

A Stumbling-block for Jews and Folly for Gentiles

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I: Jewish-Christian identity: a Journey

A. Background:

The Cardinal-Archbishop of Paris, two Carmelite friars living on the top of Mount Carmel in the Holy Land, a few Dominican friars, and some 200,000 other Christians, clerical and lay, share something special with me which marks us out, in some respects, from our other brothers and sisters in Christ. We are all born and bred Jewish, and we share this characteristic with all the apostles, with the Mother of our Lord, and with our Lord himself. Some of us are more aware of our Jewish background than others, and some of us are more deeply steeped in the traditions of Rabbinical Judaism than others of our group. Are we ex-Jews, people who have abandoned their Jewish identity by accepting Jesus as our Messiah, or do we remain Jewish in Christ? I believe that we remain Jewish in Christ, and that Christ calls us to strengthen, to nurture and to cherish our Jewish identity within his body, the Church. There are many people who disagree with this proposition. There have long been Christians who believe that Jews are called to *abandon* their Jewish identity when they are baptised into Christ, and who see the persistence of Jewish identity among baptised Christians as an affront to our Lord. For such people, my belief in the persistence of my Jewishness and in the importance of the Jewish identity of people like me is folly at best and apostasy at worst. Many Jews concur with this view, albeit from a different angle, viewing all Jews who become Christians as apostates who have abandoned any identification with the Jewish people and have joined hands with those who have persecuted them and murdered them. The baptism of Jews, on their account, is a bar to fellowship, a stumbling-block. I would like to essay a discussion of Jewish-Christian identity and its dilemmas within the Church. After some introductory remarks of an historical character, I shall sketch my own journey to Christ and the interaction of my Christian commitments and Jewish identity. I hope that this attempt to provide an account of the personal phenomenology of Jewish-Christian identity in my own life

will serve adequately to introduce a more general discussion of Jewish-Christian identity and the Church. I shall then shift from first-person to third-person mode in order to argue for the need to foster Jewish-Christian identity, and shall discuss some of the dilemmas of Jewish-Christian identity for Jewish-Christians, drawing primarily on my own experience. My treatment of the subject will not be academic. It is a matter about which I feel so deeply that I find it extremely difficult to write about it.. I hope that you will bear with me if the discussion is sometimes abrupt in consequence.

In the previous paragraph I alluded to dilemmas of Jewish-Christian identity, which make it, like the crucifixion of our Lord, a stumbling-block to Jews and a folly to gentiles. These dilemmas are deeply rooted in the long history of the Christian Church, which has until relatively recently subjected Jewish converts to an explicit regime of assimilation. Jewish converts were long expected to display fidelity to Christ by sloughing off Jewish practices and identity, and Jewish practices and identity were viewed as an affront to God.

It sometimes seems almost to be forgotten that the first Christians were Jews who retained Jewish observances, and that gentiles won over to Christ in the first years of the Church had to convert to Judaism. The participants in what is often called the first ecumenical council of the Church, which was held in Jerusalem, were persuaded by Peter, Paul and Barnabas to permit the baptism of gentiles without requiring that they become proselytes to Judaism, though gentile Christians would be required to follow the *mores* which Jewish tradition believed to be fundamental to the lives of God-fearing and righteous gentiles¹. This decision was predicated upon the assumption that the Church at large, with the exception of the new mission to the gentiles, would remain Jewish in composition and practice. The Jerusalem Church, the mother-church of Christianity in apostolic times, was Jewish-Christian in character. The Christians of Jerusalem worshiped regularly at the Temple in Jerusalem²; and Jewish-Christians attended local synagogues in addition to the observance of specifically Christian celebrations such as the eucharist³.

