When in 1453, under the impression of the Fall of Constantinople, Nicholas of Cusa wrote about "peace of faith" his intellectual baggage was laden and with theological and philosophical problems and methods. For good reasons this text has been interpreted as a philosophical-theological treatise on the conditions of the possibility of unity among diverse religions. However, I believe that Cusanus does not at all explain the existence of unity of faith as a given, he, rather, postulates such unity as a necessity and as the aim that lies before us and gives us directions. Apparently the author does not alone severally introduce the variety of religions, but he gives them a voice in a polyphonic conversation on all levels of the heavenly hierarchy: from God the Father via the Son, the Angels and Saints down to the individual representatives of various peoples and rites. Cusanus has the spokespeople of various rites articulate their concerns, which are naturally of theological importance but are also proffered with existential urgency. I propose therefore to give this text an anthropological interpretation. If the multitude of religions among the multitude of peoples manifests God's will, then also the individuality of the speakers of peoples does so. And so it turns out that peacefulness of faith does not consist in that postulated unity - which, of course, would be a Catholic one - but in the intent of the individuals to uphold their faith and peace at the same time. Peaceableness, then, must be an anthropological datum that is not restricted by history, by geography, or by creed.

As a philosopher and theologian Nicholas of Cusa is known to present complex interrelations in all their complication and thus to challenge his readership with high levels of abstraction. Traditionally, this
results in a competition of his interpreters to outperform the complication and each other by dint of negative theology, epistemology, and transcendentalism. As meritorious and fruitful that may be, frequently it is overlooked that Cusanus equally acted as a practical philosopher and spiritual guide.² His many sermons testify for that. Although one can entertain some doubt about how much his listeners might have understood his mathematical arguments, for instance, at any rate the tone of his texts is that of persuasion, exhortation, and above all reconnecting ultimate theological truth with the perspective of human religiosity. For this reason I want to discuss his famous treatise On Peace of Religion as a document of Cusanus's anthropology. For the sake of heuristics I surmise that the various speakers in this text do not just put forward some theological arguments but that the author intentionally assigns them their questions and objections as representatives of humanity. My question to the book is: what is the concept of humanity conveyed by Cusanus? Let me start with an overview of the dialogues before I investigate a few details.

THE DISCOURSE IN HEAVEN

Unmistakably the text opens with recalling the event of Constantinople 1453:

There was a certain man who, having formerly seen the sites in the regions of Constantinople, was inflamed with zeal for God as a result of those deeds that were reported to have been perpetrated at Constantinople most recently and most cruelly by the King of the Turks. Consequently, with many groanings he beseeched the Creator of all, because of His kindness, to restrain the persecution that was raging more fiercely than usual (plus solito) on account of the difference of rite between the religions.³


³ Nicholas of Cusa, On Peaceful Unity of Faith, transl. Jasper Hopkins, Minneapolis: Banning Press, 1994, p. 633 (available online: http://cla.umn.edu/sites/jhopkins/DePace12-2000.pdf). When using this translation I take the liberty and omit explanatory additions of the translator. Page numbers without further specification refer to this text. - I will quote the critical Latin edition only for emphasis or clarification:
The most striking feature of this opening is that the author is factually speaking in first person as an eyewitness that claims to have "seen the sites in the regions". The first person perspective, since it is theologically quite irrelevant, can only serve to open a treatise if the personal involvement is part of the argument. God is introduced here as the one who can be moved by prayers and groanings to have mitigating influence, while it is not even hoped that all religious strife could come to an end but only what exceeds the ordinary. This is an important motive that needs to be pondered. For now we need to go on with the overview of the topics in anthropological perspective.

Cusanus has an Archangel speak first and responded to by God himself; freedom of will is their topic (chapter 2). Now the Son, the Word, takes the floor speaking about human nature and freedom (chapter 3). As the first human speaker a Greek comes forward - and we may remember that Cusanus knew some Greeks personally, since he accompanied them on their travel by ship from Constantinople to Venice on their way to the Council of Ferrara and Florence (1438), an experience that had inspired him to his most famous book, *The Learned Ignorance*. The Greek (chapter 4) talks about the urge of nations to defending their interests with blood. The Italian (*Italus*) underscores the diversity of languages (chapter 5); thereafter the Arab speaks about love (chapter 6), including the love of wisdom, claiming that religion is a means of survival. Whereas the Indian refers to images and idols, the Chaldean opens the discussion about unity and multiplicity (chapters 7-8). The Jew relates the topic of fertility to that of plurality, while the Scythian returns back to sexuality and love (chapters 9-10). The Gaul is in charge of reminding of Parisian theology, scholasticism, which prompts The Word to call on St. Peter. This appears to be the moment of strict Scholastic debate and, indeed, the Persian raises a question of the relation between creation and creator, which then unfolds in an extended explanation of Christology (chapters 11-12). This again is a point which needs to be dwelt upon since we know that Christology for Cusanus is enhanced anthropology.

