proposed by the Athanasian Christological formula, of the coeternal Father and Son, and contradicted his earlier view that God communicated directly with the Hebrew

Even though Calvin acknowledged the legitimacy of the role and status of the patriarchs and prophets, and the validity of the Hebrew scriptural record, and the unfolding development of covenantal understanding, what he said was, for the Jews, an absolute impossibility and total heresy. There is nothing in the promises of the Old and the New Testament to prevent them from remaining the same, he said, because Christ was the foundation of both. His use of the words "Christ being the foundation of both," meant, in effect, that the Jews need never have existed. They could have been written out of God's

⁷¹⁴ North, *Xxiv-xxv*.

⁷¹⁵ Calvin, *Institutes, Vol. II*, p. 389.

plan altogether. Unnecessary! Christ was even the foundation of the “earthly blessing” of Canaan which had been held forth to the Hebrews by the Lord “as a foretaste” of their “heavenly inheritance” as a reward for maintaining the Law. Some people, he said, saw that land as “the only reward of the Divine Law to its worshippers” so that their expulsion was “the severest punishment” by the Lord for their transgression against the Law; but because “the gift of future life, now more clearly and lucidly revealed by the gospel, leads our minds directly to mediate upon it, the inferior mode of exercise formerly employed in regard to the Jews (is) now laid aside.”⁷¹⁶

Calvin said the same inheritance was destined to Jews as to Christians, but from nonage they were incapable of entering to it, and managing it. The Old Testament exhibited only the image of truth and the reality was absent, while the New Testament exhibited both the full truth and the entire body; the completion of “the covenant which God once ratified as eternal and unending,” and which was confirmed and comprehended under ceremonies and sacrifices, is fixed and ratified in Christ; and because the eternal priesthood had been assigned to Christ, “it is clear that the priesthood in which there was a daily succession of priests is abolished.”⁷¹⁷ Thus, although Calvin recognized the validity of the Hebrew prophets, he discounted that part of divine revelation through them which indicated that the covenant would not be abrogated, and that recovery and renewal would follow retribution for transgression or the rejection of obligations. In doing so, he missed the opportunity to review the prevailing Christian claims of supersession, and confirmed his support for it by saying that “the covenant of God was truly realised, made new, and eternal, when it was sealed with his blood.”⁷¹⁸

Calvin’s attempt at a rational explanation of covenant theology and Luther’s deeply held anti-Semitism deepened the antagonism between Christians and Jews, and the first stage of the Reformation left Europe in shreds from decades of religious wars. The series of alternate covenantal definitions that were proposed during the next two centuries, led by the rebellious Arminius and the Remonstrance Movement, the first stages of Dispensationalism, the movements of Fox, Hunnius, Witsius, Wesley, Smith and Darby, whose work was picked up by Blackstone, Scofield and influential business and political figures in both the United States and Europe, complicated the situation. Then a rising tide of Dispensationalism and Christian Zionism, and the disinterest in Covenantal theology within the autocratic Roman Catholic Church, meant that Christianity was no closer to a cohesive understanding of divine covenant during the early years of the Fifth Epoch, and there was desperate need for a strong ecumenical movement.

The dominant elements of the commonly held understanding of divine covenant in the Reformed churches are God’s overpowering love for humanity which takes precedence over all other considerations, the total forgiveness of sins on the basis of that love, justification on the basis of faith in Christ alone, and personal salvation for believers. Discipleship involves conduct in accord with Jesus’ teachings, and support for the disadvantaged in the community. In evangelical denominations which place an emphasis on Discipleship, this goes beyond recognition, to public prayer and declarations of acceptance that Jesus is God and Saviour, and a declared commitment to follow his teachings and to maintain personal piety and purity of conduct. Judgement is a non-issue. Jesus forgives contrite believers on a declaration of repentance, without penalty. This is

⁷¹⁶ Calvin, *Institutes Vol. 1*. p. 388.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid. p. 390.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid. p.391.

perhaps the dominant attitude among Reformed Christians: that Christians can take salvation for granted, as a right.

Christian – My Assessment

My assessment of Jesus' command that his disciples accept a "New Covenant" was on the basis that it was fundamentally the Mosaic Covenant, with four changes because, in Wright's terminology, the *context* was the *renewal* of the covenant.⁷¹⁹

First change: the people of the New Covenant were not to inherit the territory of Canaan in the sense of it being a base from which to demonstrate humanity's relationship with God through exemplary relationships with neighbouring nations. Being the principal city of the region in which the covenantal relationships between God and humanity were revealed, the City of Jerusalem was to become the geographic focal point for people of faith.

Second: the world was to be their area of positive activity and the obligation to fulfil that role was couched in positive terms. This contrasted with the terminology of the Mosaic Covenant which required essentially passive responses from the Jews who were, in effect, anchored to their base in Canaan where they were to continue as the Exemplars of divine covenantal relationships.

Third: the people of the New Covenant were not subject to the rigid religious practices and the means of identification as a community that were still required of the People Israel.

Fourth: the New Covenant did not relate to a "closed lodge" which was restricted to people of one ethnic identity. It went beyond both the Mosaic Covenant with its restriction to descendants of Jacob/Israel, and the Abrahamic Covenant which was restricted to the wider community of descendants of Abraham. It was open to people without restriction: essentially the people of the Noahide Covenant which encompasses people of both prior specific covenants as sub-communities within the total human family. However the New Covenant and the Noahide Covenant are not intrinsically the same. The Noahide Covenant is, by Freedman's definition unconditional⁷²⁰: instituted by God with a divine commitment and universal obligations which no one is free to opt in or out of. The New Covenant is conditional: an open invitation requires recognition of the person extending the invitation, acceptance of a personal commitment, and acknowledgement that divine authority (judgement) is paramount.

In addition the act of renewal was recognition of a personal covenant with God in a manner that shone a spotlight on humanity's direct relationship with God. But it did not eliminate the communal obligations which were inherent in the Mosaic Covenant: it complemented them and extended them – a fact that he confirmed with his final injunction:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. (Mt. 28:19-20) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. (Mt. 28:19-20)

⁷¹⁹ Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*. p. 280.

⁷²⁰ Freedman, and Miano, "People of the New Covenant." p. 8.

It is my assessment that Jesus did not intend anything mystical when he asked his disciples to begin a practice of sharing bread broken from a loaf, and wine from a common cup, which became known as either Communion or the Eucharist. It was to be two things. An act of commemoration and remembrance of the personal and ultimate sacrifice which he realized, from the fate of John the Baptist and previous prophet-reformers, he was about to make in his personal commitment to generate renewal of belief and action. And it was to be a focal point that ensured, or at least encouraged, cohesion and commitment within the community of adherents.

However, such a straightforward belief was submerged as the early church struggled to establish a reasoned Christology and a rationale for existence separate from Judaism, concurrent with evangelism which was reinforced by syncretism and proselytizing.

Appendix N

COVENANT – Beaumaris & Black Rock District Churches

COVENANT BETWEEN CHURCHES IN BEAUMARIS AND BLACK ROCK

PREAMBLE

In 1952 the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches accepted a suggestion that the Churches should agree to act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately (the Lund Principle).

The National Council of Churches in Australia is also encouraging local churches to take specific steps towards a more visible expression of unity and to move towards a deeper experience of communion in the conviction that ecumenical co-operation is fundamental to the integrity of the church's mission.

Covenants are agreements, made by Church communities who recognise their common Baptism and their need for salvation and a personal relationship with Jesus as Lord and Saviour; and agree to work together to make visible the unity of Christ and to lay the foundation for further combined activities.

A local covenant offers a simple and direct way of giving practical expression to this ambition. It is also a formal agreement between a local Christian community in which a pledge is made to God, to serve and witness to the Gospel. While formal unity between churches is still a long way off, local covenants are an interim way of exploring existing unity (real, but imperfect communion) and understanding elements of Christian mission and service together.

Although one of our local partner churches in this covenant, namely the Beaumaris Baptist Church is not a member of the World Council or the National Council of Churches in Australia, it has chosen to be a signatory to this Covenant.

THE COVENANT

We the Churches signed below, united in our common commitment to Christ and to the coming of his Kingdom, commit ourselves to serve one another in both word and deed, to seek ways to strengthen our witness, our service and worship and to search for fresh ways to express our unity in Christ so as to grow more united.

We covenant together

- To conduct the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday
- To conduct common public worship activity during Advent in preparation for Christmas
- To take part in the annual Bayside City Council Ecumenical Service
- To participate ecumenically in a service associated with the National Day of Healing
- To celebrate together the World Day of Prayer.
- To pray regularly for each other in our weekly services

- To have regular meetings of the clergy and staff of our parishes for prayer, study and planning and to share matters of common interest and concern related to church and community.
- To seek new ways of cooperating, and of bearing witness together to the unity to which Christ calls us.
- To participate in each other's programmes and celebrations as appropriate.

We invite all our members to join in prayer and commit to this covenant towards God's future and in response to our Lord's prayer "that they all may be one ... that the world may believe".

This covenant will be reviewed on a biennial basis to assess progress and encourage new steps towards greater unity. Following the biennial review the participating parishes will renew their commitment to the covenant.

The Anglican parish of St Michael and All Angels, Beaumaris

The Anglican parish of St Agnes, Black Rock

The Beaumaris Baptist Church

The Catholic parish of Stella Maris, Beaumaris

The Catholic parish of St Joseph, Black Rock

The Uniting Church in Australia, parish of St Martin's, Beaumaris

The Uniting Church in Australia, parish of St Andrew's by the Sea, Black Rock

Dated:

Appendix O

10. Development of Hebrew Covenantal Understanding

Data for references in each cluster

This data relates to the clusters of references discussed in chapter three concerning the development of the Mature Hebrew Understanding of Divine Covenant.

Within each cluster some references are to a single text, but others are to a group of texts. The detail for each reference includes, as far as possible, a reference number; text identification; strand designation; century and place of writing; century and place of the event; and the nature of the event, the new understanding or the revelation which has been recognized.

First Cluster: 10th - 8th cent.

Ref. 1: Exod. 3:6, E; 8th Israel; c. 15th Horob; prior to the Exodus, Moses experience of the Lord at the burning bush; plus the verses that follow, Exod. 3:7-8; J, 10th Judah; c. 15th prior to the Exodus.

Ref. 2: Exod. 3:16-20, J; 10th Judah; c. 15th Egypt; prior to the Exodus, the Lord to Moses. Also, Exod. 6:4-9, P; 5th (or 7th); and Exod. 15:26, D; 6th Egypt; the Lord to Moses after crossing the Sea of Reeds.

Ref. 3: Exod. 32:9-11, 14, J; 10th Judah; c. 15th Sinai; after the Exodus, the Lord's threat to destroy the apostates and to narrow the base of the covenant community to succession through Moses; his appeal, and the Lord's retraction.

Ref. 4: Num. 14:19-25, J; 10th Judah; and E; 8th Israel; c. 15th Sinai; after the Exodus. Punishment under judgement for rebellion; the Lord's determination to maintain a covenant community through a faithful fragment; the acceptance of intercession by a prophet, the Lord's readiness to temper justice with love and pity.

Ref. 5: Exod. 20:2-7, Other ancient source; place of composition and date not established; c. 15th Sinai; after the Exodus. Message from the Lord to the people, relayed through Moses, indicating acceptance by the Divine that other people could continue to acknowledge other deities until they had been led to the realization that THE LORD was God alone, either through the priesthood of Israel ordained by God, or through other earthly experience.

Second Cluster: 10th cent.

Ref. 6: Gen. 12:1-3, J; 10th Judah; at Haran; the Lord's initial command to Abraham.

Ref. 7: Gen. 12:4-7, J; 10th Judah; at Moreh, the Lord to Abraham

Ref. 8: Gen. 13:14-16, J; 10th Judah; at Bethel, the Lord to Abraham.

Ref. 9: Gen. 15:1-4 J and E?; 10th Judah; probably Hebron. the Lord to Abraham, concerning an heir and descendants.

Ref. 10: Gen. 16:9-10, source ?; place and date of composition uncertain, (editorial addition at an unknown stage of redaction), and the verses which follow, 16:11-12, J; 18th / 17th or earlier, on the road to Shur.

Third Cluster: 10th cent. and later.

Ref. 11: Gen. 26:3-6, J; 10th at Gerah, the Lord to Isaac.

- Ref. 12:* Gen. 26:24-25, J; 10th Judah; at Beersheba, THE LORD to Isaac.
- Ref. 13:* Gen. 28:13-17, J; 10th Judah; on the road to Haran, THE LORD to Jacob.
- Ref. 14:* Gen. 32:27-29, J; 10th Judah; while returning from Haran, an exchange while Jacob wrestled with a stranger.
- Ref. 15:* Gen. 2:5-4:26, J; 10th Judah; in the Garden of Eden, in Biblical time, 4th millennium BCE; the Lord's instructions to the first man and woman.
- Ref. 16:* Gen. portions of chapters 6,7,8 & 9, material from J and P integrated; 10th and 5th (or 7th); in Biblical time, 3rd millennium BCE, flood plains of Mesopotamia; corruption of humanity prompts the Lord to impose a great flood as punishment, then a decision to never again curse *the earth* because of human misconduct.
- Ref. 17:* I Kings 17:1-18-21, edited into its current form by bringing together a composite of earlier documents and oral histories as part of the D strand documents, 7th-6th placed here, 9th Israel, because the stories relate to tension between the Prophet Elijah and Kings Omri and Ahab over the sponsorship of the worship of Baal in the interests of political alliances.

Fourth Cluster: 8th cent.