The already precarious position of Jewish-Christians within the synagogue became increasingly insecure following the Roman destruction of the Temple in about 70 AD. The Jamniah Academy, founded with Roman permission by Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, became the major spiritual centre of post-destruction Judaism, and most synagogues in the Holy Land and in the Jewish diaspora came to recognise its religious authority. Within a decade or so of the destruction of the Temple, the Jamnian authorities decided to exclude members of

certain dissenting Jewish groups from the synagogues, adding a benediction cursing heretics, the so-called *Birkhat ha-Minim*, to the synagogue liturgy. It was designed to exclude all those who could not recite in good conscience, including Jewish-Christians, who seem to have been mentioned explicitly in the earliest known version⁴. The apparent animosity towards 'the Jews' in some of the narrative framework of John's gospel in particular might well reflect the trauma of this forced break with the synagogue.⁵

The star of Jewish-Christianity had been waning and that of gentile Christianity had been waxing, in any case, for the mission to the gentiles had won many converts, while relatively few Jews accepted Christ. Gentile-Christianity came to dominate the Church, while Jewish-Christianity withered away. Together with the earlier animosity created by the expulsion of Christians from the synagogue, this fostered Gentile-Christian antagonism towards Jewish identity and Jewish practices within the Church as such. Ignatius of Antioch, writing less than a century after the earthly ministry of our Lord, reflects this antagonism when he says in one of his letters that to believe in Jesus Christ and to live a Jewish life is monstrous⁶. This suggests that there were still a few Jewish-Christians left in an overwhelmingly gentile Church which had come to reject their identity and their practices. By the time that Christianity became the official religion of the Roman empire, Jewish-Christianity had all but vanished. The post-Nicene tradition in general, and Fathers of the Church like St John Chrysostom and St Ambrose in particular, display considerable hostility towards Jews and Judaism as such.

There was a trickle of Jewish converts to Christianity, who occasionally, like the Byzantine liturgical poet Romanos, made valuable contributions to the life of the Church. Such converts were deemed to be part of the Church only if they abandoned Jewish identity and Jewish practices, though there are a number of documents of Church councils which suggest that not all Jewish converts were prepared to do this⁷. A chapter of the Constitutions of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 urges, for example, that 'the pressure of salutary compulsion'—presumably torture—be used by those who preside over the Churches to force Jewish converts to abandon Jewish practices and Jewish identity⁸. Such attitudes persisted to a degree even in the years after the Holocaust of European Jewry. I remember having occasion to browse through a standard dictionary of moral theology written in the 1950s, whose editors and contributors include several leading figures in the Catholic ecclesiastical establishment⁹. It included an entry on Judaism which, having described Jewish doctrine and worship, condemned it in no

uncertain terms as 'an insult to God' and as 'contrary to the virtue of religion'. The entry did not mention anti-semitism, persecution of Jews or the recent Nazi attempt at genocide. Even a condemnation of racism in general and Nazi racism in particular failed to mention Nazi anti-semitism or the Holocaust. The entry on anti-semitism consisted of a cross-reference to the entry on Judaism. The sole mention of the Holocaust of European Jewry was almost *en passant* in a brief entry on genocide. The anti-Jewish tone of the entry on Judaism was unmistakable. I have no wish to suggest that all Catholic moral theology of the 1950s displayed anti-Judaism, for this is patently untrue. The tenor of the entry on Judaism in this standard dictionary of Catholic moral theology written after the Holocaust nevertheless suggests that anti-Judaism was acceptable in teaching-material used by the Church, and that the anti-Jewish theological tradition did not merely persist but that it was tolerated.

My comments in the previous paragraph notwithstanding, the Nazi attempt systematically to exterminate the entire Jewish people just fifty years ago, which claimed the lives of almost 70% of European Jewry and 40% of world Jewry, occasioned considerable Christian heart-searching after the Holocaust. Most Christian communions came to recognise that the many centuries of Christian anti-Judaism had contributed towards the making of the Holocaust, and that Christians were bound humbly to admit that they had sinned gravely in this matter. The results of this reflection within the Catholic Church can be found in the declaration *Nostra Aetate*, in which the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council discuss relations with Non-Christian religions, and which marked the withdrawal of official tolerance of theological anti-Judaism. The most substantial section of the Declaration deals with the Jewish people and notes, in a passage which echoes statements made in the Council's Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, that there is a close relationship between the Jewish people and the Church itself, and that the mystery of Israel is intimately connected with the mystery of the Church. The declaration in effect disavows the time-hallowed view that to be a Jew is to be an accursed deicide, denies that God has rejected the Jewish people, and affirms that God's election of Israel persists and will not be revoked. It gives pride of place to St Paul's image in Romans of Israel as the cultivated olive tree into which the wild branches of the gentiles were grafted, noting that the Church itself is Jewish at core, rejects the theology of anti-Judaism, and erodes the theological rationale for the regime of assimilation. Sadly, though the explicit regime has not operated officially since Vatican II, there is still an implicit regime of assimilation, fuelled by attitudes which have

