

Christianity and Islam in Historical Perspective:

A Christian's View

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Muslims and Christians have been in conversation with one another from the very beginnings of Islam as proclaimed in the Qur'an, and as preached by Muhammad in Mecca and Medina in the seventh century of the Christian era. Even a cursory glance through the Qur'an reveals that the holy book of Islam presumes in its readers a familiarity with the Torah and the Gospel, and with the stories of Adam, Noah, Joseph, Abraham, Moses, Mary and Jesus of Nazareth. The Qur'an also readily reveals its intention to offer a critique of the religious beliefs and practices of Christians, and to offer a program for their correction. The most comprehensive verse addressed directly to Christians in this vein says:

O People of the Book, do not exaggerate in your religion, and do not say about God anything but the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, Mary's son, is only God's messenger, and His Word He imparted to Mary, and a Spirit from Him. Believe in God and in His messengers, and do not say, 'Three'. Stop it! It is better for you. God is but a single God; He is too exalted for anything to become a son to Him, anything in the heavens or anything on the earth. God suffices as a guardian. (IV *The Women* 171)

Throughout the centuries since the rise of Islam, Muslim/Christian relations have revolved around this double axis of familiar, biblical appeal and strenuous, religious critique.' Accordingly, in what follows we shall offer a historical overview of these relations under the

following headings: the Qur'an and the Christians; the long era of Christian/Muslim confrontation; and the now burgeoning era of proclamation and dialogue.

I

The Qur'an and the Christians

The Qur'an's attitude toward the Christians is rather ambiguous.² To begin with, the text never actually calls them 'Christians'. Rather, like the Jews, the Christians are included among those whom the Qur'an calls 'People of the Book', or 'Scripture People'. This phrase appears some fifty-four times in the text, mostly in passages that were revealed during the last ten years of Muhammad's prophetic career, when he governed the nascent Muslim community in Medina. In one place (V *The Table* 47) the text refers to the Christians as 'Gospel People'. But according to the Qur'an, the Gospel is not what the Christians think it is. In the Islamic view, the Gospel is a scripture and a promise that God sent down to Jesus the way Moses received the Torah and Muhammad received the Qur'an (IX *Repentance* 111).

Fourteen times in the Qur'an Christians are called 'Nazarenes'. This is a name by which some people had referred to Christians already in New Testament times (Acts 24:5). The name persisted in use for some centuries in the Aramaic-speaking communities of Christians in the east, especially among those whose dialect was Syriac, many of whom lived in the Persian Empire.³ These were the very communities to whom the Arabic-speaking tribesmen of Muhammad's day seem to have owed most of their knowledge of Christianity. Among the Christians themselves the name 'Nazarene' came

eventually to apply to a dissident group of ‘Judaizers’ or ‘Jewish Christians.’⁴ This circumstance has prompted some modern scholars to surmise that the Christians whom Muhammad encountered were ‘Jewish Christians,’⁵ but this is unlikely. The objections the Qurān voices against the ‘Nazarenes’ are such as most readily apply to the beliefs and practices of the ‘mainline’ Christian denominations in the Greek and Syriac-speaking world of the early seventh century in Arabia, Syria, and Palestine. For this reason, most modern interpretations of the Qurān in English simply substitute the term ‘Christians’ for the term ‘Nazarenes’ that actually appears in the text.

The Qurān’s objections to the Christians are twofold, both doctrinal and moral. From the moral perspective the Qurān says that in their relationships with the people of the other religions whom they are likely to meet the Muslims will find that the Christians will give them a friendlier reception than will the Jews or the polytheists. The text gives as the reason for this friendly attitude the fact that among the Christians “there are presbyters and monks, and the fact that they do not behave arrogantly” (V *The Table* 82). But in other passages in the Qurān there are strictures against the monks. People in the past are said wrongly to have taken them as ‘lords’ or ‘masters,’ instead of God, and the monks themselves, the Qurān says, were among those who “would consume people’s wealth for nought and turn aside from God’s way” (IX *Repentance* 31, 34). So it is not surprising to read in yet another passage that from the Qurān’s point of view, the development of monasticism in the Christian community followed a path of unwarranted innovation in religious practice. God says, “Monasticism they turned into a novelty; We prescribed for them only to seek God’s favor, but they did not keep right observance” (LVII *Iron* 27).⁶

Given this ambivalence about the monks, it is hardly surprising to find the Qur'an saying about the community of Christians at-large that although they may give Muslims a friendlier reception than do people of other religions, Muslims nevertheless should not take either Jews or Christians as their friends (V *The Table* 51). For, as God further says to Muhammad, "Neither the Jews nor the Christians will be pleased with you until you come to follow their religion" (II *The Cow* 120). And the Qur'an has some specific objections to the religion of the Christians. These objections are the most summarily stated in the passage from IV *The Women* 171 quoted above.

Two things are very clear in this passage: in the Qur'an's view the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation are wrong; and in propounding them the Christians go to an excess, or go beyond the bounds of the truth in their religious confession. From the Qur'an's perspective the exaggeration consists in saying more about God and about Jesus than the truth in the scriptures warrants one to say about Him. The Qur'an goes on to suggest that the exaggeration comes more proximately from the tendency on the part of Christian teachers "to follow the whims of a people who had earlier gone into error" (V *The Table* 77). These earlier people are the polytheists (*almushrikun*). According to the Qur'an, like the polytheists, who thought the one God had offspring, so too the Christians are liable to be branded as infidels (*kafirun*): "they have become infidels who say that God is one of three" (V *The Table* 73).

The "one of three" with whom, according to the Qur'an, the Christians wrongfully identify God is Jesus, the Messiah, the son of Mary.⁷ The Qur'an regularly calls Jesus 'Mary's son', to insist that he is in no strict sense God's son, as the Christians say. The Qur'an fully accepts Jesus' virgin birth from Mary, who became pregnant with him at the

message of an angel (III *The Family of 'Imran*, 45-9). But to say that Jesus the Messiah is God's son is, according to the logic of the Arabic language, equivalent to saying that he is God, or an associate of God in divinity. So the Qur'an says, "They have disbelieved who say God is the Messiah, Mary's son. Say, who could prevail with God in anything if He wanted to destroy the Messiah, Mary's son, and his mother" (V The Table 17).

