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# The *Apostles' Creed*, the God of Israel and the Jew Jesus of Nazareth

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### SUMMARY

After some preliminary notes on the significance, use and origin of the *Apostles' Creed*, this paper argues that there are two significant elements lacking in the *Creed*:

(1) The *Creed* moves directly from God the creator to the incarnation of his Son Jesus Christ without giving any weight to God's dealings with the nations and Israel between Genesis 3 and Matthew 1, as if these were of no significance. This raises the important question as to the

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role and importance of God's revelation in history prior to the incarnation of Christ.

(2) The *Creed* is also silent on Jesus' Jewish identity and his ministry in and primarily for Israel. Both aspects are essential in the New Testament presentation of the gospel. Moreover, in view of the devastating consequences of excluding Israel and Jesus *the Jew* for Jewish-Christian relations in much of church history, additions are overdue. Concrete suggestions are provided.

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### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Nach einigen vorausgehenden Bemerkungen über die Bedeutung, den Gebrauch und Ursprung des *Apostolischen Glaubensbekenntnisses*, vertritt dieser Aufsatz die Meinung, dass zwei wesentliche Bestandteile im *Glaubensbekenntnis* fehlen:

(1) Das *Glaubensbekenntnis* bewegt sich direkt von Gott, dem Schöpfer, hin zur Fleischwerdung seines Sohnes Jesus Christus, ohne dass es Gottes Plänen mit den Nationen und Israel zwischen Genesis 3 und Matthäus 1 irgendwelche Bedeutung beimisst, so als wären sie unbedeutend. Da stellt sich die wichtige Frage im Blick auf

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die Rolle und Bedeutung von Gottes Offenbarung in der Geschichte vor der Inkarnation von Christus.

(2) Das *Glaubensbekenntnis* schweigt ebenfalls über die jüdische Identität von Jesus und seinen Dienst in und vor allem für Israel. Beide Aspekte sind von wesentlicher Bedeutung für die Darstellung des Evangeliums im Neuen Testament. Darüberhinaus sind Zusätze längst überfällig angesichts der zerstörerischen Folgen, die der Ausschluss Israels und *des Juden* Jesus in großen Teilen der Kirchengeschichte für die jüdisch-christlichen Beziehungen hat. Konkrete Vorschläge dazu werden gemacht.

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### RÉSUMÉ

Après quelques préliminaires sur la signification, l'usage et l'origine du *Symbole des Apôtres*, l'auteur attire l'attention sur deux points significatifs qui en sont absents. Premièrement, le symbole passe directement de la mention du Dieu créateur à celle de l'incarnation de son Fils Jésus-Christ sans mentionner l'action divine envers les nations et Israël qui se trouve relatée à partir de Genèse 3 jusqu'à Matthieu 1, comme si cette action ne revêtait aucune importance. Il néglige ainsi le rôle et

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l'importance de la révélation divine dans l'histoire qui a précédé l'incarnation. Deuxièmement, le symbole ne dit rien de l'identité juive de Jésus et de son ministère essentiellement consacré à Israël. Ces deux points constituent pourtant des éléments essentiels de l'exposé néotestamentaire de l'Évangile. Lorsqu'on considère les conséquences regrettables de ces omissions sur les relations entre Juifs et chrétiens au cours de l'histoire de l'Église, il paraît très nécessaire de combler ces manques. Des suggestions concrètes dans ce sens sont ici proposées.

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## 1. Introduction

In many liturgies and church services the *Apostles' Creed* – probably the oldest, the most significant and most widely known Christian confession of faith – is regularly used by Christians to confess their faith. As a summary of the essential contents of the Christian faith, this confession cannot be overestimated:<sup>1</sup> its contents are in people's minds – at least people within the church. Contents of the Christian faith that are *not* mentioned in the *Creed* should be attended to in the proclamation and catechesis of the church lest they be marginalised or forgotten.

In past centuries the *Apostles' Creed* was generally understood as an apt summary of the faith. A few examples suffice. One of the systematic theologians of Lutheran Orthodoxy, Georg Calixt (1586-1656), claimed that since the *Apostles' Creed* 'served in the patristic era as a baptismal confession, it should be considered as the quintessence of apostolic teaching and therefore an expression of the faith that unites all Christian churches'.<sup>2</sup> The Protestant theologian and leading representative of Neology (1740-1790), Johann Salomo Semler (1725-1791), argued with regard to the reservations of some of the radical Enlightenment theologians that '[w]hat seems to be lacking in the *Apostles' Creed* is either implicitly included or is not a fundamental article of first order'.<sup>3</sup> With regard to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's (1729-1781) assessment, H.M. Barth states: 'What the New Testament contains over and above the *Apostles' Creed*, is according to the opinion of the Ancient Church not necessary for salvation, it could be true or false, or can be understood in various ways.' The positive assessment of the *Apostles' Creed* led at the same time to a reduction of the Christian statements of faith.<sup>4</sup>

This reduction of the wealth of Christian doctrine to the minimal statements of the *Apostles' Creed* surely also accounts for the intensity and – at times – the vehemence with which this 'rest' has been debated and continues to be debated.<sup>5</sup> This observation also applies to the significance of the *Apostles' Creed* in current ecumenical dialogue, since the ecumenical consensus regarding this *Creed* is closely linked with a reduction in Christian statements of faith.

Despite these positive evaluations of the *Apostles' Creed*, I want to argue for additions to the *Creed* in two areas. These additions are required by the witness of Scripture and by the – at times devastat-

ing – *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the neglect of important biblical truths in the *Creed*.

I want to begin with some reflections on the origin and significance of the *Apostles' Creed* and on Christian confessions in general.<sup>6</sup> The Berlin church historian and patristic scholar, C. Marksches, summarises the intensive debate of the past hundred years regarding the origin and development of the *Creed* as follows:

The plethora of relatively similar Western forms in the fourth century A.D. ... and their relationship to Eastern forms of the *Creed* is best explained by the hypothesis that in the course of the third century the *Romanum* [the precursor of the *Apostles' Creed*] merged from a Trinitarian and a Christological part, perhaps also at an earlier stage – due to the lack of information no certainty can be reached. The exceptionally artistic structure of the *Romanum* argues against a gradual growth of its basic Trinitarian structure.<sup>7</sup>

In what follows we need to take note that the *Apostles' Creed* was not produced by a committee of theologians intending to draft a comprehensive and systematic summary of the Christian faith. Rather, like with many other confessions of faith, its content was determined by its origin and development.<sup>8</sup> Its emphasis is on the second article on Christology. Students of the *Creed* reach different conclusions regarding the third article, which is introduced by a repetition of the formula *credo* (I believe). Is this third article a combination of different contents and statements or does it also follow a discernible and meaningful structure? In more recent discussion, the second view seems to be gaining ground. Marksches, for example, speaks of its 'exceptionally artistic structure'.

In more recent discussions, different elements of the *Apostles' Creed* have drawn criticism.<sup>9</sup> My case, however, does *not* involve criticism of existing elements of the *Creed*. Rather, I want to suggest essential additions. Before doing so, allow me two preliminary notes,<sup>10</sup> in the good German tradition in which massive volumes on a particular subject used to be called *Prolegomena*. Firstly, if creeds and confessions of faith are to be used widely and are to be suitable for liturgical and catechetical use, they must be formulated succinctly and precisely. In this regard it is problematic to propose additions to the perhaps most important confession of Christianity, as almost all confession of the Church – even the longer confessions and

catechisms in the Reformed tradition<sup>11</sup> – could be supplemented and explicated in meaningful ways.