persisted and which have not absorbed the teaching of the Council on this matter¹⁰. The Declaration is nonetheless a welcome change of heart from the Jewish-Christian point of view, though many of its theological and practical implications have yet to be cashed. I shall attempt to explore some of these in the light of my own journey to Christ, an account of which follows.

A personal phenomenology of Jewish-Christian awareness:

I was born to a Jewish family in South Africa nearly 40 years ago. I was lucky enough to receive a long and thorough Jewish education: though my parents were not observant, they were strongly supportive of socialist Zionism, were proud and assertive of their Jewish identity (albeit in secular mode) and were at pains to ensure that I grew up with an awareness of my Jewishness. My entire primary and secondary education was obtained at Jewish schools, and I left school with a fluent knowledge of Hebrew. I spent an intensive year as a teenager in a rigorously Orthodox Rabbinical College; somewhat to the dismay of my secularised parents, I was strictly Orthodox in my religious practices for a few of my adolescent years, though under the pressure of life in a non-observant home and environment I later lapsed from Orthodox observance (though not from a sense of Jewish identity) to their not inconsiderable relief. An awareness of Jewish identity and some years of Orthodox Jewish observance thus dominated my youth, and loomed large in the process which ultimately brought me to Christ. Indeed, my journey to the baptismal font involved a *reappropriation* of Jewish identity.

After leaving school, my connexions with things Jewish suffered under the pressure of political involvements and ideological 'purity'. Some time prior to becoming a Catholic I came to be involved in a *minuscule doctrinaire* atheistic sect of fundamentalist Trotskyite persuasion¹¹, and this distanced me from Jewish belief and practice. I retained a love for my Jewish background, though I rejected it at one level as 'petty-bourgeois' and made considerable efforts to ignore this love in the name of the ideological purity of 'struggle' against Apartheid and all those, not least those who supported the 'petty-bourgeois' African National Congress¹², with whom we had ideological differences. I was uncomfortably aware of the fact that my stance was somewhat anomalous, to put it mildly, for I knew that my sense of outrage at the injustice of Apartheid (and at such things as the wholesale expropriation of Palestinian land in Israel) had religious roots. These religious roots, however, were also subjected to a regime of internal censorship because

the sacred texts of the sect of petty-bourgeois intellectuals, of which I was part at the time, viewed such things as a manifestation of the 'petty-bourgeois tendencies' which showed that a suitably proletarian consciousness had not been developed and that the class-defection of people from a background like mine had not yet been completed. I was thus estranged from my Jewish heritage and identity.

