

CENTRO PRO UNIONE

A publication about the activities of the Centro Pro Unione

"UT OMNES UNUM SINT"



Digital Edition ISSN ▶ 2532-4144

N. 97 - Spring 2020 ▶ E-book

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Centro Pro Unione

A Ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement



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Centro Pro Unione Bulletin

A semi-annual publication about the activities of the Centro Pro Unione

The Centro Pro Unione in Rome, founded and directed by the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, - www.atonementfriars.org - is an ecumenical research and action center.

Its purpose is to give space for dialogue, to be a place for study, research and formation in ecumenism: theological, pastoral, social and spiritual.

The Bulletin has been published since 1968 and is released in Spring and Fall.

Spring 2020, n. 97 / Digital Edition (Web)

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Letter from the Director

Well this Spring was filled with surprises not the least was the COVID 19 attack. In spite of the grave situation we are able to put together this issue of the *Bulletin – Centro Pro Unione* with what we hope are some interesting topics.

Since Pope Francis has been attempting to implement a more synodical form of government for the Catholic church, we thought it important to take a look at the theological and canonical issues involved in activating this ancient form of ecclesiology for the Latin Catholic church. We invited an outstanding canonist and member of the faculty of Canon Law at the Antonianum University, Francisco José Regordán Barbero, ofm, to introduce us to the principal issues concerning synodality. His conference, “Consideraciones Generales sobre la Sinodalidad: *Una cum capite suo*” allows a more comprehensive and technical understanding of the issues concerning the practice of synodality on the various levels: local, regional and universal.

As has been a long standing custom at the Centro, we jointly celebrated with the Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with a lecture and an ecumenical prayer vigil. This year Bishop Brian Farrell, lc, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity laid out for us the ecumenism of Pope Francis. He contrasted the present Pope’s approach with that of his predecessors and at the same time explained the pastoral principles that animate Francis’ approach which is a very personal one of meeting the other so as to breakdown barriers of fear and prejudices that have far too often colored our relationships.

The third lecture that we present here is one of high interest for Jewish-Christian inter-religious studies. The conference “True Religion. Maimonides’ Legacy and Inter-religious Theology” given by Prof. Menachem Lorberbaum from Tel Aviv University and senior fellow of the Hartman Institute. His lecture places the focus on the issue of idolatry as opposed to that of truth in the practice of religion. Prof. Lorberbaum offers the contribution of the Medieval Jewish theologian, Maimonides as he explores where some of the current problems of inter-religious relations is going today thereby showing the relevance of Maimonides today’.

The Centro’s Spring lecture series was to include the following lectures: *Pio X: Riformatore prima del Vaticano II* by Prof. Giovanni Maria Vian, *God, Science and Religion* by Rabbi Jack Bemporad and *Laudato Si’ and “universal communion”: Re-thinking Liturgy in a Time of Ecological Emergency* by Prof. Teresa Berger. Unfortunately we have had to move these to the Fall because of the pandemic. We have had to cancel our Summer Institute as well. For additional information on the program promoted by the Centro, MAD for Ecumenism, a program for the mutual accountability of the Churches, please check our web calendar for the new dates especially if you are following us on streaming (www.prounione.it).

We cannot close our Spring issue without including the next supplement of the *Bibliography of Interchurch and Interconfessional Theological Dialogues* compiled by our librarian, Dr. Loredana Nepi.

Lastly, we would like to announce the theme for the Week of Prayer 2021: **Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit** (cf. Jn 15:5-9)

We invite our readers to always check our web site for dates and events as well as the up-dating of our data base on the international theological dialogues and of course our two libraries: pro and dialogo.

This *Bulletin* is indexed in the *ATLA Religion Database*, published by the American Theological Library Association, 250 S. Wacker Drive, 16th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606 (www.atla.com).



James F. Puglisi, SA
Director Centro Pro Unione

Consideraciones Generales sobre la Sinodalidad

*Una cum capite suo*¹

Prof. Francisco José Regordán Barbero, ofm - Canonista y profesor de derecho canónico en la Pontificia Universidad Antonianum - Roma

▶ (Extracto de la conferencia pronunciada el día 6 de noviembre de 2019)



A nadie que siga, siquiera superficialmente, la actualidad de la vida de la Iglesia Católica podrá pasar por alto el interés creciente que esta tomando la así llamada "sinodalidad". No es sin embargo una cuestión espontánea. Como se ha dicho, ya desde la clausura del Concilio Vaticano II *"intorno agli anni Sessanta del XX secolo si è generalizzata [...] un'attenzaine crescente per la dimensione conciliare della Chiesa, denominata 'conciliarità' o 'sinodalità'"* (Alberigo).

un término técnico que haga como tal referencia a una realidad única, diversa de otras. Por ello resulta conveniente para ver el sustrato que se encuentra bajo esta terminología conviene volver a la asimilación de los términos "conciliaridad" y "sinodalidad".

Se ha dicho que ambos términos *"sono astratti, ma non arbitrari"* (Ruggeri), pero sea como fuere, lo importante en apretada síntesis es que con ambos términos, comprendidos en su generalidad, hacen referencia como dice el documento *"La sinodalidad en la vida y en la misión de la Iglesia"* de la Comisión Teológica Internacional, a una "específica forma de vivir y obrar de la Iglesia [...] que se manifiesta y realiza en concreto su comunión en el caminar juntos, en el reunirse en asamblea y en el participar activamente de todos sus miembros en su misión evangelizadora" (cf. n.º 6).

A nuestro fin, especialmente interesante nos resulta la referencia o especificación que el documento citado hace cuando une el concepto de sinodalidad a aquel de corresponsabilidad (cf. n.º 6). Así se puede leer que "el concepto de sinodalidad se refiere a la corresponsabilidad y a la participación de todo el Pueblo de Dios en la vida y a misión de la Iglesia" (n.º 7). En otras palabras, la corresponsabilidad (sinodalidad) está radicada en la estructura sacramental de la Iglesia (Arrieta).

Un peligro que se advierte en seguida es que dependiendo del significado que se le dé al término "corresponsabilidad" pueden deslizarse unas consecuencias u otras. Para poder centrar la definición de "corresponsabilidad" resulta necesario afirmar que la corresponsabilidad se orienta hacia un objetivo común. Uno puede ser corresponsable cuando existe un objetivo que debe ser alcanzado por todos y en el proceso de ello se ejecutan cuantos actos legítimos, mejor convengan. No cabe duda de que dicho objetivo en la Iglesia es aquel que dota de sentido la misión evangelizadora de la que apenas hemos hecho mención. Esto es: id por todo el mundo y predicad el Evangelio a toda criatura (Mc 16, 15). Por tanto, la sinodalidad entendida como corresponsabilidad está al servicio de la evangelización común de todos los fieles.



▶ Prof. Francisco José Regordán Barbero, ofm

Esta identificación primera de los términos "conciliaridad" y "sinodalidad" nos ayuda a entender que el término "sinodalidad", no es un concepto que por sí solo ofrezca un significado limitado que pueda definirse fácilmente, por ejemplo, mediante un opósito o su contrario. De hecho, podemos decir que el término "sínodo" no es

¹ La presente colaboración, tal como reza el subtítulo es un breve resumen de la conferencia pronunciada el día 6 de noviembre de 2019 en el Centro Pro Unione. El sistema de citación vista la brevedad de esta breve contribución, consiste en indicar entre paréntesis, en el texto principal, el primer apellido del autor considerado, después de su oportuna mención. La referencia completa se encontrará al final de este breve artículo.

La doctrina ha definido la corresponsabilidad como “il prevalere della responsabilità di ciascuno rispetto all’operato comune: nella corresponsabilità, infatti, ciascuno partecipa (e rispondere) ‘del’ e ‘dal’ proprio punto di vista istituzionale, dal *munus/ministerium*, cioè, che esercita per il bene comune; in tale dinamica ciascuno rimane ‘se stesso’ –almeno sotto il profilo funzionale–, deve, cioè, esercitare il proprio ‘ruolo’ specifico, approcciare le tematiche e le questioni secondo l’ottica peculiare dello *status/ministerium* occupato all’interno della Chiesa e per il bene di tutti” (Gherri).

