

SUMMARIES – JOURNAL OF MISSION THEOLOGY 14/2011

HEIDI HIRVONEN

Jews and Muslims – From Conflict to Dialogue?

The Jewish-Muslim conflict especially during the last hundred years has strongly influenced the mutual perceptions of the two communities. However, the conflict is above all due to political factors and historical experiences. As religions, Judaism and Islam resemble each other closely and their representatives encounter similar challenges particularly as minorities in the Western countries. During the last decades Jews and Muslims have initiated numerous dialogues to enhance mutual understanding. Among the central issues are: the state of Israel and the Palestinian question, holy scriptures, and religious law. Most of the dialogues aim at peaceful coexistence and action for the common good.

TOMI KARTTUNEN

Dietrich Bonhoeffer on the Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament

The Old Testament was under a heavy attack in the National socialistic Germany in the 1930s. Arguments for the criticism towards OT were provided also by the contemporary exegetical and historical research of the Christian dogma. Dietrich Bonhoeffer belonged to those who emphasized the vital importance of the totality of the biblical canon for the Christian faith and theology. Seeing the fundamental togetherness of the OT and NT, lead both to theological conclusions and practical actions in defending the persecuted Jews, human dignity and Christian identity. The so called Bethel confession (1933), to the preparatory phase of which Bonhoeffer considerably contributed, is a milestone in the development of the relations between Jews and Christians.

JUHANI KOIVISTO

For the Jew First – The Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism 1980–2011

The Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE), founded in 1980, is a network of agencies, congregations and individuals, who subscribe to the Lausanne Covenant and are committed to Jewish evangelism worldwide and networking with others, who share that commitment. The LCJE has arranged nine worldwide international conferences around the theme of Jewish evangelism. The latest conference was held in High Leigh near London in August 2011. The newsletter of the LCJE is the LCJE Bulletin. Web page is www.lcje.net.

ANNI MARIA LAATO

Early phases in the relations between Jews and Christians: Parting of the ways – how the Christians saw it

The parting of the ways of Christians and Jews is today seen as a long and complex process which took place on several levels. The situation, in which ordinary

Christians and Jews (and with them ideas and practices) in the words of Daniel Boyarin “crossed the borderline” in both directions, forced the theologians of the Church to make the differences between these two clear. The power-relations were at the end of the fourth century not yet clear: even if Christianity already was tolerated and favoured by the state, the events under the Emperor Julian (355-353) were also in recent memory. Judaism flourished especially in the East: for example, the great synagogues in Galilee were built after the Konstantinische Wende.

ANTOINE LEVY

Messianic Judaism from a Catholic perspective

An official dialogue between representatives from the Catholic Church and leaders of the Messianic movement has been initiated at the beginning of the third Millennium. This contribution is an attempt at shedding light on the historical and theological background of this dialogue from a Catholic perspective. After the disintegration of its “judaicizing” component at an early stage of the Church’s history, the permanence of Jewish existence has been wholesomely equated with a persistent denial of Christ’s salvation, hence a long history of anti-Jewish hatred. The situation started to change in the second half of the 19th century. However, it was not until the Second Vatican Council that a positive assessment of the permanence of Israel came to be officially endorsed by the Catholic Church. More recently, endeavors to recreate a Jewish milieu – even the embryo of a “Hebrew Church” – within the Catholic Church hardly produced fully satisfactory results. From this point of view, the meaning of a mutual “recognition”, as the explicit goal of the current dialogue, is finally examined. It is argued that this recognition cannot be interpreted in the terms of normative ecumenism, as indicating the reunification of two divided parts of one visible Church. Such recognition rather needs to be understood from an eschatological perspective, that of the final reconciliation between Gentiles and Jews in Christ, their common Messiah.

PEKKA LINDQVIST

Early Phases of Jewish-Christian Encounter: The Early Christians from a Jewish Perspective

The synagogue and early Christian movement lived side by side and confronted each other during the first centuries. Through rabbinic stories, e.g. that about R. Eliezer (b *Abod. Zar.* 17a), it appears to be thinkable that a Jew meets Christian teaching and should therefore be aware of its captivating character. Rabbinic texts also clearly show that the danger posed by the *minim* (heretics), a term which often includes Christians, or refers to them, is stronger than that of the gentiles. Josephus, on the other hand, is a unique witness of another kind of nuance in the attitude towards the Christians. His effort is not to establish orthodoxy and he may be labeled as tolerant.