Secondly, many confessions originated under particular circumstances and were responses to concrete challenges to the doctrine of the Church. Against this background confessions were formulated to distinguish sound doctrine from heresy and to express the orthodox faith of the Church in such concrete circumstances, but not to comprehensively describe Christian doctrine. This is the task of the larger catechisms of the Church, of its proclamation and catechesis and of its academic reflection in theology. For example, the *Barmer theologische Erklärung*, the *Barmen Declaration* of 1934, arguably the most important German language confession of the twentieth century, had its origin in the confrontation of the *Bekennende Kirche* holding fast to historic Christianity, the so-called *Confessing Church*, with the German national and Nazi alienation of the Christian faith by the so-called *Deutsche Christen*, the ‘German Christians’.<sup>12</sup> Under these particular circumstances the *Barmen Declaration* formulated central contents of the Christian faith and provided orientation. However, it did not comprehensively lay out all of Christian doctrine. As the *Apostles’ Creed* derives from an old Roman baptismal confession, the *Romanum*,<sup>13</sup> which summarises the faith, the second observation is perhaps not as critical as the first.

I cannot provide a nuanced appreciation of the *Apostles’ Creed* against the backdrop of its origin and development here.<sup>14</sup> It is used here merely as the wide-spread summary of the fundamental contents of the Christian faith which is almost unanimously accepted in the Western churches. Under this premise several well-known contemporary theologians, among others<sup>15</sup> my fellow Bavarian, Joseph Ratzinger, the previous Pope of the Roman Catholic Church,<sup>16</sup> have written introductions to the Christian faith on the basis of the *Apostles’ Creed*.<sup>17</sup> Such summaries are indispensable for the *Sprachfähigkeit des Glaubens*,<sup>18</sup> the ‘ability of the faith to articulate itself’, which is conjured up by a number of recent European ecclesial documents on sharing the faith. Under this abstract expression, evangelism – long belittled and ridiculed by many ‘proper’ theologians – is currently receiving new attention in European theology (not always out of deep conviction but in view of the rapidly decreasing numbers of church membership).

My proposed additions derive from the primacy of Scripture over all doctrine;<sup>19</sup> I am pursu-

ing a deeply Protestant concern (*sola Scriptura*). However, I also acknowledge concerns that are of significance in more recent Catholic theology, although, as far as I can see, my concerns are still underdeveloped in the realm of the Orthodox churches.

The two additions that I want to propose address subjects which – until recently – have only been treated inadequately in theological reflection and confessional formulation in the Protestant tradition.<sup>20</sup> My additions take up two subjects that have, arguably, been neglected in the history of theology and address two deficits that have had a devastating *Wirkungsgeschichte*.

### The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
and born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and sits at the right hand of God the Father  
Almighty.

From thence he will come to judge the living  
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy Christian church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen

## 2. God’s dealings with Israel as an integral part of the Christian understanding of God

Owing to its trinitarian basic structure, the *Apostles’ Creed*<sup>21</sup> begins its first article with God: ‘I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.’<sup>22</sup> Next to statements regarding the *nature* of God (‘the Father Almighty’), the description of God’s action focuses on creation in the beginning: ‘the maker [or creator, as in some versions] of heaven and earth’. This statement takes up a central conviction of the Old Testament,<sup>23</sup> which confesses God in the creation narrative, in the worship of Israel<sup>24</sup> and in many other places as the ‘Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in

them' (Ps 146:6).<sup>25</sup>

After referring back to the creation account in Genesis 1-2, with its far-reaching theological implications, the second article of the *Apostles' Creed* immediately addresses the Son and his incarnation: 'And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord ...' This means that the remainder of the Old Testament, the history and story between Genesis 2 and the memorable events in the temple of Jerusalem, when the angel Gabriel announced to Zechariah and later to Mary the miraculous birth of the Messiah, does not feature in the *Apostles' Creed*.<sup>26</sup> This is surprising in view of the widespread Old Testament confessional tradition which confesses God not only as the creator of heaven and earth, but speaks of him time and again as the 'God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob',<sup>27</sup> as the God who chose Israel and acted on Israel's behalf as her Saviour, and of his dealings with this people: God is the one who delivered Israel from the house of slavery,<sup>28</sup> who promised and gave to Israel the land, and so on.<sup>29</sup> For example, the introduction to the Decalogue states: 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me' (Ex 20:1-3) or, as a further example, Hosea 13:4: 'But I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Saviour except me.' Psalm 136 opens with praise of God the creator (v. 1-9). This praise is directly followed by a reference to God's salvation in and from Egypt (v. 10: 'to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt') before Israel's wanderings in the wilderness and the giving of the land to Israel are mentioned (v. 16-22). Even the commandments of the so-called *Holiness Code* are connected back to God's deliverance of Israel out of Egypt (Lev 18:1-5).<sup>30</sup> Even up to the late period of Israel, the outstanding significance of God's saving acts in the exodus – the encounter with the Saviour-God at the beginning of Israel's history – is remembered and forms part of its confession and identity (Neh 9:9-15; Judith 5:9-11).

The lack of reference to these foundational confessions of Israel in the *Creed* is surprising in view of the role that the Old Testament plays in manifold ways in the New Testament<sup>31</sup> and in view of the fact, that – despite various questions, challenges and attacks – from the second century onwards the Church retained the Old Testament without deductions.<sup>32</sup>

Are there explanations of this exclusion? The formation of Christian doctrine was initially strongly

influenced by the acute needs of the congregations and by christological issues.<sup>33</sup> Early Christianity before AD 66 and beyond was strongly shaped by early Judaism. In this setting, the Old Testament understanding of God and the history of Israel were presupposed as a matter of course. That the Old Testament and the actions of God on behalf of Israel and the people to which it testifies had a significant role in early Christianity is evident from the many quotations, allusions and echoes of the Old Testament and the references to the history of Israel in the New Testament. As early as the end of the first century, the first Jewish war, which climaxed with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, and other factors led to an increasing separation and estrangement between synagogue and Church and to a Christian demarcation from Judaism.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to these and other diverse *historical* developments, we should also note the reduction inherent in the traditional Christian perception of the Old Testament as primarily a christological testimony which is already to be discerned in the New Testament itself. Although it is in its full extent part of the Christian canon, the Old Testament appears in the New Testament and in the theology of the Church not for its own sake, but in its nature as a promise and pointer to its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, in the coming of the Holy Spirit, in the Church, its universal mission and the eventual consummation.<sup>35</sup> The allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament, which started as early as the second century AD (typology already appears in the New Testament<sup>36</sup>), led to a diminished interest and even neglect of its literal sense and of its reference to Israel as the people of God.<sup>37</sup> Already at that early stage, there existed the claim of the Church that it now was God's chosen people; theories of supersession in various forms began to develop. (The German term *Enterbungstheorie* is even more drastic, as it contains the word *Erbe*, German for heritage, which is used in the Old Testament for the land as Israel's inheritance and in other Israelite contexts.<sup>38</sup>) This mixture of historical and theological factors helps to explain why the Old Testament, Israel and references to Israel played no direct role in the formulation of confessions such as the *Apostles' Creed*.

