What Vatican II Means to Us Jews

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WHAT VATICAN II MEANS TO US JEWS

ON HIS return from the Vatican Council, Cardinal Döpfner, the Archbishop of Munich, remarked: "The Council is over. Now the Council begins." With this, he wished to say that the time had come to translate the decrees of the Council into action. By the same token, he answered the often heard question, whether or not the labors of the Council were worth the trouble: Had any real effects been produced? Had anything been changed, anything new set in motion? Whoever had naively assumed that the Catholic Church would abandon essentials of her doctrine may have been disappointed. Yet, much of what is possible under today's conditions has been achieved and the practical results should become visible relatively soon.

It would be misleading to say that, at Vatican II, one group was victorious over another. At this Council, no battles were fought for victories. Its purpose was to open the way for new developments, or, where these were already underway, to help their breakthrough. For this reason, nearly all the documents show signs of compromise. Indeed, Pope Paul suggested this approach when he said that the Council—up to then the most comprehensive assembly of the Catholic Church—did not represent a parliament but a brotherhood of Christians. Hence the Pope considered it inadmissible that a minority be voted down by a majority. Further, he proceeded from the assumption that the innovations which might be the most far reaching for the Church could more easily be accomplished if the schemata were accepted with as near unanimity as possible or with only minor opposition. Thus, not a single text was promulgated in the way it had
originally been drafted. This explains why not all justified hopes and expectations were fulfilled. But the way should now be free for the application of those chiefly theoretical texts.

The numerous votes produced an essentially homogeneous picture. Before compromises in the final editing, there was always an impressive majority for the "progressive" schemata. The greater number of these texts were acceptable to far more than two thirds of the Council fathers. Those who opposed every accommodation of the Church to our times were rarely capable of mustering more than three hundred followers; they were a small minority among the more than two thousand fathers.

Significant, however, is the fact that the powerful Roman Curia voted "No." Its influence remains fairly unbroken at the present moment. Only the future can show whether the national conferences of bishops, or the world-wide Senate of bishops will be able to bring about a change long overdue. Yet, it is evident in which direction the thinking of the world's bishops points today. Most of them are aware of the need to move away from concepts of late antiquity and the Middle Ages, to free their people from those unbiblical speculations that are more stones than bread, to seek a way to reach their fellowmen who are not Catholics, be they Christian or not. This is the great result of the Council. The Roman Church could not possibly revert to preconciliar attitudes, without acting against the documents the Pope himself has promulgated.

All too often, Catholics, as well as non-Catholics, have misunderstood the nature of this Council and were therefore incapable of adequately appreciating its results. As Catholics, the Council fathers were bound, not to begin *ab ovo*, but to express anew their thoughts, rooted as they were in a long tradition, partly good, partly not so good. Consequently, the Council had to move within a set framework. The language of the texts had to be adapted to this tradition, that is, to modes of thinking that had evolved over many centuries. Wherever attempts were made to abstract, more or less, from this tradition because its theological content is seen differently today, objections arose that were dealt with through compromise. Whether or not one went too far occasionally can only be judged in each respective case, and is, moreover, irrelevant now. The Council has left us the legacy of these documents; Catholics, with others that might be many. After all, there is a matter of course proper to Catholic strange, to people of was called an *exemptions* relevant to the addressed itself to many, as much and others from each Council was to show the Catholic Church."

**II**

**OF THE conciliar path in which Catholics tions, we mention the Declaration on Ne Religious Freedom. The core of the scientific interpretation wanted to meaning the sacred in particular circumstances according to the Scripture can be paying, "due attent perceiving, speaking sacred writer, and period in their every approach to the text single verses out of conclusions. Hence,

1. Quotations from t *Vatican II*, ed. W. Abbo
these documents; Catholics now have to live with these texts and not with others that might have been more responsive to the wishes of many. After all, the Council addressed itself primarily to Catholics; it is a matter of course, therefore, that it spoke in a spirit and language proper to Catholic terminology, although it is unfamiliar, even strange, to people of different faiths. While it is true that the Council was called an ecumenical council, it had to deal first of all with questions relevant to the life of today’s Catholics. Whenever the Council addressed itself to men of different faiths, it did so only in order to unshackle, as much as possible, the relationship between Catholics and others from earlier tensions. To use a saying of Paul VI, the Council was to show the world “the greatly beautified face of the Catholic Church.”