The real doctrinal question between Muslims and Christians in the Qur'an, therefore, has to do with the discernment of the truth about Jesus the Messiah.⁸ It echoes the question Jesus himself is reported to have addressed to his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (Mt. 16:13). While all the Christian denominations in Muhammad's world accepted Peter's answer to this question, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God," (Mt. 16:16) they quarreled among themselves over the precise wording of the theological formula to be used formally to express this acknowledgment.⁹ Some commentators on the Qur'an say that it was in view of these sometimes violent Christological controversies among the Christians that God said in the Qur'an: "With those who said they were Christians We made a covenant also, but they too have forgotten much of what they were exhorted to do. Therefore We stirred among them enmity and hatred which shall endure till the Day of the Resurrection, when God will declare to them all that they have done." (V The Table 14). On one occasion a deputation of Christians from the Arabian city of Najran came to visit Muhammad in Medina and the Christological question came up in the ensuing discussions. According to most commentators, it was in this connection that the Qur'an advised Muhammad to say to them: "Come, let us summon our sons and your sons, our wives and your wives,

ourselves and your selves. Then let us make supplication, and may God's curse afflict the ones telling a lie" (III *The Family of 'Imran* 61).

In spite of the Qur'an's doctrinal and moral critique of the Christians, the text also has positive things to say. For example, there is the statement that "among the scripture people there are those who believe in God, in what has been sent down to you and what has been sent down to them, humbling themselves to God, not bartering God's signs for a small price. They shall have their reward with God" (III *The Family of 'Imran* 199). But another text says that Muslims should fight with those who have been given the scripture but do not practice the true religion "until they pay the poll tax (*al-jizyah*) out of hand and assume a low social profile" (IX Repentance 29). In Islamic history this verse became the basis for the requirement on the part of the 'People of the Book' to pay a special poll tax in return for receiving the protection (*adh-dhimmah*) of the Islamic community. Consequently they would be designated 'People of Protection' (*ahi adh-dhimmah*), or dhimmi people. In due course, after the revelation of the Qur'an, Muslim legal scholars would further stipulate the conditions for maintaining the low social profile required of dhimmi people by the Qur'an. The code containing these stipulations came eventually to be called the Covenant of Umar, the second caliph, who ruled the Muslim community from 634 to 656.¹⁰ From the very beginning then, and already in the Qur'an, one sees the double poles of scriptural appeal and religious critique which will form the axis around which Christian-Muslim relations will unfold in history.

II

The Era of Christian-Muslim Confrontation

After the death of Muhammad in 632 A.D., within two decades armies of Muslims had occupied all the territories of the 'Oriental Patriarchates' of the Christians:

Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. In the following decades the Muslims moved across North Africa, and across the Straits of Gibraltar into the Iberian Peninsula. Their advance was not halted until the year 732, at the battle of Poitiers in France, one hundred years after the death of Muhammad. This accomplishment set the stage for the long era of confrontation between Muslims and Christians. There are two phases of Christian response to the challenge of Islam. One phase involves the Christians and Muslims living within the confines of the Islamic world." The other phase involves the confrontation between the political entities of the Islamic world and the largely Christian, political structures of the Byzantine Roman empire and the countries of western Europe, outside the political boundaries of Islam.² In both phases the religious critique of the Qur'an, and the Islamic sciences, posed a challenge to which the Christians had to respond. The character of their responses in their very different sociopolitical and historical circumstances has determined the profile of their correspondingly different views of Islam to this very day.

A - Christians and Muslims in the Islamic World

For the first hundred years or so, most people in the territories occupied by the Muslims seem to have regarded Islam as simply the religion of the Arabs, and the new Arab overlords seem to have taken the same view. In the beginning, conversion to Islam by non-Arabs seems to have been discouraged. When Christian writers living in the world of Islam first took notice of the religious convictions of the Muslims, almost three quarters of a century after the death of Muhammad, they noticed first of all what Muslims said about Jesus of Nazareth. They spoke of the Muslims as heretics, a term with inner Christian connotations. St. John of Damascus (d. c.749/754), for example, a monk of Mar Sabas monastery in the desert of Judah who wrote in Greek, described Islam as the “heresy of the Ishmaelites,” using the name of Abraham’s son by the slave girl Hagar so to designate them.³ It was a name that Greek and Latin writers had long used for the tribal Arabs of the deserts of Syria and Arabia. From the theological perspective, John of Damascus went on to surmise that, given his views of Jesus, Muhammad must have been in conversation with an Arian monk. This, of course, was John of Damascus’s way of bringing Islamic teaching within the framework of Christian, theological discourse. For the Christians who lived within the world of Islam this would remain the proper theological frame of reference for discussing Islamic teaching.

From the mid-eighth century onward, Christian writers in Greek, Syriac, and Arabic frequently wrote about the religious challenge of Islam.⁴ Their works were

addressed primarily to their fellow Christians, many of whom were under pressure to convert to Islam. So in addition to taking account of the Islamic challenges to Christian faith, Christian writers in the Islamic world were also called upon to provide a Christian evaluation of Muhammad, the Qur'an, and of Islam itself. Their purpose always was to defend Christianity as the true religion, and to give their readers reasons why they should not convert to Islam. Unlike Christians outside of the world of Islam, these writers, having themselves become inculturated into the life of the burgeoning Commonwealth of Islam,⁵ spoke of Islam, Muhammad, and the Qur'an from a position of thorough familiarity. They spoke knowledgeably and respectfully. While they could not accept Muhammad as a prophet, they praised him as one who "walked on the way of the prophets," and as one to be praised for having brought the polytheistic Arabs to a knowledge of the one God.⁶ They could not accept the Qur'an as scripture, but they could and did quote from it to support their own Christian beliefs.⁷ They argued that Islam was not the true religion, but they alleged that the prophetology of the Qur'an could be used to bolster the claims of Christianity to be the true religion.⁸

The major theological problem for the Christians living in the world of Islam was to find a way to commend Christian faith in the Arabic language. By the ninth century all these Christian communities had adopted Arabic; it was the *lingua franca* of the new civilization, and Christians played a major role in bringing it about. The problem was that Arabic religious vocabulary was already co-opted by Islam; the very terms Christian writers used to commend Christian faith in the new socio-linguistic milieu inevitably carried an Islamic connotation with them. On the one hand this phenomenon made possible the full inculturation of Christianity into the life of the caliphate. On the other

hand it also helped to bring about a measure of cultural estrangement between the Christians of the Islamic world and the Greek and Latin speaking Christians living outside of that world. This is one of the insufficiently studied, historical effects of the rise of Islam; for all practical purposes, it erected a barrier of cultural, and even of theological mutual misapprehension between the Christians of the Islamic east and those living in the west.

