THE LIVING STONES OF THE HOLY LAND TRUST

Registered Charity No. 1081204

'An ecumenical trust seeking to promote contacts between Christian Communities in Britain and those in the Holy Land and neighbouring countries.'

editor@livingstones.ngo

Living Stones Yearbook 2012

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FOREWORD

The new format and type of publication now presented in the *Living Stones Yearbook* aims to provide a platform for informed debate and scholarship concerning the life and times, historical and current, of the Christian community in and around the Middle East from a theological perspective.

Alongside this development of the *Yearbook* has been a *Newsletter* for members of Living Stones which is available periodically and concentrates on current information and news concerning the Trust. Together these publications replace the old Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust *Magazine*. Archived copies of the *Magazine* and the *Newsletter* are available on the website (www.livingstonesonline.org.uk).

The *Yearbook* will present an interesting and relevant series of papers concerning the Holy Land.

It is appreciated that articles derive from authors in a range of disciplines and demonstrate a variety in approach. The spelling of some specialised terms, local place-names and proper names in particular may vary considerably according to the contributor and discipline. These variations, however, should cause no problems to readers.

Submissions for inclusion in the *Yearbook* are welcome and papers for consideration should be sent to editor@livingstonesonline.org.uk. Notes for submission of papers and house style are available upon request from the editor.

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THE CURRENT SITUATION OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ESPECIALLY SYRIA, AFTER THE SYNOD OF THE MIDDLE EAST'S FINAL DECLARATION (SEPTEMBER 2012) AND THE PAPAL VISIT TO LEBANON[1]

Antoine Audo[2]

The Apostolic Exhortation of Benedict XVI and the Papal Visit to Lebanon

Introduction

I would first of all like to express my particular thanks to Mr Anthony O'Mahony, Director of the Centre for Eastern Christianity of Heythrop College, who invited me to the international conference held here in June 2010 in preparation for the Synod for the Middle East in October 2010. And today, following the publication of the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente* and the visit of the Pope to Lebanon on 14-16 September just past, Anthony has suggested that I should offer you some reflections on these events.

Dear Colleagues at Heythrop College, your contribution to serious reflection on the Eastern Churches of the Middle East, as well as your fine publications, deserve particular recognition. Please accept my heartfelt thanks. I also hope that, as an academic institution, you will not fail to assist the Eastern Churches and the countries of the Middle East in putting into effect the principal guidelines of Benedict XVI's Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*.

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1 This paper is based on an address given at The Centre for Eastern Christianity, Heythrop College, University of London on Friday 19 October 2012.

2 Antoine Audo SJ, Chaldean Bishop of Aleppo, has research and published extensively on theology and religious thought; see 'Contributors' notes above.

General impressions

I would like first of all to set out some general impressions regarding the Exhortation and the Pope's visit, and then to comment on a number of passages in the Exhortation and the speeches and homilies given by Benedict XVI during his various meetings and liturgical celebrations in Lebanon.

Having had, at the end of the 2010 Synod, the good fortune to be elected a member of the post-Synodal council charged with submitting proposals for the final editing of the Apostolic Exhortation, I was able to participate in Rome on four occasions in this work of reflection and editing, together with other representatives of the Eastern Churches and a number of the Roman Congregations involved.

The composition of the texts was a very serious matter, but I was afraid that it might be too academic and difficult to read. I even pleaded that the final text should be accessible to simple priests and the general laity, in order for it to be read with pleasure, admiration and Eastern sensitivity. Having read the Exhortation signed by Benedict XVI on 14 September last, the day of his arrival in Lebanon, in the beautiful basilica of the Paulist Fathers at Harissa, I had the impression that this document is truly the product of the Synod Fathers gathered around the Holy Father. It is a readable text which any Christian can read, understand and appreciate. The text is straightforward, but of admirable simplicity. Furthermore, it directly addresses the different Churches: the Catholics of the Middle East, as well as the Orthodox and Protestants when it touches on the theme of ecumenism. It also addresses Muslims, dealing with very sensitive questions such as that of religious liberty. But it does so always in a spirit of truth and charity, without falling into the trap of polemic. We will return to it.

Some weeks after the Pope's visit to Lebanon and reading his various interventions, the first impression which stays with me is one of *closeness*: it is the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep and whose sheep know him (John 10:14-15). At every meeting he found the right thing to say, inspired by the Holy Spirit and creating a dialogue of true communion.

Except for one, the six Catholic bishops of Aleppo, did not participate in the welcome of the Holy Father to Lebanon. On the other hand, they had met several days earlier in order to send him a

joint letter, in order to advise him of the grave and tragic situation in Aleppo and Syria and to ask him to intervene with the major Powers in support of peace. At the end of the Holy Father's visit to Lebanon, from his statements to journalists on the plane and the speeches which followed, we are convinced that the Pope had listened to the bishops of Aleppo and that he shared our suffering and concerns.

The Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Medio Oriente

The Apostolic Exhortation is distinguished firstly by its brevity. As is customary, it contains an introduction and conclusion, a well as three main sections. It is clear that all its parts develop the central theme of the Synod, 'The Catholic Church in the Middle East, communion and witness'.

In the first part, the Pope begins by developing at length a reflection on ecumenism (11-17), insisting on the spiritual ecumenism promoted by Vatican II: as well as the ecumenism of service, underlining the role of the Ecumenical Middle East Council of Churches. Then, in the same section, numbered 19-30, the Pope addresses the question of inter-religious dialogue.

The Holy Father speaks first about relations between Christians and Jews in an objective manner which affirms the Christian faith, while also recognising the religious value of the other. In this context, he reminds Christians of their Biblical roots, showing how Christ made them enter into the faith of the Chosen People, while at the same time the person of Jesus, as Christ and Saviour, is the cause of separation. In speaking of Muslims, the Pope re-reads *Lumen Gentium* and *Nostra Aetate* in the light of the Synod. He underlines the humane and scientific contribution of Christians to the civilisations of the countries of the Middle East. The Exhortation speaks frankly about equality, citizenship, and the religious liberty which drives us to reconsider the anthropological relationship with religion and God (27):

> Religious tolerance exists in a number of countries, but it does not have much effect since it remains limited in its field of action. There is a need to move beyond tolerance to religious freedom. Taking this step does not open the

> door to relativism, as some would maintain. It does not compromise belief, but rather calls for a reconsideration of the relationship between man, religion and God. It is not an attack on the 'foundational truths' of belief, since, despite human and religious divergences, a ray of truth shines on all men and women. We know very well that truth, apart from God, does not exist as an autonomous reality. If it did, it would be an idol. The truth cannot unfold except in an otherness open to God, who wishes to reveal his own otherness in and through my human brothers and sisters. Hence it is not fitting to state in an exclusive way: 'I possess the truth'. The truth is not possessed by anyone; it is always a gift which calls us to undertake a journey of ever closer assimilation to truth. Truth can only be known and experienced in freedom; for this reason we cannot impose truth on others; truth is disclosed only in an encounter of love.

The last part is central and deals with questions within the Catholic Church: how to live out communion and witness in a practical way. The Exhortation addresses every group of people and gives directions to each group:

—Patriarchs (39-40)
—Bishops (41-44)
—Priests, deacons and seminarians (45-50)
—Consecrated life (51-54)
—Lay-people (55-57)
—The family (58-61)
—Young people and children (62-65).

While the second section had dealt with different categories of people by underlining the task of *communion* for each group, the third section insists on the aspect of *witness*, noting the means which the Church has provided us with from the beginning, in order that we might be witnesses and evanglisers. All these treasures of the Church are there to be rediscovered, shared among Christians and put at the service of all. This section begins by insisting on the place of the Word of God

in the countries of the Bible (68-74, cf. 70-81) and its importance for East and West. Then (75-81) we have a full exposition on the *liturgy*, the Eucharist and the sacraments, with particular attention to the need for in-depth renewal:

> Throughout history the liturgy has been an essential element in the spiritual unity and communion of the faithful in the Middle East. Indeed, the liturgy is an outstanding witness to the apostolic Tradition as preserved and developed in the particular traditions of the Churches of East and West. A renewal of liturgical texts and celebrations, where necessary, could enable the faithful to draw more deeply from the liturgical tradition and its biblical, patristic, theological and spiritual riches (74) through their experience of the Mystery to which these give access. Such a renewal must of course be undertaken, to the extent possible, in cooperation with those Churches which are not in full communion, yet are also heirs to the same liturgical traditions. The desired liturgical renewal must be based on the word of God, on the proper tradition of each Church, and upon the new insights of Christian theology and anthropology. It will bear fruit if Christians become convinced that the sacramental life introduces them deeply into the new life in Christ (cf. Rom 6:1-6; 2 Cor 5:17) which is the source of communion and witness. (75)

In this section, centred as we have said on the witness of the Church in the Middle East, a number of other areas are emphasised as ways of living and announcing the Christian faith. In sections 82-84, the Exhortation addresses at length the place of prayer and pilgrimage in private life. This is not about social practice but that personal relationship with Christ which transforms the heart of man from within. Witness originates, therefore, from contemplation in prayer of the figure of Christ:

> The Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Middle East forcefully emphasized the need for prayer in

> the life of the Church; through prayer the Church allows herself to be transformed by her Lord, and each member of the faithful allows Christ to live within him or her (cf. Gal 2:20). As Jesus himself showed when he withdrew to pray at decisive moments in his life, the effectiveness of the mission of preaching the Gospel, and thus of Christian witness, has its source in prayer. Through openness to the working of God's Spirit, believers, by their personal and communal prayer, enable the riches of love and the light of hope within them to break through to the world (cf. Rom 5:5). May the desire for prayer grow among the Pastors of the People of God and among the faithful, so that their contemplation of the face of Christ may increasingly inspire their witness and their actions! Jesus taught his disciples to pray unceasingly and not to be discouraged (cf. Lk 18:1). Situations of human suffering caused by selfishness, injustice or the thirst for power can lead to weariness and discouragement. That is why Jesus tells us to pray constantly. Prayer is the true 'tent of meeting' (cf. Ex 40:34), the privileged place of communion between God and man. Let us not forget the meaning of the name of the Child whose birth was proclaimed by Isaiah and who brings salvation: Emmanuel, 'God-with-us' (cf. Is 7:14; Mt 1:23). Jesus is our Emmanuel, the true God in our midst. Let us fervently call upon him! (82)

Similarly, in no. 83, the Exhortation insists on pilgrimage as an experience of conversion and seeking God. Here also, Benedict XVI develops a theme dear to him, that of transformation which becomes a path to following Christ:

> As the land of biblical revelation, the Middle East soon became a major goal of pilgrimage for many Christians throughout world, who came to be strengthened in faith and to have a profoundly spiritual experience. Theirs was a penitential journey which expressed an authentic thirst for God. Today's pilgrimages to the lands of the Bible need to recover this primordial insight. Marked by a spirit of

> penitence aimed at conversion and by the desire to seek God, and walking in the earthly footsteps of Christ and the apostles, pilgrimages to the holy and apostolic places, if undertaken with intense faith, can become an authentic path of discipleship *(sequela Christi)*. They also provide the faithful with a powerful visual experience of the richness of biblical history, which evokes before their eyes the great moments of God's saving plan. It is fitting that pilgrimages to the biblical sites should be complemented by pilgrimages to the shrines of the martyrs and saints in whom the Church venerates Christ, the wellspring of their martyrdom and their holiness. (83)

From sections 85 to 91 there is a lengthy exposition regarding transmission of the faith and the new evangelisation. In fact, the desire that our Churches should be missionary Churches was a great concern of the Synod Fathers. Consequently, in section 88, the Exhortation explicitly reminds the Eastern Churches of the need to rediscover that missionary impetus which was at the origin of their own development:

> As heir to the apostolic outreach which brought the Good News to distant lands, each of the Catholic Churches present in the Middle East is also called to renew its missionary spirit by training and sending forth men and women proud of their faith in Christ crucified and risen, and able to proclaim the Gospel courageously both in the region and throughout the diaspora, and even in other countries around the world. The Year of Faith, which is linked to the new evangelization, if lived with intense conviction, will provide an excellent incentive for Churches of the region to evangelize themselves and to consolidate their witness to Christ. To make known the Son of God who died and rose again, the sole Saviour of mankind, is an essential duty of the Church and a grave responsibility for all the baptized. 'God desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth' (cf. 1 Tim 2:4). As she takes up this urgent and demanding task in a culturally and religiously pluralistic context, the Church

> is aided by the Holy Spirit, the gift of the risen Lord who continues to sustain his disciples, and the treasury of great spiritual traditions which are a sure guide to all who seek God. I encourage each ecclesiastical jurisdiction and all religious institutes and ecclesial movements to develop an authentic missionary spirit which will serve as a sure pledge of spiritual renewal. In carrying out this work, the Catholic Church in the Middle East can count on the support of the universal Church. (88)

Finally, this part concludes, in section 93, with a reminder of the fundamental place of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Social Teaching of the Church*.

To conclude our reflection on the Apostolic Exhortation of Benedict XVI, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, we see the Holy Father confronting, not with fear but with love and trust, the tragic political and economic situation of the Middle East. He asks each and every person to work for peace, the gift of God to humanity through the death and Resurrection of Christ. Despite every difficulty, all the conflicts within and outside the Church, we find no polemical spirit in this text: much to the contrary, the Pope invites us to a respectful personal conversion, in which each may find himself questioned, encouraged to be himself, and to allow himself to be led by the Spirit for the good of all!

The papal visit to Lebanon: 14-16 September 2012

In the introduction to this presentation I have limited myself to a number of general impressions of the Pope's visit to Lebanon. I would have liked to have had time to revisit the contributions, speeches and homilies of Benedict XVI, which must include some ten lengthy speeches of a different intellectual level. Each of them merits a close and attentive reading, but that is not my aim here.

I will restrict myself to two points: firstly, the place given to the Syrian crisis in the Pope's contributions, homilies and speeches: and then to the development of a guiding theme with regards to the Churches and societies of the Middle East.

The entire media have noted that the Pope has accorded a special place to the Syrian crisis. He spoke of Syria on three occasions, and at important moments on his journey, giving us the impression that he was aware of our suffering and difficulties and that he did not wish us to remain inactive spectators.

He first mentioned Syria on board the plane carrying him from Rome to Beirut, in a reply to a journalist. These are the Pope's words:

> Naturally, there is a great danger of Christians leaving these lands and their presence there being lost, and we must do all we can to help them to stay. The essential way to help would be to put an end to war and violence which is causing this exodus. Therefore the first priority is to do all we can to halt the violence and to open up a real possibility of staying together for the future.

The Pope insisted on dialogue as the way towards ending the war and violence, adding:

> I also believe that there must be an end to the importation of arms, without which war could not continue. Instead of importing weapons, which is a grave sin, we should import ideas of peace and creativity, we should find ways of accepting each person in his otherness, we should therefore make visible before the world the respect that religions have for one another, respect for man as God's creation and love of neighbour as fundamental to all religions. In this way, using all possible means, including material assistance, we must help to bring an end to war and violence so that all can help rebuild the country.

The Pope spoke of Syria on a second occasion, when addressing young Syrians among the gathering of young people at Bkerké:

> I understand, too, that present among us there are some young people from Syria. I want to say how much I admire your courage. Tell your families and friends back home that the Pope has not forgotten you. Tell those

> around you that the Pope is saddened by your sufferings and your griefs. He does not forget Syria in his prayers and concerns; he does not forget those in the Middle East who are suffering. It is time for Muslims and Christians to come together so as to put an end to violence and war.

A final mention was at the end of the solemn Mass at Beirut on 16 September, before the recitation of the Angelus:

> Let us turn now to Mary, Mother of God, Our Lady of Lebanon. Let us ask her to intercede with her divine Son for you and, more particularly, for the people of Syria and the neighbouring countries, imploring the gift of peace. You know all too well the tragedy of the conflicts and the violence which generates so much suffering. Sadly, the din of weapons continues to make itself heard, along with the cry of the widow and the orphan. Violence and hatred invade people's lives, and the first victims are women and children. Why so much horror? Why so many dead? I appeal to the international community! I appeal to the Arab countries that, as brothers, they might propose workable solutions respecting the dignity, the rights and the religion of every human person! Those who wish to build peace must cease to see in the other an evil to be eliminated. It is not easy to see in the other a person to be respected and loved, and yet this is necessary if peace is to be built, if fraternity is desired (cf. 1 Jn 2:10-11; 1 Pet 3:8-12). May God grant to your country, to Syria and to the Middle East the gift of peaceful hearts, the silencing of weapons and the cessation of all violence! May men understand that they are all brothers!

The second point which I remember from the various contributions of Benedict XVI is his insistence on the theme of transformation of hearts and attitudes. At the end of his allocution before the Sunday Angelus, the Pope returned to this theme, which can be considered as the thread running through all his words:

> May we, with God's help, be converted so as to work ardently to establish the peace that is necessary for harmonious coexistence among brothers, whatever their origins and religious convictions.

For those of you interested in the various papal interventions in Lebanon, I would suggest as a key to reading them the theme 'transformation, change, force for change'.

On the one hand, the Pope does not ignore the difficulties, challenges, threats even, confronting the countries, people and Christians of the Middle East, but on the other, in a spirit of profound faith in Christ, rooted in his death and Resurrection, he calls for an attitude of conversion, combining different levels and under different circumstances. This theme is also clearly apparent throughout the Apostolic Exhortation (cf. 8, 9. 10, 11, 12, 81). By way of illustration, we may note the theme's recurrence in the Pope's speeches in Lebanon:

> —the speech at Harissa during the signing of the Apostolic Exhortation;
> —the speech at the presidential palace in Baabda;
> —the speech to young people at Bkerké
> —his words before the Sunday Angelus.

The response to all violence and threats, the desires of the Arab Spring and for democracy in our countries of the Middle East, is through the heart. Let the heart be transformed. Everyone must hear this message, addressed first of all to all the Eastern Churches, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant, but also, and why not, through dialogue and mutual respect, to Muslims and Jews, living in these blessed lands of the Fathers and Patriarchs, Prophets and Kings, Apostles, Saints and Martyrs. Believing in peace and seeking to bring it about.

> 'My Peace I give you.'

This was the motto of the Pope's journey to Lebanon

Christians in Syria and the Middle East after the Synod and Apostolic Exhortation

With the signing and distribution of the Apostolic Exhortation during the recent visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Lebanon, from the fourteenth to the sixteenth of last month, the Synod of the Catholic Church for the Middle East which was held in Rome in October 2010 enters a new stage, that of implementation.

In fact this Synod, with the title 'The Catholic Church in the Middle East, Communion and Witness', responded to a profound desire for the renewal of these Catholic Churches and the societies of the Middle East. The outbreak of the various Arab revolutions in North Africa (Tunisia, Libya) and the Middle East (Egypt, Yemen, Syria) just after the closing of this ecclesial assembly conferred a prophetic character on it. The Apostolic Exhortation invites us to put it into effect through deeds and actions. Already, the Maronite Patriarch His Beatitude Bichara Boutros Al Raï has invited the Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops of the Middle East to a three-day meeting at the beginning of December, in order to determine the means of implementing the decisions of the Exhortation brought to Lebanon by the Holy Father.

The title you have proposed for my second presentation is 'Christians in Syria and the Middle East after the Synod and Apostolic Exhortation'.

I will speak on Syria, which I know best. The situation of Christians and of all Syrians continues to be extremely difficult. In order to address the topic, a degree of historical perspective is necessary, in order to better situate the various conflicts and to provide a Christian vision of the problems.

1

For some fifty years Syria, as indeed most of the regimes of the region and the Third World, was ruled by a military government. Very often, it was a single party which ensured the cohesion of the country.

Including the Baᶜath party, whose Socialist, Arabist and unitary ideology derives from the Christian thinker Michel Aflak, was in power in Syria from virtually 1962. The Marxist and military ideological

hegemony of the Soviet Union profoundly marked this period, marked by two wars with Israel, in June 1967 and October 1973.

Accustomed to a single and comfortable discourse at every level of the institutions of the state, especially the army, education and the single party, the Syrian people, despite their ethnic, religious and geographical differences, enjoyed a certain stability, with the comfort and progress which that brought. The country's Christians, like those of Iraq, found in this regime considerable security and a reining in of all religious extremism. We might even say that Christians prospered: in universities, manufacturing, business, etc. …

This then is the first aspect of the Syrian crisis, which we can describe as *political*, and which must always be considered at the local, regional and international level.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 undoubtedly represented a new page in world history and the destiny of Powers both great and small.

2

We will put the second aspect, that is to say the *religious* aspect, at the heart of our analysis.

While politics insists on Arabism, unity and Socialism, the religious pole, central in our view, is very much involved in the ongoing conflict.

At issue is the struggle between the Alawite minority, in power in Syria for some forty years—with the rule of Hafez El Assad and then that of his son Bachar—and the Sunni majority seeking power. Here too, this religious or confessional reality must be situated within a regional framework in which we find two powers, Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shi^{c}a Iran—not forgetting the Turkey of yesterday and today. These powers aspire to hegemony over the Arab and Muslim world. At an international level, the great powers are not indifferent to this religious dimension, giving rise to reaction by Islamist movements in global politics.

While the two sides in the conflict accuse each other of all the evils in the Syrian conflict wherever they arise, the Christians of the country, in the light of the Apostolic Exhortation, can employ a

different discourse, focused on the search for mutual recognition and reconciliation.

The Synod, the fruit of which is the apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente* (The Church in the Middle East), insisted from the outset on the question of communion between Catholics, between Christians, and finally with Muslims and Jews. These are the three concentric circles which are addressed and developed in turn in order to arrive at a mutual recognition, becoming witness and engagement for the common good of every human person and every society.

The introduction to the Exhortation sets the tone for the entire text, which is developed in three substantial sections. Each time, the theme of 'communion and witness' is boldly addressed, in the affirmation that the mystery of God is the mystery of religious freedom and mutual acceptance in difference.

What, in the light of the Apostolic Exhortation, can be the contribution of Christians at the heart of the conflicts shaking the Arab Muslim world?

First of all, the rejection of all confessional discourse, showing that communion is a force of love, a dynamic of solidarity for the good of each and all. Arab Muslim history gives us examples of minorities acceding to power. This is an undeniable historical phenomenon. And in view of this, we must have the courage to interpret the current situation positively and resolve it rationally, and accept the accession to power of the Alawite minority at this moment in the history of the country.

Here the rich tradition of the Bible teaches us to understand God's Covenant with humanity through this dynamic relationship between the particular and the universal. In this same understanding, Biblical Israel will take its positive and non-conflictual place in the advent of reconciliation and peace.

3

The third point of our analysis is the *economic* aspect of the Syrian crisis (cf. The Social Teaching of the Church).

Despite all the disadvantages of a single party, and a minority in power having given rise to various kinds of corruption, the Syrian

people, compared to those around them, have experienced a certain economic stability which has enabled them to feed, house and care for themselves. It is the current war which has caused enormous poverty by its destruction of all economic resources.

As Bishop of the Chaldeans of Syria and President of *Caritas* Syria, I can witness to this surge in poverty. Just as violence rages after suppression of the political and religious language of mediation, so poverty of every kind has invaded and overwhelmed families and districts: hunger, sickness, the closure of schools and universities, and of innumerable factories and shops …

Being in Aleppo, I have seen the outbreak of daily violence and the misery which increasingly surrounds us. But at the same time, day by day, I discover the joy of Christians and of those who work with Muslims to serve the displaced people who have taken refuge in a hundred and fifty schools (we estimate that some two hundred thousand people have had to leave their homes).

By way of example, I will present a number of cases of Church involvement in Aleppo, in order to show that while Christians may be in difficulty, anxious for the future, they are not sitting on their hands: they are capable of offering themselves, especially when motivated by service to others.

1) A team of six young priests from the different Catholic communities of the city are looking after a hundred Muslim refugee families in two schools in Souleimanié—a completely Christian district.
First and foremost, they need to obtain medicines and cleaning materials, to build showers, to organise childcare, to listen to families who are suffering. This is a unique experience which has enabled these young priests to come into direct contact with Muslim families. Despite all the risks that this presence may be accused of proselytism—*tabshir*—priests and families live in communion in their difficulties, get to know each other, and recognise values common to the Christians and Muslims of Syria.

2) In the district of Jabal al Saydé, with its Kurdish majority, a group of Marist brothers and laity, together

> with priests from the different communities, take care of four schools filled with refugees and three hundred Christian families who have fallen into extreme poverty as a result of unemployment and the cost of living. This is fine initiative of fidelity and a witness of solidarity. Both sides in the conflict recognise and appreciate this effective and discreet Christian presence.
>
> 3) A group of Jesuit priests from the Jesuit Refugee Service, together with groups of young scouts, criss-cross the city to provide daily meals for five thousand displaced people. Here too, Christians and Muslims witness to common values and provide evidence of a Syria of citizenship, a Syria of positive laicity, to the right to difference and respect for alterity.

I could continue to illustrate my point by looking at all the work undertaken by *Caritas* at Church level throughout Syria. What I wish to say is that, in order to continue their presence in the country, Christians must not close themselves off in fear and discouragement—paths which lead directly to emigration—but must unite, among themselves and with Muslims in order to face the challenges of violence, poverty and ignorance which take root in societies which encourage fanaticism, intolerance and a lack of respect for all difference.

In conclusion, we return to the title of this presentation: 'Christians in Syria and the Middle East, after the Synod and Apostolic Exhortation'.

In the penultimate section of the Exhortation (section 99), Benedict XVI recognises that the witness that the Christians of the Middle East are called to give 'is not easy', and for some is even 'a trial'. These are the Holy Father's words:

> By its witness, may the 'brotherhood' of Christians become a leaven in the whole human family (cf. Mt 13:33)! May Christ's followers in the Middle East, Catholics and other Christians as well, be one in courageously bearing this difficult yet exhilarating witness to Christ, and thus receive the crown of life (Rev 2:10b)! May they know the encouragement and support of the Christian world

as a whole. May the trials experienced by some of our brothers and sisters (cf. Ps 66 [65]:10; Is 48:10; 1 Pet 1:7) strengthen the fidelity and faith of all! 'May grace and peace be multiplied to you … Peace to all of you that are in Christ' (1 Pet 1:2b; 5:14b)!

THE SYNOD FOR THE MIDDLE EAST: FIRST RESULTS AND FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

Frans Bouwen

The celebration of the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Middle East, in Rome, from the 10 to the 24 October 2010, was and will for a long time be a landmark in the recent history of the Catholic Churches in the region. In many aspects it was an *unicum*, a unique ecclesial event. For the first time in history all the Catholic Bishops of the Middle East—of the various Eastern and the Latin traditions—were gathered around the Bishop of Rome, as a visible and living expression of their communion in faith, sacrament and mission. Never before have the existence, ministry and living conditions of these Churches received such an echo in the Catholic Church around the world as well as in the various media.

In order to express the unique character of the event, the Final Message of the Synod uses the term 'New Pentecost', quoting the words of Pope Benedict in his homily at the Opening Eucharist in Saint Peter's Basilica: 'Pentecost is the original event but it is also a permanent dynamism, and the Synod of Bishops is a privileged moment in which the grace of Pentecost may be renewed in the journey of the Church, so that the Good News may be announced openly and heard by all peoples.'

If we take these words of the Pope seriously, the expression 'New Pentecost' should not only describe an intensive event of the past. It should also turn our minds and hearts to the future, since Pentecost is also a 'permanent dynamism'. As a consequence, if the Synod for the Middle East really wants to reach its aim, a successful celebration in itself is not enough; it should become a permanent dynamism in the life of the Churches in the Middle East. This is the real challenge these Churches are facing today. The Bishops have committed themselves to this task in Proposition 43: 'The Churches which have taken part in

the Synod are called upon to ensure that it is properly followed up by working together with the Council of the Catholic Patriarchs of the Middle East and the official structures of the relevant Churches, with a greater involvement of priests and lay and religious experts.'

In order to understand better the many and various implications of this challenge, let us first evaluate briefly what the many and precious fruits of the celebration of the Synod in itself are; in the second place we shall try to see what the factual impact of this Synod is in the life of the Churches, as well as what is being done or could be done to put it concretely into practice.

I The Celebration of the Synod and its First Fruits

A. A unique ecclesial event

The coming together of about 160 Catholic bishops and patriarchs of the Middle East, around the Bishop of Rome, Pope Benedict XVI, who was surrounded by several bishops and cardinals of the Roman Curia and representatives of many bishops' conferences around the world, was a unique expression of union and communion in diversity. The diversity of traditions was made visible at the two Eucharistic celebrations presided by Benedict XVI in Saint Peter's Basilica, for the opening and the closing of the Synod. The images that were transmitted on television all around the world must have impressed quite a number of people who were very little aware of the existence of the Eastern Churches and their rich liturgical and theological patrimonies. The Pope himself was clearly experienced as the centre and visible sign of this communion in diversity. His respectful and attentive presence at many occasions greatly contributed to this ecclesial experience that was really at the heart of the Synod. Personally, I would have liked to see this ecclesiological dimension made more explicit in the proceedings and the texts of the Synod. In what sense?

It was manifest, at every occasion, that the centre of communion was the Pope, the Bishop of Rome. However the communion among the bishops, and their collegiality, were given notably less emphasis, despite the fact that the exercise this collegiality should have been precisely a strong message that the Eastern traditions were bringing with them to Rome. We shall come back to this lack of emphasis on

the horizontal communion—if I may use this expression—between the bishops of the various Eastern and Latin traditions, when we consider the implementation of the Synod on the local level in the Middle East. In fact, it is inevitably going to have an impact on this implementation.

B. First fruits

The first fruit that the participants of the Synod carried back home with them was undoubtedly the fraternal atmosphere that characterized their debates and their living together during the two weeks in Rome. On this point, the meetings outside the synod hall, for the breaks, the meals or the evenings spent together were probably as important as the Synod proceedings. The bishops of the different Churches and traditions got to know each other personally, new links of friendship and solidarity were created within and across the various communities, and that is very important for the subsequent implementation of the Synod.

The openness and frankness of the interventions constituted another major characteristic of the Synod. Surely, certain speeches were rather conventional, respecting the traditional discourse, but others were quite straightforward and sometimes even provoking. One could also hear very contrasting views being expressed, on many of the most burning issues, like relations with Muslims, the situation of Christians in Iraq, jurisdiction in the Arab Gulf countries, attitude towards the new apostolic movements, ecumenical relations, etc. Sometimes clear answers were given, but there was never real tension or confrontation. Mutual respect and listening always prevailed. Hopefully this mutual acceptance will also prevail back home when it comes to putting into practice the fruits of the Synod.

C. Some reservations or disappointments

Of course one should also be sufficiently honest to recognize that not everything was considered a complete success by all the participants or observers.

For instance there was the very tight timetable. The customary method or programme of the Synod of Bishops has been conceived and tested for an Assembly that initially lasted four weeks. Pope Benedict

XVI reduced the duration of the ordinary Assemblies from four to three weeks. Now this method was also applied at the Middle East Synod that lasted only two weeks. Hence there was always the feeling to be pressed for time. On the one hand, this tight schedule obliged the members of the synod to be concrete, to go ahead, not to get entangled in never-ending discussions. However on the other hand, reporters and secretaries had to work against the clock to summarize the debates at the plenary sessions at the end of the first week, and to formulate and unify the very numerous and different propositions formulated by the small working groups, in the course of the second week. As a result some choices had to be made too hastily and not all the recommendations could be included or had time to mature. For instance, when one takes an overall look at the propositions adopted at the end of the Synod, one might rightly wonder whether all the important points received all the attention they deserved.

More importantly, some countries or some local Churches left Rome with the impression that there concrete situation or needs were not sufficiently heard. This was, for instance, the case of the non-Arab countries like Turkey and Iran, giving the strong predominance of the Arabic-speaking communities and bishops. Also, persons and organizations involved in relief work among the refugees felt that their critical situation did not receive the attention they deserved. Likewise the bishops in charge of the Catholic communities in the Gulf region complained that their needs were not sufficiently taken into consideration, in spite of the fact that they represent in numbers almost half of the Catholics present in the Middle East.

It is important to be aware of these weaker points, not in order to only criticize what has been realized, but in view of integrating these dimensions in the planning of the implementation of the Synod.

D. Main concerns/themes

However, the main concerns that were expressed in the interventions in plenary sessions or during the small working groups have found their way into the Final Message of the Synod to the People of God and in the 44 Final Propositions that the Synod Fathers have submitted to the Pope. These Final Propositions remain normally confidential and are

destined to the Pope who will make use of them in the preparation of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation which traditionally concludes the whole synodal process. This time Benedict XVI decided to make the Propositions public. This decision allows us to know the main concerns of the Synod. At the same time they can already begin to be used by the Churches in starting the implementation of the Synod, without having to wait for the publication of the final Exhortation that sometimes is issued between one and two years after the event itself.

1. Renewal of Christian Faith through the Word of God

The first fundamental concern is the renewal of the Christian faith and life, through a better knowledge and practice of the Word of God. Proposition 4 encourages the reading and the meditation of the Bible, both the Old and New Testament and outlines some concrete proposals to reach that aim. Behind the concision of this proposition we can read the concern of the Church leaders that the Bible is not sufficiently read and known in the Catholic Churches in the Middle East, and that this is often used as an argument by the new Pentecostal and Evangelical groups for justifying their active proselytizing among the faithful of the traditional Churches. The emphasis on the Old and New Testaments takes root in the fact that some Christian faithful and communities in the Middle East encounter serious difficulties in reading the Old Testament in the present political situation, because the Bible is at times exploited by some Christian groups for justifying certain politics of the State of Israel.

This concern for a renewal of the faith is completed by the propositions concerning the formation of the faithful, the pastoral agents, the seminarians, etc. (cf. Propositions 24, 25, 30, 31, 32). These propositions are to a large extent very practical and concrete. Hopefully the Post-Synodal Exhortation will deepen the theological basis and spiritual demands of these orientations.

2. Communion within the Catholic Church

Promoting a deeper awareness of communion as well as a closer collaboration within the various Catholic Churches and between

them was certainly one of the most important aims of the Synod. The lack of real harmonious collaboration between the different Catholic Churches weakens their presence, witness and service considerably. In their second common pastoral letter, published in 1992, the Catholic Patriarchs of the East use this eloquent and laconic formula: 'In the East, we Christians will either be together or we will not be.'

This is true in the first place for the communion among the Catholic Churches, as it is true likewise for the ecumenical collaboration with the Orthodox and Protestant Churches. On this specific point Proposition 16 has some very concrete and courageous recommendations: creation of a commission for co-operation between Catholic patriarchs and bishops in the Middle East, regular meetings between them, financial solidarity between richer and less rich dioceses, and exchange of priests when necessary and possible. If these recommendations are really put into practice—something that is not going to be easy—a considerable positive change will take place, no doubt.

However, it is not enough to say what should be done; it is equally important to deepen the theological and ecclesiological foundations of this communion. Communion and collaboration are not merely conditions for a more effective action or a more secure future. They are part and parcel of the nature of the Church itself. When we want to affirm that the different Eastern Catholic and Latin Churches constitute one Church, it is not enough to say that they all are in communion with the Bishop of Rome. Their communion and unity should be made manifest also and primarily on the local level, in their way of being present, of witnessing to the Gospel and of serving their human community. This ecclesiological dimension seems to be missing, or at least is not sufficiently expressed in the texts of the Synod. The quotation of the Decree of Vatican II on the Oriental Catholic Churches (n. 2) that opens Proposition 16 contains the essence of this ecclesiology, but one would have liked to see something said about the necessity that this 'admirable communion' be lived in a more conscious and concrete way. We hope that on this point too the Post-Synodal Exhortation will offer a deeper insight and will strongly emphasize that communion and collaboration are essential to being Church. In fact certain structures that aim at making this communion more visible and effective have been in place for a number of years now, for instance the Council of the Catholic Patriarchs of the East and the inter-ritual

Assemblies of the Catholic Hierarchy in the various countries. However, a number of these structures seem by now to have lost their initial dynamism and are in dire need of being revived, if they were to play an effective role in the implementation of the Synod.

At the same time, the theme communion and communication raises serious questions within the various Catholic Churches of the Middle East: communication and trust between the Bishop and his priests, between the clergy and the laity leave at times a lot to be desired. The Synod recognizes the importance of renewing the links inside the Churches. The Final Message addresses the various categories of members of the Church and recognizes their specific role and vocation: priests, religious, lay people, families, women, youth, agents in pastoral activity, in education, in social work, etc (§4). In Proposition 24, The Synod Fathers commit themselves 'to give lay people a greater degree of responsibility in the Church, encouraging them to be apostles in their milieu and to witness to Christ wherever they live.' In Proposition 36 they 'commit themselves to listen to the youth so as to respond to their questioning and their needs.' Proposition 7 deems it 'necessary to apply an audit system to the Church's financial affairs that distinguishes clearly what belongs to the Church and what properly belongs to the Church's personnel.' This last point could at first appear to be a purely administrative one, but it touches a very sensitive issue and could contribute considerably to restore a greater mutual trust between clergy and laity. Lay people will certainly be looking carefully how these recommendations will be put into practice. To a large extent the effective fruits of the Synod within the various Churches will depend on the renewal of these internal links.

The call for conversion in the conclusion of the Final Message is particularly significant in this perspective: 'We confess that, until now, we have not done everything possible to better live communion among our communities and in our communities. We have not done enough to confirm you in your faith and to give you the spiritual nourishment you need in your difficulties. The Lord invites us to a conversion as individuals and as communities.'

3. Ecumenical relations

The ecumenical dimension of the Synod for the Middle East was illustrated by the presence of about ten Fraternal Delegates from the Orthodox, Anglican and Evangelical Churches. They were very warmly received, were invited to speak in the plenary sessions and could take part in the small working groups. Some of them stayed for the whole duration of the Synod, others only for a couple of days. In their interventions they all stressed the importance of this Synod, as well as the importance of a common witness and service in the Middle East, as a fundamental condition for a future Christian presence in the region, since all the Churches are facing the same difficulties.

The ecumenical concern of the Synod was repeatedly expressed in the interventions in the aula, in the intermediate reports, as well as in the Final Message and the Final Propositions. One must recognize that all the bishops did not show the same ecumenical commitment, although on the whole the ecumenical collaboration and search for unity were seen in the spirit of the already quoted sentence of the Catholic Patriarchs: 'In the East, we Christians will either be together or we will not be.' The Message states: 'We send our greetings to the Orthodox and Protestant Communities in our countries. Together we work for the good of all Christians, that they may remain, grow and prosper. We share the same journey. Our challenges are the same and our future is the same. We wish to bear witness together as disciples of Christ. Only through our unity can we accomplish the mission that God has entrusted to us, despite the differences among our Churches.' (§7)

Among the concrete suggestions put forward in Proposition 28, it is important to underline the support given to the Middle East Council of Churches. At present this Council is passing through a very difficult, even critical period, for various reasons; it would be too long to detail these reasons here. Nevertheless, the need for this Council as well as the unique opportunity it offers for collaboration and common witness are now greater than ever. So everything possible has to be done to save and restructure this Council. The *Message* says it in its own way: 'We have walked together in the Middle East Council of Churches and we wish, with God's grace, to continue on this path and to promote its activity, having as ultimate goal a common testimony to our faith, the service of the faithful and of all our countries.' (§7)

Other concrete suggestions in Proposition 28 are: 'Implementing any pastoral agreements which may have been made, adopting a common Arabic translation of the Our Father and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, working for a common date for Christmas and Easter.' Another suggestion made by a Fraternal Delegate was taken up in Proposition 29: 'To establish an annual feast in common for the martyrs of the Churches of the Middle East'. This common witness of the martyrs was very precious to Pope John Paul II (cf. Encyclical *Ut unum sint*, nn. 83-84) and could be a visible sign of communion among the Middle Eastern Churches in the midst of the difficulties and the sufferings all face together.

These ecumenical orientations and recommendations will have to be implemented in very different ways, taking into account the different ecumenical climate prevailing in the different countries. However, it can be said that everywhere the ecumenical spirit and commitment are in need of rediscovering and reaffirmation. All Churches should resist the temptation to withdraw into their small community in a reaction of self-defence or survival: they will be able to survive only in common.

4. Emigration

The constantly diminishing numbers of Christians in the Middle East, with the dangerous repercussions on their future presence in that region, was undoubtedly one of the main reasons for the convocation of the Synod for the Middle East. The topic 'emigration' was thus almost omnipresent in the debates of the Synod. This reality occupies an important place both in the Final Message (§5) and in the Propositions (nn. 10 to 15).

In fact, the problem is real and serious. It is therefore absolutely necessary to see it in its complex context, in order to avoid hasty and one-sided conclusions. The emigration of Christians from the Middle East to Europe, America or Australia is not a new phenomenon. It has its beginnings towards the end of the 19th century, with the industrial revolution in the West. Since that time it had its ups and downs according to the economical, social and political situation in the Middle East. Each time the situation deteriorated, emigration increased; when it stabilized or improved, emigration slowed down. If in recent times

the emigration of Christians accelerated again, this indicates there is something wrong again today in the Middle East. However, the reasons for this emigration are not primarily religious.

Muslims also emigrate from the Middle East although in smaller percentages. Why is the number of Christians who emigrate greater? Basically, because, on the one hand, as a small minority Christians are more vulnerable, and, on the other hand, they often have higher expectations regarding their standard of living and the future of their children. However, while stating this, we must not ignore the fact that today again—as at some other periods of history—there are undeniable cases where Christians are harassed, discriminated against or even persecuted and killed because of their faith. This is also a part of their living conditions in the Middle East today.

Besides these general reasons for Christian emigration from the Middle East, one must also be aware that the situation is in fact quite different from one country to another: Iraq is not Lebanon, Egypt is very different from Israel or Palestine, Syria still has many other underlying conditions and factors, Iran and Turkey represent a still very different context.

Hence it is of fundamental importance to have a good knowledge of the phenomenon of emigration in each specific country and situation, as well as over the whole of the region. If we want to work for a better future, if we want to mobilize the solidarity of the Churches in the West, we must have accurate figures and data, otherwise we are not credible. Rhetoric and feelings are not sufficient. Therefore we welcome wholeheartedly Proposition 10 that says: 'Our Churches must create an office or a commission entrusted with studying the phenomenon of migration and the reasons for it so as to find ways of preventing it.'

How can the Churches find ways of 'preventing' or at least of slowing down emigration? The same Proposition 10 goes on: 'They are to do all that is possible to boost the presence of Christians in their countries, and to do this especially through development projects, in order to limit the phenomenon of migration.' As you can see, this Proposition underlines especially 'development projects', and, indeed, they are very important and in some circumstances absolutely vital.

However, these development projects should always go together with an ongoing awareness building among the Christians, an education of their faith and their generosity. It is important to help them to see

their presence in the Middle East, amidst a Muslim majority, not as a fatality or a pure coincidence, but as a vocation. In fact they have a double vocation: as Christians they are called to be the witnesses of Christ in their country and culture, and as citizens they are called to contribute in creating an open, free and just society. The Final Message affirms this vocation, or this fundamental principle, as follows: 'God wants us to be Christians in and for our Middle Eastern societies. This is God's plan for us. This is our mission and vocation—to live as Christians and Muslims together.' (§3.4)

This is certainly not an easy vocation. Therefore nobody has the right to prevent someone from emigrating if he freely decides to do so. As a consequence, the Churches should never blame or condemn the persons who emigrate, on the contrary the Churches should try to accompany them and to help them to adapt to their new environment by offering them an adequate pastoral care. That is nothing new; the Middle Eastern Churches have been doing this for a long time. What is rather new is that the Churches now tend to develop a more positive view towards their faithful in diaspora, inviting them, in the *Message*, to maintain links with their home countries and Churches: 'We ask you to keep alive in your hearts and concerns the memory of your countries and Churches. You can contribute to their development and growth by your prayers, your thoughts, your visits and by various other means, despite the fact that you are far from the Middle East.' (§5)

In this perspective, it is important to examine in which way we speak about Christian emigration from the Middle East. At times some Christians and even some Church leaders tend to do it in a very emotional and dramatic way, saying for instance: 'If the present tendency continues, in a few years time there will be no Christians left in the Middle East.' One should avoid such an alarmist discourse; because it could become a self-fulfilling prophesy. If the faithful hear that their own leadership has no longer any hope for their future in the region, they will be entirely discouraged and attempt to leave at any cost.

In his homily at the closing Eucharist in Saint Peter's, Pope Benedict XVI stated: 'Peace is also the best remedy to avoid emigration from the Middle East.' This brings us back to the general context in which the Churches in the Middle East are living. The absence of peace in the Middle East and the instability and insecurity that result from this fact constitute a fertile soil for the development of all sort of extremisms

and fanaticisms—political, ethnic and religious—and the first victims of these extreme movements are the weaker groups, with the Christians in the first place. This is particularly true in countries where there is a cruel lack of central authority and justice, as it is at present the case for instance in Iraq and Egypt. A just and durable peace is thus a fundamental condition for a trustful future presence of Christians in the Middle East, and the Church leaders in the West should not hesitate to remind their political leaders of this basic fact and to invite them to act accordingly.

One last dimension to the topic of emigration has to be mentioned as being an almost entirely new reality and challenge for the Churches in the Middle East, namely the presence in their midst of large groups of Christian immigrants mainly from Europe, Africa or Asia, mostly in search of work. The Synod has devoted considerable attention to this reality and to the demands of hospitality, justice and pastoral care in their regard, particularly in the Final Message. (§14 and 15)

5. Participation in public life

In the light of recent political developments in the Middle East, it is becoming more and more evident that the quality of the future presence of Christians will depend to a large extent on their capacity to play an active role in the public life of their respective countries. For a number of Christian communities this is something quite new. In the past they have at times been tempted or pushed to live in the margin of their mainly Muslim societies, because of their small numbers or as a consequence of some painful experiences in the past. If Christians want a place in the future Middle East, they should engage themselves in the building up of their societies and countries. Since most of the Christian communities live in a Muslim environment, their participation in public life is closely linked to the quality of their relations with Muslims, and with the difficulties in Islam to separate religion and state. It is precisely in this context that the Synod tackles this question.

In the preparatory text, *Instrumentum laboris*, the concept of 'enlightened' or 'positive secularism'—in French *laïcité positive*—was suggested as a way for facilitating the insertion of Christians in their societies. Several interventions in the Synod, both in plenary sessions

and in working groups, warned against the use of such a concept. If, in theory, it may represent a possible solution, this concept goes head-on against the Muslim mentality, as it gives the impression to exclude religion from the public forum. The Western approach is not necessarily the only one. In the Middle East, religion is not necessarily doomed to disappear from public life, but it should not become a source of discrimination. That is why the Final Message and the Propositions prefer to use the term 'citizenship', implying equality in rights and duties.