JUKKA NORVANTO

How does the Gospel of Matthew show the Reluctancy of Jewish Believers of Jesus Christ to Proclaim the Gospel to Gentiles?

A great oddity in the Gospel of Matthew is the fact that although it was originally written to Jewish believers of Jesus Christ it emphasizes the close relationship between Jesus and gentiles. The closeness is e.g. shown in the Genealogy of Jesus with pagan women as his foremothers; in the visit of the magy to the new born Messiah; in the bewilderment of Jesus by the faith of a centurion whose pagan home he was prepared to visit; in the helping of the daughter of a Cananite woman whose faith he highly appreciates. Furthermore, at the cross it is a Roman centurion who confesses his faith in Jesus as the Son of God, and it is only Matthew who in the formulation of the Great Commission speaks about all nations. It seems reasonable to conclude that one of the aims of the Gospel of Matthew was to widen the understanding of the Jewish believers of the universality of the Gospel. They have no right to keep it only for themselves, but let also gentiles to become part of it.

HANNA RISSANEN

Work of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) Among the Jews

In many European countries independent mission organizations for the work among the Jews were founded. In Finland, from the very beginning, it became a responsibility of the FELM (founded 1859). First it was directed to Jews living in Finland. The first Finnish missionaries to work among the Jews were sent to Czernowitz, Austro-Hungary in 1912. Unfortunately it was interrupted by the burst of World War I. The first missionaries in the British Mandate of Palestine were Aapeli and Anna-Maija Saarisalo. The real pioneer of the FELM in the work among the Jews was Aili Havas (years 1932-1969). Nowadays FELM works in Jerusalem, Haifa and in Tel Aviv-Jaffo.

JUHA-PEKKA RISSANEN

Richard Harvey's writing "Jewish Believers in the Church"

This writing is a shot translation by Juha-Pekka Rissanen concerning the text written by Richard Harvey: "Jewish Believers in the Church" (Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 60; Issue Group on Reaching Jewish People with the Gospel, Group No. 31).

SERAFIM SEPPÄLÄ

*Orthodox Christianity and Judaism:
Paradigmatic Similarities*

The article discusses the similarities between Orthodox Christianity and Judaism on the paradigmatic level, presenting and expounding five structural similarities that function as paradigmatic truths for both religions. In each tradition, religious identity is remarkably communal and deeply tied to the history; the

sacredness of the holy text is understood and experienced in the tradition of interpretation; the concept of time is deeply connected with the liturgical cycles in which the meanings of the paradigmatic events of the past are activated into experiential reality; God's kenosis is a principle that opens views to the questions of ethics and theodicy; in anthropology, free will and human responsibility are emphasized. These common structural elements, and other similarities contained in them, have received considerably less attention than the ideological and historical problems between Judaism and Orthodox Christianity.

JOUNI TURTIAINEN

The Messiah of Israel as the Challenge for Dialogue

Faith in the Messiah both unites and divides the Synagogue and the Church. There has traditionally been an emphasis in Judaism claiming the Messiah to be always "the One who is to come" – not the One who has already come. Decisive factor in parting the ways between the Synagogue and the Early Church was conviction that Kingdom of God has come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. His death on the cross and his resurrection were interpreted as fulfillments of Messianic promises in the Old Testament. From the normative Jewish perspective faith in Jesus became deviation, which left a smoldering resentment between the Synagogue and the Church. However, there has always been Jesus believing Hebrew-Christians in the Church. Despite this fact there has been little tolerance towards their Jewish identity in the Church, which has emphasized herself as the "New Israel" replacing the old one. This replacement theology has had far reaching consequences between Jewish-Christian relationships. In spite of some exceptions suspicion and inability to encountering have increased on both sides. After the Second World War ecclesiastical theology has been adapted to demands of the Synagogue to abstain from missionary activities among Jews. One is compelled to ask: how justified it is to deny from contemporary Jews the very message, which enabled the Early Church to come into being as a Jewish movement?

