

The Lutheran Church and the Jews¹

Preface

1) This paper presumes various distinctions. For one thing it is not possible to equate the synagogue with Judaism or with the Jewish people, since there are not only atheist and agnostic members of the Jewish people, but also Messianic Jews. Both groups do not relate themselves with the “synagogue” in the classical sense. We must also differentiate between members of the Jewish people who live not only in Israel but also in the world-wide diaspora, and members of the modern state of Israel which, as a secular political power, is comprised not only of members of the Jewish people. The relationship between Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians is an intra-church affair; the relationship between the church and the synagogue is a theological-ecclesiological question; and the relationship of the church and the synagogue to the state of Israel is primarily a political-ethical matter.

1. Theological Groundwork

1.1 Biblical Principles

1.1.1 Jesus

2) “When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law” – the apostle Paul's words in the Letter to the Galatians (Gal. 4:4) sum up some important Christological insights. One of these is that as a Jew Jesus was bound to the Torah and lived as a devout member of his people in his time. He himself phrased his task in the Gospel according to St. Matthew thus: “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel” (Mt. 15:24). The events in which Jesus was involved were, therefore, an inner-Jewish phenomenon: God had “come and redeemed his people, and [...] raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David”, Zechariah sings in the Gospel of St. Luke (Lk. 1:68–69).

3) But during his life Jesus transgressed the borders of the Jewish people. He praises the faith of the woman from Canaan and heals her daughter (Mt. 15:28) so that she, too, is granted salvation by the God of Israel (cf. the faith of the centurion Lk. 7:1–10, Mt. 8:5–13). Jesus'

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love of the poor and of outcasts, of tax collectors and sinners does not stop at the borders of the people of Israel, as his encounters with Samaritans (one of the ten lepers, Lk. 17:16; the woman at the well, John 4:7ff) and with Gentiles (healing of a demon-possessed man from Gerasa, Mk. 5:1–20) show. It is, therefore, only consequent that after Easter Jesus' salvation is carried to the ends of the earth, and mission among the Gentiles is no longer an exception.

1.1.2 Paul, Gentile Christians and division from the synagogue

4) The apostle Paul, too, was a Jew and considered himself called by the Messiah and Lord Jesus²; sent, however, to the Gentiles. Salvation through Jesus Christ is “first for the Jews then for the Gentiles” (Rom. 1:16). Paul describes the Gentile Christians with the metaphor of a new branch grafted into the Jewish tree (Rom. 11:17–24); for him it remains plain that God upholds his call to his people Israel (Rom. 11:29) and that he intends to save both Jews and Gentiles through Jesus Christ.

5) The first Christians were Jews and proselytes (Acts 2:11.37.41; cf. the Hellenists in Acts 6:1). As the result of conflicts with members of the synagogue who did not recognise Jesus as the Messiah and Lord, and due also to the increasing number of Gentile Christians, a division between Jews and Christians took place. This process began in the second half of the 1st C and continued into the 2nd C. The Letter to the Ephesians describes a Gentile baptism as granting former strangers citizenship in Israel and therefore in God's household (Eph. 2:11–22). The name Christian originally designated an inner-Jewish group and not a group contrary to Judaism (Acts 11:26).³

6) Synagogal punishment and expulsion from the synagogue (Lk. 6:22, John 9:22, 12:42, 16:2, 2 Cor. 11:24f., Acts 14:5.19, 18:17) could only take place on the grounds that those punished were considered Jews. Even after breaking away from the synagogue in Ephesus, Paul's group in the School of Tyrannus enjoyed the protection accorded to Jews⁴ (Acts 19:8–10). Major persecution of Christians by the Roman state did not begin until the end of the 1st C (with the exception of persecution in Rome under Nero). In other words, from this time onwards Christians were no longer considered by the outside world to be a Jewish fellowship.

²We must credit the so-called New Perspective on Paul for pointing this out, even if we do not accept their theories on justification by faith.

³Claudius' edict, for example, temporarily expelled the Jews from Rome after a riot concerning a certain “Chrestus”; according to Acts 18:2 Aquila and Priscilla were affected by this edict.

⁴Julius Caesar awarded the Jews various rights, including the exercise of their religion within the Roman Empire.

7) Where it was not possible to live together peacefully, it was the Christians and not the Jews who were the persecuted minority. This situation changed in the 4th C when Christianity was recognised as the *religio licita*⁵ and finally assumed the status of the official state religion. The Christians' originally inferior position has left its mark in the New Testament, not only in words of comfort in the face of synagogal punishment and expulsion but also in polemic and anti-Jewish features in some texts.⁶

1.1.3 Anti-Jewish Texts in the New Testament?

8) It is not clear who the Revelation of St. John referred to with the phrase “Satan's synagogue”; the opponents so named, at any rate, are denied the honorary title of “Jew”, while the title is applied to the writer's own fellowship (Rev. 2:9, 3:9). Polemic is more pronounced in the Gospels, although the Synoptic Gospels call the opponents an inner-Jewish fellowship in line with older language use. It must be said that Pharisees, scribes, council and High Priests are stereotype opponents; however, Jesus' disciples are themselves above all Jews.

9) The Gospel of John is the first to talk in a generalising manner of “the Jews” as those who are in some degree hostile to Jesus, although here, too, we hear of Jews who believed in Jesus.⁷

10) Accounts of the Passion also display an increasing tendency to emphasise the guilt of the Jewish authorities in Jesus' death. The Evangelists do not go so far as to accuse only the Jews of Jesus' death. All the canonical Gospels portray Pontius Pilate as a ruthless judge, who condemned a person he considered innocent to death for political reasons.

11) One particular motif is Jesus' prophesy concerning the temple (Mk. 13:2parr) and concerning Jerusalem (Lk. 19:41–44, 21:20–24parr, 23:28): the destruction of the city is prophesied along the lines of Old Testament prophesy, because of insufficient penitence in the face of God's imminent Kingdom. The curse which the people called upon themselves, “let his blood be upon us and our children!” (Mt. 27:25), also belongs in this category.⁸

⁵Religio licita = licensed religion

⁶Cf. for the historical development 2.1.1

⁷John 8:31, 11:45, 12:11. Cf. for the ambivalent titles of groups John 1:11–12 (...); John 1:10, 3:16 in relation to many references where “the world” is seen as the negative counterpart.

⁸Paradoxically it is also possible to equate Christ's blood with the blood of atonement.

12) While the New Testament considered God's punishment to have been fulfilled through the destruction of Jerusalem, ecclesiastical reception and interpretation of these texts in the face of new Christian power often led to a disastrous wirkungsgeschichte.

1.1.4 The Relationship with Israel according to Rom. 9–11

13) Modern exegetes debate whether, and to what extent, the New Testament certifies that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation: is it not also true that God's loyalty to his people remains true even without the recognition that Jesus is the Messiah? One observation seems to negate this, that according to Isa. 10 only a remnant of Israel shall be saved (Rom. 9:27), and that those who confess Jesus as the risen Lord and believe in Him (Rom. 10:9) will be saved. Nevertheless it remains valid that “God does not repent his gifts and his call” (Rom. 11:29). Therefore, Paul can call the rejection of Jesus Christ by members of his own people disobedience (Rom. 11:31) and even stubbornness (Rom. 11:25), while expressing the hope that God will show mercy to his people.

14) The question is whether Paul considers that Israel will receive 'special treatment'. Franz Mußner and Bertold Klappert advocate this concept keenly. Their understanding of the solution Paul suggests in Rom. 11:25–32 is that God will save Israel at the end of time, to fulfil the promise that he will save the whole of his people; this salvation is not, however, identical to Israel's conversion and must be strictly separated from human attempts to evangelize Israel. Mußner emphasises that according to Paul Israel's salvation takes place through Christ, by grace alone; the 'special path' for Israel enjoys does not, therefore, rely on fulfilment of the Tora, on the contrary it is based entirely and solely on God's action.⁹

⁹Franz Mußner, *Dieses Geschlecht wird nicht vergehen. Judentum und Kirche*, Freiburg etc. 1991, 34–35 (quotes from his tract “Traktat über die Juden”: “According to 11:26b–32 Israel will not be saved on account of the mass conversion based on a parousie, but, independent of Israel and mankind's conduct, solely as a result of the initiative taken by the God who takes mercy on all mankind, in the parousia of Jesus. The parousia–Christ saves the whole of Israel without a previous 'conversion of the Jews' to the gospels. God's salvation of the whole of Israel is different (*Sonderweg*). It is equally based on the principle of mercy (*sola gratia*), thereby underlining God's divinity, his choice, his reputation and his promises to the fathers, and also his judgement, which is independent of all human thought and speculation.” Similarly Otfried Hofius, *Das Evangelium und Israel*, in, *Ibid.*, *Paulusstudien* (WUNT 51), Tübingen 1989, 175–202, here 197–198: The salvation of 'the whole of Israel' is *not* due to the fact that the gospel is *preached*. This is not, however, an especial action, bypassing the gospel and faith in Christ. On the contrary, Israel will hear the gospel from the mouth of Christ himself when he returns 'The whole of Israel' therefore comes to salvation by a *different route* than the Gentiles and those who already believe in Christ – not through the mission of the church but through the Kyrios himself.” According to Dieter Sänger the phrase '*Sonderweg*' was coined by Dieter Zeller: Dieter Sänger, *Rettung der Heiden und Erwählung Israels. Einige vorläufige Erwägungen zu Römer 11,25–27*, *KuD* 32 (1986) 99–119, 104 fn. 21, in reference to Dieter Zeller, *Juden und Heiden in der Mission des Paulus*, *FzB* 8, Stuttgart ²1976, 245.

15) The opposite point of view is that, according to Paul's theology, Israel cannot expect 'special treatment' which does not include Christ and therefore Israel's salvation is only possible through faith in him. According to this concept, Paul considers that Israel's salvation is a conversion to Jesus, the crucified and risen Messiah.¹⁰

16) Even if we assert that it is almost impossible to say what Paul meant with the salvation of the whole of Israel, indeed that he leaves it to God how this should happen¹¹, the question remains whether Paul intended to forgo evangelism in Israel in the sure hope that God would intervene, and whether he could imagine that God would intervene without the gospel being preached.

17) To ask these questions means to answer them in the negative, for at the beginning of Romans Paul says that the gospel benefits the Jews first (Rom. 1:16 u.ö.).¹² To forgo any evangelism amongst Jews because of the concept that Israel may enjoy 'special treatment' is not exegesis, but rather the result of the debate about the relationship between Christians and Jews in the aftermath of 1945.¹³

18) It must be conceded that for Paul salvation and conversion are not identical in exegetical terms. We must ask ourselves what Paul's concept of thought for the whole of Rom. 9–11 was, since Paul sets out arguments and does not simply let the debate result in an aporia. For example, in the parable of the ingrafted branches (Rom. 11:16b–24) the branches which are removed are the greater part of Israel. God, however, has the power to graft those who do not persist in unbelief back in again (Rom. 11:23–24).

¹⁰Cf. fn 6. explicitly in contradiction to the concept of conversion: Bertold Klappert, *Die Wurzel trägt dich. Einführung in den Synodalbeschluss der Rheinischen Landessynode*, in: Bertold Klappert/Helmut Starck (ed.), *Umkehr und Erneuerung*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1980, 23–54, p. 45; also Mußner, *Dieses Geschlecht wird nicht vergehen*, 35: “I contrast the '*Sonderweg*' for the salvation of the whole of Israel as I understand it decidedly with the solus Christus, the sola gratia and the sola Fide ... with the term σωζεσθαι ('to be saved') Paul never means 'to be converted', even if this is always claimed, referring to Rom. 11:26a. Those who claim this must prove it.”

¹¹Cf. Michael Wolter, *Paulus. Ein Grundriss seiner Theologie*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2011, 432: “Paul is really certain of only two things: *that* Israel's current alienation from salvation is *temporary* and *that* Israel will be *saved by Jesus Christ*. There will not be a '*Sonderweg*' for Israel.”

¹²Unlike Klaus Haacker, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer*, ThHK 6, Leipzig 42012, 288–289: “We should not, however, interpret a last, much more successful, proclamation of the gospel to Israel before the world ends, into the text. If this is what Paul had intended he would have said so very clearly.”

¹³Already a standard phrase, e.g. Hubert Frankemölle, *Das jüdische Neue Testament und der christliche Glaube. Grundlagenwissen für den jüdisch-christlichen Dialog*, Stuttgart 2009, 220: “Paul bases the future salvation of the whole of Israel on God's fidelity (without any Christian mission to the Jews)” ... Sängler, *Rettung der Heiden und Erwählung Israels*, 119: “I do not consider that we Christians are authorised by the gospel, after 1900 years of church history and after Auschwitz, to formulate a hope for Israel which is not founded in Jesus Christ. Israel does not need us for this.”

19) Paul does not indicate anywhere that he deviates from his view that salvation takes place through Jesus Christ alone (he is prepared to forsake his salvation on behalf of Israel, who wants nothing to do with Jesus – Rom. 9:3). On the contrary, Rom. 11:32 clearly refers back to the beginning of the letter. The juxtaposition disobedience – mercy does not indicate any difference between heathens and Jews; the issue at hand is God's mercy in Christ, as all Paul's statements indicate. The quotation in Rom. 11:26 is best understood as Messianic (otherwise we would have to confess that in Paul's opinion, God himself, according to these words, comes from Zion). The only possible implication of an alteration is the word μυστήριον.¹⁴

20) However, the mystery in Rom. 11:25 is explained in the subsequent verses: the hard-heartedness which afflicted part of Israel happened so that the Gentiles could have part in salvation; thereafter the whole of Israel would be saved. Israel's hard-heartedness is explained in principle with the salvation of the Gentiles. In this sense it is no secret that God adheres to his promise. Admittedly, according to Paul God's ways cannot be traced (Rom. 11:33).

21) The best and most consistent explanation of this passage is that Paul expected that once salvation had been preached to the Gentiles, Israel would come to salvation in Jesus Christ through the preaching of the gospel.

1.2 Systematic Theological Perspectives

1.2.1 The Contiguity of Christianity and Judaism

22) No other religion is closer to Christianity than Judaism.¹⁵ They are bound by the same historical origins, the same Old Testament texts, the same promises. Nevertheless, they differ

¹⁴Of all the other cross references, 1 Cor. 15:51 is closest to our verse: a mystery as the solution to a theological issue. It concerns something which God had decided, but which mankind had not known to date. It cannot be deduced, it must be revealed. Paul does not indicate how he received this revelation; however, he evidently derives it from divine revelation. We are not, therefore, talking about a 'mystery' as an apocalyptic term here, opening up a whole apocalyptic horizon – contrary to Dieter Zeller, *Der Brief an die Römer*, RNT, Regensburg 1985, 197–198. Cf. Folker Siegert, *Argumentation bei Paulus – gezeigt an Röm 9–11*, WUNT 34, Tübingen 1985, 173: “Although Paul claims the highest religious authority for the μυστήριον which he communicates, the purport is the same as his previous argumentation. His thought is therefore both rational and inspired: there is no contradiction. The word 'spirit' names the certainty which the argumentation alone cannot provide...”

¹⁵Cf. Leonhart Goppelt, *Israel und die Kirche, heute und bei Paulus*, in: *Ibid.*, *Christologie und Ethik. Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament*, Göttingen 1968, 165–189, here 186: “Israel has a unique relationship with the church even today. We cannot reduce it to a normal level by the use of certain terms, which would be appropriate for other relations. Israel is not one people amongst many theologically, nor one religion amongst the many, and it is also not one confession alongside the Christian confessions and thereby an ecumenical issue. Even today Judaism can only be characterised with the singular appellation 'Israel'.

in their appraisal of the Messiah. The church is concentrated on Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, as he was prophesied in the Old Testament promises made to Israel. The synagogue, on the other hand, rejects Jesus of Nazareth as the fulfilment of these promises and continues to wait for the Messiah, who has yet to come.¹⁶ Church and synagogue are also connected by their common expectation of the Last Judgement.

1.2.2 Manifold Dependence on Judaism

23) The church is indebted to Israel for the inheritance conveyed by the Old Testament of the divine covenant, the law, the divine service and the promises, as well as for being Abraham's children and, not least, having the patriarchs as ancestors (Mt. 1, Lk. 3), for the birth and life of its Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 9:4–5). The church recognises ungrudgingly that God's promise of mercy, as well as the fact that Jesus was sent (Mt. 10:5f, 15:24, Rom. 15:8), were originally accorded to Israel.¹⁷

24) The church's reliance on Israel's faithful transmission of biblical tradition does not end with the completion of the Old Testament canon. For the masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible, and the Greek translation of the Old Testament in the form of the Septuagint, which influenced the New Testament, the essential sources and foundation of its theology, the church is deeply indebted to Jewish erudition and transmission.

25) This is true in particular for the Hebrew language. It was neglected over and over again in the history of the church, and could not have been preserved and renewed without the help of Jewish erudition and the use of Jewish literary texts from Rabbinic Judaism.¹⁸ Exegetical methods, too, relied through the centuries on Jewish philology.¹⁹

1.2.3 Israel Should not Be Condemned

¹⁶Cf. Edmund Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik. Grundzüge*, Göttingen ²1985, 564.

¹⁷Cf. Jörg Baur, *Sola Scriptura – historisches Erbe und bleibende Bedeutung*. In: *Ibid.*, Luther und seine klassischen Erben. Theologische Aufsätze und Forschungen, Tübingen 1993, 46–113, here 110f: “The choice of Israel is a thorn in the flesh of other nations, and the bible is a Jewish book. In the midst of this annoyance, the imposition takes on form: the determining and salvific word will not only be spoken *by* someone else, by God, but it was said *to* others.”