La clave pues reside en la conjugación de la naturaleza no colegial de la *potestas regiminis* eclesial, con este principio de corresponsabilidad orientado a un objetivo común. El CIC, ha establecido diferentes “*modulazioni della corresponsabilità*” (Gherri). Así tenemos, entre otros, desde el Consejo de un superior religioso hasta un sínodo de Obispos. La clave consiste en observar que en todas estas formas -como se ha dicho- se ha asume y se articula “la constitutiva *non-paritarietà della struttura consultiva ecclesiale*, articolata sempre in modo *bipolare asimmetrico*” (Gherri), es decir, un superior y un órgano de consulta con más o menos competencias donde se concretiza la mencionada corresponsabilidad y que están al servicio del debido discernimiento del órgano de gobierno para el mejor fruto de sus actos de gobierno. Es decir que no puede existir la “sinodalidad” si no existe una cabeza a / con la que desde el propio *munus*, poner en aras al objetivo común, lo que, por el oficio u otra condición apta, se requiere.

Yes que esta corresponsabilidad así entendida, va pues a consistir en ultimo termino, en un ejercicio común a todas las diversas “instituciones sinodales”, esto es, el ofrecer consejo, lo que en italiano ha sido denominado como “conciliariedad” (Gherri), que tendrá diversas actualizaciones en el modo, según la institución concreta que se trate, v. gr. un sínodo diocesano, un sínodo de obispos, ... etc.

Pudiera tras la lectura de lo citado, sufrir la tentación de pensar que la corresponsabilidad y por ende la sinodalidad pudiera reducir a mostrar a la autoridad un mero parecer. No es así. Consultar –como se ha afirmado– no se identifica con informarse. De este modo, aconsejar no es ofrecer una mera indicación (Gherri). El consejo requiere de quien lo da un conjunto de interacciones que difícilmente pueden reducirse a una pericia. Se requiere una relación entre los que piden y ofrecen el consejo a fin de poder “hacer ver” (y no meramente mostrar) una determinada visión de la realidad, que implica análisis, temores y esperanzas, no pocas veces de corte

espiritual (piénsese por ejemplo en las intuiciones de los contemplativos) que no un mero parecer de un aspecto de la realidad.

En definitiva, la sinodalidad es ciertamente un modo de caminar juntos, de situar al centro una común vida de fe al servicio de una misión común, que en comunión con la cabeza, (radicada en la potestad de régimen) se traducirá o concretizará, en determinados medios de actuación al servicio del discernimiento como forma de gobierno querida por la razón y el Divino Fundador de la Iglesia.



▶ Participants greet the professor in the lecture hall

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The Ecumenism of Pope Francis

Bishop Brian Farrell, lc
Secretary, Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity

AUDIO PODCAST FOR THIS CONFERENCE:
<https://bit.ly/2WhB77j>

PODCAST



Conference Audio

(Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione, Thursday, 23 January 2020)



Introduction

In this presentation I will try to answer three questions:

- *what world and what church* did Pope Francis inherit at his election? (quick summary/ not exhaustive analysis)
- *what specific ecumenical preparation* did he bring to his petrine ministry?
- in the years of his papacy, in his own words and actions, *what has been his particular approach* to the restoration of Christian unity?

1. *What world and what church did Pope Francis inherit at his election?*

The intensity of ecumenical relations between the churches depends greatly on the churches having the vision and the stamina to engage. This is not an easy time for Christianity, and ecumenism quite frequently takes second place to concerns for survival or maintenance.

Because, generally speaking, all churches face the same challenges in today's world, I begin, not with a Catholic appraisal, but with the Faith and Order consensus document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, published in 2013 as the outcome of almost twenty years of study and consultation among practically all the Christian churches, including the Catholic Church. Section 7 of that document reminds us that "Some developments are particularly challenging to the Church's mission and self-understanding". It goes on to mention some of these challenging developments:

- *the global secularizing culture*, which affects all countries and all societies. God is not necessary, the Church is merely a maintainer of traditions that have little to do with the real life-choices of people today. Society should be organized *without any reference to transcendent truths or values*.

These are not just ideas being propounded by elites. They are now the dominant organizing criteria of not only the Western First World, but more and more are becoming a global aspiration. Peoples everywhere tend



▶ Bishop Brian Farrell

to identify the freedom and development they yearn for with this secularizing trend. Secularization seems to promise release from rules and limits. Religion with its demands begins to feel intolerable.

- *the development of social media*, where everyone's opinion can be launched and communicated to a wide audience. Views are no longer based on reality and experience but on virtual reality and the emotions that virtual reality, not real reality, arouses. In a mass of conflicting ideas, many people are disconcerted and without compass. In addition, the ability to move with ease from one network of interests to another diminishes the sense of committed belonging, for example, in interpersonal relationships and in bonding with a particular church.
- *religious pluralism*, all religions are present everywhere. All religions present themselves as valid paths to salvation, and civil legislation more and more requires that they be treated as equally valid, and equally irrelevant in determining social values and laws. As a result, the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of the world is relativized.

As Pope Francis often says, we are not in an epoch of change but in a change of epoch. In his most recent talk to the Roman Curia he said: "Today we are no longer the only ones who create culture, nor are we in the forefront or those most listened to. We need a change in our pastoral mindset... faith – especially in Europe, but also in a large part of the West – is no longer an evident presupposition of social life; indeed, faith is often rejected, derided, marginalized and ridiculed... Christendom no longer exists!" (21/12/2019).

II. What specific ecumenical preparation did he bring to his petrine ministry?

1. Pope Francis often refers to people who have influenced his thinking. [I would invite you to read the presentation he made at the Jesuit Curia (13 December 2019) of the five volumes of the writings of Father Miguel Angel Fiorito, his teacher and guide, published in the latest edition of *La Civiltà Cattolica* (4070).] He has also mentioned that he was greatly influenced by two other Argentinian theologians he met during the time he spent in the diocesan seminary, before entering the Jesuits: Rafael Tello and Lucio Gera. These teachers showed him that *faith and doctrine cannot be separated from action*: theology is inseparable from pastoral action *in the concreteness of peoples' lives*.

They taught Bergoglio to see the *People of God*, not as a conceptual category, but as made up of – imbedded in – *specific populations and their cultures*. Hence the unique importance for theology and pastoral action of the religious experience of those peoples and, within those peoples, of the poor.

In fact, these mentors and others taught Bergoglio that the poor are not only the *object* of the Church's action but also the *agent* and *criterion* of that action. In other words, the Gospel message is better assimilated from within the distinct culture of a people by the people themselves, not as something coming to them from outside; not from a supposed higher "ecclesiastical culture", and especially not from the "modern culture" generated by post-Enlightenment intellectual and political elites. The Church grows not "from the outside to the inside" but "from the inside to the outside".

These guides led the young Bergoglio to consider *liberation* as a constitutive part of evangelization. Not in the Marxist interpretation that spread through Latin America, but in the sense that runs in continuity from Medellín (1968), Puebla (1979) and Aparecida (2007) in Latin America, to Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), to which Francis often refers, through to Pope John Paul's 'new evangelization', to his own *Evangelii Gaudium*.

As a result, Pope Francis sees the Church *not as an end in itself, to be served*; but as the servant of the people, especially the poor: the famous 'field hospital', 'the church that goes forth'.

2. In Francis' vision of the Church *Christian unity* plays a central part. But it was not always that way. Pope Francis came to ecumenism by way of a personal "conversion", helped by his contact with the *Charismatic Renewal*. During the flight back from Lund after the Joint Catholic-Lutheran commemoration of the Reformation



▶ H.E. Callista Gingrich, U.S. ambassador to the Holy See attended the event

The question is: In such a world, how do the churches own a space for revelation and for authoritative teaching on faith and morals? This new world has already emerged, and all churches are finding it difficult to offer more effective ways of speaking to humanity about God, about salvation and transcendence.

As a global entity, the Catholic Church is experiencing all these challenges in an intense way, just when it has become clear that the reforms – the *aggiornamento* – inaugurated by the *Second Vatican Council* have become the arena of a definitive clash of minds, draining energy from the Church's duty to evangelize and serve. Genuine reform is always difficult because, at heart, it requires a correct discernment in new circumstances regarding how the original message (what God has said and done in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ) is to be announced, transmitted and lived today. The message is always relevant, but certain paradigms, structures and methods of church life, which developed over time in dependence on social and cultural conditions different from ours, are no longer effective channels of evangelization and witness.

This, in a few broad strokes, is the situation Pope Francis faced when he stepped onto the balcony after his election and asked for prayers.

