

Introduction

THE ORIGIN OF THE STUDY

SINCE MY ADOLESCENCE, I have been fascinated by the Jewish people. Their very long history, covering many astounding events, often makes me think of a people with an extraordinary fate, struggling with a life lived between blessings and curses. It was therefore a natural consequence to devote part of my research to the study of this people in the present day, in the light of the biblical texts. During my Master's studies in Theology, I attempted to discover whether the second "now" (*nyn*) in Romans 11:31—whose presence is contested and whose absence is used as the basis for an eschatological exposition of the text—was originally present in the verse. What was at stake was the understanding that "Israel according to the flesh" (Rom 9:3) was to be especially subject to the mercy of God during the time of the Apostle Paul or at any time since.¹ I discovered using textual, exegetical, and structural proofs that this second *nyn* was not likely to have been present in the original text. While working on this thesis I came across questions that I hoped Messianic Jews could answer. In this context I was introduced to the organization Jews for Jesus (JFJ) in November 2000, by whom I was then employed three years later.

From September 2003 to July 2009, I worked as the office manager of the Paris branch of JFJ. Taking advantage of my stay in Paris and encouraged by the Director of the Branch, I decided to pursue my theological study with a post-graduate diploma requested before undertaking a PhD. My subject was then inspired by my work with the mission.² Indeed, at the beginning of my employment, I learned that Romans 1:16 was a key verse for the

1. Cf. Fritz, "Le poids d'un mot."

2. Cf. Fritz, "L'expression 'Au Juif premièrement'."

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ministry: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew *first* and also to the Greek.”³

The late Dr Moishe Rosen, founder of JFJ, offered a rather radical interpretation of this verse: Jewish people must be evangelized first. For him, Romans 1:16 was the key to the evangelization of the whole world:

God has a formula for world evangelization, which, if we follow it, will have the gospel going forth in power until there will not be a segment of any society that remains unaffected. . . . My thesis is that if we plan a strategy to reach Jews, we will have a strategy to reach anyone. . . . By not following God’s program for world evangelization, that is, beginning at Jerusalem or to the Jews first, we not only develop a bad theology, we also develop poor missiology.⁴

I did not pay much attention to that issue, one of the reasons being that I myself was not a missionary; but then, with time, this began to haunt me. If many Christians already have difficulties with the evangelization of the Jewish people in general, what will their opinion be regarding the priority of Jewish evangelism?⁵ Do churches have to give priority to missions among the Jewish people and preach first the gospel to Jewish people of their city, and then to the non-Jews? Will this method exponentially increase the harvest?

My postgraduate research paper, concentrating on the way in which Romans 1:16c was understood by the church fathers until Constantine, did not really yield me answers, apart from the idea that the church fathers usually understood the expression “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” in historical terms. In this preliminary research paper, I found no indication that they would understand the phrase as expressing an order to evangelize the Jewish people in priority over the non-Jews, an order the church would otherwise still have to obey today.

My aim then became to continue studies on this issue at PhD level in order to:

1. Define how the Christian church understood Romans 1:16 throughout history;

3. Unless specified, the Bible quotations are taken from *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. Italics mine.

4. Rosen, “Jewish Evangelism,” 380–83. Cf. also Rosen, “Why First?” 2.

5. Cf., for instance, Hinson, “Jew First,” 8. The statement of the *Norwegian Mission to Israel* (in Norwegian *Den Norske Israelsmisjon*) gathers other objections such as the fear of the assimilation and dissolution of the Jewish people or the abhorrence of the Christian creed tainted by Hellenism, in DNI, “Jew First,” 54–55.

2. Evaluate the arguments of those who think that the evangelization of the Jewish people should have priority today;
3. Undertake an exegesis of Romans 1:16;
4. Explore the eschatological implications drawn from salvation history (Rom 9–11).

The book you have before you is mainly the results of this work which first appeared as a PhD thesis.⁶

METHODOLOGY

This study is *missiological* with missiology as its disciplinary “home.” As Christopher Wright expresses it, “Missiology is the study of mission. It includes biblical, theological, historical, contemporary, and practical reflexion and research.”⁷ Writing in the field of missiology constrains both the way I frame my questions and the way I handle the construction of my argument in response to the questions. A missiological study is essentially an *interdisciplinary* work, and therefore all the individual areas cannot receive the detailed engagement with secondary sources that they would require if each one of them was studied in their particular field.

Hence, if New Testament expertise will be employed in chapter 3 regarding the exegesis of Romans 1:16c, and on a lesser scale in chapter 4, I will approach Scripture and the various documents not as a New Testament scholar but as a missiologist, for whom Scripture is vitally important but for whom the arena of discussion lies not *within* the New Testament text but outside of it in the deliberations of contemporary theologians and missiologists regarding mission today.