The *Message* says: 'Christians are original and authentic citizens who are loyal to their fatherland and assume all their duties towards their country. It is natural that they should enjoy all the rights of citizenship, freedom of conscience, freedom of worship and freedom in education, teaching and the use of the mass media.' (§10) Proposition 42 states: 'In the Middle East, Christians share a common life and a common destiny with Muslims. Together they build up society. It is important to promote the notions of citizenship, the dignity of the human person, equal rights and duties, and religious freedom, including both freedom of worship and freedom of conscience.'

However, one should not forget that even the term 'citizenship' is also somehow problematic, because in the East it is understood in a rather different and more restricted way than in the West. Promoting this concept will require a lot of explanation and education.

6. Religious freedom

The same can be said about religious freedom. The two passages I just quoted from the *Message* and the Propositions explicitly make the distinction between 'freedom of worship' and 'freedom of conscience'. This is not a matter of chance. In fact, in Muslim society 'freedom of worship' in the narrow sense of the word—meaning the right to pray together and to have a place of worship—is in most cases not a problem when it comes to Christians—except in countries like Saudi Arabia. On the contrary, freedom of conscience in the sense of freedom to choose or to change one's religion freely remains still very remote in almost all Muslim countries. The bishop members of the Synod know this very well, but they want to insist on this demand for

equality and justice, because the lack of it has numerous important and discriminatory repercussions in various fields like, for instance, interreligious marriage, adoption of children, laws of inheritance, access to public and government functions, etc.

7. Interreligious dialogue

Regarding interreligious dialogue, Proposition 40 first takes note of a fact: 'Christians in the Middle East are called upon to pursue dialogue with the followers of other religions, bringing hearts and minds closer together.' Interreligious relations are simply part and parcel of their daily life. However, that does not imply that it is easy and does not require attention and preparation. The same Proposition 40 continues: 'For this to happen, they, along with their partners, are invited to work to fortify interreligious dialogue, to strive for the purification of memory, to forgive each other for the events of the past, and to seek a better future together. In their daily lives, they are to endeavour to accept one another in spite of their differences, working to build a new society in which religious pluralism is respected and fanaticism and extremism have no place.'

The texts of the Synod refer basically to the texts of Vatican II. The explicitly religious or theological dimensions of the interreligious dialogue are not much developed. Without using the expression of 'dialogue of life', both the *Message* and the Propositions underline the importance of collaboration for a just and lasting peace in the region and for strengthening values like freedom, justice, peace and fraternity.

It is worthwhile to dwell a moment on what the Synod says about the relations with Judaism and Jews. Why? Because, most of the Christians in the Middle East, except for the Holy Land or Israel/Palestine, have today almost no opportunity to meet Jewish believers personally, because of the fact that nearly all Jewish communities disappeared from the Middle Eastern Arab countries after the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. Because of the political tensions that followed and still persist, and because of the lack of a permanent peace, Jews are often only seen through Israeli politics in the region. This does not facilitate fraternal relations. It is therefore encouraging to pay close attention to the positive way in which the Synod documents speak

about the relations with Jews, for instance Proposition 41: 'Initiatives of dialogue and co-operation with Jews are to be encouraged so as to foster human and religious values, freedom, justice, peace and fraternity.' Not less important is this strong affirmation: 'We reject anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism, while distinguishing between religion and politics.' Never before, to my knowledge, was such a strong statement issued by the Catholic Heads of Churches in the Middle East.

Regarding the relations with Muslims, we already touched upon the most important points related to this vital topic: co-existence, relations between religion and state, equal citizenship for all, freedom of conscience. There is no need to get back to it. Let me just quote a few passages from the Final Message that speak for themselves: 'We say to our Muslim fellow-citizens: we are brothers and sisters; God wishes us to be together, united by one faith in God and by the dual commandment of love of God and neighbour. Together we will construct our civil societies on the basis of citizenship, religious freedom and freedom of conscience. Together we will work for the promotion of justice, peace, the rights of persons and the values of life and of family. The construction of our countries is our common responsibility. We wish to offer to the East and to the West a model of co-existence between different religions and of positive collaboration between different civilisations for the good of our countries and that of all humanity.' (§9)

Perhaps this text is a little too idealistic when it speaks of being a 'model' of co-existence for East and West. Anyhow, it should be recognized that the Christians of the Middle East have some significant insights and experiences to share with the Church at large, in particular with the Church in Europe, at a time when Muslims are making their presence felt more and more everywhere.

II The Aftermath of the Synod

So we come to the second part of this presentation: what happened after the Synod, in particular in the Middle East itself? I intend to deal mainly with three points: A. The efforts to communicate to the Churches in the Middle East the experience of the Synod; B. The activities of the Post-Synodal Council; and C. Local initiatives aiming at putting into practice the orientations of the Synod.

A. Communicating the experience and the first fruits of the Synod

Immediately after the closure of the Synod, numerous gatherings were held in the various countries of the Middle East to communicate to the local communities the event and the main orientations of the Synod. Many bishops, auditors and experts invested a lot of time and energy in this information campaign. As far as the information is available, these gatherings were numerous and of a very different nature. Some of them were public and saw large numbers of participants, others took place in smaller groups, aiming at specific categories or persons: priests and seminarians, religious women and men, youth movements, Christian organisations working in social fields and health care, etc. In Jerusalem, several interreligious meetings were organized, with the participation of Jewish and Muslim partners. Articles were published in journals and periodicals, both in Arabic and in other local or Western languages.

It should be acknowledged that the short time available, between the announcement of the Synod and its celebration, had the consequence that some groups or persons in the Catholic communities, clergy and religious as well as lay people, were hardly aware that the Synod was going to take place. Still less did they feel involved at that stage. Through a great effort to inform everyone after the Synod, this changed remarkably. On the whole, the Synod met with great interest on behalf of many different categories of persons and groups. As a result, this event became more widely known and consequently the interest of people increased.

In many of these meetings lay people expressed their concerns very vividly, while at the same time declaring themselves ready to collaborate actively in the period of implementation. In many of the meetings in which I took part, I was struck by the insistence of the lay people asking to prepare concrete projects, plans for action … . They kept reminding us that words and meetings or solemn statements were not enough. The big question to be asked now is: what happened to all this?

B. Work of the Post-Synodal Council

Towards the end of the Synod the composition of the traditional Post-Synodal Council was announced. The main task of this Council

is to help the Holy Father to prepare the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation and to monitor the follow up of the Synod. This time the Council is composed of eleven members, eight elected by the Synod Fathers and three appointed by the Pope: the various Catholic Churches in the Middle East—Eastern and Latin—are represented, together with some representatives of the Roman Curia.

This Council had a first meeting in Rome before the official closure of the Synod. Three other meetings followed: in the second half of January, at the end of March and in the middle of May 2011, in Rome.

Starting from the various documents, interventions and reports, produced in the preparatory phase or during the Synod, together with the Final Message and the Propositions, this Council elaborated a plan for the future Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation. With the help of a few experts, this plan was later further elaborated, filled in, re-discussed and adopted. A smaller group held a last meeting on 5 and 6 July to finalize the draft of the text before it was submitted to the Pope. So the Post-Synodal Council has accomplished its principal task. However, it is still impossible to foresee when the final Post-Synodal Exhortation will be published by Pope Benedict XVI. In fact, the Post-Synodal Exhortation concluding the Synod on the Word of God, which took place in October 2008, was only published in November 2010, meaning two years afterwards. Also, the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation for the Special Synod for Africa, which was held in October 2009, has not yet been published. Let us hope that this time we will not have to wait till autumn 2012. In that case it would be difficult to revive the dynamic of the Synod at such a late stage; more so because many changes could happen before that date in the volatile region of the Middle East.

C. Concrete initiatives following the Synod

I mentioned above the many initiatives taken in the first months following the Synod with the aim of communicating to the local Christian communities and their surroundings the living experience and the first fruits of the Synod. We noted the importance of these initiatives. However, if we then try to see what happened afterwards, we feel somehow at a loss. One has the vague impression that most

of the time normal work—'business as usual'—has taken over again. How did it happen?

Many factors played a role in it. In his homily during the Closing Eucharist of the Synod for the Middle East Pope Benedict XVI announced the convocation of the next General Synod on the theme 'The New Evangelisation for the Transmission of the Christian Faith', to be held in October 2012. In the meantime the *Lineamenta*, the main preparatory document for this Synod has been published and circulated. The Episcopal conferences and Synods of the Eastern Catholic Church are expected to send their comments and suggestions to Rome by 1 November of this year. On top of all that they are also expected to put into practice the Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*, following the Synod on the Word of God. Somehow three synods are overlapping for the Catholics in the Middle East. Is it not a bit too much? How can the Churches in the Middle East work earnestly both for the implementation of two Synods, one on the Word of God and one Special for their region, and also for the preparation the future General Synod?

Besides, the implementation of the Synod for the Middle East supposes that a number of complex mechanisms of collaboration are put in place and function effectively on different levels.

In the first place, each Eastern Catholic Church and the Latin Episcopal Conference of the region have to put in place a mechanism for their own internal life and apostolate; this is not an easy task. All these Churches have faithful in many countries where the political and religious situation is at times very difficult, and the communication between these countries is often quite difficult.

Secondly, this internal activity in each Church or tradition is not enough. One of the main aims of the Synod was precisely to have these various Catholic Churches working more closely together. This collaboration has to be planned on two different levels: on the level of the whole of the Middle East, with the Council of Catholic Patriarchs of the East, as well as on the local level in each country, with the local Assembly of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops. For each level, special commissions have to be created, while a close co-ordination between them should be maintained. How is this going to work? Who is going to take the initiative and who is going to follow up the decisions taken?

At the same time one has sometimes the impression that the recent events in the Middle East have overtaken and left behind the concerns of the Synod. Exactly one week after the closure of the Synod there was the dramatic attack against a Syrian Catholic Church in Baghdad, leaving about fifty persons killed and many more injured and traumatised for life. Two months later, the 'Arab Spring', as the media call it, broke out in Egypt and had repercussions in many other countries of the region. The turmoil in Syria started some weeks later, and the possible implications for the Christian presence in that country are not less problematic. Many ideas or prospects that were considered as a given reality at the time of the Synod are put into question and many new uncertainties and threats sprung up and require urgent attention and action. Patriarchs, bishops and priests have to do the most urgent things first, together with the many administrative and pastoral duties of all kinds that they always have.

All these recent developments do not diminish the urgency and importance of the Synod, but the question is: how are we to handle all these problems at the same time?

Conclusion: How to go Forward?

These last paragraphs may sound a little pessimistic; however there is no reason to get discouraged. First we hope that the Post-Synodal Exhortation will be published without much delay and that it will be a unique opportunity to revive the dynamic of the Synod, at the different levels of the Catholic Churches in the Middle East.

Secondly, there is a lot of good will and energy available in the Churches of the Middle East. Many priests and Church leaders recently stressed that the future of the Christian presence in the Middle East is in the hands of the lay people. Many men and women are ready to give time and energy for that aim, and have also the necessary competence for it. What is particularly encouraging is that in many countries a new type of collaboration among lay people is developing, across the frontiers between the Churches. This new ecumenical collaboration is particularly encouraging in the Holy Land, where Christians face difficult social and political living conditions and where their future looks far from bright. A certain number of Catholic and Orthodox

priests and bishops, together with Evangelical and Anglican pastors, accompany these groups and make sure that they remain in contact with their respective Churches and exercise a positive influence on their respective communities. Let us hope and pray that the leaders and heads of these Churches willingly accept to be challenged by the faithful and that they will give them space to live out their charismas and to act accordingly.

I would like to end with a quotation from the conclusion of the latest common Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Patriarchs of the Middle East, published in 2009, under the title: 'The Arab Christian Facing Contemporary Challenges'. The subtitle of this conclusion is precisely: 'The future of Christians':

> Many people have questions about the future of Christians in the Arab world, and sometimes with a tone of pessimism, fear and anxiety. No doubt, Christians as well as their societies are passing through difficult times, as citizens and as Christians. However, there is no need to engage in discouragement or despair. On the contrary, it is a time for hope and action.
>
> The future of Christians in the East is first and foremost in God's hands and in their own hands. It is in their hands to the extent that their faith is a spiritual force in them, with which they deal with difficulties, take the necessary measures and contribute to the common effort of construction. Their future is in their hands to the extent they cement it in God and trust in Him by faith: 'I am with you always, to the end of the world' (Mt 28:20), by hope: 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it—the Church' (Mt 16:18), and by love: 'If we love one another, God abides in us, in us his love is perfected' (1Jn 4:12). Our future is thus in the hands of God who accompanies us on our way on this earth and guides us towards the Kingdom of Heaven; and in our hands, that is to say, it depends on our faith, our hope and our love for one another and for all.

ENGAGING 'THE MARTYRED CHURCH' The Chaldean Catholic Church, Assyrian Church of the East and the Holy See in Ecumenical Dialogue 1994-2012 and the Influence of the Second Vatican Council

Kristian Girling

Introduction

The fundamental relationship between the Churches of the Middle East and the Churches of the West has historically been focused on the matrix of the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic Church's missionary activity amongst eastern Christians consistently outweighed that by any other missionary group. The Uniate Churches of the east, formed as a result of missionary activity have come to be some of the most important members of the universal Church and have provided some of her most famous saints.[1]

However, since the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s, the requirement for non-Catholic Eastern Churches to formally submit to the Roman Pontiff is no longer considered necessary, rather non-Catholic Churches are considered separated brethren with whom dialogue is conducted.[2] The consideration that they ought to relinquish their errors (from the perspective of the Holy See) is no longer required. Indeed, inter-communion is encouraged, for example, something which prior to the Second Vatican Council would never have been officially countenanced. These new attempts at interaction flow from

1 Leo XIII, 'Orientalium Dignitas' (Holy See, 30 November 1894), para. 2, http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo13/l13orient.htm; Aidan Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches,* Ignatius Press, 2010, pp. 19–21. I consider uniate the most utilitarian term to describe the Eastern Catholic Churches and support Aidan Nichols OP's suggestion that the term is one of respect and not detraction.

2 Leo XIII, 'Orientalium Dignitas', para. 5.

the commitment of the modern papacy to ecumenism and a desire to engender unity among the global Christian community.[3]

This article will consider how the ecclesiology of the East Syrian Churches has developed as a result of this new ecumenical dialogue.[4] I will evaluate in particular how the dialogue has affected ecclesiological change since the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council until September 2012 as preparations take place for meetings between the Holy See and Assyrian Church of the East in October.

The Holy See has particularly encouraged the study of ecclesiology among the Eastern Churches due to their apostolic origins and close relationship to the respective eastern Catholic Churches.[5] The purpose of this ecclesiological study appears to be assisting in reconciliation between Christian confessions in order that they may be made compatible for shared affirmation of beliefs and lead to increased acceptance of mutually supportive ecclesiological models.[6]

The application of this change in how the Holy See interacts with non-Catholic Christian communities is especially highlighted in the relationships with the Assyrian Church of the East and Chaldean Catholic Church. A number of theoretical and actual problems have arisen as a result of increased dialogues pertaining to the core of Catholic belief and led to a re-consideration in the Church of the East and Chaldean Church as to their ecclesiology in general and their missionary purpose in particular. The East Syrian Churches should by no means be considered as in terminal decline as much current scholarship and media suggests. However, the elucidation by the hierarchies of how they relate one to another is vital for the consolidation of the faithful and the future growth of the Churches.

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3 John Paul II, 'Ut unum sint—Ioannes Paulus PP. II—Encyclical Letter (1995.05.25)' (Holy See, 25 May 1995), sec. 3, 4, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint_en.html.

4 Ecclesiology for the purpose of this article includes but is not limited to the study of liturgy, sacramental theology and Christology. In referring to the East Syrian Churches in this article I mean the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church. The Ancient Church of the East is part of the East Syrian community but is far less directly involved in ecumenical activities and as such will not be considered at this time.

5 Paul VI, 'Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite—Orientalium Ecclesiarium' (Holy See, 21 November 1964), sec. 1, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_orientalium-ecclesiarum_en.html.

6 Mar Dinkha IV and Mar Raphael I Bidawid, 'Joint Patriarchal Statement', 29 November 1996.

Catholic belief in theory cannot and should not change to fit the vagaries of the era and this article will examine whether the ecumenical dialogue and agreements since 1994 have effected desired change in a manner in keeping with the traditions of the Churches whilst also promoting unity between the communities. That changes of a significant nature have occurred is manifest and what is left to the scholar is to discern whether they have been necessary or even desirable for Latin Catholics and members of the East Syrian Churches, especially those who reside in Iraq.

There are two main questions which I will address in this article: How have the acceptance of the ecumenical agreements of the late twentieth century affected the relationship between the Holy See and the East Syrian Churches at (i) theological level and (ii) practical level.

The Involvement of John Paul II and Benedict XVI

As reconciliation between Eastern and Western Churches has in general been expedited since the Second Vatican Council, one must recognise the remarkable developments which these debates between the Holy See and the East Syrian Churches have brought about when compared with the dialogue with numerically larger Churches whether Eastern or Western.[7]

The dialogue between the Holy See and Church of the East bore first fruits in 1994 with the Common Christological Declaration between John Paul II and Mar Dinkha IV. Now that a shared Christology is established from the highest level of the Churches this ought to lead to the possibility of sharing in all other areas of Christian life and most especially in the sacraments[8] and with this long term objective in focus the declaration of 1994 has been followed up by such documents including:

> 1997—a Joint Synodal Decree between the East Syrian Churches affirming co-operation in pastoral areas[9]

7 Cf. Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches*, pp. 351–375.

8 *Ibid*., 78; Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 'Admission to the Eucharist in Situations of Pastoral Necessity—Provision Between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East' (Holy See, 25 October 2001), sec. 1.

9 Mar Raphael I Bidawid and Mar Dinkha IV, 'Joint Synodal Decree for Promoting

2001—the agreement for admission to the Eucharist between the East Syrian Churches[10]
2002—a common statement on sacramental life between the Holy See and Church of the East

The role of the Holy See, thus far, has been to instigate and support such dialogue. John Paul II and Benedict XVI have shown particular interest in the Eastern Churches and appear to have developed the modern papacy as an institution for mediation in these cases. The dialogue with the Church of the East has been conducted as with a Church maintaining equal status if not size and influence.[11] In this way the Holy See has recognised that the Church of the East once dominated the Christian religious tradition of central Asia, Iraq and Iran.

One can only surmise at the effects on the morale of the Assyrians having been brought into the spotlight of the modern papacy; but given the deterioration of Iraqi community life and further dislocation into the diaspora across Europe and North America, it seems any help was welcomed to shore up their precarious position. As a result of the efforts of Mar Dinkha responding to the Holy See's ecumenical dialogue, the Church of the East is in a stronger position to move forward in re-establishing a role in the global Christian community and to further reconciliation with the Chaldean Catholic Church.

The documents of the Second Vatican Council affirm the necessity of developing relations with the Eastern Churches and in particular recognising their historic mission and witness.[12] However, awareness of the Eastern Churches as partners in ecumenism has yet to be widely recognised in the Latin Church outside of special interest groups of clergy and laity. Nevertheless, the continued crises within the Middle East have led to growing awareness of the role of the

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Unity Between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church 15th August 1997', in *Third Non-Official Consultation on Dialogue Within the Syriac Tradition*, Syriac Dialogue 3 (Pro Oriente Vienna, 1998), pp. 185–188.

10 Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 'Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist Between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East' (Vatican, 20 July 2001).

11 John Paul II and Mar Dinkha IV, 'Common Christological Declaration Between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East' (Vatican, 11 November 1994), para. 6.

12 Paul VI, 'Orientalium Ecclesiarium', sec. 5, 24.

Churches in the region and as to their unique mission as mediators in society at large and as such the significance of working with them in ecumenical endeavours.[13]

Ecclesiological Change

> Catholic belief involves not only doctrines which are themselves interconnected but involves a faith which is accepted as a whole or is really not approved at all.[14]

The Catholic Church's policies on a variety of issues have changed extensively since the 1960s following the Second Vatican Council and in particular the understanding of the nature of the universal Church and as to how Catholics ought to relate to other Christian communities.[15]

John Paul II outlined in *Ut Unum Sint* (1995) the results and future opportunities in such interactions:

> Interconfessional dialogues at the theological level have produced positive and tangible results … In the present situation of the lack of unity among Christians and of the confident quest for full communion, the Catholic faithful are conscious of being deeply challenged by the Lord of the Church. The Second Vatican Council strengthened their commitment with a clear ecclesiological vision, open to all the ecclesial values present among other Christians.[16]

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13 Uncredited, 'In Baghdad Prayers for the Syrian People. Christians: "Supporters of Peace"', *Baghdad Hope*, 1 September 2012, http://baghdadhope.blogspot.co.uk/2012/09/in-baghdad-prayers-for-syrian-people.html.

14 Bernard Leeming, *The Churches and the Church: a Study of Ecumenism: With a New Postscript*, 2nd ed., Darton, Longman & Todd, London/ Newman Press, Westminster, MD, 1963, p. 169.

15 In referring to the 'universal Church' I consider the apostolic Churches whose traditions affirm their origins from the first century of Christian history. This position may not be in accord with the understanding of the universal Church as proposed by others which may include Protestant Churches also. Michael Davies, *Cranmer's Godly Orde—The Destruction of Catholicism Through Liturgical Change*, Augustine Publishing Company, Chawleigh, 1977, p. xi; M. Thurian, 'The Present Aims of the Liturgical Movement', *Studia Liturgica* III (1964), p. 107.

16 John Paul II, 'Ut unum sint—Ioannes Paulus PP. II—Encyclical Letter (1995.05.25),' sec. 10.

We can suggest that contemporary ecumenism in the context of the modern papacy since the Second Vatican Council refers to a process whereby denominations are brought more closely together with the intention of unifying them despite often seemingly irreconcilable differences in customs, doctrine and liturgy.[17] In theory this process is used to further Christian unity but what this Christian unity will actually be like and how it will function is not stated in a clear or precise manner.[18] Indeed, the notion of a unified Christian Church is not in itself universal and there may be radically different understandings of how a universal Church should be constituted.

Thus, we can further suggest that there has been a development in Catholic ecclesiology of moving towards one global Church which will accept the needs of a variety of believers of a number of varieties of Christianity.[19] Particularly emphasised is that it is no longer a requirement to submit to the Roman Catholic Church or to accept that it is *the* Church of Christ.[20]

Theological Change and Dialogue

The results of the dialogue among the East Syrians have been rapid considering that approximately ten years of formalised dialogue have assisted in resolving over 1,500 years of separation. Both the Holy See and East Syrian Churches have undertaken alterations to traditions which they had observed and maintained often at great cost over centuries in order to advance the ecumenical dialogue. This rapid rapprochement cannot be underestimated as a sign of change as to how the Holy See interacts with non-Catholic Churches. The Holy See is moving away from affirming a unique and authoritative teaching position to acting as a mediator resolving differences of theology and encouraging direct reconciliation between Churches.

17 Paul VI, 'Decree on Ecumenism—Unitatis Redintegratio' (Holy See, 21 November 1964), sec. 1, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html.

18 Davies, *Cranmer's Godly Order—The Destruction of Catholicism Through Liturgical Change*, p. 43.

19 Dimitri Salachas, 'Ecumenism (cc.902-908)', in *A Guide to the Eastern Code*, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Rome, 2002, p. 608.

20 Paul VI, 'Decree on Ecumenism—Unitatis Redintegratio', sec. 2; Michael Davies, *Pope John's Council,* Augustine Pub. Co, Devon, 1977, p. 24.

We can note by contrast, for example, that Pope Pius XI stated in the encyclical *Mortalium Animos* (1928):

> such efforts [of ecumenism] can meet with no kind of approval among Catholics. They presuppose the erroneous view that all religions are good and praiseworthy, in as much as all give expression, under various forms to that innate sense which leads men to God and to the obedient acknowledgment of His rule. Those who hold such a view are not only in error; they distort the true idea of religion, and thus reject it, falling gradually into naturalism and atheism. To favour this opinion, therefore, and to encourage such undertakings is tantamount to abandoning the religion revealed by God.[21]

We can recognise that a catalyst for a movement of the Holy See away from the position of Pius XI is the significant deterioration of the situation for organised Christianity globally and especially within Iraq. Indeed, this is reflected in the work of the East Syrian Churches which in part is centred on furthering ecumenism as one of the most effective means to ensure the survival of their communities by becoming a significant influence on the global Christian community. The engagement by the East Syrian Churches with each other and the western Churches is considered one of the paths which must be followed in order to survive as more than isolated migrants in the diaspora or as ghettoised communities in their country of origin.

Ecclesial Communion

In the case of the East Syrian Churches it appears that intermediate ecumenical goals have been set and achieved. The following are the main results of the encounters thus far:

21 Pius XI, 'Mortalium Animos' (Holy See, 6 January 1928), para. 2, http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius11/P11MORTA.HTM.

—Proposals for shared theological commissions and formation of laity and priests[22]
—Regular inter-communion as and when required due to the difficulties of the native and diaspora environments[23]
—Continued re-consideration and reflection on the place and role of the Petrine ministry of the Holy See over the Church of the East[24]

However, the final target (which from a Roman Catholic perspective is presumably unity under the aegis of supervision of the Holy See) and the method to achieve this are still unclear and arguably the final goal has yet to be outlined at all.[25] Nichols has recognised the limitations of such an approach to ecumenism, nevertheless, he compares working to this final goal in progressive steps in a similar manner as to running the race to attain ultimate salvation.[26] Therefore, ecumenism especially between the East Syrian Churches is a means to further the soteriological purposes of a Church and moreover to hasten the *eschaton*.[27] In this way the East Syrian Churches via their clerical leadership are participating in a means to ensure the ultimate Christian goals. This gives any such dialogue a greater sense of urgency, necessity and legitimacy which appears to override those concerns outlined by Pius XI.

It can reasonably be assumed that attainment of full communion between the East Syrian Churches is for them the ultimate aim of the dialogue.[28] However, ascertaining what full communion actually means

22 Mar Raphael I Bidawid and Mar Dinkha IV, 'Joint Synodal Decree for Promoting Unity Between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church 15th August 1997', sec. 4, 5.
23 Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 'Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist Between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East'.
24 Mar Raphael I Bidawid and Mar Dinkha IV, 'Joint Synodal Decree for Promoting Unity Between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church 15th August 1997', sec. 7.
25 Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy, 'The Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism' (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, March 25, 1993), sec. 19.
26 Cf. Hebrews XII:1-2; Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches*, p. 19.
27 *Ibid.*, p. 20.
28 Mar Raphael I Bidawid and Mar Dinkha IV, 'Joint Synodal Decree for Promoting Unity Between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church 15th August 1997', sec. 1.

to both Churches has yet to be determined. Indeed, whilst full inter-communion pertains to sharing the eucharist, full ecclesial communion stands apart from this and implies far more practical absorption between the structures of the Chaldean Church and acceptance of ultimate authority and direction from the Holy See.

Stages of Ecumenism

A distinction must be drawn between the relations of the Holy See and Church of the East and between the Chaldean Church and the Church of the East. The latter relationship is the most fraught with difficulty as the relationship of the Holy See with the other Churches is neutral insofar as the Holy See is entirely removed from the milieu of Assyrian and Iraqi cultural mores. For the Church of the East and Chaldean Church there is naturally more conflict at a familial, tribal and political level as the ties are that much stronger and this will be discussed below. However, this is not to argue that there is reluctance on the part of either East Syrian Church to work with the other but to recognise how such communications are complicated.

Current relations in general between *sui juris* Churches and the Holy See are dominated by considerations of shared responsibility in ecclesiological areas in accord with the pastoral guidance of the Holy See. Nevertheless, the uniate Churches remain independent of the Roman Catholic Church insofar as they operate with their *sui juris* status.[29] This position as part of the Catholic Church and yet set apart from it in a manner in accordance with tradition has been highlighted and affirmed recently in the pastoral letter of the Chaldean diocese of St Peter the Apostle in California.[30]

These attempts to maintain closeness yet being set apart appeal to the considerations of the contribution of the cultural heritage of

29 Catholic Church and Canon Law Society of America, *Codex canonum ecclesiarum orientalium = Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches: Latin-English edition,* Canon Law Society of America, Washington, D.C., 1992, pt. 27.

30 Sarhad Y. Jammo, 'Pastoral Letter by the Shepherd, Hierarchs, and Priests Of the Chaldean Catholic Diocese of Saint Peter the Apostle From the Shepherd, Hierarchs, and Priests of the Chaldean Catholic Eparchy of Saint Peter the Apostle', 6 January 2012, sec. 4, http://www.kaldu.org/joomla/index.php/documents/9-uncategorised/146-pastoral-letter.

each Eastern Church to the universal Church and especially in the case of the Church of the East which had such a significant role in the development of religious life in Asia.[31]

It is easy to relegate the Assyrian Church of the East as the poor relation to the more well resourced and numerically larger Chaldean Church. However, this approach disregards how the Church of the East has influenced the dialogue and may be able to influence a new ecclesiological vision for both Churches. It is notable, for example, that the 1994 Christological Declaration did not have the direct involvement of the Chaldean Church and was only later recognised by their hierarchy as a landmark towards further interaction.[32] There appears to have been a reluctance to interact officially in theological dialogue with the Church of the East on such significant matters on the part of the Chaldeans until such a time as it was considered acceptable by the Holy See.

However, once official dialogue was started reconciliatory agreements were swiftly reached. The most significant document of the dialogue thus far between the East Syrian Churches was produced just three years later in the format of a Joint Synodal Decree.[33] The decree of August 1997 restored the ability of the Churches to interact one with another to nearly the same level as if they were already fully reconciled. This is noted in section 4 of the decree where amongst other activities the mutual training of clergy, co-operation in catechesis and liturgical publications is outlined.[34]

In particular the *Church of the East* was recognised as the accurate term for both East Syrian Churches as two branches of the ancient expression of the same faith of *the* Church of the East and it was emphasised that a restoration of unity can be expected.[35] It was also

31 Christoph Baumer, *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity*, Tauris, London, 2006, pp. 187-193.

32 Mar Raphael I Bidawid and Mar Dinkha IV, 'Joint Synodal Decree for Promoting Unity Between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church 15th August 1997', sec. 2.

33 Whilst the later 2001 agreement for admission to the eucharist established an official procedure for inter-communion the 1997 decree laid the foundations of all future dialogue.

34 Mar Raphael I Bidawid and Mar Dinkha IV, 'Joint Synodal Decree for Promoting Unity Between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church 15th August 1997', sec. 4.

35 *Ibid.*, sec. 1.

recognised that as the initial dialogue took place with the Holy See and subsequently both Patriarchs it was now right to involve the hierarchies of both Churches.[36] That is to highlight that the future direction of the whole East Syrian community be considered jointly and not just as a result of the individual efforts of the patriarchs. This distinction is important as to clarify how the dialogue will be one of openness to the whole community rather than limited to the activities of the leadership. It is notable also that Aramaic was agreed upon as the language for use at liturgical and cultural events enshrining the identity of the Churches as neither purely Arabic or Assyrian which helps to ensure that those within the East Syrian community who have an affectation for each identity may comfortably remain within the fold of the Churches.[37]

The decree noted the need for each Church to retain a particular form of governance in their own ecclesiology, for the Church of the East to maintain control over its own affairs insofar as the Holy See is not permitted to interfere whereas the Chaldean Church seeks to maintain a relationship with the Holy See as a necessary part of *full communion* with the universal Church.[38] This distinction is crucial as both Churches seek to maintain part of the status quo. It would seem that the current position of the Chaldean Church as a self-governing body under the ultimate jurisdiction of the Holy See may be suitable for the Church of the East to follow. However, other factors clearly would influence such a change and if nothing else it would have to be clarified as to how the Church of the East could remain distinct from the Chaldean Church in such an arrangement.

Pro Oriente

Outside of the direct dialogue with the Holy See the ecumenical debate has been continued at the Pro Oriente fora from 1993. These meetings should not be considered independent of the dialogue but they have permitted an outlet for regular informal discussion of matters pertaining to the dialogue conducted at synodal and patriarchal level.

36 *Ibid*., sec. 3.
37 *Ibid*., sec. 7 a:i, b:i.
38 *Ibid*., sec. 7 a:ii, b:ii.

However, the meetings have involved more than just the East Syrian Churches including the Syrian Orthodox and representatives of the Holy See and the Roman Catholic Church more widely.[39]

Whether Pro Oriente meetings concerning the Churches of the Syriac tradition will continue or different modes of supplemental discussion will be proposed does remain to be seen.[40] These events have also been supported through the work of the Mixed Committee for Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and Assyrian Church of the East. This committee has as its goal dialogue directly with the Roman Catholic Church and there were no Chaldeans present among the co-chairmen and secretaries as of 2008.[41] Dialogue had continued in this case with the Holy See via the committee and demonstrates that there remained reluctance or at least a limit on the part of the Chaldeans not to become involved with this dialogue. One can note though that the Chaldeans would normatively follow the decisions of the Holy See as long as they reflected the particular sensitivities and requirements which the Chaldean hierarchy perceive to need.

Practical Communion—Eucharist and Action

Inter-communion sanctioned by the East Syrian Churches with the support of the Holy See has been permitted for nearly 12 years following the Guidelines document published in 2001.[42] This inter-communion is the only officially formalised procedure between any eastern Catholic Church and the respective eastern counterpart. More significantly the Anaphora used in the liturgy of the Church of the East only in 2001 was recognised by the Holy See as valid. The Anaphora of Addai and Mari had previously been condemned as it lacked a consecratory formula. Within the Roman Catholic Church it has always been considered necessary for the Institution

39 For an outline of the most recent meetings please refer directly to http://www.pro-oriente.at/.

40 David Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church: A History of the Church of the East*, East & West, London, 2011, p. 435.

41 For list of attendees see http://www.prounione.urbe.it/dia-int/ac-rc/e_ac-rc-info.html.

42 Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 'Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist Between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East'.

Narrative to be recited for the Mass to be validly celebrated. However, documents published in 2001 by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity urge that despite the lack of consecratory formula the Anaphora ought to be considered a valid liturgical rite primarily because of its age and consistent use. The Holy See also is concerned for the material well being of the Church of the East and Chaldean Church which have large diaspora communities often lacking a priest of their own Church, thus inter-communion offers an opportunity to receive sacraments otherwise unavailable to the laity. Nevertheless, this ecumenical procedure is a heretofore unheard of approach by the Holy See towards allowing the sacrament of the Eucharist to be so widely distributed to non-Catholics. There is no data at the present time to assess how widely inter-communion has been utilised by the faithful. It may fairly be assumed that the agreement has permitted spiritual succour to many East Syrian Christians but that this is a far from widespread or normative occurrence. Indeed, one assumes this to be the case because in the diaspora and in Iraq the communities remain by and large contiguous and have limited direct religious involvement in similar areas to inter-communion. Activity does take place and shared celebrations of prayer if only at diocesan level are encouraged as activities but are far from normative practices.[43]

The implication of permitting inter-communion is the gradual removal and breaking down of other barriers to full ecclesial communion and whilst officially welcomed by the East Syrian Churches entails further and perhaps problematic discussion of sacramental theology. Offering opportunities in matters of ordination or baptism for co-ordinated action is easy to argue for but difficult to establish and to sustain as suitable means to share in activities which pertain to the heart of Christian life.

In the case of baptism, for example, when one becomes a member of the Church by this sacrament does this necessarily entail membership of a universal Church, only the Church one was baptised into or membership of both East Syrian Churches? Inter-communion although not suggested as a procedure outside of the East Syrian Church situation does hint at a wider precedent being set and further encouraging the practical engagement between Catholic and non-Catholic Churches more generally.

43 Baumer, *The Church of the East*, p. 272.

In an article which could have almost been purposely written with a view to aiding the acceptability of the Guidelines and Admission documents Wainwright posits that the Eucharist is the normative tool by which ecumenical work can be carried out and as such there ought to be no real barriers to those who wish to receive communion.[44] We hear such notions expressed thus by Ghirlanda:

> … anybody who enters into communion with God is also in communion with his brethren … God is the source of communion with the Church as an instrument of this.[45]

This argument whilst opening up the possibility of the Church to integrate through the sacraments neglects the reasoning behind the establishment of juridical barriers in ecclesial organisation viz. to organise, defend and protect specific beliefs.

Section 4:4 of the Guidelines agreement states that it remains to be used only in specific scenarios related to the East Syrian Churches and not for wider use. However, the precedent is hard to move back from especially because the ecumenical dialogue is ongoing and moving towards a new manner of co-operation between the Churches and could serve as an example to other Churches in similar scenarios.

Justification for a New Ecclesiology

The development of a new Catholic ecclesiology since the 1960s has appeared in the process of and as a result of ecumenism and has been officially sanctioned through canon law. The issuing of a unified code of Canon Law for the Eastern Churches attempted to simplify and consolidate the current legal systems present among the Catholic Eastern Churches and developed in order to take into account the *sui juris* status of the Churches.

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44 Geoffrey Wainwright, 'The Eucharist as an Ecumenical Sacrament of Reconciliation and Renewal', *Studia Liturgica* XI, no. 1 (1976), p. 7.

45 Gianfranco Ghirlanda, 'Universal Church, Particular Church and Local Church at the Second Vatican Council and in the New Code of Canon Law', in *Vatican II Assessment and Perspectives: Twenty-Five Years After (1962-1987)*, vol. 2, Paulist Press, Mahwah, 1989, p. 234.

The code adopts and has had to deal with a number of novel concepts and we can note in particular that ecumenism itself is considered to be such an example in Canon Law.[46] With regards to the East Syrian Churches an important point is that the Code allows for any person claiming a Christian belief to enter into communion with another. We can note:

> … today the Catholic Church does not demand the absolution of excommunication and abjuration from heresy, for the admission of the one born and baptized outside the Catholic Communion, to itself"[47]

Furthermore, perhaps the most striking feature of the Law Code is Canon 670 sec. 1 which permits participation in non-Catholic worship and merely requires 'a just reason' which need only be '[a] desire to know better'.[48]

There thus appears to be no recognition of the basic and essential difference between Churches and there is no consideration of the concept of the peculiarity of Catholic dogma. This relates to the situation for the Church of the East as some members of the Chaldean Church do consider their Church to be distinct from the other.[49]

It is affirmed by a Chaldean diocese in California that ecclesial communion is:

> … full communion with the bishop of Rome … an essential element of the constitution of the [Chaldean] Church, as wanted by the Lord'[50]

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46 Salachas, 'Ecumenism (cc.902-908)'.

47 Dimitri Salachas, 'The Ecumenical Significance of the New Code', in *The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches: A Study and Interpretation: Essays in Honour of Joseph Cardinal Parecattil*, St Thomas Academy for Research, Alwaye, 1992, p. 260.

48 Catholic Church and Canon Law Society of America, *Codex canonum ecclesiarum orientalium = Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, p. 335; Dimitri Salachas, 'Divine Worship, Especially the Sacraments (cc.667-775)', in *A Guide to the Eastern Code*, Pontificio istituto orientale, Rome, 2002, p. 496.

49 Jammo, 'Pastoral Letter of the Chaldean Catholic Eparchy of Saint Peter the Apostle', pt. V, sec. b.

50 *Ibid*., pt. V.

We can be in no doubt that such opinion does vary among the Chaldean Church and certainly within the Church of the East there has long been dispute over the importance of reconciliation with the Holy See and indeed whether reconciliation is necessary at all.

For Timothy I, Patriarch of the Church of the East (780-823 AD), the Church formed part of universal Christianity which was divided into five patriarchates. It is perhaps significant that he only mentioned in writing Rome and Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Unsurprisingly, Timothy argued for his patriarchy as superior to and 'Lord of Peter'.[51]

It appears that at that time ecclesial organisation was open to development because the Church was expanding missionary activity so rapidly into Central Asia and renewal was required.[52] We might surmise then that Timothy would now be willing and pragmatically inclined to engage with the Holy See to take into account the decline of the position of his patriarchate. Be that as it may the intransigence of some members of the Chaldean Church to accept any position for the Church of the East as similar to their own relationship with the Holy See will serve to limit the future engagement between the Churches.

Mar Bawai Soro and Ecclesiology

The ecumenical relationship is to an extent hindered by conversions and movements between the Churches and their jurisdictions. These movements demonstrate that there are more differences between the Churches than Christological declarations will cover and inter-communion can restore.

The process of rapid reconciliation epitomised by inter-communion has acted as a catalyst for the East Syrian Churches to reconsider their ecclesiological situation. This has most clearly been illustrated by the movement of the group led by Mar Bawai Soro to be received into the Chaldean Church.[53] In May 2008 several parishes in California

51 H. L. Murre-Van Den Berg, 'The Church of the East in the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century: World Church or Ethnic Community?', in *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East Since the Rise of Islam*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 134, Peeters, Louvain, 2005, pp. 306–307.

52 Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church*, pp. 164–171.

53 As per Wilmshurst's statistics of 100,000 members of the Assyrian Church of the East in the USA, *ibid*., p. 442.

were received into the Chaldean Church led by the bishop. This occurrence highlighted the different understandings and practices of full communion. As the Diocesan Announcement outlined:

> … the clergy and faithful of the Assyrian parishes and missions … have publicly requested fullness of communion with the Catholic Church and living union with the Chaldean Church by their entrance into the Chaldean Catholic Dioceses.[54]

Clearly this concept of full communion presupposes that one must formalise the relationship with the Chaldean Church via shared agreements and statements *and* also enter into the jurisdiction of that Church and by extension accept the leadership of the Holy See.[55]

The movement of Mar Bawai Soro and over 5000 laity into the Chaldean Church has been characterised by an apparent desire to consolidate Christian communities at a time when huge obstacles affect the Church internationally but also to protect what remains of the East Syrian communities.[56] We can note that this movement has affected the progress of ecumenical activity and it appears to indicate large numbers of the Assyrian Church community being dissatisfied with the leadership of their Church whilst many also have a sincere desire to conform to what they perceive as an accurate and necessary union with the Holy See.[57]

It would appear that Mar Bawai Soro acted from a theological desire to fulfil what he regards as the ecumenical necessity of restoring unity with the Holy See. Indeed, whatever other motives may have affected his

54 Felix Shabi, 'Diocesan Announcement' (Episcopal Curia of the Catholic Diocese of St Peter the Apostle for Chaldeans & Assyrians, 9 May 2008), para. 1, http://www.kaldaya.net/2008/DailyNews/05/May09_08_E1_HistoricalCelebration.html.

55 Approximately 5,000 laity, 30 deacons, 5 priests and 1 bishop.

56 Bawai Soro, 'The Position of the Church of the East Theological Tradition on the Questions of Church Unity and Full Communion', 2 November 2005, pt. 2d, http://www.zindamagazine.com/html/archives/2005/11.19.05/index_sat.php.

57 Internal dissension within the Church of the East is outlined in the letters page of *Zinda Magazine* from 19 November 2005. Some of the comments raised particularly concerning the aims of the Assyrian Church of the East leadership pertaining to education and mission are relevant to this article. 'The Decision of the Holy Synod, letters in response', http://www.zindamagazine.com/html/archives/2005/11.19.05/index_sat.php.

decision to do so his ecclesiological paradigm is in accord with that of Benedict XVI. This paradigm affirms that the unity with the Holy See is the ultimate marker of ecumenical reconciliation whilst permitting much independence in the direction and leadership of the Church.

Novel Solutions and Jurisdiction

Despite the similarities between the East Syrian Churches on a cultural level and the willingness of the leadership to engage in dialogue, barriers remain for the complete reconciliation of the Churches and the area most open for grievance is in jurisdiction.

There is a need to resolve who maintains ultimate jurisdiction over the East Syrian communities in areas where sacramental activity is shared. Both Patriarchs assert their rightful place as the successor to the See of Seleucia-Ctesiphon and theoretically assert authority over all East Syrian Christians. Current ecumenical activity would appear to limit the right to assert this authority over either community.[58] It would seem that one or other Church from the perspective of the Holy See should maintain superiority whether in jurisdiction or, for example, merely over the production of religious literature.

Eucharistic sharing has become a part of the overall movement for closer ecumenical activity. Nevertheless, the possibility for such sharing relies upon the ability or willingness of a bishop in his diocese to become involved in such projects and to integrate them into his jurisdiction. Although the Churches officially may support inter-communion on specific occasions this is far removed from inter-communion on a normative basis. Despite the initial strong support for the agreement and subsequent integration into sacramental life any further and sustained sharing of the eucharist is limited by the perceived necessity for maintaining membership of distinct Churches and this is widely upheld at all levels in both the Church of the East and the Chaldean Church.[59]

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58 E.g. Mar Raphael I Bidawid and Mar Dinkha IV, 'Joint Synodal Decree for Promoting Unity Between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church 15th August 1997', sec. 5, 7; John Paul II and Mar Dinkha IV, 'Common Christological Declaration Between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East', para. 11.

59 Mar Awa Royel, 'August 27 2012 Press Release—Clarification from the Secretariat

We can note that this is a particular area of concern for the Chaldean Church which has recently taken steps to further legitimise the origins of its authority and to set this apart from the Church of the East.[60] It would seem that there is a fear of what form of reconciliation the next stage of ecumenism will produce. It may not be the case that direct re-integration is the intention of the Church of the East and Roman Catholic Church and by this we might suggest the sharing of dioceses and parishes between bishops and priests of each Church. One could argue that this is effectively taking place already whenever an East Syrian participates in inter-communion. However, to ensure long term stability one or other Church must determine whether there is any place for pursuing some form of East Syrian unity when many of the Chaldean Church community are already clear regarding their position as unique within the Syriac heritage.

Recent and Future Developments

The focus of the Churches in the next ten years is likely to become even more concentrated upon the diaspora communities. As the rate of population migration from the Middle East increases it is clear that the Patriarchs will have to put in place further means to control and govern the communities and ensure that they are provided for temporally and spiritually. The situation is complicated by meeting the needs also of those communities at home (that is to say Iraq and the Middle East) and whether the gradual focus upon the current communities will remain or whether there may be a return to a mission oriented approach.

There is a danger of considering the Church of the East in maintaining some form of *purer* and more *authentic* Christianity due to the lengthy period of separation from what some view as interference from the Holy See and the Eastern Churches. This affirmation of a more genuine form of apostolic Christianity is engendered in the East Syrian

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of the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East' (Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East, 27 August 2012), https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http://news.assyrianChurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/August-27-2012-Press-Release.pdf&hl=en_US&chrome=true; Jammo, 'Pastoral Letter of the Chaldean Catholic Eparchy of Saint Peter the Apostle', sec. IV para. 2, V passim.