In view of the biblical testimony and of the developments just outlined, I wish to argue that it is mandatory to add to the *Apostles' Creed* statements on God's universal history with humanity in the *Urgeschichte* of Genesis 4-11 and, above

all, on the election of Israel and God's dealings with his chosen people for his own and their sake and for their significance for the Christian faith. The words chosen by the former Tübingen New Testament scholar, Peter Stuhlmacher, in his *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments* point in the right direction.<sup>39</sup> He summarises the message of the New Testament as follows:

The one God who created the world *and chose Israel to be his covenant people* has accomplished eschatological salvation once and for all, for Jews and Gentiles, in the sending, the ministry, the vicarious propitiatory death and the resurrection of his Son.<sup>40</sup>

Drawing on this designation of God – the one who created the world and chose Israel to be his covenant people – the following addition to the *Creed* would be sensible:

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, who following and next to his dealings with all humanity, chose Israel and revealed himself to this people through his word and acts in grace and judgment, displayed his covenant faithfulness to her and prepared Israel for the coming from her midst of the Messiah for Jews and Gentiles.*

Deficiencies in the first article of the *Creed* have been observed and addressed on several occasions;<sup>41</sup> for example, the *Evangelisches Gottesdienstbuch: Agenda für die Evangelische Kirche der Union und für die Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche Deutschlands* (2000)<sup>42</sup> contains a confession based on the *Apostles' Creed* in which the first article reads:

We believe in the one God who created heaven and earth and us humans in his image. *He has chosen Israel, has given her his commandments and granted his covenant with them for the blessing of the nations.*

One should add to this confession the particular character of the Old Testament as pointing forward and beyond itself, which guides not only the *Christian* understanding of the Old Testament but which is also significant in the various eras of Judaism, even though to a lesser degree.<sup>43</sup>

Before I turn to the second article, let me briefly sketch the implications of this first addition. With the additions here proposed, the significance of Israel and the Old Testament for the Christian faith would become intelligible and would remain in view of the Church confessing

her faith. Furthermore, Jesus as the Messiah *of Israel*, but also of the Church consisting of Jews and Gentiles – the content of the second and third articles of the *Creed* – would appear in a broader salvation-historical perspective.

In addition, Christians whose confession includes Genesis 3 – Malachi 3, God and his people Israel – in the words which I propose or otherwise –, express that they are not the *first* and – with regard to Romans 9-11 – not the *only* people chosen by God. In this context we refer with pleasure to the progress made in Jewish-Christian dialogue in the past five decades, including both the actual dialogue between Jews and Christians and – as its foundation and in its wake – the new and positive consciousness and repositioning of the Church with regard to Israel.<sup>44</sup>

The additions which I am proposing also indicate and remind those confessing their faith that there is no biblically founded Christian faith without God's special relation to Israel. A Christianity without Israel, without the *Jew* Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah for the world, is not *biblical* Christianity, whatever else it might be.<sup>45</sup> A general faith in God as some higher being, an 'allgemeine Gottgläubigkeit', as it was propagated in nineteenth and twentieth century Germany – among others by Nazi ideologists – as a deliberate alternative to the confession of the Christian Church, with or without creation, by-passing Israel and God's revelation in Jesus Christ, is far off any Jewish-Christian understanding of God. Nazi henchman Adolf Eichmann's last words before his execution in Jerusalem in 1962 are telling: 'Gottgläubig war ich im Leben, und gottgläubig sterbe ich' (I believed in god in my life, and I die believing in god), even though they are not necessarily representative or indicative of a compelling connection.<sup>46</sup>

### 3. Jesus *the Jew* and his earthly ministry *in Israel*

In view of the Jew Jesus of Nazareth just mentioned, at least two additions would be necessary to the second article of the *Creed*.<sup>47</sup> It confesses in this regard: '... and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried ...' This article does not allow for a comprehensive appreciation of these statements against the backdrop of New Testament Christology. However, I

would like to propose the following additions and consider their implications.

### 3.1 The Jewish identity of Jesus

In addition to the mention of divine sonship and the birth of Jesus by the virgin Mary, a clear reminder that the Son of God was born by the *Jewess* Mary of Nazareth as a *Jew* would be important: '... born of a woman, born under law ...' (Gal 4:4).<sup>48</sup> According to his human origin, Jesus was from the House of David (Mt 1:7-16; Lk 1:27; 2:4; Acts 13:22-23; Rom 1:4)<sup>49</sup> and, as this Son of David – and only as such – he fulfils important Old Testament promises. In order to do justice to the witness of Scripture and in order to express explicitly what it implicitly says, should we confess something like this: '*Born as Jew* (or as part of God's people Israel) *in Israel* by the virgin Mary, *from the House of David and living under Jewish law*'?

The *Maasai Creed* drafted in 1960 in East Africa shows that such an addition would not be without precedent.<sup>50</sup> This creed draws on the second article of the *Apostles' Creed* and formulates: 'We believe that God made good his promise by sending his Son, Jesus Christ, a man in the flesh,<sup>51</sup> *a Jew by tribe*.'<sup>52</sup>

The twentieth century provides ample evidence that Jesus' Jewish identity and, in particular, a high esteem of it, is not self-evident for Christians but requires regular reminders. Recent history included attempts of German theologians in the late thirties and early forties, influenced by German nationalism and Nazi racial anti-Judaism, to reconstruct the *Jewish* Jesus into a pure-bred Aryan of the favoured Nordic race.<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately, until recently, Jesus' Jewish identity hardly played any role in Christian theology as much as his human nature was emphasized in orthodox Christology.<sup>54</sup>

The lack of such reference in the *Apostles' Creed* can be explained by its origin and development and in the attitude of the Early Church towards Judaism:<sup>55</sup> if, for example, the church has fully inherited the privileges and promises of Israel anyway, then the *Jewish* identity of Jesus is, at best, mere *accidence*, but no longer inherent *substance* of the Gospel.

### 3.2 The Jewish character of the earthly ministry of Jesus

The *Apostles' Creed* reduces the earthly ministry of Jesus to his birth, suffering, death and resurrection. The emphasis on the death of Jesus *under Pontius Pilate* – placing the event solidly in his-

tory<sup>56</sup> – and on the historical nature of his actual suffering, death, burial and resurrection derives from the anti-docetic agenda of the orthodox Early Church.<sup>57</sup> In view of that agenda (and of some recent post-modern challenges that reduce history to 'good story'), should we not add to the statements on the death and resurrection of Jesus the *location* of these events (if Pontius Pilate even deserves to be mentioned by name!) in order to point out that they took place at a particular and, moreover, a special place, with a special role to play in salvation history – therefore: 'suffered under Pontius Pilate *in Jerusalem*'?

Another important issue is whether credal statements should also include statements on how Jesus and the early Christians *interpreted* the significance of these *bruta facta*, this death, burial and resurrection, in view of the Old Testament and Early Judaism. After all, 'Jesus was delivered over to death *for our sins* and was raised to life *for our justification*' (Rom 4:25).

However, at the moment my concern is neither with Jesus' death (which is at least mentioned in the *Creed*) nor with its interpretation. I am concerned about his earthly ministry which does not appear in the *Creed*: from the birth of Jesus through the virgin Mary, it moves directly to his suffering and death by crucifixion, as if the approximately thirty years of his life and in particular the period of his public ministry in between these events were and are of little or no significance. That the earthly life of Jesus is indeed meaningless for the Christian faith has been argued by prominent theologians in the twentieth century.<sup>58</sup> But, following the second article of the *Apostles' Creed* and adding significantly to it, the *Maasai Creed*, which we have already mentioned, continues the above quotation: '... born poor in a little village, *who left his home and was always on safari doing good, curing people by the power of God, teaching about God and man, showing the meaning of religion is love*'. Although I would formulate differently in view of New Testament terminology, this creed at least refers to the deeds and teaching of Jesus between his birth and passion.

