

AN INTRODUCTION TO
JEWISH-CHRISTIAN
RELATIONS

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Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> vi
<i>Timeline</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xvii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xix
1 Introduction	I
2 The New Testament	25
3 The writings of the church fathers	45
4 The writings of the rabbis	65
5 Biblical interpretation: Another side to the story	81
6 Medieval relations	102
7 Antisemitism and the Holocaust	124
8 Zionism and the state of Israel	147
9 Covenant, mission and dialogue	170
10 Jewish–Christian relations and the wider interfaith encounter	191
<i>Further reading</i>	212
<i>Glossary</i>	226
<i>Index</i>	236

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the relationship between Judaism and Christianity has changed dramatically and is one of the few pieces of encouraging news that can be reported today about the encounter between religions. The rapprochement in relations and the development of a new way of thinking were pioneered by a small number of scholars and religious leaders in the first half of the century. However, it was the impact of the Holocaust, the creation of the state of Israel, the development of the ecumenical movement and the work of the Second Vatican Council (1962–5) which in combination made the changes more widespread. As a result, Christianity, so long an instigator of violence against Jews, rediscovered a respect and admiration for Judaism, and the once close relationship, which had become a distant memory, has been to a large extent restored. For Jews, the traditional view that they were on their own and that Christianity was an enemy has been replaced by a realisation that partnership with Christianity is possible.

At the same time as gaining a new appreciation of Judaism, Christians now acknowledge their contribution to antisemitism and the detrimental impact of the legacy of the *Adversus Iudaeos* (anti-Jewish) literature. Christianity no longer holds that Jewish interpretation of Scripture was false or had been replaced by Christian interpretation. This is illustrated by the contemporary teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, which states: ‘The Jewish reading of the Bible is a possible one, in continuity with the Jewish Sacred Scriptures [. . .] a reading analogous to the Christian reading which developed in parallel fashion’ (*The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*, 2002). The churches are also aware of the intrinsic need to learn about developments in post-biblical Judaism, as demonstrated by the World Lutheran Federation’s assertion that ‘Christians also need to learn of the rich and varied history of Judaism since New Testament times, and of the Jewish people as a diverse, living community of faith today. Such an encounter with living and faithful Judaism can be profoundly enriching

for Christian self-understanding’ (*Guidelines for Lutheran–Jewish Relations*, 1998). Consequently, there is today recognition within Christianity that the formation of Christian identity is dependent upon a right relationship with Judaism. Each bishop is now commended to ‘promote among Christians an attitude of respect towards their “elder brothers” so as to combat the risk of anti-semitism, and he should be vigilant that sacred ministers receive an adequate formation regarding the Jewish religion and its relation to Christianity’ (*Congregation for Roman Catholic Bishops, Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops*, 2004). Although these are the official teachings of the Church, there remains a great deal to be done before they will have filtered to the pulpit and pew.

For their part, Jews initially responded to the modern changes in Christian teaching about Judaism with distrust; others engaged in dialogue with Christians for defensive reasons, in other words in order to tackle prejudice and antisemitism. There were of course individual Jewish figures who offered a different approach, such as Martin Buber (1878–1965) who reminded Jews that Jesus was a fellow Jew, their ‘great brother’. But in recent years there have been stirrings of a new and much more widespread interest in Christianity among Jews, illustrated by the publication in 2000 of *Dabru Emet* (Speak Truth), which consists of a cross-denominational Jewish statement on relations with Christianity and asserts, for example, that ‘Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book – the Bible (what Jews call “Tanakh” and Christians call the “Old Testament”).’ The eight-paragraph statement demonstrates an awareness of a common purpose with Christianity, although there were a number of Jews who were critical of the document. The positive impact of the papal visit to Israel, also in 2000, made an indelible mark on the Jewish psyche.

Of course, the new situation is not one of complete agreement, for there continue to be divisions and quarrels over, for example, attitudes towards the state of Israel and its relationship with the Palestinians as well as its other Arab neighbours. Evidence of increasing antisemitism, particularly in Europe and the Middle East, has also led to a corresponding increase in Jewish sensitivity to criticism, particularly Christian criticism. In addition, the consequences of 9/11 and the upsurge of violence in the Middle East are causing a strain on relations. Nevertheless, it seems clear that many of the main divisive issues have been either eliminated or taken to the furthest point at which agreement is possible. The efforts of Catholics and Protestants towards respect of Judaism project attitudes that would have been unthinkable a few decades ago. Christian theology has been profoundly revised at the official level: all churches are committed to the

fight against antisemitism and to teaching about the Jewishness of Jesus, and the problem of mission to Jews has been significantly reduced.

It might be assumed therefore that, because the history of the encounter between Judaism and Christianity stretches over two millennia, it is a well-worn path of study. Yet, although the distinctiveness, even uniqueness, of the relationship between the two faiths has long been noted by Jews and Christians alike, there still exist few works for the interested lay person which explore the variety of aspects that go to make up this relationship. My *Dictionary of Jewish–Christian Relations* (edited with Neil Wenborn and published by Cambridge University Press in 2005) was one of the first works to define the field of study, and this *Introduction* intends to provide an accessible and readable textbook of the long and continuing Jewish–Christian encounter.

It should not be assumed that theology alone provides the basis for relations between Jews and Christians today. Other topics, such as cultural relations, interact and overlap. Take for example Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of the Christ*, which generated great controversy when it was released in 2004. It was not produced within an ecclesiastical context but was the artistic creation of an individual practising Christian. For a number of reasons, including insensitivity to Judaism and the film's graphic and unrelenting violence (90 of the 126 minutes' running time were devoted to bodily mutilation), it raised tensions in the Jewish–Christian encounter. The film was criticised because anti-Jewish features were added to the sketchy New Testament accounts of the Passion, or were grossly exaggerated. Statements in the film, such as that the Pharisees 'hate' Jesus, contradicted official Roman Catholic teaching as well as mainstream biblical scholarship, which depicts Jesus as being closer to the Pharisees than to any other Jewish group. Pilate (governed 26–36 CE) is portrayed not as the cruel Roman ruler that we come across in the Gospels and in other contemporary first-century accounts, but as a weakling.