¹⁸Cf. Albrecht Schöne, „Denn die Juden sind unsere Büchermacher und Bibliothekare“, in: Jürgen Diestelmann/Wolfgang Schillhahn (Ed.), *Einträchtig Lehren*. FS Jobst Schöne, Groß Oesingen 1997, 405–417.

¹⁹Cf. in addition to Schöne's article on Lutheran orthodoxy: Johann Anselm Steiger, *Philologia Sacra. Zur Exegese der Heiligen Schrift im Protestantismus des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2011, 75–87.

26) If the church remains faithful to its own principles, then it must accept the predominantly Jewish “no” to Jesus' messianic claim with the apostle Paul, as a divine mystery (Rom. 11:25). It should not try to “overcome” it in piety. The Jewish “no” is a continual challenge to their Christological understanding of the Old Testament found in the New Testament, and a contestation of their belief and preaching of Christ.

27) Lutheran theology must not go further than Paul's fundamental statements about this divine mystery in Rom. 9–11. It can be shown that Christian theologians, including Luther himself, have taken recourse to indefensible anti-Jewish abuse in situations when they failed to apply their own fundamental theology principles critically. Luther's suggestions for dialogue were made in 1523 at the height of his reformatory insight, while his anti-Jewish utterances in the 1540s, with the accompanying demands that Jews should be banished and their books and homes burned, are a distinct relapse.²⁰

28) However, a general damnation of the Jewish people, as seen for example in the “disinheritance theory”, smells strongly of the theory of double predestination, which the Lutheran Confession (FC XI) clearly refutes.²¹ According to the whole of the Bible, a sinner is damned as a sinner if he does not repent, but nobody is damned because he is a Jew. The difference between the Old and the New Testament is that in the New Testament the divine call to repent, and the promises associated with it, is given not only to the people of Israel but to all peoples world-wide.

29) According to the New Testament insight that Christ was killed by the sins of all mankind, Jews cannot be accused of murdering God.²² Historically it is evident that Jesus was executed by both representatives of Israel and of the Gentile occupying forces, who represent all mankind.

1.2.4 No Anti-Jewish Resentment

30) New Testament statements, which have at times been misused to support anti-Jewish ideas or the doctrine of disinheritance, can be seen in a new light if we take into account the

²⁰Cf. sections 2.1.3–2.1.4 as well as 2.2 and 3.

²¹Cf. Johann Anselm Steiger, „Omnis Israel salvus fiet.“ For Luther's interpretation of Rom. 11 and the position of Lutheran and Reformed Orthodoxy to ties between sermons on confession and anti-Judaism: Ibid. (Ed.), *Passion, Affekt und Leidenschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Bd. 2, Wiesbaden 2005, 559–583, here 566.

²²Cf. Steiger, *Omnis Israel*, 564.

understanding of the “simul iustus et peccator”²³ given in the doctrine of justification, and the corresponding ecclesiological analogy, that the distinction between the true and the false church divides God's people, as a “corpus permixtum”²⁴ (cf. for Israel Rom. 9:6ff), throughout history and to the last judgement.

31) Throughout the history of theology we can see that God's pronouncement of judgement over Israel was used in Christianity, along the lines of a typological exegesis, as a paraenesis for God's judgement on each contemporary church (founded biblically on e.g. 1 Cor. 10:1–13, and also Rom. 15:4). This is true especially for those New Testament texts in which God's people are warned not to reject the offer of God's merciful visitation (e.g. Mt. 23:37–24:2). It is never asserted that Israel has missed its chance and that Christians would react better. On the contrary, such texts draw our attention to the fact that a call to penitence can be declined or accepted now, as it was then. Accounts and announcements of God's judgement on his people should not be confused with declarations that they were eternally forsaken, nor that they were irretrievably lost.

32) Further, it is important that New Testament texts which are sometimes thought to be problematic should be considered in the light of their particular characteristics and in their broader context. We find completely divergent statements in the New Testament, not only about Israel, but also about the “world” (the place where mankind renounces God and where the divine adversary rules, and on the other hand, as God's creation and the recipient of his merciful condescension), mankind (as creation but also as sinner), and “the flesh” (as a term for all creation but also as a term for the sinfulness of mankind).

33) In the Gospel according to St. John we not only find harsh comments about the Jews (e.g. Jn. 8:37–45) but also attributes of highest honour (Jn. 4:22); similarly there are harsh comments about the sinfulness of the cosmos or human flesh (Jn. 15:18f, 6:63) to which God, on the other hand, extends his radical love, as God's incarnation in Christ shows (Jn. 1:14, 3:16).²⁵ Intense declarations of love go hand in hand with exceedingly harsh criticism. As with all biblical pronouncements of judgement, these serve the purpose of causing those whom God loves to discover and embrace this love through repentance and faith (Ezek. 18:25).

²³Simul iustus et peccator = a Christian is “simultaneously just and a sinner”.

²⁴Corpus permixtum = mixed corporation.

²⁵Cf. fn. 6

34) In the same way that we cannot derive a *general* rejection of bodily pleasure or indeed even a hatred of the world from scripture, *Jesus'* harsh comments on his fellow Jews do not justify anti-Jewish resentment. Similarly, New Testament statements on hardness of heart not only concern Jews but also heathens. Hard heartedness and self-conceit always come into play when negative reception of God's revelation is named disbelief (eg. Rom. 1–3, Mt. 13:10–15) and reveals the mysterious insoluble intertwining of human guilt and divine judgement.²⁶

1.2.5 The Coexistence of Church and Synagogue

35) The church, according to Paul, is confronted by a divine mystery in its permanent Jewish counterpart, which does not believe in Christ, a mystery which God alone can solve at the end of time (Rom. 11:25–36). The theological task is determined in Lutheran theology by the triad *meditatio, oratio, tentatio*.²⁷

36) Together with Israel, the church studies and proclaims the same Old Testament texts (*meditatio*), which to some degree constitute a common culture beyond the confines of religion (commemorative culture, literary culture, sermonic culture, liturgical tradition).

37) Since the church, in its own conception, can only come to the God of Israel through Jesus' work of salvation (Acts 4:12) and the proclamation of the apostles through the Holy Spirit, the prayer which rises to God from the church is offered exclusively in the name of Jesus (Gal. 4:4, Rom. 8:15). Joint supplication by the church and the synagogue is, therefore, not possible; it would lead to reciprocal absorption. It is possible to pray for each other (*oratio*).

38) The fact that the synagogue does not share (cf. 2 Cor. 3:14–16) the church's understanding of scripture, despite having much in common (see above 1.2.2), remains difficult, a problem which cannot be faced with violence but must be overcome by the word alone (*sine vi, sed verbo*,²⁸ cf. CA 28:21). Since the Lutheran church is conscious of the spiritual importance of *tentatio* in divine salvation, it should be able not only to accept, but also to respect, Israel's rejection of Christ, as an expression of the divine mystery of which

²⁶Cf. Goppelt, *Israel und die Kirche*, 182f. With reference to the following bible texts: Acts 28:25–28, Mk. 4:11f with Isa. 6:9f, Mt. 8:12, 13:13ff, 21:43, Rom. 9:18, 10:16.

²⁷Meditation on the word, prayer, temptation

²⁸*Sine vi, sed verbo* = not by force, but through the word.

Paul speaks.

39) The juxtaposition of church and synagogue, Christianity and Judaism, corresponds to God's submitting will, according to the unanimous declaration of the New Testament (Rom. 11:11–16).²⁹ A manifest resolution will not take place until the Eschaton (1 Cor. 13:12, 2 Cor. 3:16–18, Rom. 11:25–36). This *tentatio*, too, teaches us “to be aware of the word” and urges us to pray. It intensifies our efforts to understand scripture (*meditatio*) and our spiritual obligation to give thanks and to pray (*oratio*), for which, following the example of Jesus Christ and the apostles, we draw on the Psalms of Israel (cf. Rom. 15:7–11). Israel's predominant “no” to Jesus of Nazareth could be heard as a distant echo of God's original “no” to the Gentiles, who are now also recipients of Christ's work of redemption, not, however, without the prior call to Israel.

40) Conversely the church owes the Jews enduring testimony of the truth of the gospel and of Jesus Christ, perceived as efficacious and necessary for salvation. Lutheran theology, however, must remain critical of systematic mission to the Jews and of human efforts to convert Israel (see below 4.).³⁰

41) The church and the synagogue, Christians and Jews, have not been installed as judges of each other, according to the New Testament. Instead they stand together before the divine judge to whom they are responsible and who will punish their sins (Rom. 1–3/9–11). Biblical reference to sin or Israel's error can never justify Gentile Christian arrogance. As, however, the church has been tempted, and has indeed often succumbed to arrogance in the course of history with catastrophic results for their Jewish counterparts, the warning which Paul issued in Rom. 11:17–24 should encourage confession.

²⁹Cf. Thomas Küttler, *Wie soll die Kirche des Neuen Bundes sich zum Judentum stellen?*, in: Folker Siegert (Ed.), *Kirche und Synagoge. Ein lutherisches Votum*, Göttingen 2012, 331–346; here the conclusion to his review of the New Testament, p. 342: “Despite all the differences between the witnesses in the New Testament, there is a great measure of agreement, which was neglected over the centuries by exegetes who were critical of the Jews. 1. The segregation between Jesus' congregation and the synagogue is described rationally and factually in the New Testament. 2. It is never asserted that the congregation is now the true Israel and takes its place. 3. On the contrary, it is assumed that the ecclesia and the synagogue exist side by side, at least for the near future. 4. We hear of a salvific future for Israel, in connection with the coming of God's kingdom and the coming of the Saviour.”

³⁰Cf. Steiger, *Omnis Israel*, 582: “The immediate conversion of the Jews through human effort was never one of the most important causes of classical Lutheran theology. I cannot see how an orthodox exegesis of Rom. 11 and the expectation that in the end God himself will convert the Jews could legitimate human efforts to convert the Jews. Whatever others may say, this is probably one of the qualitative differences between early modern Lutheranism and pietism. At any rate it is clear that the majority of the baroque theologians were prepared to tolerate the tension caused by the Jewish repudiation of Christ as the Messiah. Spener, on the other hand, attempts to resolve it because in his opinion man must take action, and bring about what, in accordance with Rom. 11, the Lutheran-orthodox perspective reserves for God's eschatological action.”

42) In view of the history of persecution over recent centuries, and particularly in terms of the church's own guilt and the many Jewish victims which their omissions caused, the church must consider “that in justification ... guilt and sin are no longer counted or, as Ps. 32:1 says, 'covered', only to be conserved, so that at the end of time this mystery may be solved as only God as the iudex can”.³¹ The church's repentance for its historical guilt must, therefore, be accompanied by a certainty of salvation received with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). “From an ethical perspective, which is the necessary counterpart to the eschatological one mentioned above, the divine justifying pardon makes it possible for mankind to recognise and to work on their guilt and to avoid further guilt through their salvation, for example by respecting and practising human rights.”³²

1.3 Lutheran Perspectives

43) Worship reveals particularly clearly that Judaism and Christianity are not two completely different religions, without any connection to each other.³³ On the contrary, it becomes evident how closely they are related.³⁴ We shall attempt to name some of the connections, which could be supplemented with many more.

1.3.1 Jewish Worship: Early Christian Worship

44) Jesus naturally worshipped in the synagogue with his disciples, reading the scriptures and expounding them (Mk. 1:39 parr., Lk. 4:16ff). And of course he journeyed to the great festivals in Jerusalem, worshipping and teaching in the temple (Lk. 2:41ff, Jn. 2:13, 7:1ff, 12:ff, Mt. 26:55). The fact that Jesus cleansed the temple (Mk. 11:15ff parr.) did not indicate that he questioned worship in the temple, but that he advocated worship which concentrated on the essentials.

45) The first Christians continued this practice after Easter. The apostles took part in worship in the temple (Acts 2:46, 3:1ff). Jewish synagogues were Paul's first port of call in his missions (Acts 13:5, 13:13ff, 14:1). The importance of the “house” (oikos) for worship in

³¹Steiger, *Omnis Israel*, 581. – iustificatio = justification; iudex = judge.

³²Steiger, *Omnis Israel*, 581f.

³³Cf. above 1.2.1.

³⁴Cf. for example Alexander Deeg/Walter Homoloka/Heinz-Günther Schöttler (ed.), *Preaching in Judaism and Christianity. Encounters and Developments from Biblical Times to Modernity (SJ XLI)*, Berlin/New York 2008.

Judaism is reflected in the early Christian practice of celebrating communion in homes (Acts 2:46, 20:7).

46) The first signs of the dissociation which took place in due course, can be seen in New Testament texts (Acts 14:1ff, Jn. 16:2).³⁵

1.3.2 Times and Locations of Worship

47) Weekly and annual cycles play an important role in Christian worship, a pattern familiar to early Christians from Jewish worship. Important festivals (Sukkot, Chanukah, Passover, Shavuot) gave the Jewish year a liturgical structure. The same is true for Christian festivals which even, in part, take place at similar times of year (Easter and Passover, Whitsun and Shavuot, Christmas and Chanukah). As Arnulf Baumann says “There can be no doubt that the church year came into existence in the wake of the Jewish festival year, although with new emphases”.³⁶

48) The festival of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, was of particular importance for the temple in Jerusalem. The ritual included a confession of sin and the transfer of sin to a scapegoat; both are an archetype for Christian days of penance. Judaism and Christianity, therefore, are joined in their confession of sin before God and their need of redemption.

49) The weekly Christian celebration on Sunday cannot be understood without the Sabbath archetype. Both feast days remind us of God's repose after his work of creation and refer to the commandment in the Decalogue (Ex. 20:8–11). The reason why the Christian Sunday is celebrated a day *after* the Sabbath is that Jesus' resurrection (on the first day of the Jewish week) is now the focus of the celebration.

50) Daily prayer, in the form of elementary biblical texts, plays a leading part in Jewish piety. This insight is archetypal for the Small Catechism and, in particular, the morning and evening blessings which Martin Luther recommends for a Christian life.³⁷

51) Once Christian church buildings were conceived for worship after the early phase in

³⁵See above 1.1.2.

³⁶Arnulf H. Baumann, Gottesdienst bei Juden und Christen, in: Christoph Barnbrock/Werner Klän (Ed.), Gottes Wort in der Zeit: verstehen – verkündigen – verbreiten (FS V. Stolle), Münster u.a. 2005, 21–28, there 25.

³⁷Cf. Peter von der Osten-Sacken, Katechismus und Siddur. Aufbrüche mit Martin Luther und den Lehrern Israels (VIJK 15), Berlin 1994.

which worship was celebrated in homes, the common tripartite division of the building into entrance, nave and choir (with an altar) reflected phenomenologically the graduated structure of space in the temple in Jerusalem.

1.3.3 Elements in Worship

52) The close relationship between Christianity and Judaism in worship is very evident linguistically. Christian worship cannot be imagined without “Hallelujah”, “Hosanna”, “Zion”, “Jehovah Sabaoth” and “Amen” for example, and it is not clear to many people that these are Hebrew words, which originated in Jewish worship.

53) Christian worship is characterised by a large number of biblical texts which connect Christian worship with the worship of the people of Israel. Lutheran worship opens with an introit which uses texts taken from Israel's Psalter. Pilgrimage psalms (Ps. 120–134), in particular, demonstrate how the psalms accompanied people on their way to worship from early days on.³⁸

54) In some Christian congregations Old Testament readings are an integral element of the service, while in other congregations Old Testament readings occur when the epistle or the gospel is the subject of the sermon. Other Old Testament texts are suggested as texts for the sermon by the six sermon texts series.

55) In Old Testament readings we hear the message which was proclaimed to the people of Israel, and which the first Christians read as their Bible. This proclamation of Old Testament scripture reveals the close affinity between Judaism and Christianity. In both religions the law and the prophets are proclaimed. Christian faith, too, is not only rooted in New Testament scripture but refers to the whole Holy Scripture contained in the Old and New Testaments, in which Christians discover the proclamation of Christ.

56) Other parts of the Christian service also proclaim words from the Old Testament, for example in the Sanctus taken from Isa. 6:3 (in connection with Ps. 118:26) or in the Priestly Benediction (Num. 6:22–27), spoken, as it was in temple worship, at the end of the Christian service.

³⁸Cf. Erich Zenger, Die Komposition des sog. Wallfahrtspsalters Ps 120–134, in: Frank-Lothar Hossfeld/Erich Zenger, Psalmen 101–150 (HThKAT), Freiburg u.a. 2008, 391–407, there 400.

57) The celebration of the Lord's Supper reveals both particular contiguity and particular distinctions between the Jewish liturgy and Christian worship.³⁹ Jesus' last meal was a Jewish feast which received its particular character through the power of Jesus' words. The Lord's Supper refers to a new covenant, effected by Jesus' death. In the Jewish feast, as in the Passover celebration, remembrance plays an important role. In the same way, the celebration of Jesus' feast ends with the call to remember God's acts of salvation in Jesus' act of atonement: "do this in remembrance of me!" (Lk. 22:19 parr). By recalling God's act of salvation the congregation expects and prays for his salvific presence. This remembrance is not so much a human performance or achievement, but rather the expectation that God will act for those who have come together to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Communion, therefore, grew from the practice of a Jewish feast, but receives its own very particular character through the eschatological new covenant in Jesus Christ and through the gift of his body and blood. This distinguishes the Christian celebration from the Jewish feast.

1.3.4 Remembrance of Israel in Worship

58) In the Lutheran Church the relationship with the people of Israel is considered on two occasions in the course of the church year, on the 10th Sunday after Trinity (Israel-Sunday) and on Good Friday.

