INTRODUCTION

Do Jews and Christians need each other? It is commonly understood that Christianity is historically dependent upon Judaism, with Christianity understanding itself as an “expansion” upon the Jewish covenants, directed toward including even Gentiles in the worship of the One God. So Christianity has always needed Judaism, even when it has historically failed to remember that fact. But does Judaism, in turn, need Christianity? Today, I want to introduce you to one Jewish thinker who offered an unusual and creative “yes” in answer to that question: someone who argued that Jews and Christians need each other as necessary parts of the redemption of this world.

Among the many different philosophies and theologies which add to the conversation between Christian and Jews, the work of the German-Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1928) may be used to examine Jewish-Christian encounters. His work is a fascinating, though highly abstract, and oftentimes esoteric theological starting point for approaching the subject; nevertheless, it can help enrich and nourish interfaith encounters between these two religions. Rosenzweig's thought on the Jewish-Christian relation is radical and oftentimes startlingly original: it's an interpretation of both Judaism and Christianity which points to a relationship between these two religions which goes beyond simply tolerating and acknowledging each other. In his view, not only would Jews and Christians live in peaceful coexistence, they have an actual need for each other as being “all in the family.”
Rosenzweig, like most of his friends of the acculturated and alienated German-Jewish middleclass in Western Europe hundred years ago, wanted to convert to Christianity following the path of the early Jewish-Christians. After his cousin and close friend, Eugene Rosenstock, he planned to first become an observant Jew, like the Jews around Jesus were and then take up Christianity, just like the Jews following Jesus did in the first century. However, in 1913, days before his planned conversion, he happened to pass by an orthodox synagogue in Berlin by accident, on the eve of Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish liturgical year. The service touched him so deeply that he decided to not only not convert to Christianity but to become an observant Jew who dedicated his life to teaching a new thinking of Judaism. As he had no lack of dramatic turns throughout his fascinating life, the IWW came and he was soon enlisted in the army and sent to the Balkans. But despite, or perhaps greatly influenced by the war and the suffering he encountered there, he started to write his magnum opus, the star of redemption, in the trenches on military postcards sent to his mother. He wanted to bring about a total renewal of thinking, a synthesis between philosophy and theology through a system of revelation, that he called the New Thinking. After he returned form the war he abandoned his prestigious academic career and he established a study-house where he set out to teach Judaism to anyone interested. In another dramatic turn, he fell ill and became completely paralyzed by Lou Gehrig’s disease, and he could continue writing and developing his idea of new thinking only with the help of his wife. She sat beside his bed for ten years reciting the alphabet and when Rosenzweig blinked an eye she knew what letter came next in the word he was dictating. She went on putting words, sentences, chapters, and books together in this painful slow manner till his death.
Among the many ideas formulated and advanced by Rosenzweig, this lecture will focus on how the two religions are interdependent for their existence and for their redemption. First I will examine how Rosenzweig formulated his idea about the relationship between God, the world, humanity, and the redemption of the Jews. After this, I will look at how Rosenzweig assessed Christianity in these terms. Then I will look at Rosenzweig’s idea of a “dual covenant” incorporating both Jews and Christians. At the end, we can then consider what resources Rosenzweig may have provided for a new “all in the family” vision of Jews and Christians together.

Although Rosenzweig would employ traditional theological categories, he frequently applied them in rather astonishing and surprising ways. He introduced a new concept of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, because he wanted to find reasons and a way to be a Jew in a Christian society of his time. According to his biographer: "he was put under tremendous personal and intellectual pressure: he had to give in or be able, at least to his own satisfaction, to defend himself for remaining a Jew." 1 He could not find the answer for that in traditional Jewish thought, "but had to work his way out of the Jewishly alienated and culturally restricted background which his parental home had provided." 2 In Rosenzweig’s own words: "We are Christian in everything. We live in a Christian state... in short, our whole ‘culture’ rests on Christian foundation. In Germany today the Jewish religion cannot be accepted." 3 But "he was convinced that his ancestral religion could be regained by the modern Jew only by immersing himself in its past." 4 Therefore, he formulated a unique view of Judaism in order to give a reason for being Jewish while also responding to a Christian claim of the time that Judaism should not exist anymore.
1. ROSENZWEIG’S CONCEPT OF JUDAISM