Gibson indicated that he was not interested in scholarly commentaries on the Gospels to support his own visualisation of the final hours of the death of Jesus. His task, as he explained to the *New Yorker*, was to narrate the story as his devotional reflections revealed it to him. The unusual combination of a cinema blockbuster and personal theology generated controversy. For many of the film's critics, Gibson represented a conscious attempt to turn the clock back to a world before 1965, before Vatican II, to a time before the Roman Catholic Church entered the modern world of interfaith dialogue, and began to engage in reconciliation with Judaism. The film seemed to return to an era when visions of Christ centred wholly

on his suffering, to an eighteenth-century period when Christians took it for granted that Jews were collectively cursed for the crucifixion, when narratives emphasised Jewish evil and wickedness.

In Gibson's film, culture and theology came together and demonstrated that it is not only questions of faith that provide the basis for a contemporary conversation about Jewish–Christian relations today. Jews and Christians do not exist only in religious communities – they also live in the world and the Jewish–Christian encounter is consequently influenced by a wide range of factors. The *Introduction to Jewish–Christian Relations* therefore does not only address the theological context, but also explores cultural, philosophical, historical, sociological and political dimensions of the ongoing encounter between Judaism and Christianity. Just as war is too serious a matter to entrust solely to generals, so the encounter between Jews and Christians is too important to leave to theologians.

By its very nature, the study of Jewish–Christian relations is interdisciplinary, and this book features a wide range of subjects. So, for example, it is the author's view that it is essential to include literary studies because a reading of *The Merchant of Venice* or *Daniel Deronda* sheds light on the Christian perception of Jews and Judaism in sixteenth- and nineteenth-century England. It is similarly essential to include biblical studies because a proper understanding of Christian exegesis requires familiarity with Jewish interpretations of Scripture (and vice versa). Likewise, it is important to include the discipline of history since historians are the professional remembrancers of what Jews, Christians and others are tempted to forget.

SETTING THE SCENE: A BRIEF HISTORY OF JEWISH–CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

In its original form, Christianity consisted of some Jewish followers of Jesus declaring him as the Messiah, claiming to represent the true path during what was to be seen as the last era of world history, and demanding conversion to their interpretation of Judaism. Christianity was one Jewish group amongst many, including the Sadducees, Zealots, Essenes and Pharisees (and we should not ignore the influence of Hellenisers), but only the Jewish followers of Jesus (the Christians) and the Jewish descendants of the Pharisees (the rabbis) survived the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 CE.

The Apostle Paul's missionary work helped spread the Christian movement, while the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and periodic persecution of Christian groups influenced the Gospels' downplaying of Pilate's role in

the death of Jesus. Gradually the Church came to view the Jewish people as the preliminary and outdated people of God, replaced by the newly covenanted people of the *ecclesia* (Church). This view deeply influenced the Christian understanding of the Gospels' anti-Jewish passages from the second century onwards, and movement towards separation became considerable. The separation between Christianity and Judaism consisted of a series of 'partings of the ways' (cf. James Dunn), beginning perhaps when the Jewish followers of Jesus started to attract large numbers of Gentiles. Arguments over the abolition of Jewish customs such as circumcision and *kashrut* (food laws) contributed to the rejection of Christianity by most Jews. The main argument over theology concerned Christian claims about the divinity of Jesus. Bitterness between Jews (as well as Gentiles) over the significance of Jesus can be seen in the early Christian writings, and a similar theme can be noticed in rabbinic literature.

Jewish opposition increased when Christians failed to support Jewish revolts against Rome in the first century and the messianic claims of Bar Kokhba in the second. This did not prevent many Christians in the early centuries attending synagogue services, especially at the autumn High Holy Days and at Passover. In response, church leaders such as Chrysostom and even Jerome delivered derogatory sermons and interpretations, which insisted that Jews did not understand that the Old Testament was a prefiguring of Christ and the Church. In the second century, Melito of Sardis produced the first unambiguous accusation of deicide, and later Augustine portrayed Jews as children of Cain whose dispersion and woes were God's punishment. They simply served as witnesses to their own evil and to Christian truth. By the time of the completion of the Talmud (c. 500) Judaism and Christianity had fully diverged. It is not coincidental that around the same time Jewish Christianity also ceased to exist.

Once Christianity was established as the religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century, the situation for Jews became more difficult, though this was a gradual process because the energy of Christian Europe was directed towards defeating pagans and Christian heretics. During this time Christian anti-Jewish writings (*Adversus Iudaeos* literature) resulted in little violence against Jews; nor did it stir much of a Jewish response, possibly because until then Christianity was viewed with little interest. The sixth-century rabbinic anti-Christian text *Toledot Yeshu* seems to be an exception.

As the Church spread outside Palestine it increasingly denied the significance of that land despite the presence of indigenous Christian communities. The Emperor Constantine (c. 285–337), however, supported the building of large churches on significant sites of Jesus' life and death.

Monastic orders followed suit and by the sixth century more than 500 churches had been built and attracted each year thousands of Christian pilgrims. Residents claimed that the grace of God was more abundant in Jerusalem than elsewhere and increasingly the term ‘holy land’ was used. The church fathers opposed Jewish hopes of restoration, and the Emperor Julian’s late fourth-century plan to rebuild the Temple worried several generations of Christians, even after his early death in 363.

In the Eastern-Byzantine Empire, the Justinian Code (529–53) removed many Jewish rights granted by previous emperors (such as the Theodosian Code, 438). Severe restrictions on synagogue practices enabled local authorities to outlaw Judaism, close synagogues and enforce baptisms despite some church opposition (e.g., Nicaea, 787). In the West, Pope Gregory the Great (540–604) insisted that Jewish legal rights be respected and their internal affairs not disturbed, but official church protection through the later Middle Ages was more often ignored than observed.

Interestingly, as far as scriptural interpretation is concerned, there is evidence that Jewish and Christian commentators were aware of and sometimes even admired each other’s interpretations. This was a two-way process and both Jews and Christians occasionally adopted each other’s interpretations. The willingness of some Jewish exegetes to appropriate Christian interpretation, wrap it in Jewish garb and include it in Jewish biblical commentary suggests a closer relationship than might have been anticipated.

From approximately 1100 onwards, as Christendom became more homogeneous, Jews were seen as one of the last ‘different’ groups, and by the sixteenth century they had been expelled from most of Western Europe, beginning with England in 1290. Jews were liable to mass assaults, as witnessed in the Crusades from the eleventh century and the response to the Black Death in the fourteenth. During this period, Christians were becoming increasingly aware of the existence of post-biblical Jewish writings such as the Talmud and denounced them. This was the time of the Inquisition, the burning of thousands of Jewish books, including the Talmud, the preaching of conversionist sermons at which Jewish attendance was compelled, blood libel accusations and the wearing of a distinctive badge.

