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Describing the Church in Relation to Israel The Language of George Lindbeck and Ephesians 2–3

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IN HIS SEMINAL ESSAY, “The Church as Israel: Ecclesiology and Ecumenism,” George Lindbeck contends that a “non-supersessionist understanding of the church as Israel is undeniable.”¹ Many would consider this statement to be an oxymoron since identifying the church with Israel would seem to be a *sine qua non* of supersessionism. And yet, Lindbeck maintains that it is not only tenable to hold this theological position, it is *essential* if the church is to become fully the church, and Israel fully Israel.²

The aim of this study is threefold:³ First, to identify specific terms and concepts that Lindbeck uses to describe the church in relation to Israel. Second, to consider the language that Ephesians 2–3 uses and does not use to articulate this relationship. And third, drawing from both evaluations, I will then compare these models and offer some thoughts on the language of post-supersessionist ecclesiology.

1. Lindbeck, “Church as Israel,” 93.

2. “Seeing the church as Israel is a biblically mandated universal; it applies in the twenty-first century just as much as in the first” (Lindbeck, “Church as Israel,” 91).

3. This is a revised and updated version of a paper presented at the Theological Interpretation of Scripture Seminar on “Post-Supersessionist Readings of Ephesians 2,” annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, San Diego, 23 November 2019.

LINDBECK'S CHURCH-AS-ISRAEL THEOLOGY

Lindbeck wrote at least twelve essays in which he describes the church's relationship to Israel.⁴ He also addresses the matter in other writings and interviews published between 1965–2012.⁵ In the last two decades of his life, Lindbeck regarded his endeavor to develop a “church-as-Israel ecclesiology”⁶ as central to his work as an ecumenical theologian.⁷ His postliberal perspective has been discussed at length, and while many researchers have commented on Lindbeck's thesis that the church should “see itself once again in the mirror of Israel,”⁸ there are few studies that address in depth how he conceptualizes and articulates the exact nature of the relationship between the church and the Jewish people. A notable exception is Shaun Brown's 2021 monograph *George Lindbeck and the Israel of God*.⁹ In this section, I hope to build on Brown's work by discussing three aspects of Lindbeck's Israelology that represent defining elements of his post-supersessionist vision: (a) The church is part of Israel, not the whole of Israel; (b) supersessionism should be named, defined, and condemned; and (c) Messianic Jews are integral to the Israelhood identity of the church.

The Church Is Part of Israel, Not the Whole of Israel

When Lindbeck was an observer at the Second Vatican Council, he viewed the church and Israel as parallel communities. However, by the late 1980s he came to regard the church as intrinsic to Israel in the New Covenant age.¹⁰ To put it an-

4. Lindbeck, “Story-Shaped Church,” 161–78. Reprinted in *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, 39–52; Lindbeck, “Confession and Community,” 492–96. Reprinted as the opening chapter in Lindbeck, *Church in a Postliberal Age*, 1–9; Lindbeck, “Comparative Doctrine: Ecumenism and Narrative Ecclesiology”; Lindbeck, “Response to Michael Wyschogrod,” 205–10; Lindbeck, “Gospel's Uniqueness,” 423–50; Lindbeck, “Postmodern Hermeneutics and Jewish-Christian Dialogue,” 108–13; Lindbeck, “What of the Future?,” 357–66; Lindbeck, “Israel-like Church (or The Language of Community and Unity)”; Lindbeck, “Church as Israel and the Future of Ecumenism: Lecture One”; Lindbeck, “Church as Israel and the Ecumenism of the Future: Lecture Two”; Lindbeck, “Church as Israel,” 78–94; Lindbeck, “Paris, Rome, Jerusalem,” 389–408.

5. Lindbeck, “Protestant View of the Ecclesiological Status of the Roman Catholic Church,” 243–70; Lindbeck, “Jews, Renewal, and Ecumenism,” 471–73; Lindbeck, “Jewish Christian Dialogue,” 146–47; Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 11; Lindbeck, *Church in a Postliberal Age*, 1–9, 145–65, 196–252; Lindbeck, “Performing the Faith,” 28–35; Lindbeck, “Ecumenism and Recapturing the Jewish Roots of the Messianic People of God,” 119–20.

6. Lindbeck, “Performing the Faith,” 35.

7. Lindbeck, *Church in a Postliberal Age*, 200. See Radner, “Quiet, Modest Pioneer,” 22–23.

8. Lindbeck, “Church as Israel,” 94. Lindbeck, “Story-Shaped Church,” 50; Yip, “Text and World,” 12–14; Ochs, *Another Reformation*, 35–62; Lindsay, *Reading Auschwitz with Barth*, 53–61; Bradbury, *Perpetually Reforming*, 111–12; Kim, “Study of George A. Lindbeck's Ecclesiology and Its Ethical Implications,” 122–24; Ochs, “Being with George Lindbeck's Being-With,” 385; Kelsey, “Church Discourse and Public Realm,” 18.

