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AN EXPLORATION OF THEOLOGICAL ATTITUDES IN MICHAEL KOGAN'S OPENING THE COVENANT

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AN EXPLORATION OF THEOLOGICAL ATTITUDES IN MICHAEL KOGAN'S *OPENING THE COVENANT*

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by

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Abstract

A positive reformation of theology at the Second Vatican Council on the religious 'other' revealed the true problem with an exclusivist theological attitude. This thesis utilizes a specific focus on the terms of Michael Kogan's pluralist theological attitude in *Opening the Covenant* to assess the current relationship of Christianity with Judaism on matters of theological and political difference. To amplify the strengths of Kogan's approach, as well as to construct my own understanding of the importance to redefine our interfaith attitudes, particular attention is given to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Jewish document *Dabru Emet*.

KEYWORDS: Vatican II, exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism, Israel-Palestine, *Nostra Aetate*, *Dabru Emet*, Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant*

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Introduction

"The human situation is so varied, so complex, that we need other viewpoints to add to our own insights if we hope to gain some understanding of it."[1]

This quote marks a new era in the recent and continuously unfolding relationship between Jews and Christians, the history of literature of which is so expansive one volume of work could not possibly give justice to the complexity of its historical development, current status, and future potential. The events of the past forty-five years that have characterized the positive change in Christian thinking can largely be accounted for as a product of the *Shoah*. "The *Shoah* dramatized the moral outrageousness of any tradition's—and that includes Judaism's—carrying on unrevised, negative stereotypes or contemptuous judgments that degrade the other."[2] The Church's response to their implicit involvement in the events that lead to the Holocaust through their explicit historical denunciation of Jews and Judaism was formulated at the Second Vatican Council in the document *Nostra Aetate*. The theme of the declaration demonstrates that a reevaluation of the theological and social-political evidence has implicated that reconciliation between Jews and Christians necessarily transforms traditional monolithic theological understanding into a new kind of universal pluralism that sheds light on God's redemptive plan for Christians, Jews, and the whole world. Because of the profound implications that these changes in Christian theological teaching have had for understanding Jews as the eternally covenanted people of the God of Israel, many prominent Jewish scholars have felt the need to reciprocate in this reassessment of the

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[1] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), xiv.

[2] Irving Greenberg, "Covenantal Pluralism." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 34, no 3 (1997), 432.

religious 'other', particularly of Christianity. Because of this dramatic shift in the relationship between Jews and Christians, it has since progressively flourished in interfaith dialogue, and the outcome, arguably, has prompted interreligious thinking to be grounded in a very new kind of theological framework. One trend that has been a dominant influence in shaping the dynamic of this theological framework has been the modern concept of "'liberal religion' [which] seeks dialogue instead of confrontation."[3] It is Christian and Jewish writers who can be identified under this model that the ambition of the thesis is concerned with – more specifically, the theological position advocated in *Opening the Covenant* by Michael Kogan.

Michael Kogan, a scholar in Jewish-Christian thinking at the University of Toronto, stands out as an archetypal model participant in Jewish-Christian dialogue who expresses the urgency to expand the scope of our theological vision to conceive of Christianity and Judaism as equally valid revelations from the God of Israel. The starting place for this vision is a fundamental reformation of the theological attitudes that have characterized this interfaith relationship. I wish to explore the significance of this in the first chapter of my thesis. Given the nature and complexity of the social, political, philosophical and theological thinking that has gone into reformulating a Christian understanding of Jews, and a Jewish understanding of Christians, the attitudes that have colored the interfaith venture have been widely diverse. Traditionally, the Church's exclusivism was expressed in the age-old axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the Church there is no salvation), and in a similar fashion, Judaism historically confessed

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[3] Michael Signer, "Dabru Emet: A Contextual Analysis," *Théologiques* 11, no 1 (2003), 200.

"that their truth was incalculably fuller and richer than that granted to others."[4] A more inclusive model (universalisation) replaced this attitude at the Second Vatican Council, but still not sufficiently enough to correspond to the perspectives of liberal religion, that, "both Jews and Christians are incomplete...the divine totality is, of course, hidden from finite human beings."[5] The contention of Kogan is that, "the underlying assumptions of the Jewish-Christian dialogue must open the participants to a full multifaith pluralism." The consequence of this refinement has been rethinking the nature of doctrine and an overall understanding of the function of religion. In light of Kogan's pluralism and in reference to the work of George Lindbeck, I have attempted to parse this out.

In my second chapter I further explore how avoiding this reformation of theological attitudes has had, and continues to have, serious consequences for the already ambiguous relationship of politics and religion. In Kogan's book he attempts to generate an awareness that, just as theological exclusivism played a directive role in the abuse of Papal authority in historic Christian Imperialism and other matters concerning the State, it continues to undermine an honest approach to integralism, most evidently in the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One of the main concerns of the chapter is that "claims to religious superiority [have] become calls to religious violence."[6] As this poses a serious threat to the nature of Jewish Covenantal theology – Israel as God's elect among the nation, chosen for *tikkun olam* 'healing of a broken world' – as well as the mission of the Church, I recapitulate the Christian and Jewish teaching on the relationship between

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[4] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 238.
[5] *Ibid*, 177, 235. I will discuss what exactly is insufficient about Vatican II theology in chapter one.
[6] rev of. Paul F. Knitter's *The Myth of Religious Superiority: A Multifaith Exploration.* Maryknoll: Orbis Books, (2005) in *Dialogue & Alliance* 20, no 1 (2006), 137.

religion and state in order to further expose the relevance of reformulating our theological attitude into "full multifaith pluralism". From this, a detailed treatment of the State of Israel and its relation to a Jewish understanding of their Covenantal relationship with God and His promise of land is examined in an attempt to dissect exactly how "Jewish political nationalism and military power [have] impacted the Jewish religious and ethical witness."[7]

In my final chapter, I attempt to reconcile what the implications of reformulating theological attitudes are for particular Christian and Jewish doctrinal truth-claims. Using *Dabru Emet*[8] as a template for discussion, it becomes evident that "interreligious dialogue demands of us more than that we allow others to define themselves in their own terms and that we try to learn to work with that definition ourselves. It also demands that we enter into the dialogue faithful to our own terms."[9] The historical problem with the attitude in proclaiming the theologies of Christians and Jews is that there has consistently been a negative treatment of the religious 'other'. In the effort to amend this, both Christians and Jews have anticipated total theological reductionism, which is, in part, the method used in *Dabru Emet.* As outlined in chapter one, however, Kogan's theology specifically asserts that, "religious pluralists need give up none of their positive claims or traditional beliefs about what they have received."[10] In an examination of three

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[7] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 226.

[8] A document released by the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies in Baltimore, Maryland in September 2000, co-authored by four Jewish scholars, that lists a series of eight affirmations about how contemporary Jews could respond to profound changes within some parts of the Christian community.

[9] Paul Van Buren, "Covenantal Pluralism," *Cross Currents* 40, no 3 (1990), 332.

[10] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 237.

statements from *Dabru Emet*, I hope to give insight to resolving the dialectical tension between competing interpretations of religious truth, and a progressive understanding of the potential in Jewish-Christian thinking.

The method used in this work is constructivist, that is, in my efforts to draw from many different sources which cover an expansive range of theological, philosophical, and socio-political territory, I hope to paint an accurate picture for reflecting Christians and Jews to be able to grasp the complexity of the depth and scope within the current and very sensitive Jewish-Christian relationship. Chapter one works as a theological schema that predicates the investigations of chapter two and three. It is a compilation of ideas that are grounded in the theological framework of Kogan's book to be able to further the discussion between Christians and Jews in a progressive and fruitful manner. As the chapters in this thesis represent nothing more than a glimpse of where Jewish-Christian theology has found itself today, it is easily conceptualized that the foundation of the interfaith relationship rests on the attitudes that inform its dialogue. If those attitudes resist change, it will be at the expense of understanding the profound intimacy and interrelatedness of Jews and Christians alike.

For me this thesis represents what its title suggests, *An Exploration*, but for many who are not familiar with the deepest and most sacred layers of theological history and the attitudes that have divided these two religions, this work represents discovery and the opportunity to construct new meaning and value around the issues that I will raise.

Chapter 1

Christian and Jewish Theological Attitudes

The reason I have chosen to undertake this project is because I think Jews and Christians have much to learn from each other in dialogue, and still yet, much to learn about themselves. In particular, the subject matter of this chapter is by far of primary interest in the whole of Jewish-Christian learning, and it is apparent most strikingly in the content of Kogan's chapter *Towards a Pluralist Theology of Judaism*. He claims that while the 'history of Jewish bigotry' has been practically non-existent since the second century, the 'missioning zeal' of Christian negative attitudes have continuously been obsessed with Jewish opposition to their universal claims[1] – one of the many exclusivist strikes recorded against Christianity in his book. At the foundation of interfaith dialogue are the intersecting theological attitudes of Christians and Jews, and in Kogan's book he urges his readers to continue to reexamine the value of exclusivist truth claims if the two sister faiths truly wish to engage in genuine and fruitful dialogue.[2]

This reexamining has been an extremely late development in the life of Christianity that has manifested itself primarily in two ways. One, in the recently adopted inclusivist attitude towards Judaism,[3] a teaching that came from a Christian theological reflection on the religious other at the Second Vatican Council; and two, in the work of contemporary pluralist theologians who wish to continue to break down the obstacles that

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[1] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 237.
[2] *Ibid.*, xiii.
[3] See the formulation of this attitude in Second Vatican Council's document "*Nostra Aetate*." In Falnnery, Austin. ed., *The Basic Sixteen Documents: Vatican Council II.* (Northport, N.Y: Costello Publishing Company, 1996).

interfaith dialogue commonly faces. For the most part, the Church has approached interfaith dialogue with a sense of doctrinal caution. While recognizing the theological value of the existence of Judaism, admitting that, "the Jews are still the people of God, tied to the LORD in eternal covenant,"[4] still the Church maintains ultimacy and the salvific fulfillment of all humanity in the redemptive work of Christ.[5] Regrettably, few Christian theologians represent the pluralist movement in, "announcing the equal rights and possible parity of [both] religions and eschew any final or absolute expression of truth."[6]

The same variety of response has coloured Jewish interfaith attitudes of the past four decades, a range of Conservative disapproval to Reconstructionist praise. In contrast to the effort of the Church, however, "no official branch of Judaism has ever issued a statement on Christianity."[7] As such, Kogan situates his pluralist theological position within, "the universal stress of [his] faith, [which] calls [Jews] to search out the image of God in all human persons, to practice reverence for all life, for all being, and to seek to make real the justice and love of God throughout God's world,"[8] the vision of which has been made real in documents such as *Dabru Emet* issued in September 2000. Judaism continues to affirm a worldly expectation of a social, ethical, and spiritual transformation of the world at large, and it is clear that the most current Jewish scholarship is flooded by

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[4] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 213.
[5] A doctrinal reflection of John 16:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, except through me."
[6] Paul Knitter, "Making Sense of the Many," *Religious Studies Review* 15, no 3 (July 1989), 204.
[7] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 179.
[8] *Ibid.*, 218.

an empathetic spirit of religious revivification. The combination of these ideas have begun to pressure Orthodox Christians and Conservative Jews to reevaluate their particular theological horizons, and explore the host of opportunities to examine the theological assertions of each religion to find truth, compatibility, and mutual apprehension, and to construct a new theology that embraces both traditions respectively.

This spectrum of attitudes toward interfaith theology, I believe, is best represented in work of Frank Whaling, a scholar in the field of Christian theology and world religions. Whaling offers seven 'theological attitudes that are available to the Christian who wishes to reflect upon the multi-religious situation of our world."[9] In order to align our discourse with Kogan to a defined grid, we need only to consider three of these attitudes: *exclusivism, universalisation,* and *relativism.* Although each of these attitudes presuppose fairly specific theological commitments, it is often problematic to choose one as the paradigm model for interfaith dialogue because of both the profound similarities and striking differences that characterize the complex theology of Jews and Christians. It is also important to note that, "although for some Christians [and Jews] one particular theological attitude is 'correct', there is no general consensus throughout the worldwide Christian [and Jewish] communit[ies] whereby all [members] are agreed upon the obvious superiority or validity of such a single theological attitude."[10] This raises the obvious question – which attitude, then, best represents the most authentic reflection of the substantial issues in Jewish-Christian dialogue? I suppose the problem is the finitude of our human language. "With all models and with all technical jargon, there are dangers

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[9] Frank Whaling, *Christian Theology and World Religions* (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1986), 72.
[10] *Ibid.*

of defining things too tightly and of stuffing people into pigeon holes they only half fit."[11] The expectation that Jews and Christians will unveil total theological compatibility by the standards of a single framework for discussion is highly unreasonable and some theologians have even argued that these attitudes have, "increasingly become one of the stumbling blocks to progress in the discussion on how Christians [and Jews] should understand and relate to religious plurality."[12] Kogan touches on this in his work when he reminds his readers that, "one cannot assume that every author who speaks about exclusivism, [universalisation], and [relativism] has precisely, or even broadly, the same understanding of these terms."[13]

The theology of Michael Kogan, however, plays an important role in supporting the relativist attitude that Jews and Christians can, in effect, excavate the theological landscape that has historically been the grounds for battle, and modify the interfaith playing field to one that recognizes no home advantage. In a manner of pushing the boundaries of conventional thinking, Kogan addresses the difficulty in truly understanding the nature of the relationship between Jews and Christians, most apparent when attempting to resolve the theological inconsistencies between the particular doctrines of Covenant and Election, Jesus, and the nature of God. Our post-Holocaust and post Vatican II age recognizes that assessing the fallibility of religious truth-claims is not something Christians can do for Jews anymore, nor something Jews can do for Christians. Because each religious tradition confesses to have historically encountered the

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[11] Paul Knitter, *Jesus and the Other Names* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1996), 4.
[12] Perry Schmidt-Leukel, "Exclusivism, Inclusivism, Pluralism: The Tripolar Typology – Clarified and Reaffirmed," *Myth of Religious Superiority* (Maryknoll, NY: 2005), 14.
[13] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 17.

God of Israel in a uniquely different way, the problem accosted is a matter of determining whether or not genuine assertions about God's revelation have been made on appropriate and acceptable grounds, and to conceive of a new Jewish-Christian theology that can "offer an intellectual and spiritual foundation for our ongoing journey together."[14]

In order to deal more thoroughly with the diversity of interfaith response that Kogan explores in his book, it is our task to sort out what the milieu of each attitude represents in the Jewish-Christian dialogue. It must be made clear that my intention here is not to catalogue a history of the development in Christian and Jewish theological attitudes either, but only to explore the theological implications of what these attitudes point to. It is within the horizon of these categories that, "Christians [can] see the hand of God in the ongoing life and worship of Israel up to the present day and into the future,"[15] and Jews can "affirm that God, the God of Israel and all of humanity, was involved in the life of Jesus, in the founding of the Christian faith, and in its growth spread across much of the world."[16]

Exclusivism

The first of our theological attitudes, on the extreme side of orthodoxy, is exclusivism. Whaling distinguishes two streams of exclusivist theology that are both fully existent, well-developed, and continued to be faithfully lived within the Christian religion:

> On the one hand, it can take an institutional form and this would be found classically in the Roman Catholic dogma *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*

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[14] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), xiv.
[15] *Ibid.*, xiii.
[16] *Ibid.*

> (outside the Church there is no salvation). On the other hand, it can take a doctrinal form whereby salvation is defined in terms of true doctrine.[17]

Another type of exclusivism to consider in this discussion is of the Jewish kind. Kogan uniquely affirms for his people that, "Judaism has been theologically universal and humanistically exclusive...[affirming] the belief that Israel alone is God's chosen people and that only in the origins and history of Israel is God's hand to be found."[18] Because Judaism's bare-bones conception of God as creator, sustainer, and redeemer, is more aligned with a universalist's conception of 'The Real' *an sich*[19] Kogan is easily mislead to claim 'theological universality;' however, the unique history of the Jewish people and their encounter with God is not merely a *human* experience to exclusively belong to, it is also a very particular *theological* way of understanding the divine within that experience. One such instance of this is the Jewish conception of the nature of God, "Hear Israel, the LORD is our God, the LORD is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4). This is extremely opposed to the Christian conception of God revealed in the person of Jesus Christ and the Holy Trinity. Thus, we must consider the theology of this approach as Jewish exclusivism, an option that holds true for many Jews today.

Exclusivism, in all three cases, stems from a particularly specific religious understanding of the divine, that the revelation of God is only available to the people that God chooses (*institutional exclusivism*, Church membership in baptism and faith, or

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[17] Frank Whaling, *Christian Theology & World Religions: A Global Approach* (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1986), 74.

[18] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), xiii.

[19] See John Hick's *Interpretation on Religions: Human Responses to the Transcendent.* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1989) for the formulation of a pluralist theory of religions. Kogan refers to Hick as a foundation of groundwork for understanding pluralism in the Judeo-Christian dialogue.

Jewish exclusivism in the Election of Israel), and to be a witness to that revelation is to interpret, practice and proselytize the Word of God in a single-minded and narrowly conceived way (*doctrinal exclusivism*, Fundamentalist Christianity). You might subscribe to this categorical 'vacuum theology' if you believe that revelation from God and the deepest truths about sharing in the divine life can be reduced to a single historical narrative, for instance, Jesus for Christians, or the Election of Israel for Jews. Naturally, these types of claims are manifest most apparently in religious circles that are eager to claim supremacy and do not wish to explore the vexed theological questions common among humanity any further than what their own convictions are fixed upon. Exclusivism necessarily depends not only on the concept of absolute truth and primacy over and above any "to the contrary" statements, but maintains that that absolute truth is rationally available and ignores, and even condemns, any variation or departure from the religious creed it advertises. Subsequently, a religious belief system that has 'intrinsically superior' status neglects all external pressure to reconsider, reevaluate, or redefine. It is simply the dominion of one belief system over and above the rest.