I am aware that I am dealing with a very sensitive subject. Since the Second World War and the catastrophic Shoah,⁸ debating Jewish issues when one is not Jewish is very delicate. The most awful jokes that I have been told regarding the concentration camps were by Jewish people. If I had made the big mistake to tell the joke myself, I would have been punished for it! At the same time, having worked for six years with JFJ made me feel to some extent like a Jew. I have been insulted like a Jew while on the phone, in the shop, or the van of JFJ. For six years, Jewish people talked to me and

6. Fritz, “Jew First or Jew at Last?”

7. Wright, *Mission of God*, 25.

8. I prefer the term “Shoah” (“storm”, “tempest” in Hebrew) to refer to the “Holocaust.” This later word indeed designates, in the Jewish mind, the animal sacrifice completely consumed by fire (cf. for example, Gen 22:2).

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treated me as if I was a *messianic Jew*—had I been a Jew they would not have considered me (as) a real Jew anyway! A Jew told me I had a Jewish nose, another one that I may be more *Ashkenazi* than *Sephardic*. Moreover, some of my relatives are Jewish by birth.

Nonetheless, the subject is still sensitive. Reading Bertold Klappert in particular helped me to apprehend the sensitive issues connected to Jewish evangelism, especially from a German point of view.⁹ While dialoguing with my PhD supervisor Steve Motyer, I realized how the Shoah was shaping his understanding of Jewish mission: for him, because of these awful events, Jewish mission should be handled by Jewish people and should be given special care: “I believe that Christian mission amongst the Jews should receive priority on the list of Christian concerns.”¹⁰ For him, history changed Jewish-Christian relationships and shapes the way we have to read Romans: “any Israel theology which does not start from a deep grief at the Jews’ unbelief, and proceed to an intense longing that they should turn to their Messiah, cannot claim to be Pauline.”¹¹ For him, Paul would certainly exhort us to evangelize courageously the Jewish people today by emphasizing the witness the Gentile church will give just by being filled with the Spirit and bringing forth those fruits.

While very conscious of the atrocities perpetrated towards the Jewish people, my purpose in this study is not to be guided by emotions. Romans 1:16 needs to be explored in its context and its teaching is to be put into practice in our twenty-first-century world. Does it teach us that we have to preach the gospel first to the Jewish people and then to the Gentiles? The church has then to put this lesson into practice and put the mission to the Jewish people at the top of its list. Does it teach us that the Jewish people were the first to be the recipients and benefactors of the gospel? If so, we then have to reach all the peoples of the earth that have not yet heard of Jesus, without forgetting the Jewish people, but doing this according to a strategy that aims to apply the “Great Commission”¹² in the wisest way possible.

Romans 1:16 is the main biblical verse examined in this study. I chose to study it because it contains the whole issue of what I came to call the *Jewish Missional Priority (MP)* in a nutshell, but also because it appears to be its strongest argument. This is the reason why I first decided to explore how it had been interpreted throughout history. I chose to examine all the

9. Cf. Klappert, “Dialog mit Israel,” 407–30.

10. Motyer, *Israel*, 169.

11. *Ibid.*, 33.

12. To use the common phrase, whose origine is uncertain, referring especially to Matt 28:18–20. Cf. Carey, *Enquiry*, Section I, 9–12: “An Enquiry whether the Commission given by our Lord to his Disciples be not still binding on us.”

arguments of the *MP* in order to understand the different connections with Romans 1:16. As a matter of fact, this examination demonstrated that Romans 1:16 is also—together with Romans 2:9–10 and chapters 9–11—at the heart of the debate and does not only function as a motto for the *MP*. The way these passages are exegetically interpreted will influence the way the mission to the Jewish people is handled. Studying Romans 9–11 led me to view the issue from the angle of salvation history, but not in the way I suspected. Indeed, while working on the issue of the *MP*, I have become haunted by the idea of priority: all the biblical passages where the adverb “first” (*prōton* / πρῶτον) was employed, where an idea of priority was expressed, drew my attention. This was the case not only in Romans but throughout the Bible, in particular with regard to Jesus’ gospel sayings “the first will be the last and the last will be the first.” At the same time, the use of these passages has not been—I believe—an excuse. Having examined them closely, in their context, I decided to put some of them on the side, while keeping those that were entering into the debate. Indeed, the theologians and authors I read throughout the process also helped me to tie the whole thing together in a logical way.

THE MAIN INTERPRETATIONS

Surveying how Romans 1:16 was understood throughout history (see chapter 1), one needs to imitate an entomologist dissecting the texts of all these commentators, churchmen, and thinkers, and classifying them according to the different interpretations that were applied. One of the difficulties of this task is to understand the meaning of the words used by the commentators in their respective time regarding the interpretation of those texts speaking about the evangelization of the Jewish people. Indeed, it is usually the aim of a commentary to explain Paul’s statements in their first-century setting rather than to apply his words to a modern context.¹³ However, after much reflection and struggle, I decided to distinguish three interpretations, all building upon each other: *Historical Priority* (*HP*), *Historico-covenantal*

13. To give a modern example: Martin Pakula, in his missiological lecture on the subject, declares: “Two excellent modern commentaries on Romans are the ones by C. E. B. Cranfield and Douglas Moo. In their comments on the meaning of the phrase: ‘first for the Jew’, they assert that this phrase cannot be merely an historical assertion: that the gospel went first to the Jew (which is true enough), but that the gospel is first for the Jew in a sense that must still be relevant today.” However, do these well-known commentators mean that a priority to Jewish evangelism should be advocated today or are they simply explaining the verse in its first-century context? Cf. Pakula, *First for Jews*, 3.