While still a strictly Orthodox Jew, I had developed a fascination with Jesus *qua* man, whom I had come to view, after I left Rabbinical College, as an integral though unorthodox part of the Jewish heritage. I was intensely aware of the Jewish character of the early church and, like many of my Jewish contemporaries, believed that the teaching of St Paul, rather than that of Jesus, had precipitated the split between the followers of Jesus and the synagogue, constituting a distinct Christian church in the process. Beginning with knowledge gleaned from a 'life of Jesus' of the semi-popular sort, which I read while at school and whose name escapes me, I soon became reasonably familiar with the canon of the New Testament. I also learnt a great deal from Fr Elias Friedman ODC¹³, a Jewish Carmelite of South African birth who lives in Haifa on the top of Mount Carmel. Fr Elias is the brother of a close friend of my parents, and I therefore visited him while in Israel in 1969, when I was sixteen years of age and on a school-tour to Israel. I was then strictly observant, and must have cut a strange figure with my skull-cap and the fringes of my four-fringed under-garment clearly visible. We had a pleasant and informative conversation about images in the Hebrew scriptures like the sacrifice of Isaac which are interpreted Christologically by the Church. The group with which I was touring had visited a number of churches *en route*, and my own curiosity about Christian belief and liturgy had persuaded me to purchase and read an English-Latin missal which, together with my Jewish observance, accounted for the fact that a few members of the group sometimes referred to me, heaven help us, as 'Rabbi Pater Noster'. I mentioned the missal to Fr Elias, who remarked that I must surely have noted that most of the language of the liturgy was taken from the Hebrew scriptures. I came to Israel to study at University a couple of years later as a non-religious Zionist and, as providence would have it, studied at the University of Haifa. I visited Fr Elias on a number of occasions, and he allowed me to read the manuscript of the first draft of his book *Jewish Identity*. We had several long conversations about the book, and he, responding to my curiosity and explaining rather than proselytising, made me aware of the importance of Paul's image in Romans of the good olive tree and of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on Jewish identity and election. My attitude towards the Church was

somewhat ambivalent at that stage. I respected it, wished to understand its teaching, and sometimes thought about the possibility of asking for instruction, but was certainly not committed to the teaching of the Church as such. It was a period of considerable intellectual ferment and indecision for me. My hitherto uncritical support for Zionism was being eroded by friendship with Palestinians in Haifa, by the shock of learning that land of Arab villages in Israel, which provided many people with their livelihoods, was even then subject to expropriation, and that many of my Palestinian friends, though Israeli citizens, were subject to restriction-orders which were uncomfortably reminiscent of the banning-orders issued by the Apartheid regime in South Africa. I did some desultory Zen Buddhist meditation with a group of Israelis in Haifa under the guidance of Dokyu Nakagawa Roshi, a delightful Japanese Zen monk, and began a confused and confusing apprenticeship in Marxism and Israeli ultra-left politics. Needless to say, my political life, though confused at that stage, did not exactly endear me to the Israeli authorities. In a way, my interests in Buddhism, Marxism and Christianity were of a piece at that stage, the expressions of rather impulsive and immature intellectual curiosity. After a year-and-a-half at the University of Haifa, I decided to return to South Africa bearing what I, in my naivety, considered to be the original view that Apartheid was to be analysed in class-terms rather than in racial terms, and to seek to involve myself in the struggle against Apartheid. I brought my rather intellectual interest in the teaching of the Church back with me as well, but this was largely dormant. I toyed with the teaching of the Church with no real conviction, and even flirted with Christian fundamentalism for a time, but none of this had any real depth and my fears that this was 'petty-bourgeois' and the heady and dangerous attractions of sectarian Trotskyite fundamentalism prevented any serious attempts on my part to look at religious issues.

One of my two majors at the University of Cape-Town was English, and this involved the study of much poetry, which began to give me a sense of the richness of the Christian heritage. I discovered that I had the right, as a student, to use the music department's extensive record-collection and listening cubicles, availing myself of this right led me to develop a fondness for renaissance and baroque mass-settings and motets in particular, which reinforced this awareness of the centrality of Christian faith to Western culture. It is surely not a coincidence that my decision finally to seek baptism into the Catholic Church was made while listening to a mass-setting by Monteverdi. At the same time, what I believe to have been a graced decision was the culmination of a long process, and a rebirth of a sense of the importance of my Jewish identity

featured prominently in it.

I went through a lonely crisis in 1975, in the course of which it became increasingly clear to me that I could no longer accept the narrow dogmatism of the sectarian Trotskyism which dominated my life at the time. I came to realise that my rejection of religious belief involved considerable self-deception, that I desperately needed a sense of the presence of God in my life, and needed to find a tenable religious identity. I also found, in this resurrection of religious faith in my life, that Christian teaching concerning the saving death and resurrection of Christ became compellingly attractive to me, for it offered hope where things had seemed hopeless before. I think that it was only then that I came to see that Jesus was more than a prophetic but human figure, and to understand that importance of Easter faith and of Christian trinitarianism. It dawned on me that the crucifixion of Jesus was an icon and an assumption of the crucifixion of our humanity in our broken world, and that the centuries of many persecution of the Jewish people, the Holocaust in Europe during the war, the extravagant suffering brought by Apartheid in South Africa, the suffering of the Palestinian people, and even the confusion and turmoil of lives like my own were all part of it. It became apparent to me that the resurrection of Jesus offered hope and meaning where none had seemed possible, and for the first time I began to understand what it meant to say that Jesus is indeed the Christ and to believe.

