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 2016

LIVING STONES
YEARBOOK
2016

The inter-relationship between religion and politics in the Middle East

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Managing Editor
Leonard Harrow

Editors
Mary Grey
Duncan Macpherson
Anthony O'Mahony
Colin South

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to the memory of

JAMIL YOUSIF BULLATA

1934–2016

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Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust

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Communications with the Chair or Editor can be made through:
chair@livingstonesonline.org.uk
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Note

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.

EDITORIAL

This *Yearbook 2016* appears early in 2017. We apologise for its tardy appearance but this was due mainly to the late inclusion of material the editors felt to be important and which the shifting picture in the region also exacerbated. This also means the Yearbook is a larger production that normal.

Every editorial of the *Yearbook* seems to begin with a lamentation for the situation of our area of interest. This edition is certainly no exception to that. The events of the last year in Europe and the US will and are having an effect on the situation in the Middle East. At the time of writing the Iraqi government and its coalition allies are beginning the action to recover the city of Mosul. The grinding down of Syria next door continues. What local outcomes will emerge and the policies of the international players remain unclear. The actions of the Israeli government and its settlement policies, along with the presently ambiguous developing policy of the new American administration, add to the whole atmosphere of apprehension throughout the region. A one-state solution is not a solution.

The Yearbook discusses three main spheres: the events associated Israel/Palestine, the Western reaction mainly herein though the filter of the Anglican Church and the ongoing agony of the Christian community in Iraq and its diaspora.

However, we must open with a tribute to Jamil Bullata, to whom this edition is dedicated. Jamil was well known to Living Stones, a long-standing member and its Treasurer for many years. His wisdom, support and good humour are sorely missed. He made an outstanding

contribution to many organisations associated with the pursuit of justice and freedom in the Middle East.

Sr Bridget Tighe's paper, 'Palestinian Christians: present situation and future challenges', is a review of the reality of life faced by Palestinians Christian who live in the Occupied Territories and the Gaza Strip. The steady loss of control and 'enclavisation' in the occupied areas is a depressing story. It is likely that in the not too distant future there will be no Christians in Gaza. Is there more that can be done apart from prayer and hope?

In a strange contrast, Emily Tavcar in her contribution, 'Hebrew Speaking Catholics in Modern Israel: Identity within the Transnational Church and Socio-Political State', points out that the population of Christians in some parts of the Middle East is growing, due to an influx of Christian migrant workers and refugees in Israel. Many are unaware of the established Hebrew-speaking Catholic community of Israel, especially the Saint James Vicariate, which welcomes these new Israeli Catholics. This is creating a dynamic, multicultural community of the faithful.

Andrew Ashdown's 'An exploration of issues surrounding Anglican/Jewish relations in the UK in the light of the Israel/Palestine conflict' is to be presented in two parts across two issues of the Yearbook. In the first part in this volume Revd Ashdown looks at Anglican/Jewish relations in the United Kingdom, outlines a brief history of Jewish/Christian relations and causes of mistrust, Zionism, and the influence of the Holocaust on Jewish theology and identity.

Christopher Brown looks at a major thinker and figure in the perception of Islam in a Christian context in his 'Kenneth Cragg as an Anglican Theologian of Islam'. He discusses Cragg's faith and work, his place in Anglican thinking, his appreciation of Islam, political theology and his role as an Anglican theologian and scholar of Islam.

The influence of Kenneth Cragg is maintained in David Derrick's paper 'Kenneth Cragg, Charles Malik and Dag Hammarskjöld—some thoughts on the question of mysticism and the "public square"'. Especially interesting is the relationship of Malik with Cragg and Cragg's deep and longstanding interest in Hammarskjöld's poetry and thought.

The 'European' perspective is maintained by Stefanie Hugh-Donovan's contribution on 'Eastern Orthodoxy and Muslim-Christian

relations between Europe and the Middle East: O Clément's perspectives on theology and ecclesiology in the Christian encounter with Islam'. Clément's work is becoming important outside of francophone areas. As an important thinker baptised into the Russian Orthodox Church, he presents an intriguing perspective from a 'Mediterranean' standpoint and is a major contributor to interfaith thinking.

With Aziz Nour's paper, 'The Faithful Presence of the Syrian Orthodox in a Challenging Milieu: Sayfophobia, Citizenship, IDPs 1915-2015, and beyond', we return in no uncertain manner to the harsh and enduring realities of the Middle East situation. Aziz's review of the history of his own community in Iraq over the last 150 years in painful. Indeed, he coins the term 'sayfophobia' to try to suggest the ongoing and inbred anxiety, the state of mind of a different degree of anxiety of the uncertainty that has lingered for the last 100 years among Christians in Iraq.

Aziz's paper is rightly dedicated to Mar Gregarious whose kidnapping and possible 'martyrdom' in the context of the tragedy of conflict in the region is of great significance for the local Christian communities.

Dr Suha Rassam presents a paper entitled 'The Present Crisis in Iraqi Christian Identity'. She discusses the political and cultural background to modern Iraq-Christian and Iraqi Christian identity, growing marginalisation and fragmentation and the challenges for the future.

Erica Hunter, in her paper, 'Is there an end in sight re the destruction of Churches and Monasteries in Iraq?', continues discussion of the problems facing Christians in Iraq by a review of the damage and systematic attacks of the holy sites of Christians in Iraq. These attacks have received less attention and comment than the great sites at Nimrud and Palmyra (in Syria). However, the attacks on churches and monasteries are an assault on the bonds that have helped unite communities across many years in the country. The major cities of Iraq still have a Christian presence. How this will develop in the future remains unclear.

The final paper by Nerses Nersessian, 'Church-State relations in the Soviet Republic of Armenia during the Catholicate of Gevorg VI Ch'orekch'ian (1945-1954) and his successor, Vazgen I Palchian (1955-1994)', reminds us that the problems of the Christian communities in

Iraq and Syria have counterparts in other parts of the region. Indeed, the Armenian experience may arguably be the longest experience of any Christian Church in the east. Certainly, how the Armenian Church dealt with the post-Second World War period and then the fall of the Soviet system is one which deserve to be more widely known, and remains a testament to the resilience of the faithful under adverse circumstance.

As ever we stand indebted to our contributors for their hard work and patience in the presentation of these papers.

The Editors
February 2017

CONTRIBUTORS

Revd Andrew Ashdown is an Anglican Priest who has been visiting the Middle East for over 30 years. In 2014, he completed a Masters in Abrahamic Religions at Heythrop College, and in 2015, stepped aside from full-time parish ministry to undertake PhD research into Christian-Muslim relations in Syria, through Winchester University, with Anthony O'Mahony as one of his supervisors. His research includes on-going visits to Syria.

Aziz Abdul-Nour. Born in Mosul-Iraq, he studied in Mosul and London University and taught in Basra University, Iraq. A Syrian Orthodox, he is a secretary of the Oriental Orthodox Churches Council and a Co-Secretary of the Anglican Orient Orthodox Forum, CMS Middle East Advisory board, Chair, Middle East Forum-CTBI. He is a founder of the Mor Gregorios Cultural Legacy Foundation, a think tank campaign to free Mor Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, the abducted Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Aleppo since 2013, promoting through his vision and mission for pluralism, dialogue of life, awareness and perception of the challenges of modern conflicts on Christians' interreligious relations and presence. Recent publications: *A Festschrift: Mor Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: Pluralism, Dialogue and Co-Existence*; *The Garden of Eden and its Living Stones: Christian in Iraq*, *The Syrian Orthodox Church in Britain: A Historical Perspective. Mosul the Mother of All Co-Existence: A Bibliographical Index*.

Christopher Brown is an Anglican priest who held senior positions in Social Work for many years. He completed an MA from Heythrop

College, University of London in Christianity and Inter-religious dialogue in 2005, focusing on the life and thought of Kenneth Cragg on Islam. He published a very well regarded study, 'Kenneth Cragg on Shi'a Islam and Iran: An Anglican Theological Response to Political Islam', *ARAM,* Vol. 20, 2008. Current interests include working to relive poverty in India and some teaching.

David Derrick trained as a worker priest for the Church of England and has exercised his ministry in London's inner-boroughs for the last fifty years. An article based on his MA dissertation, 'Can we re-image an Islam with purely a Meccan identity, as set out in the writings of Kenneth Cragg?' appeared in Living Stones Year Book 2013. He is currently a postgraduate student at Heythrop College, University of London, researching the theology of Kenneth Cragg in dialogue with Charles Malik and Dag Hammarskjöld with reference to 'Human Rights and Responsibilities'.

Stefanie Hugh-Donovan attained her MA in Theology in 2004, and an MA in Philosophy of Religion in 2006. Her doctorate entitled 'Olivier Clément: French Thinker and Theologian of the Eastern Orthodox Church in Dialogue with Western Catholic Thought on Ecclesiology, Theology and the Identity of Europe' was completed in 2015 at Heythrop College, University of London. Dr Hugh-Donovan's recent publications include: 'Olivier Clément on Orthodox theological thought and ecclesiology in the West', in: *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 10 (2010), 116-129; 'Ecclesial thought and life trajectories: an ecumenical dialogue. Part 1: Olivier Clément, Eastern Orthodox Theologian and Thomas Merton, Western Catholic Cistercian Monk', in *One in Christ: a catholic ecumenical review*, 45 (2011), 35-54; 'Ecclesial thought and life trajectories: an ecumenical dialogue. Part 2: 'Olivier Clément and Paul Evdokimov: Deux Passeurs', in *One in Christ: a catholic ecumenical review*, 45 (2011), 297-312; 'An Eastern Orthodox Perspective on Europe and Catholicism: A Study in the thought of Olivier Clément', in *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*, 63 (2011), 234-254; 'An Orthodox View of the Papacy: Olivier Clément's Response to Ut Unum Sint', in: *Orientalia et Occidentalia*, ed. by Simon Marinák and A O'Mahony, 13 (2013), 103-116; ``Louis Massignon, Olivier Clément, Thomas Merton, Christian de Chergé: Radical

Hospitality, Radical Faith', in: *Logos: Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*, 55 (2014), 473-494; The Eastern Catholic Movement in Russia", in *The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* Vol. 67, no. 3-4, 2015 (2016), pp. 305-327; 'An Eastern Orthodox Reflection on Papal Primacy: Olivier Clément's Response to *Ut Unum Sint* and the Ecclesial Legacy of Patriarch Athenagoras I', in *The Downside Review*, Vol. 134 (2016), pp. 70-87.]

Erica Hunter BA, MA, DPhil, PhD (Melbourne), is Head of the Department of Religions and Philosophies, London SOAS. She specialises in Eastern Christianity, Syriac Christianity in the Middle East, with particular reference to Iraq and Syriac Christianity in medieval Central Asia and China. She is the author of many articles, has contributed to numerous part-works. Among her own books is (forthcoming with James Coakley) her *A Syriac service-book from Turfan*, Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin MS MIK III 45, Turnhout: Brepols. (Berliner Turfantexte XXXIX)**.**

The Revd Dr Nerses (Vrej) Nersessian was born in Tehran in 1948. He was educated at the Armenian College in Calcutta, the Gevorgian Theological Academy in Holy Etchmiadzin (Armenia),and King's College, University of London. He has a degree in theology and a doctorate in Modern Greek and Byzantine Studies. After graduation in 1975 he joined the British Library as curator responsible for the manuscripts and printed books of the Christian Middle East section, a post which he held until his retirement in August 2011. Among his British Library publications are: *Catalogue of Early Armenian Printed Books. A history of Armenian Printing (1512-1850)* (1980), *Armenian Illuminated Gospel Books* (1987), *Treasures from the Ark, 1700 years of Armenian Christian Art*, a catalogue of the British Library exhibition marking the 1,700th anniversary of the conversion of Armenia to Christianity, *The Bible in the Armenian Tradition* (2001) and most recently *A Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the British Library acquired since the year 1913 and of collections in other libraries in the United Kingdom* (2012), described as 'a fitting culmination to the long and distinguished career'. He is the author of the articles on the Armenian Church tradition in *Jesus in History, Thought, and Culture. An Encyclopedia*, *In the Beginning. Bibles before the year 1000*, *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*, *Sacred Books*

of the Three Faiths: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, *Byzantium 330-1453*, *The Orthodox Christian World*. He was ordained a priest in 1983, elevated to archpriest in 1991 by Vazgen I Catholicos of All Armenians of Blessed Memory, and in October of this year he was awarded the distinguished medal of Saint Nerses Shnorhali by His Holiness Garegin I, Catholicos of All Armenians, for his distinguished career in the British Library and devoted services to the Armenian Church.

Suha Rassam was born in Mosul (Iraq); after medical training she became Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Baghdad. She came to England to undertake further medical research and practised as a doctor of medicine for many years in the United Kingdom. She is a founding member of the charity 'Iraqi Christians in Need' for which she won the 'Catholic Woman of the Year' award in 2008. She is a member of the Chaldean Catholic Church. Dr Rassam undertook studies in Eastern Christianity at the University of London. She authored *Christianity in Iraq* (2004); articles include 'The Plight of Iraqi Christians', in *One in Christ: a Catholic Ecumenical Review*, Vol. 42, no. 2, 2008, and 'Iraqi Christians: the Present Situation', in A O'Mahony and John Flannery (eds), *The Catholic Church in the Contemporary Middle East* (2010).

Emily Tavcar graduated from the University of San Francisco, California, USA in December 2013, where she received her BA in Sociology. In July 2015, she received her Master of Studies in the Study of Religion, with a focus in Christian-Jewish Relations, from the University of Oxford, Faculty of Theology and Religion. Emily's article, 'The Association of Hebrew Catholics and Hebrew Catholic Identity' was published in *One In Christ*, the ecumenical journal that seeks to further movement towards full communion among Christians. Emily currently works in market research for the social sciences. Her research interests include inter-religious relations and themes and methods within the sociology of religion.

Sr Bridget Tighe is a member of a missionary congregation the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood. With her community, supported by the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, she worked for many years as a nurse and midwife with Palestinian refugees

in Jordan. Between 1994 and 2005 she was Founding Principal of the Margaret Beaufort Institute, a theological college for Catholic women associated with the University of Cambridge after which she served as vice rector of Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem and as Regional Leader of her congregation in the UK. She now lives in the Gaza Strip where she is Executive Director of Caritas Jerusalem in Gaza.

JAMIL YOUSIF BULLATA (FCA)

1934–2016

This issue of the *Yearbook* is dedicated to the memory of Jamil Bullata who was for many years a trustee and treasurer of Living Stones. Those of us who had the privilege of knowing Jamil will remember him as a genial friend, an untiring worker for a long list of charities and a well-loved and active member of the Palestinian community in London.

Jamil was born in Jerusalem on 15 August 1934 and was educated at the De La Salle Collège des Frères, in the Christian Quarter of the Old City, where he went on to study for a higher diploma. In 1954 he joined the teaching staff of St Antony's College, the Coptic Orthodox school situated on the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In 1964 he left St Antony's and came to the United Kingdom to study accountancy at the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Cardiff. It was while he was in Cardiff in 1973 that he met and fell in love with Annette Denis, a young French student of English, whom he married in France in the following year, and with whom he then had two children.

In 1975 Jamil joined the Cardiff office of the prestigious accountancy firm, Deloitte Haskins & Sells. In 1979 he moved to their Al Khobar office, in Saudi Arabia, where he became a partner in 1982. His expertise led to his invitation to lecture in educational and business institutions throughout the Middle East.

In 1992, before retiring, Jamil returned to the UK where he worked on the publication of a series of books and articles on the subject of Saudi tax laws and business practice.

Based in London, his great energy and generosity were then

directed to giving his time and expertise to at least a dozen different organisations and charities.

Jamil had a passion and enthusiasm for Palestinian education and was committed to making a difference to the lives of Palestinian children and young people. Foremost among these was ABCD (Action around Bethlehem Children with Disability), a charitable trust dedicated to improving the quality of life of children and young adults suffering from physical, mental and psychological disabilities in the Occupied Territories and the Gaza Strip. He also served as a trustee and for a while as treasurer of the Friends of Birzeit University.

As a Palestinian Greek Orthodox Christian, Jamil was a devoted member of the Arabic congregation at Saint George's Cathedral in Redhill Street, London. He gave his support to the Arab Orthodox Society in Jerusalem and to the Saint Gregory Foundation, a UK registered charity founded in 1991 to assist charities in Russia and the former Soviet Union help the most people vulnerable in their communities.

Jamil's talents were further shared by his involvement with the Arab Club of Britain and the Arab British Centre in Gough Square. Whatever spare time remained was spent with his family, enjoying shared conversation and laughter with friends, or on his passion for gardening, as well as visiting museums and theatres.

Living Stones will remember Jamil not only for his scrupulous attention to detail but also for his unremitting commitment to supporting the Christian communities in the Holy Land and neighbouring countries.

Although becoming unwell in 2009, Jamil was able to be present for a surprise Birthday dinner in 2010 when his many friends and colleagues were able to pay tribute to his untiring dedication. On the 26th of June 2016, after a long illness, he passed away in Wimbledon with his loving family, wife, children and beloved grand-children by his side. May he rest in peace.

> *With the saints give rest, O Christ, to the souls of your departed servant, Jamil, where there is neither sickness nor sorrow nor sighing, but life everlasting. Amen.*
>
> (Greek Orthodox Prayer for the Departed)

Duncan Macpherson
October 2016

PALESTINIAN CHRISTIANS: PRESENT SITUATION AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Sr Bridget Tighe

Introduction

Challenges facing Palestinian Christians who live under the on-going Israeli Occupation are widely known and documented, so in this paper I will not offer new facts or statistics, nor will I try to address all issues surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Rather I will present theories and observations from published works that I believe reflect fairly accurately the current reality of life for Palestinian Christians who live in the Occupied Territories and the Gaza Strip.[1] I will then offer reflections from my own experience of living in the Middle East over many years and of listening to Palestinian Christians, particularly in Gaza and the West Bank, to describe their current situation and how they see the future. The published works to which I refer are *An Israeli in Palestine* (2008) by an Israeli Jew, Jeff Halper, *Dilemmas of Attachment: Identity and Belonging among Palestinian Christians* (2014) by a Danish scholar, Bård Helge Kårtveit, and recent World Bank and United Nations Reports.

Christians in the State of Israel

In addition to Palestinian Christians who remained when the State of Israel was established, other diverse groups of Christians are growing in number. They include members of the traditional Churches, mainly Russian-speaking immigrants from the former Soviet Union,

1 Approximately 38,000 Palestinian Christians live in the West Bank, 10,000 in East Jerusalem and less than 1,200 in the Gaza Strip.

Maronites who collaborated with the Israeli army in Lebanon who, with their families, were given refuge in Israel; migrant workers, mainly Filipinos and their Israeli-born, Hebrew-speaking children, and African migrants. There are also communities founded by Jews who witness to Jesus Christ within Hebrew-speaking Jewish Israeli society, including Messianic Jews and Jews for Jesus, who are outside the boundaries of the traditional Christian Churches. The experience of these Christians differs from that of Palestinian Christians in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza and they are not included in this paper.

Shared History and Current Reality

Whether in the West Bank, East Jerusalem or the Gaza Strip, Palestinian Christians share the same history of dispossession, displacement, occupation, land confiscation and isolation as Palestinian Muslims. When talking to Christians it is these events, and the current situation that is the consequence of these events, that are uppermost in their minds. Developments in surrounding Arab countries and the rise of Da'esh are also a real concern for both Christians and Muslims. To understand the current situation of Palestinian Christians, (as well as Muslims), we must look at the root causes of what we see today. It is not enough to consider only recent events, as the media is want to do, whether intifadas, rockets and tunnels from Gaza, or Israel's response to these. The current situation is the direct result of historic events going back to the rise of political Zionism, the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, the establishment of the State of Israel that displaced thousands of Palestinians from their ancestral lands and homes, the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, Israel's continuing policies of land confiscation, settlement expansion, restriction of movement and de-development in the West Bank and Gaza, and different forms of Palestinian resistance to these, including violent resistance. Christians, being few in number, are affected disproportionately and are more likely to emigrate.

While Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and others continue to talk of a two-state solution, among the people hope of a viable, contiguous, independent State of Palestine living in peace alongside a secure State of Israel is fading. A Christian woman when asked what

she thinks of the US and Europe's continuing talk of a two-state solution said it is a smoke screen that gives an impression of promoting a Palestinian State while allowing the continuation of settlement expansion and land confiscation that is making the establishment of such a state impossible. Public statements, such as that of the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs on 6 June 2016, that 'The possibility of a secure state of Israel and a viable state of Palestine living side by side is fading away, and together with the perspective of the two states, peace would also get beyond reach'[2] are now not uncommon. Palestinians have known this for years.

A Matrix of Control, Settlements and Enclavisation

In his book *An Israeli in Palestine* (2008) Jeff Halper, Israeli professor of anthropology and former Director of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, describes how Israel has cast over the West Bank and East Jerusalem what he calls a Matrix of Control: an interlocking series of mechanisms including rules, restrictions procedures and sanctions, only a few of which require physical occupation of territory, that allows Israel to control every aspect of Palestinian life in the Occupied Territories (p. 154). He highlights travel restrictions, work and building permits, fragmentation of the territory, displacement, containing Palestinians within Areas A and B following the Oslo Accord, land appropriation, settlements and by-pass roads. He states:

> The Matrix of Control, then, conceals a repressive regime intended to permanently deny the Palestinians self-determination and their basic human rights behind a façade of proper administration, physical constraint and ostensibly justified military control. It also reconfigures the entire country ensuring that a viable Palestinian state will never emerge … . (p. 173)

He quotes Eyal Weizman (2004)[3] as follows:

2 Ma'an News Agency. http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=771780, accessed 25 July 2016.

3 'Strategic Points, Flexible Lines, Tense Surfaces and Political Volumes: Ariel Sharon

> In 1982 … Ariel Sharon, then Minister of Defence, published his *Masterplan for Jewish Settlements in the West Bank Through the year 2010* later known as the Sharon Plan. In it he outlined the locations of more than a hundred settlement points placed on strategic summits. He also marked the paths of a new network of high volume, interconnected traffic arteries connecting the settlements with the Israeli heartland. … Sharon's Plan saw a way towards the wholesale annexation of areas vital for Israel's security.
> (Halper 2008, p. 153)

The systematic implementation of this Plan continues. Two major by-pass roads, Route 90 along the Jordan Valley and Route 6 along the west of the Green Line, separate Palestinian cities, that are organised along the central spine of the West Bank mountain ridge, both from Israel proper and from the river Jordan. Other roads connect these two main arteries giving quick and easy access to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv to those authorised to use them, (most Palestinians are not) and isolating Palestinian cities and villages not only from Israel but from each other. And Halper notes that:

> The brilliance of Sharon's Matrix of Control was not only in its strategic use of geography and settlements, but in the way it interlocks four strategic modes of control: administrative, economic, physical (facts on the ground) and military. Unless we grasp these critical details we cannot possible 'get it.' (pp. 153-4)

The result that we see today, consolidated by the Oslo Accord of Areas A, B, and C and the separation wall or barrier, has been referred to as the enclavisation of the West Bank.

As one drives through the West Bank, entrances to Area A have large signs warning that one is entering a potential danger zone, a Palestinian controlled area that Israeli citizens are forbidden to enter. In Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour, where the majority of West Bank Palestinian Christians live, the wall is built in a half circle and

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and the Geometry of Occupation', *Philosophical Forum* 35 [(2) 221-224)].

all travel in and out of these areas whether north to Ramallah, south to Hebron, east to Jericho or north-west towards Jerusalem is heavily monitored and restricted by Israeli checkpoints. This not only separates Palestinians from Israelis, it separates Palestinians from Palestinians whether Muslim or Christian, it cuts off Palestinians from Palestinian schools, hospitals and land. It separates Palestinian communities from each and, especially for Christians, this has serious consequences for social life and interaction.

Palestinians' long belief that settlement expansion and land confiscation, including Christian properties, are a continuation of early Zionist policy finds confirmation in recently declassified Israeli documents. Benny Morris (1999) notes that 'For decades the Zionists tried to camouflage their real aspirations … [but] they were certain of their aims and of the means needed to achieve them.' (p. 49)

He continues: 'In 1882 Ben-Yehuda wrote: "The thing we must do now is become as strong as we can, to conquer the country, covertly, bit by bit … We can only do this covertly, quietly …"'

And: 'In June 1938 Ben Gurion said "I support compulsory transfer. I do not see in it anything immoral." Ben Gurion's views did not change—though he was aware of the need to be discreet.' (p. 253)

The fact that Morris later changed his stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict does not invalidate what he quoted from others. This covert policy is further verified by Uri Bialer (*Cross on the Star of David* 2005,[4] p. 127) who notes that though the pre-1967 Israeli Foreign Ministry was more positive to Christian communities:

> Other bodies, in particular the security establishment … guided and backed by the prime minister, were almost consistently hostile. And he quotes Ginosar, the Israeli minister in Rome (1950):
>
> I know only too well the difficulty the Foreign Ministry faces in this area. The army has its own calculations, the ministry of finance his accounts, and there are influential groups and individuals whose aims are precisely what the

4 Bialer Uri *Cross on the Star of David. The Christian World* (2005) *in Israel's Foreign Policy, 1948-1967*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2005.

> Christians fear: to be rid of the Arabs in Israel—whether this is said out loud … or whether they act in silence.

These Israeli 'revisionists' historians show that a secular Zionist plan to expel the Palestinian people and take their land existed long before the Second World War. An English woman who had lived in the West Bank for some time told me of a recent conversation she had with Israeli settlers. They said they see themselves as laying the foundation for the future that may not be realised in their lifetime, to secure all the land west of the Jordan River for a Jewish State. In recent years this policy seems ever clearer with overt support for settlements, land confiscation, and enclavisation regardless of whether the Palestinians affected are Muslim or Christian, and it does not seem to matter which Israeli political party is in power. It is as if a blueprint is being implemented systematically over time. In a lecture *The 94 percent solution* (2000)[5] Halper explains that:

> For the most part the matrix relies upon subtle interventions performed under the guise of 'proper administration,' 'upholding the law,' 'keeping the public order' and, of course, 'security.' These interventions, largely bureaucratic and legal, are nevertheless backed by overwhelming military force, which Israel reserves for itself the right to employ.

The effect of this policy is described in a UNCTAD Report (2015):[6]

> Israeli settlements in the West Bank continued to expand, and the number of settlers has quadrupled since the Oslo Accords. Today, settlers outnumber Palestinians in Area C (61 per cent of West Bank area), which includes the most valuable Palestinian natural resources. Overall,

5 'The 94 Percent Solution A Matrix of Control', Jeff Halper, Fall 2000, Middle East Report 216, https://radioislam.org/historia/zionism/216_halper.html, accessed 25 July 2016.

6 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 6 July 2015. http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdb62d3_en.pdf, accessed 25 July 2016.

> 341,000 Israeli settlers live in 235 settlements and outposts in Area C, compared to 300,000 Palestinians (United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2014a). Settlers' violence against Palestinians and their productive assets continued, with 9,333 productive trees destroyed or vandalized in 2014. The violence escalated in 2015; in January alone, another 5,600 trees across the West Bank were uprooted or vandalized (OCHA, 2015). Towards the end of 2014, the movement of Palestinian people and goods in the West Bank was hindered by 490 barriers installed by Israel, including checkpoints, roadblocks, trenches and the Separation Barrier, which runs into the Occupied Palestinian Territory and unilaterally redefines the borders away from the internationally recognized Green Line (OCHA, 2014b). (1.6-7).

Jonathan Kuttab, human rights lawyer and member of the Israeli Bar, speaks and writes powerfully about how, in the Occupied Territories, Israeli law is used less in the interest of justice than as a useful tool to accomplish the unjust deeds of occupation 'clothing them with an aura of respectability and legitimacy.' (1992 p. 94) Reflecting on the unifying nature of peace-making, forgiveness and reconciliation, he draws attention to the destructive phenomenon of separation by a system of walls, roads and fences, more invidious than apartheid, that separates not only Palestinians from Israelis but Palestinian from Palestinian within the Occupied Territories. (2007 p. 171) Explaining why trees, especially olive trees on Palestinian land, are so often uprooted Kuttab says that mature trees are evidence of long cultivation and land ownership, so mature trees are destroyed and young ones not allowed to grow to maturity.

These strategies and actions are directed against Palestinians. They do not distinguish between Christians and Muslims, but nor do they protect Christian property as is evident in the construction of the wall through the Cremisan Valley.

Confiscation of Christian Lands

Since 1967 Christian lands have been confiscated for settlements, the separation wall and public parks. The wall being built in the Cremisan Valley is separating Christians from their land and livelihoods, isolating the Christian communities and institutions in Beit Jala and depriving the community of space for natural growth and expansion. This is similar to what has happened in other enclaves but it attracted world attention because it is mostly Palestinian Christians who are dispossessed. The Israeli High Court ruled against the route of the wall but soon rescinded, some say in retaliation for the Vatican recognising the future State of Palestine. Local people say that the current route of the wall is worse than the original route rejected by the High Court. Father Aktham, Parish Priest in Beit Jala explains:

> This beautiful valley of olive trees, located between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, belonging to the municipality of Beit Jala, mainly inhabited by Christians, suffered a first round of land confiscations after 1967 for the construction of the settlement of Gilo. Since then, the town Beit Jala has diminished alarmingly. Israeli construction has multiplied in this region that is still classified 'Area C' by the Oslo Accords, that is to say intended to *'be gradually transferred to Palestinian jurisdiction.'* The Palestinians are still waiting.
>
> For Christians of this valley, it is more than uprooted trees or seized lands that are taken from us. *'It is our history that is confiscated to make it disappear, to erase it. Our olive trees, most of which are thousands of years old, are uprooted and replanted elsewhere, often in settlements, as if to say 'we are here for a long time.'* Among the olive trees, archaeological treasures, including Roman and Byzantine tombs, were destroyed.[7] (Italics in web page article)

Delegations of bishops, EU representatives and high profile individuals visit the area, see the destruction of Christian property, uprooting ancient olive trees, and the wall that will separate large tracts

7 http://en.lpj.org/2016/04/25.

of land from their Christian owners. All this is well known, documented and reported but the construction of the wall continues.

Another example is the Tent of Nations established on land owned by the Christian Nassar family who say that the Israeli government is trying to claim the property as government land despite the fact that the owners have all the original land registration papers and have owned the land throughout the Ottoman, British, Jordanian, and Israeli governance.

A Politics of Paralysis in the West Bank

In *Dilemmas of Attachment* (2014) Bård Kårtveit uses the term 'A politics of paralysis', in many aspects akin to Halper's Matrix of Control, to describe the impact of the Occupation on Palestinians. He focuses on:

> Israeli measures that deprive Palestinians of access to their land, restrict their movements and activities within the Palestinian territories, sever their ties with the outside world, and restrict their social and economic ties with Israel… these measures are built on a unifying rationale and serve to further the same strategic objective: a structured paralysis of Palestinian society. (p. 126)

He describes Israeli rule of the Occupied Territories as a spacio-cidal project that aims to destroy Palestinian living spaces and he argues that:

> These objectives are pursued through a politics of paralysis: a set of processes and governmental techniques that serve to paralyse and obstruct institution-building, economic activities, social relationships and people's everyday movements in Palestinian society. (p. 126)

The aim, he argues, is to make their living spaces uninhabitable by denying planning permission to build new homes, confiscating their land so there is no space for natural growth, destroying their agricultural land, making it almost impossible to develop business and so on, with

the purpose of encouraging 'voluntary transfer' of the Palestinian population, and Christians are more likely to leave. Palestinians would agree with this analysis. Restriction on access to farm land and water for agriculture, dependence on Israel for importing and exporting goods, closures that effect tourism and so on—all these policies affect the economy of existing Christian businesses and stifle development. They also weaken the desire, the will, and the ability of Palestinian Christians to remain and to encourage their young people to remain.

The Gaza Strip

The Gaza Strip is 360 km² with a coastline of 40 kilometres. It is about 5 kilometres wide north of Gaza city widening to 13 at the Egyptian border. Since 2006 almost all factories, workshops, dairy farms, and much of the agriculture has been destroyed. Regular incursions of Israeli bulldozers supported by tanks engage in 'levelling operations' meaning destroying agriculture and uprooting trees. This is to maintain a buffer zone of up to one kilometre deep into the limited agricultural land that remains in Gaza. The blockade, imposed in 2007, is still in place though entry of food and some other items is no longer restricted. 80 percent of the population of 1,981,2871[8] depend on humanitarian aid provided by the United Nations and numerous NGOs who, as one report says, 'keep the people's heads above water' yet in so doing unwittingly enable Israel to maintain the blockade.

A 2015 UNCTAD Report[9] speaks of de-development and impoverishment of the Gaza Strip:

> Three Israeli military operations in the past six years, in addition to eight years of economic blockade, have ravaged the already debilitated infrastructure of Gaza, shattered its productive base, left no time for meaningful reconstruction or economic recovery and impoverished the Palestinian population in Gaza, rendering their

8 The Palestine Chronicle. Ministry of Interior Report 17 July 2016 http://www.palestinechronicle.com/ministry-of-interior, accessed 26 July 2016.

9 Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: Developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) September 2015.

> economic well-being worse than the level of two decades previous. The most recent military operation compounded already dire socioeconomic conditions and accelerated de-development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, a process by which development is not merely hindered but reversed. (No. 25)

The already inadequate electricity grid was bombed in the 2014 war and is still only partially operative, water from taps is undrinkable and sewage only partly treated. Political in-fighting exacerbates these problems. Prior to 1948 what became known as the Gaza Strip was noted for its fertile land that produced the best citrus fruits and dates in the region, its pleasant climate and pure drinking water. Overcrowding from waves of refugees, high birth rate, regular violence, de-development over decades, degradation of its inadequate infrastructure, and the on-going blockade that prevents people from travelling for work or study have reduced the Gaza Strip to the point where, according to a 2015 UNCTAD[10] Report, 'The social, health and security-related ramifications of the high population density and overcrowding are among the factors that may render Gaza unliveable by 2020' (No. 20.) The same report warns of a potentially even more devastating effect of the blockade:

> Furthermore, despite the fact that nearly 80 percent of Gaza's population receives some kind of social assistance, 39 percent of them (according to Bank's preliminary estimates for 2014) still fall below the poverty line. While shocking, these numbers fail to fully convey the difficult living conditions that nearly all Gaza's residents have been experiencing since the blockade was imposed by Israel in 2007. For instance, most of Gaza's 1.8 million residents are confined to an area of 160 km^2 [11] and are not able to travel beyond this area without permits. The psychological effects of confinements are not clear and neither are the effects on human capital from limiting travel and related knowledge absorption, etc. It is known, however, that as

10 *Ibid.*

11 The Gaza Strip is 360 km^2.

> a consequence of confinement and repeated cycles of armed conflict, a sizeable share of Gaza's population suffers from psychological trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Apparently, as many as one third of Gaza's children showed signs of PTSD even before the 2014 armed conflict. The number is almost certainly larger following the last conflict. Poor access and quality of basic public services such as electricity, water, and sewerage have far reaching consequences on the lives of Gaza's citizens. (No. 19)

Christians in Gaza number about 1,200 persons. They endure the same hardships as Muslims and they face additional multiple problems due to their small number in an increasingly fundamentalist Islamic enclave and their isolation from other Christians.

