

11-1-2005

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Recommended Citation

DuBois, Fletcher R. and Eberhart, Christian (2005) "Talking with the other(s): towards interfaith understanding," *Consensus*: Vol. 30 : Iss. 2 , Article 5.

Available at: <http://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol30/iss2/5>

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STUDIES AND OBSERVATIONS

Edited by Timothy M. J. Hegedus

Talking with the Other(s): Towards Interfaith Understanding

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In Honor of Robert Jewett

Christian A. Eberhart: A major insight of 20th century Christian theology has been the understanding of God as the *totaliter aliter*, the “totally other.” It comprises the idea that Christians talk about, and believe in a God who, as the “other,” is not to be found in, nor is part of, this world, and that Christian believers develop their faith, and respond in some fashion to this “other” God. Only later in the 20th century a further “other” became prominent in the realm of Christian theological reflection, however without being honored by the coining of a distinct Latin expression: the other (Christian) denomination, the other religion, respectively the member(s) of “other” religious communities. And while Christian theology is – naturally – still on the way to perform its duty of exploring the *totaliter aliter* in a vertical sense, the relationship toward the “other” in the horizontal direction has gained new momentum in a world characterized by an increasing frequency of interfaith encounters. Somebody who has been vividly engaged in this latter segment of theological reflection on an academic level is Robert Jewett,¹ and it is our pleasure to greet this friend of ours at the occasion of his 72nd birthday by presenting to him a modest contribution to this ongoing discussion.

Can Christians actually talk to “the other(s)”? Engaging in interfaith encounters is no easy endeavor, it seems. In the following quotation, two scholars have identified preconceived notions of “the other(s)” and their religion as one reason why interfaith encounters might not be successful:

The evangelical approach to other religions has been to view them as systems which are pagan, heathen, and closed to the activity of God in history. They are anti-Christian systems which have no signs of redemption in them. Only the people in them are redeemable. The system itself is not redeemable. Therefore the approach is to confront the systems by hurling gospel grenades over the boundary walls in a process designed to raze the religious system to the ground. While this siege is in progress, the attacking forces rescue what inmates they can, clean them up, baptize them, and then use them as front line troops in the siege operations.²

To be sure, this statement reflects on one particular manifestation of Christianity and is not necessarily representative of the whole. However, also the above-mentioned understanding of God's radical otherness (*totaliter aliter*) phrased by the dialectical theology was itself coupled with the notion that the God seen as the subject and object of Christianity is unique. Hence the comparison of Christianity with other religions, or of the Bible with other religious traditions, was a *priori* considered impossible.³ And still today, claims in a more subtle tone are frequently voiced that Christianity as a religion, or Christ as the savior of humankind, occupies an absolute place that does not allow for any comparison or dialogue with other religions.⁴ Such opinions raise the question about possibilities of communication with "the other(s)."

Fletcher R. DuBois: Knowing "the other(s)" in a way that that other would assent to that knowledge is no easy thing. Some evangelical Christians might take issue with the quote above as being a parody of their own beliefs. But what if some evangelicals would recognize their own beliefs in that quote? How would I communicate with them? I would probably have to contain my anger and remember that there are areas where I most surely hold beliefs that I do not even question – where my assumptions are so engrained they are dealt with as just the way things are and that this certainty can be for others a source of pain and interpreted as disrespect, although that is not my intention. Someone might respond that salvation is not to be reduced to being about individuals and that that emphasis is part and parcel of a divisive and damaging world view.

For those who find spirit indwelling in all there is, how would they begin to understand notions of the vertical divine and the horizontal human domain? Part of the hard work of meeting the other

is to recognize that categories taken for granted may be stumbling blocks to beginning any dialogue at all. Even the word “other” with its phonetic closeness to “Brother” and distance to “Sister” may hold within it challenges to true understanding, while the word understanding may contain a treasure of allusion pointing to being able to “stand under” the aegis of what or who is to be understood.