(1 November 2016), he admits that during his time as provincial of the Jesuits in Buenos Aires, between 1973 and 1979, “I forbade the Jesuits to get into that [the Renewal]”; “I too have undergone a process of recognizing the good that the Renewal has given the Church.” We know that as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, between 1992 and 2013, he took part in many prayer meetings, and through them made lasting friendships with Catholic Charismatics, as well as Evangelical and Pentecostal figures. In his visit to the evangelical pastor Giovanni Traettino of the Pentecostal Church of Reconciliation, in Caserta, Italy, he noted that “it is they [Evangelicals] who first came to see me in Buenos Aires... And so this friendship began, this closeness among the pastors in Buenos Aires” (28 July 2014).

These friendships had a *lasting impact* on Bergoglio. Interesting is what he says [in an interview with Ulf Jonsson, director of *Signum Magazine*, on the occasion of his trip to Lund, Sweden, for the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation] about the *Swedish pastor, Anders Ruuth*, professor of spiritual theology at the Faculty of Lutheran Theology in Argentina. I quote, “in a really difficult time for my soul, I had a lot of confidence in him and opened my heart. He helped me a lot at that time.... I remember him with much affection and recognition”. Because of such experiences, Jorge Bergoglio arrived at the papacy with a deep desire to do all he could for Christian unity.

III. What has been his particular approach to Christian unity in the years of his papacy?

1. The first thing to say is that Pope Francis understands ecumenical relations, above all, as a matter of *Spirit-led personal relationships*.

His personal engagement is especially evident in his meetings with **heads of churches and patriarchs**.

He has met so many of them, in his travels, to the Holy Land, Albania, Turkey, Havana (on the way to Mexico), Lesbos, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan and Egypt, Bulgaria, Rumania, North Macedonia; and so many Heads of Churches have come to Rome, some of them a number of times. In his words: “One feels the fraternity. Jesus is in the middle. For me they are all brothers.” After meeting Patriarch Kiril in Havana he remarked: “We have talked about issues that concern us both. Quite frankly, I have felt the presence of a brother, and he too has told me the same. Two bishops who, first of all, talk about the situation of their Churches; and secondly, of the world situation”.

The same with the leadership of the Anglican and Protestant churches: they read him; they are grateful for his leadership, and they pray for him ...

2. Pope Francis' Ecumenism in His Own Words

Pope Francis' statements on ecumenism would

fill hundreds, maybe thousands, of pages. We can only reference a few. For example, we can suppose he says what is on his mind when, each Christmas, he speaks to the *Roman Curia*. In his 2017 talk he spoke about *Christian unity*, and offered a good framework for the main points I am trying to make in this presentation. He refers to ecumenical relations as “an essential requirement of our faith, a requirement that flows from the depth of our being believers in Jesus Christ”. It is one of the Church's “irreversible commitments”. Then he makes an interesting point. Without using the well-known terminology of ‘dialogue of truth’ and ‘dialogue of life and love’, he clearly distinguishes between them and, in a sense, makes a preferential option for the ‘dialogue of life’.

Based on his reading of the real situation of the search for Christian unity, he is convinced that the theological and ecclesiological differences that still divide Christians will only be overcome along the path of a “shared journey”.

A) Francis is calling for a shift of emphasis from the traditional mode of ecumenism – search for progressive notional agreement – a methodology of “life together”: a real sharing by Christians in and of what they hold in common, with respect for the differences that remain complementary and do not reach the level of contradiction and conflict. Differences are in fact not all of the same weight! In Pope Francis' view the Churches would move towards one another, giving priority to the essentials that already unite them, and not using their differences as a reason – or an excuse – to continue to live and act separately, as divided churches have done for centuries.

I think we can describe his starting point this way: the Catholic Church, which, in Vatican II's language (*Lumen Gentium*, 8), has preserved all the endowments of the one Church founded by Christ, is nevertheless only a part of the whole body of the baptized, who all together are the depository and witness of Christ's saving grace.



▶ Arch. Ian Ernest, Director Anglican Centre in Rome and Prof. Donna Orsuto, Director The Lay Centre, devout friends of the Centro Pro Unione

Perhaps the heart of *Pope Francis' ecumenical legacy* is this *change of perspective*, with its call for a more inclusive way of looking at Christians in the other churches. Francis is urging us to journey towards fuller communion, not by starting from what is mine and remaining locked into my church's *narrative about other Christians*, but thinking, judging and acting within and from the much wider *vista* of the whole Christian family, of *all the baptized incorporated into Christ*. So there is this broader Christianity, made up of all the baptized, in which the Holy Spirit produces works of grace and salvation.

But beware! Pope Francis has not invented some new revolutionary vision. He is merely drawing out the consequences of what *Lumen Gentium*, 5 already stated: "They (other Christians) are consecrated by baptism, in which they are united with Christ.... Likewise in some real way they are joined with us in the Holy Spirit, for to them too He gives His gifts and graces, whereby He is operative among them with His sanctifying power".

Francis wants us to recognize that there are elements of Christ's church that are better understood and preserved outside the visible boundaries of one's own communion. As an example, his references to the fact that Catholics can learn much about synodality from the Orthodox. We have to be ready to receive from others what would lead our own community to conform better to God's designs. Already in *Evangelii Gaudium* he had advanced this guiding principle: "It is not just about being better informed about others, but rather about reaping what the Spirit has sown in them, which is also meant to be a gift for us" (246).

We may ask, has the "the exchange of gifts" of which all recent Popes have spoken really taken root? How far do we Catholics and do our brothers and sisters of the other churches show a real willingness to *receive* from one another?

B) *Such an approach of course begs the question: what do we do about our differences?* For Francis diversity is not a negative, but a positive. For him "the Church is one in diversity." How often has he mentioned Oscar Cullmann's term, 'reconciled diversity'? During his visit to the Pentecostal Church of Caserta (28 July 2014) he says: "the prism (polyhedron) is unity, but all its parts are different, each has its own peculiarity, its charisms. This is unity in diversity". In EG he calls it "communion amid disagreement".

What do we do about differences? Here and there some ecumenists are looking for a new "hermeneutic of difference"¹. Hopefully others will take up the challenge of developing the concept further! It will be a mighty struggle against the tendency towards uniformity and towards self-referential thinking! Many Catholics think that there is only one way of being Church. The Catholic blogosphere is full of them. Centuries of latinization of the Eastern Churches is a sad example,

with consequences that affect some of those churches even today.

C) *Some specifics in Francis' approach to ecumenism.* There are two recurring ecumenical events repeated every year where Pope Francis can offer extended remarks, and therefore a more reasoned explanation of his thinking. The first is the *Vesper service* at the closing of the Week of Prayer, on 25 January each year. The other, more specific to the Orthodox world, is the meeting with the *delegation of the Church of Constantinople* each June for the feastday of Rome's patrons Sts. Peter and Paul. I have re-read these talks to see what issues he highlights.

In 2014, presiding at the Vespers for the Week of Prayer *for the first time* as Pope, Francis recalled the ecumenical commitment of John XXIII, Paul VI and John Paul II, as if looking to them for guidance: "The work of these, my predecessors, enabled ecumenical dialogue to become an essential dimension of the ministry of the Bishop of Rome, so that today the Petrine ministry cannot be fully understood without this openness to dialogue... the journey of ecumenism has allowed us to come to a deeper understanding of the ministry of the Successor of Peter, and we must be confident that it will continue to do so in the future."



▶ A group of participants in the Conference

A reform of the papacy:

Every Pope since Saint John XXIII has recognized that a broader sharing of authority and responsibility and accountability – in other words, a genuine practice of the collegial and synodical nature of the Church – is needed.

"It is my duty, as the Bishop of Rome, to be open to suggestions which can help make the exercise of my ministry more faithful to the meaning which Jesus Christ wished to give it and to the present needs of evangelization" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 32). As he said at the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Synod of Bishops, on 17 October 2015: "The Pope is not, by himself, above the Church; but within it as one of the baptized, and within the College of Bishops as a Bishop

1 Placido Sgroi, *Istituto di Studi Ecumenici San Bernardino*, Venice.

among Bishops, called at the same time – as Successor of Peter – to lead the Church of Rome which presides in charity over all the churches.”

And regarding Bishops’ Conferences: “a juridical status of episcopal conferences which would see them as subjects of specific attributions, including genuine doctrinal authority, has not yet been sufficiently elaborated” (EG, 32). Here again, Pope Francis is not pressing for some revolutionary novelty, but for the re-appropriation of certain dynamic principles that belong to the essence of the Church, to the Church as communion and community: synodality and collegiality, pastoral discernment and respect for intermediate structures.