Since Judaism was a minority in both the Islamic world and Christendom, Jews were prompted to consider why God allowed these faiths to flourish. One view was that Christianity was a form of idolatry, perhaps not in the full biblical sense but through inherited patterns of idolatrous worship. Another approach categorised Christianity in terms of the Noachide

laws, which formulated moral standards without demand for conversion to Judaism. According to Rabbi Johanan, whoever denied idolatry was deemed a Jew (BT. Megillah 13a, a concept revived in the nineteenth century by Elia Benamozegh). Another view, propagated by Judah ha-Levi (c. 1070/5–1141) and Maimonides (1135–1204), was that Christianity prepared the way for nations to worship the God of Israel and for redemption. Menachem Ha-Me'iri (1249–1316) put forward the most positive view in the Middle Ages when he argued that Christianity should be understood as a form of monotheism and coined the phrase 'nations bound by the ways of religion' to relax certain rabbinic laws and facilitate a more fruitful interaction between Jews and Christians.

Jews viewed the Reformation as a positive development, partly because of its challenge to the unity of the Church, which at first diverted Christian attention away from Judaism. This was reinforced by the Protestant return to the Hebrew Bible (*sola scriptura*) and some Reformers' awareness of Jewish biblical commentaries (which may also have contributed to a rise in messianic fervour among Jews). The early writings of Martin Luther (1483–1546), such as *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew* (1523), suggested a dramatic change in Christian perceptions of Judaism, but expectations were short-lived and the bitter anti-Jewish treatises written towards the end of his life served to reinforce Jewish loyalty to the Catholic emperor. Despite its early promise, most Jews saw the Christian 'teaching of contempt' continue unabated in the Reformation, although John Calvin (1509–64) and Calvinist churches were generally less antagonistic and held a more positive view of Judaism. Calvinism produced tolerance for Jews in the Netherlands and later in the American colonies, where the separation of church and state and an emphasis on the rights of man helped create a more tolerant society.

In Europe, during the dramatic changes of the Enlightenment a small number of Jews, such as Moses Mendelssohn (1729–86), reflected more positively on the Jewish relationship with Christianity. Although Mendelssohn himself remained Jewish, there was significant Jewish assimilation into either secularism or Christianity. Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) famously called his conversion a 'ticket of admission to European culture'. The dramatic increase in assimilation in the nineteenth century was foreshadowed by the French Revolution, which offered Jews equality on condition of abandoning their faith.

A more widespread shift in attitudes to Christianity among some Jewish religious leaders can be noted in the years following the Enlightenment and consequent Jewish emancipation. Reform figures such as Abraham

Geiger (1810–74) and Stephen Wise (1874–1949) embraced the Jewishness of Jesus, and even S. R. Hirsch (1808–88), one of the founders of Modern Orthodox Judaism, argued that Jesus embodied the essence of Judaism. Jewish philosophers such as Hermann Cohen (1842–1918) and Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929) also made contributions to the Jewish understanding of Christianity, the former arguing that Jewish ethics were superior to Christian (heavily influencing Leo Baeck (1873–1956)), and the latter that Christianity was a pathway to God for Gentiles. As liberal culture spread throughout Europe, East European thinkers also wrote on Christianity: for example, Abraham Isaac Kook (1865–1935), later Chief Rabbi of Palestine, praised Jesus but criticised Christianity for moving far from Judaism.

Jewish views of Christianity were also affected by an increasing anti-Jewish prejudice and the rise of racial antisemitism. The Enlightenment doctrine that, whilst society could be remade, certain people were beyond redemption provided the basis for modern racism and reached a climax in the rise of Nazism and ultimately in the Holocaust. The failure of the churches during 1933–45 resulted in anger towards and distrust of Christianity, epitomised by the radical views of Eliezer Berkovits (1908–92), who argued that the roots of Nazism can be traced back to the New Testament: ‘Without Christianity’s New Testament, Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* could never have been written,’ he wrote in 1974.

During the years of the Third Reich, while most German churches accepted the state’s ‘race, soil, and blood’ stance, some churches, such as the Dutch Reformed Churches, began to question traditional *Adversus Iudaeos* theology about Judaism as well as the assumed necessity of Jewish conversion. In 1947 a small group of leading Christians and Jews meeting at Seelisberg, Switzerland called on the churches to revise their thinking and preaching about Judaism and its people. This remained a minority position and in 1948, while acknowledging and regretting the churches’ contribution to antisemitism, both the Evangelical Church in Germany and the World Council of Churches insisted that Christians were still obligated to include Jews in their evangelistic work, since Israel’s election had passed to the Church.

Deep-seated theological transformation began two to three decades after the Holocaust. Even the term ‘Holocaust’ was questioned and began to be replaced by the word ‘Shoah’, which is also biblical in origin. ‘Holocaust’ is the Greek translation of the Hebrew *olah*, meaning ‘whole burnt offering’, and its sacrificial overtones, implying an appeasement of God, was offensive to many. ‘Shoah’ is Hebrew for ‘catastrophe’ and its connotations of rupture and doubt are often preferred.

Consideration of the Church's 'teaching of contempt' for the Jewish people was put on the Second Vatican Council's agenda by Pope John XXIII (1881–1963) at the urging of Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–72) and Jules Isaac (1877–1963). This resulted in the publication of *Nostra Aetate* (1965). Both men encouraged church leaders to condemn antisemitism, to eliminate anti-Judaism from church teachings and to acknowledge the permanent value of Judaism. *Nostra Aetate's* insistence that 'Jews should not be presented as rejected [. . .] by God' was a significant turning point for the Roman Catholic Church and has been further amplified and developed by later pontifical documents. When Pope John Paul II (1920–2005) led the Vatican to recognise the state of Israel in 1994, he overturned centuries of teaching that tied Jewish eviction from their land to their sinful rejection of Christ. Yet at the same time the Church, as representative of God and Christ on earth, is not seen as guilty of any error or wrong. This continues to be a cause of tension when antisemitism and the Holocaust are subjects of discussion, exemplified by contemporary controversies over the role of the wartime Pope, Pius XII (1876–1958).

