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# Interreligious Dialogue in Global Perspective

by Lawrence E. Frizzell

## INTRODUCTION

The tensions between religions and political systems have been evident in intellectual and cultural contexts throughout human experience. In past ages, there has been a propensity for each culture or religion to assume that it embodied the best in every aspect of the human order. There is no longer any excuse for such narrowness spawned of ignorance to dominate the thinking of educated people. Yet mere tolerance of other approaches to the common challenges of humanity will not provide security for all, especially for minorities within a culture or for weaker societies in a given region striving to maintain their self-identity. An honest exchange of ideas, wherein each party is willing to listen, is the model which should replace the tendencies of the strong to impose their will on others. The foundations for a “dialogue among civilizations” should be explored at length, but only a brief review can be presented here.

The philosophy of dialogue, developed by Ferdinand Ebner and made popular through the works of Martin Buber, has laid the foundation for this mutual respect on the level of both individuals and cultures.<sup>1</sup> In the past, verbal polemics did not allow for mutual understanding; so by turning to a new paradigm, we hope that reason will prevail over the discrimination based on prejudice, which at times has turned to persecution.

The obstacles to such an ideal seem to be enormous. Will political parties seek the best solutions to the problems facing a community rather than merely striving to win for their own gains? Will religiously committed people acknowledge that they can learn from the group that preceded them? Or from a religion that flourishes in another part of the world? We hope that the majority of leaders in both domains will soon see the value of dialogue.

Just as we approach great intellectual issues from a limited perspective, so we begin to appreciate dialogue from concrete examples. If the debates, confrontations, prejudices and persecutions of Christians and Jews can be set aside in favor of dialogue, then there may be lessons for the benefit of other communities, both religious and political. The history of Christian-Jewish relations has been chronicled through its various stages, so we need not review it here.<sup>2</sup> We base our reflection on the

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conviction that the world may benefit from the Jewish and Christian contribution to the dialogue. The review will include elements that may be accepted readily and other points that will be discussed and tested from a variety of perspectives. Such dialogue will operate in a series of concentric circles, moving from groups with which one shares the most to communities with some principles in common and, finally to those whose approach to crucial questions may be diametrically opposed to others. For the people of faith in God, the most obvious example of the last group is the Marxist. The attitude of the Church to the leaders and theoreticians of materialistic philosophies was expressed in the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965): "Although the Church altogether rejects atheism, she nevertheless sincerely proclaims that all people, those who believe as well as those who do not, should help to establish right order in this world where all live together" (Vatican Council II, *The Church in the Modern World* #2).<sup>3</sup>

This paper will focus on ethical and social issues pertinent to most cultures and will be divided into two major parts. The first will sketch principles which both Jews and Christians derive from the biblical heritage. The second will discuss agreements and common statements that deal with major issues of wide impact in modern societies.

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## LAW AND ETHICS

### *Communities and their Members*

What is the place of legislation in the guidance of human society? In recent centuries, scholars in some disciplines (perhaps reacting against the Jewish and Christian heritage) have rejected the idea of an externally imposed law. They claim that the individual's growth to maturity is inhibited by the regulation of all aspects of life. When maturity is defined in terms of independence and autonomy, laws are seen as shackles that weigh down the human spirit. Such echoes of individualism have been heard widely. But western societies which extol such a view of maturity now face the situation of isolated individuals whose experience of illness, old age or other human limitations leads them to see every loss of independence as a defeat, a sign of failure. A model of *interdependence* of individuals within the family and larger communities is much more realistic and healthy for both the person and the community. If autonomy implies anonymity in the city or neighborhood and absence of intimate bonds that are rooted in mutual commitments, then the person is fleeing from the association of life and love with duty and responsibility. If a large number of people are motivated solely or in the majority of cases by self-interest alone, society at large will

suffer. All decisions which involve collaboration with others must be based on a prudent trust that the people will be true to their word. What is the basis for this trust? We will explore aspects of the way of life recorded in the Jewish Scriptures to discern possible answers to this question.<sup>4</sup>

### *Covenant in Hebrew Society*

The foundations of each of the world's major cultures are invariably traced to the ancient past, the result of millennia of human thought and experience. The civilizations which grew out of interplay of the Bible and Greco-Roman philosophy and jurisprudence are indebted to many groups and individuals. The purpose of this study is to trace facets of the Hebrew and Jewish contribution to the structures that undergird most of the nations of today's world.<sup>5</sup>