Here we’re talking about the *big picture*: the application of the reforms of Vatican II! The whole body of the Church has to move towards that objective. Francis can only plant and nourish; and pray that his successors will follow.

This kind of reform in the Catholic Church is seen by our ecumenical partners as a major source of *hope for ecumenism in the twenty-first century*.

More recently the January Vespers have highlighted two important points of Francis’ ecumenical outlook. In 2018 he insisted that “even when divergence separates us, we recognize that we belong to the people of the redeemed, to the same family of brothers and sisters, beloved by the one Father.” In 2019 he urged: “we must acknowledge the value of the grace granted to other Christian communities. As a result, we will want to partake of the gifts of others.” Francis’ approach to difference, the language of “exchange of gifts”, a new “hermeneutic of difference” and Receptive Ecumenism, all seem to lead in the same direction.

Something similar can be seen in his *yearly meetings with the delegation from Constantinople*. In the first years, Francis’ attention was focussed on the theological dialogue, but always in connection with his call for a culture of encounter: “we must not be afraid of encounter and true dialogue. This does not lead us away from the truth; rather, through an exchange of gifts, it leads us, under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth, towards the whole Truth (cf. Jn 16:13)” (2013).

Then, in 2017 the question of *reconciling differences* appears with force: “In the first millennium, Christians of East and West shared in the same Eucharistic table, preserving together the same truths of faith while cultivating a variety of theological, spiritual and canonical traditions compatible with the teaching of the apostles and the ecumenical councils. That experience is

a necessary point of reference and a source of inspiration for our efforts to restore full communion in our own day, a communion that must not be a bland uniformity.”

And more recently he has become more specific regarding *what is required for communion*: “I am increasingly convinced that the restoration of full unity between Catholics and Orthodox will come about through respect for specific identities and a harmonious coexistence in legitimate forms of diversity. The Holy Spirit... harmonizes them (different gifts) and brings them into authentic unity, which is not uniformity but a symphony of many voices in charity. As Bishop of Rome I wish to reaffirm that, for us Catholics, the purpose of dialogue is full communion in legitimate forms of diversity, not a monotonous levelling, much less absorption.”

Conclusion: a ‘Personal’ Way of Doing Ecumenism

1. Pope Francis’ ecumenism is *the result of a spiritual and intellectual conversion*. A conversion from the typical ‘exclusivist’ ecclesiology of the past to a recognition that God is working through all communities of the baptized. Francis enjoys the trust of ecumenical



▶ Among listeners of the conference, students from Pontifical University - Angelicum in Rome

partners. They may not agree with everything he stands for, but they recognize in him a true disciple of the Lord, even a ‘born again’ Christian, and not just a cultural Catholic defending power and ecclesiastical interests.

2. For Francis, *words are no longer enough*. Prophetic gestures are needed. Like giving the relics of St. Peter to Constantinople. A prophetic and almost mystical impulse! He has explained that it was an inspiration that came to him in prayer, the night before the celebration. Something entirely in the realm of the Spirit, way above questions of ecclesiastical diplomacy

and strategies. At the feast of St Andrew in November Patriarch Bartholomew replied: "This gift of our brother Pope Francis is a new milestone on the path of our coming closer... The fact that the brothers Peter and Andrew are again reunited through the presence of their holy relics encourages us to continue with greater momentum and hope our journey towards the desired unity".



▶ Fr. James Puglisi, SA welcoming H.E. ambassador Callista Gingrich

3. Francis' ecumenism is a "walking, praying, working together", testifying to the faith, evangelizing, serving with charity, always with practical and tangible initiatives and works. Hence, Francis attaches vital importance to experiencing brotherhood and "doing together" whatever we can do together. He approaches the formal, institutional, moments of ecumenical contact and celebration in a spiritual, contemplative, attitude; and measures the result of these moments by the intensity of the human and ecclesial communion and interaction he experiences.

4. He is not looking for sameness and uniformity, much less for dominance. He rejects the idea of there being only one way of thinking and doing. His objective is "reconciled diversity", wrought not through diplomacy and negotiation, but as the 'intrusion' of the Holy Spirit who inspires actions of love and solidarity. For Francis, theological reflection is an essential part of this walking together, but praxis must precede and prepare the conditions for doctrinal agreement.

5. For him, ecumenical action should be rooted in what is now, what is real, in the imperfect realities that we have to deal with. *What is real is the journey itself*; a 'journeying together', with all the incompleteness of our personal and institutional relationships; certainly not merely a search for perfect agreements, written in documents, to be admired and quoted when convenient, but of themselves incapable of delivering the act of faith, the mutual trust, the submission to God's will that will, in the end, constitute the act of restoration of unity among the churches. The communion we seek, as God wishes, when he wishes, in the end will not only be an act of intelligence, so much as an act of will and of faith.

6. Ecumenism therefore for Pope Francis is not the effort to create something preconceived, like a *builder who follows the plans of an architect*. What the final restoration of unity among Christians will look like is nowhere near clear. It will be a unity in diversity, without uniformity, it will be kaleidoscopic, it will be a prism or polyhedron, not a sphere, it will be multi-centered. Ecumenism is the journey itself: the search for Christian unity, with all the difficulties, the hesitations, the errors of a search for something not yet clearly perceived.

An image came to me. I am walking in a great forest. I see hundreds of trees all around me, all different kinds; millions of branches of every shape and form; billions of leaves of every size and colour. *My mind struggles to grasp* the oneness, the totality, of the whole forest, but I can only **see** a part of it. At the same time I **know**, as Pope Francis wrote in *Evangelii Gaudium*, that *the whole is greater than the part*, even than the sum of the parts. So I believe that what essentially characterizes Pope Francis' ecumenism is that the 'whole' – which would be the visible unity of Christians – is beyond our grasp, we have no clear idea of what the goal of communion in faith, sacraments and order will look like or how the churches will get there! But Pope Francis strongly believes that the churches *cannot wait for ecumenical agreement to be achieved before they come together to preach the Gospel to every creature*, and in doing so '**grow**' the unity they already have.

Pope Francis would want us to remember that the ecumenical movement belongs to God, and the Holy Spirit continues to inspire progress, mostly in slow, small steps. As he has said: "when we set out on a journey, when we are on a path, we always discover new things, things which we did not know. ... God is always new.... he always surprises us...." For Pope Francis, ecumenism is *the Spirit building communion step by step along the way*. A Spirit of surprises along the way.



▶ Lecture of Bishop Farrell

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True Religion¹

Maimonides' Legacy and Inter-religious Theology

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(Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione, Thursday, 20 February 2020)



I. Idolatry is the negative expression of monotheism

It focuses the normative implication of the religious, theological and moral imperatives of the divine claim of exclusivity. The Abrahamic religions share the basic structure of an all-encompassing truth claim, and it is a has served a reigning interpretation of the Abrahamic call. Love of God, the *eros* unto the divine, is met with an overpowering demand of absolute loyalty. Divine love is monogamous, often unto death, and divine jealousy is reflected in human zeal.

Idolatry however is not only embedded in the structures of passion; it has received a decidedly epistemic structure. The deeper the onto-theological hold upon religious reflection and imagination the more crucial the propositional character of faith becomes. Theology as a discipline is thus ensconced as the explication of the truth claim of revelation. Love, truth and the absolute combine to an exclusivity not only in relation to the divine but in the exclusion of other revelatory claims as false and rival conceptions of the divine as idolatrous. Marriage with the divine admits only of one bride.

The presentation seeks to explore a Maimonidean version of this theological complex. Maimonides is often portrayed as a prime example of the medieval Jewish theological turn. I maintain however that Maimonides not only thought through the implications of onto-theology he was also keenly aware of its limitations. The discussion will focus on the depth theology informing his monumental codification of Torah law, *Mishneh Torah*. We will thus have a chance to consider not only the workings of the monotheistic complex at one of the highpoints of the medieval theological turn in Judaism but also the potential for going beyond it.



Prof. Menachem Lorberbaum

Though Maimonides definitely placed truth as the criteria of thinking, his bi-lingual predicament deeply affected his thought. If it is true to say that all theology is necessarily comparative, then Maimonides' work is a prime example of this. The epistemological and theological web he casts upon the tradition of Torah is Arabic in language and Islamic in culture and in tenor. Following this complexity in the course of his articulation exposes the strong under-currents of what at first glance seem his official halakhic and theological positions. It offers a richer approach to the depth paradoxes of his thought and his attempts both to engage and to manage them.