The Protestant churches in the last sixty years have also come to the recognition that the Holocaust made for ever unacceptable the view of Christianity as the successor religion to Judaism, as though Judaism had no legitimate place or vocation in the world once Christianity had come. Most of the Protestant church bodies have now produced statements, such as the 2001 *Church and Israel* published by the Leuenberg Church Fellowship, that seek to clarify the present-day relationship of their communities with the Jewish people and Judaism, and speak of God's eternal covenant with both Israel and the Church – either one covenant in two modes or two inseparable but distinct covenants.

The Orthodox Church, however, along with fundamentalist and biblically conservative churches generally, did not participate in these theological revisions, and still have not done so. Some churches retain an insistence on active missionary obligation, and both Jewish and Christian liturgy remains, for the most part, unchanged in the light of the modern Jewish–Christian encounter.

Mission remains a problematic topic for the churches, particularly the Protestant branches. The Evangelical Church of the Rhineland's 1980 document was a major turning point with its assertion that Jews were permanently elected as God's people, and that the Church was taken into this covenant with God through Jesus Christ the Jew. It insisted that the Church has no mission to the Jews, and the United Church of Canada has also repudiated efforts to convert Jews since God's covenant with Israel is

irrevocable (2002). An ecumenical American scholars' group repeated these assertions and affirmed the redemptive power of God's enduring covenant with the Jewish people (*A Sacred Obligation*, 2002).

As the post-Second World War reassessment of Christian attitudes towards Judaism accelerated and became more widespread, it began to have an impact on Jewish attitudes and contributed to a reassessment of Christianity among Jews. This eventually resulted in the publication of *Dabru Emet* in 2000, a document that explored the place of Christianity in Jewish terms. It represents the views of a significant proportion of Jews in English-speaking countries, although there are also many for whom Christianity is unimportant in their Jewish identity or who are critical of the document (particularly some Orthodox Jews).

THE MODERN STUDY OF JEWISH–CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

Several major themes in the last fifty years have emerged from writings that have explored Jewish–Christian relations. Beginning with biblical studies, modern scholarly works demonstrate a willingness to take the Hebrew Bible seriously on its own terms, rejecting the traditional approach of the *Adversus Iudaeos* literature, which had rendered it virtually impossible for Christians to know how to write an Old Testament theology. It is increasingly accepted that Christian biblical theology can only be developed in dialogue with Judaism.

Associated with biblical theology are studies of the New Testament. Profoundly influenced by the writings of the scholars Geza Vermes (b. 1924) and E. P. Sanders (b. 1937), modern scholarship since the 1970s has emphasised that the ministry of Jesus can only be understood in the historical context of first-century Palestinian Judaism, since Jesus was a Jew who taught his fellow Jews, some of whom followed his teaching while others did not. Scholars point out that Jesus' Jewish followers argued amongst themselves about the conditions under which Gentiles might be admitted to this new Jewish movement and with other Jews over issues such as Torah observance and claims about Jesus. The New Testament bears witness to the disputes, which were vigorous and often bitter, but until recently New Testament scholars had almost completely neglected the fact that these arguments were between Jews, about a Jew or about Jewish issues. Traditionally, polemical passages were read as if they were 'Christian' arguments against 'Jews'. Modern scholarship has shown that to read them this way is to misread them and that this misreading contributed significantly to the Christian 'teaching of contempt'.

Rosemary Radford Ruether (b. 1936) argued that Christology in particular was the root cause of the *Adversus Iudaeos* tradition and that antisemitism lay deep within Christian tradition. As she put it, 'Anti-Judaism developed theologically in Christianity as the left-hand of Christology. That is to say, anti-Judaism was the negative side of the Christian claim that Jesus was the Christ.' Ruether suggested that, when Jews refused to accept the Christian teachings regarding Christ, Christians felt obliged to undermine their opponents' views. This was achieved by anti-Jewish Christian teaching and supersessionist polemic.

One of the most influential post-war New Testament scholars is Ed Parish Sanders, whose work is informed by a study of early Judaism in its own right, not just as 'background' to the story of Christian origins. He placed the Christian–Jewish debate at the heart of academic biblical study. Another important biblical scholar is Krister Stendahl, Bishop of Stockholm (1921–2008). In his studies of Paul, Stendahl maintains that the apostle's chief concern was not introspective and individualistic but historical and communal, that is, the question of how, while the Jews remain within the Abrahamic covenant, Gentiles also can be adopted into it; 'justification by faith' means that this can be done without strict Torah observance. Stendahl argues that Paul's experience on the road to Damascus was less a 'conversion' than a 'call'. As a result of these and other New Testament studies, scholarship now tends to describe the relationship between Judaism and Christianity in terms of siblings (the metaphor of elder and younger brothers being the most common) rather than in terms of a father (Judaism)–daughter (Christianity) relationship.

As well as reflection on the New Testament, the study of antisemitism and the Holocaust is also of central concern to Jewish–Christian relations, as illustrated by continuing controversies over the role of Pius XII. Franklin Littell (1917–2009), a Methodist theologian who was in Germany immediately after the Second World War, stresses the failures of the churches, notably Protestant 'peddlers of cheap grace'. He promoted the study of the Holocaust in the development of Christian theology, suggesting that Christian–Jewish conversation would help free it from antisemitism. Karl Barth's writings are also an important topic. Barth's opposition to Nazism and antisemitism was based on the view that the relationship between the Jewish people and the Church was unbreakable because of God's election of the Jew Jesus, which made opposition to antisemitism the duty of every Christian. He compared Jewish–Christian relations to the relationship between the various Christian churches. Barth (1886–1968) has been criticised for using supersessionist language and would not engage in

Jewish–Christian dialogue. In his view, the sole authority of Christ took precedence over any secular political authority and discussions with Jews were subordinate to this principle.

Catholic writers such as Edward Flannery (1912–98) have also examined the history of Christian antisemitism, and Charlotte Klein (1915–85) uncovered surprisingly fixed ideas among some New Testament scholars, even including contemporary writers, who contrasted law and grace in Pauline teaching and continually referred to first-century Judaism as ‘late Judaism’ (*Spätjudentum*). Among the scholars whose prejudices she revealed are Martin Noth (1902–68), Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976) and Joachim Jeremias (1900–79). A similar contribution has been made by Katharina von Kellenbach (b. 1960), whose study of certain feminist theologians revealed a prejudicial portrait of Judaism as the antithesis of feminist values, associating it wholly with patriarchy. The writings of Ruether can be cited in this regard, since she maintained a view of the coming of Jesus as heralding the liberation of oppressed women from a patriarchal, oppressive Jewish culture.