Within the Islamic world Christians contributed significantly to the growth and development of the classical culture of Islam. One particularly notable moment in which the Christian contribution was crucial was the Graeco-Arabic translation movement in Baghdad from the eighth to the tenth centuries.¹⁹ Christian scholars played a major role in the transmission and translation into Arabic of the Greek works of philosophers, physicians, mathematicians, and physical scientists, with Aristotle, Galen, and Plotinus leading the list. Some of these Christian scholars who had major roles in this enterprise still have name recognition in modern times. One thinks in this connection of men like Hunayn ibn Ishaq (d. 873), a member of the Assyrian Church of the East who was a notable translator of the works of Aristotle. And there was Yahya ibn ‘Adi (d. 974), who belonged to the Syrian Orthodox Church; he not only translated philosophical works into Arabic but wrote original works in philosophy, theology, and public morality.²⁰ These scholars prepared the way for the great Muslim philosophers of the Middle Ages, such as al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), and Ibn Rushd (Averroes), whose names and works would later become well-known in the west. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Islamic Spain, Latin-speaking Christians would encounter the works of these thinkers, along with the works of Aristotle and the other Greek philosophers and scientists. They

made the Latin translations of them that would ultimately furnish the raw material for the golden age of scholastic philosophy and theology in the west in the thirteenth century.²¹

The quality of life of the Christians living in the caliphate varied widely from place to place and from era to era, but everywhere and at all times in the Islamic world they were subject to the disenfranchising effects of the laws governing the *dhimmi* populations.²² Gradually their numbers dwindled, from the majority in many places in the Middle East before the time of the crusades (1099-1291), to the demographically insignificant numbers of the late twentieth century.²³ Sometimes they have been severely persecuted; sometimes they have lived in peace with their Muslim neighbors and have made substantial contributions to the societies in which they lived.²⁴ Always they have lived with the uncertain effects of what one modern Maronite of Lebanon has called the persistent condition of *Dhimmitude*.²⁵

Before the time of the Crusades, often in the context of free and open interreligious exchange, Muslim scholars wrote refutations of Christian doctrines and practices,²⁶ sometimes in answer to Christian tracts against the teachings of Islam.²⁷ Caliphs, sultans and emirs not infrequently sponsored interreligious discussions in their presence.²⁸ But by the thirteenth century, as Christian populations in the Islamic world began their steep decline into demographic insignificance, Muslim teachers of a much more exclusive turn of mind, such as Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) began to be heard.²⁹ And their voices echo even in the contemporary world as Muslims everywhere react to the challenges of secularism, nationalism, and materialism that many of them believe Christians have brought into the modern world.

A further diminishing factor in the experience of the Christian communities of the Islamic world has been the unwonted attention of missionaries from the west. These well-intentioned co-religionists often came with the aim of converting Muslims to Christianity; and failing in this purpose they turned their attention to the conversion of the local Christians, whom they regarded as heretics or as practitioners of a degenerate form of Christianity. While these activities sometimes resulted in the establishment of schools, hospitals and other institutions of humanitarian aid, some of them enduring to the present day, they also brought about further divisions among the Christians in the Islamic world, thereby weakening their over-all social significance. Only in recent decades has this problem begun to be addressed, with the convocation of the Middle East Council of Churches.³⁰ And even now Middle Eastern Christians, especially in Israel and Palestine, have a sense of having been abandoned by their brothers and sisters in the faith in the west.³¹ Beyond the Middle East, in the wider world of Islam, wherever Christians live in close association with a Muslim majority, social problems abound, often with attendant, inter-communal violence. One need only mention the names of the places and refer to the nightly news to make the point: Egypt, the Sudan, Nigeria, Algeria, East Timor, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Pakistan, to mention only the most prominent, recent flash points. The lives of Christians in the world of Islam continue to be uneasy; many of them are no longer optimistic about the prospects of interreligious dialogue with Muslims.

B –Islam and the Christians outside the World of Islam

Beyond the confines of the Islamic world, the history of Muslim/Christian

relations took a different trajectory. From early in the seventh century, when Muslim armies first occupied the territories of the Christian, Oriental patriarchates, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, up to and beyond the day in 1453 when even Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks, there were almost constant, military hostilities between Muslim governments in the east and the Christian nations outside the world of Islam. This state of constant, Muslim/Christian warfare came to an end only in the early decades of the twentieth century, with the end of the Turkish, Ottoman Empire. The combination of religious animosity, cultural disdain and military hostility that obtained between Muslim and Christian polities for well over a millennium, produced on both sides a large literature of mutual rejection. Over the course of time the mutual demonization of the other became almost subconscious. It was relieved only occasionally by intellectual borrowings, and sometimes by a romantic, intercultural fascination on the part of some westerners for the Arab east.³² As for the Muslims, until Ottoman times they seldom showed much interest in the civilization of western Christians; when they did they found it wanting.³³

In the Greek-speaking world of Byzantium from the ninth century onward an anti-Islamic, polemical tradition developed that lost no opportunity to blacken the name of

Muhammad, to ridicule the Qur'an, and to disparage Islam.³⁴ It is important to

emphasize the fact that, with very few exceptions, these texts, unlike those produced by

Christians living in the Islamic world, show little concern for disclosing the actual beliefs

and religious practices of Muslims. Rather, their burden was to demonize the adversary and to sustain the public animus against him. Nevertheless, even in this tradition, as, for example, in the works of Manuel II Palaiologos (1350-1425), efforts were sometimes made honestly to understand Muslims, and to correct the major misconceptions of Islam that circulated so widely in the Christian world.

The earliest literary response to Islam in the west may well be Eulogius of Cordobà's (c. 810-859) Latin account of the Martyrs of Cordoba (850-859) in a text called *Apologeticus martyrum*, along with Eulogius' exhortation to martyrdom named simply *Documentum martyriale*. The martyr movement in Cordoba was driven by a desire on the part of some Christians living there under Islamic rule to testify to the truth of the Christian faith by the shedding of the martyr's blood. They acted in conscious evocation of the memory of the martyrs in the times of the earlier Roman persecutions of Christians. Many of the martyrs in Cordoba achieved their goal by provoking arrest, and by persistently defaming Muhammad, attacking the Qur'an, and ridiculing Islam in public, to the dismay of the Muslim authorities themselves, who had a distaste for executing Christians. This tactic also precipitated a controversy among the local Christians about the propriety, indeed the legitimacy, of self-promoted martyrdom.³⁵ Although subsequent generations did not seek the death of martyrs, all the Christians of Islamic Spain, from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries were willing to testify to the truth of their faith, sometimes in the Arabic language.³⁶

