

## **Anti-Judaism: Christianity's Enduring Sin**

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Growing up in 1950s New Zealand meant I did so in a society where WWII was vividly remembered. It was quite simply 'the war' that your parents and grandparents lived through and fought in. It was kept alive in marches of many men and a few women in ANZAC Day parades; and alongside those memories people also remembered the Nazi concentration camps and their death-dealing to Jews and others. The boy who was me, a freckled-faced kid, with buck teeth and red hair, always better at reading history than rugby, did not take long in his reading before he discovered a shocking reality. That the Nazis' treatment of Jews had some precedents in the history of the Christian Church. The wearing of yellow stars by German Jews had its precedent in the Medieval Church requiring Jews to wear little yellow cloth tablets on their clothes. Herding Jews into Nazi ghettos was prefigured in similar ghettos in the Christian Middle Ages in Europe. This presentation tonight is a distillation of my thinking on this history of Christian anti-Judaism that goes all the way back to that boy who was me so long ago.

The Jews in the German city of Mainz in the last years of the eleventh century knew they were in trouble. For past months a charismatic preacher known as Peter the Hermit had been preaching a crusade, whipping up Christian fervour. He had also whipped up Christian anti-Judaism. He told his Christian hearers there was no need to go all the way to the Holy Land to combat the Muslim infidels when there were other age-old Christian enemies right there – the Jews who were guilty of Christ's blood. Christian mobs, excited by the preaching of the First Crusade, had already paused in their travels to the Holy Land to lynch Jews and burn synagogues as they passed through cities. The violence was denounced by local bishops, so the Jews of Mainz fled to the archbishop's palace. But when the mob turned up the archbishop

fled; his palace was stormed; and the entire Jewish community slaughtered.<sup>1</sup> Times of increased Christian piety often meant death to Jews as 'Christ-killers'. In the world of late medieval Christendom, where heresy could be as little as differences over whether the bread of the Eucharist was leavened or unleavened, Jewish religious difference was intolerable.

Centuries later it was no better in Tsarist Russia where Orthodoxy was the official Christian religion of the state. After the 1905 Revolution Russian Orthodox publications blamed it all on the Jews, accusing them of conspiring to destroy Christianity and take over the world.<sup>2</sup> Far from taking over the world, Jews in the Pale of Settlement (in what is now Ukraine) where they were largely confined by the Tsarist regime, knew that each year on Good Friday it was best to run for cover. On that holy day Christians heard in church the reading from John's Gospel which blamed Jesus' death on 'the Jews'.

Christian anti-Judaism, all too often resulting in hatred and violence towards Jews, has been the norm for most of the twenty centuries since Christianity emerged, and there have been precious few Christians who have not conformed to it in our history. Those of us who have been bullied as children will know the pressure bullies exert to conform, to submit, to give in to their pressure. Well, for nearly two thousand years Christianity has acted as a bully or worse towards Jews, and few Christians have dared to be nonconformist to this brutal bully in our religion. There have been Christians who have acted justly towards Jews, including those Israel recognises as 'Righteous among the Nations'. But it is also true that these Christians have been a small minority, and this presentation deals with the very different, general, historical reality. For this historian and priest, at least, actions speak more truly than words. While various church decrees have forbidden forced conversions, Christian actions have been very different. From one Visigothic king in the sixth

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<sup>1</sup> Eamon Duffy, *Royal Books and Holy Bones: Essays in Medieval Christianity* (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2018), 105-6.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution 1899-1919* (London: Collins Harvill, 1990), 89.

century,<sup>3</sup> to the Spanish monarchy in the fifteenth<sup>4</sup>, various states and churches have forced Jews to become Christians or face exile or death. Christianity has harboured and fostered a hatred for Judaism and Jews that has had an appalling effect on our faith and resulted in much loss to us as Christians. If sin can be basically defined as disobedience to the love and commands of God, then it seems to me as plain as day that Christian anti-Judaism and its consequent hatred and violence towards Jews, is Christianity's enduring sin through pretty well all of our history.