- Ref. 18.* Genesis 21:12-13, E, 8th cent, Israel; 18th cent or earlier, The Negeb, the Lord to Abraham
- Ref. 19* Genesis 22:2, E, 8th cent, Israel; 18th cent or earlier, The Negeb, the Lord to Abraham; and Genesis 22:16-18, Source ?, place and date of composition uncertain, (editorial addition at an unknown stage of redaction).
- Ref. 20.* Genesis 28:20-22, E, 8th cent, Israel; c.17th cent, at Bethel,
- Ref. 21.* Genesis 46:3-5, E, 8th cent, Israel; c.17th cent, Beersheba. the Lord to Israel, (Jacob), after some of his sons had gone to Egypt, been confronted by Joseph and instructed to bring their father to him.
- Ref. 22* Hosea 2:7,9-10,13-23, and 14:1-8, mid-8th cent, Israel; Hosea, to the authorities and the people. Recognition that Israel's role under covenant is in perpetuity, regardless of repeated apostasy, rebellion, failures and corresponding judgement and punishment.
- Ref. 23.* Amos 3:1-2, and 8:4-7,14, 8th cent, Bethel; concerning Israel's failure to maintain the conduct required by the covenant.
- Ref. 24.* Isaiah 6:1-3, Late 8th cent, Judah; realization that the authority of Yahweh is universal.
- Ref. 25.* Isaiah 1:2-4, 9, 24-28, 2:2-4 and 6:13, mid to late 8th cent, Judah; but probably at Jerusalem. The period of Isaiah's prophetic activity is not clear. He proclaimed that God's authority in all the world is demonstrated by the continuation of the Covenant through a remnant of the people of Judah in the wake of the devastation left either by the Syro-Ephraimitic War of 734-732, or by the armies of Sennacherib in 701. Whichever applies, Isaiah says that the remnant was left after Judah's unforgivable abuse of worship, not as a right, but through the Lord's mercy, and it will recover to become a blessing to the world.
- Ref. 26.* Isaiah 11:1-16, Late 8th cent, Judah, probably at Jerusalem. Isaiah's prophecy concerning restoration of a Davidic kingdom ("the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious") can be interpreted as referring to either the imminent restoration of Judah through the

return of exiles from nearby nations, or the ultimate establishment of a messianic age. It became a source of confusion.

Fifth Cluster: late 7th, early 6th cent

Ref. 27 Deuteronomy 12-16. Exodus 20:22-23:33.

Ref. 28. Jeremiah 31:31-34, 605-586, Jerusalem. Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Ref. 29. II Samuel 7:11b,16, source ? ancient, D, 6th century, and II Samuel 7:12-15, D, 6th century.

Ref. 30. Josh. 5:9, Sources J, E and P, 10th to 8th cent. edited 7th cent, placed in 14th cent Palestine.

Sixth Cluster: 6th cent. Prior to and during Babylonian Exile

Ref. 31: Exod. 20:23 - 23:33, **P**; mid 6th Israel; c. 15th Sinai; after the Exodus. The Book of Covenant, incorporating the Hammurabi Code, was added by redactors with other material of the **P** strand.

Ref. 32. ‘Second’ Isaiah 42:5-8; 43:8-12, 6th century, in Babylon, in exile. Confirmation that the Lord is God of all; that God has a covenant with all humanity, and that Israel is to exemplify that relationship to enable all people to understand it.

Ref. 33. ‘Second’ Isaiah 44:24, 28; 45:13, 6th century, in Babylon, in exile. Cyrus of Persia was “the shepherd of the Lord” in deciding upon Israel’s release from exile and in his conviction that Israel’s God was also Persia’s God: the one and only.

Ref. 34. Jonah 3:4-10; 4:1;10-11, 6th century, Israel, after the return from exile. Recognition that God’s love and compassion is for all people who repent of their sins and respond to the knowledge and demands of God’s laws: not only people under the Abrahamic or Mosaic Covenants.

Ref. 35. Exodus 15:26, D, 6th century, Source ?, place and date of composition uncertain, (editorial addition during redaction); c.15th century, Marah, the Lord to the people Israel after they had crossed the Sea on Reeds to escape the Egyptian chariots. The requirement for obedience under the Abrahamic covenant prior to the Covenant of Sinai was reinforced.

Ref. 36. Exodus 19:3-6, D, 6th century, Israel; c. 15th cent, Sinai, after the Exodus. This editing of the statement of the Mosaic Covenant left no room for doubt about the relationship between humanity and the Divine, or the intended relationship of the people Israel to humanity of which they are part. It included the profound statement that “you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

Ref. 37 Exodus 19:5-6, D, 6th century, and the paramount clauses of the Decalogue ¹, Exodus 20:5-6 source ? time and place of composition not known; c. 15th cent, Sinai. the Lord to Moses, confirming the Covenant, after to the Exodus, Presumed to have been added at a stage of redaction, probably with the D strand.

Ref. 38. Josh. 23, 24. Added mid and late 6th cent, Judah, placed in 14th cent. Palestine.

Ref. 39. Exodus 20:23 to 23:33, D ? Previously considered here, together with Refs. 35 & 37, but now considered to relate to *Ref. 27*, Deuteronomy 12-16, in the fifth cluster.

Ref. 40. Exodus chapters 25-31 and 35-40 **P**, 5th (or 7th) cent, Israel; 15th cent, Sinai. Extended instructions on construction of the sanctuary, furnishings, and the duties of the ministers; immediately after the pronouncement of the Mosaic Covenant.

Ref. 41. Exodus 6:4-9, P, 5th (or 7th) century, Israel; c.15th cent, Egypt. A second version, or confirmation, of the command to Moses and the Abrahamic covenant

Ref. 42. Genesis 28:3-4, P, 5th or 7th cent; place and date of composition uncertain; c.17th cent, Beersheba. Isaac to Jacob after Jacob harassed his elder brother, Esau, to gain his birthright and cheated both his father, Isaac, and Esau, to gain his father's blessing as successor to the covenant.

Ref. 43. Genesis 17:4-8 and 17:19-21, P, 5th (or 7th) cent, place and date of composition uncertain; c.18th cent or earlier, Hebron, Yahweh to Abraham

Ref. 44. Genesis 35:11-13, P, 5th (or 7th) cent, place and date of composition uncertain; c.17th cent, Bethel. the Lord to Jacob (Israel) after he reluctantly acknowledged that the Lord had fulfilled the undertaking given to him on the road to Haran and obeyed an instruction to destroy the pagan gods.

Ref. 45. Ezekiel 4:4-5; 37:1-14; 18:1-32

Seventh Cluster: Post exile 6th/early 5th cent; Early Second Temple Period

Ref. 46: Exod. chapters 25-31, P; 5th (or 7th) Israel; c. 15th Sinai; after the Exodus. Extended instructions on construction of the sanctuary, its furnishings and the duties of the ministers.

Ref. 47. Genesis 1:1-2:5, the expanded creation story, first in sequence but second in order of composition.

Ref. 48. Genesis 5:1-32, Prehistory from Adam to Noah

Ref. 49. Genesis 6:9-22, the Universal Covenant through Noah

Ref. 50. Genesis 8:15-17; embellishment of the story of Noah's disembarkation from the Ark.

Ref. 51. Genesis 9:1-17; the Noahide Covenant. (See also Genesis 8:20-21, J, 10th cent)

Ref. 52, Genesis 16:15-17-27, the expanded statement of the Abrahamic Covenant, stipulating that circumcision is to be a sign of the Covenant

Ref. 53, Genesis 17:8, redefinition of the land promised in perpetuity, with a reduction to the land of Canaan

Ref. 54, Genesis 17:19-21, the divine stipulation that Ishmael's descendants are to be blessed, but that the Covenant is to be established with Isaac

Others additions which concern later periods include:

Ref. 55, Genesis 35:9-13, a statement after Jacob (Israel) had destroyed pagan idols that the flow of benefits to his descendants was confirmed because of Abraham's obedience

Ref. 56, Genesis 33:19, that the Lord's name (Yahweh) was not disclosed until the time of Moses

Ref. 57, Genesis 31:19, that future protection was conditional on absolute obedience to Yahweh

Ref. 58, Genesis 33:19, stronger conditionality in the covenant concerning Israel's role as a kingdom of priests, imposed at Sinai

Ref. 59, Genesis 33:5, that a breach of covenant would invoke continuity of punishment

Ref. 60, Ezra 7:1-13, 25-26; 10:4-6 JVL.

Ref. 61, Nehemiah 5:6-16; 9:1-5; 10:1,29-30; 13:30-31. JVL

Ref. 62 Malachi 1:11-14, and 2:17-3: 5, c. 450 BCE, Jerusalem.

Eighth Cluster: 5th to 1st cent; Late Second temple Period ⁷²¹

Ref. 63, Ecclesiasticus 1:1,12,20; 5:6; 17: 1,7,12,17, 20-24; 37:16, NRSV.

Ref. 64, Maccabees I, 1:14,15,63; 2:20,49-50, 54; 4:10, c. 100 BCE, Jerusalem

Ref. 65, Maccabees II, 1:2; 6:26-28; 7:9,11,14,36; 8:15; 12:43-45; 14:37-46; 15:12,14, c. early 1st cent., Jerusalem, Alexandria/Antioch?

Ref. 66 Daniel 7:13-28; 9:1-27; 11:40-12:13, c. 167-164 BCE, Jerusalem?

Ref. 67 The Book of Jubilees, i:23-26; iv:21 ff, v:13-18; vi:15-22; vii:20-29; xxx:7-14 c. 135-105 BCE, Judea.

Ref. 68. The Manual of Discipline, c. 100-75 BCE, The Qumran Community.

Ref. 69. The Damascus Document, CD 1.1-2; 4Q268 frag. c. 100-75 BCE.

Ref. 70. Ecclesiastes, 1:13; 2:14. C. 280 BCE.

⁷²¹ Eighth Cluster.

Appendix P

Dating of the Exodus: Alternative Approaches

Kathryn Eriksson, "Thera: Redating the Exodus (Provisional)," in *Australian Institute of Archaeology 2006 Petrie Oration* (LaTrobe University Melbourne 2006).

The extracts which follow are from Eriksson's oration at LaTrobe University.

The events surrounding the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt are of critical importance in the understanding of the development of the most influential civilizations over more than three thousand years. The teachings of Moses and the Exodus events are extensively referred to by the Apostles in the New Testament and the Koran as well as the Tanakh. The story of the Exodus is therefore fundamental to all three Abrahamic religions. Yet, notwithstanding the importance of the Exodus events in the understanding and analysis of both religious and popular cultures, there is hardly any agreement about the historical facts. Even amongst those who accept that the Exodus events did in fact have a historical basis, there are still fundamental disagreements as to where to locate the Exodus in Egyptian history.

Eriksson argued that:

I. Given the size and character of the enormous eruption of the volcano in Santorini (ancient Thera), a substantial impact on Egypt is a likely reality – and this included days of darkness, hails of volcanic dust and tsunamis.

II. On the hypothesis that the events in the biblical Exodus have a substantial historical reference, the increasingly accepted theory that the Thera eruption and its aftermath provide by far the best natural explanation for the events of the Exodus should now be adopted as a working hypothesis in Biblical archaeology.

III. Hans Goedicke is right when he identifies two key Egyptian archaeological texts as referring to the consequences of the Thera eruption, namely, the Speos Artemidos of Hatshepsut and the Naos inscription of Ptolemaic date found at El Arish. However Eriksson differed in her interpretation of the detail of these documents, saying that the detailed analysis of these documents seeks to support the view that the events of the Exodus took place towards the end of the reign of Thutmose II and that Hatshepsut took control of Egypt as pharaoh after the Exodus of the Israelites.

IV. There are further arguments for rejecting the other popular suggestions for the Exodus date, that is, during the reigns of Akhenaten and Ramses II, or earlier at the time of the defeat of the Hyksos.

The greatest volcanic Eruption for 4000 Years

Eriksson's general claim is that, at around 1479 BC, the historic and colossal explosion on Thera at the time of Thutmose II created the storms, the hail of fire, and the tsunamis which drowned the Egyptians as in the Exodus account.

This famous Thera volcanic eruption totally devastated the island and had enormous repercussions on the whole of the then established civilisations.

The volcanic explosion of Thera must have been one of the most spectacular and most frightening natural disasters which occurred in the ancient world. The eruption was

so massive that it has been described at least four times the size of the greatest modern volcanic eruption, namely Krakatoa in Java. There is evidence of the impact of Krakatoa and this provides an indication of what happened in that part of the world at the time of Thera.

A vivid modern picture the explosion of Thera, compares it with the equivalent of 100,000 times the atomic explosion on Hiroshima. The whole atmosphere of the planet was probably affected for a considerable time. Just as in the case of Krakatoa, huge tidal waves creating giant tsunamis were the result of the explosion and inundated the surrounding lands – including Egypt. The tectonic plates of the earth in the Eastern Mediterranean were severely affected and these probably led to later earthquakes in the whole region. The island of Thera was no more existent in its earlier form.

It has been estimated that the debris covered a massive area, and that a tsunami wave hit the northern shore line of the neighbouring island of Crete. A tsunami could also have penetrated into the delta region of Egypt. The volcanic eruption created massive dust storms in the atmosphere such that the sky was covered in darkness for several days throughout the Mediterranean area. Pumice and volcanic ash from the fallout of the volcano is still being found in archaeological digs to this very day.

It is increasingly accepted by experts that this momentous natural catastrophe was indeed one of the greatest volcanic eruption in the world in the last 4000 years and between 4 and 6 times that of the 1883 eruption of the island of Krakatoa (Indonesia).

The work of several other scholars adds weight to Eriksson's assessment.

Frank J. Yurco, "3,200-Year-Old Picture of Israelites Found in Egypt," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 16, no. 5 (1990). In 1990 Yurco proposed that Israelites, recognized as a nomadic people, had taken part in the unsuccessful defence of Canaan against Merneptah between 1211 and 1209 BCE using the name Israel to designate their premonarchic tribal confederacy within four decades of the period, c. 1250 BCE, when it was thought they had first appeared in Canaan as an identifiable group. If they had increased and organized to that extent it is reasonable to suggest that they had been present for two generations since Moses arrived at the Plains of Moab to divide the land between eleven tribes. This would place their arrival at Moab c. 1300, and that requires a date for the Exodus of not later than c. 1350 BCE

Abraham Malamat, "Let My People Go and Go and Go and Go. Egyptian records support a centuries-long exodus," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 24, no. 1 (1998). In 1998 Malamat proposed that Egyptian material may provide indirect proof for the 'Israelite episode'; that biblical accounts streamlined or compressed the Exodus into a 'punctual' rather than a 'durative' event which could involve two or more exoduses or a steady flow of Israelites from Egypt over hundreds of years; that if it was a durative event a hunt for a specific Exodus date was futile since it could have been anywhere from the 15th to the 12th centuries BCE; that Israelites may have been among those forced to build the new capital for Ramesses II (early to mid 13th cent.); and that he was inclined to date the peak flow or "Moses Movement" in the early 12th cent.