As counter intuitive as this may be to 21st century liberal North American ideals, the fact of the matter is that both Judaism and Christianity have existing within them groups belonging to this type of extremism. Christian exclusivism, in this case, attempts to uphold a single *de facto* claim on the revelation of God's salvific grace, that it is available to humanity only in the sacrament of Baptism. Gavin D'Costa writes that Christians, "unduly bind this salvation to an explicit confession of Christ."[20] This particular tradition, when contrasted against Judaism, seems to be accredited to St. Paul

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[20] Gavin D'Costa, *Theology and Religious Pluralism: The Challenge of Other Religions* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 75.

from his letter to the Romans. "When Paul argued the priority of faith to law in relationship to God, it was inevitable that the believers in Christ would soon extend priority to superiority and then assert the superiority of Christianity, which represents the 'new Israel' and replaces the discredited 'old Israel' of traditional Judaism."[21] This understanding of the Church displacing Israel in a New Covenant with God is known as supersessionism, one variation within the Christian exclusivist tradition that has stamped a lasting impression on Jewish-Christian relations. [22] Kogan depicts this problem as a central part of the Christian reexamining of Judaism:

> According to this view, Judaism was a used-up, virtually dead religion of the past, the Jews having given up their place as God's people to a new people of God (the Church) who replaced them in the divine plan of salvation. All this happened when the Jews rejected Jesus and were, in turn, rejected by God, an event manifest to all with the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E.[23]

Besides the Pauline texts that feed into supersessionism, other paradigmatic Christian exclusivist claims from the New Testament include John 3:5, "I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit," and Mark 16:16, "whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned." In the early Christian community, these texts swayed the Fathers of the Church to explicitly apply exclusivist principles against pagans and Jews in an attempt to

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[21]Thomas A. Idinopulos, "Covenantal Pluralism and Saul of Tarsus: A Review Article," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 42, no 3 (2007), 457.

[22] See Bruce Marshall's formulation of the problem of supersessionism in "Christ and Cultures: the Jewish people and Christian Theology" in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Docrtine.* Colin Gunton ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 82.

[23] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 165.

fully embrace the Scriptural command to go out and make disciples of all nations: God's way, or the highway, so to speak. Today, this literal interpretation of the Bible is, "the bedrock of the missionary thrust of fundamentalist churches [that] has kept large denominations like the Southern Baptists out of the Jewish-Christian theological dialogue."[24] This kind of fundamentalism envisions a single one-way road that leads to the Kingdom of God, and there is no alternative route, which is why, "it is difficult to ask Evangelicals to consider the possibility that their own absolute faith in Jesus Christ can make room for the ongoing fullness of revelation, authenticity, and fulfillment in the Jewish covenant as an independent religion."[25] Exclusivism will continue to be the stumbling block in interfaith dialogue, especially with an exponentially growing population of over 80 million Fundamentalists in the southern United States who over-glorify Christian revelation in terms of their biblical literalism. Kogan writes, "this incident points to the ongoing conceptual problem for Christians: how to be faithful to the New Testament command to witness for Christ to all peoples and to convert all nations, while, at the same time, affirm the ongoing validity of the covenant between God and Israel."[26]

The problem that Jews must overcome, as defined in the beginning of the chapter, is Jewish exclusivism. This attitude teaches that Israel alone is God's chosen people, that their narrative has no place or meaning for the ministry of Christ, and non-Jews may only

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[24] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 214.

[25] Irving Greenberg, "Covenantal Pluralism," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 34, no 3 (1997), 435.

[26] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), xii.

live lives acceptable to God if they abide by the seven-fold Noahide Law.[27] Kogan writes that this type of orthodoxy believes that "only in Judaism is there a truly revealed faith."[28] Historically, Jews believed that Christianity has never had divine sanctioning. In fact, "as Judaism sees the human dilemma, the election of Israel and gift of Torah are fully sufficient to deal with the problem of human misuse of free will (sin)."[29] There is simply no need for, no reference to, and certainly no belief in the covenantal status of Christ's Church. As Daniel Cohn-Sherbok understands the problem of the election of Israel, "the conviction that God has selected a particular people as his agent is nothing more than an expression of the Jewish people's sense of superiority and impulse to spread its religious message."[30] This particular understanding of 'chosenness' inherently excludes the other, and forces down their throat the universal affirmation of Israel's divinely gifted and elevated status above the world. Although one may argue that "chosenness" is not a superior status, but rather is characterized by an increased sense of responsibility, it is certainly evident in the current political conflict in the Middle East where Israel has continued to fight for possession of land which they believe has been promised to them in divine covenant, they feel a sense of absolute entitlement On this I will discuss more in chapter two. But further, even Kogan's reference to the paradigm of the Jewish ultimate purpose *tikkun olam,* the healing of a broken world, is problematic as it can be seen as a

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[27] "Seven requirements for a just and orderly society given by God to Noah and his sons following the great flood." (Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 73). Kogan notes that "surely the high moral and spiritual standards of Christianity cannot be adequately conceived through the seven commands of the Noahide covenant." (*ibid.,* 14)

[28] *Ibid.*, xiii.

[29] *Ibid.*, 31.

[30] Daniel Cohn-Sherbok, "Jewish Religious Pluralism," *Cross Currents* 46, no 3 (1996), 340.

true signifier of superiority, that the Jews as 'already-healed' are in communion with God, during the time in which the rest of the world is nothing more than spiritually ill.

The problem, in this case, for both religions, is that they only offer one, rigidly concise stencil for the human-divine relationship to be traced on without giving any consideration to the spiritual and moral truths found in the other. "Such attempts at legitimizing ourselves at the expense of the other are unworthy of either people of God."[31] The fact is, exclusivism is completely cut off and compartmentalized from any truly valuable religious attitude. There is no value in attempting to articulate the divine plan for all of humanity by means of an exclusive revelation, and it is simply not a fair representative of the very real plurality of human response we find in the variation of religious expression even within Christian and Jewish practice. So the challenge for interfaith dialogue to be concerned with the, "move beyond the notion that religious truth is restricted to only one faith tradition,"[32] is sufficiently present in Kogan's work. We must consider that, "truth-claims by their very nature must be open to other insights...by testing their compatibility with other truths."[33] Because exclusivism does not share this interest with receptiveness of the other, but rather, holds that its truth is for the other to accept, there is serious tension between what Kogan is working towards in his religious outreach and, for instance, the Christian Fundamentalist creed, which "denies any

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[31] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 171.
[32] *Ibid.*, 231.
[33] Daniel Cohn-Sherbok, "Jewish Religious Pluralism," *Cross Currents* 46, no 3 (1996), 332.

positive salvific role for other religions."[34] The contention that exclusivism is up against is the simple fact that the 21st century has brought with it a new and empathetic global consciousness that shares in an understanding that the question of divine revelation is a human problem and not merely a Christian or Jewish one. Kogan writes, "if we Jews, with at most 15 million people, insist that we are the only bearers of truth, not only are we narrow and egocentric, we are indulging in a kind of theological madness."[35] This 'theological madness' was, until the mid 20th century, the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, embodied in the axiom *extra ecclesia nulla salus*. Modern Christian theology has attempted to amend this position, specifically to make sense of the need for interfaith dialogue, as those, "absolute claims that some Christians make for Christ...[can be] the greatest hindrance to genuine witness."[36]

To be precise, the real issue to deal with is the fact that Kogan's position simply cannot sort through all of the particular doctrinal teachings that are at the heart of division between the Jewish and Christian faiths. Does this mean that it is not sufficient theology? It might, but the move here is to transcend those systematically restricting beliefs. In chapter three, I will give a more careful analysis of the challenge with moving beyond absolute truth-claims between Jews and Christians, but here, our purpose is to engage with the augmented force behind Kogan's theological attitude. "Arguably, such a position is internally incoherent: if God is truly concerned with the fate of all humanity, he would

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[34] Perry Schmidt-Leukel, "Exclusivism, Inclusivism, Pluralism: The Tripolar Typology – Clarified and Reaffirmed," *Myth of Religious Superiority*. (Maryknoll: Snow Lion Publications, 2005), 21.

[35] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 240.

[36] Wesley Ariarajah, *The Bible and People of Other Faiths*. (Maryknoll: Oribis, 1989), 53.

not have disclosed himself fully and finally to a particular people allowing the rest of humanity to wallow in darkness and ignorance."[37] Kogan must agree that interfaith dialogue is about the day-to-day experiences of the human person, our theological connectedness to the divine, and our shared goals in political and social action. After all, "the divine totality is, of course, hidden from finite human beings."[38] Self-transcendence and a common morality are at the root of the interfaith initiative. Exclusive claims cannot be part of Kogan's discussion if we wish to grow and develop in our understanding of the divine. If Christianity wishes to conceive of Judaism as an eternally valid covenantal sister faith tradition, there can be no room for its supersessionist, exclusive claims. This is why an exclusivist attitude is not a viable option for fruitful theological interaction between Jews and Christians.

Universalisation

As Catholicism is traditionally known for its exclusivist position, it is a breath of fresh air to note that since the Second Vatican Council, a new way of assessing the theological meaning of the religious other is being favored – the second model for interreligious dialogue, which lends itself to the interfaith movement far more reasonably – Universalisation. Frank Whaling defines this theological attitude, "that it is not enough for Christ or the Christian tradition to fulfill others, [its proponents argue that] what is required is that they should include others."[39] He also notes that, "universalisation theology is the product primarily of Roman Catholic thinkers and it has flourished in the

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[37] Daniel Cohn-Sherbok, "Jewish Religious Pluralism," *Cross Currents* 46, no 3 (1996), 330.
[38] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 235.
[39] Frank Whaling, *Christian Theology and World Religions* (Basingstoke and Hants: Marshall Pickering, 1986), 87.

wake of Vatican II."[40] Because this Christian theological attitude seems to have prompted the rapid advancement in interfaith discourse, not without mentioning is the current theological attitude of the Church, it is one of our concerns to explore its milieu.

Universalisation is seen as an opportunity for Christianity to continue to, "explore possible ways to maintain the uniqueness of Christ and yet recognize that other faiths contain truth and a path to God."[41] Although this is not the attitude that Kogan believes will yield the best theology, it is still a huge theological step outside the Catholic comfort zone with the religious other. The objective here is to affirm the theological doctrine and history of one specific tradition, Christianity, while simultaneously affirming and respecting the theology of the other, in our case, Judaism. This would imply that Christians might seek to abandon exclusivist claims, reject uniformity, and create a space for Jews to continue to assert the convictions of their own belief while exploring the meaning of God's opening of the covenant through Christ's Church. In connection with Kogan's theology, the interfaith encounter demands specifically that, "we do not give up our conviction of the truth of our understanding, but we do leave open the possibility of the truth of the other's account of things."[42] Universalisation seems to be open to these terms of dialogue.

The benefit of this theological attitude is simple and refreshing: mutual respect and the opportunity to learn and grow together theologically. "Generally, the Church's faith is more accurately expressed as a claim that it too stands within the sphere of that

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[40] *Ibid.*
[41] Paul Knitter, "Making Sense of the Many," *Religious Studies Review* 15, no 3 (1989), 137.
[42] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 32.

love with which God made and is faithful to the Sinai covenant...the church cannot begin to probe the mystery of its own being without stumbling upon the mystery of Israel."[43] While this is a fairly recent amendment to the Christian position, "acknowledging that Jews already dwell in a saving covenant with God,"[44] Jews, on the other hand, have always expected, "that different peoples will conceive of divinity in widely differing ways."[45] Even after twenty centuries of Jewish theology, "Jews, while assuming that their truth was incalculably fuller and richer than that granted to others, still recognize that God has spoken to and about gentiles through those ancient universal ethical rules revealed to the sons of Noah."[46] This may seem as though Judaism sees itself as superior (in the same exclusivist tone aforementioned); however, the Jewish belief maintains that redemption begins with its covenanted people and ends with what the Talmud depicts, that, "the righteous of *all* nations have a share in the world to come." Judaism, in fact, finds itself symmetrically aligned with the type of inclusivist attitude that the Church wishes to explore further. "While Judaism views itself as the true faith of the Jewish people, it does not insist on a world in which everyone is Jewish."[47] Correspondingly, within this attitude, "virtuous Jews and others need not become Christians to be saved by Christ."[48]

But the reason why adopting this attitude has not been as successful as anticipated, quite frankly, is because the singularity of traditional Christian exclusivism is

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[43] Paul Van Buren, "Covenantal Pluralism," *Cross Currents* 40, no 3 (1990), 330-331.
[44] Philip A Cunningham, "A Response to Michael S Kogan Concerning "Reflections on Covenant and Mission". *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 41, no 2 (2004), 273.
[45] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 233.
[46] *Ibid.*, 238.
[47] *Ibid.*, 233.
[48] *Ibid.*, 214.

fervently characteristic within this attitude. Whaling notes that at the core of universalisation theology, "first there is the notion that Christ came to save all humankind...second there is the notion that salvation is by faith."[49] The problem that these concepts imply for interfaith dialogue is prevalent in the *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions* from the Second Vatican Council. The 21st Ecumenical Council, their goal of which was to promote peace and unity, came to affirm that, "the church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are to be found in the patriarchs, Moses and the prophets." Yet at the centre of that same universalisation model of dialogue is the concept that, "Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that *all* may reach salvation." [50] If interfaith dialogue were to be mutually enriching, "it would be far preferable if each party to the dialogue would truly allow the other to define herself."[51] What I mean by this is expressed thoroughly in the theology of Paul van Buren:

> The covenant as we are learning to see it in the Jewish-Christian dialogue, can provide an opening to our appreciation of the richness of God's ways with the inhabitants of this earth, ways in which we may rejoice in all the intimacy of our singularity, without in any way having to deny *a priori* the singularity of others as recipients, along with us, of the fullness of God's ways of being God of the whole earth.[52]

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[49] Frank Whaling, *Christian Theology & World Religions A Global Approach* (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1986), 88.

[50] "*Nostra Aetate*" in Falnnery, Austin. Ed. *The Basic Sixteen Documents: Vatican Council II.* (Northport, N.Y: Costello Publishing Company, 1996).

[51] Kogan, Michael. *Opening the Covenant.* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 130.

[52] Paul Van Buren, "Covenantal Pluralism," *Cross Currents* 40, no 3 (1990), 339.

The Church, by adopting this universalisation attitude, has placed herself in a theological stalemate, incapacitated from enjoying the 'fullness of God's ways of being God of the whole earth'. The remnants from a long history of exclusivist truth-claims in the Christian tradition have not been abandoned, and the Church continues to suffer from what Kogan calls, "Christomonism – a single-visioned focus on faith in Christ as the one path to God."[53] The results of this are terms such as 'anonymous Christians,'[54] and theologians who continue to affirm that, "for all people regardless of where they find themselves in relation to the church, they are universally united to Christ in the work of salvation."[55] In other adaptations of the universalisation attitude, such as the theology of Richard Drummond, there is a firm expression to, "hold up the universal normativity and unsurpassibility of Christ as integral to the Christian confession, but as realizable only at the end of history,"[56] that is, not presently realizable to Judaism, but nonetheless, the final truth. Another, S. Mark Heim, argues that "the revelation contained in Jesus Christ is 'final and decisive' for all times and that 'Christ is, in short, the living measure to which

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[53] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), xiii.

[54] See Karl Rhaner's "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions," *Theological Investigations*, Vol V, (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 1966), 131. "Christianity does not simply confront the member of an extra-Christian religion as a mere non-Christian but as someone who can and must already be regarded in this, or that respect as an anonymous Christian."

[55] See Jacques Dupuis *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue.* (London: Orbis, 2002), 210. Dupuis' Christocentrism stands as a prime example of universalisation theology that does not leave room for an authentic experience with God for the religious other.

[56] Paul Knitter rev. of Richard Drummond. *Toward a New Age in Christian Theology.* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985) in "Making Sense of the Many" *Religious Studies Review* 15, no 3 (1989), 205.

no other gauge is adequate."[57] The theology of universalisation sounds all too familiar of the exclusivist agenda.

From this stacked bench of Christian universalisationists, the attitude rests on the assumption that the many are affirmed and fulfilled in the one, that those who through no fault of their own do not know Christ can only still attain salvation mysteriously in connection with Christ's Church. Is this not the ultimate theological paradox? According to Kogan, "this Christian theory, logical as it may be, establishes a permanent inequality between Judaism and Christianity, attributing ultimate truth only to the latter."[58] Yet, the Magisterium continues to teach the position. Kogan pinpoints one example of this attitude being endorsed in the Text of the Seventh General Audience Talk of John Paul II from May 31, 1995.

John Paul II begins by stating, "the gift of salvation is not limited." This falls directly in line with contemporary Catholic thought, that God's grace cannot be bound by the walls of the church; however, he then continues in the same paragraph that, "the way of salvation *always* passes through Christ," and proclaims that, "belonging to the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, however implicitly and indeed mysteriously, is an *essential* condition for salvation." If this is not confusing to a Jewish audience, one last sentence in the statement, which eerily resurrects the Church's exclusivist negative attitude, would be. "Whoever does not know Christ, even through no fault of his own, is in a state of darkness and spiritual hunger, often with negative repercussions at the cultural and moral

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[57] Paul Knitter rev. of S. Mark Heim. *Is Christ the Only Way? Christian Faith in a Pluralistic World.* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1985) in "Making Sense of the Many" *Religious Studies Review.* 15, no 3 (1989), 205.