So how do Palestinian Christians live with these restrictions and constraints?

For Christians in the West Bank Kårtveit (2014) again expresses their situation succinctly:

> Among Palestinians faced with these policies some are left with a complete sense of powerlessness, while others retain some personal agency and a capacity to make meaningful choices for themselves. To some extent however, Palestinians who remain on the West Bank embody the movement restrictions imposed by Israeli authorities. Through roadblocks, checkpoints and other measures, they shape Palestinians' sense of distance and mobility, and where they can feel safe. In time they can shape Palestinian expectations about what kind of freedoms, what kind of opportunities, and what kind of constraints their everyday lives on the West Bank can offer. (p. 30)

We would say that people internalise these restrictions. Palestinian Christians try to adapt and to maintain their Christian identity and

practice within the wider Palestinian national identity. A local priest said to me 'Three things are central to the identity and mission of Palestinian Christians: Presence, Witness and Service.' Christians are aware of the importance of their presence and witness in the Holy Land, and the service they give is proportionately way beyond their number. There are excellent Christian schools, hospitals and orphanages, and organisations that help the poor in different ways. Many of the Christian Institutions were founded, and are still owned, by foreign religious orders though most are now staffed by local people. Christians celebrate weddings, christenings and festivals. They contribute to the local economy and in general have good relations with their Muslim neighbours. Many work in Israel.

But in conversation one hears their stories beneath this semblance of normality. To travel abroad they must go through Jordan and hope that their Israeli-issued documents will allow them to return to their homes. This is time-consuming and expensive. Some say they do not travel far from their town of residence for fear of possible road blocks and delays. Many young adults cannot afford to marry and housing is an increasing problem due to restricted space for building. Some, often the better educated, emigrate. There are many reasons for this: a stagnant economy, insecurity, fear for their children's future, hopelessness. Christians rarely engage in violent resistance but they suffer from the fallout of violence as a Palestinian friend, commenting on recent knife attacks, explains:

> Even if Palestinian Christians have not been involved with a single attack, they do not live in isolation from these events. At the very least these incidents continue to fray the confidence in Christians that a stable, productive life can be achieved in their homes, and they begin to look at options to leave or send their children abroad to study or live with relatives, which accelerates the process of the erosion of Palestinian Christian society.

Young Christian men who go abroad to study rarely return to settle in the West Bank. Some look for brides among their extended family at home but many marry foreign women leaving young Palestinian women with limited choice of life partners. So often one meets

the proud parents of successful doctors, lawyers or business people living abroad with little possibility of ever returning. An increasing phenomenon is ageing parents living alone while all their children are working and married abroad. Christian-owned properties are often bought by Muslims and a gradual transfer of property from Christian to Muslim ownership is taking place. This is a real concern in Beit Jala and Bethlehem.

For Palestinian Christians, some positive issues are double-edged, for example: the Church plays an important role in the life of their communities and Church leaders encourage them to be steadfast in their faith as expressed in the following words of Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah (2009):

> … this is what determines the vocation of every Christian in the Holy Land: a vocation to be a witness, a vocation to a difficult life, today, because of the political conflict, and tomorrow, because the Christian's life will remain a permanent battle in order to be good salt, useful leaven, a light in society, and a redemption that is fulfilled day by day in the mystery of God. (p. 175)

Words such as these reinforce a belief that being a minority between two majorities (Jews and Muslims) Palestinian Christians have an opportunity and responsibility to be peacemakers in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but I've heard different reactions to it. A local priest said to me recently: 'Do not refer to us as a minority. Yes, we are few in number but we are an important section of the Palestinian population who have lived here for more than 2,000 years.' For him, minority signifies weakness and marginalisation which is not how Palestinian Christians see themselves. A few weeks later a Christian woman in Gaza said the same thing: do not refer to us as a minority. While their role as peacemakers, being a minority between two majorities, may be debated, what is widely acknowledged is that the presence of Palestinian Christians prevents the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from becoming a purely religious conflict.

Another issue often expressed is the concern that as Christians leave the Holy Land, the sacred shrines will become mere museums. Foreign Church leaders encourage Palestinian Christians to stay to maintain a

living Church in the Holy Land, the Living Stones, but as one woman said to me: 'Why should they (foreign Christians) who live in a free country tell us, who live under a gruelling Occupation, to stay so that if they visit Jerusalem or Bethlehem they will find a living Church?' Palestinians ask why governments of Christian countries and others with political influence do not use their influence to stop settlement expansion and land confiscation and achieve a just peace and a viable State of Palestine as various UN resolutions have called for? This is what Palestinian Christians really want. In the meantime they are grateful for financial support from overseas Christians but their greater need is for pilgrims to stay in their hotels and guesthouses, to buy their goods, support the Palestinian economy and create employment rather than to stay in Jerusalem and visit Bethlehem for a few hours as so many pilgrim groups do.

Palestinian Christians find the support of Christian Zionists and some Evangelical Churches for the State of Israel with no regard for, even denial of, the presence and rights of local Christians, particularly painful and hard to understand. On the other hand, they know that not all Israelis and not all Jews approve of the Occupation and if there was a just and peaceful settlement most, perhaps all, would be happy to live together.

Political involvement

A West Bank resident explains that an older generation of Palestinian Christians took a keen interest and, in some cases, leading roles in politics, but that a younger generation does not have the same sense of allegiance to a national project, or a belief that they have a future in a secular national state. He says:

> Part of this may be the simple political exhaustion that most Palestinians feel at some level, but other factors, in particular fear of an increasingly Islamic Palestinian identity rather than a secular Palestinian identity as the de facto Arab culture in the Holy Land, and the sense that Christians, now less than 2 percent of the population and with little to no prospects of expansion of their present

> role in the society, have all contributed to something of a return to a survival mode. That is perhaps the best way to describe our present status – surviving—enduring—with a weary eye to the future.

A Gazan Christian said much the same thing, that an older generation took an active interest in politics whereas, according to him, younger people lack commitment, they are not interested in public service, only in themselves and their future. Given the harsh reality and the lack of freedom and opportunity in which Gazan Christian youth have grown up this is hardly surprising.

East Jerusalem

East Jerusalem is more complicated. Many Palestinians want Jerusalem residence ID as distinct from a West Bank ID for the better employment opportunities, better health services and working conditions, and greater freedom to travel within Israel that a Jerusalem ID affords. Some get Israeli passports but even these can feel conflict of loyalties as one such person said to me 'I don't know who I am'.

Gaza

A Gazan woman summaries Gaza's Christian history. She writes:

> The Palestinians started becoming Christians during Rome's rule over the land, but the faith did not truly flourish until the Byzantine Empire declared Christianity the state religion. The first person to preach in Gaza was Philip, a student of St Paul the Apostle. In the Bible it is written that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph came through Gaza once they returned from Egypt, after the death of Herod.[12] The best known preacher in Gaza was Saint Hilarion, who helped convert the people of Gaza to Christianity. By the time Bishop Porphyrius died in 430 A.D., most people

12 No biblical reference was given for this.

> in Gaza were Christian. There was a church built in his name that still stands today. Prior to the Israeli occupation of Gaza in 1967, there were 10,000 Christians in the area. It was projected that there would be 30,000 Christians in Gaza by 2010, but the number of Christians had decreased to 5,000 by 2007. This number continued to fall due to the deterioration of the political situation. In 2012 there were only 2,700 Christians in Gaza.

There are now about 1,200 Christians in Gaza perhaps fewer. Many get Israeli permits to visit the Holy Places at Christmas and Easter and some do not return. They stay with family or friends in the West Bank and hope eventually to get the place of residence on their Israeli ID documents changed. Until that happens they cannot leave the West Bank for any reason. Christians in Gaza have unique social problems. Most families are related and as people leave, young adults have few potential life partners. They set up a website or Facebook specifically to make contact with young adult Christians in the West Bank. Young men try to leave to study. Those who succeed rarely return. Young Gazan women engaged to men in West Bank or Gulf States cannot get out of Gaza to join their fiancés. One couple waited five years before they were united. Sometimes a young man or woman converts to Islam in order to marry. This is extremely distressing for the family concerned and the whole Christian community. Like the West Bank, many older people remain while their often very successful adult children live and marry abroad.

In the past Christians were doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers working throughout the Gaza Strip and people were accustomed to meeting Christians. Now Christians live in Gaza City with one family remaining in Khan Younis and one in Beit Hanoun. Families are reluctant to allow their single young women to work outside of Christian organisations so, on graduation from school or university, most young women stay at home with no work. Christian organisations sometimes run cash for work schemes that provide employment for three month periods. Even with these, families want their young women placed in Christian organisations. This again limits the opportunities and experience of wider society available to them. Younger Christians are rarely in top jobs and most young Muslims in Gaza have never

met a Christian. It is as if many Christians in Gaza live in a 'prison within a prison.'

At the time of writing this paper there are no Palestinian priests in Gaza. The Latin (Catholic) parish is served by an Argentinean and a Brazilian, the Orthodox by Greeks. These are good dedicated priests but they are not fluent Arabic speakers and it is difficult for them to really understand the culture and complexities of the increasingly isolated and diminishing Christian community. There are no Palestinian religious sisters in Gaza though there are Egyptians and Jordanians. There are four Christian schools in Gaza City with a large majority of Muslim students. There is one small Christian (Anglican) hospital, Caritas Jerusalem, Catholic Relief Services and Pontifical Mission.

Christians say that since Hamas took over the Government in 2007 extremist religious speech has intensified and there were some acts of violence. Yet, despite the fact that the *de facto* government attempts to impose Islamic law in Gaza it also protects the Christians and ensures their right to practice their religion freely in their churches. Persecution of Christians in Syria, Iraq and Egypt generates anxiety in Gazan Christians.

So what of the future?

Unless the blockade and restrictions on travel for study and work are lifted soon it is conceivable that in the not too distant future there will be no Christians in Gaza. There is no serious talk of peace, only of another inevitable war. For the reasons outlined, especially emigration and few suitable marriage partners for Christian youth, the Christian community in Gaza is extremely vulnerable may soon be too small to survive.

Concerning the West Bank and East Jerusalem a Christian man says that:

> Although Christian population levels in East Jerusalem and the West Bank have more or less held this decade largely due to a drop in emigration of entire families (in part due to the sluggish international economy)

> and a slightly above replacement-level birth rate among Palestinian Christians, there is little to suggest that Christians are optimistic about their future in the Holy Land.

Some time ago in Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem an anthropologist leading a discussion about Christians in the Occupied Territories was asked 'who are the people of the land?' He answered in terms of peoples and civilisations and said that in times of conflict and hardship it is the poor that stay. The wealthy and the educated are more likely to leave but the poor and the peasants remain. They are the true people of the land. For Palestinian Christians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem the brightest and ablest are more likely to emigrate but some will remain. In general Christians will adapt to whatever political reality emerges from the present conflict. A greater danger is in maintaining what may appear to be a *status quo* but is in fact more akin to the 'politics of paralysis' described by Kårtveit that aims to make life so difficult that the Palestinians, including Christians, will give up and leave.

Yet in all this Palestinian Christians say 'we must have hope'. The theological virtue of Hope is related to Faith and is different from optimism. I believe that most Palestinian Christians, including young people, have a deep faith for which, like Christians in Iraq and Syria, if openly persecuted they would die. There is no such persecution of Christians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem or Gaza. It is the constant and increasing pressure that I've tried to describe, that Palestinians refer to as squeezing or choking, and Kårtveit describes as spacio-cidal, that in the end may have a more devastating effect on Palestinian Christians than open persecution.

Michel Sabbah wrote (1992, p. 19): 'The idea that people have of us depends, in one way or another, on the quality and intensity of our presence, not on the greater or lesser number of our communities.' Steadfast presence of faith, hope and love as recognised by Pope Francis who, at the end of his 2014 pilgrimage, said: 'I pray for them [Christians], being well aware of the difficulties they experience … I urge them to be courageous witnesses of the passion of the Lord but also of his resurrection, with joy and hope,' may well be the vocation of Palestinian Christians but it is heavy burden to bear year after, decade after decade.

What future can there be for Jews, Christians or Muslims in the Holy Land if not one of justice and peace for all? For this we pray.

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HEBREW SPEAKING CATHOLICS IN MODERN ISRAEL: IDENTITY WITHIN THE TRANSNATIONAL CHURCH AND SOCIO-POLITICAL STATE

Emily Tavcar

Introduction

Christians in the Middle East today live in fear, as thousands are driven from their homes in Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Palestine. Discussion regarding Christians in the Middle East is centralized around this issue, and the realization that Christianity may soon be displaced from its roots and heritage. While this concern becomes more pressing in the course of current events, many are unaware that the population of Christians in the Middle East is growing, due to an influx of Christian migrant workers and refugees in Israeli society. Additionally, many are unaware of the established Hebrew speaking Catholic community in Israel, which welcomes these migrants, creating a dynamic and multicultural community of faithful that speaks to the strength of Christianity in the Middle East.

In my work I will demonstrate how this particular community lives in Israeli society within the Church of the East, visualising collective identity through a theoretical lens of cosmopolitanism—a movement that understands social, cultural, political and religious interaction across borders and boundaries.[1] First, I present a literature review on the sociological theory of cosmopolitanism, which has an extensive contemporary bibliography within the social sciences.[2] I

1 My theoretical understanding of cosmopolitanism is taken from the following works: Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznaider, 'Unpacking cosmopolitanism for the social sciences: a research agenda', *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 57, no. 1, 2006, pp. 1-23; Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen, *Conceiving cosmopolitanism: theory, context, and practice,* Oxford University Press, Oxford 2002; Pnina Werbner, 'Global pathways. Working class cosmopolitans and the creation of transnational ethnic worlds', *Social Anthropology*, vol. 7, no. 1 1999, pp. 17-35.

2 See Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznaider, 'A literature on cosmopolitanism: an overview',

then give a socio-historical account of the Hebrew speaking Catholic community in Israel—the Saint James Vicariate, or rather *kehilla* (Hebrew for community).[3] Fr David Neuhaus SJ, the Patriarchal Vicar for Hebrew speaking Catholics in Israel, characterizes members as Catholic Christians of both Jewish and Gentile origin who are Israelis or residents in Israel and live in the Jewish milieu.[4] The final section of my work understands the Saint James Vicariate as it lives in the transnational Church of Israel, and as it is visible in inter-religious relations between Jews and Christians.

Since its establishment in 1955, the Hebrew speaking Catholic community, vibrant with Jewish culture and tradition, has embraced French, Russian, Indian, Filipino and Eritrean cultures (to name a few), and continues to grow as a multicultural, transnational community within the context of the Church of the East and Israeli society. While some members are of Jewish ancestry and cherish their Jewish-Catholic identities[5], others come from diverse backgrounds such as Indian and Sri Lankan Catholic traditions. While some members are fluent in Hebrew[6], others are learning the lingua franca, and celebrate

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The British Journal of Sociology, vol. 57, no. 1, 2006.

3 In English, The Hebrew speaking Catholic community in Israel is known as the Saint James Vicariate, or the Association of Saint James, while in Hebrew it is called *kehilla*. Leon Menzies Racionzer, in his work, 'Hebrew Catholicism: Theology and Politics in Modern Israel', refers to the Hebrew speaking Catholic community as *Oeuvre de Saint Jacques l'Apôtre*, 'the Work of Saint James'. While Hebrew is the official *lingua franca* of the establishment, nomenclature here draws attention to linguistic shifts and cultural diversity present within the collective.

4 'Who are we?' Saint James Vicariate, accessed online: http://www.catholic.co.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10171&Itemid=478&lang=en. [1 June 2015].

5 Members who are of Jewish ancestry connect strongly to their Jewish culture and tradition. Fr Neuhaus, a Jewish-Catholic himself, holds this connection close to his heart. In an interview, he claimed, 'I feel…historically, socially, ethnically—in all senses other than religiously—a Jew.' See Tim Franks, 'Hebrew Catholics', BBC News Jerusalem (4 May 2009), accessed online: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/8032339.stm. [1 June 2015].

6 In addition to celebrating the Eucharist in Hebrew, the Saint James Vicariate publishes prayers, hymns, liturgical books, catechetical books, newsletters and other Christian material in Hebrew. They celebrate the feast days of the Latin Rite—the Roman Catholic Church, as well as particular feast days significant to Jewish Christians. Such feast days include the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, which falls each year on January 25, and the Feast of Saint Edith Stein, which falls each year on August 9. See 'Feasts' Saint James Vicariate, accessed online: http://catholic.co.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id

the Eucharist in their respective vernaculars. Such diversity has added richness to the construction of the community's collective identity, but has also introduced structural challenges, such as community building.

I note that scholarly literature on this community is sparse. Contributors include Fr Neuhaus and researcher Leon Menzies Racionzer.[7] While academic sources are limited, the community's website provides information pertaining to Hebrew Catholic history, liturgy, and identity.[8]

Contemporary Cosmopolitanism

1.1 Cosmopolitanism: A Review

Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznaider, in their work, 'Unpacking cosmopolitanism for the social sciences: a research agenda,' address cosmopolitanism as a contested intellectual movement that is often indistinguishable from its competitors: globalization and transnationalism.[9] Despite blurred lines, they define cosmopolitanism on three points. First, the shared critique of methodological nationalism. In light of transnational migration and globalization, contemporary culture and society can no longer be defined on the premise of the outdated nation-state.[10] Second, the understanding that the 21st

=35&Itemid=141&lang=en. [1 June 2015].

7 See the following sources on the Hebrew speaking Catholics in Israel: David Neuhaus SJ, 'Jewish Israeli Attitudes towards Christianity and Christians in Contemporary Israel', *World Christianity: Politics, Theology, Dialogues,* eds. Anthony O'Mahony and Michael Kirwan, Melisende, London, 2004; Leon Menzies Racionzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 405-415.

8 See Saint James Vicariate online: http://www.catholic.co.il/index.php?lang=en.

9 Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznaider, 'Unpacking cosmopolitanism for the social sciences: a research agenda', *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 57, no. 1, 2006, p. 2.

10 The critique of methodological nationalism should not be confused with the thesis that the end of the nation-state has arrived. Beck and Sznaider agree that nation-states will continue to thrive or will be transformed into transnational states. The main point of criticism here is that national organization as a structuring principle of societal and political action can no longer serve as the orienting reference point for the social scientific observer. They claim, 'National spaces have become de-nationalized, so that the national is no longer national, just as the international is no longer international.' Thus, cosmopolitanism does not intend to 'throw the state back out', but to understand how states are being transformed in the cosmopolitan constellation, how new non-state actors arise and a new type of cosmopolitan state might develop.' Please refer to Beck, Ulrich and Natan Sznaider, 'Unpacking

century is a cosmopolitan reality—a blending of cultures, values, ideas and views. Third, the diagnosis of 'methodological cosmopolitanism': the understanding that the dualities of the global and the local, the national and the international, us and them, have dissolved and merged together in new forms that require conceptual and empirical analysis. Beck and Sznaider claim, 'The principle of cosmopolitanism can be found in specific forms at every level and can be practiced in every field of social and political action: in international organizations, in bi-national families, in neighbourhoods, and in global cities.'[11] They emphasize that one must distinguish between cosmopolitanism as a set of normative principles, and existing cosmopolitanization. This distinction rejects the claim that cosmopolitanism is a conscious and voluntary choice, and all too often the choice of an elite. The notion of cosmopolitanization is designed to draw attention to the fact that the emerging cosmopolitan reality is also, and even primarily, a function of coerced choices or a side effect of unconscious decisions.[12]

Given Beck and Sznaider's definition of cosmopolitanism, one may still be unaware of how cosmopolitanism differs from globalization and transnationalism. In an attempt to further isolate the movement from globalization, they demonstrate that globalization takes place 'out there' while cosmopolitanization happens 'from within.' They argue, 'Whereas globalization presupposes, cosmopolitanization dissolves the onion model of the world, where the local and the national form the core and inner layer and the international and the global form the outer layers.'[13] Aligned with Beck and Sznaider, David Held, in his chapter, 'Culture and Political Community: National, Global, and Cosmopolitan', argues that the leading claims of globalists are at their strongest when focused on institutional change in the domains of economics, politics and the environment. They are at their most vulnerable when considering the movements of people, their attachments, and their cultural and moral identities.[14] While globalization discloses the cultural, ethical and legal basis of political order in a world where political communities and states matter

cosmopolitanism …', p. 21.

11 Beck and Sznaider, 'Unpacking cosmopolitanism …', p.3.

12 *Ibid*., p. 7.

13 *Ibid*., p. 9.

14 Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen, *Conceiving cosmopolitanism: theory, context, and practice*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, p. 56.

exclusively, cosmopolitanization recognizes the interconnectedness of political communities in diverse domains.[15]

Pnina Werbner, in her article, 'Global pathways. Working class cosmopolitans and the creation of transnational ethnic worlds', distinguishes cosmopolitanism from transnationalism. She argues that transnationals are people who move and build encapsulated cultural worlds around them, while cosmopolitans familiarize themselves with other cultures and know how to move easily between cultures.[16] While scholars of cosmopolitanism attempt to distinguish the intellectual movement from globalization and transnationalism, it is important to note that their agenda is not to isolate cosmopolitanism from other competitive movements, but rather to understand it in inclusive relation to universalism, nationalism, and transnationalism.[17]

The term cosmopolitanism is used variably in academia. It is not uncommon for cosmopolitanism to be referred to in terms of political internationalization. Alternatively, many use cosmopolitan as an adjective to describe individuals who are well travelled and have learned to be comfortable in many cultural settings. Daniel Herbert in his chapter, 'Cosmopolitanism at the Local Level: The Development of Transnational Neighbourhoods', describes the sociological phenomenon as a way of living based on an 'openness to all forms of otherness', associated with an appreciation of, and interaction with, people from other cultural backgrounds.[18] He gives an example of cosmopolitanization in his own community:

> Several of my neighbours have told me that they routinely bring seeds from their homeland secreted in their pockets as they pass through Canadian customs. Thus, there are non-sanctioned varieties of tomatoes on my lane that come from Calabria, varieties of mint from Vietnam, *bok choi* from China, and broad beans from Portugal.[19]

According to Herbert, the end result is a new ecology, where plants from different corners of the world are brought into juxtaposition and

15 *Ibid.*, p. 58.
16 Pnina Werbner, 'Global pathways …', p.3
17 Beck and Sznaider, 'Unpacking cosmopolitanism …', p.19.
18 Vertovec and Cohen, *Conceiving cosmopolitanism* …, p. 212.
19 *Ibid.*, p. 210.

selectively hybridize. Thus, a new micro-ecology, unlike any other on earth, is being created, one that exists only because of a combination of frequent to-and-fro transnational movements and the everyday cosmopolitan behaviour of the community.[20]

Though one can argue from a theoretical standpoint that cosmopolitanism is open to the other, is it welcoming in practice? A challenge that Israeli society faces, which I will discuss in the following sections of my work, is accommodating thousands of African and Asian migrants who arrive for work and refuge in the State. These newcomers—predominantly Christian—do not transition easily into the Israeli Hebrew speaking milieu. In a nation that struggles to be open to the other, these migrants contribute to the complex makeup of society, and, as we shall see, to the structure of the transnational Church.

Hebrew speaking Catholics in Israel

2.1 A Socio-Historical Analysis

The Hebrew speaking Catholic community in Israel—the Association of Saint James—was formally established in 1955.[21] In his article, 'Hebrew Catholicism: Theology and Politics in Modern Israel', Leon Menzies Racionzer notes that the decision to found the Association of Saint James was promoted by the Latin Patriarchate, in an attempt to aid the thousands of Catholics who arrived in Israel in the years following the Second World War.[22]

Racionzer notes that most Catholics emigrated from Eastern European countries and were either Jews who had converted to Catholicism, or Catholic spouses in mixed marriages. In a few cases, immigrants had no connection at all with Jews or Judaism and emigrated for reasons such as fear of Communism in the Soviet Union.[23] In response to the influx of immigrants in the 1950s, the

20 *Ibid*.

21 'Who are we?' Saint James Vicariate, accessed online: http://www.catholic.co.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10171&Itemid=478&lang=en. [1 June 2015].

22 Racionzer, 'Hebrew Catholicism …', p. 407.

23 Racionzer, 'Hebrew Catholicism …', p. 407.

Latin Patriarchate favoured the creation of a distinct framework within its jurisdiction specially designed to cater to the needs of these Israeli Catholics. Msgr Vergani, then the Vicar of Israel, decided that pastoral centres would adopt Hebrew as the *lingua franca*, in an effort to connect the multicultural community.[24] The statutes of the Association of Saint James approved on February 11, 1965 state:

> We insist upon a Biblical formation; we try to promote a Jewish Christian culture and a spirituality in conformity with that culture … [We aim] to combat all forms of anti-Semitism, attempting to develop mutual understanding and friendly relations between the Catholic world and Israel.[25]

The vision of the Association of Saint James was to implant the Church within the Jewish people in such a way that Jews who became Christians would be able to preserve their national character, in much the same way that members of any other people or nation were able to do so. According to Racionzer, a leader of this nationalist vision was Carmelite priest, Fr Daniel Rufeisen, who fought for Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return.[26]

Fr Rufeisen, born in Poland, was raised Jewish and became an active member of the Zionist movement. In 1943, after being imprisoned for helping Jews in the ghetto of Mir, Poland, he began to experience a religious conversion to Christianity. In 1946 he took the name Brother Daniel, and in 1952 was ordained a priest in the Carmelite order.[27] To escape anti-Semitism in Poland, Fr Rufeisen began the process of *aliyah*—return to Zion in 1958. According to Dick J Int'l, in his article, 'Israel's Law of Return: Analysis of Its Evolution and Present Application', Fr Rufeisen applied for immigrant status under the Law of Return so that he could be registered as a 'Jew' on his identity card; however, the Ministry of the Interior refused to register him due to his

24 *Ibid*.
25 *Ibid*.
26 Racionzer, 'Hebrew Catholicism…', p. 408.
27 'Daniel Rufeisen Carm.' Saint James Vicariate, accessed online: http://www.catholic.co.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=271:daniel-rufeisen-carm&catid=38&lang=en&Itemid=145. [1 June 2015].

Catholic status.[28] Fr Rufeisen's case went as far as the Israeli High Court (*Rufheisen v. Minister of the Interior*). He first claimed that the concept of religion and nationality were separate; one could be culturally Jewish without practicing the Jewish faith. He then argued that he was a Jew because his parents were Jewish, suggesting that the Minister of the Interior's refusal to grant him *oleh* (citizen) rights was discriminatory. Despite the validity of Fr Rufeisen's case, the High Court, in a four to one decision, held that a Roman Catholic could not be a Jew according to the standards of the Law of Return. Justice Landau claimed, 'A Jew who, by changing his religion, cuts himself off from the national past of his people ceases thereby to be a Jew in the national sense to which the Law of Return gives expression.'[29]

As a result of this case, the Law of Return, which originally guaranteed automatic citizenship in Israel to all Jews, was amended so that it excluded Jews who belonged to a religion other than Judaism. According to Int'l, *Rufheisen v. Minister of the Interior* is considered to be one of the most notable cases in Israeli history under the Law of Return.[30] Soon after the trial, Fr Rufeisen managed to become a citizen of Israel through the process of naturalization and a leader of the *Oeuvre de Saint Jacques*. In 1965, he founded the Hebrew speaking Catholic community in Haifa and educated his Catholic community in Jewish and Hebrew expression.[31]

2.2 Changing Demographics

Fr Neuhaus rightly points out that the Church is re-founded every generation, as each generation sees a new wave of migration to the Holy Land. While the first group of migrants, both Jewish and Christians alike, came predominantly from Western and Eastern European countries with arguably 'Zionist' and religious motives, the next generation came from the former Soviet Union with a different mentality. With the

28 Int'l, Dick J, 'Israel's Law of Return: Analysis of Its Evolution and Present Application', *Dickinson Journal of International Law* vol. 12, no. 1, 1993, p. 104.

29 *Ibid*., p. 105.

30 *Ibid*., p. 104.

31 'Daniel Rufeisen Carm' Saint James Vicariate, accessed online: http://www.catholic.co.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=271:daniel-rufeisen-carm&catid=38&lang=en&Itemid=145. [1June 2015].

collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's emigration policy changed, and, in 1990, some 800,000 Russian immigrants reached Israel. According to Anita Shapira, in her work, *Israel a History,* Israel had not encountered a group of immigrants who were so well educated and represented such impressive human capital as this Russian influx.[32] In fact, the Russian immigrants as a group had a higher level of education than that of the host society.[33] Originally, the Israeli government thought that these immigrants would take the place of Palestinians in secondary sector jobs. On the contrary few of them took these jobs, and in most cases, only temporarily. These immigrants had escaped the underdevelopment of their countries, and they would not settle for 'Arab jobs.'

In his work, 'New Wine in Old Wineskins,' Fr Neuhuas notes that within this influx of immigrants were thousands of Russian Christians, some of them Russian Catholics.[34] In 2003, Msgr Jean-Baptiste Gourion, auxiliary bishop to Michel Sabbah, publicly stressed his mission to accommodate the Russian immigrants who were Christian. He appointed two Eastern European priests to minister Catholic communities in the Russian language.[35] Polish priest, Fr Slawomir Abramovsky, established a centre for Russian Catholics at the Latroun monastery in Jerusalem, and later worked with the Russian community in Haifa. Polish priest, Fr Jan Hlavka worked at the Latroun monastery.[36]

In addition to the 1990 wave of Russian immigrants, Israel recruited an influx of non-Jewish migrant workers in the aftermath of the First Intifada (1987-1991). Since the Russians refused to seek secondary sector jobs, Israel was left without a cheap labour force. According to Vivienne Jackson, in her article, 'This is Not the Holy Land: Gendered Filipino Migrants in Israel and the Intersectional Diversity of Religious Belonging', migrant workers were hired en masse to fill agricultural and construction roles previously held by Palestinians of the Occupied Territories.[37] David Bartram, in his work,

32 Anita Shapira *Israel a History*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 2014, p. 453.

33 *Ibid*., p. 454.

34 David Neuhaus SJ, 'New Wine in Old Wineskins' in *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*, vol. 57, no. 3-4, 2005, pp. 207-236.

35 *Ibid*., p. 223.

36 'Chronology' Saint James Vicariate, accessed online: http://www.catholic.co.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2661:chronology-c-2000-2007&catid=39&Itemid=146&lang=en. 1 June 2015].

37 Vivienne Jackson, 'This is Not the Holy Land: Gendered Filipino Migrants in Israel and the Intersectional Diversity of Religious Belonging', *Religion & Gender* vol. 3,

'Foreign Workers in Israel: History and Theory', notes that they had come in large groups from Romania as construction workers, Thailand as farmers, and the Philippines as domestic service workers.[38] By 2010, Israel was home to 200,000 migrant workers—predominantly Christian migrant workers from the Philippines, India and Latin America, alongside African asylum seekers.[39]

Fr Neuhaus notes that these communities are the newest members of the Saint James Vicariate. Statistics by the Ministry of Interior prove that these communities continue to grow at a rapid pace: 71,352 new migrants have arrived in Israel since 2014.[40] While it is difficult for these migrant workers to attain citizenship, they wish to remain in Israel, and remain Catholic in Israel.[41] However, many of these migrants live in areas that are predominantly Jewish, and some choose to hide their Christian identities in fear of losing their work contracts.[42]

Since its establishment in 1955, the Saint James Vicariate has experienced change demographically and fluctuated in membership. Fr Neuhaus notes that while *kehilla* membership numbered in the thousands in the 1950s, it decreased to about 200 in the 70s and 80s due to an intensive period of assimilation into Jewish society. In the last two decades the *kehilla* has grown to about 800 people, with active communities in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Haifa, Beer Sheba, Tiberias and Nazareth.[43] It is important to note that in the 1950s, the *kehilla* had a strong connection to its Jewish roots, for most members, like Fr

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no. 1, 2013, p. 9.

38 David Bartram, 'Foreign Workers in Israel: History and Theory', *International Migration Review*, vol. 32, no. 2, 1998, p. 314.

39 David Goldman, 'Israeli Christians: Uncomfortable Minority, Mutual Opportunity,' First Things (11 October 2010), accessed online: https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2010/10/israeli-christians-uncomfortable-minority-mutual-opportunity. [1 June 2015].

40 'Coordination of the Pastoral for Migrants—A Film' Christian Media Center, accessed online: http://www.cmc-terrasanta.com/en/video/migrants-and-refugees-in-israel-7974.html. [8 June 2015].

41 David Neuhaus SJ, 'Jewish Israeli Attitudes Towards Christianity And Christians in Contemporary Israel', *World Christianity: Politics, Theology, Dialogues,* eds., Anthony O'Mahony and Michael Kirwan, Melisende, London, 2004, p. 359.

42 *Ibid*., p. 362.

43 'Communities' Saint James Vicariate, accessed online: http://www.catholic.co.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14&Itemid=420&lang=en. [1 June 2015].

Rufeisen, were Jewish converts to Catholicism. While the Saint James Vicariate attributes this connection as a significant part of its mission today, *kehilla* members are culturally diverse, and evidently *kehilla* identity is not static. Fr Neuhaus states:

> Our communities, small in size, are very diverse. We have faithful from many parts of the world … in addition to Israelis. Some are Jews and some are not. Some are Israelis, some have been here many years, some have just arrived. Some speak Hebrew, some do not. Some are Catholics by baptism at birth, some are Catholics by baptism late in life.[44]

Indeed diversity poses structural challenges within the Saint James Vicariate, as it embraces a multicultural community. While the community is connected by the Jewish roots of its faith and the Hebrew vernacular, new migrants take time to learn Hebrew, identify with Hebrew Catholicism, and adjust to Jewish Israeli culture. According to Fr Neuhaus, the Saint James Vicariate takes on the responsibility of accommodating Catholic migrant communities, for there is very little institutional support for them in Israel. In doing so, he notes, 'there is a constant vigilance in order to build community and not allow divisiveness or factionalism to enter.'[45]

2.3 Kehilla *Identity*

While some Hebrew speaking Catholics come from Jewish families and keep Jewish tradition close to their hearts, others are ingrained in Indian, Filipino and Eritrean traditions. How does the Saint James Vicariate live in community? As previously mentioned, the Saint James Vicariate calls priests to serve cultural communities. Fr Michael Grospe from the diocese of San Jose, Philippines was invited by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem to serve the Filipino community. Similarly, Fr Tojy Jose

44 Karna Swanson, 'Israel's Hebrew-Speaking Catholics' Zenit (8 June 2008), accessed online: https://zenit.org/articles/israel-s-hebrew-speaking-catholics/. [1 June 2015].