9. Brown, *George Lindbeck and the Israel of God*.

10. “Lindbeck's work on church-Israel relations can be seen in two phases. The first phase, as seen

other way, for Lindbeck, Israel as a whole presently *includes* the church but is not limited to the church. As Lindbeck unpacks it, “*The church is Israel as a part, an enlargement, of the one and only Israel to which contemporary Jews, including non-Christian ones, also belong.*”¹¹

The use of this nuanced language—“*The church is Israel as a part, an enlargement, of the one and only Israel*”—is but one example of the various ways that Lindbeck describes the relationship between the church and Israel from an “antisupersessionist” perspective. Other examples of fine distinctions in his language include:

- “The church *shares* (rather than fulfills) the story of Israel.”¹²
- “The church *is also Israel.*”¹³
- “Israel subsumes the church, not *vice versa.*”¹⁴
- “The relation of Israel’s history to that of the church in the New Testament is not one of shadow to reality, or promise to fulfillment, or type to antitype. Rather, the kingdom already present in Christ alone is the antitype, and *both Israel and the church are types.*”¹⁵

Lindbeck also uses the term “expansion” to describe the inclusion of the church within the orbit of Israel.¹⁶ Notably, when Lindbeck makes ontological statements about the church-Israel relationship, such as “the church is Israel” or “the church as Israel,”¹⁷ he does not attenuate the claim but includes within the wider context a critique of replacement theology.

in a few pieces while he was an observer at the Second Vatican Council, interprets the church and Israel in parallel. His second phase, from the late 1980s–early 2000s, can be divided into two sub-phases. Lindbeck begins by discussing the church as ‘Israel-like.’ While he continues to use this terminology, he comes to augment his position slightly. He says, “‘Seeing the church as Israel’ is better because it suggests that there is a sense in which it really is Israel and not merely similar” (Brown, *George Lindbeck and the Israel of God*, 5; quote from Lindbeck, “Performing the Faith,” 29).

11. Lindbeck, “Performing the Faith,” 29–30; emphasis added. Cf. Peterson, *Who Is the Church?* 105, 117n35: “At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit gives the church a distinctive identity and calling within Israel as a part of God’s people.”

12. Lindbeck, “Story-Shaped Church,” 43; emphasis added.

13. Lindbeck, “What of the Future?,” 362; emphasis added.

14. Lindbeck, “Response to Michael Wyschogrod,” 207.

15. Lindbeck, “Story-Shaped Church,” 166; emphasis added. Cf. Lindbeck, “Gospel’s Uniqueness,” 436; Lindbeck, *Church in a Postliberal Age*, 238–39.

16. Lindbeck, “Gospel’s Uniqueness,” 436–37; Lindbeck, *Church in a Postliberal Age*, 238–40. James Buckley uses “extension” to describe Lindbeck’s view: “Lindbeck argues that the Church does not ‘replace’ Israel but ‘extends’ Israel from a Jewish community to a community of Jews and Gentiles” (Buckley, “Editor’s Introduction,” in Lindbeck, *Church in a Postliberal Age*, 225; cf. xiii).

17. Lindbeck, “Performing the Faith,” 29. Cf. Lindbeck, “Church as Israel,” 93; Lindbeck, *Church in a Postliberal Age*, 162. Note the subheading “The Nature of the Church as Israel” in Lindbeck, “Church as Israel,” 80. In 1995, he suggested that “one speaks of the church *as* Israel, but does not say that it *is* Israel” in light of the Romans 11 olive tree analogy (Lindbeck, “Response to Michael Wyschogrod,” 206).

Supersessionism Should Be Named, Defined, and Condemned

While it has become increasingly common for theologians to call into question the use of the term “supersessionism,”¹⁸ Lindbeck uses the term frequently and unsparingly. He defines supersessionism as “the belief that the church replaces Israel”¹⁹ and describes its economic, punitive, and structural scope.²⁰ The key misstep with classic forms of supersessionism, according to Lindbeck, is not the church’s appropriation of Israelhood identity but its *expropriation* of Jewish election and covenantal inheritance, since in his view “the covenant with the Jews has not been revoked.”²¹ In a nutshell, supersessionism is thinking of the Jewish people as the “once-but-no-longer chosen folk.”²²

Lindbeck identifies his own position as not only “non-supersessionist” but “anti-supersessionist.” In using this label, he signals that he is not a neutral party. He actively opposes replacement theology and condemns it in the strongest terms. Lindbeck demonstrates in his writing that he takes seriously the legacy of Christian antisemitism and describes how the church’s adoption of a supersessionist narrative has led to crusades, pogroms, and other acts of violence and discrimination against the Jewish people that paved the way to the Shoah.²³

Lindbeck also takes to task the many ways that supersessionism has generated anti-Jewish interpretations of Scripture, such as Rupert of Deutz’s medieval hermeneutical rule, which Ephraim Radner paraphrases as: “all good things in the [biblical] texts . . . should be referred to Jesus Christ and his Church, while all bad elements . . . should be referred to the Jews and to human sin in general.”²⁴ In light of this

18. E.g., Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 2:784, 806, 1413, 1448. Contra Willitts, “Jewish Fish,” 3.