As far as the Holocaust is concerned, a number of Jewish thinkers have been particularly influential, especially Richard Rubenstein (b. 1924), Emil Fackenheim (1916–2003), and Irving Greenberg (b. 1933). Rubenstein sets the mechanical non-humanity of the perpetrators of the Shoah in a vast historical context, on the one hand of slavery (essentially making humans into consumables) and on the other the rise of the inhuman city, where functionaries survey the lives of the city-dwellers from behind closed doors. Rubenstein rejects any notion of God acting in history, for after Auschwitz only human beings can create value and meaning, and Judaism has a particular role in this renewal and reintegration.

Rubenstein’s argument that belief in a redeeming God – one who is active in history – is no longer credible deeply influenced Christian theologians, among them three Protestant thinkers who have been described as the ‘death of God’ theologians, T. Altizer (b. 1927), W. Hamilton (b. 1924) and P. van Buren (1924–98).

Fackenheim, himself a survivor, seeks to interpret the significance of the Shoah, where evil went beyond all explanation. God and Israel are still in relationship, and the Jewish people are precluded from despair or abdication of responsibility. Fackenheim’s thesis of a 614th commandment for Jews to remain Jewish and thus not to grant Hitler a posthumous victory gained wide recognition among Jews and Christians, and he called on Christians to support Israel as a guarantor for the future survival of the Jewish people and for Jews and Christians to work together for *tikkun olam*

(mending of the world). An example of Fackenheim's influence can be seen in the writings of Roy Eckardt (1918–98) who, following Fackenheim, called for a Christian return into the ongoing history of Israel.

Irving Greenberg developed an interest in Jewish–Christian relations, seeing the Holocaust as an event that needs to lead to the re-evaluation of Christian identity and relations with Jews. His concept of 'voluntary covenant', according to which Jews after the Holocaust are no longer commanded but choose to take on the continuity of Judaism, has been discussed and incorporated into some aspects of Christian Holocaust theology.

Roy and Alice Eckardt were profoundly shocked that the Christian churches had for twenty years remained silent about the Holocaust and continued to remain silent about contemporary Jewish existence (Roy called it 'the new Christian silence'). Only, he suggests, by becoming the younger brother once again in the house of God the Father of Israel will the Church be able to live authentically. With his wife Alice (b. 1923), he pleaded for a 180-degree reversal of inherited Christian theology, indeed a 'starting all over again' to eliminate all vestiges of supersessionism. Both saw historic Christian anti-Judaism as directly connected to modern antisemitism and as providing the soil in which the seeds of Nazism could flourish.

The Eckardts also devoted themselves to interpreting the significance of the state of Israel and vigorously defending it against its critics. As a source of Jewish–Christian controversy, Israel has been the subject of much discussion. The most critical scholars include the Christian liberation theologian Naim Ateek (b. 1937) and the radical Jewish theologian Marc Ellis (b. 1952), who take issue with other theologians by suggesting that Holocaust theology has failed by neglecting to analyse the contemporary use of power, which has now passed into Jewish hands in Israel. Ellis sees solidarity with the Palestinian people as Jewish theology's decisive test and suggests that Jews have to learn from the mistakes of Christians.

A number of Christian theologians have attempted to develop a systematic revision of Christian theology, the most detailed study being by Paul van Buren. In his trilogy *A Theology of the Jewish–Christian Reality* (1980–7) he considers the implications that emerge within Christianity when the continuing validity of the covenant between God and the Jewish people is acknowledged. Van Buren argued that the foundational document of the Church is the Hebrew Bible; as a record of God's conversations with Jews, these Scriptures belong to Israel, and Christians are committed overhearers. Because the covenant between God and Israel continues, churches must reformulate all christological statements that denigrate Judaism. He

viewed Judaism and the Jewish people as partners with Christians on the same ‘Way’ to the kingdom of God. Towards the end of his life van Buren somewhat revised his thinking and was concerned about the dangers of relativisation and the undermining of Christian faith. However, his earlier work has been continued by the Catholic scholar John Pawlikowski (b. 1940), who has reflected on issues associated with covenant, mission and especially Christology in light of Jewish–Christian dialogue.

Other recent studies have also considered developments in educational and liturgical materials, particularly in the United States. Philip Cunningham (b. 1953) has studied textbooks used in Catholic schools and religious education programmes and has also written concise introductions to the Sunday readings (following the Roman Catholic lectionary). Mary Boys (b. 1947) has tackled specific implications of Jewish–Christian dialogue (traditionally dominated by male voices) for Christian education and biblical studies. Her most important work, *Has God Only One Blessing?* (2000), addresses Christian supersessionism and suggests new ways for the Christian message to be proclaimed without anti-Judaism.

For their part, a small but growing number of Jewish scholars have considered the theological implications of Jewish–Christian relations for Judaism. The Jewish community does not subject itself to the discipline of public statements like the numerous Christian statements of the Catholic and Protestant churches. In part, this is because of the asymmetrical nature of the relationship, the history of the *Adversus Iudaeos* tradition and the associated teaching of contempt, and in part because of the distinctive nature of Jewish religious polity, which militates against multi-denominational agreed statements. However, the publication of *Dabru Emet* in 2000 and of the book which followed in the same year, *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, symbolises a growing awareness among Jewish theologians of the theological implications of Jewish–Christian relations. An important Jewish study has been penned by David Novak entitled *The Image of the Non-Jew in Judaism* (1983), which analyses the Noachide laws and the significance of Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. His work marks the beginning of a process that will lead to more reflection on a Jewish theology of Jewish–Christian dialogue.

A notable feature of modern scholarly writings is the increasing number of studies either co-edited by Jewish and Christian scholars or consisting of conversations between Jews and Christians. Among the more significant publications are the dialogue between Karl Rahner (1904–84) and Pinchas Lapidé (1922–97), *Encountering Jesus – Encountering Judaism: A Dialogue* (1987), and the study guide of the New Testament and rabbinic texts by

Michael Hilton (b. 1951) and Gordian Marshall (1938–2007) entitled *The Gospels and Rabbinic Judaism* (1988).

Educational centres for the study and teaching of Jewish–Christian relations began appearing in the aftermath of the Shoah, but in the last quarter of the twentieth century their number increased rapidly, especially in academic settings. John M. Oesterreicher (1904–93) founded the first such centre in 1953 at Seton Hall University in New Jersey. His Institute of Judaeo–Christian Studies published an influential series of yearbooks entitled *The Bridge* which explored theological concepts that would inform Vatican II’s 1965 declaration *Nostra Aetate*.