45 *Ibid.*

serves the Indian community, presiding at Indian weddings and feast days. On Christmas each year, they make a procession from Jerusalem to Bethlehem and bear witness to their faith with penitential practices. Fr Tojy notes that it is important for Indian Catholics to gather as a community for support and strength in the Holy Land.[46]

By maintaining their respective cultural traditions while actively living the Hebrew Catholic tradition, these Hebrew speaking Catholics are examples of cosmopolitanization. In accordance with Werbner 's definition, they belong to different ethnic and cultural localisms simultaneously. However, one may argue that while these Hebrew speaking Catholics are part of their respective cultural traditions and Hebrew Catholic tradition, they may not necessarily integrate with other ethnic communities, and thus better fit Werbner's definition of transnationals—those people who move and build encapsulated cultural worlds around them. While this argument is valid, as Fr Neuhaus has voiced his concern about community building, the Saint James Vicariate works continuously to prevent such isolation within the *kehilla*.

In 2011, former Latin Patriarch Fouad Twal[47] appointed Fr Neuhaus Coordinator of the Pastoral for Migrants. Since then, Fr Neuhaus and members of the *kehilla* have worked to establish a new centre for migrants in Tel Aviv, Our Lady Woman of Valour, which opened its doors in March 2014. In a city where there is no established Catholic presence, and many Hebrew speaking Catholics, Our Lady of Valour provides a church that seats 250 people, a rooftop chapel, and apartments for the Sisters from the Philippines and Sri Lanka. According to Indrani Basu and John Albert, in their article, 'Tel Aviv Catholic church serves growing migrant community', the church holds five 'Sunday' masses, though interestingly all but one take place on Saturday, which is Israel's Sabbath and the only day migrants have off from work.[48] While cultural

46 'Coordination of the Pastoral for Migrants—A Film' Christian Media Center, accessed online: http://www.cmc-terrasanta.com/en/video/migrants-and-refugees-in-israel-7974.html. [8 June 2015].

47 Patriarch Fouad Twal has 'reached the legal age' and has handed over his powers to Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa. Pope Francis appointed the Very Reverend Pierbattista Pizzaballa as Apostolic Administer of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem until the appointment of a new Patriarch. See 'Curriculum Vitae of Most Rev. Pierbattista Pizzaballa', accessed online: http://en.lpj.org/biography/. [22 October 2016].

48 Indrani Basu and John Albert, 'Tel Aviv Catholic church serves growing migrant community', *Washington Post* (2014), accessed online: https://www.washingtonpost.

groups celebrate mass in their own languages, there is opportunity for migrants to interact. One of the main priorities of the Centre is to integrate migrant children as best as possible into Hebrew speaking society. Migrant children of diverse cultural backgrounds gather once every two weeks for mass in Hebrew. Before mass they study and read catechism books together.[49]

While cosmopolitanization occurs on a micro level within the Hebrew speaking Catholic community in Israel, does it occur on a macro level, within the wider Church of the East? Or, does it occur on an inter-religious level between Jews and Christians? The next chapter will explore inter-ecclesial relations within the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which is predominantly Arab, and Christian-Jewish relations in the Holy Land.

Presence in Inter-ecclesial and Inter-religious Relations

3.1 Ecclesiastical Complexity

Within the jurisdiction of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Hebrew speaking Catholics in Israel belong to a larger community of Eastern Catholics, and the wider community of Eastern Christians. Here it is important to give an ecclesial context of Christianity in the contemporary Middle East, to better understand the transnational Church of Israel. In his work, Anthony O'Mahony groups the Churches of the Middle East into five families: Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental and Eastern Catholics, Anglican and Protestant, and the Assyrian Church of the East.[50] As one of the five groupings, the Eastern Catholic family includes six Oriental patriarchates and one Latin patriarchate.[51] Within the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem

com/national/religion/tel-aviv-catholic-church-serves-growing-migrant-community/2014/05/19/89fade2e-df86-11e3-9442-54189bf1a809_story.html. [1 June 2015].

49 *Ibid*.

50 Anthony O'Mahony, 'Christianity in the Middle East …', p. 7.

51 According to H.E. Bishop William Shomali, Patriarchal Vicar for Jerusalem and Palestine, the title of patriarch is not much different than the title of archbishop. It is a prestigious title, which was given to Jerusalem in the 5th century, as it was given to the other four seats of the Church (Alexandria, Antioch, Rome and Constantinople). The patriarchate is the jurisdiction of the patriarch.

lives the Hebrew speaking Catholics community in Israel, the Saint James Vicariate.[52]

Middle Eastern Christianity is distinctly plural in ecclesial identity; and the transnational Church of Israel mirrors this complexity. It is important to note that the transnational Church of Israel mirrors this complexity. Rather than focusing on the denominational breakdown of Christians in Israel, Fr Neuhaus deems it helpful to distinguish Israeli Christians by social, political, and cultural factors. In his work, 'Jewish Israeli Attitudes Towards Christianity And Christians In Contemporary Israel', he places Israeli Christians into four groups. The first group consists of Christian Arabs, who according to official statistics make up more than 90 percent of Christians in Israel. They are citizens and reside in Israeli borders.[53] The second group consists of the large number of expatriates mostly of European and North American origin. Many of these expatriates are not citizens, but are long-term residents. The third group, less clearly identifiable and yet of unknown proportions, consists of the myriad of Christians who arrived from Russia and Ethiopia within the waves of Jewish immigration and received citizenship upon arrival. The final group consists of the tens of thousands of foreign workers from the Philippines, Latin America, Eastern Europe and Africa. These migrants find it difficult to gain citizenship, but have established families, speak Hebrew and set up permanent residences in Israel.[54]

The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, within the transnational Church of Israel, also mirrors the complexity of Middle Eastern Christianity. While members of this Patriarchate are of the same ecclesial rite—cultural, social, and political differences are part of its reality. Former Latin Patriarch, Fouad Twal states, 'To complicate [our]

52 Interestingly, Racionzer in his study, 'Hebrew Catholicism: Theology And Politics In Modern Israel', attributes the reality of the *kehilla* to Cardinal Tisserant, who placed the community of Hebrew Catholics in Israel under the jurisdiction of the Sacred Congregation of Oriental Churches. In 1954, Cardinal Tisserant, head of the Congregation for Oriental Churches claimed, 'The mass in Israel? Not Latin and not Byzantine but rather an Aramaic rite, for example that of the Syrians.' However, the suggestion to utilize the Syrian liturgical rite in Hebrew was not popular, as many Jewish converts to Christianity from the West were accustomed to the Latin Rite. In 1957, Pope Pius XII permitted the kehilla to use Hebrew in the Latin Rite. For references see, Leon Menzies Racionzer, 'Hebrew Catholicism …' p. 406.

53 David Neuhaus, 'Jewish Israeli Attitudes …', p. 348.

54 *Ibid*.

complex reality further, it is one diocese with many states,' covering Jordan, Israel, Palestine and Cyprus.[55] While the Latin Patriarchate is multicultural and transnational, statistics show that it is highly populated by Arab Catholics. In his article, 'Promised Land', O'Mahony notes that the conflict between Arab and Jew has coloured the political debate over the ecclesial jurisdiction. It has been argued that there should be a Catholic identity for Israel separate from the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The former Patriarch, however, understands this particular challenge to be historic, as the Church of Israel is a church open to culture.[56]

If this particular challenge is no longer a concern to the Patriarchate, what are temporary issues that face the jurisdiction? What is the responsibility of the Latin Patriarchate as it lives in Israel? According to Fr Emile Salayta, President of the Ecclesiastical Court within the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the identity of the Patriarchate has three dimensions. First, it has a responsibility towards Christians of the World, for he claims, 'we are the mother church.' Second, it acts as a bridge connecting Arab Christians and Arab Muslims. He states, 'we share our culture language, tradition, and food with the Arabs [Muslims].' Additionally he notes that the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the Church of the East is connected to the Church of the West, and is in communion with Rome. Third, it has the responsibility of hosting the universal Church—to serve pilgrims and give witness of Christ in the Holy Land. It must be open to administer to all Catholics and Christians who come from different areas of the world to understand the roots of their faith.[57]

While Fr Salayta mentions the bridge between Arab Christians and Arab Muslims, he does not mention the bridge between Israeli Christians and Israeli Jews. Though the Church is open to culture, it is primarily Arab in hierarchy and composition. This explains why Christian-Jewish relations appear to be less of a concern.[58] Nevertheless,

55 'Introduction to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem,' Latin Patriarchate YouTube Channel, accessed online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3qzki981rI. [10 June 2015].

56 Anthony O'Mahony, 'Promised Land,' *The Tablet* 9, October, 2010, p. 7.

57 'Introduction to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem,' Latin Patriarchate YouTube Channel, accessed online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3qzki981rI. [10 June 2015].

58 We may see a change, however, as the appointed Apostolic Minister—taking the

the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem recognizes the vocation of the *kehilla*. In 2001, the Synod of the Catholic Churches in the Holy Land expressed this recognition:

> There is a group within the Jewish people who have come to know Christ as Savior. They are part of our local Church and they live in their own special conditions. We must preserve open bridges of communication between our Churches and this community in order to exchange experiences so that we can learn from one another and so that this community can develop according to its own particularity and as a part of the community of faithful in our countries[59]

Given these dimensions, one of the major challenges the Latin Patriarchate faces is accommodating the new wave of migrants and refugees, many of whom are Christian. The Latin Patriarchate caters to them by calling priests to serve specific cultural communities, and establishing pastoral centres like Our Lady of Valour Centre for Migrants. It is necessary to recognize, however, that the Saint James Vicariate has largely taken on the responsibility of catering to these communities, for many choose to partake in Israeli, Hebrew culture, rather than Arab culture. While the Latin Patriarchate is convinced that the Jewish Arab divide no longer affects relations within the Church, it is impossible to ignore its presence in Israel. This being said, the Latin Patriarchate as a whole works to serve the migrant community. In January 2015, in honour of the Celebration of World Migrant and Refugee Day, the Arabic parish at Saint Saviour Church in Jerusalem welcomed about 40 Filipino Catholics with their priests to celebrate mass. While the mass was said in Arabic, the second reading was in English and there were prayers of the faithful in English and Tagalog.[60]

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responsibilities of Patriarch Twal until appointment of new Patriarch—is a Hebrew speaking Catholic and previous Vicar of the Saint James Vicariate. See 'Curriculum Vitae of Most Revd Pierbattista Pizzaballa', accessed online: http://en.lpj.org/biography/. [22 October 2016].

59 This statement was taken from the following source cited by the Saint James Vicariate: 'Assembly of the Catholic Ordinaries in the Holy Land' (Diocesan Synod of the Catholic Churches), The General Pastoral Plan, 2001, 156.

60 'Celebration of World Migrant Day in the Jerusalem parish' Saint James Vicariate,

3.2 Christian-Jewish Relations in the Holy Land

In his work on Catholic-Jewish Relations, Fr Neuhaus stresses that the relationship between Christians and Jews in Israel is sharply distinguished from the companionship that exists in the West—where Jews and Catholics have been in healthy dialogue for the past six decades.[61] Most of the official dialogue that goes on in Israel is between expatriate Christians and foreign-born Jews. Fr Neuhaus notes that this dialogue tends to be conducted along the same lines as dialogue in the Western world, 'often minimally taking into account the particular context in Israel.'[62] Dialogue is happening at the institutional level—between religious officials he notes, but it does not necessarily make a presence on the ground—between lay people. There are several reasons why dialogue between Jews and Christians in the Holy Land is particularly challenging. The most evident reality is that the majority of Catholics in Israel and Palestine are Arabs. While Palestinian Arabs tend to focus on justice and peace as an essential element of dialogue, Israeli Jews who are interested in dialogue with Christians are sometimes unwilling to engage in this "political" concern. Furthermore, Jews nor Catholics can ignore the presence of Islam in their society. Interestingly, Fr Neuhaus points out that a large number of Israeli Jews have their origins in predominantly Muslim countries (Moroccan and Yemen Jews); however, they are not making the same effort as Catholics to be a bridge between Judaism and Islam. According to Fr Neuhaus, there is almost no inter-religious dialogue that takes as its starting point the shared cultural heritage of the Muslim world.[63]

One of the most concerning challenges surrounding Catholic-Jewish dialogue is that Israeli Jews are unaware of their Catholic neighbours. According to Fr Neuhaus, Israeli Jews tend to have little knowledge of Christianity in general and also little knowledge of the Catholic Church that lives in its presence. There is a sad reality, he notes, that many Israeli Jews have never consciously met an Israeli or Palestinian Christian. Some would not even know of their existence.

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accessed online:http://www.catholic.co.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=249:celebration-of-world-migrant-day-in-the-jerusalem-parish&catid=58&Itemid=122&lang=en. [1 June 2015].

61 David Neuhaus SJ, 'Catholic-Jewish Relations in the State of Israel …', p. 237.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 240.

63 *Ibid.*

One might ask how this is the case considering the continuous influx of migrant workers and refugees who identify as Christian? In order to blend in with their Israeli-Jewish neighbours, many Christians hide their identities by worshiping secretly. Often, migrant children hide their Christian identities at school, and some of these children, who have explicitly Christian names, are renamed by their parents.[64]

Given that Jews are unaware of Christians in their midst, do they recognize the Hebrew speaking Catholics in Israel—those who share aspects of their culture and tradition? On a local level, some Hebrew speaking Catholics engage in promoting better relations with Jews in the Holy Land. In February 2015, kehilla members in Jerusalem, together with a Jewish synagogue community, inaugurated a study group where more than 30 people gathered to study the Torah.[65] Though dialogue is at work, Fr Neuhaus notes that the *kehilla* is careful to remain a discreet presence in Israel. The very fact that there are Jews who have recognized a call to enter the Church is a sensitive issue within Jewish-Catholic relations. Fr Neuhaus suggests that perhaps it is not yet time for Hebrew speaking Catholics to be prominent in dialogue between the Jewish people and the Catholic Church. Rather, it is a time for them to pray for the success of future dialogue between the Church and the Jewish people—as the relationship between Christians and Jews slowly mends. By expressing the Jewish roots of their faith as a community within the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Hebrew speaking Catholics in Israel highlight the importance of this existing relationship.

Conclusion

It is clear that the transnational Church of Israel mirrors the society in which it exists. While religious pluralism contributes to this structure as Jews, Christians and Muslims share the Holy Land; additional social, cultural and political layers accentuate contemporary challenges Israel faces as a transnational, multicultural society. The

64 *Ibid*., p. 360.

65 'Studying the Word of God Together' Saint James Vicariate, accessed online: http://www.catholic.co.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=263:studying-the-word-of-god-together&catid=51&Itemid=114&lang=en. [1 June 2015].

Hebrew speaking Catholic community in Israel is but one example of cosmopolitanization at work.

In the context of the Church, the *kehilla* is an Israeli Catholic presence in the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which is highly composed of Arab Catholics. Additionally, it is a Latin Catholic presence in the wider Catholic Church of Israel, which consists of Melkite, Syrian, Armenian, Coptic and Chaldean Catholics. Its unique presence is recognized in the transnational Church of Israel and in the wider context of Middle Eastern Christianity. The Saint James Vicariate lives within a reality of ecclesial diversity, while belonging to a universal Church.

In the context of community, the *kehilla* welcomes Israeli Catholics from around the world. While cultural diversity has posed challenges to the structure of the *kehilla*, it also provides a richness to Hebrew Catholic identity in the Holy Land. In the context of Israeli society, Hebrew speaking Catholics choose to be an active part of the Israeli-Jewish milieu. Many Hebrew Catholic children are enrolled in Jewish state schools. The Hebrew speaking Catholics in Israel are a presence in inter-religious relations between Christians and Jews as they give witness to the Jewish roots of their faith, and fully embrace their Hebrew Catholic collective identity. We can see that the Hebrew speaking Catholic community in Israel—the Saint James Vicariate, or rather the *kehilla* is part of multiple cultures and localities in Israeli society, as it actively crosses social, political, and religious boundaries.

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AN EXPLORATION OF ISSUES SURROUNDING ANGLICAN/JEWISH RELATIONS IN THE UK IN THE LIGHT OF THE ISRAEL/PALESTINE CONFLICT

Andrew Ashdown

Part 1
A historical look at Christian-Jewish relations as they relate to the Church in England, the development of Zionism, and influences on Jewish theology and identity. [1]

Introduction

Even in a world where political, cultural and religious conflicts abound, there can be few more significant or long-standing struggles for inter-faith relations than the situation that prevails in Israel/Palestine. The conflict has its roots in the nineteenth-century emergence of the Zionist movement, and in the political manoeuvrings of Europe in the post-Ottoman and post-First World War context. Its consequences however are far-reaching. The Israel/Palestine conflict has a particularly profound impact not only on relations between the Abrahamic faiths in the Middle East, but also on Jewish/Christian and Jewish/Muslim relations worldwide. Arguably, the conflict has also helped fuel the political and religious instability we see throughout the Middle East today. Thus, the issues raised by it are not simply political, but include issues of cultural and religious identity and are of theological relevance to all three Abrahamic faiths.

How these issues impact on Anglican/Jewish relations in the United Kingdom is a complex and sensitive topic. At times, and particularly over the past twenty years, the relationship has been fraught, as can be

1 This is the first part of a two-part work taken from the final Masters Dissertation presented in 2015 to complete an MA in Abrahamic Religions at Heythrop College, London University. The second part will be published in *Yearbook 2017*.

any engagement with this subject. However, considering the role that the Church in Britain has played historically in the Israel/Palestine debate, may enable us to reflect on how it can play both a prophetic and reconciliatory role in healing hurts and helping identify possible paths towards a solution acceptable to all parties.

This essay seeks to go beyond the surface issues. It will not focus on realities in Israel/Palestine such as the 'Security Barrier' or the 'Apartheid Wall' however one terms it; the demolition of Palestinian homes; suicide bombers; the treatment of Palestinian civilians or prisoners, or any of the realities that are a feature of the Israel/Palestine conflict. Rather, I hope to explore the deeper reasons behind the wall of mistrust and hatred that exists between the two communities and how this impacts upon Jewish/Christian relations in Britain. I intend to explore whether there is any common ground, or even understanding of 'the other' that can help to bridge the gulf that exists between the two communities. I will consider the reasons for the sometimes fraught relationship Christians in England have experienced in seeking to address issues of injustice and theology, whilst Jews, feeling vulnerable, stress issues of security, and speak not of theology but of identity and existence.

In this essay, (Part 1) I will offer a historical description of Jewish/Christian relations, particularly as they relate to the Anglican context, and will explore key themes in Judaism that influence that relationship. Inseparable for Jews as regards discussion of Israel/Palestine are the themes of Israel itself, and what the land and nation mean to Jews and Christians; Zionism; and the impact of the Holocaust on Jewish identity. Bearing in mind Britain's role in the creation of the State of Israel, Part 2 of the essay, (to be published separately), will reflect on the historical presence of the Anglican Church in Israel/Palestine, along with its theological focus on issues of Justice, and its ambiguous relationship to Zionism, particularly Christian Zionism. I will consider some of the Palestinian Christian responses found in the work of Sabeel, Jerusalem,[2] the Kairos document of 2009,[3] the Palestinian

2 'Sabeel' meaning 'The Way', is 'an ecumenical grass-roots liberation theology movement' (see www.sabeel.org/ourstory) for Palestinian Christians based in Jerusalem, and founded in 1989 by Revd Dr Naim Ateek , an Anglican priest at St George's Anglican Cathedral.

3 'Kairos: A Moment of Truth. A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering' was published in 2009, and is a 'cry to the worldwide Christian

Lutheran theologian Mitri Raheb, each of which have influenced the UK Anglican Church's engagement with the issue, and reflect on the response of Jewish theologians to the issue, amongst them Marc Ellis and Mark Braverman. Finally, I will consider whether the thought of these and other figures such as Emmanuel Levinas, Martin Buber, David Bohm, and Hans Gadamer, might offer positive paths of dialogue and resolution. My hope in the essay as a whole is to go beyond the 'facts on the ground' into a reflection that might offer the possibility of dialogue and progress.

A brief history of Jewish/Christian relations

Since the early days of Christianity, Jewish-Christian relationships have been strained. The tension between Jewish communities and gentile and Jewish followers of Jesus is referred to both in the Book of Acts, and in the epistles of Paul to the scattered nascent Christian communities of the eastern Mediterranean. However, historical and archaeological studies also show that many Jews and early Christians co-existed and that some of the debates that prevailed emerged in contexts of both closeness and rivalry. There is considerable debate about when exactly the 'split' between Judaism and Christianity took place. As Christian theology developed, rabbinical Judaism, especially following the destruction of the Temple in 70AD, was also evolving, making Judaism a religion no longer dependent on the Temple, but capable of being followed in any place. The tensions that have always existed between Christianity and Judaism, including the subject of Israel and Palestine today, are complicated by the fact that our traditions have the same origin and share the same scriptures. Even our hermeneutical and exegetical traditions and methods are similar. This similarity serves to highlight our theological differences and their implications for the expression of our faith.

Justin Martyr (c.100-165) was deeply influential in early Christian-Jewish debates, and his work, *Dialogue with Trypho,* which narrates a debate he has with a Jew (real or imagined) is an important source for this period, representing an increasing critique of the Jewish faith

community', formulated by and endorsed by almost all the Church leaders in the Holy Land.

and the view that 'the biblical commandments were given because of Israel's hardness of heart and have been replaced by faith in Jesus as the only means of salvation'.[4] The tension increased as Christian doctrine developed, and as the identity of Jesus as Messiah continued to be disputed. Attitudes hardened during the time of the Church fathers, who accepted that Jesus 'was born, lived and died a Jew', but struggled with the Jews' rejection of Jesus as Messiah.[5] Early theologians acknowledged that allegorical interpretation of scripture was based on Jewish allegory, and Origen (184-253) recognised the importance of Jewish tradition in Christian theology, but he still regarded Christians as the 'new Israel', Jews having rejected the Messiah. Christian critique of Jewish approaches to Christianity strengthened in the fourth century. But it was John Chrysostom (349-407), who is most responsible for the growth of anti-semitism at the time. Indeed, his writings have continued to feed anti-Jewish hatred. In 386-387, in a series of sermons entitled *Adversus Iudaeos (Against the Jews)*, he condemned Jews and Christians who practised Jewish traditions. Chrysostom's writings have been profoundly influential and 'gave the Church for centuries a pseudo-religious basis for persecuting Jews'.[6]

The mediaeval period was a time of significant violence, superstition and anti-semitism. Concepts of the anti-Christ, which found their origin in Persian and Babylonian myths, were particularly prevalent in Britain. Jews were powerfully identified with these concepts in the Christian mind, and mediaeval art and architecture reflect these prejudices. Such prejudices were fuelled by the myth of blood libel, in which it was believed that Jews would kill a Christian boy and use the blood in Passover rituals. This belief was at the centre of the case of William of Norwich in 1144, which resulted in the murder of nineteen Jews in the city. The preaching of the Crusades against all unbelief further focussed Christian anger against the Jews who suffered massacres or forced conversion across Europe. Jews were also implicated as a cause of the Black Death. Such disputation sometimes resulted in expulsion, as exemplified in the expulsion of all Jews from England in 1290. Indeed it was not until 1656 that they were allowed to return. .

4 Edward Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010, p. 53.
5 Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, p. 45.
6 Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish Christian Relations*, p. 61.

Despite these struggles however, Jews contributed significantly to European culture throughout this era. Particularly influential were Rashi (1045-1105) and Moses Maimonides (1135-1204); the former for his exposition of the Jewish scriptures, and the latter for his inclusive Aristotelian approach to the Bible, which influenced Thomas Aquinas and other European philosophers and theologians, and who continues to do so today.[7]

Protestant Christianity represents a complex and ambiguous context for Jewish-Christian relations. Traditionally, Jews have 'flourished in countries where Protestant constituted the majority of the population'.[8] Yet, led by Martin Luther and other reformers, the Reformation movement took a keen interest in the Hebrew scriptures, and their enduring perspective was that 'God's Old Testament covenant with Israel had been abrogated, or superseded, by a new covenant grounded in Jesus which thus created the Christian church, a "new Israel"'. This view was rooted in a mediaeval anti-Judaism so that Jews became 'thoroughly demonised' by all sections of the Protestant spectrum across Europe.[9] Martin Luther's earliest references to Judaism in lectures on the psalms in 1514 'affirmed God's wholesale rejection of this people' and that they were 'active foes' of Christianity,[10] and although in 1523, Luther exhibited a slightly more tolerant approach towards the Jews, the majority of his writings are profoundly anti-semitic, and even helped to influence the Nazi ideology of the early twentieth century. Most reformed theologians, including Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) and John Calvin (1509-1564) advocated supersessionism and urged conversion of the Jews. This contempt was rooted in three main propositions: that the Jews had been dispersed as a punishment for crucifying Jesus;

7 Church of England Inter-faith Consultative Group, *Sharing one hope? The Church of England and Christian-Jewish Relations. A Contribution to a continuing debate*, Church House Publishing, London, 2001, p. 3.

8 Ezra Mendelsohn 'Introduction'. *The Protestant-Jewish Conundrum. Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, eds Jonathan Frankel and Ezra Mendelsohn, Vol. 24, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010, p. 4.

9 Eric Gritsch, *The Jews in Reformation Theology* in *Jewish-Christian encounters over the centuries. Symbiosis, Prejudice, Holocaust, Dialogue.* American University Studies. eds Marvin Perry and Frederick M Schweitzer, Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 1994, p. 197.

10 Alice Eckardt, 'Martin Luther', in *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations*, eds Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005, pp. 279-280.

that Christians had inherited the Divine Promise due to the state of Judaism at the time of Jesus; and that the Jews were guilty of Deicide.[11]

The development of Zionism

With the development of the printing press, a more moderate approach to Judaism developed, but the French revolution; the Napoleonic wars and the Industrial Revolution in the sixteenth and seventeenth Centuries, saw the rise of new eschatological expectations amongst Christians, especially Puritans, who promoted the belief that Jews needed to be converted, and that they should return to their ancestral homeland in readiness for the 'Second Coming' of Jesus.[12] By the nineteenth century, archaeological discoveries in Palestine and a growing interest in the Near East, nurtured a growing interest among European Christians in the Christian heritage there and its Jewish origins. Combined with the rise of nation states, and the growing problem of anti-Semitism in eastern Europe, the seeds of Zionism were being sown; seeds significantly nurtured by British policy in the region, and then assisted considerably by the horrific events of the Holocaust in the Second World War. But before examining these crucial influences further, let us consider Britain's place, and the Anglican Church's part in helping nurture the seeds that would lead to the birth of the State of Israel in 1948, and its profound implications for Jewish/Christian relations.

'Christian Zionism' had its roots in the nineteenth century in two main areas: the colonial politics of the region, and the development of dispensationalism and restorationist beliefs. Jewish Zionism can be defined as 'the historic and continuing desire of the Jewish people for a homeland in the Middle East'. But it also has a narrower definition that refers to the 'movement of thought, literature and politics which from the later nineteenth century onwards has been committed to obtaining and securing such a homeland for the Jewish people'.[13] In

11 Eric Gritsch, *The Jews in Reformation Theology* …, pp. 204-205.

12 Yaakov Ariel, 'The One and the Many: Unity and Diversity in Protestant Attitudes towards the Jews' in *The Protestant-Jewish Conundrum. Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, eds Jonathan Frankel and Ezra Mendelsohn, Vol. 24, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010, pp. 23-24.

13 Anglican Communion Network for Inter Faith Concerns, *Land of Promise? An*

its early phase it was primarily a secular movement. 'Christian Zionists' support the concepts of Jewish Zionism, and are therefore predisposed to support the State of Israel, but their theology sees Zionism as a means of hastening the 'end times' and the 'second coming' of Jesus. Their political support for Israel therefore has a firmly Christian theological motivation.

At the end of the eighteenth century, as the power of the Ottoman empire declined, Napoleon's desire to expand his empire represented a threat to British interests in the region, particularly the vital sea routes to India and the East, This persuaded Britain to take a much closer interest in Egypt and the Levantine region. In 1799 Napoleon advocated a Jewish State in the territories of Palestine. And in 1809 the London Jews Society was formed, initially to support work amongst poor Jews in London, but before long it was expressing enthusiastic support for the restoration of Jews to Palestine.[14]

The political outcome of the theological principles of dispensationalism and restorationism can be attributed to the influence of an important evangelical circle of Christian leaders in England known as the 'Albury Circle'. Dispensationalism adopts a literal interpretation of scripture in identifying different ages in which God operates to fulfil scripture, and sees the role of Israel as vital to this. Restorationism emerges from Dispensationalism and affirms the importance of the restoration of the people of Israel to the Land of Israel in order for God's Kingdom on earth to be fulfilled. In 1826, Edward Irving (1792-1834) held a series of annual conferences at Albury in Surrey. With a variety of prominent Christian leaders present, the group explored prophetic theology; and the restoration of Jews to Palestine was firmly espoused. The motive was primarily theological—in order to hasten the Second Coming of Jesus and eschatological fulfilment—rather than political. These meetings profoundly influenced John Darby, regarded as the 'father' of dispensationalism, whose subsequent visits to America received the support of and influenced key evangelicals such as Dwight Moody, William Blackstone and Cyrus Schofield, who, in turn, have had a lasting and continuing influence on the theology of

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Anglican Exploration of Christian attitudes to the Holy Land, with special reference to 'Christian Zionism', The Anglican Consultative Council, London; 2012, 2.4.

14 Samuel J Kuruvilla, *Radical Christianity in Palestine and Israel. Liberation and Theology in the Middle East*, I B Tauris, London, New York, 2013, pp. 20-21.

evangelical American Christianity, particularly as regards the theological and political place of Israel in the modern world.[15]

The Anglican Church played an important part in this growing British understanding of the importance of the Near East. With the help of the Anglican Church Missionary Society, the Anglican Bishopric in Jerusalem was founded in 1841, both to bring Christianity to the Jews of Palestine, but also to ensure both a religious and political presence and influence in the Levant. Working with the Church Missionary Society in London, the Anglican Church established many schools in the Holy Land which continue to flourish. Initially, this caused tensions with existing Palestinian Churches in the region who feared proselytization by Protestants. However, as the Protestants played a key role in the 'Arab Awakening' of the early twentieth century, they attracted young indigenous Christians, and from 1905 onwards, the Anglican Church started a process of indigenisation that means that the Anglican Church in the Holy Land is now one of the few Christian denominations in the Holy Land to be entirely indigenous—one reason for its continuing influence for the Christian presence in the region.[16]

The Anglican Church also played a part through Reverend William Hechler, Chaplain to the English Embassy in Vienna, in the implementation of the First world Zionist Conference that met in Basle, Switzerland in 1897. One of only three Christians present at the Conference, Hechler had a profound influence on the British Government through David Lloyd George, and became 'Herzl's chief Christian ally in realizing his vision of a Zionist State'.[17]

The concept of the restoration of Jews to the land of Palestine might have remained purely a theological ideal were it not for the political support of Anthony Ashley-Cooper, Lord Shaftesbury (1801-1885). A committed evangelical, Lord Shaftesbury believed that restoration of the Jews was not only prophesied in the Bible, but would also fulfil strategic interests of British foreign policy. Shaftesbury succeeded in securing the support of his friends, the then foreign secretary, David Lloyd George, and Lord Balfour, and later, Winston Churchill. Thus it was that at the end of the First World War, Lord Balfour wrote his

15 Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism. Road map to Armageddon?*, Inter Varsity Press; Leicester, 2004, pp. 42-54.

16 Riah Abu El-Assal. *Caught In Between. The Extraordinary Story of an Arab Palestinian Christian Israeli*, SPCK; London, 1999, pp. 50-51.

17 Stephan Sizer, *Christian Zionism. Roadmap to Armageddon?,* p. 60.

famous letter to Lord Rothschild on 2 November 1917 in which he declared his 'sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations', and that the Government viewed 'with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people'.[18] The subsequent failure to honour the phrase that stated that it should be clear that 'nothing should be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine', has been the cause of Palestinian resentment ever since. Furthermore, this declaration represented not just a political document, but it received the support of the Anglican Church hierarchy. Whilst the Balfour declaration is remembered by Palestinians as a notorious betrayal, Jonathan Gorsky of Heythrop College argues that Balfour could not have foreseen in 1917 the amount of mass Jewish emigration to Palestine that later took place, following the closure of American and European borders to Jewish refugees in the 1920s and 30s, which left Palestine as one of only a few places open to them. Hence, Gorsky argues that this Jewish immigration was a result not of support for the Zionist cause, but rather a product of desperation.[19]

In 1948, the State of Israel was created. For Palestinians, this event continues to be viewed as a *Nakbah*, a 'catastrophe'. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, both Christian and Muslim, became refugees, and thousands of Jews received their 'freedom' in a land they regarded from their scriptures and history, as their own. The difficulty of course is that it is a land that is holy to all three Abrahamic faiths, all of whom to some degree, regard the land as central to their faith traditions, and feel that they 'own' it in some way. It is often forgotten in western countries that there has always been a significant indigenous Christian population who, as Palestinians, experience the same struggle and pain as their Muslim compatriots. In Britain, one of the challenges is to honour and listen, both to our fellow Christian sisters and brothers who suffer at the hands of the Israeli State; but also to our Jewish cousins, whose faith origins we share. Let us consider first Jewish attitudes to Israel and their roots, as they affect Jewish/Christian relations in Britain.

The State of Israel's actions in recent decades (not its existence), has been an increasingly complicating factor for Jewish/Christian relations. Though Zionism started as a secular movement, it, and therefore the

18 Samuel J Kuruvilla, *Radical Christianity in Palestine and Israel*, p. 22.
19 Email conversation with Jonathan Gorsky, 31 March 2015.

State of Israel, has become rooted in Jewish religious tradition and most ordinary Jews around the world identify deeply with the State of Israel. This was not originally the case. Indeed, Zionism was not originally universally supported. Believing that only the coming of the Messiah could usher in the return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel, ultra-Orthodox Jews regarded, and continue to regard the establishment of the State of Israel, as 'an alternative way of life meant to displace God, Torah and classical Jewish Teachings.'[20] But the Holocaust changed everything. In the light of the Holocaust, Jewish self-understanding, and the traditions of the land took on a new significance, influenced ironically by the rise of Christian Zionism.