Even the role of the prophets is embedded in Christology. It is obviously a welcome occasion for the Syrian (chapter 13) to bring up the question of mortality, which is dealt with within the parameters of

desire and hope (desiderium, spes). Now the Spaniard has to connect that question with virginity, and the interlocutors agree that fertility and virginity are the two possible states of a human being. The Turk - notably representing that people that has brought so much suffering to Constantinople - asks Peter about the crucifixion, thus prompting a discussion about obedience, cowardice, freedom, and mortality (chapter 14). The German is interested in happiness (felicitas), so that Peter instructs the audience that the Jews believe that the eternal life cannot be gained through works (because that is not what is promised in the Law) but through faith alone, which understandably presupposes the existence of Christ (chapter 15). The Tartar motivates Paul, who now enters the scene (chapter 16), to elaborate on the relationship between works, belief, and justification: "But faith has to be formed; for without works it is dead." In Aquinas' theology, fides formata is distinguished through its enhancement by charity. Here Cusanus gives it a new meaning that may flow out of charity, namely the intent to peacefully worship God. This thread of the conversation heads towards the concluding postulate that sometimes a majority has to conform to a minority - for the sake of peace (chapter 16). Consequently the Armenian wants to know more about baptism and the Bohemian about the Eucharist, both understood as rituals that might be questioned (chapters 17-18). Through his spokesman Paul, Cusanus asserts that faith has priority over ritual. To a member of that nation that had harbored the utraquist movement the message sounds: "For believing - and thereby eating of the food of life - suffices for salvation."

Eventually an Englishman suggests discussing the rules of marriage (as though he would prophetically anticipate the affair of Henry VIII) and other sacraments. St. Paul cuts that short by observing and thus concluding the entire survey of religious differences: "Where conformity of mode cannot be had, nations are entitled to their own devo-

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5 Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae, II-II" q. 4 a. 4 c, and q. 19 a. 5 ad 1; whereas in q. 4 a. 9 ad 3 ecclesiastical doctrine seems to provide "formation". Also in Cusanus's De docta ignorantia III 6, faith is said to be formed by charity.

6 Ibid. p. 668. De Pace § 66, p. 60 f: "Hoc sacramentum... non est sic necessarium, quod sine eo non sit salus, nam sufficit ad salutem credere, et sic manducare cibum vitae." Bohemian Hussitism and utraquism (Holy Communion with bread and wine) were debated at the Council of Basel where Cusanus had been active.
tions and ceremonies, provided faith and peace be maintained.7 Salva fide et pace - holding faith and peace together captures the whole tension and its overcoming. The solution lies in accepting human limitations. Paul's first response to the question of sacraments had been theologically even more provocative: "It is necessary to make great allowances for the weakness of men... For to seek exact conformity in all respects is rather to disturb the peace." Cusanus rounds his vision off with the famous theory of presupposition, which holds that the accord of all religions is guaranteed in the heaven of reason (in coelo rationis) so that all participants of the discussion accompanied by Angels may go out, proclaim, and realize it all over the world. However, as a final caveat, we are admonished that the Prince of Darkness prevents believers from insight into that harmony.

THE HUMAN NEED FOR REVELATION

As already stated the text begins with an affirmation of personal concernment ("There was a certain man..."), which in spite of being said in third person doubtlessly refers to the author Cusanus himself. The remainder of the text is the fictional vision of a gathering of experienced sages who debate about the question, whether it might be "practically possible to reach a concord and by this to achieve in religion eternal peace with both effective and honorable means".8 The entire scenery and the accumulation of qualifying conditionals (possible, doable, effective, honorable) is that of personal experience and human condition.

A brief look into another work of Cusanus that deals with a competing religion, A Scrutiny of the Koran (Cribratio Alkorani) confirms that Cusanus is deliberately staging, for in this book persons including the author himself don't play any role but only the doctrines and the theological sources.