Avraham Faust, "How Did Israel Become a People? The genesis of Israelite identity," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 35, no. 6 (2009). In 2009 Faust said it was tempting to connect the mention of Israelites in the 13th cent. Merneptah Stele with the hundreds of settlements in the highlands of Canaan which had been ruled by Egypt from the 15th cent. .

Hershel Shanks, "When Did Ancient Israel Begin?," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 38, no. 01 (2012). In 2012 Shanks has reported speculation on two issues. First, assessments by three German Egyptologists that an early 14th cent. name ring on a pedestal in the Berlin Museum, thought to refer to peoples conquered in Canaan may read "Israel". Their assessment is neither conclusive nor unanimously accepted. Second, whether Josephus was correct to equate the expulsion of the West Asiatic Semitic rulers of Egypt, the Hyksos, c. 1550 BCE, with the Exodus, noting that Tel Aviv University archaeologist Israel Finkelstein has suggested, in the words of German scholars, "that the Biblical tradition likely contains vague memories of the expulsion of the (West Semitic) Hyksos."

Appendix Q

Dating the Biblical texts

Without regard for time and process, the tradition that God dictated the Torah to Moses and that it was transmitted faithfully and complete was maintained within both the Jewish and Christian communities until the 16th cent. CE when archaeological evidence and textual study showed it to be untenable.⁷²² When the tradition was first challenged, (largely on the basis of style, use of names, status, vocabulary and means of communication), the debate was sporadic. However, after the publication in 1885 of the Wellhausen Documentary Hypothesis (DH)⁷²³ the debate intensified because of the threat to the church's authority. The DH proposed that the Torah was comprised of separate narratives produced in sequence (designated J, E, D, P) by contributors in four different eras, progressively redacted and finally combined into a cohesive whole. Continuing debate stimulated further Biblical textual research into the origins and authorship of early Hebrew texts⁷²⁴ and whether Wellhausen's sequence of E, J, P and D was correct.

Otto Eissfeldt (1934, republished 1965)⁷²⁵ identified three additional sources, L, B and H, with a logical chronological sequence in the preparation of constituent parts of the Pentateuch, and proposed that the parts had been grafted together progressively. A number of other scholars, including Fohrer⁷²⁶ and Kaufmann,⁷²⁷ who dated P to c. 715 BCE, also proposed different sources or alternative dates for the compilation of some texts, but by 1970 the DH was generally accepted.

However, although Jewish scholars had continued their research, there was a long pause in research by Christian scholars in the post-WWII era in circumstances discussed in Chapter Eight, before a period of accelerated research and vigorous debate began and is continuing. As a result of a host of contributions, including major ones noted below, the DH is now largely rejected and the emphasis in research has shifted towards genre and linguistic dating of Hebrew texts. However debate continues and according to T. L. Thompson it has "substantially removed any hope for consensus in the foreseeable future."⁷²⁸ An assessment of the progressive evolution of covenantal understanding and the implications

722 Jean Louis Bergel, "Principal Features and Methods of Codification," *Louisiana Law Review* 48, no. 1988 (1988). William M Schniedewind, *The Word of God in transition : from prophet to exegete in the Second Temple period*, Journal for the study of the Old Testament. Supplement series (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

723 Wellhausen, *Prolegomena – Israel*.

724 W. Robertson Smith, "Preface to English Translation: Wellhausen's Prolegomena to the History of Israel," in *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1885), v.

725 Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament : an introduction, including the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, and also the works of similar type from Qumran: the history of the formation of the Old Testament*, trans. Peter R. Ackroyd (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

726 Georg Fohrer, *History of Israelite religion* trans. David E. Green (London: S.P.C.K., 1973).

727 Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The religion of Israel, from its beginnings to the Babylonian exile*, trans. Moshe Greenberg (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961).

728 Thomas L. Thompson, "Why Talk About the Past? The Bible, Epic and Historiography," in *In Search of Philip R. Davies: Whose Festschrift is it Anyway?*, ed. Duncan Burns and J. W. Rogerson, *Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies* (London: T.& T. Clark/Continuum, 2012). Pre-publication release of papers, http://tandtclark.typepad.com/Davies_FS_Files/Davies_FS_Thompson.pdf, p. 4.

of consequent and subsequent interaction must therefore take account of widely divergent views of the dating of particular texts.

In 1975 Van Seters proposed that redactors had not been involved in merging texts from various sources; that there had been an ongoing process of supplementation as successive authors modified earlier compositions and changed their focus; and that the earliest sources for Genesis should be dated to the 6th cent. BCE.⁷²⁹ Then, using linguistic study, R. Polzin (1976) dated the critical P source between Classical and Late Biblical Hebrew.⁷³⁰ R. Rendtorff (1977) proposed that rather than two distinct early sources, J and E, there had been an accumulation of fragments which were accreted first into small units and progressively into larger units. He thought this did involve a redaction process, but "it is no longer a matter of assigning individual texts to different sources, but of outlining more exactly the process by which the single narratives came to form the larger units."⁷³¹ A. Hurvitz (1982) dated P as not later than the end of the 7th cent.⁷³²; R. N. Whybray (1987) examined the three hypotheses and said both the Supplementary and Fragmentary models were logical and simple to explain, but the DH was complex and required specific assumptions that were illogical and contradictory.⁷³³ In the same year Thompson acknowledged all of the alternatives that had been proposed, declared that the task of dating the narratives which form the origin tradition of Israel "is, perhaps, ultimately an impossible one," and that "the discovery of the integrated world-view of the Yahwistic theology" was one of the major successes of the Documentary Hypothesis. However, contrary to the views of most scholars, he proposed that the final redaction into Torah form may not have been carried out by Ezra in the 5th cent. but during the early phase of the Hasmonean era.⁷³⁴

In 1998 E. W. Nicholson⁷³⁵ concluded from an extensive review of Pentateuchal research that the pattern of dates determined by three groups of scholars were all well supported, and W. H. Propp's commentary on Genesis, based on a DH framework, was published the following year.⁷³⁶ Subsequently, in 2003, R. E. Friedman supported the basic DH model except for re-dating P to the first decade of the 7th cent.⁷³⁷, and Ian Young edited a volume of papers setting out the challenges in applying linguistic methods to determine the origins of the Hebrew Bible.⁷³⁸ According to Bernon Lee, it showed that the possibilities of linguistic heterogeneity were effected by a host of socio-linguistic factors, and a graded

729 John Van Seters, *Abraham in history and tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975).

730 Cited in Thomas L. Thompson, *The Origin Tradition of Ancient Israel: I. The Literary Formation of Genesis and Exodus 1-23*, *Journal for the study of the Old Testament. Supplement series* ; 55. (Sheffield: JSOT/Sheffield Academic Press, 1987). p. 191.

731 Rolf Rendtorff, *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch*, trans. John J. Scullion, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* 89 (Sheffield: JSOT / Sheffield Academic Press 1990). Conclusions, Section 4.3.

732 Cited in Thompson, *Tradition*.

733 R. N. Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study*, vol. Series 53, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987).

734 Thompson, *Tradition*. pp. 191, 202.

735 Nicholson, *Legacy*.

736 William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18 : a new translation with introduction and commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1999).

737 Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed* (San Francisco: Harper, 2003).

738 Ian Young, ed. *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology* (Sheffield Academic, 2003).

and gradual procedure in linguistic transition complicated efforts to identify linguistic typologies and chronologies based on the distinction between Standard and Late Biblical Hebrew.⁷³⁹ Young followed that in 2008 with a research reference work in which the authors argue that the use of language in dating biblical texts, and the traditional approach to the chronological development of biblical Hebrew, both require thorough re-evaluation.⁷⁴⁰

Thus, in view of the confusion (indicated in the following table), and having found by transposing P source texts from the late 5th cent. to the 6th cent. that a change from one to another does not materially affect conclusions about the development of the mature Hebrew understanding of Covenant, the dating of Marks, Gray and Hyatt⁷⁴¹ is used in this research. Further details relating to that decision are provided in Appendix Q.

The strands of documents are dated thus:

Nicholson 1998 p.21				Applied in this research
The Wellhausen 'school'	Dillmann & supporters	Marks & Hyatt	Kaufmann & Friedman	
J: c. 840 BCE	E: 900-850 BCE	J: c. 950 BCE	J: Before 722 BCE	J: c. 950 BCE
E: c.700	J: 800-750	E: 8 th cent.	E: After 722	E: 8 th cent.
D: c.623	P: 800-700	D: c. 550	P: c. 715-687	P: c. 715-687
P: c.500-450	D: 650-623	P: c. 400 (late 5 th cent.)	D: c. 622	D: c. 550
Final Redaction Torah: c. 458			Torah: c. 458	Torah: c. 458

⁷³⁹ Bernon P. Lee, " Review: Ian Young, ed. Biblical Hebrew - Studies in Chronology and Typology " *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 5(2004-5).

⁷⁴⁰ Ian Young, Robert Rezetko, and Martin Ehrensävrd, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts: Volume 1, An Introduction to Approaches and Problems*, 1st ed., 2 vols., vol. 1, Bible World (Equinox Publishing, 2008).

⁷⁴¹ Charles M. Laymon, ed. *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, First Regular ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971). Marks, p. 1; Gray, p. 33; Hyatt, p. 1082.

Alternatives proposed by other authorities are that E was also composed in the 10th century in parallel with J following the division of the kingdom into Judah (J) and Israel (E); that P was composed in the 7th century and not the 5th century; that D was composed in two parts in the 6th century; that the second stage redaction involved all four sources; and that there was a further major redaction during the Hasmonean period, probably in the 2nd century BCE.

The most significant alternative is the reversing of the sequence of compilation of the P and D sources. However, in the context of this research a change in dating of sources within the range suggested by alternative authorities does not affect my conclusions. Similarly, on the same basis, I have not been able to identify any situations in which the reallocation of a passage from one source to another would affect my conclusions.

Appendix R

The Crisis-driven rise in Dialogue.

From a literature and internet search I have identified 63 Non-Governmental Organizations which have as a primary function the organization of interfaith conferences, research programs, education, fellowship and training, lobbying or crisis intervention with some degree of international reach. I expect there are a number I have missed. To determine an indicative rate of change, I have assumed only one major function per year, each. I have not included universities which organize conferences or have established dialogue centres in the table below as 'interfaith organizations', but using the same search method I have estimated the number of international or regional conferences which they have organized, and have added that figure to the major annual conferences of the interfaith organizations to arrive at an estimate of the relative activity levels.

Using data for 1950 to represent base population and activity levels, the chart below shows that while the world population has increased by a factor of 2.7, the number of interfaith organizations has increased by a factor of 5.6 (twice the population rise), and total interfaith event activity, by a factor of 74, (27 times the population rise). The number of universities, and therefore the number of academics available to take part in dialogue programs, have also risen at a rate far higher than the world population, but the religious faith communities have also risen significantly, in absolute numbers, but whether as a proportion of the population is not clear.⁷⁴²

Decades >	1891 1900	1901 1910	1911 1920	1921 1930	1931 1940	1941 1950	1951 1960	1961 1970	1971 1980	1981 1990	1991 2000	2001 2010
New Interfaith organizations established	0	1	1	1	1	3	2	3	4	14	16	17
Progressive total organizations	0	1	2	3	4	7	9	12	16	30	46	63
Conferences: universities, ann. events,	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	100	200	600
Total annual conferences, events	0	1	2	3	4	7	9	12	20	130	246	663
World population billions (UN)	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.3	2.5	3.0	3.7	4.4	5.3	6.1	6.9

⁷⁴² While reliable data is not available for all countries, it is widely accepted that the trend is for lower participation rates in the WWCB and higher participation rates elsewhere, notably in Africa, and that Muslim participation is rising, overall, at a significantly faster rate than Christianity.

Tom W. Smith, "Religious Change around the World," (Chicago: NORC/University of Chicago, 2009).

Ian Smith, John W. Sawkins, and Paul T Seaman, "The Economics of Religious Participation: A Cross-Country Study," *Kyklos* 51, no. 1 (2008).

Appendix S

Papal Document: *Dictatus Papae*

Gregory VII, Pope "Dictatus Papae, 1090 " In *The Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, edited by Paul Halsall. New York: Fordham University / Online Reference Book for Medieval Studies, 1075. Translated in Ernest F. Henderson, *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages*, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1910), pp. 366-367

The Dictatus Papae was included in Pope's register in the year 1075. Some argue that it was written by Pope Gregory VII (r. 1073-1085) himself, others argues that it had a much later different origin. In 1087 Cardinal Deusdedit published a collection of the laws of the Church which he drew from any sources. The Dictatus agrees so clearly and closely with this collection that some have argued the Dictatus must have been based on it; and so must be of a later date of compilation than 1087. There is little doubt that the principals below do express the pope's principals.

The Dictates of the Pope

1. That the Roman church was founded by God alone.
2. That the Roman pontiff alone can with right be called universal.
3. That he alone can depose or reinstate bishops.
4. That, in a council his legate, even if a lower grade, is above all bishops, and can pass sentence of deposition against them.
5. That the pope may depose the absent.
6. That among other things, we ought not to remain in the same house with those excommunicated by him.
7. That for him alone is it lawful, according to the needs of the time, to make new laws, to assemble together new congregations, to make an abbey of a canonry; and, on the other hand, to divide a rich bishopric and unite the poor ones.
8. That he alone may use the imperial insignia.
9. That of the pope alone all princes shall kiss the feet.
10. That his name alone shall be spoken in the churches.
11. That this is the only name in the world.
12. That it may be permitted to him to depose emperors.
13. That he may be permitted to transfer bishops if need be.
14. That he has power to ordain a clerk of any church he may wish.
15. That he who is ordained by him may preside over another church, but may not hold a subordinate position; and that such a one may not receive a higher grade from any bishop.
16. That no synod shall be called a general one without his order.
17. That no chapter and no book shall be considered canonical without his authority.