59) After the reading of the Gospel taken from Lk. 19:41–48, the destruction of Jerusalem and especially of the temple in Jerusalem has been commemorated since the Reformation.⁴⁰ Often an account of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem was read. The destruction of the temple was often understood as God's punishment of his people because they refused to recognise his merciful visitation in Jesus Christ and instead nailed him on to the cross. The fate of the people of Israel and the destruction of the temple was interpreted as a warning to Christianity. In this way these sermons became penitential.

60) As far as the Israel-Sunday is concerned, we must be aware that the responsibility for Jesus' death, according to the Bible, lies with the people of Israel quite as much as with all mankind. For Jesus "takes away the sin of the *world*" (Jn. 1:29) so that his death is the result

³⁹Cf. Karl-Heinrich Bieritz, *Liturgik*, Berlin/New York 2004, 279ff.

⁴⁰Cf. Irene Mildenerger, *Der Israelsonntag. Gedenktag der Zerstörung Jerusalems* (SKI 22), Berlin 2004, and Evelina Volkmann, *Vom Judensonntag zum Israelsonntag. Predigtarbeit im Horizont des christlich-jüdischen Gesprächs*, Stuttgart 2002.

of the sin of *mankind*. Considering the destruction of the temple as God's immediate punishment for the death of his son is, therefore, ruled out. According to Lutheran thought, the service and the sermon should not reflect on the assumed guilt of other parties. Preaching the law and the gospel fulfils the task of calling listeners to change their ways.

61) The 10th Sunday after Trinity acquired a new character after the Second World War and the atrocity of the Shoah. Christians attempted to build up a new relationship with Judaism. Remembrance of the destruction of the temple is increasingly replaced by reflection on the relationship between Christianity and Judaism. Both elements belong in Christian worship on this Sunday: remembrance of the destruction of the temple as a call to the whole congregation to repent, and remembrance of the lasting solidarity of Christians with the people of the covenant of Sinai.

62) The second annual occasion in which the focus lies on the people of Israel is Good Friday. The Prayer Book of the Selbständige Ev.-Luth. Kirche formulates the following prayer for both Good Friday and the 10th Sunday after Trinity:

Reader: Let us also pray for the Jews that the merciful god may take away the veil from their eyes / so that they may acknowledge Jesus our Lord as their Messiah. [Let us pray:]

*Liturgist: Almighty, eternal God, you have chosen Israel to be the first witness of your revelation: hear our intercession for the people of your promise and let them see the light of your truth, accept salvation in Christ and praise your son with all Christendom. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*⁴¹

63) Recent liturgical debate shows that terms like these are problematic and can easily be misunderstood. It could give rise to the impression that the Jews were blighted in a particular way with delusion, and therefore necessitate special supplication. Indeed, this was what was meant at many times in the history of the church. Liturgically Good Friday carries this burden, for Jesus' death on the cross was linked over centuries with the fatal accusation, in all its consequences, that the Jews murdered God.

64) Therefore this practice should be changed: supplication for Israel on Good Friday should be completely newly phrased or left out altogether. Superficial revision is not helpful. The

⁴¹Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenagende, ed. Kirchenleitung der Selbständigen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche, Vol. 1, Freiburg u.a. 1997: Allgemeines Kirchengebet C 1, 410.

danger that misunderstanding may linger, increase, or develop is too great.

1.3.5 Things which Unite, Things which Divide

65) We can discern that Christian worship grew out of Jewish piety and developed abreast with Jewish liturgical practice, under the influence of the many forms of Jewish worship. The manifold connections between Judaism and Christianity, and occasionally vice versa, are evident.

66) It is worth focussing on these connections in liturgical style from time to time, particularly on Israel-Sunday. The confrontation with Jewish worship forms can afford new understanding of Christian worship.

67) At the same time, we must be aware that Jewish and Christian worship differs fundamentally, for Jesus Christ is of no importance to the one party while for the other he is central to their whole understanding of liturgical practice. Therefore we can conclude with Arnulf Baumann: *“The family resemblance [...] is still extant [...]. Yet, common worship of Jews and Christians is hardly possible since both clearly lay their focus differently, Christians on Jesus Christ, Jews on the torah. [...] We must respect here that Judaism and Christianity stem from the same root but have developed into different religions.”*⁴²

68) Respect for the differences must forbid the use of Jewish liturgical forms for pro-Israel services⁴³ and increase our awareness of the differing liturgical traditions. “Appropriation by imitation”⁴⁴ is not acceptable.

69) Liturgy has the elemental task of making our relationship with Israel (in knowledge of God's fidelity) fruitful for our liturgy, despite all the significant distinctions.

1.3.6 Baptism

70) Christianity's particular bond with Judaism is expressed throughout church history, for

⁴²Baumann, Gottesdienst, 28.

⁴³This is stressed by Peter von der Osten-Sacken, Gottesdienst im Judentum – Gottesdienst im Christentum, in: Alexander Deeg/Irene Mildenerger (Ed.), „... dass er euch auch erwählet hat“. Liturgie feiern im Horizont des Judentums (BLSp 16), Leipzig 2006, 63–88, there 66.

⁴⁴Hans Hermann Henrix, Herausforderung und Verheißung: Liturgie im Kontext des christlich-jüdischen Dialogs, in: Deeg/Mildenerger (a.a.O.), 11–32, here 29.

example in the baptism ritual for Jewish catechumens, which differs from that of Gentiles. Johann Gottfried Scheibel, one of the fathers of the Lutheran confessional church, confessed that he re-phrased the exorcism formula on one occasion since “Israel cannot be put on an equal footing with born heathens, as we are.”⁴⁵

71) Volker Stolle remarks:

*He [Scheibel] identifies exorcism as a crucial point, since the powers of the heathen gods are concentrated in the demons. Israel – Scheibel uses this classical theological term consciously – however, believes in the living god from the Bible. In this respect an Israelite does not renunciate foreign gods, in whose power he stood, in his baptism; he turns again to the living God of his fathers.*⁴⁶

72) This is only one example of how important meticulous reflection on the relationship between the church and Judaism is in liturgical questions.

2. Remarks Concerning History

2.1 Christians and Jews – a Short Historical Review

2.1.1 Up to the Constantinian Shift

73) In historical terms, Christianity begins as a group within early Judaism. Jesus of Nazareth, recognised by his followers as Israel's Messiah and the Saviour of the world, was a Jew, born of a Jewish mother. The proclamation of Jesus' messiahship caused strife between his followers and those who did not recognise Jesus as the proclaimed Messiah.

74) The Christian mission soon reached beyond Israel to non-Jews (heathens). The decisive question was whether the Mosaic laws applied to Gentile Christians. Paul argued resolutely that the mission to the heathens was not ruled by the law. This resulted in internal Christian tension, and above all in tension between Jews and Christians. The Christian refusal to take part in the uprising against the Romans was for the Jews decidedly suspect. The Christians, on the other hand, saw God's judgement in the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. The

⁴⁵J(ohann) G(ottfried) Scheibel, *Actenmäßige Geschichte der neuesten Unternehmung einer Union zwischen der reformirten und lutherischen Kirche [...]*, Erster Theil, Leipzig 1834, 280f.

⁴⁶Volker Stolle, *Johann Gottfried Scheibel und die Judenemanzipation in Breslau*, LuThK 36 (2012), 143–174, 169.

demarcation strategies on both sides gained in intensity towards the end of the first century.⁴⁷

75) At times Jewish-Christian, Gentile-Christian and mixed Jewish-Gentile Christian congregations existed side by side. Jewish Christianity attempted to conflate the law and the covenant with the confession to Christ. In the course of the second to fourth centuries Jewish-Christians were increasingly marginalized by the sheer numbers of Gentile Christians, who considered their theology and piety to be heretical.⁴⁸

76) With time the rejection of Jewish piety became a constitutional element of Christian identity. *Adversus-Judaeos*-literature⁴⁹ enhanced this attitude to an exclusive dichotomy and culminated, as early as the end of the second century, in the accusation that the Jews had “murdered God”. To begin with Christians could claim the protection of the *religio licita*, as it was valid for the Jews. When it became clear that Christianity was not the same religion as Judaism, they forewent this. This loss exposed Christians to persecution by the Roman state.⁵⁰

2.1.2 Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages

77) Toleration of Christianity by Constantine I and his successors and the award of privileges marginalized Judaism increasingly; the Imperial church developed into the supreme power. Judaism was subject to increasingly rigid restrictions. The elevation of the Trinitarian dogma by Theodosius I, expressed in the Creed of Nicaea (and Constantinople, 325/381), as the norm of Catholic faith, led to increased repression of the Jews under his successors.⁵¹

78) Jews settled in “German” areas in the Roman cities on the Rhine as merchants or craftsmen; a particular brand of Judaism developed. The more Christianity became the norm,

⁴⁷Cf. Ulrich Luz, Das „Auseinandergehen der Wege“. Über die Trennung des Christentums vom Judentum, in: Walter Dietrich/Martin George/Ulrich Luz (Ed.), *Antijudaismus – christliche Erblast*, Stuttgart 1999, 56–73.

⁴⁸Cf. Martin George, *Antijudaismus bei den Kirchenvätern. Eine notwendige Polemik*, in: Dietrich/George/Luz, *Antijudaismus*, 74–92; cf. Günter Stemberger, *Juden und Christen im spätantiken Palästina*, Berlin 2007, 4–12.

⁴⁹Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (1.–11. Jh.)* (EHS.T 172), Frankfurt/M. u.a. ⁴1999; *Ibid.*, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (11.–13. Jh.)* (EHS.T 335), Frankfurt/M. u.a. ³1997; *Ibid.*, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (13.–20. Jh.)* (EHS.T 497), Frankfurt/M. 1994; *Ibid.*, *Christliche Adversus-Judaeos-Bilder. Das Alte und Neue Testament im Spiegel der Christlichen Kunst* (EHS.T 650), Frankfurt/M. 1999.

⁵⁰Cf. Joachim Molthagen, *Der römische Staat und die Christen im zweiten und dritten Jahrhundert*, Göttingen ²1975; also 1.1.2.

⁵¹Cf. Peter Schäfer, *Geschichte der Juden in der Antike. Die Juden Palästinas von Alexander dem Großen bis zur arabischen Eroberung*, Stuttgart/Neukirchen-Vluyn 1983, 190–206.

the more the Jews, with their very different form of religion, were seen and treated as an alien element, often denied full citizenship. Not until Charlemagne came to power did they receive full freedom of religion.

79) From the turn of the millennium onwards Jews were increasingly settled, in Europe and in the German Empire, in separate areas in towns (ghettos). Open hatred emerged with the beginning of the Christian Crusades at the end of the 11th C: in 1096 systematic pogroms against Jewish congregations began on the Rhine, with more than 5000 casualties. Houses and synagogues were destroyed, and the Jews were either forced into baptism, banished or murdered.⁵²

80) Imperial sanctions (*Kammerknechtschaft*) later offered a certain, lesser legal protection, while particular taxes were levied and the right to exercise certain professions was restricted. From the 13th C onwards particular attire was mandatory.⁵³ The 4th Lateran council in 1215 constrained usury and prohibited the appointment of Jews to public office.

81) Christian-Jewish consultations in the middle ages⁵⁴ were not able to improve inter-religious relations,⁵⁵ for they were imposed from above and their sole function was to prove the predominance of Christianity.⁵⁶ The division caused by the christological and trinitarian dogmas proved to be insurmountable. Charges of ritual murder and desecration of the Eucharist led time and again to violence.⁵⁷ The Jews were finally accused of poisoning the wells and so causing the outbreak of the plague in Europe (1348).⁵⁸ Many of them fled to Eastern Europe.⁵⁹ After the reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula towards the end of the 15th C, the Jews were either forced to convert and be baptised or to emigrate.⁶⁰

⁵²Michael Toch, *Die Juden im mittelalterlichen Reich* (EDG 44), München 2003, 111–113.

⁵³Cf. Friedrich Battenberg, *Das Heilige Römische Reich bis 1648*, in: Elke-Vera Kotowski/Julius H. Schoeps/Hiltrud Wallenborn (Ed.), *Handbuch zur Geschichte der Juden in Europa*, Vol. 1: Länder und Regionen, Darmstadt 2012, 15–22.

⁵⁴Erwin J. Rosenthal, *Jüdische Antwort*, in: Rengstorf/Kortzfleisch, 1, 307–362, esp. 336–347; also Matthias Lutz-Bachmann/Alexander Fidora (Ed.), *Juden, Christen und Muslime. Religionsdialoge im Mittelalter*, Darmstadt 2004.

⁵⁵Cf. Frantisek Graus, *Judenfeindschaft im Mittelalter*, in: Wolfgang Benz/Werner Bergmann (Ed.), *Vorurteil und Völkermord. Entwicklungslinien des Antisemitismus*, Freiburg/Basel/Wien 1997, 35–60.

⁵⁶Cf. Hans-Joachim Schoeps, *Jüdisch-christliches Religionsgespräch in neunzehn Jahrhunderten*, Königstein/Ts. 1984, 71–96.

⁵⁷Toch, *Juden im mittelalterlichen Reich*, 113–115.

⁵⁸Cf. Willehad Paul Eckert, *Hoch- und Spätmittelalter. Katholischer Humanismus*, in: Rengstorf/Kortzfleisch, 1, 210–306, here 265–272.

⁵⁹Cf. Norbert Franz/Wilfried Jilge, *Ostmitteleuropa und Osteuropa*, in: Kotowski/Schoeps/Wallenborn, *Handbuch 1*, 167–227; Heiko Haumann, *Polen und Litauen*, in: Kotowski/Schoeps/Wallenborn, *Handbuch 1*, 228–234.

⁶⁰Eckert, *Hoch- und Spätmittelalter*, in: Rengstorf/Kortzfleisch 1, 252–265; Bernd Rother, *Die Iberische*

2.1.3 The Reformation up to the Thirty Years War

82) Despite all this, Judaism survived in Europe, even in Germany. Humanism and the Reformation induced a new appreciation of the Hebrew language and texts – but also phenomena such as “Christenangst und Judenplage” (Christians’ fear and Jewish plague).⁶¹ The Old Testament was read and expounded in the original language, after centuries of mandatory reading of the Greek and then the Latin translations (the Council of Trent continued this practice for the Catholic Church into the 20th C).⁶²

83) At the height of his reformatory insight, Martin Luther could conceive a Jewish-Christian dialogue and the peaceful coexistence of Jews and Christians. Towards the end of his life he changed his mind and now propagated the alternatives, conversion or banishment. It was, therefore, possible later for anti-Semites to claim him as an authority, although he himself had not advocated racist thought.⁶³

84) Several ancient Imperial rights and safeguarding provisions were renewed in the 16th C on the initiative of Josel of Rosheim. After the Thirty Years' War (1648) Jews were allowed to trade in some countries. They were often found in princely courts as political and legal advisers (*Hofjuden – Court Jews*).⁶⁴

2.1.4 Enlightenment and the Early Modern Age up to Anti-Semitism in the 19th and 20th C

85) The European Enlightenment, with its demands for tolerance, brought about gradual change.⁶⁵ Often it was only a few intellectuals who put the case for equal participation in

Halbinsel, in: Kotowski/Schoeps/Wallenberg, Handbuch 1, 325–349; Horst Pietschmann, Die Vertreibung der Juden aus Spanien im Jahr 1492, in: Benz/Bergmann, Vorurteil und Völkermord, 61–89.

⁶¹Heiko A. Oberman, Wurzeln des Antisemitismus. Christenangst und Judenplage im Zeitalter von Humanismus und Reformation, München 1983.

⁶²Eckert, Hoch- und Spätmittelalter, in: Rengstorf/Kortzfleisch 1, 272–306; a redefinition of the relation to the Jews was made in the declaration *Nostra aetate* by the II. Vatican Council on 28. Oktober 1965; Cf. the articles in Bernd Ginzler/Günter Fessler (Ed.), Die Kirchen und die Juden. Versuch einer Bilanz, Göttingen 1997; the exact phrasing of the declaration *Nostra aetate* can be found in Rolf Rendtorff/Hans Hermann Henrix (Ed.), Die Kirchen und das Judentum, Vol. 1: Dokumente 1945–1985, Paderborn/München 1988, 39–44.

⁶³Cf. Wilhelm Maurer, Die Zeit der Reformation, in: Rengstorf/Kortzfleisch 1, 363–452; and also: Thomas Kaufmann, Luthers „Judenschriften“. Ein Beitrag zu ihrer historischen Kontextualisierung, Tübingen 2011. – See above 2.2.

⁶⁴Battenberg, Das Heilige Römische Reich bis 1648, 34–46.

⁶⁵Reinhard Rürup, Judenemanzipation und bürgerliche Gesellschaft in Deutschland, in: Benz/Bergmann, Vorurteil und Völkermord, 117–158.

society and education for Jews. At times 'philo-semitism'⁶⁶ was wide spread. One example of the possibilities this offered were the religious consultations between Isaac Orobio de Castros and the Amsterdam professor Philipp of Limborch (1685). Although they did not achieve an agreement, it was the first time that it had been possible to discuss Jesus' messianity publicly for centuries.⁶⁷

86) In Germany a rapprochement between Jewish and German culture,⁶⁸ which varied considerably from area to area, began as early as the 18th C.⁶⁹ Co-existence also became increasingly possible, although often not without tension.⁷⁰ Moses Mendelssohn, who supported an enlightened ethical-religious moralism, represented a rapprochement which could be advocated in modified form by enlightened Christian theologians.⁷¹ It must be said that such positions often led to tension within the Jewish community. Orthodox and liberal, and later in particular in the USA, conservative schools of thought often differed strongly in the question of assimilation, even today (many define themselves in terms of secular or humanistic Judaism).⁷²

87) A consequence, but also indeed one of the stipulated conditions, of the increasing assimilation in Prussia, was that Jews were granted equal civil rights and liberties (1813).⁷³ In the second German Empire equality was not granted until the Imperial Constitution came into power in 1872; from this time on Jews were entitled to hold public office.⁷⁴

88) However, parallel to the emancipation of the Jews, which provided them with access to the fields of art, scholarship and politics, anti-Jewish attitudes were also on the rise in the 19th

⁶⁶Cf. Wolfgang Philipp, Spätbarock und frühe Aufklärung. Das Zeitalter des Philosemitismus, in: Rengstorf/Kortzfleisch 2, 23–86.