In a nomadic existence in lands of harsh climates and limited agricultural possibilities, many people have a profound experience of the solidarity that is required to survive. Each person must learn to be responsible for others, sensitive to their needs. Active involvement in acquisition of basic rights to food, water, shelter, etc. precludes hoarding and other manifestations of selfishness. There would be no claim to being "self-made" or self-sufficient, even though there were and are occasions when authority and influence could be abused. Ideally, leaders of the community would sense the ways in which life is enhanced for all by proper decisions.<sup>6</sup> In many ancient cultures the rulers were above the law; one of the great contributions by the Hebrews was legislation that became the basis for evaluating the activities of rulers and judges as well as guiding the life of ordinary people.

Laws can be ignored by those in authority, so a relatively independent form of leadership developed in the person of the prophet. When King David broke the commandments forbidding adultery and murder (2 Sam 11:1-27), the court prophet Nathan had the courage and pedagogical deftness to make David condemn his own actions (2 Sam 12:1-7).

Two human relationships offered analogies whereby the Hebrews could appreciate their association with God and the divine authority over all creation and over human society in particular. These are the political treaty and the marriage bond.

In time of peace, societies in the ancient Middle East defined their relations on the international level in terms of treaties and the responsibilities that flowed from such commitments. Such an agreement was usually imposed by an emperor upon the petty states which came under his control. His self-description at the beginning of a treaty portrayed him as a benefactor whose gracious attitude would continue, but the treaty itself obliged only the vassal. Transgression of the stipulations laid upon the subordinate party was the reason for war or for a court case and corrective punishment.<sup>7</sup>

A unilateral covenant is described in Genesis 15 where, contrary to human experience, the superior (God) bound himself irrevocably to the subordinate (Abraham and his descendants). Other experiences described in terms of covenant were bilateral, involving responsibilities on both sides. Thus, the book of Exodus depicted the

Sinai Covenant as an exercise of divine creativity whereby a motley group of ex-slaves became a nation (*goy*, a people with a territory). A land was promised to them wherein they would be free, with freedom defined in the context of the service of God, who had called them to an exclusive relationship (Ex 19:4-6).

In Hebrew society the covenant community was formed by God and the common goal of all its members was loyalty and service expressed by obedience to the commandments. Union with the divine will should bring wholeness, tranquility and harmony to the community and eventually to all creation.

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The most intimate human experience of mutual sharing and service is marriage and the family. The prophet Hosea (chapters 1-3), Jeremiah (3:1-5) and Ezekiel (16:1-63) took marriage and adultery as images to teach the unique nature of Israel's union with God and the grievous implications of failure to keep the commandments, especially to avoid idolatry. Again, the commitment involved serious obligations which were presented in the laws of society.

The term “covenant” (Latin: foedus, foederis) is integral to the self-definition of any society that calls itself a federation or confederation. Of course, phrases like “Covenant with America” used by politicians should be tested to ascertain whether the meaning of the term has been preserved!

## RELATIONSHIPS GOVERNED BY THE COMMANDMENTS

The individual and the societies to which the person belongs (family, clan, city, nation) can survive only in relation to the rest of reality. The Hebrews believed that there are four points of focus in every life; the person and all communities touch God, neighbor, the self and nature, either to foster peace or discord.<sup>8</sup> These foci have a perennial value for Jews and Christians. It is worthwhile to consider them at length.

### *God*

The esteem for the human person evident (in spite of shadows) throughout the Bible and other ancient Jewish literature is crystallized in the doctrinal insight that every human being is created in God's image and likeness. Male and female are equals and partners in their collaboration with God in procreation and in ordering creation towards perfection (Gen 1:26-28). This understanding of the human being lays a heavy moral responsibility on the individual. The moral life consists essentially in the imitation of God (Lev 19:2), who is revealed in the divine attributes (listed most fully in the interpretation of the divine Name in Ex 34:6-7). The challenge is to serve God with total dedication (Deut 6:4-6) and to imitate the divine concern for the poor, the widow, the orphan, the stranger, the sick and others who may be neglected or op-

pressed by the powerful in a given society.

Self-evaluation in the areas of morality and spirituality is difficult to achieve with honesty. The Sabbath rest provides an opportunity for such a reflection to take place within the context of community prayer (Ex 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15). A regular rhythm of withdrawal from work allows people the time to focus on their use of time and talents in fulfilling the human vocation of reflecting the divine in the world. Moreover, the Sabbath commandments demand that slaves and beasts of burden be given rest as well. This has been a profound civilizing influence throughout the world, but sometimes has been neglected in industrial nations.