It didn't start that way of course, for Jesus of Nazareth and all his followers during his lifetime were Jews. Even in the first two or three decades of Jesus followers after his crucifixion, the sect that became Christianity was just one of several variants of the Jewish religion that scholars refer to as 'Second-Temple Judaism'. Second-Temple Judaism was the Judaism during the period when the second Temple stood in Jerusalem, that is, from the sixth century BCE to 70CE. Even St Paul, the earliest writer in the New Testament, while making a radical claim for Jesus people to quit Jewish ritual practices like food laws and circumcision, expressed his belief in God's promises to his people: 'They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises' (Rom.9.04).

We get an indication of this original Jewishness in Christianity from the first gospel to be written, that of Mark, dated probably in the late 60s, before the destruction of the Temple. When it comes to the arrest and death of Jesus Mark's gospel is remarkably free of some of the anti-Jewish verses of the other three gospels. For Mark, the enemies of Jesus and his teachings are the Jerusalem religious elite, backed up by the local Roman government. It is not the general Jewish populace. It is the local religious leaders who plot to kill Jesus, according to Mark, and it is the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, who colludes with them and who

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<sup>3</sup> King Sisebut in Spain (reigned c.565-620/21).

<sup>4</sup> King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in the newly united kingdom of Spain. It was they who established the Holy Office of the Inquisition in 1498 to detect if the newly converted Jews remained true to their new faith.

sentenced Jesus to death by that unique and excruciating Roman execution by crucifixion.

However, very regrettably, in the other three gospels the culpability for Jesus' death widens to embrace the Jews of Jerusalem until, in John's Gospel, 'the Jews' becomes the term for the enemies of Jesus from the beginning. So, Matthew's Gospel has that nasty little sentence attributed to the crowd before Pilate calling for Jesus' crucifixion: 'His blood be on us and on our children' (27.25). Matthew's gospel begins the process of reducing the guilt of the Roman authorities and increasing that of Jews and Judaism. Consequently, Matthew has Pilate seeking to release Jesus because he knows he is innocent. Luke's Gospel also has a purportedly powerless Pilate seeking to release Jesus, but somehow this most powerful political figure in Jerusalem is overwhelmed by the Jewish crowd baying for Jesus' blood: 'they kept shouting [to Pilate] "Crucify, crucify him!".' (23.20). This process of shifting the blame for Jesus' death from the religious elite of Jerusalem and the Roman governor to the Jews culminates in John's gospel which notoriously has 'the Jews' as the opposition to Jesus from the start. In the first verses of John's famous Prologue to his gospel we read: 'his own people did not receive him' (1.11). For John, antipathy between Jesus and 'the Jews' even extends to Jesus himself, and so Jesus (that's Jesus the Jew) says to 'the Jews': 'You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires' (Jn.8.44a). Jews are now a devilish people utterly opposed to Jesus.

The failure of the Jewish revolt from 66-70CE against the Roman Empire which occupied their Promised Land resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. After this debacle there was growing mutual intolerance between Christians and Jews. In some instances, Jesus Jews were excluded from synagogues by the Judaism that was in the process of re-defining itself as the people of God's covenant in the face of such a disaster. So, we hear in John's Gospel, written probably in the 90s, Jesus saying to his followers, 'They will put you out of the synagogues, Indeed, an hour is coming when those who kill you will think that by doing so they are

offering worship to God' (Jn 16.02). Biblical scholars largely believe that this expulsion from synagogues was what happened to the John's Christian community, and that this accounts for the outright hostility shown to 'the Jews' in the final version of the Gospel that now appears in the New Testament. The horrible irony is that over the next two millennia it was not Christians, but Jews, who experienced time and again the words of the Johannine Jesus – that Christians who persecuted and killed Jews would think they were doing something God wanted.

So how did this blame-game of moving the responsibility for Jesus' execution from the Jerusalem religious establishment and the Romans to all Jews happen? Because of the Jewish rebellion the Christian sect sought to move away from its parent Judaism now that the Temple, a focus for the first Judean Christians, was gone. Also, Christians were keen to distance themselves from the rebellious Jews now that the Christian faith was growing in the Roman Empire. In addition, after the initial impact of belief in Jesus' resurrection from the dead Jews were proving more and more difficult to convert to Jesus the Messiah. On the other side, after the appalling failure of their revolt Jews had to re-invent themselves now that their central focus of the Temple, Jerusalem, and the Promised Land, were gone. Consequently, it was in those decades after the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans, decades of increasing distance, division, and growing hostility between Christians and Jews, that most of the New Testament documents were written. It is unfortunate, to say the least, that many of the foundational Christian sacred texts were produced at a time when Christian identity was being impacted upon by inter-faith hostility between Christians and Jews. When the future of Christianity lay largely in the Roman Empire, an empire that had ultimate responsibility for the execution of Jesus of Nazareth, it would not do to lay the blame for the execution of Jesus where it really belonged, at the door of the Romans.

