

The Land of Israel as an Area of Conflict in the Jewish-Catholic Dialogue

A theological Analysis of the Concept „Land“

The International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ) highlights in “A Time for Recommitment: Building the New Relationship between Jews and Christians”¹, a document from 2009, the importance of the Land of Israel to Jews and Palestinians. At the same time, Christians are invited to understand the deep connection between Judaism and the land from a religious perspective. In particular, the value of the modern state of Israel for Judaism is emphasized. The document points to one of the focal points of the theological dialogue between Jews and Christians: the question of a theological understanding of the land and state of Israel from a Christian perspective.

The Roman Catholic point of view still refers to the document "Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Teaching in the Roman Catholic Church of June 24, 1985"² of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. This clearly differentiates between a religious and a political dimension of the concept of the "Land of Israel" and the modern State of Israel. This view is repeated in the document "The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable (Rom 11:29)"³ from 2015 which constitutes the current perspective of the magisterium. Recent Catholic approaches criticize, also in connection with Jewish concerns and inquiries, that there is no current position within Catholic theology on the centrality of the land in the Jewish faith. The lack of a discussion of the Jewish understanding of the land of Israel can be identified as a gap.

As part of the dissertation project, the question will be discussed as to which theological position the Catholic Church can take on the concept of the "Land of Israel" in the reception of *Nostra aetate* in the 21st century. This question gains particular importance through the close connection between the concept of the "Land of Israel", the modern state of Israel and the current identity formation of modern Jewish tendencies.

¹ International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ), A Time for Recommitment. Building the New Relationship between Jews and Christians; Quelle: <https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/assets/uploads/berlin-paper.pdf> (12.07.2021).

² Kommission, Hinweise, in: Rendtorff, Rolf/Henrix, Hans Hermann, Die Kirchen und das Judentum. Dokumente von 1945-1985, Paderborn/München 1988, 92-103.

³ Kommission, Gnade, Quelle: https://www.dbk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/diverse_downloads/presse_2015/Vatikandokument-50-Jahre-Nostra-aetate.pdf (12.07.2021).