### *Neighbor*

Principles which advocate deeds of injustice and peace govern the laws of the Bible relating to the social order. The Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17) moves from the commandments concerning the God to a series of concentric circles of human interchange. The centrality of the family is emphasized, first in the lifelong obligation of honoring one's parents and providing for them in time of need,<sup>9</sup> and secondly in the prohibition of sexual relations that would interfere with one person's commitment to a third party. Parents are partners with God in sharing life and they are the first to present the divine image and likeness to their children. Therefore, the command is to *honor* them in this context, and not only to love them as one is obliged to love every neighbor. The commandment forbidding adultery not only protects the partners in the integrity of their relationship, but it also enables them to mirror God's fidelity to their children.

The basic rights to life, reputation and property are protected by other commandments of the Decalogue (Ex chapters 20:13-17). Even the desire for persons or things belonging to another must be controlled. The simple apodictic form of these laws, enunciated without indication of a penalty, may derive from the admonitions of parents to their children. When the clan developed into a nation at Mount Sinai, sanctions were attached to these and other commandments (Ex 21-23) and complex cases were presented in casuistic (case law) form. Certain transgressions which may escape the attention of the community, so the people renewing the Covenant at the occasion of entering the promised land placed themselves under a curse should they commit such crimes (Deut 27:15-26).

Sensitivity to the needs of others is understood as imitation of God; just as God is merciful to all his creatures, so should the Israelites be, even if the person is an enemy (Ex 23:4-5). The pursuit of peace in society is associated with the search for righteousness and right judgment in society. These activities constitute an imitation of the righteousness or integrity of God, who demands that goodness and honesty govern the legislative and judicial orders (Ex 23:1-3).

Even before the Sinai Covenant and its Torah (instruction in the form of commandments and examples of personal ideals), Moses learned to delegate his authority as judge. First he taught the people the laws governing the new society; then he selected able, trustworthy and God-fearing men to judge the cases resulting from

conflict within given segments of the community. He reserved the difficult cases for himself and thus set up a hierarchy of order within the judiciary (Ex 18:13-27). In ancient Israel each judge was admonished: "You shall not pervert judgment... Righteousness, only righteousness shall you pursue..." (Deut 16:18-20).

"There shall be no poor among you" (Deut 15:4) is a basic principle of legislation for those inhabiting the Land of Israel, because this land is understood to be God's gift to the entire people. The rhythm of seven applied not only to the week with a day of rest for all, but also to the use of the land. Every seventh year the fields should rest in fallow, and everyone was to have equal access to the produce that sprang up spontaneously. Debts were to be remitted at this time as well, and Hebrew slaves were to be released (Deut 15:7-18). The Priestly Code took these laws a step further, instituting the jubilee year after seven sabbaticals. At this time, all alienated land was to be restored to its original owner (Lev 25:8-55).<sup>10</sup>

### *Self*

Each person in any special group is expected to exercise a responsible concern for himself or herself. The Hebrew teachers rooted self-esteem in the realization that the human being is "little less than God, crowned with glory and honor" (Ps 8:6). Of course, this is not to be confused with pride or self-centered attitude that would pit one person against others. Being in the image and likeness of God, each person recognizes an inherent dignity that overcomes despair or feelings of inadequacy. At the same time, the person realizes that this same image is mirrored in the face of every other human person.<sup>11</sup> "You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the children of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor *as yourself*: I am the Lord" (Lev 19:18). Should anyone limit the term "neighbor" to one's fellow Israelite, the text goes on to include the resident alien. "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall do him no wrong... you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Lev 19:33-34). This is an example of the golden rule, express in the ideals of many civilizations.<sup>12</sup>

### *Nature*

At a pre-urban stage of civilization, people in virtually every culture show a deep sense of closeness to the earth and to all the forms of life which sustain them. Agricultural communities in the land of Canaan celebrated the end of each harvest with a thanksgiving festival. The Hebrew people recognized the dangers of idolatry in these feasts, so they imposed three great pilgrimage festivals on these harvest festivities (Deut 16:1-17). A portion of the earth's fruits were offered, but within the context of a commemoration of the way in which God's hand had triumphed in their history. Legislation of these holy days included a special concern for the poor and the disadvantaged in society.