In terms of genre, the Gospels are essentially passion-, death- and resurrection narratives that have been 'projected forward' to include aspects of the identity and ministry of the person who experienced the events of particular interest. But this 'forward-prolongation' is *comprehensive*. Of what importance is the life and ministry of Jesus between his birth and suffering? After all, thanks



to its relatively broad presentation in the four gospels, the description of this period of Jesus' life constitutes a major part of the New Testament.<sup>59</sup> What is the significance of his deeds and his teaching for the Christian faith<sup>60</sup> and, in particular the fact that this ministry occurred *in Israel*? How important is it for the Christian faith that Jesus understood his calling and his ministry first and foremost to be the eschatological gathering and restoration of Israel? Can we understand his *whole* ministry and, in particular, his proclamation of the reign of God, but also the events in Jerusalem, apart from this context?<sup>61</sup>

### 3.3 Pointers in the early Christian kerygma

The early Christian proclamation of the Gospel provides important clues.<sup>62</sup> In Jerusalem, Peter summarised the ministry of Jesus – with which the audience was familiar – from the perspective of divine affirmation: 'Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs which God did among you through him' (Acts 2:22). In Peter's sermon before Cornelius in Caesarea, the portrayal of the ministry of Jesus is more detailed, although even there the audience was familiar with it:

*You know* what has happened throughout *Judea*, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached – how God anointed Jesus of *Nazareth* with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. We are witnesses of everything he did *in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem* (Acts 10:37–39; see also 13:27, 31).

Here and in the other missionary speeches of Acts – in particular in the sermon in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch (13:16–41) – the extent to which the *Jewish* context of the ministry of Jesus of *Nazareth* is emphasized is noteworthy: '... *throughout Judea ... in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem*'.<sup>63</sup> These references concern the following issues:

Firstly, the *Jewish identity* of Jesus the Saviour. Jesus comes from *Nazareth* (2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 6:14; 10:38; 22:8; 26:9). His ministry began in *Galilee* after the baptism that the *Jewish* prophet John the Baptist preached and practised in all the country around the River *Jordan* (10:37; Lk 3:3). Jesus appeared to those who had travelled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem (13:31). From *David's*

descendants God has brought *to Israel* the Saviour Jesus (13:22–23).

Secondly, *Judea and Jerusalem as the location of the ministry of Jesus*. His ministry took place throughout *Judea*, beginning in *Galilee* (10:37). Jesus ministered in the *country of the Jews* and in *Jerusalem* (10:39). The people of Jerusalem and their rulers condemned Jesus (13:27). Following his resurrection, Jesus appeared in *Jerusalem* (13:31).

Thirdly, *the Jews as the primary address of God's salvation*: When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to the *Jews* to bless them (3:26). God gives repentance and forgiveness for sins to *Israel* (5:31). 'God sent the message to the *people of Israel*, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ' (10:36).<sup>64</sup> The apostles received the commission to preach to *the people* [of Israel] (10:42). Before the ministry of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to *all the people of Israel* (13:24). 'What God promised to our *fathers*, he has fulfilled for us, *their children*' (13:32–33). Jesus proclaims light to his *own people* and to the Gentiles (26:23). In this primary focus on Israel, God's promises to the fathers came to fulfilment (13:23, 32–33).

The missionary speeches of Acts indicate the *thoroughly Jewish origin of Jesus, his ministry throughout Judea, Galilee and Jerusalem and the Jews as the primary addressees of salvation*. Only after God's salvation had come to Israel and after she had been gathered and restored in the ministry of Jesus and of the apostles, did this salvation venture forth also to the Gentiles. Throughout the whole of Book of Acts, this salvation and its recipients remain bound to Jerusalem.

Through the mention of the *patriarchs* (3:13), of *Moses* (3:22; 13:39; 26:22) and of *David* (2:25,29,34; 13:22,34–36) in the context of references to Jesus, he is placed in the wider context of God's saving actions on Israel's behalf; he is clearly set in salvation history which so far is the history of Israel. The Norwegian exegete, Jacob Jervell, has rightly observed that Luke 'did not write the history of a religious movement or sect, but the final part of the history of the people of the God of Israel'.<sup>65</sup> To play on Jervell's words: Luke wrote neither a biography of Jesus nor the history of early Christianity (as many have suggested). Rather, Luke wrote a *further chapter* in the history of the people of the God, Israel. The present and the future of Israel and of the nations are now determined by the risen Christ.

### 3.4 Implications

The implications of this Jewish emphasis for evangelism and mission are remarkable: Despite all the necessary and certainly legitimate efforts in contextualising and acculturating the Gospel, the Jewish origin and identity of Jesus and of this Gospel, as well as the salvation-historical priority of Israel, must not be neglected. Apart from the Jewish Saviour from and for Israel and the nations, there is no *Christian* Gospel. Neither the 'de-judaised', 'aryanised' (*entjudet, arisiert*) Jesus of Nazi- ideology and national German Christian lore (where the systematic deconstruction of the Jewish identity of Jesus probably had its all-time low!<sup>66</sup>) nor the 'Jesus' constructed by other ideologies or of secularism, nor the decidedly African, Asian or Latino Jesus is the Saviour of the world, but *the descendant of David, Jesus of Nazareth, first sent by God to the people of Israel*, 'for salvation is from the Jews' (John 4:22).<sup>67</sup>

A popular worship song from the 1980s addresses Jesus as follows: 'From heaven you came, helpless babe, entered our world, your glory veiled.'<sup>68</sup> But even under these particular circumstances his human identity was clearly determined: this helpless babe entered the world through a Galilean Jewess Mirjam of Nazareth, he was born and spent the first days of his life in Bethlehem, the city of David, he was circumcised on the eighth day, as demanded by covenant and law<sup>69</sup> and received the common Jewish name Jesus (Lk 2:21), which embodied the Jewish hope, anticipation and yearning for God's salvation for his people Israel (Mt 1:21). Shortly thereafter Jesus was taken to the temple in Jerusalem in order to be consecrated, 'as it is written in the Law of the Lord ...' (Lk 2:22-23). No doubt, Jesus will be a light for revelation to the Gentiles (2:32). However, Simeon's canticle links this light inseparably with 'glory for God's people Israel' (2:32; 'a light of revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel').<sup>70</sup> As such, Jesus came to Egypt, to Africa, before he returned to Nazareth and to the temple in Jerusalem (2:39-51).

Therefore Jesus cannot and must not be *incarnated* in African, American, Asian Australian or European soil, as has occasionally been demanded.<sup>71</sup> Jesus is not the 'helpless babe' which the peoples of this earth can adopt and – thoughtlessly or consciously – shape into one of their own. He was incarnated on *Jewish* soil (and was born as the Son of God) in *Bethlehem* (Lk 2:4-7);

he 'was born of a woman, born *under law*' (Gal 4:4). However, as such – and only because of this identity as God's Saviour for Israel – he is and he can be the universal Saviour and Lord of all (Acts 10:36). As such, and only as such, the peoples of this world must adopt him. No doubt, the good news of his coming, of his present and of his future ministry can be and must be 'sown' on the various 'soils' of this world (Lk 8:11).

