

## **Statement on Jewish-Christian Relations**

### **From the Churches Inter-Religious Network**

#### Introduction

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland is an ecumenical body that has 38 member churches in membership, representing almost all the major churches across the Britain and Ireland. The Churches Inter-Religious Network is a Network of CTBI that brings together the churches' representatives who hold responsibility for relations with people of other faiths.

In June 2011 these representatives met together to discuss Jewish-Christian relations. This was an intra-Christian conversation which aimed:

- *To take stock ecumenically of where the churches are in their relationship to Judaism*
- *To reflect upon how progress on dialogue sustains or fails to sustain relationships of trust when difficulties arise and where issues of conscience mean that the two faiths cannot agree*
- *To address crucial questions arising from the day*
- *To identify any future work that needs to be undertaken*

All who attended this consultation agreed that it would be important to produce a statement of common purpose that would serve both as a reminder of what has been achieved and as an indicator of the relationship with the Jewish people as uniquely precious and is one that must be continually deepened and enriched.

#### The Statement

The relationship between Judaism and Christianity is unique. The Hebrew Scriptures (which Christians refer to as the Old Testament) are authoritative to both traditions. The Patriarchs and Prophets play a vital role in the teachings of the two faiths. Jesus Christ was born a Jew and died a Jew. St. Paul spoke of his pride of being a member of the tribe of Benjamin. The histories of the two religions, especially in Europe, are inextricably linked.

Christianity and Judaism together have played an essential role in the development of European culture: through faith and learning they have given human civilization some of its greatest thinkers, philosophers, scientists, artists, musicians, writers and political leaders.

Christians and Jews, together with other faiths, now make a significant contribution to our society and its leaders are frequently looked to for spiritual and moral leadership.

Over the past 60 years enormous progress has been made in Jewish-Christian relations, including growing mutual understanding in matters of faith and social action, Biblical interpretation and a willingness to stand together against racism, anti-Semitism and the misuse of religion for political ends.

We value enormously both the strong Jewish heritage of the Christian religion, and the deepening of our mutual understanding and respect. We remain committed to this developing relationship. We also recognise that there are matters of difficulty and disagreement which may from time to time cause pain and misunderstanding. We remain however committed to strong and positive relationships with the Jewish community and seek to develop and strengthen these in the years to come.