[58] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant (*New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008.), 141.

level."[59] Not only does this pronouncement ignore that the question of salvation for Jews is merely peripheral, opposed to its significant centrality in Christian thinking, I am not sure what response is most appropriate other than to be in agreement with Kogan to challenge it. "If the first covenant is truly still in force, and, through the church, gentiles are grafted in, why insist on this retroactive imposition of Christ into an earlier tradition?"[60] The theology coming from the Vatican is ambiguous and unsatisfactory. Its ridiculousness is obvious that when presenting this document to a Jewish audience, "some [would] giggle in amusement at what seems to be an obvious absurdity."[61] The idea of universalisation theology, although meant to be a progressive movement by the Church, really turns out to be a regressive folly. "The language of public pronouncements is purposely ambiguous, expressing perhaps an appreciation (even admiration) for Jewish faithfulness to Torah but at the same time presupposing the universal nature of the church's apostolate."[62] If what Catholics are trying to say is that "Judaism is seen as a worthwhile, living religious tradition that Christians should study as eager learners,"[63] then Pope John Paul II's address is in dire need of serious reevaluation. That is not the message that is being sent to the Jewish community, or any other religious tradition for that matter.

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[59] *L'Osservatore Romano*. "All Salvation Comes Through Christ." [online] The Vatican, (14 June 1995, p. 11, accessed July 2009, available from < http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP950607.HTM>

[60] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 131.

[61] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 130.

[62] Isaac C. Rottenberg, "More Steps Toward Dialogue: A Tentative Response to Michael Kogan," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 33, no 2 (1996), 240.

[63] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 124.

The benefit of affirming the Christian doctrinal core within the domain of nterfaith exploration becomes less and less appealing to the religious other when its universalist vision is not actually as universal as it proclaims to be. Furthermore, this conflicting theological attitude responds 'no' to Kogan's question, "is Christianity capable of saying, or will she ever be capable of saying, that God has made an earlier and permanently efficacious covenant with Israel that is fully sufficient to bring Jews what Christians call 'salvation' [apart from Christ]?"[64] Two things, the Christ-event and the election of Israel, must be separated theologically if Judaism is to be regarded as having any true salvific value. "How can one *logically* claim that Israel is still God's covenanted people and then hold that Jesus' messianic ministry ('the Christ-event') has profound faith implications for Jews as well as gentiles?"[65] A distinction must be made. It is coherent to understand Christianity as an offshoot of Israel's historical encounter with God as a foundation of meaning for interfaith dialogue. It is incoherent to understand the Jewish relationship with God through the person of Jesus and the tradition that came after. "If God's pledge of salvation to the world in Jesus Christ is unsurpassable, then the election of Israel is unsurpassable. Christians cannot therefore be supersessionists about Israel unless they are willing to stop being Christians."[66] Our discussion will benefit from coming to terms with the reality of this. "The permanence of Israel's election thus entails

[64] *Ibid.*, 121.
[65] Isaac Rottenberg rev. of Michael Kogan's *Opening the Covenant.* [online] (Oxford University Press.) accessed July 09 available from <www.isaacrottenberg.com/uploads/pdf/...isaacrottenberg.../a_review.pdf>
[66] Brcuce Marshall, "Christ and Cultures: the Jewish people and Christian theology" in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Docrtine.* Colin Gunton ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 88.

the permanence of the distinction between Jew and Gentile."[67] What needs to change is the Christian expectation that the one will necessarily save the rest. Speaking bluntly on behalf of the Jewish people, Paul van Buren writes, "if we fail to bring our own identity into the conversation, if we leave behind our own story, the ensuing discussion can hardly be an interreligious one."[68] This is why the universalisation attitude is not a viable option for fruitful theological interaction between Jews and Christians.

Relativism

The third theological attitude under examination, which has been adopted by many participants in the Jewish-Christian dialogue, is what Frank Whaling calls relativism. Those committed to a relativistic attitude are not concerned with affirming the most theological 'correct' doctrine, gaining full membership in the Church, or the singular revelatory experience of the Election of Israel and the Covenant at Sinai. Opposed to *institutional* and *doctrinal exclusivism*, this pluralist approach is treasured by the fact that it avoids the inevitable disagreements between the particular theological inconsistencies of Judaism and Christianity and fosters a far more opened perspective in conceiving of the variety of God's revelatory action. "Religions," Whaling writes, "are relatively true. They are true relative to the cultures in which they reside, the people who attain faith through them, and the goal toward which they are all advancing."[69] This model for interfaith dialogue not only embraces the differences between religions, such as the clashing of Christocentrism and the Election of Israel, but it assumes that these

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[67] *Ibid.*, 91.
[68] Paul Van Buren, "Covenantal Pluralism," *Cross Currents* 40, no 3 (1990), 332.
[69] Frank Whaling, *Christian Theology and World Religions: A Global Approach.* (Basingstoke and Hants: Marshall Pickering, 1986), 95.

points of fundamental disagreement actually bring verity to a new concept of hope in the interfaith discussion:

> If we set aside our principle of scarcity and adopt the more appropriate principle of superabundance, it should be possible for us to speak of and find actual delight in not only the variety of human ways of speaking of God, or of that which is the ultimate reality, but even more in the incredible richness of a God who can love all creation and relate to the multiplicity of creatures in multiple ways.[i]

When taking relativism into consideration it is important to note that, like any other theological attitude, there is inevitably going to be variations of its claim within the scope of its ambition. For instance, a more progressively developed work on the theology of this attitude is recognized in the writing of John Hick. At the heart of his argument is an axiomatic acceptance of the variety of religious consciousness that has been present throughout the history of humankind. He writes:

> The great world faiths embody different perceptions and conceptions of, and correspondingly different responses to, the Real from within the major variant ways of being human; and that within each of them the transformation of human existence from self-centeredness to Reality-centeredness is taking place.[70]

Hick's work is the product of a particular mode of thinking within relativism, in which religion is verifiable by its impact on life and its people's ethical transformation, and what Whaling refers to as 'the goal toward which all are advancing.' The problem, however, with using this model for our discourse is that religion then becomes defined by the search of, "truth seen not in terms of a religion's being an accurate reflection of the

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[70] John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religions: Human Responses to the Transcendent.* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1989), 240.

livine reality but as producing a desired end."[71] I am not convinced that this would be an ıppropriate attitude for dialogue when the Judeo-Christian religions have been guided by ı divine outreach to humanity and a very specific encounter with God's revelation. When he role of God in His Covenantal offering to His Elected People and Church is liminished, if not ignored altogether, what is left for discussion is that revelation is a natter of partisanship and not objective truth, and human subjectivity is the architect in he projection of a religious construct. As Kogan points out in his book, "the problem vith this kind of pluralism is that it seems alien to the lived experience of the believer in he pew who is convinced that the content of his faith is divinely revealed."[72]

The bread and butter of Michael Kogan's theological horizon, rather, is more in ine with the pluralism of Paul Knitter. Knitter argues, "though we Christians claim Jesus he Christ as our necessary and happy starting point and focus for understanding ɔurselves and other peoples, we must also remind ourselves that the Divine Mystery vhich we know in Jesus and which we call *Theos* or God, is ever greater than the reality ınd message of Jesus."[73] The discrepancy here is that the relativism of Hick validates the vorld religions based only on their existence and common goal while it misses an ɛssential element in both Jewish and Christian religious experiences, "being commanded ɔy God and being shaped and defined by that command."[74] The theology of Kogan and Knitter take account of the teleological feature of Hick's relativism, but offer a more ınique relativist approach in that it is, "more responsive to the demands of [a Jewish-

[71] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 175.
[72] *Ibid*, 176.
[73] Paul Knitter, *Jesus and the Other Names* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 9.
[74] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 235.

Christian] theology."[75] They present a more comprehensive way of understanding the specific doctrine, worship, and historical experiences of the two faith traditions in their own integrity. While Knitter resolves for Christians that, "one is not [actually] abandoning the Christian witness contained in scripture and tradition, but rather understanding it more deeply and thus preserving it, when one sublates the given Christocentric approach to other believers with one that is theocentric [or relativistic],"[76] Kogan suggests for his Jewish audience, "if we adopt, as we must, a broad pluralistic interpretation of the particular and the universal in Jewish tradition, we arrive at a liberating vision that will enable Judaism is live in a productive and mutually enriching relationship with its sister faiths around the world."[77] This reason for the creation of this kind of a theology, opposed to the one of Hick, is to emphasize that, "to affirm another religious community's spiritual worth without grounding the affirmation in one's own religious particularity would result in a relativism that eventually denies the value of any religious particularity."[78] Kogan and Knitter give a fair representation of this relativist adaptation. They break down the conventional barriers of exclusivism that aim to prove one religious tradition right and the rest wrong, and give a fair and equally valid voice to each participant in the examination of the Judeo-Christian sphere. "Instead of being *the* chosen people, [Jews] begin to see themselves as *a* chosen people. Instead of *the* true

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[75] *Ibid.*, 176.
[76] Paul Knitter, *Jesus and the Other Names* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1996), 9.
[77] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 232.
[78] Philip A. Cunningham, "A Response to Michael S Kogan Concerning 'Reflections on Covenant and Mission'," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 41, no 2 (2004), 274.

church, Christians come to see themselves as *a* true church."[79] In this sense, relativism surpasses the universalisationist position in which God's Covenant with Israel need not be understood as salvifically operative only through the fulfillment of Christ's work. In Judeo-Christian terms, this take on relativism might think of, "the People of Israel [as] *all* who take up the covenantal task of world redemption."[80] This idea suggests that both Jews and Christians are connected in, "a human-divine partnership [that] will voluntarily and jointly recreate Earth as paradise,"[81] while at the same time, redefines an important Christian theological assumption, that, "what the church came to confess as the 'Christ-event' has no *salvific* implications for Jews."[82]Why this approach is favored by Kogan in his theology is because, "it calls the self to proclaim the truth it has received, but also to reach beyond the self, whether that self be individual or collective."[83] The milieu of relativism in this case conceives that, "Jews and Christians are bound by equal noncompeting covenants, which oblige them together to engage God's law as a mission to 'repair the world' and thus move it toward moral and spiritual perfection and redemption."[84]

If the idea stands that God sends different revelations to different people at different points in history, and in pluralist terms, "all theories of the divine are restricted

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[79] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 241.
[80] Irving Greenberg, "Covenantal Pluralism," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 34, no 3 (1997), 425.
[81] *Ibid.*, 427.
[82] Isaac Rottenberg rev. of Michael Kogan's *Opening the Covenant*. [online] (Oxford University Press.) accessed July 09 available from <www.isaacrottenberg.com/uploads/pdf/...isaacrottenberg.../a_review.pdf>
[83] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 240.
[84] Thomas A. Idinopulos, "Covenantal Pluralism and Saul of Tarsus: A Review Article," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 42, no 3 (2007), 455.

by time and place, by language and historical experience,"[85] then no one particular historical understanding of biblical revelation, divine worship or liturgical practice can be considered the fullest conception of religious expression and knowledge. It follows from this that the terms of Christianity must not necessarily be in fundamental agreement with the terms of Judaism in order for each tradition to respect and learn from the other. Relativism in this light "recognize[s] that what is 'absolute' and 'decisive' in any religion is one's commitment to truth; one's grasp of truth, however, is and remains limited."[86] The fecundity of this attitude is by far the most promising for our current discussion.

Towards a Relativist Theology

Besides making the choice as to which theological attitude best suits the nature of Jewish-Christian dialogue, which in light of our discussion I hope the relativism of Kogan and Knitter would be kept in mind, it is the theological and doctrinal implications of adopting that attitude that become the stumbling block for conservative Christians and Jews to be engaged in dialogue. For instance, the implications of the age-old exclusivist attitude were singularity, superiority, and absoluteness. According to Kogan, this kind of a discussion is defined by, "corporate egoism of creed and community."[87] Where Jews and Christians could see potential for theological compatibility, the exclusivist attitude presupposed the notion of theological reductionism, that, "doctrinal reconciliation

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[85] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 241.

[86] Paul Knitter, "Making Sense of the Many," *Religious Studies Review* 15, no 3 (1989), 207.

[87] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 241.

without doctrinal change is self-contradictory."[88] But it is obvious in the recent ecumenical and interfaith work of both Jews and Christians that the discussion need not surrender to this claim. A prominent thinker on this, George Lindbeck, believes that this new religious outlook is:

> The product of a quarter century of growing dissatisfaction with the usual ways of thinking about those norms of communal belief and action which are generally spoken of as the doctrines or dogmas of churches...doctrines regulate truth claims by excluding some and permitting others, but the logic of their communally authoritative use hinders or prevents them from specifying positively what is to be affirmed.[89]

The argument here is that the traditional function of doctrine, which in full effect is exclusivism, precludes the option of authenticating the religious experience of the other in fruitful interfaith dialogue. Where members of exclusivism misunderstand the apprehension of relativism is in the context of such universal claims as, "the Real [*an sich*] transcends human comprehension and hence it must be admitted that Jewish religious convictions are no different in principle from those found in [Christianity] – all are lenses through which divine reality is conceptualized."[90] While Hick would agree here, these vague pluralist statements tend to meld the particular theological doctrines of Christians and Jews into general unequivocal categories, this inevitably begs the question, "can one be a pluralist while holding to the truth of the revealed nature of one's own faith?"[91]

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[88] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1984), 15.
[89] *Ibid., Foreward.*
[90] Daniel Cohn-Sherbok, "Jewish Religious Pluralism," *Cross Currents* 46, no 3 (1996), 342.
[91] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 236.

As we have seen from this study, however, Kogan and Knitter support that, "religious pluralists need give up none of their positive claims or traditional beliefs about what they have received."[92] In this light, the use of Lindbeck's suggestion, that the exclusivist view, which he defines as 'cognitive propositional,'[93] must be reconceived and understood in light of the new relativist attitudes that are being adopted in the interfaith discussion, identified in the new 'cultural-linguistic' approach. If throughout the Jewish-Christian dialogue:

> Emphasis is placed on those respects in which religions resemble languages together with their correlative forms of life and are thus similar to culture...there is no logical problem in understanding how historically opposed positions can in some, even if not all, cases be reconciled while remaining in themselves unchanged.[94]

The 'cultural-linguistic' and relativist views of religion are wholly compatible and when appropriated, Lindbeck argues that the implied view of doctrine would also change. He calls this 'rule theory':

> Rules, unlike propositions or expressive symbols, retain an invariant meaning under changing conditions of compatibility and conflict...the function of church doctrine that becomes most prominent in this perspective is their use, not as expressive symbols or as truth claims, but as communally authoritative rules of discourse, attitude, and action.[95]

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[92] *Ibid.*, 237.
[93] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Wesminister Press, 1984), 16. The notion that "religions are thought of as similar to philosophy or science."
[94] *Ibid.*, 18.
[95] *Ibid.*

Because, "the relationship between a religious aim and the pattern of life that is commended to those who seek it is similarly intrinsic,"[96] the fullness of what Kogan and Knitter contend in their theology of relativism, "must be grounded in a living faith tradition,"[97] in which, "the only workable criterion for religious truth is whether it can be realized in peoples' lives."[98] This bespeaks an understanding of the need for an incorporation of Lindbeck's 'rule theory' in the theological and religious understanding of the Judeo-Christian vision. Positively speaking, this may be the most proper forum, in which a reevaluation of the feasibility that God has revealed Himself to more than one single community, can be brought to the forefront of the discussion. This shall inform the rest of this thesis' theological investigation.

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[96] W.T. Dickens, "Frank Conversations: Promoting Peace Among the Abrahamic Traditions through Interreligious Dialogue," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 34, no 3 (2006), 403.

[97] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 236.

[98] Paul Knitter, "Making Sense of the Many," *Religious Studies Review* 15, no 3 (1989), 204.

Chapter 2

Theological Attitudes and Politics

Preface

Before I begin to explore the theological attitude of thinking and action that has continued to distort the apprehension of political theology for both Christians and Jews, I ought to give a brief introduction to the framework in which Kogan grounds his argument.