He formulated his novel concept of Judaism in his book *The Star of Redemption* claiming that Jews have a particular connection to God, to time, and to the world because God revealed himself to the Jew through his eternal love in historical revelation at Mount Sinai. Because of this specific revelation God enables the Jewish people to connect to him directly. That is, God gives himself to his people, to the Jews, in revelation. This revelation gives the Jewish individual the knowledge that God is "our" God, "our" father. Therefore, the Jew is conscious of God everyday and God for him is not something supreme, but something inner.

Further, according to Rosenzweig’s view, Judaism has a particular (and confusing) connection to time and to the world as well: that is, Jews are outside of time, though they are physically subject to it through their liturgical year. They have a spiritual world since Jews live in a cycle that is replicated in the Jewish liturgical year, and just physically exist in this physical world. Because Jews reach redemption in the Jewish circuit of the year, their liturgical life cycle expresses eternity in the present reality. Jewish time is based on festivals that communicate the relationship of God with the Jewish people in the following way: Sabbath is the festival of creation, the three pilgrim festivals express revelation, and the days of Ave, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are redemption festivals. In the creation festival, Jews celebrate that Israel came into existence, that the Jewish people are created. In the revelation festivals the revelation of the Torah is remembered, while in the redemption festivals Jews celebrate the anticipated
redemption. The liturgical year is thus the mirror image of eternity. In the words of Samuel Bergman, a Rosenzweig scholar, "the eternality of Judaism is the eternal life of the chosen people, the people to whom God, through his eternal love, recognizes and reveals himself and who in turn reply by their faithfulness." Therefore, according to Rosenzweig, for the Jew to live in this world means that he lives there only physically through the liturgical life cycle that expresses eternity, but he is not subject to time. Jews have already reached their goal—which is redemption—and have anticipated it by hope via the liturgical year. Jews are themselves the redemption because Judaism has a redemptive vocation, which is to be Jewish. Thus, when the Jew is a Jew he is redemptive: for himself, for Judaism, for the world, and even for the Christian as we shall soon see. Thus, time, space and history is not important for the Jews because they already exist in eternity.

However, although, Jews do not live in time and space like Christians did, according to him, there is one reason why Jews would have an interest in the world: Because the physical embodiment of Judaism, the remnant, is in this world. This is possible, because the remnant is simultaneously a part of the ever-existing Jewish people and the present Jewish people in the world. In other words, it is possible for the remnant to live in time and space and bridge over time and space at the same time because they are eternal (that is Jews are space and time travelers): They are eternal because they are going to exist, until the end of the world, when everything is going to be redeemed, and there will be no difference between Jews and Christians. Only then will Judaism and Jews cease to exist.

Further, according to Rosenzweig, there is a special relationship not only between
Judaism and God, time and the world, but there is a special characteristic of the Jew as well. In Judaism the individual Jew is born into the holy nation, "Knowing that God has elected him." A Jew is a Jew by birth. He does not have to become a Jew, since he is born one. Yet he cannot opt out of being Jewish, since he has to be one because he is born one. Hence, the Jew does not need to be reborn, to change, to reverse internally or to transform in order to be close to God, because the Jew has already been converted to Judaism through Abraham. A Jew is closer to God the more he recognizes that he is Jewish because of his "blood". In other words, "the kinship of blood and family loyalty which unite the grandfather and the grandson are the basic feelings of the Jew. Conscious of the strength of these ties, the Jew knows himself to be part of an eternal people." Jews have to safeguard their own existence, since its own existence is their faithful response to God. The task of Judaism is to persist. Consequently, Judaism turns inward, and focuses on its own existence.