In many ways the views of Islam expressed by western Christians at large in the Middle Ages mirrored those circulating in Byzantium. Writers were much less interested in discerning and presenting the truth about Muhammad, the Qur'an, and Islam than they

were in demeaning them in the public eye. At times the presentations bore no appreciable resemblance to reality at all.³⁷ Yet this state of affairs was not the whole story. Peter the Venerable (c. 1092-1156), the abbot of Cluny, commissioned a Latin translation of the Qur'an, along with other Arabic texts deemed useful to his interreligious concerns.³⁸ Some of the translators have been shown by modern scholars to have been very well attuned to the currents of Islamic thought at the time.³⁹ Ramon Llull (c. 1233-1315), with a view to commending the truth of the Christian faith, sought to engage Muslim, religious thinkers in discussion on their own terms.⁴⁰ In the later Middle Ages, Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464), very concerned with the ways of discerning and expressing religious truths in the east and the west, published a Latin commentary of the Qur'an that searched for points of strength and weakness that would allow for a more effective commendation of Christianity to Muslims.⁴¹ In the high Middle Ages, St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and other prominent schoolmen were engaged in a virtual philosophical dialogue with prominent Muslim thinkers of the past, on the basis of Latin translations of their Arabic works, and of the works of Aristotle and other Greeks, that were made available in the Latin-speaking west from the eleventh century onward.⁴² Arguably, these scholarly works from the world of Islam played an important catalytic role in the life and institutions of medieval scholasticism.⁴³

Meanwhile, throughout the high Middle Ages, the Crusades formed the backdrop for Muslim/Christian relations east and west.⁴⁴ First preached by Pope Urban II (c.1035-1099), they originally had as their twin goals: preaching the Gospel; and making the 'holy places' of Jesus' homeland safely accessible to Christian pilgrims. As time went on other motives and more political and this-worldly interests became intertwined with the

religious agenda. The crusades became military adventures that ultimately brought about not only a more pronounced, religious estrangement between Christians and Muslims generally, but, through the Crusader capture of Constantinople in 1204 ~they exacerbated the rift between the Byzantine and the Latin churches that had been festering since the so-called 'Schism of 1054'. The effects of this Crusader misbehavior are still painfully felt in Orthodox and Catholic relations to this day. From the Christian perspective, the one highpoint in interreligious relations that one can point to with some measure of equanimity in the crusader period is St. Francis of Assisi's (1181/2-1226) debate with Muslim religious scholars at the court of Sultan Malik al-Kamil in Damietta, Egypt in November of the year 1219. The credit for this peaceful interchange goes to both St. Francis and to the sultan.⁴⁵

In the early modern period, after the attentions of the crusaders and their ecclesiastical promoters had turned from the eastern Mediterranean to Spain and the *Reconquista* that by 1492 would drive the last of the Muslims from the Iberian peninsula, the Muslim/Christian encounter became more and more a Turkish/Christian confrontation, especially after 1517 when the Ottomans unseated the Mamluke dynasty in Egypt. On 7 October 1571 western naval forces defeated an Ottoman fleet off Lepanto, making the Mediterranean once again safe for European travel. But it was not until well into the seventeenth century that Ottoman encroachments into eastern Europe were definitively repulsed. It was against this background of the Turkish threat that the leaders of the Reformation in western Christendom continued the already very negative Christian polemics against Islam that had been standard fare in earlier times.⁴⁶ The virulence of this literature seems to have increased with time, combining cultural, religious and

political attacks against Islam. It went hand-in-hand with the movements in the churches to send missionaries to the Islamic world to encourage conversions to Christianity.

Within the Islamic world, the numbers of indigenous Christians continued to decrease in the Middle East during Fatimid and Mamluke times. But under Ottoman rule their numbers increased notably;⁴⁷ the *millet* system of self-government for religious minority groups fostered by the Turks provided more stable protections against the harsher measures of *dhimmitude*. Also, as time went on the influence of increasingly stronger European governments played a greater role in soliciting protection for Christians. Nevertheless, in the Islamic world at large the production of tracts against the doctrines and practices of the Christians continued apace, with even a crescendo of rejectionism after the time of Ibn Taymiyya, as mentioned above.⁴⁸ By the dawn of the twentieth century, and well up into the century, Muslims and Christians had more than a millennium of mutual hostility and recrimination behind them, fueled by both religious animosity and the vicissitudes of almost continuous warfare between Muslim and Christian countries. One would not have thought that efforts at some measure of rapprochement were in the offing.

III

Proclamation and Dialogue

In view of the foregoing millennium and more of Muslim/Christian warfare and interreligious polemic, one of the more surprising statements in Vatican II's "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," *Nostra Aetate*, promulgated

on 28 October 1965, is the following paragraph in the section of the document dealing with the Muslims. The text says:

Over the centuries many quarrels and dissensions have arisen between Christians and Muslims. The sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all men, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values.⁴⁹

This seeming *volte face* in the western Christian attitude to Muslims did not come about without preparation. Throughout the centuries there have been perceptive Christians and Muslims who have put an emphasis on what the two confessions of monotheist faith have in common. For example, already in the 11th century, Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085) wrote to a Muslim emir that “You and we . . . believe in and confess one God, admittedly in a different way, and daily we praise and venerate him, the creator of worlds and ruler of this world.”⁵⁰ But for the most part it was not until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that Christians in the west began positively to search for ways in which Muslims and Christians could come to some common understanding in religious matters that would allow for a peaceful and tolerant acceptance of one another. There seem to be two, interrelated reasons for this change of attitude. First there are the socio-historical factors involved in the expansion of the west, the colonization of Muslim territories by western countries, and the rapid growth of the modern means of transportation and communication. These developments in turn brought about the

conditions for the second reason for the change of attitude, namely the prolonged exposure to Muslim life, both at home and abroad, on the part of many religious westerners. It is the latter phenomenon that is of particular interest to the present inquiry.

While Christians have been living in the Islamic world, and have been in dialogue with Muslims from the very beginnings of Islam, they have for the most part been indigenous Christians, fully inculturated into Islamic society. Before modern times, western Christians came into this world only as crusaders, merchants, missionaries, adventurers, or itinerant scholars. When they came as colonizers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries they came to stay, and somehow, imperialistically to draw Muslims into their own western ways of life, both in the colonies and in the so-called 'mother' countries. By the end of the twentieth century, when the colonies had become independent, modern states in their own right, large numbers of Muslims had emigrated to the west. These circumstances provided both the opportunity and the impetus not only for the growth of the burgeoning field of Islamic studies in the universities of the west, but also for observant western Christians to learn to appreciate Muslim religious life.