But there was more to it than that. Jewish universal experience was of vulnerability and often persecution. Zionism represented the possibility of a place where Jews could feel safe, and be free to practise their faith without fear of persecution. Speaking in 2014, Dr Jane Clements, now director of the Council Christians and Jews in London, reminded me that the 'fragility of the only place of safety' for Jewish people represents a source of real fear for the contemporary Jewish community in the light of their historic experience. Similarly Rabbi Tony Bayfield writes: 'The centuries ultimately demonstrate that Jews can never achieve the status and security that is the right of every people in the lands of either sibling, Christian or Muslim. Jews continue to pray for Jerusalem and Zion; the land is integral to daily, Sabbath and festival prayers. Whenever they can, they return.'[21] Israel therefore remains for many Jews, psychologically a symbol of 'ontological security', and this profoundly influences their attitude and loyalty towards the State.[22] Notwithstanding the real rise of anti-Semitism in Europe; whether or not this fear is founded upon any genuine threat to the existence of Jews either in the diaspora or in Israel, the fear is real and something of which Christians need to be aware.

When discussing Jewish/Christian relations in Britain, it is helpful to note the statistics. In the 2011 UK census, 263,346 people responded that they were 'Jewish'. This represents only 0.5 percent of the population. By contrast, those who declared themselves to be 'Christian'

20 Donniel Hartman and Moshe Halbertal *Judaism and the Challenges of Modern life*, Continuum, London, 2007, p. 143.

21 Report: Board of Deputies of British Jews, *Zionism: A Jewish Communal Response*, The Board of Deputies of British Jews, London, 2010, p. 12.

22 A term used by Jonathan Gorsky in email conversation. 31 March 2015.

were 59.3 percent of the population, (a substantial drop from 2001).[23] Most Jewish communities in Britain are unevenly spread around the country, and concentrated in particular areas. This means that Jewish communities are small and feel vulnerable, especially in times of religious or political insecurity. We also need to remember that Jews are as diverse as Christians in their traditions, and have varying views about the place of Israel in modern Judaism. According to Jonathan Gorsky, Lecturer in Jewish-Christian Relations at Heythrop College, the lives of most British Jews are defined in their relationship to Israel by four key factors: the Holocaust; the Creation of the State of Israel, which, taking place only three years after the end of the Holocaust endows it with huge significance—almost a resurrection experience and a source of hope; the existence of relatives living in Israel, and therefore identification with the State, especially in times of threat; and their identity as Jews, which Jonathan Gorsky suggests represents for many, more of a cultural identity than a theological or religious one. All these factors, including the psychological dependency on the State of Israel that they evoke, contribute to the increased level of sensitivity experienced by the Jewish community in Britain, whether or not that sensitivity is justified. It also helps to explain the lack of empathy that many British Jews feel for the situation of the Palestinians.

It is undeniable that Israel has a special place in the heart of Jews, of the Jewish scriptures, and therefore of Judaism itself. Daniel Langton identifies three ways in which Israel is understood in Jewish thought and tradition. First, there are the 'people of Israel' *(am Yisrael)*—these are those who are descended from Patriarch Abraham, with whom God made a Covenant in Sinai. Later, this community developed into the *b'nei Yisrael* (Children of Israel) or House of Israel, who through the Covenant were understood as especially 'chosen' by God. Secondly there is the Land of Israel, believed to have been given by Covenant, as recited twice daily in the Shema liturgy, which takes the words of Deuteronomy 11:18-21: 'You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul … so that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.' Even in times

23 Simon Rocker, 'Census 2011, the Jewish Breakdown'. http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/94111/census-2011-the-jewish-breakdown (Accessed 20 February 2015).

of exile, it is understood that there has always been a Jewish presence in the land. Indeed, at the heart of Jewish liturgy lies 'the hope for the Messianic restoration of Jerusalem' and the 'ingathering of the Jewish people'.[24] Finally, Israel is understood as the 'State of Israel', which came into being in 1948.

Most Jews today, whether secular or religious, whether living in Israel or in the diaspora, are supportive of Zionism and see support of Israel as 'integral to their self-understanding as Jews'.[25] For many religious Jews, (indeed also many evangelical Christians) the establishment of the State of Israel is seen as nothing less than a divine fulfilment of the restoration of the people to God's 'promised land'. Some go further. The first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of British Mandate Palestine, Abraham Isaac Ha-Cohen Kook (1865-1935), whose writings and teachings, along with those of his son, Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Hacohen Kook (1890-1982) whose views continue to inspire more extreme ideological settler Jews on the West Bank, wrote that 'in the heart of every Jew, in its purest and holiest recesses, there blazes the fire of Israel' which 'completely permeates the soul of the Jews'.[26] A minority, many of whom can be found amongst the ideological settlers in the West Bank (particularly those belonging to the Gush Emunim movement), take this further, espousing that the land should be exclusively for the Jewish people. This idea is based on the principle, following a fundamentalist interpretation of the Jewish scriptures, that 'Jews are exceptional—different from other nations'. Those who hold to these views are capable of providing '"convincing" arguments for perpetual Jewish rule over the land of Israel and for the denial of certain basic rights to the Palestinians' on the basis of both security and a God-given right to the territories. Personal experience of attempting a dialogue with members of an extremist settler group in the West Bank a few years ago amply illustrated the intensity, the intransigence, and even the violence of those who hold these views.[27] This intensity of attachment is only enhanced of course by the contrast of the 'success' and development of the modern State of Israel, with

24 Daniel R Langton, *Children of Zion: Jewish and Christian Perspectives on the Holy Land*, Woolf Institute of Abrahamic Faiths, Cambridge, 2008, pp. 7-11.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

26 *Loc. cit.*

27 Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, Pluto Press, London/Sterling VA, 1999, pp. 14-15.

the experience of the Holocaust that in some way affects every living Jew. It is to that which we shall now turn.

Influence of the Holocaust on Jewish theology and identity

In any discussion of Israel and Judaism today, one cannot ignore the impact of the Holocaust. It represents one of the most challenging events in human history, and is lodged deep in the psyche of every Jew. Of the 0.5 percent of the UK population who are Jews, it is probably true to say that everyone will have a personal association with the events of the Holocaust in some way, perhaps having lost members of their family, or have family who experienced the flight from Germany and Eastern Europe. Gentiles in Europe are justifiably confronted with our collusion with the events that took place in Nazi Germany—sometimes active collusion from the Christian population in the *shoah* itself, and sometimes collusion by silence. After the war too, surviving Jewish refugees were denied entry to numerous countries within Europe, including our own.

After the war, there was a long silence as regards the Holocaust. Eugene Borowitz writes that the Holocaust had 'so traumatised us that we repressed it as too painful to bear'. He also concludes that the silence of American Jewry on the subject was 'as much guilt at their inaction as from their identification with those who suffered and died'. The same could surely be said of British Jewry as well.[28] It wasn't until the 1960s that Jewish writers started to explore the implications of the Holocaust. Primo Levy and Jean Amery, and Hannah Arendt, (herself a Holocaust survivor) were three early examples of those who attempted to do so. Arendt was the first to suggest that 'all were implicated' and that 'the boundary between the innocent and the guilty had been obliterated', and that the evil perpetrated was 'historically unprecedented'.[29] This belief that the horrors of the Holocaust find no precedent in history before or since is ingrained in the vulnerability and sense of victimhood

28 Eugene B Borowitz, *Choices in Modern Jewish Thought*, Behrman House Inc., West Orange NJ, 1983, p. 188.

29 Michael L Morgan, *Beyond Auschwitz. Post-Holocaust Thought in America*, Oxford University Press, Oxford/ New York, 2001, pp. 10-11, 14.

of Jews today, and impacts upon the significance of the State of Israel for modern Jewry, though it can be argued.

Of all the post-Holocaust writers, Elie Wiesel, also an Auschwitz survivor, was perhaps the most important. He too believed that there was no precedence for the horror unleashed in the *Shoah,* and that no meaning could be ascribed to it. For him, Auschwitz represented a 'new Sinai', and his conclusion was that 'a cruel duty' is laid upon every survivor 'not to forget and not to let the world forget, as it would dearly like to do.'[30]

As Jews sought to make meaning of the Holocaust, the establishment of the State of Israel, and Israel's victory in the Six Day War in 1967 were turning points for the Jewish community. Viewing the Six Day War through the lens of Auschwitz, some, interpreting Israel and Israeli military success in terms of the death camps, came to view the theological imperative of survival as justifying overwhelming military force, and continue to do so. The events of 1967 also galvanised in Jews a new sense of corporate identity and group solidarity, strengthening 'allegiance to Jewish history and Jewish self-identification'.[31]

Highly influential for post-Holocaust Judaism are the writings of Richard Rubenstein (1924-2013). His work 'After Auschwitz' represented a complete re-evaluation of faith in God after Auschwitz. In fact, he wrote that the Holocaust 'invalidated all the classic Jewish positions regarding god and evil, and requires us to reject classic Jewish faith in God.'[32] Rather he believed, any God for whom the Holocaust could be ascribed meaning, should be abandoned. For him, Judaism became a vehicle of identity only, and the supreme symbol of that identity becomes the State of Israel. Indeed, 'with chosenness abandoned, the State need reflect no special standard of quality.' Rather, 'it rightly does whatever it must to ensure its survival in an amoral universe.'[33] The implications of this view are far-reaching, and some of its consequences can be seen in the State of Israel, and Jewish attitudes towards it, today.

Many theologians have sought to reflect on the events of the Holocaust theologically, and discern motifs that help in making some

30 Eugene B Borowitz, *Choices in Modern Jewish Thought* …, p. 192.
31 Michael L Morgan, *Beyond Auschwitz*. …, p. 88.
32 Richard L Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz. History, Theology and Contemporary Judaism*. (Baltimore, London: John Hopkins University Press; 1966) p. 193.
33 Eugene Borowitz. *Choices in Modern Jewish Thought*. p. 196.

sense of the horror. Several (such as Buber, Soloveitchik and Berkovitz) have found the 'hiding' of God's face a helpful theological motif, and most have interpreted Auschwitz as somehow representing a new revelation of God and a new understanding (or abandonment) of the Covenant. However, all agree that the evil requires a response.

Few have explored this more fully, or been more influential for modern Jewish thought and theology than Emil Fackenheim (1916-2003). For him, the Holocaust was a 'rupture in Jewish history and thought, and a rupture in world history and philosophical thought'.[34] Fackenheim argues convincingly that the Holocaust is a 'unique' event, on the basis he states that 'Being itself was made a capital crime and there was nothing one could do about it.'[35] For him, this was 'a unique descent into hell… an unprecedented celebration of evil'.[36] For this, Fackenheim believed, there had to be a response, and that response for Jews, is to refuse to despair in God or humanity. Fackenheim created what he called the 614th Commandment; that 'the Jew of today is forbidden to hand Hitler yet another posthumous victory'.[37] This commandment requires nothing less than survival and the affirmation of Jewish identity and existence, which is realised in its fullness in the State of Israel. Later, Fackenheim established the notion of *Tikkun Olam*—meaning mending the world; building on the courage of those in the death camps, and affirming a new commitment to God. Let Fackenheim himself sum up what this means: 'What then is *Tikkun*? It is Israel itself. It is a State founded, maintained, defended by a people who—it was once thought—had lost the arts of statecraft and self-defense forever. It is the replanting and reforestation of a land that … was unredeemable swamps an desert. It is a people gathered from all corners of the earth … It is a living language that was dead beyond revival. … And it is in and through all this, on behalf of the accidental remnant, after unprecedented death, a unique celebration of life.'[38] It

34 Michael L Morgan and Peter Eli Gordon, *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Jewish Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 256.

35 Eugene B Borowitz *Choices in Modern Jewish Thought* …, p. 200.

36 Michael L Morgan, *Beyond Auschwitz*. …, p. 158.

37 Emil Fackenheim, The 614th Commandment, in *Wrestling with God. Jewish Theological responses during and after the Holocaust*. eds Steven Katz, Shlomo Biderman, Gershon Greenberg, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, p. 433.

38 Emil Fackenheim, Historicity, Rupture and Tikkun Olam, in *Wrestling with God. Jewish Theological responses during and after the Holocaust*. eds Steven Katz, Shlomo Biderman, Gershon Greenberg, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, p. 448.

is hard to overstate the significance of this view for contemporary Jews, both in Israel and the Diaspora, for the life and policy of the State of Israel, and of Israel's and Judaism's encounter with God and the wider world.

Understanding these foundational realities is a necessary part of engaging with the complexity of the Israel-Palestine debate between Jews and Christians. In the next part of this essay however, I will explore more recent Christian and Jewish prophetic responses that challenge the limitations that these historical influences have placed upon progress both in the Jewish-Christian debate on Israel-Palestine, and upon the political realities prevailing in the land. Through an alternative and prophetic approach, I will suggest that a new paradigm can be created that could lead to understanding, hope and positive co-existence for all the people of the land, if only Christians and Jews will grasp it.

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KENNETH CRAGG AS AN ANGLICAN THEOLOGIAN OF ISLAM

Christopher Brown

'I find that one idea leads to another,' Bishop Kenneth Cragg told me when asked in 2008, about his most recent publications. 'Ideas' have certainly flowed liberally from his pen since he submitted his massive 'Islam in the Twentieth Century: The Relevance of Christian Theology and the Relation of the Christian Mission to its Problems', for his D.Phil. in Oxford in 1950. He wrote over fifty books since his foundation volume, *The Call of the Minaret*, was published in 1956, and during the final years of his long life he continued to send fresh manuscripts to his publishers. One publisher commented that they regarded him as a poet, with a wide imagination and deep roots in English history and culture in all its various facets. He is seen as a profound religious thinker, who brought a lifetime of reflection and experience to the relationship between Islam and Christianity. Another analogy could compare him to a gifted and challenging composer whose works require serious listening, where the key frequently changes and the 'tunes' are not immediately apparent. But the reward comes with study and concentration. Not all the works will appeal to or be understood by everyone; some are mysterious and inspiring. Most make the reader want to study further with their imaginative invitation to enter an unfamiliar world and find links with our own experience.

We will first take a general view of his life and works, followed by four sections focussing upon Cragg as an Anglican theologian; his appreciation of Islam; his political theology; and finally an assessment of him as an Anglican theologian and scholar of Islam.

His life and works[1]

'Evangelical faith was the breath of our being, deep but not demonstrative, assured but not boisterous' is how Kenneth Cragg describes the atmosphere of his family home. He was born in Blackpool on the 8 March 1913, the younger of two brothers.[2] His father had a shop and the family walked three miles every Sunday to attend Christ Church, presumably passing on their way other churches offering a rather different tradition in worship and theology. Life had been hard for the family during periods of war and economic recession and at one stage his father wished to remove Kenneth from the local grammar school, not trusting the potential presented by higher education. Other counsels prevailed; he remained for the sixth form and developed a strong personal faith. It was after his Confirmation that he found 'the sense of the need for a personal Saviour and of Jesus Christ being invited into the heart. Right believing was an important part of that understanding of being "truly Christian" but the liability to witness and serve was central too.'[3] Even from these early days his faith found expression in concern for the world around him in the children he saw hanging around outside the pubs on his way home from church. He could do little to help them, but he sensed that faith had consequences in our engagement with the world and requires us to try and 'put right the wrongs of human life'. At the church the tradition was firmly rooted in the Protestant inheritance of the Church of England, with the Authorised version of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer as its pillars. During the Prayer Book crisis of 1927/8, when parliament rejected some quite modest proposals for the reform of the Prayer Book, Christ Church celebrated a great victory, although Kenneth Cragg was not to be found among the members of the youth group who chanted the doxology outside the vicarage. Perhaps even at this early stage there was some recognition that none of the issues had been seriously discussed although he was certainly not aware of the implications of this decision for the relationship between

1 See my study'Kenneth Cragg on Shi'a Islam and Iran: An Anglican Theological Response to Political Islam, *ARAM,* Vol. 20, 2008, pp. 37-391.

2 '*Faith and Life Negotiate A Christian Story-Study*' , The Canterbury Press, 1994, p. 21.

3 *Ibid*., p. 26.

Church and State. His evangelical zeal found expression in some local preaching engagements (one can only presume that at this youthful age he did not have any license to preach) and assisting at the annual mission on the Blackpool sands. It was there that he heard William Temple, at that time Bishop of Manchester, who made a profound impression on him even though he did not recall his actual words. The mission and other experiences made him realise that his own faith and local church were part of something much larger and truth may even find a place in other traditions. Also during these vital formative years, long before the ecumenical climate of today, he often passed the Church of the Sacred Heart—a title that puzzled him. He sensed the place as 'something sinister and menacing'[4] and was suspicious of the subtleties and devious workings of minds like Newman's and the Tractarians. Roman Catholic and Anglo Catholic minds could lead to a degree of sophistry 'that sowed distrust and insecurity in the minds of "plain dealers".' In his autobiography this is the only reference to Roman Catholicism and this seems to reflect something of these early experiences and the milieu in which his Christian faith developed. Although in later years such denominational prejudices diminished, leading to some areas of co-operation and mutual benefit, it is perhaps a reflection of earlier divisions that Kenneth Cragg hardly features in major works by Roman Catholic scholars engaged in inter-religious dialogue. Similarly, few Catholic authors feature significantly in his own extensive works.

Before he progressed to Jesus College Oxford in 1931, the seeds had been planted of a firm faith, and although this had been in the uncritical ambience of Christ Church, already there is a strong sense of someone embarking on a lifelong journey. He loved Oxford and his time was taken up between his study of history and the Christian Union. He was too poor to join the other Union and thus avoided the keen political debates of the time. Although there were some struggles with his faith and doubts about the right course to pursue, he decided upon ordination in his final year.

Whilst waiting for the results of his finals, he bought a copy of Constance Padwick's *Temple Gairdner of Cairo* with little realisation of the major part the author and her hero would play in his own

4 E.g. Jacques Dupuis SJ, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, Orbis Books, 1997, New York.

future. Having just missed a first, he went to the Bible Churchman's Missionary Society (BCMS) College in Bristol. This college, itself the result of a split from the Church Missionary Society, took a very conservative approach towards the scriptures, only admitting the study of modern biblical criticism for the purpose of passing the General Ordination Exam. Otherwise it was to be dismissed. This did not suit the developing enquiring mind of the young Cragg, but his own family had been involved in the trauma of the split, and he held his peace until he later came across a more permissive atmosphere in his curacy at Higher Tranmere, Birkenhead, in the Chester diocese. He continued his theological studies during this period and made a successful submission for the Ellerton Theological Essay Prize to Oxford in 1937, on the subject of 'The Place of Authority in Matters of Religious Belief'. The focus of the essay appears to have arisen from the sometimes harsh experience of the disputes taking place within the Church concerning the place of scripture, how it is to be interpreted and applied in contemporary situations. An indication of his developing theological position was reflected in him repaying to the BCMS the money they had provided for his theological training and joining the British Syria Mission, which, although of evangelical persuasion, also had a strong commitment to welfare and educational work.

In one of the few major or substantial studies of Cragg's life and work, *The Call to Retrieval*, Christopher Lamb comments that 'it is important to realize that Cragg's abandonment of conservative evangelicalism did not entail contempt for the school of thought which had at first nurtured him.'[5] It is open to question whether Cragg saw himself as abandoning his conservative evangelical roots, either at this stage or later in his life. The nurturing provided by these roots continued to sustain him in a strong personal faith, but he did reject some of the tendency to fundamentalism, which could be found within this particular strand on Anglicanism. After a very important formative period in Beirut where he taught in the Bible College and became attached to the American University of Beirut where he taught philosophy, he and his wife ran a hostel for Arab students.

5 Christopher Lamb, *The Call to Retrieval: Kenneth Cragg's Christian Vocation to Islam*, Grey Seal, London, 1997, p. 12.

Also during this time he studied Arabic and began his life-long study of and commitment to Islam and its relationship to Christianity. His philosophical studies led to a high level of competence and the award in 1947 of a further Oxford prize—the T H Green Moral Philosophy Prize on 'Morality and Religion'. By this stage serious academic study beckoned, not as some abstract activity, but arising from his experience and love for the people he met in Beirut and his increasing competence as an Arabist and student of Islam. He returned to the living of Longworth Oxford to study for his DPhil. The experience of living in the house where *Lux Mundi*[6] collection of influential essays had been produced in 1889 led him to serious theological reflection upon the nature of authority and the implications of the Incarnation. This major work for his doctorate confirmed his credentials as a theologian and partly reveals some of the main influences upon him at this time. By 1950 when he completed his thesis, it is clear that the *Lux Mundi* essay by Charles Gore on the doctrine of Kenosis, or Christ's voluntary self-limitation, based on Philippians 2: and 2 Corinthians 8:9, played a considerable part in his theological understanding. This, as Lamb comments, led Cragg to appreciate the emphasis 'on the Incarnation rather than the Atonement in the life of Christ as a timely move, which set the Atonement in a broader theological context than had been customary, particularly in his own Evangelical tradition.'[7] Lamb quotes an even greater influence upon Cragg at this time in the Baptist scholar H Wheeler Robinson, from his book, *Redemption and Revelation in the Actuality of History*,[8] where in a passage, 'The Kenosis of the Spirit' he writes, 'God as Holy Spirit enters into a relation to human nature which is comparable with that of the Incarnation … which would … bring all existence into unity, and show us the divine self-emptying from the foundation of the world. Through this long and patient kenosis, God has carried the burden of all humanity … which it is His purpose to redeem. The believer is simply entering into a new and greatly deepened experience through Christ of what God has

6 '*Lux Mundi. A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation'*, ed. by Charles Gore, Oxford, 1889.

7 Lamb, p. 13.

8 H Wheeler Robinson, *Redemption and Revelation in the Actuality of History*, Nisbet, London, 1942.

been doing all the time by His "prevenient" grace.'[9] This concept of the suffering of the Spirit within humanity recurs in Cragg's thinking through many of his books. For example in his early and important work, *Sandals at the Mosque*, he writes, 'What room then for aught save humility in a situation at once so involved in the lowliness of God in Christ by the Spirit? Outside a comparable lowliness the Christian has no valid status. His being in reconciliation and in ministry hinges upon the self-giving of God. All his relationships must be in the truth of his own inner Christian existence.'[10]

Although Kenneth Cragg wrote a substantial number of books, focussing in the main upon Christian mission and relations to Islam, all of them have been shaped by his initial substantial thesis. In his book, *Rewarding Encounters*,[11] which compares the theologies of Cragg and Cantwell Smith, Bard Maeland comments, 'Already in this study there is present an impressive interest in modern and contemporary Muslim intellectual activity, an overview of the relation between religion and political/social issues … this initial work of Cragg may be characterised as a fundamental and strategic study in Christian mission to Muslims.' It is very significant that this work came *after* his experience in Beirut and the drive and energy it required seems to have been provided by that initial contact with the people of the region. His first major work, *The Call of the Minaret* was published in 1956[12] and it also reflects his experience of living in a country, Lebanon, where the population was fairly evenly divided between Christian and Muslim. The political upheavals of the time, following the Second World War and the establishment of the State of Israel, helped shape the book that has been described by Hugh Goddard as 'still highly significant and worthy of the most serious consideration by Christians who wish to think about Islam.'[13] The book arose from a series of seminars Cragg conducted in his new post as Professor of Islamic Studies at Hartford

9 *Ibid*, p. 290.

10 *Sandals at the Mosque—Christian Presence Amid Islam,* SCM Press, London, 1959, p. 87.

11 Bård Maeland, *Rewarding Encounters—Islam and the Comparative Theologies of Kenneth Cragg and Wilfrid Cantwell Smith*, Melisende, London, 2003.

12 *The Call of the Minaret,* OUP, Oxford, 1956, 2nd ed. 1986, Collins. London.

13 Hugh Goddard, *The Significance of* The Call of the Minaret *for Christian thinking about Islam*, in '*A Faithful Presence. Essays for Kenneth Cragg,* Melisende, London, 2003, p. 93.

Seminary in Connecticut where he had arrived in 1951. It started as a kind of 'manual' for people involved in teaching or administration in Asia or Africa, and arose from the experience of engaging with others in shaping and focussing their ideas.

After his appointment in 1956 as a residentiary canon of St George's Cathedral in Jerusalem, he spent three hectic years travelling the vast area of the Middle East covered by the Anglican diocese. Lasting friendships were formed and he was able to deepen his knowledge of Islam and the fast moving political scene in which the church had to function.

The post-war period had led Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher to take the initiative in the foundation of a Central College for the Anglican Communion at St Augustine's Canterbury, a former missionary college. Cragg became a Fellow in 1959 and Warden from 1961. The college had a variety of purposes but never gained the essential support of the hierarchy after the departure of Archbishop Fisher. To his great disappointment, which he describes in some detail in his autobiography, the college was closed in 1967, leaving Cragg without a job.[14] It is the nearest Cragg comes to almost bitterness in his personal story, writing, 'Its forlorn demise was my deepest private story, a harsh, unwanted redundancy, entailing a sense of dereliction whose sources were official and against which all personal positive efforts after continuity were disallowed'. After a period teaching in Nigeria and Cambridge, Cragg was consecrated Assistant Bishop in the Jerusalem Archbishopric in February 1970 and spent about three years in Cairo. He resigned in 1973 on principal, believing strongly in an indigenous ministry with the appointment of an Egyptian bishop. His extensive experience of the region and competence in Arabic were greatly valued by the Archbishop in Jerusalem, George Appleton, but once again Cragg found himself redundant. He accepted an appointment as Reader in Religious Studies at Sussex University until he reached retirement age for academics in 1978. This was followed by his appointment as vicar of Helme in the Wakefield diocese, giving an opportunity to return to parish ministry and to use his knowledge in working with the Community Relations Chaplain in the large cities of the region. He also served as an Assistant Bishop. In 1981 he retired to his beloved Oxford where he again became

14 *Faith and Life Negotiate*, ch. 5.

an Assistant Bishop and where he continues to write books, at least five since 1999.

This brief sketch illustrates his lengthy commitment to the Christian faith and its relationship with the Muslim world. It is a story full of variety and engagement with many people and cultures over a very long period. Also, as Christopher Lamb comments,[15] it shows how the Anglican Church, for whatever reasons, has not been 'well organised to make maximum use of a man with the particular combination of gifts that he possesses.' In view of the substantial level of immigration from Muslim countries to the UK it is particularly regrettable that his skills were not used more effectively in the task of building bridges with the growing Islamic community from the 1970s. Possibly, as Lamb suggests, this was because his expertise had led him to be identified with what was perceived to be a narrow and specialist area of concern. Or it could be that his rare scholarship threatened those who were more comfortable in the territory of domestic church affairs and the niceties of Christian history and biblical study. His very presence challenged those who did not really want to engage with the challenges of the modern and rapidly changing world. Islam, for most, remained an unknown and unfamiliar world, suitable for missionaries and the like, but not of central importance to the domestic church terrain. Perhaps also, hovering somewhere in the wings, has been the traditional suspicion of the English establishment of the academic and intellectual. Cragg's learning has been in territory at once unfamiliar and also therefore often threatening.

As an Anglican theologian

A glance at the index of any of Kenneth Cragg's many books reveals a mind fed by an eclectic range of sources, some from obvious theological wells of learning, but just as many from the world of literature and poetry. The range is enormous and he has the ability to make links between less than obvious minds, which, perhaps even unknown to themselves, are touching upon similar areas of human insight and endeavour. His ability to engage in what has become known as 'the art of lateral thinking' is very considerable and often challenges the

15 Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

reader to reflect on a passage if it is to reveal its full value. Yet for all his learning, he is a very English thinker, nurtured on the classics, and from his Oxford undergraduate days, steeped in English history. He is clear that he has never been tempted to depart from his Anglican roots, not even to another Christian denomination let alone to become a Muslim.

A passage from *Sandals at the Mosque* illustrates his personal faith and its priorities. 'One of the deepest truths of Christianity is the endless regressive character of human self-centredness, making men proud of their humility, complacent that they are penitent, satisfied that they are orthodox. We are always tending to involve ourselves in the distinctiveness of what we preach. We have need to remember Thomas of Canterbury's question when he first realised that even martyrdom might be self-regarding:

> Is there no way in my soul's sickness
> Does not lead to damnation in pride
> …
> Can sinful pride be driven out
> Only by more sinful? Can I neither act nor suffer
> Without perdition?[16]

Cragg continues this passage with the comment, 'The only emancipation from the entail of the selfish is to seek a wholeheartedly servant-status, in which the self is truly transcended …'[17] This returns us to the theme on Kenosis briefly touched upon earlier and now needing more exploration if we are to understand Cragg better as an Anglican theologian. It has already been noted that he was influenced when he wrote his thesis by the essay by Charles Gore in the collection *Lux Mundi*.

In his Gore Lecture for 1989, 'Incarnation and the Renewal of Community',[18] Rowan Williams traces the development in the nineteenth century of a dual theological principle which came to dominate considerations about the role of the church in human society. This he describes as 'incarnational and sacramentalist'. Through

16 T S Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*, first performed Canterbury, 1935.
17 *Sandals at the Mosque*, SCM Press, London, 1959, p. 100.
18 Rowan Williams, 'On Christian Theology', ch.15, pp. 225-238, *Incarnation and the Renewal of Community*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2000.

the incarnation 'God had raised the *whole* of human nature … to a new dignity … the human God had established, as abiding tokens of his presence, material acts and objects, bread, wine and water, and so declared all material existence to be potentially charged with the life of God.'[19] Led by F D Maurice and others in the nineteenth century, this principle changed the whole approach of the Church to public affairs. *The Kingdom of Christ*, the title of one of Maurice's most influential works, was seen to encompass the whole of life and to bring liberty 'to reflect the social harmony of the Trinity, liberation from the bondage of egotism'.[20] It was this theology, which underpinned the work of Gore, Scott-Holland, Wescott, Headlam and others and led to the establishment of the Christian Socialist Movement, and the subsequent theological themes of the 1960s, which refused to allow any firm boundary between the sacred and the secular. Although this theology has been critically analysed by Williams and others, the important connection for our purpose is the considerable influence the kenosis interpretation of the life of Jesus has played in the thinking of Cragg. This Christology did not lead him to join the Christian socialists, but it does penetrate all his thinking and engagement with Islam. Having been exposed in his childhood to a rigid theological system, he now shared with F D Maurice a suspicion of any system, which seemed to claim the answer to all questions. Also he dislikes any attempt to define too tightly theological insights, which by their very nature are more likely to be understood by the use of poetry, metaphor and elliptical language. He is not a systematic theologian and, according to Lamb[21] sometimes 'his writing becomes rather cloudy'.

The other central Christian doctrine influencing Cragg's thinking is the Atonement, and, in a letter to Christopher Lamb, he quoted from the American theologian Horace Bushnell (1802-1876), 'The Spirit has His Gethsemane within us … if the sacrifices of the much enduring, agonising Spirit were acted before the senses in the manner of the incarnate life of Jesus, He would seem to make the world itself a kind of Calvary from age to age.' This view has been criticised for its vagueness, but in the same letter,[22] Cragg rejects 'over forensic'

19 *Ibid*., p.225 ff.

20 *Ibid*., p. 226 ff.

21 Lamb, *op. cit*., p. 13.

22 Lamb, *op. cit*., p. 15 letter of 17.10.86.

interpretations and continues, 'I suppose a register of Bushnell's feel for *kenosis* and his finding it in creation *per se* and certainly in the "grievings" of the ever-patient Holy Spirit, far outweighed what may, or may not, be proper by way of strictures on his "vagueness".'

When teaching his students philosophy in Beirut, Cragg used a book by the American liberal thinker, W E Hocking, *Types of Philosophy*, which included the theme of 'reconception' which invited all faiths to rethink their basic convictions, 'preserving their cores of truth but expanding to include the insights of others'.[23] Lamb notes that Cragg later came to criticize this approach from Hocking, but it clearly influenced his early thinking, and, even as late as 1977 he finds 'its spirit is admirable.'[24] This philosophical idealism is also to be found in the thinking of the group of contributors to *Lux Mundi* who were the founders of Liberal Catholicism within the Anglican Church, in particular the work of T H Green. Although at no time a professional philosopher, Cragg's work has a theme of speculation concerning ultimate questions, which has been driven by this early experience. As Lamb comments, this 'interest therefore marked a further departure from his origins.'[25]

Another key influence, although in a negative sense, upon Cragg's development as an Anglican theologian, is to be found in the 1858 Bampton Lectures of Henry Mansel. They had the title, 'The Limits of Religious Thought' and argued that the limits of the human intellect meant that the truths of religion are not speculative but regulative. It followed from this, according to Mansel, that God is in Himself unknowable and human knowledge of the nature of God is acquired from supernatural revelation alone.[26] This provoked a good deal of hostile criticism, not least from F D Maurice who thought that Mansel had substituted the dry bones of theology for the living God. Lamb comments, 'For Maurice divine revelation was not the unveiling of a set of propositions but the meeting of a person, and (quoting Reardon, 1971, p. 239) "that Person the ground and Archetype of men, the source of all life and goodness in

23 Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
24 *The Christian and Other Religion. The Measure of Christ,* p. 76f.f, Mowbrays, London, 1977.
25 Lamb, *op. cit.,* p..22.
26 See article in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. 1997, p. 1029.

men".'[27] The dispute was continued later by Gore who considered the Incarnation as the crown, not the antithesis of what could be known through nature and reason. These strands of influence in Cragg's theology, where he would without doubt identify with the position of Maurice and Gore, help us to understand the roots of his own work. He came to his Christian faith through the formative influence of a conservative Evangelical atmosphere, later tempered by further study and experience. But the core of his faith is based upon a continuing relationship with the living Christ, a presence he finds not in dry academic speculation, but rather in a series of encounters with others, mainly within the dynamic of the Christian/Islam encounter. He describes this relationship in a thousand different ways, using every device of literature and allusion, sometimes almost to the point of impenetrability, but based on the belief that it is possible and right to attempt to do so. Commenting on this, and drawing on a number of sources, Lamb writes, 'The difficulty of language about God, as Cragg sees it, is that theologians suppose that God is reluctant to be named or described, and the confidence he calls for is in God's willingness to be addressed by the creatures he has made himself responsible for.'[28] But it could be conjectured that his emphasis on a personal relationship with Jesus would make it difficult for him to relate to Islam, or they to him. This would ignore the supremacy he gives to the doctrine of God as Creator—in itself seen by him as a sort of *kenosis*, a free self-giving of supreme power. This means, of course, says Lamb,[29] 'he can attempt to relate directly to Islam through the Qur'an with its vivid and consistent portrayal of … "The Lord of the Worlds", who constantly sustains us in being.'