C.E.: I think it is important to realize that understanding another person, and thus getting to know her or him is a difficult, yet also rewarding task. Such understanding necessarily requires conversation, and real conversation is only possible if “the other” is accepted as a person of equal status who is being treated with due respect, including the respect of the person’s religion or denomination.⁵ This is an aspect of modesty that the “standing under” seems to suggest. It takes seriously the fact that nobody will ever be fully capable of understanding another human being, and that the other will forever be an elusive other whom I cannot grasp. The Jew Martin Buber expressed the ability to respect the other despite his or her otherness in a public discussion held in 1933 by using the image of a sanctuary: The sacred area that hides its secret is inside of the sanctuary and, therefore, invisible from the outside; every real sanctuary, however, can acknowledge the secret of another real sanctuary.⁶

Any claim of absoluteness of one’s own standpoint *a priori* denies this respect. In all genres of personal encounter, are not claims of absoluteness always coupled with a sense of one’s own superiority that prohibits any real encounter with the other right from the outset?

As a Lutheran scholar of religious studies, I may mention at this point that Martin Luther himself, in his lectures on the book of Genesis (1535-1545), warned against *superbia* (pride, arrogance) as the principal sin of humanity.vii Biblical texts supporting such a warning can also be found in other Old Testament books: I do not want to dwell on the well-known passage about loving one’s neighbor (Lev 19:18) or, even more striking, loving the foreigner (Lev 19:33-34); instead I want to briefly investigate Amos 9:7:

Are you not like the Ethiopians?? to me,
O people of Israel? says the Lord.
Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt,
and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?

In this text the prophet (or the redactor of the book⁸) challenges Israel when saying that God led not only Israel, but also *other* people into liberty! To be sure, this text displays what today would, more or less, fall into the category of inclusivism: the other nations and their religions are understood in Israel's own terms because Israel's God, not their genuine divinity, is the one who guarantees salvation. Despite this circumstance, we should not ignore that Amos 9:7 fundamentally challenges Israel's self-understanding of being chosen by God. It necessarily implies that Philistines and Arameans who historically count among Israel's archenemies, as well as Ethiopians, have been privileged through authentic encounters with God.⁹ Even if texts like this one are rare in the Old Testament (see, however, Isaiah 19:19-22), it must be stressed that it defies any sense of religious superiority resulting from a feeling of closeness, and thus opens up ways toward the other.

F.D.: Ah Amos, there are such beautiful lines in Amos that let the soul soar. But going back a bit to what you said about what gets in the way of understanding the other: Is it possible to demand or expect that each person be of the same status? Or do you mean something more akin to "existential worth"? There are all kinds of status differences in different situations, not the least of which occur daily in schools and institutions of higher learning. But how, given such differences in power and privilege, can one learn to really hear the other? And after truly hearing what does that result in: how are actions changed, goals altered and minds and hearts opened? And doesn't our notion of knowing up until now depend too much on the spoken word? Aren't there other ways of knowing as well? The way someone moves, a look, a tone, a way of being silent or attentive, having laughing eyes or a kind ironic half smile. Also as I write this I realize I have focused on the dialogic – two people encountering one another. But there are also ways of learning about the others when those others make up a group of people – and sometimes it is perplexing how different that kind of encounter can be.

My guess is that any religion has in some form its share of intolerance. Martin Luther is no exception here (though said in another time, some of his remarks and actions towards the farmers in the farmers' revolt, or about Jews certainly are not monuments to understanding).¹⁰ Pride seems to be able to wreak havoc in most any

place at any time. And of course that kind of pride needs to be put over against the kind of pride that is a loving gratitude toward where one has come from and who one owes one's life to. And how do we distinguish the one from the other?