⁶⁷Schoeps, Religionsgespräch, 97–114.

⁶⁸Cf. Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, Der Kampf um die Emanzipation, in: Rengstorf/Kortzfleisch 2, 129–176; Albert Bruer, Preußen und Norddeutschland 1648–1871, in: Kotowski/Schoeps/Wallenborn, Handbuch 1, 47–57; Monika Berthold-Hilpert, Bayern und Süddeutschland 1648–1871, in: Kotowski/Schoeps/Wallenborn, Handbuch 1, 67–74.

⁶⁹Steven M. Lowenstein, Anfänge der Integration 1780–1871, in: Marion Kaplan (Ed.), Geschichte des jüdischen Alltags in Deutschland vom 17. Jahrhundert bis 1945, München 2003, 126–224.

⁷⁰Robert Liberles, An der Schwelle zur Moderne: 1618–1780 – 6. Soziale Beziehungen, in: Kaplan, Geschichte des jüdischen Alltags, 115–122.

⁷¹Schoeps, Religionsgespräch, 115–128.

⁷²Cf. Karl-Erich Grözinger, Jüdisches Denken. Theologie – Philosophie – Mystik, Vol. 3: Von der Religionskritik der Renaissance zu Orthodoxie und Reform im 19. Jahrhundert, Frankfurt M./New York 2009.

⁷³Bruer, Preußen, in: Kotowski/Schoeps/Wallenborn, Handbuch 1, 58–66; Berthold-Hilpert, Bayern, in: Kotowski/Schoeps/Wallenborn, Handbuch 1, 74–77.

⁷⁴Julius H. Schoeps, Deutschland seit 1871, in: Kotowski/Schoeps/Wallenborn, Handbuch 1, 79–81; cf. Marion Kaplan, Konsolidierung eines bürgerlichen Lebens im kaiserlichen Deutschland, in: Ibid. (Ed.), Geschichte des jüdischen Alltags, 226–346.

C.⁷⁵ Increasing nationalism led to a growing perception of Jews as 'alien', particularly in Middle and Eastern Europe. In Czarist Russia Jews were persecuted brutally ('pogroms').⁷⁶ Pseudo-scientific arguments were developed which supported a racist anti-Semitism based on an ideological theory of racism. Even amongst intellectual middle-class circles⁷⁷ in Germany, 'liberal' Protestants⁷⁸, and indeed the Catholic clergy,⁷⁹ this way of thought was adopted and transferred, in the form of an anti-Jewish mentality, into the 20th C.⁸⁰

89) Nevertheless, many patriotic Jews who had fought for Germany in the First World War hoped for far reaching social equality in the Weimar Republic;⁸¹ in vain.⁸² Talks between Christianity and Judaism, Judaism and Christianity on equal footing appeared to be possible at the beginning of the 20th C, as consultations between Franz Rosenzweig, Rudolf Ehrenberg and Eugen Rosenstock or the talks between Martin Buber and Karl Ludwig Schmidt show.⁸³

90) When the NSDAP seized power in 1933 such streams of thought were doomed to failure for the foreseeable future.⁸⁴ Anti-Semitic ideology, which was rife amongst the German people in the 20s, no longer accepted Jewish citizens as equals. Instead they were disqualified as enemies of the German people. There was, therefore, little resistance to the gradual but insistent marginalization of Jews in public life, and indeed in life altogether in Germany.⁸⁵

2.2 Luther and the Jews⁸⁶

⁷⁵Franz-Heinrich Philipp, Protestantismus nach 1848, in: Rengstorf/Kortzfleisch 2, 280–319.

⁷⁶Peter Hauptmann, Russische Christenheit und Ostjudentum, in: Rengstorf/Kortzfleisch 2, 639–667, here 646–660.

⁷⁷Cf. Werner Jochmann, Struktur und Funktion des deutschen Antisemitismus 1878–1914, in: Benz/Bergmann, Vorurteil und Völkermord, 177–218.

⁷⁸Christhard Hoffmann, Geschichte und Ideologie: Der Berliner Antisemitismusstreit 1879/81, in: Benz/Bergmann, Vorurteil und Völkermord, 219–251.

⁷⁹Cf. Heinz Hürten, Deutsche Katholiken 1918 bis 1945, Paderborn u.a. 1992, 425–459; 501–522.

⁸⁰Cf. John C. G. Röhl, Kaiser Wilhelm II. und der deutsche Antisemitismus, in: Benz/Bergmann, Vorurteil und Völkermord, 252–285; see also 3.1.1.

⁸¹Schoeps, Deutschland seit 1871, in: Kotowski/Schoeps/Wallenborn, Handbuch 1, 81–86; Volker Losemann, Rassenideologien und antisemitische Publizistik in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, in: Benz/Bergmann, Vorurteil und Völkermord, 304–337.

⁸²Cf. Helmut Berding, Der Aufstieg des Antisemitismus im Ersten Weltkrieg, in: Benz/Bergmann, Vorurteil und Völkermord, 286–303; Heinrich August Winkler, Die deutsche Gesellschaft der Weimarer Republik und der Antisemitismus – Juden als „Blitzableiter“, in: Benz/Bergmann, Vorurteil und Völkermord, 341–362.

⁸³Philipp, Protestantismus nach 1848, in: Rengstorf/Kortzfleisch 2, 320–338; Schoeps, Religionsgespräch, 147–183.

⁸⁴Wolfgang Benz, Die Juden im Dritten Reich, in: Benz/Bergmann, Vorurteil und Völkermord, 365–394.

⁸⁵Trude Maurer, Vom Alltag zum Ausnahmezustand. Juden in der Weimarer Republik und im Nationalsozialismus 1918–1945, in: Kaplan, Geschichte des jüdischen Alltags, 345–470.

⁸⁶This chapter represents a text of the "Arbeitskreis der Selbständigen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche für Zeugnis unter den Juden e.V.", slightly altered and extended, which was first published in: Arbeitskreis der Selbständigen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche für Zeugnis unter den Juden e.V. (ed.), Lutherische Christen und Juden, Hannover 1998, 1–13.

91) Martin Luther (1483–1546) gave considerable thought to Judaism, a subject which was of importance to him. His statements on this subject offer a confusingly wide spectrum from surprising candour to horrifying hostility. Lutheran Christians ask themselves how the reformer, who felt himself bound in faith to God's Word and to his Lord Jesus Christ, could falter in his judgement so greatly? How can we deal with the fact that people from so many schools of thought found support for their hatred of the Jews in Luther's anti-Jewish tracts?

2.2.1 Luther's Concept of the Relationship between the Church and Judaism

92) As in other spheres, too, Luther submitted the traditional relationship between Christians and Jews to a critical review, in the light of biblical authority. In his opinion the first chapters of the Old Testament contained the whole of the Christian message. According to his exegesis the early promises made here make salvation through Christ, even if they were fulfilled much later, the foundation of human faith from the very beginning. At the same time they become the key for our understanding of the whole of Holy Scripture.

93) According to Luther, the Christian church has its origins in Paradise. With their children, Adam and Eve believed in the coming of the Messiah/Christ. After the fall of man God linked the curse spoken to the snake (the devil) with his promise to Eve, that the offspring he promised her would prevail in the battle with the devil (Gen. 3:15). This message from Christ constituted the church.⁸⁷ And this gospel was preached and believed through all generations. Luther sees Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the beginning of God's especial journey with Israel, as preachers of the gospel of Christ.⁸⁸

94) Luther, consequently, understands God's path with his chosen people as part of an all-encompassing history of the church.⁸⁹ He differentiates initially between the three pre-Christian epochs of the church of the patriarchs, the church of the people in the time until Salomon, and the church of the prophets in which the pious lived concealed amongst the people.⁹⁰ The people of Israel and the church are never one and the same for him, but the

⁸⁷Luther formed his all-encompassing opinion of the church by refuting a mariological exegesis of Gen. 3:15 based on the Vulgate and, on the other hand, declaring the word of God the fundamental constitutive reference for the church.

⁸⁸Cf. Martin Luther, *Daß Jesus Christus ein geborner Jude sei* (1523), WA 11, 317,11f.23–26 and 318,29f.33–319,2.

⁸⁹Cf. Martin Luther, *Predigt über Matth 8,23–27* am 31. Januar 1546, WA 51, 155,16–20.26–30.

⁹⁰For Old Testament church history cf. Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther und das Alte Testament*, Tübingen 1948, 176–184. – Cf. also Apol 24 § 55, BSLK 365 (BSELK 640–643); Apol 27 §§ 97f, BSLK 376 (BSELK 660–

church can always to be found where God's Word is preached.

95) After the promised Messiah/Christ had come in Jesus, the era of the apostolic church began with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Whitsun, a church not bound to a certain people, Christ's spiritual realm. All Jewish expectations are nullified or fulfilled in this realm, while on the other hand the promises of salvation which God gave to peoples outwith Israel are redeemed. The Jews are not marginalized out of the church, in Luther's view. On the contrary, God's intention, in Luther's opinion, was that they should be part of the Christian church.

96) Founded on his exegesis of the Bible, this view not only leads to an unexpected affinity between Judaism and Christianity, but also results in fundamental tension.⁹¹ Luther drew two conclusions which characterised his bearing towards the Jews of his times. Firstly, he saw in them descendants of God's people and respected them as blood relations of Jesus and the apostles.⁹² He sought counsel for his translation of the Hebrew Old Testament from Jewish scholars.

97) On the other hand, he considered that contemporary Jewish piety also required profound reformation. In order to fulfil their Jewish destiny to the full, they should return to the faith in Christ in which the patriarchs had lived, not however in the expectation that the Saviour was to come, but confessing that he has come in the person of Jesus, and living in the expectation of his Second Coming.

98) Luther's positive attitude to the Jews as members of God's people with whom God has a unique bond, was not founded on the conception which contemporary Jews had of themselves. Instead his view of Judaism rested on his interpretation of the Bible.

99) The consequence was that Luther had very particular expectations of the Jews. He trusted that they would believe in Jesus as their Messiah if they were approached with Christian love.⁹³ Luther interpreted the fact that this expectation was not fulfilled as wilful denial and blasphemous defiance.⁹⁴ He confronted the Jews with the alternatives: conversion or

663).

⁹¹Cf. the instructive investigation by Dietz Bering, *Eine Tragödie der Nähe? Luther und die Juden*, in: *Architectura Poetica*. FS Johannes Rathofer (Kölner Germanistische Studien 30), Köln 1990, 327–344.

⁹²Cf. WA 11, 315,25–27.

⁹³Cf. Luthers Schrift von 1523: “Daß Jesus Christus ein geborner Jude sei”, WA 11,314–336.

⁹⁴The title of Luther's text written in 1543 was very revealing: “Von den Juden und ihren Lügen” (About the

banishment.⁹⁵

100) Messianic Jews – in his view true Jews – should take their undisputed and unconditional place within Christianity, enjoying full citizenship. Therefore, in his opinion, Jews who deny that Christ is their lord also repudiate their own Jewishness. Consequently they should not enjoy the right of abode amongst true Christian believers, any more than heretics or dissenters. They should lose their legal right to protection against deportation.

101) Luther did not even stop short of defamatory and insulting generalisations, nor of misanthropic advice to Christian sovereigns.⁹⁶ Luther's past, in the form of traditional anti-Semitic concepts and fears, caught up with him in such utterances. Terrible anti-Jewish rioting and excesses had been the result of such thought in the Middle Ages. Luther can never be an example for the Lutheran Church in this issue.

102) The fundamental alteration in Luther's relation with the Jews also has its roots in his dispute with the Papal Church. In his early years the reluctant Jewish attitude to Jesus Christ was a further indication, in Luther's eyes, of the degeneracy of the church. Later Luther was no longer only a critic of the church but himself carried responsibility. The fact that Judaism in his time and age did not in the whole come to believe in Christ, despite the Reformation, was, in his eyes, criticism of the Reformatory Movement, to which he reacted very strongly.

103) The contemporary Jewish exegetical approach to the Old Testament did not correspond to Luther's own exegetical insights, indeed he considered them an irritating misinterpretation which threatened the Christian faith.⁹⁷

2.2.2 The Use of Luther's Statements for other Aims

104) Luther's digressions against Jews who refused to believe in Christ can be explained for the most part by the danger they represented to his own faith, that is they were religiously motivated. In their absurd hatred of the Jews, ideologists utilised his later judgements as

Jews and their lies), WA 53,417–552. Cf: “Vom Schem Hamphoras und vom Geschlecht Christi”, WA 53, 579–648.

⁹⁵Cf. Martin Luther, Eine Vermahnung wider die Juden (following Luther's sermon on February 15., 1546), WA 51, 195f.

⁹⁶Cf. Martin Luther, Von den Juden und ihren Lügen, WA 53, 417–552.

⁹⁷For the last two paragraphs see Thomas Kaufmann, Luthers “Judenschriften”, Tübingen 2011; and Peter von der Osten-Sacken, Martin Luther und die Juden, Stuttgart 2002.

pseudo-scientific support for their own racial theory goals.

105) This anti-Semitism, which pursued the so-called Final Solution of the Jewish Question so inconceivably brutally under National Socialism, is a phenomenon of the modern era. It does not differentiate between Jews and Jewish Christians, a differentiation which was decisive and essential for Luther. On the contrary, alleged inherited negative characteristics became the rationale for human discrimination.

106) Admittedly the widespread attitude present within the church, which disparaged Jews and Judaism, considering them religiously and culturally inferior (anti-Judaism), helped to prepare the way for racial fanaticism: Luther could not possibly have anticipated these later racist theories.

2.2.3 Luther's Statements in Lutheran Churches

107) Luther's confirming statements about Jews were seldom effective in the history of the Lutheran church in gendering appreciation of the Jews and their traditions. Theological consultation and the advocacy of fair treatment for Jews were rare. An open attitude towards Jews was only found amongst those Christians who hoped to interest them in God's love in Christ.⁹⁸ This aroused Jewish suspicion, and encountered not only open-mindedness but also opposition.

108) Sadly, first moves towards a more adequate consideration of the Jews, as they can be found in the second half of the 19th C in particular in Franz Delitzsch,⁹⁹ were adopted very hesitantly in Lutheran theology and the Lutheran church. A derogatory approach, which maintained that God had long condemned the Jews to damnation, remained prevalent. This attitude to the Jews, prevalent over centuries including Luther's times, and characterised by suspicion and polemical venom, was perpetuated.

109) To a great extent the churches, therefore, lacked the spiritual authority and the theological clarity necessary to defy the systematically organised extermination of the Jews

⁹⁸A number of pastors from the early days of the Independent Evangelical-Lutheran Church (SELK), who had previously been engaged in Mission to the Jews, could be named here. Cf. Volker Stolle, *Ein ungenutztes Erbe. Die frühere altlutherische Kirche und das Zeugnis unter den Juden* (BIMS 3), Groß Oesingen 1986; Friedrich Rathje, *Christlicher Glaube. Entwicklung – Erweckung – Mission – vor allem Judenmission. Am Beispiel des Pfarrbezirks Balhorn-Altenstädt bei Kassel*, Groß Oesingen 1996.

⁹⁹Cf. Siegfried Wagner, *Franz Delitzsch. Leben und Werk*, Gießen 2199

by the National Socialist state resolutely. We confess that anti-Jewish attitudes were also found in the predecessor churches of the SELK.¹⁰⁰ Jewish-Christian church members were discriminated and ultimately exposed to deportation.¹⁰¹ We must admit that “grievous wrong and profound moral guilt must be confessed”.¹⁰²

3 Churches in Germany and their Relation to Judaism 1933–1945

3.1 Regional Churches (*Landeskirchen*) in Germany 1933–1945

110) The conduct and the pattern of reaction seen in the churches and their members to the National Socialist politics against the Jews in Germany and later in the occupied territories, can be explained by the long history in which mentality went hand in hand with theological, political and social aspects. We can ascertain in German protestantism “partial congruity and affinity, but also at the same time clear differences in political-ethical objectives” towards National Socialism.¹⁰³ “Monocausal derivational tendencies” for the extermination of the Jews “due to Christian anti-Judaism” remains “problematic”.¹⁰⁴ It may be helpful to differentiate terminologically between being 'guilty' and being 'entangled'.¹⁰⁵

3.1.1 Pre-history

¹⁰⁰ Cf. eg.: “It is not the task of the church to free our German culture from the destructive influence of the Jewish spirit; this is the task of the state. But as a church we also do not have the right to hinder the state when it cleans our German culture with the measures at its command”. (“M.W.” in: *Evangelisch-Lutherische Freikirche* 60, 1935, 135), in the light of the decision taken by the 52 Synod of the Ev. Luth. Free Church in Sachsen and other states, 23–28 May 1934: “We thank the state government for its devoted work ... in restoring the real ethnic community, by overcoming all the contrary cultures which divide our nation” - *Evangelisch-Lutherische Freikirche* 59 (1934), 95.

