

## **EJCR – Aims and Purpose**

The research and publication project EJCR presents an overview of Jewish-Christian interaction over the centuries up until today, and thus establish a standard reference work of interdisciplinary research on Jewish-Christian relations. It encompasses invited articles by international experts in the field of up to 200 topics focussing specifically on the aspect of Jewish-Christian relations. The contributions will not focus on a Jewish and Christian perspective on a topic respectively but rather highlight issues pertaining to the interaction of the traditions on a particular topic. In addition to presenting the current state of research, articles will also establish a basis for deepening and widening themes and opening up perspectives for future research on the relationship between these traditions in increasingly secular and religiously diverse societies.

Attempts at open conversations between Jews and Christians concerning their commonality and difference, including their self-understanding and identity have of course been initiated already in the 1920ies but the continuation, of these initiatives was, for obvious reasons, rendered impossible. Attempts at continuing the conversations where they were ruptured by the Shoah led to numerous encounter initiatives since the sixties. Jewish-Christian relations have matured over the decades since the Shoah. This provides the basis for moving the conversation forward, deepening it and enabling possibly a more critical engagement and reflection on questions raised by the encounter and during these conversations.

Jewish-Christian relations have a long history and did not start at the end of World War II. The EJCR will document and critically analyse and reflect on decisive aspects, themes, and periods in this regard. The encounters and relations were not always and exclusively hostile, although Christian disrespect and contempt of Jews overshadowed them to a vast and dominating extent. It is also the case that anti-Christian teachings have appeared through Jewish history, whether in response to persecution, in formal disputation, or in philosophical responses.

However, the view of Jews and Christians as implacable opponents battling for their version of truth, of Jews living as insular pariahs within a hostile world, the tale of persecution by the mighty of the weak, or what Salo Baron critiqued as the “lachrymose conception of Jewish history,” has given way in recent years to a much more nuanced understanding of areas of congruence, of cultural, economic, and social interchange. For a long time these interchanges between Jews and Christians were those of highly unequal participants, where an imbalance in terms of political and academic power had a decisive impact on the exchange. Nevertheless encounters and critical interactions did occur and a legacy of Jewish-Christian relations has been built.

The EJCR is thus a project which continues the tradition of interreligious relations within Judaism and Christianity by developing a comprehensive and fundamental scholarly/academic work which documents the current state of research and serves as the standard reference work for further research projects in the area of Jewish-Christian relations. As such the EJCR serves also as a contribution to establish Jewish-Christian relations as an area of research and studies in its own right.