II. The monotheistic religious posture

For Maimonides, the monotheistic religious posture congeals conceptually in his notion of *dat ha-emet*, a term he uses I would argue as a theological core concept for *Mishneh Torah*. The term appears several times in the work. There is also an additional similar one, *derekh ha-emet*. The latter is axial in Maimonides description of Abraham's enlightenment in the Laws of Idolatry 1:3 and we will begin by considering it. The chapter is devoted to the human fall to idolatry and the Abrahamic turning point. Maimonides follows Abraham's reasoning that leads him to attain a knowledge of God:

¹ I wish to thank Prof. David Nirebner of the University of Chicago Divinity School and to the participants in the **Conflict and Coexistence Initiative** to whom I first presented the arguments of this paper. It is a testament to this effort that I could present the current version at the **Centro Pro Unione** and the **John Paul II Center for Interreligious Dialogue** at Rome. My deepest thanks to Father James (Jim) Puglisi for extending the invitation and for his ongoing friendship and hospitality.

He had no teacher, no one to instruct him in aught. He was submerged in Ur of the Chaldees among ignoramus [*tipshim*] idolators [...] but his heart was busily working and reflecting until he had conceived the path of truth [*derekh ha-emet*], and by his attuned comprehension the correct line [of thought, *kav ha-tsedeg*, but perhaps the rule of justice],² and knew that there is one God [*eloha ehad ...*] and in all being there in no other god [*eloha*] but him.³

Abraham engaged in debates declaring to his compatriots that “this is not the path of truth that you tread” and when he finally left his homeland he engaged in teaching “each individual according to his intellect [*da’ato*],⁴ until he caused them to return to the path of truth.” It should be emphasized that *derekh ha-emet*, that I would render *tariq ilhaq* in Arabic, is decidedly ethical: it denotes a path the devotee embarks on her way to God. It captures the Maimonidean rendering of the Abrahamic movement.

Abraham is here depicted as a great teacher imparting a truth that ultimately unfolds as an ethic, *derekh ha-shem*, the way of the Lord. This echoes Genesis 18:19: “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.” In Abraham’s hands, the revelation of truth is not cast in the form of principle or dogma but rather rendered as a moral claim.⁵ Abraham left his home to embark on a journey. His call is for all human beings to join with him on this journey to God, that is the *derekh*. Maimonides’ formula⁶ echoes a distinction that returns to the foundational strata of the Pentateuch: the fact of God’s existence and unity *eloha ehad*, is transformed to a claim in the name of *ha-shem*.

The human fall to idolatry as Maimonides understands it is a forgetting:

So gradually the [cultic mode of worship] spread throughout the world of worshipping figures with various modes of worship, such as offering sacrifices to them, and bowing down to them. As time gradually passed, the honored and revered Name [*ha-shem*], was forgotten by mankind, vanished from their lips and intellects, and was no longer known to them.⁶

It is fascinating to note that the main force in forgetting God is that of institutionalized religion itself. Representations, temples, priests and rituals have simply buried all knowledge of God from humanity. Abraham’s mission is that of overcoming forgetfulness and a returning of the true God to human consciousness and action. Abraham not only rediscovers God, he charts a path not an institution, not a religion.

Abraham’s original journey proclaimed a call that led thousands and tens of thousands to join him [...] And this increased with ever increasing vigor among Jacob’s children and their adherents and so their came into the world an *ummah* that knows the Lord [*ha-shem*].⁷

Ultimately however, the emigration to Egypt led to the breakdown of the Abrahamic project. It seems that the towering idolatrous culture of Egypt overpowered his movement. This experience leads to a new epochal moment in the *heilsgeschichte* of humanity’s overcoming the forgetfulness of God. This is the Mosaic harnessing of the religious structure for the sake of God: Abraham’s *ummah* is restructured by election, commandments and directives of worship. Central to it “is the law concerning idolatry and all that error in following it.”

From within the Mosaic religion the history of the Israelite faith is conceptualized thus in the context of retelling of the Passover *haggadah*:

One should begin the story with discreditable facts and conclude with laudable ones. Thus one should begin by telling how are fathers were originally heretics [*kofrim*] – in the time of Terah and earlier – mistakenly following vanity and pursuing idolatry, and conclude with the true religion [*dat ha-emet*]: that God [*ha-makom*, the Place] drew us nigh to it and separated us from all those mistaken [peoples] drawing us nigh to unify Him.⁸

2 On the latter rendition, the import of what seems to be a Maimonidean neologism, would be not epistemic but moral, i.e. synonymous with the Rabbinic *shurat ha-din*.

3 ISADORE TWERSKY, *A Maimonides Reader*, (Springfield, NJ: Behrman House 1972), 73 (amended).

4 Maimonides translates the Arabic *‘aql as da’at* and not *sekhel* as do the Tibbonites. This translation leads to many confusions as he uses the word to translate *d’ahn*, mind too and translates *akhlāq*, disposition, as *de’ah*.

5 Abraham’s parents and contemporaries are earlier described as *tipshim*. This may be a rendering of the Arabic *jahilin*; however, it seems to me that an examination of the occurrences of the word in MT (*Mishneh Torah*) would justify translating it as ‘irrational’, i.e. those incapable of distinguishing between the possible, the necessary and the impossible. See e.g. Laws of Mourning 13:11.

6 *A Maimonides Reader*, 72.

7 Note that *allah* in Arabic can also be understood equivocally as a noun and a proper name.

8 The Code of Maimonides, Book Three: *The Book of Seasons*, translated by Solomon Gandz and Hyman Klein, (New Haven/London: Yale University Press 1961), Laws concerning Leavened and Unleavened Bread 7:4, p. 351 (amended).

So too in the festival of Sukkot in the public reading of the Torah of the Sabbatical year:

It is a positive commandment to assemble all of Israel – men, women and children – at the years end of the Sabbatical year, at the time of the pilgrimage and read to them thus imparting portions of the Torah that induce them to [fulfilling] the commandments and strengthens their commitment to the true religion [*dat ha-emet*]. (Laws concerning the Festival Offering 3:1)⁹

The Mosaic self-conception is that of *dat ha-emet*. It is used to delineate the formative narrative (quietly overstepping the Abrahamic moment) and for describing the very meaning of the Torah, and the commitment to it.

The Maimonidean idiom, *dat ha-emet* is a Hebrew rendering of the Arabic *al-din al-haq*.¹⁰ Maimonides uses the Arabic idiom already in his earlier *Sefer ha-Mizvot* (*Book of Commandments*). To the best of my knowledge it is not used by either Sa'adia or Halevi even as the dialogue of *The Kuzari* center-stages the question, which is the true religion? In Maimonides' works the concept of *dat ha-emet* is used to articulate the essence of the Torah, the *shari'a*. Both *dat* as used in Hebrew, and certainly *din* treated as a n Arabic cognate, underscore the element of law and rule fundamental to the idiom.¹¹ 'Religion' captures the terms well so long as we understand it in the etymological spirit of the Latin '*religio*' to denote a conscientious observance of the traditional cult and modes of worship. Not in the modern, very Protestant (ultimately Paulinian) sense, in which it is to be contrasted to law.

Emet in biblical Hebrew means 'firmness, faithfulness, truth.'¹² It is primarily an ethical adjective modifying action and motivation. Even thus, the Torah never describes itself as *emet*, rather as just and good. Thus, classically in Deuteronomy 4:6 (KJV):

9 My translation.

10 Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (Maimonides), *Sefer Hamitzvot*, Arabic Original with Hebrew translation by Joseph Kafih (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook 1971), Positive Commandment 9, p. 63.

11 From the very first paragraph of the Introduction to The Guide of the Perplexed shows that logically speaking *din* is understood to be a more fundamental term than *fiq*, *halakhah*.

12 BDB, sv תָּמַא, p. 54.

⁶ Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. [...]

⁸ And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous [*tzadikim*] as all this law, which I set before you this day?

In post-biblical Hebrew truth meaning gradually assumes primacy as the sense of *emet* and the application to the Torah is rabbinic. In Maimonides' Hebrew use it



▶ Prof. Joseph Sievers enters in dialogue with the lecturer

sometimes means reality, in the sense of the German *wirklich*, or in modern Hebrew *mamashut*.¹³ But the sense of truth assumes prime place.¹⁴ The shift in meaning of the word, most especially the primacy of its epistemic tenor, reflects the internalization of the onto-theological picture in Jewish theological self-understanding and it echoes throughout the Hebrew language since.