The whole earthly life of Jesus up to his ascension took place in Israel and there, on Mount Zion, the apostle Paul expects his *parousia* as 'the deliverer from Zion' (Rom 11:26). This country is in between the continents as they were known in the ancient world; it is an area which, many centuries before, had become the Promised Land for Abraham and his descendants. Therefore one might say that Africa, Asia and Europe had Jesus in their midst, *together* to behold, to hold and to cherish, to worship and to follow him and to wait for his coming in glory, but not to turn him into one of their own. Where people and the peoples of this world seize him, divest him of his Jewish identity and assimilate him as theirs, he no longer is the Christ of God for Israel and the nations.

### 4. Conclusion

In view of the deficits which we identified, we understand the practical theologian Henning Schröer when he demands that '[t]he factual monopolisation of the *Apostles' Creed* has to be cancelled'.<sup>72</sup> Schröer further demands: 'Not a repeal of the *Creed*, but its intensive *exposition* is required.' I have pleaded for a different way forward, since one can only *exposit* what actually occurs in a given text. In view of the additions for which I have argued, I question Schröer's conclusion that the *Creed* cannot serve as an authoritative pattern.<sup>73</sup>

After the long history of the *Apostles' Creed*, including the various discussions and arguments regarding its content and in view of the futile attempts of churches past and present to agree on the exact wording of the *Apostles' Creed*, it would be naïve to expect that much will become of the additions to the *Creed* which I am proposing.<sup>74</sup> Yet in order to articulate itself inside and outside of the walls of the church, the Christian faith needs confessions which summarise its essential contents and keep them in the thoughts and daily lives of the Church. That was the case in Early Christianity and has led to the formation of confessions early

on.<sup>75</sup> In this sense, confessions are the ‘emergency portion’ of Christian faith. With their use in services, in catechesis but also in the mission of the church, essential contents of the faith are and remain alive. For this purpose the additions which I have suggested would be helpful; we may certainly also consider others.

These additions entail a new orientation but also a fresh self-assertion vis-à-vis the Old Testament, the Jews and Israel and – closely linked to this – the re-discovery and adequate understanding of the Church’s relationship with the roots that support it (Rom 11:17-24; ‘... consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you’, 18). They also entail a fresh appreciation of the salvation-historical place of our Christian existence and of the Christians’ place in the grand narrative for which they and many of our post-modern contemporaries are yearning.

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### Endnotes

- 1 This applies only to the Western churches. In the Orthodox churches the *Apostles’ Creed* is of lesser significance. For a recent scholarly assessment of the *Apostles’ Creed* see C. Marksches, ‘Apostolicum’ in H.D. Betz et al. (eds), *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart [RGG] 1* (4th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998) 648-649, the entries ‘Bekenntnis I.-V.’ in *RGG 1*, 1246-1264 and F.E. Vokes, ‘Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis I. Alte Kirche und Mittelalter’ in H.R. Balz et al. (eds), *Theologische Realenzyklopädie [TRE] 3* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1978) 528-554.
- 2 H.M. Barth, ‘Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II. Reformations- und Neuzeit’, *TRE 3* (1978) 554-566, 558.
- 3 ‘Was im *Apostolikum* zu fehlen scheine, sei entweder *implicit*e enthalten oder es handle sich nicht um Fundamentalartikel ersten Grades’, Barth, ‘Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II’, 559.
- 4 Barth, ‘Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II’, 559.
- 5 Barth, ‘Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II’, 562.
- 6 See the entries ‘Glaubensbekenntnis(se) V.-X.’, *TRE 13* (1984) 399-446 and ‘Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis’, *TRE 3* (1978), 528-571.
- 7 Marksches, ‘Apostolicum’, 649; see the detailed discussion in J.N.D. Kelly, *Altchristliche Glaubensbekenntnisse: Geschichte und Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972) [= *Early Christian Creeds*, London: Longmans Green, 1972] and M. Vinzent, *Der Ursprung des Apostolikums im Urteil der kritischen Forschung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).
- 8 See Vokes, ‘Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis I’, 552: ‘Die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Ketzertum hat in seinem Inhalt wenig Spuren hinterlassen. Symbole standen im Zusammenhang mit der *regula fidei* und bildeten den Maßstab, an dem die ungewisse Auslegung der Schrift überprüft wurde. *Obwohl Erzeugnisse der kirchlichen Tradition, wurden sie schließlich als Konzentrat des Schriftsinns behandelt*’ (italics CS).
- 9 Already during the age of Reformation, there was discussion as to whether the *Apostles’ Creed* contains the fundamental articles of the Christian faith; see Barth, ‘Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II’, 558: ‘Nach Auffassung der orthodoxen Lutheraner war dies nicht der Fall: Es fehlte nicht nur die explizite Trinitäts- und Satisfaktionslehre, auch von Erbsünde und Rechtfertigung war nicht die Rede. Je nach Perspektive wurden Beanstandungen vortragen, die Lehre von der *communicatio idiomatum* oder auch Wiedergeburt, Buße und Heiligung konnten vermisst werden.’ Barth further notes: ‘Die aufkommende historische Kritik an der Bibel zog notwendig auch das stark an biblischen Aussagen orientierte *Apostolikum* in Mitleidenschaft’ (562).
- 10 See the entries ‘Bekenntnis I.-V.’ in *RGG 1*, 1246-1264.
- 11 See the survey in H. Schwarz, ‘Glaubensbekenntnisse VII. Reformationszeit bis 17. Jh.’ in *TRE 13* (1984) 416-429.
- 12 See C. Nicolaisen, ‘Barmen II. Barmer Theologische Erklärung’ in *RGG 1*, 1112-1115; W.D. Hauschild, ‘Bekennende Kirche’ in *RGG 1*, 1241-1246 and J.D. Douglas, ‘Barmen Declaration’ in S.B. Ferguson and D.F. Wright (eds.), *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1988) 76: ‘The declaration did not purport to be a comprehensive statement, but against contemporary deviations it stressed the headship and finality of Christ, and the pre-eminence of Scripture for belief and as the guide to practical action for Christians.’ The same would apply to the *Belhar Confession*, issued by the *Dutch Reformed Mission Church* in 1986 and by the *Dutch Reformed Church in Africa* when they joined to constitute the *Uniting Reformed Church* in 1994.
- 13 See Marksches, ‘Apostolicum’, 648-649 and Kelly, *Glaubensbekenntnisse*, 103-165.
- 14 See on this the entries ‘Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis’ in *TRE 3* (1978) 528-571.
- 15 See W. Pannenberg, *Das Glaubensbekenntnis – ausgelegt und verantwortet vor den Fragen der Gegenwart* (GTB Siebenstern; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1979); T. Schneider, *Was wir glauben – Eine Auslegung des Apostolischen Glaubensbekenntnisses* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1985); H. Küng, *Credo – Das*

- Apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis Zeitgenossen erklärt* (München, Zürich: Piper, 1995); E. Busch, *Credo: Das Apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003); H.G. Pöhlmann, *Das Glaubensbekenntnis ausgelegt für Menschen unserer Zeit* (Frankfurt/M.: Lembeck, 2003) and T. Rusten, *Glauben macht einen Unterschied: Das Credo* (München: Kösel, 2010); in the English language e.g. C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Apostles' Creed: A Faith to Live by* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark / Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) and Alister E. McGrath, *'I Believe': Exploring the Apostles' Creed* (Downer's Grove: IVP, 1997).
- 16 J. Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum*, 10th ed. (München: Kösel, 2011).
- 17 The Apostles' Creed is present in the Church also because of its close relation with the liturgical year. H. Schröer, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis III. Praktisch-theologisch' in *TRE* 3 (1978) 566-571 (569; italics CS) notes that 'Das Kirchenjahr ... ist aber eine sich übers Jahr hinüber erstreckende Begehung des Apostolikums.'
- 18 A search for the expression *Sprachfähigkeit des Glaubens* in search engines like Google indicates how many recent ecclesial documents employ it (e.g. [www.kirche-im-aufbruch.ekd.de/praxis/glauben.php](http://www.kirche-im-aufbruch.ekd.de/praxis/glauben.php)).
- 19 Barth, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II', 558 comments on the relativisation of the *Apostles' Creed* in the era of the Reformation: 'Es hatte seinen Namen nicht auf Grund einer etwaigen apostolischen Verfasserschaft, sondern nur *materialiter ratione dogmatis*, aufgrund seines dogmatischen Gehalts. Damit war klargestellt, dass es theologischen Kriterien unterworfen bleiben musste und diese nicht seinerseits erbringen konnte.' In the age of the Enlightenment there were both high appreciation for the *Creed* and efforts 'es zu ergänzen oder überhaupt durch Neuformulierungen zu ersetzen' (559; italics CS).
- 20 We do not argue for deletions or re-interpretations, but want to suggest additions in order to 'formulieren, was wir „wirklich“ glauben, d.h. so, dass wir mit unserem Leben daran hängen', Barth, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II', 563. See the presentation and discussion of recent formulations of the *Creed* in Schröer, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis III', 566-567, who demands: 'Die faktische Monopolisierung des *Apostolikums* muss aufgehoben werden' (570). For the Protestant post 1945 re-assessment of Israel and Jesus the Jew see e.g. S. Hermle, *Evangelische Kirche und Judentum – Stationen nach 1945* (Arbeiten zur kirchlichen Zeitgeschichte 16; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990) and The Leuenberg Fellowship of Reformation Churches in Europe, *Church and Israel: A Contribution from the Reformation Churches in Europe to the Relationship between Christians and Jews*, 2. ed. (Leuenberg Documents 6; Frankfurt: Lembeck, 2001) 89-157; a survey of official statements is provided by R. Rendtorff and H.H. Henrix (eds.), *Die Kirchen und das Judentum: Dokumente von 1945 bis 1985: Veröffentlichung im Auftrag der Studienkommission Kirche und Judentum der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland und der Arbeitsgruppe für Fragen des Judentums der Ökumene-Kommission der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz*, 3. ed. (Paderborn: Bonifatius; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 2001) and H.H. Henrix and W. Kraus (eds.), *Die Kirchen und das Judentum: Dokumente von 1986-2000* (Paderborn: Bonifatius; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 2001), 429-942. For the Catholic Church see e.g. the *Decretum de Judaecis* of the Second Vatican Council constitution *Nostra aetate* (*Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions*, 1965) and the sources in Henrix and Kraus, *Die Kirchen und das Judentum*, 1-428.
- 21 For an appreciation of the first article see the historical commentary in Vokes, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis I', 545-546.
- 22 I quote here from the version adopted by the Lutheran Church. The particular confessional version of the *Creed* is of little significance as my additions concern parts of the *Creed* that are not disputed among the various Christian denominations.
- 23 W.H. Schmidt, 'Gott II. Altes Testament' in *TRE* 13 (1984) 608-626 (614): 'Der Glaube an den Schöpfer ist vielleicht das Haupterbe des AT an die Christenheit', for God as creator see pp. 614-615.
- 24 E.g. in Psalms 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; 95:4-5; 102:6; 115:3; 136:4-9.
- 25 See e.g. Isaiah 40:12-31; Jeremiah 32:17; 33:2; Amos 4:13; 5:8; 9:5-6; Jonah 1:9; Zechariah 12:9; B. Janowski, 'Schöpfung II. Altes Testament' in Brigitte Schäfer et al. (eds.), *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart [RGG]* 7 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 970-972; R.G. Kratz and H. Spieckerman, 'Schöpfer/Schöpfung II. Altes Testament', *TRE* 30 (1999) 258-282. The New Testament also speaks of God with these traditional expressions (Acts 4:25); see. O. Wischmeyer, 'Schöpfung IV. Neues Testament' in *RGG* 7, 973-974.
- 26 See the survey 'Christliche Glaubensbekenntnisse', [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christliche\\_Glaubensbekenntnisse](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christliche_Glaubensbekenntnisse), accessed on 16 August 2010 and the entries 'Glaubensbekenntnis(se) V.-X.' in *TRE* 13 (1984) 399-446.
- 27 See e.g. Genesis 50:24; Exodus 3:6; 6:3; 32:13; 1 Kings 18:36; see R. Martin-Achard, 'Abraham I. Im Alten Testament' in *TRE* 1 (1977) 364-372.
- 28 See S. Herrmann, 'Exodusmotiv I. Altes Testament' in *TRE* 10 (1982) 732-737.
- 29 See Deuteronomy 26:5-9; Judges 11:16-22;