19. Lindbeck, “What of the Future?,” 358. “Supersessionism’ is differently defined nowadays, and there are clearly different kinds of it. But in this essay ‘supersessionism’ means the presumption or claim that Christianity replaces the Jewish people as God’s elect people.” (Buckley, “Editor’s Introduction,” in Lindbeck, *Church in a Postliberal Age*, 224–25).

20. For definitions of economic, punitive and structural supersessionism, see Soulen, *God of Israel and Christian Theology*, 28–33.

21. Lindbeck, “What of the Future?,” 358–60, 365; Lindbeck, “Church as Israel,” 94.

22. Lindbeck, “Response to Michael Wyschogrod,” 208.

23. “Supersessionist beliefs that Christians alone are now the true Israel, the chosen people, because God has rejected the Jews, once pervaded Western culture and must be counted among the historical sources of the anti-Semitism that made Auschwitz and comparable crimes possible” (Lindbeck, “Church as Israel,” 78–79). Cf. Lindbeck, “Paris, Rome, Jerusalem,” 406. See also Lindbeck, “What of the Future?,” 362. Lindbeck notes that “church-as-Israel discourse has almost always been anti-Jewish” (“Church as Israel and the Future of Ecumenism,” 1).

24. Rupert of Deutz, *Patrologia Latina* 167:1379 as paraphrased by Radner, *End of the Church*, 292n30. See Lindbeck, “Church as Israel,” 91; Lindbeck, “Performing the Faith,” 30; Lindbeck, “Story-Shaped Church,” 47; Lindbeck, *Church in a Postliberal Age*, 210–11.

well-documented reception history, Lindbeck concludes that eliminating replacement theology “severs the taproot of Christian anti-Judaism.”²⁵

Messianic Jews Are Integral to the Israelhood Identity of the Church

Lindbeck’s vision of the church as an expansion of Israel dovetails with his view that Jesus’s first followers were all Torah-observant Jews who saw themselves as living out Israel’s story.²⁶ Lindbeck maintains in his 2003 essay “The Church as Israel,” that while Jesus-believing Jews through the centuries were forced by the Church to leave behind their Jewishness, it is nonetheless essential to have a Torah-observant Jewish presence within the church if the church is truly part of Israel:

As they became the great majority, gentile Christians increasingly looked askance at the continued Torah observance of their Jewish fellow believers. Ultimately the few Jews within the church were canonically compelled to be non-practicing, that is, assimilated and in effect deprived of their Jewish identity. *Completely forgotten was the need for Torah-observant Jewish participation in the church if it is to be truly Israel in the new age.* Instead it was affirmed by universal practice, even if not always in theological theory, that the church can be Israel without Jews, and from there it is but a short step to the supersessionist absurdity of condemning Christian Jews for Torah-observance, that is, for worshipping God as did Jesus and the apostles.²⁷

While Lindbeck did not work out a fully developed ecclesial theology of what welcoming Messianic Jews would look like in a twenty-first century context, he envisioned Torah-observant Jewish followers of Jesus serving as the bridge between Israel and its eschatologically expanded commonwealth.²⁸

25. Lindbeck, “What of the Future?” 358. For a discussion of various kinds of “replacement theology,” see Lindbeck, “What of the Future?” 361–64; Lindbeck, “Church as Israel,” 84–86.

26. Lindbeck, *Church in a Postliberal Age*, 149; Lindbeck, “Church as Israel,” 82–83. See Lindbeck, “Story-Shaped Church,” 45–46.

27. Lindbeck, “Church as Israel,” 83–84; emphasis added. “Early on, Christianity was thought of as such a complete replacement of Judaism that, more or less simultaneously with the expulsion of Jesus-believing Jews from the synagogue, Jews as well as Gentiles who were Christians were forbidden by the ‘great church’ (as it has come to be called) to engage in distinctively Jewish practices. Jewish Christians thus lost their group identity and became indistinguishable from their Gentile fellow believers. That the first Christians had remained Torah-observant was explained away, in a blatant instance of Gentile special pleading, as a temporal permission that had been rescinded” (Lindbeck, “What of the Future?” 359). Cf. Lindbeck, “Church as Israel and the Future of Ecumenism,” 4; Rudolph, “Paul’s ‘Rule in All the Churches,’” 1–23; Rudolph, “Paul and the Food Laws,” 151–81.