¹⁰¹ Attitudes and conduct towards Jewish-Christians were not coherent; cf. adverse examples in: *Geschichte der lutherischen Freikirchen im Dritten Reich – eine Dokumentation*. Selbständige Ev.-Luth. Kirche, 6. Kirchensynode (1987), *Berichte Vol. II, SELK-Kirchenkanzlei Hannover 1987*, 38.63. – A few further references to conduct in the Jewish issue are found here. Although their stance against current ideology is relatively limited, it has little similarity with Luther's position in 1523 11f.20.33.70.89.100. Biographies from Jewish-Christians in churches later affiliated with the SELK: < http://www.selk-deutschland.de/download/Kirche-und-Judentum_4.pdf> (2.2.2013). Texts on the current attitudes of Lutheran confessional churches to Judaism: http://www.selk-deutschland.de/download/Kirche-und-Judentum_1.pdf<> (2.2.2013).

¹⁰² Gunnar Beier/Markus Holmer (Ed.), *Blickwinkel. Ein gemein(d)schaftliches Lesebuch der Dreieinigkeitsgemeinde Hamburg, Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche 1896-1996, Groß Oesingen [1996]*.

¹⁰³ Hans-Ulrich Thamer, *Protestantismus und „Judenfrage“ in der Geschichte des Dritten Reiches*, in: Jochen-Christoph Kaiser/Martin Greschat (Ed.), *Der Holocaust und die Protestanten. Analysen einer Verstrickung*, Frankfurt/M. 1988, 216–240, here 218.

¹⁰⁴ Kurt Meier, *Evangelische Kirche und „Endlösung der Judenfrage“*, in: Wolfgang Stegemann (Ed.), *Kirche und Nationalsozialismus*, Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln 1990, 75–95, here 95.

¹⁰⁵ Berndt Hamm, *Schuld und Verstrickung der Kirche. Vorüberlegungen zu einer Darstellung der Erlanger Theologie in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus*, in: Stegemann, *Kirche und Nationalsozialismus*, 11–55, here 11–22.

111) Jewish emancipatory developments and nationalistic anti-Jewish movements were evident from the beginning of the 19th C.¹⁰⁶ Anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic thought is also traceable within the German intelligentsia. After the German Empire was founded in 1871, anti-Semitic tendencies, in particular German nationalist ones, strengthened. Theological anti-Judaism and racist anti-Semitism spread amongst protestant clergy in the course of the century. Around the turn of the century these tendencies joined forces, nourished by a “nationalist protestant view of history”.¹⁰⁷ Voices such as that of Martin Rade in the “Christian World” remained an exception.¹⁰⁸

112) In the course of the First World War, and above all after the First World War, anti-Semitism in Germany strengthened again, despite Jewish solidarity with the German Empire during the war. The success of the Jewish emancipation during the German Empire, and even more so during the Weimar Republic, invoked opposition. “The Jews” were charged with the trauma of the defeat in 1918, the fall of the monarchy, the revolution and all the social evils of the republic, despite the enormous contributions of German Judaism during the Weimar Republic in science, art and intellectual life.¹⁰⁹

113) The German-nationalist mentality in particular – from the NSDAP to the DNVP and the DVP – used the new “racist” theories to bolster latent anti-Semitism. A radicalisation took place within the protestant clergy, from anti-Jewish to anti-Semitic attitudes. Their role as multipliers is significant, and cannot be denied for the period between the wars, at the latest.

114) Moreover, university theology in the Weimar Republic also did not for the most part constitute an exception. We find anti-Jewish tendencies in Paul Althaus and Werner Elert, Gerhard Kittel and Adolf Schlatter.¹¹⁰ The German-Christian movement adopted extreme forms of anti-Semitism and found an echo within parts of the protestant church, even amongst those who rejected the German-*völkisch* thought which was often found in anti-

¹⁰⁶ See above 2.1.4.

¹⁰⁷ Berndt Hamm, Schuld, here 26.

¹⁰⁸ Philipp, Protestantismus nach 1848, in: Rengstorff/Kortzfleisch 2, 280–357, here 316f.; Friedrich Wilhelm Graf: „Wir konnten dem Rad nicht in die Speichen fallen“. Liberaler Protestantismus und „Judenfrage“ nach 1933, in: Kaiser/Greschat, Der Holocaust und die Protestanten, 151–185, here 168–171.

¹⁰⁹ Philipp, 321–324; Marikje Smid, Protestantismus und Antisemitismus, in: Kaiser/Greschat, Der Holocaust und die Protestanten, 38–72 here, 43–46.

¹¹⁰ Smid, Protestantismus und Antisemitismus, 50–55; Hamm, Schuld und Verstrickung, in: Stegemann, Kirche und Nationalsozialismus, 40–44; Thamer, Protestantismus und „Judenfrage“, in: Kaiser/Greschat, Der Holocaust und die Protestanten, 222.

Christian tendencies.¹¹¹

3.1.2 In the Third Reich

115) It cannot be denied that the NSDAP under Adolf Hitler availed themselves of anti-Semitism for ideological reasons and as a tactic to attract votes. Some protestant ministers adopted this ideology long before the success of the party from 1930 on, so that the preconditions for the “Movement of German Christians” (*Deutsche Christen*), the party spearhead based on the party programme within the church, were set.

116) The expression “national uprising” proved to be acceptable for the conservative public, too, and given the atmosphere of deep seated and widespread anti-Jewish prejudice,¹¹² it effectively prevented any awareness of racist anti-Semitism.

117) If we assume that four phases mark the persecution of the Jews by the National Socialists, then the first encompasses the years 1933/34 and is characterised by the boycott of Jews and the introduction of the Aryan paragraphs. The second phase, accompanied by renewed violence against Jews and the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws, led to the social exclusion of Jews from 1935 onwards. The third was characterised by the awful events of the Crystal Night in 1938; its goal was economic suppression and forced emigration. The fourth phase, after the beginning of the war, encompassed the decisions taken at the Wannsee Conference in 1941 and the consequent deportation and wholesale murder of the Jews.¹¹³

118) The legal segregation of the Jews during the first phase of the National Socialist government were “congruent with the political concepts of German conservatism”.¹¹⁴ This explains why the churches, traditionally anti-Jewish and with an eye for their own interests, remained silent for so long. Neither the Roman Catholic nor the Protestant churches protested against the boycott of 1933.

119) In contrast to racist based “socially acceptable anti-Semitism” which they rejected, theologians such as Rudolf Bultmann, Hans von Soden and Otto Baumgarten advocated

¹¹¹ Philipp, Protestantismus nach 1848, in: Rengstorf/Kortzfleisch 2, 324–339.

¹¹² Thamer, Protestantismus und „Judenfrage“, in: Kaiser/Greschat, Der Holocaust und die Protestanten, 223.

¹¹³ Thamer, Protestantismus und „Judenfrage“, in: Kaiser/Greschat, Der Holocaust und die Protestanten, 232–235.

¹¹⁴ Herbert Strauss, Antisemitismus und Holocaust als Epochenproblem, in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte. Beilage zur Wochenzeitung *Das Parlament*, B 11/87, 14. 3. 1987, 20.

prejudices against the “Jewish-legalistic” and consequently inferior form of religion. Only a minority of academic theologians supported a theologically motivated repudiation of any form of anti-Semitism, amongst them Karl Barth, Karl Ludwig Schmidt and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.¹¹⁵

120) For these circles the equality of baptised Jews, as for example propagated by the “Young Reformist Movement” (*Jungreformatorische Bewegung*), was a fundamental ecclesiological assumption. The few voices raised against the anti-Christian ideology of the NSDAP and its anti-Semitism, such as Hermann Sasse and those named above, fell on deaf ears. They too, however, were hardly prepared to take a stand on behalf of their Jewish fellow citizens, at the best for baptised Jews. Similar opinions and conduct prevailed amongst liberal theologians.¹¹⁶

121) A misconceived doctrine of the two kingdoms smothered any criticism of government measures, assuming an “amicable juxtaposition” of state and church. A realignment of the official attitude towards Jews is left to the state and the church merely protests against forcible-coordination.¹¹⁷ In most of the state churches, in particular those with German Christian leaders, the incorporation of the Aryan paragraphs in ecclesiastical law led to the dismissal of ministers of Jewish descent or with Jewish wives.¹¹⁸ Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Niemöller, amongst others, considered this legislation to be at variance with the confession of the church and consequently a tort.¹¹⁹ This led to the protest of the “Pastor's Emergency League” (*Pfarrernotbund*) and eventually to the founding of the Confessing Church. In the majority of the independent evangelical-lutheran churches in Germany similar observations can be made.¹²⁰

122) The situation of Christians of Jewish descent deteriorated considerably due to the Nuremberg Laws in 1935.¹²¹ The NS government defined status according to race and not by religion. German Christian church governments implemented the party political line within the church and declared that being a Jew per se excluded membership in a “German

¹¹⁵ Smid, Protestantismus und Antisemitismus, in: Kaiser/Greschat, Der Holocaust und die Protestanten, 62–64; Thamer, Protestantismus und „Judenfrage“, in: Kaiser/Greschat, Der Holocaust und die Protestanten, 237.

¹¹⁶ Graf, „Wir konnten ...“, in: Kaiser/Greschat, Der Holocaust und die Protestanten, 173–178.

¹¹⁷ Smid, Protestantismus und Antisemitismus, in: Kaiser/Greschat, Der Holocaust und die Protestanten, 58–60.

¹¹⁸ Kurt Nowak, Das Stigma der Rasse. Nationalsozialistische Judenpolitik und die christlichen Nichtarier, in: Kaiser/Greschat, Der Holocaust und die Protestanten, 73–99, here 74–76.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Eberhard Bethge, Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie, München ⁶1986, 357–365.

¹²⁰ See below 3.2.

¹²¹ Nowak, Stigma, in: Kaiser/Greschat, Der Holocaust und die Protestanten, 77–79.

protestant church”.

123) Not even the Confessing Church protested officially against this racial legislation. One year later cautious but plain comments were made. One of the most shameful and deplorable occurrences within Free Church Lutheranism in this period is the amendment of their statutes by the Dreieinigkeit congregation of the Ev.-Lutheran Church in Hamburg in January 1939. With the mandatory three-quarters majority the Aryan paragraph was adopted as the precondition for becoming a member of the congregation, although not stipulated by the state.¹²²

124) Solidarity with Christians of Jewish descent in the Confessing Church (where existent) was generally justified theologically, but not motivated by social politics. In a few cases attempts were made to offer persecuted Jews safety through baptism.¹²³ Although the events of the Crystal Night in 1938 led some church leaders to reconsider their conduct, the fundamental anti-Jewish attitude did not change.¹²⁴

125) After the decisions taken at the Wannsee Conference in 1941 and the beginning of the deportations to Eastern Europe the church had very little chance of supporting Jewish-Christian members, if they had desired to do so. Such efforts as existed were based on the differentiation between Jews and Jewish-Christians and only concerned the latter.

3.2 The Independent Evangelical-Lutheran Churches 1933–1945¹²⁵

126) The independent evangelical-Lutheran churches aimed their missionary activities from the very beginning not only at heathens but also at Israelites/Jews.¹²⁶ This was only natural, for many of the ministers in Prussia had worked for the Jewish Mission before they became pastors (Heinrich Kaspar Wedemann, Ludwig Otto Ehlers, Johann Georg Wermelskirch, Philipp Jakob Oster, Karl Friedrich Becker); independent Lutherans were aware from the

¹²² Beier/Holmer (Ed.), *Blickwinkel*, 66–79.

¹²³ Meier, *Evangelische Kirche und „Endlösung der Judenfrage“*, in: Wolfgang Stegemann (Ed.), *Kirche und Nationalsozialismus*, 78.

¹²⁴ Nowak, *Stigma*, in: Kaiser/Greschat, *Der Holocaust und die Protestanten*, 79–90.

¹²⁵ This chapter makes use of Werner Klän, *Selbständige evangelisch-lutherische Kirchen im “Dritten Reich”. Versuch einer Zwischenbilanz*, *LuThK* 11 (1987) 73–87, and the Introduction by Volker Stolle, IX. *Verhältnis Kirche und Judentum*, in: Werner Klän/Gilberto da Silva (Ed.), *Quellen zur Geschichte selbständiger evangelisch-lutherischer Kirchen in Deutschland. Dokumente aus dem Bereich konkordienlutherischer Kirchen (OUH.E 6)*, Göttingen 2010, 478f.; the Documents *ibid.*, 480–506.

¹²⁶ Aus der Instruktion für das Oberkirchenkollegium, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), *Quellen*, 406f.

very beginning that “mission and church are inseparable”.¹²⁷

127) The formation of the Renitent Church of the Unchanged Augsburg Confession in Hesse¹²⁸ was closely connected with the founding of the Balhorn Mission to the Jews in 1861 by Ludwig Saul.¹²⁹ This work, however, never took on more concrete form. Mission to the Jews remained marginal. The application by Karl Friedrich Becker, a missionary to the Jews in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Prussia, for a full-time appointment based on the tenet that missionary activity amongst the Israelites is a church concern, was rejected by the General Synod in 1856.¹³⁰

128) Although the Renitent congregation in Balhorn was one of the founding members of the “Evangelical-Lutheran Zentralverein for Mission to Israel” in 1871, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Prussia was unable to agree to corporative membership, allowing membership only to individuals.¹³¹ Official support for the concept and the work of the gospel under the Jews never materialised. Reflection on the connection between respect for the people of Israel and mission based on Rom. 9–11, in combination with the Lutheran confession,¹³² as it is found for example in Franz Delitzsch' thought, soon faded into obscurity.¹³³

129) Towards the end of the 19th C articles with quite evident anti-Jewish tendencies, indeed close to an anti-Semitism like that of Stöcker,¹³⁴ were increasingly found in journals from the independent evangelical-Lutheran churches. Accordingly, commitment to the Mission to the Jews did not intensify when the “association of the friends of Israel within the Lutheran Church in Prussia” (*Vereinigung der Freunde Israels innerhalb der lutherischen Kirche in*

¹²⁷ Cf. Volker Stolle, *Ein ungenutztes Erbe. Die frühere altlutherische Kirche und das Zeugnis unter den Juden* (BIMS 3), Groß Oesingen 1986.

¹²⁸ Cf. Friedrich Rathje, *Er wird Israel erlösen. Pfarrer Saul und die Judenmission in Balhorn* (BIMS 4), Groß Oesingen 1986; *Ibid.*, *Christlicher Glaube. Entwicklung – Erweckung – Mission – besonders Judenmission. Am Beispiel des Pfarrbezirks Balhorn-Altenstädt bei Kassel*, Groß Oesingen 1996.

¹²⁹ „Der Herr kommt! Ein Ruf zur Mission auch unter Israel“, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), *Quellen*, 480f.

¹³⁰ Ablehnung des Antrags von Karl Becker auf Anstellung als Judenmissionar durch die Generalsynode 1856, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), *Quellen*, 482; Carl Becker, *Ach, daß die Hülfe aus Zion über Israel käme und der Herr sein gefangenes Volk erlösete!* Ps. 14,7, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), *Quellen*, 482.

¹³¹ Editorial comment on: Alfons Wagner, *Noch ein Wort über Judenmission*, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), *Quellen*, 483.

¹³² Cf. Franz Delitzsch, *Die Mission der Kirchen an die Juden* (1858); in: *Ibid.*, *Missionsvorträge* (SIJL 32a), Leipzig 1892, 3–16; on Delitzsch: Siegfried Wagner, *Franz Delitzsch. Leben und Werk*, Gießen/Basel 1991.

¹³³ Cf. 4.1.1.

¹³⁴ *Kirchenblatt für die evangelisch-lutherischen Gemeinden in Preußen* 41 (1886), 142–144, 195f.; 42 (1887), 60, 75, 93; 43 (1888), 365; 46 (1891), 266–269; 53 (1898), 433–463, 465–469; 54 (1899), 538f.; cf. Werner Klän, *Trauerarbeit tut not. Gedenkrede zur Feierstunde in der Gedenkstätte Bergen-Belsen am 6. Oktober 1990 anlässlich der 119. Jahrestagung des Evangelisch-lutherischen Zentralvereins für Zeugnis und Dienst unter Juden und Christen e.V.*, *FüI* 73 (1990), 147–155, here 152.

Preußen) was founded at the instigation of Ernst Ziemer 1915,¹³⁵ in support of the work in Breslau. The church's express endorsement of this foundation¹³⁶ was combined with the quiet removal of this field of work from the portfolio of the *Oberkirchenkollegium*.

130) The plan to send a missionary and a deaconess to Eastern Europe in co-operation with the *Zentralverein* came to nothing due to the outcome of the 1st World War.¹³⁷ The *Zentralverein* was disbanded in 1935, in order to pre-empt measures of the state and the NSDAP.¹³⁸ As early as 1946, however, the *Oberkirchenkollegium* issued a call to support the renewed work of the *Zentralverein* financially.¹³⁹

131) In the official publications of the SELK predecessor churches even prior to Hitler's rise to power, anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic stereotypes are wide spread; a few critical voices can be found which, however, for the most part ceased after 1933. Some statements against an anti-Jewish attitude within the church can be found.¹⁴⁰ In the National Socialist period the relation to Judaism was a topic of controversial discussion; the church, however, does not seem to have issued official statements on this topic. There is also great divergence in conduct towards Jews or Christians of Jewish or partly Jewish descent. On the one extreme we find Gottfried Riegel's theory¹⁴¹ and on the other Friedrich Priegel's statement concerning the Aryan paragraphs and the church.¹⁴² In April 1933 the *Oberkirchenkollegium* of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Prussia issued a church intercession which is representative for the hope that Germany may be rescued from "its great distress" and for "a new birth" based on "the inviolable principles of *rechtes Volkstum* (true nationhood)".¹⁴³ The SELK in Hesse, too, hoped until 1935 that the state would protect their existence on the grounds of the right to exercise religion.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁵ Aufruf zur Bildung eines Vereins für Judenmission, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 484.