Take note too that *dat ha-emet* is a strikingly equivocal idiom. It may be interpreted as 'the true religion.' On this interpretation, 'true' modifies 'religion' as religions can be true or false. A second interpretation is 'the religion of truth', that is the religion that is committed to the promotion of truth and to its propagation. This second interpretation can be understood to hold that religions are neither true nor false only the beliefs they adhere to or promote. It is tempting to suggest that the

13 See MT Laws of the Foundations of the Torah 1:4.

14 See e.g. MT Laws concerning Dispositions 2, 6; 5:13; Laws concerning Sale 7:8. These are wonderful illustrations of how faithfulness, *emunah*, is defined by truth, *emet*. Laws concerning the Sanhedrin 2:7, 12; chapter 24.

first interpretation is that of the devotee of the Mosaic religion, the second that of a believer with an Abrahamic consciousness, and that may include Moses himself as legislator and all future interpreters of *halakhah* that assume the position of the legislator.¹⁵

The political implications of this conceptualization of the Torah becomes clearer in Laws concerning Kings and their Wars the culminating unit of *Mishneh Torah*. These laws are divided into three parts: the king and his office, war and the messianic era. The unit regarding the king and his office (4:10) ends thus:

But whatever he does should be done by him for the sake of heaven. His sole aim and thought should be to uplift the true religion [*dat ha-emet*], to fill the world with justice [*tzedek*], to break the arm of the wicked, and to fight the battles of the Lord [*ha-shem*].¹⁶

Structurally speaking, the Maimonidean king precedes the law being understood as the efficient cause of the polity. As such he is bidden to act with the *telos* of the polity constantly in mind: truth and justice. This is the political parallel of the Abrahamic project of truth and justice. Moreover, it seems that at least the flourishing of the *dat*, religion, or perhaps (divine) law, will depend upon the polity, if not its very existence. This underscores the degree to which according to *Mishneh Torah*, the institutionalization essential to religion is enmeshed in the polity. Abraham propagates the way of the Lord and the king wages His battles.

It is this understanding that also informs the second section of the Laws of Kings, their wars. This section has an unmistakable *jihadi* character to it. Here the inner *telos* of the king vis-à-vis the polity becomes the outer motivational force of his externally directed politics, the medium of which is war. It also determines the tenor of his messianic vision.

The coda of *Mishneh Torah* is devoted to a triumphalist depiction of the messiah-king. It is here that all the major threads of the work come together: law, polity and knowledge combine in a monarch that redeems Israel, possibly the world at large, and in many senses, the Torah too. The first major attribute of the messiah-king is that his polity is the one in which the Torah actually guides people's lives as law, and they live by it. On top of that he is politically victorious with regard to the fate of the people of Israel in that they know longer experience exile. Finally, the reach of his wisdom is such that it effects the entire world in its turn to God. In this latter sense, the messiah-king effects an overcoming of

the initial forgetting of God that is the very essence of the human fall to idolatry. The reverse of idolatry is not only a matter of knowledge it is a triumphal attestation.

Maimonides codification thus reveals the grander ambitions of the Mosaic project over and against that of Abraham's. A world-eradicating of idolatry necessitates a political program not simply a movement of devotees. Paradoxically, it affords a glimpse to the deeper connections between institutionalized religion, the original idolatrous force in human history, and its sublimation in the form of a political (not merely legal) program for human redemption. (Or, as its critics would argue, the deep idolatrous impulse embedded in the political.)

According to Maimonides, messianism is not merely a derivative of destruction and collapse it is rather an integral aspirational component of the Mosaic project. His rendering of the grander messianic vision underscores the historical placing of this political project. The temporal dimension of the political is history. Maimonides here seems to be heavily invested in this perspective of being seeing that the human quest for knowledge of the divine begins in the fall to idolatry and makes its way to the messianic moment. One is tempted to argue that it is not merely the *historie* of human politics, it is the *geschichte* of the human attainment of knowledge. But Maimonides never provides such a metaphysical underpinning for temporality. He seems to emphatically prefer to remain within the contours of *historie*. Even thus however, history is anything but transparent to us:

If there arise a king from the House of David who meditates on the Torah, occupies himself with the commandments, as did his ancestor David, as prescribed in the written and Oral Law, coerces Israel to follow it and to repair its breaches, and fights the battles of the Lord, he is presumed Messiah [...] But if he has not met with success, or is slain, it is manifest that he is not the one promised in the Torah [...]. Even Jesus of Nazareth, who imagined himself to be Messiah, but was put to death in court, Daniel had prophesized as written, "And the children of the violent among your people shall lift themselves up to establish the vision; but they shall stumble" (Daniel 11:14). For has there ever been a greater stumbling than this? All the prophets affirmed that the Messiah would redeem Israel, save them, gather their dispersed, and reinforce the commandments. But he caused Israel to be destroyed [...] He was instrumental in changing the Torah and causing the world to err and serve another beside the Lord.

But humans lack the power to apprehend the designs of the Creator; for our ways are not His ways, neither are our thoughts His thoughts. And all these matters relating to Jesus of Nazareth and the Ihsmaelite [Mohammed] who came after him,

15 CF Laws concerning Sanhedrin 1:3, 5:1, Laws concerning Rebels 1:1.

16 A *Maimonides Reader*, 218. On the ongoing relevance of *derekh ha-emet* see Laws concerning Repentance 6:4; 7:6.

serve only to pave the path for the messiah king and to prepare the entire world to worship the Lord together [...]. Thus, the Messianic teaching and those of the Torah and the commandments have become familiar topics - topics of debate (among the inhabitants) of the far isles [...].¹⁷

History baffles us. Nothing seems to be working according to what we would consider, the plan. We live as if the story is about us and we are center stage, we believe in our role with a full heart, but Christianity and Islam have established themselves in the grand narrative. Maimonides has no *geschichte* to offer, neither does he propose a dialectic to digest this. We lay claim according to Maimonides to a religion of truth, yet history unfolds the truth of divinity in its own way. The politics of religious truth remains without a historical compass as the seeming idolatrous religions prepare the path for

III. Humility as the fundamental virtue, inspiring sobriety

In contra-distinction to the Lockean project of toleration that assumes the facticity of the faith claim upon the believer, the medieval project aspires to truth. This forces the centrality of idolatry and of triumphalism in framing the conception of otherness. Conceptualizing the Torah as *dat ha-emet*, is a major contribution of Maimonides to Jewish religiosity and to the halakhic imagination. Indeed, *dat ha-emet* provides a conceptual core that powerfully captures the tenor of the onto-theological moment. Yet, what is most surprising is to discover the deconstructive exposition of the concept attendant to its presentation in *Mishneh Torah*. We have followed not only the presentation of the concept but the three moments of its exposure. They emphasize that religion always carries the traces of idolatry, that law cannot obviate ethics and that politics is in need of a history. All this without turning to the form of fideistic voluntarism of Lockean toleration.

The theological-political project of *Mishneh Torah* is surprisingly candid about the limits of its own undertaking. It underscores the sublimity of its redemptive aspiration to which it is fully committed while being quite clear about what it cannot do and what it cannot provide.

This exposé is enmeshed in the unique linguistic polity unfolding in the work and attests to the great care invested in its formulation. The platonic aspiration of a true politics is the public persona of a teaching that leads the scholar to know that he cannot know. The *hakhamim*, the *ulama*, are led through a reflection on the foundations of the law to understand both the power of law and its limits: what law cannot do and what it cannot provide. The true scholar of the Mosaic law thus retains

a fundamental fidelity both to Abrahamic virtue and to Socratic unknowledge. Together they combine to form humility (*anavah*) as the fundamental virtue, inspiring sobriety (Laws of Dispositions 1:5; chapter 5). These perhaps the only check on the eschatological inebriation of triumphalism.



▶ **From right:** Among attendants, a friend of the Centro, Rabbi Jack Bemporad — here with Associate Director Teresa Francesca Rossi and a guest

universal knowledge of God. Though the claim to truth is conceived of as exclusive, history belies the claim. To the degree that the divine city, or the religion of truth, or the law, depend upon a history for their validity they are in fact confounded. Maimonides thus reaches the limits of his project, the inscrutability of divine will as manifested in history. God is always on His own side – and we cannot lay exclusive claim to it.