28. “Israel’s Messiah, Jesus the Christ, has made it possible for gentiles while remaining gentiles to become citizens of the enlarged commonwealth of Israel (Eph. 2:12). In that portion of the elect people which is the church, *Jew and Gentile are reconciled in Christ but without, as far as the New Testament is concerned, losing their respective identities.* . . . You will further observe that on this view the chosen people, the whole of Israel, includes non-Christian Jews as well as gentile *and Jewish Christians*” (Lindbeck, “Response to Michael Wyschogrod,” 206; emphasis added). See also Lindbeck,

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When Lindbeck presents biblical support for his non-supersessionist church-as-Israel view, there are three New Testament texts that he refers to more than any other: 1 Corinthians 10, Romans 9–11, and Ephesians 2–3.²⁹ In this section, I will focus on Ephesians 2–3 and highlight how the writer describes the relationship between the church and the Jewish people.

The lack of Coterminous Language

Ekklēsia occurs nine times in Ephesians (1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32) and *Israēl* once (2:12). The two words do not appear in the same chapter and *there is no instance in the letter where ekklēsia or a comparable term (e.g., “the body of Christ”)*³⁰ *is explicitly identified as coterminous with Israēl.*³¹ What we find instead in Ephesians 2–3 is vocabulary and syntax that steers clear of this potential misunderstanding. As an example, consider the restrained language in Eph 2:12:

Remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from *the commonwealth [politeia] of Israel*, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. (NRSV)

The author could have written “being aliens *from Israel*,” but instead he includes the term *politeia*, which interjects enough ambiguity into the verse to prompt the question: “Is there a difference between being part of the commonwealth of Israel and being a member of Israel?”

The restrained language in Eph 2:12, and in the wider context of chapters 2–3, may be an indication of the writer’s perceived need to distinguish between genealogical Israel and the Jew-gentile *ekklēsia*. This would be consistent with the use of *Israēl* throughout the New Testament. Of the seventy-seven times that the term *Israēl* (or *Israēlītai*) appears in the apostolic writings, seventy-six times it contextually refers to the Jewish people.³² Setting aside N. T. Wright’s strained interpretation of Rom

“Ecumenism and Recapturing the Jewish Roots of the Messianic People of God,” 120; George Lindbeck, personal correspondence with David Rudolph, 16 March 2005, 1–5; Rudolph, “Messianic Jews and Christian Theology,” 58–84; Rudolph, *Jew to the Jews*, 33–34.

29. See Lindbeck, “Ecumenical Directions and Confessional Construals,” 123.

30. Eph 4:12; cf. 1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4, 12, 16; 5:23, 29, 30.

31. “Whereas Paul in Romans enumerates the advantages of the Jews, the analogous list in Eph 2:12 presents this indirectly as the privileges that the gentiles did not have. And yet the gentile Christians though closely related to Israel are not quite completely identified with Israel” (Campbell, “Unity and Diversity in the Church,” 133).

32. See Harvey, “Israel in Early Christian Literature,” 225–56; Tomson, “Names Israel and Jew in Ancient Judaism and in the New Testament: I,” 120–40; Tomson, “Names Israel and Jew in Ancient Judaism and in the New Testament: II,” 266–89. Cf. Staples, *Idea of Israel in Second Temple Judaism*, 339–48.

11:26, which argues for the expropriation of Jewish covenantal inheritance,³³ there is only one instance where the meaning of Israel is in doubt: Gal 6:16. However, it is also not clear from this text that by *Israēl* Paul means the church. First of all, it might be another example of restrained language since Paul does not write simply *Israēl* but *Israēl tou theou* (“Israel of God”). In other words, the nuance might be similar to Eph 2:12 in context—a reference to Israel proper (without expropriation) and its eschatologically extended commonwealth.³⁴ Alternatively, Paul might be referring to *kol Yisrael* (“all Israel”), the faithful Jewish remnant, or a sub-group of Jewish Christ followers from Jerusalem as Ralph Korner argues.³⁵

Another possible reason for the restrained language in Eph 2–3 is that the implied author was aware of supersessionism creeping into the church—a reality that Paul points to in Rom 11:1–2 when he sets the record straight about God’s covenant faithfulness to the Jewish people, “I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.” That a concern for gentile Christian triumphalism was warranted by the time that Ephesians was written is evidenced by Justin Martyr’s description of the church as the “true Israel” only decades later.³⁶ The writer of Ephesians may have wanted to close the door to this incipient replacement theology by avoiding coterminous language.