Another key theological principle held by Cragg is his emphasis that the work of the Holy Spirit continues and therefore he 'urges a dynamic and not simply a static approach to doctrine.'[30] He is quite clear that the Spirit speaks in other faiths, and particularly Islam. He writes in *Sandals at the Mosque*, that the book was specifically written to repudiate views expressed in reviews of his first volume,

27 Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
28 Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
29 Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
30 Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

The Call of the Minaret, which suggested there could be no meeting of any meaning between the two religions. 'Whether or not we draw them together in spiritual meeting, they belong together in spiritual truth.'[31]

The Person of Christ is central to Cragg's theology. He does not espouse the 'theocentrism' of John Hick and others who propose that the focus for Christians should move from Christ to the centrality of God. He writes, 'The gospel through and through is about God. But it is about God in dimensions and via indices which are nowhere else reached or read as they are in Jesus as the Christ and the Christ as crucified for love of man.'[32] Even with this degree of conviction, he still rejects the term 'unique' as being applied to Jesus because he sees it as hostile in tone. He believes in the reality of religious diversity, not in the sense of 'religious pluralism' as applied to Hick and others, but rather as an acknowledgement of the fact of difference and that there can be no over-arching theological concept, which will embrace all faiths. Much theological speculation he regards as premature, leading towards closure, which is not ours to determine.

Arising from his own faith and essentially his experience, he believes that we will only find the way forward with other faiths if we take seriously the notion of *hospitality* as being at the heart of the Gospel, and the dynamic of 'proceeding' —the very word theology uses of the Holy Spirit.[33]

This concept of *hospitality* colours his whole approach to the role of the missionary. He respects and admires Temple Gairdner and Constance Padwick, both CMS missionaries who shared this approach, had similar roots in the life of the Church, and made a significant contribution to Islamic studies. This *hospitality* is not only about meeting people and discussing their ideas. It also demands the 'hospitality of the Christian mind to the true intentions, the inner heart of Islam itself'.[34]God cannot be turned into an academic topic, to be studies from afar and followed by some sort of evaluation. He regards any such activity as 'a blasphemous, and indeed also a ludicrous impossibility'.[35] This *hospitality* can only be exercised through face-to-

31 *Sandals*, p. 20.
32 *The Christ and the Faiths: Theology in Cross-Reference*, p. 323, 1986, and cited by Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
33 *The Christian and Other Religion*, Mowbrays, London, 1977, p. 105.
34 Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 101.
35 *Sandals*, p. 68.

face contact, through real engagement, through relationship, which is at once rewarding *and* costly.

Cragg also comes to his theological task as an Anglican bishop, with a clear view of authority, which in his own life has been tested. Both in Jerusalem and Canterbury, he accepted the authority of his Archbishop, although in the former case he had more sympathy with the decisions being made, than he did with the latter.

At this point it is useful to briefly explore Cragg's view of authority. We have seen how his roots are in evangelical Christianity and this was the dominant ethos of his home church in Blackpool. But, although at one end of the spectrum of churchmanship available within Anglicanism, it was firmly rooted in the Scriptures and the Book of Common Prayer. From the time of the first Prayer Book compiled by Cranmer and published in 1549 the issue of authority within the church had been addressed. In his Preface, Cranmer cites the 'ancient fathers' as a legitimate guide in liturgical matters. For the next century the basis of authority had to be defended against Puritans on the one hand and Roman Catholics on the other. The main exponents, Richard Hooker (c. 1554-1600)[36] and Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626) argued for the '*via media*' of the Anglican settlement and that its catholic integrity is patristic rather than papal. The classic formula was developed that all authority comes from God and is transmitted through Scripture, Tradition and Reason. It was the Anglican task, as it defined itself, to develop a balanced synthesis between these three.

Of particular interest to Cragg is Hooker whom he quotes in *Muhammad and the Christian* as having similar insight into the absolute authority and sovereignty of God as that expressed by Ibn Khaldun, a well-known Muslim thinker about faith and society. The absolute authority of God over the creation is emphasised, by Hooker, often quoting from the early Fathers of East and West and often reflecting an affinity with passages from the Qur'an. Indeed, Cragg writes that they are 'almost like a paraphrase of the Qur'an'.[37] The thrust of the Anglican Fathers is to develop credible belief, which aims to find consensus

36 Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk. 5, and Andrewes polemics with Cardinal Bellarmine. A full discussion of the issues is to be found in *Fathers and Anglicans*, chs. 6 and 7, by Arthur Middleton, Gracewing Publishing, Oxford, 2001.

37 *Muhammad and the Christian*, Oneworld, Oxford, 1999, p. 147 and pp. 32-34, where he analyses the concept of *Jihad*.

through the use of patristic scholarship. It is reason which determines discipline with the help and guidance of Scripture. It is legitimate to use tradition in matters where scripture give no clear or final guidance.[38] It is significant that Cragg first read history at Oxford and he has a strong sense of the Anglican tradition of authority. Perhaps this tradition gives some 'natural' affinity with Islam where all authority comes from God and is located within the Qur'an, Tradition and Reason, although the use of the written text has an absolute authority more akin to that ascribed to the Bible by the Puritans. However, there can be seen some sympathy between the two traditions in the use of reason in assessing and evaluating doctrines and scripture.

He sees the task of the Christian in the world of Islam as that of an ambassador, one who is representing another country, in his case the religious 'other', but one who must learn the local language and customs in order to be understood. Credibility and authority in such a situation have to be earned. They will not be ascribed just because of a title or label given by another country and culture.

In discussion with the author, Cragg agrees that he does not readily fit into any of the traditional categories into which theologians engaged in dialogue are usually placed. Lamb thinks that because of the centrality of Christ in his early and later books, he is acceptable to the conservative evangelical thinkers about mission,[39] but Cragg thinks that he has at least been 'suspect' in some circles, being regarded as not quite 'sound'. Lamb regards him as 'one of the elder statesman of … Inclusivism, boldly hospitable to other faiths, and ready to learn from them, but secure in the Christian home from which such hospitality is offered.'[40]This attempt to place Cragg does not really work. He certainly has a very strong personal faith that he is prepared to share with others. But the classic 'inclusivist' label, as applied for example to Karl Rahner and his idea of the 'anonymous Christian' does not fit Cragg. He does not suggest that somehow, if only they understood, Muslims are hidden Christians. He respects their 'otherness', their own insight, experience and understanding of Divine revelation.

38 See H R McAdoo, *The Spirit of Anglicanism*, A & C Black, London, 1965, for full discussion of the issues.

39 Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 170 ff.

40 Gavin D'Costa, *Theology and Religious Pluralism: The Challenge of Other Religions*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1986.

Some passing references have been made to Cragg's use of language, which at times can seem to be elliptical and difficult to penetrate. In his introduction to *The Event of the Qur'an, Islam and Its Scripture*, he writes, 'There are not simply meanings and words: there are meanings and words and people. There is not only content and form: there is content and form and audience … the collective human hearing imposes its own necessities of awareness and interpretation.'[41] He is here discussing the interpretation of the Qur'an, but it could equally be applied to any situation where deep truths are trying to be communicated through the limitations and inadequacies of all human language. In compelling language he tells us 'There is no prophecy, honoured or otherwise, without a country of the mind. Muhammad's country had its character … But in a profound way it also made a homeland of the heart that has endured these fourteen centuries.'[42] The classic Cragg combination is shown here. Mind and heart, dedicated to an enterprise of hospitality and faithfulness, which has produced a unique contribution to the world of dialogue and understanding. As we have already noted, the wish by some authors to fit those engaged in inter-religious dialogue into the paradigm of 'exclusivist', 'inclusivist' or 'pluralist'[43] does not work in the case of Cragg. He is a good example of someone who cannot be so easily categorised, being in some sense 'exclusivist' in his sense of personal salvation and the central position of Christ in God's redeeming work; 'inclusivist' in his desire to find God's redeeming presence, and the work of the Spirit, throughout creation; and 'pluralist' in his recognition of the truth and presence of God to be experienced in other faiths. Perhaps the time has come to abandon these definitions, which tend to separate and divide, rather than heal and restore.

Because he has written so extensively it would be possible to assume that Cragg has a rather academic approach to the challenge of what

41 *The Event of the Qur'an Islam in Its Scripture*, Oneworld Publications, London, 1971, p. 19.

42 *Loc cit*. Cragg emphasises the importance of the historical context of the foundation of Islam.

43 Both Lamb and Maeland classify Cragg as an 'Inclusivist'. Lamb, in *The Call to Retrieval*, p. 171, says that Cragg avoids the negativity of 'exclusivism' and the uncertainty of the 'pluralists' before defining him as an 'elder statesman' of Inclusivism. Bård Maeland in *Rewarding Encounters*, p. 177 ff. compares Cragg with Kraemer and Rahner and concludes that he is 'genuinely inclusive'. However, although mildly critical of Rahner, Cragg is broadly sympathetic with his approach.

he calls 'frontier theology'.[44] Nothing could be further from the truth. The final chapter of *Sandals at the Mosque*, 'Present with the Peace of God' is an intense personal testimony to his faith and commitment to the Church. The Church 'exists to give, not to get; to preach, not to strive; to welcome, not to proselytize.'[45] In a typical personal use of language he rejects the 'two covenant' theory in relation to Judaism, saying that although many involved in Jewish-Christian dialogue have opted for it, the problem is that it completely betrays the Gospel and the being of the Church. He is quite clear, 'It cannot be Christian to hold that any are excluded from Christ.'[46]

This is the core of his theology. It stems from a long journey of personal commitment and exploration that has given the opportunity for many encounters and opportunities to listen to others and share with them the riches of his experience.

His appreciation of Islam

In the *Event of the Qur'an*, first published in 1971 and re-issued in 1994, Cragg writes, 'Certainly the Qur'an did not, and does not, exist in order to be "interesting". It was, and is, a living summons asking a personal response and requiring a corporate participation … the Qur'an can never be authentically known in neglect of the sensitivities, the emotions, the spiritual property in it, of Muslims. There have been pursuits of western scholarship unhappily careless of these courtesies … A scholarship that exempts itself from the patient toils of due relationships is liable to forfeit in real intellectual achievement what it may attempt in bare analysis.'[47] This summarises well his attitude towards the Qur'an over a period of almost seventy years. He has not only made a life-long study of Islam, but also engaged with the culture of Muslim countries and built relationships with the people for whom the Qur'an is the centre of their faith. The Qur'an 'is a document of

44 *Sandals*, p. 139.

45 *Ibid*., p. 142.

46 *Faith and Life Negotiate*, p.p 183 and 184. Cragg is emphatic about the Jewish roots of Christianity and suggests the two-covenant theory does justice to neither faith. The importance of this issue for Cragg is reflected is his use of the whole of chapter 7 of his autobiography to the subject, 'A Christian Judaica'.

47 *Event*, p. 20.

faith looking for a faith to receive it. The scholar must be alive to it as such … To enquire genuinely into the Qur'an is to live with the life of Islam.'[48] It is in this spirit that Cragg explores the meaning of Islam. He does not make any attempt to reduce the impact of this faith in its attitude or effect on Christianity. There is no watering down of the claims of Islam, that is the total abrogation of the Christian faith, with no Crucifixion, Resurrection or redemption through Christ. The respect he has for Islam would not allow him to distort their faith to suit some liberal 'pluralist' agenda, which would prefer to avoid the tension inherent in difference. In a key chapter in *The Call of the Minaret*, with the title 'The Call to Retrieval',[49] he recalls a Muslim parable of three caravans travelling across the desert.

'The first halted and encamped while the other two went on. By and by the second halted and encamped, leaving the third to complete the journey alone. The caravans were respectively, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.' It follows that the Muslims have arrived, whereas the Christians have fallen short. This Muslim parable, Cragg explains, helps us to understand their perception of Judaism and Christianity. If a Muslim wishes to learn the truth about Jesus the Prophet, then for them, there is no point in going to the Gospels because these are corrupted, but rather to the Qur'an which is the pure and final Word of God. From the time of St John Damascene onwards some Christians have described Islam as a 'Christian heresy', but 'for Muslims the "Christian heresy is Christianity itself."'[50] Islam arrived to correct the Christian 'distortion' of Jesus and of God.

Cragg largely attributes this perception by Islam to the failure of the Christian Church. 'It was a failure in love, in purity, and in fervour, a failure of the spirit.' The version of Christianity known to Islam Cragg describes as 'imperfect', and this led to an opposition, which still persists with the 'pure faith' as he understands it. From a Christian point of view this is seen as a tragedy, because much of the Muslim opposition to Christianity is against a faith they have never effectively known. He writes, 'The state of being a stranger to the Christ of the Christians has been intensified by further failures of love and

48 *Ibid.*

49 Chapter 9, p. 219. This is also the title chosen by Christopher Lamb for his study of Cragg's Christian vocation to Islam.

50 *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 219.

loyalty on the part of institutional Christianity in the long and often bitter external relations of the two faiths through the centuries.'[51] He regards it as no less than a tragedy in the history of the relationship between the two faiths that fixed positions were adopted early and even today there are those who see little point in trying to build bridges of understanding. This view of the early history of the encounter between the two faiths no doubt has validity, but it is hardly the whole picture. It is true that early Islam would have encountered the Christian faith in an Eastern form, which would contain elements that would be of a different tradition from the Church in the West. However, in its essentials, believing in the core tenets of the Christian faith, what was being rejected by Islam did not constitute a gross distortion of the key elements of the faith. Such stumbling blocks as the doctrine of the Trinity, even with sophisticated interpretations concerning relationship, would still constitute a major difficulty for orthodox Muslims. In later centuries the Church in the West certainly failed in charity towards the Muslims and became embroiled in the political conflicts of the time.

However, Cragg, in his second book, *Sandals at the Mosque*,[52] challenges a counsel of despair that suggests dialogue is pointless. The faiths may have difficulty in spiritual meeting, but 'they belong together in spiritual truth.'[53] In spite of the differences, Cragg finds beneath these some vital areas, which are common ground. They both believe in the significance of the world, they share an understanding of the oneness and personality of God, they accept the fact of revelation and 'the moral accountability of man in and beyond this life'.[54] Lamb and others have raised the question, whether in seeking this 'common ground' Cragg is not revealing a missionary purpose presented as an engagement with Islam. His language about Christ and the Church does not seek to compromise his own faith and is expressed in the terminology he would have absorbed during his early years in the conservative evangelical tradition. Cragg's choice of language appears to cause a degree of discomfort in some of his Christian colleagues engaged in Christian-Muslim dialogue. He does not share much of the modern liberal agenda but is greatly respected by Lamb and others

51 *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 219.
52 *Sandals*, Part 1, 'In Quest of Islam', p. 20.
53 *Sandals*, p. 20.
54 *Ibid*., p. 74.

who do not doubt his genuine concern for Islam, and acknowledge that Cragg sees in it a relationship between God and man, which has an element of reciprocity. This makes God to some degree subject to the will of humanity, in the sense that He has chosen to limit Himself through His act of creating men with freewill, a position rejected by Muslims. But Cragg argues from the content of the Qur'an in its description of God as Creator, that the relationship is already there from the beginning.[55] This position could lead to the accusation that he believes he understands the implications of Islam better than the Muslims do and that he seeks out those within the Muslim community who are likely to be sympathetic to this view.

Cragg's whole theological approach to Islam is based upon the premise that it is possible to communicate with God and that we have an 'existential need of it'.[56] This does not lead him to an anthropocentric view of God, implying that we have created Him in our own image. He comments on the Islamic cry 'Allahu-akbar', 'the criteria of divine greatness cannot well be those of our devising or requiring. It takes God to show us what they are.'[57] This is a central point in Cragg's theology. The omnipotence of God cannot lead to an arbitrariness, which would render our Islam/submission impossible. The whole thrust of his life and work has been based upon the possibility of relationship, first with God and this then leading to relationship with people. He acknowledges the tradition of negative theology, which focuses on the otherness, the 'indescribability' of God, but believes in the possibility that there can be 'a certain mutuality between God and man, proper to both'.[58] In his book '*Troubled by Truth*' 1992[59] he writes, 'God, having "a friend" (in Abraham) thereby becomes (or, rather, is) one—a truth which must make the two words *Allah* and *khalil* somehow alike. A relationality in respect of man enters, in some sense, into the being of God.'

55 Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
56 Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
57 *Truth and dialogue: The Relationship between World Religions*, ed. John Hick, Sheldon Press, London, 1975, p. 136.
58 In A H Green (ed.), *In Quest of an Islamic Humanism: Arabic and Islamic Studies in memory of Mohamed al-Nowaihi*, American University in Cairo Press, Cairo, 1984, p. 190.
59 *Troubled by Truth: Life-Studies in Interfaith Concern*, Pentland, Durham, 1992.

Thus, as Lamb comments, for Cragg the bridge which can be built between theology and religion 'is the possibility of mutual communication between God and humanity which God has planted in the very character of his creation.' This element of the possibility of intimacy with God is fundamental for Cragg and has found some echoes among Muslims. In his review of *The Call of the Minaret*, Daud Rahbar[60] criticised the theologians of Islam for their representation of the divine transcendence to the point where the divine personality was obscured. However, the majority of Islamic scholars would not follow this view. Lamb cites Fazlur Rahman as representative of this majority school, commenting that if God is a friend of humanity, then it is as a 'protector-friend'. For Cragg though, the link is not some philosophical abstraction, but a real relationship which leads to worship that ennobles humanity as well as honouring God.

We have already noted that Cragg has no difficulty in seeing the activity of the Spirit in other faiths. In this he seems to take a broader view than some of his early more rigid evangelical colleagues, particularly from his Bristol theological college. Most evangelicals would see the work of the Spirit in other faiths as being active in leading adherents to personal experience of Christ. This outlook is classically represented by Lesslie Newbigin who wrote, 'The work of the Spirit is the confession of Christ.'[61] In his book, *Alive to God: Muslim and Christian Prayer*,[62] Cragg confirms his belief that God does speak through the institutions of Islam and in particular through the Qur'an. But his understanding of this does not suggest that Muslims accept the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit. For them God is not Spirit in the sense that the fourth Gospel would claim. (John 4.24). Cragg approaches this issue in an oblique manner, avoided any head to head conflict, which he would see as contrary to the Spirit of love and reconciliation. He avoids over definition, or any superficial interpretation, which leads to deadlock instead of any mutual understanding. This is the case in his writing about the Holy Spirit in Islam. He turns to 'Sufi' literature, which may be seen to support his theme of the Spirit 'proceeding' (as we say in the creed) to reveal the inner meaning of Islam. But Lamb

60 Daud Rahbar (1958) Review of *The Call of the Minaret, The Muslim World* 48:1 (Jan.) pp. 40-51.

61 *The Open Secret, Sketches for a Missionary Theology*, 1978, quoted by Lamb, *op. cit*., p. 57.

62 *Alive to God. Muslim and Christian Prayer*, OUP, London and New York, 1970.

comments that Muslims uninfluenced by 'Sufi' thought would be puzzled by Cragg's theology of the Spirit.[63]

They can see the Spirit of God active in the revelation given to Muhammad through Gabriel, but this in no way accords with the Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity. They also speculate about 'spirits' at work in an unseen world, but this is of no interest to Cragg. His focus is on the modern world and how Christians and Muslims engage with the post-Enlightenment development of secularism and agnosticism. In doing this, he does not depart from doctrinal orthodoxy, as defined and protected by the Church over the centuries, but finds within this tradition an openness and richness, which can engage with other faiths in a quest for the truth. In a reflection of his own journey, he seeks language, which points towards movement and exploration rather than the settlement and safety of a fixed position. He criticises what he perceives as the defensive posture of the 'custodian mind', 'there are no automatic guarantees in the Holy Spirit, no established creeds, codes, churches, symbols, which avail and achieve just by dint of being there, of being right in form, of holding fast and keeping going.'[64] This apparent disregard for rigidity may alarm some, but, like F D Maurice in an earlier generation, he wishes to break free from abstract metaphysics, and bring Christology/theology 'firmly into the concrete "operation" of divine energy to save, fulfilled within the human.'[65] He was inspired by the earlier work of the missionary Temple Gairdner who found much traditional Christian language and metaphor a barrier to understanding rather than a vehicle for conveying experience of the love of God.

Cragg then claims his mission is to Islam, not just to individual Muslims. But there is no sense of him wanting to persuade others of the superiority of his faith in some polemical sense. He is concerned with relationship, which can only come through the possibilities presented by extensive contact and listening to the 'other'. His focus in on the challenge Islam makes to the Christians, and from his earliest days he has been driven by a desire to share his personal experience of the love

63 Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

64 *The Christian and Other Religion. The Measure of Christ*, Mowbray, London, 1977, p. 108.

65 'Temple Gairdner's Legacy', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Oct. 1981, pp. 164-7.

of God as he finds it in Jesus. His books all have the same basic theme —that by working in and through the interface between Christianity and Islam, which implies a profound knowledge of both faiths, and by using every device of language, imagination and scholarship, it is possible to find a path of peace where we can learn from each other things about the nature of God.

Many Muslim scholars have criticised Cragg's work, seeing it as a sophisticated attempt to read Christian doctrine into the Qur'anic text.[66] In particular the comment is made that Cragg regards Islam as only providing unavailing, external remedies to human problems, while Christianity 'is credited with the custody of the true, because inward and spiritual, solution'. (Lamb, p. 126) These criticisms of Cragg's alleged tendency to 'Christianise' Islam are sometimes based on the assertion that he has either a fundamental lack of sympathy for it, or, too much sympathy, which does not do justice to the fundamental differences between the two religions. These criticisms come from Muslim writers and perhaps miss the point that Cragg is addressing a Christian audience in his books, as made clear in the introduction to 'The Event of the Qur'an' which examines the context of Muhammad's teaching in Mecca to an essentially polytheistic Arab world. His concern is not with the old antagonisms between Islam and Christianity.

In the same book we find one of the cultural meeting points between Cragg and Islam, which can be lost in the examination of his detailed understanding of the text of the Qur'an. As we have seen, Cragg is steeped in English history and its long poetic and literary tradition. He constantly uses these sources to illustrate a point and to get to the heart of the matter he is trying to convey. Drawing parallels with text of the Qur'an, he writes, 'The Qur'anic character as poetry and Muhammad's experience as poetic go far to explain and illuminate those features of the story which have sometimes received malicious interpretation in the west or superstitious esteem in the east.' [67] He compares the experience of having the muse of literature with trance and ecstasy, providing a great vision 'beyond the frontiers and patterns of normal consciousness'. It is this transcendent quality of the Qur'an

66 Christopher Lamb expands on these criticisms in ch. 6 of *The Call to Retrieval*; *The Question of Criteria in Interpreting Islam*. Particularly the Pakistani scholar Hamidullah regards Cragg's work as a 'sugar-coated pill'..

67 *The Event of the Qur'an*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1971, p. 48.

that Cragg relates to and conveys in his writings with passion. His love for the written word is central to any understanding of his engagement with Islam. Commenting on the 'luminous Arabic' of the Qur'an, he writes, 'The force of language bears on the import of truth and the pattern of truth is in the shape of language. The meaning makes its own music, finds its own mythopoetic words, strides within its own metre, flows down the channel of its own filling, and all these, the literary qualities, take their being from its urgency.'[68] He does not believe that it distracts in any way from the unique character of the Qur'an to draw on patterns of literary inspiration to enhance our understanding. This inspiration Cragg finds primarily in the early Meccan period of the Qur'an rather than the later Medinan years, which he sees as more concerned with the legal application of a series of rules. Lamb, with others, asks whether the model of 'poetry' is adequate, since any definition of the term is difficult. The Qur'an does not fit in with the definition of Arabic poetry, lacking regular rhymes and being rather disjointed in various parts of the text. But perhaps this is to take too limited an interpretation of 'poetry'? Cragg constantly searches for insights into the text at different levels of interpretation, using his whole literary knowledge to make links, which he finds useful in bringing a deeper understanding. He does not always succeed, but reading Cragg is still to be invited on a journey of exploration and a testing of one's own capacity to bring various hermeneutical sources to bear.

His political theology

Cragg writes, 'For to study Islam, both in its history and its theology, is to encounter the most resolute and unperturbed of all faiths in placing trust, and finding pride, in political religion.'[69] He continues in this chapter from *Muhammad and the Christian* to give a detailed description of the social and political conditions, which prevailed, in Mecca before Muhammad set out for Medina. Cragg strongly believes that the spiritual, as represented by prophecy and institutions, has to do with the political order, but it must retain liberty and spiritual

68 *Ibid.*, p. 47.

69 *Muhammad and the Christian: A Question of Response,* ch.3, *The Political Equation*, Orbis, London, DLT, New York, p. 32.

independence. The thrust of his engagement with Islam is to try and understand the historical and religious context in which the Islamic state arose. He is suspicious of the use of power to advance spiritual values, considering it a contradiction of the very nature of God as revealed in the suffering Servant. The understanding of suffering and rejection reflected in the early Shi'ah history and culture provides a 'minority verdict against Sunni "victoriousness"'.[70] He has an eirenic approach which cannot accept the use of force in trying to impose a religious faith.

Cragg, as an Anglican bishop, is well aware of the complexities of the relationship between Church and State. As an historian he knows how fraught this has been at times and also how valuable in giving the Church a voice in political affairs without forming a separate political party. He does not shirk from the tensions inherent in political comment, but these are made from outside any particular political affiliation.

In his autobiography, *Faith and Life Negotiate*, and the volume he wrote as a direct response to the New York attacks of 9 September 2001, '*Am I Not Your Lord*?[71] he makes a series of political judgements on specific issues. Kuwait, for example, was created as a territorial expression of British oil interests and western politics in the Gulf on the one hand and a tribal family hierarchy on the other. He is scathing about Ataturk's secular philosophy, which was applied in Turkey after the First World War and of the Armenian holocaust in the second decade of the twentieth century.[72] In chapter three of his autobiography, *Unease in Zion*,[73] Cragg provides a lengthy and critical account of the Balfour Declaration of 1917, giving Britain a League of Nations Mandate over Palestine. He writes, 'it contrived a sorry bed of nails, a doom of costly futility, through a quarter century of enmities incorrigible.' The Declaration he describes as a deliberate deception, neglecting the 90 percent preponderance of Palestinians in Palestine and ignoring the earlier assurances given to Arab allies during the war. Certainly at this point Cragg's language has no need for subtle interpretation, 'Chicanery can never implement truth, for it only lives

70 *Ibid*., ch. 9, *Ready for Response*, p. 143.
71 *Am I Not Your Lord? Human Meaning in Divine Question*, Melisende, London, 2002.
72 *Ibid*., p. 205.
73 *Faith and Life Negotiate,* The Canterbury Press, Norwich, 1994, ch. 3, p. 162.

by defiling it … British power became inevitably oppressive, trying to hold a ring that had no ring of truth.' Moving further into the twentieth century, he criticises Elie Wiesel for insisting that 'survivors of the Holocaust had no debts except to non-survivors'[74] remarking that gratitude is rare in politics—or religion. If Rommel had broken through at Alamein, there may not have been any State of Israel. The travails of the Palestinians have weighed heavily upon Cragg who feels strongly their continuing suffering.

The roots of Cragg's political theology can be found in his early influences.

The work of F D Maurice and later Charles Gore were both significant. Although he only saw him once, he also could not miss the influence of William Temple, who made no secret of his views about justice and the right ordering of society. In 'Sandals at the Mosque' he analyses St Paul's words in Ephesians chapter six concerning the 'Gospel of peace'. He asks whether this 'means entering into every situation with a readiness for quiet compromise … On the contrary, the good news begins by being disturbing'. The Gospel of peace can only be described as such 'because it is a profoundly disconcerting thing which comes with radical judgment and transforming decision into every situation'. It is only through judgment and disturbance that the Gospel brings newness of life.[75] In part 3 of Sandals, Present with the Peace of God, he links the Anglo-Saxon notion of the 'king's peace' as a clue to understanding 'what Islam proposes and the Gospel announces'. It is a peace of sovereignty, the assertion of a rule of law in the lives of people and societies. For the Muslim, community of right order is central. He rejects the absolutism of Communism,[76] 'with the totalitarianism that recognises no judgment on itself …' Communism, in absolutizing its dogmas and claims, has dethroned God. His analysis of the absolute sovereignty of God in Islamic society has parallels for him in the New Testament understanding of the Kingdom of God. He refers to C H Dodd[77] who wrote, 'The term "Kingdom" indicates that … in which God is revealed as King or sovereign Lord of His people or the universe which He created.' Thus Cragg's analysis makes direct

74 *Ibid.*, p. 164.
75 *Sandals*, p. 105.
76 *Sandals*, p. 115.
77 C H Dodd *Parables of the Kingdom*, London, 1935.

comparisons between the Islam and Christian concepts of society, how it should be ordered and the responsibility of the individual to contribute to the 'common good'.

Although Cragg is prepared to engage with particular political issues, his primary focus is theological rather than political. Lamb comments that 'he does not always indicate an awareness that for many Muslims theology … is of little interest or importance compared with discovering the right conduct God requires.'[78] The concept of a God-given community in Islam makes all political life grounded in a religious base. In the main within the Christian tradition, faith is seen as having political implications. Lamb considers Cragg to be unsympathetic to the development of liberation theology, especially as espoused by the Mexican theologian Jose Miranda.

But the final pages of *Muhammad and the Christian* sets out the consequences of repudiating false idolatries and in truly 'letting God be God'. This theological foundation leads to liabilities in concrete situations concerned 'with politics and society, with the economic order, and issues of liberty, justice and compassion. They are concerns about poverty and discrimination, about chronic imbalance in resources and living standards both between and within national states. They have to do with exploitation of natural and human resources, with pollution and the rape of nature, with the menace of technological vandalism and the cult of sheer efficiency.'[79] These are hardly the words of one who is detached from political issues and he then asserts that all these issues will find no solution unless they are seen as theological, which leads to the recognition of God in all things through 'right submission'. Christian theologians of liberation, he believes, unconsciously use this essentially 'muslim' concept, and he quotes Miranda's *Marx and the Bible* to support this.[80] God commands us and makes absolute demands upon us; if it is not so, then God is no longer God. The consequences of this transcendence is that we have an 'entire commitment to justice for our neighbour'. Far from contesting Miranda, in this passage Cragg has no doubt that it is 'New Testament' grace which drives Miranda's passion for justice, in the tradition of the prophets of Judaism. It is however

78 Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

79 *Muhammad and the Christian*, p. 156.

80 Jose Miranda, *Marx and the Bible: A Critique of the theology of Oppression*, Orbis, New York, 1974, p. 44.

in this very area of some agreement with Islam that the Christian reservation about Muhammad finds expression. God does not only command, but also reveals himself in grace and suffering. It is this emphasis on suffering which has been criticised in Cragg's theology and Lamb ascribes this to his Protestant background. It is difficult to make this equation, since an emphasis on suffering is also strong in Catholic theology. But Cragg sees reciprocity in our relationship with God because He has chosen to be identified with the human condition. It is this theological insight that leads Cragg to the conviction that all of society, including the political order, is subject to God's sovereignty.

His role as an Anglican theologian and scholar of Islam

Rowan Williams, writing on 'The Finality of Christ',[81] comments, 'But if inter-faith encounter is more than a programme for avoiding disagreement … debate is inevitable and fruitful. And if we need to be concerned to state what the Christian question or challenge is to other faiths, we need to be more alert in hearing the corresponding questions addressed to us—the Muslim anxiety about the fragmentation of religious language without an essentially unitary concept of God and God's will.' Kenneth Cragg has spent a long life engaged in such an encounter and although his roots are to be found in an Anglican evangelical tradition, there is a sense of someone on a journey, making fresh discoveries and asking new questions as he proceeds. He has responded to the Festschrift written to mark his 90th birthday, *A Faithful Presence,* with a characteristic riposte, 'A Strange Half-absence',[82] mildly objecting to the title on the grounds of modesty. He thinks 'A Strange Half-absence' more accurately reflects the academic mind, which may be far from the realities of faith. He asks, 'is Faithful Presence' an elusive dream? He is critical of some of the contributions as 'a barren verdict of despair' that dismisses all that is common territory around Christology—'in creation for creaturehood, in prophethood and personality, in a sacramental order of in a world of faith that excludes

81 *On Christian Theology*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2000, Ch.7, p. 104.

82 See *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* Vol.15, No.3, July 2004, Carfax Publishing, pp. 317-329. Cragg brought this paper to the author's attention and the view that we can have no 'faithful presence'.

the 'other' 'signs' and in the divine commitment to humankind explicit in the very nature of law …' And, typically, he criticises the use of language, which does not take sufficient account of its qualities of metaphor, analogy, allegory, sympathy and image. This rather passionate response sums up much of Cragg's life and work. He is recognised as a leading academic and Arabic scholar, who has made an enormous contribution to our understanding of Islam. He is concerned mainly with the present, although he does not lack a sense of history. But, while recognising that academic studies need to be dispassionate, he believes that 'passion is inseparable from their authenticity.'[83] His writing, although sometimes difficult to penetrate and always inviting further study, arises from the heart of his own experience of involvement and engagement with Islam and Christianity, always seeking to find areas of commonality and shared insight rather than conflict and rejection.

Within the Anglican world he has often been a rather marginal figure who did not receive due recognition for his work after the closure of St Augustine's College in Canterbury. This is partly due to a failure of vision by those responsible and also perhaps a consequence of his personality. It is impossible to imagine Cragg playing ecclesiastical politics to secure preferment or to advance his own interest. Throughout his books the theme constantly returns to the belief that, 'Religions, across all their disparities, are about the same thing and have to do with the same world, with the heart of man and the finitude of life.'[84] In his journey of exploration and encounter, he has followed his own dictum; 'Christian theology is safest when it is most concerned, not to be safe, but to be articulate.'[85] Engagement can never be merely a question of tactic, but should be motivated by the 'impulse to reverence, tactfulness, tenderness, care, sensitivity—in a word, to humility'. This humility is to be expressed in frankness and the business of honest theological translation. In this task he remains a Christian theologian, but one who is willing to share his own sense of God's presence with him in Christ and to listen to the experience of others finding the love of God transmitted to them through other channels. The imperative for Cragg throughout all his activities has been

83 *A Strange Half-absence: Reflections on A Faithfull Presence*, Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, vol. 15 no. 3, July 2004, Carfax Publishing, Oxford. pp. 317-329. p. 319.
84 *Sandals*, p. 74.
85 *Sandals*, p. 88.

to painstakingly explain the meaning of the Gospel with a dedication to the disciplines of learning and listening. He rejects the counsel of despair in the current ethos of violence, believing that patience and sanity will prevail in the recognition that we all answer the question, *Am I Not Your Lord?* in the affirmative.

My personal encounter with Kenneth Cragg revealed his strong sense of vocation, which derived from his belief in the trusting and lasting friendship of Jesus. In his own words, 'If God undertakes us in redemptive purpose and redemptive love, we must undertake each other in comparable terms. If we affirm that "God is love" then "love one another" must closely follow.'[86] At his ordination he heard the words from Geoffrey Fisher, his bishop, 'Receive this care, both yours and mine,' and he then embarked on a journey where the one thing that saved him 'was the fact that faith responds as it proceeds. For it belongs with an enterprise of trust in which it is junior partner to "the patience of God".' It is this assurance about God that sustained the once-for-all commitment he gave at his ordination.

Books about Kenneth Cragg

Christopher Lamb, *A Policy of Hope: Kenneth Cragg and Islam*, Melisende, London, 2014.
(This includes a full bibliography of Cragg's works. It is an updated version of his 1997 book *The Call to Retrieval: Kenneth Cragg's Vocation to Islam*.)