17 Laws concerning Kings 11:4 (uncensored version), *A Maimonides Reader*, 226-227 (amended).

A Bibliography of Interchurch and Interconfessional Theological Dialogues

Thirty-fifth Supplement – 2020

LIST OF DIALOGUES

- A-B:** Anglican-Baptist International Forum
A-B / eng: Informal Conversations between the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Church of England
A-D / aus: Anglican Church of Australia-Churches of Christ Conversations
A-L: Anglican-Lutheran International Commission
A-L / africa: All Africa Anglican-Lutheran Commission
A-L / aus: Anglican-Lutheran Conversations in Australia
A-L / can: Canadian Lutheran Anglican Dialogue
A-L / eng-g: Representatives of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and of the Church of England
A-L / eng-nordic regions: Representatives of the Nordic countries and of the Church of England
A-L / eur: Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission
A-L / usa: Episcopal-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA
A-L-R / eng-f: Official Dialogue between the Church of England and the Lutheran-Reformed Permanent Council in France
A-M: Anglican-Methodist International Commission
A-M / eng: Anglican-Methodist Conversation in Great Britain
A-M / ire: Church of Ireland / Methodist Church of Ireland Covenant Council
A-M / usa: United Methodist-Episcopal Bilateral Dialogue
A-M-R / eng: Informal Conversations between the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church
A-Mo: Anglican-Moravian Conversations
A-Mo / usa: Moravian-Episcopal Dialogue in the USA
A-O: Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission
A-O / usa: Anglican-Orthodox Theological Consultation in the USA
A-OC: Anglican-Old Catholic Theological Conversations
A-OC / na: Anglican-Old Catholic North American Working Group
A-OO: Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Dialogue
A-OO / copt: Anglican-Coptic Relations
A-Pe / eng: Anglican-Pentecostal Consultation
A-R: Anglican-Reformed International Commission
A-R / eng-scot: Church of England-Church of Scotland Joint Study Group
A-R / usa: Presbyterian-Episcopal Bilateral Dialogue
A-RC: Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)
A-RC: International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM)
A-RC / aus: Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission of Australia
A-RC / b: Belgian Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee
A-RC / br: Brazilian Anglican-Roman Catholic National Commission
A-RC / can: Canadian Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission
A-RC / eng: English Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee
A-RC / eur: Anglican-Roman Catholic Working Group in Western Europe
A-RC / f: Anglican-Catholic Joint Working Group in France
A-RC / nz: Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission in Aotearoa New Zealand (ARCCANZ)
A-RC / usa: Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA
A-U / aus: Conversations between the Anglican Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
AC-CC: Joint Commission for Unity between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church

Abbreviations for Confessional Families Churches and Councils

A	Anglican
AC	Assyrian Church of the East
AIC	African Instituted Churches
B	Baptist
CC	Chaldean Catholic Church
CEC	Conference of European Churches
CCEE	Council of European Episcopal Conferences
CP	Constantinople Patriarchate
CPCE	Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (formerly <i>Leuenberg Church Fellowship</i>)
D	Disciples of Christ
DOMBES	Groupe des Dombes
E	Evangelicals
FC	Free Churches
FO	Faith and Order
L	Lutheran (includes German 'Evangelische')
M	Methodist
MECC	Middle East Council of Churches
Mn	Mennonite
Mo	Moravian
NCC	New Charismatic Churches
O	Eastern Orthodox (<i>Byzantine</i>)
OC	Old Catholic (includes <i>Polish National</i>)
OO	Oriental Orthodox (<i>Non-Chalcedonian</i>)
Pe	Pentecostal
R	Reformed
RC	Roman Catholic
SA	Salvation Army
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
U	United Churches
W	Waldensian
WCC	World Council of Churches

- AC-O / rus:** Bilateral Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East
- AC-OO / copt:** Theological Dialogue between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Coptic Orthodox Church
- AC-OO / syr:** Bilateral Commission between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox Church
- AC-RC:** Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East
- AIC-R:** Dialogue between the African Instituted Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches
- B-CPCE / eur:** Dialogue between the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe and the European Baptist Federation
- B-L:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue
- B-L / g:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in Germany
- B-L / n:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in Norway
- B-L / sf:** Baptist-Lutheran Conversation in Finland
- B-L / usa:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA
- B-M:** Baptist-Methodist International Dialogue
- B-M-W / italy:** Baptist-Methodist-Waldensian Relations in Italy
- B-Mn:** Baptist-Mennonite Theological Conversations
- B-O:** Baptist-Orthodox Preparatory Dialogue
- B-O / georgia:** Dialogue between the Orthodox Church of Georgia and the Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Georgia
- B-R:** Baptist-Reformed Dialogue
- B-RC:** Baptist-Roman Catholic International Conversations
- B-RC / f:** Baptist-Catholic Joint Committee in France
- B-RC / usa (ab):** American Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue
- B-RC / usa (sb):** Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue
- CEC-CCEE:** Joint Committee of Conference of European Churches and Council of European Episcopal Conferences
- CPCE-RC:** Community of Protestant Churches in Europe - Roman Catholic Church Consultation
- D-L / usa:** Disciples of Christ-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA
- D-O / rus:** Disciples of Christ-Russian Orthodox Dialogue
- D-R:** Disciples of Christ-Reformed Dialogue
- D-RC:** Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue
- D-U / aus:** Conversations between the Churches of Christ in Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
- D-U / usa:** Disciples of Christ-United Church of Christ Dialogue in the USA
- DOMBES:** Dialogues des Dombes
- E-RC:** Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission
- E-RC / can:** Canadian Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue
- E-RC / f:** Evangelical-Roman Catholic Conversations in France
- E-SDA:** Theological Dialogue between the World Evangelical Alliance and the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- FC-O / g:** Free Churches-Orthodox Dialogue in Germany
- FO:** Faith and Order conferences, consultations, studies
- L-M:** International Lutheran-Methodist Joint Commission
- L-M / n:** Conversation between the Church of Norway and the United Methodist Church in Norway
- L-M / s:** Dialogue between the United Methodist Church in Sweden and Church of Sweden
- L-M / sf:** Lutheran-Methodist Dialogue in Finland
- L-M / usa:** US Lutheran-United Methodist Dialogue
- L-Mn:** Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission
- L-Mn / f:** Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in France
- L-Mn / g:** Theological Dialogue between the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Association of Mennonite Assemblies in Germany (AMG)
- L-Mn / usa:** Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in the USA
- L-Mn-RC:** Lutheran-Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue Commission
- L-Mo / usa:** Lutheran-Moravian Dialogue in the USA
- L-O:** Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission
- L-O / g:** Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church in Germany and the Evangelical Church in Germany
- L-O / g-cp:** Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Ecumenical Patriarchate
- L-O / g-rom:** Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Romanian Orthodox Church
- L-O / g-rus:** Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Russian Orthodox Church
- L-O / sf:** Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox Church
- L-O / sf-rus:** Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church
- L-O / usa:** Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue in the USA