Introduction to Jewish and Christian Polity

Jews and Christians enter society both religiously connected and politically incongruent. Today, especially in the Western world, it has become entrenched in society to embrace the autonomy of the State apart from religion, to recognize that the two belong compartmentalized from each other, the State responsible for the governance of its citizens, religion responsible for human spiritual guidance. This conception has not been endorsed in the Middle East where theological expectation and political conceit have come face to face in the midst of crisis. If we consider, however, with a cultural-linguistic approach, that, "religion can be viewed as a kind of cultural and/or linguistic framework or medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought,"[1] it will be recognizable that Christians and Jews will each have their own particular understanding of integralism. At the root of these understandings are two different perceptions of where Kogan says, "Christians tend to see distinctions where Jews do not."[2] He suggests that the division of the body and soul in ancient Greek and Christian thought is the blueprint in

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[1] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1984), 33.
[2] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 226.

which the separation of Church and State is ultimately grounded, a point of reference that Judaism does not contend as radically. Because of the discrepancies in the appropriation of this doctrine, Kogan has argued that the inability to formulate a single understanding between the carnal and the spiritual has negatively affected the political discussion between Christians and Jews. This juxtaposition of political ideals is the "radical divergence of perceptions" that Kogan speaks about, and one that I will deal with briefly here.[3]

(a) Body and Soul

Here, Kogan claims that the Christian teaching begins with St. Augustine. In his work *Concerning the Teacher* he distinctively gives a conception of human nature in which the soul is seen as a spiritual substance apart from the body, similar to Plato who spoke of the soul as imprisoned in the body. "For if a body be made by a body, it cannot be made whole...and if this is so, the mind which clearly excels the body has power to a greater degree. And thus the mind is proved immortal...however much the soul is joined to a body occupying space, still it is not joined locally."[4] When the ensuing discussion is connected to the political ideas in Augustine's *City of God*, on face value, Kogan claims that it is easy to read into the text to believe that he means that man is both body and soul – the body, ultimately signifying the earthly city, and the soul ultimately signifying the heavenly city – allegorically aligning the body with the temporal State and the soul with

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[3] The claim to this divergence in Judeo-Christian belief informs Kogan's examination of political theology. For our discussion, I have chosen to examine the specific examples of Augustine's *City of God* and Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem*, which I believe best represent this juxtaposition, and also to give insight as to how body/soul teaching has influenced Christianity and Judaism in subscribing to contrasting views in the relationship between Church and State.

[4] Augustine, *Concerning the Teacher and the Immortality of the Soul.* (New York: Appelton-Century-Crofts, 1938), 73, 81.

eternal felicity in Heaven. Of course this treatment of Augustine, using body/soul dualism as a springboard for understanding the *two cities* political theory, is not historically correct. Furthermore, Augustine never equates the visible church with the Kingdom of God.[5] What is particularly useful about Kogan's misreading of the texts, however, is to notice how deep the division between Christian and Jewish ontological polity truly is – the implications, of which, are daunting to Jews: it dismantles any unifying or holistic understanding of the human person. Augustine writes in *City of God*:

> All man's use of temporal things is related to the enjoyment of earthly peace in the earthly city; whereas in the Heavenly City it is related to the enjoyment of eternal peace...in serving God the soul rightly commands the body.[6]

The reason why Kogan finds this ground shaking is because the body/soul doctrine that Christians assert, as well as the political structure offered in Augustine's account reaffirm a view of humanity that, "*sin dominates individuals and the whole human race.*"[7] While this model posits, "When we shall have reached that peace, this mortal life shall give place to one that is eternal, and our body shall be no more this animal body which by its corruption weighs down the soul,"[8] the Judaic understanding of body and soul reflects a more intimate understanding of God's law and the nature of the human person, something

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[5] In Augustine's *City of God* he did not consider the two cities to be identical with the church and state, body and soul, respectively. With the decisive element of love in the formation of a society, those who love the world are found both in the state and in the church. Furthermore, the city of God is not identical with the Church since not all members of the Church will be saved, and similarly, there are those who are a part of the state who also love God, a blurring of the division. Conclusively, the body/soul dualism of Augustine's theology does not necessarily translate into the dualism of Augustine's politics. But it is, for the sake of our argument, interesting to note this fundamental misconception by Kogan.

[6] Augustine, *City of God* (London: Penguin, 1984), XIX.14.

[7] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 22.

[8] Augustine, *City of God* (London: Penguin, 1984), XIX. 23.

that gives way to a contrasting polity. "All laws are based on eternal truths of reason...the laws and doctrines are related to each other like body and soul."[9] The grounding of this Jewish conception begins with Genesis 2:7. It reads, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Man is formed out of the dust of the ground, not out of spirit, and 'became' a living soul. A soul, therefore, is what man is, not something that man has.

It is clear that these two teachings are disconnected. The Christian dualism of body and soul fosters a particular political understanding that places the spiritual far above the corporal, whereas the Judaic holistic understanding of body and soul leads to a political stance that, "Jews exist for the sake of the world,"[10] the body and soul are intimately created, "called to labor for the advancement of God's reign on earth."[11] While Augustinian politics tends to focus on *teleology*, Jewish politics (informed especially by the Talmud) would teach, "not to focus on the coming judgment, but to do the good for its own sake and out of devotion to the Holy One."[12] When Mendelssohn writes in *Jerusalem*, his concern is not the separation of the temporal and spiritual to distinguish state and church. Mendelssohn insists that, "our welfare in this life is ... one and the same as [our] eternal felicity in the future."[13] Judaism is, if not entirely focused on 'this' world,

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[9], Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem: Or On Religious Power and Judaism* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1983), 99.
[10] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) 82.
[11] *Ibid.*, 12.
[12] *Ibid.*, 11.
[13] Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem: Or On Religious Power and Judaism.* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1983), 39.

surely more so than is Christianity, and Kogan contends, "[Jews] do not make the distinction Christians do, in this case at least, between religion and politics."[14]

The peculiar thing is, in the midst of this disagreement in political theology, Christianity stands on one side suspecting that a combined ethic of body and soul (State and Church, effectively) has the problem that the two may be in conflict. On the other side, where Judaism suspects that the combined ethic of body and soul is the nature of God's creative act and theocratic rule, it could reasonably be interpreted that what Christians fear is exactly the core of the problem in the Middle East crisis: religiously influenced, unjust political action - Judaism characterized by a resort to military violence. The point here is not to conclude that Christian political dualism is a more appropriate polity to be able to distinguish what the role of the sacred is amongst the secular, but rather to recognize that if Mendelssohn is correct, that "our welfare in this life is ... one and the same as [our] eternal felicity in the future," and Jews are divinely commissioned to *tikkun olam*, the use of unjust[15] political/military force to sanction their claim to the land of Israel is not exactly what the Jewish witness is supposed to stand for.

(b)Implications and the Coherency of Two Compatibly Incompatible Theologies

The political implications of body/soul dualism for Christians are clear:

> Christianity viewed the material world as inherently evil and sought salvation in an escape from terrestrial realities. The human body as well as the body politic were allegedly seen as far inferior to the realm of spiritual realities; and thus an extreme other-worldliness took over.[16]

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[14] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 227.

[15] Unjust in terms of religiously grounded political enforcement.

[16] Isaac Rottenberg, "Political Theology: A Jewish-Christian Dispute." [online] accessed June, available from <www.isaacrottenberg.com/...isaacrottenberg.../ political_theology__2_.pdf>

In this statement we see how a particular strand of Augustinian politics has historically been taken up by the Church and misunderstood; but we can see the division between Christian and Jewish teachings takes precedent in our discussion. The beginnings of this Christian political teaching reside with Jesus, who gives a very clear model in the Gospel narrative for the way that the State and Church should be related, "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." (Lk 20:25) This works as somewhat of a skeletal structure for the framing of Augustinian politics and the separation of Church and State which has long been taught in Christian history, most famously articulated in *City of God*. Augustine writes:

> I classify the human race into two branches: the one consists of those who live by human standards, the other of those who live according to God's will. I also call these two classes the two cities, speaking allegorically. By two cities I mean two societies of human beings, one of which is predestined to reign with God for all eternity, the other doomed to undergo eternal punishment with the Devil.[17]

The Catechism of the Catholic Church has continued to embrace this conception, that, "the Church is not to be confused in any way with the political community," (CCC 2245) and there has always been a greater tendency for Christians to continue to see the authority of the Church in terms of its "sign and safeguard of the transcendent character of the human person,"[18] and not so much in its dealings with state citizenship. The Church, however, has historically had an ambiguous, and for the most part, corrupt relationship with the State. John Paul II admitted to this in an address to the European Parliament at Strasbourg in 1988. "Medieval Latin Christendom, according to the Pope,

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[17] Augustine, *City of God* (London: Penguin, 1984), XV.1.
[18] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 2245.

failed to distinguish sufficiently between the respective spheres of influence of faith and civil life and thereby overstepped the boundary between the realms of Caesar and of God. Religious integralism, which still prevails in some parts of the world, identifies citizenship with a specific religious affiliation, and thereby exerts a pressure on the consciences that violates the principle of religious freedom," and other fundamental human rights.[19] In effect, this was the dominating influence throughout the history of proselytizing Christian exclusivist truth-claims. Although the Christian teaching seems to be fundamentally at odds with the Jewish tradition, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has demonstrated an overstepping of this boundary again. This does not necessarily mean that there is incompatibility between the two teachings, but rather, with the adoption of a relativistic attitude, it is expected that a different community's religious experience will yield a different political outlook.

As prominently developed in Moses Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem*, the case is that the two institutions of "Church and State" are understood as constantly working together to promote public virtue. "[Mendelssohn] sees the teachings of religion as closely related to the proscriptions of civil law,"[20] as he writes, "religion and state are on the same footing...the common good includes the present as well as the future, the spiritual as well as the earthly. One is inseparable from the other."[21] From the context that ancient Israel was a theocracy[22] a more this-worldly orientation of religious discernment and praxis was

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[19] Peter Phan, *The Gift of the Church* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), 108.
[20] Jonathan Cohen, "Some Jewish Reflections on Locke's Letter Concerning Toleration," *Cross Currents* 56, no 1 (2006), 69.
[21] Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem: Or On Religious Power and Judaism* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1983), 72.
[22] Jonathan Cohen, "Some Jewish Reflections on Locke's Letter Concerning Toleration" *Cross Currents* 56, no 1 (2006), 68.

already set in place, thus giving way to Mendelssohn's argument that it is, "in the strictest sense, neither in keeping with the truth nor advantageous to man's welfare to sever the temporal so neatly from the eternal."[23] Today, the result of "Christianity's weakened political presence in the world [which] corresponds to the increased political power of Jews,"[24] is that Jews, living in the State of Israel, have distorted this tradition. What we can deduce from this is that it is not difficult see an exclusivist theological attitude as the cause of distortion in the relationship between the religious and political spheres. The reason I introduced this is to establish the prevalence of adopting a cultural-linguistic/relativistic attitude in interfaith dialogue. From this we turn to an investigation of Christian and Jewish theological attitudes in political-theology.

Theological Attitudes and Politics

Central to the many subjects in Jewish-Christian relations discussed is an area of dialogue that, for Kogan, is the locus of a "radical divergence of perceptions," which "threatens to derail theology" and "destroy one of the most hopeful developments in Western religious history in the last 2000 years." That area is Political Theology. The reason why this is such an extremely important discussion for interfaith dialogue is simply because the religious and moral commitments of the human person are often what inform their political involvement in society. If an exclusivist theological attitude is what characterizes those religious and moral commitments, which was not only the case in the Christian-Political relationship for two thousand years, but also, in which Kogan argues, is the case of the current State of Israel's political/military action against the Palestinians,

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[23] Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem: Or On Religious Power and Judaism* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1983), 39.
[24] Luke Timothy Johnson rev. of *Christianity in Jewish Terms. Commonweal.* (April 20, 2001), 32.

the worst seems to be inevitable. In either case, the feelings of one religion towards another will be altered. While Christians have only recently overcome this terrible misconception, Fundamentalists excluded, proclaiming optimistically to share a common belief in the theological truths of the God of Abraham and His covenantal promises *to* and *for the land of* Israel, they disagree on the terms of the political action that has been taken to place a stronghold on the fulfillment of those promises. After it seemed so clear in Second Vatican theology that, "the Holocaust [had] unleashed a paroxysm of Christian self-critique and theological determination to overcome the "teaching of contempt" tradition, [in which] contempt breeds apathy to others' fate, if not the will to participate in assault upon them,"[25] should it not be self-evident to Jews that it is not proportionate to a Covenantal theology to be contemptuous towards Palestinians? In Kogan's tenth chapter *Does Politics Trump Theology?*, what he challenges his readers to do is attempt to explain away the discrepancies of the State of Israel whose actions challenge the moral value and call to witness of the Judaic faith, and then resolve the political-theological issue with an adequate understanding of the Christian role in these affairs.

Inevitably the argument bears down on reconciling a Jewish covenantal theology of land with the intentions behind the war in the Middle East. What needs to be clarified here is that I do not wish to offer a full discussion of a theology of land, but rather, use the dispute over land as an example of the kind of theological attitude that can manifest itself in such claims. Kogan discusses the major role that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has played in cultivating, not only a high stream of tension in our political discussion, but a strong juncture for theological dispute. He writes, "the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

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[25] Irving Greenberg, "Covenantal Pluralism," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 34, no 3 (1997), 432.

invaded what had previously been primarily a religious discussion."[26] Now, 'invaded' is a fairly harsh word, but it is the reality of the situation. Speaking on behalf of Canada, Israel is not like our Western democracy in which the State subscribes to a zero tolerance policy for religious admonition. The relationship between the state and religion has always been something that has been ambivalently conceived, and in this case, where the Church teaches that, "it is a part of [her] mission to pass moral judgments in matters related to politics whenever the fundamental rights of man or the salvation of souls requires it,"[27] Israel has been left feeling victimized by, "the church, [who feels] solidarity with Palestinian members of their own denominations."[28] In an address to his Excellency Mr. Mordechay Lewy, Ambassador of Israel to the Holy See, the issue is formulated by Pope Benedict XVI, who writes:

> Accordingly, I would urge your Government to make every effort to alleviate the hardship suffered by the Palestinian community, allowing them the freedom necessary to go about their legitimate business, including travel to places of worship, so that they too can enjoy greater peace and security... When all the people of the Holy Land live in peace and harmony, in two independent sovereign states side by side, the benefit for world peace will be inestimable, and Israel will truly serve as אור לגוים ("light to the nations", Is 42:6), a shining example of conflict resolution for the rest of the world to follow.[29]

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[26] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 216.
[27] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 2246.
[28] *Ibid.*, 228.
[29] The Vatican, *Address of Benedict XVI to his Excellency Mr. Mordechay Lewy, Ambassador of Israel to the Holy See.* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, May 12, 2008, accessed June 2009); available from http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080512_ambassador-israel_en.html; Internet.

It is no surprise that Jews see the Church as 'the pot calling the kettle black' with Christianity's record of abusing Jews, denouncing Judaism, and not least of all her silence through the devastating events of the Holocaust.

But in the interests of reconciliation and ecumenism, it would still seem obvious for Christians to feel compelled to question, in the context of both theological rapprochement and social justice, a state which is supposed to represent themselves as a light to the nation, but are standing tall as, "a relatively powerful, nuclear-armed [oppressor]."[30] The Israeli-Palestinian issue is not a new one, but with the recent interfaith concept that "that age of Christendom has passed,"[31] Kogan calls his Jewish audience to recognize that, "we Jews have presented ourselves to the world in two capacities: as a witness people of faith and as a political nation armed to the teeth. Do not these capacities clash?"[32] The heart of the issue is adopting a new theological attitude, the relativism that I have suggested is apposite to Jewish-Christian dialogue, and amending those exclusivist claims which are the encumbrance to both interfaith theology and political righteousness. Is it true that the claim to the land of Israel, every single acre of covenantal land, is necessarily indispensable to the fulfillment of the Jewish praxis, witness and covenantal living? Does theological exclusivism warrant Jewish-Israeli threat to the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian people and their land? Reconstructionist Jews would disagree urging the Orthodox Extremists to reconsider, 'Do we really want support of Israel that is based on an understanding of 'God's

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[30] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 227.
[31] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 216 – quoted from the "Theological Understanding of 1987.
[32] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 226.

promises to His people,' promises that many of us have long since demythologized in our own thinking, promises that encourage what for some of us are dangerous trends within our own community?"[33] For Kogan the objection of demythologizing truth-claims is a non-issue given his genuine commitment to acknowledging that, "the Jews are still the beloved people of God entitled to God's gift of land."[34] But Fuchs-Kreimer points to the paradoxical reality that Kogan struggles with in his chapter: one of Judaism's main theological concerns (which has become a political one), "the recognition of the tie between the Jews and the land of Israel," has turned awry. "Jewish political nationalism and military power [have] impacted the Jewish religious and ethical witness"[35] in a negative way, pushing the issue far beyond a mere disagreement over "disputed territories, the boundaries of which remain to be defined."[36] Given the sensitivity and complexity surrounding the issue, it is no wonder the political-theological discussion has become so disordered.

Without ignoring the horrific history of Christian imperialism in our focus on the prevailing Israeli war, I pose a question: what exactly is the difference between religious communities who are full and active participants in the social contract, and those that cannot agree to its terms. To frame this discussion I have introduced this chapter with two juxtaposing theological views that represent the root of the tension Kogan illuminates. Judaism and the State of Israel traditionally understand themselves in a prior ontological

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[33] Nancy Fuchs-Kreimer, "Dabru Emet – A Reconstructionist Perspective," *The Reconstructionist* (Fall, 2002), 37

[34] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 225.

[35] *Ibid.*, 226.

[36] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) 229.

and political relationship – the single and covenantal relationship with God. Counter to this view, Christianity and the State are traditionally understood in terms of the Augustinian model of separation. Given a proper understanding of relativism from chapter one, this is not necessarily an incompatible set of theologies, but the political action of Jews truly needs to be considered as something demanding redefinition of a political-theological attitude for Israel that, "transcend[s] narrow egocentric selves and reach[es] out to others in shared human community."[37]

To do this, I believe the best point of reference would be the work of David Novak, a scholar of Jewish philosophy, law and ethics at the University of Toronto, who has played a major role in the ongoing discussion between Jews and Christians as a co-author of the Jewish statement on Christianity, *Dabru Emet*, as well as the author of several books on Jewish participation in the political sphere. I will suggest that the use of Novak's political theology from his book *The Jewish Social Contract* can serve as the groundwork for reevaluating the problems Kogan has raised. This issue might yet be resolvable. But in order for this to happen, the Jewish people must seek to form and appropriate an attitude that reconciles the recent persecution of Palestinians by Jews in Israel to their historical societal experience of segregation and inequality as God's elect among the nations. If this can be done, and the prevailing distortion of exclusivist claims can be amended, there is hardly a shadow of a doubt that interfaith dialogue between Jews and Christians can be strengthened.