¹³⁶ Bestätigung der „Vereinigung der Freunde Israels innerhalb der lutherischen Kirche in Preußen“ durch die Generalsynode von 1921, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 484.

¹³⁷ Stolle, Ungenutztes Erbe, 28.

¹³⁸ Auflösung der „Vereinigung der Freunde Israels innerhalb der lutherischen Kirche in Preußen“, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 485.

¹³⁹ Kollekte für Mission unter Israel, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 485.

¹⁴⁰ Volker Stolle, Juden gegenüber weitgehend distanziert. Die selbständigen evangelisch-lutherischen Kirchen und die Juden im "Dritten Reich", in: Daniel Heinz (Ed.), Freikirchen und Juden im "Dritten Reich". Instrumentalisierte Heilsgeschichte, antisemitische Vorurteile und verdrängte Schuld (Kirche – Konfession – Religion 54), Göttingen 2011, 215–244.

¹⁴¹ Thesen von Pfarrer Gottfried Riegel auf dem Herbstkonvent der Selbständigen evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche in Hessen am 10./11. 10. 1933 in Dreihäusern, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 485–487.

¹⁴² "Der Arierparagraph" von Seminardirektor Friedrich Priegel [extract], in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 487–489.

¹⁴³ Kirchenblatt No. 16, Breslau, 16. 4. 1933, 241f.

¹⁴⁴ Superintendent Heinrich Martin, Bericht für den 12. Kirchenkonvent 1935, 11. 13.

132) As far as the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Prussia is concerned it must be confessed that while a certain breadth of opinion on the treatment of non-Aryan Christians did exist, increasing pressure to assimilate was felt through the progressive racial legislation by the National Socialist state. The deaconess mother house in Guben adopted a positivistic approach to National Socialist legislation. Indeed they relinquished some of their wards and a Jewish-Christian deaconess was deported.¹⁴⁵ This can only be confessed “with grief and shame”.¹⁴⁶

133) In the publications of the Evangelical-Lutheran Free Church we find not only theologically motivated Anti-Judaism but also open racist Anti-Semitism, even before the NSDAP came to power. This indeed culminated in the termination of the Mission to the Jews. The unanimous synodal decision taken by the Evangelical-Lutheran Free Church in 1934 was an open acclamation of the National Socialist regime.¹⁴⁷ The National Socialist racial policy was evidently not problematic for the ELFK in ethical terms. The ELFK did not raise its voice and even condoned discrimination, assault or calls to boycott the Jews and Jewish institutions; indeed they actively defended the Aryan paragraphs. The *Dreieinigkeitsgemeinde* in Hamburg even adopted them in their constitution.¹⁴⁸

134) The Independent Evangelical-Lutheran Churches in Hesse, the Renitent Church of the Unchanged Augsburg Confession and the Independent Evangelical-Lutheran Church in the Countries of Hesse hallmarked the “Jewish question” as a “matter of conscience” very early on. Close ties to the Jewish Mission in the Mission house in Melsungen increased awareness of this issue. The Renitent Church of the Unchanged Augsburg Confession was an exception; as early as 1932 members asserted that certain points in Hitler's “*Mein Kampf*” and Alfred Rosenberg's “*Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*” were “immoderate hubris”.¹⁴⁹

135) As far as the evangelical-Lutheran free churches in Hannover and Hamburg, the *Hannoversche Evangelisch-Lutherische Freikirche* and the *Evangelisch-Lutherische Hermannsburg-Hamburger Freikirche* were concerned, solidarity was expressed and exercised when one of their members, such as the Pastor in the Evangelical-Lutheran

¹⁴⁵ Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche, 6. Kirchensynode, Groß Oesingen, Bericht, Vol. II: Geschichte der lutherischen Freikirchen im Dritten Reich – mit Dokumentation, 39.

¹⁴⁶ Klän, Trauerarbeit, 153.

¹⁴⁷ Verhandlungen der Evangelisch-lutherischen Freikirche in Sachsen u. a. St. bei ihrer 52. Synodaltagung in Berlin-Süd A.D. 1934, XIV–XV.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Beier/Holmer (Ed.), Blickwinkel, 74f.

¹⁴⁹ Melsunger Missionsblatt 1932, 21–23.

Zionsgemeinde in Hamburg, Erwin Horwitz, was directly affected. On the other hand, they accorded the state the right to solve the “Jewish question” at their own discretion. The synod of the Hermmansburg-Hamburg Free Church did, however, pass a resolution in November 1933 “that we stand in statu confessionis and [...] must reject the Aryan paragraphs”, in response to the situation in which the half-Jew and pastor, Erwin Horwitz, found himself.¹⁵⁰ He was endangered by the anti-Semitic atmosphere which existed after the National Socialists came to power and introduced the Aryan paragraphs.

136) In the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Prussia we find at least two cases after 1938 where Jewish-Christian members were successively ousted. They were in fact finally deported and the church took no action on their part. The fate of further Lutheran Christians, both men and women, who were forced by discrimination to emigrate or only survived due to the exceptional support of fellow Christians, must be lamented. Karl Mützelfeld must be mentioned here, who founded an association in Australia after his emigration, the “Lutheran Immigration Association”, which attempted to enable the immigration of non-Aryan protestant Christians in Australia.¹⁵¹

137) The Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Prussia quite unnecessarily caused their pastors to pledge allegiance to Hitler in 1938.¹⁵² The superintendent of the Independent Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Hesse disassociated himself from this measure very emphatically.¹⁵³

138) On the other hand the 'Old Lutherans' (*Altlutheraner*) in Prussia had had to fight their '*Kirchenkampf*' one hundred years earlier. In the 1930s some of them, therefore, supported pastors and congregations from the Confessing Church. They also provided quarters for meetings which the state church refused to house. There are many such cases in the Berlin-Märkische Diocese of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Prussia. Similar appraisal of the position in which the church found itself, not least concerning the introduction of the Aryan paragraphs, existed.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Protokollbuch, Pastoren-Konvent am 28. 11. 1933.

¹⁵¹ Volker Stolle, „Den christlichen Nichtariern nimmt man alles.“ Der evangelische Pädagoge Karl Mützelfeld angesichts der NS-Rassenpolitik (MJSt 22), Berlin 2007.

¹⁵² Kirchenblatt Nr. 20, 15. Mai 1938, 299.

¹⁵³ Bericht für den 13. Kirchenkonvent, 2. 11. 1938, 3.

¹⁵⁴ Examples found in Hans Lochmann/Peter Lochmann, *Einsame Wege. Seit 150 Jahren Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche*, Köln/Düsseldorf 1980, 135–143; *Ibid.*, *Aus der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche am Niederrhein*, Köln/Düsseldorf 1981, 115–117; further: Christian Neddens, *Unerwartete Nähe und naheliegende Weggemeinschaft*, in: Jürgen Kampmann/Werner Klän (Ed.), *Preußische Union, lutherisches Bekenntnis und kirchliche Prägungen. Theologische Ortsbestimmungen im Ringen um Anspruch und Reichweite konfessioneller Bestimmtheit der Kirche* (OUH.E 14), Göttingen 2014, 232–269, here 253.

139) A reappraisal after the Second World War did not take place. The Statement of Union (*Einigungssätze*) of 1947 merely expressly refutes chiliastic expectations concerning the return of the Jews and their general conversion (*see chap. XII, doc. 243, Th. IV, 2*). However, the *Zentralverein's* journey of (hesitant) reconsideration of its position did enjoy close support. We can follow this development in the changing names (1871: Mission to Israel, 1985: Witness and service to Jews and Christians, 2000: Encounter between Christians and Jews). One step along this path was the so-called 'Leipzig Declaration'.¹⁵⁵

140) In order to promote witness amongst the Jews, an “*Arbeitskreis der Selbständigen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche für Zeugnis unter den Juden e. V.*” was founded in 1984 which employed a missionary to work amongst the Jews in Johannesburg/South Africa from 1991–1998.¹⁵⁶

141) The *Arbeitskreis* was based quite consciously on the founding articles of the *Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche* (Independent Evangelical-Lutheran Church). Its activities concentrated on “1. the proclamation of the Word of God and Christian witness amongst the Jews according to the Lutheran confession, 2. relations to Jewish-Christians, 3. encounters with Jews and an understanding of Judaism, 4. research on Judaism and preparation for the work of Christian witness to the Jews”.¹⁵⁷ Based on the monotheistic-trinitarian dogma, the *Arbeitskreis* confessed “Jesus Christ, ... the Messiah promised by the law and the prophets” and advocated the proclamation of “the gospel for the Jews”.

142) The *Arbeitskreis* ascertained that historically “the picture of Christian faith conveyed to the Jews had been a travesty” and concluded that “this burden cannot be overcome by mere words, but only by patient rapprochement”. A Christian feeling of superiority is not permissible. The *Arbeitskreis* expressed their hope that the gospel and “its comprehensive power to heal, can overcome all separation”. Finally they placed this witness in an

¹⁵⁵ 120 Jahre Zentralverein (Leipziger Positionspapier 1991), in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 489–497 (Doc. 192).

¹⁵⁶ Satzung des Arbeitskreises der Selbständigen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche für Zeugnis unter den Juden, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 497–500; Was meint der Arbeitskreis der Selbständigen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche für Zeugnis unter den Juden (AZJ) mit „Zeugnis unter den Juden“?, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 500–502; Luther und die Juden – und wir lutherischen Christen, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 503f.

¹⁵⁷ Aus der Satzung des Arbeitskreises der Selbständigen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche für Zeugnis unter den Juden [1996], in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 497–500, here 498.

eschatological perspective in which “God will complete the peace of his whole people”.¹⁵⁸

143) The *Arbeitskreis* also considered Luther's view of Judaism critically. Initially they emphasised Luther's reformatory esteeming comments on “the Jews as Jesus' blood relatives”. Then they differentiated between Luther's late rejection of the Jews for religious reasons and a *völkisch*, racist orientated anti-Semitism. At the same time they acknowledged that “the Lutheran Churches as a whole lacked the energy and conviction to oppose the National Socialist state”.¹⁵⁹ It cannot be denied that Luther's late anti-Jewish writing is a “difficult inheritance”, particularly since it “is not congruent with the core of his biblical theology”.¹⁶⁰

144) In 2002 the *Arbeitskreis* was disbanded; there had been little resonance within the SELK for its activities and impulses. The SELK then installed a *coordinator for the church and Judaism*.¹⁶¹

145) An important step was taken with the endorsement of the Charta Oecumenica in 2003 which includes the section “10. fellowship with Judaism”.¹⁶² This states that “a unique fellowship ... links us with the people of Israel, with whom God has an eternal covenant”. In addition they vouch that they will work against all forms of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism in the Church and in society and intensify their dialogue “with their Jewish brothers and sisters”.¹⁶³

146) The General Synod of the SELK decided in 2007 to clarify the question of the relationship between Jews and Christians.¹⁶⁴ It is still true that “the relationship between the Church and Judaism remains an important topic for Lutheran Christians”.¹⁶⁵ If we do not come to terms with the past, these events, including the omissions of the past, limit and bind us to the aberrations of our history.

¹⁵⁸ Was meint der Arbeitskreis der Selbständigen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche für Zeugnis unter den Juden (AZJ) mit „Zeugnis unter den Juden“? [1992], in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 500–502.

¹⁵⁹ Luther und die Juden – und wir lutherischen Christen [1998], Summary in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 503f.; complete in: Hans Hermann Henrix/Wolfgang Kraus (Ed.), Die Kirchen und das Judentum II. Dokumente von 1986–2000, Paderborn/Gütersloh 2001, 783–790 (E.III.59’).

¹⁶⁰ Klän, Trauerarbeit.

¹⁶¹ Koordinator der Selbständigen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche für „Kirche und Judentum“ in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 504f.

¹⁶² Charta Oecumenica, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 702–709.

¹⁶³ Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 707f.

¹⁶⁴ Beschluss der 11. Kirchensynode der Selbständigen evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Radevormwald vom 12.–17. 6. 2007, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), Quellen, 506.

¹⁶⁵ Luther und die Juden – und wir lutherischen Christen, in: Arbeitskreis der Selbständigen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche für Zeugnis unter den Juden e.V. (Ed.), Lutherische Christen und Juden, Hannover 1998, 16.

147) Forty years after the November pogrom in 1938, Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf, the minister in Mühlhausen in Oberfranken at that time and later the director of the Evangelical-Lutheran Free Church Mission (Bleckmar Mission), confessed his personal failure and that of the the church and the congregations towards Jewish citizens. He spoke of the sin, the guilt and the responsibility of Christians and the Church towards Jews in Germany.¹⁶⁶

148) It must be hoped for us ourselves and for our relationship to Judaism, that we take the Jews seriously as those who, according to Holy Scripture, are “blood relatives, cousins and brothers of our Lord”.¹⁶⁷

4. Mission to the Jews

4.1 The Debate about Mission to the Jews

4.1.1 Mission to the Jews and the Lutheran Church

149) The term “mission to the Jews” is connected historically with the Institutum Iudaicum founded in Halle in 1728 and Pietism,¹⁶⁸ and with the “Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews” founded in 1809 in London. A whole series of missionary societies came into being as a result of the zeal for mission, which was rooted in the revival movement.

150) Many efforts were undertaken to convert Jews, particularly in the period of Lutheran orthodoxy. However, many involved coercion and therefore had little success.¹⁶⁹ Slowly, due in part to the enlightenment, the concept that mission to the Jews could only take place

¹⁶⁶ Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf, 40 Jahre nach dem Novemberpogrom, Mühlhausener Pfarrer klagt wegen eigener Untätigkeit, in: *Ibid.*, Kritische Standpunkte für die Gegenwart. Ein lutherischer Theologe im Kirchenkampf des Dritten Reichs, über seinen Bekenntniskampf nach 1945 und zum Streit um seine Haltung zur Apartheid, ed. Markus Büttner/Werner Klän (OUH.E 11), Göttingen 2012, 380–383, here 380–383.

¹⁶⁷ Martin Luther: Daß Jesus Christus geborener Jude sei, WA 11, 315, 27; see Werner Klän, Zum Gedenken: 75 Jahre Novemberpogrom, LuThK 37 (2013) 206–223.

¹⁶⁸ Rengstorf/Kortzfleisch 2, 103f.; however, Johannes Wallmann, Der Pietismus und das Judentum, in: Markus Witte/Tanja Pilger (Ed.), *Mazel tov. Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Christentum und Judentum*, Leipzig 2012 (SKI.NF 1), 177–194. Cf. esp. a.a.O. 188–189 about the Institutum Iudaicum and Johann Heinrich Callenberg: “The Institutum Iudaicum is not the result of impulses which arose from Pietism, but rather of impulses from Lutheran orthodoxy.” Wallmann differentiates between the chiliastic expectation of Pietism and the organised Mission to the Jews by the Hallensische Institutum, which was, however, supported financially by the pietist network.

¹⁶⁹ Cf.: Karl Heinrich Rengstorf/Siegfried von Kortzfleisch (Hg.), *Kirche und Synagoge. Handbuch zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden*, 2 Vol., Stuttgart 1968–1970, esp. Vol. I, 487ff. a. Vol. II, 73ff.

through the word, and in discussion based on solid knowledge of Judaism, gained acceptance. The term “mission to the Jews” therefore refers above all to the missionary societies of the 19th and 20th C. Within society as a whole, these efforts were part of the polarised atmosphere between the emancipation of the Jews and assimilation, tolerance and anti-Semitism.

151) Since the missionary societies were not technically attached to the institutional churches it is not easy to discuss the mission to the Jews and the Lutheran Church. Our concern is with missionary societies with close connections to a Lutheran Church on the one hand, with individuals and finally with clerical statements concerning mission to the Jews on the other hand.¹⁷⁰

152) The London “Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews” established various filial societies in Germany and the German-speaking world. These included societies in towns within the sphere of Lutheran state churches such as Dresden (*Verein zur Verbreitung wahrer biblischer Erkenntniß unter dem Volke Israel in Dresden* 1822), Breslau (1822) and Hamburg (1827).

153) Further societies were founded in the 1840s. In Lutheran areas these were the *Verein der Freunde Israels in Lübeck* (1844), the *Kurhessische Verein für Israel zu Kassel* (1844), the *Hamburg-Altonaer Verein für Israel* (1844), and the *Verein von Freunden Israels im Großherzogtum Hessen* (1845). In Hannover and surroundings collections were made for the *Verein von Freunden Israels in Lehe und Umgegend*.¹⁷¹ Evidently conservative revivalist movements were influential in these areas.

154) Initially these missionary societies desired to convert Jews, but from the mid-19th C onwards concepts for the welfare of converted Jews and, indeed, social welfare work amongst Jews also arose. This was accompanied by the fear that granting material privileges could be seen as unfair religious practice.

¹⁷⁰ Folker Siegert in: Folker Siegert (Ed.), *Kirche und Synagoge. Ein lutherisches Votum*, Göttingen 2012, 25, supports the theory, “that efforts to mission the Jews remained alien in Lutheranism, and were the result of pressure exercised by a questionable history of theology, taken from other sources”; cf. the first chapter in this book, also by Siegert, a.a.O., 41–69.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Torben Rakowski, *Der „Verein von Freunden Israels in Lehe und Umgegend“ (1839–1852) im Kontext der deutschen protestantischen Judenmission im 19. Jahrhundert*, Hermannsburg 2007 (master thesis; internet address: <http://hdl.handle.net/11250/161968>).