Bård Maeland, *Rewarding Encounters: Islam and the Comparative Theologies of Kenneth Cragg and Wilfrid Cantwell Smith*, Melisende, London, 2003.

A Faithful Presence: Essays for Kenneth Cragg edited by David Thomas with Clare Amos, Meilisende, London, 2003.

86 *Faith and Life Negotiate*, Canterbury Press, Canterbury, 1994, p. 259 ff.

KENNETH CRAGG, CHARLES MALIK AND DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD—SOME THOUGHTS ON THE QUESTION OF MYSTICISM AND THE 'PUBLIC SQUARE'

David Derrick

Introduction

Surveying the public square and engaging with the three principle actors, this article explores the influence of religion and mysticism in the public square and the dynamic that each actor has brought to this area and in turn has been influenced by it. The mapping of the public square has had to be on a very small scale, given the restraints of space. Similarly with the treatment of the term 'Mysticism'.

> No word in our language—not even 'Socialism'—has been employed more loosely than 'Mysticism.' Sometimes it is used as an equivalent for symbolism or allegorism, sometimes for theosophy or occult science; and sometimes it merely suggests the mental state of a dreamer, or vague and fantastic opinions about God and the world. [Inge 1918: 3]

So wrote William Ralph Inge, the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, London; almost a hundred years later definitions of mysticism are still as loose and vague. Rather than attempt to give an all-encompassing definition of mysticism, each actor will bring his own sampling into the arena.

The Public Square

The Naked Public Square was Richard John Neuhaus' stark metaphor for what he saw as the exclusion of religious discourse from the conduct

of public policy and law formation [Neuhaus 1986: vii]. Having cast off its religious mantle, society stands shivering and vulnerable. Carl H Esbeck, reviewing this book, notes that as early as 1940, writers had already seen the need of a socio-religious consensus to redress the state's political power. [Esbeck 1985: 202]

More recently (2012), Malcolm Miles, in *The Ambivalence of the Public Square,* sees 'A public square, as an archetype of public space, ... where a society's dominant ideology is presented for the public gaze.' He demonstrates how a mythicized idea of the public square is a necessary element for the public understanding of a free society and argues for a realignment of the 'idea of the public square, or the imagination of a viable public sphere' [Miles 2012]. He, in common with other writers, sees *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, by J Habermas (1991) as the seminal work whereby the public square became 'a template for the space designed for acts of democratic exchange'. However, Gavin D'Costa in his review of Armando Salvatore's, *The Public Sphere: Liberal Modernity, Catholicism, Islam,* contends that,

> Habermas' depiction of the public square seriously fails to engage with the genealogy of the concept of the 'public square' and the 'common good'. If Habermas had dug deep enough he would have located the 'public square' within its two earlier axial stages and thus recognized its vital religious dimensions. Charles Taylor and Craig Calhoun are social theorists who do take these traditions seriously. [D'Costa 2010: 508-9]

Thus it is arguable that the religious aspect never left the 'secular' public square, it was merely overlooked, 'buried' or ignored by the secularists, rather than having been excluded.

Craig Calhoun's chapter, *Civil society and the public sphere* in Michael Edwards (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society,* clearly explains how the Public Sphere, grew out of the eighteenth-century notion of 'Civil Society', where 'social life could be self-organizing, even in complex, large-scale societies, and that it could thereby be more free than if left to government officials or to technical experts.' [Calhoun 2011: 2]

The nuanced differences between writers as to the meaning and role of 'The Public Square', 'The Public Sphere', 'Civil Society' and 'Civic Virtue' [Salvatore 2007: 236] do not affect nor concern the overall approach of this article. As Salvatore points out, 'The development of modern liberal notions of the autonomy of the self and the public sphere was complex and not as linear as the narratives of social theory often imply.' [Salvatore 2007: 15] What is important here, is the recognition that these areas are fundamental to freedom and the pursuit of public good.

In *Faith and the Public Square*, Rowan Williams points out that the term 'secularism' is more than one idea or process. He distinguishes between 'procedural' and 'programmatic' secularism. He uses the government of India as an example of procedural secularism. The state's role is to oversee a variety of communities of religious persuasion, (I would add, 'and political persuasion'), 'without need of any specific public confessional allegiance from its servants or guaranteeing a single community a legally favoured position against others'. Williams uses what he calls the French paradigm as an approximation to programmatic secularism, which he defines as where:

> any and every public manifestation of any particular religious allegiance is to be ironed out so that everyone may share a clear public loyalty to the state unclouded by private convictions, and any signs of such private convictions are rigorously banned from public space. [Williams 2012: 2-3]

He sees that Christianity would have no problems with a procedural secularism as in India (although the state is having problems accommodating the rise of Hindu nationalism and its rejection of a universalistic view of nationalism. [Pandey 1990]). However, programmatic secularism has only one public loyalty beyond loyalty to one's faith, which is roughly the French position (France's Muslim citizens are, in their own way, challenging this concept [Klausen 2005: 20-24]). As Williams points out, all of the above not only have implications for how the State deals with the question of religious liberty, but also how it sees its own identity. This also has further implications as to how the public square is envisaged and how effectively it can operate. [Williams 2012: 3-4]

Williams' treatment of secularism is similar to that of Kenneth Cragg, particularly in his book *The Secular Experience of God*. [Cragg 1998] Cragg plots the contours of the three major Abrahamic religions to show how they adjust themselves to 'secularity' or 'secularization—he uses both terms. He sees that the role of religion is to examine the inability of secular liberalism to safeguard both religious freedom and truth. [Cragg 1998: 16-17] Cragg concludes that 'What is plain now is that society cannot be content with drawing on the reserves of Christian moral capital without attention to replenishing the source.' [Cragg 1998: 71]

In asking 'Has secularism failed?' (secularism appears in retreat before resurgent religious bigotry), Williams sees two ways of asking this question. The first is whether attempts should be made to resist the reintroduction of religious dialogue into the public square, given the controversies around 'faith schools' and the growth of terrorism in the name of religion. Williams feels that in these areas, secularism should be maintained to prevent social upheaval. His other way of asking the question is, does secularism have 'an adequate vocabulary for speaking of *evil*? Does modernity allow for evil or only for a thinly conceived good and bad or, worse still, progressive and reactionary, useful and redundant?' [Williams 2012: 11-12] It is here that Williams sees that 'procedural' secularism is most challenged. He further argues that 'secular' freedom is a simplification of freedom and diminishes our perception of what it means to be human. [Williams 2012: 25]

Postsecularism

Luke Bretherton's *A Postsecular Politics? Inter Faith Relations as a Civic Practice*, given as 'The Lambeth Inter Faith Lecture' at Lambeth Palace on June 4th, 2009 [Bretherton 2009], provides a useful summary of the main points of his book *Christianity & Contemporary Politics: The Conditions and Possibilities of Faithful Witness* [Bretherton 2010] for which he was awarded the 2013 Michael Ramsey Prize for Theological Writing.

Bretherton's plotting of the emerging contours of religious-state relations in Britain shows a number of contributory developments: large scale immigration, the turn to civil society, the State as partner not provider, the return of the moral questions regarding

the distribution of welfare, the move towards participatory or co-governance, and the secularization of religion. Bretherton sees the latter as the latest development in religious-state relations. It has arisen out of actual and supposed connexions with terrorism and some Islamic groups. In all of these areas, Bretherton observes that governments see faith groups having a key role in view of their cultural, moral and social resources. He concludes that this has resulted in an increase in the dynamic of religious-state relations. He notes that the term 'postsecular' is increasingly being applied to this contemporary relationship between religion and politics. [Bretherton 2009: 3-7]

Mysticism in the Public Square

Dag Hammarskjöld sets mysticism firmly in the public square with a very concrete, public and universal example: the Meditation Room in the United Nations Headquarters in New York. This was very much the personal creation of Dag Hammarskjöld and quite a remarkable achievement in the face of much opposition. Because of his published journal, *Vägmärken* ('Markings'), where we get a glimpse into his inner spiritual life, Hammarskjöld has been referred to as a modern day Mystic. He recognized and articulated the need for spirituality to be at the centre of the United Nations and he is often quoted as saying that world peace would not occur without a spiritual renaissance on our planet. ['The United Nations Meditation Room' 2007]

For those who may not be familiar with either Cragg, Hammarskjöld or Malik, their backgrounds will be briefly outlined.

Kenneth Cragg Biography

Cragg was born in 1913 in Blackpool, Lancashire into a devote Church of England Evangelical family. His father was a struggling back-street shopkeeper in the working-class holiday-resort of Blackpool. Through scholarships he gained his education culminating in an MA from Oxford in 1935.

Cragg was ordained an Anglican priest in 1936. He went to Lebanon in 1939, to begin his missionary service, under the auspices of the British Syria Mission. In Lebanon he met Charles Malik then the Head of Department of Philosophy at the American University of Beirut. On Malik's departure to become Lebanon's Ambassador, Cragg took over as acting Head of the Philosophy Department. He returned to Oxford in 1947 and was awarded his doctorate in 1950. [Cragg 1950] The following year Cragg was appointed to the chair of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Hartford Seminary, USA.

In 1956 he published his seminal book *The Call of the Minaret*. In 1961 he became Warden of St Augustine's College, Canterbury. Then in 1970 he was consecrated as assistant bishop in the Jerusalem Archbishopric. Cragg has been recognized as a leader in the field of Christian- Muslim relations.

It was in his book *Christianity, World Perspective* published in 1968, that Cragg first started to cite Hammarskjöld as both an international diplomat and a mystic. This was quickly followed by a positive approach toward the United Nations in his other books. His book *The Wisdom of the Sufis*, published in 1976, shows that their wisdom 'lies in finding out the loneliness of the egotistical self and attaining the community of the essential self.' [Cragg 1976: 3] In 1982 together with his co-author R.M. Speight, he published an undergraduate textbook, *Islam from Within: Anthology of a Religion*. Cragg was responsible for the material on the Qur'an, Worship and Religion, Art and Architecture, Mystics and Saints. [Cragg and Speight 1980] He continued to publish almost up to his death in 2012 at The College of St Barnabas just a few months short of his one hundredth birthday.

Dag Hammarskjöld Biography

Hammarskjöld was born in 1905 into an aristocratic family in Jönköping, Sweden. He was brought up in the university town of Uppsala where his father was Governor of the county of Uppland. His father became Prime Minister of Sweden in 1914. Although Hammarskjöld never joined any political party, regarding himself as an independent, he served the Swedish Government in several posts. In 1954, he was elected Secretary-General of the United Nations. As

Secretary-General, Hammarskjöld worked through a range of situations to prevent war and serve the other aims of the UN Charter.

In the Middle East, for example, this included: continual diplomatic activity in support of the Armistice Agreements between Israel and the Arab States and promoted progress toward better and more peaceful conditions in the area; organization in 1956 of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) and its subsequent administration; clearance of the Suez Canal in 1957 and assistance in the peaceful resolution of the Suez Canal dispute; organization and administration of the United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL) and in 1958 the establishment of an office for the special representative of the Secretary-General in Jordan in 1958.

Markings

Jodok Troy's article, *Dag Hammarskjöld: An International Civil Servant Uniting Mystics and Realistic Diplomatic Engagement*, demonstrates that:

> While in office, Hammarskjöld was able to unite personal belief and political rationale. This is the main reason he became a respected and true international civil servant. [He] united mystics and realistic political engagement. [Troy 2010: 434]

Troy's article draws on the lessons learned from a 'practical mystical' and an international civil servant. He sees Hammarskjöld's strong political ethic as a consequence of his mysticism. [Troy 2010: 438] Troy concludes that by the devotion of Hammarskjöld's private life to God, he was able to devote his political life to the UN. Hammarskjöld was tragically killed in a plane crash during a UN Mission to Ndola, in today's Zambia.

After his death, a manuscript with the title *Vägmärken* (translated as *Markings*) was discovered with a covering letter to his literary executor, stating that it was 'a sort of White Book concerning my negotiations with myself—and with God.' Roger Lipsey, in his article *Dag Hammarskjöld and Markings: A Reconsideration,* suggests that:

> It may seem a trivial topic, but the physicality of the original typescript and the circumstances surrounding its discovery and publication speak to larger issues. [Lipsey 2011: 85]

Lipsey further speculates that Hammarskjöld would have originally kept handwritten journals, but never mentioned them. They are probably now destroyed. Hammarskjold's original typescript was carefully edited, with final corrections in his characteristic turquoise ink. The quotation on the manuscript's title page, from the Swedish poet Bertil Malmberg, 'Only the hand that erases can write the true thing', suggests that Hammarskjold was a stern editor of his own work. Lispey observes that when Hammarskjöld left the journal behind in a night table drawer in his New York apartment in mid-September 1961, to make his last journey to the war-torn, chaotic Congo, it was perfectly ordered, ready for publication complete with a closing poem dated August 24, that echoes and enlarges on the poem with which it begins. Lipsey feels that it is reasonable to conjecture that:

> upon his return from the Congo, and perhaps for many years to come, he had in mind to add to it without disturbing the elegant symmetry of the opening and closing poems. Meanwhile it was ready, come what may. [Lipsey 2011: 86]

Lipsey plays down the possibility that Hammarskjöld had so prepared his work because of a premonition of his own death. Other writers, such as Bernhard Erling, have stressed aspects of *Markings* which could support such a view, particularly those entries made at the time of the Congo Crisis which followed the country's independence on June 30 1960 [Erling 1999: 259-72]. Yet Peter Wallensteen sees Hammarskjöld's premonitions as not of his own death, but of those caught up in a potential global conflicts.

> The Soviet Union criticized Hammarskjöld for having negotiated with Tshombe, a traitor. A rapprochement took place between the Soviet Union and Lumumba.

> The Congo was still at risk of becoming a pawn in the Cold War. [Walensteen 1995: 25-26]

What Lipsey and others do not mention is Hammarskjöld's possible fear that he should die and leave his work unedited. This fear can be seen in his attitude to the posthumous publication of Gosta Lunquist's book *Lapland* by his publisher and friends. Being a very close friend, Hammarskjöld was invited to write the Foreword. In it he notes that the task of publishing Lunquist's work in such circumstances could only produce a 'torso'. Hammarskjöld writes,

> He had long planned this work, and it is indeed sad that in the end he was denied the opportunity to edit himself or write the text that would have given the pictures their true background... *A torso*—. [Lundquist and Thaning 1960: 5]

Understandably, Hammarskjöld would not want to leave behind his *Vägmärken* as a mere 'torso'.

The publication of *Vägmärken* in 1963 was followed by the English translation *Markings* in 1964. It is regarded as a classic of contemporary spiritual literature. Warren Hodge, writing in *The New York Times*, May 22, 2005, reports that:

> Emblematic of the book's reception was a front-page rave in The New York Times Book Review… [which] called the book 'the noblest self-disclosure of spiritual struggle and triumph, perhaps the greatest testament of personal devotion, published in this century.' [Hodge 2005]

Hodge noted that, the book is attracting attention again, with the UN commemorations of the centennial of Hammarskjöld's birth in July, 2005. A new report on the fatal crash was published in 2015, which has again put Hammarskjöld's name back in the public domain.

Auden's translation of *Vägmärken* has become questioned. For example, Hodge queries 'the sceptical view that the Auden foreword took of Hammarskjold's: disciplined self-assessment, his expressions of mysticism and his characterizations of his inner battle as "my

negotiations with myself—and with my God."' Hodge reports that 'Jan Eliasson, Sweden's ambassador to Washington, said the commotion over the translation was a bit of an eyebrow raiser at home but had not touched the memory of Hammarskjold, who, he asserted, remains a legendary figure in Sweden.' Eliason felt that the discussion was useful as it would bring *Vägmärken* to public attention. [Hodge 2005]

In the 1954 Hammarskjöld took part in Edward R Murrow's radio programme, *This I believe,* as part of a series of statements of philosophical and spiritual belief (rather than religious dogma) made by distinguished men and women. In it Hammarskjöld stated that,

> Faith is a state of mind and the soul. In this sense we can understand the words of the Spanish mystic, St. John of the Cross: 'Faith is the union of God with the soul.' The language of religion is a set of formulas which register a basic spiritual experience. It must not be regarded as describing, in terms to be defined by philosophy, the reality which is accessible to our senses and which we can analyse with the tools of logic. ... the logic of how man should live a life of active social service in full harmony with himself as a member of the community of the spirit, I found in the writings of those great medieval mystics for whom 'self-surrender' had been the way to self-realization, and who in 'singleness of mind' and 'inwardness' had found strength to say yes to every demand which the needs of their neighbors made them face, and yes to the every fate life had in store for them when they followed the call of duty, as they understood it. [Foote 1962: 23-24]

This is a clear and public statement of Hammarskjold's own mysticism and the mystics he followed and valued and how they underpinned his sense of duty. He identified two medieval mystics in a letter written to his friend the artist Bo Beskow about a year after the programme. He writes:

> The pages of 'This I Believe' that you happened to see are not polite statements but deeply engaged ones,

> partly in self-criticism. They were written sometime last autumn but the last part says what I would say today: the counterpoint to this enormously exposed and published life is Eckhart and Jan van Ruysbroeck. They really give me balance and—a more and more necessary—sense of humor. My salvation is to 'take the job damned seriously but never the incumbent'—but it has its difficulties. The roads to a basic conviction that in the deepest sense is religious can be most unexpected. [Lipsey 2016]

To the list of people who give him 'balance' can be added the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber (1878-1965). A copy of Buber's *I and Thou* was found in Hammarskjöld's luggage at the crash site where he met his death. Hammarskjöld was in the process of translating it into Swedish. Hammarskjöld had supported Buber in his award of the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1959, writing to the Swedish Academy regarding Buber, Hammarskjöld noted that:

> The mysticism of personal spiritual life—the terminology is warranted however less than adequate—which Buber developed during the influence of Hasidism as well as from Christian medieval mysticism. [Hammarskjöld 1959]

Lou Marin in his book *Can we save true dialogue in an age of mistrust? The encounter of Dag Hammarskjöld and Martin Buber*, notes that the term 'mysticism of personal spiritual life' (in Swedish, 'personlighetsmystik') was taken by Hammarskjöld from the protestant theologian Nathan Söderblom (1866-1931). [Marin 2010: 67] Söderblom attempted to demonstrate the difference between the spiritual worlds of revealed religion and mysticism by the division of mysticism into types of personality, mystery and infinity mystery. [Palm 1938: 287]

In a speech given on Swedish Radio in 1962 entitled *Memories of Hammarskjöld*, Buber spoke of their common comprehension of the Cold War and the inability of the major powers to engage in true dialogue. Buber added enigmatically,

> But I sensed, looking at and listening to him, something else that I could not explain to myself, something fateful

> that in some way was connected with his function in this world-hour. [Marin 2010: 9]

Buber made no further comment on what he meant by 'something fateful', fuelling the speculation that he had sensed Hammarskjöld's impending death, or that Hammarskjöld had had a premonition of his own death. Marin explains that the exchanges between Hammarskjöld and Buber have been well documented by several authors, but they are all in agreement that no influence of Buber's philosophy can be seen before Hammarskjöld's first contact with Buber in April 1958. Some similarities have been noticed in *Vägmärken*. Examples suggest that for both of them,

> 'to live meaningfully meant to live in response to the demand of the situation'; that both showed respect for the word and would not allow it to be misused, as this would show contempt for man; furthermore, that their approach to conflict with another person included both an objective detachment as well as a capacity 'to experience his difficulties subjectively'; finally, that both 'knew a realistic and active mysticism which does not turn away from the world.' [Marin 2010: 10]

Citing Buber's English translator and main biographer, Maurice Friedman, Marin points out certain differences:

> that while Buber was also decisively influenced by Meister Eckhart, Hammarskjöld seemed to remain Kierkegaardian precisely in the way that Buber did not, i.e., focusing on the I—Thou relationship with God somewhat at the expense of that with man…. What is more, in Hammarskjöld's concern for God and others there was a note of denial of the self that was very foreign to Buber. [Marin 2010: 10]

Charles Malik Biography

Philosopher and diplomat, Charles Habib Malik pursued an academic career in philosophy at Harvard University and founded the philosophy department at the American University of Beirut. He was also a theologian who successfully reached across religious lines to fellow Eastern Orthodox Christians, Roman Catholics and Evangelicals alike. He represented Lebanon at the San Francisco conference where the United Nations was founded. He served as President of the Economic and Social Council and as Chair of the Third Committee during the 1948 debates on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Malik was a major force in the debates surrounding key provisions of the Declaration. He also played a critical role in explaining and refining some of its basic conceptual issues. He returned to his academic career in 1960 and lectured on human rights at universities in the United States.

Malik gave a lifelong commitment to the Church and religious education. The title of Grand First Magistrate of the Holy Orthodox Church was conferred on him by the late Athenagoras 1, the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch, who asked Malik to accompany him on his three historic meetings with Pope Paul VI; in Jerusalem in 1964 and in Istanbul and Rome in July and October 1967. Among other posts he held was that of Vice-President of the United Bible Societies (1967-71) of which the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Coggan, was president. [Malik 1982: 9]

Malik had studied under, taught with and was a friend of the philosopher and mystic William Ernest Hocking. He wrote a chapter in *Philosophy, Religion, and the Coming World Civilization: Essays in Honor of William Ernest Hocking*, entitled, 'It is time to Remind the West'. Malik observes that:

> No American philosopher has given as much sustained, responsible, grounded and continuous thought (for about four decades now, at least since his Re-Thinking Missions in 1932) to the historical-political-cultural-spiritual relations of the worlds of which we speak as Professor William Ernest Hocking. [Malik 1966: 400]

In this chapter, Malik tells us he has a special love for Russian

spirituality. He also recalls this of Hammarskjöld:

> I asked Dag Hammarskjold once whether he kept a diary and he assured me he did not, and when I heard in the fall of 1964 that a kind of autobiography by him had just appeared I was surprised, but when I obtained a copy of his Markings and read it I found no contradiction between what he told me and the fact of this book. These strange, symbolic, severely-chiseled, spiritualized interiorizations are not as innocent as they appear: they are the outbursts of one who was so full from his life of action that he simply could not contain himself; he had to seek contemplative relief by letting the whole world reflect itself in him in this strange, mystical way in order, partly, to spare the living, and in his case, of course, he meant also to spare himself, the dead. Contemplation at times is the cross whereby one spares the living including the contemplator himself. [Malik 1966: 408]

A copy of *Markings* annotated by Malik is held with other papers belonging to Malik in the Library of Congress, USA. [Malik 1964]

Cragg summarises Malik's and Hammarskjold's careers as follows:

> [Malik's] lot then was only the steady aggravation of issues he had fought so long to resolve. Champions in the West, like Adlai Stevenson and Dag Hammarskjöld whom he trusted and admired had passed from the scene of his prime, their calibre unique. [Cragg 2011b: 221-32]

Malik confidently allows mysticism into the public sphere in a number of his publications, particularly in *The Two Tasks*; *A Christian Critique of the University*; and *It is time to remind the West*. In all three books the underlying theme is the vital issue about the relationship between knowing God, education, and civilization that are in need of solutions. The West has turned its back on its Christian heritage.

> All our ills stem proximately from the false philosophies that have been let loose in the world and that are now

> being taught in the universities...Save the university and you save the Western Civilization and therewith the world'. [Malik 1980: 65]

The two tasks of Christian scholars in the public university involve redeeming the soul and redeeming the mind. He urges Protestants, particularly the evangelicals, to 'know something authentic about St Ignatius of Antioch, St John Chrysostum, St Basil the Great, St Ephrem, St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, and significantly, St Teresa of Avila. Thus *The Two Tasks* makes interesting reading given its audience is Evangelical Christians and how they can further understand the role of education. Malik was one of the few Orthodox theologians of his time to became extensively recognized in Evangelical spheres.

An assessment of Charles Malik as a Christian Arab

As a Christian Arab Malik was torn between the religious tradition of his birth, European influences and his Muslim heritage. Dominique Avon in his article *Youssef Karam, Charles Malik, Youakim Moubarac. Une élite arabe chrétienne, trois vocations (années 1930—années 1970),* demonstrates how Malik (as an Arabic speaking Christian) became inspired by an influential group of Francophone and Anglophone thinkers, and ensured the continuity of a *Nahda* ('Awakening' in Arabic) during 1930 to 1970. Avon delineates the identifiers in Malik's thought: belonging to a Christian minority in Muslim society; born an Ottoman citizen, but educated in an Anglo-Saxon environment. Thus Malik brings together two branches of Christianity, the Byzantine in which he grew up and the Roman; one of his brothers became a Jesuit, the other a Dominican. As a Lebanese Maronite he acted as a bridge between Rome and Byzantium.

Through these identifiers Malik challenges concepts in modern philosophy, aspects of Islamic civilisation and the political balance between libertarianism and authoritarianism. He became a 'neo-scholastic Arab' which led to the development of a supra-historic 'Abrahamism'. ('En fonction de leurs competences et de leurs appétences, ils opérent des selections, qui pour fonder une «néo-scolastiquearabe», qui pour ouvrir la culture arabe à la notion

de «changement», qui pour inventer un «abrahamisme» supra-historique' [Avon 2015: 104].)

Although Malik was residing in Europe and the United States at the time of Whitehead, Russel, Eddington, Bergson and others, it was to the French mathematician and philosopher of science, Jules Henri Poincaré (1854-1912) that he looked for questions about rationalism and idealism. While influenced by Descartes' mathematics, it seemed to Malik that Decartes' thinking remained incompatible with a philosophy founded on faith. Certainly Malik keeps his distance from phenomenology, seeing it to have no connection with any experience of life. [Avon 2015: 107]

Contrary to what happened two or three generations earlier, part of the Arab speaking elite gradually abandoned Cairo for Beirut which, until 1975, appeared like a small protected intellectual island. An illustration of this process is *The Lebanese Literary Group*, founded by Michel Asmar in 1946 in which Malik became involved during the 1950s and 1960s. [Avon 2015: 110]

Malik thought that 'civilisation' can only be European, drawing from both mediaeval and modern sources. His belief in this area being influenced by the model of the United States and a Maritain form of democracy. Malik saw no problem in placing religion in the public sphere, this being compatible with the separation of religion and state. Malik's guiding principle was 'freedom of conscience'. As rapporteur to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Drafting Committee at the United Nations, 1948, he saw for himself the reticence of the Soviet, Chinese and United States' representatives on this precise point.

The social and institutional position of the members of the Arab Christian intellectual elite was relatively favourable in the first half of the twentieth century in Egypt and Lebanon (where they were at their strongest) but this gradually disintegrated over time. After the 1970s Muslim philosophers, whether Arabic, Iranian, or Sub-Saharan African, directly compared Islamic philosophy with European thought without reference to the works of Arabic speaking Christians. However, in Lebanon, Nasif Nassar developed a critical discourse on the thoughts of Charles Malik and *The Charles Malik Foundation* guaranteed the republication of Malik's principal works in English and Arabic.

Although their circle never constituted a united intellectual front there was a common regret at the lack of understanding of Eastern

Christianity by European and American Christians. Moreover, they deplored the lack of knowledge of 'Arab Christian literature' whether philosophical or spiritual, by their fellow Muslims. Although the spiritual aspect of this literature has not been fully explored, it can now be better understood, particularly through translations of Christian mystics. Avon concludes by noting there still is a presence of Christian intellectuals using Arabic in the fields of literature, political science and journalism. However, their situation remains precarious and is dependent on the internal or geopolitical politico-religious developments of the region, as has been demonstrated by the example of Iraq since 2003 and Syria since 2011. [Avon 2015: 115]

However, Edward Alam, in his article *Rethinking politics in a scientific age. Constructing a true world political authority. Lessons from an unlikely place: Lebanon*, is more positive:

> even Marxism in the hands of Lebanese intellectuals takes on a decidedly religious, mystical, and public flavour, which is indicative of a tendency in Lebanon never to completely separate the secular from the sacred, nor to ever confine the religious or divine dimension to the private realm. [Alam 2012: 172]

Alam concludes that Western secularism is not the kind of secularism found in Lebanon where the politics and public life are distinct but not totally separate from religion.

Kenneth Cragg's endorsement of Hammarskjöld as a practical mystic

Cragg refers to Hammarskjöld in fourteen of the fifty or so books he published. These references fall into two categories; either using references to Hammarskjöld in a broad or general illustrative manner, 'examples'; or using Hammarskjöld as a specific mystic 'exemplar' i.e. that of a practical mystic.

Cragg's, *Alive to God* (1970) is a compilation of Muslim and Christian Prayers. It demonstrates Cragg's general use of Hammarskjöld's private spirituality as found in *Markings*. In the 'Introductory Essay', to *Alive to*

God, Cragg recognises that there has been little movement in Christians and Muslims praying together:

> 'Let *us* pray' runs the familiar Christian invitation. 'Thee it is *we* worship' says the opening Surah of the Qur'an. The intention, in either case, is the proper community, whether of the church or of the mosque, to the firm, even scornful, exclusion of the improper one. [Cragg 1970: 2]

Cragg asks if this situation can be overturned whereby 'congregations' cease to be 'segregations'. He does not intend a fusion of corporate acts of worship (this in any event is forbidden under the Canon Law of The Church of England), but a joint seeking of 'the face of God'. For, as he continues, there is no longer any isolated world. He points out there are now many instances when Muslims and Christians find themselves together; schools, universities and hospitals.

Cragg's eclectic collection of prayers has quotations from the Qur'an and the New Testament. Other quotations representative of Muslim prayer range from Ahmad Ibn Idris, a noted Moroccan mystic of the early 19th century, to Zuhair, an outstanding poet from the period before the rise of Islam. Those of a more Christian hue are chosen from Augustine of Hippo to William B Yeats. It is into the latter group that Cragg has placed four pieces from Hammarskjöld's *Markings* that are concerned with the theme of 'penitence'. In *Notes on Authors* at the end of the book, Cragg justifies this inclusion with a quotation from the introduction to a book of Hammarskjöld's speeches and statements:

> A man of true inner greatness in a position of high leadership... sustained and inspired by pure and firmly founded beliefs and ideals about life and relationships. [Cragg 1970: 165]

A review of *Alive to God* in the *Tablet*, 1971, notes that Cragg 'suggests that a new pattern of prayer may be emerging today, which is meditative "not so much— as often hitherto—about the mysteries of faith, but rather about the tumults of the world. … It wants to react in God and for God to what it perceives around it of the plight and passion of society."' [Clericorum 1971: 15]

In 1999, Cragg published a book in a similar vein, *Common Prayer: A Muslim-Christian Spiritual Anthology*, which again includes the quotations from Hammarskjöld's *Markings*. His 'Postscript: A part in common prayer' discussed, while acknowledging that there are disparities between Christian and Muslim prayer; he looks to similarities, where perhaps others might not look. He believes that there is an affinity symbolizing 'a certain kinship in praise, penitence and petition' within the sources which he has quoted. He asks:

> Has the searching self-reproach of a Hamid al-Ghazali altogether no kinship with the mental turmoil of a Francis Thompson, or the public conscience of the cordwainer al-Hallaj no converse with the private self of a Dag Hammarskjöld? [Cragg 1999: 120]

Anthony O'Mahony has suggested that Hammarskjöld is to Cragg what al-Hallaj, as a martyr-mystic, is to Louis Massignon.[1]

Cragg had previously published (1968) an article titled 'Common Prayer' in *The Union Seminary Quarterly Review*. The article opens with Shylock's words from *The Merchant of Venice*:

> … I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following: but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you.

Cragg develops this theme with two contrasted occasions. The first in 1966 to conclude the nine-hundredth anniversary of Westminster Abbey, where a silent service of inter-religious meditation and prayer was shared by Commonwealth citizens of various faiths. While this was ongoing, outside the West door, a group of Anglican clergy protesting at the service inside arranged a service wholly of Christian prayers and hymns. This was in protest at the 'menace' of syncretism. Cragg notes sagely that 'multi-religiousness is certainly a fact and a factor of ever-sharpening relevance to our whole existence. [Cragg 1968: 368-9]

1 'Massignon saw the relationship between Christianity and Islam through the lens of the tragic figure of the mystic al-Hallaj.' Anthony O'Mahony, 2007, 'Louis Massignon as priest', in *Sobornost*, 29:1, p 11.

The second occasion to which Cragg refers took place in 1968 at Liberty Stadium in Ibadan, Western Nigeria. Present were:

> the local Muslim dignitaries, together with the Anglican and Roman Catholic leaders and representatives of the (Southern) Baptist and Methodist Churches, shared in a joint service of prayer for peace, at which prayers were offered in both Muslim and Christian form and vocabulary, and explanatory convictions were expressed by both elements in concert.

Cragg concludes,

> There is no option to avoid participation through 'compromise' except by incurring the greater, and faithless, compromise of seclusion and 'abiding alone'. [Cragg 1968: 369]

Cragg must have been pleased to have been invited to give the keynote address at the two-day conference *Two Sacred Paths: Christianity and Islam, a Call for Understanding* which took place in Washington National Cathedral, USA in 1998. Certainly he would have been delighted at the opening ceremony. The Episcopal News Service reporter Nancy Montegomery tells us that thirteen hundred people crowded the Washington National Cathedral and were welcomed by Bishops Ronald Haines and Jane Holmes Dixon, joined by Dean Nathan Baxter of the cathedral. Dr Abdul Aziz Said, Professor of Islamic Studies at the American University in Washington, asked the congregation 'to experience the mind and heart of Islam, to bear witness to Islam's spirituality in its cultural manifestations.' Montegomery reported that The Whirling Dervishes of the Mevlevi Order demonstrated their art in the cathedral's crossing and aisles, as the white-robed figures circled with dignity and serenity to the echoing strains of Eastern music.

The next day in his keynote address, Cragg spoke dryly of 'being at risk' in his attempts to interpret both Islam and Christianity. He expressed a hope for the future of secularization as the persecution of Christians in Africa and Pakistan 'makes even a stronger argument for

secular government, for a body politic that is neutral about religion.' [Montegomery 1998]

In response to Bishop Cragg, Dr Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Professor of Islamic Studies at Georgetown, said that he and Cragg 'have talked for three decades, on many continents; and not much has happened.' In addressing the issue of how Islam and Christianity are both based on revelation, he said that 'those who follow the spiritual path in Christianity are closest to Islam. The ideal life (in both religions) is closely linked to the other. In divine love there is no difference between a Christian monastery and a Sufi center.' [Montegomery 1998]

The Italian Jesuit priest Paolo Dall'Oglio would no doubt agree with the last statement. Inspired by Pére de Foucauld and Louis Massignon and with the approval and encouragement of the Roman Catholic Church, he ventured to set up a 'Muslim-Christian' Church at the monastery of Mar Moussa, 80 km north of Damascus. This is described in his book *Amoureux de l'islam, croyant en Jésus.* Here he expresses his conviction that many of the current difficulties that exist between Christians and Muslims can be met through paths that lead towards a secularized public space based on the concept of citizenship. The reflection of European Muslims could bring much to the debate. He further asserts that a solution will only come from a dialogue conducted in a democratic and plural framework. Good neighbourliness, is a spirit, a dynamic, and not a series of laws. [Dall'Oglio 2009: 53-4] All this may be an antidote to Williams' 'programmatic' secularism. Sadly, the ongoing warfare in Syria will no longer enable Paolo to put this into practice. On 29 July 2013 while negotiating with ISIS for the release of some hostages and a truce with Kurdish militias, he disappeared from the city of Raqqa. Reports and rumours suggest he was executed.