60 Jammo, 'Pastoral Letter of the Chaldean Catholic Eparchy of Saint Peter the Apostle', sec. 5.

Churches by the belief of some members of their descent from the ancient Assyrian peoples of the Middle East. The effects of suggesting such an identity in Iraq during the late 20th and early 21st centuries apart from the accepted Arab nationality of the Iraqi people is controversial given the fragile state of the country. Moreover, if the East Syrian Churches desire to regain greater influence and prove their missionary ability narrow definitions of ethnic origins do not serve to expand the Church.[61] It is fair to state, however, that as the theological position and identity of the Church of the East has fluctuated so likewise the actual Assyrian ethnic identity has been emphasised to different degrees.[62] Furthermore, national identity in a foreign environment is useful for maintaining community cohesion even if it has become more spurious when the mission of the Church is reconsidered as much more than a mission to Assyrians alone.

The mission approach of each Church also differs as a result of bias towards location concerning the Patriarch. Mar Dinkha resides in Chicago and Mar Emmanuel Delly of the Chaldean Church in Baghdad. The largest proportion of members of the Church of the East reside in the USA so the base in that country should not be thought of as unusual.[63] In recent years there have been suggestions that the Church of the East may relocate the Patriarch's residence to Iraq. Nevertheless, as the situation is so fluid it is possible that other reasons have caused Mar Dinkha to stay in the USA since that time.[64] By remaining in the USA it does give the unfortunate impression that Mar Dinkha is unwilling to engage with the grass roots activists of his Church and critics would say he loses some legitimacy to his title as the Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Historically, however, this is not an unusual situation for a Patriarch of the Church of the East due to the massive areas in the medieval period over which the Patriarch had authority throughout central Asia. Thus, the Patriarch's distance from the faithful should not ordinarily be a cause for criticism.

The Chaldean Church since the 1950s has shifted from viewing the communities in the diaspora as outside of the usual structure of the

61 John Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians of the Middle East: Encounters with Western Christian Missions, Archaeologists, and Colonial Power*, Studies in Christian Mission 26, Brill, Leiden, Boston, MA, 2000, p. 221.

62 Arthur John Maclean, *The Catholicos of the East and His People*, 1892, p. 6.

63 Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church*, p. 442.

64 Cf. Baumer, *The Church of the East*, pp. 272–274.

Church and now has placed them within the structure of the Church proper. As a result patriarchal vicars have been replaced with Bishops in their own dioceses within the diaspora.[65] This is a recognition that the Chaldean hierarchy is prepared for the future challenges of managing an even more extended diaspora community and that Syriac culture can extend even to the USA and Europe.

This separation of the Patriarchs one in the diaspora and one in Iraq could serve as a model for future co-operation. The Church of the East with responsibility for the communities in the geographical remit in which they dominate and vice versa for the Chaldean Church. When it is considered that the validity of the liturgy in the Church of the East is no longer questioned by the Holy See the other sacraments and ecclesiology in general could be likewise recognised as two expressions of the same faith. Indeed, in 1997 as though to confirm the commitment to practical expressions of their shared faith Mar Dinkha and Mar Raphael I Bidawid jointly consecrated a new cathedral in Chicago.[66]

The theme of 'two expressions of the same faith' is popular under the papacy of Benedict XVI. We might compare the situation of the ecclesiology of the East Syrians with the situation in the Latin Church where there are two forms of the same Roman liturgy in *ordinary* and *extraordinary* forms. This establishment of two paths leading to the same outcome could become a suitable model as a means to ensure that both East Syrian communities retain their own particular identity without the need to formalise a relationship between the two.[67]

The missionary purpose of the Holy See towards members of the Church of the East appears to be focused on efforts of working with the Chaldean Church to restore ecclesial communion between the two rather than a direct purpose of conversion leading to an explicit repudiation of the Assyrian Christian community. A conundrum for the outworking of future ecumenical activity is the place of the jurisdiction of the Holy See over a non-uniate Church when the sacraments are shared. As the East Syrian Churches now officially share the eucharist, even on an infrequent basis, it may be possible for the Holy See to exert some authority over the Church of the East and as to how their clergy

65 Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church*, p. 447.

66 Baumer, *The Church of the East*, p. 272.

67 It should be noted that I have yet to come across any examples of clergy, religious or laity who have converted from the Chaldean Church to the Church of the East.

operate in sacramental affairs. If the Holy See does not retain the power to intervene and settle disputed matters over the sacraments in these cases this could lead to a decline in the position of the Petrine ministry.

If the Church is considered the basis for communion and communion is the focus of ecumenical life, unity from the perspective of the current discussions could be resolved through widespread inter-communion, that is to say far more extensively used than it is at present. The Admissions document unfortunately does not relate the position of members of the Church of the East outside of access to the Chaldean Church or vice versa.[68] It is confirmed that inter-communion should only be undertaken in the scenario as outlined, however, would a member of the Church of the East be permitted to receive communion in any other Catholic Church and if not is there a specific reason prohibiting this? We may consider that many members of the Church of the East seek the sacraments wherever they can and due to the universality of the Holy See's jurisdiction they might lawfully receive the sacraments in a non-Chaldean but still Catholic Church. We may fairly assume that cultural difference would preclude inter-communion in any scenario outside of the East Syrian Churches but in canon law is it possible to develop a structure whereby cultural identity is the basis of the law differentiating between two or more Churches? This would seem difficult as identity is such a fluid concept and hard to formally define as a barrier to receiving the sacraments.

These complications in the administration of the sacraments may not ordinarily appear of great matter. However, the distribution of the sacraments goes to the centre of Christian life and by not delineating their place in the jurisdiction of the correct authorities we risk confusion in the future development of the ecclesiology of the East Syrian Churches.

Future Activities

Attempts by the Church of the East to further enhance the relationship with the Holy See are due to start with a series of discussions on 4

68 Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 'Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist Between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East', sec. 4:4.

October 2012.[69] Notwithstanding the continued interest of Benedict XVI in protecting and defending minority Christian groups the decision to engage with the Holy See came from a joint decision of the synod of the Church of the East.[70] It would seem that discussion is due to continue at this time as the conflict and political situation in Iraq has stabilised to a certain extent and that as Mar Dinkha is now nearly eighty he desires to see the next stage of ecumenical discussion completed. The continued support which the Holy See can offer grants a degree of security for his Church and will likely be seen as part of his legacy to the future of the Church. Also it appears that Mar Bawai Soro's leaving the Church of the East has resulted in the communal need to consider why he left and whether any grievances he had were justifiable and should be discussed.

One may note also that the meeting in June 2009 of the Mixed Committee for Dialogue between the Assyrian and Roman Catholic Churches appears to have been convened to deal with the ramifications of Mar Bawai Soro's reception into the Chaldean Church.[71] Official ecumenical activity is affected when groups move between the two communities involved. If the normative mission purpose of any Church is to convert all men to that particular type of Christianity then we ought not prevent those earnestly seeking the truth in good conscience to remain in a Church which they believe to be in error. In this instance as there has been such a close recent ecumenical bond developed between the East Syrian Churches the movement of Mar Bawai Soro's group serves as a barrier to continued open ecumenical discussion. If wider conversion activities are to begin especially among the native populations in the diaspora it will be necessary to set aside any political differences which may have led to the movement of Mar Bawai Soro and to focus upon the evangelisation which each East Syrian Church can offer and consider how the Churches share responsibility over new converts. The expansion of the Church of the East as an independent

69 'Assyrian Church of the East to Resume Talks with Holy See', 26 July, 2012, http://terrasanta.net/tsx/articolo.jsp?wi_number=4115&wi_codseq=%20%20%20%20%20%20&language=en.

70 Royel, 'August 27 2012 Press Release—Clarification from the Secretariat of the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East'.

71 The 12th meeting in the series from June 13-14, 2009 in Chicago was titled *'Informal consultation dealing with difficulties between the Assyrian and Chaldean Churches on the West Coast; future course of the dialogue; ways of working together and difficult situation for the faithful in Iraq'* http://www.prounione.urbe.it/dia-int/ac-rc/e_ac-rc-info.html

organisation is difficult to maintain outside of an environment with no connection with any other ecumenical partner due to the significant lack of resources in infrastructure at this time. There are alternatives to the support of the Holy See should the Church seek them and one has only to consider the late 19th and early 20th centuries to see relationships with the Russian and Anglican Churches.[72] However, the current openness of the Holy See to those Eastern Churches in need and the international reach of the Holy See is still of interest to the leadership of the Church of the East who recognise that there is more possibility and similarity between these Christian communities than others. One may draw out the similarity between the historical role of the Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon and the governance of the Christian community of most of Asia east of the Euphrates to that of the Popes and their historical, though now defunct, role as Patriarchs of the West. In this regard the Church of the East can highlight the universality and global reach it had and could still have. Wilmshurst notes, for example, the support which a less westernised Christian paradigm may have among many communities especially those in Africa and Asia.[73] The possibility of renewal in China and Hong Kong via the Jingjiao Fellowship is a new avenue for the Church of the East to follow. The Fellowship has permitted discussion of the historical role of the Church of the East in east Asia with interested Chinese groups and proposals for evangelisation work especially through the translation of liturgical works into Chinese languages.[74] Thus, the hierarchy does not remain fossilised in the approach to missionary activities and shows a desire to restore the Church in areas in which it has long been dormant.

72 Baumer, *The Church of the East*, 259–260; J. F. Coakley, *The Church of the East and the Church of England: A History of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission*, Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, Oxford /New York, 1992.

73 Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church*, p. 461. I do concur to an extent with Wilmshurst; however, the dominance of the Protestant and Catholic Churches in China at this time would appear to preclude the notion that westernised forms of Christianity are less popular.

74 'Press Release—Catholicos-Patriarch Receives Director of 'Jingjiao Fellowship' /Assyrian Church News' (Assyrian Church of the East, 18 June 2012), http://news.assyrianChurch.org/2012/06/18/catholicos-patriarch-receives-director-of-jingjiao-fellowship/3880.

Conclusion

If unity between the Holy See and the Eastern Churches is constructed at three levels of Faith, Sacraments and Institutions it is hoped that further study will reveal to what extent reconciliation has been established in these areas and as to which area has most affected the development of ecclesiology in the East Syrian Churches.[75]

Once Christology has been agreed upon then discussion of sacraments and institutions ought to naturally follow and lead to an end of some potentially controversial areas of debate. Nevertheless, as indicated by the reaction to Mar Bawai Soro leaving the Church of the East and the subsequent cooling off of ecumenical debate the ecclesiological reconciliation may be deferred until such a time as the acceptable place of the Petrine ministry and the aims of the Holy See are fully outlined.

Though only a small difference in terminology from a Roman Catholic perspective the notion of the Petrine ministry as separate from the Holy See is an important distinction for Churches moving towards further dialogue with the Holy See. It is clear that some notions of legalism and socio-juridical authority which the Roman Catholic Church has professed are out of favour for many of the Eastern Churches and especially the Assyrian Church of the East. Whereas, a ministry exerting spiritual guidance only may be a model more acceptable to the Church of the East. This limits, however, the role which the Holy See still maintains as the ultimate authority within the universal Church with the coercive power to enforce resolutions as required and to intervene in matters of dispute.

It is also necessary to consider as to how to maintain the identity of the Church of the East from the Chaldean Church but to also involve both East Syrian Churches in the pastoral care of both of their communities. It would appear that the East Syrian Churches maintain the same beliefs concerning Christology and liturgy and the only remaining barrier is to their agreement on Church organisation. A difficulty associated with ecumenism especially in this case is of knowing whether the Churches have the same intentions towards unity and full communion. Moreover, the attempts to unite groups through

75 Johan Bonny, 'Relations Between the Catholic Church and Ancient Churches of the East', *L'Osservatore Romano*, Vatican City, 28 April, 2004, weekly English edition.

nothing more than assertions of shared faith outside of defined juridical structures within the Churches are difficult to sustain. Fortescue, writing in the early twentieth century, suggests:

> If you tell a Jacobite that he, together with Nestorians, Orthodox, Papists and an indiscriminate collection of Protestant sects, is one Church, that the true faith of Christ is the greatest common measure of what all these believe, he will think, rightly, that you are talking nonsense.[76]

It is this author's opinion that one can sympathise with the sentiments of Fr Fortescue but must also clearly recognise the change in the situation for the communities in the Middle East since his day and the gradual shift towards a policy of practical interaction as necessary to survival.

Contemporary ecumenism can be and has been maintained through the urgency of the situation in Iraq and the growth of the diaspora. The means to govern the Churches effectively have to be regularly re-assessed as a result and as official dialogue has slowed since 2006 one must consider what aspects of the dialogue thus far need to be most focused on for the future and which areas may require particular development.

The next round of meetings in October 2012 will offer some time for this sort of clarification of the ability of the Holy See to support specific Christian communities in the Middle East something which will also almost certainly be highlighted during Benedict XVI's visit to Lebanon in September.

It will be prudent also to challenge the current prevailing academic and popular view which appears to greatly support the dialogues and consider if this process may in fact be detrimental to the East Syrians retaining their specific ecclesiology, especially the Church of the East which appears to lack sufficient resources to dialogue on an equal footing with the Holy See and prevented from defending the specific identity it has maintained.

This is a frustrating area of study as it will only be in coming decades that it will be known what have been the effects of

76 Adrian Fortescue, *The Lesser Eastern Churches*, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1913, p. 447.

ecumenism upon the identity of the East Syrian Churches as ecclesiological developments generally take some time to be implemented and accepted. It is this author's opinion that the process of inter-communion will now, having found a precedent, be further and further applied throughout both Churches and contribute to the gradual blurring of religious identity and lead to the establishment of an East Syrian Church maintaining shared authority and jurisdiction over the sacraments between the hierarchy of each Church as they currently exist. Unless the Churches expand rapidly into new areas and encourage missionary activity a consolidation of the two communities will take place as resources and populations shrink in accordance with the current demographic decline.

ANGLICANISM AND ISLAM: THE ECCLESIAL-TURN IN INTERFAITH RELATIONS

Richard J. Sudworth

In 1909, an Anglican missionary in Cairo declared that 'The British Empire has more Muslim subjects than the Ottoman and Persian empires combined.' Confident of the persuasive power of the combined project of the colonial project and the mission of the Church of England, he signed off his letter to a fellow missionary with the rhetorical flourish: 'Who would doubt the issue of this glorious conflict?'[1] The contemporary reality of Anglican relations with Islam across the globe has to reckon with the collapse of the British Empire, and other European colonial empires, and a far more variegated picture of power-relations between the two communities certainly from the vantage point of many British Anglicans formerly used to enjoying religious dominance at home. The demise of Islam that many missionaries expected in the early 1900s was apparently confirmed by the break-up of the Ottoman Empire following the end of the First World War.[2] What those missionaries were unable to anticipate, though, was the resilience of Islam within the nation-states of a post-colonial economy and the reconfigurations of Islam itself within the model of the nation-state. That the British Empire's legacy persists in the Indian subcontinent's supply of a now decidedly *British* Muslim presence today underscores the irony of any earlier aspiration of missionary victory.[3]

1 Quoted in Kevin Ward, *A History of Global Anglicanism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, p. 3.

2 J. I. Smith, 'Christian Missionary Views of Islam in the 19th-20th Centuries', in, *Muslims and the West: Encounter and Dialogue*, eds Safar Ishaq Ansari and John L. Esposito, Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad, 2001, pp. 146-177, 158. See also, 'Christian Missionary Views of Islam in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 9, No. 3, (1998), pp. 357-373.

3 It must be noted that within the Western colonial experience, there are strands that *invigorated* Islamic identity. For example, Edmund Burke III notes that the intentions of the French government to improve and lift the status of Algeria

What common resources shape an Anglican Christian's encounter with Muslims in such diverse locations as Bradford, New York, Jos and Kampala?

This paper is judiciously titled '*Anglicanism* and Islam' as opposed to 'The Anglican Church and Islam'. It must be underlined that there is no such thing as 'The Anglican Church' but rather a *Communion* of forty-four different Churches, made up of thirty-four provinces, four United Churches, and six other Churches. There is an estimated seventy-eight million Christians represented by the Anglican Communion.[4] Whilst global in reach, there is no sense in which the Anglican Communion sees itself as a 'universal Church' but is rather a community of Churches drawing from the national Church ideal and held together by 'Instruments of Communion'.[5]

As William Jacob notes, the adaptability to local context and the embrace of dispersed authority characteristic of Anglicanism both helped its success in taking root around the world and has produced difficulties in any effort to present Anglican doctrinal distinctives that have purchase across the Communion.[6] The 'Instruments of Communion' are the Archbishop of Canterbury as the focus for unity, the Lambeth Conference, the Primates Meeting, and the Anglican Consultative Council. For the purpose of this study, I will be analysing resolutions on Islam from Lambeth Conferences, paying particular attention to the Conferences of 1988, 1998 and 2008. The ten-yearly Lambeth Conferences do not have the force of a Roman Catholic magisterium or Vatican Councils, somehow legislating for all Anglican

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acted as a 'midwife to progress' in the ill-fated intervention from the nineteenth century and in so doing actually put in place conditions for a *renewal* of Islam. See Edmund Burke III, 'The Terror and Religion: Brittany and Algeria', in eds Gregory Blue, Martin Bunton and Ralph Croizier, *Colonialism and the Modern World: Selected Studies*, M. E. Sharpe, Inc., New York, 2002, pp. 40-50. In Britain, the very fact of the establishment of the Church of England has been seen to give greater ballast to an Islamic public presence in contrast to the more secularised state of France or the middle-way of 'multiple establishments' present in Germany: Joel S. Fetzer and J. Christopher Soper, *Muslims and the State in Britain, France and Germany*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2005. These examples remind us to beware of assuming a binary polarity between the interests of a 'Christian' West and Islam.

4 Statistics taken from *The Anglican Communion* information leaflet, downloaded from http://www.theanglicancommunion.org on 1 March 2010.

5 William Jacob, 'The Development of the Anglican Communion', in ed. Stephen Platten *Anglicanism and the Western Christian Tradition*, Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2003, pp. 192-206.

6 *Ibid*., p. 206.

Churches, but are significant fora of 'dialogue and collegiality'[7] that indicate the priorities and trends of Anglican theology and practice. In a period when relations between Christians and Muslims have potential for such good, and such ill, it is my contention that Anglican understandings of Islam over the period examined reveal a notable shift deserving of attention as an 'ecclesial-turn' in interreligious relation.

Lambeth Conferences pre-1988

The Lambeth Conference of 1897 published an Encyclical Letter that sought to settle a policy for interreligious relations and provides an early positing of the priority of the triumvirate of Christian-Jewish-Muslim relations:

> In preaching His Gospel to the world we have to deal with one great religious body, which holds the truth in part not in its fullness, the Jews; with another which holds fragments of the truth embedded in a mass of falsehood, the Mohammedans; and with various races which hold inherited beliefs ranging down to the merest fetichism.[8]

In this short statement one sees the framing of interreligious relations in the context of mission ('His Gospel') and an evident tension in seeking out that which is truthful in other religious traditions whilst holding fast to the Gospel 'lest that good, such as it is' become a 'substitute for the Gospel'. At a time when the bulk of Anglican encounters with Muslims would be in the context of parishes and bishoprics established from missionary stations, the prior motive of evangelism seems to be paramount, tempered by the commitment to truth in the affirmation of what is consonant in other traditions. Within this schema, Islam offers something more than 'merest fetichism', but is seen as embodying elements of truth, obscured by lies: Judaism as incomplete truth.

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7 Mark Hill, 'Communion, Covenant and Canon Law: A Challenge and Opportunity for the Anglican Communion and the 2008 Lambeth Conference', *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (May 2008) pp. 63-68, p. 63.

8 'Encyclical Letter, *Lambeth Conference, 1897*', *The Anglican Tradition: A Handbook of Sources*, eds G. R. Evans, and J. Robert Wright, SPCK, London 1991, p. 360.

It is over seventy years before Islam is addressed again during a Lambeth Conference. In that intervening period, two world wars and the steady dismantling of the British Empire witness a growing attention to ecumenical endeavours. The first World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, 1910, marked what David Bosch sees as the 'all-time highwater mark in Western missionary enthusiasm, the zenith of the optimistic and pragmatist approach to missions.'[9] Bosch notes the harnessing of Enlightenment progress thinking in the resources available to world evangelization, as described in Edinburgh, that provided a symbiosis between Christian missionary endeavours and the colonial project.[10] The carnage of two World Wars and, for the British, a steady dismantling of empire, began to undermine the optimism in the fruits of 'secular science' that was so evident at Edinburgh 1910.[11] Importantly for the Church of England, though, Temple Gairdner, Church Missionary Society missionary and Arabist and Islamicist, was entrusted with presenting to Edinburgh 1910 on the nature of Islam and reporting back to the Church on the proceedings.[12] For all the naïve optimism and combative overtones that are replete in the language of Edinburgh 1910, there are some remarkable statements that anticipate the work of Kenneth Cragg[13] and inform so much of subsequent Anglican thinking. Islam was deemed a 'living faith' and 'it was this living faith, intense, more intimate and more comprehensive than sight.'[14] As Vinoth Ramachandra points out, 'The Report dares to ask: "Have we in our modern theology and religion sufficiently recognised what Islam stands for—the unity and the sovereignty of

9 D. J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 1991, p. 338.

10 *Ibid.,* p. 336

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 334–341. Bosch identifies Edinburgh 1910 as the source of the re-birthed ecumenical movement. The challenges to Enlightenment optimism of two world wars have accelerated the cause of unity that has been embodied in the dichotomy of unity and mission at the inception of the World Council of Churches in 1948, D. J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, pp. 457-461.

12 C. E. Padwick, *Temple Gairdner of Cairo*, SPCK, London, 1929, p. 198.

13 Note, for example, Kenneth Cragg's assertion that 'Islam has a task of the spirit in the contemporary world, which the alert Christian must acknowledge and serve, without abeyance of themes which, precisely because of that partnership, are the more authentic and searching.' In *The Event of the Qur'an: Islam in its Scripture*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1971, p. 187.

14 T. Gairdner, *Edinburgh 1910: An Account and Interpretation of the World Missionary Conference*, Oliphant, Edinburgh 1910, pp. 128-9.

God?"'[15] From the heart of the missionary enterprise, and exemplified by Temple Gairdner, then, is an assessment of Islam that strives to see beyond caricature, to encounter Islam in its genuine otherness, but with sympathy and affection.

The burgeoning concern for ecumenical unity, set against the break-up of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, is evident in the Encyclical Letters of the Lambeth Conference of 1930 which talk of 'that great human family of which God is the Father.'[16] The parallel tracks of mission that become embodied in the World Council of Churches are evident, too, in the call for ecumenical relations on the basis that 'Every extension of this circle of visible fellowship would increase the power of the Church to witness to its Lord by its unity.'[17] For the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, Christians from many traditions were united in a single aim of the evangelization of the world. Following the First World War, many of those same leaders were focussing their attention on ecumenism as the priority project of the global Church and distancing themselves from the conservatism of much of the missionary movement in the 1920s and 1930s.[18] In 1948 the inaugural assembly of the World Council of Churches was to take place out of the ashes of European wars and building upon conversations that had originated from the impulse of evangelism.[19]

For the Lambeth Conference of 1968, the language and imperative of dialogue becomes first apparent. In a decade exercised by the applied ecclesiology modelled in Vatican II and charged with the insecurities of the Cold War, interreligious dialogue is seen not in the context of a theology of religions but in the reality of plural life, which includes atheism and Marxism. Thus, Resolution 11 encourages 'positive

15 V. Ramachandra, *The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions: The Edinburgh 1910 Commission IV Report and Beyond*, available from http://www.towards2010.org.uk/downloads/t2010paper04ramachandra.pdf, p. 3, downloaded 21 July, 2009.

16 'Encyclical Letter, *Lambeth Conference, 1930*', *The Anglican Tradition,* eds G. R. Evans and J. Robert Wright, p. 389.

17 *Ibid*., p. 391.

18 Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity 1920-1990*, SCM Press London, 1991, pp. 86-99 and 302-308.

19 See Douglas Pratt, 'The World Council of Churches in Dialogue with Muslims: Retrospect and Prospect', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 20, No. 1, (January 2009), pp. 21-42, for an overview of World Council of Churches' reflections upon relations with Islam. Also, Douglas Pratt, *The Church and Other Faiths: The World Council of Churches, the Vatican, and Interreligious Dialogue*, Peter Lang, Oxford 2010.

relationship to the different religions of men (*sic*)' as will 'call Christians not only to study other faiths in their own seriousness, but also to study unbelief in its real quality'. Resolution 12 further recommends 'a renewed and vigorous implementation of the task of inter-religious dialogue already set in hand' and 'commends similar assistance for dialogue with Marxists and those who profess no religious faith'.[20] Michael Ipgrave assesses this shift to situate the religions within a wider diversity of belief systems as expressing the priority of dialogue with diversity rather than with an attention to a theological assessment of the realities of that diversity.[21]

In the Lambeth Conference of 1978, Resolution 37, there is a return to the framing of interreligious relations within the 'Gospel' but this is opened out to include 'the obligation to open exchange of thought and experience with people of other faiths'. There is no mention of atheistic ideologies this time, suggesting perhaps the previous 1968 Conference's own preoccupations with the foment of the Cold War and the burgeoning social liberalism of that era. There is a recognition of the 'vocation' by Churches in, again, a broader mission of 'theological interpretation, community involvement, social responsibility, and evangelization' where specific other religions predominate (Hinduism, Buddhism, Taosim, Confucianism, and Islam). No theological assessment of these faiths is attempted. However, there is a very specific mention of the need to 'seek opportunities for dialogue with Judaism', hinting at the especial obligation to remedy of Christian-Jewish relations post-Holocaust that had so charged the climate of Vatican II. It is notable that Tom Lawson's study of the Church of England's post-war understanding of Nazism reveals a 'limited imagination' that instrumentalises the Holocaust of Jews of Europe as an onslaught on European Christian civilisation. For Lawson, the Church of England's theological relationship with Judaism remained set 'between missionary and convert' and was thus ripe for revision.[22]

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20 For extracts of Lambeth Conference resolutions on interfaith matters to 1988 see M. Ingham, *Mansions of the Spirit: The Gospel in a Multi-Faith World*, Anglican Book Centre, Toronto, 1997, pp. 141-143.

21 M. Ipgrave, 'Understanding, Affirmation, Sharing: *Nostra Aetate* and an Anglican Approach to Inter-Faith Relations', *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 1, (Winter 2008), pp. 1-16, p. 2.

22 Tom Lawson, *The Church of England and the Holocaust: Christianity, Memory and Nazism*, Boydell & Brewer Ltd, Woodbridge 2006, p.171. See also Tom Lawson, 'Constructing a Christian History of Nazism: Anglicanism and the Memory of the

Lambeth Conference 1988: *The Way of Dialogue*

It is with the Lambeth Conference of 1988 that a systematic attempt was made to order Anglican interfaith relations and to provide a theological rationale for the encounter with Judaism and Islam, in particular.[23] The key text in this regard proposed to the Conference in Resolution 21 is *Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue*. The significant starting point for *The Way of Dialogue* is in the statement that 'we recognise a special relationship between Christianity, Judaism and Islam.'[24] For *The Way of Dialogue*, 'All three of these religions see themselves in a common relationship to Abraham, the father of the faithful, the friend of God.'[25] Michael Ipgrave[26] analyses the particular indebtedness of this document

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Holocaust, 1945-49', *History and Memory*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Spring/Summer, 2004), pp. 146-176.

23 It is worth noting that at the beginning of this decade, the seminal event of the Iranian Revolution took place, reframing perceptions about the global place of religion and Islam. 'Ever since the Iranian Revolution of 1979, Muslims across the globe have become a focus of attention': Abbas, Tahir. 'British South Asian Muslims: before and after September 11', *Muslim Britain: Communities Under Pressure*, ed. Tahir Abbas, Zed Books, London, 2005, pp. 3-17, p. 13. See Scott M. Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century,* Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2005, who begins his account of the resurgence of religion in public life with the event of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The Iranian Revolution had a direct and devastating impact on Persian Anglicans, who experienced persecution, the son of the Anglican Bishop of Persia murdered and his episcopal oversight eventually exercised from exile. See Mark Bradley, *Iran and Christianity: Historical Identity and Present Relevance,* Continuum, London/New York, 2008.

24 'Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue', Appendix 6, *The Truth Shall Make You Free: The Lambeth Conference 1988: The Reports, Resolutions and Pastoral Letters from the Bishops,* Anglican Consultative Council, London 1988, pp. 299-308, p. 299.

25 'The Way of Dialogue', p. 299.

26 Michael Ipgrave was the Secretary to the Churches' Commission on Inter Faith Relations and Inter Faith Relations Adviser for the Archbishop's Council [Church of England] from 1999-2004. This post, employed by the General Synod of the Church of England, was initiated in 1992. Christopher Lamb was the first such adviser, from 1992-1999. The post was reconfigured when Guy Wilkinson took up his position in 2005. Guy Wilkinson was appointed the National Inter Faith Relations Adviser and Secretary for Inter Faith Relations to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The significance of this shift is that the role is now positioned within Lambeth Palace, accountable and responsive to the Archbishop of Canterbury in his pivotal role within the Anglican Communion. This arguably reflects a growing recognition of the global sensitivities of the inter-religious questions. Guy Wilkinson resigned from his post in 2010, his successor, Toby Howarth, appointed in May 2011.

to Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate*, the seminal account of the Roman Catholic Church's interfaith relations.[27] As Adrian Hastings observes, 'in speaking of Moslems and Jews, the Council stresses our common father in faith, Abraham.'[28] However, a more detailed analysis of the text suggests that Hastings may be presuming too much commonality between Christianity and Islam in the reference to Abraham in *Nostra Aetate*. This will be made clearer when comparing and contrasting *The Way of Dialogue* which, arguably, follows Hastings in misinterpreting the extent of shared origin proposed by Vatican II in the two faiths.

As with Vatican II, the political realities of Churches in majority-Muslim contexts beyond Britain influenced the conception of *The Way of Dialogue* as a document that was instigated to explicate Christian-Jewish relations but necessarily evolved into an articulation of relations between the three faiths.[29] While the three main monotheistic faiths, in contrast to *Nostra Aetate*, are excluded from *The Way of Dialogue*, the Lambeth Conference seems to continue the pattern of privileging the understanding and consonance of revelations in Judaism and Islam. *Nostra Aetate* notably judges not to make an assessment of the status of the Qur'an or Muhammad.[30] Similarly, *The Way of Dialogue* prefers to affirm monotheism and the mutual obligations to Abraham as bases for the significance of good relations and dialogue between Christians and Muslims without making a judgment on the prophethood of Muhammad, for example.

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27 M. Ipgrave, 'Understanding, Affirmation, Sharing', cited n. 21 above.

28 A. Hastings, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of the Second Vatican Council, Volume One,* Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1968, p. 198.

29 M. Ipgrave, 'Understanding, Affirmation, Sharing', p. 6.

30 For two summary analyses of Vatican II assessments of Islam see A. Unsworth, 'The Vatican, Islam and Christian-Muslim relations', in *Christian Responses to Islam: Muslim-Christian Relations in the Modern World*, eds A. O'Mahony and E. Loosley, Manchester University Press, Manchester 2008, and 'Louis Massignon, The Holy See and the Ecclesial Transition from "*Immortale Dei*" to "*Nostra Aetate*": A Brief History of the Development of Catholic Church Teaching on Muslims and the Religion of Islam from 1883 to 1965', *ARAM*, 20 (2008), pp. 299-316. In addition, see A. O'Mahony, 'Modern Catholic Thought on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations', *One in Christ*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Winter, 2010), pp. 111-135, 'the Council did not intend to give a full description of Islam, entering into a comprehensive theological assessment of the tradition: the Council left that open for future consideration by the Church', p. 123.

There are ways in which the Anglican proposal is somewhat more definitive than Vatican II, though. In *Nostra Aetate*, Muslims are described as those who 'submit wholeheartedly … just as did Abraham, with whom the Islamic faith is pleased to associate itself.'[31] *Lumen Gentium* admits 'the plan of salvation' which 'includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place among these there are the Moslems, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God.'[32] Where *The Way of Dialogue* accedes to a 'common relationship to Abraham', Vatican II merely notes that Muslims *profess* to hold the faith of Abraham and are pleased to *associate* their faith with the submission modelled by Abraham. One wonders whether this difference is deliberate or whether the Anglican indebtedness to *Nostra Aetate* involved a misunderstanding of its true scope and intent. Hastings' interpretation of *Nostra Aetate* likewise overstates the convergences between the two faiths and it is perhaps just such misinterpretations that have tipped the Anglican document into an unintended new place of doctrinal development. As Jaques Dupuis asserts, *Nostra Aetate* was a 'nondoctrinal, concrete' document that did not show a 'graded orientation of members of other religions towards the church'.[33] Rather, the encyclical is an encouragement to good relations, a pastoral document offering points of contact and commonality as opposed to a systemic framework for unity.

Following Vatican II, the theological rationale for good relations based on a common relationship to Abraham has been the subject of extensive discussion that suggests that the premise of the Lambeth Conference document of 1988 may be anachronistic. It seems clear that both Vatican II[34] and *The Way of Dialogue* admit that Muslims and Christians worship the one God. Asserting that Vatican II goes as far as accepting the Abrahamic theologoumenon as proposed by Louis Massignon, who had such an influence on the conciliar inter-religious documents, would seem to be a much more dubious conclusion. The 'father of the faithful' as described in *The Way of Dialogue*, need not

31 'Nostra Aetate 3', *The Documents of Vatican II: With Notes and Comments by Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Authorities*, ed. W. M. Abbott S.J., Geoffrey Chapman, London 1966, p. 663.

32 'Lumen Gentium 16', *The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 35.

33 Jacques Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 2002, pp. 60–1.

34 A. Unsworth, 'The Vatican, Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations', p. 61.

be merely the literal progenitor of Jews and Muslims. However, there are serious scholarly objections to the assumption of Islamic lineage traced back to Ishmael.[35] Taking a Pauline understanding for Christians of Abraham as the model of faith in the one God, Muslims might be seen to relate as heirs of Abraham 'by faith'. Thus, Paul, in Romans 9, includes Gentiles in the promises of Yahweh despite their lack of genetic lineage to Abraham. Their qualification is merely that of 'faith'; the very qualification of the first Jew, Abraham the patriarch, who was compelled to leave the land of Ur in simple obedience. In a parallel fashion, it could be argued that Muslims 'by faith' inherit from God, explicitly drawing, as they do, from the originating monotheism of Abraham.[36] The Israeli scholar Alon Goshen-Gottstein has commented on the tendency of the Abrahamic faiths motif to work most effectively for Christians and Muslims, 'while the Jews tend to watch from the margins.'[37] Abraham as the 'man of faith' is a tenable concept in Pauline theology but it works to negate the fullness of covenant obligation in Judaism.

The Way of Dialogue thus follows the lead of Vatican II in stressing the particular confluences between the monotheistic faiths but is suggestive of a rather more controversial and questionable synchronicity that is avoided in the conciliar documents.[38] It is noteworthy that the considerable controversy generated by *The Way of Dialogue*,[39]

35 A. O'Mahony, 'Catholic Theological Perspectives on Islam at the Second Vatican Council', *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 88, Issue 1016 (June 2007), pp. 385-398, p. 392.

36 Galatians 3:7 in this vein, refers to those 'who believe' as 'children of Abraham'.

37 Quoted in P. Valkenberg, 'Does the Concept of 'Abrahamic Religions' have a Future?', *Concilium, Islam and Enlightenment*, New Issues 2005/5, pp. 103-111, p. 108.

38 See R. Arnaldez, *Three Messengers for One God*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1994, for a Catholic reflection of the Abrahamic faiths motif that shuns the reductionism of a 'common core' theology. For an alternative advocacy of a complementary and unitary core Abrahamic theology see K-J. Kuschel, *Abraham: A Symbol of Hope for Jews, Christians and Muslims*, SCM Press Ltd, London, 1995.

39 For an annotated commentary of *The Way of Dialogue* informed by contemporaneous notes of discussions and the records of the principal drafter, Bert Breiner, I am indebted to Lucinda Mosher's unpublished historical-critical analysis of 1997 for the General Theological Seminary, New York: *'Christ and People of Other Faiths' and 'Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue', the Statements on Interfaith Relations of The Anglican Communion prepared by The Dogmatic & Pastoral Concerns Section, Lambeth Conference 1988*. Lucinda Mosher has kindly given the author her summary analysis of the 1988 Lambeth Conference including Breiner's notes, providing and invaluable commentary to the controversies surrounding *The Way of Dialogue.*

especially amongst bishops from Asia and Africa, is focussed more on the interpretation of historical precedence, Islamic theology and the practical application to interreligious relations rather than to the underlying theological schema itself. As will become apparent, for many Anglicans in Muslim-majority contexts, abstract formulations of religious unity across the faiths took second-place to addressing the realities of co-existence and causes of persecution of Christians.

Taking an Abrahamic foundation, three theological principles are then used to inform the content of *The Way of Dialogue*: understanding, affirmation, and sharing. Michael Ipgrave identifies the influence of Max Warren, a former general secretary of the Anglican Church Mission Society (CMS), and his concept of 'Christian Presence' in the outworking of interfaith understanding as 'affective entry into the world of the other'.[40] Max Warren and John V. Taylor, another advocate of 'Christian Presence' and former general secretary of CMS, and Bishop of Winchester respectively, brought a missionary sensibility to this incarnational approach to inter-religious encounter. Graham Kings identifies Temple Gairdner of Cairo[41] and Kenneth Cragg as two key influences on Max Warren and John V. Taylor[42] and the idea of Christian Presence. Both these towering figures of Anglican engagement with Islam have clearly continued a legacy that has informed the encounter with Islam and a general theology of religions back in the British context. It is worth noting here a parallel to Anglican 'Christian Presence' theology with the ideas of Jean Daniélou, Jules Monchanin[43] and Henri De Lubac that informed so much of Vatican II. In Daniélou and De Lubac there is a clear stress on the Christian faith being the

40 M. Ipgrave, 'Understanding, Affirmation, Sharing', p. 7. This 'affective' identification with the faith of the author, as Ipgrave points out, was famously described in Max Warren's introduction to Bishop Kenneth Cragg's *Sandals at the Mosque*, SCM, London, 1959, a part of Warren's 'Christian Presence' series: 'Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes, for the place where we are approaching is holy. Else we may find ourselves treading on men's dreams.' P. 9.

41 For an account of Temple Gairdner's own influence on the work of Bishop Kenneth Cragg, see C. Lamb, *The Call to Retrieval*.

42 G. Kings, 'Mission and the Meeting of Faiths: The Theologies of Max Warren and John V. Taylor', in *The Church Mission Society and World Christianity, 1799-1999*, eds K. Ward and B. Stanley, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids/Cambridge, 2000, pp. 285-318.

43 See Françoise Jacquin, 'L'abbé Monchanin et l'Islam', *Islamochristiana* (Rome), Vol. 23 (1997), pp. 27-41.

source of salvation but a recognition of the unfolding revelation of God in other religions that is fulfilled in Christ.[44] Across Anglicanism and Catholicism, then, there is a significant stream of fulfilment theology that encourages a positive identification with God's revelation and action with the adherents of other religions albeit in reference to the Christological centre of the Christian faith.

Relations with Islam are set in a historical perspective, noting the historic enmity evinced in the Crusades but also in the positive cultural contributions from Islamic to Christian civilisations.[45] The principle of *understanding* is embodied by offering correctives to negative images of Islam such that the burden is on redressing destructive Christian patterns towards Muslims and challenging populist notions of, for example, *sharia* law treatment of women[46], *jihad*[47] and traditional Islamic understandings of the crucifixion.[48] Lucinda Mosher's analysis of the Conference discussions notes Michael Nazir-Ali's particular dissatisfaction with the emphasis of these correctives.[49]

Allied to the perceived 'glossing' of Islamic theology, concerns were also voiced at the insufficient treatment of the evangelistic mandate of the Church.[50] Evangelism, or proclamation in the language of Vatican II and subsequent Roman Catholic encyclicals, is only mentioned incidentally to *The Way of Dialogue*: 'if we are truly to share our faith we must not

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44 See Jacques Dupuis' brief comparison of Daniélou and De Lubac's theology of religions in *Christianity and the Religions,* Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 2002, pp. 47-52. Daniélou and De Lubac differ in their understanding of grace and nature. Daniélou believes that God's revelation in other faiths is manifest as a human response to the natural revelation that is displayed. De Lubac sees grace present in nature following the decisive event of the incarnation of Christ which allows for the divine action, albeit towards Christ, within other faiths. Interestingly, Dupuis takes this possibility a step further by doing what Daniélou and De Lubac did not do which was to unmoor Christ, as the summit of revelation and the 'pole' (in De Lubac's terminology) of salvation, from the reality of the Church.

45 *The Way of Dialogue* §8, pp. 300-1.

46 *The Way of Dialogue* §9, p. 301.

47 *The Way of Dialogue* §11, p. 302.

48 *The Way of Dialogue* §19, pp. 303-4.

49 L. Mosher, *Christ and People of Other Faiths*, p. 14. Michael Nazir-Ali (b. 1947) was born in Pakistan, son of a father who had converted from Islam, and became Bishop of Raiwind in 1984. Following threats to his life, Archbishop Robert Runcie invited him to Lambeth to assist him in his work, taking a significant role in the planning for the 1988 Lambeth Conference. In 1994 he became the Bishop of Rochester until his resignation in September 2009.

50 Mosher, *ibid*., p. 15.

only affirm what we can but share our own deep convictions, even when these appear irreconcilably opposed to our partner's faith and practice. In the case of *Islam* particularly, Christians must first understand Islam if this witness is to be effective.'[51] The conditional 'if' posits evangelism as an optional practice subservient to the wider thrust of dialogue, even if the respective integrities of traditions are affirmed robustly within *The Way of Dialogue*. It is notable, though, that issues of human rights in Muslim societies, the doctrine of apostasy as it affects minority Christian communities, and dissident Muslim groups, and the challenge to Muslims to correct distorted images of Christians and Jews provide elements of reciprocal obligation in *The Way of Dialogue*.

The feeling, especially amongst evangelicals, that too much was being given away and presumed positively of Islam can be traced back in some of the preparatory documents to Lambeth 1988. *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*[52] *(TTID)* was published as a report to the General Synod of the Church of England by the Inter-Faith Consultative Group of the Board for Mission and Unity. This report was circulated as advance reading for Lambeth 1988 and introduces the contemporary experience of British plurality as an opportunity to explore a renewed understanding of the theology of religions, seen through the prism of the 'threefold typology' of religions.[53] Within *TTID*, pluralism is regarded as a developing, innovative response to the challenge of religious diversity. It is presented on a par, in terms of theological legitimacy, with inclusivism, while exclusivism is viewed as an inhibition to the affirmation of spiritual truths in other faiths.[54] The apparent inconsistency in presenting pluralism alongside an affirmation of the Christian doctrine of the trinity betrays something of the loose theology targeted by the 1986 Anglican theological and doctrinal commission report, *For the Sake of the Kingdom*: 'For too long Anglicans have appeared willing to evade responsible theological reflection and dialogue by acquiescing automatically and immediately in the coexistence of incompatible views, opinions and policies.'[55]

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51 *The Way of Dialogue* §33 & §28 , pp. 305-6.

52 *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*, Anglican Consultative Council, London: 1986 edition, hereafter designated '*TTID*'.

53 Exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism. This typology originates with Alan Race in *Christians and Religious Pluralism*, SCM, London, 1983.

54 *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*, pp. 7-10.

55 Quoted in Stephen Sykes, *Unashamed Anglicanism*, Darton, Longman & Todd,

TTID provoked a response by Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali,[56] included in the 1986 edition, redolent of his objections to *The Way of Dialogue*. Paying particular attention to the Christian-Muslim milieu, Nazir-Ali corrects the sense of novelty that he sees in the exploration of interfaith relations in *TTID*, reminding readers of the longstanding traditions of dialogue, co-existence and mission in non-Western Anglican contexts. Again, Nazir-Ali criticizes the seeming compromise of the 'scandal of particularity'[57] of the Gospel in the service of dialogue. The ignorance of the global precedents of interfaith relations and the overarching narrative of salvation for Christians in *TTID* makes, for Nazir-Ali, a 'fleeing of history'. This abnegation renders the work of the Holy Spirit (described in *TTID* as 'unpredictable, culturally and historically indeterminate')[58] somehow less than biblical.[59]

The emphasis on the Church's need to rethink its attitudes, actions and theology in *TTID* informs Christopher Wright's robust critique in an *Anvil* journal edition of 1984. There is an important distinction to be made between the challenge to the individual Christian obtained in the encounter with truth within another tradition and a challenge to Christian revelation itself. For Wright, this distinction is blurred in the text of *TTID*[60] as well as an unbiblical qualifying of the Great Commission in the service of interfaith dialogue.[61] It is interesting to note Christopher Lamb,[62] one of the authors of *TTID*, responding to Wright's critique by expressing his admission that 'Though we wanted to see people moving in a certain direction we had no illusions that we were producing a definitive report.'[63] The impression is given of a

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London, 1995, p. 120.

56 See note 49 above.

57 Nazir-Ali, M. 'That Which is not to be Found but which Finds us', in *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*, p. 47.

58 *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*, p. 20.

59 Nazir-Ali, M. 'That Which is not to be Found but which Finds us', p. 48.

60 C. J. H. Wright, 'Interfaith Dialogue', *Anvil*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1984), pp. 231-258, p. 256.

61 *Ibid*., p. 257.

62 Christopher Lamb was the first Secretary to the Churches' Commission on Inter Faith Relations and Inter Faith Relations Adviser for the Archbishop's Council [Church of England] from 1992-1999. Lamb served with the Anglican Church Missionary Society in Lahore, Pakistan for six years and his *The Call to Retrieval: Kenneth Cragg's Christian Vocation to Islam,* Grey Seal, London, 1997, is probably the most authoritative account of Cragg's engagement with Islam.

63 C. Lamb, 'Interfaith Dialogue', *Anvil*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1984), pp. 259-60, p. 259.

discussion document that is deliberately tipped toward dialogue as a provisional redress of balance for a Church of England insufficiently open to inter-religious encounter.

This impression is supported by the feedback given to *TTID* by the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Nigeria in 1984 and published in their report *Bonds of Affection*. In their view, 'the book needed a greater emphasis on the doctrine of redemption, and we questioned some of its biblical exegesis, as well as the selectivity of biblical texts. People from non-Western societies especially found the approach too academic and cerebral, and thus it was classified as largely irrelevant to them.'[64] There are efforts at practical application in *TTID* but they all, revealingly, denote the responsibility of Christians as the holders of power and privilege to change and adapt to the new economy of diversity. Thus,

> It is no longer with someone out there, at a distance, that we engage in conversation, but with those with whom we share in a way quite other than any previous generation. Nevertheless, we ought not to minimize the fact that numerically those of other faiths are few compared with the number of practising Christians in Britain. The relative size of communities has a profound effect on our self-understanding, and conditions the way we relate to others. Adherents of different faiths seldom meet as equals, and isolation and cultural dominance are hard to overcome.[65]

Perhaps the 'irrelevance' observed by Anglicans outside of Europe is in the language of cultural dominance assigned to the Christian faith and reflected upon from experiences of longstanding diversity or even Islamic cultural dominance. Accounts of contexts that contrast with the presumed Christian dominance of Britain become aired and apparent in the exchanges of the Lambeth Conference of 1998 and tell a different story often of the marginalisation and even persecution of Christians.