The Presence of Dyadic Language

In Ephesians 2–3, there are at least two ways that the writer highlights the continuation of Jewish and gentile identity in the Israel-related *ekklēsia*.³⁷ One is by using “the second

33. “He [Paul] has systematically transferred the privileges and attributes of ‘Israel’ to the Messiah and his people” (Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 250). Cf. Wright, *Letter to the Romans*, 2:1246–52. For a critique of Wright’s interpretation of Rom 11:26 and his expropriation framework, see Rudolph’s Messianic Jewish response essay in *God’s Israel and the Israel of God*; Kaminsky and Reasoner, “Meaning and Telos of Israel’s Election,” 421–46; Kaminsky and Reasoner, “In Quest of a Coherent Portrait of Paul,” 513–27; Korner, *Origin and Meaning of “Ekklēsia” in the Early Jesus Movement*, 229–34; Vanlaningham, “Evaluation of N. T. Wright’s View of Israel in Romans 11,” 179–93; Das, *Solving the Romans Debate*, 236–45; Harink, *Paul among the Postliberals*, 151–207; Chan, *Liturgical Theology*, 24–27; Campbell, “Paul, Antisemitism, and Early Christian Identity Formation,” 319, 331, 338; Givens, *We the People*, 398–99; Rudolph, “Zionism in Pauline Literature,” 168–71, 177, 190–91; Fredriksen, *Review of Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 387–91; Tatum, “Law and Covenant in *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*,” 318–19; Hurtado, *Review of Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 361–65.

34. McDermott, *Israel Matters*, 26–28.

35. Korner, *Origin and Meaning of “Ekklēsia” in the Early Jesus Movement*, 221–29; Eastman, “Israel and the Mercy of God,” 367–95; Betz, *Galatians*, 323; Davies, “Paul and the People of Israel,” 4–39, esp. 10; Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church*, 82–83.

36. Justin, *Dial.* 125, 135. “The word ‘Israel’ is applied to the Christian Church for the first time by Justin Martyr c. a.d. 160” (Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church*, 1). Cf. Barn. 4:7; 14:5. See Kok, “True Covenant People,” 81–97.

37. For a response to third race interpretations of Ephesians 2, see Rillera, “Tertium Genus or Dyadic Unity?,” 31–51. See also Rudolph, “Toward Paul’s Ephesians 2 Vision of the One New Man,”

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person plural pronoun and verb as a way of identifying *Gentiles* in contrast to Jews (Eph 2:11, 12, 13, 17, 19; see also 3:1).³⁸ He also uses the first person plural and *amphoterōi* (“both”) to refer to Jews and gentiles in Messiah who remain Jews and gentiles:

- “. . . and might reconcile *both groups* to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it” (Eph 2:16)
- “. . . for through him *both of us* have access in one Spirit to the Father” (Eph 2:18)³⁹

Adding grist to the mill, the verb in Eph 2:18 is present tense, indicating that *both* (*amphoterōi*) Messianic Jews and gentile believers continue in their respective identities in this new corporate body associated with Israel.

A second way that the writer highlights the dyadic nature of the Israel-affiliated *ekklēsia* is by using *sun-/sum-* prefixes in Eph 2:19–22, which can be translated as “fellow-,” “together with” or “co-.” Lionel Windsor explains the significance of these prefixes in communicating a non-supersessionist understanding of the relationship between gentile believers and Israel:

As several interpreters have observed, the use of three *syn*-compounds indicates a salvation-historical unity-in-diversity. Gentile believers are “fellow-citizens (*συμπολίται*) of the saints” (v. 19), every construction is “being joined together” (*συναρμολογουμένη*, v. 21), and the gentiles are being “built together” (*συνοικοδομείσθε*) into God’s dwelling (v. 22). This emphasis on togetherness does not imply that the gentiles have *become* Israel; rather it is a claim that they have become equal sharers *with* Israel in God’s blessings. There is a parallel here with vv. 5–6, in which three *syn*-compounds are used to describe believers’ relationship to Christ. Believers have been “made alive together” (*συνεζωοποίησεν*) with Christ, “raised together” (*συνήγειρεν*) with Christ, and “seated together” (*συνεκάθισεν*) with Christ (vv. 5–6). While this claim that believers share in the status of the risen Christ is of course remarkable, it is not meant to imply that believers have *become* Christ. Similarly, vv. 19–22 asserts that the gentile believers share in the benefits of Israel. While this too is a remarkable claim, it does not imply that the believers have *become* Israel. In the words of Paula Fredriksen, gentile Christ-believers can be understood as “ex-pagan pagans.”⁴⁰ In one sense, they are no longer “gentiles,” because they have been transformed into being God’s people alongside Israel (cf. 4:17); yet in another sense they have a distinct “gentile” identity, albeit one that has been fully transformed in Christ (cf. 3:1, 6).⁴¹

3–11; Yee, *Jews, Gentiles, and Ethnic Reconciliation*, 166.

38. Kinzer, *Searching Her Own Mystery*, 67. Cf. Fowl, “Post Supersessionist Reading of Ephesians 2,” 1–11.

39. Cf. Eph 2:14.

40. Fredriksen, “Why Should a ‘Law-Free’ Mission Mean a ‘Law-Free’ Apostle?” 637–50.

41. Windsor, *Reading Ephesians and Colossians after Supersessionism*, 150–51. Cf. Hoch, “Significance of the *Syn*-Compounds for Jew-Gentile Relationships,” 175–83; Thiessen, “Construction of

The *sun-/sum-* prefixes also occur in Eph 3:6, along with *sus-*, to describe gentile followers of the Messiah who join Israel's commonwealth as gentiles. Mark Kinzer translates 3:6 as "the gentiles have become *co-heirs, co-members-of-the-body*, and *co-sharers* of the promise in Messiah Jesus through the good news."⁴² In this passage, as well as in Eph 2:19, 21 and 22, the *co-* prefix points back to the antecedent, Israel. In other words, the *co-* prefix clarifies that gentile believers are closely related to Israel without replacing Israel.