Rosenzweig, constructing his ideas about the Jew from his personal feelings of being pressured to convert to Christianity when Judaism had lost its meaning for modern Jews, “urged German-Jews to take both components of their identity, as Germans and as Jews..." If the way of living and task of the individual is different for Jews and Christians, then the chance of avoiding assimilation is greater. Similarly, the idea of the Jewish individual's strong sense of belonging to the community also decreases the chance of assimilation. Though this idea of human behavior demands very radical behavior of the Jewish individual by expecting him to give up freedom and submit to the "fate" of the community in his view. Because the relationship between Judaism and the Jew is relevant insofar as the life of the individual is looked at as a part of the Jewish community. But for
that, the Jewish individual has to lose external possessions and identify with the eternal nature of the community, putting the community's need above personal needs. Presumably Rosenzweig saw no other way of being Jewish except in such a stringent way.

To summarize, Rosenzweig tried to show the necessity of the Jewish God via God's particular relationship to the Jews. That is, that God revealed himself at Sinai to the Jews so they can have a direct relationship with him. The task of the Jews is to maintain their unique relationship with God since such a relationship was given only to them. Rosenzweig's idea of eternity embodied in the Jewish lifecycle (i.e. anticipating redemption in them), and that the Jews live only physically in the world but spiritually in redemption gives a reason and explanation why the Jews should not be assimilated, and why Christianity should not hate or be anti-Semitic towards the Jews. His views certainly meant a change in the view of God for the assimilated Jewry of Germany, where there was a tendency to forget in what aspect the relationship of the Jews to God was supposedly unique: Because "the German Jews were no longer simply and unambiguously Jewish, their identity and cultural loyalties were fractured." Thus, wanting to keep up with modernity, they turned towards the God of the society, which was the Christian God. Paul Mendes-Flohr, a contemporary Rosenzweig scholar says: "in hastening to identify with German culture, the Jews often viewed their own culture...as an impediment, as ill suited to the cognitive and axiological requirements of the modern world. The tradition and folkways of their ancestral faith were not infrequently regarded as un-modern, even embarrassingly anachronistic." But of course, after this short introduction to Rosenzweig’s view of Judaism, we are left with the question: How can
this radical idea be built into or be accepted as the traditional belief?

2, ROSENZEWIG’S VIEW OF CHRISTIANITY

According to Rosenzweig, Christianity has a different but unique relationship with God than Judaism does. The Christian God is expressed in the concept of the Father and the Son. The Christian God is the Jewish God, but while the Jewish God “is” the Father, the Christian God "is" the Son. Though the Christian God "is" also the Father, but not the Holy Spirit, Christianity is not directed toward the Father but rather toward the Son because Christians cannot address him directly but only indirectly, only through the Son. Thus, the Christian concept of God is twofold, embodied in the Father and the Son. Consequently, it is different from the Jewish concept of one God or from the Christian understanding of God as Trinity. However, in Rosenzweig’s view, Christian piety follows this didactic God in two ways as the two concepts describe the different attributes of God: One is the loving Son; the other is the stern Father. In Rosenzweig’s words: "The Father reserves God's remoteness, while the Son paganises God. God becomes man so that the pagans can enter the kingdom, making it possible to go to God according to the two attributes of God: love and sternness.” The Christian God is both Son and Father in one, only Christianity divided this into the two different persons of God. The Christian approaches God, the Son, with love and familiarity and God the Father can be approached only through God the Son. The Christian would not even dare to enter the presence of God, the Father in any way other than through the Son. Therefore, it is essential for the Christian that God became a man that provides the only possible way to reach God, the father. As Christians have no direct relationship with God, the father,
Christ, the Son, is the center of Christianity. Only at redemption, when the Son becomes one with the Father and Judaism becomes one with Christianity will "Christians" have the same direct relationship with God that Jews have now.