18. That a sentence passed by him may be retracted by no one; and that he himself, alone of all, may retract it.
19. That he himself may be judged by no one.
20. That no one shall dare to condemn one who appeals to the apostolic chair.
21. That to the latter should be referred the more important cases of every church.
22. That the Roman church has never erred; nor will it err to all eternity, the Scripture bearing witness.
23. That the Roman pontiff, if he have been canonically ordained, is undoubtedly made a saint by the merits of St. Peter; St. Ennodius, bishop of Pavia, bearing witness, and many holy fathers agreeing with him. As is contained in the decrees of St. Symmachus the pope.
24. That, by his command and consent, it may be lawful for subordinates to bring accusations.
25. That he may depose and reinstate bishops without assembling a synod.
26. That he who is not at peace with the Roman church shall not be considered catholic.
27. That he may absolve subjects from their fealty to wicked men.

Appendix T

Document of Vatican II: *Nostra Aetate*

**DECLARATION ON
THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS
NOSTRA AETATE
PROCLAIMED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI
ON OCTOBER 28, 1965**

1. In our time, when day by day mankind is being drawn closer together, and the ties between different peoples are becoming stronger, the Church examines more closely her relationship to non-Christian religions. In her task of promoting unity and love among men, indeed among nations, she considers above all in this declaration what men have in common and what draws them to fellowship.

One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth.(1) One also is their final goal, God. His providence, His manifestations of goodness, His saving design extend to all men,(2) until that time when the elect will be united in the Holy City, the city ablaze with the glory of God, where the nations will walk in His light.(3)

Men expect from the various religions answers to the unsolved riddles of the human condition, which today, even as in former times, deeply stir the hearts of men: What is man? What is the meaning, the aim of our life? What is moral good, what sin? Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve? Which is the road to true happiness? What are death, judgment and retribution after death? What, finally, is that ultimate inexpressible mystery which encompasses our existence: whence do we come, and where are we going?

2. From ancient times down to the present, there is found among various peoples a certain perception of that hidden power which hovers over the course of things and over the events of human history; at times some indeed have come to the recognition of a Supreme Being, or even of a Father. This perception and recognition penetrates their lives with a profound religious sense.

Religions, however, that are bound up with an advanced culture have struggled to answer the same questions by means of more refined concepts and a more developed language. Thus in Hinduism, men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an inexhaustible abundance of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry. They seek freedom from the anguish of our human condition either through ascetical practices or profound meditation or a flight to God with love and trust. Again, Buddhism, in its various forms, realizes the radical insufficiency of this changeable world; it teaches a way by which men, in a devout and confident spirit, may be able either to acquire the state of perfect liberation, or attain, by their own efforts or through higher help, supreme illumination. Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing "ways," comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites. The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has

reconciled all things to Himself.(4)

The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men.

3. The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all- powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth,(5) who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.

4. As the sacred synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that spiritually ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock.

Thus the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ-Abraham's sons according to faith (6)-are included in the same Patriarch's call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles.(7) Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ, Our Peace, reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making both one in Himself.(8)

The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: "theirs is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the law and the worship and the promises; theirs are the fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. She also recalls that the Apostles, the Church's main-stay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people.

As Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation,(9) nor did the Jews in large number, accept the Gospel; indeed not a few opposed its spreading.(10) Nevertheless, God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or of the calls He issues-such is the witness of the Apostle.(11) In company with the Prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and "serve him shoulder to shoulder" (Soph. 3:9).(12)

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues.

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ;(13) still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.

Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.

5. We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any man, created as he is in the image of God. Man's relation to God the Father and his relation to men his brothers are so linked together that Scripture says: "He who does not love does not know God" (1 John 4:8).

No foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between man and man or people and people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned.

The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion. On the contrary, following in the footsteps of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, this sacred synod ardently implores the Christian faithful to "maintain good fellowship among the nations" (1 Peter 2:12), and, if possible, to live for their part in peace with all men,(14) so that they may truly be sons of the Father who is in heaven.(15)

NOTES

1. Cf. Acts 17:26
2. Cf. Wis. 8:1; Acts 14:17; Rom. 2:6-7; 1 Tim. 2:4
3. Cf. Apoc. 21:23f.
4. Cf 2 Cor. 5:18-19
5. Cf St. Gregory VII, letter XXI to Anzir (Nacir), King of Mauritania (Pl. 148, col. 450f.)
6. Cf. Gal. 3:7
7. Cf. Rom. 11:17-24
8. Cf. Eph. 2:14-16
9. Cf. Lk. 19:44
10. Cf. Rom. 11:28
11. Cf. Rom. 11:28-29; cf. dogmatic Constitution, Lumen Gentium (Light of nations) AAS, 57 (1965) pag. 20
12. Cf. Is. 66:23; Ps. 65:4; Rom. 11:11-32
13. Cf. John. 19:6
14. Cf. Rom. 12:18
15. Cf. Matt. 5:45

Appendix U

Division in Islam

[Relating to Chapter Five, section 5, p. 184]

On other theological grounds the Shī'at 'Alī gradually diverted further from the main stream Muslim community which became known as Sunni. Shi'ism splintered over time into a number of streams, usually on the basis of succession disputes and which imam each community considered to be the final valid office holder, and those divisions are a significant factor in the current crises in the Middle East..

Supplementary material

Concerning martyrdom, Shi'ism elevated the concept to a focal point of devotion, and, in a somewhat contradictory move, adopted *taqiya*, dissimulation, under which Muslims are allowed to conceal their true beliefs for self-protection to avoid persecution and the need for martyrdom.⁷⁴³ The similarity between this and the Babylonian Talmudic discussion on precepts of the Torah that can be set aside to avoid martyrdom suggests another case of syncretism – the adoption of the common Israelite understanding of a ruling by the Sanhedrin that if a man was commanded to transgress against the Torah “he may transgress and not suffer death, excepting idolatry, incest [which includes adultery] and murder.”⁷⁴⁴ The date of that ruling is uncertain, but as it was apparently some time between 57 BCE and 200 CE. During that period it could only be made in the context of either heathen foreign imperial attempts to eliminate or reduce the influence of Hebrew worship, or under Christian imperial oppression, and certainly not under pressure from Islam which was not called into existence until several centuries later.⁷⁴⁵

The Shī'a adoption of *taqiya* was directly contrary to Qur'anic teaching that Islam was not to be rejected as a means of saving one's life, (S.3 A.177), and that the blessings of Allah's mercy and forgiveness for prior sins are far better than any earthly benefits from apostasy, (S.3 A.157-160). Similarly, it was a misinterpretation or a distortion of the Qur'anic teaching that Allah would bestow “a goodly provision (and) admit ... to a place with which they shall be well pleased”, those who die in the cause of Allah – *jihad* as correctly understood – (S.22 A.58-60), and main stream hadith. If contemporary reports that suicide bombers who commit atrocities have been encouraged to do so in the expectation of flamboyant activities, luxuries and sexual privileges in heaven as martyrs are correct, then it suggests either a gross distortion of the principal Sunni collections of hadith by those recruiting suicide bombers, or that collections not referred to by the writer contain radically different statements attributed to the Prophet.⁷⁴⁶

743 ———, "Shi'a Islam - Doctrines and History."

744 Isidore Epstein, ed. *Babylonian Talmud: Seder Nezikin, Sanhedrin Chapter VIII, Folio 74a*, Come and Hear web page ed., Soncino Babylonian Talmud (Soncino Press, 1961).

745 J Shachter and H. Freedman, "Introduction to the Sanhedrin," in *Babylonian Talmud: Seder Nezikin, Sanhedrin Chapter VIII, Folio 74a*, ed. I. Epstein (Soncino Press, 1961).

See p. 228 for acknowledgement and confirmation by Maimonides

746 The most likely hadith in the principal Sunni reference, Az-Zubaidi, *Bukhari*. is Book 53, chapter 98, part of paragraph 1339. It names a third person who attributes to a companion of the Prophet the words: “our Prophet, peace be upon Him, has informed us that our Lord says: Whoever amongst us is killed (i.e.

Shi'ism splintered over time into a number of streams, usually on the basis of succession disputes and which imam each community considered to be the final valid office holder, but two important streams were influential in that splintering on the basis of theological disagreements.

One, the Mu'tazilah, emerged early in the 17th cent. from the Kharijite's questions which resulted in the initial Shī'a – Sunni division. It became influential when the 'Abbasid caliph, al-Ma'mun, declared its doctrine to be the state creed in the mid 9th cent. The Mu'tazilah claimed that someone who commits a grave sin without repenting occupies a middle state between being a Muslim and not being a Muslim; God is pure Essence, without attributes that impute human or physical properties to God and that Qur'anic passages which imply otherwise are to be understood as metaphorical; the Qur'an was created and is not eternal, and claims for the eternal coexistence of the Qur'an beside Allah implies another god beside Allah; free will makes people entirely responsible for their decisions and actions. Therefore divine predestination is incompatible with God's justice and human responsibility, and God, of necessity, acts justly, rewarding or punishing on the day of judgement as stated explicitly in the Night Journey; and that knowledge of God can be acquired through reason as well as revelation.⁷⁴⁷

These Mu'tazilah differences from main stream Sunni belief cannot be said to contradict any aspect of Qur'anic covenant, and are of less theological consequence than the disagreements concerning Christology which divided the church during its era of heresy hunting. To be seen as not fully Muslim effectively placed a person in the same relationship to Sunni Islam as Christians and Jews who were adherents to their community faith but not religious leaders. They were people to be accepted, subject to some discrimination in taxation and social standing, and also subject to the Qur'anic understanding of judgement.

Dispute over whether the Qur'an was created or eternal suggests that Sunni scholars failed to appreciate that revelation was progressive, and ignored the fact that only portions of the Qur'an show the character of revelation while much of it shows the character of circumstantial or contextual reasoned thought. They adopted a view parallel to the prevailing Christian view that Jesus equated to the Word which was with God (rather than which was disclosed progressively and initially through the Hebrew prophets) and was therefore eternal and coexistent with God. The Mu'tazilites were said to be introducing Greek philosophical thought into Islam rather than exercising reason themselves.

The second divergent stream, the Nusayriyyah, was regarded by Sunnis as an heretical extreme Shi'ite group. It emerged about the same time as the Mu'tazilah from the syncretic merging of Islamic, Gnostic, Christian and Jewish beliefs and traditions. The Nusayris, who now prefer the name 'Alawi' to identify them more closely with Ali, have had a chequered history of conflict with Sunni powers, Christians during the Crusades, French interference during the 20th cent., followed by minority domination of Syria since 1970 and a civil war with the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood, and currently both internal and

martyred), shall go to Paradise to lead such a luxurious life as he has never seen, and whoever amongst us remain alive, shall become your master." None of the numerous Shi'a collections of hadith have been examined, directly, for this research.

747 Bulend Shanay, "Mu'tazilah Islam," in *Philtar Religion: Overview of World Religions*, ed. Elliott Shaw (Carlisle: University of Cumbria, 1998).

external political manipulation as a result of Syria being embroiled in the so-called Arab Spring.⁷⁴⁸

Nusayris believe in incarnation and reincarnation; that Ali is God in the flesh and created Muhammad from his spirit; Muhammad created an early Shi'ite saint, Salman; together they form a Trinity in which Ali is described as the 'meaning', Muhammad is the 'name' and Salman is the 'door'. They reject the Qur'an and prayer associated with Sunni tradition; believe that all Islamic teaching can be interpreted spiritually and does not have to be taken literally; use wine as a symbol for God; and, claiming that women do not have souls, see no need to explain to them the secrets of Nusayri doctrine which are taught to men – who are born into the sect – from the age of initiation, nineteen years.⁷⁴⁹ This appears to be an adaptation of the understanding of Jewish youth reaching the age of responsibility and status of a bar mitzvah.

Another stream, the Zaydiyyah, developed within Shi'ism parallel to the Mu'tazilah in the 7th cent.; gained strength and established states in Tarbaristan and Yemen during the 9th cent.; declined and was largely absorbed by Twelver Shī'a by the 16th cent., except in Yemen, where it retained its influence through the Ottoman Era, but lost the status of an Imamate with the establishment of the Yemen Arab Republic. It is regarded as closely aligned with the Sunni stream and theologically closest to the Mu'tazila. The continuing Zaydis reject the notion of the Hidden Imam and the return of Mahdi which was a Twelver development, (see below). They believe that anyone in the house of Ali is eligible for the Imamate, not only a particular line of descendants, and teach that the Imam is neither infallible nor capable of performing miracles and should be appointed on the basis of personal merit.⁷⁵⁰

In the meantime, in 750 the Umayyad Caliphate fell, overthrown by the Abbasid Dynasty in a 'dirty' fight that did not bring a complete change or unify the Dār al-Islām. One member of the Umayyad dynasty survived to establish an emirate in Spain which, for a time, claimed the status of a caliphate, and Abbasid authority was further weakened by the temporary establishment of a competing caliphate in Egypt. However only a year after their grab for power the Abbasids found whatever plans they might have harboured for further spread of Islam by military means dramatically undermined. A decisive battle fixed the frontier between Muslim controlled territory and Buddhist-Confucian China indefinitely. Large mixed armies of the two power blocks fought a massive battle at Talas, Kyrgystan, in 751 – exactly one hundred years after the first Muslim envoy's visit and construction of the Canton Mosque. Except for the capture of Palermo in 831, the expansion had peaked.

Schisms in Shi'ism on the basis of succession to the Imamate occurred again, late in the 8th cent. when the Isma'iliyyah, known as Sevener Shī'a, extended missionary work to North Africa; and late in the 9th cent. when the eleventh Shī'a Imam, Hasan al-Askari, died. He

748 Roula Khalaf, "Syrian regime reaches point of no return," *Financial Times*, November 29, 2011 2011.

MuslimHope Contributor, "Alawites in the Muslim World," Christian Debater, <http://www.muslimhope.com/AlawitesInTheMuslimWorld.htm>.

749 Bulend Shanay, "Nusayriyyah - Shi'ite tradition," in *Philtar Religion: Overview of World Religions*, ed. Elliott Shaw (Carlisle: University of Cumbria, 1998).