The State of Nature

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[37] *Ibid.*, xiv.

To begin our discussion, as a starting point for discernment, we must first distinguish between two kinds of political commitment. First, there is the classic secular understanding of the human relationship within society and the State, an individualistic concept of the social contract from Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan.*[38] Secondly, there is the political commitment of Judaism, which stems from an understanding of the community in a primal covenantal relationship with God predicated on biblical promises of land, revealed legislation, and moral witness. Because the Covenant has been the focus of reevaluation in the Jewish-Christian dialogue, and because it is the source from which Jews and Christians enter society, it necessarily implies that Jewish and Christian social/political involvement, as full and active state participants, will be reevaluated. This is important, not only for the effort to conciliate the current situation in Palestine, but also to reaffirm the strength and optimism that has characterized Christian political counsel for the past forty years in the interfaith movement.

Before we can speak of how the State interacts with its citizens in the social contract, we must know from where its citizens have come to be in relationship with the state. "The idea of the social contract first makes its appearance in Plato's *Republic*. Men are naturally prone to commit injustice, and thus injustice is naturally good."[39] This is not

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[38] I use *Leviathan* for my discussion of the social contract, as opposed to Locke's "A Letter Concerning Toleration" for two reasons. First, I obviously wish to demonstrate the contrast in conceptions between the State of Nature and Jewish Covenantal Theology. But second and more importantly, to further amplify the gravity of adopting a theological attitude of relativism. Because Hobbes claims that uniformity in religion is necessary for peace, a concept operative in exclusivism, he relates particularly well with my discussion of Jews in the State of Israel. The clear link with Locke who argues for diversity of religion in the social contract, a concept operative in relativism, I think, is accounted for by the move towards David Novak's political theology.

[39] Alan Mittleman, "Religion and the Legitimate State," *First Things: A Monthly* Journal *of Religion and Public Life* (March 1, 2006), 48.

exactly how today's citizens of Israel would want their government to respond to mad bombers walking in from Palestinian towns and villages, or how the American government, for that matter, should understand the human motive behind the attacks of 9/11. That injustice is 'natural' and therefore precludes lawful society is not a concept that has been endorsed in any modern politic or religious moral framework. The reason I introduce this argument from Plato is because it highlights the political and moral concerns that are central to the understanding of the relationship between State and citizenship for Thomas Hobbes. In this respect, Hobbes unconventionally challenges how justice exactly fits into the moral fabric of human political interaction.

"Justice and injustice are none of the faculties neither of the body nor mind. If they were, they might be in a man that were alone in the world, as well as his senses and passions. They are qualities that relate to men in society, not in solitude."[40] Injustice is not the natural state that man is found, but rather is a by-product of his fear of death in a world of power-struggle. This is exactly the context in which the Israeli security fence, "illegally encroaches into Palestinian territory."[41] The boundary is intended for Israel as protection from suicide bombers and other outside threats to Jews and their Covenantal claims on God's promise land, but the central acknowledgement here is that this defense mechanism is a product of fear. This is the reality of how some have been compelled to act in difficult situations.

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[40] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: On the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), Ch.13.
[41] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 229.

Hobbes writes, "To understand political power aright, and derive it from its original, we must consider what estate all men are naturally in."[42] Thomas Hobbes posits in his *Leviathan* that humans, as a collection of isolated individuals, are always in vicious competition for limited resources – but injustice is hardly 'good' in the state of nature, it is merely what is necessary for survival. Under these conditions life is nasty, brutish and short-lived. We can see this from the conflict in Israel today. Hobbes suggests that in order to avoid the cruelty of "the war of all against all," humans agree to enter a social contract governed by a sovereign. Law is not the external expression of our inner moral compass, but a product of our egoistic tendencies – that which is necessary to avoid injustice, yet persevere the self-interest of each human. Because death threatens even the most intelligent and strong of us, humans impose upon themselves a contract, a set of rules involving property, rights, duties, and so forth. Hobbes writes, "the passions that incline men to peace are fear of death, desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living, and a hope by their industry to obtain them."[43] The contract becomes void only if the centralized government fails to provide peace, protection, and a defense for the people. Hobbes argues that society begins with the individual and branches out.

If we were to consider the situation in Israel in light of Hobbes, it would seem that the state of nature reasonably describes the prepolitical situation in which people are found. This is why Kogan is saddened by what the implications of Jewish action in the Middle East are for Covenantal witness. With Hobbes in mind, and to continue our investigation of a Judaic theological-political self-understanding, we must consider that

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[42] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: On the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil.* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 262.
[43] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan On the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil.* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 14.

there is also another version of the origin of man and the state. "There is another source for the idea of the social contract...that source is the Bible."[44] The Hobbesian narrative does not resonate with David Novak's understanding of man's prepolitical situation. In fact, "the nub of Novak's argument is that Hobbes is wrong."[45] Allan Arkush states, "David Novak rejects the idea of the state of nature as a 'hypothetical – that is, fictitious, even mythical' condition."[46]

Community and Covenant

Although Novak's political theological work is offered in the context of its application for a Western democratic polity, the fundamental concepts that structure his argument can be transferred to resolve the theocratic/exclusivist ideals of the Jewish State of Israel. The current situation in Palestine has subscribed to the sufferance of egoism and the demands of the individual that define Hobbes' politic – that is, land has been conceptualized as a limited resource, something to be in vicious competition for. This has begun to erode the value of communal, religiously informed politics. David Novak writes in his work *Covenantal Rights*, "in modern discussion of political theory, the favored terms seem to be 'individual and society' or 'society and individual'."[47] Contrary to modern liberalism, however, Judaism embraces the community as the foundation of covenant – a specifically tailored version of 'contract' rooted in love, trust, and moral guidance – as opposed to the social contract of Hobbes' narrative. The paradoxical reality

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[44] Alan Mittleman, "Religion and the Legitimate State," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* (March 1, 2006), 48.
[45] *Ibid.*, 49.
[46] Allan Arkush, "Drawing Up the Jewish Social *Contract," The Jewish Quarterly Review*. 98, no 2 (Spring 2008), 255.
[47] David Novak, *Covenantal Rights: A Study in Jewish Political Theory* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 3.

of the state's understanding of individual and community raises the question for the Jewish people of whether "the demands of a society are to be justified by criteria coming from the individual (liberals), or are the demands of individuals to be justified by criteria coming from the society (communitarians)?"[48] This has certainly obscured the meaning of being part of a history structured by a hope that God will one day restore Israel to their land, the world to its created order, and "in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people" (Daniel 2:44). It is important to be attentive to the nature of the relationship that Jews have appealed to in their political involvement in order to further understand how their role as the people of God has been distorted. The reality of contemporary Israeli politics is that it has turned a blind eye to an endless territorial war and frivolous, unjust military force at the expense of the other – truly a *defiance* for Jews as covenantal religion. This has lead to the backbone of covenantal life being shredded with the knife of egoism and a progressive loss of respect for the place of religious authority in the state.

In order to understand the superiority of Novak's political-theological understanding, against the Hobbesian concept, there must be a way in which the community can reasonably be determined as the state of man prior to the individual. Novak argues in *Covenantal Rights*, "a person, even acting singly, is always acting as a member of a community beginning with his or her own family."[49] Kogan would agree with this concept as he writes in *Opening the Covenant*, "Jews feel themselves to be a

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[48] *Ibid.*
[49] *Ibid.*, 5.

family."[50] This denotes that the individual exists insofar that he exists with the community. The individual does not exist as a being, but rather individuals exist as being-with. To understand this communal reality of the individual, a cross-examination of the 20th century French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy's work *Being Singular Plural* can give depth to Novak's contentions.

Nancy argues in his ontological examination of the "singular-plural" reality of being that the 19th century theologico-political order synthesized a demand on humanity which presupposed a 'generic being' of humanity as 'essentially social': a co-ontology. Nancy states, "always subject to weak and unpleasant connotations, coexistence designates a constraint, or at best an acceptable concomitance, but not what is at stake in being or essence, unless in the form of an insurmountable aporia with which one can only negotiate."[51] The basic stance Nancy takes proposes that there is no existence without co-existence, there is no singularity without plurality; therefore, "that which exists, whatever this may be, co-exists because it exists."[52] There is no being without being-with, and in order to think of 'individual' as singular, we have to think of it first as plural. This is essentially how the Jewish tradition sees itself – as a part of a long-standing communal tradition. They are a divinely elected people, a nation, a community; not a fragmented and egoistic collection of individuals – regardless of what the implications of their military force suggests. If a defined 'oneness', an absolute sharing, a mere collection of equal individuals were the true notion of community, it would destroy any social fabric or

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[50] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) 226.
[51] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 43.
[52] *Ibid.*

true social ordering that individuals are able to offer to existence. "There is no meaning if meaning is not shared, and not because there would be an ultimate or first signification that all beings have in common, but because meaning is itself the sharing of Being."[53] This philosophical insight offers a vision of the Jewish community as the true primitive perception of the human person, prior to the individual, and undermining the current relationship that the State of Israel and Judaism have created in the midst of war. This would point to the fact that the favored terms in modern political theory should be 'community' and 'society'. Counter to Hobbes' notion of the structure of society which is erected from an individualistic state of nature, when applying Nancy's ontological argument to Novak's prepolitical understanding of man it is more reasonable to discern that, "one enters a social contract from a 'thicker' communal background and agrees to accept its 'thinner' terms in order to be able to live at peace with persons coming from other communal backgrounds and develop some common projects."[54] This is surely compatible with Kogan's theological relativistic attitude, and opposed to the reality of Israeli Jews at war over theological exclusivist convictions.

In Novak's *The Jewish Social Contract*, the crux of his argument is to engage in the specificity of this exact problem, "to explain how modern polities can be best sustained and utilized if they are conceived not as a conglomeration of isolated individuals (the war of all against all) but as the products of social contracts agreed upon by disparate but mutually accommodating covenantal communities."[55] The implications of Novak's position are of great importance when talking about the adoption of an

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[53] *Ibid.*, 45.
[54] David Novak, *Jewish Social Contract* (New Jersey: Princeton University, 2005), xvii.
[55] Arkush, "Drawing Up the Social Contract" *The Jewish Quarterly Review.* 98, no 2 (Spring 2008), 256.

attitude of relativism in understanding the Jewish people, the land of Israel, and all citizens living within the state. If the social contract, as Novak defines it, "is an ongoing agreement as to what is necessary for different cultures to justly and peacefully transact with one another in common social space,"[56] then the Jewish community's agreement with society is most coherently understood in terms of Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic view of religion and Kogan's relativistic theological attitude. "Like a culture or language, it is a communal phenomenon that shapes the subjectivities of individuals rather than being primarily a manifestation of those subjectivities."[57] The 21st century global human situation has developed a philosophy that, for reasons that are becoming more and more self-evident, we cannot argue anymore that speaking English is superior to speaking Japanese, or that the concept of white supremacy or that of the Aryan race actually holds truth. The point is that if one language or culture were argued by someone to truly be inherently superior to another, a democratic society would testify racisim, bigotry, and prejudice.[58] The same goes for religion; that Israeli Jews believe that their theological and Covenantal claim to land is superior (exclusivism) to the state claims of those, who happen to be Islamic and Christian, Palestinians, is the fundamental paradox at hand, and why Kogan titles his chapter with a nuanced question, *Does Politics Trump Theology?* "Parties in a social contract transcend it by having a communal past before it has been established, a communal life outside the present domain of the social contract, and a communal future in a time after there is any need left for a social contract."[59] Discerning

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[56] David Novak, *Jewish Social Contract* (New Jersey: Princeton University, 2005), 7.
[57] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*. (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1984), 33.
[58] Something that the Church has learned to do since the *Shoah*.
[59] David Novak, *Jewish Social Contract* (New Jersey: Princeton University

the original state of man is an indispensable part of our dialogue, and before the social contract can place its demands on Jewish participant citizens, what also needs to be addressed is, "how the communal nature of human beings, their constant need for interaction with each other, is connected to the personal relationship with God."[60] The key to Novak's Jewish political theology is to understand that beyond the human person being rooted in the community, the core of the covenant is manifested directly within God's relationship with Israel as His elected community in the world.[61] This is also a vital affirmation in Kogan's relativistic attitude, that, "theology must be grounded in a living faith tradition."[62] As covenant and community are a primal sharing, a symptom of the cultural-linguistic understanding of religion, the implications point to the reality of Judaism's existence deeply rooted in an ontological priority with the state of God as supreme: an ancient Theocracy. The Israeli Jew's self-understanding of their redemptive role as the People of the God needs to be remodeled. For Jews to enter the social contract, "the aspirations of modern democratic republics, founded on social contracts, can only be secured when those contracts originate from agreements between more primal communities founded on covenant."[63]

Covenantal Claims and Election

This is where Israel has become confused within their political and theological commitments. The central focus here is the Jewish understanding of its relationship with

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Press, 2005), 201.

[60] David Novak, *Covenantal Rights: A Study in Jewish Political Theory* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 77.

[61] *Ibid.*, 78.

[62] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 236.

[63] Alan Mittleman, "Religion and the Legitimate State,"*First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*, (March 1, 2006), 49.

God as 'Elected', "God's claims on the covenanted human community lead to the claims this community can make on God."[64] This is expressed in the theology of Markus Barth, "what is expressed in Jewish prayers, before and after the destruction of the First and Second temples...[is] the faith and worship of the Jews who are promised and expect the Messiah is essentially related to the promised land, to Jerusalem, and to freedom from foreign yokes."[65] The community can hold God to his specific promises to them because these promises are specific to their being God's people, for instance, "justice as the most evident covenantal claim God makes on his community."[66]

Most assuredly, the covenantal community is not compartmentalized and cut off from society; it must also be a society amongst itself where it learns from its experiential history how to morally and justly interact with state members. Novak writes, "at an overall level, the community (*Gemeinschaft*) is a society (*Gesellschaft*), functioning impersonally through its formal political and legal institutions."[67] The Jewish tradition makes claims on its individual members that make up the community, but "in order to be a complete covenanted polity, the Jewish people must function both as a community in the existential sense and as a society in the judicial and legislative sense."[68] Novak reaffirms in *The Jewish Social Contract* that, "the priority of covenant over contract is historical, ontological and teleological."[69] A Jews' primary identity is with the

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[64] David Novak, *Covenantal Rights: A Study in Jewish Political Theory* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 99.
[65] Markus Barth, *The People of God*, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), 66.
[66] *Ibid.*, 87.
[67] David Novak, *Covenantal Rights: A Study in Jewish Political Theory* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 153.
[68] *Ibid.*
[69] David Novak, *Jewish Social Contract* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 31.

covenanted Jewish people, just as Christians' primary identity is with the Church. "Only subsequently do Jews and Christians participate in various associations, and they can only participate in these in good faith when they justify the participation by references to the ends for which their own communities live and thrive."[70]

This has been the space in which Israeli's have come to understand their *rights* as human persons "made in the image of God" (Genesis 9:6). Novak argues that a proper hermeneutic of this Genesis passage denotes that the human person "is to be treated with proper respect by every other human being and every human community in the world...God's autonomous exercise of his responsibility *for* what he has created thereby enables his creatures to claim his response *to* their own creaturely needs in return."[71] Rabbi Hillel Goldberg oscillates this conception in his theology, and places the actions of Israeli Jews in the spotlight[72] as he speaks with authority in his paper, "between religions are two, and only two, legitimate relationships...every religion's absolute respect for the human rights of all people...[and] cooperation on the social and political level to meet any individual's or any group's fundamental human needs."[73] With the issue of fundamental human rights at stake in the Middle East, the theological truth claims of any

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[70] *Ibid.*, 196.

[71] David Novak, *Covenantal Rights: A Study in Jewish Political Theory* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000) 100.

[72] Strangely, Rabbi Goldberg argues that, "the mending of historical deficiencies in Christian adherence to human rights requires not one iota of change in the intimate language and substance of Jewish theology." Because of the very framework of his hybrid exclusivist/relativist theological attitude, I would have thought that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an issue to be made an example of in his interreligious convictions.

[73] Hillel Goldberg, "Dabru Emet: True Interfaith Dialogue is Silence". *Jewish Action.* 5761 (Jan. 2000). This statement, of course, has major ramifications for the theological and political attitudes of some Jews in the Middle East, which is why I cite it here; but because this paper was primarily written as a reaction to *Dabru Emet*, I will return to it in chapter three, as it relates intimately with my investigation.

religion have absolutely no grounds for the taking of another life. This is the fundamental issue at hand. Yet, in *Opening the Covenant* Kogan is quick to note that, "without a state and an army Jews end up in gas chambers and ovens."[74] I am not convinced that the "image of God" motif has guided Jews through the Israeli-Palestinian war, but we must keep all of these issues in the foreground when considering that the response to God as Creator is a covenantal act, prior to any commitment to the social contract.