- L-O-R / f:** Dialogue between Representatives of the Inter-Orthodox Bishops' Committee in France and the Protestant Federation of France
- L-O-R / na:** Lutheran-Orthodox-Reformed Theological Conversations in North America
- L-OC / g:** Dialogue between the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Old Catholic Church in Germany
- L-OC / s:** Commission for Dialogue between the Church of Sweden and the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht
- L-OO / copt:** Theological Dialogue between the Coptic Evangelical Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church
- L-OO / copt-s:** Coptic Orthodox-Lutheran Dialogue in Sweden
- L-OO / g:** Consultations between the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Evangelical Church in Germany
- L-OO / india:** Dialogue between the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East and the Lutheran Churches in India
- L-Pe:** Lutheran-Pentecostal Conversations
- L-Pe / sf:** Lutheran-Pentecostal Dialogue in Finland
- L-Pe-R / f:** Pentecostal-Protestant Dialogue in France
- L-R:** Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission
- L-R / arg:** Dialogue between the Evangelical Church of the Rio de la Plata and the Evangelical Congregational Church of Argentina
- L-R / aus:** Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Reformed Churches of Australia
- L-R / can:** Canadian Lutheran-Reformed Conversations
- L-R / f:** Fédération Protestante de France
- L-R / usa:** Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations in the USA
- L-R-RC:** Lutheran-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue
- L-R-RC / f:** Catholic-Protestant Joint Working Group in France
- L-R-SDA / f:** Protestant-Seventh-day Adventist Dialogue in France
- L-R-U / eur:** Leuenberg Church Fellowship
- L-RC:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity
- L-RC / arg:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Argentina
- L-RC / aus:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Australia
- L-RC / br:** National Roman Catholic-Lutheran Commission in Brazil
- L-RC / can:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Canada
- L-RC / g:** Joint Commission of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the German Episcopal Conference (DB)
- L-RC / india:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in India
- L-RC / jap:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Japan
- L-RC / n:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Discussion Group in Norway
- L-RC / s:** Official Working Group of Dialogue between the Church of Sweden and the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm
- L-RC / sf:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Relations in Finland
- L-RC / usa:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA
- L-SDA:** Lutheran-Seventh-day Adventist Consultations
- L-U / aus:** Theological Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
- M-O:** Methodist-Orthodox Commission
- M-Pe-W / italy:** Methodist-Pentecostal-Waldensian Dialogue in Italy
- M-R:** Methodist-Reformed Dialogue
- M-RC:** Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council
- M-RC / eng:** English Roman Catholic-Methodist Committee
- M-RC / usa:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the United Methodist Church in the USA
- M-SA:** International Dialogue between the Salvation Army and the World Methodist Council
- Mn-R:** Mennonite World Conference and World Alliance of Reformed Churches
- Mn-R / nl:** Mennonite-Reformed Dialogue in the Netherlands
- Mn-RC:** Mennonite-Catholic International Dialogue
- Mn-RC / latin america:** Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue in Latin America
- Mn-SDA:** Mennonite-Seventh-day Adventist Theological Conversations
- NCC-RC:** New Charismatic Churches-Roman Catholic Preliminary Conversations
- O-OC:** Joint (Mixed) Orthodox-Old Catholic Theological Commission
- O-OO:** Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches
- O-OO / rus:** Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches
- O-OO / rus-armenia:** Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Armenian Apostolic Church
- O-OO / rus-copt:** Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church
- O-R:** Orthodox-Reformed International Dialogue

- O-R / ch:** Protestant-Orthodox Dialogue Commission in Switzerland
O-R / na: Orthodox-Reformed Conversations in North America
O-R / rus: Dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Russian Orthodox Church
O-RC: Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church
O-RC / can: Canadian Orthodox and Catholic Bishops' Dialogue
O-RC / ch: Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland
O-RC / eng: Catholic-Orthodox Pastoral Consultation in England
O-RC / f: Joint Catholic-Orthodox Committee in France
O-RC / g: Greek Orthodox-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Germany
O-RC / pol: Russian Orthodox Church-Catholic Church in Poland Working Group
O-RC / rom: Joint Commission for Dialogue between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Romanian Church United with Rome (Greek-Catholic)
O-RC / rus: Theological Conversations between Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church
O-RC / rus-g: Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the German Episcopal Conference
O-RC / usa: North American Catholic-Orthodox Theological Consultation
O-U / aus: Theological Dialogue between the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
OC-R / india: Old Catholic Church-Malankara Mar Thomas Syrian Church Theological Consultation
OC-R-RC / ch: Old Catholic-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland
OC-RC: Old Catholic-Roman Catholic Conversations
OC-RC / ch: Dialogue Commission of the Old Catholic and the Roman Catholic Churches in Switzerland
OC-RC / g: Dialogue between the Old Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Germany
OC-RC / na: Polish National Catholic-Roman Catholic Dialogue
OC-RC / nl: Old Catholic-Roman Catholic Study Commission in the Netherlands
OC-RC / pol: Joint Commission of the Polish Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Poland
OO-R: Oriental Orthodox-Reformed Theological Dialogue
OO-RC: International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches
OO-RC / armenia: Armenian Apostolic Church-Catholic Church Joint Commission
OO-RC / copt: International Joint Commission between the Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church
OO-RC / eritrea: Eritrean Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations
OO-RC / ethiop: Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations
OO-RC / india: Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
OO-RC / syr-india: Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church
OO-RC / usa: Official Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Consultation
Pe-R: Pentecostal-Reformed Dialogue
Pe-RC: Pentecostal-Roman Catholic International Dialogue
Pe-WCC: Joint Consultative Group between the World Council of Churches and Pentecostals
R-RC: Reformed-Roman Catholic Joint Study Commission
R-RC / a: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Austria
R-RC / b: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Belgium
R-RC / ch: Protestant/Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Switzerland
R-RC / nl: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Church in the Netherlands
R-RC / scot: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland
R-RC / usa: Roman Catholic-Presbyterian Reformed Consultation in the USA
R-SDA: International Theological Dialogue between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches
R-SDA / usa: Presbyterian Church (USA)-Seventh-day Adventist Church Dialogue
RC-SA: Salvation Army - Catholic Informal Conversation
RC-SDA: Conversations between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Roman Catholic Church
RC-U / aus: Working Group of the Roman Catholic Church and the Uniting Church in Australia
RC-U / can: Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue Group in Canada
RC-W / italy: Roman Catholic-Waldensian Relations in Italy
RC-WCC: Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches
SA-SDA: Theological Dialogue between the Salvation Army and the Seventh-day Adventist Church
SDA-WCC: Seventh-day Adventist Church-World Council of Churches Conversations
WCC: World Council of Churches - assemblies, convocations, relations

PERIODICALS SURVEYED

- A ▶ Acta Apostolicae Sedis, AFER-African Ecclesial Review, American Baptist Quarterly, Amicizia ebraico-cristiana, Angelicum, Anglican Theological Review, Annales theologici, Apulia Theologica
- B ▶ Bausteine für die Einheit der Christen, Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology
- C ▶ Calvin Theological Journal, Catholica, Centro Pro Unione Bulletin, Chemins de dialogue, Chrétiens en Marche, Christian Orient, Una città per il dialogo, Concilium, Confronti, Contacts, Courier, Cristianesimo nella storia, Current Dialogue
- D/E ▶ Diálogo ecuménico, Eastern Churches Journal, Ecclesia Mater, Ecclesiology, The Ecumenical Review, Ecumenical Trends, The Ecumenist, Ecumenismo Quotidiano, Ekklesia, Exchange
- F/I ▶ Forum Letter, Global Christian Forum Newsletter, The Greek Orthodox Theological Review, Herder Korrespondenz, Information Service & Service d'Information, International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church, International Review of Mission, Internationale kirchliche Zeitschrift, Irénikon, Istina
- J/K ▶ Journal of Anglican Studies, Journal of Ecumenical Studies, Journal of Pentecostal Theology, Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association, Kerygma und Dogma
- L ▶ LibreSens, The Living Church, Lutheran Forum, Lutheran Quarterly
- M/N ▶ MD-Materialdienst des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts Bensheim, Nicolaus
- O ▶ O Odigos, Odos, Ökumenische Rundschau, Oikumene, One in Christ, Oriente cristiano, Origins, Orthodoxes Forum, L'Osservatore Romano, L'Osservatore Romano (weekly English), Ostkirchliche Studien
- P/Q ▶ Pastoral Ecuménica, Pneuma, Positions luthériennes, Proche-Orient Chrétien, Pro Dialogo, Pro Ecclesia, Protestantismo, Qîqajôn di Bose
- R ▶ Reformed World, Il Regno, Reseptio, Review of Ecumenical Studies, Rinnovamento nello Spirito Santo
- S ▶ SEIA Newsletter on the Eastern Churches and Ecumenism, Sobornost, St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly, Studi di Teologia, Studi Ecumenici, Studia i dokumenty ecumeniczne, Studia Oecumenica, Studia Liturgica, Studies in Interreligious Dialogue
- T ▶ The Tablet, Theological Studies
- U/V ▶ Una Sancta, Unité des Chrétiens, Veritas in caritate: informazioni dall'ecumenismo in Italia
- W/Z ▶ The Window, Worship, Zeitzeichen

KEY TO SUB-HEADING

INFORMATION: facts, communiqués, surveys, brief reports
 REFLECTION AND REACTIONS: essays, responses, commentaries, theological papers
 TEXTS AND PAPERS: documents, reports, statements, official responses

KEY TO READING THE BIBLIOGRAPHY ENTRY

For periodical entries:
 the first number refers to the volume and the second refers to the issue followed by the year and page numbers, thus:
Christian Orient 16, 4 (1995) 180-191 = pages 180-191 in volume 16, issue no. 4 in 1995 of *Christian Orient*.

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Compiled by Dr. Loredana Nepi



DIGITAL EDITION / <https://bulletin.prounione.it>

🔄 Editor revision · **August 31, 2021**

Design Bulletin E-book · *Espedito Neto*