The conventional means of describing a vision are present; it is described as being "caught up to an intellectual height" (intellectualem

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7 Ibid, chapter 19, p. 669.
8 De pace § 1, p. 4: "unam posse facilem quandam concordantium reperiri ac per eam in religione perpetuam pacem convenienti ac veraci medio constitui." (My translation.) "Facilis" cannot mean "easy" or - as Hopkins translates - "readily-available"; Cusanus must have had the etymology in mind: "doable". "Verax" does not refer to objective truth, but to truthfulness as opposed to cunning or deceit.
and Godfather is described not as anything abstract but as the "King of heaven and earth". He condescends to receiving "from the kingdom of this world sorrowing messengers" who report about "the moanings of the oppressed" (p. 633). Cusanus's vision immediately returns down to his earthly reality. On the other hand he faces the narrative problem to make plausible that the ambassadors in heaven may be heard. Therefore he explains that they do not act like humans but, rather, like intellectual virtues. His literary ploys underline that he is not exploring some lofty realm but the condition of humans on earth.

The human perspective explains also why one of the representatives from Earth, some Prince, opens the dialogue with a definition of man: "O Lord, King of the universe, what does any creature have that You did not give to it? It was fitting that the human body, formed from the clay of the earth, was inbreathed by You with a rational spirit, so that from within this body an image of Your ineffable power would shine forth." Although it sounds like a Christian commonplace, emphasis is laid on the createdness and the internal divine power, which both combine to make up the human being as such. Being internally divine and being dependent could weaken the concept of human being and at the same time empower humanity as a dialectical unity. In other words, whatever human beings do, they achieve it thanks to that very internal power which is divine and nevertheless only given but, again, given from God.

This is the moment of finger-pointing: God is responsible for the plurality of religions. From plurality stems diversity. Add to that the fact that the majority of human beings can afford neither leisure nor time to make use of their free will and to cognize themselves. Consequently - between all their toil and labor - they simply lack opportunity and potential to seek after "the hidden God". Kings and prophets, such continues the narrative, were put in charge of the instruction of simple people. That again backfired because people took the doctrines much too literally, a factor that reveals the true human condition.

9 It may be observed that Giordano Bruno in 1584 will exploit this paradox in his dialogue Spaccio de la bestia trionfante: he has stars and deities transformed into abstract virtues.
10 Trans. Hopkins, p. 634.
11 Ibid. p. 634. Cusanus wrote a work by the title "The Hidden God" (De Deo abscondito).
(humana terrena conditio), namely, "that longstanding custom, which is regarded as having passed over into nature, is defended as the truth. In this way there arise great quarrels when each community prefers its own faith to another."\textsuperscript{12}

If this were a theological tractatus the latter statement would be pure blasphemy. For God is blamed of having created a plurality of human beings, having failed at repairing that, and for the human nature to be bound to fanaticism or, at least, sectarianism. The fanaticism, as just described, is some form of competition or, to use René Girard's terminology: mimesis, a mimetic circle. "For the sake of You, the only one they worship in whatever they adore, exists all this competition (aemulatio)."\textsuperscript{13} The Good, Truth, Life, and generally Being, those are the real objects of religious strife; for seemingly different interests converge in the object of aspiration. Only conscious return and awareness of the true object will be able to break the circle of violence. Such competition is also nurtured by ignorance, namely, revelation gone wrong, which God is asked to mend:

\textit{Therefore, do not hide (occultare) Yourself any longer, O Lord. Be propitious, and manifest Your face; and all peoples will be saved, who no longer will be able to desert the Source of life and its sweetness, once having foretasted even a little thereof. For no one departs from You except because He is ignorant of You. If You will deign to do the foregoing, the sword will cease, as will also the malice of hatred and all evils; and all will know that there is only one religion in a variety of rites.}\textsuperscript{14}

Here we have the famous formula: one religion in a variety of rites, which is frequently quoted when Cusanus' contribution to religious tolerance is discussed. It sounds quite comforting. Who would deny that, of course, in a plethora of rites there is just one religion, whatever that may be? The contingency is that God himself has to redo his revelation. Salvation depends on God's showing himself once again, or for the first time. War is ignorance, yes, but ignorance can only be healed by the Source of life Himself, none other. Then and only then insight in the true nature of religion is possible. And what is the true nature of religion? It helps reading attentively, for Cusanus is not at all

