

**From Lucerne to Geneva:
The Academic Consultation Between Judaism and Orthodox Christianity
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I. Geneva, December 2025

Geneva carries a particular weight in the history of Jewish-Orthodox Christian relations. It was a few minutes away in Chambésy that the bilateral consultation series was born, as a direct consequence of Metropolitan Damaskinos's speech in Zurich in 1976 that, in Gerhart Riegner's own recollection, "opened the way to the beginnings of a serious interreligious dialogue between Orthodox Christians and Jews."¹ It was fitting, then, that Geneva was chosen as the site of the 12th Academic Consultation between Judaism and Orthodox Christianity, convened by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) from 7 to 10 December 2025. The consultation marked nearly fifty years of bilateral encounter between the two communities at the international level, and that proximity to a major milestone lent the proceedings a reflective quality, though the mood was far from merely nostalgic.

This article attempts an assessment of that meeting and of the consultation series it represents. It draws extensively on the historical survey offered at the opening of the Geneva consultation by Fr Michael Azar, who has spent years working through the archives of the dialogue and whose account of its history remains the most thorough available. It also draws on Fr Azar's broader published work on Orthodox Christianity and Jewish-Christian relations, on the official communiqué of the 12th consultation, and on the author's own experience as an invited participant.²

A word on my position as author is in order. The Orthodox Church in America, of which I am a presbyter, does not hold official membership in the consultation series, which is convened under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. I attended as an invited academic participant, not as a delegate or representative of any jurisdiction. What follows should be read as a scholarly reflection, not a report from within the dialogue's institutional structures.

II. An Absent Voice: Orthodox Christianity and the Origins of Jewish-Christian Dialogue

To understand what the Academic Consultation is, one must first understand what it was created to remedy. In 1947, Western Christians and Jews gathered in Seelisberg, Switzerland, for an emergency meeting on antisemitism. The gathering was historic. It produced the famous Ten Points of Seelisberg and helped to inaugurate what we now recognise as the mainstream of

¹ Gerhart Riegner, personal message to Metropolitan Damaskinos on the occasion of his 60th birthday, 20 December 1995, cited in Michael G. Azar, "Orientation and Introduction: Fifty Years of Jewish-Orthodox Dialogue," opening address at the 12th Academic Consultation between Judaism and Orthodox Christianity, Geneva, 7 December 2025 (unpublished; cited with permission).

² For Azar's published treatment of this history, see Azar, Michael G., "Orthodox Christianities" In *Encyclopedia of Jewish-Christian Relations Online* edited by Walter Homolka, Rainer Kampling, Amy-Jill Levine, Christoph Marksches, Peter Schäfer and Martin Thurner. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ejcro.22609098>; and "The Bible in Orthodox Christian-Jewish Dialogue," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Orthodox Christianity*, ed. Eugen J. Pentiu (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 556-74. His forthcoming monograph, *The Table and the Empty Seat: Orthodox Christianity and Jewish-Christian Relations*, will offer the most comprehensive treatment to date. The historical account in Sections II and III of this article draws extensively on both the encyclopaedia entry and the Geneva address (n. 1 above).

Jewish-Christian dialogue. But it was, in a precise sense, a Western meeting. Orthodox Christians were not present; nor, in any substantive way, were their concerns. When those gathered spoke of reforming Christian teaching on Jews and Judaism, they had Western Christian teaching primarily in view. When they spoke of political remedies for the plight of Europe's surviving Jews, the concerns and possibilities they had in mind were those of Western governments.

This absence was not remedied for a generation. The mainstream of Jewish-Christian dialogue, including the landmark declaration *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council in 1965, was shaped without serious Orthodox participation, and the consequences have been lasting. The dialogue's working assumptions, its historical frame of reference, its characteristic anxieties and hopes, were formed in a context that largely overlooked or misunderstood the Eastern Christian world.