The presumption of both *The Way of Dialogue* and *TTID* is that the Church is in a prior position of host to those of other faiths. For

64 'Extracts from "Bonds of Affection"', *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*, Anglican Consultative Council, London, 1986 edition, p. 39.

65 *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*, pp. 5-6.

TTID, and subsequently *The Way of Dialogue*, there is a recognition of the importance of dialogue, especially with Muslims, but, for many, an incomprehension of the language of host to guest and a discomfort at the relegation of evangelism.

Lambeth Conference 1998

The extent of the controversy occasioned by Lambeth 1988 was perhaps behind the extensive sharing of stories from around the Communion of encounters with Islam for the Lambeth Conference of 1998, as opposed to the pursuit of any theological investigation.[66] Gambia, Northern Nigeria, the Middle East, Pakistan and Bradford were all contexts providing stories of constructive Anglican-Muslim engagements, all notably Muslim-majority in complexion. The 'major issues' identified included dialogue, conversion, basic freedoms, working ecumenically and monitoring.[67] Pointedly, in 'monitoring', the Network for Inter-Faith Concerns is sanctioned with resources in 'monitoring Christian-Muslim relations as they affect the different provinces of the Anglican Communion', recognising 'both the opportunities for inter-faith encounter and the difficulties.'[68]

Of additional note for the 1998 Lambeth Conference is the address by Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali specifically on inter-faith relations, providing perhaps his preferred approach where *TTID* and *The Way of Dialogue* may have failed in his view. Nazir-Ali provides a number of practical illustrations that flesh out the objections expressed to *TTID* and the apparent concerns over *The Way of Dialogue*. He does this by way of affirming Kenneth Cragg's espousal of the missionary values of 'embassy' and 'hospitality'[69], ideas prevalent in the 'Christian Presence' school of missionary scholarship that we have already noted. Hospitality may be demonstrated by Christians in the West opening up their homes

66 M. Ipgrave, 'Understanding, Affirmation, Sharing', p. 4.

67 *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference 1998*, Morehouse Publishing, Harrisburg, 1999, pp. 268-327.

68 *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference 1998*, p. 273.

69 'Hospitality he describes as "surely the closest of all analogies to the meaning of the Gospel"', Christopher Lamb describing Kenneth Cragg's Christian vocation to Islam, Lamb, *The Call to Retrieval: Kenneth Cragg's Christian Vocation to Islam*, p. 102. Kenneth Cragg saw the Christian mission to Islam 'conceived in terms of residence, hospitality, embassy and retrieval', p. 114.

to people of other faiths who have recently arrived in the country or making church halls available for social functions. However, 'The use of church buildings is a classic situation where Western Christians can learn from the history of Christianity elsewhere. In the early days of the expansion of Islam into the Christian countries of the Middle East, for example, the new rulers sometimes took over a part of a church for their worship, leaving the rest to the Christian community. In many cases, however, the whole building was eventually taken over.'[70] This illustration is elicited as an example of ill-considered and naïve hospitality that pays insufficient attention to that dimension of mission, *embassy*: 'going out to them and sharing the Gospel with them.'[71] In Nazir-Ali's view, it is the very history of privilege and dominance of the Western Church that has stymied the full expression of mission as embassy but now 'The situation is changing.'[72] A more equitable balance of power between the faiths, and especially with Muslims, is being highlighted, one that needs to be cognisant of the breadth of encounters in history and across the Communion.

The Way of Dialogue remains the most recent authoritative statement on the theology of interfaith concerns in relation to Islam for the Anglican Communion.[73] There is an evident indebtedness to Vatican II and in particular to *Nostra Aetate* in the situating of relations with Islam in the context of the monotheistic faiths. However, *The Way of Dialogue* goes somewhat further than Vatican II in outlining how the relationship between the faiths is framed within an Abrahamic schema and is based on a misinterpretation of the conciliar documents that is in danger of undermining the Church's relations with other faiths beyond Islam.[74]

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70 M. Nazir-Ali, 'Embassy, Hospitality and Dialogue: Christians and People of Other Faiths', *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference 1998*, p. 312.

71 *Ibid*.

72 *Ibid*., p. 315.

73 M. Ipgrave, 'Understanding, Affirmation, Sharing', pp. 4-5.

74 'In Britain, Christian-Muslim relations cannot be isolated from a context of religious diversity, which encompasses both the oldest religious minority—the Jews—and Sikh and Hindu communities formed since the Second World War, part of that larger flow of migrants from former British colonies invited to fill the labour shortages … Much of the institutionalisation of Christian-Muslim relations is part of this larger reality.' P. Lewis, 'Christian-Muslim Relations in Britain: Between the Local and the Global', in *Christians and Muslims in the Commonwealth: A Dynamic Role in the Future*, eds A. O'Mahony and A. Siddiqui, Altajir World of Islam Trust, London, 2001, p. 182.

For critics of *The Way of Dialogue*, the document lacks doctrinal rigour in not presenting the full particularity of the Gospel and paying insufficient attention to the vocation of evangelism. It is perhaps ironic that the evident use of resources from a missionary tradition that includes Temple Gairdner, Kenneth Cragg, John V. Taylor and Max Warren in the articulation of its theology is seen in this light. It must be noted that the thrust of the document was *dialogue* and the overarching tone was one that sought to open up the Anglican Communion to constructive relations with Jewish and Muslim neighbours in dialogue and partnership. This emphasis on dialogue can be seen to be part of a continuity with the preparatory document *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue* where the Church is seen as host and Muslims, and those of other faiths, as guests. For many evangelicals and Anglicans beyond Europe, both documents display an unrecognisably positive portrayal of the realities of Christian-Muslim co-existence and an exaggeration of the power of the Christian community.

Moving to Lambeth 1998, a clear effort to hear the stories of Christian-Muslim coexistence from beyond Europe was made and an appreciation of the positive *and* negative realities of interfaith engagement.[75] This commitment to the lived reality of the interface between Christianity and Islam was institutionalised for the Communion in 1998 through the responsibilities given to the Network for Inter Faith Concerns (NIFCON), that had been established in 1993, to disseminate such information and resources. Additionally, the recurring motifs of Christian Presence, hospitality and embassy, that run through *The Way of Dialogue* and originate in the missionary theologies of Kenneth Cragg and Max Warren among others, were presented anew to embrace both dialogue and evangelism.

75 This is confirmed by Philip Lewis' 2001 essay on Christian-Muslim relations in Britain where he remarks that 'The issue of equitable treatment of Muslim minorities in Europe and Christian minorities in parts of the Muslim world is perhaps the most pressing concern threatening to sour relations between Muslims and Christians,' in an argument for the necessity of a local *and* global perspective: Philip Lewis, 'Christian-Muslim relations in Britain: between the local and the global', p. 196.

Lambeth Conference 2008: Generous Love

A significant backdrop to the publication of the 2008 document, *Generous Love*, is the Church of England initiative, *Presence and Engagement*. In 2005, the report *Presence and Engagement: the churches' task in a multi Faith society* was issued by the Mission and Public Affairs Council of the Church of England. The Presence and Engagement Task Group, supported by the Church of England's national Adviser on Inter Faith Relations has superseded IFCG as the focus for the equipping of the Church of England's interfaith encounter and this report was an important preliminary resource for the drafting of *Generous Love*. It is surely no coincidence that the motif of Christian Presence, so significant in the missionary theologies of Kenneth Cragg, John V. Taylor and Max Warren, is used in the title of this report, and understood in incarnational terms through the coupling with engagement, relevant to context and local realities.[76] The report is especially focussed on the actual contexts of parishes facing a significant proportion of other faiths, reflecting on their understanding of that 'presence and engagement'. Utilising 2001 census statistics, the first British census to ask questions about religion and thus to be able to properly assess the nature of contemporary religious diversity, an important picture is drawn of the opportunities and challenges of Church of England parish life in a post 9-11 world. A crucial observation from the report is that 'the presence of significant other Faith communities is now one of the major contexts in the ministry of the Church. At the time of the 2001 census, some 900 parishes out of a total of 13,000 had more than 10 percent of their population as people of other Faiths than Christian and this figure is now higher and growing.'[77] These 900 parishes represent 23 percent of the total population of all English parishes and 32 percent of these parishes have over 25 percent of their population as people of other faiths. What is clearly discernible is a shift from the perceived novelty of religious diversity in the 1970s and 1980s to the settled reality of differing faiths in English parishes, of which the Christian faith is frequently now in the minority.

The report draws attention to the fragility of many of these parishes with a significant faith other, reflected in often weak financial

76 *Presence and Engagement: the churches' task in a multi Faith society*, Church House Publishing, London 2005, p. 8, commended by General Synod in July 2005.

77 *Presence and Engagement*, p. 27.

sustainability but also in the diversity and vigour of 'presence and engagement'. The range of encounters and approaches is interrogated and the sensitivity of 'conversion' particularly noted in relations with Muslims: a word that 'captures the worst fears and the highest hopes of many people whether of faith or secular. But it is not a word that can be banished, nor is the concept behind it one that can be removed from the place it occupies at the heart of Christianity and Islam.'[78]

The guiding principles of the report process, 'identity', 'confidence' and 'sustainability', seem to have freed respondents in providing a snapshot of genuine complexity in the Church of England's local encounters with other faiths. The stories of celebration are there alongside the vulnerability and fear, and there is a huge spectrum of approach offered (dialogue, evangelism, community action) in a spirit of catholicity. The diversity of encounters with Islam across the Lambeth Communion that was asserted in response to *The Way of Dialogue* seems to be a feature *within* the Church of England and not just a matter of Anglican experience globally. That identity, confidence and sustainability should constitute the guiding principles of *Presence and Engagement* also redresses something of the perceived imbalance of earlier approaches to interfaith relations which set the onus on the Church's need to change in the encounter with the faith other.

Generous Love: the truth of the Gospel and the call to dialogue, issued by the Anglican Communion Network for Inter Faith Concerns (NIFCON) was particularly attentive to the local stories of the *Presence and Engagement* report. So, while a function of the Lambeth Communion, it has as its origins the diverse realities of the Church of England experiences at the parochial level. The document was discussed at the Lambeth Conference 2008 and brought to and commended by General Synod in January 2009.[79] Archbishop Rowan Williams comments, in his foreword, on the strategic context of Vatican II for *Generous Love*, while noting that 'the situation has moved on, both in theology and in practical relations between communities.'[80] For Michael Ipgrave, the primary author of *Generous Love*, the optimism apparent in *Nostra Aetate* has been replaced by a markedly less sanguine approach to

78 *Presence and Engagement*, p. 50.

79 *Generous Love: the truth of the Gospel and the call to dialogue: a report from the Anglican Communion Network for Inter Faith Concerns: an Anglican theology of inter faith relations*, Anglican Consultative Council, London, 2008.

80 *Generous Love*, from the foreword by Rowan Williams, p. v.

inter-religious relations.[81] Religiously motivated violence, as epitomised by the totemic tragedy of 9-11, has influenced an approach that is decidedly pastoral in facing the diverse realities of Christian-Muslim experience. In terms of a theological shift, Catholic documents since Vatican II have certainly given a greater attention to the subject of proclamation[82] while the 1990 collection of essays in *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions* is emblematic of a broad front countering novel schema of theologies of religions.[83] These shifts make *Generous Love* an important indicator of Anglican theologies behind some of the changes we have observed since *TTID* and *The Way of Dialogue*. Within this foreword and in the subtitle to *Generous Love*, there is already an express commitment to both 'the truth of the Gospel and the call to dialogue'; 'that double conviction that we must regard dialogue as an imperative from Our Lord, yet must also witness consistently to the unique gift we have been given in Christ.'[84]

The document is explicitly theological rather than practical, seeking to present a Christian basis for relations with other faiths but not striving to formulate a scheme of the theology of religions in the way that *TTID* sought to do in 1984. What is immediately apparent, though, is the Trinitarian language of the theology. The Trinitarian language betrays the wider trajectory of ecumenism with its mutual indebtedness across the ecclesial traditions and a self-conscious ecclesiology in identifying the Christian response to the other as an outflow of the participation in the life of God within the body of Christ. It 'begins with God' and

81 In assessing the immediate context to *Generous Love* I am indebted to Michael Ipgrave who has kindly conveyed the influences (textual, theological and political), informing his drafting of the document in a conversation dated 29 March 2010. It is worth noting, in the light of the subsequent analysis, that Michael Ipgrave's PhD reflected upon the significance of the doctrine of the trinity to the earliest Christian-Muslim encounters. See Michael Ipgrave, *Trinity and Inter Faith Dialogue: Plenitude and Plurality*, Peter Lang Publishing Inc., Bern, 2003.

82 Jacques Dupuis expresses his 'disillusionment and dissatisfaction' with a perceived hardening of position towards other religions within conciliar documents in the forty years since Vatican II, hoping that some of the ambiguities of *Nostra Aetate* would have led to a more pluralistic assessment of God's revelation: Jacques Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, p. 66.

83 *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, ed. Gavin D'Costa, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1990. Significantly, this collection contains essays by Rowan Williams and John Milbank that contradict the pluralism of John Hick and argue for a more ecclesio-centric vision of religions.

84 *Generous Love*, from the foreword by Rowan Williams, p. v.

the 'mystery of his being' that 'through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth the One God has made known his triune reality as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.'[85] This 'beginning with God' uses phraseology from the *Guidelines for Interfaith Encounter in the Churches of the Porvoo Communion* with the Anglican Communion of 2003.[86] Michael Ipgrave, the primary author of *Generous Love*, was keen to build on the pattern of the Porvoo guidelines in articulating theology out of a prior understanding of the nature of God rather than the customary Anglican pattern of a beginning in context. Interestingly, an important drive behind *Generous Love*[87] was to present a document to the Conference of 2008 that affirmed the mission of the Church and that could command widespread assent, in contrast to the internal disagreements over sexuality. As such, the significance of *Generous Love* is arguably deepened by the sense that it is not an attempt to break new ground but is a genuine consolidation of Anglican principles for interfaith relations.

In echoes of the *perichoresis* theology more familiar to Eastern Orthodox spirituality, the work of God in the world and across cultures and religions is set in the 'boundless life and perfect love which abide forever in the heart of the Trinity' and 'are sent out into the world in a mission of renewal and restoration in which we are called to share.'[88] Where *TTID* was accused of using the Holy Spirit as an unbiblical, freewheeling motif for discerning truth in other religious traditions, *Generous Love* articulates a pneumatology that repeatedly references back to the Father God and the revelation of that fatherhood in Jesus, the Son of God.

It is revealing that Lucinda Mosher's analysis of the 1988 Lambeth Conference includes observations on reports written by Rowan Williams in parallel to but separate to the interfaith reports: 'Communion with God and the Life of the Christ' and 'Christ and

85 *Generous Love*, p. 1.

86 www.cofe.anglican.org/info/interfaith/porvooguidelines.doc downloaded on 12 May 2010. The Porvoo Churches are those who have signed an agreement to 'share a common life in mission and service' from Anglican and Evangelical-Lutheran traditions, generally across northern Europe. See http://www.porvoochurches.org/whatis/index.php downloaded 30 July 2010.

87 For Michael Ipgrave, this is about 'setting interfaith within the language and context of mission: mission understood in an inclusive sense.' Quoting from a conversation with Michael Ipgrave dated 29 March 2010.

88 *Generous Love*, p. 1.

Culture' together with an introduction to the concept of the report of the Communion as a whole. Mosher observes that his reports are 'replete' with 'Eastern Orthodox theological flavour' in talk of us being caught up into a 'great pattern of relation' in the Trinitarian revelation.[89] This language finds resonance in section 8 of *Generous Love*, on 'sending and abiding' where it is affirmed that 'our relationships with people of different faiths must be grounded theologically in our understanding of the reality of the God who is Trinity. Father, Son and Spirit abide in one another in a life which is 'a dynamic, eternal and unending movement of self-giving."[90] This latter reference is extracted from *The Church of the Triune God—The Cyprus Agreed Statement of the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue* (ACC, 2006), II.5.[91] It seems more than coincidental that the 'characteristic idioms'[92] of Rowan Williams' Orthodox Trinitarianism observed at the Lambeth Conference of 1988 are apparent in this strategic statement of Anglican interfaith theology while he is Archbishop of Canterbury. Where the concept of the Trinity is mentioned merely as one area of disagreement between Christians and Muslims in *The Way of Dialogue* and is a potential source for explaining the activities of God within other religious traditions in *TTID*, the Trinity provides the whole shape for Christian relationship with the other and infuses all aspects of *Generous Love*.

Generous Love offers a brief perspective on what is distinctively Anglican for a Trinitarian theology of religions, recognising the plurality in unity characteristic of the roots of Anglicanism underpinning the

89 Mosher, 'Christ and People of Other Faiths', p. 6.

90 *Generous Love*, p. 15.

91 *The Church of the Triune God—The Cyprus Agreed Statement of the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue* (ACC, 2006), II.5. downloadable from http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/ecumenical/dialogues/orthodox/index.cfm accessed 1 November 2010. The modern period of Anglican-Orthodox ecumenical dialogues (known as the 'Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Discussions'—A/OJDD) began in 1973 and resulted in the *Moscow Agreed Statement* of 1976. The second phase of dialogue resulted in the *Dublin Agreed Statement* of 1984. The third phase of doctrinal dialogue began in 1989 under the newly configured title of 'The International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue' (ICAOTD). This phase of dialogue has sought to explore the nature of the Church in the light of the doctrine of the Trinity and it is out of this process that the *Cyprus Agreed Statement* was drafted in 2006 and acts as an important weather-vane of Trinitarian ecclesiology for the purposes of *Generous Love*.

92 Mosher, 'Christ and People of Other Faiths', p. 6.

affirmation of God's work in the world but also a Christian unity that avoids sectarianism.[93] This makes for a commitment to local context and an attention to the particularities of time in the light of God's unfolding providence.[94]

The significance of scripture is reaffirmed as crucial to Anglican method, the practice of 'scriptural reasoning' particularly noted as an example in this regard[95] and the 'Building Bridges' programme of Christian-Muslim scriptural reflection implicitly endorsed as a necessary endeavour. Though *Generous Love* articulates a theology of interfaith relations and makes no attempt to evaluate specific religious traditions, the specificity of Christian-Jewish relations is underlined, and *The Way of Dialogue*'s reminder that we must 'reject any view of Judaism which sees it as a living fossil, simply superseded by Christianity.'[96]

The variety of Anglican experiences especially with Islam is mentioned, from the stories of Lambeth 1998 to NIFCON consultations on 'mission and dialogue' in Bangalore, India (2003), and on faith and citizenship in Kaduna, Nigeria (2007). There is no attempt to foreclose the nature of the Christian encounter with other faiths, and specifically with Islam, nor to give particular emphasis on one practice at the expense of the other, save to encourage a dynamic 'presence *and* engagement'. The 'two poles' of this presence and engagement utilise two of the most persistent themes for Anglican encounters with other faiths, and originating in the theology of the great missionary scholar of Islam, Bishop Kenneth Cragg: embassy and hospitality, and reaffirmed as we have seen by Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali. The combined 'going out' and 'welcoming in' are seen from within the Trinitarian dynamic around which the Eucharist is both symbol and source of that self-giving love.[97] There seems to be a very clear break from the casting of the Church as host that is apparent in earlier documents and the hospitality metaphor recast so that the Church actually has a responsibility as *both host and guest*. Thus, 'the giving and receiving of

93 *Generous Love*, pp. 3-4.

94 A creative analogy is made here between the theology of the Church of England and English common law 'with its appeal to precedents at the same time as its openness to new applications in new cases,' *Generous Love*, p. 17, n. 10.

95 The key text referenced is *A Handbook for Scriptural Reasoning*, ed. D. F. Ford and C. C. Pecknold, Blackwell, Oxford, 2006.

96 *Generous Love*, quoted on p. 5.

97 *Generous Love*, pp. 13-14.

hospitality is a most powerful sign that those who were strangers are reconciled to one another as friends.'[98] For *Generous Love*, the Church also has to learn to be a guest, understanding that the real host of our shared space is Christ the Lord. There are echoes here of the theology of religions articulated by the Jesuit scholar Michael Barnes, who espouses a *dialogical* theology, or comparative theology, that reflects from within tradition in the experience of the encounter with the other. Thus, Michael Barnes can say, in the spirit of *Generous Love*, 'The mediation which Christians practise is motivated by the Spirit of love, in imitation of God's own action of welcome and hospitality towards all people… To put it another way, God is himself both host and guest.'[99] For Barnes, as with *Generous Love*, relations with the other are posited within the Church's understanding of God's relationality and not abstracted to an objective schema of religions.

Clare Amos[100] hints at this dual track of Christian hospitality in her reflections on *Generous Love*, *A Common Word* and Rowan Williams' *sharia* law speech. For her, the ongoing establishment of the Church of England presupposes at least *some* identification with the role of 'host', akin to Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' picture of the 'country-house' model of religious diversity.[101] Yet, there are also times when the Church of England is called upon to act generously and give away privilege, as exemplified in Rowan Williams' *sharia* law speech in the proposal that legal status be given to some aspects of Islamic law. It must be made clear that this proposal is made by the Archbishop of a Church of England 'established by law' and involves a theoretical broadening out of elements of legal privilege to another religious community. Arguably this analysis of the Church as host still gives insufficient attention to the Church as a genuine 'guest', where the power and privilege may

98 *Generous Love*, p. 13.

99 M. Barnes SJ, *Theology and the Dialogue of Religions*, CUP, Cambridge 2003, p. 192.

100 Clare Amos is the Director of Theological Studies for the Anglican Communion, and Co-ordinator for the Network for Inter-faith Concerns for the Anglican Communion ('NIFCON') (2001-).

101 J. Sacks, *The Home We Build Together*, Continuum, London 2007. Sacks offers three models for religious diversity. The 'hotel' would be the picture best suited to multiculturalism, where groups are present in one place but do not interact and have little attachment to the common place of residence. The 'country-house' assumes one dominant culture that welcomes and includes the 'guests' or strangers. For Sacks, the 'home we build together' presents the best and most suitable aspiration for Britain's contemporary situation.

well be located elsewhere. In some very real senses, the Church, too, is residing in a country-house and beholden to an 'other'. What *Generous Love* suggests is a Christian understanding of inter-faith relations where the Church is *simultaneously* both host and guest. Within this dynamic, God is the only host,[102] as Barnes notes, and Kenneth Cragg's vision of Christian hospitality recalled: a vision that encompasses the embassy of Christ, to 'decide by the Gospel as the people of the Gospel must.'[103]

In what must be a reference to some of the Christian experiences of Islamic majority, reciprocity in interfaith relations globally is asserted but generous love patterned in love for enemies that does not seek retaliation. A clear statement of identification with the suffering Church is offered too in the imperative to solidarity and support of 'Christians who have to witness to their faith in difficult circumstances.'[104] This statement provides evidence that the intentional collation of stories of Christian-Muslim encounter since 1998 from across the Anglican Communion are indeed informing theological reflection.

Generous Love is a remarkable document that provides a Trinitarian shape for an on-going shift in formal Anglican approaches to other faiths and to Islam, in particular. There is an attempt to cast that in an Anglican distinctive that embraces diversity in unity, is contextual and rooted in scripture. This diversity models an approach to other faiths based on embassy and hospitality, affirming the breadth of mission in dialogue and evangelism. The Church is both to be host and guest in this economy: receiving, learning and being challenged, as well as reaching out, proclaiming and challenging in turn.

The Ecclesial-Turn in Interfaith Relations

The Anglican development towards establishing interfaith relations from an ecclesial starting point has to be seen in a wider context of

102 Christopher Lamb, speaking of Kenneth Cragg: 'The language of hospitality is always in his mind: 'Are we not ourselves the guests of God in Christ?'', C. Lamb, 'Kenneth Cragg's Understanding of Christian Mission to Islam', in ed. David Thomas with Clare Amos, *A Faithful Presence: Essays for Kenneth Cragg*, Melisende, London, 2003, p. 124.

103 K. Cragg, *Muhammad and the Christian: A Question of Response*, Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd, London, 1984, p. 139.

104 *Generous Love*, p. 10.

parallel moves. Luke Bretherton has observed the trend of an 'ecclesial-turn' that asserts that the Church 'should not be policed or determined by some external discourse.'[105] In the realm of political theology, Bretherton recognises, in the works of Oliver O'Donovan, Stanley Hauerwas and William Cavanaugh, very different contributions to a trend that would question any subsuming of Christian theology into imposed categories from sociology or political theory. This process is being mirrored here by the Anglican Communion with regard to inter-religious relations. Where earlier Anglican documents suggested that the challenge of other faiths might provoke a new scheme of theologies of religions, an 'external discourse' shaping the Church's vision, *Generous Love* begins with God and the consequent nature of the Church within the life of God. What this turn reflects, then, is not a *new* innovation in theology but a *recovery* of inherited traditions: a genuine *ressourcement*.

This *ressourcement* is evidenced by the appeal to Eastern Orthodox spirituality in *Generous Love*, and the inheritance of the Church Fathers in their emphasis on the Church's participation in the godhead. For the Catholic Church during the Vatican II process, this *ressourcement* was famously enabled by the *nouvelle théologie* school of Henri de Lubac, Jean Daniélou, and Yves Congar among others. Church, for von Balthasar, for example, 'is not a *what*'.[106] The Church, rather, is the body of Christ and is formed in the eucharist as a sacramental presence to the world. Similarly, de Lubac states that 'The Church is the body of Christ. It is pre-eminently so, and it is so in all truth.'[107] Where *Generous Love* describes the Church's inter-religious relations as emanating from the Church's participation in 'a dynamic, eternal and unending movement of self-giving' within the trinity, it is in complete accord with the Eucharistic, self-understanding of the *ressourcement* of Vatican II. This participatory vision of the life of the Church can both affirm the unique sacrament that is the body of Christ and the presence of God in the world through the incarnation. Thus, Bryan Hollon can say of de Lubac that 'like the exegetical approach of the Fathers', he 'serves both to draw the Church into the mystery of Christ and salvation history

105 L. Bretherton, 'Introduction: Oliver O'Donovan's Political Theology and the Liberal Imperative', *Political Theology*, Vol. 9, Issue 3 (2008), pp. 265-271, p. 269.
106 J. O'Donnell, *Hans Urs von Balthasar,* Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1992, p. 15.
107 H. de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*, SCM Press, London, 2006, p. 75.

while extending the reach of the Church into the fullness of Christ where all of humanity is reconciled and redeemed.'[108]

The implications for this retrieval of patristic orthodoxy for Vatican II was a confidence in the eschatological nature of the Church to *re-present* Christ[109] in a plural world with a lively sensitivity to God's redemptive activity *beyond* the Church. In turn, the direct influence of the *nouvelle théologie* school on Vatican II was energised and complemented by the recovery of the Church Fathers within the Eastern Orthodox tradition itself.[110] In the 1920s a wave of Russian Orthodox theologians and philosophers came to the West from Russia and championed an Orthodox spirituality that had had to contend with the privations of Soviet secularism.[111] Georges Florovsky (d. 1979), a key *émigré* priest, had called for a 'neo-Patristic synthesis',[112] a move that was taken up by Vladimir Lossky in his seminal work *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*.[113] When *Generous Love* highlights the significance of 'the presence of Christ's body'[114] among other religions and how this is to be sustained, there is a clear allusion to Afanasiev's clarion call that 'the Eucharist makes the Church'.[115] Such a vision does not relativise the importance of the Church to the world as suggested in *The Way of Dialogue,* which offers a much more diluted sense of the

108 B. C. Hollon, *Everything is Sacred: Spiritual Exegesis in the Political Theology of Henri de Lubac,* James Clarke & Co., Cambridge, 2010, p. 5.

109 John Milbank sees de Lubac's ecclesiology as re-appropriating the early Church Fathers' understanding of the eucharist as a 're-presentation of the historical body of Christ' as opposed to a 'derivation from clerical power and a present miraculous spectacle' that it became after the 1300s, J. Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Debate concerning the Supernatural,* SCM Press, London, 2005.

110 See T. Rowlands, *Culture and the Thomist Tradition after Vatican II,* Routledge, London, 2003.

111 See S. Hugh-Donovan, 'Olivier Clément on Orthodox theological thought and ecclesiology in the West', *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, Vol. 10, Nos. 2-3 (May-August 2010), pp. 116-129, for an excellent overview of the influence of Olivier Clément, an important French convert to Russian Orthodoxy, in the context of this *émigré* theological movement

112 *Ibid*., p. 120

113 V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church,* James Clarke, Cambridge, 1957. Rowan Williams' own interest can be traced back to his PhD thesis on the theology of Vladimir Lossky: Williams, Rowan D. 'The Theology of Vladimir Nikolaievich Lossky: an Exposition and Critique' (D. Phil. Thesis, Oxford University, 1975).

114 *Generous Love*, p. 9.

115 See A. Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora. Church, Fathers, Eucharist in Nikolai Afanas'ev, 1893-1966,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008.

Church's importance: 'Christian faith focuses quite naturally on Jesus the Christ and his Church. However, both these realities can and should be seen along with the hope for, and the horizon of, the Kingdom of God.'[116] Anglicanism's reflections on its relations with other faiths have evidently reflected a shift from the Church that is oriented to Jesus Christ as *hope for Christians* beneath a horizon of the Kingdom of God as hope for the world, to a Church that is sacramentally Jesus Christ as *a sign for Christians and non-Christians alike*.

The boldness of the ecclesial-turn is tempered, though, by the corresponding mysticism of this Eastern inheritance:

> It is not for us to set limits to the work of God, for the energy of the Holy Spirit cannot be confined … .When we meet these qualities in our encounter with people of other faiths, we must engage joyfully with the Spirit's work in their lives and their communities.[117]

Thus, the openness of Vatican II, which also found expression in *The Way of Dialogue*, is reaffirmed but is in no way in contradiction to the ecclesial-turn. For the Eastern Orthodox tradition, there is the mysticism both of how the humanity of the Church can become participants in the life of the Trinity, the *theosis* talked of by the Church Fathers, and the encounter with God that can take place in other religions.

For Sergei Bulgakov, one of the celebrated Russian Orthodox *émigrés*, the doctrine of Holy Wisdom, of the *Sophia* in the work of the Church Father Maximus the Confessor in particular,[118] embodied this tension of incarnation and pneumatology from within a Eucharistic ecclesiology. *Sophiology* was 'a way of explaining how the Church can both be characterized by fullness and yet at the same time to be a pilgrim people. The Church can be both if she in some sense embodies not only the eternal divine Wisdom but also the creaturely wisdom that is still in process of becoming.'[119] Bulgakov found resonances of

116 *The Way of Dialogue*, p. 302.
117 *Generous Love*, p. 2.
118 See A. Nichols, *Light from the East. Authors and Themes in Orthodox Theology,* Sheed & Ward, London, 1995.
119 A. Nichols, *Wisdom from Above: A Primer in the Theology of Father Sergei Bulgakov,* Gracewing, Leominster 2005, p.199. See also *A Bulgakov Anthology,* eds J. Pain

this ecclesiology within Anglicanism such that he could advocate the imminent union of Orthodoxy and Anglicanism.[120] Donald Allchin (d. 2010), an Anglican cleric committed to the retrieval of patristic resources and constructive relations with the Orthodox Church, finds much within Anglicanism that resonated with this tradition. Allchin recognises in Richard Hooker something of the *theosis* of the Eastern Church; of Christ 'making us such as he himself is.'[121] As Allchin himself admits, this is not to attribute to Hooker an unlikely engagement with the *theosis* theology of a Church Father such as Maximus the Confessor. Rather, it highlights the inter-ecclesial resonances of seeing the Church as at once incarnational and anticipatory of God's providence in an economy of grace within the world. The dialogue between Anglicanism and Orthodoxy, then, offers for Allchin a rich seam to explore the comprehensiveness of the Church as a complement to 'how God himself in Christ is at work in varying ways in all the religions and cultures of all mankind.'[122] In Lancelot Andrewes, Allchin also finds echoes of Eastern *theosis*, and the unifying mystery of the Church. Proving the mutualities of these resonances, Nicolas Lossky, the son of Vladimir Lossky, wrote in praise of Lancelot Andrewes (b. 1555) and his kindred spirit of ecclesiology in what is a classic account of the Anglican divine.[123] Lancelot Andrewes was a pivotal figure in

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and N. Zernov, SPCK, London 1976 and R. Williams, *Sergeii Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology,* T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1999.

120 S. Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, Revised Translation, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Syracuse, NY, 1988, p. 191. It is worth noting that the Theological Academy of St Sergius in Paris, founded in 1925 and so vital to the Russian émigré movement was, in part, financed by the Church of England, through the leadership of Bishop Charles Gore. The corresponding Anglican-Russian Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, founded in 1928, has become a strategic confluence of Anglican-Orthodox thought since then, stimulating the vision of Anglican figures such as Donald Allchin, Eric Mascall and Rowan Williams. See E. C. Miller, *Toward a Fuller Vision: Orthodoxy and the Anglican Experience,* Morehouse Barlow, Wilton, 1984, for a full account of the mutualities of Orthodoxy and Anglicanism within leading Anglican apologists from Lancelot Andrewes through to Bishop Michael Ramsey. Also, Charles Miller and Anthony O'Mahony, 'Guest Editorial', *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, Vol. 10, Nos. 2-3 (May-August. 2010), pp. 82-89, p. 84.

121 Quoted in A. M. Allchin, *The Kingdom of Love & Knowledge: The Encounter between Orthodoxy & the West,* Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1976, p. 97.

122 Allchin, A. M. *The Kingdom of Love & Knowledge*, p. 162.

123 A. M. Allchin, 'Lancelot Andrewes', in *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism*, ed. Geoffrey Rowell, IKON Productions Ltd, Wantage, 1992, pp. 145-64 and see N. Lossky, *Lancelot Andrewes the Preacher (1555-1626): The Origins*

the retrieval of patristic thought for the nascent Church of England. What Allchin describes as the 'ecstatic movement of the heart and the mind'[124] in communion with God held its own appeal, in turn, to the Orthodox tradition and to Nicolas Lossky. Nicholas Lossky has recently returned to this theme of the mutual indebtedness of Anglicanism and Orthodoxy. Acknowledging the 'inseparable character of the Word of God and participation in the Sacrament of the Eucharist' articulated within the *Thirty Nine Articles*,[125] Lossky asserts what seems to be a striking feature of the ecclesial-turn of Anglican interfaith relations:

> The Holy Trinity should never be regarded as something like a mathematical formula that is reserved for academic, dogmatic, or even worse, 'systematic' theologians. The Holy Trinity concerns every aspect of every Christian's life. It is, or should be, the prototype of our relations within our community, our congregation, the gathering of the People of God.[126]

There seems to be a gift offered by the mysticism of Orthodoxy, true across the Church as a whole and integral to Anglican identity, which asserts that 'The word of grace is not an ideology of Christ. It also represents a Christianity which knows that the principle of incarnation is not limited to *the* incarnation … a Christianity which may rightly call itself catholic … proclaims the joy of *all* creation.'[127] The Trinitarian life of God, then, is no mere incidental doctrine that is problematic to relations with Islam but the very shape that both asserts the Eucharistic presence of God *in* the Church and *beyond* the Church. Thus, Lossky can define Anglican comprehensiveness not as a bland universalising notion but as a form of catholicity, 'the very fullness of that truth' ('Jesus Christ himself who is The Truth'), 'understood as a life witnessing to the fullness of the Revelation and that is a life of

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of the Mystical Theology of the Church of England, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991.

124 Allchin, 'Lancelot Andrewes', p. 154.

125 N. Lossky, 'Orthodoxy and the Western European Reformation tradition: a memoir', *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, Vol. 10, Nos. 2-3 (May-August 2010), pp. 90-96, p. 93.

126 N. Lossky, 'Orthodoxy and the Western European Reformation tradition', p. 95.

127 A. M. Allchin, *The Joy of all Creation: An Anglican Meditation on the Place of Mary*, new edn, Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1993, pp. 189-90.

union with God.'[128] The implications of this 'ecclesial-consciousness' for Lossky are plain:

> I read the texts published by the World Council of Churches and they seem more interested in inter-religious dialogue. We were opposing the trend which consists in putting Jesus Christ between brackets and in speaking about One God in order to be able to dialogue with Jews and Muslims.[129]

Generous Love does indeed proffer an 'ecclesial-consciousness' that refuses the bracketing of the Trinity.

A similar sensibility of Eucharistic centring can be found in the Anglican cleric Eric Mascall (d. 1993), who draws from de Lubac, Vladimir Lossky and the Church Fathers to advocate an 'openness of being' which is given authority in Anglicanism by the Thomism of Richard Hooker.[130] Allchin, like Mascall, finds these resonances within the Anglicanism of F. D. Maurice, the Oxford Movement, William Temple, and Michael Ramsey.[131] Within these latter movements lies a thorough commitment of the Church of England to social responsibility and the discovery of God's grace within the margins of society. What is evident is that the spirituality that asserts the incarnational reality of the Church is compelled to look for signs of grace in the margins. It is thus, perhaps, no coincidence that the neo-patristic wave of the Russian *émigrés* was birthed from within the encounter with the aggressive atheism of communism. Thus, Bulgakov, Evdokimov and Berdiaeff, in particular, provide a rich Eucharistic theology that engages deeply with Marxism.[132] Similarly, we might add that Vatican II's own *ressourcement*

128 Nicholas Lossky, 'The Anglican Contribution to the Ecumenical Age: A Non-Anglican View', *Anglican Theological Review*, Vol. 80, No. 2 (1998), pp. 250-255, p. 251.

129 Nicholas Lossky, 'An Interview', *One in Christ*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Winter 2010), pp. 101-109, p. 108. Lossky, referencing his father's work, contrasts 'ecclesial-consciousness' with 'self-consciousness', the former being Orthodoxy's particular gift to the Church, p. 104.

130 E. Mascall, *The Openness of Being,* Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1971.

131 Allchin, 'Lancelot Andrewes', p. 162.

132 See R. Williams, *Sergeii Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology* and 'Bread in the Wilderness: The Monastic Ideal in Thomas Merton and Paul Evdokimov', in *Merton & Hesychasm: The Prayer of the Heart, the Eastern Church*, eds B. Dieker and J. Montaldo, Fons Vitae, Louisville, 2003, pp. 225-234.

was also a direct result of the challenges of atheism, modernity, and ecclesial and religious diversity. As we have already noted in the Anglican Communion's change of tone with regard to interfaith relations in recent years, there is a clearer appreciation of a shift in the Church's assumed role of dominance that seems to be a significant context for the ecclesial-turn.

The Cistercian monastic, Thomas Merton, was an exemplar of someone who embodied the fusion of ecclesial responsibility and generous mysticism and is arguably a key figure bridging the inheritance of the Eastern tradition.[133] According to Rowan Williams, Merton was able to root himself in his own tradition while being 'genuinely open to others'.[134] Famously, Merton's encounters with Buddhism and then Sufism, generated an expansive view of God's providence that was yet informed by his own Christian monasticism: 'he was brought face to face with the unfamiliar world of Islam, and he found that he was at home, not in spite of his monastic way of life, but because of it.'[135] Thus, French Catholicism shaped Merton's spirituality but, as Rowan Williams has observed, 'it would not be what it is without his devoted and careful study of Greek patristic thought and the Desert Fathers.'[136] For Sidney Griffith, Merton dug deep within his own tradition to respond to the Islamic call to worship of the one God in ways that echo the vocations of Massignon, Wilfred Cantwell Smith and, importantly, Kenneth Cragg.[137]

Again, it is an ecumenical vista, embracing West and East, and a self-conscious ecclesiology that is providing creative possibilities for the engagement with other faiths. Confirming this stream of Eucharistic ecclesiology as it informs the encounter with Islam, we must note the coincidence of Donald Allchin's friendship with Merton and

133 See the collection of essays entitled *Merton & Hesychasm* … for examples of and analyses of this pivotal figure's Eastern-inspired mysticism.

134 R. Williams, 'Bread in the Wilderness', p. 175.

135 Agnes Wilkins, 'Thomas Merton and Islam', *The Merton Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Advent 2005), pp. 8-23, p. 20. Merton's own appreciation of Lancelot Andrewes draws the circle of Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican traditions that resource an inclusive spirituality. See, 'Can We Do Wales Then?'. *The Merton Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Eastertide 2006), pp. 2-10, p. 5.

136 R. Williams, 'Bread in the Wilderness', p. 175.

137 Sidney H. Griffith, 'Mystics and Sufi Masters: Thomas Merton and Dialogue between Christians and Muslims', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (July 2004), pp. 299-316, p. 309.

the considerable work Allchin has done in synthesising an Anglican perspective that draws from Merton's monasticism and Orthodoxy.[138] Acknowledging Rowan Williams' friendship with Allchin, there is a notable network of eucharistically minded theologians and mystics affirming the ecclesial-turn in Anglican interfaith relations.[139]

Anthony Padovano sees in Merton someone who anticipated the changes of Vatican II and is a symbolic representative of a Eucharistic ecclesiology in full engagement with the world: 'The Decree and Declarations on Christian unity, religious liberty and world religions encourage what Merton instinctively endorsed more than a decade before they became Church policy.'[140] We have already noted Louis Massignon's influence on Vatican II,[141] and Massignon was to have a lasting impact on Merton through correspondence, pointing him to Sufism and the particular challenges and gifts within Islamic mysticism.[142] The reconciling work of Vatican II that Merton

138 See, for example, A. M. Allchin, 'The Worship of the Whole Creation: Merton and the Eastern Fathers', in *Merton & Hesychasm …*, pp, 103-20 and 'Our Lives a Powerful Pentecost: Merton's Meeting with Russian Christianity', *op. cit.*, pp.121-40.

139 Rowan Williams preached at Allchin's funeral in December, 2010 and the ecumenical appeal of Allchin's writings and ministry is illustrated by his obituary written by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, another friend of Rowan Williams, in *The Tablet* on 5 February 2011.

140 Anthony Padovano, 'Thomas Merton's Enduring Influence', *The Merton Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Eastertide, 2008), pp. 4-11, p. 5.

141 For further material on Massignon and Vatican II see Anthony O'Mahony, '"Our Common Fidelity to Abraham is What Divides": Christianity and Islam in the Life and Thought of Louis Massignon', in *Catholics in Interreligious Dialogue: Monasticism, Theology and Spirituality*, eds Anthony O'Mahony & Peter Bowe, Gracewing, Leominster, 2006, pp. 151-92 and 'The Influence of the Life and Thought of Louis Massignon on the Catholic Church's Relations with Islam', *The Downside Review*, Vol. 126, No. 444 (2008), pp. 169-92, 'Louis Massignon as Priest: Eastern Christianity and Islam', *Sobernost*, incorporating *Eastern Churches Review*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (2007), pp. 6-41. Both articles note a similar attention to 'hospitality' by Massignon that is evident in Kenneth Cragg and important to the Anglican development of relations with Islam. Also, see Sidney H. Griffth, 'Bediüzzaman Said Nursi and Louis Massignon in Pursuit of God's Word: A Muslim and a Christian on the Straight Path', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (January 2008), pp. 5-16 and David E. Burrell, 'Mind and Heart at the Service of Muslim-Christian Understanding: Louis Massignon as Trail Blazer', *The Muslim World*, Vol. LXXXVIII, No. 3-4 (July-October, 1998), pp. 268-278. The latter article refers to Massignon's 'open secret of interfaith understanding: friendship celebrated in hospitality', a motif so redolent of Kenneth Cragg and *Generous Love*.

142 Agnes Wilkins, 'Thomas Merton and Islam'.

exemplified, Massignon pioneered and Jean Daniélou drafted under Massignon's influence, was a missionary vocation that involved, for Anthony O'Mahony 'one finding Christ even more than preaching him.'[143] This phrase has echoes of the 'Presence' missiology of Kenneth Cragg, Max Warren and John V. Taylor that has characterised many of the formative Anglican documents on other faiths, as we have seen. It seems that the proclamatory impulse of Christian mission, when properly open to a Trinitarian economy of gift, is not compromised by the mystery of an encounter with God in the inter-relatedness of faiths.

Tracing back the archaeology of this tradition within Catholicism further than Massignon, one notes, too, the significance of Charles de Foucauld as a missionary hermit in North Africa, continuing the mysticism of the Desert Fathers in contemporary terms.[144] Rowan Williams highlights the 'correspondence in thought' between de Foucauld and that of Merton and Evdokimov to suggest another convergence of West and East around the encounter with Islam.[145] In Anglicanism, too, Kenneth Cragg, who is arguably as pivotal a figure for Anglican Christian-Muslim relations as Louis Massignon is for the Catholic Church,[146] displays this open but tradition-centred sensibility.[147]

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143 Anthony O'Mahony, 'Our Common Fidelity to Abraham is What Divides', p. 152.

144 See Ian Latham, 'Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916): Silent witness for Jesus "in the face of Islam."' In *Catholics in Interreligious Dialogue: Monasticism, Theology and Spirituality*, pp. 47-70.

145 R. Williams, 'Bread in the Wilderness', p.192.

146 'He has been described as "the Louis Massignon of Anglicanism"', Christopher Brown, 'Kenneth Cragg on Shi'a Islam and Iran: An Anglican Theological Response to Political Islam', *ARAM*, 20 (2008), pp. 375-391, p. 378. This temper is evident throughout Cragg's many writings. Perhaps one resource that underscores Cragg's spirituality, though, is his anthology of Muslim and Christian prayers. See, *Common Prayer: A Muslim-Christian Spiritual Anthology,* Oneworld Publications, Oxford, 1999. Alongside this model of an open spirituality, we face Cragg's repeated urgings in his other works that Christians 'decide by the gospel' and have a 'cross-referenced theology'.

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It would be wrong to present uniformity across the many influences that seem to represent the 'ecclesial-turn' that I argue is informing the context for Anglican interfaith relations. The disagreements between Lossky and Bulgakov over Sophianic theology, the disparities in the traditions of Kenneth Cragg and Donald Allchin or the theological differences between de Lubac and von Balthasar should all alert one to the diversities even *within* the respective traditions. What is common, though, is the rootedness in tradition combined with openness to the other, informed by a Trinitarianism that affirms the sociality of the Christian in the life of God. Thus, Kenneth Cragg can talk about that most evangelical of Anglican missionaries, Temple Gairdner, and his contribution to Anglican thinking on Islam as presenting 'the mystery of Islam' in the same breath as Louis Massignon, and in terms consonant with the mysticism of the Eastern Church.[148] We must note, too, the legacy of another evangelical Anglican missionary, Constance Padwick (d. 1968), and her seminal *Muslim Devotions*.[149] This controversial publication 'meant to understand articulate mysticism as it was lived in the prayers and acts of devotion Islam had formed out of its own, distinctive history around Muhammad, the Qur'an and the several 'masters', or *aqtab*, of the Sufi Orders.' It was, again, forged in the desert experience, attuned to the universal challenge of Christ in the Church, but open to find God in Islam.