C.E.: I think your statement adequately captures the Christian perception of oneself and of other human beings. When looking at another human being or at the totality of life and the earth as such, Christians believe that there is a single and unique source to all of this. They perceive this source not as impersonal, but as personal. And the attempt to establish a faithful relationship with this personal source of life encompasses loving gratitude. Of course, the concept of creation as such is not only Christian, but is part of other religions as well. Within Judaism, it finds its most famous manifestations in the creation accounts (Gen 1:1-2:4a; Gen 2:4b-25), but also in, for instance, some of the arguments regarding theodicy (Job 38:4-11), or in the Book of Psalms (e.g., Ps 8; 66:6-12; 139:13-18). Christianity has generally adopted such views (see, e.g., John 1:1-5), even though creation as such is a topic less frequently referred to in the New Testament. Paul, however, assumes that nature allows human beings to gain at least a limited knowledge of God (Rom 1:18-21).¹¹ Likewise in Islam, human beings are thought to be capable of recognizing Allah because they are created (Surah 56:58-74); furthermore, the concept of creation can be coupled with the notion of Allah's justice and mercy (Surah 55:1-13).

Finally, considering my present Canadian context, I might add that considerable commonalities regarding this concept of creation can also be found within First Nations spirituality. While it is impossible to provide an adequate overview over the rich and diverse traditions which vary according to the individual life-styles and sources of subsistence, some examples might suffice to highlight such similarities: In several North American native cultures, the Earth is considered to be the one who brings forth and sustains life. Human gratitude can be expressed through prayers, smoke offerings, or ritual ceremonies.¹² In many cultures the view is held that the shape of the world needs to be changed or its balance to be restored so that life can be sustained. Culture heroes (like the White Buffalo Calf Woman in the Lakota tradition) or tricksters may appear and bring about this change;¹³ alternatively, animal beings may bring central cultural

goods to the people.¹⁴ Humans therefore owe these beings their gratitude as well.¹⁵ The existence of such more or less similar concepts of creation in different religions generally makes them a subject that is well fit as a point of departure for interfaith dialogue.¹⁶

F.D.: The gratitude I was referring to can take many forms. It can be to one's ancestors, it can be to the land one was raised on. It can be to the Source of All. Each of us has a shared lineage which ends uniquely with us, the irreplaceable individual. Each of us is different but difference alone will not help us really talk to another. Without some commonality there could not be any talking and responding. Even if we do not understand the words we know something about sounds and gesture and the making of sense. Where however does empathetic understanding come in? Is it assured by assuming there is a common ultimate source – and then who am I to presume to assume?

For me the paradoxical way is that of utter difference (only we can die our own death) and utter sameness – us being all drops in the same ocean. But that last part doesn't sound very biblical or personal. However in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, there are mystical traditions that know the divine as incredibly personal and totally beyond naming. The via negative for example as a lived experience to a logical category. And other faiths? What happens to our interfaith understanding when we confront a Buddhist text that responds to the question of God as being one which does not tend toward edification,

Once my great teacher, the Rabbi Professor Eugen Kullmann, who taught me respect for the world of Arabic thinking, writing, and culture and who had a Buddha statue in his front lawn, shared with me that a great question of the next century would be if we would be if we could learn to refrain from saying the name God. Why?

On one occasion at Kenyon College where he taught in the last part of his life, a Palestinian scholar was giving an address and was loudly interrupted by an irate person in the audience. Kullmann arose and went to the podium where he shook the speaker's hand and reminded the audience that the etymology of the word "college" refers to the ability to converse with one another. That one time event has been retold by some of his students due to the power of what it taught them. It also speaks volumes about our teacher. On another occasion I heard him give on very short notice a whole seminar lecture on the Christian mystics. But erudition alone is also no

guarantee for true being and speaking with the other. What else is needed? And how can it be taught? How can one keep one's own most deeply cherished beliefs and still be open for the other?