750 ———, "Zaydiyyah - Shi'ite school of law," in *Philtar Religion: Overview of World Religions*, ed. Elliott Shaw (Carlisle: University of Cumbria, 1998).

was succeeded in mysterious and highly conjectural circumstances by his four or five year-old son, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Mahdī, for whom there is no record of death.

The story of the boy's birth, occultation and expected reappearance which was soon circulating is remarkably similar to the Gospel stories of Herod's fear on learning of Jesus' birth (Mat. 2), his ascension (Mark 16:19), and expected return in glory and divine authority (Acts 1:11; 2 Thess. 1:6-10). Al-Mahdi is said to have been born in some exceptional manner, under divine protection; to have taken charge of prayers at his father's funeral and identified himself as the expected God-appointed Imam; to have been pursued by the Abbasid king, al-Mutamad, who knew of prophecy that the twelfth imam would be born during his reign; and to have been protected by four special deputies who were the last people to see him – in a cellar from which he disappeared without trace.

The inability of his four protectors to explain the boy's disappearance led to the proposition that he was the final valid Imam, known as the Mahdi; that he did not die but is in hiding and will appear as the end of time approaches as God's vehicle for judgement and to bring victory for the Shī'a faith. That proposition was soon accepted in the manner of doctrine and resulted in the establishment of the Imamiyyah, or Twelvers.

Documentary evidence of the rationale for the development of such a belief at that time is not readily accessible, but it is reasonable to conclude that it was the result of the syncretic adoption of two prior beliefs. One: the Christian teaching that Jesus the Christ will return at the Day of Judgement (the Athanasian Creed). The other: the Qur'anic teaching that Jesus the Messiah did not die on the cross and was lifted to heaven to return in the manner of the Christian teaching (S.3 A.55-6; S.4. A.157-159). In any case it mitigated any suggestion that he died at the hands of his four protectors who jointly assumed the role of his special deputies, in effect, the Imamate. Twelvers believe that he entered a stage of occultation which lasted seventy years, during which time the four special deputies were in touch with him. They also believe that he is now in a second stage of occultation which will last until God commands him to appear, and that their scholars are regular deputies of him without having ability to see him.⁷⁵¹

The Twelvers currently dominate Shī'a Islam, but following the schism the Seveners were dominant for a time. In 909 they set up a competing Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt. They believed that Islamic law (the Shari'ah) should be repealed; rejected the Qur'an and all forms of prayers in the main Sunni Islamic tradition; and interpreted Islamic teachings spiritually, freeing them from adhering to laws and obligations such as prayer, fasting, and hajj.

Such theological and organizational confusion precipitated a review of mainstream Muslim theology during the 10th cent. and the adoption of a set of orthodox Sunni propositions.

The Prophet and his revelation are of foremost authority.

In order for the Qur'an to be used as a basis for sound judgement for subjects under dispute it is necessary to take sound hadiths into account.

Qur'anic verses should be interpreted in the context of the whole of the Qur'an.

751 Contributor Shi'a Homepage, "The Twelfth Imam: Imam Mehdi (AS)," Shia.Org -The Shi'a Homepage <http://www.shia.org/mehdi.html#index>.

In understanding the Qur'an rational thinking is subordinate to revelation. If the Qur'an or the Sunnah of the Prophet offers a clear judgement on anything, the Muslim is obliged to follow this judgement. If there is no clear judgement about anything in the Qur'an, then it is necessary to make a rational opinion (known as Ijtihad) which is consistent with Qur'anic teaching.

The first four caliphs were the legitimate rulers of the early community.

Faith and deeds are inseparable.

Everything occurs according to the divine plan.

Allah will be seen in the life after death.⁷⁵²

That formulation was consistent with Qur'anic teaching on covenantal obligations ("Faith and deeds are inseparable"), but by placing emphasis on "the divine plan" it qualified, or rejected, the traditional teaching on predestination, and emphasised free will and divine judgement. However, it was not a formula for reconciliation. While there are references to the Mahdi in hadith which some Sunni scholars accept, that formula was, in context, a direct challenge to the fractured Shi'ite communities, and in particular to the Twelvers.

But there were others who were equally unhappy. An Isma'ili missionary, al-Darazi, and Hamzah ibn 'Ali, proclaimed the sixth Fatimid caliph, Abu 'Ali al-Mansur al-Hakim, to be divine; denounced Islam and Isma'iliyyah as mere superstitions; were rebuked for their unorthodox teachings. Following the deaths of al-Hakim and Hamzah ibn 'Ali in the same year, 1021, the sect was driven out of Egypt and settled in Syria, and prepared its own scripture, the *Rasa'il al-hikmah*. Basic to its teaching is that Hakim and Hamzah will return to the world and establish a just order ruled by its members, now known as Druzes. Some adherents expect the temporary manifestation of God in human form. It flourished and spread to Iraq, Iran, India and several New World countries. Self-governing under the Ottoman Empire for a period, the Druze community split during the 17th cent. into Qayis and Yamanis. They have been repeatedly involved in conflict and civil wars, and their presence as influential minorities, especially in conflict with Maronite Christians, has been a consideration through the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Their bases are now in Lebanon, Syria and Israel where they have a favoured relationship with the government because of their loyalty and refusal to be involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁷⁵³

After the Druze defection from Shi'a Islam the fracturing continued, and in 1094 the Isma'ilis split into Nizaris and Musta'lis over who should succeed their caliph, and the Musta'lis split yet again following the fall of the Fatimid caliphate.⁷⁵⁴ Shi'a fortunes rose and fell, but after a long period of competition between the Fatamids and Imamiyyah, persecution of Shi'a by Sunni regimes, and successive invasions by Turks and Mongols, Shi'a independence was established in Iran with the rise of the Safavid dynasty.

752 Bulend Shanay, "Sunni Islam," in *Philtar Religion: Overview of World Religions*, ed. Elliott Shaw (Carlisle: University of Cumbria, 1998).

753 ———, "Shi'a Islam - Origins."

———, "Druzes (Deviation from Shi'a Islam)," in *Philtar Religion: Overview of World Religions*, ed. Elliott Shaw (Carlisle: University of Cumbria, 1998).

754 ———, "Isma'iliyyah - Shi'ite tradition," in *Philtar Religion: Overview of World Religions*, ed. Elliott Shaw (Carlisle: University of Cumbria, 1998). Sub-sects of both continue as communities, mainly in India (Khojas and Bohras), Arabia, the Persian Gulf, East Africa and Burma (Musta'lia)

Tension between Sunni and Shī'a regimes, as a group, increased. There was an attempt to re-impose Sunni Islam in Iran in the 18th cent.; attempts to modernize and Westernize Iran in the 20th cent. which was enmeshed in two world wars and Western interference based on competition for petroleum resources; the overthrow of the Shah in 1979, the reintroduction of the Shī'a interpretation of shari'ah, and a further rise in tension between Sunni and Shī'a regimes.

That tension is illustrated by the vigour of disputation between some Shī'a and Sunni scholars over the status of the Mahdi and his relationship to Jesus. An online Shi'ite encyclopaedia (Ali Abbas ed.) lists twenty one references to support its claims that Sunni hadith substantiate Shī'a beliefs. It then says:

Also: The Prophet (PBUH&HF) said: "al-Mahdi is one of us, the members of the household (Ahlul-Bayt)." Sunni reference: Sunan Ibn Majah, v2, Tradition #4085

It is evident from the above traditions that Imam al-Mahdi (AS) is from the Ahlul-Bayt of Prophet Muhammad, so he can not be Jesus (the Messiah; al-Maseeh). Thus, al-Mahdi and Messiah are two different personalities but they come at the same time, al-Mahdi as Imam and Jesus as his follower. The following tradition clearly mentions that Imam al-Mahdi is one of descendants of the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HF):

The Prophet (PBUH&HF) said: The Mahdi will be of my family, of the descendants of Fatimah (the Prophet's daughter).⁷⁵⁵

It then attacks the highly regarded scholar Muhammad Mushin Khan, saying:

In Sahih al-Bukhari, it is narrated that: The Prophet (PBUH&HF) said: "What would be your situation if the Son of Marry (i.e. Jesus) descends upon you and your Imam is among you?"

Sunni reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, Arabic-English, v4, Tradition #658
NOTE: The above is my own translation. The Saudi-paid translator of Sahih al-Bukhari (Muhammad Muhsin Khan) has shown pure dishonesty in translating the above tradition. His translation of the last portion of the tradition does not bear any similarity what so ever with the Arabic text of the tradition ...

the translator has added another sentence which does not exists in the Arabic text. I should mention that this is not the only place that he has altered the text, and there are much more examples in this regard which proves his bias and his dishonesty.⁷⁵⁶

But fragmentation of the Shī'a did not end there. Another split occurred within the mainstream Imamiyyah, or Twelvers, seven centuries later, when Babism, and subsequently the Baha'i, , referred to in Chapter Six, evolved from the teaching of Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad Shirazi in 1844.

755 Contributor Al-Islam.org, "Sunni Documentation on Imam al-Mahdi (AS)," in *A Shi'ite Encyclopedia Version 2.0*, ed. Ali Abbas (Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project (DILP), 2001).

756 Ibid. p. 6. In my copy of Khan's translation of Sahih al-Bukhari (1994 edition in one volume, not nine) the tradition #658 refers to an unrelated matter, and I have not been able to locate a hadith which corresponds to the Shi'ite encyclopedia quotation.

Appendix V

Movements in Judaism and their impact: early decades, the 1st cent. CE

[Relating to Chapter Four, section 2, p. 143 ff]

During the life and ministry of Jesus, unease and politicking over Temple leadership and the meaning of Israel's existence and covenant had not stopped following the murder of Aristobulus II in 35 BCE, nor with the debates between the great Pharisaic Schools. A steady stream of new documents had entered circulation either during Jesus' ministry or by the time of the Jerusalem council. Prominent among them were the Essene Genesis Apocryphon, (possibly written earlier); the Testament of Job and Philo's various papers, both c. 30 CE; and the Wisdom of Solomon and IV Maccabees, both c. 40 CE. Apart from Philo's papers they were each somewhat apocalyptic and messianic, and the people eagerly awaited a messianic figure who would end the pattern of foreign domination and, in particular, the Roman suzerainty.

Barnstone⁷⁵⁷ notes that the messianic Jewish Pseudepigrapha were among the favorite readings for early Christians. The Genesis Apocryphon refers to the laying on of hands in faith healing practices, and might be the basis of subsequent Christian writings which suppose that it was a peculiarly New Covenant introduction by Jesus. This also avoids acknowledging that Jewish priestly ordination was based on God's command to Moses. It was probably among papers which were altered to make them reveal Christian 'truths.'

Similarly, it was Philo, for whom there was no recognition in Jewish literature until the 16th cent. CE, who introduced the term 'Logos' into Christian theology. Martin McNamara explains that Philo's doctrine of the *Logos* was central to his teaching on God's relationship to the world, although he never defined it. In *Who is Heir of Things Divine?* he attributes to the *Logos* the statement: 'I stand between the Lord and you; I am neither uncreated like God nor created like you, but midway between the two extremes, a hostage on both sides.' It is, in McNamara's view, a matter of debate whether Philo considered the *Logos* as a reality, as a distinct identity having real existence, or as no more than an abstraction.⁷⁵⁸

The notion of Biblical Inerrancy can also be traced to Philo. According to Emil Schürer, the *formal principle* of his whole theology was the absolute authority of the Mosaic law. The Torah is the supreme, sole and absolutely decisive authority and a perfect revelation of Divine wisdom. Every word written by Moses is a divine declaration; all the prophets are God's interpreters and instruments for the revelation of the Divine will, and for Philo, Moses is the true teacher of mankind from whom the Greek philosophers derived their wisdom.⁷⁵⁹

IV Maccabees was widely read by early Christians and became a model for the church's martyrdom stories which encouraged martyrdom as "a most desired goal"⁷⁶⁰ which was

757 Barnstone, *Other Bible*. p. 202.

758 Martin McNamara, *Intertestamental Literature* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1983). pp. 232-3, referring to chapter 42 (§ 206) cited in Peter Kirby, "Philo of Alexandria," <http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/philo.html>.

759 Emil Schürer, *The literature of the Jewish people in the time of Jesus*. (New York Schocken Books, 1972). pp. 366-7 cited in Kirby, "Philo".

760 Barnstone, *Other Bible*. pp. 153-4

subsequently exploited to generate support for the Crusades. However, in an important distinction, the writer contradicted the notion developed in II Maccabees, (p. 168), that martyrs were resurrected bodily following their death. He wrote that all souls persist after bodily death, but while the virtuous enjoy eternal happiness the wicked exist in eternal fire and torment. The book is thought to have been prompted by protests which followed Emperor Caligula's order to erect a statue of himself – as a god – in the Temple, consistent with other statues that had been built around the empire.

Post-Temple Disarray: The Evolution of Rabbinical Judaism

The destruction of the Temple did not end the stream of apocalyptic writing. In 2 Baruch the writer anticipated a coming redemption, but said the catastrophe came about because of Israel's sins. God had acted righteously in bringing about its punishment and would bring the people home to their land and restore their fortunes with the same certainty that punishment had been administered, but they must endure God's wrath with patience. His assurance was that "just as you purposed to go astray from God, return with tenfold zeal to seek Him. For He who brought these calamities upon you will bring you everlasting joy with your salvation." (2 Baruch 4:28-30) The thrust of II Ezra was similar, but the writer sought to reconcile Israel's action on the basis of capacities that God had provided, and divine justice. To him, the catastrophe was consistent with Israel's sin, but it was also the outcome of man's natural incapacity to honour God's will within the parameters of divinely provided absolute free will.

While the destruction of the Temple was a critical consideration for the minority Nazarenes, in the evolution of Christianity, it was even more critical for the mainstream Jewish community whose structures, leadership and cultic practices had been destroyed or annulled. It had very similar questions to consider as the Christians. Who and what are we in the light of a catastrophe which suggests that God has cut us down and annulled the Mosaic Covenant? What have we done to deserve this, what is our future, and how should we respond? How do we achieve atonement without animal sacrifice? What will be our focus of worship and service to God, and how will our community be organized to secure its future as the people who were bound under covenant to enable all humanity to understand its relationship with God?