OF THE conciliar pronouncements that have meaning for the society in which Catholics live together with non-Catholics and non-Christians, we mention three: the Constitution on Divine Revelation, the Declaration on Non-Christian Religions, and the Declaration on Religious Freedom.

The core of the document on Revelation paves the way for a scientific interpretation of Scripture. “In order to see clearly what God wanted to communicate to us” the exegete has to “investigate what meaning the sacred writer intended to express and actually expressed in particular circumstances, as he used contemporary literary forms in accordance with the situation of his own time and culture” (art. 12).1

Scripture can be understood, the Council document asserts, only by paying “due attention to the customary and characteristic styles of perceiving, speaking, and narrating which prevailed at the time of the sacred writer, and to the customs men normally followed at that period in their everyday dealings with one another” (ibid). Such an approach to the texts of the Bible can prevent exegetes from taking single verses out of context, isolating them, and drawing premature conclusions. Hence, in presenting the life of Jesus, the many cultural

and spiritual facets of his environment must be taken into account. The New Testament can be properly understood only against the background of the Judaism of that time. Beyond that, it is essential to understand the literary dispute that resulted from the schism between Judaism and the early Christian community; its residue is found in the New Testament in the form of religious polemic. It is equally essential not to dogmatize what actually was a specific situation of conflict, not to hurl about selected anti-Jewish verses, using them to condemn the Jews, as has been done ever since the days of the Church fathers. The Judaism of New Testament times was not presented in the light of its own self-understanding but as it appeared to men who were willing to sever their bonds with it or who had been expelled from it.

In preaching the Christian message, it is therefore necessary to pay attention to the peculiar character of these documents of faith. Exegesis is here confronted with the task of re-examining certain problems of New Testament language: the literary presentation of the parables, the shaping of the passion story, concepts like "the Jews" (especially in the Gospel of John), the essence and doctrine of Pharisaism, expressions such as "salvation," "rejection," and so on. Furthermore, the statements in the Gospels must not be isolated, but should be considered in their total context of the New Testament by taking into account, among other passages, Romans 9-II and Ephesians 2.

The New Testament exegesis now approved by the Council may help the Church not to yield again to an anti-Judaism that for centuries has been active within all Christian denominations—and not to their benefit.

The Old Testament must be approached reverently for it leads to a knowledge of both God and man. While the Gospels do hand down what Jesus did and taught, their authors, nevertheless, selected "some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writing, reducing some of them to a synthesis, explicating some things in view of the situation of their churches" (art. 19). The Council has now fully returned the Old Testament to Catholics; frequently it was known to Catholics only in part rather than in its breadth and profundity.

Today, the members of the Catholic Church will again be able to find access to the continuity between the Old Testament and the New,
What Vatican II Means to Us Jews

and they can learn to understand what the Bible means in relating the one history of God's salvation of His creatures. Beyond that, the Old Testament becomes important in its own right; its spirituality can no longer be viewed one-sidedly as a rigid legalism, presumably in opposition to the New Testament message of love. The "God of Vengeance" of the Old Testament, contrasted with the "God of Love" of the Gospels, is thus shown to be a man-made image, not at all corresponding to the biblical reality.

On this basis, it is possible to approach the Bible in a scientific, critical manner. Such an undertaking obviously does not divest the New Testament of its dignity; on the contrary, it helps to unlock the correct understanding. The document on Revelation, finally, advises the learned reader to go back, when necessary, to the original text of the Bible in order to guard against misinterpretations, prejudices, and commonly accepted distortions handed down by habit. Scholarship, preaching, and catechesis are here confronted with new, grave responsibilities.

III

In the Declaration on Non-Christian Religions, the chapter on the Jews is of special importance. Its importance is derived not so much from the understandable self-interest of Jews; its significance is, rather, that it is an act of the Church's self-purification. Even in the early days of the Church, a pseudotheology appeared that deprived "God's people of the Old Covenant," as it was called, of its dignity. Despite the warnings of the apostle Paul, an attempt was made to divest the Jews of their divine promises and to claim these for Christians alone, rather than, as Paul taught, to glory in the sharing of them. The consequence of this profoundly unbiblical attitude, which had been introduced by the Church Fathers, surfaced in the form of hostility toward Jews motivated by pseudotheological notions.