Further, it is Rosenzweig’s thought that unlike Judaism, Christianity, because of its indirect relation to God, the father, exists in time. It “cannot create its own time, and liberate itself from time, so it must master time while being in time. It does it by being based on an event which comes from beyond time and leads beyond time”13, that is, the incarnation of God in Christ. Because of this event, Christian time is divided into three parts: before the birth of Christ is the past, since the birth of Christ until his next coming is the great present and the future is the last judgment. The present is a single way, but "a way whose beginning and end lies beyond time, thus it is an eternal way."14 The Christian liturgical year is the mirror image of the eternal way: where Sunday is the festival of creation, Christmas, Easter and Lent are the revelation festivals. However, in Rosenzweig’s thought Christianity has no redemption festivals like Judaism, since it is not yet redeemed. Every point on this eternal way is a midpoint between the beginning and the end. The Christian is always between the beginning and the end, thus between departure and goal. "The beginning and the end are both equally near to him at every moment, for both are in the eternal, and it is only thereby that the Christian knows himself as a midpoint at every moment."15 This moment becomes the representative of eternity as a midpoint of the Christian world and time. This world then, for the Christian, consists of midpoints. The Christian is always on the way, though he presses toward the beginning, which is the Cross.

Additionally, Christianity has to spread itself in order to preserve itself. Because
of that, Christianity consists of people of very different nationalities. These different
Christian people, who live at the same time and believe in the same thing, are gathered
together at the midpoint of time united through belief and through fellowship that comes
out of the same love in Christ. The Christian belief is the testimony of Christ to bear
witness, which is the spreading of Christianity that happens through mission all the time,
until the whole world (except for the Jews) becomes Christian. Therefore, Christianity is
like an infinite line; it spreads out without limit.

Finally, in Rosenzweig’s thought, Christianity has a particular but very different
relation to redemption than Judaism. That is, Christianity is dependent on Judaism for
redemption. Without Judaism, Christianity could not be redeemed. Judaism gives the
"power" to Christianity to missionize the world, and bring forth redemption. When
Christianity missionizes the world, redemption for Christianity and for the whole world
can occur, including Judaism.16

Rosenzweig’s view of Christianity might not coincide with the Christian view,
nevertheless, in the words of Rosenzweig scholar Ronald Miller: "Until Rosenzweig,
Judaism’s most generous evaluation of Christianity was achieved through its use of the
Noahide covenant formulation.... This (Noahide) theology, though generous in one
respect, does not deal with Christianity in its uniqueness... It does not reach Rosenzweig's
recognition of the validity of God's covenantal action through Jesus and the consequent
status of Christianity as a true religion."17 Despite Rosenzweig’s positive evaluation of
Christianity, what does it mean to say that Christian and Jewish differences come from
their distinct relationships to redemption? Further, this raises the question of whether it is,
in fact, valid to accept an interpretation of Christianity from a Jewish point of view?
These two questions will drive my discussion in my third and final portion of this lecture.

3. THE COMMON GROUND OF JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY: THE DUAL COVENANT

As we can see, the concepts of Judaism and Christianity differ very much in Rosenzweig's thought, for example: Judaism is with God already because Jews have a direct relationship with God, while Christians do not. Jews are with God, while Christianity is going towards God continuously and subduing the world on His behalf, so that Christianity can achieve a direct relationship with God too. The task of the Jew is to be a Jew, so that he can give "light" to the Christian. The task of the Christian is to missionize. However, while both religions are needed for the redemption of the world, Rosenzweig says that there is an obstacle between them. That obstacle is the pride of the Jew, which is the enemy of the Christian. The Jew is proud because he has a unique relationship with God. But the problem is that this Jewish pride may bring forth hatred in the Christian. Because the Jew with his existence reminds Christianity that it is still on the way to achieve the goal of redemption. Because of that the Christian realizes the enemy in the Jew - in that the Jews persist whatever happens and with their existence they remind the Christian that they are on the way and that they have a duty to do, to missionize the pagans, not the Jews, out of the "light" that they receive from Judaism.