This meant that for the next three centuries institutional Judaism and Christianity were on parallel courses in uncharted waters, until the church succeeded in attaching itself to the might of imperial Rome and became dominant.

The Christian community, at leadership level, was trying to establish itself in order to carry out the command of the person whose life and teaching were the basis of its existence, to understand or determine how to do so, to fashion a rationale or justification for its claim to have superseded the first, and to determine a policy or a program – or political affiliations – to ensure that it succeeded. According to Neusner, their former coreligionists did not show the same antagonism towards them. For some time, both in Palestine and the Diaspora, the Christian was another kind of Jew and saw himself as such, and they served "as another form of Judaism, one which differed from the rest primarily in regarding the world as having been redeemed through the Word and Cross of Jesus."⁷⁶¹

⁷⁶¹ Neusner, *Rabbinic History*. p. 41.

The Jewish community was trying to re-establish itself, re-examine its theology, renew its self-understanding, determine how to present its message to better effect, and determine its role in the world alongside a break-away competitor. In particular it had to support and provide worship, spiritual and educational leadership for Jews in each significant new diasporic centre in Asia Minor, North Africa and parts of Mediterranean Europe. Babylon, where a strong and prosperous Jewish community had persisted following its release from exile after the destruction of the First Temple, was a special case.

Babylonian Jewry saw itself as culturally independent, if not superior; politically secure and enjoying the spiritual leadership of its *exilarch* under the protection of the Zoroastrian Sassanian regime, and, being outside the paganistic influence of Rome and the series of conflicts which had swept Palestine, it had no desire to be seen as under the control of Jewish authorities in Jerusalem. Also, there are reports of differences in their leadership approaches which contributed to tension between the two communities during the early centuries CE. Babylonian rabbis were somewhat formal and distant from their non-rabbinic communities than those in the land of Israel, preserving hierarchical barriers and showing disregard, and disdain, and being concerned about issues of lineage. Palestinian rabbis are said to have sought greater influence with non-rabbis in order to secure their positions, perhaps reflecting the differences between Roman and Persian culture. This contrast apparently lessened during the fourth century, with greater openness and interaction.⁷⁶²

The Sages who were available in the vicinity of Jerusalem immediately after the destruction of the Temple and the academy, and the elimination of the Sanhedrin had to comfort a community in despair and in need of words of hope and consolation. They wasted little time in gathering at Jabneh to which Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai had either escaped or been escorted. The influence of the Sadducees had been eliminated; some Jewish groups had rejected the Temple long before its destruction; its sanctity had been arrogated by others; for large numbers of ordinary Jews it was remote and unimportant, even if holy; piety was expressed fully through synagogue worship, but there were many who found the idea of leadership of the faith being exercised anywhere other than in Jerusalem quite objectionable.

The role of the sages was therefore essentially to manage renewal and reform, and to provide counselling and reassurance.⁷⁶³ They established a new academy; exercised the authority of the former Sanhedrin; introduced courts or Houses of Law based on halakhah, (*Bet Din*, each with three males presiding), as alternatives to Roman-imposed jurisprudence; ruled against re-instituting the sacrificial practices of the Temple, and transformed the Temple-based Passover ritual into a ritualized family meal, the *seder*. Within a few years the term 'Rabbi' became accepted to identify an ordained teacher who continued the former Pharisaic traditions; community centres or synagogues were opened wherever a recognized scholar was available, and at least three rabbinical Houses of Study (*Bet Ha-Midrash* or *batei midrash*) were established by 110 CE.

In addition a new approach to scriptural writing evolved from the need for counselling in circumstances of discontinuity and cultural and religious tension. It enabled laws and

762 Jeffrey Spitzer, "The Rabbis and the Common Folk," My Jewish Learning, http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history/Ancient_and_Medieval_History/539_BCE-632_CE/Rabbis_and_Common_Folk.shtml.

763 Neusner, *Rabbinic History*. p. 35.

explanations for them to be derived from Torah passages by reading teachings into them which were not apparent from plain reading. Known as Midrash, it was based on Ezra's approach and the Book of Lamentations which had been composed following the destruction of the First Temple. Holtz describes it as a way of resolving crisis and reaffirming continuity with the traditions of the past, and as so significant that Midrash can be seen as the central enterprise of almost all Jewish religious writing until the modern era.⁷⁶⁴ Commenting on his community's circumstances, Holtz wrote that Midrash reflects "a great sense of doubt about the worthiness of our lives in the face of our terrible failings as people" and yet God's almost autocratic will lurks behind it. "Our worthiness is suspect but our lives must, in some profound sense ... beyond reason or logic, be meaningful - because God has chosen us for existence."⁷⁶⁵

Matters subject to midrash were divided basically into two classes: Halakhah, (laws, rules and regulations for religious life), and Aggadah, (ethics, history, philosophy, medicine and anything not specifically law-related). The rabbis regarded Torah as eternally relevant because it was inspired by the perfect Author, but it lacked discussion, and through the exercise of reason, Midrash served to harmonize and enhance the meaning of passages which may appear incompatible or even contradictory when read in isolation.⁷⁶⁶ It is remarkably similar to the approach attributed to Jesus when he wanted to clarify or interpret the meanings of passages or remove restrictions which were often read into them without setting one passage against another, by saying "it is said ... but I say ..."

These developments were masking the tension which rose and fell between imperial Rome and its Jewish subjects who were making extensive preparations for a revolution which, led by Simon bar Kosiba (later Bar Kokhbab), erupted in 132 and continued for three and a half years. The consequences of failure included the deaths of several hundred thousand Jews; the paganization of Jerusalem; a shift in the centre of gravity of the Jewish population from Judea to Galilee; loss of Jewish population dominance in large areas of Palestine; the formulation of rule on martyrdom and obligations for Jews in relation to the Land of Israel to offset the prospect of mass emigration, and attempts by Babylonian sages to disengage from the spiritual leadership of Palestine. Tension arose between the Babylonian exilarch and Rabban Simon ben Gamaliel upon him taking charge of a new Galilean Sanhedrin and exerting his authority in effectively merging the operation of the Sanhedrin and the Babylonian rabbinic court.

While the *Bet Ha-Midrash* were not intended to compete with either the Sanhedrin or the Academies, a sense of competition was inevitable. By the mid 2nd cent. a new Galilean Sanhedrin was established at Usha, rival academies were operating at Nehardea and Sura in Babylon, and the *Bet Ha-Midrash* in Babylon and Palestine/Galilee were in competition. Others were established progressively as the need arose. In due course exilarch Rav Huna at Sura exercised authority throughout Babylonian Jewry and began work on a Babylonian Talmud.

After the Bar Kokhbab debacle the Jewish approach was quite different to that of the embryonic church. With the destruction of the Temple the realization had deepened that not all Scripture had a common base. The Torah had been revealed in two formats: written

⁷⁶⁴ Barry W. Holtz, "Midrash," in *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts*, ed. Barry W. Holtz (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006). pp. 177-9.

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 193.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid. pp. 180,185.

and oral. The reform and strengthening of Rabbinical leadership which had been undertaken progressively from 70 CE was nearing finality. The batei midrash had been established, Rabbi Judah was working on the Mishnah, and the sages increasingly turned their efforts to re-examining the basis of the traditions which had evolved over a thousand years. The concept of the dual Torah and the conviction that the written Torah is not the whole record of revelation became a preoccupation which required careful exploration and the interpretation of the Torah in its entirety. The determination to understand its application in ever-changing circumstances became the centre of Rabbinic Judaism. Furthermore, it is the central concept that distinguishes Rabbinic Judaism from all other conceptions of Judaism, past and present,⁷⁶⁷ and all Jewish denominations today derive from classical Rabbinic Judaism.⁷⁶⁸

On that understanding, a digest of the Oral Torah, the Mishnah, was compiled at the turn of the 2nd / 3rd cent. by Rabbi Judah while the church argued over Gnosticism, Montanism (demanding asceticism, moral rigidity and readiness for martyrdom), and Chiliasm, with its adherents gathering to await the arrival of Christ for the Last Judgment. Subsequently, c. 400, compilation of the Palestinian Talmud (Yerushalmi) began with the collection of teachings, debates and discussions among the sages, (primarily the Palestinian Tannaim, but additionally the Amoraim), covering all aspects of the Mishnah. They were divided broadly into Halakhah (laws, rules and regulations for religious life), and Aggadah (ethics, history, philosophy, medicine and anything not specifically law-related).

767 Neusner, *Rabbinic History*. p. xii.

768 Ochs, *Thiessen Lectures*. p. 25.

Appendix W

Leadership: In the line of Moses, Divinely Delegated through Joshua, and challenges to it

The pattern of Israel's leadership after its people crossed the Jordan was based on the belief that when Moses, having been banned from entering the promised land, asked God to appoint a man so that the congregation would not be "like sheep without a shepherd," was commanded by God to lay his hands upon Joshua, to present him before Eleazar the kohen and the entire congregation, to "bestow some of your majesty upon him." That majestic ordination was to ensure that Joshua would lead the people Israel and they would respond to him in matters of communal security and law. Even so, God commanded Joshua to stand before Eleazar the kohen, (a son of Aaron who, with his father, had been consecrated as the first priestly family to serve in the sanctuary), and to seek his counsel through the judgment of the Urim before the Lord so that "by his word they shall go, and by his word they shall come; he and all Israel with him, and the entire congregation." (Num.27:15-21 incl. Rashi's notations, JP)

The tradition followed that only those who had been ordained in that manner in a chain originating with Joshua could act as judges, and the relationship between the male descendants of Aaron, as the priestly cast of Kohamin, and the judges was maintained. The disregard for that line of descent in the appointment of High Priests during the Hasmonean era, and political appointments made in collaboration with the Romans, became major factors in both the conduct and collapse of the Hasmonean monarchy. At some point the practice was adopted that only scholars who were ordained in like manner were recognized as teachers with authority to rule on matters of the Law, but it is unclear whether that development, and the recognition of two influential Pharisaic 'houses' or 'schools' of Torah interpretation led by two great sages, Hillel and Shammai, was prior to the crisis of 63 BCE.

As noted in Chapter Three, many documents composed during the final three centuries of the First Epoch were very legalistic in approach. Such an approach is confirmed by Louis Newman's classification of biblical agreements into those between *unequal* parties as covenants which could not be revoked, and those between *equals* as contacts which "could not be irrevocable."⁷⁶⁹ However, that somewhat arbitrary division raises the question whether the undertakings that Moses and Joshua extracted from the tribes of Israel was between those leaders and the people as "equals" or between the people and God as "unequals," and also whether Newman's view that 'walking in God's ways' is a matter of covenant while 'keeping commandments' is a contractual matter, is valid.⁷⁷⁰

G. W. Buchanan notes that Moses was accepted as a legal agent of Yahweh and, as such, he was legally identical with God within the limits of his mission, and that in both cases the people were asked to accept or reject, (or renew), the terms offered.⁷⁷¹ He then relates

⁷⁶⁹ Newman, "Ananalysis." .pp. 98-104.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 98.

⁷⁷¹ George Wesley Buchanan, "The Covenant in Legal Context," in *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C. R. de Roo (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2003). pp. 32-33.

Moses' role to Hammurabi's role. Hammurabi was seen as the legal agent through which the Babylonian deity administered the laws which were displayed on the stele to dramatize the deity's legal presence. Moses was seen as legal agent for God, the principal at Sinai, in presenting the tablets which gave him the authority to appoint subordinate judges whose judgments were accepted as not their own, but God's.⁷⁷² Such authority also gave him authority to delegate it.

For the Jews, as time passed, communal interaction became a buffer between the reality of God in the return from exile, Jeremiah's prophecy, and daily life. The obligation and procedures for people to approach the judges or priests for atonement of sins or to resolve disputes strained the sense of immediacy in their relationship with God, and left the door ajar for bias, corruption and confusion to creep into legalistic decision making. In addition, as Buchanan notes, people began to think of the "contract" between Israel and Yahweh as a marriage contract and subject to the same flexibility and legal interpretation.

After the Hasmonean Era: Multiple Challenges and a bid for renewed commitment to the Mosaic Covenant

According to Jacob Neusner⁷⁷³, the need for change became apparent to the Temple leadership, and Rabbinic Judaism came into being in a formal sense, only as a result of the efforts of the sages in the aftermath of the destruction of the Second Temple, between 70 CE and 170 CE. Those who challenged the structures prior to the destruction of the Temple tried to take their own particular initiatives, but the spiritual and communal leadership of the rabbinic sages had continued.

There had been political turmoil, a period of great uncertainty, social distress and a yearning for change during the late Second Temple Period, but there was no initial expectation that dramatic events were about to change the status, the organizational structure and leadership – or the covenantal self-understanding – of Judaism. There was, however, strong condemnation of the conduct of the Hasmonean Dynasty in some psalms, testaments and wisdom documents written during its later phase, notably some of the Psalms of Solomon which were probably written soon after Pompey's murder in 48 BCE.

Without using the term 'covenant' PssSol 2, 7, 8, 13 and 17 have clear references to God permitting the occupation of Jerusalem and the destruction of the monarchy by Roman gentiles as punishment for sins. The monarchy, the nation as a whole, and people individually as sons and daughters of Jerusalem were to be 'rewarded' according to their sins, meaning breaches of obligation under covenant. There were calls to act in accord with the Law because God disciplines the righteous and judges the sinner, (PssSol 3, 7, 8 and 13), but there were no calls to discard the leadership system. Similarly, the Testament of Moses which, on the basis of internal evidence must have been written between 4 BCE and 30 CE, opposes militant action and supports the existing system of priesthood and laws.

During the century-long period of Hasmonean domination, c. 165 to 63 BCE, the family campaign of forced Judaization by circumcision of the population of each territory occupied or annexed, from Idumea to Galilee, had lifted the Jewish population nine-fold

772 Ibid. pp. 34-35.

773 Jacob Neusner, *Early Rabbinic Judaism: historical studies in religion, literature and art* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975).

from an estimated actual base of half a million to a nominal peak estimated at four and a half million.⁷⁷⁴ Then, following the destruction of the monarchy the Jewish population fell progressively to a more normal level within a few generations as those who had been forcibly converted died and/or their families reverted to their prior practices or adopted different ones.