It is important to point out that the author of Ephesians did not have to use these prefixes. He could have written that gentile believers become citizens, heirs, members-of-the-body and recipients of the promise in Messiah Jesus. However, he wanted to emphasize that all of these blessings are realized in association with the Jewish people. To put it another way, as Lionel Windsor nicely states it, "they were once gentiles *contra* Israel; now they are gentiles *blessed alongside* Israel."⁴³

EVALUATING LINDBECK'S MODEL IN LIGHT OF EPHESIANS 2–3

The dyadic language in Ephesians 2–3 is consistent with Lindbeck's anti-supersessionist understanding of the relationship between the church and Israel. It is not surprising, therefore, that Lindbeck emphasizes the importance of the *co-* prefixes in stressing that the church is not a third entity but an expansion of the commonwealth of Israel:

The uncircumcised, "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel," have become "*fellow* citizens of the household of God," "*fellow* heirs, *fellow* members of the body, *fellow* partakers of the promise" (Eph. 2:11, 19; 3:16). . . . The inclusion through Christ of the circumcised in the one eternal covenant constituted, for the early Christians, not the formation of a new people but the *enlargement of the old*.⁴⁴

At the same time, Lindbeck seems to go beyond the writer of Ephesians when he uses coterminous language like "the church is Israel" or "the church as Israel." As noted above, the author of Ephesians stops short of making this kind of statement in 2:12, probably because he considered it wide of the mark and something that would have fueled an expropriation theology. Even if Lindbeck's point is ontological or intended to help gentile Christians see themselves within Israel's story, the same potential exists

Gentiles in the Letter to the Ephesians," 13–25; Windsor, "Plural Constructions and Post-Supersessionist Possibilities in Ephesians 2:19–22," 1–17.

42. Kinzer, *Searching Her Own Mystery*, 80.

43. Windsor, *Reading Ephesians and Colossians after Supersessionism*, 226.

44. Lindbeck, "Story-Shaped Church," 45; emphasis added. See also Lindbeck, *Church in a Postliberal Age*, 151, 238; Lindbeck, "Response to Michael Wyschogrod," 206; Lindbeck, "Scripture, Consensus, and Community," 75–76.

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today for misunderstanding. Lindbeck was aware of the drawbacks of using coterminous language and thus regularly had to qualify his statements with more precise terms.

Despite the coterminous language, Lindbeck's Israelology makes an important contribution to theological interpretation of Scripture. For those who regard the church *as* Israel and embrace an expropriation narrative, Lindbeck's focus on Romans 9–11 and his identification of supersessionism as the *fons et origo* of Christian anti-Judaism warrants serious consideration.

For those who see the church as Israel but reject replacement theology, and do not know how to reconcile these two positions, Lindbeck's enlarged Israel ecclesiology is a way forward that resolves a number of critical questions.

Finally, for those who view Israel and the church as distinct-but-related entities, Lindbeck has contributed an array of nuanced terms that can be drawn on to describe a dyadic relationship between the two.⁴⁵ These terms are comparable to *politeia*, *amphoterai*, and the co-prefixes in Ephesians 2–3.

EXCURSUS: LANGUAGE OF POST-SUPERSESSIONIST ECCLESIOLOGY

Post-supersessionist scholars have coined various terms and expressions to describe the church's relationship to Israel in light of Ephesians 2–3. Below, arranged by scholar alphabetically, are a number of ways this nexus has been articulated in addition to proposed language that may prove helpful to theologians who want to build on Lindbeck's work.

45. Cf. Rudolph, "Toward Paul's Ephesians 2 Vision of the One New Man," 3–11.

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| Markus Barth ⁴⁶ | Accepted in the inheritance of Israel ⁴⁷ Intimate connection with Israel ⁴⁸ Belong together with Israel ⁴⁹ Linked to Israel (in Christ) ⁵⁰ Built together with Israel ⁵¹ Brotherhood with Israel ⁵² Communion with Israel ⁵³ Solidarity with Israel ⁵⁴ Together with Israel ⁵⁵ Joined to Israel ⁵⁶ |
| William Campbell | Israelite-related identity . . . never identified as co-Israelites ⁵⁷ Sharing as gentiles . . . in the promises of Israel ⁵⁸ Share in the Israelite inheritance ⁵⁹ Brought near—not into—Israel ⁶⁰ Co-heirs <i>as gentiles</i> with Israel ⁶¹ Fellow-citizens with Israelites ⁶² Joint Association with Israel ⁶³ Joint heirs with Israelites ⁶⁴ |
| Stephen Fowl | Tied to Israel ⁶⁵ |
| Justin Hardin | Along with Israel ⁶⁶ |