155) In 1871 Franz Delitzsch consolidated the greater part of these early missions to the Jews in Lutheran areas to the “Evangelical-Lutheran *Zentralverein* for mission to Israel”. He also founded the *Institutum Judaicum* in Leipzig in 1886, which was later named after him as the *Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum* (IID). After this was closed down in 1935 (from 1935–38 it survived in Vienna) Karl Heinrich Rengstorf continued this tradition after the Second World War in Münster/Westfalen.¹⁷²

156) Delitzsch' original interest in Judaism was mission; however, research soon made it clear to him that it was important to know more about the history and the literature of Judaism. He was convinced that Jews could only be won for Christianity on the basis of a deeper understanding of Judaism. In addition academic knowledge of Judaism became an important task in a world which was increasingly anti-Semitic.

157) In the middle of the 20th C the policy of the “Evangelical-Lutheran *Zentralverein* for mission to Israel” changed fundamentally. Up to the 80s the constitution stated the society's intention, that “understanding for the mission to the people of Israel expected by the word of God from Christians in the Evangelical-Lutheran Churches and congregations was to be broadened and deepened and the means necessary for this task to be collected and put to use (§ 1)”.¹⁷³ To achieve this “no other means were to be used than the proclamation of the gospel, personal counselling and spiritual debate, and the loving welfare and spiritual nurture of the believers and the baptised. Proselytes should never be enticed by worldly benefits.” (§ 3).

158) In 1985 the society was re-named as the “Evangelical-Lutheran *Zentralverein* for witness and service to Jews and Christians e.V.” (*Evangelisch-Lutherischer Zentralverein für Zeugnis und Dienst unter Juden und Christen e.V.*). In 1991 its 120th anniversary was celebrated in Leipzig and a policy paper published which expressly rejects “an understanding of 'witnessing faith' which misuses the encounter of Jews and Christians as an expedient for a possible conversion”. It rejects “any activities by churches, ecclesiastical institutions or individuals which aim at converting Jews to Christianity, in disregard of their Jewish faith and life”. The paper supports “a friendly encounter between Christians and Jews ... This expressly includes a 'debate about truth' in an atmosphere of mutual respect”.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² See 3.2.

¹⁷³ Published in: Reinhard Dobert (Ed.), *Zeugnis für Zion*. FS zur 100-Jahrfeier des Evang.-Luth. Zentralvereins für Mission unter Israel e.V., Erlangen 1971, 126.

¹⁷⁴ Quotations from the paper found in: Henrix/Kraus, *Die Kirchen und das Judentum* 2, 623.

159) In 2000 the society was re-named once again as the “Evangelical-Lutheran *Zentralverein* for the encounter of Christians and Jews” (*Evangelisch-Lutherischer Zentralverein für Begegnung von Christen und Juden*); the intention was to avoid the danger of understanding 'witness' as a unilateral absorption. The term “Mission to the Jews” is now rejected by the *Zentralverein* and connected Lutheran churches.

4.1.2 Mission versus Dialogue

160) Christian mission assumes a universal understanding of humanity and recognises that humanity as a whole necessitates redemption.¹⁷⁵ It presumes the freedom of religion, but is continually challenged by it. On the other hand the term 'mission' is not anchored in comparative theology, since mission is not linked categorically to religion. Some religions are by definition not interested in mission, since they are local or regional or focussed on one ethnic group.

161) The technical term 'mission', for action taken by the church, does not occur in the New Testament as such, but the issue itself does. Jesus takes the prophetic task to proclaim the “year of the Lord's favour” personally (Lk. 4:18, Isa. 61:1f); in this way he links the substance of mission, to proclaim the gospel to the whole world, with his person. The disciples are given the task of 'proclaiming'; they are 'sent' into the world. Jesus' disciples become Christ's apostles (envoys): Mk. 6:30.

Missio Dei

162) The term *Missio Dei* points to the subject of every Christian mission: it is the commission of the Triune God to bring the message of salvation through Christ to the 'whole world'. At the same time, God in Christ is himself the envoy and, in the Holy Spirit, the agent. This principle qualifies the ecclesiocentric concepts of mission, in as far as it sees the institution of the church as the acting subject or as the starting point and the goal. God himself is in the world as its light. The Church acts on his behalf and in the name of his promise.

¹⁷⁵ Forerunners for the theology of Christian mission are found in the Old Testament. The monotheistic worship of Yahwe necessitates a universal concept of God (Isa. 45:5ff). The motives for the people's pilgrimage (Isa. 2:1ff, 60:1ff), and reference to Yahwe as the light for the Gentiles too (Isa. 49:6) emphasise this.

163) We must differentiate here between *missio interna* and *externa*. If it is God himself who calls people, then the proclamation is intended for everyone: the heathens, who have not yet heard the gospel, and the baptised, who are called to repent, and also members of the Jewish people, who are called to repentance by the prophets.

164) *Missio Dei* encompasses the history of the world. The bible describes God's undertaking to save humanity, and its preliminary climax in the history of the people of Israel, and points to a new age in Christ, which approaches its consummation with the beginning of the new world. Christian mission is, therefore, included in God's epochal work, and is part of God's universal work of salvation.

*The Apostles and the Beginning of the Mission to the Jews*¹⁷⁶

165) In its origins Christian mission was aimed in two directions, according to the New Testament. Initially it was mission from Jews who believed in Christ to other Jews. Paul always attempted to contact local Jewish congregations on his missionary journeys and witnessed the crucified and resurrected son of God (Acts 9:20) to them. His arguments in the synagogue were based on their common knowledge of the Old Covenant. Building on this, he could prove that the Old Testament witnessed to Christ (Acts 16:13); indeed he even submitted himself to the Torah for the sake of his witness (Acts 16:3).

166) The other missionary initiative soon included non-Jewish groups (Acts 10) in their strategy, resulting in the foundation of Gentile congregations and the emergence of the term "Christian" (Acts 11:26). This move, away from the Jewish religious community, met with opposition from within (Acts 10:14) and without (Acts 17:32), but was decisive for the development of the Church.

167) Equally decisive was their concept of themselves as the people of God. Constituted from both Jews and Gentiles, the congregation saw themselves as God's new people, so that conflict with the synagogue, who reserved for themselves this exclusive right, was inevitable.

168) Initially Christian congregations were seen as Jewish groups and, therefore, as members of the people of God with a right to Roman protection under the *religio licita*. This self-conception could not be upheld much longer once most of their members were baptised

¹⁷⁶ Cf. above sections 1.2.5 and 2.1.1.

Gentiles. The dividing wall between Gentiles and Jews had been torn down (Eph. 2:14) and a church for all peoples had come into existence. At the same time, however, the question arose, whether mission to the Jews was just as equally justified and valid as it was to the Gentiles.

169) These two lines of Christian missions have never been conflated. Signs of the existence of Jewish-Christian congregations dwindle after the destruction of Jerusalem. While they do not disappear completely, they are no longer relevant for Christian theology or for the Jewish religious community.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, the Jews lost their status as a *religio licita* at the same point in history in which Christianity became the official state religion.

170) From this point onwards justification for mission to the Jews is always linked to the issues of toleration and civil rights in the states succeeding the Roman Empire.¹⁷⁸ Rabbinic piety and erudition reacted to this development by concentrating increasingly on the Torah and even reducing their perusal of the word to the Torah.¹⁷⁹

171) Today the Church and the Jewish religion share a two-thousand year old history. It is burdened by ostracism and reciprocal recrimination, and by derogatory myths concerning Judaism.¹⁸⁰ It is also characterised on the side of the Christians by forced conversions, expulsion and pogroms; Jews accuse Christians of proselytism which they strictly reject. Each contests that the other party possesses an independent, contingent theological position.

Is Jesus Christ the Only Way? Christian Witness

172) Christian proclamation, and therefore also missionary proclamation, is based on preaching and confessing the exclusivity of Jesus as the Messiah and saviour. “There is salvation in no one else” Peter says (Acts 4:12) and John quotes Jesus with the words “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn. 14:6).¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Bernd Wander, *Judenchristen I. Neues Testament*, RGG⁴ 4, 601–603; also: *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland* (Ed.), *Christen und Juden. Die Studien der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland 1975–2000*, Gütersloh 2002, 30ff.

¹⁷⁸ The checkered and dramatic history of Judaism in the European states cannot be described here.

¹⁷⁹ “All of Yahwe's paths are mercy and truth. 'Truth' means the Torah. Who does he give it to? Those who preserve his covenant” (Midrasch on Ps. 25:10, in: Bill. 2, 361).

¹⁸⁰ For example the myth of the “eternal Jew”, of the desecration of the host, of deicide or the doctrine of disinheritance and the reduction of biblical evidence on “Aryan” grounds – culminating in the Shoa.

¹⁸¹ Cf. 1.1.

173) Aware of this claim, Paul expounds the great importance and the reliability of God's pledges in the Old Testament,¹⁸² relating this reliability to his proclamation of Christ. "The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:29). Paul closes his thoughts with a doxology on God's unfathomable character and not with a logical conclusion. This demonstrates the insoluble tension between the abiding validity of the divine promise given to a chosen people and its unique character on the one hand, and on the other hand the exclusivity of salvation through the Messiah, Jesus, the Son of God.¹⁸³

174) Given the historical burden,¹⁸⁴ the so-called "insoluble tension", and the unambiguous commission to bring "all peoples" to Christ (Matt. 28:19) and to preach the gospel to "all creation" (Mark 16:15), what form should the relationship between Christians and Jews take?¹⁸⁵

175) Two observations can help us here: we should note, for one thing, that Jesus was a Jew. Jesus was born into the people of Israel according to God's divine will. His words, his reference to the Old Testament and his acts, as seen in the four gospels, demonstrate this

¹⁸² In chapters 9–11 of his Epistle to the Romans, Paul on the one hand incorporates prophetic criticism of the people of Israel, on the other he emphasizes that God has not rejected his people; he expects a unification of the whole people of God at the end of time. The incorporation of prophetic criticism in Paul and in other New Testament writings took place within the framework of the Jewish community. But when the non-Jewish component of the Christian congregations grew, the character of these statements changed fundamentally; they were no longer made by Jews about Jews, but were instead judgments against the Jewish people made from the outside. – EKD, Christen und Juden, 33f.

¹⁸³ If we talk about "insoluble tension" then we must also confess the salvific work of Christ. This confession is missing in the Study on Christians and Jews II (Studie Christen und Juden II), so that chapter 2.3 is dangerously close to philo-semitic positions, such as those found in the 19th C. Thus it is documented: "The 1950 EKD synod in Berlin-Weißensee proclaimed in a pioneering statement: 'We believe that God's promise to his chosen people Israel has remained in force even after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.' This is incorporated in all other synodal or church governing statements. A position stating that God revoked his covenant with the people of Israel and that the Jews are rejected by God is no longer held. The Jews remain God's chosen people; the election of the church composed of Jews and Gentiles neither suspends nor replaces their election." (EKD, Christen und Juden, 65). – Cf. above 1.1.2 as well as 1.1.4. And the EKD paper of 1975 states: "Paul confirms that the Jews are God's people and remain so; 'God has not rejected his people' (Rom: 11:2)." The 1980 synod of the *Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland* confesses: "We believe in the abiding election of the Jewish people as God's people." The 1988 joint statement of the *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland* and the *Bund der Evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR* mentions the One God of the Bible, "who freed his people from slavery, who is faithful to his people, and who has never revoked his covenant with Israel." It is a theologically decisive factor for the relationship of Christians and Jews that the abiding election of Israel belongs to the generally recognised convictions of Christianity. The fact that Israel cannot be seen as rejected by God but must be held as beloved and chosen by God even in the face of its rejection of Christ as the messiah, actually forbids a negative attitude of Christians to Jews." (EKD, Christen und Juden, 64f.).

¹⁸⁴ "A leading representative of the Christian-Jewish consultation, Rabbi Nathan Peter Levinson, referred to the Mission to the Jews as 'the holocaust by other means'." found in: Absage an Begriff und Sache christlicher Judenmission, Beschluss der Kirchenleitung der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland vom 12./13.12.2008, 2.

¹⁸⁵ Cf.: Küttler, Wie soll die Kirche des Neuen Bundes sich zum Judentum stellen?, in: Siebert (Ed.), Kirche und Synagoge, 331–346.

clearly. And secondly, when Paul calls Israel the olive tree¹⁸⁶ into which the Gentiles were grafted he signifies that the Gentiles are integrated into God's plan of salvation.¹⁸⁷ These two facts open up the possibility of consultations.¹⁸⁸

176) However, it must be confessed that the term Mission to the Jews has caused great and tragic misunderstanding.¹⁸⁹ The term is based on a concept of mission which is unilinear and directed at convincing others.¹⁹⁰ It is issued by “people who know better ~~or sooner~~” and has a concrete commission to “those who know nothing”.¹⁹¹

177) If, however, Christians and Jews are to encounter each other as equals, then for Christians the confession of Jesus Christ as the saviour of the world is at stake. This does not exclude Judaism but on the contrary includes it. “Christians owe Jews witness to the hope that is in them. To forgo this would deny the universal saving power of the gospel for Jews and all other people”. Rom. 1:16, 1 Peter 3:15.¹⁹² “To refrain from mission should not lead to refraining from confessing our faith. On the contrary, *to forbear mission obliges us to give unabbreviated confession of our own faith*. That must be a confession to Jesus as Christ”.¹⁹³ Such confession is the indispensable duty of the church to Judaism.

¹⁸⁶ Rom. 11:16.17–24.

¹⁸⁷ Martin Luther points to the connection between the Old Testament laws and Christ: that the people of the Old Testament are forced to “look for something else, ... i.e. the mercy of God, promised in the Christ to come” – Martin Luther, *Vorrede zum Alten Testament* (1523), WA.DB 8,24. – Cf. above 1.1.1.

¹⁸⁸ Dialogue is the appropriate form for communication between equals. Joint events, such as the Memorial for Auschwitz or for the Reichspogromnacht, the “week of brotherly love”, the project “do you know who I am?” and good relations between neighbouring congregations of Jews and Christians, have found their place in Germany.

¹⁸⁹ By contrast, the fusion of theological arguments with historical issues is questionable: “Any form of mission to the Jews is out of the question for Christians, not only because of their conduct which led to Auschwitz, but also due to the exceptional theological position occupied by the Jewish people in God's revelation (Rom. 9: 3–5, 11:1.13–25).” (Hubert Frankenmölle, *Mission II. Christentum 1. Neues Testament*, RGG⁴ 5, 1273–1275, here 1275). This statement cannot bear comparison with the – fictive – inverse argument: What would Christian mission to the Jews look like if the burden of the past did not exist? The argument used here, that Christo-centric mission does not correspond to the biblical witness, since “New Testament faith is primarily theocentric”, must be refuted.

¹⁹⁰ “Towards the end of their existence, the Leipzig Mission to the Jews” (*Die Leipziger Judenmission*) realised that the term 'mission' was not appropriate for the task they had given themselves.” Küttler, *Wie soll die Kirche des Neuen Bundes sich zum Judentum stellen?*, in: Siegert (Ed.), *Kirche und Synagoge*, 344.

¹⁹¹ The term 'mission' is generally understood in this sense.

¹⁹² Was meint der Arbeitskreis der Selbständigen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche für Zeugnis unter den Juden (AZJ) mit „Zeugnis unter den Juden“?, in: Klän/da Silva (Ed.), *Quellen*, 500–502, here 501; Küttler, *Wie soll die Kirche des Neuen Bundes sich zum Judentum stellen?*, in: Siegert (Ed.), *Kirche und Synagoge*, 344: According to the bible we must deny that “Jews should be excluded from our confession of Jesus as the Christ, as if Jesus Christ was not their concern, and they had no need of him. This cannot be reconciled with the New Testament. On the contrary: a clear confession to Jesus Christ is the prerequisite for relinquishing mission in the sense of efforts to convert.”

¹⁹³ Küttler, *Wie soll die Kirche des Neuen Bundes sich zum Judentum stellen?*, in: Siegert (Ed.), *Kirche und Synagoge*, 344f. (italics in original).

4.1.3 Conclusions

178) The “Mission to the Jews” is burdened and questioned by many theological issues and historical developments.

179) We reject the *substitution theory* which states that Christianity supersedes Judaism as the new people of God. This is not in accordance with Paul's Letter to the Romans.

180) Adherence to the *perpetuation of the election of Israel* gives rise to the question, whether Judaism and Christianity are differing paths to salvation. We are convinced that this is not what Paul meant; he was convinced that Israel would be saved through Jesus Christ.

181) From a Christian point of view it is inconceivable that the goal of mission to the Jews could be the *conversion of Jews to Gentiles*. We should therefore consider which theological features would characterise 'Messianic Jewish Christianity'.

182) Historically the term mission is burdened by the aggressive missionary methods, in which a position of social superiority may have exercised pressure. God's mission, however, is characterised by *the word of the cross* and should never exercise pressure. The church should abjure misguided proselytism and the according missionary methods.¹⁹⁴

183) *Social welfare work* should never become the 'prolonged arm' of the mission; it is our duty to befriend our neighbours without any ulterior motives.

184) *Debate concerning the truth* cannot be ignored in encounters between Christians and Jews. It is important to understand and respect each other without denying our own positions. The term “testimony” is relevant here in our opinion; it should not be encumbered, however, with an intent to monopolise.

185) One problem involved in the *encounter between Christians and Jews* is the missionary element, inherent to most forms of Christianity but not to Judaism (into which one is generally born). This upsets the equality of consultations, in particular when mission is a dominant social element.

¹⁹⁴ This is our understanding of the “Zentralverein's” refusal to practice *Proselytenmacherei* (making proselytes).

186) *After the holocaust* the thought of any kind of missionary activity to the Jews originating in Germany is inconceivable.

187) The increase in the number of synagogues in Germany as a result of *migration* leads to more encounters between Jews and Christians. We can learn from the history of the mission to the Jews that it is imperative to be open with each other, to listen to each other, to be well informed about each other, and to know that we are only credible when we respect each other, not degrading anyone as an object for mission.