Roman rulers showed respect for Judaism, but antagonized the Jews by requiring a census, thus reminding them of their vassalage, and in 4 BCE a minor revolt rose to rebellion that was only suppressed with two thousand crucifixions and the division of greater Palestine into three districts.⁷⁷⁵ Ten years later (6 CE) when Augustus shifted the capital from Jerusalem to Caesarea he insisted on another census. And, by doing so, stimulated not only greater opposition to the Roman occupation, but greater interest in covenant-centred Judaism.

A Zealot movement led by Judah of Gamala and a Pharisee, Zadok, saw Jewish freedom and the hastening of the reign of God as linked goals; a Pharisaic Babylonian scholar and president of the Sanhedrin, Hillel, began to formulate seven principles to broaden the interpretation of the Torah and strengthen Jewish integrity, and his 'school' engaged in exegetical and interpretative Torah debates with another school led by Shammai.⁷⁷⁶ A few years into those debates when they were focussed on a new set of seven principles for broadening Torah interpretation and proposed changes to laws governing debts and loans to the poor close to the sabbatical year, an Alexandrian Jewish scholar, Philo, circulated his philosophical writings in a bid to enhance Judaism by rationalizing long-standing Hebrew belief with more recent Greek philosophy and so broaden the base of Judaism.⁷⁷⁷ He also aimed to generate debate on covenant.⁷⁷⁸

Philo wrote that the Noachian Covenant is full of grace and shows God to be immutable, and that justice is commensurate with covenant. He disputed the territorial basis of the Abrahamic Covenant, saying that river boundaries were symbolic of corporeal and external blessings with early material benefits followed by joy, wisdom and virtue with mature integrity. He said Abraham loved God and humanity, was a guardian of truth for law for the whole human race, and that the Abrahamic Covenant had dual attributes of benefits and vengeance.⁷⁷⁹ Philo's strongest views related to Israel and he built on the teachings of the prophets. God's covenant with Israel was not to be taken for granted, he said. It was to bestow grace and to bring virtue into humanity, and he said the study of covenant, the word of the living God, and control of one's passion was to come before teaching

774 Barnavi and Charbit, *Jewish History Atlas*. Demographic Introduction, pp. xii,1. The estimated number of Jews had fallen to about 1.5 million by 200 CE, and to 0.9 million by 500 CE.

775 Gribetz, Greenstein, and Stein, *Timetables*. p. 55.

776 Jacobs, "Companion." p.240-242.

777 Philo Judaeus, "A Treatise on the doctrine that dreams are sent from God " Graham Pockett, <http://thriceholys.net/Texts/Dreams.html>. Accessed 21-11-2010. They included 'Questions & Answers on Genesis', 'Who is Heir of Divine things?', 'On the change of names' and 'God-sent Dreams'.

778 John R. Levison, "Philo's Personal Experience and the Persistence of Prophecy," in *Prophets, prophecy, and prophetic texts in Second Temple Judaism* ed. Michael H. Floyd and Robert Donel Haak, *The Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies* (T&T Clark International - Society of Biblical Literature, 2006).

779 Philo Judaeus, "Q&A " Graham Pockett, <http://thriceholys.net/Texts/Dreams.html>. paras. 16,40,42. —, "Heir," Graham Pockett, <http://thriceholys.net/Texts/Dreams.html>. Accessed 21-11-2010.

commandments.⁷⁸⁰ Another challenge for religious renewal had been building up for some time, from the Qumran Community (Eighth cluster, chapter 3, p. 129 ff.), but it was less a direct challenge for national renewal than an effort to provide an alternative community dedicated to re-establishing favour with God through disciplined obedience. The community's hope was that when the nation reached the catastrophic stage of divine rejection, which they expected, its members would be ready to lead Israel back to proper civil and religious practice in accord with the Mosaic Covenant. However, the community's efforts were snuffed out together with the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the nation at large when Rome crushed all uprising in 70-73 CE. In the meantime their efforts, and those of other reform-minded groups were overshadowed by the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth, a division in the Jewish community and the establishment of Christianity as a competitor to Judaism.

Talmudic development

By the late Medieval period the former practice of rabbinic ordination by the laying of hands on an eligible nominee had been discontinued, and candidates for the honorary Rabbinate, (tradition required that no payment be made for teaching Torah), were subjected to examination in Jewish Law and the Talmud by a prominent scholar.

Almost every community had its own qualified resident rabbi, and the demand for scriptures and literature among students in Spain led the gaon of the Babylonian Academy at Pumbeditha to send them a Talmud because they were reliant on digests of Talmudic law prepared by geonim and other sages. At the same time some Karaites withdrew their opposition to the use of the Talmud in recognition of the value of the Midrash which was also available.⁷⁸¹ The Karaites, (widely regarded as heretical), disputed the notion of a dual Torah and insisted that there was only one: conveyed directly to Moses and transmitted faithfully thereafter. They pressed for a return to plain reading and direct study of the Torah to offset the distraction of conflicting and possibly erroneous interpretations conveyed in debates recorded in the Mishnah, and the controversy had cast doubt on the status of the Talmud and undermined the authority of the Rabbinate.

Most authorities say that the Talmud had been complete and closed about the end of the 5th cent., but Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki (Rashi), an 11th cent. French Talmud commentator, suggests that the Mishnah had been retained in oral format and was only finally committed to writing and integrated with the Gemara to complete the Talmud in the 8th cent. That step facilitated systematic synagogue teaching and family study, and enabled Jews to focus again on the basis of their communal covenant. This would be consistent with the impact of the Karaite controversy and efforts made to end bitter attacks on the Rabbinate by the Karaite sect.

The Talmud has been described by Robert Goldenberg as a scholarly text concerned to clarify and provide consistency in the application of law rather than simplicity, or to lay

780 ———, "A Treatise on the Question Why Certain Names in the Holy Scripture Are Changed," Yonge, www.earlychristianwritings.com/yonge/book20.html Accessed 21-11-2010. Although his writings were in limited circulation in Greek for sixty years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem there was no mention of him in Jewish literature until the 16th cent.. According to Jacobs it is a moot point whether Philo knew Hebrew. (Jacobs 1995, p. 377)

781 Ibid. p. 93.

down hard-and-fast rules. It interweaves the law with other aspects of Judaism into an elegant structure with the chief purpose of preserving the record of the study of their traditions by earlier generations, to provide material for study by people in later generations whose highest value is a life of study, both as a training text for rabbis and their disciples, and as a framework or guidance for decision making by individuals. It also contains theological speculation and embodies an entire world view, and is in part a response to abuse and misrepresentation by the church which was constantly interpreting the Bible in such a way as to undermine Jewish traditions, especially during the Middle Ages.⁷⁸²

The 'closing' of the Talmud was not intended to suggest that Jewish learning had reached an end point or that the learning process should be halted.⁷⁸³ It would have been quite unrealistic to continue adding indefinitely to such an enormous and complex work. Leaving it open-ended at a given point in time provided a base for future scholars to reflect on unfolding circumstances with the benefit of an extended record of prior experience, and the capacity to enhance it by means of future complementary publications.

Acceptance of Kabbalah

At the same time a theosophical system which had first been recognized in Mediterranean France, Kabbalah, was gaining acceptance in Spain, largely due to benign support from another Talmudic scholar, Nahamides (Ramban, 1194-1270). Reacting against the rationalism and theology of negation which was propounded by Maimonides and others, and influenced by Gnosticism, mythology of a married divinity, Neo-platonic and earlier philosophical notions, Kabbalah nominated two aspects of Deity: God as God, and God as a series of manifestations. Louis Jacobs shows that this introduced the notion of duality in a dynamic Godhead, both through gender duality and worship through two entities, En Sof and Sefirot, which critics saw as decatheism, worse than Christian Trinitarian belief, and verging on paganism.⁷⁸⁴ However, there is an aspect of Kabbalah which helps to offset that tendency towards polytheism and to reinforce the notion of a covenantal relationship. Isaiah Tishby⁷⁸⁵ notes that according to a later development of Lurianic Kabbalah (p. 312), humanity, which is the apex of God's creation and is given role to play that is not given to any other creature, caused cosmic catastrophe by 'breaking the vessels' and leaving everything in a state of disarray. He then describes the consequent task imposed on humanity, thus:

The gigantic task allotted to man is that of reclaiming and releasing the "holy sparks" by restoring them to their source. This is the process known as tikkum, "putting right", "perfecting". When the task of tikkum is complete, redemption will come not only to Israel and not only to mankind

⁷⁸² Robert Goldenberg, "Talmud," in *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts*, ed. Barry W. Holtz (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).

⁷⁸³ A series of dates are proposed in various contexts for the 'closing' of the Talmud: the end of the 5th or 6th cent.; after integration during the 8th or 9th cent.; the 11th cent and the 15th cent. Whatever the date and context, the rationale remains the same.

⁷⁸⁴ Louis Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology* (Springfield, NJ: Behram House, 1973). pp. 24, 27-29.

⁷⁸⁵ Isaiah Tishby, *Torat ha-Ra ve-ha-Kelippah be-Kabbalat ha-Ari* ("The Idea of Evil... in Lurianic Kabbalah," (1942). Cited in Jacobs, *Theology*. p. 32.

as a whole but to the entire cosmic process, in fact, to God Himself in His aspect of manifestation.⁷⁸⁶

Being given a role, failing in it and being given a penalty task with a defined conclusion - redemption - necessarily conveys a relationship between God and humanity. It is a covenantal relationship without being named as such.

Emancipation, Jewish Revitalization, and Challenges to Covenant Theology

Concurrent with these developments, the Jewish community of Europe, for whom the concept of covenant was basic to their existence, was entering a dynamic period of Emancipation, reform, and adaptation following the Shabbethaian crisis.

Credit for Jewish Emancipation is usually given to the French Revolution, but the concept that Christians should not enjoy greater rights of citizenship than Jews or people of other religions was first formally acknowledged by those who drafted the constitution for the state of Virginia in the early days of the American War of Independence. However even they could not avoid an implication that Christian practice was superior.⁷⁸⁷

That was followed by the Edict of Toleration issued by Austrian Emperor Joseph II in 1782, under which the freedom to pursue all branches of commerce and to attend universities was extended to Jews, but new requirements were imposed at the same time. They were required to establish German-language primary schools or to send their children to Christian schools, and a linked series of laws abolished the autonomy of the Jewish communities under which they had previously run their own court, charity, internal taxation and school systems. They also required Jews to acquire family names, made them subject to military conscription, and required candidates for the rabbinate to have secular education.

The French Revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte's policies then encouraged rapid advances in education and business opportunities, but also introduced problems. Some Jews, responding to the easing of restrictions and social integration became totally assimilated and retreated from their regular practice of Judaism and the support of their immediate community. Samuel Hirsch, who later became a leader of the Reform Movement, said it would be better for Emancipation not to have taken place if it were to lead to wholesale defection from Judaism and its values. However, he ignored mysticism, had little regard for Talmudic dialectics, saw nothing wrong with imitating some gentile practices in services of worship, and wrote that "Land and soil were never [Israel's] bond of union, but rather the common task set by Torah."⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid. Quoted in Jacobs, *Theology*. p. 33.

⁷⁸⁷ Clause XVI of the Virginia Declaration of Rights states: That religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator and the manner of discharging it, can be directed by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore, all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity towards each other.

⁷⁸⁸ Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism*, First ed. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988; reprint, Wayne, 1995). pp. 77-78.

The Jewish Reformers were contemptuous toward Shabbethaism and initially tried to introduce reforms within the framework of Halakhah, but "Jewish Law was no longer unchallenged as the bond uniting all Jews (and) it was therefore more vulnerable to a program of reform."⁷⁸⁹ The challenges actually started before the French Revolution, led by Moses Mendelssohn who is regarded as the father figure of a movement that became known as the Haskalah. However his aim was reform of Jewish life: not Judaism. He believed that the common ground of natural religion, accessible to all rational human beings, would eventually unify cultured humanity on the deepest level, and he encouraged the modernization of Jewish education with expanded scope for secular studies.⁷⁹⁰

Such a plan was not without opposition, and Napoleon's emancipation program prompted contradictory reactions: waves of anger in France and Germany that restrictions on Jews were to be eased; concern that Jews were no longer a nation apart; anger that Jews continued to refuse intermarriage with Christians; and concern among Jews that Napoleon's intention was that Jews should gradually disappear.⁷⁹¹ When the first formal request for reform of a synagogue's practices in the US, in 1824, was rejected, some members withdrew and established a small congregation based on a creed using a modified Maimonidean code.⁷⁹² Eleven years later, and five years after the same sentiment had been expressed in the Book of Mormon, Solomon Steinheim lifted reformers' confidence by publishing an understanding of revelation that Judaism not only preceded Christianity but was destined to succeed it.⁷⁹³

Steinheim's work prompted vigorous debate about whether the Mosaic Covenant permitted an attempt to bring on either the messianic age or the second coming of Christ, or mass migration to reclaim Palestine, by human effort, and whether to do so was practical or desirable. The request by Zevi Hirsch Kalischer, a Polish-born rabbinic scholar, to Meyer Ansschel Rothschild, and Moses Montefiore, that they buy Eretz Israel, or at least the Temple area of Jerusalem, to initiate the 'miraculous redemption',⁷⁹⁴ brought mixed reactions.

Rabbi Abraham Geiger brought 14 rabbis together in the Rhineland for the first Reform-oriented rabbinical conference, and the crucial doctrines of the Reform movement began to develop.⁷⁹⁵ In contrast, Rabbi Judah Alkalai preached that the era of the Messiah had arrived, but redemption would have to be achieved by human action.⁷⁹⁶ An Anglican clergyman, Louis Way, followed, writing that it was necessary for Jews to return to Palestine as the first stage towards the Messianic Age, and speculated on the timing of Jesus' second coming.⁷⁹⁷ Rabbi Abraham Lowenstamm,⁷⁹⁸ opposed the plan because

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 11.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 13.