It was not until the 1970s that dialogue participants noticed and tried to address this gap. But the initial invitation to Orthodox Christians, as Fr Azar has shown, was less a genuine opening than an extension of Western concerns: Orthodox voices were sought not so much for what they might contribute as for what their presence might confer.³ It is perhaps unsurprising that these early overtures had limited success.

What did produce real movement was something that came from within Orthodox Christianity itself. In June 1976, Metropolitan Damaskinos addressed an audience of Jews and Christians in Zurich on what he described as the necessity of interreligious dialogue, and he made a clear argument: it was not *despite* Orthodox Christianity's deep commitment to its ancient traditions that dialogue with Jews was necessary, but precisely *because* of it. For those outside the Orthodox world who had long assumed that traditional commitment was a barrier to dialogue, this reframing was both unexpected and significant. Damaskinos had confirmed, openly and directly, not merely the benefit but the obligation of encounter.

Riegner, who would later become one of the two founding architects of the bilateral consultation series, described the speech as the moment that made everything possible. The friendship between Metropolitan Damaskinos and Riegner would prove as important to the history that followed as any institutional arrangement.

A year after Metropolitan Damaskinos's speech, in March 1977, Jews and Orthodox Christians gathered in Lucerne for the first international, bilateral academic consultation. Sponsored by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and IJCIC, it addressed the concept of Torah in Jewish and Orthodox Christian thought. What emerged from that first meeting was not consensus but recognition: both traditions, it became clear, understood Torah and law not as mere legislation but as an encompassing orientation of life toward God, inseparable from the living community of interpretation. Neither shared this intuition straightforwardly with the Western Christianity that had hitherto defined the terms of Jewish-Christian encounter. The commonality was genuine, and the differences illuminating.

One should note, alongside this international series, an earlier bilateral meeting that deserves its place in the record. In January 1972, a select group of Orthodox Christians and Jews met in New York under Archbishop Iakovos and Marc Tanenbaum, in what may have been the first encounter of its kind conducted not for disputation but for mutual learning. The participants

³ Azar, "Orthodox Christianities."

spoke of Scripture and theology, liturgy and history, ethics and questions of national belonging. They pledged to form bilateral study groups to continue the work; but the meeting had no sequel in the United States, and a gathering of that significance has not been repeated there since. The international series inaugurated in Lucerne has carried the weight of the relationship ever since.

III. Fifty Years of Conversation: The Arc of the Consultation Series

The three meetings that followed Lucerne established the theological character of the dialogue at its most ambitious. The second consultation, held in Bucharest in 1979, took up the question of tradition and community, with both sides finding common ground in their shared conviction that Scripture is not self-interpreting but is properly understood within and through the living tradition that receives it. For both rabbinic Judaism and Orthodox Christianity, the tradition is not an external imposition on the text but its proper habitation; the one who reads in isolation from that tradition reads less than the text offers.

The third consultation, held in Greece in 1993, addressed continuity and renewal. It was also the first meeting attended by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, then only months into his patriarchate. The fall of Communism had made broader participation possible, and for the first time the proceedings were published in their entirety in English and later translated into Russian. Riegner, who felt strongly that Russian Jews and Orthodox Christians had to be included in the dialogue's fruits, considered this a priority. The published volume from Athens 1993 remains the most widely known product of the consultation series.

The fourth meeting, held in Israel in 1998, marked a turning point that the dialogue has not yet fully reckoned with. It was the last to be guided by Metropolitan Damaskinos and Riegner, whose friendship had sustained the enterprise from its beginning. Their successors, Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon and a series of prominent Jewish figures under IJCIC, have maintained the dialogue with considerable skill and dedication. But the thematic character of the consultations shifted after 1998.