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Priority (HCP), and *Missional Priority (MP)*.¹⁴ I need to describe them in some depth.

Historical Priority

This interpretation contains two steps: the first step considers the priority expressed by *prōton* in Romans 1:16 to be a historical fact—in the history of the early church, the gospel first went to the Jewish people through Jesus' mission—and a second one describes the pattern employed by the disciples in Acts. I estimate that they can be classed in the same category. The *HP* is the basis for the other interpretations: I can state that the word *prōton* of Romans 1:16 could, at the very least, indicate this priority.

Historical Fact

I did not find anyone who contested the fact that the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, came to the Jewish people first. Charles H. Dodd, for example, explains it in this way: Paul “will admit that the Jews have a certain priority: it is for the Jew first. That is in the first instance a simple matter of historical fact. The gospel had been offered to the Jews by Jesus.”¹⁵

This historical fact, recounted in the gospels, can be summed up by the declaration of Jesus: “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt 15:24) and the order given to his disciples: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt 10:5–6). Of course, the time will come when Jesus will order them to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, but only after the cross: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19).¹⁶

14. As we will see, this presentation is not very original. With some light variations, it is also chosen by Glaser, *BBJE*, II.A. However, the former JFJ missionary Stuart Dauermann distinguishes (rather unconvincingly) five different ways to view this priority (*descriptive position*, *paradigmatic position*, *restrictive position*, and *prescriptive position*, before giving his *prophetic-progressive position*). See Dauermann, “Jew of Course,” 3–6. He also did not convince two other members of the conference who gave him a response: Sibley, “Response,” 1–2, and Goldsmith, “Jew of Course,” 1–2. For these papers, cf. LCJE website. Online: <http://www.lcje.net/Papers%20of%20the%20conference%20High%20Leigh.html>, accessed March 2012.

15. Dodd, *Romans*, 9.

16. Cf. Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise*, 84.

Historical Pattern

Following the final call from Jesus to be his “witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8), his disciples went on mission. The twelve, under Peter, were more dedicated to the Jewish people, while Paul was called to be the Apostle to the Gentiles (cf. Gal 2:7–8). It is Paul who seems to incarnate best the “Historical Pattern” practice, going first to the Jewish people, and then to the Gentiles. It can be summed up by the words of Acts 13:46: “Then both Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, ‘It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you reject it and judge yourselves to be unworthy of eternal life, we are now turning to the Gentiles.’”

Dodd, again, expresses this pattern as follows: “According to the Acts of the Apostles, it was his [Paul’s] own normal practice, on opening work at a fresh place, to approach the Jews first of all, wherever it was possible. But it was for the Greek as well.”¹⁷ Having said that, some questions remain: was this pattern unique to the early church and followed for practical, strategic, or theological reasons? The two other interpretations that I am going to consider now differ: for the second interpretation, this pattern is reserved for the beginning of the church and is part of a *Covenantal Priority*, for the third, this pattern was not only reserved for this period but is still valid, i.e., it is a *Missional Priority*.

Covenantal Priority

The second interpretation explains the historical fact and pattern. If the gospel went first to the Jewish people, it was because of their status as chosen people. As God chose Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob as his people, it was natural that the promise of salvation would come to them first. To continue with Dodd, he resumes this interpretation as follows: “And that, Paul thought, indicated that it was the will of God that they should have the first chance of accepting it (cf. xv.9 [sic]).”¹⁸ This interpretation gains status as we go through history. Usually, the proponents of this interpretation will believe that “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” enjoyed this privilege during the apostolic time. The supporters of the third interpretation claim its ongoing validity.

17. Dodd, *Romans*, 9.

18. Ibid. Rom 15:8 is to be preferred: “For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs.”

Missional Priority

The supporters of the *Missional Priority* interpretation (MP) together consider that, historically, the Jewish people received the gospel first because of the covenant and that, because of their election, they *still* have the right to receive the gospel before the Gentiles (see chapter 2). The biblical proof claimed for this is that Jesus and his twelve disciples preached the gospel first to the lost sheep of Israel and that Paul, the “Apostle to the Gentiles,” went first to the Jewish people before going to the Gentiles, and that there is no reason why this priority should not be valid today. Meanwhile, the MP proponents also assume—as the supporters of the first two interpretations do—that the gospel is for Jewish people and Gentiles alike.