- Micah 4:1-5; Isaiah 12, Ps 2; 96-99; 148f; cf. E. Gerstenberger, 'Glaubensbekenntnis(se) II. Altes Testament' in *TRE* 13 (1984) 386-388. For the election of Israel see K. Seybold, 'Erwählung I. Altes Testament' in Betz *et al.* (eds), *RGG* 2 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999) 1478-1481; H. Seebaß, 'Erwählung I. Altes Testament' in *TRE* 10 (1982) 182-189 (186-187) and W.H. Schmidt, 'Gott II. Altes Testament' in *TRE* 13 (1984) 608-626 (611):
- Aber die Befreiung aus Ägypten gilt durch Israels Geschichte hindurch als die grundlegende Erwählungstat ..., und das Bekenntnis 'Jahweh, der Israel als Ägypten geführt hat' wird, gemessen an der Häufigkeit seines Vorkommens, die wichtigste theologische Aussage des AT, die weite Bereiche durchzieht und gleichsam zum Grund der Erwählung wird.
- 30 I gratefully acknowledge the guidance provided by my retired colleague in Old Testament studies, Dozent Bernd Brockhaus.
- 31 See the survey by D.- A. Koch, 'Schriftauslegung II. Neues Testament' in *TRE* 30 (1999) 457-471 and G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson (eds.), *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Nottingham: IVP, 2007); see also M. Lüling, 'Geschrieben um unsertwillen' (Röm 4.24) – Die Verweise auf die Vergangenheit in der Argumentation des Römerbriefs, MTh Dissertation (Pretoria: UNISA, 2012; supervisor C. Stenschke).
- 32 See G. Fischer, 'Bibel II. Altes Testament' in *RGG* 1, 1410-1412; I.Z. Dimitrov *et al.* (eds.), *Das Alte Testament als christliche Bibel in orthodoxer und westlicher Sicht* (WUNT 174; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).
- 33 On this issue see P. Stuhlmacher, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments I: Grundlegung, Von Jesus zu Paulus*, 3. ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005) 178-195.
- 34 See A. Lindemann, 'Judentum und Kirche IV. Alte Kirche' in Betz *et al.* (eds), *RGG* 4 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001) 632-633; M.H. Jung, *Christen und Juden: Die Geschichte ihrer Beziehungen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008) 20-47 and the entries in E. Kessler and N. Wenborn (eds.), *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005). However, the Jewish influence on the Ancient Church should not be underestimated, see O. Skarsaune and R. Hvalvik (eds.), *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007).
- 35 See F. Hahn, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments II: Die Einheit des Neuen Testaments. Thematische Darstellung*, 2. ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002) 88-110.
- 36 See D. Treier, 'Typology' in K.J. Vanhoozer (ed.), *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (London: SPCK; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005) 823-827.
- 37 See W.A. Bienert, 'Allegorie/Allegorese IV. Kirchengeschichtlich' in *RGG* 1, 306-307; H. Karpp, 'Bibel IV. Die Funktion der Bibel in der Kirche 1. Alte Kirche' in *TRE* 6 (1980) 48-59; E. Mühlenberg, 'Schriftauslegung III. Kirchengeschichtlich' in *TRE* 30 (1999) 472-488 (472-478) and J.K. Aitken, 'Old Testament' in Kessler and Wenborn, *Dictionary*, 322.
- 38 On this issue see Jung, *Christen und Juden*, J.T. Pawlikowski, 'Judentum und Christentum' in *TRE* 17 (1988) 386-403; K. Cracknell, 'Dialogue' in Kessler and Wenborn, *Dictionary*, 124-126 and R.K. Soulen, 'Supersessionism' in Kessler and Wenborn, *Dictionary*, 413-414.
- 39 The recent NT Theologies of I.H. Marshall, F. Thielman, F.J. Matera and T.R. Schreiner offer similar summaries, though they focus more on the New Testament; see the presentation and evaluation of these volumes in C. Stenschke, 'Strong Cases for the Unity of New Testament Theology: A Survey of Four Recent English New Testament Theologies' in *Religion & Theology* 17 (2010) 133-161.
- 40 'Der eine Gott, der die Welt geschaffen und Israel zu seinem Eigentumsvolk erwählt hat, in der Sendung, dem Werk, dem Sühnetod und der Auferweckung seines Sohnes für die endzeitliche Rettung von Juden und Heiden ein für allemal genug getan hat', *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments II: Von der Paulusschule bis zur Johannesoffenbarung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005) 320. It is interesting to note that the *Apostles' Creed* speaks after the introductory statement 'I believe in God' of God as the *almighty Father*. The attribute *father*, despite a few occurrences in the Old Testament, is essentially a New Testament designation for God, but see Svetlana Khobnya, 'God the Father in the Old Testament' in *European Journal of Theology* 20.2 (2011) 139-148. The combination 'almighty Father' does not appear in the Bible itself; see the entries 'Vatername Gottes II.-V.' in Schäfer *et al.*, *RGG* 8 (2005) 890-893 and C. Zimmermann, *Im Namen des Vaters: Studien zu ausgewählten neutestamentlichen Gottesbezeichnungen vor ihrem frühjüdischen und paganen Sprachhorizont* (AGJU 69; Leiden: Brill, 2007).
- 41 See e.g. F. Crüsemann *et al.* (eds.), *Ich glaube an den Gott Israels: Fragen und Antworten zu einem Thema, das im christlichen Glaubensbekenntnis fehlt* (Kaiser Taschenbücher 168; Gütersloh: Kaiser, 1999). Despite the promising title, none of the essays in this collection directly addresses the issues with which we are concerned.
- 42 Edited by the Kirchenleitung der Vereinigten Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche Deutschlands und im Auftrag des Rates von der Kirchenkanzlei der

- Evangelischen Kirche der Union, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Evangelische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft, 2003) 541; the source mentioned there is *Evangelische Kirche von Kurbessen-Waldeck*, Agende I/2 (1996), 663 No. 8, 1049. The supplementary volume published in 2002 – *Evangelisches Gottesdienstbuch / Ergänzungsband: Für die Evangelische Kirche der Union und für die Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche Deutschlands* – contains further new creedal formulations that do not contain additions to the first article in the way we propose.
- 43 On this compare the still foundational reflections by G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments II: Die Theologie der prophetischen Überlieferungen Israels*, 3. ed. (Berlin: EVA, 1964) 329-424; more recent reflections in R. Rendtorff, *Theologie des Alten Testaments: Ein kanonischer Entwurf II: Thematische Entfaltung* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2001) 254-317.
- 44 See M. Beintker, 'Judentum und Christentum VI. Kirche und Judentum in der Gegenwart' in *RGG 4* (2001) 635-637; C. Thoma, 'Juden, Judentum VII. Juden und Christen 3. Jüdisch-christlicher Dialog' in M. Buchberger, W. Kasper *et al.* (eds.), *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* 5 3rd ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 1996) 1046-1049 and Jung, *Christen und Juden*, 234-262. It is tragic that so many theologians and church officials appear, for example, in the new W. Benz (ed.), *Handbuch des Antisemitismus: Judenfeindschaft in Geschichte und Gegenwart Band 2: Personen A-Z* (München: Saur, 2009; see also the entries 'Antisemitismus/Antijudaismus', *RGG 1*, 556-574 and J.T. Pawlikowski, 'Anti-Judaism' in Kessler and Wenborn, *Dictionary*, 19-21) and that many of the other anti-Semites were at least socialised in Christian contexts.
- 45 The mere terms *Christianity*, *Christians* and the adjective *Christian* point to the *Christ*, the anointed one of God, the Messiah (cf. Acts 11:26). This concept cannot be understood apart from the Old Testament and early Judaism; see the surveys in Stuhlmacher, *Biblische Theologie I*, 107-111 and in M. Hengel and A.M. Schwemer, *Jesus und das Judentum* (Geschichte des frühen Christentums I; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007). In this regard the introductory formula to the confession of faith 'Let us now confess our *Christian* faith', used in many Christian services, already serves as a reminder that this faith has its temporal roots long before the confessing church and God's saving action in Christ to which the New Testament testifies.
- 46 H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: Ein Bericht von der Banalität des Bösen*, 5. ed. (Serie Piper 4822; München, Zürich: Piper, 2010) 371. The German adjective *gottgläubig* was a welcome (self-) designation for people who – for a variety of reasons – had turned their back on established Christianity and wanted to demonstrate this, yet without breaking with some kind of faith in (a) god.
- 47 See E. Schweizer, 'Jesus Christus I. Neues Testament 9. Jesus: Leben' in *TRE 16* (1987) 670-726 (710-712) and E.L. Ehrlich, 'Jesus Christus IX. Judentum' in *TRE 17* (1988) 68-71.
- 48 This was also emphasised by the young Martin Luther in his treatise *Dass Jesus ein geborener Jude sei* from 1523. In contrast, there are massively anti-Jewish statements in the late Luther; for example in *Wider die Irrlehren der Juden* from 1543; see Junge, *Christen und Juden*, 130-136; H. Kremers (ed.), *Die Juden und Martin Luther, Martin Luther und die Juden: Geschichte, Wirkungsgeschichte, Herausforderung* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1985); T. Kaufmann, *Luthers 'Judenschriften': Ein Beitrag zu ihrer historischen Kontextualisierung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) and P. von der Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther und die Juden neu untersucht anhand von Anton Margarithas 'Der gantz Jüdisch glaub' (1530/31)* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002).
- 49 See T.R. Hatina, 'David' in C.A. Evans (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Historical Jesus* (London, New York: Routledge, 2008) 130-131; see my paper at the 2011 NTSSA conference in Potchefstroom.
- 50 This creed was drafted in collaboration with missionaries from the *Congregation of the Holy Ghost*. 'The creed attempts to express the essentials of the Christian faith within Maasai culture', see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masai\\_Creed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masai_Creed) (accessed 8 February 2012). It is astonishing that a confession drafted by Christians under Catholic influence would dismiss the *virgin Mary* so readily.
- 51 These words replace the traditional words 'born of the virgin Mary' for expressing the real humanity of Jesus.
- 52 This confession underlines Barth's estimate ('Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II', 560): '... der Rückgriff auf die altkirchlichen Bekenntnisse konnte auf die Dauer die theologische Bemühung nicht ersetzen; die Erarbeitung einer eigenen "Basis" erwies sich als notwendig'. Also the first half of the *Maasai Creed* (based on the first article) is worth noting:  
We believe in the one High God, who out of love created the beautiful world and everything good in it. He created Man and wanted Man to be happy in the world. God loves the world and every nation and tribe on the Earth. We have known this High God in darkness, and now we know Him in the light. God promised in the book of His word, the Bible, that He would save the world and all the nations and tribes.  
The source reference in the Wikipedia article is J. Pelikan and V. Hotchkiss (eds.), *Creeks and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition* (Yale: Yale UP, 2003). On confessions of the so-called 'young churches' see also H. Schwarz,