Where the first three meetings had engaged at the level of theological substance, the meetings between 2003 and 2017 were characterised more by common ethical concern and, at times, by diplomatic considerations that were not always easy to disentangle from the theological. The fifth meeting (Thessaloniki, 2003) considered the common commitment to peace and justice; the sixth (Jerusalem, 2007) addressed religious liberty; the seventh and eighth (Athens 2009 and 2013) turned to ecological and economic crises, along with religious prejudice including antisemitism; the ninth (Athens, 2015) marked the 25th anniversary of Greek-Israeli diplomatic relations with a focus on spiritual centres and diasporas; the tenth (Jerusalem, 2017) considered the significance of Jerusalem, with deliberately limited attention drawn to contemporary political tensions in the city.

These were not unimportant subjects. But the shift from theological to primarily social and ethical themes was not without its drawbacks. The deep mutual recognition that had characterised the early meetings, the sense that each tradition had something to teach the other about the nature of Scripture, law, and living community, became harder to sustain when the agenda was shaped primarily by common opposition to external problems rather than by mutual inquiry into internal convictions. There is also a structural difficulty that compounds this: unlike the proceedings of the first three meetings, the documents, papers, and transcripts of meetings

four through ten were never systematically published.⁴ What remains is largely communiqués, personal accounts, and unpublished addresses. Much has been lost that might otherwise have allowed the dialogue to build more cumulatively on itself.

The eleventh consultation, in Vienna in 2022, offered something of a corrective. The theme concerned the way each tradition employs its religious sources to navigate life as either a minority or a majority community, a question with genuine theological depth and pressing practical relevance. More significantly, participants at Vienna expressed what Fr Azar has described as a common hope for a new direction: more searching exchange, more honest engagement, direct address of matters that had been passed over. Vienna also saw the beginnings of work on a joint document, intended as a teaching resource for each community about the other. Geneva was, in important respects, the continuation of what Vienna had begun.

IV. The Twelfth Consultation: Sacred Space in Geneva

The theme chosen for Geneva, “Sanctity of Place, Sanctity of Space,” was theologically rich and deliberately open. Sacred space is a subject on which Judaism and Orthodox Christianity have much to say, and much that illuminates each tradition’s deepest commitments about the relationship between the material world, human practice, and divine presence. It is also, as the consultation would make clear, a subject that cannot be pursued in purely abstract terms: it opens almost inevitably onto questions of land, power, belonging, and loss.

The consultation opened on Sunday evening with a dinner at which Metropolitan Emmanuel and IJCIC Vice-Chair David Michaels offered welcoming remarks. The substantive work began that same evening, with Fr Azar’s historical survey from which much of this article draws: a careful, candid account of the consultation’s origins and trajectory, including a frank assessment of the challenges that remain and, as will be discussed below, some pointed questions that the dialogue cannot continue to defer.

The formal sessions began in earnest on Monday morning. Metropolitan Emmanuel and IJCIC Chair Rabbi Mark Dratch, the consultation’s co-chairs, offered opening remarks acknowledging the weight of the occasion. Metropolitan Emmanuel then presented a formal tribute to Metropolitan Damaskinos and Riegner, accompanied by a photographic retrospective of five decades of meetings prepared by Dr Gary Vachicouras, whose unparalleled dedication to preserving the historical record of this dialogue is itself a contribution to its continuity. The tribute was a reminder that dialogues of this kind depend on persons, not merely on institutions.

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew’s keynote address, which followed, took the theme of sacred space and pressed it in an ethically demanding direction. Sacred space, he argued, is not a monument to the past but a moral and spiritual vocation. Authentic holiness cannot be separated from justice and mercy; the embodied experience of worship does not draw the faithful away from the world but orients them more fully toward its transformation. And here, as he observed, the two traditions find strong resonance with one another. The inseparability of sacred space and moral responsibility is not a Christian imposition on a Jewish idea, nor vice versa, but a shared inheritance from the biblical tradition both communities hold in common. Rabbi Richard Marker, an IJCIC past chair, responded to the address.

⁴ On this archival gap, see Azar, “Orthodox Christianities,” and Azar, “The Bible in Orthodox Christian-Jewish Dialogue,” 556-74.