The MP interpretation is put into practice—for instance by Jews for Jesus—by focusing every missionary effort on the Jewish population. JFJ campaigns are conducted in Jewish cities all around the world. Advertising is expressed in a Jewish way.¹⁹ The songs interpreted by its evangelistic band, called The Liberated Wailing Wall, are composed using traditional Jewish chords. This does not mean that Gentiles are not evangelized—as a matter of fact, JFJ usually reaches four times more Gentiles than Jewish people²⁰—but they are not the priority. If a Gentile is interested in the Christian faith, he is counseled by pastors of local churches. If a Jew is interested, he is automatically followed up by the mission. JFJ is a “one issue mission” as well as a devotee of “direct evangelism,” which prefers direct methods:²¹ “Direct Jewish Evangelism as our priority” is the first core value of the mission.²² Even if the phrase “to the Jew first” does not occur in the Jews for Jesus mission statement—“We exist to make the messiahship of Jesus an unavoidable issue to our Jewish people worldwide”²³—it is regularly used in the publications of the mission.²⁴

The very aim of this book is to study this third interpretation, in dialogue with Jews for Jesus (JFJ). My work will not deal with the fact that JFJ, as a “one issue mission,” is targeting the Jewish people—as the Christian Union targets students or Arab World Ministries Arabs. It will be focused

19. A famous tract gives this slogan: “Be more Jewish, believe in Jesus.” A slogan that can only be understood by the Jewish Community.

20. E.g., these statistics from 1955 to 1965: “265 New Jewish Believers for 1100 New Gentile Believers.” In Rosen and Proctor, *Jews for Jesus*, 48.

21. Ibid., 87–88.

22. Cf. JFJ website. Online: <http://www.jewsforjesus.org/about/corevalues/#direct>, accessed July 2010.

23. Cf. JFJ website. Online: <http://www.jewsforjesus.org/about>, accessed August 2010.

24. Cf. for instance Brickner, “First and Also,” 1–2, and my chapter 2.

on its teaching of the *Jewish Missional Priority* (see a more detailed definition further on). When JFJ is using the phrase “To the Jew first,” it is not as part of its “one issue mission” ministry among the Jewish people, but as an important statement the church should follow. I will try to discern the *raison d'être* of JFJ in the history of missions (story, identity, practice) and its main arguments regarding our issue (theological basis, interpretations, eschatological schemes), in order to evaluate the *Missional Priority*. This dialogue will take place in particular through the publications of the mission as well as through my personal involvement within it.

THE PLAN OF THE STUDY

It appears that the major focus of research done on this subject has been within biblical studies, rather than systematic theology. However, in order to answer the question, one should not only consider three specific verses (Rom 1:16; 2:9–10) and Paul’s usual practice of evangelization in Acts, but rather take a wider theological view. Of course, this would include subjects such as “the story of the people of Israel” or “the place of Romans 1:16–17 in the structure of the Epistle.” But the thematic development of the covenant of God with Israel or the eschatological plan of God for humanity should also be considered, as well as the historical and theological development of mission among the Jewish people during twenty centuries of Christianity.

At the same time, interpreters are influenced by their tradition, by their geographical or ethnic background, in which they were raised, and by their socio-cultural feelings expressed through their understanding of the political issues in the Middle East or by their memory of the Shoah’s atrocities. We need to be careful not to distort issues of the first century through our modern hermeneutic: we need to understand what Paul meant when he wrote his Epistle to the Romans in the first century. Hopefully, some mis-siological conclusions will then be able to be drawn.

The aim of this study is to engage with this issue by following the four points stated above (cf. end of “Origin of this study”). Basically, these four points define the four chapters of this work: a *wirkungsgeschichte* (*history of effect*) to understand how Romans 1:16 was understood and applied throughout history, a *status quaestionis* (*state of the question*) to gather and critique all the claims of the proponents of the interpretation in question, a *propositio* (*proposition*) emerging from the exegesis of Romans 1:16–17, and a *heilsgeschichte* to consider *salvation history* from the angle of this study. Finally, in the *Conclusion*, a useful scheme for today’s missions will emerged hopefully, Jewish mission in particular. I believe this work, which has never

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been done in such an extensive way, will shine an important light on this issue.

Wirkungsgeschichte (History of Effect)

The first chapter is a historical one. Its aim is to present a survey of the interpretation of Romans 1:16 throughout history. A *wirkungsgeschichte* or *history of effect*²⁵ is undertaken here to try to find how the text was understood in the historical context of the thinker, a thinker who is, whether he likes it or not, influenced by his tradition and epoch. This survey deals concurrently with the different interpretations of the verse by our predecessors (theory), the different ways in which the Jewish people were evangelized in the last 2,000 years (practice), and the influence of the relations between Jewish people and Gentiles on the whole issue (context). It demonstrates the background of Jews for Jesus' perspective.

Status Quaestionis (State of the Question)

The second chapter is literary in nature. Quite a few books and articles have been written to defend the *MP* interpretation. I attempted to gather them as extensively as possible, which is part of my originality.²⁶ They are usually the work of pastors and missionaries—some of them are sermons or tracts—although a few scholarly books and articles were written to promote the thesis. A recent book edited by Darell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser, compiling fourteen articles written by some of the most well-known proponents of the interpretation, is entitled *To the Jew First: The Case for Jewish Evangelism in Scripture and History* and indicates that the issue is very topical.²⁷ The phrase “To the Jew first” has been increasingly used as a slogan to encourage Jewish evangelism, which means that, while using the slogan, some of these books are not really a proper study of Romans 1:16.²⁸ As far as I am aware, and rather surprisingly, no specific work on the subject has been

25. See chapter 1 for a definition.

26. We were for instance unable to access Heward, *Jew First* and we are still waiting to receive from a library a copy of Mussen, *Jew First*.