Israelites were commanded to care for their domestic animals with a mercy that reflected the Creator's goodness (Ex 20:10; 23:4-5; Deut 22:1-4). Even wild creatures are protected; to avoid the wanton destruction of life, one is forbidden to take

both the mother bird and the eggs, or the mother and the chicks (Deut 22:6-7). In time of war, destruction of trees, especially fruit trees, is expressly forbidden (Deut 20:19-20).

The tradition recorded in the Bible recognizes that all creation is a gift of God, to be used for the enhancement of human life but to be treated with utmost respect and to be shared with others, especially those who are unable to take proper care of themselves. "The central vision of world history in the Bible is that all of creation is one, every creature in community with every other creature."<sup>13</sup> This attitude should undercut the greed that had led certain societies to exploit natural resources without restraint.

### APPLICATION TO THE NEED OF MODERN SOCIETIES

The search for solutions to the world's social-political and ecological problems, especially for order in societies disrupted by terrorism and other aberrations in the name of "freedom," must begin with the recognition that there are legal and moral foundations that can be expressed in language common to peoples who are interacting. Secondly, those who are striving to practice justice so that peace may be achieved, must acknowledge that there is much wisdom to be distilled from the past. Investigation of ancient cultures will lead to the recovery of principles which can be part of the discussion that should be taking place between societies and ways of life. Some truths will be shared in common and, in other instances, the principles of a given heritage will resonate favorably with those who discover them for the first time, or see them in a new light.

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### **. . . there is much wisdom to be distilled from the past.**

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In every modern society people should have a perspective or viewpoint whereby the intricacies of daily life can be evaluated from the outside. This can be achieved in the context of dialogue, because each partner is listening to the other express a vision of life and community. It can be discovered also when we enter the literature of an ancient civilization, stepping back into a world quite different from our own. Both Jews and Christians share the Hebrew Bible and accept it as God's Word; even though methods of interpretation differ, we can continue to learn from the way the other community experience and lives this Word. Reflection on covenant and the four relationships governed by the commandments should be the basis for positive contributions toward a richer and more responsible social life within the communities to which we belong.<sup>14</sup>

#### *The Challenge of Idolatry*

Antipathy to idols has been a basis for polemics by biblical authors since the Babylonian Exile (586-538 B.C.). What some adherents to monotheism fail to realize is the fact that idolatry takes on subtle forms in every culture. Any created reality, material or abstract, may replace the one God at the center of a person's or a



community's life. The categories of potential idols are presented in the following chart:

The response to each of these categories involves an attitude of self-control. A God-centered life incorporates the relationships of the natural order (the person with neighbor, self and nature) into a response that is wholesome and peaceful. Certain

<i>Potential Idols</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Strength provided by</i>
Possessions	Poverty	Faith
Pleasure-intellectual or sensual	Temperance	Hope
Power	Obedience	Charity

tragedies in life cannot be alleviated by wealth, so eventually every person will sense an emptiness in sickness or bereavement that can be filled only with the divine presence and consolations in a life of faith. Hope that human life is not limited to this bodily existence provides the basis for a person to exercise self-control regarding the pleasures of life. Temperance guides the use of food and drink and governs the sexual appetite according to the person's state in life (married or single). Finally, rather than exerting power through brute force or political manipulation, the person exercises authority by evoking the potential of others to fulfill their personal dignity through work and deeds of service. Obedience, a listening attitude toward God and neighbor, leads to acts that involve giving without counting the cost or thinking about rewards (altruistic love).

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#### *Common Good and Individual Rights*

The common good may be defined as "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily" (Vatican Council II, *The Church in the Modern World* #26). Mature discussion of "fulfillment" must include obligations and duties along with the rights claimed by societies and individuals. Every society should protect and foster "the sublime dignity of the human person, who stands above all things and whose rights and duties are universal and inviolable" (ibid). This implies that the goals of a political or religious community must not reduce any human person to the level of an object. "The social order and its development must constantly yield to the good of the person, since the order of things must be subordinate to the order of persons..."

(ibid).

In the distribution and use of resources, a delicate balance must be maintained between the fostering of benefits for the majority in a community and the rights of the individual. A hierarchy of values helps to keep the balance. Thus, the right to life takes precedence over quality of life. Concern for the basic rights to food, clothing and shelter for all should be completed by fostering the human potential for gainful employment and adequate health care.