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid. De pace § 4, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{13} De pace § 5, p. 6: «Propter te enim, quem solum venerantur in omni eo quod cuncti adorare videntur, est haec aemulatio.» (My translation.)
\textsuperscript{14} Trans. Hopkins p. 635. De pace § 6, p. 7: "...non est nisi religio una in rituum varietate."
comforting us, he is challenging his Western readership. The uniformity of religion is not a fact, it is something that needs to be learned ("all will know"). Cusanus is not advertising a religious melting pot, he is giving a philosophical-theological definition of religion: "there is no single religion, except in a variety of rituals". Modern Christians in a diversified world tend to assure themselves that in some way 'we all pray to the same God'. To that Cusanus would say that this 'one God' is only accessible in the rivalry of religions. He explicitly speaks about the human condition, which is to stick to a truth fanatically once it has been found; and this is God's will. Only a God can salvage humanity by manifesting Himself in a way that He can be recognized; and once He is recognized, it will also be manifest that fanatical rivalry is the very human condition, which is accompanied by the paradox of knowing God and being religious at the same time, from where strife originates. Hence follows that competition as such, since it is god-given, cannot be the object of fanaticism. Religious struggles are derailed from their true object - recognition and veneration of God - to the struggle for the struggles' sake. The mimetic circle has been set in motion by God, therefore only God can break it by showing that emulation and contest are not aimed at fellow-humans but at God, and therefore competing peoples cannot be competitors except as concurrent lovers of God.

**MULTIPlicity**

In chapter 2 God illustrates the situation of humans; due to free will man is capable of societal life, but at the same time man is torn between his animalistic and intellectual components. After the prophets had unsuccessfully tried to call humanity back on the right path, intellectuality, The Word, had to take on human nature. It was intended as a lesson and a model to impart on human beings that specifically free will endows human nature with the capacity to receive immortality. At this point The Word remarks that the variability of opinions is equally entailed in free will.\(^{15}\) Plurality of opinions is a creation of God, from which we may deduce that freedom of will is not restricted to the capability to sin (as Luther would have it). Plurality is the epitome

\(^{15}\) _De pace_ § 7, p. 9: "[Verbum] humanam induit naturam, ut quilibet homo secundum eleccionem liberi arbitrii in sua natura, in homo illo qui et Verbum, immortale veritatis pabulum se assequi posse non dubitet."
of human creativity that as much as any undirected potential can go wrong, even if without arbitrary meanness. Otherwise it would be inexplicable why the same freedom is the basis of human sociability.

The Greek speaker thinks that unity of religion is hard to communicate because it is natural to any nation to reject foreign beliefs and to defend their own faith even with their blood. To this *Verbum* responds with an excursus on unity, plurality, and wisdom in Greek thought. That is to say speculation, philosophical wisdom, enables peoples to tolerate the coexistence of other creeds without taking up arms. The poor inhabitants of Byzantium had been spared a lot of suffering if they had been given time to understand that the Turks were not bringing any other faith, but exactly the same. We could conclude from that mental experiment that the conquering of Constantinople was not at all a religious war, and that also the Council of Florence, that failed to convince both parties that the wording of both creeds expressed the same thing, had not miscarried for religious quandaries but, rather, for reasons of power politics. Cusanus, familiar with Church politics, keeps silent, here.

The Italian observes that Greek wisdom relies on diversity of linguistic expression. Although the wisdom of the Creator included language, differences in wording cannot be overheard. Looking back at the theory of presupposition it appears that multiplicity presupposes logically and factually unity, nevertheless multifacetedness turns out to be denied as long as it is not accepted and appreciated as the many faces of wisdom. Universal wisdom is in charge to make order out of chaos without annihilating its individual components. Unity is not coercive but permissive.

Taking up the thread of the common love for wisdom the Arab speaks about polytheism. He concurs that the so-called gods are nothing but manifestations of the one God; however, he finds it hard to accept the cult of many gods, because those people who believe in gods expect advice and help from them and are therefore resilient to forswear them. As can be expected The Word reminds the audience that salvation is only in the Creator. It is worth noting that Cusanus shows familiarity with the anxiety that is expressed in the belief in oracles. On a global level, Cusanus points out that there is competition among the peoples that is reflected in the competition of foreign gods and that anxiety for cultural survival is expressed in idolatry. Both aspects taken together invoke again the mimetic circle and its potential overcoming, when fear and hope are redirected according to the true aim.
The conversation with the Indian plays out the various ways of deceit through idolatry and transfers them gradually towards the concept of Trinity. Trinity, in the conversation with the Chaldean, is discussed as the paradigm of a challenge to human understanding. In appreciating and taking up that challenge, The Word refers the Trinitarian structure to the essence of being human. Again, Cusanus gives his argument an anthropological turn. Traditionally Trinity is the interaction of oneness, equality, and connection (nexus). That is present also in being human: "Therefore, when a man is summoned by Omnipotence from out of notbeing, there first of all arises (oritur) a oneness, then an equality, and then the union of both." (p. 644). The rise of man must be accompanied by awareness, if Cusanus' argument shall be effective. Therefore man perceives himself as one ( unus), that is, as the first accessible unity, which includes equality and linkage. Self-reference is the experience of reflected oneness that does not fall apart. The philosophical theology of the triune God that antecedes revelation in Scripture is based on an anthropological fact that every human being can acknowledge without further instruction. Actually, "every created being conveys the image of creative power".\(^\text{16}\) After further discussion about this topic with the Jew and the Scythian, Peter explains Christology to the Persian.