In modern times, it was easy to secularize this hostility, so that the allegation of the "God-rejected" Jews became the theory of the "inferior Jewish race." These insane notions were put into practice in Auschwitz. The horror of it, as well as the guilt, that many Christians brought upon themselves may have been the unexpressed reason for
the so-called Declaration on the Jews. No man will fully understand the Nazi persecution of the Jews unless he realizes that it was made possible only because for centuries Jews were portrayed in a pseudo-theological way as "obstinate" and "rejected" individuals. In our day, images of this sort have made Christians susceptible to Nazi hostility against the Jews and have weakened their Christian resistance to barbarity and devilry. In addition, the Church has always had a tendency to separate the Old Testament from the living Jewish people by seeing in them the wanderer driven restlessly over the face of the earth (Cardinal Faulhaber).

In this way, the psalms could be salvaged for the Catholic liturgy while fraternal bonds and solidarity to the very people from whom they sprang were too often denied. In such a view, the Jews lose their place in the history of salvation and, even worse, their human significance. They stand outside the circle of those for whom one feels co-responsible. This was the fruit of a pseudo-theology handed down from generation to generation and one which had led to a complete estrangement between Christians and Jews. Only thus was it possible for a great many Europeans who found themselves within the power sphere of Nazi domination to be so uncommonly disinterested in the fate Hitler inflicted on the Jewish people. It is typical in this context that often Christians intervened for baptized Jews only, and even to them the solace of Christian fraternity was occasionally denied.

Against the background of such a totally unchristian attitude, the Statement on the Jews was meant to create a new understanding of Judaism. The conciliar document contains the following five significant points:

1. The Jews remain chosen and dear to God for the sake of their fathers.
2. On the basis of a common spiritual heritage, the Council wishes to promote mutual respect and knowledge.
3. The death of Christ cannot be blamed without distinction on all Jews then living, much less can it be imputed to the Jews of today.
4. The Jews may not be represented as rejected or cursed.
5. The Church repudiates all persecutions against any men and deplores the hatred, persecution, and manifestations of anti-Semitism.
This last thought is taken up again when the Declaration proclaims that the Church rejects any discrimination against men, any harassment because of race, color, condition of life, or religion. Finally, there is another passage that stresses the "common brotherhood" of all men "which excludes every kind of discrimination."

Thus, anti-Semitism is unequivocally repudiated in the Statement on the Jews. By rejecting it three times, the Declaration strongly denounces hatred of Jews, even though it avoids the technical term damnat, "condemns," which can be found in the decree of the Holy Office against anti-Semitism of March 25, 1928. It was decided on principle to eliminate the word "condemn" from all Council texts. The triple rejections should be enough to make any form of anti-Semitism in the Catholic Church today impossible.

Considerable time may have to pass before all members of the Church arrive at this insight and translate it into word and deed. What is needed, above all, is that all prejudicial statements and various mistaken exegetical notions be deleted from catechetical and theological textbooks, a task that will keep experts busy for some years. It is urgent not only to correct printed works of every kind, including the pamphlets distributed in parishes, but also to instruct young priests and teachers so that they will not teach anything that conflicts with the texts promulgated by the Council. What will become of those children who are still being taught the sentiments here cited (the example is taken from a German teacher's manual still in use)? "The Jews knew no mercy. They acted as though possessed by the devil. . . . They were really detestable people and ungrateful ones, these Jews. . . . Some day, God will severely punish the evil Jews for their sins. Even women and their children will have to suffer a great deal. . . ."

In a careful and scholarly investigation, Theodor Filthaut has proved that this is not an isolated case of malicious aberration. His
findings were submitted to the German bishops' conference together with an authoritative opinion requested by the conference. Another example is the parish bulletin of the Basel-Stadt deanery of October 16, 1964. It contains an article by one of the pastors of the deanery in which he says:

By murdering the Messiah, Israel deserved to lose its universal mission to be "the people of religion," the bearer of the kingdom of God. Another people will take its place, a people not in a national, but in a religious-historical sense. The tenants will be killed. In the year 70, Jerusalem perished and was horribly devastated.

It is typical of the obstinacy in some circles that the pastor in question simply refused to discuss his unbiblical theses.