Conclusion

The Lambeth Conference 1988 endorsement of *The Way of Dialogue* still provides the most formal Anglican pronouncement on the nature

148 Kenneth Cragg, 'The Anglican Church', in *Religion in the Middle East: Three Religions in Concord and Conflict*, ed. A. J. Arberry, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1969, pp. 570-595, p. 593. It is worth remembering, too, a remarkable statement of Temple Gairdner from his address at the famous Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910: 'And it is this living faith (*Islam*), intense, more intimate and more comprehensive than sight that the body of Christ has to recover, in order that her witness may be with demonstration and "with the Finger of God"' at once displaying a self-consciousness global ecclesiology and sense of evangelical mission and a profound appreciation of the mystery of faith within Islam, W. H. T. Gairdner, *Edinburgh 1910: An Account and Interpretation of the World Missionary Conference*, Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, Edinburgh/London, 1910.

149 Constance Padwick, *Muslim Devotions: A Study of Prayer-Manuals in Common Use,* SPCK, London, 1961.

of Islam to the Christian faith. Following the lead of Vatican II, an appreciation of common threads between Christianity, Judaism and Islam are integral to a proper understanding of relations between the three faiths. However, the accompanying theological resource of *The Way of Dialogue* seems to push the Anglican position further than Vatican II went in misinterpreting its emphasis on the shared possibilities with Islam, the presumption of an Abrahamic underpinning and the relegation of proclamation. It must be noted that *Nostra Aetate* was also accompanied in Vatican II by *Lumen Gentium*, a statement about the unique status of the Church in the world, *Gaudium et Spes*, on the relationship of the Church to the world, and *Ad Gentes*, on the mission of the Church to the world. Bearing in mind the strategic impact of Vatican II on inter-religious dialogue globally, the controversy created by *The Way of Dialogue* suggests the uniting potential for doctrinal unity on interfaith issues when theological considerations of dialogue and proclamation are not splintered apart.[150]

A telling element of the processes and discussions of *TTID*, *The Way of Dialogue* and subsequent Lambeth discussions of interfaith concern has been the contribution of the diversity of Anglican experience globally. This experience is informed by the stories of persecution of Christians in Muslim-majority contexts, and the Anglican Communion is ceasing to baulk at addressing this challenge with Muslim leaders. The Anglican Communion has been obliged to listen to the realities of Christian-Muslim encounter in Africa and Asia in addressing its consequent theology and been encouraged to reflect on contexts of more longstanding precedent. It is perhaps beside the point whether the earlier emphasis on the need for dialogue and assumption of Christian majority and dominance in the British context ever reflected the reality or not. However, the *Presence and Engagement* report underlines the breadth of Anglican encounters with Islam within England now and their fragility and vulnerability in many instances. This is not to say that the efforts

150 Subsequent developments within the Roman Catholic Church confirm the conviction that both dialogue and proclamation are to be addressed. See the 1991 Vatican document, *Dialogue and Proclamation*, discussed with reference to Christian-Muslim relations by Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald in ' "Dialogue and Proclamation": A Reading in the Perspective of Christian-Muslim Relations' in *In Many and Diverse Ways, In Honor of Jacques Dupuis*, eds D. Kendall, and G. O'Collins, Orbis, Maryknoll, 2003.

towards dialogue are to be relaxed or that monolithic projections of Islam have disappeared. Rather, the nature of the encounter between Christians and Muslims seems to be recognisably more as equals; the 'great other', to both faiths, the secularist agenda that would reduce the potency of religious discourse in public life.

Generous Love seems to be a landmark in interfaith theology for the Anglican Communion, recognising the mutualities of relationship between faiths. It is unapologetically 'Christian' in its Trinitarianism and does not endeavour to provide the new schema for interfaith relations that was hinted at in the provisionality of *TTID* and *The Way of Dialogue*. Rather, it is consonant with an 'ecclesial-turn' that displays a responsibility to patristic sources and the influence of Catholic and Orthodox understandings of ecclesiology and the Trinity. There are efforts in both Christian and Muslim traditions to work to a theological rapprochement that can reconfigure the respective faiths to a common core.[151] The originating stories of Abraham within the Bible and the Qur'an evidently provide an ongoing resource and obligation in relationship between Christians and Muslims, perhaps in the potential of dialogues epitomised by scriptural reasoning. Whether more can be said than this without excluding the convictions of many Anglicans and presenting impediments to relations with other faiths is unclear. Certainly, though, any utilisation of the Abrahamic motif cannot be made without reference to the vital relationship of the Christian faith to the Jewish faith, as underlined by Archbishop Rowan Williams in his response to *A Common Word*.[152] As Rowan Williams says, attention to scripture, as Anglicans, will be a significant part of the process of

151 See David Thomas's assessment of this process in the work of John Hick and Mohammed Arkoun in D. Thomas, 'The Past and the Future in Christian-Muslim Relations', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (January 2007), pp. 33-42. Thomas argues instead for a 'respectful, agnostic, inquisitiveness', p. 41. The plea for a creative theological convergence between Islam and Christianity is argued by Muslim scholar Mohammed Arkoun in M. Arkoun, 'New Perspectives for a Jewish-Christian-Muslim Dialogue', *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Summer 1989), pp. 523-529.

152 R. Williams, *A Common Word for the Common Good*, 14 July 2008, available from http://www.acommonword.com downloaded 16 July 2008. It is instructive that Rowan Williams mentions Judaism where the original *A Common Word* document omitted it: 'And for Christians and Muslims together addressing our scriptures in this way, it is essential also to take account of the place of the Jewish people and of the Hebrew scriptures in our encounter, since we both look to our origins in that history of divine revelation and action.' P. 16.

theological reflection on the encounter with Islam for 'we are speaking enough of a common language.'[153]

For Anglicans, the process of negotiating the variegated co-existence with Islam across the Communion in the last thirty years seems to have begun to bring fresh realisations of what is essentially *distinctive* about the Christian faith moving from an earlier emphasis on the obligation to what is *shared* with the faith of Islam. This shift demonstrates an attentiveness to theology that is as much about self-definition as it is about relations with the other. From the tentative explorations of pluralist conceptions of theology of religions, the trajectory of the Anglican Communion suggests an ecclesial-turn that strives to root the engagement with Islam from within the self-understanding of the Church. Thus the motifs of hospitality and embassy, with the evocation of both dialogue and proclamation, have been reasserted in continuity with a distinguished tradition of scholarly Anglican missionary encounter with Islam, particularly of Bishop Kenneth Cragg. This posits the Church as both host and guest in a truly relational dialectic with Muslims. The hospitality advocated by Kenneth Cragg is framed by a high Christology; God understood in his *kenosis* on the cross. This at turns compels an open identification with Islam and Muslims while challenging the will-to-power inherent in the Medinan economy. A characteristically Anglican attention to time and context suggests that the principles of hospitality and embassy might be utterly appropriate for our post 9-11 world.

The Anglican Communion's 'ecclesial-turn' in interfaith relations, as I have argued, is part of a wider trajectory that seeks to recover the resource of the historic Church, drawing from patristic thought and the mysticism of the Orthodox tradition. This ecclesial-turn points to a confluence of influential figures, perhaps foremost of these being Archbishop Rowan Williams who exhibits such indebtedness to the Eastern Church and the monastic movement.[154] Ataullah Siddiqui, as a Muslim commentator, has observed something of a shift in tone from

153 R. Williams, *A Common Word for the Common Good*, p. 2.

154 Aside from the sources already referenced, it is worth noting Rowan Williams' popular work on the Desert Fathers, *Silence and Honey Cakes: The Wisdom of the Desert,* Lion Hudson plc, London, 2004, and his own formative, scholarly research into Vladimir Lossky. See Rupert Shortt, *Rowan's Rule: The Biography of the Archbishop,* Hodder & Stoughton, London, 2008, for information about the importance of the Russian Orthodox *émigré* movement, in particular, on Rowan Williams' formative studies.

Churches in their approach to interfaith relations. Siddiqui sees a search for a 'more assertive identity' as emanating from evangelical pressure and internal insecurities and conflicts.[155] This conclusion ignores that consistent stream of missionary theology indicative of Kenneth Cragg that is open even in its confessional robustness and reveals a perspective that ignores the wider global and historic resources that are being brought to bear by the Church of England, in particular. The 2010 document of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, *Meeting God in Friend and Stranger*,[156] affirms a similar trajectory of openness yet ecclesial self-confidence. There is the recognition of 'the presence of what is true and holy in other religions' but 'the Church is cautious about identifying those "rays" and those "seeds" too hastily to ensure the "integrity" of the dialogue.'[157] There are notable points of comparison and contrast to *Generous Love* such that the Church is seen as a central and active vehicle of the affirmation and fulfilment of that which is of God in other religions.[158] In contrast to *Generous Love*, though, there is a much greater emphasis on the coincidence of the 'Church' with that of the Catholic Church, so the context is set from within the magisterium and the specific institution of Catholicism, with support for and awareness of the ecumenical implications of interreligious relations. There are repeated internal references to the authorisation and the pattern of the Catholic Church where *Generous Love* exhibits a greater degree of qualification about its self-identity. This should not be surprising noting the very origins of Anglicanism and the originating impulse to see itself as in continuity with the Catholic Church.[159]

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155 Ataullah Siddiqui, 'Inter-Faith Relations in Britain Since 1970—An Assessment', *Exchange 39* (2010), pp. 236-50, pp. 243-4.

156 *Meeting God in Friend and Stranger: Fostering respect and mutual understanding between religions,* The Catholic Truth Society, London, 2010.

157 *Ibid.,* p. 15.

158 *Ibid.,* p. 37.

159 Donald Allchin helpfully highlights this subtle difference in ecclesiology by saying that, 'The Anglican situation is basically different. Our fundamental awareness of the Church to which we belong is a part of the whole Church, a part unhappily separated from others.' A. M. Allchin, 'Monastic Life and Unity in Christ' in *One Yet Two: Monastic Tradition East and West*, ed. M. Basil Pennington, Cistercian Studies Series, Kalamazoo, 1976, pp. 474-486, p. 477. Anglicanism's more instinctive ecumenical temperament is evident in the liturgy of the ordination to the priesthood where the candidate is 'ordained to the office of priest in the Church of God', not the Church of England.

When we consider the global and ecumenical reach of Anglicanism, an ecumenism which is rooted first and foremost in the Lambeth Communion, an attention to the diversity of encounters with Islam, seems particularly significant. Across a wide range of traditions, the primary theological drive seems to be less about finding novel theological schemes that conflate Christianity and Islam and more about using the essential characteristics of the Christian faith to presage attention to shared notions of citizenship. Throughout the history of Christian-Muslim relations and in the global context of today, the Church has had to reckon with the consequences of will-to-power, of persecution and isolationism. The task then remains, if Anglicanism is to assert divergences as well as convergences with Islam, to develop a political theology whereby Christians and Muslims can overcome their differences in pursuit of the common good. In *Generous Love*, the Anglican Church has produced a theology for interreligious encounter with Islam that seems attentive to the realities of diverse experience throughout the Communion and faithful to the orthodoxies of the Church's self-identity recognisable ecumenically. This presents the Church with a resource that is arguably more sustainable than earlier efforts in the 'theologies of religion' vein.

PALESTINIAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AS A NEW AND CONTEMPORARY EXPRESSION OF EASTERN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

Leonard Marsh

The creation of the state of Israel in 1948, and the dislocation and dilemmas facing the Palestinian Christian community, has brought about a remarkable emergence of an original and creative theology of liberation. These Christian theological reflections from Jerusalem and the Holy Land are an important development in enlarging our understanding of Christianity as a global tradition.[1] This review of the literature of Palestinian Liberation Theology does not claim to be completely comprehensive.

Palestinian Liberation Theology has developed out of Palestinian Christian experience, above all a history of expulsion and occupation.

The impact of what Palestinians refer to as *Al-Nakba* ('The Catastrophe') is exemplified by a leading Palestinian writer, Father Elias Chacour (b. 1939). Father Chacour is a Greek Catholic priest who chronicled his personal experience of being forced as a child from Biram, a village in Galilee destroyed by Israeli troops in 1948, in two important texts, *Blood Brothers* and *We Belong to the Land*.[2]

Blood Brothers, a reflective autobiography, relates his growing radicalisation as a Palestinian Christian activist. He witnessed and documented the dislocation and oppression of Palestinians during his Pastorate of the Greek Catholic Church in Ibillin in the Galilee.

Another important contemporary Christian thinker from the Holy Land is Naim Ateek, a Palestinian Anglican theologian. Ateek sees the 1967 war as a crucial moment in the history of the Israeli state. The

1 See the recent study by Laura Robson, 'Palestinian Liberation Theology, Muslim-Christian Relations and the Arab-Israeli Conflict', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 21 (2010), pp. 39-50.

2 Elias Chacour (with David Hazard), *Blood Brothers*, Chosen Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1984; (with Mary E. Jensen), *We Belong to the Land*, Harper San Francisco, San Francisco, 1990.

occupation of Gaza, the West Bank, along with the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula was, according to him, attributed by a large percentage of Israelis and many Western Christians to 'God's powerful intervention on the side of Israel and against the Arabs'.[3]

Ateek realises that the Bible itself can and has been used as an ideological tool in asserting a religious basis for Zionism, although it was originally a secular movement. Arguably, the Bible has been used in a way to support injustice and inequality. Understood in a literal way, the Bible appears to Palestinians to justify their enslavement and among Palestinians undermine their hopes for a national homeland.

When Christians recite the 'Benedictus', including the words 'Blessed be the God of Israel', Ateek asks what this means.[4] Which Israel is being referred to? What redemption is being promised, and to whom? One problem facing Palestinian Christian Theology simply is a matter of how the Bible itself is to be understood by Palestinian Christians. An important question arises: Is God partial to the Jews, and is the God of the Bible a God of justice and peace?

For Ateek, the 'authentic' word of the Bible and the 'meaning' of Biblical texts can only be found in Jesus Christ himself. Christ is the key to understanding the Bible and God's action in history. It is only in Jesus Christ that 'objective' knowledge of God is found.[5] If theological suppositions and assertions exist in the Old Testament which conflict with the understanding of God which Christians believe are revealed in Christ, then these suppositions or assertions must not be considered revelatory. Ateek identifies different traditions in the Hebrew Bible that he evaluates only according to the revelation given in Jesus Christ. One tradition is essentially tribal in nature, based on the election of the Jews to be God's people, and allowing for expulsion from the land. For Ateek, these traditions have a value in a negative way: they clarify what God is not.[6]

Ateek declares a preference for the prophetic strand in Hebrew scripture, in the context of faith in a God who is committed to the

3 Naim Ateek, 'The Emergence of a Palestinian Christian Identity' in *Faith and the Intifada*, eds Naim Ateek *et al.*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1985.

4 Naim Ateek, *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1990, p. 76.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 39

underprivileged, the disadvantaged, and the vulnerable: a theology of hope and compassion.[7]

Ateek observes that Eastern Christians have experienced a heavy price historically because they share the name 'Christian' with Crusaders of a previous epoch, living as a minority in the Middle East.[8]

Ateek sees the Church in Israel-Palestine in terms of a rich heritage of Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Protestantism. Most Arab Christians are united by a common faith, even if some Church hierarchies may be preoccupied with past differences.[9]

Ateek sees the theological implications of his exegesis as a matter of faith in an inclusive God of truth, justice, and peace—regarding the Incarnation as the basis for Christian involvement in the world and the conscience of a nation.[10]

In a lecture on the future of Palestinian Christianity at the Sixth International *Sabeel* Conference (2-9 November 2006), *The Forgotten Faithful: A Window into the Life and Witness of Christians in the Holy Land*, Ateek called for a greater recognition of the importance of working ecumenically, highlighting the urgent need to articulate a theology and strategy for relations with other faiths, especially Islam. Ateek acknowledged the Orthodox Church as the original Church of the Holy Land, the Church of our ancestors. Strikingly, Ateek also noted 'the relationship between the Greek hierarchy and the Palestinian clergy must be addressed if we ever hope to strengthen the Christian presence and witness … the fact exists that most of the local Orthodox clergy have not had the benefit of a solid theological education.'[11]

It should be noted that Ateek is not alone in addressing hermeneutical problems regarding the Bible and Palestinian Christian experience.

Former Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah wrote a pastoral letter in November 1993, entitled 'Reading the Bible Today in the Land of the Bible'.[12] Patriarch Sabbah noted we have to struggle in order

7 *Ibid*., p. 134.
8 *Ibid*., p. 135.
9 *Ibid*., p. 152.
10 *Ibid*., p. 157.
11 Naim Ateek *et al*., eds, *The Forgotten Faithful, Sabeel* Ecumenical Liberation Centre, Jerusalem, 2007, pp. 143, 144.
12 Michel Sabbah, *Reading the Bible Today in the Land of the Bible*, 'In Pulchritudine Pacis', Jerusalem, 1993.

to maintain and build peace with justice. Interpreting the Bible is a demanding task. Such interpretations concern our very national and personal identity as believers because unilateral, partial interpretations run the risk—for some—of bringing into question their presence and permanence in this land, which is their homeland. Questions to be addressed include 'What is the relationship between the Old and New Testaments?' The narrative of the Bible includes stories of violence and genocide, resembling recent history which may be attributed to God. How is this to be understood? What is the relationship between ancient Biblical history and contemporary history? Is Biblical Israel to be identified with the state of Israel? What are the meanings of the promises, the covenant, and, specifically, the promise and gift of the land to Abraham and his descendants? Does the Bible justify current political claims made on its behalf? Could we be victims of our own salvation history, which seems to favour the Jewish people and condemn others?

Patriarch Sabbah rooted his pastoral letter in the decree on divine revelation of the Second Vatican Council. In this understanding, the Bible is a divine and human word revealed to a community. But the word comes to us clothed in linguistic, literary, cultural, historical and geographical terms which, after all, are human. We must not ask of the Bible what it cannot give.

Patriarch Sabbah presented the Bible as a matter of progressive revelation and, in accordance with the Second Vatican Council documents, notes the importance and value for Palestinian Christians of Biblical criticism, in interpreting the Bible for our time.

Other Palestinian Christian theologians share these concerns regarding Biblical interpretation. Mitri Raheb, pastor of the Bethlehem Christmas Church and director of the International Meeting Centre in Bethlehem, has observed that until the middle of the 19th century, the Palestinian Churches interpreted the Bible allegorically or typologically. This is no longer possible. The advent of Zionism has made the Old Testament a political text, and made the Bible problematic the moment the modern state of Israel was formed.[13]

Raheb also has addressed the question of the Qur'an from an Arab Christian perspective.[14] Raheb's intention is to have an understanding

13 Mitri Raheb (tr. Ruth C. L. Gritsch), *I Am A Palestinian Christian*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1995, p. 59.

14 Mitri Raheb, 'Contextualising the Scripture Towards A New Understanding of the Qur'an—An Arab Christian Perspective', *Studies in World Christianity*, 3(2), 1997,

of Muslim scripture which would provide the basis for a Christian-Muslim relationship within contemporary Arab society.

Raheb notes the significance of the language of the Qur'an. 'It is an Arabic text.'[15] This language is shared by Muslims and Christians in the Arab world, a shared common space between two religions. He believes there is a sense in which the Qur'an may be said in Christian perspective to represent arabization of the Biblical message.[16] The Prophet speaks from his own time and place, and offers a thoroughly contextualized rendering of the Abrahamic message.

Raheb contrasts the linear understanding of 'salvation history', which may be said to be Biblical, with the Qur'anic concept of a decentralised interpretation of God's action in the history of human communities. Raheb suggests that Muhammad intended to establish a local Arabic 'liturgy' comparable to previous Jewish and Christian recipients of scripture.[17] It was only after the Hijra from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE that Muhammad employed the terms *Tawrat* and *Injil* to denote two separate scriptures that were deemed to be partial representations of the word of God.

It is worth noting that such Palestinian reflections on Biblical and Qur'anic scripture have been characterized as forms of 'Palestinian Marcionism' and described as 'the Islamisation of Christianity'. In a polemical chapter of her book, Bat Ye'or regards the search for a common ground between Muslim and Christian scholars as having led to a 'de-Biblicizing' of the Bible.[18]

A question which inevitably presents itself is why Greek/Arab Orthodoxy in the Holy Land generally has not produced theological scholarship of the kind illustrated by Palestinian theologians cited above. It may be that historical factors have prevented the development of such a tradition. Many important figures from the Orthodox tradition have been strongly identified politically with Arab and Palestinian nationalism, and this may have served as an alternative to intellectual engagement with Palestinian theological developments.

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pp. 180-202.

15 *Ibid*., p. 182.

16 *Ibid*., p. 182.

17 *Ibid*., p. 189.

18 Bat Ye'or, 'The Islamization of Christianity' in *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, Madison, NJ, 2005, pp. 211-224.

Other important figures from the Orthodox background include political activists like George Habash (1926-2008), founder of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, general secretary until 2000. He claimed to hold together Orthodoxy, Marxism, and Palestinian nationalism.

Ecumenical Developments

Following the first Intifada, 1987-1991, and the years after the Oslo accords, significant developments in co-operation between the Churches of the Holy Land have been observed. An historical background of intense rivalry has increasingly given way to a pragmatic ecumenism, with Church leaders joining together in advocacy regarding issues of public concern, especially in matters of justice, peace and the question of the position of Jerusalem. This co-operation has resulted in a more self-conscious Arab identity among the Churches. This has been limited to the areas of social, economic and political matters, rather than in the areas that affect doctrine or the position of the Holy Places.

An ecumenical group of Palestinian Christians issued 'Kairos Palestine, A Moment of Truth', on 11 December 2009 in Bethlehem. Many notable Palestinian individuals and representatives of institutions signed the document. The word *kairos*, deriving from the Greek, refers to a moment in time, a moment when God is present in opportunity.

In the apartheid era, South African Christians also issued a Kairos document, in a call for an end to injustice and oppression.

Jerusalem is highlighted in the Palestinian document, and the document calls for the issue of Jerusalem to be addressed before anything else. It also defines the Israeli occupation of Palestine as a sin against God and humanity. This sin of occupation prevents both Israelis and Palestinians from being able to see God in each other. The document calls for religious liberty in the context of those who insist on a Jewish state, as well as those who call for a potential Palestinian-Islamic state. It also calls for boycott, disinvestment and sanctions, sometimes called BDS. At last, the document expresses gratitude for international solidarity with an invitation for all to come and see, and acknowledges the Holy Land as inhabited by two peoples, with the hope expressed that they can love and live together.

A commentary on the Kairos document by Rift Odeh Kassis was published in 2011.

Rift Odeh Kassis was a driving force and contributor to the Kairos document. In his wide-ranging commentary, that includes autobiographical material from his own history as an activist in the non-violent struggle for Palestinian self-determination, he locates the Kairos document in a historical and political context, as well as exploring the unique dilemmas and situation of Palestinian Christians. Kassis' insights include both critical and positive observations regarding Palestinian Christian experience. He notes Palestinian Christians have developed their theology in a way to remain open to non-Christians. This is in contrast to most Western Christian theology which often stays out of relationship with social realities, and is 'now at a loss to easily integrate the multi-national, multi-cultural societies that have started to take hold in Europe.'[19]

Kassis bemoans the loss of the role Arab Christians have played from the beginning of the last century; thinkers, writers, artists and politicians. Arab Christians were a central part of the Arab National Movement. According to Kassis, national and socialist aspirations emanating from Christian initiatives have now been lost.[20]

Palestinian Christians have become fragmented and divided into distinct enclaves. Kassis attributes these divisions to Western influence or funding related to the struggle between colonial powers in the Holy Land and the holy sites. He also criticises theological formulations that have remained 'stagnated in meditative rather than transformational practice.'[21]

Reflecting on Muslim perceptions, Kassis believes that many Muslims have tended to equate Christianity with the tyrant or the occupier, because of their experience of colonialism, imperialism, and neo-colonialism.[22]

Kassis challenges Palestinian Christians not to internalise the attitude of a religious minority that would mean leaving political life to others. They should be active and involved. Authentic faith will lead

19 Rifat Odeh Kassis, *Kairos for Palestine*, Badal/Alternatives, Palestine and India, 2011, p. 72.
20 *Ibid*., p. 73.
21 *Ibid*., p. 73.
22 *Ibid*., p. 74.

them to do so: and this is 'exactly the aim of the Kairos document'.[23] They need to increase and develop their analytical capacities so that they can learn from their history and the history of the whole region.[24]

The central message of the Kairos document is non-violent resistance to the occupation, and calls for Faith, Hope and Love. Faith in action—a belief in both the Old and New Testaments, but the Bible is not to be used for one nation to dominate another. Hope again is seen as a vehicle for action, and Love expresses itself in the challenge to love your enemy.[25]

Addressing specific political realities, Kassis acknowledges that the continuing occupation of Palestine owes a lot to Arab dictatorship which, ironically enough, has protected Israel,[26] and he believes the Arab Spring may be a sign that change is in the air.[27] Finally, Kassis believes that Kairos is not just a document—it is a living initiative, and a context for continually responding to the reality as it changes.[28]

The Challenge of Islam

The relationship of Palestinian Christianity to Islam needs to be seen in the context of the Middle East as the birthplace of the three Abrahamic faiths. Palestinians have a kinship and a shared pride in Arab culture. The growth in awareness of Arab culture and its political dimensions owes much to Arab Christians who were founders of secular Arab political movements.

Commentators frequently have stressed the good relations and common experience for Muslims and Christians in the Holy Land, and there is a reason for this: the centuries of co-existence and the present Arab-Israeli conflict affect the entire population. Christian welfare institutions have served both communities. Islam's recognition of the importance of the Holy Places to Christians, and the predominantly urban nature of the Christian presence, has produced communities living in proximity to each other without conflict. The fact that being

23 *Ibid.*, p. 75.
24 *Ibid.*, p. 77.
25 *Ibid.*, p. 106.
26 *Ibid.*, p. 116.
27 *Ibid.*, p. 114.
28 *Ibid.*, p. 119.

a Christian has not been seen to detract from a Palestinian national consciousness, and the tradition of autonomy in religious matters inherited from the Ottoman *millet* system—all these factors are evinced to explain good Muslim-Christian relations.[29]

Also, we ought to be aware of the public agreements such as the first Alexandrian Declaration (January 2002) among Muslim, Jewish and Christian leaders in the Holy Land, in which they pledged themselves to a search for a just peace.[30]

Of course, particular problems continue to arise at different points. The Nazareth mosque dispute in the period leading to millennial celebrations, and the papal visit of Pope John Paul II, are reminders that tensions ignite in some circumstances. In this specific example, there was the perception that the Israeli government was exacerbating conflict with the intention of creating Muslim-Christian hostility among the Palestinian population.

The Greek Patriarchate already had come into conflict with a Jewish group's attempt to occupy patriarchal property with the seizure of St John's Hospice in 1990.

The potential for conflict among the Abrahamic faiths over 'sacred' space, and its implications for interfaith relations have been explored.[31] Nur Masalha points out that the intensification of Israeli de-Arabization policies in the old city of Jerusalem, and its sacred geography, led to the Al-Aqsa Intifada in September 2000. In a volatile situation, mutual suspicion can develop, especially where secular nationalism is perceived as having failed. Radical Islamists in such situations increase Christian apprehension.

Historical, Social and Political Context

Palestinian Christian thought cannot be understood in a vacuum. The Kairos document, as has been noted, called for Palestinian Christians to develop their analytical faculties in a process of deepening their

29 See, for example, S. Saliba, *Palestinian Christians: Religion, Conflict and the Struggle for Just Peace*, Holy Land Studies 4 (2), 2005, pp. 27-50.

30 *Ibid*., p. 117.

31 See N. Masalha, 'Jewish Fundamentalism and the "Sacred Geography" of Jerusalem in Comparative Perspective, 1967-2004: Implications for Interfaith Relations', *Holy Land Studies* 3(1), 2004, pp. 29-67.

understanding of their situation as part of a struggle for liberation. Recent work by Western academics will be of value, but will need to be assessed critically.

Laura Robson, Assistant Professor of History at Portland State University, Portland, Oregon, in a well written and accessible monograph, 'Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine',[32] traces the ways in which the British Mandate government exacerbated sectarianism in the crucial period leading up to partition of Palestine and the birth of the Israeli state. During the period of British colonial rule (1917-1948), Palestinian Christians experienced rapid decline in their political significance. From a prominent and influential position in the nationalist movement their community declined to near total exclusion from Muslim-dominated nationalist politics of the 1930s.[33]

Robson argues that this decline was directly linked to the policies of the colonial administration that assumed the political centrality of communal identification. Arab Christians responded to this new colonial policy, and along with pressures from foreign dominated Church institutions and other currents in the Arab world were led to re-imagine their religious communities as political entities. This British re-invention of sectarianism in Palestinian public life, eventually drove Arab Christians to move away from a multiple identity towards a new type of communal identity in a sectarian colonial political system. These attempts to maintain Arab Christian political and civic participation in an increasingly sectarian political context in mandate Palestine were increasingly unsuccessful. Although individual Christians continued to hold influential positions in the nationalist movement the political importance and implications of membership of the Christian Churches declined. By the time of the end of the British mandate in 1948 Palestinian Arab Christian communities had become marginal.

Robson has separately written about Palestinian liberation theology,[34] locating it as a specifically Palestinian version of Christian liberation theology in which the ideas of the Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez in his *A Theology of Liberation* (1971), 'entered into the awareness of elite Palestinian Protestant Christians alongside the global

32 Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine,* University of Texas Press, Austin, 2011.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

34 See Laura Robson, 'Palestinian Liberation Theology, Muslim-Christian Relations and the Arab-Israeli Conflict', pp. 39-50.

anti-colonial and civil rights rhetoric of the 1960s and 1970s.'[35] Whether readers will agree with this characterisation of Palestinian Liberation theology as 'elite' is open to question.

Robson points out differences between Latin American liberation theologians and Palestinian Christian thinkers include the well known difficulties Palestinian Christian writers have had with the Exodus model of liberation theology favoured by many Latin American writers, but she also notes differing views on the legitimacy of violence in pursuing political goals in a liberation struggle. Palestinian liberation theologians sought 'both to demonstrate Palestinian Christian commitment to the Intifada and to offer a theological justification for the specific, non-violent mechanisms of popular resistance being used.'[36].

Robson also argues that Naim Ateek positioned the new Palestinian Christian liberation theology as an ally of Muslim religious resistance, noting the nearly simultaneous emergence of *Sabeel* and Hamas during the Intifada, calling Hamas an Islamic liberation movement, although rejecting its use of violence.[37] She also believes this is an attempt to re-position Christianity as a non-Western religion, allied with Islam in seeking political justice for the Palestinians.

Robson sees Palestinian liberation theology as a product of elite Western-educated Palestinian Protestant clergy with its material written in European languages and directed not only to Palestinian Muslims, but to international, mainly Western Christians. She points that it is not a mass movement in the Palestinian context. [38]

Palestinian Christians in Israel

Limited research has been specifically directed to Palestinians Christians in Israel. According to Una McGahern, many have seen Palestinian existence within Israel itself as unproblematic. Seventy-five percent of Palestinian Christians resident within the combined territories do not live under the rule of the Palestinian Authority, but are Israeli citizens within Israel. Una McGahern, Research Fellow at the School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University, in *Palestinian*

35 *Ibid*., p. 40.
36 *Ibid*., p. 45.
37 *Ibid*., p. 46.
38 *Ibid*., p. 47.

Christians in Israel: State attitudes towards non-Muslims in a Jewish state, locates Palestinian Christians in Israel within an understanding of Israel as an 'ethnocratic state'.[39]

This book, influenced by Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge with its emphasis upon the contingency of all ideas, value systems, power relations, and state institutions upon a societal foundation, sees the attitudes and impulses of Israeli society coming from the ideological premise upon which the Israeli state is founded. Critical theories of state, society and policies towards minorities are also evaluated in showing the principles of political Zionism as central to the determination of social relations, and to the boundaries which the state operates within on behalf of its Jewish majority. These lead, in McGahern's view, to a contradiction between the aspiration to be a democracy and to be Jewish. Palestinian Christians in Israel are located within the broader context of the Israeli state's systemic minority policy, and seen in the context of an uncomfortable admixture of democratic and theocratic principles.[40] This is an interesting analysis of the situation of Palestinian Christians in Israel, and developing state attitudes and policy regarding them. We need to know more and understand better the context of Palestinian life in Israel, as well as the nature of Israeli society itself.

★ ★ ★

Historical, political and social analysis of the history of the Arab/Israeli conflict, and the present reality for Palestinians, will illuminate specifically *theological* resources that continue to emerge from the Palestinian struggle. This tradition shows no sign of exhausting itself in a region that is experiencing major upheavals and developments. Whatever our attitude to theology and to the Palestinian question, this thinking presents important questions to Christians from wherever they come. The interpretation of the Bible in changing cultural realities; Muslim/Christian relations; and the attitude of Christians toward violence—all are fundamental questions facing Christianity as

39 Una McGahern, *Palestinian Christians in Israel: State attitudes towards non-Muslims in a Jewish State,* Routledge Press, London and New York, 2011.
40 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

a global tradition, and are profoundly addressed within contemporary Palestinian Christian thought. The critical insights and perspectives of Palestinian Christians deserve our attention and respect.

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ACCEPTING THE FACT OF DEATH, WE ARE FREED TO LIVE MORE FULLY

A reflection on freedom and liberty in Israel and Palestine

Colin South

Introduction

One of the Advices and Queries in the discipline of the Religious Society of Friends states, 'Are you able to contemplate your death and the death of those closest to you? Accepting the fact of death, we are freed to live more fully. In bereavement, give yourself time to grieve. When others mourn, let your love embrace them.'[1]

Although this advice was written with an individual concern in mind, the title is apt in consideration of the communities of Israel and Palestine who are daily confronted individually and communally with their own death and of those closest to them. We only have to think of the three religious groups within those communities in the Middle East (Jew, Christian and Muslim) to understand their trials, tribulations and fear in this context.

The Author

The author of this paper is a Christian who has lived and worked in Ramallah, West Bank, for four years from the outbreak of the second Intifada. He sees the situation as complex and layered and clearly one where a community experiences a major imbalance in power and control in its relationship with another, both locked together in a web of interrelated but conflicting historical narrative and fear of injustice, discrimination and destruction. What has Christ to offer these

1 'Advices and Queries', The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, 1995, Number 30.

communities and how can this knowledge be used to achieve peace and reconciliation. This is the subject of this paper.

The author's sees himself first and foremost as a Christian but for some 40 years has been a member of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain (Quakers) and some understanding of this tradition as it manifests itself today may be helpful. The 'Britain Yearly Meeting explained' introduction to the 2011 Annual Report states. '(Quakers) are a faith community with worship at its heart. Founded in 1652, a period of religious turmoil, we welcome people of all faith backgrounds who want to deepen their experience of God and find a way of living harmoniously in today's troubled world.' *Quaker Faith and Practice* as part of our Church discipline incorporates a contemporary body of literature known as 'Advices and Queries' from which the title of this paper is taken. In an explanation of this literature, it is stated that these advices and queries 'should continue to be a challenge and inspiration to Friends in their personal lives and in their life as a religious community which knows the guidance of the universal spirit of Christ, witnessed to in the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.' In another 'advice' it is written, 'Bring the whole of your life under the ordering of the spirit of Christ. Are you open to the healing power of God's love? Cherish that of God within you, so that this love may grow in you and guide you. Let your worship and your daily life enrich each other. Treasure your experience of God, however it comes to you. Remember that Christianity is not a notion but a way.'

Returning to the Annual Report, there are 479 local meetings in Britain and an individual membership of approximately 15,000 members plus 10,000 others who regularly attend Meetings. The Religious Society of Friends has no pastors and no creedal statements as matters of principle. Put more positively each human being is a child of God with the same responsibility for ministry and oversight as any other participant in a Quaker Meeting. Quakers believe that your way of life is a greater testimony to faith than words; that your personal experience of the Light (of Christ) should be the basis for your testimony in word and deed and that each person, no matter their condition, has that of God within them. These statements probably are the closest to any universal acknowledged creed among Friends. Meetings for Worship and for Business are set in a stillness which comes from an expectant waiting

upon the leading of the Spirit (of Christ). Quakers are an historic peace Church with a recognised place in British history in the abolition of slavery, prison reform, conscientious objection to military service, understandings of reformative justice, peace studies as an academic discipline and conflict resolution. British Friends were one time joint winners with the American Friends Service Committee of the Nobel Peace Prize for their work with refugees after the Second World War.

The Book of Job

The book of Job in the Old Testament came to mind on my return from pilgrimage in the 'Week of prayer for Christian Unity' in late January 2012 as the author contemplated the various conversations with Palestinians and Israelis that the group had been gifted with. Most of the significant conversations referred to had been with Palestinian Christians, Muslims and Palestinian people of no faith as well as with Messianic Jews, followers of a faith similar no doubt to that of the earliest Jewish Christians. What was clear was the sense of crisis and of desperation in the face of apparent inaction and inability of any party with the power to resolve the dispute between the Israeli Government and the people of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A resonance with the story of Job seemed to call out for consideration. In consideration of the text, it is helpful to be reminded that the story of Job is common to the three faith traditions. Job is a controversial text in Judaism in terms of its authenticity as historical literature compared with its source as folklore tales known to rabbinic scholars. The story of Job also may be counter to concepts of God in a relationship with humankind that allows freewill since Satan, a servant of God, has such control over Job. God is also supposed to be loving and compassionate as well as just and yet seems callous in allowing such abuse to Job simply for the purpose of winning an argument. So the soundness of the text is sometimes in question. For example, it is recognised that the 'happy ending' to Job's story in his new family is not a really a happy ending for Job and his wife who would have lost all the members of their first family. Gerald Aranoff explains that the Talmud suggests that his sons and daughters were kept safe for Job and his wife and eventually restored to them both

in addition to his new family.[2] In Talmudic literature, the thesis that Job is innocent and sinless is challenged. It could be argued that if Job sinned he was pushed to do so by Satan who in the Jewish canon is a servant of God, so Job can hardly be blamed for being so seduced.[3] On the other hand, it is argued that Job had access to the Torah and so had all the God-given tools necessary to subdue the seducer and was sinful regardless, and so the argument continues.[4]

In Islam, Job (Ayyub), as a story of a great prophet, is much less controversial in such matters. The story and message of Job is decentralised in the Qur'an and is referenced in various *suras*. In the revelation of the text of the Qur'an to Muhammad, the message of faithfulness, submission to God and the dire consequence of rejection of God is central and where appropriate illustrated by occasional reference to most of the stories of the prophets within the Torah and of Jesus and Mary in the New Testament. Muhammad was concerned to demonstrate the unity of prophetic revelation for which he was the final messenger to the Arabic speaking peoples. Much of this perspective is described by Mitri Raheb in an article entitled 'Contextualising the Scripture: Towards a New understanding of the Qur'an'.[5] As within Judaism, there are additional elements to the story that are expanded in other contemporary Islamic literature and tradition.[6] In this tradition, Job's story illustrates patience in the face of relentless adversity which may have made, in itself, a significant contribution to Palestinian stoicism. One reference sums up the teaching from Job as prophet, 'When one truly worships God with full submission, it is necessary to have patience. It is easy to worship for a few days or even weeks, but we must be consistent. The life of the world is a test and in order to pass, and be rewarded with Paradise, we need to acquire the patience of Job.'[7]

For the author, the story of Job in the Old Testament and parallel teaching in the New Testament is the source material for a personal reflection on God's relationship with mankind in the context of Israel

2 www.jbq.jewishbible.org/assets/uploads/394/jbq.394_Iyov.pdf 13 September 2012
3 www.myjewishlearning.com/beliefs/...and.../Bok_of_Job.shtml, 13 August 2012.
4 www.jewishencycopedia.com/articles/8692-job, 13 August 2012.
5 Mitri Raheb, 'Contextualising the Scripture: Towards a New Understanding of the Qur'an—An Arab-Christian perspective', *Studies in World Christianity*, Vol. 3.2, 1997, pp. 180-202.
6 www.jannah.org/morearticles/50.html, 13 August 2012.
7 www.islamreligion.com/articles/2721, 13 August 2012.

and Palestine. The historicity of the text and its orthodoxy are of little interest. It is rather its value as inspiration that is appreciated. So this paper is a contribution to the debate from a Christian point of view and a springboard for action which arises from an exercise in liberation theology through discussion within the Theology Group of Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust focused around this text.[8]

Liberation Theology

In the *Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* is a helpful statement of the main characteristics of liberation theology; i.) non-neutrality; a recognition that we should declare where we are coming from an ideological and sociological point of view; ii.) an option for the poor; iii.) the concept of *realidad*; a reflection upon the actual circumstances in which we are living AND an analysis of the historical causes of those circumstances; iv.) praxis; a process of action and reflection focusing on transformation of the conditions of the oppressed; v.) orthopraxis; a practice which allows challenge to the *status quo* often reinforced in traditional theology. In liberation theology the reflection is first of all upon the world, and only then is it considered how God has manifested Godself in the historical events of humankind's liberation; vi.) structures of sin; liberation theology focuses on the structural aspects of sin; that is the macro structures that perpetuate social injustice, poverty, and violence around the world.[9]

In *Let's do Theology* by Laurie Green, one model used by groups in Britain in liberation theology in urban settings is based on reflecting on experience in a locality, exploring all the related issues to the experience in question from a political, sociological and historical perspective, for example, and gathering stories followed by Bible-based theological reflection finally drawing up an action plan based on the engagement with all of these. Once the action forms part of the experience, you are ready to begin the process again leading progressively to greater

8 In that respect, I am very grateful to Professor Mary Grey of St Mary's College, Twickenham, University of London, and Anthony O'Mahony of Heythrop College for all their help and encouragement.

9 *Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, eds Hastings, Mason and Pyper, OUP, Oxford, 2000, s.v. 'Liberation Theology'.

social justice and hopefully some establishment of kingdom values in the community. [10]

The author's interpretation of experience-led theology has followed much the same path as Laurie Green's model has suggested; first to engage with the experience, then try to understand what is at stake, listening to as many voices as possible and researching the subject from as many different perspectives as are made available by chance and by choice, then reflect on scriptures which seem to shout out as being relevant in the Old and New Testament and finally to draw together threads which might help form a framework for action and change.

Context

In December 2009, Palestinian Christian Leaders launched the Kairos process with a document 'that shares their daily realities of life under occupation and calls on Christian sisters and brothers and Churches worldwide to be witnesses to these realities, to be in solidarity, and to take action.'[11] The document highlights in one of its sections the deprivation of freedom brought about by the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Gaza Strip is still occupation as a reality on the ground regardless of the removal of settlements from Gaza; the sea blockade, the control of ingress and egress over land, the control of air traffic and the frequent incursions of Israeli troops into Gaza and an auto response of air raids over Gaza in retaliation for any missile reaching Israel from Palestinian renegade militarised brigades indicate an intention to dominate and control the territory militarily.

The deprivation of freedom evidenced in occupation of the Palestinian territories includes: i.) the separation wall; ii.) the presence of Israeli settlements in the West Bank; iii.) the daily humiliation of military checkpoints; iv.) the separation of family members especially in examples where a spouse does not have an Israeli identity card; v.) the restriction of religious liberty; vi.) the condition of refugees waiting to exercise their right of return; vii.) the prisoners languishing in Israeli jails; and viii.) the emptying of Jerusalem of its Muslim and Christian

10 Laurie Green, *Let's Do Theology*, Mowbray, London, 2009.
11 Kairos Document, Sabeel, 2010.

citizens through confiscation of identity cards, house demolitions and expropriation of property.

Raed Salah, leader of the Islamic Movement in Israel writes of the situation that Arab Israelis face as citizens of Israel.

> There are around 1.5 million Arabs in Israel. We make up 17 percent of the population, but we face a barrage of racist policies and discriminatory laws. We receive less than 5 percent of funds allocated by the government for development. Public spending on children in Arab municipalities is one third lower than that of children in Jewish municipalities. The average hourly wage of Arab workers is about 70 percent of that of Jewish workers. Any Jew, from any country, is allowed under Israel's law of return to migrate to Israel; Palestinian refugees are not allowed to exercise their right of return. While a Jew can live anywhere in Israel, a Palestinian citizen cannot. Jews can marry whoever they wish and live with them in Israel, Palestinian citizens cannot.[12]

This forms the background for this paper further illustrated by five of the conversations the author has recorded as accurately as possible with Palestinians Christians and Muslims and one Israeli Messianic Jewish couple during Pilgrimage in 2012 in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. These conversations also add frustration with the Palestinian Authority which is in an impossible situation, trying to retain leadership in the struggle for freedom, given the international political and financial pressures to comply and conform and a powerful patrimonial tradition in society which encourages nepotism. The record below may be illustrative of the situations described to me rather than correct in every detail.

On a bus from Ramallah to Jerusalem

The young Palestinian man, with Jerusalem ID, sitting next to me on the bus was on his way to work. Ahmed (not his real name) told me

12 Raed Salah, 'Britain's duty to my people', *The Guardian*, Thursday 19 April 2012.

that he worked at a large and modern Jerusalem hotel as a waiter. His father was dead and he was the main financial support for his mother and several brothers and sisters younger than him. Their house had been demolished by the Israeli authorities in the last month and the family were staying with other extended family members in the area for the moment whilst they decided what to do next. Their home extension and further development did not have a building permit which is frustratingly difficult to obtain and had been rejected on application several times by the Israeli authorities. They were required to demolish the floor and rooms added in which they lived and so following warnings to their family, their home was destroyed. He commented that he was depressed not because of this incident alone but because the day before a senior Palestinian politician had celebrated his birthday in the hotel where he worked in a particularly extravagant manner flaunting his wealth and influence among all present and this had sickened him, he being aware of the struggle to survive financially and politically for thousands of ordinary Palestinians in East Jerusalem. I thanked him for his conversation and expressed the hope that one day he would be happily married with many sons and daughters and he thanked me, remarking that there was no chance that he would bring children into his world. It simply would not be fair to them to bring them into a situation which was so discriminatory and so much without hope.