27. Bock and Glaser, *Jew First*. Among the writers: Walter C. Kaiser, Darell L. Bock, Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, Mitch Glaser, and Arthur F. Glasser.

28. The best example is the book of Wilson and Wilson, *The Tabernacle: To the Jew First and Also to the Greek*, which does not deal at all with Romans 1:16! Cf. also Bietz, *Jew First*, which is more a testimony; MacLachlan, *Unfulfilled Prophecies: To the Jew First*, which deals with the promise of the land.

published countering this thesis. Of course, some commentators chose to counter it while writing their comments on Romans 1:16, but no scholar has written a monograph to that purpose. However, the 295 page study of John H. Stek commissioned by the General Home Missions Committee of the Christian Reformed Church (USA) in 1966 needs a special mention.²⁹ His first chapter was published in the *Calvin Theological Journal*, but the others, though announced, have never been really made available publicly.³⁰ At the end of his unpublished work, Stek shows that he is not in favor of the *MP* interpretation.

My *State of Question* gathers all these works in order to extract the arguments for the missional interpretation in a methodical as well as a critical way. Thereby I am familiarizing myself with their thought so that I can evaluate it in a proper manner and continue my study particularly focused on its understanding by Jews for Jesus.

Propositio (Proposition)

My third chapter is an exegetical one. The aim of this chapter is to understand the place of Romans 1:16 in the Epistle and in the New Testament. As an evangelical researcher, I am particularly interested—as Jews for Jesus—in Paul’s original meaning. For that purpose, I will use the historico-grammatical method³¹ and attempt, as much as possible, to approach the texts in an empathic manner.³² Even though I will draw upon New Testament studies, I will not engage with the secondary literature to the extent it would be necessary, if this was a monograph on New Testament studies.

Heilsgeschichte (Salvation History)

The fourth chapter is systematic in nature since the whole issue raised by Romans 1:16 is grounded in the *heilsgeschichte* or *salvation history*, in connection with chapters 9–11. The aim of the chapter is to define how the

29. Stek, *Jew First: Exegetical Examination*.

30. Stek, “Jew First,” 15–52. I heard of the unpublished thesis of Stek via *Googlebooks*, which refers to it as a thesis of 590 pages, because it counts the blank versos or the work as a whole. Holwerda, *Jesus & Israel*, 174 (note 34) quotes it regarding Rom 11. In 2010, it was available in eight different libraries in the USA and, thanks to Meredith M. Kline of *Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary*, I was able to get it in December 2010.

31. As defined, for instance, by Bruce, “Interpretation of the Bible,” 565–66.

32. Cf. the “Critical-realist reading” and “hermeneutic of love” as defined in Wright, *New Testament*, 61–67.

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sense of priority I have discovered can be understood in our twenty-first century context.

Conclusion

This concluding chapter will be the place for a summary of the study, a self-critique, as well as a missiological introduction. What are the issues that were not taken into account in this study and which should be undertaken in the future? How should the mission to the Jewish people be advocated among other missions? What are the consequences of the use of the *MP interpretation* in mission today or what would be the consequences if it is given up?

DEFINITIONS

A few terms or notions directly connected to the study need to be defined here to avoid any misunderstanding or misrepresentation.

”Jew” and “Israel according to the Flesh”

Defining Jewishness is without doubt a difficult task, for the Jew as well as the non-Jew. David Brickner agrees with that:

Jewishness is defined broadly within the Jewish community. It is a fact of birth, a product of social development, education and identification, and lastly, a matter of religious affiliation. Yet when it comes to the specifics of Jewish identity, even the leaders of the community disagree. In fact, the question of who is a Jew is one of the most hotly contested issues in the State of Israel today.³³

For Jean-Paul Sartre, “the Israelite is one whom other men consider an Israelite.”³⁴ *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* informs us that “[i]n the 1980s, the Reform movement agreed to regard someone either of whose parents were Jewish as a Jew by birth. . . . For religious Jews, the question of Jewish identity continues to be decided by *halakhah*,”³⁵ *halakhah* which “defines a Jew as a person born of a Jewish mother or one who has converted

33. Brickner, “Jewish Resistance,” I.C.

34. Sartre et al., “Jewish Question,” 42.

35. Hertzberg, “Jewish Identity,” 371.

to Judaism.”³⁶ It is certain that for me, as well as for JFJ which employs only Jewish missionaries or spouses of Jewish people,³⁷ the definition of the Jew is closer to the Reform than the Orthodox tradition; however, I need to add that being a Jew is not simply to be defined genetically, but also culturally and socially. Moreover, I believe that a “Messianic Jew” or a “Jewish believer in Jesus” remains a Jew.³⁸ In 2009, the worldwide Jewish population was 13,421,000.³⁹