46. For a discussion of Barth's interpretation of Eph 2:11–22, see Rader, *Church and Racial Hostility*, 222–34.

47. Barth, *Israel and the Church*, 112.

48. Barth, *Israel and the Church*, 83.

49. Barth, *Israel and the Church*, 82.

50. Barth, *Israel and the Church*, 82.

51. Barth, *Israel and the Church*, 103.

52. Barth, *Israel and the Church*, 104.

53. Barth, *Ephesians 1–3*, 337; Barth, *Israel and the Church*, 100.

54. Barth, *Israel and the Church*, 101, 107, 112.

55. Barth, *Ephesians 1–3*, 337; Barth, *Israel and the Church*, 92, 98.

56. Barth, *Broken Wall*, 120.

57. Campbell, "Unity and Diversity in the Church," 144.

58. Campbell, "You Who Once Were Far Off Have Been Brought Near," 33–34.

59. Campbell, "You Who Once Were Far Off Have Been Brought Near," 41.

60. Campbell, "You Who Once Were Far Off Have Been Brought Near," 41.

61. Campbell, "Unity and Diversity in the Church," 144.

62. Campbell, "Unity and Diversity in the Church," 129.

63. Campbell, "You Who Once Were Far Off Have Been Brought Near," 40.

64. Campbell, "You Who Once Were Far Off Have Been Brought Near," 39.

65. Fowl, *Ephesians*, 101.

66. Hardin, "Equality in the Church," 229.

Covenant and the People of God

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| Mark Kinzer | Extend Israel's holy social-and-political-order (i.e., <i>politeia</i>) ⁶⁷ Expanded and transformed commonwealth of Israel ⁶⁸ Eschatologically expanded and transformed Israel ⁶⁹ Eschatologically reconfigured "catholic" Israel ⁷⁰ Expanded and transformed <i>politeia</i> of Israel ⁷¹ Israel's eschatological expansion ⁷² Prolepsis of eschatological Israel ⁷³ Catholicization of Israel ⁷⁴ Bilateral ecclesiology ⁷⁵ United with Israel ⁷⁶ |
| Ralph Korner | <i>Ekklesia</i> ⁷⁷ |
| George Lindbeck | Expands Israel to embrace gentile believers ⁷⁸ An enlargement, of the one and only Israel ⁷⁹ Israel subsumes the church, not vice versa ⁸⁰ Added to Israel through Jesus ⁸¹ Along with Israel ⁸² Israelhood ⁸³ Israel-like ⁸⁴ |

67. Kinzer, *Searching Her Own Mystery*, 79.

68. Kinzer, *Searching Her Own Mystery*, 77.

69. Kinzer, *Searching Her Own Mystery*, 79.

70. Kinzer, *Searching Her Own Mystery*, 82.

71. Kinzer, *Searching Her Own Mystery*, 79.

72. Kinzer, *Searching Her Own Mystery*, 73.

73. Kinzer, *Searching Her Own Mystery*, 81.

74. Kinzer, *Searching Her Own Mystery*, 81.

75. Kinzer, *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism*, 165.

76. Kinzer, *Searching Her Own Mystery*, 77.

77. "If Gentiles could not collectively assume the designation 'Israel,' but yet, through faith in the Jewish *Christos*, could share in historic Israel's covenantal benefits, then Paul's designation of his multi-ethnic communities as *ekklēsiai* provided them with an inherently Jewish collective identity other than 'Israel' by which he could institutionally integrate Gentiles qua Gentiles into theological continuity with Torah observant Jews qua Jews (i.e., Gentiles become part of the *qahal*, even though they are not part of the [ethnic] 'am)" (Korner, "A Response to Erich Gruen," 127–28). Cf. Korner, "Some Implications for Paul's Socio-Religious Location," 63–64, 71–74; Korner, *Origin and Meaning of "Ekklesia" in the Early Jesus Movement*, 233–58.