My decision to seek baptism into the Catholic Church was not an abandonment of my Jewish identity and heritage but rather a reappropriation of these. I had not been an observant Jew for several years and had come to be estranged from the world of Judaism. A return to Orthodox Jewish practice was not really an option for me. I felt, rightly or wrongly, that I could not find a religious home in the Jewish Orthodoxy which I had been taught in Rabbinical College in my early teens, because it seemed too parochial, too closed to the rest of the world. I was not attracted to non-Orthodox forms of Judaism because, somewhat ironically, I was emotionally unable to see them as legitimate forms of Judaism. In Christ and his Church I felt that I had found a teaching which enabled me to reappropriate the Jewish tradition and to give expression to my love for it, without forcing me to accept the apparent parochialism of Orthodox Judaism. The religious concepts and the scriptures of my newly-evincing faith were all steeped in the world of Judaism. In Christ, I rediscovered my Jewishness. It is not coincidental that my awakening to faith in Christ also brought me back to the study of Rabbinic literature. After several months of instruction in which it was emphasised that the Church did not demand that I lose my Jewish

identity or abandon the Jewish heritage in Christ, I was baptised on the 6th March 1976.

It is perhaps important to note that I was not proselytised. While I was at school I had occasionally encountered fundamentalist Christians who attempted to proselytise me, and this never impressed me. What did impress me was that a priest at the Catholic Cathedral in Cape Town, from whom I sought information about the beliefs of Catholics when I was in the penultimate year of my secondary education, explained Catholic beliefs without making any attempt to convert me, and indeed told me that the Catholic Church held that the observance of the commandments of Judaism was salvific for non-Christian Jews. The very same priest, Fr Guy Fraser-Ruffell, was later to instruct me in the faith and to baptise me. Fr Elias Friedman's patient explanations of Catholic doctrine and his eschewal of any attempt to convert me were also an eloquent and attractive witness, at the end of the day, to Christ. As I hope my narrative makes clear, the simple presence of the Church, general knowledge about the person of Christ, the Jewish roots of the Church, the patent respect of those of its members whom I encountered for the Jewish heritage and their willingness to explain without seeking to convert me, were all eloquent testimonies to Christ in and of themselves. Had I been subjected to overt attempts at proselytisation or told that the Church demanded that I relinquish Jewish identity and become an 'ex-Jew', I would certainly have rejected baptism.

The sense of my own Jewish identity, which was given new life with my coming to belief in Christ, has deepened with my sometimes painful growth in Christian faith. It has played a part in practically all the major decisions in my life as a Christian, among them my decision to enter religious life by joining the Order of Preachers. A number of things attracted me to the Order. Among them was the openness of the Dominicans whom I encountered to my identity as a Jew. I was also attracted to the Order by its attitude towards study, which features centrally in Dominican life, for the reason that it is similar to Rabbinical attitudes to the study of things which lie within the domain of Judaism. Jews are encouraged by the Rabbis to make study an integral part of their daily lives, and I can remember many very Orthodox Jewish laymen studying religious works for some six hours at the end of each working day. Orthodox Judaism regards study as something sacred, as something which is of value both for its own sake and for the observance which it encourages, rather than as a means to lesser ends. The religious study in which very Orthodox Jews engage makes considerable intellectual demands, and develops rigour in discussion and a healthy and critical intellectual curiosity. Talmud, a traditional area of

study, cannot be learnt by rote, but must be argued with discernment and rigour. The type of study which the preaching-vocation of the Dominican Order encourages is not unlike this and, like the sacred learning of observant Jews, it is the occupation of a lifetime in which one never expects to achieve mastery and to know all there is to know. In universities teachers are complimented because they *know* a lot, which suggests that they have little more to learn. In Rabbinical studies a scholar of distinction is said to be a '*talmid chacham*', a wise *student*, one who really, to use the way Rabbinical scholars talk among themselves, knows how to learn and who learns well. The Dominican ideal of study is not dissimilar, and this *prima facie* consonance with Jewish attitudes played no small part in drawing me to the Order.