Starting in 1973, Christian and Jewish leaders in the United States jointly sponsored periodic National Workshops in Jewish–Christian Relations. To date, sixteen have been held in various cities. Local leaders who had collaborated in preparing for the workshop held in Baltimore in 1986 decided that their combined efforts should continue. This led to the establishment of the Institute of Christian & Jewish Studies, one of the larger such centres in the United States. Among the notable achievements of the ICJS was the sponsorship of the group of Jewish scholars who published *Dabru Emet*.

Since the 1980s more and more university-based research institutes have appeared, such as the Centre for the Study of Jewish–Christian Relations (1998) at Cambridge in the United Kingdom. In 2002, the Council of Centers of Jewish–Christian Relations, representing twenty-five academic institutes in North America, was established ‘for the exchange of information, cooperation, and mutual enrichment among centers and institutes for Christian–Jewish studies and relations’. The increasing number of such academic centres suggests that contemporary encounters between Christians and Jews have begun to consider questions that require the scholarly resources of universities; this represents an unprecedented development in the long shared history of Christianity and Judaism.

THE APPROACH TAKEN – SOME EXAMPLES

The thread running through this book is the encounter between Jews and Christians, and it is to be hoped that the reader will be surprised to discover the extent of the impact that Jewish–Christian relations have made on shaping intellectual and religious life during the last 2,000 years.

Needless to say, serious attention has been directed to the relationship during the last two millennia, but the tone and character of that attention has changed significantly since the middle of the twentieth century. In the past it has typically been apologetic or polemical, or else has simply

consisted of an examination of, for example, the place of Christianity in Jewish thought, and vice versa. The weakness of such an approach is that, while it may enhance the understanding of one religion *or* the other, it fails to do justice to both. Jewish–Christian relations cannot be categorised under Jewish Studies or viewed simply as an aspect of Christian theology. Although closely related to these disciplines (not to mention history, sociology, literature, etc.), the encounter between Judaism and Christianity must be examined in its own right; nor, while it necessarily deals with the subject, is its principal focus the dialogue between the two religions.

This book begins with an examination of the foundational texts in the formative period of both Judaism and Christianity, devoting the first three chapters to the New Testament, the writings of the church fathers and the rabbis. We then consider some of the unexpected encounters that took place during the first six centuries; unexpected because whilst writings about the ‘Other’ were generally negative there is evidence to suggest that relations ‘on the ground’ were far healthier than a review of the religious writings might lead us to believe.

The next chapter examines the medieval relationship when lines of demarcation grew sharper and more clear-cut, especially from the twelfth century onwards. During this period although there were outbreaks of tolerance, attitudes were generally negative and there were numerous acts of Christian violence against Jews. The Enlightenment and Jewish emancipation marked a new stage in the history of Jewish–Christian relations and the chapter ends with a consideration of the impact of the pre-modern period, focusing on Christian Hebraism as well as Voltaire (1694–1778) and the French Revolution.

The final section of the book deals with the modern period – the growth of antisemitism and the calamity of the Holocaust, the rise of Zionism and the creation of the state of Israel. Both developments remain central to the contemporary encounter between Jews and Christians. The last chapter considers the significance of the Jewish–Christian encounter for the wider interfaith encounter, beginning with relations with Islam, the third Abrahamic faith, and also considering the encounter with Eastern religions.

The study of Jewish–Christian relations has significance for the study of interfaith relations in general. One of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century is to generate an effective dialogue between many faiths. The challenge takes place daily, not only in the seminary or the place of worship but also in the classrooms of the primary, secondary and tertiary

sectors as well as in popular culture and in the workings of intercommunal and international relations. A better understanding of Jewish–Christian relations may lead to the realisation that, while Judaism and Christianity are separate, they are also profoundly connected. If this can happen between Judaism and Christianity perhaps it can take place in the encounter with other religions as well.

To give the reader an idea of the approach taken in this book we will briefly examine three distinct topics: liturgy, art and Jewish–Christian relations in the United Kingdom.

LITURGY

Liturgy sheds light on different periods of Jewish–Christian relations, notably the formative era, when Christian worship was rooted in Jewish liturgy since Jesus prayed as a Jew. Even after the Christ event, Jesus' disciples continued their Jewish way of worship in a manner that did not distinguish them from other Jews (Acts 2:42–46).

The Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9–13; Luke 11:1–4) is one example of Christianity's origins within Judaism. Even today, it provides a fertile area for Jews and Christians to explore; it has become a common subject of discussion in Jewish–Christian dialogue groups because there is nothing in it that is unfamiliar to Jewish ears. Most scholars believe that the prayer's original form was Aramaic and that it has antecedents both in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the liturgy of the early synagogue. This is demonstrated, for example, by Ben Sira 28:2–4 which states, 'forgive your neighbour the wrong he has done and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray'. David de Sola Pool (1885–1970) wrote that it has an 'exact equivalent in the Kaddish [prayer of mourning], except for differences in person'. The prayer begins with the main concerns of the Kaddish and then follows the outline of the *Amidah* (Eighteen Benedictions): praise, petition and thanksgiving. The hallowing of God's name is an essential part of both the Lord's Prayer and the Kaddish, as is reference to the coming of God's kingdom. The *Didache*, a manual of church discipline from the late first century CE, included the instruction that the Paternoster be recited three times each day (8:2), like the Eighteen Benedictions.

The Eucharist itself combines elements of the traditional synagogue service with Passover and *birkat hamazon* (grace after meals); baptism owes its origin to the purifying ritual of the *mikveh* (ritual bath); the Jewish tradition of carrying the scrolls around the synagogue is mirrored in certain Christian liturgies by processing the Gospels around the church; and, in

Eastern rites, the blessed bread (*antidorian*) is sometimes distributed at the end of the liturgy, quite distinct from the bread of the Eucharist, similar to the Kiddush ceremony at the end of a Saturday morning Shabbat service. It should therefore be of no surprise that the term for ‘church’, *ecclesia*, like the Greek word *synagoga*, is an equivalent of the Hebrew *kahal*, ‘assembly’.

