

Professor Federici's paper, especially in view of its occasion, can only be welcomed. Given the disarray of the W.C.C., in which the political agenda of the Third World bloc endangers positive developments in Jewish-Christian relations for the foreseeable future, the steady development of better Catholic relations with the Jewish people becomes all the more important. This paper (e.g. in I,B,6 and II,A, 14 and 18) constitutes one more step in that direction.

It is of course only a step, taken no doubt with care not to get too far out in front and so out of touch with Rome. Its limitations are fairly obvious:

1. The author seems unable to develop a positive place for the Jewish people as a constituent element within his own theology. This failure, as I see it, is due to his failure to reach any new understanding of the church, any new self-understanding, which must be the inevitable consequence of a new understanding of the other, especially such a theologically significant other as the Jewish people. If the Jewish people are acknowledged to be Israel, the people of God, then the church cannot be either. It must be what we have always called ourselves, the church of God, indeed, the Gentile church of God.

2. In spite of indications in the beginning of the paper that the author is not insensitive to a contemporary historical consciousness, the paper as a whole reflects a failure to absorb or digest this. The general view presented is that the church is only doing somewhat better now than what it has always done (he speaks of renewal, of our knowledge being extended and deepened, etc.). This prevents him from identifying grave mistakes which many of us feel were made in our past. The way ahead for us cannot so easily side-step the need for repentance and a new commitment to self-criticism. Moreover, our hard-won contemporary historical consciousness is especially needed if we are to gain a sense of the development of the church out of its origins and to see how much of the problem has come from our traditional a-historical reading of the Apostolic Writings.