My Jewishness and schooling in Jewish orthodoxy affects my theological perspectives deeply. As a preacher, I find myself continually drawing on Rabbinical literature in order to make sense of the gospel and to communicate the meaning of the good news to others. I find it difficult to understand how anyone with the intellectual capacity can attempt serious study of the New Testament in general and the four gospels in particular without some grasp of their Jewish background and without any reference to Rabbinical material. I could hardly begin to understand the New Testament, let alone preach about it, without these. Even in the prologue to John's gospel, which is often viewed as quintessentially Greek rather than Jewish, rich allusions to inter-Testamental Jewish concepts, and even plays on Rabbinical terms of art, leap at me from the page. Here is but a taste of this, by way of example.

Much of the imagery of the prologue to John's gospel is reminiscent of Rabbinical teaching about the *shekhinah*, God's glorious presence which dwells in the midst of his people and which was present in the tabernacle. When the prologue to John's gospel tells us that 'the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth'¹⁴, the Greek word *es-keinosen*, 'dwelling as in a tent', is used. It is surely not coincidental that the evangelist uses a word whose root, *skein-*, sounds like the Hebrew *shakhen*, the root of the term *shekhinah*, and that the meanings of these words are closely related. *Shekhinah* imagery interacts, in turn, with a rich vein of covenant-imagery. 'Grace and truth', *chesed ve-emet* in Hebrew, are among the thirteen attributes of God according to the Rabbis, and refer to Divine grace mediated through the covenant with Israel and to Divine fidelity to the covenant. Other areas of my theological outlook—my views on Christology and the way I view the eucharist, *inter alia*—are also shaped by my Jewish background and training. I find myself impelled, for example, into the acceptance of what might be called a 'Torah Christology', in that I view

Christ as the incarnation of God's entire revelation to his people in scripture and elsewhere, the whole Torah¹⁵ brought to its ultimate perfection, made immediately present to us in Christ. Christ is God's Word made flesh, and God's Word is revealed in the Torah; it follows naturally for someone with a Jewish background that there is an intimate connexion between the incarnation and the Torah. New Testament scholars note the abundant use of wisdom imagery used in connexion with Christ, and infer correctly that Christ is viewed as God's wisdom. In Rabbinical tradition, wisdom imagery is annexed to Torah. It is said, for example, that God created the world by means of wisdom, and the Rabbis infer from this that the world was created by means of the Torah. Compare this with the assertion in John's gospel that Christ 'was in the beginning with God' and that 'all things were made through him'¹⁶: it is obvious to someone steeped in Jewish tradition that Christ and the Torah are identified here. I am convinced that a case could be made for the claim that such a 'Torah Christology' informs not only the prologue to John's gospel but also Matthew and the Pauline epistles¹⁷.

'Torah Christology' and Jewish sensibilities also affect my attitude towards the Eucharist. Eucharistic participation in the body of Christ, the Torah incarnate, is tantamount to participation in the Torah, and I am intensely aware, when celebrating mass or taking communion, of the connexion between the body and blood of our Lord and Messiah and the Torah. My reverence for the consecrated elements in the Eucharist and my reverence for Torah are linked inextricably. I also believe that Jewishness is an inseparable part of the humanity of our Lord, whose body we share in the Eucharist, and that conscious and witting rejection of Jesus's Jewishness therefore makes the one who rejects it risk taking the eucharist to his or her damnation.

In the following article I shall argue in less personal terms for the fostering of Jewish-Christian identity in the Church, but shall follow this with a more personal discussion of some of the dilemmas of Jewish-Christian identity and with a fairly tentative proposal for a framework which could foster Jewish-Christian identity and contribute towards the resolution of some of the dilemmas.