In Austria, too, it is obviously still considered proper to perpetuate the accusation of ritual murder by the Jews that originated in magical fantasies. In the Egger-Lienz chapel, there is the following inscription: "Former resting place of the innocent child Ursula Böck who, on Good Friday of the year 1443, was martyred by Jews in the Jews' Lane in Lienz." The priest in charge maintains that he does not believe this inscription could produce anti-Jewish resentment; it was rather propaganda against the picture and inscription that focused attention on them. Elsewhere in Austria, in Pulkau, for example, legends about the desecration of eucharistic bread, complete with pictures and pamphlets, are sold by the local parish priest.

Such pseudotheological fantasies had their corrupting consequences in the political area as well. Paulus Gordan, O.S.B., has compiled various pronouncements made by bishops against the Jews after 1933. These utterances would hardly have been possible had the Second Vatican Council taken place, not in our day, but then. In the 1939 Lenten pastoral of the Bishop of Limburg—that is, some months after the pogrom of November 1938—we read: "The Jewish people is guilty of deicide and has been under a curse ever since the Crucifixion." The late Archbishop Gröber of Freiburg is quoted as having said on March 24, 1941, at a time when the Jews were already deported from his own province: "The insane but real self-condem-
nation is coming down on Jerusalem: 'His blood be on us and our children.' This curse has fulfilled itself horribly down to our day."

Words like these, spoken as they were by bishops, clearly demonstrate two things. First, it was necessary for the Catholic Church to purge itself through the Council of theological prejudices; second, these prejudices have helped to prevent a fraternal solidarity between Christians and Jews. Small wonder, then, that even today there are Christians who speak of the barbaric persecutions of the Jews, the mass murder of millions of innocent men, women, and children, as "God's judgment"—a concept that is again gaining favor, and by no means only in Catholic circles. In this way, one's own failure is to be covered up by a pseudotheological excuse. Not the persecutors but their victims are judged guilty, and one seeks to bring this guilt to light by seemingly profound biblical interpretations.

In the face of such aberrations, some questions arise: Were the people of Dresden who were killed by fire bombs more evil than the people of Heidelberg who were spared? When it comes to Jews, some primitive hair-splitting and a simplistic exegesis seem all that is needed to rid oneself of one's own guilt. Incidentally, the New Testament has treated this subject in chapter 13 of the Gospel according to Luke, where Jesus proclaims that the Galileans whom Pilate had slain while they sacrificed in the Temple, as well as those who lost their lives when the tower of Siloah fell, were not greater sinners than anyone else in Galilee or Jerusalem. How strange that some theologians do not remember these words of their Lord.

In this context, I also think of the more than two thousand Polish priests and the ministers of the Confessional Evangelical Church who were murdered in Nazi concentration camps. Had these martyrs upheld the Gospel of Jesus Christ less than the German Christian ministers who saved their lives and were lucky enough to return from the war? Which of all these stood under the judgment of God? May one quite irresponsibly quote some scriptural texts taken out of context against the tens of thousands of Christian martyrs who had to pay for their faith with their lives? Or is this procedure permitted only against Jews?

Even today, insane pseudotheological notions are still being passed off as theological insights. This was shown by the distribution of anti-Semitic pamphlets even at the margin of the Council. Only some
of these can be attributed to the Arab League. Others were the productions of Catholics.6

This applies specifically to a pamphlet that takes a tradition of the Church’s hostility against the Jews for granted. A bevy of some thirty obscure Catholic organizations of the most reactionary brand took it upon itself to put together examples from Church history that document a definite anti-Jewish attitude.7 Obviously, it is not difficult to find such utterances. The authors of the pamphlet then asked: Is it permissible, then, to disown those Church Fathers and popes by teaching in the Statement on the Jews the very opposite of what up to now has been considered the traditional understanding in the Church?8 Apart from the fact that it would be poor praise of the Church to declare ecclesiastical anti-Semitism a matter of tradition, such an assumption is also factually erroneous. If, over the centuries, a certain anti-Judaism and sometimes even hatred for Jews were able to spread in the Church, the adherents of such doctrines were guilty of an offense against Scripture, against the basic verities of biblical revelation, and that ultimately means against the very humanity God demands. Catholics, therefore, who clamor for the perpetuation of such an attitude, are doing a decided disservice to their own Church by reminding everyone of the crimes men committed against other men. The intention of the Council is precisely the demand to turn once and for all from the darkest chapter of church history and to offer brotherly affection to all men.