Defining Jewishness according to the New Testament is easier but not without difficulties. Even if the word “Jew” (*Ioudaios*)⁴⁰ is related etymologically to the territory and to the people of Judah (*Ioudas*), one of the twelve tribes born of Jacob, the Jewish people are recognized in the first century and today as being all the descendants of Jacob/Israel, son of Isaac, son of Abraham: they are Israelites or “Israel.”⁴¹ Israel, the “people” (*ām; laos*), is generally opposed to the “nations” (*gōyim; ethnē*), which I will not use “in the more restricted sense of ‘nation state’ that developed in post-Reformation Europe,”⁴² but rather as the different peoples of the earth. As for the one converted to Judaism, he is a “proselyte” and in its full expression he is the one who “converts out of love of Judaism and accepts all its laws and ceremonies.”⁴³ He is not to be confused with the “God-fearers,” which refers “to non-Jews in ancient times who observed some of the precepts of the Torah without fully converting to Judaism.”⁴⁴

As Dan Cohn-Sherbok expresses it,

Paul’s reference to Israel according to the flesh (1 Cor. 10.18) implies that there is a different Israel “according to the spirit.”

36. Anonymous, “Jew,” 369.

37. Susan Perlman, Director of Communication for JFJ, answered my question “Who is a Jew according to JFJ?” by email on the 14th March 2012 by writing that “the standard of Jewishness for missionaries is determined according to ethnic descent as the first consideration. That qualifying ethnic decent is established through the applicant having one or both parents who have two Jewish parents. So more specifically Jewishness can be established from two fully Jewish parents or Jewishness from parents that were a Jewish-Gentile couple (A fully Jewish parent + a Gentile parent).”

38. See Brickner, “Jewish Resistance,” I.C.

39. According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics website. Online: http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ_shnaton_e.html?num_tab=sto2_27&CYear=2010, accessed March 2012.

40. Cf. Esth 2:5.

41. Cf. Dunn, *Romans* 9–16, 526.

42. Wright, *Mission of God*, 456 n.3.

43. Anonymous, “Proselyte,” 550.

44. Bohak, “God Fearers,” 279. A God-fearer is hence not circumcised.

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Such a distinction is based on the conviction that the Christian community constitutes a new Israel that is due to inherit the privileges of ancient Israel.⁴⁵

While I would agree that the church, composed of Jewish people and Gentiles who have believed and believe in Jesus, is the new Israel (Gal 6:16),⁴⁶ I also argue that “Israel according to the flesh” still has a special destiny in the plan of God. Moreover, non-Christian Jews today “would be ‘non-Jews’ by the standards of Revelation 2:9; 3:9; Romans 2:28.”⁴⁷ As for modern Judaism, this note of Henri Blocher is also helpful:

Judaism [today] should not be confused with Second Temple Judaism, much less Old Testament religion. Judaism was born, through the work and debates of several generations, of the victory of one party over the others (basically the Pharisaic party) in the radically changed situation created by the ruin of the Temple.⁴⁸

Evangelism, Jewish Evangelism, Jewish Missional Priority

According to the Lausanne Movement,

To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gifts of the Spirit to all who repent and believe.⁴⁹

Jewish evangelism is evangelism of the Jewish people.⁵⁰ *Jewish Missional Priority* is a phrase I have coined to express the idea that the priority for the church today in mission should be the mission to the Jewish people.⁵¹ Glaser considers that “the most lucid explanation of the Present Prior-

45. Cohn-Sherbok, “Israel,” 79.

46. The *kai* in this verse can be exegetical. Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 567.

47. Blocher, “Two Covenant Theology,” 201.

48. *Ibid.*, 201.

49. LCWE, “Lausanne Covenant,” 9.

50. See Robinson, “Jewish Mission,” 190–92.

51. Throughout this book, I will rather use the short version: *Missional Priority* (MP). For the use of “missional” instead of “missiological,” see Wright, *Mission of God*, 24–25: “*Missional* is simply an adjective denoting something that is related to or characterized by mission, or has the qualities, attributes or dynamics of mission. Accordingly, I will normally use *missiological* when . . . a theological or reflective aspect is

ity view of Romans 1:16 [MP] can be found in the statement of the *Lausanne Committee for Jewish Evangelism* in the *Occasional Papers #7*.⁵²

There is, therefore, a great responsibility laid upon the church to share Christ with the Jewish people. This is not to imply that Jewish evangelism is more important in the sight of God, or that those involved in Jewish evangelism have a higher calling. We observe that the practical application of the scriptural priority is difficult to understand and apply. We do not suggest that there should be a radical application of “to the Jew first” in calling on all the evangelists, missionaries, and Christians to seek out the Jews within their sphere of witness before speaking to non-Jews! Yet we do call the church to restore ministry among this covenanted people of God to its biblical place in its strategy of world evangelization.⁵³

Stewart Dauermann—President of *Hashivenu* and former JFJ missionary—gave a paper on our issue at the LCJE International Conference held at High Leigh Conference Centre in Hoddesdon (Hertfordshire, UK) in August 2011.⁵⁴ Here, he expresses the priority using the image of the *foundation* to highlight the importance of this doctrine and to prevent the shaking of the foundation of the house:

No one enjoys going underneath the house to examine the foundation, and no one welcomes the added expense and inconvenience of repairing foundations in need of work. But only a fool would simply paint over cracked foundations with the whitewash of civility.⁵⁵

The Oxford English Dictionary defines “priority” as “[t]he condition or quality of being earlier or previous in time, or of preceding something else” or “Precedence in order, rank, or dignity.”⁵⁶ Christopher J. H. Wright, while talking about the priority of mission, declares:

intended.” Since choosing the phrase, I came across it in the 2011 paper of Stuart Dauermann: “The *restrictive position* holds that because the Jews are singled out in the New Testament as a missional priority, the church can only be said to truly be doing mission when its mission includes outreach to the Jews.” Dauermann, “Jew of Course,” 3.