It is also possible to discern the Jewish background of the Christian liturgical cycle, as John Paul II’s 1998 Apostolic Letter, *Dies Domini*, acknowledged. The observance of the Sabbath did not disappear from Christian practice and in the early centuries Christians observed both Saturday and Sunday, as witnessed in the second and third centuries by Irenaeus (c. 130–c. 200) and Origen (185–254) respectively. Easter and Pentecost are adaptations, with dates modified according to the solar calendar, of Passover and *Shavuot*. Both the festivals of Epiphany and Sukkot include celebrations of water and light, features that are better preserved in Eastern Christianity than in the West, as is true also of elements shared by Jewish and Eastern Christian wedding ceremonies.

In terms of Jewish–Christian mutual interaction it seems that Jewish liturgy and its Christian equivalent were not, respectively, progenitor and offspring but exercised two-way influences. For example, in the Middle Ages aspects of Purim celebrations were clearly influenced by the Carnival and Twelfth Night. When Jewish communities adopted for their rabbinic texts the codex, they were copying what had long been known in the Christian world.

Mutual influence on liturgies continued in modern times. Nineteenth-century Jewish reformers adopted forms of Protestant worship, including the introduction of a sermon, the use of the vernacular for the service, shortening its length, and the use of choirs. One motivation of the first reformers was to prevent Jews joining the Church, and a style of prayer closer to that of the Church was thought to be more appealing. The new rite of confirmation, of which the name, idea and many specific features were borrowed from the Church, was an early and popular innovation. Permitting men and women to sit together in synagogue was an innovation of Isaac Mayer Wise (1819–1900) in New York in 1851, following the practice of most American churches. The Association for Reform in Judaism conducted its weekly service exclusively on Sunday. During the second half of the twentieth century Progressive Jewish and Protestant groups appointed women rabbis and clergy and used inclusive language for prayers.

After the Holocaust, some Christian rites and texts were revised. Texts that might be perceived as antisemitic, most notably the Roman Good

Friday liturgy, were either removed or replaced by alternatives. In 1959 Pope John XXIII changed the disparaging Good Friday prayer for the Jews (*pro perfidiis Iudaeis* or 'for the perfidious Jews'), ending in Paul VI's corrections to the Roman Missal of 1970 (for 'the Jews, first to hear the word of God'). Thus the prayer, which before Vatican II was a prayer for their conversion, became a prayer that Jews will be deepened in the faith given to them by God. It is perhaps unsurprising that the revision of the Tridentine Rite in 2008 caused such consternation in Jewish–Catholic circles because it appeared to be a step back to pre-Vatican II days.

Finally, although problematic for some practising Jews and Christians, interfaith worship has become more familiar. This is often centred on Holocaust commemoration, although it is also increasingly common practice for Christians and Jews to gather for prayer on special occasions throughout the year.

ART

It might seem surprising that art should even be considered in the study of Jewish–Christian relations. In the past, scholars turned to the following biblical verses:

You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God. (Exod. 20:4–5.)

This command has been interpreted to mean that Jews and Christians would automatically have opposed every form of figurative visual representation. However, the rabbinic writings make reference to the widespread existence of Jewish figurative art, even though opposing views existed. The Targum mentions that figurative art in synagogues was approved as long as it was used not for idolatrous purposes but only for decoration:

You shall not set up a figured stone in your land, to bow down to it, but a mosaic pavement of designs and forms you may set in the floor of your places of worship, so long as you do not do obeisance to it. (Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Lev. 26:11)

Figurative art was also a significant part of everyday life in the early Church. Like the rabbis, the church fathers were concerned about the idolatrous nature of art in places of worship. For example, the Council of Elvira (306 CE) stated that there should be no pictures in a church in case the object of worship was depicted on the walls, but Tertullian (2nd century

CE) states that figurative representation was not forbidden because it was not idolatrous.

Both Jewish and Christian leaders worried about the temptations of religious art. Even though they acknowledged the pious purpose of visual art, religious leaders remained concerned that such art, misunderstood or misused, could become a source of sin rather than edification for those same unsophisticated viewers it was meant to aid. Pope Gregory the Great insisted on the value of paintings on the walls of churches to instruct those who could not read the lessons in the books, but showed his concern about the dangers of these images by insisting that his clergy take care to prohibit anyone from mistakenly worshipping the pictures themselves. Similarly, Rabbi Meir ben Barukh (d. 1293) in thirteenth-century Rothenburg warned against Jewish prayerbooks that contained images of animals, since Jews might turn aside to contemplate the pictures rather than inclining their hearts to God. Yet mutual interaction continued. As a result of their equivalents in the Church, Jewish prayerbooks grew in size, elegance, content and authority and even included prayers for non-Jewish rulers.

A general influence of Christian art upon Jewish is especially noticeable in the Middle Ages when illuminated Hebrew manuscripts were influenced by the Gothic style of Western Christian works and Christian workshops may even have produced Bibles and Passover *haggadot* for Jewish clients. Because of their common Scriptures, Christians and Jews often chose to illustrate the same story, such as the Sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22), as we shall discuss later in this book, demonstrating that they shared a set of core stories.

At the same time, it was increasingly common for Christians to portray Jews with negative stereotyping and often with outright derision. Even biblical patriarchs such as Abraham and Moses were given negative attributes. For example, Christian artists endowed Moses with horns protruding from his forehead, which, although originally meant to suggest his honour and power (as a result of the Vulgate translation of Exod. 34:35 that describes Moses' face as 'horned', a mistaken interpretation of Hebrew *qaran*, 'shone brilliantly', as *qeren*, 'horn'), soon came to signify ignominy and even disrepute. The horns on the famous monumental sculpture of Moses by Michelangelo (1475–1564) in Rome's San Pietro in Vincoli may not have been originally intended as derisive, but came to be seen by later viewers as a negative attribute, specifically pointing to his Jewishness.

The visual allegory of Ecclesia and Synagoga, female figures fashioned by Christian artists to proclaim Christian replacement of Jews, and Jews

as responsible for the death of Christ, became common in Western Christian art. Later on, the illustrations of popular literature, including the famous Jewish characters of Shakespeare (1564–1616) and Dickens (1812–70), Shylock and Fagin, were arguably more antisemitic than the texts themselves.

By contrast to these defamatory images of Jews made by Christians, the Protestant artist Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69) was known for his unusually sensitive portrayal of Jews, both in portraits and in representations of biblical scenes, based upon Jewish acquaintances he made in his native Amsterdam. Perhaps the most famous of these is his late painting titled *The Jewish Bride*, which represents the bridal couple with both dignity and tenderness.