Care for the poor and those who suffer permanent or temporary disabilities should be of special concern to all who espouse the biblical teaching that every human being is created in the divine image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-28).

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) in Washington, D.C. issued a statement regarding persons with disabilities on February 9, 1999 (the fourth of a series since 1978). Some of the principles are of interest for a discussion of ethical issues that touch all societies in the modern world. People of other faiths are asked to discern the implications of the practical order that here may be applicable even though they are expressed in specifically Christian terms, but resonate well with their ideals.

1. Each person is created in God's image, yet there are variations in individual abilities. Positive recognition of these differences discourages discrimination and enhances the unity of the Body of Christ.
2. Our defense of life and rejection of the culture of death requires that we acknowledge the dignity and positive contributions of our brothers and sisters with disabilities. We unequivocally oppose negative attitudes toward disability which often lead to abortion, medical rationing, and euthanasia.
3. Defense of the right to life implies the defense of all other rights which enable the individual with the disability to achieve the fullest measure of personal development of which he or she is capable. These include the right to equal opportunity in education, in employment, in housing, and in health care, as well as the right to free access to public accommodations, facilities and services.

Although there has not yet been a joint statement on respect for persons with disabilities, this important concern should be addressed in the future. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Council of Synagogues in the United States prepared for the Christian celebration of the second millennium in the Christian calendar by issuing a joint statement, "Reflection on the Millennium" on May 5, 1998. Although Jews would not join the celebration as such, their leaders saw this to be an occasion for renewing common efforts in drawing upon the biblical vision in order to deal with social-moral challenges.

In preparing for celebration of the great Jubilee in the year 2000, Pope John Paul II drew upon traditions going back to Pope Boniface VIII in 1300.<sup>15</sup> In the past, Catholic leaders have interpreted the great themes of the sabbatical year (Lev 25:1-7; Deut 15:1-18) and the jubilee (Lev 25:8-55) with a spiritual application relating to

forgiveness of sin. For this great Jubilee the Pope returned as well to the concrete meaning of the texts.

This approach was applied to the United States in the joint statement mentioned above.

The year 2000 has been proclaimed by the Catholic Church as a Jubilee Year. The Hebrew Scriptures in Leviticus 25 define the meaning of the Jubilee. Both in this chapter of the Bible and in Papal reflections upon this theme, one can see a three-fold obligation placed on the People of God as a mandate for national reflection. These obligations have significance, we believe, not only for Catholics and Jews working together in joint study and action but also for the renewal of our American society as a whole.

1. The Liberation of Slaves — Human Liberation. Consideration of this theme (Lev. 25:39) can involve local communities in confronting the inhuman conditions of bigotry, exploitation and violence that enslave such a large part of America's inhabitants to this day, and in planning and implementing educational programs and social activities to address the problems jointly studied.

2. Return of Property — Economic Liberation. This legislation (Lev. 25:13) was revolutionary in introducing moral guidance into economics. It sought to prevent the permanent accumulation of land in the hands of the few, to alleviate poverty, and to give people another chance for achieving economic fulfillment. Its underlying principles challenge our discussions today with regard to welfare, tax reform and other issues within our country.

3. Resting the Land — Ecological Liberation. Respect for the land (Lev. 25:11) and the seas can be stressed here, as well as humanity's role as a steward (Genesis 2:15) responsible to God for nurturing and caring for all forms of life.

Finally, as we approach the millennium, we can develop channels to work together to witness to that which is shared in our spiritual heritage. Not only do we bring to bear on the profound problems of our day the riches of our separate yet related traditions, but we work together to prepare the way for the coming of the Reign ("kingdom") of God, for which we both pray, as a task of *Tikkun Olam* ("perfecting" or "repairing" the world).

As we see, in addition to a traditional understanding of the Jubilee Year with a spiritual application of moral enslavement and forgiveness of sins as debts, the Church joins the Jewish community to encourage practical efforts in the social-economic order. Unfortunately, issues of slavery are very real in several nations: for example, the Sudan, Mauritania and in Southeast Asia. Only international efforts at Christian-Muslim dialogue can be effective in certain African nations, along with the work of human rights organizations. However, the sexual enslavement of children and young

women of several countries in the context of tourism from wealthy nations is being confronted in many ways. Local governments can be encouraged to cooperate and travel agents can be alerted to their moral responsibility in advertising.