CHRISTOLOGY AS ANTHROPOLOGY

The power and weakness of Christology is a matter of perspective. If one emphasizes the human nature of Christ, then everything is seen under this human prejudice that eclipses the divine nature. Tautological as it may appear it explains the difficulties with Christ from the human point of view. Therefore Cusanus suggests taking Christ to be the greatest of all prophets, which entails the role as speaker of the word. Since a Prophet is defined as the bearer of the word of God without being the original author, his role is that of the visible manifestation of the word of God, which is close to the theology of God incarnate.\(^\text{17}\) The prophet's word is not his own; rather, the prophet

\(^{16}\) Transl. Hopkins, p. 646. De pace § 24, p. 25: "sic res omnis creati gerit ymaginem virtutis creativae".

\(^{17}\) De pace § 32, p. 33: The Persian is speaking: "Sed omnium prophetarum maximus Christus..."
is defined by the word of God. All what makes a prophet a prophet is divine. Therefore, the relationship between man and God can be presented as a case of concomitance if not inherence: "...in Christ the human nature is united to the Word, or to the divine nature, in such way that the human does not pass over into the divine. Rather, it adheres to the divine nature so indissolubly that it is not separately personified in itself but is personified in the divine, in order that, having been called to become a successor to an eternal life with the divine, [human nature itself] would be able to obtain immortality in the divine." Of course, the word "adhere" should not mislead to thinking that humanity is sticking to the divine; it is embedded in it, as the final clause emphasizes. Christ's human nature subsists as a person in his divine nature, thus making the nature of all human beings immortal. As prophecy is entailed in the Word of God, humanity is entailed in divinity.

The question of immortality is of interest to the Syrian. Once more we immediately detect the humane, if not existential basis of religion and its plurality: "For all men have the desire and the hope only for eternal life in their own human nature..." (p. 656). What makes the talk about incarnation ambiguous, the earthly perspective of the double nature of Christ, is a theological way to detect the transcendent, namely, to acknowledge that a desire to transcend the human nature is built in that very nature. The hope for an afterlife opens a glimpse into that same afterlife. However, it is prefigured or imagined within the human framework. Therefore St. Peter explains that most peoples "have instituted ceremonial purifications for their souls, as well as holy practices, in order that they may become better fitted in nature for that eternal life." (p. 656) Religious folk life as can be described in terms of ethnology is the outer expression of the inborn desire (ex desiderio connato) for transcendence, immortality, and can therefore be interpreted in both directions: as the individuality of a specific culture and as the universality of a thought.

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18 Transl. Hopkins, p. 651 f. De pace § 35, p. 35: "...in Christo sic tenendum est naturam humanam unitam Verbo seu naturae divinae, ita quod humana non transit in divinam, sed adhaeret sic indissolubiliter eidem, ut non separatim in se sed in divina personetur; ad finem quod ipsa humana natura, vocata ad sucessionem aeternae vitae cum divina, in ipsa divina immortalitatem assequi possit." I substituted the phrase in brackets for "it" in the translation, because the arguments shifts, dramatically, from Christ's human nature to the nature of human beings.

19 De pace §45, p. 42.
As already initially mentioned, the virginity of the Mother of God is explained as part of the human world, which allows for two possible states, chastity and fertility. In Saint Mary these mutually exclusive states are miraculously combined: "Consequently, the Highest (altissimus) is conceived in the womb of a virgin by the divine power; and in the virgin the highest fecundity was present together with the virginity. Hence, Christ was born unto us in such way that He is very closely united to all men."  

20 The mystery of incarnation is explained in traditional theological concepts but Cusanus directs our view from the lofty speculation to the human benefit.