78. Lindbeck, "Gospel's Uniqueness," 437; Lindbeck, *Church in a Postliberal Age*, 240.

79. Lindbeck, "Performing the Faith," 30.

80. Lindbeck, "Response to Michael Wyschogrod," 207.

81. Lindbeck, "Gospel's Uniqueness," 441; Lindbeck, *Church in a Postliberal Age*, 244.

82. Lindbeck, "What of the Future?," 363.

83. Lindbeck, "What of the Future?," 359–60.

84. Lindbeck, "Performing the Faith," 29.

Describing the Church in Relation to Israel—RUDOLPH

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Gerald McDermott | All those <i>in or associated with</i> Israel ⁸⁵ Associates of Israel ⁸⁶ Associate members ⁸⁷ |
| Ephraim Radner | Divinely accountable connection to Israel ⁸⁸ |
| Andrew Rillera | Dyadic sociopolitical reality ⁸⁹ Dyadic community ⁹⁰ Dyadic association ⁹¹ Dyadic entity ⁹² Dyadic union ⁹³ Dyadic unity ⁹⁴ Dyadic body ⁹⁵ The dyad ⁹⁶ |
| David Rudolph | The church is a prolepsis of Israel and the nations in the eschaton ⁹⁷ Israel's commonwealth of nations ⁹⁸ Israel's commonwealth ⁹⁹ <i>Politeia</i> of Israel ¹⁰⁰ |
| Thomas Torrance | Union of the Christian Church in Christ with Israel ¹⁰¹ Incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel ¹⁰² Fellow-citizens with God's people ¹⁰³ Incorporated into Israel ¹⁰⁴ |
| J. Brian Tucker | Co-citizens of the "commonwealth of Israel," without becoming Israel ¹⁰⁵ |

85. McDermott, *Israel Matters*, 5.
 86. McDermott, *Israel Matters*, 6.
 87. McDermott, *Israel Matters*, 5, 27.
 88. Radner, *Church*, 134.
 89. Rillera, "Tertium Genus or Dyadic Unity?," 35.
 90. Rillera, "Tertium Genus or Dyadic Unity?," 49.
 91. Rillera, "Tertium Genus or Dyadic Unity?," 41.
 92. Rillera, "Tertium Genus or Dyadic Unity?," 33.
 93. Rillera, "Tertium Genus or Dyadic Unity?," 38–40, 42, 51.
 94. Rillera, "Tertium Genus or Dyadic Unity?," 31, 50–51.
 95. Rillera, "Tertium Genus or Dyadic Unity?," 39.
 96. Rillera, "Tertium Genus or Dyadic Unity?," 39, 51.
 97. Rudolph, "Paul's 'Rule in All the Churches,'" 15.
 98. Rudolph, "Commonwealth Model," 10, 17, 19.
 99. Rudolph, "Relationship between the Church and Israel (Eph 2:12)," 4.
 100. Rudolph, "Relationship between the Church and Israel (Eph 2:12)," 4.
 101. Torrance, "Appendix A (2)," 142.
 102. Torrance, "Appendix A (2)," 143.
 103. Torrance, "Appendix A (2)," 91.
 104. Torrance, "Appendix A (2)," 90.
 105. Tucker, "Continuation of Gentile Identity in Ephesians," 10–11.

Covenant and the People of God

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| Lionel Windsor | Equal sharers <i>with</i> Israel in God's blessings ¹⁰⁶ Reconciled alongside Israel. ¹⁰⁷ Blessed alongside Israel ¹⁰⁸ |
| David Woods | Fellow citizenship with Israel—yet without becoming Jews ¹⁰⁹ Incorporated into the citizenship of Israel ¹¹⁰ Identifies . . . with Israel, not as Israel ¹¹¹ “Added” to the household of Israel ¹¹² Joined to (or added to) Israel ¹¹³ |

A concise way to describe the church-Israel relationship (after clarifying that the church does not expropriate Jewish election and covenantal inheritance) would be to refer to the church as an *extension of Israel*.¹¹⁴ Below are expressions that describe the interconnection in a way that preserves the sense of a center and a periphery while also identifying the trajectory of the extension as being toward the nations.

| | |
|---------------|--|
| David Rudolph | Multinational extension of Israel (<i>or</i> Israel proper) ¹¹⁵ International extension of Israel Eschatological extension of Israel Gentile extension of Israel “Extension” can be replaced with the word “expansion,” “enlargement” or “commonwealth.” |
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106. Windsor, *Reading Ephesians and Colossians after Supersessionism*, 150.

107. Windsor, *Reading Ephesians and Colossians after Supersessionism*, 129.

108. Windsor, *Reading Ephesians and Colossians after Supersessionism*, 121.

109. Woods, “Jew-Gentile Distinction in the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15,” 108.

110. Woods, “Jew-Gentile Distinction in the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15,” 118.

111. Woods, “Jew-Gentile Distinction in the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15,” 127.

112. Woods, “Jew-Gentile Distinction in the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15,” 118.

113. Woods, “Jew-Gentile Distinction in the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15,” 98.

114. “Elsewhere, Kinzer described the Gentile component of the church as ‘a *multinational extension of the people of Israel*’ (2005:15, emphasis original). This is apt wording to express the non-supersessionist perspective, because (i) an extension is not a replacement, and (ii) an extension depends on that which it extends for support—it cannot function independently. As Paul expressed it, ‘you do not support the root, but the root supports you’ (Rom 11:18)” (Woods, “Jew-Gentile Distinction in the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15,” 119).

115. Rudolph, “Relationship between the Church and Israel (Eph 2:12),” 4.

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