Apart from the inflammatory book “Complota contra la Chiesa,” authored by anonymous Catholics and financed by the Arab League, whose German translation, incidentally, was barred by the Attorney General of the West German government because of its inflammatory character, the following publication ought to be mentioned: *Im Bann des Konzils—Reform oder Revolution* (Zurich: Thomas, 1966). The book contains a lecture by James Schwarzenbach, long known as a Jew-baiter. It reveals the slanderous means with which anti-Semites are at work in the Church. In this connection, it is not superfluous to mention that open anti-Semitism is rampant in certain Spanish and South American circles, and that the fantasy of an international Jewry pulling the strings serves anti-Jewish propaganda in other parts of the world, too.

At the Council, a number of experts of different national backgrounds declared that they had never heard of most of the organizations listed. Some were definitely non-existent, while the names of others (for instance, that of the U.S. “Traditionalists”) were used without authorization [Editor].

This is a specimen of the pamphlet’s argument and style: “No council and no pope can condemn Jesus, the Catholic Church, its sovereign pontiff, and the Church’s most famous councils. The Declaration on the Jews carried with it this implicit condemnation. For this reason it must be refused.”

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brotherly affection to those who do not share the faith of the Catholic Church.

The Council demands a re-vision and a reorientation. It rejects hatred and intolerance and seeks, by way of a new understanding, to turn toward the "separated brethren" so that all, in concert, may make this world a little more human. To this end, however, it is not enough to bring out unbiased books; it is at least as urgent to remove all prejudice, most of which is unconscious, from the minds of pastors and teachers. The experience of many years has shown that these men are not aware of any personal guilt; it would be incorrect to label them conscious "anti-Semites." Habit has done its work in them and the prejudices that time and again poison the souls of children and adults alike simply bubble to the surface. If anyone accused them of "anti-Semitism," they would indignantly deny it. The Council's Statement offers the possibility of laboring against this kind of enmity in a systematic and biblically founded way. A basic principle for such work might be the recognition that the word of Scripture can be proclaimed to Christians only if the preachers themselves are not only touched by the spirit of the Bible, but have made it fully their own. Anything else will only lead to ever new distortions of the biblical text, disfigurements which the Statement on the Jews wishes to make impossible.

But the Statement does a service, not so much to Jews as to Catholics whom it will help to free in the future from the poison of Jew-baiting. This was clearly the intention of Pope John XXIII in demanding such a decree from the Council and in instructing Cardinal Bea, then President of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, on September 8, 1962, to prepare a declaration on the bonds of the Church to the Jewish people. Pope John reasserted his intent several times, for instance, on September 13, 1962, when he wrote; "We have read..."
Cardinal Be'a memorandum with care, and share his opinion that a profound responsibility requires our intervention."\(^{10}\)

This legacy of John XXIII has, in all essential matters, been honored by Paul VI and the Council fathers. If one is but willing, the Statement on the Jews offers all the possibilities needed to render the future relations between Catholics and Jews freer of tension. Let all, therefore, who have any responsibility for putting this Statement into practice, arouse the willingness needed and, as soon as possible, translate the spirit of John XXIII into action.

**IV**

**The Decree on Religious Freedom completes the Statement on the Jews. Without the former, the latter would be an isolated document, not organically embedded in the work of the Council. The Decree on Religious Freedom elucidates the entire perspective. It also brings to light some very practical consequences. All that has been known for centuries—not seldom ingloriously—by the alienating expression "Mission to the Jews" ought now to be thought through again in the light of religious freedom. Above all, it is to be hoped that very soon the Spanish Jews, for instance, will be able to enjoy the fruits of this decree. On this subject, the document says:

If, in view of peculiar circumstances obtaining among certain peoples, special legal recognition is given in the constitutional order of society to one religious body, it is at the same time imperative that the right of all citizens and religious bodies to religious freedom should be recognized and made effective in practice (art. 6).

While the Statement on the Jews had already called for fraternal dialogue, the Declaration on Religious Freedom underscores once more that truth must be sought by way of free inquiry; men are counselled to assist one another in the quest for truth through the interchange of ideas, through dialogue. Now partners equal in rights face one another; no longer is there an attempt to bring a mere "object" more or less to the Church alone to relinquish her claim to indignation. The Church alone in the world. The misuses of power and complicity in evil are no longer possible.