C.E.: Instead of attempting a straightforward response, I want to provide some observations from the New Testament. First, according to the story of the call of the first disciples, Jesus meets fishermen who are casting their net in the Sea of Galilee (Mark 1:16-20parr). Many details of this as well as other call-story have been the subject of scholarly scrutiny, but few have paid attention to the surprising fact that the people recruited in order to accompany Jesus on his religious mission are introduced solely by their secular profession, and not at all as members of a particular religious group that existed in Early Judaism, for example, Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, Essenes, etc. Jesus certainly had the choice to select adherents from the whole spectrum of various Judean denominations, but he called laypeople instead. And also Jesus himself is never portrayed as a representative of a particular Judean sect. When walking through the country and finally approaching Jerusalem, he is in touch with members of various Judean sects and visits synagogues and the temple; yet he is never identified as a member of any of them. This, of course, does not mean that Jesus or his disciples did not belong to the Judean religion. It is beyond discussion that Jesus and his disciples were well versed regarding their religious traditions and part of them. It implies, however, that neither Jesus nor his disciples were radical representatives of any particular group of their religion – perhaps with the possible exception of Judas Iscariot.¹⁷

A second observation is that especially the Gospel according to Mark portrays Jesus sometimes as acting against certain features of his own religion. One of the reasons why Jesus met increasing opposition from the authorities of the established Judean religion lies in his protest against some of its particular external forms. When his disciples plucked grains on a Sabbath (Mark 2:23-28parr), or when Jesus himself healed a man on this very day (3:1-6parr), then the message implied in these actions is twofold: The welfare of human beings is more important than strict religious legalism; and under certain circumstances, religious rules can, in fact, harm humans – or even kill (3:4). According to Mark, Jesus' protest is the reason why Judean authorities eventually plotted to eliminate Jesus (3:6).

It is important to emphasize that, according to Mark, Jesus did not protest against his Judean religion or the Judean Law as such. Mark's report on the healing of a leper (Mark 1:40-45) which immediately precedes the passages in 2:1-3:6 shows Jesus demanding that the requirements of the traditional law of purification from leprosy (according to Lev 14:1-32) be fulfilled. Later, when asked by a scribe, Jesus readily confirms traditional religious values (Mark 12:28-34). In 2:1-3:6, however, Mark depicts Jesus as clearly acting against some traditional laws as well as against additional Pharisaic laws.¹⁸ This leads to a "crescendo in the tension between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, the scribes and Pharisees."¹⁹ A historical evaluation of Mark's narratives yields that the conflict between Jesus and the Judean authorities is likely to be exaggerated.²⁰ This, on the other hand, is not to deny any historicity of Jesus' conflict with Judean authorities. I understand these stories as proof of how Jesus in fact questioned the value of certain traditional laws if they are taken more seriously than urgent human needs. It is my understanding that Jesus would as well have protested against similar religious forms if they would have occurred in other religions, even in Christianity. The identification of Jesus' behavior in Mark 2:1-3:6 as "protest," therefore, should not be misunderstood as an anti-Jewish statement.

Third, Jesus did not protest against what was at the heart of his Judean religion; that is to say, Jesus did not object to the fact that his religion enabled human beings to recognize and establish a genuine relationship with God. His parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14) features the earlier as a good representative of the Judean religion who, as we might assume, has fulfilled his religious obligations, among them fasting and alms giving. On the contrary, the latter is certain to have fulfilled only very few – if any – of these laws. Nevertheless, Jesus declares that the tax collector is "justified" while the Pharisee is not (verse 14). The reason is, once again, that the observance of specific rules or particular religious behavior is not the criterion according to which a relationship to God can be judged. Instead, the fact that the tax collector features an utterly humble attitude towards God while the Pharisee displays personal pride that included his despise of "the other" shows that arrogance is not an attitude to be tolerated. What is wrong about this arrogance? It accepts only one's own forms of worship while

dismissing the possibility that also the other might have a genuine relationship with God. Paul expressed this when reflecting on the gift of love in general: he stated that “love is not boastful or arrogant or rude; it does not insist on its own way” (1 Cor 13:4-5).