Nevertheless, despite all these differences, they have something in common that links them together according to Rosenzweig. That is, Judaism and Christianity labor at the same task of God, the redemption of the world for which both religions are needed: Judaism can bring the world to God only through Christianity and Christianity without
Judaism could not remain an effective force of redemption. To use Rosenzweig’s metaphor: God has bound Christianity and Judaism to each other and has given eternal life to the Jews through the "fire of the star" of God's truth in the heart of the Jew. In Rosenzweig’s own words: "The life of this people, alone, burns with a fire that feeds on itself."18 God gave the Christians the eternal way by making them the "rays of the star" of God's truth until the end of the world. The Jew turns toward himself to his interior, which is the truth of God, while the Christian looks outside himself. Consequently, the Jew, looking internally, sees the star but does not see the rays. Christianity receives "power" from the Jew in the form of the fire of the star, even while facing away from Judaism, while Christianity turns toward the outside world and missionize the "pagan" world with the rays. In other words, though, the Jew has the truth in himself because he is redeemed already, but he does not live in time. Therefore, he cannot redeem the world. However, the Christian lives in the world and in time, but turns his back to the truth of God. Therefore, the Christian may be led by the rays of that truth while simultaneously facing towards the outer world with his back to Judaism. In this way both religions have only a part of the truth, thus, the synthesis of these two religions is the truth and redemption can be achieved only in tandem.

To repeat, on the one hand, Judaism is dependant on Christianity not for its existence (because it can live alone), but because it is caught up between this world and the world to come. Namely, physically they are in this world and spiritually they are in the world to come (in the redeemed world). In order to be redeemed physically (that is to help the redemption of the world) Judaism needs Christianity to missionize the world and bring forth redemption.
On the other hand, Christianity is mutually dependent on Judaism for its own reason to exist and for achieving its goal of redemption. It stems from and is kept alive by Judaism: That is why "the core of Christianity is Jewish." Christianity needs Judaism because they are bound physically and spiritually to this world and do not live in redemption. For their redemption they need the redemption of the world first. They are capable of acting, because they live in the world, but they lack the spiritual direction for redeeming the world. They receive that from Judaism, which has the spiritual direction, because spiritually they are redeemed, but they lack the possibility of acting, because they do not live in the world physically. Thus, for its own development and existence, Christianity needs Judaism; otherwise Christianity would lose the way to God and redemption; and that is also why, in Rosenzweig’s view, Christianity should not convert the Jews. Christianity gave Judaism no protection from the Christian mission and the willingness to convert Jews. Rosenzweig "resented Christian conversionary efforts directed at Jews perhaps more than virtually all Jews do by instinct, because his own reversion to Judaism was instigated by his cousin Rosenstock's attempt to convert him." However, with the idea of the Jews living in eternity and as redemption while Christians do and are not, Rosenzweig saw Judaism as unavoidable and essential for Christianity's existence and for the redemption of the world.

To summarize, the importance of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity is that Judaism is dependent on Christianity for redemption, because Jews, in light of their direct relationship to God, live spiritually in this world. Though physically still present in the world, they need the redemption of the world so that their physical presence will come to an end, and they can live completely in their spiritual redemption.
If Judaism did not exist, Christianity could not survive since it would lack the direction for the way to redemption. If Christianity did not exist, Judaism would be caught up between its unredeemed physical existence in the world and its spiritual already redeemed existence outside the world. In other words, Judaism and Christianity are not only related but interdependent. They both need each other for finding their direction, doing their tasks, and fulfilling their theological aims of redemption. The covenant at Sinai and the covenant at Golgotha are both valid and true covenants in Rosenzweig’s view. In the words of Steven Schwartzschild, a Rosenzweig interpreter: "They are both true paths over which to reach God, one for the man born a Jew, the other path for all others... Judaism and Christianity posses equal validity."21 This "dialogical model of revelation in a pre-propositional or trans-propositional matrix does indeed allow for the possibility of more than one authentic expression of revealed truth."22 It is a dual covenant of Judaism and Christianity. With this symbiosis of Christianity and Judaism, in my view, Rosenzweig found a novel Jewish theological way of expressing the necessary existence of both religions in the same world (and society.) With this concept he formulated "a bridge to new possibilities of Jewish-Christian dialogue, for he takes us beyond the polemics of traditionalism versus liberalism with their respective rejection of either modernity or faith to a common ground which can encompass both."23 "Rosenzweig focused on the 'and'... he came to signify a healthy balance between covalent spiritual estates."24 Namely, for both the Christian and for the Jew it is essential to know that they are supposed to live and work together. Because this 'and' can be attained only if they are both a living reality.
CONCLUSION:

After all this analysis of esoteric existential theology of Rosenzweig, we should ask the question: So what? Why bother reading Rosenzweig? In my view we can look at his esoteric existential theological thinking to broaden horizons and examine new possibilities of thinking, that is, to help develop ‘new thinking.’

Contrary to Rosenzweig's theological interpretation, it is often held that at present a relationship is not needed anymore between Judaism and Christianity, only at a level of remembrance or acknowledgement of the origins. Judaism does not need Christianity because Jews deal primarily with themselves, with the maintenance of Judaism through procreation and observation: it is an introspective religion. Christianity does not need Judaism anymore since it is already "on the way," that is, it missionizes the world already. Thus they go on two different paths.

The only problem, in my view, is that history tells us that the lack of a closer relationship between Judaism and Christianity caused great catastrophes and disadvantages for the Jews physically, and for Christians, spiritually. Thus, it is not permissible that their relationship be restricted only to a remembrance of their common origins. In my view, there is a need for another kind of relationship between the two religions so that oppression of one religion by the other can be avoided and the persecution of each other on the basis of lack of knowledge, misjudgments and prejudice can be stopped. The question is then whether the encounter between these religions can be based on these common core values and on the concepts derived from these? Could another kind of relationship between Christianity and Judaism be focused on maybe derived from the concepts of Rosenzweig?
Namely: That Judaism and Christianity are to learn about their differences and to live with them. This is not a tolerance born simply out of respect for different beliefs, but rather recognition of the mutual dependence both religions have of each other in order to live in a society, or using Rosenzweig’s terms, to fulfill what God intends for each community, for Tikkun Olam and redemption. In other words "there are things Christianity does best as there are things Judaism does best. Judaism and Christianity need each other because they both have a goal that is beyond their personal agendas. As Rosenzweig puts it: They are both instruments of God"25 in the redemption and Tikkun Olam. Because "if God wanted Christianity to be in the world, Christianity has a role to play in the world, and Judaism has a different role."26 While they share similar values of communicating peace and justice.

However, to have good relations, in my view, "honest Christian-Jewish dialogue requires a certain thoughtfulness that moves beyond mere politeness and allows for honest disagreement, even alienation and feelings of estrangement."27 Just as "What Rosenzweig wanted by way of an understanding between the Jew and the Christian was a greater knowledge between the two."28 But one has to keep in mind that, in the words of Miller: "A Christian veneer of philosemitism and a Jewish sentimentality for all things Christian - these attitudes open no door of true dialogue."29 When we think theologically, what may be needed is to remember that "the dialogue is of listening to the other faith’s coming witness to God, and of accepting that testimony as valid evidence in its own right."30 Thus, it is important to keep in mind that there is a possibility and need for encounters, as well as the recognition of the covenant between Christianity and Judaism, as all in the family. In the same way that his theory points to the necessity of
maintaining Judaism within a Christian context in order for both religions to be able to live up to their theological goals to bring forth redemption and to live up to the ideal of a tolerant pluralistic society.
Masculine designation for God and humanity, to remain consistent with Rosenzweig's terminology, will be used throughout this paper.

For the Jew his Jewish essence brings a duty with it: the procreation of the Jews. Jews are the people made eternal by the combination of physical ties of blood, with the belief that this blood stream is indeed the "holy seed." [Rosenzweig thus unites the “ethnic” and the “religious” definitions of Jewish identity.]

Namely, the truth is to know God: and according to Rosenzweig Christianity and Judaism are only capable of that together.