The formal sessions that followed ranged widely. Monday morning's first session, "What Makes a Space Holy?", was addressed by Rabbi Joe Kanofsky and Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden, each drawing on the resources of their own tradition. Monday afternoon brought two further sessions: Rabbi David Sandmel and Fr Azar addressed an ongoing collaborative project on how each community speaks about the other, one of the dialogue's most practically significant preoccupations. This was followed by "Space as Power," in which Ambassador Michał Klinger and Rabbi Noam Marans explored the intersection of sacred space with questions of control, identity, and political expression, a discussion whose resonance with contemporary realities was impossible to ignore.

Tuesday morning opened with what the programme called "Textual Hospitality," a session I led together with Rabbi Shoshana Boyd Gelfand. The session was structured not around the juxtaposition of "Jewish texts" and "Christian texts" as separate scriptural worlds, but around Genesis 28 itself as a sacred text held in common, with rabbinic midrash and Christian commentary treated as parallel interpretive traditions emerging from the same scriptural source. The methodology deliberately resisted hard supersessionist⁵ assumptions by treating Genesis itself as the primary shared scriptural ground of encounter. Rather than presenting Christian readings as replacing Jewish interpretation, the discussion allowed both traditions to explore how distinct trajectories of interpretation emerge from the same narrative while remaining tethered to it. Particularly illuminating was a discussion surrounding Jacob's stone at Bethel. A Jewish participant observed the narrative movement from "a stone" to "the stone," noting how rabbinic tradition identifies it with the foundation stone of the Temple itself. Orthodox Christian participants responded by drawing parallels with sacramental and liturgical consecration, leading to a wider discussion about how the particular becomes the bearer of universal or cosmic significance. The disagreements proved no less fruitful than the convergences. When discussion turned to the Johannine identification of Christ as the ladder between heaven and earth, Jewish participants pressed directly on whether such readings dissolved the sacred geography central to Jewish practice. The conversation did not resolve these tensions, but it demonstrated that serious religious difference need not prevent us undertaking sustained inquiry together. Indeed, the discussion generated enough energy around questions of liturgical practice that several participants proposed liturgy as a subject for a future consultation.

Tuesday morning also included a session on sacredness in spaces beyond the primary, in which Rabbi Sandmel and Dr Theodor Keskos explored questions of pilgrimage, diaspora sanctity, and the sacred encountered in the everyday away from designated religious spaces. The afternoon was devoted to site visits of considerable symbolic importance: to the historic Beth-Yaacov Synagogue in Geneva, where the community and its leadership received the delegation warmly, and to the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, where Metropolitan Maxime of Switzerland offered remarks and Dr Vachicouras led a tour. To stand in Chambésy, in the building that Metropolitan Damaskinos had directed, and from which the initiative that made the consultation series possible had been launched, was to feel the weight of the history that had brought the group together. The visit was not merely ceremonial.

⁵ I employ "hard supersessionism" here in the sense articulated by David Novak, distinguishing replacement or invalidation theology from broader claims of theological fulfilment or greater theological adequacy inherent to confessional traditions, which he calls "soft supersessionism." David Novak, "Supersessionism Hard and Soft," *First Things*, August 15, 2025, <https://firstthings.com/supersessionism-hard-and-soft/>.

The consultation's final morning opened with a textual reflection led by Rabbi Dratch on how the two traditions teach from the same texts. The sharing of a canon, even a partially shared one, creates interpretive obligations as well as opportunities. This was followed by the fourth and final formal session, on virtual space, in which Rabbi Dratch and Fr Nicolas Kazarian examined the challenges that digital culture and social media pose for communities whose sacred life is constituted by bodily presence and lived practice. The discussion that followed was, by several accounts, the most animated of the consultation. Both communities find themselves navigating a world in which questions of presence, community, and encounter are being radically reconfigured by forces largely indifferent to what either tradition has to say about them. That the dialogue devoted time to this question was itself a sign of its responsiveness to the present moment.