In the second century we see this double process of Christian and Jewish religious reinvention going on. Judaism needed to re-focus its faithfulness to the one

and only God revealed to it in the history of Israel now that the Temple and the Promised Land were gone. That meant tightening up on its previous diversity as Judaism re-oriented itself around the teachings of its learned rabbis as to what Torah meant – teachings encapsulated in what eventually became the text known as the Talmud. It also meant excluding from what was becoming Rabbinic Judaism all those differing sects within Judaism from the previous century, including Christians. At the same time Christianity was also embarked upon its own developing self-identity that moved it away from its parent Judaism. So Christian writers began to attack Judaism as a religion, not least because, despite what St Paul argued for, many Christians continued to practise their faith in ways that resembled Jews. This complex process of re-orientation by both Judaism and Christianity would go on for some centuries after the death of Jesus and the destruction of the Temple, as leaders in both communities attempted to make impermeable the boundaries between two faiths.

However, the problem with attacking another religion is that religion is an abstraction; it is the people who adhere to the religion you attack that are the reality. And that meant that these attacks on each other's religion soon meant attacks on actual Jews and Christians. Now this early mutual hostility might not have mattered so much as long as both faiths lacked access to political force. In the first centuries after the advent of Christianity this political power was held by an empire that was neither Christian nor Jewish, but pagan Rome. And Rome was quite capable of turning equally upon both Christians and Jews when they disturbed Roman rule. In that cosmopolitan city of Alexandria where Jews in the first century were a substantial portion of the city's population, Rome massacred thousands of Jews when they rioted. And when Christians turned against imperial loyalty by refusing to sacrifice to the genius, the protecting power, of the emperor, sporadic local persecution up to and including death was legally inflicted upon them also.

However, all that even-handed imperial Roman policy of 'a plague on both your houses' changed when, in the fourth century and thereafter, a pagan Roman

Empire became a Christian Roman Empire, as did successive regimes in Europe for the next millennium and a half. Christianity now became the official religion of these states, and these Christian states took up the Christian anti-Judaism they found in certain New Testament passages and in the writings of early Christian thinkers. Accordingly, Christian states became intolerant towards the only dissenting religious community in their midst – Judaism and Jews. And now that Christianity had access to the force and violence of the state Christians and their institutional Church were increasingly prepared to use it when Jews stubbornly kept to their different faith in the same God as the Christians.

Time and again over the next centuries a Jewish minority felt the disfavour, then the hostility, then the persecution and murder of an increasingly powerful Christian Church allied to various Christian states in Europe. And this persecution of Jews was fostered by what Christians heard in church from their preachers. During this past Lent I was reading some of the sermons of St Augustine, probably the greatest theologian in Western Christianity, who lived in the fifth century in Roman north Africa. I didn't have to go too far in my reading to come across some of Augustine's asides about Jews. Talking about the stoning of Stephen in Jerusalem for his Christian testimony, Augustine described the Jewish zealots who stoned Stephen as 'the slayers of Christ' (Sermon 49.11). In a remark in another sermon Augustine demeaned Jews' observation of the Sabbath as 'worldly idleness' (Sermon 9:3).<sup>5</sup>

Now that was reading at random mere asides in the texts of one Christian preacher. But other prominent Christian leaders devoted whole sermons to Jews in societies where Christianity was the official religion. Where, in other words, their words were the only version of Christianity people heard. John Chrysostom was the Patriarch of Constantinople in the principal city of the now-Christian Roman Empire at the beginning of the fifth century. He preached there to large audiences from the emperor down. John was lauded as a preacher and earned the nickname 'Golden-

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<sup>5</sup> *Saint Augustine Essential Sermons*, transl by Edmund Hill (New York: New City Press, 2007), 63, 27.