52. Glaser, *BBJE*, II.B.4. Same argument in Wilks Jr, “Jew First,” third point.

53. COWE, “Christian Witness,” 5.

54. Dauermann, “Jew of Course,” 1–15, a paper that has not been published in the following *LCJE Bulletin*, despite a few allusions, for instance in Downey, “Theological Impressions,” 16–17. At the time of writing, it is the most recent paper advocating the *MP*.

55. Dauermann, “Jew of Course,” 4–5.

56. Murray et al., *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2305.

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First, the language of “priority” implies that all else is “secondary” at best. . . . In other words, the language of priority and primacy quickly tends to imply singularity and exclusion. Evangelism is the *only* real mission. . . . The word *priority* suggests something that has to be your starting point. A priority is whatever is most important or urgent. It is the thing that must get done first before anything else.⁵⁷

Applied to Jewish evangelism, this last definition might appear extreme. It is, however, the definition I think we should keep in mind throughout my work. It may explain that Jewish Missional Priority is in fact rarely applied in such an extreme way, as we will see in my second chapter.

Regarding Jewish evangelism, and Jewish Missional Priority in particular,⁵⁸ we must be aware of the influence of JFJ in the Lausanne Movement, and especially in the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE).⁵⁹ Since the first Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism in 1974, Moishe Rosen and Susan Perlman labored hard to create the LCJE during the Consultation on World Evangelization (LCWE) held in Pattaya (Thailand) in 1980, as Susan Perlman recalls in “A Tribute to Moishe Rosen.”⁶⁰ Since Pattaya, JFJ members have always been part of the LCJE. The *Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 60*, written during the LCWE in Pattaya in 2004 and which in a way expands the *Occasional Paper No. 7*, presents its seven-member team as composed of: Tuvya Zaretsky (JFJ; Editor), Kai Kjær-Hansen (Convener), Ole Chr. Kvarme (Theological Consultant), Bodil F. Skjøtt (Facilitator), Richard Harvey (JFJ), Theresa Newell and Susan Perlman (JFJ). The same applies to the Willowbank and the Berlin Declarations

57. Wright, *Mission of God*, 317.

58. Dauermann, in Dauermann, “Jew of Course,” 1, is bold enough to say that: “Although not officially sanctioned, ‘to the Jew first’ is the only viable candidate for the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE) motto.” At the same time, he adds: “However, anyone who looks or listens in closely will discover widespread disagreement in the LCJE on how to interpret ‘to the Jew first’ for Paul’s context and ours.”

59. For more information, go to Lausanne Movement website. Online: www.lausanne.org, accessed March 2011. Also the LCJE website. Online: www.lcje.net, accessed March 2011.

60. Cf. Perlman, “A Tribute to Moishe Rosen.” In June 1980, the Pattaya participants were Betty Baruch (Australia), Menehem Benhayim (Israel), Rev. David Harley (England; International co-ordinator), Dr. G. D. James (Australia), Kai Kjær-Hansen (Denmark), Rev. Ole Chr Kvarme (Israel), Tony Lewin (South Africa), Rev. Murdo MacLeod (England), Rev. Rodney Mechanic (South Africa), Jh'an (Alan) Moskowitz (JFJ - U.S.A.), Susan Perlman (JFJ-U.S.A.), Rev. J. S. Uhrinak (U.S.A.) and Brian Wells (New Zealand) and the consultants Dr. Gerald Anderson, (U.S.A.), Dr. Richard R. de Ridder (U.S.A.), Dr. Louis Goldberg (U.S.A.), Dr. Erwin J. Kolb (U.S.A.; consultant chairman) and Moishe Rosen (JFJ-U.S.A.)

produced in 1989 and 2008 respectively by the World Evangelical Alliance and the Lausanne Movement, but in very close collaboration with Jews for Jesus.⁶¹ David Parker, while introducing the different papers given during the International Consultation on “The Uniqueness of Jesus and Jewish Evangelism,” organized by The Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) at Woltersdorf, near Berlin, in August 2008, states:

Indeed, Christianity has been charged with the responsibility of sharing the gospel with all people, irrespective of who they are or of any other actions of service that may be carried out in the name of Christ. This mandate [Jewish evangelism] is considered even more urgent in this case because of the biblical pattern, “to the Jew first.”⁶²

Finally, in the 2011 LCJE International Conference, this statement was made:

We are dismayed by any reluctance among Christians to share the gospel with Jewish people, since “it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.” . . . We rejoice in the power of the gospel that enables Messianic Jews and Arab believers in Jesus to find reconciliation in Christ. Therefore, we encourage the whole church always and everywhere to take the gospel “to the Jew first” and to all the nations. It is vital that all who are concerned for the spiritual welfare of the Jewish people join us in the cause of Jewish evangelism. We call upon the whole church to take the whole gospel to Jewish people always and everywhere.⁶³

Church, Christendom, Christianity

In the present book, the word “church” will be used in its universal sense, i.e., “The Christian community collectively,” as referring to “Christianity” or

61. Via Tuvya Zaretsky, Susan Perlman, and Richard Harvey. For the full text of the Willowbank Declaration, see the WEA website. Online: <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/list/index.php?com=tc&id=52>, accessed April 2012. For the Berlin Declaration, see WEA, “Berlin Declaration on the Uniqueness of Christ,” 4–5. For information, the foreword writer of the present book has participated to the drafting of both declarations.

62. Parker, *Jesus, Salvation & Jewish People*, 5.

63. LCJE, “To all concerned,” 5.

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“Christendom,” “The whole body of Christians,”⁶⁴ including the Evangelical Church as defined, for instance, by the World Evangelical Alliance.⁶⁵

Covenant(s)

Paul, in Romans 9:4, uses the plural when he refers to the “covenants” that belong to the Jewish people. As Paul R. Williamson recalls, “[t]here is no consensus over the precise number of divine covenants in Scripture.”⁶⁶ In his article, Williamson refers to nine covenants, among which are the following: the Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, priestly, Davidic, and new covenant; the Abrahamic and Mosaic are instituted in different stages.⁶⁷ For the purpose of the study and for a global understanding of God’s plan of salvation, I will focus on the Abrahamic covenant as the one representing all the others, except for the Noahic.

LIMITATIONS

A few areas, commonly found in theology, will not be tackled in this work, mainly for reasons of irrelevance:

Firstly, I will not deal with the intertestamental literature, because my aim is to concentrate on the mission of the church toward the Jewish people and hence is mainly governed by the literature after the coming of Jesus.

Secondly, even if I have learned a great deal from the discussion between the so-called *old* and *new perspectives on Paul*, I will not enter into this debate in this study.⁶⁸

Thirdly, if I use the *rhetorical* features in Romans, *Speech-Act Theory* will not be considered in this study: no commentary consulted makes reference to it and I came to the conclusion that only the verb *epaischynomai* (“to be ashamed of”) in Romans 1:16 might be investigated using this system;

64. Onions et al., *Shorter Oxford*, 308, 311.

65. Cf. WEA website. Online: <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/aboutwea/>, accessed March 2012.

66. Williamson, “Covenant,” 420b.

67. *Ibid.*, 419–29.

68. Cf. for instance Dunn, *New Perspective*; Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul’s Doctrine*; Carson et al., *Variegated Nomism I* and Carson et al., *Variegated Nomism II*.

however, “shame” or “boasting” are not really the point of my focus.⁶⁹ As for *speech-in-character*, I discuss it with Stanley Kent Stowers.⁷⁰

Fourthly, on account of the time of research on this present study, only works published before 2012 have been considered.

Fifthly and finally, when the following issues are mentioned and defined in my work, I will not go into the whole debate surrounding them: The legitimacy of Jewish evangelism by Christians in the post-Holocaust world, universalism, and two-covenant theology. My interest is clearly in relation to Romans 1:16 and Jews for Jesus.

PRESUPPOSITIONS

It is important to consider the role of presuppositions, in mathematics as well as in theology,⁷¹ here are my own ones. As evangelical, I hold the confession of faith of the World Evangelical Alliance, which views “the Holy Scriptures as originally given by God, divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy; and the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.”⁷² Of course, we do not possess the original biblical texts and my study will use textual criticism, but I mean that any theological argument that would not assume the biblical text or the biblical writer divinely inspired will be treated very cautiously.

Moreover, I recognize that my own evangelical and theological education has an impact on the way I handle my reflection. I cannot dismiss completely where I come from and what I have become. However, I have sought in this study to engage each issue with theological professionalism, ready to reform my mind as every evangelical, son of the Reformation, should be able to do (*semper reformanda*)! Actually, when I started this study, I was sincerely unable to answer this question: Must the church today prioritize evangelizing Jews over Gentiles as Jews for Jesus advocates on the basis of Romans 1:16? I believe I now have the answer. I hope to convince you, for the global spread of the gospel and for the glory of our Lord.

69. See Austin, *Things with Words*, 12, for a definition of Speech-Act Theory: “to say something, at least in all cases worth considering, i.e., all cases considered, is always and simply to *state* something.”

70. Stowers, *Rereading*, 11–15.

71. See Poythress, “A Biblical View of Mathematics,” 159–88.

72. Cf. WEA website [formerly World Evangelical Fellowship]. Online: <http://www.worldangelicals.org/aboutwea/statementoffaith.htm>, accessed March 2012. Statement written originally in 1951, under the presidency of Sir Arthur Smith; cf. *Billy Graham Center* archives on the Wheaton College website. Online: <http://www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/GUIDES/338.htm>, accessed August 2012.