Finally, government practice, the law, which is itself the product of the freedom and discrimination among religious bodies. It follows that a people, by the constitution of any religious body. All religious bodies to religious freedom. It also brings to light some very practical consequences. All that has been known for centuries—not seldom ingloriously—by the alienating expression "Mission to the Jews" ought now to be thought through again in the light of religious freedom. Above all, it is to be hoped that very soon the Spanish Jews, for instance, will be able to enjoy the fruits of this decree. On this subject, the document says:

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"object" more or less forcibly to the recognition of the one truth that the Church alone has in her safekeeping. That the Church cannot relinquish her claim to truth is a matter of course and no reason for indignation. The question is, rather, how will she carry out this claim in the world. The Decree on Religious Freedom is likely to prevent every misuse of power and every kind of compulsion. It says:

Finally, government is to see to it that the equality of citizens before the law, which is itself an element of the common welfare, is never violated for religious reasons, whether openly or covertly. Nor is there to be discrimination among citizens.

It follows that a wrong is committed whenever government imposes upon its people, by force or fear or other means, the profession or repudiation of any religion, or when it hinders men from joining or leaving a religious body. All the more is it a violation of the will of God and of the sacred rights of the person and the family of nations when force is brought to bear in any way in order to destroy or repress religion, either in the whole of mankind, or in a particular country, or in a specific community (art. 6).

It would be a gross simplification to isolate the Statement on the Jews and not to interpret it together with other statements. All of them complement one another, and only thus do they offer the possibility of the proper understanding from which the practical application must follow.

Before the Catholic Church lies a long road of reflection on her renewal. The Church after the Council is not the same as she was before. The windows to the world have been opened. A free breeze moves through the dwellings of Catholics so that men might regain their spiritual health, so that much which has been in conflict with Scripture may be blown away. But this is the concern of Catholics and of Catholics only. It was, after all, their Council. The effects of such a development in the Church, however, will be constructively felt by all men. Cramped relationships between people can now be resolved; the ground has been cut away from under the presumption and discrimination that stood in the way of good relations. A narrowness, sometimes almost ghetto-like, has made room for a new openness to the world.

By the very abundance of its themes, the Council has forced
Catholics to "overcome certain thought patterns, a certain laziness in thinking, so as to arrive at that conversion of hearts which is the renewal Christ's message demands" (Bishop Franziskus von Streng). Of course, the scope of conciliar material is so overwhelming that quick results cannot be expected everywhere. For the time being, it can only be hoped that the enlightened spirit, engendered by the Council, will not yield again to fatigue and indifference. Despite its many compromises, one should not underestimate the richness of the Council but rejoice in the new spirit that has come to life in the community of faith that, whether it will or no, is tied by many bonds to those to whom it is indebted not only for the Old Testament, so called, but also for its redeemer and his apostles.

Despite some discordant notes that could have been avoided, the theological progress achieved by the Statement on the Jews is especially evident when it is compared with the "Resolution on Anti-Semitism" of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi, 1961. As gratifying as the strong rejection of anti-Semitism is in that resolution, the missionary element in it is plain enough. Jews are not looked upon as "separated brethren"; rather is the complete elimination of anti-Semitism meant to create a condition favorable to the acceptance of Christ by Jews. Underlying this approach is the thought that the missionary approach to Jews has failed; the attitude of many Christians toward the Jews has frightened them away from "sharing with Christians the best that God has given us in Christ." The Resolution reads:

The Third Assembly recalls the following words which were addressed to the Churches by the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948: "We call upon all the Churches we represent to denounce anti-Semitism, no matter what its origin, as absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith. Anti-Semitism is sin against God and man. Only as we give convincing evidence to our Jewish neighbors that we seek for them the common rights and dignities which God wills for His children, can we come to such a meeting with them as would make it possible to share with them the best which God has given us in Christ."