In the twentieth century, some Jewish artists took up Christian themes, including the Russian artist Marc Chagall (1887–1985), who included images of Jesus' crucifixion (often showing Jesus wearing a Jewish prayer shawl in place of a loincloth) in some of his paintings reflecting on his childhood in a Russian Jewish village, and the sculptor Jacob Epstein (1880–1959), who adapted the image of the *pietà* (Mary holding her dead son) and of the risen Christ as war memorials.

THE UNITED KINGDOM

Christianity has been the dominant religion in the United Kingdom from the sixth century CE and, although Jews may have arrived in Roman times, the first organised Jewish community only started after the Norman Conquest in 1066 when Jews accompanied William the Conqueror from Rouen. Jewish communities were then established in London – on a site still known as Old Jewry – and in Lincoln, Oxford and some other towns.

As elsewhere in Europe, in the twelfth century Christian attitudes towards Jews grew steadily worse as royal power became weaker and less able to protect Jews. The barons, to whom Jews lent money, encouraged anti-Jewish violence and Christian clergy became more hostile. Popular prejudice was reinforced by accusations of 'blood libel' (the accusation that Jews kill a young Christian boy and use his blood in the ritual preparation of unleavened bread or *matzah* for Passover), which originated in England with the case of William of Norwich in 1144. In 1190 massacres of Jews occurred in several cities, most notably in York at Clifford's Tower, and in 1290 Edward I expelled all Jews from the realm. Despite the expulsion, some Marranos came to Britain and Shakespeare's Shylock was perhaps modelled on one of them. *The Merchant of Venice* depicts Shylock as both

villain and victim – an avaricious moneylender and Christian-hater but a man who suffers greatly and is forced to convert.

In the seventeenth century the Puritans showed renewed interest in Judaism, perhaps because of the importance they gave to the Old Testament. Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), himself a Puritan, was aware of the economic benefits of Jewish tradesmen and allowed Jews to return in 1656. Bevis Marks, the oldest synagogue in Britain, was opened in 1701, and in 1760 the Board of Deputies of British Jews, based on a parliamentary model, was founded. During the tenure of Nathan Adler (1845–91) the Office of the Chief Rabbi, based on the Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury, was established.

In the nineteenth century Jews (alongside Roman Catholics and Non-conformists) gained political emancipation, although the Church of England retained certain privileges. Although delayed by the opposition of bishops, in 1858 Lionel de Rothschild was the first practising Jew to be formally admitted as a Member of Parliament. The same century also saw increasing divisions in the Jewish community, notably among Liberal and Orthodox Jews, mirroring Christian divisions such as those between Methodists and the Church of England.

In the latter part of the century, Jewish refugees fleeing Russian persecution came to the UK and between 1881 and 1914 the Jewish population rose from about 25,000 to nearly 300,000. Nazi persecution led to another influx of refugees in the 1930s and some Christians joined protest meetings against persecution, while Christian missionary centres in East London and other cities provided practical help. (The number of Jews in the UK today is about 250,000, although this does not include those of Jewish birth who have no affiliation with a synagogue.) For example, an Anglican vicar, James Parkes (1896–1981), helped mobilise British opinion on behalf of Jewish victims, playing a leading role in helping refugees escape the Nazis. He was devoted to fighting antisemitism and seeking out its origins, which he found in the writings of the early Church, including the New Testament (see, for example, his *The Conflict of the Church and Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Anti-Semitism* (1934)). Archbishop William Temple (1881–1944) was central in the formation of the UK Council of Christians and Jews in 1942, and all subsequent Archbishops of Canterbury have been CCJ Presidents and have taken an active interest in relations with Anglo-Jewry and in working in partnership with the Office of the Chief Rabbi.

Mission has often been a controversial topic in Jewish–Christian relations, illustrated in famous and popular works of English literature such

as the conversion of Shylock's daughter Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice*. Conversionist narratives were especially common in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, highlighting the supersessionist tendencies of Christian society, and are satirised in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1874–7).

The Church's Mission to the Jews (CMJ) was originally active in the East End of London, working with Jewish immigrants. After the Second World War, CMJ moved to north-west London, where many Jews lived, and the headquarters are now in St Albans. Today it seeks to combat antisemitism and to make Gentile Christians more aware of their faith's Jewish roots, as well as seeking Jewish evangelism. George Carey (b. 1935), when he became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1991, unlike his predecessors declined to be a Patron of CMJ as, he said, this was incompatible with his position as President of the Council of Christians and Jews.

Christian Zionism in the UK influenced the publication of the Balfour Declaration (1917), which declared the support of the British government for the Jewish claim to Palestine. Arthur James Balfour (1848–1930), the Foreign Secretary, and David Lloyd George (1863–1945), the Prime Minister, saw their support of Zionism as the fulfilment of a historical mission. Lloyd George, for example, was influenced by his Welsh Baptist background, with its deeply rooted, literalist biblical interpretation and interest in messianic expectation. He wrote, 'I was taught far more about the history of the Jews than about the history of my own people,' and a romantic interest in the survival of the Jewish people reinforced his political determination that Protestant Britain should control the Holy Places. David Street, in the heart of the Old City of Jerusalem, is one of a number of streets in Israel named after the former Prime Minister.

Today, attitudes towards Israel are the most common cause of division between Jews and Christians, and, although most churches have made significant efforts to eliminate anti-Jewish teaching and are committed to maintaining good relations with the Jewish community, there is a danger that the conflict in the Middle East may spill over into the UK, although bodies such as the Council of Christians and Jews and the Three Faiths Forum try to ensure good communal relations. In 2006, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams (b. 1950), initiated a dialogue with the Chief Rabbis of Israel and set out a framework for regular meetings in Jerusalem and Lambeth.

Yet, despite tensions, Jewish–Christian relations are primarily friendly, epitomised by joint visits between local churches and synagogues. In 1988, the Lambeth Conference issued a detailed statement, entitled *Jews*,

Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue, in which the Church of England repudiated antisemitism and renewed the wish to purge the Church's teaching of all anti-Jewish elements. The document called for a common mission between Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Recent Archbishops of Canterbury and Chief Rabbis have been proactively committed to deepening relations. For example, in 2005 a Lambeth–Jewish dialogue group was established as a joint initiative of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the present author. Since then, it has been co-chaired by the Interfaith Office at Lambeth Palace and the Centre for the Study of Jewish–Christian Relations in Cambridge. The group meets quarterly and its goal, on the one hand, is to predict and pre-empt future tensions and misunderstandings in Jewish–Christian relations in the UK and on the other, to foster greater appreciation of and sensitivity to the needs of one another.