

Christian relationships with Judaism as challenge and tool for Receptive Ecumenism: Touchstone and Transformation

Dr Clare Amos

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There has long been an ambiguity as to whether Christian relationships with Judaism should be seen as falling under the heading of 'ecumenical' or 'interreligious' dialogue. Famously Karl Barth once described Judaism as the great 'ecumenical issue' for his, and possibly our, time. What did he mean by this? What contributions do the Churches' past and current engagement with Judaism offer in the area of Receptive Ecumenism? This paper will seek to explore the way that Christian dialogue with Judaism (especially since *Nostra Aetate*), by challenging and requiring the churches to be more self-critical, can become a transformational 'touchstone' enabling them to learn from each other as well as from Jewish dialogue partners.

Cardinal Walter Kasper described Judaism as being for Christianity, 'a sacrament of every otherness'. This remarkable and challenging comment deserves attention and exploration. Are there ways in which Christian churches by responding to the 'otherness' of Judaism can become more appreciative of legitimate difference? Finally the paper will also seek to explore the question of 'particularity'. What can the churches discover from Judaism about 'the scandal of particularity' and how it can be both threat and tool in the ecumenical endeavour.

Dr Clare Amos, fairly recently retired as Programme Coordinator and Executive for Interreligious Dialogue at the World Council of Churches, and currently honorary Director of Lay Discipleship in the Anglican Diocese in Europe (Church of England), and freelance writer and speaker. Among her various recent projects Clare has written on behalf of the national/regional ecumenical body Churches Together in Britain and Ireland its national Lent course for 2020.