- ‘Glaubensbekenntnis(se) VIII. 18. Jh. bis Neuzeit’ in *TRE* 13 (1984) 430–437 (434): ‘Die meisten [Bekenntnisse] blieben jedoch im westlichen Idiom und der westlichen Vorstellungswelt verhaftet’. Important exceptions are the confessions of *Huria Kristen Batak Protestan* – Church on Sumatra, Indonesia (1951) and the unification document of the *Church of South India* (1947).
- 53 See Jochen Eber, ‘Das „Volkstestament der Deutschen“: „Die Botschaft Gottes“ – ein deutsch-christliches Neues Testament im Dritten Reich’ in *European Journal of Theology* 18.1 (2009) 29–46.
- 54 See for example A.- J. Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper, 2006); R. Deines et al. (eds.), *Walter Grundmann: Ein Neutestamentler im Dritten Reich* (Arbeiten zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte 21; Leipzig: EVA, 2007); A. Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann* (Studies in Jewish History and Culture 20; Leiden: Brill, 2009) and O. Arnhold, *Entjudung – Kirche im Abgrund: Die Thüringer Kirchenbewegung Deutsche Christen 1928–1939* and *Das Institut zur Erforschung und Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben 1939–1945* (Studien zu Kirche und Israel 25; Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum – Zentrum für Christlich-Jüdische Studien an der Humboldt – Universität zu Berlin, 2010).
- 55 See Jung, *Christen und Juden*, 37–41, 52–61.
- 56 The reference to Pontius Pilate serves to indicate the time of these events as between AD 26 and 36; see Vokes, ‘Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis I’, 548. The birth of Jesus during the reign of Herod the Great (Mt 2) and the beginning of his public ministry mentioned in the synchronisms of Lk 2:1–2 and 3:1–2 have a similar function.
- 57 See W. Löhr, ‘Doketismus’, *RGG* 2, 925–927 and the survey of the developments and priorities in the formation of dogma in the Ancient Church, in particular in the various christological controversies, in A.M. Ritter, ‘Dogma und Lehre in der Alten Kirche’ in C. Andresen (ed.), *Handbuch der Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte I: Die Lehrentwicklung im Rahmen der Katholizität* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982) 99–283.
- 58 For example by R. Bultmann; see K. Hammann, *Rudolf Bultmann: Eine Biographie*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 179–192. For an astute critique see I.H. Marshall, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1977); see also the survey and methodological discussion in D.L. Bock and R.L. Webb (eds.), *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence* (WUNT 247; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).
- 59 Through the many readings from the Gospels the life of Jesus is present in the liturgy and the proclamation of many churches.
- 60 Vokes, ‘Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis’, 552, identifies as one of the few shortcomings of the *Apostles’ Creed* that ‘it contains no reference of any kind to the teaching of Jesus ...’.
- 61 Fortunately this is emphasised in many of the recent studies of the historical Jesus; see e.g. Hengel and Schwemer, *Jesus und das Judentum* and C.S. Keener, *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 33–46, 178–185, 214–222.
- 62 See the survey and evaluation by C. Stenschke, “... by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead ...” (Acts 4:10): Jesus in the Missionary Speeches of Acts’, *Swedish Missiological Themes – Svensk Missions Tidskrift* 99 (2011) 267–294.
- 63 Here I follow the compilation in C. Stenschke, ‘Sharing the Gospel: Jesus in the Speeches of Acts’, *The South African Baptist Journal of Theology* 19 (2010) 24–34 (28–29).
- 64 This emphasis on Israel is probably behind Peter’s surprised astonishment in Acts 10:43–44 which appears at the beginning of the only missionary speech in the narrow sense of the word that takes place before a Gentile audience. Although Peter proclaims Jesus as the Lord over *all* (10:36) and as the appointed judge of (all) the living and the dead and speaks of forgiveness of sins through his name for *everyone* who believes in him (10:42–43), the presentation of Jesus and his ministry has a distinctly Jewish note.
- 65 Quoted according to J.D.G. Dunn, ‘The Book of Acts as Salvation History’ in J. Frey et al. (eds.), *Heil und Geschichte: Die Geschichtsbezogenheit des Heils und das Problem der Heilsgeschichte in der biblischen Tradition und in der theologischen Deutung* (WUNT 248; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 385–401 (401).
- 66 See S. Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) and [de.wikipedia.org/.../Institut\\_zur\\_Erforschung\\_und\\_Beseitigung\\_des\\_juedischen\\_Einflusses\\_auf\\_das\\_deutsche\\_kirchliche\\_Leben](http://de.wikipedia.org/.../Institut_zur_Erforschung_und_Beseitigung_des_juedischen_Einflusses_auf_das_deutsche_kirchliche_Leben) (accessed 28 April 2011). Cf. also note 53 above.
- 67 Slightly revised according to Stenschke, ‘Sharing the Gospel’, 32.
- 68 Graham Kendrick, *The Servant King* (1983).
- 69 See A.R. Bevere, ‘Circumcision’, in D.N. Freedman (ed.), *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2000) 256.
- 70 See C. Stenschke, ‘Die Cantica der lukanischen Kindheitsgeschichte: Prolepse des lukanischen Doppelwerks und erste Leserlenkung’, *Jahrbuch für Evangelikale Theologie* 25 (2011) 7–32.

- 71 Examples in D.J. Goergen, 'The Quest for the Christ of Africa', *African Christian Studies: The Journal of the Faculty of Theology, Catholic University of Eastern Africa* 17 (2001) 5-51; see also A. Neely, 'Incarnational Mission' in A.S. Moreau (ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000) 474-475 and S. Mondithoka, 'Incarnation' in J. Corrie (ed.), *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations* (IVP Reference Collection; Nottingham, Downers Grove: IVP, 2007) 177-181.
- 72 Schröer, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis III', 570.
- 73 Schröer, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis III', 570.
- 74 Schröer, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis III', 568 notes that 'Revisionen und Reduktionen des Apostolikums haben zu Recht kaum Anklang gefunden. ... Zugleich hat die Bemühung um Neuformulierung auch des Credo im Zusammenhang mit den Versuchen neuer Katechismen seit der Aufklärung eine beachtliche Geschichte'; compare also the discussion on p. 569.
- 75 See J. Reumann, 'Bekenntnis II. Bibel 2. Neues Testament', *RGG* I, 1248-1249 and Stuhlmacher, *Biblische Theologie* I, 178-195.