V. Challenges and Unfinished Business

Fr Azar's historical survey in Geneva did not content itself with celebration. Having traced the arc of the dialogue with care and evident affection, he turned to the challenges that remain, some of which the dialogue has not yet found the courage to address directly, but with which any honest assessment must engage.⁶

Three clusters of challenge seem to me particularly important.

The first is internal to Orthodox Christianity. Antisemitism remains a real and documented presence in many of the lands where Orthodoxy is the historic majority faith. Liturgical texts, not least those associated with Holy Week, contain elements that are deeply offensive to Jewish readers and that have functioned historically as vehicles of contempt. Orthodox scholars have written about this with increasing candour in recent decades, and there are voices within Orthodoxy calling for liturgical revision. But revision is genuinely complicated by the structural reality of Orthodoxy's autocephalous character: unlike the Catholic Church, there is no central authority capable of mandating change across the whole body. The common liturgy has been, for centuries, the primary means of Orthodox unity, theological instruction, and communal survival under conditions that have no Western analogue. Change must come from within each autocephalous jurisdiction, through processes that are slow, contested, and sensitive to particular histories. None of this is an evasion; it is a real constraint, and the dialogue will serve itself poorly if it treats the question of liturgical revision as though the Orthodox situation were simply a lagging version of what the Catholic Church has already accomplished.

The autocephalous structure creates additional difficulties for the consultation series itself. The bilateral meetings have been convened by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and Orthodox participation has inevitably tracked the complex and at times strained relationships between other jurisdictions and Constantinople. The Russian Orthodox Church, the world's largest Orthodox body, has been largely absent from the series. Representation has been disproportionately Greek, owing in large part to the extraordinary commitment of Greek Orthodox leaders and institutions who carried the dialogue through much of its formative history. This has at times given the encounter more the character of a dialogue between particular historical communities than between the full diversity of the two world religious traditions. Orthodox voices from Romania,

⁶ The analysis in this section draws extensively on Azar's Geneva address (n. 1 above), in which he offered a frank diagnosis of the dialogue's unfinished business. The challenges identified here are substantially his; the framing and any errors of judgement are the present author's own. For his published treatment of several of these themes, see Azar, "Orthodox Christianities."

Georgia, and above all from the Arab Christian communities of the Middle East have been present only intermittently.

The second cluster of challenges concerns the dialogue's place within the broader world of Jewish-Christian encounter. The mainstream of that world was formed without Orthodox participation, and the working assumptions it inherited do not always fit the Orthodox situation well. Orthodox Christianity continues to be underrepresented in the major institutions of Jewish-Christian dialogue, and its distinctive theological and historical position is frequently misunderstood or simply overlooked. The fruits of the consultation series have been too little known, partly because of the unpublished proceedings of the middle period and partly because Orthodox scholarship in general has been slower to circulate in the Western academic contexts where Jewish-Christian dialogue most concentrates itself.

The third cluster is the most demanding, and it is the one on which Fr Azar's survey at Geneva spoke with the greatest urgency: the situation in the Middle East, and specifically the place of Palestinian Christians in the ongoing catastrophe.

The relationship between Orthodox Christianity and the Holy Land is unlike that of any other Christian tradition. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Patriarchate of Antioch are among the oldest continuously operating institutions in the world. Orthodox Christians constitute the single largest block of Christians in the region and own a substantial proportion of its land. They are not outsiders looking in, as most Western Christians effectively are; they are indigenous communities whose presence predates Islam, the Crusades, and European colonialism. They have been dying out, displaced by forces in which multiple political actors have played roles, over a period spanning many decades.