mouth', which is what 'Chrysostom' means. In a sermon devoted to the Jews his congregation lapped-up words that accused the Jews of political scheming, heresy, immorality, and the synagogue as a place of evil. In just one passage, which I took almost at random from the beginning of one of Chrysostom's anti-Judaism sermons, the bishop spat out:

Many, I know, respect the Jews and think that their present way of life is a venerable one. This is why I hasten to uproot and tear out this deadly opinion . . . the synagogue is not only a brothel and a theater; it also is a den of robbers. . . when God forsakes a people, what hope of salvation is left? When God forsakes a place, that place becomes the dwelling of demons.<sup>6</sup>

John Chrysostom was bemoaning the fact that there wasn't entirely unrelieved Christian hatefulness towards Jews among Christians. One of the reasons he, and others, fulminated against Jews in the first centuries of Christianity was that numbers of Christians kept attending synagogues. These were Christians who did not accept Paul's argument about Jesus abolishing the Law, and they believed that some degree of Jewishness was significant for their Christianity.

Centuries later a new form of Christianity in addition to Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy had emerged in the sixteenth century. Well, it might have been a new approach to Christianity, but as far the Jews were concerned Protestant Christianity was business as usual. Martin Luther, in his last sermon, preached in 1546, like so many Christian preachers before him, despaired of Jews turning to Christ and so he trumpeted the same old Christian anti-Judaism and hatred. Jews, he wrote, are Christians' public enemies, they called the Virgin Mary a whore and Jesus a bastard, 'and if they could kill us all, they would gladly do so'.<sup>7</sup> Luther had three years

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<sup>6</sup> John Chrysostom, 'Against the Jews', sermon found at The Tertullian Project [https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/chrysostom\\_adversus\\_judaeos\\_01\\_homily1.htm](https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/chrysostom_adversus_judaeos_01_homily1.htm) (accessed 13 May 2025)

<sup>7</sup> Heiko A Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil* (New Haven: Yale University Press, ET 1989), 294.



previously given Protestant vent to this age-old Christian Jew-hatred in one of his very successful pamphlets which he titled *Of the Jews and their Lies* (1543). So we don't need to think too hard to answer the question of where, in Protestant England, William Shakespeare's caricature of the Jew came from in his *Merchant of Venice*. The grasping, money-hungry, duplicitous Shylock encapsulated centuries of Christian anti-Judaism, a terrible commonplace in the Christian culture of Europe for centuries.

Christian anti-Judaism, and its inculcation of hostility and even hatred towards Jews, saw Jews persecuted again and again in Christian nations. It is the horrific religious link that kept alive a hatred over the centuries until it connected with emerging Antisemitism in the nineteenth century. Antisemitism is hatred for Jews as a race rather than as a religion and is espoused not just by Christians but those who espouse no Christianity at all. Atheists from the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche to Soviet Russia have been at the forefront of Antisemitism. Just as the final outcome of Christian anti-Judaism was the burning alive of Jews in the fires of the Spanish Inquisition, so the final solution of racial Antisemitism was the genocidal murder of six million Jews in Nazi death camps. Hatred needs to kill.

Until very recently I would have said that the horror of the genocidal extermination of most of Europe's Jews, and the use made by the Nazis of racial Antisemitism to achieve that evil, changed this hate-filled history. This genocide was the very belated jolt to Christian consciences that prompted the founding the first Council of Christians and Jews to replace death with dialogue. The Holocaust also resulted in the retreat from hostility towards Jews in Christian worship, especially the liturgies of Holy Week. This long-overdue shift in Christian conscience resulted in the theological watershed of the document of the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church known as *Nostra Aetate* ('In Our Time'). This year marks the sixtieth anniversary of that constitution guiding inter-faith relations by the Roman Catholic Church. That document and its theology marked a sea-change in the attitudes and theology towards non-Christian religions, and in no area more so than in Catholic-

Jewish interaction. Fundamentally, *Nostra Aetate* stated that God's covenant with the Jewish people had never been revoked and that God holds his Jewish people most dear. The document rejects the idea, so common throughout Christian history, that the Jewish people as a whole are responsible for the death of Jesus. In effect, it took two thousand years for theology to catch up with the truth of history!