Before the Second World War, and before the founding of the modern state of Israel in 1948 and the entry of the USA into the affairs of the Arab world, Great Britain and France were the two western powers with the greatest stake in the Islamic territories in the Middle East and North Africa. It is perhaps then no wonder that from the Roman Catholic Church, the first writers in the colonial era to begin to take Islam religiously seriously, and to write about it appreciatively in the west were Frenchmen and the most positively disposed Protestants were British. Considerations of time and space allow the mention of only two such influential writers here, Louis Massignon (1883-1962) 51 and

Kenneth Cragg (1913-present).⁵² Their readily available works are typical of those that contributed to the religious change of attitude toward the Muslims that found its most profound expression in the documents of Vatican II, and later in numerous texts emanating from the Vatican and the modern centers of Protestant religious thought.⁵³

Like others of his faith, when Louis Massignon learned the Arabic language and became immersed in the lives of Muslims in Cairo and Baghdad in the early twentieth century he was deeply impressed by the rigor and regularity of their religious observances. He was struck by the power of Islamic mystical poetry, and especially by the life and passion of the Muslim Sufi saint and martyr, Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 922).~ He began an intensive study of the life and work of al-Hallaj, culminating in the publication in 1922 of two major books on the biography of al-Hallaj and on Islamic, mystical vocabulary, works that would revolutionize the study of Islamic mysticism in Europe.⁵⁵ But personally the most important experience for Massignon was his religious conversion in 1908 in Iraq, from a life of profligacy. as he saw it, back to the intense practice of the Roman Catholic faith he had earlier abandoned. It was precipitated by a dramatic moment in his life, fraught with sickness and physical danger. He always believed that al-Hallaj, the Muslim mystic and martyr, interceded for him with God on this occasion. The experience gave Massignon a deeper, religious appreciation of Islam, and he thereafter and throughout his life sought ways to bring about a rapprochement between Islam and Christianity.⁵⁶ Eventually he became associated with Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916), the Christian hermit in Muslim North Africa,⁵⁷ whose spirituality was to inspire many in the twentieth century. In later life Massignon, together with a 'Melkite' woman of Cairo named Mary Kahil (1889-1979), founded an ecclesiastically

approved sodality of prayer, called in Arabic *al-Badaliyya*. The purpose of the sodality was for its members mystically to offer their prayer and fasting in behalf of Muslims. A notable, early member of the sodality was Giovanni Batista Montini, the future Pope Paul VI.

Massigno's experience, while it was dramatically more striking than that of most people, was nevertheless in many ways fairly typical of that of many Christians from the west who lived with Muslims in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Kenneth Cragg, who had a long experience as an Anglican priest in Jerusalem and Cairo, eventually being ordained an assistant bishop of the Anglican see in Jerusalem, was similarly inspired by Islamic religious life. He has written numerous books explaining Islam and Muslims to Christians, becoming in the process the most prominent voice in the English-speaking world to commend a religious respect for Muhammad, the Qur'an, and Islam.⁵⁸

Among Roman Catholics, from as early as 1868 the *Peres Blancs*, founded in Algiers by Charles-Martial Allemand Lavigerie (1825-1892) have lived and worked among Muslims in Africa and elsewhere. Their distinguishing mark among missionaries has from the beginning been a deep respect for Islam, and the concern to preach Christ in the Islamic world principally by the Christian quality of their lives rather than by any methods of proselytism. In Tunis Charles Lavigerie founded a school of Arabic and Islamic studies that became the direct ancestor of today's Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies, now with headquarters in Rome. It is still largely under the auspices of the *Peres Blancs*, where, among many other services, they publish the influential, annual journal *Islamochristiana*.

These and many other western Christians prepared the way for the thinking that would be adopted by the fathers of Vatican II. Ultimately, in *Nostra Aetate*, they not only exhorted Christians to forget the acrimonious past between Muslims and Christians but they also offered a positive appreciation of Islam. The text says:

The Church has also a high regard for the Muslims. They worship God, who is one, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has also spoken to men. They strive to submit themselves without reserve to the hidden decrees of God, just as Abraham submitted himself to God's plan, to whose faith Muslims eagerly link their own. Although not acknowledging him as God, they venerate Jesus as a prophet, his virgin Mother they also honor, and even at times devoutly invoke. Further, they await the day of judgment and the reward of God following the resurrection of the dead. For this reason they highly esteem an upright life and worship God, especially by way of prayer, alms-deeds and fasting. 59

Since Vatican II, it is no exaggeration to say that the Roman Catholic Church has been the leader in Muslim-Christian dialogue worldwide. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue set up after Vatican II soon issued guidelines for the dialogue between Christians and Muslims.⁶⁰ And there has been no more tireless promoter of this dialogue than Pope John Paul II, who in numerous documents has taught Catholics to proclaim their faith in Jesus Christ in open and free dialogue with Muslims and members of other religions. On his numerous journeys to Muslim countries John Paul II has

himself led the way in this enterprise, and by now there is a sizeable collection of his talks and formal greetings to largely Muslim audiences.⁶¹ Always he echoes the themes of Vatican II, the dignity of the human person, the necessity of the free exercise of religion in society, and the conviction that “the truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth.”⁶² High Vatican officials have followed the Popè’s lead. Francis Cardinal Arinze, for example, the president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, is in regular contact with Muslim groups around the world.⁶³

What is different in the approach to Islam in the post Vatican II climate in the Roman Catholic Church, by comparison with earlier periods, is the determination to highlight what Christianity and Islam have in common, rather than to pay exclusive attention to what divides the two religions. This approach in turn prompts the search for ways in which Muslims and Christians can cooperate in promoting justice and peace around the world, on the local level as well as in the international forum. In no way does this effort derogate from the church’s mission to proclaim its faith in the lordship of Jesus Christ, or from the Muslims’ duty to call others to Islam. Rather, dialogue between Muslims and Christians opens the space for an honest conversation of this precise topic. It recalls an occasion in the first days of Islam, when Christians from the southern Arabian city of Najran came to visit Muhammad in Medina. Islamic tradition records the memory that the conversation on that day turned to the issue of faith in Christ, and that in reference to it the following revelation, recorded in the Qur’an, came down to Muhammad, instructing him to say:

Come, let us gather our Sons and your sons, our wives and

your wives, ourselves and yourselves. Then let us pray,

and let us invoke God's curse upon those who are telling a falsehood. (III *Family of Imran* 61)

Effectively this advice from the Qur'an can be interpreted to invite Muslims and Christians each to profess their faith sincerely and to leave the judgment in God's hands. But it also reminds the modern believer that after all the scholarly efforts, especially on the part of Christian theologians, to devise a conceptual model for the encounter with people of other religions, that in the end one requires a theological response tailored to the challenge of a particular religion. Specifically, in the case of the encounter with Muslims, it calls for a Christian, even a Catholic theology of Islam.⁶⁴ Such a theology would respond to the Islamic critique of Christian doctrines in the idiom of the challenge, and not in terms that caricature the teachings of the Qur'an and of the Islamic community. Centuries ago, from the middle of the eighth century to the time of the Crusades Arab Christian writers began this project, but it never came to fulfillment.⁶⁵ Perhaps the time has come to try it again.