Fr Azar had raised the growing vulnerability of indigenous Christian communities in Israel and the wider region at Vienna in 2022. Since then, the situation has deteriorated catastrophically. The war in Gaza following October 2023 has brought particular devastation to Gaza's Christian community, which was overwhelmingly Orthodox. Over ninety percent of Gaza's Christians prior to October 2023 were members of Saint Porphyrios Orthodox Church in Gaza City. The future of their ancient presence in that land is now genuinely in question.⁷

Fr Azar's challenge at Geneva was therefore direct, though the questions it raised extended well beyond the immediate political crisis: the dialogue cannot claim to be about justice and sacred space while declining to ask hard questions about land, covenant, nationhood, historical memory, and the theological resources (or failures) that both traditions bring to these realities. At stake are not only contemporary political disputes, but the broader question of what happens when sacred history, collective suffering, territorial belonging, and theological claims of election become politically absolutised. Neither Judaism nor Orthodox Christianity is immune to these temptations, and the dialogue will remain incomplete so long as it treats them as problems external to theology itself.

Orthodox Christianity has its own long and unresolved history of sacralising nation, territory, and historical memory. The condemnation of ethnophyletism in 1872 did not eliminate the persistent tendency within parts of the Orthodox world to conflate ecclesial identity with ethnicity, national destiny, or territorial belonging. The modern history of Orthodoxy includes its

⁷ Azar, Geneva address (n. 1 above). For the civilian casualty figures cited by Azar, see "Revealed: Israeli military's own data indicates civilian death rate of 83% in Gaza war," *The Guardian*, 21 August 2025.

own forms of sacralised nationalism, some of them tied closely to state power, war, and competing claims of sacred history. Any honest dialogue concerning land, covenant, and sacred space must therefore ask difficult questions of both traditions.

What theological resources do Jewish and Orthodox Christian communities possess for resisting the sacralisation of land, nation, and covenant in ways that distort or instrumentalise them? Have Orthodox churches outside the Middle East done what they should to speak for their suffering communities within it? Has the dialogue, which has spoken for fifty years about justice and peace, the courage to address what has been happening to some of its own participants' communities?

Fr Azar noted at Geneva that he had been told, at a major international Jewish-Christian gathering in 2024, that the dialogue was glad to be “moving on” from the war.⁸ He does not accept that there is any moving on, and I share that view. A dialogue that has spoken for five decades about justice, peace, and the sacredness of space cannot treat the ongoing devastation of ancient Christian communities as a topic to be set aside in the interests of harmony. The question is not whether these matters belong in the dialogue, but whether the dialogue has the structures and the will to address them honestly.

VI. What the Dialogue Is Doing, and What It Must Do

What, then, is the state of the academic consultation between Judaism and Orthodox Christianity?

The dialogue is alive, and in important respects in better health than it has been for some years. The return at Geneva to questions of genuine doctrinal and interpretive substance, pursued through direct engagement with the texts and practices of both traditions, suggests that the aspiration expressed at Vienna for deeper exchange is beginning to bear fruit. The joint document developed since Vienna represents a significant practical commitment: a teaching resource that each community might use to introduce its own members to the other. The ongoing project on how each tradition speaks about the other shows an awareness that the dialogue must eventually generate outcomes that reach beyond the room in which it takes place.

The text study exercise at Geneva, modest as it was in the context of a four-day consultation, points toward a form of engagement that deserves sustained development. When Jews and Orthodox Christians sit together with the same texts, each with their own interpretive inheritance fully in play, something becomes visible that neither community would reach alone. The differences prove as generative as the convergences, sometimes more so. This is, I would suggest, one of the dialogue's most underexploited resources, and one that could be developed more systematically both within the consultation and in smaller, less formally constituted settings.

And yet the structural challenges are real. The absence of the Russian Church, the underrepresentation of non-Greek Orthodox voices, the two-decade gap in published proceedings, the still-incomplete integration of this dialogue into the broader world of Jewish-Christian encounter: these are not problems that any single consultation can resolve, but they are

⁸ Azar, Geneva address (n. 1 above). The gathering in question was the annual conference of the International Council of Christians and Jews, held in Salzburg in June 2024.

problems that need to be named and addressed. And the Middle East remains, as Fr Azar made clear in Geneva, the question that the dialogue cannot responsibly defer.