Not only would the views of *Nostra Aetate* be a watershed in Catholic-Jewish relations, the document has had a significant influence at an official level in many other Churches, changing their theologies also. However, not all Churches have embraced the document's repudiation of Christian supersessionism – the idea that God's covenant with the Jews is obsolete, not ongoing, and Jews need to be converted to Christianity to be saved. Nevertheless, I have believed that *Nostra Aetate* brought about a permanent retreat from the horrible history of hatefulness by Christians towards Jews. It did so by its cool theological assessment of Christian anti-Jewish hatred and by replacing it with a positive theology of God's ongoing covenant with both Jews and Christians.

At least, that's what I would have said prior to 7 October 2023. Since then I have been shocked, and even ashamed, at the silence from an Australian Christian leadership in the immediate aftermath of that ghastly day; a day that resulted in the greatest act of Jewish extermination since the Holocaust. In the interval of weeks between that massacre of Jews and the Israeli military invasion of Gaza there was, with only one or possibly two exceptions, no unequivocal statement condemning the mutilations, murders, and kidnappings from the Australian Christian leadership. For me, their silence was telling. Consequently, since 7 October 2023 I ask myself, has anything really changed in this horrible Christian history?

It is only too evident what centuries of Christian hatred has cost Jews once they were branded by Christians as Christ-killers. They have endured over some fifteen hundred years since Christianity became the official religion of various states periods of persecution, forced conversions, repeatedly being exiled from Christian

states, herded into ghettos, made to wear distinctive badges on their clothing, made to live as a repressed, despised, and hated minority, subject to mob violence, pogroms, and death in many ugly forms of violence that were legalised by the state or the Church, or inflicted by Christian mobs.

What I also want to ask here is what has our anti-Judaism cost us as Christians? Isolation and hostility or worse towards our parent religion has created various distortions, for we both believe in the same God, the God of Israel whom we Christians believe to be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, this evening I want to focus briefly on just two of aspects of our unhappy history of anti-Judaism, one negative and one positive.

First, the negative. Christian anti-Judaism has meant we have harboured a hatred at the very heart of our religion. Recounting the stories of our redemption through the death and resurrection of Jesus has for centuries been accompanied by a hatred of Jews as the killers of Jesus. In doing so we have not only perpetuated a historical lie, we have also repudiated the gospel of the very one we celebrate as our Redeemer. Time and time again, even when encountering misunderstanding, abuse, betrayal, disappointment, and the like, and ultimately even his own death, Jesus repudiated hatred. 'Love your enemies'; 'pray for those who persecute you', 'even saying of those Roman soldiers who crucified him, 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do'. He advised that hatred causes destructiveness within us, warning about what we sow at the centre of our lives – 'what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart and this is what defiles' (Mt. 15.18). Yet we Christians have done entirely the opposite with the people of Jesus of Nazareth – we have nursed hatred towards them, persecuted them, and certainly not engaged in the need for forgiveness – our need, not theirs. Christian anti-Judaism is a sin, a Christian sin, because it violates the very teaching of Jesus whom we hold to be our divine Saviour. And it is about time, after two thousand years, that we realise our hostility, morphed into hatred, towards those with whom we were enemies for a short time at

the end of the first century, has long since passed its use-by date. Our enduring sin has merely allowed hate to flourish down the centuries, rather than the life Jesus our Lord came to give us. Faced with the pernicious rise of Antisemitism here in Australia we Christians need to put away this sin and engage in the real mission of Christ, which, as St Paul realised, was reconciliation.

Second, the positive. Historians deal with the past. But I want, in conclusion, to venture tentatively into the future. Unlike that strange country which is the past, in the present we Christians in Western countries like Australia are now a minority. We are now a minority that is increasingly regarded with indifference and ignorance by most of our fellow citizens who espouse no religion. In the future, our new minority status as Christians may result in widespread impatience and even hostility towards us as we doggedly insist that certain moralities are more complex than the state would like to make them. There are signs of this hostility already in Australia. In the Australian Capital Territory, the government has made legal its compulsory take-over of a Catholic hospital in a territory where the liberal secularism of the government and Catholicism's rejection of abortion and Voluntary Assisted Dying clashed. There were laws proposed in Queensland which would have made it almost impossible for Christian hospitals not to practice Voluntary Assisted Dying. If our Christian future in Western societies is to be one where Christians face, for the first time in centuries, legal, social, political, and economic hostility towards us then we Christians are going to need help. We will need help because it has been a very, very long time since we had any experience of legal and political hostility in the West. We are far more experienced in dishing this out than in receiving it. On the other hand, Jews and Judaism have such experience, often caused by us Christians, and so Jews have had to become masters in how to sustain a religious community amidst repression or even worse. Christians can learn valuable lessons from our Jewish parent about how to live in contemporary Western societies as a minority – perhaps a minority despised and certainly counter-cultural.