Throughout the Muslim world since Vatican II, writers have continued to put forward the Islamic view. Many have written strong, anti-Christian polemical tracts; some have promoted an interest in dialogue with Christians.⁶⁶ In this latter connection one might call attention to the foundation in the mid-1990s in Amman, Jordan, of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies. In addition to sponsoring colloquia featuring Muslim, Christian, and Jewish scholarly participation, the Royal Institute also puts out a Bulletin that contains scholarly studies in the three Abrahamic traditions and publishes books on related themes.⁶⁷

Many individual Muslim scholars have eagerly participated in Muslim/Christian dialogues and they continue to do so. One of the most enthusiastic and influential Muslim teachers to promote interreligious dialogue and respect for other religions, especially Judaism and Christianity, as an Islamic duty, is the Turkish scholar, Fethullah Gulen (1938-present). Taking his cue from Beddiuzaman Said Nursi (1876-1960), a prominent scholar in Turkey in the first half of the twentieth century,⁶⁸ with a large current following, Gulen made his own Nursi's dictum that "World peace would be possible only via Islam and Christianity, that would join and be allied with the Qur'an."⁶⁹ Concerned to foster good relations with Christians in Turkey, Gulen made it his purpose to visit and to become acquainted with the Christian leaders there, principally the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church. In February 1997 he visited Pope John Paul II in Rome. According to Gulen, interreligious dialogue is not a superfluous endeavor, but something integral to Islam. He believes it is one of the duties of Muslims on earth.⁷⁰ In the USA Gulen's associates have founded the Rumi Forum for Interreligious Dialogue in Washington, D.C., the first of its kind in the USA under Islamic auspices.

Catholics in the USA have been eager participants in the Muslim/Christian dialogue. Under the leadership of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, meetings between Catholics and Muslims have been taking place around the country for more than a decade.⁷¹ And one of America's best-loved spiritual writers, Thomas Merton (1910-1968), a Trappist monk of the Abbey of Gethsemane in Kentucky, personally conducted an interreligious dialogue through letters with a Pakistani student of Sufism, Abdul Aziz, for almost eight

years. It is the only example one can readily bring to mind of an extended correspondence on religious themes between a Muslim and a Christian in modern times.⁷²

While for the last forty years ideas about dialogue between Christians and Muslims have gained the ascendancy in official, ecclesiastical circles, the mutual suspicion and hostility of a millennium and more have not disappeared on either side. Political theorists in the west, echoing the rhetoric of medieval times still speak of a “clash of civilizations”,⁷³ and religious writers sometimes borrow the phrase to speak of a comparable “clash of theologies.”⁷⁴ Life at the intersection of Islam and Christianity on the ground remains difficult and fraught with danger. One need only call to mind the experience of the Trappist monks of Tibhirine in Algeria who lost their lives in May of 1996 to make the point. They were determined to remain with their Muslim friends in spite of the threat to their lives by Islamists bent on killing them in the name of God.⁷⁵ But all such events as these, especially in the wake of 11 September 2001, make the imperative for dialogue ever stronger if the religions are to take the lead in the search for justice and peace in the world. Through it all one must keep in mind what Pope John Paul II said to the young people of Morocco whom he addressed on a visit to their country on 19 August 1985:

I believe that we, Christians and Muslims, must recognize with joy the religious values that we have in common and thanks to God for them. We both believe in one God, the only God, who is all Justice and all Mercy. We believe in the importance of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, repentance and pardon. We believe that God will be a merciful judge to us at the end of time. We

hope that, after the resurrection He will be satisfied with us, and we know that we will be satisfied with Him.⁷⁶

1. See Lloyd Ridgeon (ed.), *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001). See also Hugh Goddard, *Muslim Perceptions of Christianity* (London: Grey Seal, 1996).
2. See David Marshall, "Christianity in the Qur'an," in Ridgeon (ed.), *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity*, pp. 3-29.
3. See Sebastian P. Brock, "Christians in the Sasanid Empire; a Case of Divided Loyalties," in S. Mews (ed.), *Religion and National Identity* (Studies in Church History, 18; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 1-19. See also Ian Giliman and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia before 1500* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 23.
4. See A.F.J. Klijn & G.J. Reinink, "Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects," *Novum Testamentum* (Supplement, 36, 1973), pp. 44-52.
5. See, e.g., Hans Kung in Hans Kung et al., *Christianity and the World Religions; Paths to Dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism* (Peter Heinegg, trans.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986), pp. 122-130.
6. See Jane Dammen McAuliffe, *Qur'anic Christians; an Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
7. See Kenneth Cragg, *Jesus and the Muslim; an Exploration* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985).
8. In a recent study Tarif Khalidi has written, "Jesus is a controversial prophet. He is the only prophet in the Qur'an who is deliberately made to distance himself from the doctrines that his community is said to hold of him." Tarif Khalidi, *The Muslim Jesus; Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 12.
9. See John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* (2nd ed.; Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1975).
10. See A. S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects; a Critical Study of the Covenant of 'Umar* (London: Frank Cass, 1970 [1st ed. 1930]).
11. For general information about Christians living in the Islamic world, particularly in the Middle East, see Kenneth Cragg, *The Arab Christian: a History in the Middle East* (London: Mowbray, 1992); Antonie Wessels, *Arab and Christian: Christians in the Middle East* (Kampen, The Netherlands: Pharos, 1995).
12. For an overview of the Muslim and Christian writings in both eras see Jean-Marie Gaudeul, *Encounters and Clashes~ Islam and Christianity in History* (2 vols.; Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabie Islamici, 1984).
13. See Daniel J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam; the "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"* (Leiden: Brill, 1972).
14. See Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It; a Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam, 13; Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1997). See also Seppo Rissanen, *Theological Encounter of Oriental Christians with Islam during Early Abbasid Rule* (Abo: Abo Akademis Forlag, 1993); Samir Khalil Samir & Jorgen S. Nielsen, *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period (750-1258)* (Leiden: Brill, 1994); David Thomas, *Syrian Christians under Islam~ the First Thousand Years* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Sidney H. Griffith, *Arabic Christianity in the Monasteries of Ninth-Century Palestine* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Variorum, 1992); idem, *The Beginnings of Christian 'Theology in Arabic* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Variorum, 2002).
15. See Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth; Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).
16. See Samir K. Samir, "The Prophet Muhammad as Seen by Timothy I and Some Other Arab Christian Authors," in Thomas, *Syrian Christians under Islam*, pp. 75-106.
17. See Sidney H. Griffith, "The Qur'an in Arab Christian Texts; the Development of an Apologetical Argument: Abu Qurrah in the Majlis of al-Māmun," *Parole de L'Orient* 24 (1999), pp. 203-233.