The same is true when the discussion moves over from birth to dying. The theological mystery of Christ's death lies in its historical reality, which tends to be distorted by the good intentions of human interpreters: "As for their denying that He was crucified by the Jews, they seem to do so out of reverence for Christ - on the supposed ground that such men could not have had any power over Christ." (p. 657) Instead of chastising the "ignorance" of the critics, Cusanus explains that Christ even anticipated such misunderstandings: "But note how the historical accounts... ought assuredly to be believed:...Christ came, as one sent by God the Father, to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven (evangelizaret); and regarding that Kingdom He made claims which were able to be proved by Him in no better way than by means of the witness of His own blood."  

21 The hermeneutic principle of understanding the biblical story consists in the purpose of the event that is being told, the spread of the gospel. And the assurance of its truth lies in Christ's "own blood", that is, in the factual reality of the divine message. It is a statement of philosophy of history that the mystery of Christ's death is rooted in the need for concreteness that attests theological truth. Instead of theory explaining facts, reality evidences theory. Obviously martyrdom always follows the same pattern. A pious and also realistic observation.

Christology, as I said at the beginning, is enhanced anthropology: Christ "preached the Kingdom of Heaven, proclaiming that man could attain unto it, being capable of receiving it (illius regni capax)." (p. 658) The incarnate God is the tangible argument to prove the mystery that man can transcend humanity (in biblical language: attain the

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20 Ibid. p. 657. I replaced "loftiest [man]" with "Highest".
21 Ibid. p. 657 f. I changed "note that" to "note how" (quomodo).
Kingdom of Heaven), while the internal capacity (regni capax) is the natural foundation of that transcendence. Christ as a sensible testimony dispels ignorance, guarantees salvation, and resolves anxiety and cowardice. The stories of the death of Christ and of the martyrs are stories of consolation in so far as they confirm, rather than deflect from the reality that human beings live in an empire of death:

> For the mortal must divest itself of its mortality, i.e., of its capability of dying; and this comes about only by means of death. Thereafter the mortal can put on immortality. Now, if the mortal man Christ has not yet died, then He has not yet divested Himself of mortality; and so, He has not yet entered into the Kingdom of Heaven, wherein no mortal can be present. Therefore, if He who is the first fruits, and the first born, of all men has not disclosed the Kingdom of Heaven, then the human nature that is united to God has not yet been led into the Kingdom. (p. 659)

Immortality is attainable for human beings because God is the first born man. Therefore we may conclude that humans are divine because God is human. This insight must necessarily have an impact on Cusanus's view of religious diversity.

**FROM THE HEAVEN BACK TO WORK**

Therefore let us skip the further discussions in the text about beatitude, justification through works, sacraments, etc., although they all had very important repercussions in the anthropology of the Protestant Reformation. I rather want to stress Cusanus's mode of thought according to which all manifestations of religiosity, including skeptical doubts, have their pivotal point in the human perspective, which Cusanus never tires to confirm and justify. The essentially human attitude toward the visible signs of religion, such as rituals, prayers, but also doctrines and dogmas, yields an image of man as constantly reflecting upon the human condition and working on its foundation and overcoming.

As is well known the entire debate culminates in a peculiar heaven of reason (coelum rationis).

> Therefore, in the heaven of reason (in coelo rationis) a harmony among the religions (concordia religionum) was reached, in the aforeshown

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22 The human being, of course.
manner. And the King of kings commanded that the wise men return and lead their nations unto a oneness of true worship and that administering spirits guide and assist them. Moreover, thereafter, having full power for all assemble in Jerusalem, as being a common center, and in the names of all accept a single faith and establish a perpetual peace with respect thereto, so that the Creator of all, who is blessed forever, may be praised in peace.²³

This is a powerful conclusion; therefore I regret that I still have to add a few remarks. It must be stressed that the conclusion teaches that God can be praised only in peace. On the other hand we have seen that fanaticism is part and parcel of being human. Therefore such peace can only be reached by way of approximation so that the oneness of religion must be based on hypothetical unity to be cherished in diversity. Note that before these speakers can gather in Jerusalem to sign a religious peace accord, they have to return to their home countries and do some PR work, supported by angelic consultants. Then, perhaps, God might be able to contain struggles and wars. Cusanus's theory of presupposition that suggests religious unity as the backdrop of confessional dispute is highly speculative in terms of philosophical theology; but it is also extremely practical as it appeals to all peoples to work for peace against all appearances because that is the only realistic means to attain peace.

²³ Ibid. p. 669f. I replaced "loftiest domain" with "heaven".