The 1998 joint statement, quoted above, neglects to deal with the issue of debt among the poorest nations, which was the subject of an international conference at Seton Hall University in October 1998. The burdens of international debt upon many nations in the southern hemisphere continue to be addressed in meetings between religious, government and banking leaders. Land reform for the benefit of local populations in poor agricultural countries is being addressed as well by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in cooperation with local governments.

Previous joint statements of these bodies are also worthy of study and application: *Moral Values in Public Education* (1990), *The Evil of Pornography* (1993) and *A Joint Condemnation of Holocaust Denial* (1994) and *To End the Death Penalty* (1999)<sup>16</sup>.

International Catholic-Jewish statements have focused on the Sanctity of Marriage and the Family (Jerusalem, 1994)<sup>17</sup> and *Care for the Environment* (Rome, 1998). The most recent meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, held in New York City from May 1-4, 2001 was the occasion for a joint statement on "Protecting Religious Freedom and Holy Sites."<sup>18</sup> Shortly after the destruction of ancient Buddhist statues in Afghanistan by the Taliban, as well as attacks on shrines elsewhere, this declaration condemned all violence directed against holy places, even by members of our own communities. With regard to religious freedom, the Committee acknowledged that "... we must do more as religious leaders to teach our fellow believers respect for people who belong to other religious traditions."<sup>19</sup> Moving to the political sphere, the text states:

Those responsible for law, order and public security should feel themselves obligated to defend religious minorities and to use available legal remedies against those who commit crimes against religious liberty and the sanctity of holy places. Just as they are prohibited from engaging in anti-religious acts, governments must also be vigilant lest by inaction they effectively tolerate religious hatred or provide impunity for the perpetrators of anti-religious actions.<sup>20</sup>

The document concludes with words of hope: "We look forward, prayerfully, to the time when all people shall enjoy the right to lead their religious lives unmolested and in peace. We long for the time when the holy places of all religious traditions will be secure and when all people treat one another's holy places with respect."<sup>21</sup>

The important question of educating clergy for dialogue was addressed at the same meeting. The "Joint Recommendation on Education in Catholic and Jewish Seminaries and Schools of Theology" calls for increased attention to the contents of curriculum and appropriate efforts "to expose students to living Judaism or Christian communities through guest lectures, field trips, involvement in local, national and international dialogue groups and conferences."<sup>22</sup> This preparation should dispose

future leaders in local communities to interact on social issues so that various crises may be avoided.

## CONCLUSION

All these issues deserve the attention of people responding to the biblical vision of life and to all others seeking a world of justice and peace. In another essay I have sketched the development of dialogue on several continents. This may be consulted for its wide range of bibliographical suggestions.<sup>23</sup> To accomplish lasting results, cooperative efforts should involve experienced community leaders and an awareness that no one group can be effective across such a wide-ranging gamut of challenges. We should stimulate others to exercise their talents and constantly widen the circles of those involved in the issues most pertinent to a given community. As always, the words of Rabbi Tarfon are pertinent: "It is not your duty to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it" (Mishnah Abhot 2:21).

## Notes

Part of this article was taken from a chapter written by the author in *Seeds of Reconciliation: Essays on Jewish-Christian Understanding*, ed. by Katherine T. Hargrove, (North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press), 1996.

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<sup>1</sup> See Harold Stahmer, "Speak that I May See Thee!" *The Religious Significance of Language* (New York: Macmillan, 1968) and John M. Oesterreicher, *The Unfinished Dialogue: Martin Buber and the Christian Way* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> See Léon Pliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1975) three volumes; Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985); John M. Oesterreicher, *The New Encounter Between Christians and Jews* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1986); Geoffrey Wigoder, *Jewish-Christian Relations Since the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); Marcus Braybrooke, *Time to Meet: Towards a Deeper Relationship between Jews and Christians* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> Austin Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1975) volume 1 p. 922. See the document "On Dialogue with Unbelievers" issued by the Holy See's Secretariat for Unbelievers on August 28, 1968 (Flannery, p. 1002-14) and Avery Dulles, "Communication Theology: Dialogue in Communication and in the Theology of *Communio*," *Catholic International* (November, 2001) p. 36-40. A wide range of statements and addresses by recent popes and other officials is gathered in English translation under the title *Paths to Peace: Documents of the Holy See to the International Community* (New York: Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, 1987). Donald F. Durnbaugh edited statements of the World Council of Churches and other groups in *On Earth Peace: Discussions on War/Peace Issues between Friends, Mennonites, Brethren and European Churches, 1935-75* (Elgin, IL: The Brethren Press, 1978).