- 18 See Sidney H. Griffith, "Faith and Reason in Christian Kalam: Theodore Abu Qurrah on Discerning the True Religion," in Samir & Nielsen (eds), *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period*, pp. 1-43.
19. See Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: the Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbasid Society (2nd-4th/8th Centuries)* (London & New York: Routledge, 1998).
20. For a description of the milieu in which Yahya and other Christian intellectuals flourished in the Islamic world see Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam~ the Cultural Revival during the Buyid Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1986).
21. See the story told in F. E. Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs; the Aristotelian Tradition in Islam* (New York: New York: New York University Press, 1968). See also Marie-Therese d'Alverny, "Translations and Translators," in Robert L. Benson & Giles Constable (eds.), *Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 42 1-462.
22. See Youssef Courbage & Philippe Fargues, *Christians and Jews under Islam* (trans. Judy Mabro; London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997). Also easily available is Bat Yèor, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam; from Jihad to Dhimmitude; Seventh-Twentieth Century* (Madison & Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996). One must use this book with great care due to the author's extreme anti-Islamic prejudice and consequent distortion of the facts of history, both Christian and Islamic. Nevertheless, the quoted sources do provide some sense, albeit highly distorted by reason of selective quotation, of the difficulties experienced by Christians over the centuries living under Islamic rule. The book gave rise to some surprisingly bigoted remarks by Richard John Neuhaus, "The Public Square; the Approaching Century of Religion," *First Things* no. 76 (October, 1997), pp. 75-79. There are similar problems with Bat Yèor, *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam* (Rutherford, Madison, & Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985) and with Bat Yèor, *Islam and Dhimmitude; Where Civilizations Collide* (Madison & Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002). It remains to Bat Yèor's credit to have raised an important issue that still has not received adequate study.
23. See Andrea Pacini (ed.), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
24. See Samir Khalil Samir, "The Christian Communities, Active Members of Arab Society throughout History," in Pacini (ed.), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East*, pp. 67-91.
25. The very expressive neologism dhimmitude, originally a French caique on the Arabic word dhimmah, has come into currency in English due to Bat Yèor's use of it. She says she borrowed it from the assassinated president of Lebanon, Bashir Gemayel, who was killed on 14 September 1982. Cf. Bat Yèor, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity*, p. 28.
26. See, e.g., David Thomas, "The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Early Abbasid Era," in Ridgeon (ed.), *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity*, pp. 78-98. See also David Thomas, *Anti-Christian Polemic in Early Islam; Abu 'Isa al-Warrags "Against the Trinity"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
27. See the texts presented and discussed in Gaudeul, *Encounters and Clashes*.
28. See Hava Lazarus-Yafeh et al. (eds.), *The Majlis: Interreligious Encounters in Medieval Islam* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999).
29. See Thomas F. Michel (ed. & trans.), *A Muslim Theologian's Response to Christianity; Ibn Taymiyyjis al-Jawab al-Sahih* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1984).
30. See the Middle East Council of Churches website: <http://www.mecchurches.org>.
31. See the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation website: <http://www.hcef.org>. See also the monthly newspaper: *Via Dolorosa; an Independent Monthly to Revive the Culture of Middle East Christians*. P. O. Box M125, Siiver Spring, MD 20911.
32. See D.M. Dunlop, *Arabic Science in the West* (Pakistan Historical Society Publication, no. 35; Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1958); Dorothee Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Norman Daniel, *The Arabs and Mediaeval Europe* (2~ ed.; London: Longman, 1979).
33. See Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982).
34. See John Meyendorf, "Byzantine Views of Islam," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964), pp. 114-132; N.M. Vaporis (ed.), *Orthodox Christians and Muslims* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1986); Alain Ducellier, *Chretiens d'Orient et Islam au Moyen Age; VIIIe-Xve* (Paris: Armand

Cohn, 1996).

35. See Edward P. Colbert, *The Martyrs of Cordoba (850-859); a Study of the Sources* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1962); Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Jessica A. Coope, *The Martyrs of Cordoba; Community and Family Conflict in an Age of Mass Conversion* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995). 36 See Thomas E. Burman, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050-1200* (Leiden: Brill, 1994); Mark D. Meyerson & Edward D. English (eds.), *Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain~ Interaction and Cultural Change* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000).

37. For general surveys see Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West, the Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: The University Press, 1960; 2nd rev. ed., 1962; re-issued, Oxford: One World, 1993); R. W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962); Franco Cardini,