One Jewish survival strategy is to locate the practice of faith in God in the home and not only in the synagogue, because a public building can become an easy target for hostile groups, or even the state. This became apparent when the Nazis burned so many synagogues on what became known as the 'Night of Broken Glass', *Kristallnacht*, in 1938 which marked the beginning of the genocidal Holocaust. Jewish synagogues as a target also came home to roost here in Australia last year when hateful arsonists burned down a synagogue in Melbourne. The domestic setting for much of Jewish religious practice is epitomised, of course, in the sacred Shabbat meal, the weekly Seder. Yet it is entirely consistent with the traditional arrogance of Christians towards the Jewish faith that Christian parishes have appropriated this Jewish sacred ritual into their own Holy Week without so much as a 'by-your-leave' or understanding how offensive it might be. To relocate some of the practice of Christian faith in the home is not about adopting the sacred ways of another faith we have constantly offended and worse for centuries, but to go 'back to the future'.

In recent decades work by several historians has reinforced the large extent in which Christianity in the West up until the seventh or eighth century was centred in the household and the home. Archaeology from Spain to Ephesus has shown a remarkable number of private chapels connected to households from the farmhouse to the palace. In such chapels it was the master or mistress of the house who decided how the Christian faith was to be practised, and not the clergy. Christian religion in these first centuries was centred around family and friends, not the clerically-dominated gatherings for the Eucharist. Then, around the eighth century, Christian faith became more and more practised in a public church that was controlled by the clergy. 'The household was now treated [by the clergy] as purely "private" space. It was long left to women, who could read and pray as much as they liked, as long as they kept to their bedrooms.'<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity AD 200-1000* (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, rev. edn. 2013), xxxiii-xxxiv.

We both now, Christians and Jews, inhabit a western society that is increasingly turning its back on religion and history. Social media has encouraged the rise of what one historian has called an 'Ahistorical Age'.<sup>9</sup> Our Western societies have in recent decades fostered ahistorical values, including viewing our past as only a source of shame and oppression from which we need to free ourselves; so we no longer think of ourselves as part of historical communities; we do not value our past, and we are increasingly ignorant of our own history, which our culture now seems to believe has no purpose to give us or things to teach us. If this is an accurate assessment of contemporary western values (and speaking as a history teacher for the past 30 years, I believe it is) then both Jews and Christians are by definition counter-cultural communities because we are both indelibly historical faiths. We are formed by our histories because it is our histories that, we believe, take us back to God. Jews find the revelations of the one and only God in the history of the people of Israel and, for Christians, in the history of Jesus of Nazareth and the Church that grew from his teaching. Christians and Jews will have to survive and flourish in this ahistorical non-religious western culture we now live in. To do so as two peoples formed by our historical revelations of the Divine and Holy One we worship, we will need each other if we are to find ways to live by our religious histories in our present and on into our futures.

Finally, let us imagine that fabled Martian landing on earth with an interest in our religions. The Martian reads the Christian Gospels and then looks around to discover the human community that follows the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. She discovers that Jesus said to love your enemies; do good to those who persecute you; judge not lest you be judged; love God and your neighbour. Will she locate Jesus' authentic followers in the Church that has shared power with earthly authorities with dubious results, fomented crusades, established Inquisitions that burned people alive, expelled Jews from their homes, and preached hatred against them. Or will she

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<sup>9</sup> Sarah Irving-Stonebaker, *Priests of History: Stewarding the Past in an Ahistorical Age* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Zondervan, 2024), 6, 25-38.

locate the best representative of these teachings of the Jew, Jesus of Nazareth, in a different community. The community that in obedience to its faith in the one and only God has accepted oppression in Christian lands, suffered repeated exiles, persecution, murders, and ultimately genocide rather than abandon the God of Israel, the God we both, Christians and Jews, seek to worship and serve?

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