The Assembly renews this plea in view of the fact that situations continue to exist in which Jews are subject to discrimination and even persecution. The Assembly urges its member churches to do all in their power to resist every form of anti-Semitism. In Christian teaching, the historic events which led to the fastening upon the Jews belong to our corporate history, Jews were the first to identify with the mission of Christ as "chosen nation" and yet do not yet recognize Him. That this declaration, despite the good elements that reside in it, is up to them which the organization is in a measure to live up to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

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As for the final version, one may well ask whether the authorities at the time "did not recognize the high mindedness" of the earlier version accepted by the fathers. Again, even here one shows through; men (with the passion of Christ, upon himself his suffering, all through the Gospel 4:27 as against 2:3 in 11. The New Delhi Resolution of the World Council of Churches, 1961 (New York).
laziness in which is the on Streng). elming that one being, it red by the Streng). Despite its of the in the com bonds testament, so avoided, the Anti- Delhi, 1961. that resolu not looked of and the acceptance ight that the any Chris with Chris reads:

As FOR the final version of the conciliar Declaration on the Jews, one may well ask whether it was necessary to draw attention to the Jewish authorities at the time of Jesus, and whether the remark that Jerusalem "did not recognize the time of her visitation" does not sound somewhat high minded. The use of such phrases as "although" and "nevertheless," as well as the "true—but" sentences, are all too obvious reminders of that spirit of compromise which was missing in the earlier version accepted on November 22, 1964, by 1651 Council fathers. Again, even here the old ambivalence of Christian theology shows through; men (though certainly not "all Jews") are accused of the passion of Christ, at the same time it is emphasized that Jesus took upon himself his suffering and death voluntarily in order to accomplish his redemptive work for all mankind. This double track runs all through the Gospels, also the Acts of the Apostles (see 3:17-18, 4:27 as against 2:36; 3:13; 4:10; 7:52; 10:39). The Pauline
Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich

writings, by contrast, contain no such polarity (see 1 Cor 15:3; Rom 5:8; 8:32; Gal 1:4; Eph 5:2). Christians will have to live with this theological difficulty as much as with the fact that the gospel reports are not historiography in any modern sense but documents of faith, even in accordance with their own assertions (Mk 1:1). Jews will not feel disconcerted that, contrary to their own self-understanding, they are assumed to have an insufficient sense of perception.

Despite these objections, this Statement represents a considerable step forward and this we must not overlook. It points, in a very definite sense, the way to that future in which all peoples will invoke the Lord who first revealed Himself to Israel, the one Lord whom at the end of history all men will serve, shoulder to shoulder. This is the hope of Israel, and the Church professes it too. Thus, Christians and Jews share not only a common biblical past, but also the one great goal that is made manifest in the reign of the one God over all mankind. In the Statement on the Jews, this common hope is stressed in such a way that even the hint of Israel's conversion has been avoided. Such an allusion would have been offensive to Jews and would have deepened the rift between them and Christians. All the same, the witness demanded of a church has not been renounced, and, together with the Jews, the Catholic Church now hopes that the road into the future will be friendlier than their past experiences have been.

One would not do justice to the Statement on the Jews were one not to mention the concluding part of the entire Declaration on the Church's Relationship to Non-Christian Religions. It bears the title "Universal Brotherhood" and reads:

We cannot in truthfulness call upon God who is the Father of all, if we refuse to act in a brotherly way toward certain men, created though they be to God's image. A man's relationship with God the Father and his relationship with his brother men are so linked together that Scripture says: "He who does not love, does not know God" (1 Jn 4:8).

The ground is therefore removed from every theory or practice which leads to a distinction between men or peoples in the matter of human dignity and the rights which flow from it.

As a consequence, the Church rejects, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion.
Accordingly, following in the footsteps of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, this sacred Synod ardently implores the Christian faithful to “maintain good fellowship among the nations” (1 Pet 2:12), and, if possible, as far as lies in them, to keep peace with all men (Rom 12:18), so that they may truly be sons of the Father who is in heaven (see Mt 5:45) (art. 5).

This last section seems to me particularly significant, even though it has not yet met with the attention it merits. Here the Council calls for brotherliness even toward those who do not belong to the Roman Church. And this appeal is not made on the basis of a beautiful philosophy, but in direct harmony with the biblical message of creation. It therefore seems to me that here lies one of the most important results of the Council: The non-Christian is here recognized in his dignity as fellow man, a dignity that derives from the fact that he is made in the likeness of God. The words of the First Epistle of John may lead Christians and Jews together into a better future, for here all men are reminded once again that God cannot be found when the love for our fellow man is lost. But a brotherly spirit and brotherly deeds must go together, as the Declaration so rightly states. We may hope, then, that what Jews have painfully missed through the centuries may one day be fulfilled: the brotherly solidarity between Christians and Jews, in spirit and in deed.

*Translated from the German by Otto M. Knab, Portland, Oregon.*