- Europe and Islam (Caroline Beamish, trans.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); Rollin Armour, Sr., *Islam, Christianity, and the West* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002).
38. See James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964).
39. See, e.g., Thomas E. Burman, "Tafsir and Translation: Traditional Arabic Qur'an Exegesis and the Latin Qur'ans of Robert of Ketton and Mark of Toledo," *Speculum* 73 (1998), pp. 703-732.
40. See Anthony Bonner (ed. & trans.), *Doctor Illuminatus: a Ranion Liull Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); J.N. Hillgarth, *Ramon Lull and Lullism in Fourteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).
41. See Jasper Hopkins, *Nicholas of Cusás De Pace Fidei and Cribratio Alkorani: Translation and Analysis* (Minneapolis: Arthur J. Banning Press, 1990); James E. Biechier, "Christian Humanism Confronts Islam: Sifting the Qur'an with Nicholas of Cusa," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 12 (1976), pp. 1-14; idem, "Nicholas of Cusa and Muhammad: a Fifteenth-Century Encounter," *The Downside Review* 101 (1983), pp. 50-59.
42. See James Waltz, "Muhammad and the Muslims in St. Thomas Aquinas," *The Muslim World* 66 (1976), pp. 81-95; Gabriel Reynolds, "Saint Thomas' Islamic Challenge: Reflections on the Antiochene Questions," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 12(2001), pp. 161-189.
43. George Makdisi may claim too much in his studies of the ways in which the Islamic world and its institutions influenced intellectual life in Europe. Nevertheless, his work does call attention to the many cross-cultural currents that fueled university life in the medieval west. See George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981); idem, *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West; with Special Reference to Scholasticism* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1990).
44. On the Crusades, from the perspective of Muslim/Christian, religious concerns, see Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). From the Muslim perspective, see Amin Maalouf, *The Crusades through Arab Eyes* (Jon Rothschild, trans.; London: Al Saqi Books/Zed Books, 1984); P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades; the Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London & New York: Longman, 1986). See also Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades; Islamic Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2000).
45. See J. Hoeberichts, *Francis and Islam* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1997).
46. See Egil Grisliis, "Luther and the Turks," *Muslim World* 64 (1974), pp. 180-193, 275-291; Sigvard von Sicard, "Luther and the Muslims," *Africa Theological Journal* 9 (1980), pp. 24-38; Gregory Miller, "Luther on the Turks and Islam," *Lutheran Quarterly* 14 (2000), pp. 79-97. See also Jan Stomp, "Calvin and the Turks," in Y. Y. Haddad & W. Z. Haddad, (eds.), "Christian-Muslim Encounters (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1995), pp. 126-142.
47. See Philippe Fargues, "The Arab Christians of the Middle East; a Demographic Perspective," in Pacini, *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East*, pp. 52-57.
48. See Goddard, *Muslim Perceptions of Christianity*.
49. Austin Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council II; the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Vatican Collection, vol. I, rev. ed. Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co., 1975 & 1984), p. 740.
50. Quoted from Armour, *Islam, Christianity, and the West*, p. 103. Vatican II, in *Nostra Aetate*, would echo the words of Pope Gregory VII in its paragraph on the Muslims. See Flannery, *Vatican II*, p. 739, n. 1.
51. See Mary Louise Gude, *Louis Massignon; the Crucible of Compassion* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996).
52. See Christopher Lamb, *The Call to Retrieval; Kenneth Craggs Christian Vocation to Islam* (London: Grey Seal, 1997).
53. See Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds Which Unite Us; 16 Years of Christian-Muslim Dialogue* (Vatican City: Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, 1994); Jacques Waardenburg (ed.), *Muslim-Christian Perceptions of Dialogue Today; Experiences and Expectations* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000).
54. See Herbert W. Mason, *Al-Hallaj* (Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 1995).
55. Massignon completely revised these works in later years. See now Louis Massignon, *Essay on the Origins of the Technical Language of Islamic Mysticism* (trans. Benjamin Clark; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997); idem, *The Passion of al-Hallaj; Mystic and Martyr of Islam* (trans. Herbert Mason, 4vols.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); idem, *Hallaj; Mystic and Martyr* (trans., ed. & abridged by Herbert Mason; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

56. See Sidney H. Griffith, "Sharing the Faith of Abraham: the 'Credo' of Louis Massignon," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 8 (1997), pp. 193-210.
57. See Au Merad, *Christian Hermit in an Islamic World; a Muslims View of Charles de Foucauld* (trans. Zoe Hersov; New York: Paulist Press, 1999).
58. One of Craggs most influential books in this regard has been: Kenneth Cragg, *Muhammad and the Christian; a Question of Response* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984).
59. Flannery, Vatican Council II, pp. 739-740. See also the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 21 November 1964, where the text says: "But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place among these there are the Muslims, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind." Flannery, Vatican Council II, p. 35.
60. Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, *Guidelines for Dialogue between Christians and Muslims* (Interreligious Documents, I, prepared by Maurice Borrmans, trans. R. Marston Speight; New York: Paulist Press, 1990).
61. See many of them quoted or collected in the booklet published by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds Which Unite Us*, cited in n. 53 above.
62. Flannery, Vatican Council II, *Declaration on Religious Freedom*, p.677.
63. See Francis Cardinal Arinze, *Christian-Muslim Relations in the Twenty-First Century* (Lecture presented to the Center for Muslim-Christian Relations, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., January 1998); idem, *Meeting Other Believers: the Risks and Rewards of Interreligious Dialogue* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1998); idem, *Religions for Peace: a Call for Solidarity to the Religions of the World* (New York: Doubleday, 2002).
64. Some efforts in this direction may be seen in the Christian development of what one might call the 'Abraham theologoumenon. See, e.g., the very different approaches of Louis Massignon, *Les trois prieres d'Abraham* (Patrimoines; Paris: Cerf, 1997) and Karl-Josef Kuschel, *Abraham~ Sign of Hope for Jews, Christians and Muslims* (trans. John Bowden; New York: Continuum, 1995).
65. See the studies mentioned in n. 14 above. From the historical perspective, a beginning may be seen in the work of a thinker like Roger Arnaldez, *Three Messengers for One God* (trans. Gerald W. Schiabachet et al.; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).
66. See Kate Zebiri, *Muslims and Christians Face to Face* (Oxford: One World, 1997). See also Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, *Islam and Other Faiths* (ed. Atallah Siddiqui; Leicester, UK & Herndon, VA: The Islamic Foundation & The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1998).
67. One of the first publications in Arabic and English was El Hassan bin Talal, *Christianity in the Arab World* (Amman: Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, 1995), an appreciative study of the role of Christianity in the Near East.
68. A special issue of the journal *The Muslim World* 79, nos. 3-4 (July-October, 1999), is devoted to the thought of Said Nursi.
69. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *Risale-i Nur Kulliyati* (2 vols.; Istanbul: Nesil Yayinlari, 1996), vol. II, p. 1964.
70. Guleń's views on dialogue are published in English translation in Ali Unal (ed. & trans.) & Alphonse Williams (ed.), *Advocate of Dialogue: Fethullah Gulen* (Fairfax, VA: The Fountain, 2000).
71. See John Borelli, "Catholic-Muslim Relations," on the web: <http://www.nccbuscc.org/seia/borelli.htm>
72. See Sidney H. Griffith, "As One Spiritual Man to Another: the Merton-Abdul Aziz Correspondence," in Rob Baker & Gray Henry (eds.), *Merton & Sufism: the Untold Story; a Complete Compendium* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 1999), pp. 101-129. Merton's side of the correspondence is published in Thomas Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love: Letters* (William H. Shannon, ed.; New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1985), pp. 43-67. A complete publication of both sides of the correspondence is in the offing.
73. See Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), developed from an earlier article entitled, "Islam and the Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* 72 (1993), pp. 245-261.
74. "See Emilio Platti, "Islam et Occident; 'Choc de theologies?'" *Melanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Etudes Orientales du Caire* 24 (2000), pp. 347-379.
75. See Bernardo Olivera, *How Far to Follow: the Martyrs of the Atlas* (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1997); John W. Kiser, *The Monks of Tibhirine; Faith, Love and Terror* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002).

76. Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds Which Unite Us*, p. 65.