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And last, but certainly not least, I express my thanks to God, who has sustained us, kept us alive, and enabled us to reach this time.

Dr. Deborah Weissman
President, International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ)
Jerusalem/Israel

PREFACE

Do miracles still happen in our day and age? To my mind at least, the publication and presentation of our declaration about the future of Christian-Jewish Dialogue, "*Time for Recommitment*" is one. Does it not seem like a miracle that seventy years after the beginning of World War II this declaration is to be presented in Berlin, the city where the annihilation of European Jewry was conceived and planned – and where the desks were located from which the implementation orders were sent out? Seventy years – a biblical time. It is the time that is generally connected with the Babylonian exile, but also, according to Psalm 90, the duration of a human life. This time was needed to travel the long and arduous road from the darkest period of Christian-Jewish relations to this document of mutual trust and co-operation. The joint input of both Christians and Jews from such different countries as Germany, Israel, the United Kingdom, the USA, and Poland went into the making of this document.

Seventy years after the greatest abyss ever separating the two religious and secular cultures, men and women of both traditions could meet in mutual respect as equal partners, in spite of the pain suffered and the wounds inflicted in the past, to address not only the similarities but also the differences of their religious traditions.

The road towards reconciliation was long and arid, but those who travelled it learned to listen to the religious Other and to be aware of what hurts him. Only a trustful encounter allowed the authors to address new and radical questions in the document.

Other documents prepared the way. First of all, the Ten Points of Seelisberg in 1947, the first document after the shock of the Shoah. It calls on the Christian Communities to renounce their long term theology of supercessionism. One year later, in 1948, the first Societies of Christian-Jewish Co-operation were founded in Germany to overcome the

paralysing silence between Christians and Jews. Soon thereafter they formed an umbrella organisation, the *Deutscher Koordinierungsrat*. It was precisely this umbrella organisation that arranged a conference, "*Common Mistakes about the People of the First Covenant*," for clergymen and teachers in Schwalbach. The Eight Schwalbacher Points, published after the conference, extend and deepen the Seelisberger Points calling for a theological language and interpretation of biblical texts free of anti-Jewish contempt. Moreover, they also address the failings of many Christians to help Jews during the time of persecution by the Nazis. Out of this experience, according to the document, arises the responsibility for every Christian to fight any form of anti-Semitism. In other words, the Schwalbacher Points of the *Deutscher Koordinierungsrat* focus, already in 1950, on the social and political consequences of a new relationship to the Jews. Other declarations followed. The Churches had started to redefine their relationship to the Jews.

All documents preceding the Twelve Berlin Points were directed towards the Christian communities and their members, whereas the Berlin Points address Christians and the Churches as well as Jews and Jewish Communities in their call for joint action, thus bringing theology out into the public space.

As liaison of the *Deutscher Koordinierungsrat* to the ICCJ, I am very grateful that we could participate in the making of this groundbreaking document. We are pleased to sign the *Berlin Declaration* for it reflects our motto 2009, „*So viel Aufbruch war nie*“ in an exemplary way calling on Jews, Christians and Muslims alike to join forces and work together for a better future for all mankind.

Dr. Eva Schulz-Jander
Deutscher Koordinierungsrat der Gesellschaften
für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit

A TIME FOR RECOMMITMENT

BUILDING THE NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
 JEWS AND CHRISTIANS

In the summer of 1947, 65 Jews and Christians from 19 countries gathered in Seelisberg, Switzerland. They came together to express their profound grief over the Holocaust, their determination to combat antisemitism, and their desire to foster stronger relationships between Jews and Christians. They denounced antisemitism both as a sin against God and humanity and as a danger to modern civilization. And to address these vital concerns, they issued a call in the form of 10 points to Christian churches to reform and renew their understandings of Judaism and the relationships between Judaism and Christianity.

Now, more than 60 years later, the International Council of Christians and Jews issues a new call — this one to both Christian and Jewish communities around the world. It commemorates the anniversary of the Seelisberg gathering, which was also the genesis of the International Council of Christians and Jews. Today's call reflects the need to refine the Ten Points of Seelisberg, consistent with the advances in interreligious dialogue since that groundbreaking document of 1947.

This new call contains 12 points – presented as goals, and addressed to Christians and Jews, and to Christian and Jewish communities together. After listing the 12 points and several specific tasks for each one, the document reviews