<sup>4</sup> Surveys with extensive bibliographies for the biblical tradition are offered by Jean-Marie Aubert, "Loi et Evangile," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* LXII (1976) col. 966-984, Klaus Koch and others, "Gesetz," *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (1984) pp. 40-147, S. Greengus, "Law in the OT," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplementary Volume (1976) pp. 532-537, H.H. Esser, "Law," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, volume 2, pp. 436-456. Articles on Greek, Roman, common and natural law in the *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (volumes 2-3) review areas that are beyond the scope of this essay.

<sup>5</sup> The following volumes include a study of the legal heritage: Israel Abrahams and others, *The Legacy of Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927); Moshe Davis (ed.), *Israel: Its Role in Civilization* (New York: Harper and Row, 1956); Louis Finkelstein (ed.), *The Jews: Their Role in Civilization* (New York: Schocken, 1971); Abraham Katsh, *The Biblical Heritage of American Democracy* (New York: KTAV, 1977); Cecil Roth, *The Jewish*

*Contribution to Civilization* (London: East and West Library, 1956).

<sup>6</sup> H.W. Robinson, *Corporate Personality in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) and Aubrey R. Johnson, *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1964).

<sup>7</sup> See Delbert R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1969); Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1978). On the covenant law-suit form, see Julien Harvey, *Le Plaidoyer prophétique contre Israël* (Brussels: Desclée, 1976).

<sup>8</sup> See A. Finkel, "The Meaning and Practice of Peace: A Biblical and Rabbinic Perspective," edited by L. Frizzell. (South Orange: Jewish-Christian Studies, 1990) p. 1-14.

<sup>9</sup> See A. Finkel, "Aging: The Jewish Perspective," *Spiritual Perspectives on Aging*, edited by F. Tiso (Lake Worth: Sunday Publications, 1982) pp. 111-134.

<sup>10</sup> See Robert North, *Sociology of the Biblical Jubilee* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1954).

<sup>11</sup> A saying attributed to Hillel the elder (an older contemporary of Jesus) makes the point well: "If I am not for myself, who is for me? If I am only for myself what am I? (Mishnah Aboth 1:14). Rabbi Akiba (who died in A.D. 135.) stated: "Beloved is the human person, for he was created in the image of God; still greater was the love which made this known to him (Gen 9:6) (Aboth 1:15).

<sup>12</sup> See Jeffery Wattles, *The Golden Rule* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Living Toward a Vision* (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1982) p. 15. A scholarly approach to the Pentateuch (Torah) of the Hebrew Bible is offered by Dale Patrick *Old Testament Law* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985) and Franz Crüsemann, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law* ((Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

<sup>14</sup> For Jewish and Christian contributions to this discussion see Ze'ev W. Falk, *Law and Religion: The Jewish Experience* (Jerusalem: Mesharim, 1981); Walter Harrelson, *The Ten Commandments and Human Rights* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) and *Peace, Politics and the People of God*, edited by Paul Peachey (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986). For an approach that stresses the difference among the civilizations of the world, see A.J.M. Milne, *Human Rights and Human Diversity: Essay in the Philosophy of Human Rights* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986). Another version of the above section of my essay was published in *Seeds of Reconciliation*, edited by Katharine Hargrove (N. Richland, TX: BIBAL Press, 1996).

<sup>15</sup> Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter "Toward the Coming Third Millennium,": *The Pope Speaks* 40 (1995) p. 91-93 (#11-14).

<sup>16</sup> See *SIDIC* 33 (#1 - 2001) p. 22-24.

<sup>17</sup> See *SIDIC* 27 (#2- 1994) p. 32.

<sup>18</sup> The text is found in *SIDIC* 34 (#2 - 2001) p. 23-25 and in *Pro Dialogo* (Pontifical Council for Dialogue among Religions) 107 (2001-2) p. 272-275. Also see the Boston College web site at: [www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/research/cjl/](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/research/cjl/)

<sup>19</sup> *Pro Dialogo*, p. 274

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274-275

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 275

<sup>22</sup> See *SIDIC* 34 (#2- 2001) p. 25

<sup>23</sup> "Jewish-Christian Relations and the Dialogue with World Religions: A Bibliographical Survey," *SIDIC* 28 (#2- 1995).