I think this love that does not insist on its own way finds its expression when your teacher Eugen Kullmann was willing to closely study different cultures and religions in his quest for truth. It takes seriously the final limitation of human knowledge that applies to every field of academic study but especially to theological studies. Robert Jewett aptly links this epistemological rule to the biblical commandment not to make images of anything that is in heaven above (Exod 20:4) when writing:

Whether Jew or Gentile, conservative or liberal, weak or strong, everyone tends to make a graven image of some particular definition or code, and whenever this occurs, God is opposed and his will is thwarted. Faith without tolerance is just as much a violation of what it means to be truly religious as tolerance without faith.²¹

F.D.: Your excursus into the New Testament examples was for me enlivening and provocative. Thank you for the food for thought especially about how the disciples were called. How to advocate for interfaith understanding? The one person with her or his own dearest memories, experiences and hopes will connect to the prayer that makes the other feel utterly excluded. This is no easy road. I wonder now how others may look at our conversation here. Will they think that I do not respond enough to your rich statements? What image will they have of us doing our best to share ideas and learn from each other? There is newness to this in that we usually have spoken German with each other. Thankfully for me we can do this writing in my mother tongue. You are accommodating me but also thinking of whom we are writing for. Now as we are closing our “talk” I realize that understanding the other is also about being with and sharing with the other. I remember when you and your family and I visited Bob Jewett and his wife Heike Goebel in their lovely home. We had just started with these conversations about tolerance, religion, teaching and understanding. It was then that I wrote a poem out on a rather large envelope – those were my initial thoughts and questions. In the mean time we have looked at many approaches to this thorny and flowering field I was particularly taken by descriptions of medieval interfaith

understanding in Andalusia Spain. And most recently I found a very small article in the library of the ecumenical institute and student dorm that is right round the corner from where I live and where you studied—right under the Bell tower of the Heidelberg Castle. That article was written just shortly after I was born by a former housemaster of Clifton College, Albert K. Polack, and it is titled “Tolerance Can It Be Taught?” Just a half decade after the end of World War II Polack writes with urgency that we must find ways to promote tolerance. I know that term is very difficult. And looking back we almost always can discover ways in which we, unknowingly, have been insensitive to the real lives of others protecting our privilege or our envy or some other life denying form. Here we have tried to start the conversation that I trust we will continue and I am grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to be with you in these lines.

Thou shall – shalt not teach
 of what is held to be most true
 The Ground which souls stand upon
 The Destination after time of home
 And who is there to reach out to
 without elevation and selection of
 The everlasting choice of other
 How to accept the seeming finality of
 conviction – “we are, however full of failure,
 Right” – from different eyes
 And what they see – not one’s own horizon.
 Facts and lines of simple demographic demarcation
 Will not do alone. Where is the compassion and
 Room for another’s deepest hope and inspiration
 The willingness to risk and trust and be confined
 By the unanswerable righteousness of hurting questions
 A world of difference between the irritated task to
 tolerate and the wideness of mercy for self and
 others – the fullness of knowing one has just begun
 to know. Words and effort bend back upon
 Themselves in necessary contradiction. Thus the
 Claims, to stake claims – the stakes and flames.
 Righteousness now for all – we beseech but whom?
 The loom of threads unraveling. Strong design, in time
 Thou shalt not – Thou shall teach.