However, Bretherton citing Olivier Clément's, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism: Text and Commentary*, (London: New City Press, 1997), reminds us that holiness does not belong exclusively to monks and other ascetics. The mother consoling her child and bringing them to spiritual birth 'is as holy as the monk who prays all night.' [Bretherton 2010: 196-7]

Responsibility

A recurring theme in *Markings* is 'responsibility'. In the entry dated Sept. 3 1957, p 156, Hammarskjöld writes:

> Your responsibility is indeed terrifying. If you fail, it is God, thanks to your having betrayed Him, who will fail mankind. You fancy you can be responsible to God; can you carry the responsibility for God? [Hammarskjöld 1964:156]

Bernhard Erling's *A Reader's Guide to Dag Hammarskjöld's Waymarks,* 1999, (Erling prefers to translate *Vägmärken* as *Waymarks*), informs us that this entry was written at the time of Hammarskjöld's re-election for a second term as Secretary-General. Hammarskjöld did not want to discuss the matter at press conferences on the 22nd of August and the 5th of September when questions were raised as to his accepting the appointment. This entry may give us some idea of what was on his mind at the time. Other entries in *Markings* show he had a strong sense of his own responsibility.

In *Dying Daily: Quotidian Living*, 2010, Cragg opens Chapter 3, *Nicholas of Cusa: 'De Docta Ignorantia'* with:

> The notion of 'learned ignorance' is at least as old as Plato … [who] seeks to be alert to the fallibilities of human knowledge and to the error for which it is liable. [Cragg 2010b: 44]

Cragg notes that Nicholas combines 'learned ignorance' with 'the coincidence of opposites', and quotes Hammarskjöld as being able to distinguish between 'being responsible to God' and the much deeper 'responsibility for God, in trust of one's theology and worship'.

In *Bent to Literary Event: Masters in their Masterpieces* (2011), Cragg also uses this particular *Marking* as an example of the supreme burden of Paul's apostolate in his dealing with the Galatians. Hammarskjöld distinguishes being responsible to God 'with due heed to what He commands and prohibits' as opposed to being responsible for God in that doctrine is a matter of will, beyond being a matter of the mind. [Cragg 2011a: 71]

Erling explains this somewhat differently in that God is in a sense dependent on us, for through us God can fail humanity. This is what Hammarskjöld elsewhere calls God's humility. But according to Erling, Hammarskjöld does not think he can bear the responsibility of answering to humanity on God's behalf, while what should have been done was not done. Erling unlike Cragg, leaves us with some sense of Hammarskjöld's self-doubt. Is Cragg unwittingly bestowing on Hammarskjöld a saintly perfection? This particular quotation has been used by some of Hammarskjöld's critics to accuse him of megalomania. Erling explains that:

> This accusation cannot be disproved by anything Hammarskjöld said or wrote, because humility and demonic pride speak the same language. [Erling 1999:xvi]

However, Cragg is content to use Hammarskjöld as the exemplar of a person carrying the burden of responsibility to and for God.

Similarly, in *The Breaking of Bread*, [Cragg 2010a], Cragg uses the same quotation from *Markings* as the exemplar of the person who carries the burden; this time for the 'terms and integrity he [Hammarskjöld] brought to the theme of his theology'. On this occasion, Cragg offers the insight that in a similar vein, while facing the temptation of suicide in 1952, Hammarskjöld wrote:

> You are tempted to overcome loneliness by making the ultimate escape from life. No! it may be that death is to be your ultimate gift to life: it must not be an act of treachery against it.

Erling notes that earlier entries in *Markings* show that Hammarskjöld had experienced the suicides of others and in this passage, Hammarskjöld acknowledges that he was aware of the temptation that suicide could represent. Tiredness and loneliness could cause suicidal thoughts though these are strongly rejected. [Erling 1999: 92]

In *The Christian and Other Religion*, 1977, Cragg moves from interdependent religious experiences to an exploration of differences between monotheistic faiths and Asian monisms. Instead of intellectual formulations and creedal statements he finds ultimate faithfulness in

people who witnessed by their doing not by their orthodoxy. He gives Hammarskjöld as an exemplar of such a person. Hammarskjöld, Cragg observes, 'did not describe his will to faith in sharply exclusive terms' and quotes the following from *Markings*:

> I don't know Who—or what—put the question. I don't know when it was put. I don't even remember answering. But at some moment I did answer Yes to Someone—or Something—and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life in self-surrender had a goal. [Hammarskjöld 1964:205]

James Scherer, reviewing *The Christian and Other Religion* in *The International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 1980, found it:

> erudite, beautiful, evocative, and challenging, but hardly for the novice reader. The author's poetic, almost meditative style occasionally produces a feeling of elusiveness rather than clearly graspable meaning. [Scherer 1980: 138]

He notes that Cragg's paradigms for ultimate faithfulness, 'interestingly, are persons who witnessed by their *doing* and not by their orthodoxy: Albert Schweitzer and Dag Hammarskjold.' [Scherer 1980: 139]. He concludes his review with this quotation from Cragg:

> The calling of the Christian community is to be there with the Gospel as that sphere of association where the mystery is luminous.

Silence

Returning to Hammarskjöld's *Room of Quiet,* and looking briefly at silence, Tom Bruneau's article, *An Ecology of Natural Mindlessness: Solitude, Silence, and Transcendental Consciousness,* attempts to define spirituality from a brain studies perspective. He posits that 'solitude is necessary to achieving a deeper kind of silence because well-planned

solitude helps to eliminate pervasive kinds of objective, everyday consciousness.' [Bruneau 2012: 55-73]

He notes that:

> The Sufi experience is an active religious attitude, a daily striving for spirituality, a movement from the outer and profane worlds (daily speech and business) to an inner, more spiritual world of silence. According to Cragg [Cragg 1976], the Sufi experience is a movement from the soul biased to the evils of mundane living, to the acquired awareness that one's soul is not tranquil and is in the wrong, and, finally, to where the soul attains to a deep peace. Yet, as stated by Cragg [Cragg 1976], the Sufi understands that 'The tranquillity of the soul in peace comes only through the travail of the soul dismayed.' [Bruneau 2012: 14-15]

Bruneau observes that Dag Hammarskjöld poetically noted that:

> Silence shatters to pieces
> The mind's armour
> Leaving it naked before
> Autumn's clear eye. [Hammarskjöld 1964: 69]

Bruneau describes how silence is related to mystical experiences and often occurs in mystical literature. [Bruneau 2012: 66-67]

Conclusion

All three actors have been both public figures and religious adherents. All three managed both aspects of their lives in their own particular way. Kenneth Cragg, successfully juggled the role of academic, bishop, and pioneer in Christian-Muslim relations, seeing secularism as a 'safety net' in the public square. Charles Malik lead a more public and political life but he too, had to balance his faith against his philosophical and political views. Dag Hammarskjöld *seemed* to keep his faith very private

as he stood on a very public stage in the public square. In their own way, Cragg, Malik and Hammarskjöld have helped to place mysticism firmly in the public sphere. Malik with his insistence on a wider attitude to education, forms a bridge between philosophy and theology, and Orthodox and Evangelical; Cragg in his use of mystics to inform his writing, and his employment of Hammarskjöld as a practical mystic shares mysticism with his fellow Evangelicals, a group not renowned for their following of this path. While there is general academic agreement on Hammarskjöld's status as a mystic, Troy notes that:

> Some see in Hammarskjöld a kind of political martyr who died in the course of action that he took up for the international society. [Troy 2010: 447]

The current Secretary General to the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon in his letter dated 2nd July 2015 to the President of the General Assembly regarding the *Investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him,* states:

> It is therefore our shared responsibility to pursue the full truth concerning the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and the others accompanying him. To that end, I recommend that the General Assembly remain seized of this matter. This may be our last chance to find the truth. I consider this our solemn duty to my illustrious and distinguished predecessor, Dag Hammarskjöld, to the other members of the party accompanying him and to their families. [Ki-moon 2015: 1]

The recent *Report of the Independent Panel of Experts established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/246* [Ki-moon 2015: 7-65] by inferring that Hammarskjold's death may not have been accidental, will inevitably lead to re-evaluation of his life and work.

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EASTERN ORTHODOXY AND MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST: O CLÉMENT'S PERSPECTIVES ON THEOLOGY AND ECCLESIOLOGY IN THE CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER WITH ISLAM

Stefanie Hugh-Donovan

Olivier Clément: a short introduction

Olivier Clément, the French Orthodox lay theologian and prolific writer, was born in a village of the south of France in 1921, into a family whose philosophy was strongly atheist and socialist. He therefore received no religious education. His journey from atheism to Christian conversion, and on to Christian maturity, is marked in profound and dramatic ways. It was as a student of history in Montpelier and teacher in Paris that an anthropological view of religion first developed, followed by his encounter with the spiritual and intellectual renewal of Russian Orthodoxy which flourished in Paris, that brought him to the choice of baptism into the Russian Orthodox Church and membership of the Russian Francophile community in Paris in 1951. He was thirty years of age. He remained rooted in Orthodoxy and was enduringly loyal to his friends and colleagues, philosophers and theologians of the Russian Diaspora, in particular Nicolas Berdiaev, Vladimir Lossky and Paul Evdokimov, yet he continued to identify deeply with France and Europe. After the student revolt in Paris in 1968, which he considered to be caused by spiritual malaise, the revolt of the son against the father, he built strong filial relationships with the patriarchs of Constantinople, Athenagoras and Bartholomew I, and used his literary skills to make their views, and Orthodoxy, better known in the West. His understanding and appreciation of a wider Christian landscape also matured, in which Catholicism held a crucially important place.

A 'Mediterranean Man'

While Clément lived and worked mainly in Paris, he preferred to identify himself as a 'Mediterranean man'. He held an abiding affection for the ambience and conviviality of Mediterranean village life, the culture of his childhood, and the countries of the Mediterranean. He came to see the Mediterranean as holding immense historic, political and future importance for Europe and the Middle East, and therefore, globally. Albert Camus, the Nobel Prize winner for Literature in 1957, Patriarch Bartholomew I and Clément recognised certain characteristics of the region they termed as Mediterranean humanism and 'Mediterranean genius',[1] which they hoped would again be important in a future dialogical role, building peace through the rediscovery of principles that once flourished in that region through the recognition of the sacred character of each person, a love which, through compassion, forgiveness, justice and peace transcends all boundaries and does not discriminate.'[2]

His experience of the tragic consequences of atheism and totalitarianism in post-war Europe and Russia fostered in him a spirit of ecumenism which became an enduring passion of his life: a desire to bring Eastern and Western Christians together in closer communion and understanding. A characteristic of Russian émigré theology was the notion of *sobornost*, defined as freedom, unity and conciliarity; it carried the meaning that church life is 'collaborative and yet hierarchical', building up the Body of Christ. Nicolas Afanasiev's thesis on Eucharistic theology,[3] saw it as the gathering of the faithful around the Scriptures and eucharistic table that forms the Church's ecclesial identity. This starting point of the ecclesiology of communion recognised by most Christian Churches and Confessions today, was a significant contribution to ecumenical dialogue. Clément worked tirelessly for a mutual and fraternal respect between East and West

1 Clément uses the term from a letter by Patriarch Bartholomew I to Yasser Arafat in Olivier Clément, *Conversations with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I*, St Vladimir's Press, New York, 1997, p 211.

2 *Op.cit*.

3 See Paul Mc Partlan, *Sacrament of Salvation: An Introduction to Eucharistic Ecclesiology*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1993; Michael Plekon, *Living Icons*, University of Notre Dame, Indiana, 2002, in which his chapter: 'Nicolas Afanasiev: Explorer of the Eucharist, the Church and Life in Them', pp 149-177.

that did not require a change of identity or character. His attitude to ecumenism however made him unpopular with some members of his own Church, particularly after his critique of the nationalism demonstrated amongst Orthodox clergy following the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. This spirit of ecumenism and encounter with the Antiochian paradigm led him to work for the 'wider ecumenism' of interfaith dialogue.

Clemént's wider dialogical aims

In 1989, Tunisian born historian and intellectual, Mohamed Talbi, and Olivier Clément agreed to co-author a book on faith and dialogue entitled, *Un Respect Têtu*: 'Hard-headed Respect' reflects both the mind-set of the writers and their joint project. Their approach to Islamic-Christian dialogue, which they consider to be of major contemporary importance, conveys a sense of practical, realistic, unsentimental respect for the 'other', and importantly for the faith of the 'other'. An organic approach of person to person characterizes their search for truth that they endeavour to keep free and unbiased by nationalistic loyalties. Clément writes to be of service, not only for Muslims that they might understand Christianity better, but also for 'seekers of God' in the West and in Russia. Clément sees that for the Christian, relationality is part of the mystery of God, and constitutes the vocation of the created being; he judges that for Christians, the Muhammaden prophecy has a place in the designs of God in which Christians are called to participate. He wishes particularly to dedicate the book to Christian Arabs of Antioch, among whom he has many friends, but above all he dedicates it to the martyrs of Lebanon, 'where Christians and Muslims must again learn to love each other anew.'[4]

Clément's contribution to the book is divided into two parts: Part One, Clément calls a 'Little Introduction to Christianity'. In this he expresses his special interest in the Churches of Asia and Africa in the Middle East, which co-existed alongside Islam for many centuries, he also wants to show that these ancient Churches and Christianity in Europe need each other and need to identify with each other.

4 Mohamed Talbi and Olivier Clément, *Un Respect Têtu*, Nouvelle Cité, Paris, 1989, p 112.

Christianity is an 'immense and complex spiritual world' into which Clément attempts to make some 'depth charges' or 'scalpel cuts', as he puts it. But his introduction to Christianity is more than a neutral historical exposition; it is a profession of faith. Clément opens his discourse on Christianity with this quotation: 'What we hold most dear is Christ himself. Christ and all that comes from Him'[5]. These words are the reply of staretz John, a fictional character, when the one he is about to declare to be the Antichrist asks, what is the most important thing for him in Christianity? They are taken from the fascinating and prophetic work of Russian Orthodox religious philosopher, Vladimir Soloviev, entitled, '*A Short Story of the Antichrist*'.[6] The work was written in the year of Soloviev's death, 1900, on the eve of the terrible, yet largely unexpected, catastrophes of the twentieth century. Soloviev's eschatological theme predicts forgetfulness of God, the secularisation of Europe, great wars, civil strife and revolutions which would pave the way for a United States of Europe at the end of the twentieth century, and the rise of the Antichrist, who is fascinatingly portrayed as an urbane philanthropist who, while accepting the social, cultural teaching of Jesus, rejects the central message that he is the Son of God, who died, is risen, is alive and active today. Yet Soloviev was optimistic that ethical and humanistic ecumenism would result in the different ecclesial groups being united in diversity. In his story, a parable, the coming of the Antichrist will be preceded by a general apostasy, but three men remain to reject the Antichrist, Peter II (Catholicism), the Elder John (Orthodoxy), and Professor Pauli (Protestantism). At a Council called by the Antichrist, their stand in fact does lead Christianity to a final unity.

In a Lenten retreat talk given by Giacomo Cardinal Biffi to John Paul II and the Roman Curia in March 2000, the cardinal took as his theme, 'Soloviev and Our Time', based on Soloviev's '*A Short Story of the Antichrist*'. Biffi describes Soloviev as a 'friend of truth and an enemy of ideology'.[7] John Paul II who had previously been unaware

5 *Op.cit*, p 115. See also Clément's footnote 1, p 121: 'V. Soloviev, *Trois Entretiens*, tr. French, Paris, 1984, p. 212.'

6 Vladimir Soloviev, Russian philosopher and poet who was born January 1853 and died in 1900, aged 47. His last book, a fictional work, *Three conversations on War, Progress, and the End of History*, was translated and published in France in1984. Soloviev contributed significantly to the Russian spiritual renaissance at the beginning of the twentieth century.

7 Biffi also delivered a Lenten meditation to Pope Benedict XVI and the Roman

of the story, was deeply moved by it.[8] Hans Urs von Balthasar regarded Soloviev's work as 'the most universal, speculative creation of the modern period',[9] and accorded Soloviev, who is sometimes referred to as 'the Russian Newman', a similar level of recognition as St Thomas Aquinas. Biffi later delivered a Lenten meditation to Pope Benedict XVI on the same theme in 2007, which he cites as the fascinating story in his book, *Jesus of Nazareth*.

This notion of religious ideology as a destructive force is one that recurs in Clément's discourse; Soloviev's religious philosophy can be seen as foundational to the creative thinking of the Russian Orthodox theologians of the Diaspora, and therefore to Clément. Christianity cannot be reduced to a set of values, being a Christian involves a personal encounter with Christ; solidarity, peace, respect for nature are relative values which, if they are seen as absolute, can become ideological idolatries. Soloviev's book was published in France in 1984, and again resurfaced in Russian theological circles after the breakup of the Soviet Union as a way to a new Russian philosophy. It is therefore both foundational in Clément's Orthodoxy and significant in his analysis of ecumenical and interfaith dialogue at the time he collaborated with Talbi in their dialogical book published in 1989.

Interfaith dialogue: Triune relationality—the Christian starting point

Clément enters interfaith dialogue with an understanding that the most profitable starting point from the Christian side for any dialogue with Islam is Christian ecclesial unity. If we can achieve unity between the Christian Churches we will be better equipped to proclaim the unity of the triune God, as the Churches come together in unity as

curia on the subject of Soloviev's Antichrist. Pope Benedict XVI's book *Jesus of Nazareth*, mentions a fascinating story of the Antichrist written by Soloviev on pp. 30-41.

8 For text of Cardinal Biffi's lecture see http:// Catholicism.or/ad-rem-no-25.html (accessed 1/9/2015).

9 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord Vol. III, Studies in Theological Styles*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1962, p 263. Published by T&T Clark, Great Britain, in association with Ignatius Press, 1986. Balthasar explores Vladimir Soloviev's work as an example of lay styles that reveal the glory of God's revelation, pp 279-352.

the Body of Christ. Clément dedicated his life to working for unity among Christian ecclesial groups of East and West; he wants Christians and Muslims to listen to each other, to undertake a reciprocal spiritual sharing and questioning that unites both in a sense of justice. There is no polemical stance here or position of religious superiority, but a desire for relationships to flourish as the 'other' is deeply listened to with respect. In this interreligious dialogue, Clemént sees hard headed respect as primarily respect for oneself, for one's faith, and for the other; it is at the heart of Christian understanding of the mystery of a relationality which is constitutive of God himself, as Trinity, and constitutive of all human beings. 'In the image of and by participation in Trinitarian existence, we are called simultaneously to diversity and communion. In both God and man, being is relational.'[10] The recognition of Christ on the shore, and on the road to Emmaus, was a sudden awakening of personal relationship, which was already an ecclesial relationship of persons, because the fish and the bread are symbols of the eucharist, and Christ, risen in the power of the Holy Spirit, is both with and in us.[11] The created being is potentially sacramental and this cosmic sacrament must come true through the communion of men between themselves and with God. Clément's is a hard headed respect for the faith in which as a Christian he attempts to live, and in which he hopes to die. Yet his driving force is to speak of God's love, which he has experienced personally, and in understanding deeply that death, all forms of death, and the worst is not physical, become 'the veil torn by love.'[12] Our task, Clément believes, 'is to make known at the surface of the world, the brazier that Christ does not cease to light at the edge of the lake, at the edge of the heart, at the heart of human communion and dignity. Clément sees traces of the Trinity in the mysticism of Islam; the Qur'an speaks of the Word and the Spirit of God, thus making a Trinitarian 'space'. Clément appeals to Christians to reflect on the prophecy of Muhammad with an open heart.[13]

The second Part of Clément's writing describes Islam, as seen from a Christian viewpoint. He draws on the writings and vision of a series of French or French speaking Islamicists, many of whom were

10 Clément, *Conversations with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I*, p 154. See also Clément, *Un Respect Têtu*, p 112.
11 Clément, *Un Respect Têtu*, p 125.
12 *Op. cit.*, p 128.
13 *Op. cit.*, p 282.

contemporaries and known to himself; these men introduced a fresh understanding of Islam to twentieth-century Western theologians. A remarkable aspect of the opening up of Western theological understanding to the importance of Islamic-Christian dialogue is the intensely francophone element that allowed it to happen. Clément cites the significant French influences that shaped this phenomenon. He was deeply influenced by the writing of the great Catholic scholar and French Orientalist, Louis Massignon,[14] who he knew a little, and also by the work of Massignon's disciple, Youakim Moubarac,[15] a Lebanese French scholar and priest born in France. While captive in Iraq in 1908, Massignon underwent a dramatic conversion experience; as he understood it, he was brought back to the Catholic faith of his childhood through the prayers of five Christian and Muslim intercessors one of whom was the Catholic mystic, Charles de Foucauld, another the Muslim martyr, Hocei͡n Mansi͡r Hallâj who wanted to die like Jesus and was crucified in 922. This metanoic experience completely changed the direction of Massignon's life. Massignon chose the Passion of Hallâj for his doctoral thesis. In 1934 he and Mary Kahil, an Arab Melkite Christian, dedicated their lives to pray for the Muslim people in response to the marginalization of many Arab Christians in Egypt under Muslim domination. The prayer group *Badaliya*, in Arabic 'substitution' was formed and in 1947 received official status from Rome and support from many including the future Pope Paul VI.

The double trajectory of Massignon's life from this point led to his priesthood in the Eastern Catholic Church of Antioch, as Clément calls it, his 'arabisation'. One could say that he experienced a type of 'double belonging', of West and East, Christianity and Islam. He dedicated his life to achieving fraternal unity between Christians and Muslims; he would visit the tombs of Muslims to pray for the Muslim dead, especially those who had died in the violence of the fifties in France. He judged Islam to be 'a natural religion … that reclaims the religion of Abraham, the pure monotheist of Patriarchal times'.[16] In an interview in 1948 entitled 'Le Signe Marial',[17] The Marian Sign, Massignon defines

14 *Op. cit.*, p 112.

15 Youakim Moubarac, 1924-1995, dedicated his life to interfaith dialogue between Christianity and Islam, to the unity of the Church and to the Maronite Antiochian heritage.

16 *Clément, Un Respect Têtu*, p. 181.

17 See Anthony O'Mahony, 'Our Common Fidelity to Abraham is What Divides',

his theological view on the authenticity of Muhammad's prophecy: rather than describing it as true or false, he chooses the words positive and negative, both considered as authentic prophecy. 'Positive' prophecy challenges human behaviour and sinfulness, 'negative' prophecy in Muhammad's case signifies an eschatological character that is witnessing to 'the final separation of the good from the evil'.[18] Because his prophethood occurred after Jesus' first coming, and is an anticipation of the Second Coming, this should alert Christians to an acceptance of the authenticity of Muhammad as an eschatological prophet.

Clément also cites support of the authentic nature of the Qur'anic prophecy in the writings of intellectuals Roger Arnaldez, French Islamist, Bendali Jaouzi, a Palestinian Christian, the British linguist Robert Charles Zaehner, who converted to Catholicism, and Athenagoras I, who describes Muhammad as a prophet of the Old Covenant, referring to Abraham as the first Muslim; it is a faith which is not only pre-Incarnation but pre-Decalogue. Athenagoras points to Gregory Palamas' judgement that Islam led people from a degenerate, idolatrous paganism to faith in Abraham. Clément evoking the second century Father, St Ireneus of Lyons, sees Muhammad not only as a prophet of the Old Testament linked to the Christian era but also a prophet of the ultimate eschaton; Jesus in his eschatological imminence characterises Islam. Islam questions Israel waiting for a Messiah born of human paternity; it questions Christianity which became settled, closed and divided, imprisoning the Spirit in a kind of 'ecclesiolatry'[19]. It is a reproach to Christians for not recognising sufficiently the monastic perfection, of which Jesus is the model. Clément concludes with Moubaric's view that Islam could be defined as an 'Abrahamism', a Marian, eschatological and ecumenical warning especially for the benefit of Jews and Christians. Clément sees the task of Christians in dialogue as defined by the Fathers, is to find again the eschatological perspective inclusive of the universal character of salvation: the whole of humanity is touched by the Spirit. The Fathers, whose 'worldview' interestingly, was that of the

Catholics in Interreligious Dialogue, eds Anthony O'Mahony and Peter Bowe OSB, Gracewing, Leominster, 2006, pp. 151-192, citation pp. 175-176.

18 David A Kerr, 'The Prophethood of Muhammad', *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, Eds Yvonne Yazbech Haddad and Wadi Zaiden Haddad, University Press of Florida, pp. 426-446, p. 429.

19 Clément, *Un Respect Têtu*, p. 284.

Mediterranean countries and of the Near East, detected the presence of the Holy Spirit present in all humanity.

There were participants from England also in this important arena, who shared the key theological principle of the action of the Holy Spirit in the world. Anglican Bishop Kenneth Cragg, held in high regard as a pioneer of dialogical ecumenism by Clément,[20] then in his nineties and living in Oxford, continued to write strongly on this subject. Both men are historians who had professed the centrality of Jesus in their theology, and had each written over 40 books and numerous articles; both believed the Spirit speaks in Islam, in other faiths, and in other cultures.[21] Bishop Cragg, a profound religious thinker, had spent much of his long life reflecting on the relationship between Islam and Christianity.[22] He judged the Christian must approach Islam as an ambassador representing not another country but the religious 'other', who must learn the language and customs of Islam, not so much to understand them, *but to be understood*.[23]

The Antiochian paradigm

Clément reminds us in his introduction to *Sources*,[24] the brilliant collection of texts from the Patristic era accompanied by Clément's own commentary, that Christianity is an Oriental religion, and it is a mystical religion.

Georges Khodr, born in Lebanon, in 1923 into a Christian family, was educated at a Jesuit university and studied law. With fifteen other law students he became a founding member in 1942 of the Orthodox Youth Movement (OYM), and a pioneer in renewal[25] in many areas of ecclesial life in the Patriarchate of Antioch: Bible study groups, the rebirth of monasticism, parish renewal, religious social events and the opening of Christian hostels during the 1940's. Renewal was sought by

20 *Op. cit.*, p. 272.
21 Christopher Brown, 'Kenneth Cragg on Shi'a Islam and Iran: An Anglican Theological Response to Political Islam', *ARAM,* Vol. 20, 2008, p. 380.
22 Brown, *ibid.*, pp. 375, 380; Clément, *ibid.*, p. 271.
23 Brown, *ibid.*, p. 381.
24 Olivier Clément, *Sources*, Stock, Paris, 1982.
25 Riad Mofarrij, 'Renewal in the Antiochian Orthodox Church in Lebanon', *Studies in World Christianity*, Vol. 15 Issue 3, pp. 217-235, p. 217.

a return to the sources, that is, the Bible and the Church which they found described there, and the Eucharist. It seems, apart from texts in services the Bible was not read by the Orthodox people; a similar situation existed in the pre-Vatican II Catholic Church. In 1950 Khodr studied in Paris at the St Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute, a place of great influence in Clément's life and where he and many of the theologians of the Russian Diaspora taught.

In the 1980s a continuation of this renewal flourished in the Archdiocese of Beirut under the leadership of Bishop Elias Audeh. This deeply scriptural and spiritual renewal grew among groups of young people who became aware of their own personal relationship with Jesus and discipleship to him; in this sense it was deeply evangelical movement of the Holy Spirit, that brought the experience of Pentecost to their lives. The Church became for them a meeting place with Jesus where individual healings took place. Their prayer life and in particular the use of the Eastern Jesus Prayer[26] became an imperative. This renewal spread across the frontier firing line that separated the two Beirut's, West and East, at that time of the civil war. It appears that a charismatic renewal was irrupting on both sides of Beirut. Khodr's involvement in a wider ecumenical renewal was influenced by Riad Mofarrij,[27] another Lebanese founding member of OYM, who had joined a Catholic-ecumenical community which after time drew Orthodox into membership: Khodr was impressed with the spirituality of these Orthodox.

Metropolitan Georges Khodr represents the Eastern Orthodox tradition of the Middle East, and specifically the Byzantine Church of Antioch, which is a member of the World Council of Churches. The autocephalous Orthodox Church of Antioch is third in rank after Constantinople and Alexandria and is the largest Arab Christian Church in the Middle East; 30 percent of the predominately Muslim

26 *Op. cit.*, p 234, footnote 5, *On the Invocation of the Name of Jesus by a Monk of the Eastern Church*, London: The Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius. Lev Gillet wrote under the pseudonym Monk of the Eastern Church.

27 Riad Mofarrij, Greek Orthodox Christian of Antiochian Church, felt called to join the Catholic 'Word of God' lay community in Beirut. This ecumenical community is one of 'a community of communities' called 'The Sword of the Spirit', founded in 1982 as a student evangelical outreach at the University of Michigan, USA; which is now worldwide. Fr Lev Gillet encouraged Mofarrij to join the community of Catholics in Beirut but to research in depth the theology of Orthodoxy.

population in Lebanon are Christian. Khodr addressed the WCC Central Committee, which met in 1970 to define a programme on 'Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies', with a lecture entitled 'Christianity in a Pluralist World: The Economy of the Holy Spirit'. Khodr sees the mission of the Church in dialogue is 'to nurture the spiritual tradition of religions it encountered by "improving" them from within … while not alienating them.'[28] He amplifies this point by recalling the relationship of the Eastern Church with Islam, particularly the Assyrian (Nestorian) Church: 'The prophetic character of Muhammad is defined in Nestorian texts on the basis of specific analysis of the Muhammadan message. But there is no blurring of the centrality and ontological uniqueness of Jesus Christ.'[29] Khodr sees 'the line which leads from Abraham, Father of believers, to the Arab Prophet is a mysterious and providential way', and that touches of the Word are evident in the Qur'an:[30] the Qur'an vibrates with a powerful nostalgia of Christ. The Assyrian Patriarch Timothy, who died in 823, answered the ruling 'Abbasid caliph al-Mahdi's question, 'What say ye of Muhammad?' with the reply 'he walked in the path of the prophets'—a very dialogical response compared to the Christian-Islamic polemics which followed down through the centuries until Massignon's defence of Muhammad's authenticity as a prophet.

In his chapter on the Christian view of Islam, Clément cites Khodr's words: Christ is not an institution, but is found in the transformation of hearts to gentleness and humility and *jihad*[31] for those who suffer; *jihad* here means to struggle for the other.

Clément lives in the knowledge and expectation that the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit is continually expressed in history; this requires a creative and dynamic response from Christianity, never a static approach to doctrine. He points to the discernment of Georges Khodr and Kenneth Cragg who see that the Christian is meant to discover and recognize the 'traces of Christ' in all human reality, whether religious or not.[32] Islam constitutes a spiritual universe in which Jesus is present, and it is this presence that Christian witness must unveil and reveal, in awareness that Islam explicitly negates Christian dogma concerning

28 Kerr, 'The Prophethood of Muhammad', p. 433.
29 *Ibid*.
30 Clément, *Un Respect Têtu*, p. 282.
31 In this sense *jihad* means struggle. On the meaning of jihad, see Talbi, p. 26.
32 Clément, *Un Respect Têtu*, p. 286.

Jesus: the Trinity, the Cross and Redemption. In mystical Islam Jesus appears as the major representative of the way of love, and the cross of Jesus was witnessed by the sacrificial death of Muslim Mansur al-Hallaj, mentioned above in connection with Massignon.

'Secular' Europe

A revolt in the West dating from the nineteenth century against what Clément terms 'clerical totalitarianism'[33] gathered momentum. Its opposition to ecclesiastical institutions, led to 'Christians without a Church', but also a humanism that remained open to Gospel values and a system of government based on human rights. Gradually religion became just one dimension among many, the Church was no longer a regulatory force within Western society, and as sociologist Grace Davies wrote, people were 'believing not belonging'. A culture developed which encouraged research, polemics, diversity and change, which was also nevertheless self-critiquing; its laws however were rooted and based on Christian teaching and an insistence on human rights. 'Secularization is … simultaneously the daughter of Athens and Jerusalem.'[34] European culture began to emerge 'as the first *open* culture in history … with no other implicit *philosophy than a philosophy of the "other" welcomed in his otherness.*'[35] But as foretold by Soloviev on the eve of the twentieth century, society alone could not sustain this Utopian vision: dreadful consequences ensued involving for many the loss of a meaningful matrix for life: the desire to live, stable relationships between men and women, between parents and children. As villages emptied, cities became overpopulated, production and consumerism ruled and the abyss of collective totalitarian nihilism opened; followed by individual nihilism.

Twentieth-century Eastern European Christians, particularly the Orthodox, have witnessed the destruction of their cultures during more than half a century of persecution; Clément judges that this can turn the Church into a religious ghetto, that leaves Christians more liturgized than evangelized; to be an Orthodox

33 Clément, *Conversations with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I*, p. 156.
34 *Op. cit.*, p. 159.
35 *Ibid.*

Christian can become a sign of identity and belonging that results in a religious nationalism which Clément sees as 'the Orthodox form of secularization'.[36]

'Mediterranean genius'

Clément experienced a religious anthropological view in Dupront's historical research; it arose for Clément again in the work of another contemporary writer, Albert Camus, in his *Letter to a German Friend*[37]. Camus and Clément both shared admiration of 'Mediterranean humanism' and its philosophical turn grounded in nature and moderation. Camus refers to the 'Mediterranean genius' in his lecture on *The New Mediterranean Culture,* delivered in Algeria, 1937.[38] Camus and Clément's very French understanding of the Mediterranean is characterised as being 'inclusive, multicultural and progressive'. In his discussion concerning Christian-Islamic relations, Clément cites Patriarch Bartholomew I's view that the people living round the sea must be invited to build peace in the Mediterranean through the rediscovery of the principles and values which flourished for many centuries in this region.[39]

It would seem that knowledge of the Mediterranean ethos is crucial to understanding the origins and character of many modern societies. A culture developed in the Middle Ages among both Christians and Muslims, that was based on 'a rationale that remained close to the Greek *logos* and the bibilical Wisdom'[40], which lies at the roots of contemporary Western and Middle Eastern cultures. Pondering the history, significance and meaning of this region is important to any Christian-Islamic discussion. Today over twenty-one modern states have a coastline on the Mediterranean sea,[41] including eight of the twenty-

36 *Op. cit.*, p. 160.