A young English-speaking Israeli 'item' who are both members of a Messianic Jewish community

Over supper at an Italian restaurant in downtown Jerusalem, a conversation with two young Israelis who were both serving in the Israeli Defence Force in the West Bank. The young woman was in active service at the Qalandia checkpoint and the young man had worked in the West Bank at mobile checkpoints and in making arrests of children and others who were violently resisting occupation. The young man remarked that he was aware that some of his colleagues in the IDF deliberately and randomly victimised some of the Palestinian men and women with whom they had come into contact. He personally was saddened by what was happening but had no control over another's

behaviour. He remarked that he and his friend had found a way into Bethlehem out of uniform and in normal everyday clothes just to feel what it was like to walk normally around Manger Square and they were surprised at how safe they felt. Service at Qalandia checkpoint is clearly a bit of nightmare for the young woman who is conscious of her vulnerability not least to potential suicide attacks and the task of dealing with hundreds of Palestinians trying to pass through the checkpoint each day to go to work, to visit family or to go about their legitimate business few of whom, if any, are sympathetic to her task that is required of her as part of her national service. These dilemmas alongside the knowledge that Messianic Judaism finds itself in a society where it often is under pressure to prove itself by its words and actions to be as nationalist as their Jewish neighbour in order to address the counter cultural message in their recognition of Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah. The young woman hopes to get married soon which the young man was delighted to hear as he had not yet proposed.

A successful young businessman in Ramallah

This young man runs a small family construction company which he took over on the death of his father and is in partnership with his uncle. They have business in Dubai and own significant parts of the commercial centre of Ramallah which they rent out to their tenants. Over lemonade and biscuits, we talk of doing business in present-day Palestine. His biggest obstacle to successful business is not the Israeli Government but the close relatives of the President of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, who use their power and influence to their advantage in a system of historical patrimony which is difficult to break through. A good Muslim who was educated at the Quaker Friends School in Ramallah, he has a strong sense of right and wrong. The PNA has set up a Corruption Agency which has successfully prosecuted people who abuse the market and Mohammad has made good use of this facility and managed to successfully challenge the system and a protagonist through it. The problem is not, he says, in negotiation with the Israeli authorities although when he has encountered difficulty, he has had sound advice and occasionally assistance from Tony Blair's office of the Quartet Special Representative. He is happy and relaxed but recognises

that the political crisis is climbing to a peak not experienced since the outbreak of the second Intifada and is much less confident about political outcomes but so far is a survivor.

A Palestinian Christian family over supper in Ramallah

On the last occasion that I met him, the father was a successful businessman importing goods from China. Since then this business collapsed as his partner embezzled several hundreds of thousands of dollars and the business was left bankrupt. Since then he has sought to start again in business but has been stymied by patrimonial problems with their origin too close to the political leadership in Palestine which has meant it was impossible to get started. However, this obstacle now seems to have been circumvented. His wife is an adviser to Palestinian Schools in East Jerusalem and is shocked by the lack of resources and trained teachers compared with the comparatively good resources of their Israeli counterparts, all financed by the same taxes levied on citizens of East Jerusalem and West Jerusalem. Their children have been educated at Friends School, Ramallah, and it is likely that they will be educated in the USA with financial support from scholarships from schools and colleges there. It is unlikely that their children will return to Palestine after graduation until their savings are sufficient to support new career start-ups in the West Bank and depending on stability and security offered by the political situation in the West Bank. This is no place to bring up a family.

A leader of the Lutheran community in Jerusalem

As a major figure in the administration of the Lutheran hospital on the Mount of Olives, he speaks of the blatant discrimination in the resources applied to the infrastructure within East Jerusalem (e.g. road maintenance, drainage, refuse collection) in comparison with the relatively generous infrastructure investment among the Jewish and other communities of West Jerusalem and the blind protection and open support afforded the Jewish settler communities in East Jerusalem compared with legalistic and bureaucratic approach to the

same issues of housing and access afforded Palestinian citizens of East Jerusalem. He speaks of the fight to retain ownership of the land on which the Lutheran community seeks to build low-cost housing for the Christian community of East Jerusalem and the endless bureaucracy in seeking planning permission for well thought out, affordable and clearly documented plans which have spanned years and still see no final outcome. He speaks of the obvious strategy of the Israeli authorities to dispossess Palestinians one way or the other of their land and property in East Jerusalem and to create a Jewish Israeli majority throughout Jerusalem as soon as is possible.

Job

The story of Job is well known. Job, who knows that he has led a good life, is confused and troubled by the exigencies that befall him. He lost his oxen, his donkeys and his servants to a band of hostile Sabeans; his sheep and household servants in a fire, his camels and other servants to a raiding party of Chaldeans; his sons and daughters were all killed and his house destroyed and then he was afflicted by painful sores from the top of his head to the soles of his feet. Three of his close friends commiserate with him but gently, then ever more directly chiding him, suggesting that he must have committed some sin against God and so is being punished. Elihu, another erstwhile comforter, suggests that God is possibly chastising Job by these trials to warn and admonish rather than punish—even for Job to suggest that God would 'allow' such suffering in a 'good' man would be disrespectful and sinful and worthy of admonishment. But Job was a good man and made his priority the poor as highlighted by Gustavo Gutiérrez in *On Job*[13] commenting on Job's remarks in Chapters 29-31. Job had been a rich man much blessed by his family and community. He was a respected man renowned for his generosity and compassion in his day-to-day dealings of those he met who were in need or served him because Job recognised their common humanity. Job had done what had been required of him and had made the poor, the downtrodden, the widow, his priority and yet had suffered tragically.

13 Gustavo Gutiérrez, *On Job*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1989.

The fact that the story of Job is illustrative of an argument and a wager between God and Satan about the fickleness of humanity in humankind's allegiance and loyalty to God does not hide the central question about the problem of suffering; why does an omnipotent and ever present God allow good people to suffer? The wager is lost by Satan as Job remains consistently loyal and faithful to God despite Satan's best efforts to humiliate and destroy him. Job is angry with God and confused by Him demanding His presence to account for His actions but he remains faithful. God's response to Job's angry and despairing call to God to present Himself and answer Job's distress in person is to remind Job who is God in this relationship.

God speaks to Job directly, 'Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you and you shall answer me.' (38:2)

Then two chapters of God's questions follow to remind Job that he is just a part of the creation for which God has a plan. God reminds Job that 'good' is nothing other than an accomplishment of the will of God; to remind him that Job's very existence, the wonderful world that he inhabits, the very air that he breathes, the food that he eats and the rain that refreshes his crops and sustains his animals and everything that occurs in God's time are in God's gift. God alone is able to comprehend all the exigencies that must be present to accomplish the goodness of God's gift. So basically with compassion and grace, Job is repeatedly told to brace himself like a man and answer Him, that is to put up with his distress; to acknowledge his powerlessness; to accept that which characterises a right relationship with Him is a total unquestioning and accepting dependence on God in the certain knowledge that God does care for you and does listen and to note that, in the wider scheme of thing, God will choose or not choose to answer your prayers and that God will do so as God sees fit. A hard pill to swallow but one that Job in growing humility accepts.

Job concludes with his response to God's reprimand:

> I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.

> You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes. (42:2ff)

At the end of this great story, we are told that Job's fortunes and his life in all its fullness is restored to him. Job's good friends who 'toe the party line' in suggesting that punishment only follows evil and reward only follows good are chastised by God for 'not speaking of me what is right, as my servant Job has.' (42:7) Job had been steadfast in his insistence that he will and must remain faithful despite everything. He had sought to question God, to see Him face to face and challenge Him but nevertheless remained faithful. He was answered by God if not in the way that Job had expected.

Job and the Gospel Message in Matthew

The gospel accounts underwrite the messages from Job. Job has often been considered as one of the greatest preconfigurations of Christ in the Hebrew Scriptures[14] so the connection is not surprising. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth' forms a part of a quotation from Job used as the words of the beautiful aria in Handel's *Messiah* which in its text unites the passage from Job 19:25, 26 and a text stating that Christ is risen from the dead from I Corinthians 15:20. So what are some of the truths that we can acknowledge in Job which are echoed in the reader's present experience of Christ in the gospel.

That only a relationship with God has eternal value: In Matthew Chapter 6, Jesus says, 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'

The pure in heart will see God: Also in the Beatitudes, Jesus says, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.' In this story, Job

14 *Ibid*., p. xvii.

is one of those who is, we are led to understand, pure in heart and has encountered His God and has remained obedient.

That a right relationship with God begins and ends with Love and Compassion: In Matthew Chapter 22, Jesus reminds us of the greatest commandments for us in right relationship with God, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.'

Do not judge or you too will be judged: In Matthew Chapter 7, we read this injunction with the caveat 'for in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.' The three 'friends' who sat with Job for seven days and seven nights were clear in their mind that Job had sinned and must repent for his sin and that Job's sin was the reason for his distress but God states that this was incorrect and misleading and his friends, according to the story, were only saved from God's judgement by Job's prayer for compassion.

Persecution because of righteousness: Jesus reminds us in the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:10 and 11, 'Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.' Job was tested by the presence of Evil as Satan determined to undermine Job's faith in God and unsettle his righteousness, but God was present and palpably so. The story of Job indicates that, despite hardship and persecution, ultimately, through the grace of God and not through merit, Job was rewarded. Similarly Jesus wanted his disciples to be under no illusion, if they were to love God and their fellow men then persecution although not necessarily inevitable was pretty likely; note Matthew 10: 22, 'All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.'

Accepting the fact of death, we are freed to live more fully: Jesus's final words in Matthew are 'And surely I am with you always,

to the very end of the age.' Now it may not be that we live for one hundred and forty years seeing our children and their children to the fourth generation encountering death, old and full of years as Job did but we are assured as Job was that God is consistent and always present and will be with us until the end of the age. We are encouraged then to believe that death should be the culmination of a life lived in the knowledge that God is present and in control till the very end of the age and that we should have life and have it to the full as in Jesus speaking metaphorically as the Good Shepherd describes it in a verse unique to John (John 10:10).

A Reflection on our Response to the Unjust Suffering of Others in Palestine and Israel

Central to the whole story of Job is a right relationship with God or as Gutiérrez suggests 'How we are to talk about God.'[15] Like Job, before the wager between God and Satan, we are living a comparatively untroubled life here in Britain and at the invitation of the author we are invited to enter the story after Satan has begun his work and identify with Job no longer as benefactor but as victim vicariously experiencing the suffering of the Palestinian and Israeli as though we are Job in his distress and try like Job to make sense of this in relationship with God. Then we can reflect on our attitude to the unjust suffering of those in Israel and Palestine and to the 'friends' of those suffering who seek to lay blame at their door. What response to the unjust suffering should we make if we like Job are seeking to live a righteous and faithful life? What risks are we prepared to take and what should be our attitude to its cost?

Perhaps before we embark on this exercise we should hear what Jean Zaru, a Christian Quaker Palestinian female theologian, has to say and harken to warnings about structures of dominance and warm to the vision of our inter-dependence, and then reference an article by Drew Christiansen reminding ourselves of the quiet ecumenical revolution that is happening within the Christian Church in Israel/ Palestine which seeks to challenge some of these same structures of dominance.

15 *Ibid*., p. xviii.

> One thing I have learned from neighbours of other faiths is that 'religion' is often a problem for all of us. Religion is the problem where its structures of dominance have oppressed us as Palestinians, as women, or as any other people who have been on the downside of religious chauvinism. Religion is also a solution where its vision of liberation or equality has generated powerful social and political movements for change … But remember, in the English Language the meaning for religion is to bind, to tie and to fasten. So religion can be the bond of kinship that binds us together and binds us to God. … Religion should also be spiritual in order to breathe life into a world weary of conflict … More than ever, we human beings really do depend upon one another. My well-being and yours, my freedom and yours, my rights and yours are inseparable. Hearing one another in the mutuality of dialogue gives us the knowledge and wisdom to discern our close connections, to see the real implications of our situation, and to join together in positive and creative ways.[16]

Drew Christiansen,[17] in an article published in 2004, surveys recent developments in the life of the wider Palestinian Christian community. The impact of introducing Arab Christian Palestinians into the leadership of the Latin Patriarchate and other Catholic Churches of the Holy Land, the Lutheran and Anglican communities has been electric and refocused the attention of the international Christian community and the Government of Israel to issues of justice under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza and within Israel and their impact on the indigenous Christian community. These Church communities have been galvanised into action around issues of unfairness in the provision of housing, citizenship and nationality and have done so ecumenically after centuries of co-existence without co-operation. In a similar vein, it is also noted that in recent years the Jerusalem Churches have

16 Jean Zaru, *Occupied with Nonviolence—A Palestinian Woman Speaks*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2008, p. 128.

17 Drew Christiansen S.J, 'Palestinian Christians—Recent Developments', *The Vatican Israel Accords*, ed. Marshall Breger, University of Notre Dame Press, 2004, pp. 307-339.

together asked for and received assistance in witnessing to injustice from the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment programme[18] peopled by Christians, young and old, from Europe, North America and South East Asia. The Kairos process referred to earlier is an unprecedented statement of the majority of Christian leaders in Israel/Palestine boldly stating the calamity of the occupation in its effect on the Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities. These are actions to which the Church feels called, despite the risks that such challenges to the Government of Israel create. They are called to action by the faith imperative for justice within the Gospel.

Conclusion

It is clear then that inaction is not the required response to a time of testing and trial almost beyond endurance. How then do we reconcile our response to the fact, from our study of Job, that God is the final arbiter, that we need to be patiently faithful, trusting in the ultimate wisdom of God in whom everything is accomplished for the best? Let us take stock:

1. What ever else anyone may think of us, whatever else anyone may do to us, whatever becomes of us, whatever impact we make in a situation for better or for worse, only our relationship with God has eternal value. Perhaps this is the most important observation. To leave God out of any reflection on or any action in the conflict between these communities is short term and short sighted. As believers, it must be true of any such conflict but particularly where faith and religion play such important parts in the politics of the region. This means making our relationship to God a priority in establishing our analysis, our motive and our response. This is not a half-hearted lip service to this discipline but a determined and purposeful and visible commitment. How does this manifest itself in our meetings, our writing, our conferences, in our pilgrimages and on our website and indeed in any other sphere of our life and activity as Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust?

18 *Accompaniment and Hope—an introduction to the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel*, World Council of Churches, 2010.

2. It is important to heed Jean Zaru's warning about structural dominance and with that hypocrisy and self righteousness. It is the pure in heart that shall see God. What do we know of pureness of heart? The story of Job might suggest a necessary humility before God which Job had to learn again a little late in the relationship but along with that is care to examine our interpretations of scripture and in particular the Law and the Prophets (see Matthew 5:17) so that we do not end up like Job's friends being adamant about interpretations when God only has the final say. Love and compassion need to be our guiding lights, it seems, in interpreting scripture. Pureness of heart seems to recognise humility and recognise the two greatest commandments which underpin the Law and the Prophets. If our relationship to God is to be real and immediate and in that sense 'to see God', we must approach our reflection on Israel and Palestine in 'pureness' of heart grounded in scripture but drowned in the love and compassion that God demonstrates to us through his grace.

3. A reading of Job gives us a clear understanding of the outworking of love and compassion that is symptomatic of 'pureness of heart' and here the priority for the poor and the dispossessed are part of that characteristic. In testing Job's faithfulness, his identification with suffering is key. No longer is he benefactor but now victim. He sees and feels the experience of suffering and is better for it … a humility has grown in him. We may never experience suffering directly in the way perhaps most of humanity experiences it, but the tale of Job reminds us of the fragility of the relationship between benefactor and beneficiary in poverty, malnutrition and dispossession, in victim of discrimination and unjust violence, in suffering humanity. Perhaps the tale brings us closer and if we are victim, an object of violence and discrimination, it enables us to recognise that we are not alone, that God is alongside and was himself the suffering servant of the Gospel accounts as well as Job brought low. In 'pureness of heart' we demonstrate compassion and identity. We recognise the boundary between oneself and otherness is dissolving; again this echoes what Jean Zaru has written 'My well-being and yours, my freedom and yours, my rights and yours are inseparable.' Love requires that union. We must love our neighbour as our self (Matthew 22:39) and furthermore that union stretches to we must 'Love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.' (Matthew 5:44)

What does this mean in our work in the Middle East and in particular in Israel and Palestine? It means that we must demonstrate, as Job did, our understanding of what this union might mean. It is a call to action, a call to accompaniment, a call to solidarity, a call to pay attention and a call for generosity not out of sympathy, perhaps not just empathy, but as a consequence of our union called for by Love. It must mean too that we cannot ignore or vilify either community; rather we need to insist on the truth as Job did and speak truth to power as Jesus did in his relationship with the Pharisees. We must do this with an appetite for understanding the perpetrator of violence and the victim; of being close enough to the problem to understand the dynamics of the relationship so that our words and our deeds reflect the love and compassion that must have its origin in 'pureness of heart'.

4. One of the reasons why the author decided to focus on Job was the multi-layered and confounding argument that often confronts any seeker for the truth in understanding the Israeli and Palestinian conflict. This seemed to parallel the similar arguments about divine retribution and Job's sinfulness that his friends sought to project. The too easy judgement of his friends on Job as a consequence of observation on his condition also spells out the complexity of the arguments about the existence of the wall or boundary fence, the function of suicide bombing, settlements and neighbourhoods, corruption and democracy, patrimony and privilege etc. I am constantly challenged by Matthew 7:1-5, 'Do not judge or you too will be judged.' One thing to be learned out of Job and Matthew 7 is that self-examination should precede any kind of judgement because at least then your ability to exercise love and compassion may be better sensitised.

We share a common humanity and one person's failings can find echoes of such sentiments in your own expressions of personality and it may be important for us to realise that. There is perhaps a difference between consequences and judgements in our understanding of the text. In this text judgement might suggest a valuing, a diminishing of personhood in judging another's behaviour and that may be the subject of the correction; but an application of legal, social, moral or ethical consequence may be less judgemental and more analytical, and easier for a person infringing agreed codes of behaviour to find it in themselves to conform. It might not be right to conform but to live in freedom in community or society, however you choose to define these,

might require you to argue your case and win sufficient agreement.

So in, say, judging an IDF soldier's behaviour, we need to be wary of our own possible fallibility in similar circumstance and focus on consequence rather than character assassination or global generalisations about the Israeli army or an Israeli government. At the same time, we need to be aware of institutional evil[19] and if evidence suggests such then we need to speak truth to power. Again our discipline has to require us to speak out of love and not out of bitterness and hatred. These are tall orders but our effectiveness as 'friends' depends upon it.

As far as Living Stones is concerned in our choice of programme, of speaker, of subject, we need to tread a difficult dividing line between judgement and consequence, between hypocrisy and truth, between the coldness of analysis and acceptance in love if we are to be heard aright.

Our even handedness in our analysis of both communities seems to be a requirement too, we need to acknowledge that there are saints and sinners in all communities and not be afraid to acknowledge consequence and credit in both.

5. There are no surprises in the fact that there are victims, nor in the fact that we could, at a throw of dice, become victims too. In fact, if we are to believe scripture and we are seeking pureness of heart then we should not be surprised if it happens to us. To describe it as God's choice would be incorrect so Job and God's treatment of his friends teaches us. Gutiérrez says something interesting about justice and he perhaps has it right in his reflections on Job:

> What is it that Job has understood? That justice does not reign in the world that God has created? No. The truth that he has grasped and that has lifted him to the level of contemplation is that justice alone does not have the final say about how we are to speak about God. Only when we realise that God's love is freely bestowed do we enter fully and definitively into the presence of the God of faith. Grace is not opposed to the quest for justice nor does it play it down; on the contrary, it gives it its full meaning. God's love, like all true love, operates in a world not of cause and effect but of freedom and gratuitousness. This is how

19 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed., University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1958.

> persons successfully encounter one another in a complete and unconditional way: without payment of any kind of charges and without externally imposed obligations that pressure them into meeting the expectations of the other.[20]

So persecution is not inevitable or necessarily to be expected but we should not be surprised. That being the case, for those who suffer our response should be one of solidarity, support and where possible accompaniment. Love and compassion requires that of us and requires us to do what we can to speak out in advocacy and to name truth as we see it in through the lens or 'eye' of faith. It is right that those who suffer out of righteousness should call out for help and expect God to be present and to see God—feel God and experience an upholding whilst recognising that we cannot demand of God anything. Heaven is at least a state of knowing of the presence of God and it is accompanied by an expectation of unjust suffering for righteousness sake. These are the tenants of 'faith', are they not? We are promised a counsellor or comforter, John 15:26, which is the Holy Spirit as we have come to know it. We must not forget that God works through us too and we are expected as people of faith seeking pureness of heart to be there as much as we can for those who suffer. We are also told that theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:10), that great is their reward in heaven (Matthew 5:11) and we should think it possible that we may have a part in that realisation too by our actions in support of those who suffer and of their families.

In our programme as Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust, we should examine our role in contribution to solidarity and accompaniment.

Job was taken to the bottom of his resources but God did not allow Satan to take his life.

'Skin for skin!' Satan replied. 'A man will give all he has for his own life. But stretch our your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.' The Lord said to Satan, 'Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.' … and Satan was so affective in his cruelty that Job's wife said to Job, 'Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!' He replied, 'You

20 Gutiérrez, *op. cit.*, 'Beyond Justice', pp. 87-88.

are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?' In all this, Job did not sin in what he said. (Job 2:4-10). It is important that we do not lose sight of the fact that this book was a creature of its time and we need to consider the text as a cautionary tale in the valuing of women as equal contributors to developing our relationship, as humankind, with God and that we need to critique any exclusive role of leadership among men in the Church or in the family in Palestine and elsewhere. The case for Job's wife is taken up by Ellen van Wolde in *Mr and Mrs Job*.[21]

This was the second and last of the tests that Satan laid on Job to shake him from his faithfulness to God and one which Job, much to Satan's displeasure, passed. Job's resolve to put up with everything even unto death is another mark of obedience and faithfulness which Jesus also exemplified except, of course, that Jesus's journey went beyond death to life eternal. Job had left death in God's hands; he was prepared to put up with whatever came his way but God did not require his death and rewarded him in the end with a long and prosperous life.

When the young man asked Jesus, 'What good thing must I do to get eternal life?' … Jesus replied, 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honour your father and mother and love your neighbour as yourself.' The persistent young man said 'All these I have kept.' … then Jesus answered, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.' This was too much and the young man, we are told, walked away.

Job was taken there; he did give generously to the poor and had the rest taken away, but rather than cursing God, Job still believed in Him and was faithful but wanted an explanation from God face to face so that he could understand. I think the story of Job reinforces the fact that our worldly wealth and possessions and even our physical life itself are not what it is all about. Ellen van Wolde, a Catholic theologian, in the first chapter[22] of a book collecting together papers from a symposium on Job 28, talks of a paradigmatic change in the focus of our attention in our relationship with God that is highlighted by the poetry of Job 28 in the search for wisdom. She stresses the attention in this chapter,

21 Published by SCM, London, 1997.

22 Ellen van de Wolde, *Wisdom, who can find it? A non-cognitive and cognitive study of Job 28 v1-11*, Brill, Leiden, 2003, p. 33.

which uses the metaphor of mining in its poetry, not on the human activity but on the earth and its fortunes and outworkings. Ellen writes

> Wisdom has nothing to do with hole digging, with devastating activities; wisdom is acknowledging the things and the earth from their own perspective, respecting them, and refraining from grasping, from tearing them out of their context and leaving holes and slags behind. What is overturned now? The conceptualisation of wisdom is overturned, the slags of the ancient concepts stay behind.

A similar theme is explored by Bill McKibben, who as an environmentalist, mines the rich prose that the book of Job uses as it describes God's response to Job's challenge. Again the focus of attention shifts to the wonder of God's creation and our dependence upon it and away from the pride and arrogance of humankind in its attempted management of the earth's resources.[23]

Our Life is fulfilled only in unity with God, only when Christ lives in us and we in Him (see John 6:56). That is the basis for abundant life. In this position, our worldly wealth and our lives are at God's disposal and an acknowledgement of that releases us into life eternal, into Christ in us and we in Him.

So in our situation, in the context of Israel/Palestine, and in considering our contribution we have to ask ourselves what is required of us? If we are true to our Christian tradition, the answer is probably to do what is right regardless of our own interests. In some of the other pointers in our reflection, we have guidance about what is right to do as we listen, study, pray and reflect and having seen what is required of us, we throw caution to the wind and live adventurously so that we may feel and know God at work in us. Maybe together we can build a more robust and creative framework for the future programme of action for Living Stones in particular and all of us in our own theatres of possibility.

23 Bill McKibben, *The Comforting Whirlwind—God, Job and the Scale of Creation*, Cowley Publications, Cambridge, MA, 2005.

THE CONCEPT OF *DHIMMA* IN EARLY ISLAM

*C. E. Bosworth**

I

The *millet* system, as it developed in the later centuries of classical Islam, owed its specifically Islamic legal bases to the very beginnings of Islam, to the events of Muḥammad's Medinan years (622-32), when the Prophet and his followers had achieved majority power in one town at least of Arabia, and were therefore forced to consider the question of the Muslim community's relationship to minorities, in the case of Medina specifically, a Jewish minority.

However, systems for the regulation of minorities such as the Islamic *millet* system became were by no means alien to the older Near Eastern world, in which hardly any state or empire had ever achieved—or indeed sought—an ethnic or religious exclusiveness. Thus the two great empires of Muḥammad's time, the Byzantine and the Sassanid ones, had to come to terms with the question of dissenting minorities. Where this dissent took the form of what seemed to be a schismatic and heretical deviation from the prevailing orthodoxy; or where some sort of challenge to the existing socio-religious order was involved, the claims to enforce uniformity of a powerful established Church, under imperial patronage, in the case of Byzantium, or of a socially superior priestly caste, in the case of Zoroastrian Persia, could not be gainsaid. Hence Byzantium had to combat strenuously the Paulicians in eastern Anatolia and, later, the Bogomils in the Balkans, just as the Sassanid state and Church successfully overcame the challenge in the early sixth century of Mazdakism and also managed to push Manichaeism out of

* This paper is an updated version of that first published in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, I, *The Central Lands*, eds B. Braude and B. Lewis, Holmes & Meier, New York and London, 1982.

the empire northwards and eastwards into Transoxania and Central Asia. But the existence of other great monotheistic faiths within the borders of the empires was—somewhat paradoxically in view of the external support which the devotees of such faiths could often call upon—felt as a lesser affront to the dominant religious susceptibilities than were the sectarian forms of that dominant faith. Something of respect for the founders of the other great faiths, for Moses and Christ as prophets and holy men, survived in Near Eastern minds, an attitude that was probably to influence Muḥammad in his policy toward the *dhimmī*s. In the case of the Jews, there was an ethnic barrier which enabled the dominant castes to despise them for racial exclusiveness as well as for religious purblindness and to adopt something like an attitude of exasperated contempt, as if nothing better could be expected from such a people; and this in fact allowed the Jewish communities to survive. Moreover, the dissenting groups often fulfilled useful administrative, social or economic functions within the empires, thus permitting policies of discrimination against them but not policies of total extermination.

In the pre-Christian Roman Empire, Judaism had been a *religio licita,* but a hardening of attitudes took place after the conversion of Constantine. The Code of Theodosius II (438) restated a body of anti-Jewish legislation which had grown up in the previous decades. Thus chapters eight and nine of book XVI of the Code, *De Judaeis, Caelicolis et Samaritanis* and *Ne Christianum mancipium Judaeus habeat* forbade celebration of the feast of Purim, when it was believed that Jews burnt images of the Cross, and Jews' holding Christian slaves (as the title of chapter nine implies), and also prohibited the construction of new synagogues and required the pulling down of old, structurally unsafe ones. The *Corpus iuris civilis* of Justinian I likewise subsumed a host of further discriminatory measures: *novella* 37 of 535 forbade the practice of Judaism altogether in the North African territories newly reconquered from the Vandals, and *novella* 146 of 553 actually interfered in Jewish doctrinal matters—something which was hardly ever to occur under Islam—by stipulating which *Targum* was to be used and forbidding use of the *Mishnah* for understanding the Torah. Already in 383 the council of Byzantine bishops had forbidden apostasy from Christianity, and Theodosius prescribed death for any Jews or Samaritans who persuaded Christians to abandon their faith.[1] Thus the

1 *Encyclopaedia Judaica,* second edition, Jerusalem, 1972, s.v. 'Byzantine Empire', vol.

general aim of Byzantine policy towards religious minorities, above all the Jews, was to keep them in a permanently inferior position; in several of the above measures, e.g., in regard to synagogue construction and proselytism, it foreshadowed later Islamic policy aimed at freezing the position of the *dhimmī* communities, presumably in the hope that over the course of time they would wither away naturally. The question of financial disabilities of the Jews in the Byzantine Empire is somewhat obscure, and specific documentation is lacking. Andreades thought it probable that the Jewish communities were liable to a special capitation tax.[2] In the pre-Christian period of the Roman Empire, the Jews had paid a fixed due to the imperial treasury, the *aurum coronarium* or *fiscus iudaicus,* and certain Arab geographical writers of the mid-ninth and early tenth centuries aver that the Byzantine state *(al-Rūm)* used to take one *dīnār per annum* from every Jew and Zoroastrian.[3]

In the Sassanid Empire, there were important Jewish communities in Mesopotamia and scattered across Persia proper as far as Khurasan and Soghdia. Since they were unsupported by any outside power, their presence posed no threat to the security of the state; hence they seem to have survived, as internally self-regulating communities, on their own enduring religious and intellectual resources. It was the Christians of the empire, much more numerous than the Jews (above all in Mesopotamia, but strongly represented in the towns of Persia, too) and at times looking outward to their coreligionists in countries like Byzantium and Armenia, who felt at times the persecuting hand of the Zoroastrian state church, though this seems most often to have fallen on the clergy rather than on the Christian laity. The Church of the empire (after the schisms of the fifth century divided into Nestorian and Syrian Monophysite branches, with the former especially strong in the eastern parts) subsisted as a largely autonomous organization under its patriarchs or Catholicoi, as it was to do in Islam. But the Church leaders do not seem to have had any fiscal responsibilities as under Islam,

4, cols. 1549-1555, and s.v. 'Theodosius II', vol. 15, cols. 1101-02.

2 A. Andreades, 'Les Juifs et le fisc dans l'empire byzantine', *Mélanges Ch. Diehl,* Paris, 1930, vol. 1.

3 Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Al-Masālik wa-al-mamālik,* ed. M. J. de Goeje, Leiden, 1889, p. 111, repeated by Ibn al-Faqīh, *Mukhtaṣar kitāb al-buldān,* ed. de Goeje, Leiden, 1885, tr. H. Masse, *Abrégé du livre des pays,* Damascus, 1973, p. 176. Zoroastrians can only have been found in lands conquered by the Greeks from the Persians on the far eastern fringes of Asia Minor and in eastern Transcaucasia or Caucasian Albania.

where the religious head, Patriarch or Exilarch, collected taxation from his community on behalf of the secular state; the mention that Shāpūr II (309-79) raised a double capitation tax from the Christians (i.e., double that normally levied on all his subjects, of whatever faith) and that he asked Simeon bar Sabbāʿe to collect it, implies that this was not the norm. The building of new churches was prohibited as it was to be under Islam, but this regulation was often waived for diplomatic reasons; thus in the peace agreement between Justinian and Khusrau Anūshirvān (531-79) of 561, conversely, Zoroastrians in Byzantine territory were to be permitted to build fire temples. Juridically, the Christian communities were left to follow their own laws and customs, such as the Acts of the Synods of Ctesiphon of 410 and 420 for ecclesiastical matters and the Syro-Roman law code, the *Leges Constantini Theodosii Leonis,* for personal status, thus placing them on broadly the same footing as the Christian population within the Byzantine Empire. The question of apostasy from the dominant Zoroastrian faith is not entirely clear in the Zoroastrian legal literature. Certainly, high-born converts to Christianity, from the royal family, the nobility and the upper priesthood, courted death, which was often inflicted, as the Syriac Acts of the martyrs tells us, in a singularly barbarous fashion; and we hear of Christian martyrs as late as 615. Even so, such draconian punishment may not have been generally applied to those below the top social and religious ranks, since we know of several prominent ecclesiastics who were formerly Zoroastrians, such as Sābbā (d. 487), from a high Zoroastrian family, and the famous Nestorian Patriarch Mar Abhā (d. 552) was formerly a Zoroastrian official; and there are mentioned numerous Christians with Zoroastrian names, often containing theophoric elements, showing that they were not born Christians.[4] Persian imperial policy was more

4 For the general position of Christians in Sassanid Persia, see J. Labourt, *Le Christianisme dans l'empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide (224-632)*, Paris, 1914; E. Sachau, 'Von den rechtlichen Verhältnissen der Christen im Sassanidenreich', *Mitteilungen des Seminars für orientalische Sprachen an der K. Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin, Westasiatische Abteilung,* 10 (1907), pp. 69-95; and A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides,* second edition, Copenhagen, 1944, pp. 267-268, 298-299, and chapter 6, 'Les Chrétiens de l'Iran', *passim*; also now, Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East. A Concise History*, London 2003, pp. 7-41; Ian Gilman and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia before 1500*, Richmond, Surrey, 2000, pp. 109-52; David Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church. A History of the Church of the East*, London, 2011, pp. 2-31.

liberal than the later Islamic attitudes to conversion, since al-Ṭabarī expressly records that Khusrau Parvīz (591-628) allowed conversions to Christianity from any faith except Zoroastrianism, whereas under Islam, conversions between the protected religions, e.g., of a Christian to Judaism and vice versa, were forbidden.[5]

In sum, the position of Christians and Jews in pre-Islamic Persia was precarious at certain times, such as those of warfare with Byzantium with respect to the Christians, but the Christians' numerousness, their high level of education and the ability of their faith to appeal even to the highest social classes of the Persians, all allowed them a generally not unfavourable position. Much in their social and legal status corresponds to the position of the Christian community under Islam (and one wonders whether the attitudes towards the *dhimmī*s elaborated later in Islam by such an Iraqi-centred *madhhab* as that of the *Ḥanafī* owed anything to the situation which the Arab conquerors found already prevailing in the early seventh-century Persian Empire), but in certain respects it was superior. For one thing, the Persian emperors did not disdain to employ Christian soldiers in their army;[6] the Islamic *jizya* came to be regarded as in lieu of military service, but *dhimmī*s did not, after the first decades of Islam, have any option of either joining the Muslim forces and sharing in the privileges (primarily financial) of the Arab *muqātila* or of paying the *jizya,* till the *Tanẓīmāt* period of the Ottoman Empire. Hence Sachau's conclusion was that 'the struggle for existence by Christianity in Islam was much harder than in the time of the Zoroastrian Sassanid rule.'[7]

II

The Qur'anic basis of the later doctrine of *dhimma* has as its background the numerous references to *jihad* against the unbelievers, arising out of Muḥammad's gradual disillusionment with the Jews and Christians who failed, as he had originally hoped, to recognize the new faith of Islam as either the valid form of eternal revelation for the Arabs

5 T. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser and Araber zur Zeit der Sassaniden,* Leiden, 1879, pp. 287-8, cf. also pp. 74-6 n. and pp. 160-2 n.

6 Sachau (cited n. 4), pp. 79-80.

7 *Ibid*., p. 94.

specifically, or as the latest, hence truest in its universal validity, form of God's message for all mankind. Also significant for the prehistory of the idea of *dhimma* is the document preserved in the *Sīra* of Ibn Isḥaq and known for convenience as the 'Constitution of Medina'. It has recently been recognised, e.g., by Watt and Serjeant, as in fact a highly composite document, parts of which antedate Badr (2/624) whilst others may postdate the massacre of the third great Jewish tribe of Quraiẓa (6/627). The main point for our present purpose is that it attempts to regulate *inter alia* the status of the Jews in Medina (though whether these Jews include the three major tribes or consist of smaller, splinter groups attached to the Arab tribes of the Anṣār as confederates is unclear), either as a separate *umma* (if religion be the main test of an *umma)* or as part of the general *umma* of Yathrib-Medina (if territoriality be an important element in the definition of an *umma);* in any case, both the Muslims and the Jews are to retain their own *dīn* (here almost certainly meaning law as well as religion).[8]

It is here in the Constitution of Medina that we find the term *dhimma,* for section fifteen states that 'the *dhimma* [here, it seems, 'compact guaranteeing security'] of God is one', i.e., all within the *umma* are equally protected, and all are able to give protection to other members, so that complete solidarity, with everyone in the dual role of protector and protected, is assured for all.[9] The corollary would appear to be that no one outside the *umma* is to be protected, except under

8 Cf. W. M. Watt, *Muhammad at Medina,* Oxford, 1956, p. 221 ff.; R. B. Serjeant, 'The "Constitution of Medina"', *Islamic Quarterly* 8 (1964), pp. 9-16 (who thinks that the Jews were to be a separate *umma* along with the Muslims); M. Rodinson, *Mohammed,* Harmondsworth, 1973, pp. 152-3 (who thinks that the Muslims and Jews were to form one *umma,* 'the people of Medina as a whole, presenting a united front to the outside world'). Since this paper was first written, the important article of R. B. Serjeant, 'The *Sunnah Jāmiʿah,* Pacts with the Yathrib Jews, and the *Taḥrīm* of Yathrib: Analysis and Translations of the Documents Comprised in the So-Called 'Constitution of Medina", *BSOAS,* 41 (1978), pp. 1-42, appeared. In it, Serjeant demonstrates clearly, by meticulous analysis of the Constitution into eight component documents, that his Document C affirms that each group of Jews in a *ḥilf*-relationship with one of the Arab tribes of Medina, was to form an *umma* with the Arab *mu'minūn*; *umma* he defines as a '(theocratic) confederation', and considers the document in question to have been composed early, perhaps only a few months after Muḥammad's arrival at Medina.

9 The paragraph numbering here is that of Watt (cited n. 8), p. 222; the equivalent numbering by Serjeant, 'Sunnah' (cited n. 8), p. 19 is sections 6-7 of his Document A.

the temporary grants of *ḥilf* and *jiwār* which were traditional in ancient Arabian society. An increase in Muḥammad's claims as religious leader and prophet is seen in his requirement of obedience 'to God and His Messenger', paralleled by the fact that in his treaties with the outlying tribes of Arabia who sent delegations to Medina we find mention both of 'the *dhimma* of God' and 'the *dhimma* of Muḥammad', here clearly meaning 'grant of protection'. In some cases, there is mentioned the *'dhimma* of Muḥammad' alone, possibly where tribes were still not yet Muslim in faith but nevertheless in political alliance with Muḥammad, hence the Prophet's personal hesitancy about the propriety of extending God's *dhimma* to pagans. However, Muḥammad seems later to have extended the *dhimma* of God to all tribes and individuals coming within his system of security and alliance; he never showed any compunction about employing non-Muslims in his fighting forces, as with the still pagan Quraish at Ḥunain, and the concept that only Muslims could share in the advantages of the Muslim *umma* develops only after the *Ridda* with the advent to power of the legalistic disciplinarian ᶜUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. The importance of the possibility of non-Muslim but political and military allies of the Prophet enjoying *dhimma* in these last years of Muḥammad's life is that, in subsequent times, it was to be precisely the non-Muslim scriptuaries dwelling within Islamic society who were accorded this *dhimma* and became known as the *ahl al-dhimma* par excellence.

In the actual text of the Qur'an, we find the noun *dhimma* only twice, in *sūrat al-barā'a* (9: 8, 10), coupled with a parallel word *ill* in the phrase 'compact or agreement' (the lexicographers defining *ill* as 'an agreement for mutual protection', 'promise of protection', etc). But it is in this same *sūra,* so redolent of the atmosphere of *jihād,* that we find the Qur'anic crux for the subsequent legal basis of *dhimma* equals 'protection of non-Muslims living with the *dār al-Islām*'. In 9: 29, we have 'Fight against those who disbelieve in God and the Last Day, who do not account forbidden what God and His Messenger have forbidden, and who do not follow the religion of truth, from amongst those who have been given the Book, until they pay the *jizya* in exchange for a benefaction granted to them, being in a humiliated position.' The exact exegesis of the final phrases *ᶜan yadin* and *wa-hum ṣāghirūna* has been much discussed,[10] but the general purport of the

10 The translation here follows essentially that of M. Bravmann in 'A propos de

verse is clear: the People of the Book are exempted from the general sentence of being combated till death, the inexorable fate of obdurate pagans, but the price of their preservation is to be reduction to a humiliating status in society as second-class citizens, liable to a poll tax—this last provision being presumably an echo of similar provisions which may have been imposed on minority faiths in the older Near Eastern empires (see above). What was thus envisaged in Islam was a sort of contract promising protection, *dhimma,* perpetually renewed with the Muslim state in return for acceptance of subordinate status and automatically revoked in the case of non-fulfilment by the *dhimmī*s (what happened when the Muslim authorities failed to implement the promised protection was left less clear).

Such a solution was based on sound pragmatic grounds. Even within the Arabian peninsula, where the vestiges of ancient indigenous paganism soon crumbled and Islam became the majority faith, there were in the last years of Muḥammad's life and during the caliphate of Abū Bakr, communities of Zoroastrians in Bahrain and Oman and of Christians in Najrān and other parts of southern Arabia who stood firm over their own faiths but were friendlily disposed toward the Prophet and his new creed, as is shown for example by the treaty which Muḥammad made with the Christians of Najrān, by whose terms the people of that town were to aid the Prophet in time of war with weapons and beasts.[11] Outside the peninsula, some sort of *modus vivendi* with the vast populations soon to be subjugated by the generals of ᶜUmar and ᶜUthmān had to be hurriedly worked out. The Arab warriors were for long a dominant minority which had to concentrate itself in the *amṣār* and in certain other urban centres; the broad consent, if only tacit, of the governed would have to be eventually secured. Moreover, one or two of the minorities formerly oppressed by the old regimes, like the Samaritans in central Palestine and perhaps some of the Jewish communities, had given positive assistance to the incoming Arabs. We do not have to picture the masses of Christian population across the Fertile Crescent as actually welcoming the conquerors—the age-old

Qur'an IX, 29', *Arabica, 10* (1963), pp. 94-5: that the *jizya* is a benefaction granted in exchange for their lives (following Baidāwī on this verse), and that they have been left in a humiliating position because of their failure to fight till death in battle. This latter interpretation is assented to by C. Cahen, *ibid.,* p. 95, cf. also his earlier interpretation of the whole verse, 'Quran IX, 29', *Arabica,* 9 (1962), pp. 76-9.

11 See Watt (cited n. 8), pp. 127-8.

antipathy of sedentaries for Bedouins from the deep desert must have caused profound fear and disquiet at their approach—but the alienation of these Semitic populations, on social and religious grounds, from the Greek Melkite ecclesiastical hierarchy and the Byzantine Greek ruling elite of soldiers and officials was not conducive to wholehearted resistance against the invaders in most cases. Even where towns and regions did resist, and submitted eventually through force of arms rather than a peace treaty, mass enslavement or extermination (as had been possible in the limited confines of the Medinan oasis with the Banū Quraiẓa) was clearly not feasible.

Hence the *dhimma* system came into existence almost inevitably, but in a somewhat informal way; the elaboration of a tight legal system here was to be the work of later, systematising jurists, above all in the ᶜAbbāsid period. The first requirement was definition of the terms *ahl al-dhimma* and *ahl al-kitāb.* The Qur'an was somewhat vague. In three places (2:59/62; 5:70/69; 22:17) we have the Jews, Christians and Ṣābi'ūn linked together, but with the addition in the last verse, from *sūrat al-ḥajj,* of the Zoroastrians *(al-majūs),* and traditional exegesis came to distinguish these from the polytheists (*alladhin ashrakū* in this verse). The position of the Jews and Christians as scriptuaries is clear enough. Whoever the original Ṣābi'ūn may have been—and they must have been some vestigial sectarian group on the fringes of Arabia—the designation later became an umbrella one under which various groups, like the so-called 'Sabians' of Harran, devotees of later classical paganism, were to claim *kitābī* status. The position of the Zoroastrians, somewhat uncertain because of their single mention only in the Qur'an, required very urgent clarification, for by 652 the last fugitive Sassanid emperor, Yazdagird III, was dead, and apart from remote regions like Dailam, the Caspian provinces and Sistan, all Persia lay under Muslim control. In any case, there had been Zoroastrian groups established in eastern and southern Arabia in pre-Islamic times, as we have noted above, conceivably including some native Arab converts. A *ḥadīth* attributed to the Prophet subsequently asserted that Muḥammad expressly extended the terms of Qur'an 9:29 to the Magians; some Persophile jurists were to maintain that the Zoroastrians had formerly been genuinely in possession of written scriptures, but these had been destroyed at a date before the advent of Islam.[12] In this fashion, a neat solution could

12 A. J. Wensinck, A *Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition,* Leiden, 1927, p. 60, s.v.

be suggested for the difficulty that both the written Avestan originals of the Zoroastrian sacred texts and the Middle Persian translations, almost certainly made during the later Sassanid period (sixty century), seem to have been lost in the disruption of the Zoroastrian religious institution by the Arab invasions, and were only committed to writing again during the Zoroastrian literary renaissance of the ninth and early tenth centuries.[13]

When the Muslims first acquired a foothold in the Indian subcontinent through the conquest of Sind in the early eighth century, a situation arose similar to that of Persia; the teeming populations there could not be slaughtered *en bloc,* but how, in the absence of any Qur'anic *naṣṣ* (and the Majūs had at least been explicitly mentioned in the Holy Book in a context capable of bearing a favourable interpretation to the Zoroastrians), could the pagan Hindus be assimilated to *dhimmī* status? On the evidence of Balādhurī's account of the conquest of Sind, there were certainly massacres in the towns of Sind when the Arabs first arrived; but in some places, there was no resistance, especially, it seems, amongst the Buddhist minority, with their traditions of nonviolence (though it does not seem necessary to go as far as an Indian nationalist historian like R. C. Majumdar and claim that the Arab invasion was positively facilitated by the treachery of certain Buddhist priests and others who assisted the invaders, rather like the Samaritans are said to have done in Palestine). Peace treaties were made with the local communities according to Balādhurī again, on what had been standard conditions during the overrunning of the Fertile Crescent and Persia (see below), e.g., the requirement of giving hospitality to Muslims, and the commander Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim al-Thaqafī is recorded as accepting the submission of the fortress and town of Rōr after several months' siege in return for tribute *(kharāj)* and as conceding that their idol temples should not be disturbed because, he proclaimed, 'Idol temples are exactly like the churches and synagogues of the Christians and the fire temples of the Zoroastrians.'[14]

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djizya; A. Fattal, *Le statut légal des non-musulmans en pays d'Islam*, Beirut, 1958, pp. 17-18.

13 See M. Boyce, 'Middle Persian Literature', *Handbuch der Orientalistik, IV. Iranistik. 2. Literatur,* Part 1, Leiden-Cologne, 1968, p. 33 ff.