(F.R. DuBois)

Notes

- 1 See especially Robert Jewett's book *Christian Tolerance: Paul's Message to the Modern Church – Biblical Perspectives on Current Issues* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982). However, values such as tolerance and human understanding are also at the heart of several of his other works, e.g. *Saint Paul at the Movies: The Apostle's Dialogue with American Culture* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), and its sequel, *Saint Paul Returns to the Movies: Triumph over Shame* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), as well as *Paul the Apostle to America: Cultural Trends and Pauline Scholarship* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994). In his books *The Myth of the American Superhero* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002), and *Captain America and the Crusade Against Evil: The Dilemma of Zealous Nationalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003), Jewett – together with co-author John Shelton Lawrence – studies and exposes religious subtexts rendering U.S. American popular and political culture inherently zealous, and as such intolerant toward world views of other cultures.
- 2 Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, "Dialogue with other Religions – an Evangelical View", in: Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (ed.s), *Sharing Jesus in the Two Thirds World: Evangelical Christologies from the Contexts of Poverty, Powerlessness and Religious Pluralism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1983), pp. 122-40; p. 132.
- 3 An example of this position is Karl Barth's 1920 presentation entitled "Biblische Fragen, Einsichten und Ausblicke," reprinted in: Jürgen Moltmann (ed.), *Anfänge der Dialektischen Theologie, vol. 1: Karl Barth, Heinrich Barth, Emil Brunner, ThB 17/1*, (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1977):49-76. For a description of these features of the dialectical theology see Klaus Koch, "Propheten/Prophetie II. In Israel und seiner Umwelt," *TRE 27* (1997):477-8; Christian Eberhart, *Studien zur Bedeutung der Opfer im Alten Testament: Die Signifikanz von Blut- und Verbrennungsriten im kultischen Rahmen, WMANT 94*, (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2002):11-12.
- 4 For a recent example of this position, see Jörg Frey, "Die 'Absolutheit des Christentums' und die Einzigartigkeit Jesu Christi," in: *Zeitschrift für Neues Testament 5* (2000):37-43.
- 5 In his definition and description of a multicultural society, Wolfgang Huber stresses the necessity of accepting the variety of different cultural expressions and actively engaging in forms of exchange with members of the other cultures (cf. W. Huber, "Viele Kulturen – eine Gesellschaft: Multikulturalität in europäischer Perspektive," in: *Zeitschrift für Evangelische Ethik 36* (1992):113.

- 6 “Jedes echte Heiligtum kann das Geheimnis eines echten anderen Heiligtums anerkennen. Das Geheimnis des anderen ist innen in ihm und kann nicht von außen her wahrgenommen werden... Aber nicht wissend können sie einander im Geheimnis annehmen.” K.L. Schmidt/M. Buber, “Kirche, Staat, Volk, Judentum: Zwiegespräch im Jüdischen Lehrhaus in Stuttgart am 14. Januar 1933,” reprinted in: Peter von der Osten-Sacken [ed.], *Leben als Begegnung: Ein Jahrhundert Martin Buber 1878 – 1978: Vorträge und Aufsätze* [Veröffentlichungen aus dem Institut Kirche und Judentum 7] (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1978), pp. 116-144; p. 129.
- 7 WA 42:189.
- 8 In biblical scholarship, extensive portions of Amos 9 are not usually attributed to the prophet Amos (nor to any writer of the eighth century period); cf. Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, Anchor Bible 24A* (Toronto, ON: Doubleday, 1989), p. 894.
- 9 Cf. Jörg Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary* (translated by D.W. Stott; Old Testament Library), Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998, pp. 163-4; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, pp. 905-7; Volkmar Fritz, “Philister und Israel,” *TRE* 26 (1996), pp. 518-23; Christian Eberhart, “Biblical Perspectives on ‘the Other’,” *Audenshaw Papers* 2004, p. 3.
- 10 See, for example, Martin Luther’s writings against the farmers such as *Ermahnung zum Frieden auf die Zwölf Artikel der Bauernschaft in Schwaben, 1525*, WA 18:291-334; *Wider die Räuberischen und Mörderischen Rotten der Bauern, 1525*, WA 18: 357-361; *Ein Sendbrief von dem Harten Büchlein wider die Bauern, 1525*, WA 18:384-401; for his writings against Jews, see, e.g., *Von den Juden und Ihren Lügen, 1543*, WA 53: 417-552. See also Luther’s writing against the enthusiasts: *Wider die Himmlischen Propheten: Von den Bildern und Sakrament, 1525*, WA 18:37-214.
- 11 In later Christian theology, the object of this limited perception is referred to as “*deus absconditus*.”
- 12 Cf. Åke Hultkrantz, “The Religious Life of Native North Americans,” in: Lawrence E. Sullivan (ed.), *Native American Religions: North America* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 3-18; Jordan Paper, “Through the Earth Darkly: The Female Spirit in Native American Religions,” in: Christopher Vecsey (ed.), *Religion in Native North America* (Moscow, Idaho: University of Idaho Press, 1990), pp. 3-19. In these concepts, Earth is usually considered female and can be coupled with the Sun (ibid., pp. 15). According to certain Blackfoot traditions, it