Given the adoption of a relativistic attitude, the many issues that have been raised challenge us to renew an understanding of the Jews as a covenanted community and not as isolated individuals that terrorize the West Bank. Barth notes, "The purpose of the [State of Israel] is not merely to safeguard the survival of the Jewish people after the murder of six million Jews in extermination camps, but also to secure the possibility of conserving and developing Jewish ways of life, be they religious or secular."[75] As such, their Covenantal claims are not welcomed if they are to be interpreted at the expense of human rights and religious war. This means that a reinterpretation of the theology surrounding God's promise of land is required. I will discuss this in chapter three. But, we can now turn to a comparison of covenant and contract in order to further our understanding of Jewish political reformulation.

Covenant and Contract

To further the development of what a proper legal relationship in the social contract is for the Jews, beyond their communal being, and of course, beyond their exclusivist theological-political war, the definitions of both the Israelite covenant with

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[74] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 225.

[75] Markus Barth, *The People of God.* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), 68.

God and the social contract must be discussed. In *The Jewish Social Contract*, Novak discusses five integral differences between a covenant and a contract. First, a covenant is a perpetual relationship of mutual trust and love, and a contract is a negotiated agreement for a finite term. Second, in a covenant the terms are stipulated by the initiating party for the reciprocating party to accept; in a contract, both parties negotiate the terms. Third, a covenant cannot be nullified through a violation of the stipulations, whereas either party can nullify a contract by a violation of the stipulations. Fourth, the subsequent mutual agreer cannot terminate a covenant, whereas either party can terminate a contract. Fifth, a covenant cannot be terminated by any subsequent event, and a contract can be.[76]

There is a clear distinction between the two types of agreements. In the case of the Jewish covenant with God, it is defined by infinite love, perpetual trust, and a divine promise for restoration. The social contract, however, is finite; it is hardly an agreement rooted in love, but rather is set to determine a reciprocating relation founded on self-interest and egotistic fulfillment. It seems that the Israeli government has attempted to trump the social contract in the name of Jewish covenantal promises - a significant shift in the mixing of religion and politics and a reflection of how the 'individual – community' dichotomy can been misconstrued. A communal unit may enter into the social contract, but the social contract is primarily reserved for the protection of the rights of the individual. This misunderstanding has been a product of, "the historical exilic existence of the Jewish people [set against] its present existence as possessing political

[76] David Novak, *Jewish Social Contract* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 34-36.

autonomy."[77] Novak's *The Jewish Social Contract* argues against the Hobbesian type of polity, "for the inadequacy of the prevailing secular frameworks and for their reconstitution along theologically informed lines."[78] The confusion has set in because:

> Society has become so separated from older forms of direct human community, there is an understandable tendency to regard the one-to-one relationship of God and the individual person as primary and the relationship of God and the religious community as being separate from it.[79]

But in this examination of Jewish political theology, we have discerned that it is impossible for the Jewish people as a culture, or as a religion, to enter into society without holding closely to their historical, ontological, teleological prior covenantal history. Novak says that the problem is that:

> Most modern secularist arguments for democracy have called for mistrust by their claims, both implicit and explicit, that persons coming from traditional cultures like Judaism need to break faith – that is, mistrust and thus overcome – their cultural origins in order to fully participate in civil society.[80]

In one sense, I agree. The claim to mistrust is an answer to the situation in the Middle East. If a relativist theological attitude is adopted, "Jews, Christians and others should feel fully entitled to take their bearings primarily (although not exclusively) by their own religious traditions when they formulate their polity preferences."[81] Thus, for the social contract to be faithful to the purpose it serves, "an ongoing agreement as to what is

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[77] Yeshayahu Leibowitz, *Judaism, Human Values, and the Jewish State* (London: Harvard University Press, 1992), 94.
[78] Alan Mittleman, "Religion and the Legitimate State," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*, (March 1, 2006), 49.
[79] David Novak, *Jewish Social Contract* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 78.
[80] David Novak, *Jewish Social Contract* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 5.
[81] Allan Arkush, "Drawing Up the Jewish Social Contract," *The Jewish Quarterly Review.* 98, no 2 (Spring 2008), 265.

necessary for different cultures to justly and peacefully transact with one another in common social space," the state as its authority must be able to accommodate its citizens accordingly, and necessarily define the claim to mistrust it requires: the mistrustful theological sanctioning of the claim to the land of Israel. The purpose, however, of the social contract must not be ignored. It plays an essential role in our discussion. "The demand for the separation of religion from the existing secular derives from the vital religious need to prevent religion from becoming a political tool, a function of the government bureaucracy, which 'keeps' religion and religious institutions not for religious reasons but as a concession to pressure groups in the interest of ephemeral power-considerations."[82]**Where Do We Go From Here?**

"We are concerned with determining what sort of political-social organization would be in the religious interest in the existing situation."[83] The reality of a communal religion, like Judaism, is that it can never totally be separated from politics:

> Religious communities are rarely if ever politically, economically, or intellectually, self-sufficient. In one way or another, they need to make alliances with others outside their own cultural domain, alliances in which no one party dominates the others, or one in which all the parties merge and create a new identity for themselves.[84]

This is how Novak sees the construction of civil society. "Civil society, as Novak understands it, is 'a truly secular space' that only emerges 'out of intercultural agreement' among religious communities."[85] The fact of the matter is that a majority of Israeli

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[82] Yeshayahu Leibowitz, *Judaism, Human Values, and the Jewish State* (London: Harvard University Press, 1992), 177.
[83] *Ibid.,* 175.
[84] David Novak, *Jewish Social Contract* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 19.
[85] Allan Arkush, "Drawing Up the Jewish Social Contract," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 98, no 2 (Spring 2008), 263.

participant citizens root their familial identity within the Jewish community. The problem that these religious communities face is articulating a religious and political self-understanding worthy of societal integration. "The foundation of Judaism is the family identity of the Jewish people as the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Whatever else is added to this must be seen as growing out of and related to the basic identity of the Jewish people,"[86] insomuch as those additions are not in direct opposition to mutual respect and the dignity of human life.

One insight that fits a progressive relativist attitude is the concept of secularity. David Novak defines secularity in *The Jewish Social Contract* as, "the realm of interhuman, multicultural, interaction that does not look to any unique community with its singular historical revelation and special tradition as the exclusive source of social legitimization."[87] This seems like a fair trade off – anyone may enter the social contract, and no one community will define and dominate the whole of civil society. This is not what is happening in Israel. Novak speaks about this when he explores how a religious community may enter the social contract, "...without, however, either conquering civil society or being conquered by it."[88] Secularity acts as the space in which all communities may share equally in the social contract, and this should be epitomized in the laws of Religious Liberty in Israel.

Secular democratic polities in North America have made this situation a workable one by becoming more and more tolerant through a newly adopted, refreshing and

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[86] Michael Wyschogrod, *The Body of Faith: Judaism as Corporeal Election* (Minneapolis: Seabury Press, 1983), 57.
[87] David Novak, *Jewish Social Contract* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 121.
[88] David Novak, *Jewish Social Contract* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 195.

contemporary outlook on the plurality of religious praxis, race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. This is how it should be, as David Novak notes, "the state [should] recognize and respect the various ways its citizens deal with their religious needs and respect all the religions that enable humans to do so, that is, all religions that make a *positive contribution* to public morality as the state proclaims it and enforces it."[89] Building security fences in Palestinian territory does not seem to be a positive contribution. The problem, however, as discussed earlier, is that the social contract is based on a political outlook of the public duty to protect the private realm of the individual citizen. For the Jewish tradition, as well as the Christian one, the private realm of the citizens' place is the community. Caught in a juxtaposing worldview, Jews and Christians reject the rationality of the social contract's goal of keeping the exercise of religion to the status of a private human right.[90] Christians in the Church, as the mystical extension of the Body of Christ, are called to be counter-cultural – "a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of the unity of the entire human race."[91] Religion is hardly a private matter. For Jews, as God's elect among the nations, it does not seem appropriate to be restricted to a private domain in which the fruitfulness of religious witness cannot offer itself for the community at large. A state that does not embrace the plurality of the cultures it wishes to protect is hardly a state worth belonging to, especially when that state says 'keep it to yourself'. At the same time, Jews cannot be the one conquering society. They are not called to be a light to the nations, implying active universal mission, but they are called to be a covenanted people, a light of the

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[89] *Ibid.*, 172.
[90] *Ibid.*, 219.
[91] "*Lumen Gentium.*" In Falnnery, Austin. Ed. *The Basic Sixteen Documents: Vatican Council II* (Northport, N.Y: Costello Publishing Company, 1996).

nations – a people among people. When religion is downgraded to a private matter, or over-glorified into a public conquest, the entire concept of a covenantal and communal tradition revealed in history, one that promises redemption to a community of believers, becomes invalidated. In the extreme case where religion is publicly evangelized and theological truth-claims are forced upon other state citizens, the social contract fails to play its role in its protection of fundamental human rights, essentially, in the freedom of religion. This proves to be disheartening when the system that vouches to protect its citizens' religious liberty is forced to intervene and overrule the attempt to convert and conquer.

The issue here is much larger than the dichotomy of individual and community, private and public, and theist and non-theist.

> For Novak, this means a great deal more than protecting an environment where Jews can quietly maintain a religious communal life free of outside interference. It means establishing the basis for a certain understanding of the Jewish community's role as 'a full and active participant' in 'the larger secular society.'"[92]

This also means establishing the basis for a certain understanding of the Christian community's role in the larger secular society. "The main obstacle that Novak faces in such an endeavor is the argument of the liberals, including Jewish liberals, 'that there should be no religiously based advocacy of any issue of public policy inasmuch as religion, a private matter, has no right to make any public claims at all.'"[93] Even in the Theological Understanding of 1987 Christians affirm that private religious claims are simply not up for public debate, "The State of Israel is a geopolitical entity not to be

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[92] Allan Arkush, "Drawing Up the Jewish Social Contract," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 98, no 2 (Spring 2008), 264.
[93] *Ibid.*

validated theologically."[94] Referring back to my statement which points to 'humanity's existence deeply rooted in an ontological priority with God as supreme,' it seems as though religion might actually have a 'right' to make public claims. "Persons remain members of primary units or primordial groups, deriving their self-understanding and worth from their participation in other orders."[95] This worth and self-understanding renders the 'right,' which does not necessarily trump the whole of society, so long as it 'makes a positive contribution to public morality as the state proclaims it and enforces it?' The problem here is not so much having a place for religious liberty in the state, but defining what that religious liberty means.

> In a nation like Canada, on a basic level it means that:
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> Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.[96] (15.1, *Canadian Charter of Rights*).

In Israel, on a basic level it means that:

> The State of Israel will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.[97]

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[94] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 217.
[95] Alan Mittleman, "Religion and the Legitimate State" *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*, (March 1, 2006), 50.
[96] Department of Justice Canada. *Canadian Charter of Rights*. [online] accessed July 2008, available from<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/>
[97] Jewish Virtual Library. "Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, May 14, 1948" [online] accessed July 2009, available from <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Dec_of_Indep.html>

To have a fully embracing and functioning social contract, one that encourages the appropriation of the diversity of cultures it has adopted, the understanding of what religious liberty entails needs to be developed further. "The protection of religious liberty, which is the political right to respond or to turn away from God who elects us, is the epitome of human dignity by which all other rights are grounded," says Novak.[98] But the problem comes back to this: "how [do] faithful Jews and Christians enter into civil society and survive there intact, let alone flourish, without, however, either conquering civil society or being conquered by it."[99] Survival is feasible in a political order based on the right to religious liberty, but what about 'flourishing'? Of course with historic Christianity and current Israeli Judaism there is a threatening and hegemonic tone associated with religious communities, as Novak writes, "no public support of any religious institution, no matter how pluralistic, can be tolerated without opening the door for the religious takeover of civil society by the most dominant religious community in that society."[100]

The purpose of this discourse is not necessarily to resolve the problem in conceiving of an appropriate balance between religion and politics, rather, it is to bring to the attention of this thesis the inherently conflicting issues that political theology has come to engender. I hope that I have done this in my examination.

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[98] David Novak, *Jewish Social Contract.* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 199.
[99] *Ibid.*, 195.
[100] *Ibid.* 222.

Chapter 3

Theological Attitudes in *Dabru Emet*

> Clearly, at the inception of interfaith dialogue some 40 years ago, the impetus was good will. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, many Christian leaders and theologians realized that something had gone drastically wrong with Western Civilization, which, in the main, is Christian civilization. Many Jewish leaders were only too happy to witness the Catholic Church begin to show remorse for Christian anti-Semitism and its theological roots. Then, as the Catholic gesture began to spread, Jews were further buoyed. The Jewish motivation was to save lives — Jewish lives — as well as to do away with the lesser but still serious manifestations of Christian hostility to Jews.[1]

As this quote poses an accurate account of the beginnings of interfaith relations, out of the many articles, critiques, and scholarly research that I have read on the *Dabru Emet* statement, the document of which has drawn the attention of many theological attitudes from many Jews and Christians, this one specific response stood out to me in both a uniquely perceptive and contravening way. The theology of Rabbi Hillel Goldberg's response, although sometimes poses as an insightful and holistic example of the kind of relativist attitude Kogan wishes would epitomize the Judeo-Christian discussion, in fact, appeals to an exclusivist attitude in his argument that *Dabru Emet* is a Jewish arrogation. At the heart of Goldberg's thesis is the rejection of the concept of Judeo-Christian theological compatibility, and he stubbornly adds that, "the Jewish covenant with God needs no confirmation by any outside party."[2] He argues this with the understanding that the 'fundamental tenet of interfaith relationships' is to exclude any sort of theological

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[1] Hillel Goldberg, "Dabru Emet: True Interfaith Dialogue is Silence," *Jewish Action* 5761 (Jan. 2000).
[2] Hillel Goldberg, "Dabru Emet: True Interfaith Dialogue is Silence," *Jewish Action* 5761 (Jan. 2000).

interaction; "[It] is wrong. Religion is intimate. Religion is untranslatable. Religion is the private language of believers."[3]

He then goes on, in his paper, to speak about, as I mention in chapter two, that, "between religions are two, and only two, legitimate relationships...every religion's absolute respect for the human rights of all people...[and] cooperation on the social and political level to meet any individual's or any group's fundamental human needs."[4] What Rabbi Goldberg essentially denies in his paper is that an exclusivist theological attitude, "closes us off from other men and women and seduces us into the folly of imagining that God is ultimately restricted to the images our respective communities have created."[5] Rather, he believes that being involved in the revision of interfaith theological truth-claims is an illegitimate relationship for Jews to be engaged in.

This response is particularly interesting in our discussion. In one sense, Goldberg's argument is aligned with an exclusivist attitude in which its logic discerns that Judaism *precludes the option of authenticating the religious experience of the other in fruitful interfaith dialogue* – "That God is One...[is] self-evident to all Jews for what they exclude: a trinity."[6] In another sense, the function of Goldberg's theology is to emend the assumption that, "for interfaith relations to work, Jews must be free to tell

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[3] Goldberg, Hillel. "Dabru Emet: True Interfaith Dialogue is Silence," *Jewish Action* 5761 (Jan. 2000).

[4] *Ibid.* This statement, of course, has major ramifications for the theological and political attitudes of some Jews in the Middle East, which is why I cite it here; but because this paper was primarily written as a reaction to *Dabru Emet*, I will return to it in chapter three.

[5] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), xiv.

[6] Hillel Goldberg, "Dabru Emet: True Interfaith Dialogue is Silence," *Jewish Action* 5761 (Jan. 2000). This is one contention of exclusivism that I argue, in chapter one, is threatening to the spirit of interfaith dialogue.

Catholics what to believe"[7] – which is considerably proportionate to Kogan's relativist theology, in which, "other traditions have an equal right to claim their own word of truth. We cannot judge their claims in advance."[8] The implicit tension within this hybrid theological attitude, with both exclusivist and relativist claims, results in an extreme limitation, in which Goldberg can only conclude that, "true interfaith dialogue is, in effect, silence."[9]

I begin with this particular Jewish response not only because it exemplifies the attitude in which Lindbeck rejects, "doctrinal reconciliation without doctrinal change is self-contradictory,"[10] but it also resonates with my own theological contentions against the truth-claims of *Dabru Emet*. On one level, I agree with Goldberg that, "the advertisement proceeds to rewrite Judaism [and Christianity], top to bottom;"[11] however, on a much deeper level, with Goldberg's position aligned as 'cognitive propositional,'[12] my reservation is with the discussion precluding the opportunity to understand interfaith relations in a 'cultural-linguistic' way. This is something that I see as being problematic if Jews and Christians want to have a mutually corresponding interfaith relationship.

In Michael Kogan's study of *Dabru Emet*, we get a very different opinion than Goldberg's. Although Kogan deals with the 'thoughtful Jewish response' in only a few

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[7] Hillel Goldberg, "Dabru Emet: True Interfaith Dialogue is Silence," *Jewish Action* 5761 (Jan. 2000).
[8] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 236.
[9] Hillel Goldberg, "Dabru Emet: True Interfaith Dialogue is Silence," *Jewish Action* 5761 (Jan. 2000).
[10] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1984), 15.
[11] Hillel Goldberg, "Dabru Emet: True Interfaith Dialogue is Silence," *Jewish Action* 5761 (Jan. 2000).
[12] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*. (Philadelphia: Wesminister Press, 1984), 16. The notion that "religions are thought of as similar to philosophy or science."

pages in his book, he praises the significance of the document as a, "unique and major advance on the Jewish side of dialogue,"[13] and a "comprehensive" and, "worthy response to the many Christian statements on Judaism that cried out for Jewish acknowledgment and reaction."[14] Regardless of the fact that it is not an official statement recognized by any Jewish body, *Dabru Emet*, from the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies in Baltimore, Maryland, has been signed in full support by almost three hundred[15] Jewish scholars and rabbis who agreed that, "it [was] time for Jews to reflect on what Judaism may now say about Christianity."[16] Four authors, Tikva Frymer, David Novak, Peter Ochs and Michael Signer, compiled a set of eight major theological affirmations that Jews were willing to assent to regarding Christians and Christianity.