1 Acts 15:1-29.

2 See Acts 2:46, 3:1, 5:21 and 21:26, for example.

3 See Acts 9:20, 13:5, 13:14, 14:1, 17:1, 17:10 and 19:8, for example.

4 Versions of the benediction currently used in the synagogue-liturgy no longer excoriate Christians, and could be recited by Christians in good conscience. See Carmine Di Sante, *Jewish Prayer: The Origins of Christian Liturgy* (N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1991), pp. 107-112.

5 See J.L. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979).

6 Epistle to the Magnesians 10, 3.

- 7 See, for example, Canon 8 of the Second Council of Nicaea in 787; chapter 70 of the constitutions of the Fourth Lateran Council; and sundry paragraphs (DS 1348, 1350, 1351) of the Decree for the Jacobites of the Council of Florence in 1442.
- 8 A translation of the relevant section can be found with the addition of an embarrassed explanatory gloss in J. Neuner SJ and J. Dupuis SJ, *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, (Glasgow: Collins, 1983), p. 305f.
- 9 *Dictionary of Moral Theology*, compiled under the direction of Francesco Cardinal Roberti, Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signature, edited under the direction of Monsignor Pietro Palazzini, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Council, and translated under the direction of Henry J. Yannone, S.T.L. (London: Burns & Oates, 1962). It was published in Italy in 1957.
- 10 It is perhaps also telling that *Nostra Aetate*, which began its life as a proposal for a Decree of the Second Vatican Council on the Jews, met with considerable resistance which very nearly caused it to be abandoned. See John M. Osterreicher, 'Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions', in Herbert Vorgrimler (ed.), *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 3 (London and N.Y.: Burns & Oates/Herder and Herder, 1969), pp. 1–136, for a fascinating account of the vicissitudes of successive drafts of the document.
- 11 I do not wish to suggest that all Trotskyites are dogmatic, sectarian or even wedded to atheism.
- 12 I should perhaps add that this sectarian rejection of the ANC, which has fought longer and more consistently than any other for a just order in South Africa, and which has earned the loyalty of a large proportion of South Africans, was a folly of my youth. I have long been a supporter of the ANC.
- 13 I have learnt a great deal from Fr Elias about the theology of Jewish-Christian identity in particular. In fairness to him I should note, however, that my views on the matter have come to differ from his in a number of respects, and his views should therefore not be judged to suffer from the weaknesses which might be found in my views on this matter. I am sceptical about what he calls his 'prophetic hermeneutic', which views certain contemporary events such as the establishment of the State of Israel as signs of the times and the fulfilment of New Testament prophecies, and do not accept the apocalyptic determinism and view of prophecy which appear to inform this hermeneutic. I cannot accept that the establishment of the State of Israel and its actions are of eschatological significance at all. I am also of the view that his characterisation of the decline of religious commitment in Europe and the United States as 'the apostasy of the gentiles' is somewhat overstated. I would not wish to say that the Jewish sages and their traditions after Christ are without religious authority or validity, and that they have been superseded absolutely by the teaching of the Church. In practical terms, the Jewish-Christian framework which I believe to be needed is also somewhat more modest than the full-blown rite which Fr Elias seeks. I have no objection at all in principle to the notion of a Jewish-Catholic rite, provided that it is not elitist in intra-Christian terms, that it is not committed to the eschatological hallowing of the State of Israel and its actions, that it formally commit its members to strive to be accepting, dialogical and non-proselytising in its attitude to Jews who are not Christian, and that it seek reconciliation with such Jews.
- 14 Jn 1.14.
- 15 The term '*Torah*' refers primarily to God's revelation to Israel in the canon of Hebrew scripture, though it is sometimes used by Judaism in a narrower, and sometimes in a broader sense. In its narrower sense, it refers to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. In its broadest sense, it refers to the entire revealed religious tradition of Judaism, written and oral.
- 16 Jn. 1. 2f.
- 17 This view is not without adherents among New Testament scholars. Some time after coming to this conclusion, I heard this view enunciated in a lecture delivered at Oxford by W.D. Davies.