14 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān,* Cairo, 1959, pp. 425-7; Y. Friedman, 'A Contribution to the Early History of Islam in India', *Studies in Memory of Gaston* Wiet, ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon, Jerusalem, 1977, pp. 325-9.

Over the succeeding centuries, it became accordingly normal practice to concede to the Hindus and other non-Muslims the status of *ahl al-dhimma*. Here on the remote fringes of the Islamic world, it was obviously difficult to enforce the strict regulations of the *Sharīʿa* regarding *dhimmī*s. Territory not infrequently changed hands along the Hindu-Muslim frontier, and Muslims found themselves living under Hindu rulers (where in the case of the Rashṭrakūṭs of the Deccan, their Muslim subjects in the Bombay coastal region enjoyed much favour and religious and legal freedom[15]); and in this syncretistic environment, Islam came to adapt itself to the historic caste system of India, rather than attempt to change it. An interesting instance of what seems to be the adoption of an ancient Hindu discriminatory custom towards an inferior minority by the Muslim conquerors has been suggested by Y. Friedmann as the explanation of a puzzling passage in Balādhurī about the activities of an ʿAbbāsid governor in Sind during the caliphate of al-Muʿtaṣim (218-27/833-42). In this, the governor is dealing with the community of Jhats (Arabic, *Zuṭṭ),* considered an unclean group in the Hindu social system; he took the *jizya* from them, 'sealed' their hands (i.e., the practice of giving a receipt for payment of poll tax in a particularly humiliating way, attested for Iraq and others of the central Islamic lands from the Umayyad period onwards), and ordered that every Jhat when he went out should be accompanied by a dog. The apparent explanation is that the dog is an unclean animal to both Hindus and Muslims, and the requirement that every member of the despised Jhat group should be distinguished by having him with a dog would thus be a peculiarly local form of *ghiyār,* distinguishing feature, analogous to the *zunnār* and the coloured patches of the *dhimmī*s in the lands of the caliphate further west (see below).[16]

15 Cf. S. Maqbul Ahmad, s.v., 'Balharā', *EI*², vol. 1, p. 991 (an Arabised form of the title of the Rāshtrakūtas); amongst the Arabic sources stressing their benevolence towards the Muslims are al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, Paris ed., vol. 2, pp. 382-3, and the *Akhbār al-Sīn wa al-Hind,* ed. and tr. J. Sauvaget, Paris, 1948, p. 12, Section 25.

16 Al-Balādhurī (cited n. 14), p. 432; Friedmann (cited n. 14), pp. 331-2.

III

The treaties made by Muḥammad and the commanders of the first Muslim armies as they overran the Arabian peninsula and then expanded over the whole Near East seem to have been *ad hoc* conventions, made by Muslim leaders on the spot with the chief or headman of the town or region in question. The historical sources providing details, such as Ibn ᶜAbd al-Ḥakam for Egypt and Balādhurī for the conquered lands in general, date from up to two and a half centuries after the agreements were made, and as Fattal has remarked, the more detailed and circumstantial are the conditions of surrender, the more suspect are the documents.[17] The original agreements must in fact have been quite vague ones, often in the first place oral ones in an age when literacy, at least on the Arab side, was very rare, and when a limited number of Coptic, Aramaic, or Persian native speakers could be expected to know Arabic anyway. It is certainly impossible to deduce a neat dichotomy, as later jurists were to do, between voluntary surrender according to a peace treaty *(ṣulḥ[an])* and conquest by force of arms *(ᶜanwat[an])*. However, there are some broadly common features in these agreements. The subject peoples are above all required to pay the poll tax or *jizya* as the price of the *dhimma* extended to them. In addition, various services, express of *ṣughr* or humiliation, are demanded. They have to act as guides through unknown terrains for the Muslims, and give Muslim travellers shelter for between one and three nights and days: they have to keep up roads and bridges; they have to supply the Muslims with basic foodstuffs like corn, oil and honey and raw materials like pitch and timber for building purposes; and they must undertake not to provide aid or comfort for the Muslims' enemies. The *dhimma* received in exchange comprised freedom of person and freedom of legal status, i.e., continuance under personal law codes with access to personal courts; freedom to retain property (only houses abandoned by fugitive owners were to be taken over by the Muslims); and freedom of conscience and the exercise of monotheistic religion (only churches abandoned by their Christian congregations were to be turned into mosques). In the case of certain privileged groups who had rendered special services to the incomers (like the Samaritans who had acted as guides) or who lived

17 Fattal (cited n. 12), p. 58.

in strategic areas on the borders of the Muslim empire and had to be specially conciliated (like the Mardaites or Jarājima of the Amanus region of northwestern Syria, bulwarks against a Byzantine revanche; the Arab tribes of Taghlib and Tanūkh in the upper Jazīra, adjoining the Byzantine frontier, who might have been tempted to go over to the Greeks; and the kingdom of Nubia, remote and protecting the Islamic province of Egypt from the unknown potential threats from inner Africa), exemptions from these general requirements were made often involving financial concessions or the privilege of fighting at the side of the Muslim warriors and thus sharing in the captured plunder.[18]

In all these agreements, the provisions are often summary in form and by no means rigorous. There is, for instance, no mention as yet of the *ghiyār* or *shiʿār,* the requirement of distinctive dress for *dhimmī*s*;* the Muslim warriors, a small minority in the conquered lands in any case, were in these early years perfectly distinctive through their Bedouin dress and mounts and thus in no need further to distinguish themselves from what eventually became in most parts of the empire a non-Muslim minority only. The neat systematisation of the social and legal rights and disabilities of the *dhimmī*s dates from a later time, as Islamic religion began to permeate for the first time the general fabric of Near Eastern society, whereas previously older attitudes of the Jāhiliyya had been still strongly held. Above all, this definition is a reflex of a general urge in all walks of life towards the erection of legal frameworks, in which each individual's rights and duties vis-à-vis the *sharīʿa,* in the case of the Muslims, and vis-à-vis the Islamic state in the case of all peoples within the *dār al-islām,* Muslims and *kitābī*s alike.

The classic formulation of the general status of the *dhimmī*s was to be that of the so-called 'Covenant of ʿUmar'. A forerunner of this is the document known as 'the Prophet's edict to all the Christians' and then '… to all mankind', preserved by two oriental Christian sources, the anonymous Nestorian *Chronicle of Siʿirt* and the Jacobite Barhebraeus's *Ecclesiastical Chronicle.* This edict is said to have been originally made by Muḥammad with the Christians of Najrān. Various monasteries and other institutions of the Christian Orient later claimed to possess genuine copies of this document, confirmations of which were connected with various historical figures like the caliph Muʿawiya and the Nestorian Catholicos Īshoʿyahb II, and Fattal has noted that 'une

18 *Ibid.*, pp. 58-60.

immense fortune était réservée à ce document';'authentic' copies of it have continued to turn up till the present century, e.g., in 1909 at the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate in Istanbul. Nevertheless, it is a patent fabrication, probably the work of some Nestorian priest or monk.[19]

The 'Covenant of ᶜUmar' itself exists *in extenso* only in authors of as late as the end of the eleventh century and the twelfth one, sc., in Abū Bakr al-Ṭurṭūshī's (d. 520/1126) *adab* work the *Sirāj al-mulūk* and in the *Ta'rikh madīnat Dimashq* by Ibn ᶜAsākir (d. 571/1176), and then, with numerous variations, in subsequent authors, though certain of these authors do claim to be quoting much earlier authorities. It is true that the early ᶜAbbāsid jurist Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798) attributes in his *Kitāb al-kharāj* certain of the conditions of the 'Covenant' as it was later constituted to ᶜUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's general Abū ᶜUbaida. Ṭurṭūshī's version claims to be an agreement made with the Christians of Syria at the time of their capitulation, without specifically mentioning any city like Damascus, Ḥimṣ, Jerusalem, etc., although Ibn ᶜAsākir does state that the 'Covenant' was in fact Abū ᶜUbaida's capitulation treaty with the people of Damascus and all Syria, elsewhere further citing Khālid b. al-Walīd's imposition of a capitulation treaty on the *dhimmī*s of Syria whose conditions resemble closely those of the 'Covenant'.

The essentials of the 'Covenant', said to have been promulgated by ᶜUmar I in reply to a request for *amān* by the Christians of Syria and related on the authority of the Companion ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ghunm (d. 78/687), are as follows: the Christians undertake not to erect any new churches, monasteries or monks' hermitages, and not to repair those falling into ruin; to give hospitality to Muslim travellers for up to three days; not to shelter spies or harm the Muslims in any way; not to teach the Qur'an to their children; not to celebrate their religious services publicly; not to prevent any of their kinsfolk from freely embracing Islam; to show respect for the Muslims in various ways, such as rising in their presence; not to imitate the Muslims in matters of dress or hairstyle, to use their manner of language and their patronymics; not to use riding-beasts with saddles, or to bear any arms; not to have seals engraved in Arabic characters; not to sell alcoholic

19 See for those two works, A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur,* Bonn, 1922, vol. 2, p. 312, and G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur,* Vatican City, 1944-1953, vol. 2, pp. 195-6, and for the 'Edict' in general, Fattal (cited n. 12), pp. 27-33.

drinks; to shave the front of the hair and to wear the distinctive girdle or *zunnār;* not to parade the emblem of the cross publicly in Muslim quarters and markets, or to beat the *nāqūs* (wooden clappers used instead of bells to summon the faithful to worship) or to chant loudly; not to conduct public processions on Palm Sunday and at Easter; not to bury their dead in the same neighbourhoods as Muslims are interred; not to keep slaves who have been the property of Muslims; and not to build houses which might overlook those of Muslims. The Christians agree to observe these conditions, in exchange for protection, and to regard contraventions as absolving the Muslim state from its obligation of *dhimma*.

Clearly, such provisions as the requirement of distinctive clothing, the prohibition of building houses overlooking the private quarters of Muslim houses and the forbidding of overt Christian ceremonial in public places where Muslims might be affronted, point to a society where Muslims and *dhimmī*s are inextricably mingled, and there is no indication of anything like the Jewish ghettos of mediaeval Europe or even of the specifically Jewish quarters of *mellāḥ*s of later Islamic North Africa. The chronologically piecemeal character of the 'Covenant' is apparent, and little of it seems to fit the conditions of the early conquest period in Syria; its attribution to the second caliph does however accord with the picture which grew up of ᶜUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb as the great lawgiver and organizer of the military and administrative bases of the Islamic state. One may also suspect some confusion with the later Caliph ᶜUmar b. ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz (99-101/717-20), the 'Hezekiah of the Umayyads' as Goldziher called him, who does seem to have endeavoured to apply the letter of *sūra* 9: 29, about humiliating the *dhimmī*s. The *Chronicle of Siᶜirt* states that ᶜUmar II was more hostile than previous rulers to the Christians, that he imposed hardships on them and on the celebration of their liturgy, and that he established the rule that the killing of a Christian by an Arab (i.e., a Muslim) did not necessitate the exaction of a life in retaliation but only a monetary payment. Michael the Syrian records similar policies, including a worsening of the financial means of support for Christian ecclesiastical institutions and increased incentives for Christians to become Muslims. It is indeed quite probable that ᶜUmar continued the policies of Arabization begun twenty years previously by his uncle ᶜAbd al-Malik, extending them from the administrative sphere to the

personal religious one. The period of quiescence in Muslim-Christian relations during the decades immediately following the conquests was now coming to an end; to it there succeeded in the eighth century a sharpened consciousness of the intellectual and religious divisions of the three great monotheistic faiths and their communities, seen in the increasing appearance of Muslim-Christian polemical literature and the apologetic role of scholars like St John of Damascus (d. 749?). The increasingly influential religious institution of *ʿulamā'* and *fuqahā'* wished now to formalise what had earlier been a matter of varying local, somewhat informal, agreements, and inevitably, the dominating secular power worked in the direction of rigidity and of worsening the *dhimmī*s legal status. Hence Tritton may well be right to some extent when he states that 'it would seem that it (sc., the Covenant) was an exercise in the schools of law to draw up pattern treaties.'[20]

IV

To recount the course of subsequent relations of the Muslims with the Jews and Christians would be a lengthy task, and is one which needs to be approached through monographs on specific communities at particular periods, as has in fact been done by Mann for the Jews in Fatimid Egypt, by Ashtor for the Jews in Mamlūk Egypt and in Muslim Spain, by Galante for the Jews of Istanbul, and by Simonet, de las Cagigas, Manuel de Epalza and, most recently, Richard Hitchcock in his *Mozarabs in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*. Aldershot 2008. Here, only a few of the general trends in these historical processes can be noted.

Further spasms of anti-*dhimmī* restrictions followed on ʿUmar II's increasingly severe measures during the early ʿAbbāsid period, especially under Hārūn al-Rashīd and under the strongly orthodox Sunni and traditionalist al-Mutawakkil. Especially interesting is the requirement of distinctive dress, which Abū Yūsuf traces back to ʿUmar II. The *zunnār* or girdle is always mentioned, but ʿUmar II is said to have prohibited the *dhimmī*s from wearing the typically Muslim *qabā* or cloak, *ṭaylasān* or gown of the learned classes, and the *sirwāl* or trousers held round by bands of cloth. In the specially discriminatory

20 For detailed analyses of the 'Covenant', see A. S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects,* London, 1930, pp. 5-17, and Fattal (cited n. 12), pp. 60-9.

senses of the two words, the *ghiyār* 'mark of distinguishing' and *shiᶜār* 'mark of recognition' make their appearance under the two ᶜAbbāsid caliphs mentioned above. Al-Ṭabarī records under the year 191/807 that Hārūn al-Rashīd ordered one of his officials in Baghdad to see that the *dhimmī*s there were differentiated from the Muslims in matters of dress and mounts; this outburst of zeal was connected with an intensification of warfare with Byzantium, and the destruction of Christian churches along the frontier zone of the Taurus Mountains was also enjoined. Then in 239/853 al-Mutawakkil enjoined that the *dhimmī*s should wear two honey-coloured (i.e., yellow) *durraᶜa*s and that they should ride only mules and donkeys, and not horses.[21] We now have the concept of a band or patch of a specific colour being compulsorily placed over the shoulders of the *dhimmī*s garments. One Christian source says that al-Mutawakkil required the Christians to wear honey-coloured *ṭaylasāns* together with the *zunnār,* and in subsequent times, patches of red and blue are also mentioned. The favoured Muslim colours at this time were probably white (the official colour of the Umayyads), black (that of the ᶜAbbāsids) and green (that of the ᶜAlids), but there does not really seem to have been any deep rationale behind these stipulations on colour beyond that of pure differentiation. Only in Mamlūk times, when hostility towards the *dhimmī*s had intensified considerably, do we find for instance that according to Ibn Taghrībirdī, in 700/1301 the Jews in Egypt had to wear a yellow turban, Christians a blue one and Samaritans a red one, and in 755/1354 the requirement of similarly-coloured garments was made (in the Fāṭimid period, however, the eccentric caliph al-Ḥākim had decreed black turbans for the *dhimmī*s, because black was the colour of the detested ᶜAbbāsids); another source states that the Jews and Christians of Egypt had to wear yellow leather boots with one red and one black garter. In Muslim Spain, where the numbers of the Mozarab Christians must have been not much less, and conceivably more, than those of the Muslims, regulations for the distinctive dress of Christians and Jews seem to have been imposed only with the advent of the Almoravids in the later eleventh century and then under the Almohads; the secretary of the Almoravides, Ibn ᶜAbdūn (d. 529/1134), demanded that such measures be imposed in Seville,

21 Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk*, ed. de Goeje, Leiden, 1881, Series 3, vol. 2, pp. 712–3, 1419.

but they do not appear actually to have been put into practice until Almohad times.[22]

The regulations concerning distinctive dress were only applied sporadically, as discussions in the Muslim sources of their frequent renewal show, and fell into desuetude toward modern times. Often it was on the fringes of the Islamic world, or in conservative and isolated regions of it, that discriminatory measures lasted longest. Thus until the establishment of the Protectorate in Morocco (1912), Jews there had to go on foot in their own quarters and had to take off their sandals or slippers when in the presence of Muslim dignitaries and when passing Muslim holy places.[23] Shīʿī areas of Islam were often more rigorous toward *dhimmī*s than the mainstream Sunnīs. Thus in the Zaydī highland zone of Yemen, the Jews' houses were limited in height and were further restricted in the use of external decoration. In the district of Yazd in central Persia, the Zoroastrian community, much oppressed within the Muslim environment, built low, fortress-like single-story houses, with covered-over courtyards for easier defence, until affairs began to improve for them in the later decades of the nineteenth century.[24]

Although protected by the contract of *dhimma,* the *dhimmī*s were never anything but second-class citizens in the Islamic social system, tolerated in large measure because they had special skills such as those of physicians, secretaries, financial experts, etc., or because they fulfilled functions which were necessary but obnoxious to Muslims, such as money-changing, tanning, wine-making, castrating slaves, etc. A Muslim might marry a *dhimmī* wife but not vice versa, for this would put a believing woman into the power of an unbeliever; for the same reason, a Muslim could own a *dhimmī* slave but a *dhimmī* not a Muslim one. The legal testimony of a *dhimmī* was not admissible in a judicial suit where a Muslim was one of the parties, because it was felt that infidelity, the obstinate failure to recognize the true light of Islam, was proof of defective morality and a consequent incapability

22 See on this question of distinctive clothing, Tritton (cited n. 20), pp. 115-26; 1. Lichtenstadter, 'The Distinctive Dress of Non-Muslims in Islamic Countries', *Historia Judaica,* 5 (1943), pp. 33-52; M. Perlmann, s.v. 'Ghiyār', *EI*^{2}, vol. 2, pp. 1075-6.

23 E. Aubin, *La Maroc d'aujourd'hui,* Paris, 1904, p. 357; R. Le Tourneau, *Fès avant le Proctectorat, étude économique et social d'une ville de l'Occident musulman,* Casablanca, 1949, p. 185.

24 See M. Boyce, 'The Zoroastrian Houses of Yazd', *Iran and Islam, In Memory of the Late Vladimir Minorsky,* ed. C. E. Bosworth, Edinburgh, 1974, pp. 125-47.

of bearing legal witness. In the words of the Ḥanafī jurist Sarakhsī (d. 483/1090), 'the word of a dishonest Muslim is more valuable than that of an honest *dhimmī*.' On the other hand, the deposition of a Muslim against a *dhimmī* was perfectly valid in law. It was further held by almost all schools of Islamic law (with the exception of the Ḥanafī one) that the *diya* or blood money payable on the killing of a *dhimmī* was only two-thirds or a half of that of a free Muslim.[25]

It is surprising that, in the face of legal and financial disabilities such as these outlined above, and of a relentless social and cultural Muslim pressure, if not of sustained persecution, that the *dhimmī* communities survived as well as they did in mediaeval Islam. Under the stigma of worldly subjugation to another faith, inevitably viewed by many as a manifestation of divine displeasure, and cut off from ready access to such centres of spiritual and cultural life as Rome and Constantinople, the standards of ecclesiastical discipline and clerical literacy amongst the Eastern Christian Churches inexorably declined. Whenever a *dhimmī* was in difficulty under the laws of his own community, he could generally escape by a timely conversion to Islam, thereby putting himself outside the reach of his own legal system. In such a fashion, members of the highest clergy, such as bishops or Catholicoi of the Nestorian and Jacobite Churches, not infrequently escaped the consequences of serious crimes like simony, unnatural vice and even murder.[26] Hence in several regions of the Islamic world, such as North Africa and Nubia in the west; Circassia, Daghistan and other parts of the northern Caucasus; and Persia and Central Asia in the east, Christianity disappeared completely by the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. The mainly urban, though not exclusively urban, Jewish communities were more tenacious and Judaism survived even in a hostile environment like Yemen, where until the exodus of 1948 a high male literacy rate and a fervent attachment to the practices of rabbinical Judaism preserved the historic community there largely intact.[27]

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25 See Fattal (cited, n. 12), pp. 85 ff., and Cl. Cahen, s.v. 'Dhimma', *EI*^{2}, vol. 2, pp. 227-31.

26 See L. E. Browne, *The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia,* Cambridge, 1933, *passim*.

27 See S. D. Goitein, 'The Jews of Yemen', in *Religion in the Middle East,* ed. Arthur J. Arberry, Cambridge, 1969, vol. 1, pp. 230-5.

The above article was written well over thirty years ago, and three very turbulent decades in the Arab lands of the Middle East and in Iran have radically changed the picture. There emerges from what was written above that there never was an interfaith Utopia in these lands, but that the *dhimmī*s were allowed to subsist not because of any Islamic beliefs in the positive virtues of tolerance and toleration (ideas which did not anyway emerge in the West until the eighteenth century), but because there were there and because they often had knowledge and skills which were useful for the wider Islamic society.

This had been gradually changing since the end of the Second World War, abruptly in the case of the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 and the incoming thither of Jews from as far afield as Morocco, Iran and Central Asia, more gradually in the case of the more numerous Christian communities. These last now came to feel the pressures from growing Arab nationalism, often with an equation of Arabism with Islamic religion, and xenophobia. The results are seen, for example, in the gradual emigration and disappearance of the Levantine communities—Greek, Cypriot, Maltese, etc.—for whom there was clearly no place in the Egypt of ᶜAbd al-Nāṣir/Nasser; hence the Alexandria of Cavafy is now only an increasingly-remote memory.

The *dhimmī*s, essentially now the Christians, who remained in the Middle Eastern countries, tended to put their trust in Arab and other leaders who, whilst paying lip-service to the supremacy of the Islamic religion and the will-o'-the wisp of Arab nationalism, in practice pursued what were essentially secular-oriented policies. In the 1920s and 1930s, the vestigial communities in Turkey of Greek and Armenian Christians had felt comfortable with Kemal Atatürk's regime, and in the Arab countries of the post-World War II period, the considerable Christian communities in countries like Egypt, Syria and Iraq tended to feel safe with leaders like Anwar Sadat and Husni Mubarak in Egypt and with those of the local Baᶜth parties in Syria and Iraq, however unattractive these regimes may have appeared to the Western world. The upheavals of the opening year of the present century in Iraq and now in Syria, have presented fearful dilemmas for the Christian communities there, and they have in large part responded by emigration. The post-Saddam Husayn violence in Iraq has caused many Christians to flee into Syria; in 1904-7 44 percent of the Iraqi

refugees in Syria were Christians who had experienced violence from Muslim groups, both Sunnī and Shīʿī. The first free elections after the overthrow of Mubarak has just brought to power the Islamist/Muslim Brotherhood party of Muhammad Morsi. Most probably for outside public consumption, he has made overtures of friendship to the Coptic bishops in Egypt, but the Muslim Brotherhood has done little in recent months to protect the Coptic community, who form 10 percent of the population of Egypt, from Muslim attacks. Hence it is unsurprising that many Christians looked in the elections to the former general Ahmad Shafiq as a bulwark against Islamic fundamentalism, and these Christians now, with good reason, regard a Muslim Brotherhood-dominated government with apprehension.

Hence despite assurances from the new president, made for instance during his recent meeting with Hilary Clinton, Egyptian Christians remain wary, and long-established grievances, such as the refusal in recent decades by the Egyptian authorities to grant licences to Copts and others to build new place of worship, and the denial of the opportunities in public life enjoyed by Muslims, remain as contentious issues.

Most imminently disturbing, however, is the present state of violence in large parts of Syria, where the Christian community is caught in the crossfire between the two opposing sides of government and rebels. Many Christians have been among the tens of thousands who have been forced to flee their homes for the countryside or to neighbouring countries like Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. The Barnabas Fund, which supports Christians in the Middle East where they are a minority and suffer discrimination, states that, for instance, almost the whole Christian population of Homs and Qusayr has fled to surrounding villages or further afield. Relief organisations like Christian Aid and the Roman Catholic Caritas Internationalis are offering help to these fleeing refugees. A group of intellectuals from the Christian Arab diaspora in Europe and North America, including Syriac, Chaldaean and Assyrian Christians, has called for a separate region in Syria for the Christian minority, adducing the deprivation in event years by President Bashar al-Asad of Christians' legal rights, and the presence of Islamic fundamentalist elements, such as Salafiyya and al-Qāʿida supporters, among the Syrian opposition forces; a victory for these last would almost certainly mean further violence against Christians all over the

Middle East. Fighting has already spread beyond the frontiers of Syria into northern Lebanon, and the auguries for the Pope's projected visit to Lebanon in September do not look good.

THE INFLUENCE OF LATIN-MELKITE RELATIONS IN THE LAND OF TRANSJORDAN
From the Rebirth of the Latin Patriarchate to the Foundation of the Archdiocese of Petra and Philadelphia (1866-1932)

Paolo Maggiolini

During the first half of the 19th century, the Holy See gradually considered the idea of increasing the presence of Catholicism within the Near East. In 1842, Pope Gregory XVI issued initial provisions for setting up new missionary activities under papal authority and direct supervision of the Sacred Congregation *de propaganda fide*, founded by Gregory XV in 1622. In 1848, Pope Pius IX promulgated the encyclical in *Suprema Petri sede.* Rome's renewed interest in the Near East was officially demonstrated, taking a decisive step toward the traditional project of 'Uniatism', intended to lead to reunification between the Eastern and Roman Catholic Churches through a precise missionary strategy aimed at converting and favouring the return of non-Catholics, especially after the creation of an oriental department within the Congregation *de propaganda fide* in 1862. Although this term is not used today, in the 19th-century Uniatism described an ecclesiological development characterized by a strong gathering movement around the Holy See.[1] After the papacy of Leo XIII and during the 1920s, Uniatism came to be replaced with the term Unionism in order to dispel past mistrust and the charge of hiding Latinizing goals, reinforcing instead the role of the Eastern Churches as actors of the reunion, establishing a complex dialectic with the dimension of ecumenism.[2]

Between 1830 and 1862, the progressive implementation of Istanbul's reforms *(Tanzimat)* favoured the development of Uniatism strategy allowing Ottoman Christian subjects to be emancipated and

1 É. Fouilloux, 'De L'unionisme à l'Oecuménisme', in *Les enjeux de l'uniatisme: dans le sillage de Balamand: catholiques et orthodoxes*, ed. Comité mixte catholique-orthodoxe en France, Fleurus-Mame, Cerf, Bayard, Paris, 2004, p. 147.

2 Fouilloux, 'De L'unionisme', pp. 203-204.

be integrated into the administrative and political life of the empire. At the same time, foreign religious institutions, such as the Roman Catholic and Protestant, were permitted to open up their own missionary establishments.[3] Uniatism benefitted from this new political atmosphere. On the one hand, from the 1830s on, the Holy See sent an increasing number of missionaries to the territories now part of the modern states of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq seeking to support the existing Eastern Catholic religious institutions. On the other, where the Holy Land was concerned, due to the lack of a large native Catholic community[4] and as a result of strong competition from Protestants and Russians,[5] in addition to promoting new missionary establishments, the Holy See considered the possibility of direct intervention within the territory:

> A resident bishop or an Apostolic Vicar, beyond the greater veneration and the sanctity of his nature, would no longer be compelled to abandon the so important mission of Palestine (where the Franciscan Guardian remained in office for 3 years or at least for a period of 6 years) after having just met it [...] without getting ready efficient and lasting remedies, notifying useful and permanent institutions capable to promote the benefits of Religion [...].[6]

3 Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Holy Land, Report of Mgr Valerga, Vol. 19, 1843-1848, F. 573.

4 In 1848, the Latin dioceses of the Holy Land, including the island of Cyprus, had in their entirety a population of 4,141 souls, distributed as follows: 961 in Jerusalem; 1,672 in Bethlehem, including the so-called village of shepherds, and a hundred of people from the nearby village of Beit Jala; 600 in Nazareth; 92 in S. John Montana; 20 in Rama or Arimatea; 319 in Jaffa, 58 in Caiaphas; S. Acre 119; 310 in Larnaca, 45 in Nicosia. In addition to the Roman-Latin Catholic population, there were 339 faithful belonging to the various Eastern rites. Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Acta, Holy Land, Patriarch of Jerusalem, Report on the state of the diocese, measures for its improvement, Vol. 211, Pon. 4/IX/1848, F. 312-328.

5 As early as 1847, the Sacred Congregation *de propaganda fide* considered, in fact, the political implications of re-establishing the Latin Patriarch, given the increasing competition between France, England and Russia. Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Holy Land, 28 November, 1847, Vol. 19, 1843-1848, F. 553-554

6 Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda

In the Near and Middle East, Uniatism thus involved two different issues. Uniatism characterized the official relations between Rome and the Apostolic Sees of the East. Moreover, regarding the territories of Palestine and Transjordan, it influenced the revival of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (1847),[7] aiming at developing Catholic missionaries' activities and directly influencing their relationship with local Christian Churches.

The decision to revive the Latin Patriarchate and promote the creation of a wider network of missionary establishments within the Holy Land (Palestine and Transjordan) triggered, along with Protestant and Greek-Orthodox oppositions, a reaction from the Eastern Churches**,** which considered Uniatism a form of *Latinization,*[8] and from the Franciscan Custody which felt threatened in its secular

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Fide', Acta, Jerusalem, Palestine, Erection of a Patriarchal Vicar in Jerusalem, Vol. 205, Pon. 28/II/1842, Dilate, F. 7-20.

7 The Sacred Congregation *de propaganda fide* addressed the issue of the revival Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem in two plenary congregations on 25 January and 3 May 1847. Subsequently, on 23 July, Pius IX issued the Apostolic *Breve* known as *Nulla Celebrior* thereby officially promoted its re-establishment. Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Acta, Holy Land, Missions of Palestine, Relations between the Patriarchate and Franciscan Custodia, Vol. 291, Pon. 14/VI/1920, F. 216-339. P. Pieraccini, *Il Ristabilimento del Patriarcato Latino di Gerusalemme e la Custodia di Terra Santa, la Dialettica Istituzionale al Tempo del Primo Patriarca Mons. Giuseppe Valerga (1847-1872),* The Franciscan Centre of Christian Oriental Studies, Studia Orientalia Christiana Monographiae N. 15, Cairo-Jerusalem, 2006, pp. 202-209.

8 The Roman Catholic tendency to overrate the ritual dimension instead of Catholic affiliation is indirectly attested to by several documents concerning the Christian presence in the Near and Middle East. The following census, in fact, includes the Greek-Catholics among the Catholics of the Roman-Latin rite: Jerusalem Holy Sepulchre and St Saviour: Latin 880; other rites 50; Bethlehem: Latin 1967, -; St John: Latin 100, -; Rama: Latin 25, other rites 49; Jaffa: Latin 340, other rituals 400; Nazareth: Latin 620, other rituals 470; Acre: Latin 120, other rites 1,200; Saida: Latin 108, other rites 1,400; Beirut: -, -; Ariss: -, -; Tripoli: Latin 33, other rituals 300; Latakia: Latin 26; other rites 15; Aleppo: Latin 410, other rites 80; Damascus: Latin 130, other rites 50; Larnaca: Latin 380, other rites 108; Nicosia: Latin 32, other rites 65; Alexandria: 5,800 Latin, other rites 600; Rossetto: Latin 48, other rites 53; Cairo: 2,400 Latin, other rites 2,000; Fajum: Latin 6, other rites 48; Constantinople: -, -; Total: 13,425 Latin, other rites 6,888; clergy: 200; total students: 1,134; summary of premises: convents 9, 13 hospices, 25 churches, 18 parishes, 33 sanctuaries, 17 chapels, male schools 13, female schools 8, homes for the poor 201. Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Holy Land, State of the Custody and Mission of the Holy Land, From August 1, 1849 till July 1850. Convents, Hospices, Parishes and Schools, Vol. 20, 1849-1852, F. 223.

role of Custodian of the Holy Places. Regarding this aspect, the relationship between the Latin Patriarchate and the Franciscan Custody was characterized by continuous disputes about their respective roles in the management of both holy places and financial resources.[9] The Holy See was so concerned with these issues that, beginning in 1847, it steadily tried to mediate between the two institutions until a *modus vivendi* was arrived at in 1920.[10]

Aside from religious issues concerning the faith of natives, local Christians reacted pragmatically to this time of change and transition. Co-operating with or opposing the spread of missionary institutions, Christian Arabs gained new socio-political resources that allowed them to emerge from previous local balances of power. At the same time, religious institutions found it convenient to exploit local rivalries and interests in their charitable services to develop and spread their activities within the Holy Land. Accordingly, issues related to rite and Church affiliation thus became important in sustaining this process of stratification and emancipation from traditional socio-political balances of power, as the case of Nazareth in 1837 attested to a decade before the revival of the Latin Patriarchate in 1847.[11] This was particularly true in Transjordan where tribalism favoured the occurrence of mass

9 P. Pieraccini, *Il Ristabilimento del Patriarcato Latino*, pp. 209-217.

10 The issue of coordination between the Franciscan order and the new Apostolic Vicar Bishop in Jerusalem was first discussed in 1818, rejected in 1842 and then approved in 1846. Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Holy Land, Reminder of the Minister General of Araceli 1847, Vol. 19, 1843-1848, F. 436-437. Both in *Nulla Celebrior* and *Istruzione*, which shortly followed the *Breve* (10 December 1847) and in the Propaganda's Decree of *Licet*, which was issued on 9 September 1851, the 10th of the 28 points of the decree said that 'Num Patriarchae vel Religiosis inibi spectet defensio Sanctuariorum? Resp. Spectare tam Patriarchae quam Religiosis, iuxta intructionem dandam.' The *modus vivendi* confirmed this statement outlining the primary Franciscan role as Guardian of the Holy Places and the superior institutional authority of the Latin Patriarchate within the Holy Land. Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Acta, Jerusalem, Including a *modus vivendi* between the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Franciscan Custodia, N. 34, Vol. 293, 1922.

11 In 1836, the Custodia Terrae Sanctae sent a cable to the Sacred Congregation *de propaganda fide* in which it asked permission to accept the abjurations of several Greek-Orthodox who asked to embrace Catholicism and the Latin rite. Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Acta, Holy Land, Supplication of Custodia Terrae Sanctae in order to receive in the Latin rite Greek schismatics (Supplication), Vol. 199, Pon. 12/VII/1836, Dilate, F. 169.

conversions. The result was that new religious communities were often composed of single clans or tribes. As early as 1848 this phenomenon was of concern to the Holy See, which primarily ascribed the natives' insouciance in converting from one rite and Church to another to the excessive readiness of religious institutions in the Holy Land to provide local populations with material benefits. Following the *Ponenza* of 1848, the result was that local populations identified with the leaders through whom they had to pay taxes. Consequently, they did not fully recognize the role of the clergy within the socio-political field of the Holy Land, considering that all the benefits were gained thanks to the commitment of their leaders.[12] Accordingly, within the newly erected communal boundaries there opened a field where missionaries and natives steadily negotiated to influence the new institutions according to their personal interests. The result was the overlapping and intertwining of different logics and cultural heritages.

Latinization vis-à-vis Uniatism during the 19th Century

Roman Catholic missionary institutions traditionally devoted and limited their work to the Christian Arab population, therefore avoiding proselytizing Muslims in order to prevent clashes with Ottoman authorities. Competition between Latin Patriarchal, Protestant and Greek-Orthodox emissaries was intense, as well as with Greek-Catholics, who perceived Latin activism as a threat to their role in the Holy Land. Nonetheless, in the Near East clashes and disputes between Melkites and Latin missionaries, with the participation of Maronites too, had been going on since the 18th century.[13]

In 1835, the Sacred Congregation *de propaganda fide* was again involved in mediation between these different parties regarding the ownership of churches and places of worship in the Holy Land.[14]

12 Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Acta, Holy Land, Patriarch of Jerusalem, Report on the State of the diocese and measures for its improvement, Vol. 211, Pon. 4/IX/1848, F. 321.

13 A. Girard, 'Les Melkites de Syrie au sein du Catholicisme au XVIIIe siècle: Politique Romaine, Tensions Intercommunautaires et Doctrine Confessionnelle', in *Religions et politique dans les Orients d'Europe (XIVe-XXe siècles)*, eds D. Stamatopoulos and A. Anastassiadis, École française d'Athènes, Athens, 2012 (forthcoming).

14 Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Holy Land, Direct to the Prefect of

In particular, in Transjordan and Palestine, the difficult relationship between the Latin and Melkite Patriarchates, as well as the arrival of many different monastic orders, worried the Holy See and all Catholic institutions because it could undermine the development of Catholicism within the region. During the first two decades of the 20th century, Mgr Barlassina described this situation using the image of 'internal enemies':

> These internal enemies of the spiritual well-being of the Palestine missions are mainly two: firstly, a strong spirit of nationalism, often excessive, which affects most of the religious institutions that are very numerous in Palestine, as EE. VV. has seen; secondly, the continuous strife between clergies: among the Latins and the Greek-Catholics; within the same Latin clergy; among the various religious orders; and particularly between the Patriarchate and the Franciscans Custody.[15]

Although the Latins strove to reinforce the idea that their mission would mean 'reconciliation' with Eastern Christianity and not its 'conversion', the Melkites publicly questioned the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and its attitude to Latinizing their faithful. After the Nazareth episode in 1837,[16] Melkites confronted Roman Catholic institutions in Palestine, accusing them of discrediting the Byzantine rite and discouraging the passage of the Greek-Orthodox populations to the true Catholic Church of the Near East, namely the Melkite.

Propaganda Fide, May 1, 1835, Vol. 17, 1828-1835,.

15 Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Acta, Holy Land, Missions of Palestine, Relations between the Patriarchate and Franciscan Custodia, Vol. 291, Pon. 14/VI/1920, F. 280.

16 In 1837, the Sacred congregation of *de propaganda fide* validated the Latinization of several Melkite faithful, who were interested in the enrolment in the Latin register that would allow them to benefit from the related guarantees. In 1844, Greek-Catholics, Latins and Greek-Orthodox clashed because of the duty to pay annual tribute the Ottomans levied on Christians. Accordingly, 300 Latin faithful decided to return to the Melkites. J. Hajjar, *Les Chrétiens Uniates du Proche-Orient*, Éditions de Semil, Paris, 1962, p. 274. Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Holy Land, Vol. 17, 1825-1835, Miscellany. Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Holy Land, 31 January, 1844, Vol. 19, 1843-1848, F. 164-165.

Initially, Uniatism aroused great concern within the Melkite Church, which complained to the Holy See of its undermining Eastern identity and traditional autonomy, concealing behind the call for unity the intent to centralize under its authority the religious life of all Catholics of the Middle East.[17] At the same time, supporters of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem strove to boost the opportunity of strengthening the Roman Catholic presence within the Holy Land, Latinizing Eastern Christians. As Patriarch Mgr Valerga frequently stated, socio-political conditions within the Ottoman Empire decreed promoting the Latinization of both Arab Christians and Catholics as the responsible choice. Rite affiliation was, in fact, a central element in defining the identity of Eastern Churches and the Holy See.[18]

In reality, the issue of rite affiliation had been of concern to Holy See institutions since the Council of Florence (1439). The switch from the Latin to the Eastern rite had already been prohibited by Nicholas V. Accordingly, considering the Melkite dimension, during the 18th century the complex dynamic of confrontation, first between the *ultraromane* and the Holy See and, later, between Girmanus Adam, his followers and Rome, expressed the importance of rite and canonical issues and the difficulty the Greek Catholics had in consolidating their position regarding Catholic missionaries and other Churches.[19] Furthermore, in 1818, the Franciscan Custody reported to the Sacred Congregation *de propaganda fide* that it had received a circular where it was officially suggested to refrain from mandatory impositions on the passage from Eastern rites to the Latin.[20] Later on, in 1834, the Holy See came back to the issue, prohibiting abandonment of the Latin rite to re-embrace the original Eastern rite without concrete motivations and official permissions. Moreover, even if it was possible

17 Patriarcat Grec-Melkite-Catholique d'Antioche et de tout l'Orient d'Alexandrie et de Jérusalem, *Catholicisme ou Latinisme? à Propos du Patriarcat Latin de Jérusalem: Réponse au r.p. Pierre Médebielle*, Imprimerie de Saint Paul, Harissa, Lebanon, 1961, p. 61.

18 J. Hajjar, *Les Chrétiens Uniates,* p. 299.

19 A. Girard, 'Quand les «Grecs-Catholiques» dénonçaient les «Grecs-Orthodoxes»: la Controverse Confessionnelle au Proche-Orient Arabe après le Schisme de 1724', in *Dénoncer l'Autre. Discours et Représentations du Différend Confessionnel à l'Époque Moderne*, eds H. Bost and C. Bernat, Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, Sciences religieuses 151, Brepols, Turnhout, 2012, p. 183.

20 Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Holy Land, Custody of the Holy Land, 25 July 1818, and 18 January 1818, Vol. 16, 1818-1827.

to switch from the Eastern to the Roman-Latin rite, the Holy See sought to reduce disputes and confusion by setting precise rules for rite passage. In the case of entire communities papal permission was required, preventing the local priest or religious institution from ratifying this decision without informing the Holy See. Meanwhile, the Holy See had banned the possibility of changing from the Maronite to Greek-Melkite and vice versa.[21] Moreover, in order to rationalize and renew the traditional Eastern canon, avoiding clashes between Eastern Catholic Churches, the Holy See forced the repeal of Maronite power to confess Eastern Catholics.[22] Finally, an episode occurring shortly before re-establishment of the Latin Patriarchate obliged the Holy See to establish precise rules about this issue. In 1843, the Greek-Melkite Patriarch Mazlum dispatched an increasing number of emissaries to open new missionary establishments within the Near East,[23] asking the Holy See to intervene to bring the Latinized back to their original rite. The Holy See refused, according to the papal bull of Benedict XIV, in order to keep disputes from arising, in the meanwhile planning the revival of the Latin Patriarchate. Nonetheless, understanding that the lack of Greek-Catholic priests and well-established Melkite missions were favouring Latinization, the Holy See decided to establish a new practice. Once a new Melkite mission opened in a village, the Latinized had to make a final decision about which rite to follow.[24]

Accordingly, Mgr Valerga perceived these divisions and disputes as an insurmountable barrier that was weakening Catholicism within the region. Differences among rites within the same Church, the Catholic Church, could lead to confusion regarding the issue of nationality, posing problems to the recognition of Catholic activities within the Ottoman administration. Moreover, as emerges in a *Ponenza* of 1837 to

21 Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Acta, On the passage of the Easterns from one Eastern Rite to another, Vol. 197, Pon. 27/VII /1834, F. 186-191.

22 Archivio Storico, Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Acta, Melkite, for the withdrawal of the Maronite faculty to confess all the Eastern-rite Catholics. An instance of the Archbishop of Aleppo (Sciajhat Gregory, Greek-Melkite) and his opposition to the Propaganda, Report, Vol. 198, Pon. 25/V/1835, F. 133-136.

23 J. Hajjar, *Un Lutteur Infatigable, Le Patriarche Maximos III Mazloum*, Imprimerie de Saint Paul, Harissa, Lebanon, 1957, p. 229.

24 Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Acta, Passage of Rite, Grant to the Latinized to decide permanently between the Greek or Latin rite. Mazlum Archbishop, Vol. 206, Pon. 18/IX/1843, F. 373-374.

the Sacred Congregation of *de propaganda fide*, even if Vatican emissaries tried to promote conversions to Catholicism preserving the Eastern rite, at the same time they supported the importance of changing rite as a tangible sign of communion with the Holy See and definitive separation from the schism. Moreover, the simultaneous abjuration and embrace of the Latin rite could prevent Orthodox Patriarchs from regaining new Catholic converts with a single act by appealing to the non-changed rite.[25]

The solution to these political issues would therefore be achieved by removing any rite's barriers to promoting Latinization. Consequently, emphasis on missionary work and the involvement of Catholic Arabs in the institutional life of the Latin Patriarchate became a central element of Uniatism from the Latinization standpoint.

In 1853, during a visit to the Holy Land, Abbot J. H. Pichon underlined the negative effects of this programme, as Hajjar recalls in his work.[26] Anticipating the remarks of Delpuch in 1924 and Robinson in 1926,[27] the abbot pointed out the general hostility of Eastern Christians to the Latin rite, perceived as harmful to their identity and tradition. In a *Ponenza* of 1866, it clearly emerges that the Sacred Congregation *de propaganda fide* and the Holy See were well aware of increasing concern among the Eastern Churches after the revival of the Latin Patriarchate, while the Western Church was celebrating a fundamental step for Catholicism within the region:

> When the lovely and immortal Pius IX realized the noble plan to restore the Latin hierarchy in Jerusalem, if it was greeted with great enthusiasm and acclaim all over the Western Church, however, it was seen with doubt by the Eastern Rites, maximum by the Greeks, who conceived the greatest suspicion and jealousy […] foolishly suspected that Rome, by restoring the Patriarchate, would Latinized gradually and imperceptibly the Greeks of the Latin

25 Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Acta, Holy Land, Schismatics' insistence on switching to the Latin rite in the act of abjuration. Papal Dispensation (See Supp. 12/VIII/1836, Holy Land), Vol. 200, Pon. 3/VII/1837, F. 171-172.

26 J. Hajjar, *Les Chrétiens Uniates,* p. 280.

27 Archivio Storico Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, Report on the religious situation in Transjordan, 528/28 File 1, Melkiti, F. 1, F. 7.

> Patriarchal Diocese, returning to Syria other Latin bishoprics and stealing all the Eastern rites.[28]

Abbot J. H. Pichon understood that behind the issue of rite was hidden an insurmountable problem of distrust and prejudice between the West and the East which was threatening the role of Catholicism within the region. Accordingly, he proposed to circumscribe the use of the Latin rite to the Holy Sepulchre under the custodianship of the Franciscan order and reform the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, imposing the Byzantine rite instead of the Latin. Following this path, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem would cease to be Latin, truly realizing the union with the Melkite Church and partly confuting the opposition of the Greek-Orthodox.[29]

During the 19th century, Uniatism produced mixed effects within Palestine and Transjordan. It was considered by Latin missionaries as a useful means to combat the Greek-Orthodox and Protestants, widening Catholicism's prestige and role within the region, as the growing influence of the Latin Patriarchate displayed. At the same time, as Abbot Pichon realized during his visit, the same strategy produced controversial results triggering counter-reactions and distrust by those of the faithful who would have been converted or returned to Catholicism. Moreover, opposition to Uniatism testified to widespread concerns regarding growing foreign and Western influence in the Middle East. The Melkites, in fact, accepted and sought Holy See and Patriarchal support for the internal reform and revitalization of their religious institutions. At the same time, they demanded respect for the originality and authenticity of their religious, cultural and rite identities, rejecting any attempt at Latinization. Finally, opposition to this form of Uniatism further explains the socio-political atmosphere that led to a revival of religious-community life in Palestine and Transjordan. It describes the cultural attitudes and behaviours that initially led to the reconstitution of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and, later, to the promotion of missionary work in Transjordan, thus clarifying the

28 Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Acta, Holy Land, Appointment of Vincent Bracco as Apostolic Vicar of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and proposed union of the Delegation of Syria and Aleppo with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem (Dilata) VV. PP. 26/I/1858, Vol. 230, Pon. 29/I/1866, F. 1.