TIMO VASKO

The founding of the European Lutheran Commission on the Church and the Jewish People (LEKKJ), 1976 – Finnish membership 1977

The *Lutherische Europäische Kommission für Kirche und Judentum* (LEKKJ) was founded 29-30 March 1976 in Christiansfeld, Denmark. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF), under the leadership of Archbishop Martti Simojoki, reached a decision on 31 Jan. 1977 to establish a Working Group on the ELCF and Judaism. Furthermore, the Church officially joined the LEKKJ from the beginning of 1978. This article analyzes the activities of the LEKKJ, 2004-2011, on the basis of the documents it produced. Further discussion is made on the following meetings: Antisemitism – Cluj-Napoca 2004, Israel: State, Land, People – Amsterdam 2005, Religious Identity in Europe – 30th Anniversary Convention Hannover 2006, Messianic Judaism – Oslo 2007,

Viewpoints on Education and Training Arising from Christian-Jewish Dialogue – Venice 2008, Early Model of the Meeting of Christians and Jews – Budapest 2010, Christological Hermeneutics of the Old Testament – Helsinki 2011. In 2012 the ELCF will celebrate 35 years of participation in the LEKKJ

TIMO VASKO

Report of “the Helsinki Research Group on Messianic Theology (HRGMT)” – study tour to Jerusalem 22-29, June 2008.”

(appendix)

A Finnish five-member ecumenical group travelled to Jerusalem to study with Roman Catholic and Messianic Jews the overall situation of the various Hebrew-speaking Churches and communities. In these meetings we heard their own concepts of the current central theological emphases, with particular regard to the Messianic movement at this moment in Israel. Taking into account all possible groups in Israel, those who believe in Jesus as the Messiah now number around 10,000. There are approximately 150,000 of these believers around the world. There is a great divergence between those who are oriented towards the Churches, i.e. the Hebraic Roman Catholic and other historical Churches, and the Messianic Jewish movements. The latter want to go their own way, emphasise Christology as the core of Christian faith (Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; God and man). They also stress the Bible (the Hebrew Old and New Testament) as the only authority. They are not actually interested in, e.g., the ecclesiology, doctrine of the Trinity, or confessions of the old, traditional Churches. The reason for this is because these things are the creation of the historical Churches; they do not arise from Jewish-Hebrew roots and sources, which are to be read “in the light of Christ”. The priority of eschatology is significant; chapters 9-11 of Romans are vital. They expect the return of Christ in the near future (Rom. 11:25-26). The theological problematic surrounding the identity of Jewish believers in Christ is, at the moment, still being clarified in many ways.

DANIEL WEINTRAUB

Judaism in Finland

Finland’s Jewish population is young according to European standards. Jews arrived in Finland starting from 1830s as soldiers of the Russian army. At the time of autonomy – according to the laws concerning Jews from the period of the Swedish rule – it was forbidden for Jews to live in Finland. So Jews in Finland didn’t have an official position. In spite of that the congregational organisation of the Jews started around the mid 1800s. By the end of the century, started also the discussion about making the position of the Jews official. After the independence of Finland the Jews got civil rights very quickly and the Jews living in Finland started to become Finnish Jews. During the years of the war the history of Finnish Jews is significantly different from the destinies of Jews who were in contact with Hitler’s Germany. After the Second World War also Finnish Jews shared their sympathy between their home country and the newly established Israeli State. They secularized at the same time with other Finns. To balance the assimilation,

during the last 25 years many Jews mostly from Israel and Russia have moved to Finland. Today the future of Finnish Jews looks stable.

KATJA-MAARIA VILÉN

Jews for Jesus and Jews for Judaism in the United States in 1985—2006

"The Fight over Jewish Souls: Jews for Jesus and Jews for Judaism in the United States in 1985–2006" was the topic of my thesis that I wrote at the Faculty of Theology, Helsinki University, in 2011. The thesis deals with two opposing forces: Jews for Jesus, an organisation founded in 1970's to proclaim the message of the gospel to all Jews worldwide, and Jews for Judaism, a counter-reaction to the former organised to educate the Jews so that they would not convert and thus leave their heritage. I did my research on the underlying reasons of the battle and also on the way the two took action, especially during the worldwide Behold Your God campaign during the years 2001–2006.