Metropolitan Damaskinos wrote in 1978 that young people were waiting neither for the continuation of Christian-Jewish disputes nor merely for intra-religious housekeeping; they were waiting for Jews and Christians to work together, vigorously, for human rights, social equality, peace, and the future of humanity.⁹ As Fr Azar observed at Geneva, one wonders whether such words have ever been more urgent than they are now.

More fundamentally, the dialogue may still be only at the beginning of discovering the distinctive resources Orthodox Christianity can bring to the question of Judaism's ongoing covenantal life before God.¹⁰ Much post-war Jewish-Christian dialogue has been shaped by Western theological trajectories and by the institutional and historical concerns specific to Roman Catholicism and Protestant Europe. Orthodoxy approaches these matters differently, carrying within its inheritance forms of Logos theology, ecclesiology, and mystical anthropology whose implications for Jewish-Christian relations have not yet been fully explored. The growing influence of "within Judaism" scholarship on Christian origins may prove especially significant in this regard. Its renewed emphasis on the earliest Jesus movement as a Jewish movement that incorporated gentiles into the worship of Israel's God, rather than replacing Israel itself, resonates in important ways with questions that remain largely unexplored within Orthodox theological reflection. That Orthodox theology might articulate a more robust account of Jewish covenantal existence, not as superseded but as an ongoing life before the God whom Christians confess as the Logos, remains a largely unrealised possibility. Yet the consultation series increasingly appears to be one of the places in which such work may begin to emerge.

VII. Conclusion

The 12th Academic Consultation closed with a communiqué, reviewed and approved by delegates and presented by Fr Nicolas Kazarian and IJCIC Vice Chair David Michaels. The tone was one of gratitude for what had been shared and of hope for what might yet be accomplished. Delegates departed knowing that they had participated in something that matters, even when its significance is not always legible beyond the room.

The consultation will meet again, and when it does, it will carry forward both the riches and the unresolved tensions that Geneva made visible. The riches are considerable: half a century of genuine encounter, a network of scholars who know and trust each other across the traditions, and a mutual commitment to learning that does not require agreement as its precondition. The tensions are equally real. The dialogue now finds itself pressed by questions that cannot be answered through goodwill and diplomacy alone: questions of land and memory, covenant and nationhood, suffering and historical responsibility, and the theological habits by which religious communities sacralise both themselves and their histories.

Yet Geneva also suggested something more hopeful and more demanding: that the dialogue may still be only at the beginning of discovering what Orthodox Christianity and Judaism are capable of saying to one another theologically. The return to sustained textual engagement, the renewed

⁹ Metropolitan Damaskinos, "Das orthodoxe Christentum und das Judentum: Der Stand ihrer Beziehungen," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 21-22 October 1978, cited in Azar, Geneva address (n. 1 above).

¹⁰ See Geoffrey Ready, "The Logos at Sinai: Orthodox Christianity and the Covenant That Was Never Revoked," also in this volume.

attention to the Jewish context of Christian origins, and the growing willingness to address unresolved questions directly all point toward possibilities that earlier stages of the dialogue only partially explored. The consultation increasingly appears not merely as an exercise in interreligious diplomacy, but as one of the places where both traditions are being compelled into deeper truthfulness about themselves.

Metropolitan Damaskinos began all of this not by minimising Orthodox Christianity's commitments but by insisting that those commitments are precisely what make dialogue necessary. That conviction remains the dialogue's indispensable foundation. It requires both traditions to bring the fullness of their theological convictions to the table, including the parts that are difficult for the other to receive and difficult to examine within themselves. But only such honesty can sustain a dialogue capable not merely of coexistence, but of genuine theological encounter.

From Lucerne to Geneva, the conversation has covered a great deal of ground. Whether it will now find the courage to follow its deepest questions where they lead remains an open question — and perhaps the most important one of all.