> *1. Jews and Christians worship the same God.*
> *2. Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book*
> *3. Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel.*
> *4. Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of Torah*
> *5. Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon.*
> *6. The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world as promised in Scripture.*
> *7. A new relationship between Jews and Christians will not weaken Jewish practice*
> *8. Jews and Christians must work together for justice and peace.*

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[13] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 171.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Michael Signer, "Dabru Emet: A Contextual Analysis," *Théologiques* 11, no 1-2, (2003), 194.
[16] Tikva Frimer, David Novak. Peter Ochs. Michael Signer. *Dabru Emet.* [online]. Center for Catholic-Jewish Learning, September 2000, accessed June, available from <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/ccjl/academic_resources/researchers_students/jewish/dabru_emet/>

This was no easy accomplishment. After Christians have finally come to terms with the fact that Judaism did not end with the coming of Jesus, that the Church did not replace the Jews, and both religious traditions are part of the same ongoing covenant, it was now time for Jews to proclaim, "a new understanding of Christians and Christianity, taking them entirely beyond the parameters of their rabbinic faith and the biblical sources out of which it grew."[17]

The verity of the document's content is evaluated by Kogan in his chapter *Into Another Intensity*, with a specific focus on statements one, six and seven, recognizing them as the 'most important' in the discussion between Christians and Jews. For Kogan, these three statements capture the essence of what the interfaith encounter between Jews and Christians ought to represent; a) a common belief in the God of Israel; b) that even the profound theological differences between the two faiths should not inhibit the spirit of interfaith ecumenism; and c) that a more positive evaluation of Christianity does not render any negative implications for Jewish worship and praxis. Of course Kogan wants, as a Jewish scholar, to focus particularly on statement seven to reassure that there is no need to fear the pluralism that characterizes the document, and that Jewish life and worship is not in any way affected by these interfaith affirmations – this clearly is directed at someone like Rabbi Goldberg who, in a very ridged manner, defensively proclaims, "our language of faith is mutually exclusive, private, intimate, untranslatable."[18] With a relativist approach, however, there is no need for apologetics, which is why, for the purposes of this discussion, I would like to assess the adequacy of

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[17] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 168.
[18] Hillel Goldberg, "Dabru Emet: True Interfaith Dialogue is Silence," *Jewish Action* 5761 (Jan. 2000).

Kogan's treatment of the document with the exception of statement seven. After an indepth examination of the political sphere in the Jewish-Christian debate, I ought to substitute an evaluation for statement three on politics instead, 3) "Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people on the land of Israel."[19]

What needs to be examined in this chapter are the theological truth-claims of *Dabru Emet*, if they reasonably move beyond the exclusivism that has plagued Jewish-Christian relations for thousands of years, but also, if they are faithful to the central convictions of both religious traditions without minimizing the value of their inherent creedal purpose. Signer, in a 2003 article entitled *Dabru Emet: A Contextual Analysis*, writes after the fact, "it is quite clear to the discerning reader that various portions of this document were written in language that tried to harmonize divergent positions," yet later in the same expression writes, "the foundation of our statement is the possibility to admit that the Other is different and that this very difference is the beginning of the search for common ground."[20] To say the least, the statement's purpose is fairly clear, but the content is easily confusing. It is worth repeating that Kogan's relativistic approach will be the directive force behind my theological assessment of the document. The task of reevaluating Christianity *theologically* in the wake of this "unprecedented shift in Jewish and Christian relations,"[21] was surely the motive that influenced the composition of the

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[19] Tikva Frimer, David Novak. Peter Ochs. Michael Signer. *Dabru Emet.* [online]. Center for Catholic-Jewish Learning, September 2000, accessed June, available from <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/ccjl/academic_resources/researchers_students/jewish/dabru_emet/>

[20] Michael Signer, "Dabru Emet: A Contextual Analysis," *Théologiques* 11, no 1-2 (2003), 194, 196.

[21] Tikva Frimer, David Novak. Peter Ochs. Michael Signer. *Dabru Emet.* [online]. Center for Catholic-Jewish Learning, September 2000, accessed June, available from

document; however, as it asserts in the first paragraph of the statement, the series of eight points is merely a "first step" in the Jewish effort – and as a "first step," some major discussion and revision are seriously required for this document to truly stand as an adequate theological assessment of the Jewish-Christian relationship.

Jews and Christians Worship the Same God

Dabru Emet begins its series of statements with none other than the most central of universal theocentric affirmations in Judeo-Christian theology:

> Jews and Christians worship the same God. Before the rise of Christianity, Jews were the only worshippers of the God of Israel. But Christians also worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; creator of heaven and earth. While Christian worship is not a viable religious choice for Jews, as Jewish theologians we rejoice that, through Christianity, hundreds of millions of people have entered into relationship with the God of Israel.

The statement begins by intimately connecting the two traditions to the 'God of Israel'. This is a fairly typical move in recent Jewish-Christian dialogue, to stress the commonality between the two faiths rather than the differences – and what better starting point could there be than the ultimate source of revelation, God? Kogan makes the distinction in his chapter that the Church, in denouncing Marcion's rejection of Jewish scripture and adopting the Old Testament into a part of their canon, became more familiar with the Hebrew text to the point where it was reasonable to discern that "the same God is certainly the subject of both [traditions]."[22] This extremely recent theological development has come with the expiration of exclusivism at the Second Vatican Council, coupled with a renewed understanding of Christianity from a Jewish perspective. The

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<http://www.kings.uwo.ca/ccjl/academic_resources/researchers_students/jewish/dabru_emet/>

[22] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 169.

Church, which intimately, "draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles,"[23] affirms the communal origin and final redemption of Israel and Christians with the one true God, and Jews agree.

From the Jewish side, the magnitude of optimistic progress can only be appreciated when you contextualize the statement and realize that at one time in history, Jewish thought, as represented in the work of "Maimonides, explicitly classifies Christianity as idolatry, thus forbidding contact with Christians of the sort permitted with practitioners of other, non-idolatrous religions."[24] To even consider then that Christians worship the *same* God as the Jews is thus a huge theological step forward. But I suppose the question, rather, should be whether or not the theological framework of this *Dabru Emet* statement is actually grounded. Rabbi Hillel Goldberg argues, "This statement is simply not grounded."[25] Jewish philosophy, from its birth, has continued to assert the qualitative difference in its own indivisible conception of God. This has been radically contrasted by Christian Trinitarian belief. Here in *Dabru* Emet, the two have been assimilated. I think Rabbi Goldberg understands that there is more at stake here in the discussion then what the Jewish document alludes to. "Jews have demanded of Christians that they rewrite their fundamental beliefs,"[26] he writes. While we should applaud the Jewish effort in helping create a new sense of Jewish-Christian theological affinity,

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[23] "*Nostra Aetate*" Falnnery, Austin. Ed. *The Basic Sixteen Documents: Vatican Council II* (Northport, N.Y: Costello Publishing Company, 1996).
[24] Jon D Levenson, "The Agenda of Dabru Emet," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 7 (2004), 7.
[25] Hillel Goldberg, "Dabru Emet: True Interfaith Dialogue is Silence," *Jewish Action* 5761 (Jan. 2000).
[26] *Ibid.*

which Christians themselves have affirmed in recent decades, we should be weary of such ambiguous and vague theology.

Kogan strongly concedes that the reason *Dabru Emet* can register such a truth-claim today is because Jews have reconsidered, "if not the Messiah according to rabbinic expectations, Jesus was an indirect agent of world salvation,"[27] opening the covenant up to the gentiles and bringing the knowledge of God to the nations through His church. This is the means by which Christians have come to know the God of Israel. There is nothing theologically incoherent about this; however, the overwhelming amount of negative response to the *Dabru Emet* statement must solidify an argument for us that Kogan's over-zealous commitment to Jewish-Christian unity distorts a true reading of the text, and his promulgation far exceeds what the *Dabru Emet* authors have actually affirmed:

> What the Christianity of *Dabru Emet* lacks is the notion of a God who is triune and not simply one, who was definitively incarnate in Jesus Christ, gave a new and more complete revelation in the New Testament, including a basis for morality at odds with the Judaic focus on law and commandments, and called into existence a new Israel, a community not based on genealogy nor promised any particular real estate.[28]

This is the curious thing about the first *Dabru Emet* statement. It mentions nothing of Jesus, His ministry, or what the meaning of the central Christian doctrine of the Paschal Mystery could be beyond the Christian encounter with the God of Israel. If the statement is meant to unify the Jewish and Christian perception of the nature of God, it does so reluctantly and according to an exclusivist Jewish attitude; "Jews have asked Christianity

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[27] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 238.

[28] Jon D Levenson, "The Agenda of Dabru Emet," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 7 (2004), 26.

to speak a language not its own."[29] Christianity is depicted as nothing other than Judaism's equivocal cohort in worshipping the God of Israel. The document's, "respect for Christianity is directly proportional to the extent to which Christianity can be made to look like Judaism."[30]

It seems fitting, retrospectively, that the Church included in the Second Vatican Council *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions* that:

> Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.[31]

It is not exactly the case that *Dabru Emet* 'does not conform to the truth of the Gospel'; rather, it glosses over the issue by simply stating that 'Christian worship is not a viable option for Jews.' I think that there must be a recognition that, "*Darbu Emet*, like most participants in Jewish-Christian dialogue, speaks as if Jews and Christians agree about God, but disagree about Jesus. It overlooks the key fact that in one very real sense, orthodox Christians think Jesus *is* God."[32] This is not an issue to be pigeonholed and ignored, which is what the statement seems to imply. Jews should feel urged to confront the incoherency that Christology challenges them with, and not ignore it as if it has no meaning outside the scope of baptism and Christian salvation.

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[29] Hillel Goldberg, "Dabru Emet: True Interfaith Dialogue is Silence," *Jewish Action* 5761 (Jan. 2000).
[30] Jon D Levenson, "The Agenda of Dabru Emet," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 7 (2004), 12.
[31] "*Nostra Aetate,*" No. 4 in Falnnery, Austin. Ed. *The Basic Sixteen Documents: Vatican Council II* (Northport, N.Y: Costello Publishing Company, 1996).
[32] Jon D Levenson, "The Agenda of Dabru Emet," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 7 (2004), 7.

Jon D. Levenson, professor at Harvard Divinity School, negatively reacted to this statement after its release in September 2000. "The issue is not about a viable choice versus one that is less viable. It is about religious truth. It is about the nature of the God of Israel."[33] My reaction to the statement is fairly similar to that of Levenson's, that there is something unsettling about unequivocally pronouncing that Jews and Christians worship the same God. Even more surprising is the Catholic response to *Dabru Emet*, released in October of 2000. Overlooking its void of Trinitarian and Incarnation concepts, it reads:

> One test of such statements addressed to one's own community with an awareness that another community is, as it were, looking over our shoulder as we write, is whether the onlooking community will see themselves validly portrayed there. *By and large we do, and we are grateful for and respectful of the immense scholarship and religious openness that is required to do such a thing right.*"[34]

How is it possible for Christians to feel 'validly portrayed' in a statement, which is uncomfortably silent on their central creedal convictions? I am not quite sure how to answer this, other than that the letter is meant simply as a sign of respect to publicly announce the Christian appreciation for the Jewish effort. I suppose the National Conference of Bishops may have been thinking about this lack of theological reconciliation when they ended their letter by writing that some theological issues, "merit further exploration between us."[35] But even Levenson contests, "whatever its authors' and signatories' intentions, the statement leaves the clear impression that it is directed

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[33] Jon D Levenson, "The Agenda of Dabru Emet," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 7 (2004), 8.
[34] William H Keeler, "The Power of Words: A Catholic Response to Dabru Emet," *Origins* 30, no 15 (September 21, 2000), 227.
[35] *Ibid.*

only at those Christians for whom the classical creedal statements about Christology have lost their theological centrality, perhaps even their fundamental credibility."[36]

When we relate this problem back to the theological attitude of relativism that Kogan recommends, "the mutually exclusive truth claims that are the challenges for interreligious conversation are the differences that *Dabru Emet* consistently neglects."[37] What this leaves us with is the impression that interfaith dialogue, its measure of theological compatibility in a relativist attitude, is departed from.

> [It rather,] adopts a model of conflict resolution or diplomatic negotiation as the basis for the conversation...the expense is deceptively great, so great that the whole enterprise is, in fact, imperiled. For dialogue on these terms quickly turns into a monologue, as each side simply phrases in its distinctive idiom what is, in fact, the common belief of all involved. Religious difference, once a matter of the deepest beliefs about the most important and universal truths, is this rapidly downgraded to a matter of mere vocabulary.[38]

The concept that is missing from *Dabru Emet*, is that with a relativist attitude:

> The unique Divine self-designation in the book of Exodus...has been understood precisely to mean that no two people have the same conception of the Divine...it is actually not at all necessarily contradictory to affirm that someone worships that same God and at the same time contend that the other's perception of the Deity is problematic and/or flawed.[39]

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[36] Jon D Levenson, "The Agenda of Dabru Emet," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 7 (2004), 10.
[37] *Ibid.*, 12.
[38] *Ibid.*, 1.
[39] Rabbi David Rosen. *"Dabru Emet": It's Significance for the Jewish-Christian Dialogue*. Address given at the 20th anniversary celebration of the Dutch Council of Christians and Jews (OJEC) at Tilburg, The Netherlands, 6 Nov 2001. [online] accessed Aug 2009, available from <rabbidavidrosen.net/.../Christian-Jewish%20Relations/Dabru%20Emet%20-%20It's%20Significance%20for%20Jewish-Christian%20Dialog.pdf>

Regardless of the fact that the four authors of *Dabru Emet* attempt to cover their theological shortcomings by stating at the beginning of the document that this is nothing more than "a first step," I feel that it is unfair to the Jewish people, unfair to Christianity, and unfair to the interfaith discussion at large to bypass something so theologically challenging to one party while it stands as something so theologically central to the other. "What, then, are we to make of the fact that 'A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity' as *Dabru Emet* is subtitled, takes no account of doctrines central to historic Christianity and very much alive among hundreds of millions of contemporary Christians as well?"[40] I am not suggesting that the signers of *Dabru Emet* are naïve about Judaism's central theological problems with Christianity, or that the document should have been an extensive work meant to resolve the 'Trinity/Jesus-issue' from the Jewish side. But, this issue has continued to be a consistent stumbling block in the Judeo-Christian discussion. "If the dialogue is going to be conducted between *communities* of faith, beliefs historically confessed and still held by the vast majority of members should not be dealt with in a cavalier fashion."[41] Kogan suggests in his relativist framework that:

> We are called to proclaim with eloquence the truth that has been revealed to us, while listening to the equally impassioned truths others claim to have had revealed to them...It is an affirmation of the reality of a truth communicated by God combined with a humble admission that we may not be in possession of all of it.[42]

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[40] Jon D Levenson, "The Agenda of Dabru Emet," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 7 (2004), 9.

[41] Isaac Rotternberg, "More Steps Toward Dialogue: A Tentative Response to Michael Kogan," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 33, no 2 (1996), 243.

[42] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 236.

Dabru Emet ignores this kind of relativism, and I suggest that even if the sensitivity and complexity that this issue faces in interfaith dialogue were mentioned in the document, it would have been a better 'first step'.

Christians Can Respect the Claim of the Jewish People on the Land of Israel

I dealt extensively with the question of the State of Israel in chapter two, and now, in the *Dabru Emet* statement, we come across it again. It is clear that the issue of covenantal land is at stake in any discussion on the people of Israel as it resurfaces in a document of only eight statements that Jews felt to be central to their identity in an interfaith discussion. Irving Greenberg writes in an essay, "the reestablishment of the physical community of Israel in a physical and political state may inspire new reflection on the religious significance of a physical people and their actual existence."[43] For this reason, statement three reads:

> Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel. The most important event for Jews since the Holocaust has been the reestablishment of a Jewish state in the Promised Land. As members of a biblically based religion, Christians appreciate that Israel was promised—and given—to Jews as the physical center of the covenant between them and God. Many Christians support the State of Israel for reasons far more profound than mere politics. As Jews, we applaud this support. We also recognize that Jewish tradition mandates justice for all non-Jews who reside in a Jewish state.

The statement, inevitably, has received a variety of response. Because it is already difficult to fully grasp the complexity of the relationship between politics and religion, and the document offers, on behalf of the authors and signatories, a view that presupposes that the question of covenantal land is an established truth by virtue of God's revelatory

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[43] Irving Greenberg, "Judaism, Christianity and Partnership After the Twentieth Century" in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, Peter Ochs, David Novak, Michael Singer, David Sandmel ed., (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002), 31.

power, the question evidently arises – what are the implications of each theological attitude in interpreting the scriptural promise of land?