29 J. Hajjar, *Les Chrétiens Uniates*, p. 281.

intellectual horizon that influenced these men during their meetings with the natives of the East Bank of the Jordan.

The debate about the manner and meanings of Uniatism continued for a long time, characterizing the relationship between the Holy See and Eastern Churches, in particular regarding the simultaneous presence of Melkite and Latin Patriarchates in Palestine and Transjordan. The issue was never fully resolved and reached its apex with the issue of the Bull *Reversurus* in 1867 and during Vatican I.[30] Initially, the Bull was drafted for the Armenian Catholics to reserve most of the rights of nominating bishops and patriarchs to the Holy See, but soon it was designed to extend its dispositions to the rest of the Uniate Churches, arousing much concern among them.[31] Nonetheless, in 1882 Pope Leo XIII took initial steps to placate opposition. Accepting the Greek government's demand, in a papal letter Leo XIII ordered that Latin bishops would be appointed to episcopal seats in Greek-Christian territories, avoiding the formula in *partibus infidelium*—in the infidels regions.[32] Later on, in 1894, the Pope reconsidered the idea of creating a new institution independent from the Congregation *de propaganda fide,* which was partially realized with creation of a Commission of Cardinals for the promotion of the reunion with dissident Churches.[33] After a long silence, these acts allowed the Roman Catholic Church to revive, at least, the dialogue with the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople and reassure Uniate Churches.

During the papacies of Leo XIII (1878-1903) and Benedict XV (1914-1922), the Holy See attempted to overcome the initial Latinization attitude that characterized Uniatism during the 19th century.[34] Aid and support for Uniate Churches had to respect the authenticity and originality of their cultural and religious rites. Moreover, Eastern Churches not only needed to be recognized as the protagonists of the

30 J. Nasrallah, *Notes et Documents pour Servir à l'Histoire du Patriarcat Melchite d'Antioche*, Jerusalem, s.n., 1965, pp. 44-45.

31 A. O'Mahony, 'Patriarchs and Politics: the Chaldean Catholic Church in Modern Iraq', in *Christianity in the Middle East, Studies in Modern History, Theology and Politics,* ed. A. O'Mahony, Melisende, London 2008, p. 117.

32 J. Hajjar, *Les Chrétiens Uniates*, p. 309.

33 G. M. Croce, 'De la 'Propaganda Fide' à la Congrégation pour les Églises Orientales une Période d'Incompréhension Romaine de l'Orient Orthodoxe', in *Les enjeux de l'uniatisme: dans le Sillage de Balamand: Catholiques et Orthodoxes*, ed. Comité mixte catholique-orthodoxe en France, Bayard: Fleurus-Mame, Cerf, Paris, 2004, p. 191.

34 J. Hajjar, *Les Chrétiens Uniates*, p. 322.

reunion, but also to be supported in their mission and to be part of the Unionism project until then monopolized by the Latin missionaries. The new spirit, which was clearly manifested with creation of the Sacred Congregation of the Oriental Churches by *motu proprio Dei Providentis* (1917) under the Holy See's direct authority, restored balance to the relationship between Roman and Eastern Catholicism.

Regarding solely the condition of the Melkites, after the end of the 19th century, thanks to the opening of the Seminary of Saint Anne by the White Fathers (1882) and the experience of the Syrian Catholic Seminary of the Benedictine Fathers on the Mount of Olives (1902-1952), they were able to train their clergy and open new establishments.[35] As shown by the consolidation of the missions of al-Hosn and Salt (1910), this allowed Melkites to return to Transjordan and develop their presence through the creation of the Archdiocese of Petra and Philadelphia (1932).[36]

The Development of Greek-Catholic Establishments in Transjordan

After decades of confrontation and debate about the purpose of reviving the Latin Patriarchate in the Holy Land, during the first half of the 20th century the Greek-Catholic presence begun to develop in Transjordan, strengthening the growth of Catholicism within the territory. Aside from the personal attitudes of natives toward Catholicism, local socio-political conditions deeply influenced this process. Accordingly, the proliferation of Greek-Catholic establishments displayed many of the distinctive features that characterized the development of Latin-Catholic missions during the 19th century, suggesting that traditional tribal culture still guided local collective behaviour. Nonetheless, the development of a Greek-Catholic diocese in Transjordan did not simply replicate the same path that distinguished Latin-Catholic missionaries' experiences during the 19th century. During the first half of the 20th century Transjordan faced another period of transition and

35 P. Médebielle, *Le Patriarcat Latin de Jérusalem*, Séminaire Patriarcal, Jerusalem, 1962, p. 44. P. Gorra, *Sainte-Anne de Jérusalem: Séminaire Grec Melkite dirigé par les Pères Blancs*, Imprimerie de Saint Paul, Harissa, Lebanon, 1932, pp. 25-30.

36 H. H. Ayrout, *La Transjordanie Melkite*, Muséum Lessianum, Louvain, 1935, p. 390.

development after the *Tanzimat* era. The new phase of confrontation involved the local tribal system, which had already been subjected to modifications and progress by Istanbul, and the newborn modern Hashemite state, which was still engaged in imposing its authority and logics. New socio-political conditions deeply affected local society. On the one hand, the growing influence of Arab nationalism and the foundation of the Hashemite Emirate under the British Mandate altered the functioning of the Transjordanian political space and the position of Christian religious minorities with regard to the state. On the other, the Eastern Churches archives documenting the Melkite presence in Transjordan during those decades describe the re-emerging of a process of polarization and stratification within the Christian dimension. After decades of conflicts between the Greek-Orthodox, Protestants and Latin-Catholics to develop or strengthen their establishments, several Christian tribes and clans tried to disengage from traditional local balances of power, distinguishing themselves not by Church, but by ritual. At the same time, both Latin and Melkite Catholic institutions engaged in local rivalries, widening their influence within the Christian dimension and the newborn state. This dynamic would foster religious segregation, accentuating Christian solidarity as a means of protecting Christian minorities, as Haddad points out.[37]

It should be noted again that our purpose is not to delve into spiritual and faith issues. Rather, taking as viewpoint the birth of a new religious community, its development and growth, makes it possible to describe a wider historical process from which emerged part of the contemporary Transjordanian society made up of different rituals, Churches and religions. New experiences, differences and changes from the past are usually accentuated in order to describe processes of development, although it is often complex to determine the boundaries and meaning of these dynamics of transition and evolution within the daily life of a society.

From this standpoint two Catholic sources clarified the course of this dynamic of confrontation between Latins and Melkites.

In 1926, Father Robinson, appointed by the Holy See to study the condition of Catholic missions in Transjordan, whose number

37 M. Haddad, '"Detribalizing" and "Retribalizing": the Double Role of Churches among Christian Arabs in Jordan: a Study in the Anthropology of Religion', *The Muslim World* 82, Issue 1-2 (1992), pp. 87-88.

was increasing due to the spread of Greek-Catholics, and to settle the dispute between Mgr Baralssina and Mgr Mogabgab regarding the establishments of Salt,[38] described a country not much different from what might have appeared in the mid-19th century:

> Transjordanian villages are very primitive and most of them are nothing more than piles of little houses, low, dark and made of clay, where domestic animals live under the same roof with their owners. The inhabitants are of pure Arab race, and most of them are semi-nomadic Bedouins, who have become accustomed to sedentary lifestyle: they have preserved in their mentality, customs and traditions many similarities to nomadic tribes, without any distinctions of religion.[39]

Transjordan is depicted as an isolated and backward territory, a land where people were still tied to the rhythm of the seasons, anchored to traditional lifestyles very similar to those of the 19th century. Christian religious affiliation awareness was never menaced. However, the reports point out the lack of a consciousness of differences between rites and Churches:

> […] Although schismatics in Transjordan usually do very much distinguish between Mohammedans, Jews and Christians, do not amongst the various Christian Churches. In fact, I was assured that where Christian churches are missing, they follow en masse the first Christian missionary that arrives. One should not conclude from this that they are attracted by all Christian Churches.[40]

38 P. Pieraccini, 'Il Patriarcato Latino di Gerusalemme (1918-1940). Ritratto di un Patriarca Scomodo: Mons. Luigi Barlassina', *Il Politico* 4, Vol. 63 (1998), p. 608. See also Archivio Storico Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, Petition from the faithful of Salt, 672/49 (1529/28) (1905/28), Melkiti, Transjordan or Petra and Filadelfia. Salt.

39 Archivio Storico Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, Report on the religious situation in Transjordan, 528/28, Files 1, Melkiti, F. 7, p. 3.

40 *Ibid*., p. 5.

Aside from the inter-Christian rivalries, this issue characterized the confrontation between Latin and Melkite Patriarchates after the revival of the former in 1847. Accordingly, Father Robinson tends to introduce the idea that it was this 'ignorance' which favoured conversion to the Melkite or to whichever Church. This condition had, however, sustained Latin Patriarchal development even before the 20th century. Father Robinson thus described the natives' readiness to convert as based on local political considerations, material gains and personal vendettas:

> […] They blindly follow their leader. So they are able to support any movements and to sign any petitions that the leader wants, without even realizing the content. Every tribe follows the religion of the leader, and if he changes his religion and rite, the entire tribe follows his example […].[41]

Similarly to what had happened to Latin Catholic missions during the 19th century, mass conversions, favoured by tribalism, triggered a new process of spreading Catholicism under the guide of Melkite institutions:

> […] The sheikh, head of the schismatics, has become Catholic, it seems to captivate the benevolence of the Bishop. The whole tribe followed suit, except for a dozen people who have decided to follow another tribal leader. Sometimes, if a leader does not have as much influence with the Government than another leader of another religion or ritual has, the tribe is ready to follow the religion of the latter. This explains why the leader of the schismatics in Chatana was paid annually so much by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, to prevent him from becoming Catholic.[42]

Father Robinson's account tends to be anchored to a traditionalist description of Transjordanian reality during the beginning of the

41 Archivio Storico Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, Report on the religious situation in Transjordan, 528/28 File 1, Melkiti, F. 7, p. 4.

42 *Ibid*, p. 4.

20th century. Few elements distinguish his reports from 19th century travellers' and missionaries' tales about Ottoman Transjordan. Obviously, this territory was still backward compared to other areas of the Near East. Nonetheless, as Rogan points out, it had already experienced a process of transition to modernity during the 19th century that altered part of its traditional socio-political structure.[43] Aside from the theological implications of embracing different Christian rites and Churches, after fifty years of direct Ottoman control it is unconvincing to maintain that natives were not aware of the repercussions of conversions within a political field based on the recognition and tutelage of communal dimensions.

A Melkite report about the Greek-Catholic missions of Palestine and Transjordan, compiled by Mgr Cyril Mogabgab, Patriarch of Antioch, instead introduces other elements. The Patriarch, in fact, suggests totally different explanations for the movement of conversion to the Melkites.[44] He retains the image of Transjordan as an isolated and a backward territory. The same conclusion can be traced reading the work of Father Salman about local traditions and customs in the land of Transjordan, written in 1929.[45] Nonetheless, Mogabgab's accounts describe a society aware of its identity and social-political reality, even if it was humble and simple in its behaviours and attitudes. Contrary to what Father Robinson said, Mgr Cyril Mogabgab refuted the image of an unaware society, introducing a new subject that influenced the Melkites' growing role within the region: Arab nationalism.

Mgr Mogabgad upheld the importance of Arab pride and nationalism, briefly retracing the historical course of the Catholic presence within the Holy Land during the 19th century. He pointed out that during the last part of Ottoman history in Palestine and Transjordan a wide movement among the Orthodox toward Catholicism began. However, as he wrote, its course was oriented under the auspices of Latinization. Those who demanded reconciliation and union with the Holy See were invited to embrace the Latin rite instead of becoming Greek-Catholic. Western cultural and political influence,

43 E. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan 1850-1921*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, pp. 252-253.

44 Archivio Storico Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, Report on the religious situation in Transjordan, 528/28, File 1, Melkiti, F. 55, p. 5.

45 P. Salman, *Khamsah A'wam fi Sharq al-Urdun*, Imprimerie Saint-Paul, Harissa, Lebanon, 1929, pp. 2-5, 31.

opposition to the Turks, the absence of the Melkite Church (which was suffering a period of financial restraint), and in part the false belief—sometimes instigated by certain Latin missionaries—of the importance of accepting the Latin rite to become Catholic were the main reasons the Latin Patriarchate was preferred to the Melkite. The Patriarch continues in his analysis, underlining that after the Great War a substantial component of the Greek-Orthodox community of Palestine and Transjordan asked to became Catholic, but not to embrace the Latin rite. The Patriarch's analysis sought, in fact, to dispute the Latin Patriarchate's tendency toward Latinization. He points out that there were both religious and political reasons behind the Greek-Orthodox desire for reconciliation with the Holy See. Intellectual or dogmatic considerations were almost to be excluded. The humbleness of most of the natives relegated theological debates to the background. Patriarch Mogabgad says, instead, that moral, social and administrative issues attracted those men to Catholicism. The Patriarch thus introduced an element complementary to the dispute between Latin and Melkite Catholics: the controversial relationship with the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate. Greek-Catholic institutions were, in fact, struggling to impose their role as the native Church within the Near East against the Latin Patriarchate's imposition of the Latin rite and the Greek monopolisation of the local Orthodox Church administration.[46] Palestinians and Transjordanians were suffering from the humiliating condition of the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate. In 1926, Father Robinson had already reported to the Congregation that most of the Greek Orthodox were eager to improve their socio-political condition through education, pointing out that the Orthodox Patriarchate was not able to fulfil their needs. Accordingly, as a layman of Karak confided to the father, most of the Orthodox were ready to embrace Catholicism but they refused to accept the Latin rite and so they were waiting for the foundation of a Melkite establishment in their village.[47]

The British Mandate administration and the overwhelming importance of Greek national elements within the patriarchal institutional organization were also important causes behind this period

46 Archivio Storico Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, The Transjordanian Missions, Melkiti, 528/28, F. 1-2-3.

47 Archivio Storico Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, Latins, Palestine and Transjordan. Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, 335/37. Jerusalem, 27 January 1926, F. Pasquale Robinson.

of internal crises that triggered local opposition. The Patriarch offers the proof of his statement, concluding his analyses with the description of his pastoral visit to Transjordan:

> […] In Transjordan: the creation of an independent Arab principality under British protection, made to vibrate in all hearts a high note of enthusiasm for everything that is Arabic, as well as a refusal for each foreign element. For this reason, more than once I felt in my last pastoral visit the high acclaim from the Orthodox: Long live the Arab Patriarch![48]

Following Mgr Mogabgab's account, the spirit of nationalism developed within both sides, reinforcing among the local population the common refusal of any external impositions over the Near East: no Latinization, or Hellenism or Mandate administration. Political and religious issues intertwined and overlapped. The development of a new religious community thus became a coherent part of a wider political movement of Arab emancipation.

At the same time, in a *Ponenza* of 1920, Cardinal Michele Lega underlined another aspect of the growing influence of nationalism within the Holy Land, among the Arab population as well as monastic orders and the clergy. The Cardinal first introduced this issue on the basis of Mgr Barlassina's report of 1919 where the Patriarch explained his opposition to increasing the number of religious orders in Palestine because of harmful competition among and between them:

> […] all these numerous religious orders, which devour each other, say that they are here for the Holy Places, to save souls, but their first goal is to realize the policy of their country.[49]

Secondly, he observed the consequences of this behaviour regarding the relationship between foreign and local clergy:

48 Archivio Storico Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, Report on the religious situation in Transjordan, Melkiti, 528/28, F. 55, p. 4.

49 Archivio Storico Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide', Acta, Holy Land, Palestine Missions, Vol. 291, Pon. 14/VI/1920, F. 285.

> Still throbbing is a long and painful dispute between Arab Salesians and their Italian Superiors brethren. The dispute is solely based upon the uncompromising spirit of nationality of the two parties, on the use of Italian language during catechism and sermons to indigenous Arabs.[50]

Nationalism not only symbolized the Arab desire for emancipation and recognition. It also broadly affected the relationship between different Western religious orders, and between them and the local faithful and clergy, overlapping with the issue of rite affiliation that traditionally animated the dispute about Uniatism and Latinization. Accordingly, under a different guise, the Franciscan Custody's peremptory refusal of and opposition to any nationalist bias during those years confirmed the importance of this dynamic.[51]

The reports thus show the complexity of a society deeply rooted in tribal tradition, but at the same time conscious of and receptive to the new political ideas that were spreading. The Arab nationalist movement was developing across religious affiliations and tribal divisions, but it also influenced internal Christian and Catholic debate within the Holy Land. At the same time the importance of tribalism offered religious institutions the means to counteract this desire for emancipation, manipulating local rivalries to reinforce their roles and importance within the new socio-political field. Aside from the traditional opposition between different Churches, this situation brought Latins and Melkites to clash repeatedly to win the title of authentic testimonies to Catholicism within the Near East.[52] This

50 *Ibid*.

51 G. Buffon, 'The Religious Politics of the Franciscans in the Holy Land between the Crimean War and the First World War', in *Christianity in the Middle East. Studies in Modern History, Theology and Politics*, ed. A. O'Mahony, Melisende, 2008, London, p. 446.

52 Despite the difficulty of proving the reliability of the data included in the following report and considering that the document could have been deliberately created to overrate the number of Greek-Orthodox who sought to become Melkite in order to get more support from the Holy See, it is interesting to follow the trend in order to understand the strong competition between Latins and Melkites. Bishop Hajjar informed the Holy See about the numerous requests to switch to Greek-Orthodox from Greek-Catholics supporting the idea of the importance of the Melkites over the Roman Catholics: Chatni (100 Greek-Orthodox), Ourjane (150 Greek-Orthodox), ʿAjlun (100 Greek-Orthodox), Salt (1500 Greek-Catholics), Madaba (500 Greek-Orthodox), Maʿin (170 Greek-Orthodox, are not required

rivalry greatly damaged the development of Catholicism, subtracting forces and resources from both sides.[53] The Greek-Catholics repeatedly accused Latin missionaries of preaching falsely, preventing resurrection of the true Catholic Church of the East. Latins historically defended themselves by trying to prove the authenticity of the presence of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the superiority of its ministers. The consequences were quite controversial. On the one hand, the clash between the two rites, superimposed on tribal divisions, led to new conversions. The percentage of Catholics grew. New educational and charitable establishments were founded, as evidenced by the fact that the Melkites succeeded in a few years to open twenty schools just in Transjordan, along with those of the Latin Patriarchate.[54] On the other, these new institutions did not significantly improve the quality of the services provided to Catholics. New missions were frequently founded within the same villages where Latin Patriarchal establishments had been active since the 19th century. Moreover, in the most remote villages, because of financial restraints, despite the local Christian population's nominal conversion to Catholicism, whether to Latin or Melkite Catholics, the new faithful were practically abandoned to reliance on the services of the Muslim community. This was causing serious threats to the future of both communities:

> It is well known that most of those missions do not have schools. In some villages there are only Muslim schools and Christian children who attend them, learn the Koran as catechism. So for example in Aidun—Eidoun—that I

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to convert, but to accept the services of education and the Catholic catechism), Fuheis (600 Greek-Orthodox), Ahmoud (350 Greek-Orthodox), Naᶜour (300 Greek-Orthodox). Archivio Storico Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, The Transjordanian Missions, Melkiti, 1068/28, 528/28, F. 1-2-3.

53 P. Médebielle, *La Diocesi del Patriarcato Latino di Gerusalemme*, Patriarchatus Latini, Gerusalemme, 1963, pp. 46-50. Patriarcat Grec-Melkite-Catholique d'Antioche et de tout l'Orient d'Alexandrie et de Jérusalem, *Catholicisme ou Latinisme?*, p. 23. H. H. Ayrout, *La Transjordanie Melkite,* pp. 392-402.

54 The twenty schools housed seven hundred and thirty-four students, of whom two hundred were Greek-Orthodox. In 1932, the Greek-Catholics opened their schools in Amman, Salt (male and female), Fuheis, Madaba, Maᶜin (male and female), ᶜAdr (male and female), Naᶜour, Hosn, Irbid, Chatni, Sarih, Rafidiyya, Inbeh, Farah, Umm-Roumanie, Khirbet, Orjan, Khanzireh, Jdetta. Archivio Storico, Congregazioni per le Chiese Orientali, The Transjordanian Missions, Melkiti, 528/28, 1-2-3, F. 515.

> visited, Muslim customs relentlessly penetrate Christians who are used to pray facing Mecca, when they come to rely on Muhammad as a saint. Therefore the danger of Islamization is not only imaginary, especially among the young generation.[55]

Of course, missionaries' and travellers' accounts about Transjordan are full of these kinds of descriptions about syncretism amongst natives both Christian and Muslim. Instead of focusing on these particular behaviours and attitudes, it is better to evaluate the consequences the competition between Latins and Melkites had in undermining their abilities to manage their own missionary networks in a period of continual growth and expansion. After the reports of Delpuch and Robinson, in 1929 Mgr Malchiodi, charged by the Holy See to again inspect Transjordan, pointed out the need to draft a new missionary strategy with particular reference to the management of local schools.[56] Later on, in 1930 and 1931, Mgr Valeri, Apostolic Delegate, returned to these issues, advancing a concrete proposal for a *modus vivendi* between Melkites and Latins, unifying the educational institutions under a common co-ordination and stating the prohibition to create new missionary establishments in villages where there was already a presence of one of the two rites.[57] A solution was partially achieved only during the 1930s when Latins and Melkites finally had to accept and recognise the legitimacy of their respective positions. In particular, the foundation of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and Petra (1932), based in Amman, made an agreement necessary. It was thus stated that the two Churches would divide up the Catholic faithful and the establishments of small parishes, avoiding superimpositions and duplications within the same villages.[58] Ader, Maʿin and Safout, with their 376 Latin Catholics, went

55 Archivio Storico Congregazioni per le Chiese Orientali, Report on the religious situation in Transjordan, Melkiti, Transjordan, 528/28, F. 9.

56 Archivio Storico Congregazioni per le Chiese Orientali, Report on the Transjordanian Missions (1929) of Mgr Malchiodi, Melkiti, Transjordan, 814/29.

57 Archivio Storico Congregazioni per le Chiese Orientali, For a Common Organization between Melkite and Latin Missions, Melkite, Transjordan, 1094/31: Cairo, 16 November 1930. Mgr V. Valeri, Apostolic Delegate, F. 1. Cairo. 13 January 1931. Mgr V. Valeri, Apostolic Delegate, F. 4.

58 The following statistic, sent to the Eastern Churches in 1924, reports the average number of Christian faithful for each parish—Greek-Orthodox (g.o), Latin (lat.) and Greek-Catholic (g.c)—according to the District Division. District Karak:

to the Melkites, while the 345 Greek-Catholics of Smakieh, Naᶜour and Shatana were placed under the authority of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. In reality, the agreement did not bring an end to past competition.[59] It only served to normalize relations between the two sides. The division of parishes and the union of several clans under the same rite was almost impossible.[60] The case of Ader is exemplary of this. The Melkite Father Dumont and the Latin Father Deraoui of Karak in fact failed to comply with the auspices of the agreement and, despite repeated calls for the unification of all local Catholic households under a single rite, the village remained divided as in the past.[61]

The Melkite Presence in Transjordan

At the beginning of the 19th century, the land of Transjordan was divided into different administrative units—Jabal ᶜAjlun, Balqa', Karak and Maᶜan-ᶜAqaba—politically and economically separated from one another. Nonetheless they shared some common elements such as their local autonomy, the strong link between people and the specific ecological and climatic conditions of the districts—crucial to the balance between settled people and nomads[62]—and, finally, the presence of Muslim and Christian tribes, respectively belonging to

District of Karak: Karak (700 g.o, 100 lat.), Smakieh (?, 200 lat.). District of Balqa': Madaba (1,500 g.o, 500 lat.), Naᶜour (300 g.o, ? lat.), Ahmond (250 g.o), Ma'in (?), Fuheis (600 g.o, 400 lat., ? g.c), al-Rumemin (100 g.o, 100 lat.), Amman (200 g.o, 40 lat., 50 g.c), Salt (3,000 g.o, 800 lat., 1350 g.c). District of Jabal ᶜAjlun: ᶜAjlun (700 g.o, 200 lat., 100 g.c), Hosn (1,100 g.o, 200 lat., 230 g.c), Irbid (200 g.o, 30 g.c), Rafid (110 g.o), Taybé, Sarikh (250 g.o), Chatna (325 g.o, 60 g.c), Eidoun (80 g.o), Djedeita (60 g.o), Kafar Adil (30 g.o), Khanziré (80 g.o), Samad (100 g.o), Souf (250 g.o, 150 g.c), Kafar Anzé (120 g.o), Anjara (170 g.o, 130 lat.), al-Kerk (40 lat.), al-Sakit (30 g.o), Debbine (30 g.o), Jerash (200 g.o, ?). Archivio Storico Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, Information on Transjordan, Melkit, Juin 1924, 528/28 1, 24, i, F. 6-7.

59 *Le Monitor Diocésan du Patriarcat Latin de Jérusalem*, June 1953, p. 138.

60 See Archivio Storico Congregazioni per le Chiese Orientali, Petition of the faithful of Orgian, Kufrabil e Kifrawan, 448/37, Latins, Palestine and Transjordan, Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

61 Christian faithful were divided in: 130 Latins: 22 Hijazin families, 3 Madanat and 2 Baqa'iin. 148 Melkites: 27 families between the Ishqat and the Kawalit. 199 Greek-Orthodox. P. Médebielle, 'Ader', *Le Monitor Diocésan du Patriarcat Latin de Jérusalem*, January-February 1961, 158.

62 E. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State,* pp. 8-10.

the Sunni and to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, that fought and co-operated with each other on the basis of military power and group solidarity—*ʿassabiyya*—rather than the faith professed. Despite the fragmentation and division, the population of Transjordan thus shared the same cultural horizons.

After 1860, Catholic missionaries from France and Italy belonging to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and Protestants, mainly British in origin and affiliated with the Church Mission Society, increasingly flocked into the Transjordanian territory attracted by the possibility of freely proselytizing a population characterized by a strong Christian religiosity but with little awareness of the institutional dimension of the religion, partly as a consequence of the scant presence of official Greek Orthodox activities. Aside from specific reasons of faith which persuaded these men to convert, some of the local Christian tribes, aware of the relationship between foreign missionaries and European powers, welcomed them in order to benefit from their protection, taking advantage of their services in health and education which significantly improved their social status vis-à-vis the Muslim component. Mass conversions, favoured by tribalism and local rivalries, characterized the encounter between natives and missionaries, in just a few years leading to the development of wider networks of charitable establishments.[63] At the end of the 19th century, the local Christian dimension already appeared stratified between different religious communities, even if they still needed to consolidate their activities and presence. Nonetheless, the development of Greek-Catholic establishments within Transjordan triggered a new process of conversion and stratification involving not only Greek-Orthodox and Protestant adherents but also Catholics of the Roman rite.

Latins *vis-à-vis* Melkites during the 19th Century

During the last twenty years of the 19th century, aside from the development of Catholic and Protestant missions in Transjordan, the conversion of rival families and tribes to the Latin rite rather than the Melkite begun to increase. In reality, Mgr Valerga's account of his

63 I analyzed these dynamics in *Arabi cristiani di Transgiordania. Spazi politici e cultura tribale (1841-1922)*, Franco Angeli, Collana Politica-Studi, Milan, 2011.

first pastoral visit to his diocese pointed out that the Greek-Catholic community was already active in the Hawran and within the northern part of Transjordan during the mid-19th century.[64]

Given the traditional social structure of Transjordan based on family and tribal groups, beyond the extent of personal faith, religion frequently played a secondary role, becoming an expression of political concerns defined by local tribal culture.[65] In 1885, thanks to Father Gatti's prestige and continuous contacts between the local Christian population and Catholic missionaries residing in the district of Balqa', two local sheikhs, Abdullah Effendi and Nasrallah Effendi, began to explore the possibility of converting to Latin Catholics.[66] The two sheikhs, positively impressed by the missionary's ardour in defending several Catholic faithful against Ottoman authorities in Irbid, finally decided to go to Nazareth to meet Mgr Bracco and officially asked him to send a missionary to their village. In 1885, Hosn's mission was founded, representing the first Catholic missionary establishment within the Jabal ᶜAjlun. Patriarch Bracco thus appointed Father Theobald Navoni as the new priest of Hosn, entrusting him with the task of tending the spirit and bodies of the young local Latin community, becoming the beacon for all the Catholics in the district.[67]

However, from the beginning of his stay, Father Navoni was involved in a complex socio-political controversy. A small incident of looting at the expense of several Catholic families, which occurred shortly before his arrival, was worsened by the missionaries' decision to build a school and a chapel, superimposed on international rivalry and competition between Churches.[68]

Given the great amount of charitable work, both material and spiritual, the Patriarchate decided to support Father Navoni despatching to Hosn a young curate, Father Michael Karam, a native of Nazareth, who was specifically tasked to administer the new-founded school, while Father Navoni was occupied with erection of a chapel. The

64 A. Wandelbourg, *La Palestine, la Syrie et l'Arabie Visitées Mgr Valerga, Souvenirs de Voyages aux Missions d'Orient*, Tome II, Berche et Tralin, Paris, 1886, pp. 289-290.
65 *Le Monitor Diocésan du Patriarcat Latin de Jérusalem*, November-December 1957, 237.
66 P. Médebielle, *Salt, Histoire d'une Mission*, Patriarcat Latin de Jérusalem, Jerusalem, 1987, p. 70.
67 A. Possetto, *Il Patriarcato Latino di Gerusalemme (1848-1938)*, 'Crociata', Milan, 1938, p. 332.
68 A. Possetto, *Il Patriarcato Latino,* 334.

fast growth of the Catholic establishment inevitably antagonized the other religious communities already in place before the arrival of Latin missionaries. Both Greek-Orthodox and Protestants, settled in Hosn with their school and a health clinic, made common front against the new arrivals and their intention to introduce church bells to the village. This pattern had already provided the pretext for the outbreak of inter-community clashes within the Balqa' and Jabal Nablus. Accordingly, the display of the cross and the use of the bells, public symbols which attested to the anchorage of the new religious community, increased the evolution of traditional internal local balances and easily aroused the suspicion and hostility of Protestants and the Greek-Orthodox, who felt threatened by the Catholic missionary's activism. This phenomenon was not new to Transjordan during the 19th century. However, the crescendo of inter-community tensions soon reached new heights within the Catholic dimension. The competition between Latin and Melkite Catholics thereby complicated the already ticklish socio-political situation, anticipating a path that soon would spread throughout Transjordan at the turn of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Melkite Catholics joined the Greek-Orthodox/Protestant camp by opposing Father Navoni and Latin-Catholics, charging them with being 'foreign' subjects, aliens to local culture and thus inherently harmful.[69] Naturally, even though there was competition between Melkites and the Greek-Orthodox, the latter reacted positively to the move supporting their statement. At the same time, although they were 'foreigners' too, given their lesser interest in the evangelization of Eastern Christianity, the Protestants were naturally aggregated into the anti-Latin alliance.[70] Consequently, from a socio-political standpoint and outside strictly religious issues, Protestant missionaries represented a minor threat to the Orthodox, who thus accepted their support.[71]

Throughout 1886 tensions steadily increased involving every possible local actor, from Ottoman authorities to Hosn's tribal system and religious emissaries. Given the activism of the Latin missionaries, Greek-Orthodox notables decided to circulate a petition to be

69 P. Médebielle, *La Diocesi del Patriarcato Latino*, pp. 42-53. Patriarcat Grec-Melkite-Catholique d'Antioche et de tout l'Orient d'Alexandrie et de Jérusalem, *Catholicisme ou Latinisme?,* p. 61.

70 P. Duvignau, *S.B. Mgr Vincent Bracco, Patriarche Latin de Jérusalem*, Patriarcat Latin, Jerusalem, 1981, p. 182.

71 E. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, pp. 131-133.

submitted to the Pasha of the Hawran, on whom the entire district of Jabal 'Ajlun depended. The allegations contained in the petition were perfectly aligned to the new Ottoman policy of opposition to foreign Western intromissions. The Greek-Orthodox community invoked, in fact, the intervention and protection of the Ottoman Empire against the threat posed by the 'foreign' activities of Latins and their religion, both considered contrary to local customs and traditions. Catholic missionaries were thus accused of being hired by Western powers opposing the Ottoman Empire and its subjects whatever their religion was.[72] The petition had no concrete consequences, however. Boundaries between the different local communities were consolidated, even if antagonism and rivalries were not resolved.

Similarly to what happened in the Jabal ᶜAjlun, in 1887, after a long season of conflict and continuous clashes among the tribes of Madaba and Balqa', some Orthodox families, except for the tribe of the Sonnaᶜ, decided to make contact with Father Biever to discuss their conversion.[73] Again, the influence of the Catholic Latin Patriarchate attracted the interest of several Christian natives. As emerges from the missionary's accounts, the ecumenical movement that developed in Madaba in 1887 was characterized more by political and economic factors than by religious issues. Father Biever said, in fact, that they sought to find protectors and mediators against Ottoman authorities, beyond the interest in benefitting from Catholic charitable services in the light of Greek-Orthodox financial restraints. It is possible that the missionary was interested in explaining the reasons for this conversion, highlighting weaknesses and material interests. However, the episode gives an interesting insight into the relationship between missionaries and tribes.

Firstly, clans interested in conversion approached the missionaries, explaining that they were ready to embrace Catholicism or Protestantism. This position might reinforce the idea that the natives were not aware of the differences between Churches and rites. At the same time, their statement might have hidden the will to negotiate their conversion with the missionary on an equal footing, getting the most concessions from the representative of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. From their

72 A. Possetto, *Il Patriarcato Latino*, p. 336.

73 P. Médebielle, *Madaba et Son Histoire Chrétienne*, Imprimerie du Patriarcat Latin, Jerusalem, 1987, p. 239.

point of view, Father Biever had to 'conquer' new faithful and not simply collect their abjurations. Orthodox families were certainly aware of inter-community rivalries within Madaba and sought to exploit it for their own benefit. Moreover, Father Biever depicted their preference towards Catholics rather than Protestants on the basis of common devotion to the cult of the Virgin Mary and the saints, suggesting that, political calculations aside, conversion to Catholicism could reduce the need to change some of the traditional local customs. The cult of the Virgin Mary and the saints in fact played an important role in the popular culture of Transjordan and communal life of the village. Choosing Catholicism instead of Protestantism would lessen the need to alter their identity, especially if the conversion would be to the Melkites and not to the Latins, as they asked. Following this path, they could simply recognize the authority of Holy See, keeping intact their rituals and tribal identity as a new religious community and getting all the benefits from Catholic institutions in Palestine.[74] They sought, in fact, to have their own school, which would employ a member of their clan.

Accordingly, the Greek-Orthodox families that proposed their conversion and submission to the Roman Catholic Church, asking to be confirmed in their Eastern rite, sought to preserve their independence at the local level, distinguishing themselves from the leading Latin-Catholic tribe of the ᶜAzayzat. Giving rise to a different religious community, that of the Melkites, they would preserve their autonomy, putting their presence in Madaba on an equal footing with the ᶜAzayzat.[75] Understanding the socio-political implications of this issue, the Latin Patriarchate, however, decided to decline their requests fearing that these conversions would introduce new tensions to the new-founded Latin mission in Madaba.

The Foundation of New Melkite Establishments at the Beginning of the 20th Century

After the first episodes of attempted conversions in the 19th century, at the beginning of the 20th century the Melkite presence began to develop.

74 P. Médebielle, *Madaba*, p. 240.
75 *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240.

In 1836, during his stay in Madaba, Father Merlo was charged with assisting the Catholics of Maᶜin, a little village close to the Zarqa river inhabited by some Christian tribes originally from Karak.[76] In 1892, several tribesmen approached Father Manfredi asking to become Latins, followed by other families in 1902. In 1924, the whole tribe of the Hijazin embraced Catholicism and the Latin rite. In 1915, Greek-Catholics made their entrance into the village due to the rivalry between the clans of the Bdewine and the Alaya, who became Melkite.[77] Later on, in 1936, following Holy See instructions, Father Merlo was tasked by the Patriarchate to mediate the conversion of all the Hijazin to the Greek-Catholics. Latins did not have sufficient funds to open and manage an establishment there and it was thus decided to support the creation of a new religious community independent from the Patriarchate. The missionary failed, however. The rivalry between the two clans was too deep. The local Catholic dimension thus remained split into two communities. Later on, in 1958, a movement of conversion to Greek-Orthodoxy supported by the Khouri clan spread amongst the population of Maᶜin. In reality, Latins were not involved, but the danger threatened the existence of the Melkite community. In order to avoid the loss of adherents, and at the request of the Greek-Catholic Archbishop, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem succumbed to the pressing demands of Alaya and, despite serious financial problems, gave the go-ahead to the construction of a small missionary establishment. The work helped to save the Catholic presence of Maᶜin, but could do nothing to resolve the old divisions resulted from local tribal rivalry.

In Jabal ᶜAjlun, after al-Kura rebellions between 1921 and 1923, the work of Catholic establishments proceeded without particular difficulties. The rift between Latins and Melkites had occurred long before, because the district had always maintained close ties with Syria and then with the Patriarchate of Antioch.[78] The main communities were residing in ᶜAjlun and Hosn. In 1925, some Catholic missionaries tried to open a new mission in Eidoun, near Hosn, and Khirbet al-

76 P. Médebielle, *Madaba,* p. 388; P. Médebielle, *Encore à propos du Patriarcat Latin de Jérusalem*, Séminaire Patriarcal, Jerusalem, 1962, pp. 52-53.

77 Archivio Storico Congregazioni per le Chiese Orientali, Mission of Maᶜin, Latins, Palestine and Transjordan, 175/34.

78 Archivio Storico Congregazioni per le Chiese Orientali, Relationships between Latin Patriarchate and the Eastern clergy, Latins, Palestine and Transjordan, 335/37, 27 January 1926. Father Robinson.

Wahadneh, near ᶜAjlun.[79] At the end of the 19th century, Father Navoni had already made several visits to these two small villages. He won several converts, but failed to establish any stable presence. In 1925, Father Jabril Soudan, one of the first Hosn natives to be baptized by Father Navoni, was dispatched to Eidoun, where he was immediately greeted by a group of Haddadin who immediately converted to the Latin rite.[80] The birth of this small Latin community attracted the attention of the Melkites who, under the auspices of Bishop Hajjar, bought a piece of land with the intention of opening up their own establishment for those clans remaining Orthodox, mainly the Sahawineh.[81] The attempt failed, however, despite the mediation of the central government and the High Commissioner. The leading Muslim tribe, the Khasawineh, strenuously opposed this enterprise. Accordingly, the Sahawineh abstained from making further inquiries about the opening of the establishment and Bishop Hjjar had no choice but to sell the land that he had already purchased. Nonetheless, over time a small Greek-Catholic community came into being, even if most of the Sahawineh emigrated in search of work to Irbid and Amman. Khirbet al-Wahadneh, a village situated in the valley of the Yarmuk River, was a small settlement largely inhabited by Muslims, like Eidoun. The local Christian population was divided between the Haddadin and the Bader clans.[82] After sporadic visits by Father Navoni and his successor, Father Smets, during the 19th century, in 1924 most of the Bader converted to the Melkites, but quickly most of them abjured to switch to the Latins. In 1926 Father Soudan bought a small plot of land and ordered the opening of an establishment entrusted to a Maronite priest. Finally, in 1936, when the Apostolic Delegation decided to rationalize the distribution of Latin and Greek-Catholic missions in the Jabal ᶜAjlun, the rest of the Bader were forced to pass from the Melkite to the Latins.

79 P. Médebielle, 'La Mission d'Irbed', *Le Monitor Diocésan du Patriarcat Latin de Jérusalem*, May-June 1961, pp. 88-93.

80 P. Médebielle, 'Eidoun', *Le Monitor Diocésan du Patriarcat Latin de Jérusalem*, September 1952, pp. 176-178.

81 Archivio Storico Congregazioni per le Chiese Orientali, Relationships between Latin Patriarchate and the Eastern clergy, Latins, Palestine and Transjordan, 335/37, 12 June 1926, Mgr Hajjar, attached in 27 January 1926. Father Robinson. Roma. 14 May 1927.

82 P. Médebielle, 'Bénédiction de l'Église de Khirbeh', *Le Monitor Diocesan du Patriarcat Latin de Jérusalem,* July-August 1964, pp. 227-229.

The development of Melkite establishments not only involved the districts of Balqa' and Jabal ᶜAjlun, but also that of Karak. In 1934, Mgr Salman sent a detailed report on the condition of Melkite missions in this district pointing out the difficulties that he was experiencing in developing a new missionary establishment due to the opposition of the Latin Patriarchate.[83] Before the beginning of the 20th century, Smakieh was a ruined village owned by the al-Majali who used this land to graze their animals and those of their allies. After fierce fighting in 1922 between the Hijazin and the al-Majali regarding ownership of this territory, in 1924 Smakieh was definitively founded thanks to the settlement of several Christian clans under the guidance of the Latin Patriarchate.[84] Father Angelo Foresto was entrusted by Mgr Barlassina to study a project for building the mission, which was shortly completed. The young curate, suffering from the harsh climatic conditions of the place, left the village in 1925, being replaced by Father Maat. In 1934 a dispute which had begun many years before between the Christian tribes of the Akasheh and the Hijazin led to the birth of the local Greek-Catholic community, as had already happened in Karak and Homud. The Akasheh increasingly complained about having to share the church with their rivals, the Hijazin. The dispute was soon resolved. The Akasheh became Greek-Catholics, while the Hijazin remained anchored to the Latin rite. At the same time, the Akasheh branch of Karak decided instead to remain Latins, preserving their leading role within this religious community.

Similarly, ᶜAder, a small village five kilometres northeast from the city of Karak, saw the foundation of a missionary establishment in 1928, when Father Aqel, a Maronite priest, settled there and rented a small house which became the village's first school. ᶜAder was entirely inhabited by Christian tribes. There were eleven Latin families belonging to the tribes of the Hijazin and Nasraoui, and about forty-five Greek-Orthodox families related to the Baqaᶜiin and Madanat.[85] The tribes lived peacefully together and this allowed

83 Archivio Storico Congregazioni per le Chiese Orientali, Amman, Transjordan. 26 June 1934, Mgr Salaman to Cardinal Luigi Sincero, F. 7, in Mission of Maᶜin, Latins, Palestine and Transjordan, 175/34.

84 P. Médebielle, 'La Mission de Smakieh, Pour l'Histoire de nos Missions', *Le Monitor Diocésan du Patriarcat Latin de Jérusalem*, January-February 1960, pp. 22-27.

85 P. Médebielle, 'Ader', *Le Monitor Diocésain du Patriarcat Latin de Jérusalem,* January-February 1961, pp. 156-158.

the Latin establishment to easily consolidate. In 1935, the clans of the Ishqat and Kawalit, both part of the Greek-Orthodox tribe of the Baqaʿiin, decided to embrace Catholicism. The tribal division of ʿAder prevented this. The two clans, in fact, refused to be integrated with the Hijazin within the same religious communal boundaries and be forced to accept their authority due to their greater numbers. In 1937, therefore, they opted to become Greek-Catholics, and started to build a new establishment.

Conclusion

The Holy Land had always been at the core of multiple interests where political, religious and economical issues had steadily overlapped with one another. And so the controversial connection between the Melkite and Latin Patriarchates is corroborative of this, partly explaining the difficult relationship between the West and the East that characterized the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century and directly affected the process of transition from the Ottoman Empire system to the Near and Middle East of the modern Arab states. Aside from theological and religious aspects, at the beginning of the 19th century the issue of rite affiliation and consequently of the Latinizing attitude of Roman Catholic activities catalyzed suspicion and worry among Eastern Christians regarding the growing influence of Western endeavours within the region. Later on, as Arab nationalism developed, politics and the institutional aspects of religion overlapped and intertwined with each other. Religious and rite issues, even within the Christian dimension, arose as another field where the Arab population tried to achieve emancipation from foreign influence. Of course, the fast growth of the Latin diocese within Palestine and Transjordan, created by the opening of many missionary establishments, by charitable and educational activities and, finally, by involving the local population in its institutional system, cannot be ignored or considered a sign of dominion, even if it was strongly criticized by both the Greek-Orthodox and Melkite Patriarchates. In fact, oppositions and reactions were not produced by the revival of the Latin Patriarchate itself or by its growing commitment to socio-political issues within the Near East and the Holy Land. The Melkites attacked Latin activism and

Latinizing missionary attitudes to Eastern Christianity because they were perceived and depicted as harmful to their identity and tradition. The controversies about Latinization (which never meant a refusal of Uniatism and Unionism) represented a denial of the equation between Church and rite. Accordingly, Catholicism was not only the Roman-Latin rite, but also Eastern rites under a common respect for and recognition of the superiority of the Holy See of Rome.

During the mid-19th century and the beginning of the 20th, the development of different Catholic missionary establishments, both Latin and Melkite, in Transjordan testified to how these controversies could easily arise in a territory dominated by tribalism where local rivalries and competition were strong. The arrival of foreign missionaries sustained a process of social stratification that was enabled thanks to the re-imposition of direct Ottoman authority. Religion, in fact, became not only an important factor in the identities of local populations, but also a fundamental means of dealing with the Ottoman political system. Religious communities represented an important field in which to get new services from the missionaries and obtain guaranteed seats in the administrative councils emerging from previous local balances of power. Religious affiliation could thus directly affect the socio-political status of families, clans and tribes.

Aside from these people's religious beliefs, the local Christian populations immediately understood the importance of the resources missionaries offered and for that reason welcomed and housed these men. Christian religious institutions benefitted from these positive attitudes quickly developing with missionary networks. As the case of Transjordan attests, local populations did not only co-opt or react to this dynamic, but tried to directly influence its growth. Mass conversion, opposition and bargaining were all symptoms of the complex and controversial relationship that characterized the encounter between the Christian tribes of Transjordan and missionaries. The influence of the Latin-Melkite relationship in Transjordan explains how wide this phenomenon was, involving both different Churches (Greek-Orthodox, Protestant, Roman Catholic) and rites. Every possible element of distinction, polarization and consequently mutual recognition was politically exploited to emerge from traditional tribal balances of power, recomposing part of its functioning and logic within the smaller local communal dimension.

The introduction of the religious community was not an easy process. Tribal identity and local rivalries, in fact, were able to reproduce their logic within these new fields, threatening their survival and development. As Haddad points out, a form of detribalization along with the consolidation of the religious community took place, but it did not lead to individualization. Both the local tribal system and Church institutions tried to re-tribalize members of the socio-religious institutions. The former to preserve their traditional power system; the latter to counter the dynamic of secularization.

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