⁷⁹¹ Ibid. p. 28.

⁷⁹² Ibid. p. 67.

⁷⁹³ Ibid. p.69 citing Solomon L. Steinheim, *Die Offenbarung nach dem Lehrbegriffe der Synagoge* (Frankfurt 1835). pp.358-64

⁷⁹⁴ Jacob Katz, "Forerunners," in *Zionism* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1973). p. 6.

⁷⁹⁵ Meyer, *Modernity*. pp. 89, 95.

⁷⁹⁶ Katz, "Forerunners." p. 5.

⁷⁹⁷ Donald Wagner, "Christians and Zionism: British stirrings.," *Daily Star*, First part, 10 September 2003. Fifth part, 10 December 2003. 2003. pt. 1.

those who wanted to accelerate emancipation dropped the traditional conception of messianic redemption, denied the hope of the reconstitution of Israel on its own soil and the rebuilding of the Temple, and this was tantamount to a denial of Judaism and the Mosaic Covenant.

These controversies encouraged governmental anti-Semitic policies in each of Prussia, Russia and England, all of which encouraged increased Jewish migration to America where Gustav Poznanski preached that "the United States was the modern Jews' promised land ... this synagogue is our temple, this city is our Jerusalem, this happy land our Palestine;" that the Messiah announced by the Prophets is *not* come, the Prophecies in relation to his coming not being fulfilled.⁷⁹⁹

Lowenstamm and Rabbi Einhorn stood firm and insisted that under the Mosaic Covenant Jews were not permitted to initiate the redemption; that it could only come by God's will and in God's own time; that messianic hope demanded political quietism, and certainly no disloyalty or any attempts to overthrow established institutions.⁸⁰⁰

Changing Jewish Perspectives

In spite of the resurgence of Jewish scholarship at the end of the 1940s, by the early 1950s some Reform Rabbis in the US were seriously examining the sombre theologies of religious existentialism, and in the mid 1950s they found that one traditional concept, *Berit*, covenant, represented their position better than any other.⁸⁰¹

According to Michael Meyer, it is particular to Israel, although it is ultimately universal, it reflects mutuality in the relationship between God and Israel, and it both sets the Jewish people apart and binds it together as a "covenant community." He says *berit* was a far more conducive concept for Reform Jews than *matan torah*, the giving of the law or teaching on Mount Sinai which had implied receipt rather than partnership, unquestioning obligation, and a fixed tradition. Covenant could be understood as an ongoing relationship, not limited to a single generation that might or might not have literally stood at Sinai, with every Jew in every age was obligated to renew and uphold the covenant, but, "as liberals, Jews were also free – on the basis of their own serious confrontation with the texts – to renegotiate its terms." The covenant was thus seen as the basis for historical, but also open-ended, dialogue between God and Israel.⁸⁰²

The new approach reflected the work of Eugene Borowitz whose 'Crisis Theology and the Jewish Community' was published in the journal 'Commentary' in 1961.⁸⁰³ Borowitz reviewed the troubled times and said that to expound a theology relevant to the day required a decision about where to begin with the problem of sin or the value of *mitzvah*. The Christian approach of considering the theologies of sin, redemption, then justification

798 Abraham Lowenstamm, *Tseror ha-hayim* (Amsterdam 1820).

799 Meyer, *Modernity*. p. 234/

800 Ibid. p.59.

801 Meyer, *Modernity*. p. 362.

802 Ibid. p. 362.

803 Eugene Borowitz, "Crisis Theology and the Jewish Community," *Commentary*, no. July 1961 (1961). Published the following year as Eugene B. Borowitz, "A Theology for Modern Judaism," *The Jewish Digest*, no. February 1962 (1962). Republished in Borowitz, *Studies*.

and sanctification in sequence was not appropriate to the evolutionary development of traditional Judaism. This led him to coin the phrase "Covenant Theology" which, he said, rests on reaffirmation in contemporary terms of the Covenant of Sinai and its renewal during centuries of prophetic leadership; seeks to make manifest the meaning of the Jewish Covenant with God; becomes a way of living one's life based on a relationship with God; and acknowledges that the Covenant was not made between one Jew and God, but between God and the entire House of Israel. Israel will, Borowitz said, remain faithful to God and His service until all men come to know Him; that is, to live in His law, and "Israel does not believe that any other religion has been or would be able to carry out that function."⁸⁰⁴

He set out a series of tasks for modern Judaism to satisfy its responsibility to God and to mankind; said that covenant theology gave no answer to why God demands such suffering from Jews, and "neither condones nor minimizes Jewish persecution;" and that "the reliance upon God alone in times of oppression and persecution has often acted to reduce the role of *mitzvah*, to relieve the people of its responsibility to use its own powers for justice and peace."⁸⁰⁵

In expressions that coincide with Qur'anic understanding of *amanah* and *khalifa*, and firmly reject Pope Gregory's *Dictatus Papae*, Borowitz then said that God moves through history working out His will for creation; that although the Messianic era has not arrived despite our best efforts, we cannot conclude that it will not arrive, and it will dawn in God's own good time, if not in ours; and that man has the privilege of serving as His partner, though not as His "surrogate."⁸⁰⁶ He added a brief statement which amounts to a restatement of the mature Hebrew understanding of covenant.

Judaism long ago affirmed that its Covenant was eternal – that is, unconditional. God may punish, exile, decimate Israel. Still the Covenant remains. The prophets may denounce Israel in His name, they may insist that He will render judgement upon it as upon any other sinful nation, and perhaps even more severely – still they do not say He will revoke His Covenant. Israel's obligations under that continuing Covenant are precisely what call forth the prophetic denunciation and the punishment of God.⁸⁰⁷

The work of two other scholars, Irving Greenberg and David Weiss Halivni, illustrates the widely divergent conclusions that were reached as a host of scholars pursued new perspectives.

Greenberg⁸⁰⁸ first draws on the work of three scholars to identify two primary polar positions in Jewish scholarly thinking. One upholds the God of History, with Emil Fackenheim saying that "the commanding voice of Auschwitz ... bids us not to hand Hitler (a) posthumous victory" by repudiating the covenant and declaring Judaism to have been an illusion, and with Eliezer Berkovits stressing that Jewish survival testifies to the Lord of History. The other affirms the death of God and the loss of all hope, as in Richard Rubenstein's statement that because Jews were left nakedly alone and could not expect

804 Borowitz, "Crisis." p. 65.

805 Ibid. p. 67.

806 Ibid. p. 67.

807 Ibid. p. 67.

808 Greenberg, "Cloud of Smoke, pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and modernity after the Holocaust."

support from either God or their fellow creatures, "the world will forever remain a place of pain, suffering, alienation and ultimately defeat."⁸⁰⁹

Greenberg argues that the re-creation of the body of the people Israel is testimony to God's continuing presence in history and acknowledges that for Jews to deny all significance in the Holocaust would be to repudiate the fundamental affirmations of the Sinai covenant: "that history is meaningful, and that ultimate liberation and relationship to God will take place in the realm of human events."⁸¹⁰

If the experience of Auschwitz symbolises that we are cut off from God and hope, and that the covenant may be destroyed, then the experience of Jerusalem symbolises that God's promises are faithful and His people live on. Israel's faith in the God of History demands that an unprecedented event of destruction be matched by an unprecedented act of redemption, and this has happened.⁸¹¹ However, "the re-creation of the body of the people, Israel, is renewed testimony to Exodus as ultimate reality, to God's continuing presence in history proven by the fact that his people, despite the attempt to annihilate them, still exist."⁸¹² He says that the moment of despair and disbelief in redemption cannot be final, at least in this generation's community of Israel, and that "the moral necessity of a world to come, and even of the resurrection, arises powerfully out of the encounter with the Holocaust."⁸¹³

Greenberg dares to hope that reflection on the cloud of smoke of bodies by day and the pillar of fire of crematoria by night may yet guide humanity to a goal when people are so attached to each other and have shared each other's pain, and self-criticism, that never again will a Holocaust be possible.⁸¹⁴ He adds that it ill behoves Christians to claim that a second revelation superseded the first, and "to rule out further revelation a priori, lest it be hoist by its own petard."⁸¹⁵

He concludes that:

Confession by Christians of Judaism's ongoing life and acceptance in gratitude of a new harvest or revelation would, at one stroke, undercut the whole Teaching of Contempt tradition in Christianity. In light of the Holocaust, classical Christianity is called "to die" to be reborn to new life; or it lives unaffected, to die to God and man.⁸¹⁶

Throughout that work Greenberg does not suggest any particular circumstance which might have led to the Holocaust as retribution for a breach of the Covenant of Sinai, but it is implicit in his strong contention that the covenant has not been abrogated, that God has not 'lost control' of it, and that the community's misdeeds at some point and in some way

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid. pp. 317-8.

⁸¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 336, 316.

⁸¹¹ Ibid. P. 323.

⁸¹² Ibid. p. 336.

⁸¹³ Ibid. pp. 336, 321.

⁸¹⁴ Ibid. P.341.

⁸¹⁵ Ibid. P. 317.

⁸¹⁶ Ibid. P. 326.

were involved in precipitating the crisis. Similarly, although he demonstrates the direct links between the church, its Supersessionism and anti-Semitism as the immediate cause of the Holocaust, and suggests that Christianity might be called "to die" to be reborn, he does not discuss the notion of a covenantal relationship under which that death and rebirth might occur. Certainly he does not suggest that Israel as a community of people was without sin.

In contrast, Halivni, in *Breaking the Tablets*, is adamant that the Shoah was not the consequence of sin, and that "they (the victims) suffered and died, but for nothing they had done. The cause of their suffering was cosmic."⁸¹⁷ (The italics are original.)

Halivni examines Leviticus 26:44 and the interpretation of the critical word *l'khalotam*, "to annihilate them," in prayers for Rosh Hashanah, and states that those who claim that the Shoah is a result of sin will interpret *l'khalotam* quantitatively, as total annihilation, and that if any people survive, rebuild their lives and contribute to the enhancement of Judaism, the event would not count as "total annihilation" and would not therefore represent a weakening of God's promise to Israel. This interpretation, he says, leads to the view that the Shoa was a consequence of sin and those who were destroyed were punished for their sins. He insists that "this interpretation is incorrect and misguided."⁸¹⁸

He discusses Jeremiah's understanding of God's promise, Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* and some writings of earlier sages, notes that "our generation exceeds all its predecessors in its cruelty (and) its malicious determination to destroy everything that was Jewish," and suggests that some respected theologians "see only a quantitative difference between the Shoah, the crusades, the inquisition, and the persecution and slaughter of the Jews under Chmielnicki in 1648–49."⁸¹⁹

He attributes the Shoa to human evil, stating that it was tragedy unparalleled in history, acknowledges that Jews expected God to intervene to protect them "so long as the people's sins could not tip the scales of judgement against them," and agrees that it was "difficult to explain why God was apparently indifferent in our days and chose not to intervene."⁸²⁰ God will continue to intervene in history, he says, and relies on Lurianic Kabbalah for an explanation of the Shoa as a "cosmic" episode. The explanation offered is that God contracts to leave room for human freedom, that after a period of excessive divine influence He may retreat, opening a time of maximal human freedom and interaction, and that the Shoa occurred in such a period, when those who exercised this free did so in most evil of ways while their victims remained unprotected, undefended and without any intervention from Above.⁸²¹

In making his case that the Shoah was not the consequence of sin Halivni does not distinguish between communal and individual obligation, misconduct and punishment under the covenant, nor does he give adequate weight to the mature Hebrew understanding that the consequences of breach of covenant may be experienced by later generations. Furthermore he discounts the fact that actions taken by the community between 1897 and

⁸¹⁷ Halivni, *Tablets*. pp. 17-18, 34.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 17-18.

⁸¹⁹ Ibid. p. 27.

⁸²⁰ Ibid. p. 31.

⁸²¹ Ibid. p. 33.

1941 in connection with *Der Judenstat*, the formation of the various bodies to put it into effect, the Balfour Declaration, and terrorism in Palestine during that period are consistent with transgression against their neighbours. Then, by providing such an unconvincing argument for its cause he provides an opportunity for Agnostics and Atheists to say 'I told you so!'

Neither Greenberg nor Halivni mention Islam, nor consider that Judaism and Christianity may both be subject to covenants. They write as if Judaism is the subject of a unique divine initiative and that Christianity is a competitor and a factor in Israel's trouble, but nothing more.

Borowitz wrote a few years later⁸²², that in one sense the Six Day War of 1967 had a stimulating influence because, although Reform theologians had not drawn a causal connection between the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel, in the wake of that war they did note a prevalent sense of renewed divine presence. It seemed that God had not forsaken Israel after all.

Meyer says that some Reform Jews hesitated, greatly, to accept an unqualified ascription of revelatory and salvific significance to contemporary events; some came to think that Holocaust theology was one-sided; few still believed that Auschwitz and Jerusalem could remain outside any persuasive Jewish theology; and Jewish theologians generally became relatively less concerned with the dialogue between God and Israel in ancient times, and more intent on understanding its presence, or absence, in their own age.⁸²³

However in another sense the Six Day War became linked with the movement's official opposition to the Vietnam War to cause serious concern. The movement lost a number of congregations for its opposition to the invasion of Vietnam. The problem was then exacerbated in 1970 when public opinion in Israel began to divide sharply on the future of the West bank and other occupied territories. Meyer states that while the official Jewish leadership in America suppressed any Diaspora divergence from Israeli policy, some leaders of the Reform movement began to break ranks. The Reform magazine for laity published a collection of diverse Israeli views, and [Rabbi] Eisendrath identified with those Israelis who condemned 'ostrich-like denial of the very existence of a Palestinian entity,' provocative resettlement of occupied territories, and inadequate initiatives regarding Arab refugees." Some rabbis and laity joined a controversial peace movement; there were bitter recriminations; and Reformed leaders called for free discussion on Israeli issues within the American Jewish community.⁸²⁴

822 Eugene Borowitz, *Renewing the Covenant: A Theology for the Postmodern Jew*, First ed. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991).

823 Meyer, *Modernity*. p. 364.

824 Ibid. p. 373.