Broadly speaking, there are two theological attitudes that have been operative in interfaith dialogue between Jews and Christians on this topic. The first is in line with exclusivism. There is a sizable group of Jews[44] who have appealed to a literal interpretation of the biblical covenant. In the sixth book of the Tanakh, the conquest of Joshua has become a very powerful narrative to support the cause in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, "I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived east of the Jordan. They fought against you, but I gave them into your hands. I destroyed them from before you, and you took possession of their land." After the reestablishment of the State of Israel, given to the Jewish People in 1948, it seemed clear to Zionist movements, both Jewish and Christian, that, " Jerusalem will be a theological, geographical and political entity."[45] The problem with this theological attitude and interpretation is that it is difficult to ignore it as the source, and motive, behind an unjust war in the Middle East:

> A person reading in a literalist, fundamentalist fashion the texts about the promise of land and its conquest through Joshua's slaughter of the indigenous population could scarcely avoid the implication that God mandates genocide as an act of piety. In addition to being morally problematic, these narratives have fuelled virtually every form of militant colonialism emanating from Europe, by providing all allegedly divine legitimization for Western colonizers in their zeal to implant 'outposts of progress' in 'the heart of darkness'.[46]

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[44] Referring to Jews in the State of Israel who are politically-religious/militant activists.
[45] Elmer John Thiessen, "Christians and Jews Proselytizing: A Response to David Novak," *Religious Studies and Theology* 22, no 2 (2003), 57.
[46] Michael Prior, "The State of Israel and Jerusalem in the Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Monologue in Two Voices," *Hold Land Studies* 3, no 2 (2004), 163.

In early Christian history, as the Church sought to break through the truth of Christ to humanity, Irving Greenberg notes that the idea, "often end[ed] up as the imperialist agenda of all-conquering or imperialistic missionary practitioners pushing their own interests."[47] It is difficult not to perceive Israeli Jews in the same inauspicious light. It is clear in *Dabru Emet* that the authors seek to maintain somewhat of an orthodox stance, that, "the existence of Israel, the connection to the land of Israel, is central to Jewish self-understanding and survival,"[48] but, I do not believe that they are committed to this extreme theological exclusivism.

The other attitude that has played a dynamic role in this conversation has been relativism, but relativism influenced by John Hick and what George Lindbeck would call the 'experiential-expressive' dimension of religion. It has taken a slightly different approach than what I have described in Kogan's theology. "For experiential-expressive symbolists, religiously significant meanings can vary while doctrines remain the same, and conversely, doctrines can alter without change of meaning."[49] Reconstructionist Judaism, represented by someone like Nancy Fuchs-Kreimer, would argue that the *Dabru Emet* statement, "treats both the Christian and Jewish traditions as 'true' in a way that [Reconstructionism] does not understand either of them to be...in the Reconstructionist community, we have abandoned claims to being the chosen people or those in possession

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[47] Irving Greenberg, "Covenantal Pluralism," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 34, no 3, (1997), 430.

[48] James Karpen, "Remembering the Future: Towards an Ethic of Reconciliation for Jewish and Christian Communities" Ph.D diss., (Union Theological Seminary, 2002), 191.

[49] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1984), 17.

of some special truths."[50] The position functions to appease the religious other, and to endorse an interreligious concept of theological 'sameness'. I tend to be suspicious with this attitude as, "doctrines function as nondiscursive symbols, are polyvalent in import and therefore [are] subject to changes of meaning or even to a total loss of meaningfulness."[51] The problem with this attitude is that its sense of duty to demythologize has had serious consequences for Jewish theology, and even more dangerous, it has given Christians the opportunity to make pronouncements for Jews on what they believe an accurate reading of the Scriptural covenantal claim on the land of Israel would be. One example of this consequence is the "Theological Understanding of 1987." Here we have a Christian assertion of what the specific Jewish truth-claim *should* be, "the State of Israel is a geopolitical entity and is *not* to be validated theologically."[52] It seems that the importance of the land of Israel is acknowledged, but the concept of land is strangely detached from the Jewish State of Israel:

> 'Land' is understood as more than place of property; "land" is a biblical metaphor for sustainable life, prosperity, peace, and security. We affirm the rights to these essentials for the Jewish people. At the same time...we affirm our solidarity with all people to whom those rights of land are currently denied.[53]

Here, in a dangerous trend of Christians making pronouncements on what is and is not legitimate in Jewish self-understanding, there is a clear departure from 'mutual respect'

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[50] Nancy Fuchs-Kreimer, "Dabru Emet – A Reconstructionist Perspective," *The Reconstructionist* (Fall 2002), 36.
[51] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1984), 17.
[52] *A Theological Understanding of the Relationship Between Christians and Jews.* A paper commended to the Church for study and reflection by the 199th General Assembly [online] accessed June 2009, available from < www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/christians-jews.pdf>
[53] *Ibid.*, 14

and Kogan's relativist theology. Furthermore, Jon D. Levenson refers to a recent statement issued by Knox Theological Seminary. It reads, "the entitlement of any one ethnic or religious group to territory in the Middle East called 'the Holy Land' cannot be supported by Scripture. In fact, the land promises specific to Israel were fulfilled under Joshua. The New Testament speaks clearly and prophetically about the destruction of the second temple in A.D. 70."[54] The impact of the statement has recycled the argument over the question of the New Testament superceding the Old. Maintaining superiority of the New Testament, in that it fulfills and reassigns biblical promises, is a position that Levenson argues, "is very much alive and well today."[55] So what exactly are we to make of *Dabru Emet*'s claim to the State of Israel?

There is an obvious risk in misunderstanding the document when it claims that, "Christians support the State of Israel for reasons far more profound than mere politics." Levenson points out, "it must not be missed that supersessionist theology is not necessarily incompatible with the belief that God's gift of the Land of Israel to the Jews is still in effect. In this connection, I think of those Christians who support Israel because they see the ingathering of the Jewish exiles as a necessary prelude to the second coming of Jesus and the conversion of all Israel to Christianity."[56] This is clearly not what the statement wishes to propound. On the other hand, "not everyone will be happy that the Bible is invoked to salve whatever pangs of conscience one might have about the

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[54] quoted by Jon D Levenson, "The Agenda of Dabru Emet." *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 7 (2004), 18. cited in Richard John Neuhaus, "The Public Square," in *First Things* 13, no 4 (June/July, 2003), 66.

[55] Jon D Levenson, "The Agenda of Dabru Emet," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 7 (2004), 18.

[56] *Ibid.*, 19.

expulsion of a million Palestinians."[57] But, the unreconciled tension, and current gambit in Jewish-Christian relations on this topic is that "sixty years after Auschwitz, Israel still does not have recognized borders and must fight for its legitimization."[58]

On December 30, 1993 the Holy See and the State of Israel agreed upon a set of articles, "in order to study and define together issues of common interest, and in view of normalizing their relations."[59] 'The Fundamental Agreement' reads in article 11:

> Article 11
> 1. The Holy See and the State of Israel declare their respective commitment to the promotion of the peaceful resolution of conflicts among States and nations, excluding violence and terror from international life.
> 2. The Holy See, while maintaining in every case the right to exercise its moral and spiritual teaching-office, deems it opportune to recall that, owing to its own character, it is solemnly committed to remaining a stranger to all merely temporal conflicts, which principle applies specifically to disputed territories and unsettled borders.

The reality of the matter is that Christians cannot define for Jews what the covenantal claim to Israel actually means, and Jews cannot demand of Christians to concur with their own understanding. If *Dabru Emet,* "mandates justice for all non-Jews who reside in a Jewish state," it is not coherent to justify the claim to biblical land at the expense of fundamental human rights and war. The ambiguity that this statement leaves us with is a feeling that the document requires a far more profound exploration of the topic and that statement six of *Dabru Emet* is truly where the conversation will end up.

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[57] Michael Prior, "The State of Israel and Jerusalem in the Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Monologue in Two Voices" *Holy Land Studies* 3, no 2 (2004), 164.
[58] Oded Ben-Hur, "The State of Israel and the Holy See." In *The Catholic Church and the Jewish People* Philip Cunningham, *ed.,* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 186.
[59] *The Fundamental Agree between the Holy See and the State of Israel.* Appendix 4 in *The Catholic Church and the Jewish People* Philip Cunningham ed., *et al.* (New York,: Fordham University Press, 2007), 233.

The...Differences Between Jews and Christians Will not be Settled Until God Redeems the Entire World

For me the sixth statement represents the theological culmination of not only the *Dabru Emet* document, but of where this thesis has located its understanding of the Jewish-Christians relationship within the framework of Kogan's relativism. The dynamic move in this statement brings to the relationship a brand new Jewish confirmation that Christianity is truly the source of a different, yet somehow complementary, divine revelation. "It is significant that in this statement the word 'revelation' is used of Christianity by Jewish thinkers,"[60] and Kogan writes, "it is the first time this crucial issue has been met head-on by Jewish theologians and formulated in a positive manner."[61] The statement reads:

> The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world as promised in Scripture. Christians know and serve God through Jesus Christ and the Christian tradition. Jews know and serve God through Torah and the Jewish tradition. That difference will not be settled by one community insisting that it has interpreted Scripture more accurately than the other; nor by exercising political power over the other. Jews can respect Christians' faithfulness to their revelation just as we expect Christians to respect our faithfulness to our revelation. Neither Jew nor Christian should be pressed into affirming the teaching of the other community.[62]

As Kogan celebrates the statement as the most progressive and advanced relativistic theme in *Dabru Emet*, it in fact, seems strangely at odds with *Dabru Emet's* first

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[60] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 170.
[61] *Ibid.*, 170.
[62] Frimer, Tikva. David Novak. Peter Ochs. Michael Signer. *Dabru Emet.* [online]. Center for Catholic-Jewish Learning, September 2000, accessed June, available from <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/ccjl/academic_resources/researchers_students/jewish/dabru_emet/>

statement. Here the four authors of the document maintain that, "Christians know and serve God through Jesus Christ and the Christian tradition," and this is coherent only when placed externally to the Jewish tradition in which, "Jews know and serve God through Torah and the Jewish tradition." The document seeks to employ the terms of relativism, that in fact both Jews and Christians have experienced the God of Israel in the world at different times, places and even in theologically incompatible ways – and this represents a sound religious position. Kogan comments here that, "this is an important breakthrough that in no way diminishes Judaism. Rather, it affirms what thoughtful Jews must have long suspected."[63] Although this seems like a nice thought, I do not think many Jews have expected what Kogan is claiming they have. If I were an exclusivist Jew, I think that I would feel compelled to challenge the statement. Traditionally Jews have held that they "have no need of Christianity for its own self-understanding,"[64] that their covenantal and biblical tradition originated in historical communications with God, containing the divine legislation and moral instruction for their elected witness, long before the god-man stood in Galilee preaching the fulfillment of the Scripture. I am sure that neither of these public affirmations are necessary for the forming of a coherent Jewish self-understanding; yet, *Dabru Emet* stands to make them. In order to truly validate the claims of statement six, however, Jews must be willing to agree that the revelation of God through Jesus Christ is, (a) true in a way that Jews necessarily respect the universal salvific efficaciousness of the Cross, and (b) that it is a rigidly singular and contrasting, (i.e. Trinity/Incarnation) way of understanding the coming of the Kingdom of

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[63] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 170.
[64] *Ibid.*, 168.

God. According to traditional Judaism, however, "God is an absolute unity who cannot be syncretistically linked with other gods."[65] Much like statement one, this poses an inherent theological juxtaposition that *Dabru Emet* simply ignores.

The last sentence, that, "neither Jew nor Christian should be 'pressed' into affirming the teaching of the other community," is appropriate for the terms of a relativist discussion, but its ambiguity as a Jewish statement leaves readers asking what exactly the terms mean? On this they are hopelessly vague. The paradoxical implication here is that it is appropriate to be respectful of the theological truth of the other's existence, but affirming that theological truth does not necessarily follow from that. I suppose I am confused with what the goal of the statement is. It seems that it resolves its incompatibility by silencing the discussion (yet again) – if you have nothing nice to say, do not say anything. What is fruitful and progressive about this mind frame? I am not denying that respect engenders a far more positive atmosphere for discussion than antipathy; however, the type of respect that the interfaith discussion calls for should be directed towards the religious other as a human person, not necessarily towards the object of belief. "Indeed a serious Jewish theology of Christianity will need to go further than simply respecting 'Christians' faithfulness to their revelation;' it requires an understanding of the significance of that revelation in terms of the Divine plan for humanity."[66] The process of understanding that significance is, again, not a part of the agenda of *Dabru Emet.*

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[65] Daniel Cohn-Sherbok, "Jewish Religious Pluralism," *Cross Currents* 46, no 3 (1996), 339.

[66] David Rosen, *"Dabru Emet": It's Significance for the Jewish-Christian Dialogue.*" Address given at the 20th anniversary celebration of the Dutch Council of Christians

Conclusions

Dabru Emet "overall, leaves the impression that Judaism and Christianity represent minor variations on a common theme. The truth is that it is hard to come away from *Dabru Emet* without the sense that nearly two thousand years of Jewish-Christian disputation have been based on little more than the narcissism of small differences."[67] Because of this, I think it is essential that the conflicting religious truth-claims between the Jewish and Christian faiths should be the focus of discussion. This idea does not preclude respect, and I mean respect in the fullest conception of the word. Interfaith dialogue has no need to fear the fact that, "both disagreement with another, and trying to persuade another, presumes that I am right and that the other is wrong. Surely there is nothing wrong with this kind of 'arrogance.' Indeed, the ability to take a position and defend it is part of what it means to be a human being,"[68] not least the goal of interfaith dialogue. From Kogan's relativistic theology, "we have learned that it is possible to affirm the truth of one's own faith tradition without having to devalue or deny the truth claims of the other faith."[69] This is summarized best in Rabbi Hillel Goldberg's paper:

> No Jew needs to affirm in any way any faith claim of Christianity in order to expect legitimately that all Christians will afford every Jew every

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and Jews (OJEC) at Tilburg, The Netherlands, 6 Nov 2001. [online] accessed Aug 2009, available from <rabbidavidrosen.net/.../Christian-Jewish%20Relations/Dabru%20Emet%20-%20It's%20Significance%20for%20Jewish-Christian%20Dialog.pdf>

[66] Jon D Levenson, "The Agenda of Dabru Emet," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 7 (2004), 9.

[67] *Ibid.*, 24.

[68] Elmer John Thiessen, "Christians and Jews and Proselytizing: a Response to David Novak," *First Things* 107 (Nov. 2000), 58.

[69] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 237.

> human right, unconditionally. No Christian needs to affirm in any way any faith claim of Judaism in order to expect legitimately that all Jews will afford every Christian every human right, unconditionally.[70]

The overall analysis in this thesis has attempted to confirm that, "Pluralism – the setting of healthy limits on absolutes, valid or otherwise – emerge[s] as a key corrective to the abusive tendencies built into all traditions of ultimate meaning."[71] This has been explored both theologically and politically. The theological reordering of this attitude has petitioned for Judeo-Christian dialogue that, "there is no space in...religion for an exclusivism that denies the salvific qualities of other religions."[72] The political reordering of this has meant the reconceiving of a more appropriate balance in the relationship between religion and socio-political involvement. Both of these concepts are taken up in sixth statement of *Dabru Emet*, that, "difference will not be settled by one community insisting that it has interpreted Scripture more accurately than the other; nor by exercising political power over the other."[73] Just as the statement acted not only as "a long-awaited Jewish reaction to long-awaited changes in Christian teaching and practice," the venture of this exploration of Jewish-Christian studies, "is also an invitation to a more profound

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[70] Hillel Goldberg, "Dabru Emet: True Interfaith Dialogue is Silence" *Jewish Action* 5761 (Jan. 2000).

[71] Irving Greenberg, "Judaism and Christianity: Covenants of Redemption," in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*. (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 154.

[72] Stefan Silber rev of. *The Myth of Religious Superiority: A Multifaith Exploration.* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005) in *Mission Studies* 23, no 2. (2006), 301.

[73] Tikva Frimer, David Novak. Peter Ochs. Michael Signer. *Dabru Emet.* [online]. Center for Catholic-Jewish Learning, September 2000, accessed June, available from <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/ccjl/academic_resources/researchers_students/jewish/dabru_emet/>

interaction between the Jewish and Christian communities."[74] If, according to George Lindbeck, that "to become religious – no less than to become culturally or linguistically competent – is to interiorize a set of skills by practice and training,"[75] then for Christians to continue on in fruitful relationship with Judaism is not a matter that is centrally concerned with the competition theological truth-claims. Rather:

> In the coming years, Jews and Christians should engage in a mutual search for respect, justice, and love. We should build this dialogue on a different framework than previous encounters. Both communities should face each other with the idea that we are groups of people who have spent our histories trying to live by the words, deeds and message of the Hebrew Bible. Each community has found its unique way to live out that message among themselves but not toward one another. Over the centuries, both communities have enjoyed the teaching of brilliant minds and the actions of ordinary people. We need to share these experiences and teachings with one another. We should admit from the very beginning that there are elements in each tradition that the other side cannot comprehend. We should enjoy the fact that we are different from one another. We should understand that the sweetness of agreement and the disappointment of disagreement are part of a relationship of caring for one another. There is no compromise in this encounter for there is no victory for one community or the other. There is only life together. It will be a life of "yes" and "no", of community and alienation, and of continued searching. The comfort and joy of our common and separate searches will provide the continuing motivation for our changed framework. We need not know everything that awaits us on the road ahead. The mystery of surprise will surely bring greater hope than the pessimism that growth in mutual understanding are beyond our grasp.[76]

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[74] James Karpen, "Remembering the Future: Towards an Ethic of Reconciliation for Jewish and Christian Communities." Ph.D diss., (Union Theological Seminary, 2002),182.

[75] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*. (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1984) 17.

[76] Friemer-Kensky *et al. Christianity in Jewish Terms* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 373.

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