4.2 Messianic Judaism

4.2.1 The Term

188) The term *Messianic Jew*, Hebrew *jehudim meschichim*, has become the accepted term for the heterogenous group who indeed call themselves “Jews who believe in Jesus”.¹⁹⁵ Previously they had been named Hebrew Christians. In general they now avoid or even reject the use of the word Christian.

189) The form of Messianic Judaism, including the appellation, considered here was a result of the great wave of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union to Israel and the West in the 70s, where evangelicals actively exercised mission amongst often non-religious Jews.

190) In a *narrower sense* we can also consider those Jews as *Jewish Christians* who call themselves believers in Jesus and in Christ, while retaining their Jewish theology and life style, for example keeping the Old Testament laws on circumcision, dietary laws and the sabbath.

191) Simon Mimouni differentiates between a heterodox Jewish Christianity, which recognises Jesus as the Messiah but not his divinity, and an orthodox Jewish Christianity, which confesses Jesus' divinity.¹⁹⁶

192) The definition provided by the *Jewish Alliance* in 1957 expressly mentions baptism,

¹⁹⁵ Andreas Hornung, *Messianische Juden zwischen Kirche und Volk Israel. Die Begründung und Entwicklung ihres Selbstverständnisses*, Gießen 1995 (out of print). To be found in the internet (31.01.2014) under: http://www.segne-israel.de/mag/am_0inh.htm.

¹⁹⁶ Simon C. Mimouni. *Pour une définition nouvelle du judéo-christianisme ancien*, NTS 38 (1992) 161–186, here 184.

saying that “Jewish Christians are people of Jewish heritage who believe in Jesus Christ as Israel's Messiah and their personal saviour and affirm their membership of the Old Covenant after their baptism”.¹⁹⁷

4.2.2 Messianic Judaism as an Independent Phenomenon Today

Distribution

193) Strongly diverging estimations for the number of Messianic Jews lie between 50,000 and 332,000 worldwide, organised in 165 to 400 congregations. It is estimated that between 50,000 and 60,000 Messianic Jews live in the USA, while between 6,000 and 15,000 live in Israel.¹⁹⁸

194) In Germany it is estimated that 40 synagogues or house groups exist, including Berlin, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Hannover, Heidelberg, Karlsruhe, Cologne, Munich and Stuttgart.

Self-Conception and Faith

195) In their 'statement of faith', the Messianic Jewish Alliance in America¹⁹⁹ (MJAA) names the following articles of faith: salvation through faith, the New Testament congregation of Jews and non-Jews, the bible in Old and New Testaments as the inspired and infallible word of God, the trinity, the “physical and spiritual restoration of Israel”.

Individual Aspects of the Messianic Jewish Faith and the Practice of Faith

196) In principle Messianic Jews advocate the verbal inspiration, the infallibility and the inerrancy of Scripture in the Old and New Testaments. In hermeneutic terms clear tendencies towards fundamentalism are evident in that, for example, a differentiation between law and gospel is not evident in their principles of exegesis. The Old Testament promises are also understood to refer to the restoration of Israel on earth.

¹⁹⁷ Fritz Majer-Leonhard, *Judenchristentum II. Im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit*, RGG³ 3, 972.

¹⁹⁸ Statistics from: Stefanie Pfister, *Messianische Juden in Deutschland. Eine historische und religionssoziologische Untersuchung* (Dortmunder Beiträge zu Theologie und Religionspädagogik 3), Münster 2008; and in (16.02.2015): http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messianische_Juden#cite_note-11.

¹⁹⁹ The Messianic Jewish Alliance of America founded in 1915 is the largest alliance of Messianic Jews worldwide, according to their own statistics.

197) The law is excluded as the way to salvation but not put completely out of force. Jewish tradition and practice remain authorised and valid. Paul's statements are considered as directed against an understanding of the law that awards merit for its fulfilling, making it compulsory for non-Jews. According to David Stern,²⁰⁰ the lack of a correct Christian theology of the law is the greatest impediment to Jews for accepting the gospel.

198) Since the Torah still applies, circumcision of male descendants eight days after birth remains general religious practice; most Jewish feasts and holy days are also religious practice. The 'Sabbath' is held, either on 'Saturday' or the evening before. The Messianic Jewish Passah-Haggada is of particular importance. The observation of the dietary laws is very varied. Generally adult baptism, understood as fulfilling the covenant with God and as a confession of faith in Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, is practised. Communion is also celebrated, but not so frequently. Messianic-Jewish services retain elements of the service in the synagogue, but are otherwise held in a free, more 'charismatic' form. The ancient credo-texts are rarely used, but the *Sch'ma Jisrael* and the Aaronic Blessing are used.

199) Messianic Jews often confess that they first consciously discovered their Jewish faith and identity after coming to faith in the 'Messiah Jeshua' through contact with Christian or Messianic Jewish mission. In this sense, being a Messianic Jew is prerequisite for conscious Judaism and consequently initiates a strong missionary impulse toward Jews who are not yet Messianic. Apart from the impulse to save which inspires every form of mission, this is clearly understood as a contribution towards maintaining, collecting, preserving and saving the Jewish people.

200) Conservative Jews, however, deny that Jews who convert to Jewish Messianic Christianity can still retain their Jewish identity.

4.2.3 Conclusion

201) Messianic Jews who believe in the Triune God of the Bible and in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as their Lord and have been baptised, must be acknowledged in Lutheran opinion in the same manner as other Christian groups and confessions would be.

²⁰⁰ David H. Stern, *Restoring the Jewishness of the Gospel. A Message for Christians – Condensed from Messianic Judaism* (Jewish New Testament Publications), Clarksville (MD) 1988, 43.

202) The vague confessional stance of most Jewish Messianic congregations and the impossibility of assigning them to one of the classical confessional families makes it difficult, in Lutheran opinion, to relate to these groups more closely than via the channels offered by the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen* in Deutschland.²⁰¹

203) Particular Messianic Jewish theological teaching and concepts, some of which can be found in other Christian, for example Free Church, groups will not be considered here.

204) The New Testament recognised the possibility that Jews might profess Jesus Christ. This is not, however, an affirmation of aggressive forms of Mission to the Jews, as repudiated above.

205) We should not forget that, from a Jewish point of view, people of Jewish extraction lose their Jewish identity when they confess Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah.

206) The adoption of Messianic Jewish rituals by Gentile Christians is not advisable and the danger of seeking salvation in observation of the law instead of through Christ is very great, a danger which Paul continually fought against.

5. The Lutheran Church and the State of Israel

5.1 Chiliasm/Millennianism

5.1.1 The Term

207)The term chiliasm is generally used for the concept of a realm of peace in this world which will last a thousand years, and precedes the Last Judgement and the end of the world.

208) This concept of world history has its origin in Jewish apocalypticism and embraces various forms and phases. This is true for the millennium too: it is either seen as an epoch which has already begun or as one which will take place in the future; it could be a time of salvation for the chosen faithful, but also an era in which the powers of evil are bound or a time of preparation for the final salvation of this world.

²⁰¹ Cf. Arbeitsgemeinschaft christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland (Ed.), Leitlinien für die ökumenische Zusammenarbeit in den Arbeitsgemeinschaften Christlicher Kirchen auf nationaler, regionaler und lokaler Ebene, Frankfurt/M. 2013.

209) The figure 1000 is either a symbol for the fullness of time or it is understood literally and as such is the basis for calculating and qualifying historical dates and the course of events.

210) For the relationship between the Church and Judaism millennium concepts within Judaism and, above all, millennium expectations within Christianity, and the corresponding attitude towards the state of Israel, are important.

5.1.2 Modern Jewish Millennialism

211) Classical Jewish Messianic concepts differentiate between “a future, temporary Messianic kingdom” and “the concept of a final realisation of God's eternal rule”.²⁰² The Messianic kingdom of peace will manifest God's righteousness, and the “punishment of the iniquitous, purging of the world, the affirmation of the just and the commencement of God's eternal rule”.²⁰³ Even without the specification of 1000 years the expectation of a temporary Messianic realm within this world can be called chiliastic.

212) Such an expectation can also be linked to the conduct of God's people: for example – the Messiah will come when his people are prepared and as a people fulfil the Mosaic law. An important precondition for the time of salvation, therefore, would be the opportunity to offer the required sacrifices on God's holy mountain again. Others hoped to speed up the time of salvation by studying Holy Scripture, fasting and praying. At the beginning of Islamic rule, for example, in the 8th and 9th C, members of the Karaite movement settled on the Mountain of Zion in Jerusalem, to await the realm of the Messiah.²⁰⁴

213) Some groups in modern Judaism understand the foundation of the state of Israel as a sign that the Messiah will come. It is linked to the ancient dream of celebrating the Passover feast “next year in Jerusalem”. Ultra-orthodox Jews, however, are convinced that the enforcement of Judaism according to Mosaic law in 'Erez Yisrael' is the precondition for the coming of the Messiah, and not a modern state. Such 'chiliastic' expectations are marred by the fact that the God of Israel still has no temple on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

²⁰² David E. Aune, *Chiliasmus II. Neues Testament*, RGG⁴ 2, 136–137, here 137.

²⁰³ David Frankfurter/Joseph Dan, *Apokalyptik III. Jüdische Apokalyptik*, RGG⁴ 1, 592–594, here 592.

²⁰⁴ Friedmann Eissler, *Maskilim und Messias. Endzeiterwartung bei den frühen Karäern*, *Judaica* 59 (2003) 164–181.242–255.

214) Despite all this, many people still observe the religious laws. Civil legal affairs such as marriage and divorce, food laws and the observation of religious festivals are controlled by the Chief Rabbi; however, this is done in the name of the state and not for a Messianic realm to come.

5.1.3 Christian Millennialism and the State of Israel

215) The most important Biblical reference for Millennialism in the New Testament is found in Rev. 20. Here we hear that the Heavenly Christ will return to the earth to rule with the resurrected in peace for a 1000 years, before the Last Judgement and the subsequent end of the world. Whether this figure is to be taken literally or symbolically, perhaps as the fullness of an era²⁰⁵ or as a new status brought about by Christ's Second Coming – as in apocalyptic literature – remains open.

216) The Millennialism manifested here contradicts the statements about the final realisation of God's eternal rule made in the first chapters of the Revelation of St. John.²⁰⁶ It is astonishing that one reference in Rev. 20 had such an impact historically. The expectation of the Millennium exercised an enormous charisma as early as the first Christian generation (in the face of persecution by the Roman state), and for the Desert Fathers (in the face of increasing worldliness and secularization amongst Christians). It inspired protest and revolution within the church over centuries. Augustine interpreted Millennialism as Christ's realm in this world – not limited to a thousand years – and identified it with the *civitas Dei* which he described. This cleared the path for medieval²⁰⁷ and later catholic concepts which identified God's realm of peace with the existing, visible church. Martin Luther concurred with Augustine's interpretation of Rev. 20 with his conviction that the 1000 years had already expired and were not yet to come.

217) Despite all the difficulties with Millennialism,²⁰⁸ we still find exegetical traditions, in

²⁰⁵ The motive of the fullness of time is found in Paul, who sees time 'fulfilled' in Christ (Gal. 4:4). With the end of the old era and the beginning of the new one (Eph. 1:21) history is in principal open for chiliastic events. However, we should note that Paul makes no references to chiliasm in the sense of Rev. 20.

²⁰⁶ Rev. 1:17bf.

²⁰⁷ Apocalyptic depictions were of great importance to the preachers of the Crusades and their Crusaders; Joachim von Fiore can be seen as the spiritual father of mediaeval chiliastic theology. – Ulrich Körtner, *Chiliasmus V. Systematisch*, RGG⁴ 2, 141–143.

²⁰⁸ Alongside the attempts made during the Reformation to set up God's kingdom in this world, there were pietist movements in Europe, such as those of Jakob Böhme, Johann Arndt and Philipp Jakob Spener. They lived in expectation of the conversion of the Jews at the end of time, which was prerequisite for the Messianic realm of peace. Further pietist groups exist in North America, puritan groups in New England,

particular amongst evangelicals, which are based on the varied texts in Revelation (eg. Rev. 11:1–2, 14:15, 20:1–6). They recognize the foundation of the state of Israel in the 20th C (possibly in expectation that the Temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt) as a sign for the end of the times and for the Second Coming of the Messiah or even the beginning of the eschatological period of the Millennium.

5.1.4 Millennialism from a Lutheran Perspective

218) Lutheran theology has always refused to consider political events in terms of the Millennium – perhaps to preserve distance to the Reformatory left wing.²⁰⁹ CA 17²¹⁰ refutes Anabaptist and Jewish (or those seen as Jewish) positions clearly.

219) The foundation of the modern state of Israel cannot, therefore in Lutheran opinion, assume any theological significance nor is it a sign for the beginning of the last times or of God's eschatological kingdom. Every Christian movement which supports the state of Israel as a means of bringing about the last times must be refuted resolutely, but without any tinge of an anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic attitude.

5.2 Zionism

5.2.1 The Term

220) Zionism as an aspiration for a Jewish state, perhaps even a Holy Land, exists in various forms. It is important to differentiate between political Zionism and religious Zionism. In the face of pogroms and persecution, political Zionism pursued the aim over the course of history of achieving a Jewish state, which indeed need not necessarily lie in Palestine. Pragmatic solutions for the persecuted Jews were the main focus. Religious Zionism is fired by the expectation of a return to the promised land, according to the promises made by the God of Israel. This is in part explicitly linked to Messianic expectations.

and also Mormons and Jehovah's witnesses. They have in common the expectation of a temporary evident divine realm, which they will prepare through their piety. Other typical characteristics which accompany this type of chiliasm are healers, ethical rigorism, and migratory movements.

²⁰⁹ Cf. BSLK 72, fn. 3. Contact between chiliastic Christians and Jews in Worms is recorded here.

²¹⁰ "Likewise rejected are some Jewish teachings, which have also appeared in the present, that before the resurrection of the dead, saints and righteous people alone will possess a secular kingdom and will annihilate all the ungodly." – CA 17 (5), BC 50/BSLK 72 (BSELK 112–113); similarly Johannes Calvin, *Unterricht in der christlichen Religion – Institutio Christianae Religionis*, Neukirchen-Vluyn ³2012, 553f. (Inst. III, 25.5).

5.2.2 Political Zionism from a Lutheran Perspective

221) Political Zionism must be understood against a centuries-old background of anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish experience, as often as not accepted and even sanctioned by the state, of discrimination, persecution, marginalization, ghettoisation, deportation, of pogroms and all other forms of anti-Jewish violence. In the 19th C, mass impoverishment, which affected Jews in particular, came into play in Eastern Europe. Often they were denied the right to exercise the very few professions still available to them, a form or rather a result of the ever-present discrimination. In the opinion of political Zionists the glimmers of Jewish emancipation in Europe were doomed. They regarded assimilation as the first step along the path of abandoning their Jewish identity. The social and political demands made by political Zionists for a Jewish state, acknowledged under international law, are therefore understandable and legitimate.

222) It remains true, however, that from a Lutheran theological point of view, the modern state of Israel, the legitimacy of its borders, its security, home and foreign policy all fall into the category of the 'left hand' government of God. Fundamental questions, such as the right of the state of Israel to exist or their right to self-defence, are bound by the same principles of Lutheran ethics as apply to any other state.

223) It is clear that all forms of 'anti-zionism' are inherently anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic. All concepts which contest the right of the state of Israel to exist, must, in Lutheran opinion, be repudiated.

224) Lutheran Christians naturally vary greatly in their appraisal of current political events in Israel and of German state policy towards Israel or the opinions of German politicians. They must answer to their own conscience, which is bound by God's word.

225) This sets limits to the freedom of opinion and action, for example when political thought and action towards (Jews and) the state of Israel is based pseudo-theologically on a theory of 'biblical reprobation' or a theory that Jews 'murdered Christ'.

5.2.3 Religious Zionism from a Lutheran Perspective

226) *Religious* Zionism is based on the biblical election of Israel and the related divine

promises, in particular the promise of land. The appropriation of the 'promised land' today is thus considered to be at least a partial fulfilment of these promises.²¹¹

227) Rom. 11:29 pledges that God's gifts and God's call are irrevocable (cf. Ps. 33:4 "His work is done in faithfulness").²¹² On the other hand it is justifiable to ask whether the fulfilment of the promise of land was not given in the first appropriation of land and, therefore, how exile and the loss of the land should be evaluated theologically. From a Christian point of view, we cannot state that the foundation of the modern state of Israel is the fulfilment of the old promises, nor can we simply argue theologically to the contrary.

228) Individual pious opinion (*pia opinio*), which sees in the renewed foundation of the state of Israel after 1945 proof that God continues to choose the people of Israel, and is faithful and merciful, and recognises that 'the old God lives and rules', cannot be refuted.

229) However, a theology of history which attempts to place historical global and current political events in a biblically founded context of salvation, and to interpret secular events biblically, claims, in Lutheran opinion, a prerogative of interpretation which humanity does not possess.

230) It is, therefore, clear that religious Zionism cannot be justified biblically from a historical-theological point of view. Anti-zionist, anti-Jewish, and anti-Semitic, or even anti-Israel concepts have even less claim to a theological justification. Lutheran theology therefore repudiates any form of a disinheritance or substitution theology, and any statement which justifies criticism and opposition to the modern state of Israel theologically.

231) In Lutheran conviction salvation lies in Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of the history of God with mankind (*Heilsgeschichte*). All political theology which attempts to locate salvation elsewhere must be seen in this light.

²¹¹ A religious Zionism, which refutes all human, political efforts to this end, and expects all God's promises to be fulfilled through his direct action, does exist.

²¹² Cf. above. 1.1.2, 1.1.4, and 1.2.3.