is Creator Sun who created and sustains the universe and life. Creator Sun therefore expects that humans are thankful toward him and Mother Earth; cf. Percy Bullchild, *American Indian Genesis: The Story of Creation* (Berkeley, Calif.: Seastone, 1998), p. 70.

- 13 Cf. Åke Hultkrantz, *ibid.*; William K. Powers, "The Plains," in: Lawrence E. Sullivan (ed.), *Native American Religions: North America* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 19-36; Marla N. Powers, "Mistress, Mother, Visionary: The Lakota Culture Heroine," in: Christopher Vecsey (ed.), *Religion in Native North America* (Moscow, Idaho: University of Idaho Press, 1990), pp. 36-48; Kenneth M. Morrison, "Native American Religions: Creating Through Cosmic Give-and-Take," in: Duane Champagne (ed.), *Native America: Portrait of the Peoples* (Detroit: Visible Ink, 1994), pp. 446-7.
- 14 For information on First Nation traditions and myths see, e.g., the websites at <<http://www.indianlegend.com/>> and <<http://www.bluecloud.org/myth.html>>.
- 15 I am grateful to Remi Rheault, Saskatoon, and Monika Müller, Berlin (Germany) for their assistance with this particular paragraph.
- 16 The implications of love and otherness will be explored in a future essay.
- 17 Our precise knowledge of biographical data on Judas Iscariot remains vague. There is, however, some speculation that he might have been a zealot; cf. Kurt Lüthi, "Judas I. Das Judasbild vom Neuen Testament bis zur Gegenwart," *TRE* 17 (1988):297.
- 18 In Mark 7:3, 5, 8, the Pharisaic laws are called "tradition of the elders" (see also Gal 1:14; Jos.Ant. 13:296-298); they can, according to Rabbi Akiba, be seen as "a fence around the Law" (m.Abod 3:14). A compilation of Rabbinic sources on these "traditions of the elders" is presented in Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, 3rd edition (München: Oskar Beck, 1926), pp. 691-5.
- 19 Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 3rd edition (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 72.
- 20 Cf. Ehrman, *ibid.*; Hans-Friedrich Weiß, "Pharisäer II. Neues Testament," *TRE* 26 (1996):482-485; for an evaluation of the historical accuracy of polemics against Judean authorities in New Testament passion narratives see Christian Eberhart, "The 'Passion' of Gibson: Evaluating a Recent Interpretation of Christ's Suffering and Death in Light of the New Testament;" in: *Consensus* 30/1 (2005):46. It should be noted that Mark's redaction is customarily dated to 68-72 C.E. when the conflict with the traditional Judean religion had already evolved; cf.

Robert A. Guelich, Mark 1-8:26, WBC 34A, (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), pp. xxxi-xxxii; Udo Schnelle, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 4th edition, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), pp. 244-5; John S. Kloppenborg, *Evocatio Deorum and the Date of Mark*, JBL 124 (2005):419-450.

²¹ Robert Jewett, *Christian Tolerance*, p. 90.