37 Clément, *L'Autre Soleil*, p. 90.

38 See Neil Foxlee's, 'Mediterranean Humanism or Colonialism with a Human Face? Contextualizing Albert Camus' "The New Mediterranean Culture"', *Mediterranean Historical Review*, Vol. 21, No. 1, June 2006, pp. 77-97.

39 Clément, *Conversations with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I*, p. 211.

40 *Op. cit.*, p. 212.

41 *In Europe, west to east:* Spain, France, Monaco, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovinia, Montenegro, Albania, Greece. *In Asia, north to south:* Turkey, Syria, Cyprus, Lebanon, Israel. *In Africa, east to west:* Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco.

one Islamic countries of the Middle East,[42] where often minority Christian groups have lived since the coming of Islam; millions of Arabic-speaking Christians live among Muslims in the Middle East.

Clément recalls Camus as a man of modesty with a sense of limitations. Born in Algeria, Camus became an author and a key French philosopher of twentieth century. He arrived in France in 1938, aged twenty-five; later Camus described himself as 'French by birth and, since 1940, by deliberate choice',[43] and a self-professed atheist—although Clément wonders about this. Camus rejected ideological associations, opposed nihilism and totalitarianism in its many forms, and like both Dupront and Clément became active in the French Resistance, directing the famous Resistance Journal *Combat*. He formulated his philosophy at this time: no matter how inexplicable existence might be, human life remains sacred. By 1949 he became a leading spokesman for the French working class, but rejected Marxism. In his political-philosophical essay, *L'Homme Révolté* (The Rebel), written as a corrective to Marxism and Nazism, the rebel, he explains, understands the difference between revolution and revolt which is a peaceful, evolutional process, needs leadership but *not* violence. Young people of Egypt and North Africa in recent times have attempted to achieve a peaceful revolt to attain human rights for the people of their countries. Camus spoke out with courage against the atrocities of the Soviet Union, particularly following the Hungarian Uprising of 1956; his early death caused by a car crash came in 1960 when he was only forty-seven.

Two Faces of Islam

In Clément's view Orthodoxy needs to accompany Catholicism in Europe, and this awareness sensitizes him to the presence of Islam and its two possible 'faces' of which Talbi and Ramadan are representative.

There are additional Territories: Gibralter ((UK), Centa and Melilla (Spain), Mount Athos (Autonomous monastic state), Gaza Strip (PNO), as well as other countries that do not border the sea but are considered to be Mediterranean countries in a wider sense: Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia and the Vatican.

42 Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Jordon, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE, Yemen.

43 R Quilliot and L Faucon, Eds, *Albert Camus Essais,* Paris, BGallimard, 1981, p. 978.

Mohamed Talbi, one of the most important Muslim modernist thinkers of the twentieth century, was born in Tunis in the same year as Clément, 1921. After a traditional Islamic education he went to Paris in 1947 for his doctoral studies in Islamic history. The vibrant intellectual culture of Paris made a strong and positive impression; he later expresses gratitude for his exposure to the thinking of Marx, Freud and the great Islamic scholars who guided his studies which he interpreted from his traditional Tunisian and Sufi influenced background. His interest in other religions and his European experience of different cultures is a crucial part of Talbi's development as a modernist thinker.'[44] In considering modern pluralism, Talbi sees it as integral to the Qur'an and Islamic tradition: an intellectual and religious freedom which respects the other and his or her views, a mutual respect that creates a space for dialogue. Talbi argues for an historic reading of the Qur'an which speaks of pluralism, freedom—the right of every individual in society, an apolitical Islam and equality status of women;[45] he rejects a literal understanding and judges democracy. Democracy in spite of failings is the best system of government for Muslims today. Talbi sees the pluralism he considers to be characteristic of all great religions is more urgently needed now to deal with modern globalisation. Talbi believes that the ethical values of the Qur'an provide a model for contemporary culture and situations; it must be interpreted 'at this moment and in this place'.[46] He would welcome the 'Islamisation of modernity and the modernisation of Islam;' in so doing Islam would rediscover 'its own humane truth in integration with the most humane values of modern culture.'[47] Talbi approves of diversity of views, but criticises those who believe their own interpretations are somehow the total truth; 'knowledge however compelling, is never absolutely certain'[48], he says. He wants to define the *Umma* as 'the community of

44 Ronald L Nettler, 'Mohamed Talbi on understanding the Qur'an', *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur'an,* ed. Suha Taji-Farouki, Oxford University Press, London, pp. 225-239, p. 226.

45 *Op. cit*.

46 *Op. cit*., p. 231.

47 *Op. cit*., p. 237.

48 Ronald L Nettler, 'Mohamed Talbi: "For Dialogue Between all Religions"', *Studies in Muslim-Jewish Encounter, Muslim-Jewish Encounters, Intellectual Traditions and Modern Politics*, ed. Ronald L Nettler, Harwood Academic Publishers, The Netherlands, 1998, pp. 171-199, *op. cit*., p. 178.

moderation'[49] yet predicts a polarisation between 'totalitarianism and anarchy'[50] within it.

Tariq Ramadan's position on Islamic modernism and tradition is different and Olivier Clément issues a warning.[51] Ramadan was born in Geneva 42 years ago, studied as an Imam in Cairo, attained a degree in French Literature, studied the European philosophers and achieved two doctorates in Islamic Studies. He teaches philosophy, French literature and Islamic studies at the Universities of Fribourg and Geneva and lectures internationally. He has attracted critical reviews for anti-Semitism and radical views; he sees the West as having innate hostility towards Islam, and predicts its decline and the ascendancy of Islam. His maternal grandfather, Hassan Al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood movement in 1929, of which his father was an active promoter. His brother Hani, directs an Islamic Centre in Geneva that has been accused of links with the terrorist network of Al-Qaeda, although Ramadan denies contact with it.

Ramadan's ideology brings Islamic politics into dialogue with earlier radical Western critiques of Nietzsche, Heidegger and neo-Marxist thought. He wants Islam to overcome Western modernity in an Islamisation of the West. Yet Western intellectuals applaud Ramadan, because his ideology includes some democratic elements, equal citizenship and free expression. One lone voice of criticism is raised against Ramadan's model of Islam: Olivier Clément in an article published by him in 2003 in the Catholic University of Milan's magazine, *Vita e Pensiero*. He sees a new exploitation of the juridical and mental structures of Western society that signals a new motivation. A problem is the new ideology has a spokesman, Ramadan, presents himself as a Western intellectual and while affirming his Muslim faith, it would seem he wants to replace the values of Western civilisation, affirm Islamic identity and present it as true universality that will fill the spiritual void left by a diminishing Christian and Jewish religious presence. For him all good people such as Mother Teresa, Helder Camara and Sister Emanuelle are implicitly Muslims. Ramadan writes, 'today the Muslims who live in the West must unite themselves to the

49 *Op. cit.*, p. 180.

50 *Ibid*.

51 See Olivier Clément, 'Be Careful of Ramadan's Model of Islam' in Sandro Magister's article, 'Tariq Ramadan's Two-Faced Islam. The West is the Land of Conquest', http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it (accessed 20.11.16).

revolution of the antiestablishment groups … .' Jaques Jomier judges that Ramadan's project is 'not the modernisation of Islam, but the islamification of modernity.' Ramadan is coming from a very different perspective to that of Talbi. Talbi engages and takes interest in European thought and Christianity, for Ramadan, the West is a space for Islam to reassert its old dominance.

Clément has experienced deeply the damage caused by totalitarianism through his critical analysis of Solzhenitsyn's lived experience and work, while his own experience of atheism and twentieth century totalitarianism has carved a sacred space in him. He sees some of the same traces of an idolatrous Islamic totalitarianism appearing in Islam.

Islamic groups who have emigrated to the West—Britain, Germany, Holland, Canada, USA, have had to rethink the position of Islam within the reality of being 'just another religion' in a 'secular', democratic society. Could this recurrence of diaspora throughout history be a divine prompting to all enclosed societies, to seek fruitfulness amongst diversity. Closed societies such as ancient Israel, some areas of Orthodoxy, the Catholic Church before Vatican II (no salvation outside the Church!), Islam, after its original fruitfulness in the early centuries, became isolated. In comparison the Jewish and Russian Orthodox diasporas brought richness to the world. Kenneth Cragg sees the diaspora of Muslims to the West as a hopeful sign that may be a call of God for Muslim communities to co-exist with those of other religions. A re-evaluation of Islam itself is being forced on Muslims by international laws of human rights and by the minority status of Muslim communities no longer living in an Islamic State.

Conclusion

France looks to the Mediterranean and looks northwards to Europe and the Atlantic. Constantinople and Antioch are frontier European Christian presences: while 30 percent of the predominately Muslim population in Lebanon is Christian, the other Arab nation states of the Mediterranean and Middle East have a diminishing, or no, Christian presence. The Mediterranean is a place of conviviality and Christian consciousness, to which Clément has responded to over a

lifetime; he came to appreciate the context of Antioch as a Christian presence that has endured and has experienced spiritual revival in the twentieth century. His mature ecclesial consciousness has assimilated Constantinople and, over time, he became aware of the special vocation of Antioch and the renewal of Catholicism in Europe; he sees the united co-operation of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches as vital to the future of Europe, together with hard headed dialogue between Islam and Christianity.

Massignon's sense of double belonging to Catholicism and also to the *Ummah* of Islam, is extremely significant for Clément. Clément reassesses and re-connects on the one hand with his ancestral Catholic roots through the spiritual renewal flowing in twentieth century French Catholicism, and on the other, with the spiritual paradigm of Antioch and the Mediterranean Catholic and Orthodox Christian ecclesial groups, which as at Antioch, learnt to co-exist alongside Islam. His earlier election of Orthodoxy is not the denial of his Catholic roots that it may originally may have seemed. His relationship with Talbi is part of that development in which he became aware of zones of conversation and dialogue and the overall importance of Europe.

Clément judges that Talbi's call for mutual respect that creates a space for dialogue, must include the intuition of Louis Massignon: a mutual compassion, that attempts to rejoin the strong transhistoric lines of Islamic philosophical reflection, mysticism and justice for the humiliated ones of the Third World. But Clément also is pointing to a problem. The difference between Talbi and Ramadan is that Talbi engages and takes an interest in other religious traditions, including Christianity, whilst Ramadan has no interest - the West is a platform for Islam to reconfirm itself. Clément is aware of this and takes critical note.

Clément can be considered an example of monastic, pluralistic, mystical acceptance of all humanity and creation on a cosmic scale in Christ, in fact he is a Father of the Church.

THE FAITHFUL PRESENCE OF THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX IN A CHALLENGING MILIEU: *SAYFOPHOBIA*, CITIZENSHIP, IDPS 1915-2015, AND BEYOND.

Aziz Abdul-Nour

> Between 1914 and 1918, my church [the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch] lost almost 100,000 faithful in the 'Sayfo' [Year of the Sword], and nearly the same number were uprooted from their homeland … The continuing memories of suffering from wounds that have not healed will keep historians busy throughout the third millennium.
>
> Mor Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, 2001

This study, which is dedicated to Mor Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, the abducted Archbishop of Aleppo since 22 April 2013 (Oez & Abdul-Nour, 2016), mainly focuses on the geopolitical span of half a century (1873-1923) between the Treaty of Berlin 1878 and the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. This includes significant multi-transitional events and turning points which had lasting effects on our interpretation of the historical and present religious freedom, and our understanding of future co-existence of Christians in general, and the Syrian Orthodox in particular. The purpose of these endeavours was for Christians to maintain their identity and 'zero conflict' with their neighbours in their increasingly challenging Middle Eastern milieu. After centuries under the Ottoman Empire's rule, state-sponsored reforms and acculturation, Ottoman Christians were subjected to violent geopolitical practices, uprooted, ethno-religiously cleansed and they became critically endangered in their homeland (Parry, 1895; Joseph, 1983; Saka, 1983; O'Mahony, 2006; Brock, 2016, 2008; Sato, 2017).

Those who survived the deportation orders ('*Tehcīr* Law') and ('*Safar Barlek*') the Exodus of apocalyptic dimensions of 1915 resettled mainly in Syria and Iraq (Luck, 1925, Asfar, 2012). They embraced the painful

and fearful past with a measure of selective amnesia (Sato, 2005, 2006). They sought to acclimatize in order to survive and recover in the safety of Iraq and Syria, as well as in Lebanon, Trans-Jordan, Palestine and Turkey (Loosley, 2009; Dinno, 2017). A century later, Christians became again the collateral damage of comparable geopolitical violence which has rendered them now almost entirely 'internally displace persons' (IDPs) in a volatile region (OHCHR, 2014, 2015; MRG, 2015; UNHCR, 2016). Like their forefathers in 1915, they were back to square one, entering the third millennium in the last 'deportation caravan' (Namiq, 1991) assigned to 'displaced persons' camps, in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. They endured the lowest status of human existence under the UN Charter, deprived of dignity, integrity, and humanity. Basically, these Middle East Christians were a demographic pawn in a tumultuous region with no clear prospect of resettlement in their ancient homeland which is again now a political flash point. This article seeks to reposition those 'Living Stones', all those forgotten innocents, especially the Syrian Orthodox, whose story has been missing from the overall picture, in order to find synergies in paradoxes. Moreover, the Treaty of Lausanne 1923, which was the most intractable diplomatic negotiation after the First World War that ended the conflict, defined and established modern borders. It recognised Turkish sovereignty. Essentially, the deed of New Turkey, which offset the *Mi̱sāk-i Millī* ('National Pact, or National Oath') made by the last meeting of the Ottoman Parliament known as the Chamber of Deputies, *Meclis-i Mebusân*, on 28 January 1920 was a development that worried the allies. The Treaty of Lausanne is now approaching its centenary with an anticipated geopolitical paradigm shift which poses a grave challenge to the status quo.

This paper focuses particularly on the Syrian Orthodox Christians in their historical heartlands on the ancient trade routes as they crossed the idyllic Syriac corridors of the Fertile Crescent (Parry, 1892; Bell, 1913, 1982; Griffith, 2013). The geopolitical region in question embraces the three main Ottoman Eastern frontiers provinces *(wilāyāt)* facing the wider Arab world: Mosul, Aleppo, and Amid (Diyarbekir). These three units, historically, geographically, demographically and culturally, formed the Upper Mesopotamia triangle. Recently, special media attention has been given for different reasons to various portions of this triangle. Aleppo's corner emerged as the trophy of the fratricidal

attrition in the battle for Syria (Phillips, 2016). The Mosul apex within Iraq was given the intriguing name the 'Sunni triangle.' Although the term may have been coined and used in the narrow academic circles of Iraqi specialists, it was not until a month after the fall of Baghdad did this term become widespread and popularised when used in a *New York Times*' article on 10 June 2003. This depicted an omen of the impending deluge of sectarianism in Iraq post 2003. This strategically important economic-geopolitical bridge straddles the Tigris and Euphrates and acted as an East and West connection with the old world. Politically it has been the musical chair of many belligerent empires millennia before the arrival of the Ottomans (Kinross, 1977). Starting from the first emerging empire of the Assyrians in Nineveh, the destruction of its great capital was predicted by the prophet Nahum in 612 BC: 'Nineveh lay in ruins, who will pity you?' (Nahum 1: 7). This earned Nahum an eternal place in the Old Testament. All emperors were eager to mint coins with their head on them to proclaim that Mesopotamia had been conquered and subjugated to their power. There was not only a clash of civilisations but also cultural encounters and cross fertilisation (Frankopan, 2016).

Alexander the Great, who ruled most of the known ancient world of his day from a notional capital at Babylon, shot to fame in 330 BC when he defeated his Persian rival King Darius III of the Achaemenid Empire. This was in the vicinity of the city of Mosul-Nineveh, in the Valley of Nineveh, 'the valley of tears and blood', where most Christian towns and villages are located. The Valley of Nineveh has been the battlefield of successive inroads of all these empires and beyond. Now, as we go to press, the battle for Mosul's destiny is currently fought from house to house in these deserted Christian villages of the Valley of Nineveh, Mosul's eastern bank and the entire eastern hinterland of Mosul.

This region was and still is an important agricultural, commercial and cultural centre. Christianity reached this region if not—according to tradition—with the returning Magi, then definitely with the returning Mesopotamians who were present at the Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2:9). Naturally, the converts were both Jews and Gentiles. They were then first called Christians at Antioch (Acts 6:26), they endeavoured to live peacefully side-by-side in relative healthy, wealthy and tranquil co-existence.

The pagan house in Mosul city centre where St Thomas the apostle resided during his stay in Mosul-Nineveh, eventually became the Church of St Thomas. This oldest functioning Syrian Orthodox Church in Iraq became a worldwide destination for pilgrims when the relic of St Thomas was discovered during the church restoration work directed in 1963 by Bishop Zakka Iwas (later Patriarch Zakka I, 1980-2014) (Ibrahim, 1981, Abdul-Nour, 2005). Alas, the bell of the last Eucharist celebrated in this church rang on the eve of the fall of Mosul on 9 June 2014. Since then entire Christian community members of Mosul, regardless of their denominations, were ethno-religiously cleansed and were given an ultimatum to leave the city of Mosul by noon on 19 June 2014 and eventually the Valley of Nineveh on 7 August 2014. This brought to a close two millennia of Christianity in Mosul-Nineveh. Mosul has not since heard a single toll of any bell from its ancient churches; not a single Christian is left in the city. The private properties and ecclesiastical endowments of the Syrian Orthodox were confiscated. Each house was branded with the Arabic letter N (ن) to depict that the citizen-N who once lived here was a Nazarene—*Naṣārā,* which is a pejorative Arabic word for Christians. Unfortunately for Christians in the Near East, their ancient homeland has been and still is one of the most challenging regions in the world. This is a result of the long-lasting entanglement and ongoing plethora of conflicts that the Christians have had to (and continue to) endure. (For Christianity in the Middle East, see O'Mahony and Loosley, 2010 and O'Mahony, 2014.)

The advent of Islam and the Arab conquest of the region from the seventh century took place under the Rightly Guided Caliphs (632-661), and their successors, the Umayyads (661-750) and the 'Abbāsids (750-1258).

Muslim rulers were not interested in dogmatic differences between Christians in their domains or in the outcome of the Council of Ephesus (431) or Christianity's crossroads at Chalcedon (451). The resultant three-way split in Eastern Christianity was effectively fossilised and cut off from the Chalcedonian tradition (Constantinople and Rome), from the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Church of the East. Christians were all living under Muslim rule (Brock, 2005). Christians were officially regarded as *ahl al-dhimmah*—(*dhimmīs*) (Bosworth, 2012). The state was obliged to protect the people who

were basically known to Muslims as 'people of the Book' (Jews and Christians) including the community's life, property, and freedom of religion and worship. In exchange, *dhimmīs* were required to be loyal to the empire and to contribute to its coffers by paying the capitation or poll tax *(Jizyah)*, while Muslim subjects paid *Zakāt*, a set proportion of one's wealth to charity (Tritton, 1930; Bosworth, 2012). The *dhimmī* concept regulated inter-faith relationships among subjects who were governed by reciprocal tolerance, although this fluctuated from time to time, place to place, and ruler to ruler. There was little change in the status quo (Morony, 1974, 1984).

The Seljuk Turks seized power in Baghdad in the eleventh century, only to be overthrown by the Mongol hordes of Genghis Khan (1162-1227) which started the Mongol invasions that conquered most of Eurasia. A successor Hulagu Khan (1218-1265) was supposed to be friendly towards Christians. His mother and wife were Christians of the Ancient Church of the East. Hulagu Khan conquered Baghdad on 10 February 1258, he pillaged the great and glorious city; the waters of the Tigris ran red and then black with the ink of the treasure of the Grand Library of Baghdad. Then Timur the Lame (1336-1405) had his turn. The invaders were, again, indiscriminate in their persecution of the populace in general and Christians in particular. The consecutive campaigns of the Mongols and others had a great impact on the Syrian Orthodox Church especially after the ransacking of Baghdad and the ancient city of Tikrit, (Fiey, 1980). Tikrit was the long established see of the Syrian Orthodox Catholicos (or Maphrian) of the East, the second in ecclesiastical command after the Patriarch (Oez, 2012). The entire Syrian Orthodox Church community of Baghdad and Tikrit were dislodged *en masse* together with their Catholicos. The survivors reached the safety of Mosul. Tikrit never recovered its status as a see of the Catholicos of the East and a stronghold of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Iraq. The Catholicosate (or Catholicoi) of the East alternated its seat between Mosul and the fourth-century ancient monastery of Mor Matta, (Yacoub III, 1961) until the abolition of the Catholicosate in the Syrian Orthodox Church in 1856.

The Ottomans emerged fully after the fall of the ancient city of Byzantium, Constantinople, the then capital city of the shrunken Byzantine empire on 29 May 1453. The 90th Patriarch of Antioch and all the East for the Syrian Orthodox, Mor Ignatius Behnam Al-Hadaly

of Bartella (1445-1454), was 681 miles or 1096 km away, as the crow flies, celebrating the Eucharist of the 8th anniversary of the succession in the church of the citadel-like Monastery of Dair al-Za'faran ('Saffron Monastery', or the Monastery of St Ananias). This monastery was established in 493 AD and then in 1165 AD it became the Syrian Orthodox's Patriarchal headquarters, in Mardin in the province of Diyarbekir, South East Turkey (Zakka I, 1983;Yacoub III, Parry, 1895). Initially, such changes may have brought about an ecclesiastical sigh of relief at the discomfort of having to live with an established church which evolved and existed since the Council of Chalcedon 451 AD. It looked down on the rest of Christendom from the capital of the Byzantine Empire (Menze, 2008). However, there was a half century of a political tug-of-war in the region and plenty of water mixed with blood passed under the Mesopotamian bridges. Political and cultural repercussions of a new era and new reality were marked by such a major event in history in the Near East where then most of the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox co-existed (Norwich, 1995, 1997).

Sultan Selim I (1512-1520) was best known as Selim the Grim. He was the first Sultan to inherit the Sultanate of the House of Ottoman by eliminating his brothers, which were traditional and legalised acts of succession. This seems to have begun with Bayezid I (1389-1402). Such practices remained a legal standard (Fisher, 1964). Historians oversimplified this period by concentrating on blood thirsty conquests. This may have obscured Selim I's intellectual, artistic and shrewd traits and interests in foreign relations. He befriended and respected men of learning and used their talent in his government. By the age of fifty, Selim I emerged victorious in the Battle of Chaldiran, 23 August 1514 (Akçe, 2015), over Shah Ismail I (1505-1524), the founder of the Safavid Empire. Ismail I converted Iran from Sunni to Shi'ah and played a key role in the rise of Twelver Shi'ah Islam, (Newman, 2008*)*. No one could deny that it was Selim's conquests of Persia, Anatolia and Egypt which paved the way for the Ottoman Empire to reach its pinnacle under his son Suleiman I (1520-1566) (Magnificent) the Lawgiver (*Qānūnī*). He brought all provinces in Eastern Anatolia together encompassing Western Armenia and Mesopotamia, the Levant in 1533. Symbolically, Baghdad, not Constantinople, is the seat of the Caliphate of the Sunni world. To claim the Caliphate and assume the title of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques *(Khādim al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn),* it was

paramount for Suleiman I to be present when his army re-conquered Baghdad. Suleiman I entered the old capital of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate victoriously and immediately ordered the restoration of the tomb of Imam Abū Ḥanīfah (767-699). The founder of the Sunni Ḥanafī school of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and other Sunni shrines were destroyed by Ismail I. It seems what we witnessed of indiscriminate destruction, sacrileges and urbicide in Mosul and Aleppo are not recent practice. (Kinross, 1977).

Bringing the region and its multi-ethno-religious communities together under a new reality was ushered in by the hegemony and eventual permanent conquest of the emerging Ottoman Empire. This ruled the region through many wars and treaties until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 and its aftermath (Harrow, 2015).

Reaya of the Ottoman Millet System and the effect of *Tanẓīmât* and Capitulations

For three centuries, the three multi-ethno-religiously diverse eastern *Wilāyahs* lived a static life. Politics were the concern of only a few in the centres of the *Wilāyahs*, most of them local notables and Turkish officials. The rural and tribes people were disenfranchised from participation in political life and force was the only language used between them and the authorities. The ancient Christian communities, subjects of the Ottoman Empire, initially essentially belonged to the Orthodox Churches, both Oriental Orthodox (Ephesian) and Eastern Orthodox (Chalcedonian). They were all considered *Dhimmī*, their denominations were completely ignored and they were all dealt with uniformly. Shortly after the fall off Constantinople, the Ottomans introduced the millet system (from the Arabic word *millah* which means 'nation, community') to regulate the administration of different millet within the empire. It gave religious/ethnic/geographical communities a sort of communal autonomy with a limited amount of power to regulate their own affairs under the overall supremacy of the Ottoman administration. The millet system was not only oblivious to dogma and denominations but also deprived Dhimmi of all forms of political participation (Bin Talal, 1994; Harrow, 2014; Gibbons, 2014).

The millet system in the Ottoman Empire, however, did allow people or confessional communities to be grouped by religious confession as opposed to nationality or ethnicity, which was more consistent with the existing social structure. People were able to represent themselves more effectively within a group rather than as individuals.

For indigenous Orthodox Christians of the empire, however unsatisfactory the millet system, under the circumstances it was eminently suitable and functional system that eliminated the religious Apartheid of the Byzantine Empire. The millet system successfully compartmentalised, on an equal footing, the entire indigenous Orthodox communities, whether urban or rural, formed within the Ottoman Empire into a class called: *the Reaya* (from Arabic *raʿāyā*—a plural of *raʿiyah,* 'flock, subject'). The Orthodox *Raʿaya* belonged to two main ecclesiastical/temporal authorities: the *Rum Millet (millet-i Rūm)*, the then established Church of the Byzantium Empire with a long established Ecumenical Patriarchate in the Phanar quarter of Constantinople, which until 1453, had been the centre of Orthodox Christianity, (Anagnostopoulos, 2014). The Armenian Orthodox *Ermeni Millet (millet-i Ermeni)* was a non-established Church and never previously allowed to officially operate from Constantinople during the Byzantine Empire. In implementing the institutionalisation of the millet system through only two of the main Christian *Dhimmī* communities living in the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman addressed this issue in 1461 by inviting Bishop Yovakim of Bursa (1461–78) to Constantinople and bestowing upon him the title of patriarch, entrusting him with the ecclesiastical and civil government of all Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire. In effect, the unification of the Armenian people was formally legitimised by the institution of the *Ermeni millet* (Nersessian, 2015). The Jewish community the *Millet-i Yahud* was entrusted to the Grand Rabbi of Istanbul. The millet system operated according to pyramidal and hierarchical principles. The Ottoman authorities recognised the patriarch as the highest religious and political leader of a loyal people or nation *(millet-i sadıka),* since they lived in harmony with the new rulers of Anatolia. Both patriarchs were equally granted *Imperial bérats* (titles of privileges given to the lay or clerical officials on behalf of the Ottoman state) the official title of *Millet-Bashi* (ethnarch) of their respective churches. They were also recognised and mandated under

the millet system with the official responsibility to look after the ecclesiastical and temporal affairs of all other indigenous Orthodox denominations which became subjects of the Sultan.

The Ecumenical Patriarch, at Constantinople of the *Rum Millet (millet-i Rūm)* looked after all Eastern Orthodox Churches in the Ottoman Empire (Albanians, Arabs, Bulgarians, Greeks, Russians, Serbs and Vlachs Orthodox).

The successful Armenian patriarchs who now also resided at and operated from Constantinople were granted officially temporal responsibility for the Oriental Orthodox (Armenians, Coptic, Ethiopian, Syrian Orthodox) and all ethnic Armenians irrespective of whether they belonged to the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Armenian Catholic Church or the Armenian Protestant Church (which was formed in the nineteenth century).

If and when a new patriarch is elected to any of those Churches, the patriarch would have to apply in person for their official *bérats or Firmān* through the office of the *Millet-Bashi* in Istanbul who is responsible for the temporal affairs of that particular Church. Who would launch the application for *bérats* at the Sublime Porte (*Bāb-ı Hümāyūn* or *Bāb-ı 'Ālī*). Considering that the elected patriarch had to go in person to Istanbul to initiate the bureaucratic process of obtaining the Imperial *bérat*, this could take a very long time. In addition to all the expenses involved was the potential danger of travelling between the patriarchate headquarters in Mardin and Istanbul. Many Syrian Orthodox patriarchs in the past decided to bypass this demanding process and simply said that: 'The Cross is my best *bérat*.'

The millet system kept evolving further as it was implemented under different Sultans. Ottoman scholars differ in their interpretation of both this specific administrative system, the *Dhimmī* and *Millet*, some may consider this as religious apartheid, at best 'second class'. Others consider the millet an example of pre-modern religious pluralism (Hasluck, 1925).

The Anglo-Ottoman Trade Pact of 1838 signed by Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) opened the empire's market to imports of Western products. This imposed a new phase of reforms which have become known in history as the *Tanẓīmāt*—'reorganisation' or 'reform'.

The chronological starting point for these was the *Tanẓīmāt* Reform period (1839-1876). This is considered to be the issuing of the imperial decree of 'The Illustrious Rescript' (known as *Haṭṭ-i Şerif)*

in 1839 under auspices of Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) who was proclaimed as Mahmud the Just. However, these were brought about in tandem in co-operation between his Grand Vizer Reşid Mehmed Pasha (1829-1833) and Sir Stafford Canning (1786-1880), the long-time British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire (Lane-Poole, 1890).

Haṭṭ-i Şerif contained declarations of equality, freedom, and isonomy by which the Ottoman state bound itself to treat its non-Muslim subjects. The reforms sought to grant emancipation to non-Muslim subjects of the empire and to integrate non-Turks more thoroughly into Ottoman society by enhancing their civil liberties and granting them equality throughout the empire. The reforms encouraged Ottomanism among the diverse ethnic groups of the empire, attempting to stem the tide of nationalist movements within the multi-national Ottoman Empire.

Sultan Abdul-Majid (1839-1861) swiftly rejected a Russian ultimatum claiming protectorate over Christians in Turkey. He declared his commitments to reform immediately following the end of the Crimean War (1853-1856). The Ottomans under Abdul-Majid passed the sweeping famous decree of the Imperial Rescript known as *Haṭṭ-i Hümayūn* in 1856 (Davidson, 1963). Scholars list some of the key elements of *Haṭṭ-i Hümayūn*: the guarantee of freedom of religion; abolition of distinction based upon language, race, or religion; the replacement of *shari'ah* courts with mixed courts for commercial and criminal suits involving Muslims and non-Muslims (historians point out that in practice formal and informal discriminations against non-Muslims continued unchecked [Masters, 2001]); and the dropping of the terms *ahl al-dhimmah* or *reaya* in favour of *gayrimüslimler* (non-Muslims). (See Masters, 2001.)

The *Tanẓīmāt* era brought specific regulations called 'Regulation of the Armenian Nation' *(Nizâmnâme-i Millet-i Ermeniyân*) which was introduced on 29 March 1863, over the millet organization. This granted extensive privileges and autonomy concerning self-governance. Soon the Ottoman Empire passed another regulation over *Nizâmnâme-i Millet-i Ermeniyân* developed by the Patriarchate Assemblies of Armenians, which was named as the *Islahat Fermânı* ('Firman of the Reforms'). The 'Firman of the Reforms' gave immense privileges to the Armenians, which formed a 'governance in governance' to eliminate the aristocratic dominance of the Armenian nobles by development

of the political strata in the society (Nersessian, 2014; Gibbons 2014). This was not without serious repercussions and stress over Ottoman political and administrative structures.

During the governorship of Midhat Pasha (1869-1871) the reformer Grand Vizer of Sultan Abdul-Aziz (1861-1976), masterminded the first constitutional monarchic regime, and bargained with the 34th Sultan Abdulhamit (1876-1909) to start the constitutional process as a condition of his enthronement, a promise that was not kept and the First Constitutional Era (1876–1878) lasted for two years only. On 5 February 1878 Abdulhamit sent Midhat in to exile and adjourned the parliament indefinitely on 13 February 1878, (Midhat, 1909). This ushered in an era of absolute authoritarianism which lasted 30 years. The party of Union and Progress obliged Abdulhamit to promulgate once more the Constitutional Monarchy on 23 July 1908. Soon Abdulhamit was dethroned by five members of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) *(Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti)*. They claimed that with their efforts democracy that is inspired by the French slogan of liberty, equality and fraternity was prevailing in Turkey (Karpat, 2001).

The *Tanẓīmāt* reforms affected the character of the millets. To understand the importance of the reforms it is necessary to understand the 'development' phases of each millet, or rather the new relationships created either between or within millets. In addition, their relations to the concessions system were provided by the Capitulations (extraterritorial rights of Europeans).

The Ottomans carefully considered their obligations under the Capitulations. This was an agreement that gave concessions and immunity to European powers in the Ottoman Empire. The earliest of these Capitulations is that of 1535 with Francis I (1494-1547) who formed a Franco-Ottoman alliance with Suleiman I. These concessions which initially were given to the French included ambassadors and consuls who were to have ex-territorial jurisdiction over their citizens, to enjoy inviolability of domicile, the liberty to travel in all parts of the Ottoman Empire, to carry on trade according to their own laws, to be free from all duties save of customs duties, to have religious freedom and liberty of worship. Eventually, the French and other nations had in effect *imperia in imperio* (Angell, 1901). Britain received such a concession in 1583, the Netherlands in 1609, and Austria in 1615.

The religious freedom clause invited an influx of Christian missionaries: Jesuit, Capuchin, Carmelites and Dominicans and then Protestants and Evangelicals to provide Ottoman citizens with educational and medical services. As open proselytising was forbidden among Muslims, therefore missionaries were most active among indigenous Christians in all three provinces under study. Soon a number of the Syrian Orthodox clergy and lay were proselytised, converted and entered into communion with Rome and formed their own Catholic Uniate Churches. Members of the the Church of the East formed the Chaldean Catholic Church (Ghanīmah, 1998; Joseph, 2000; Flannery 2008; Wilmshurst, 2011; Rassam, 2014).

Due to the difficulties of Ottoman imposed building regulations on new churches and places of worship, the French ambassador and consuls had to resort to exercising their power, privilege, protection and influence under the Capitulations to secure ecclesiastical properties for the Catholic Uniate. For this end Syrian Orthodox churches, monasteries, schools and cemeteries were confiscated in the provinces Mosul, Aleppo and Diyarbekir and their environs, leaving the Orthodox communities without churches, monasteries and cemeteries.

The Capitulations of the Ottoman Empire gave the European powers immunity to protect the rights of their citizens within the empire. These included the French Roman Catholics, British Protestants and other groups. The Russians became formal Protectors of Eastern Orthodox groups.

Furthermore, the French ambassador interfered with the sublime port and was successful in obtaining separate millet status for all the emerging Catholic Uniate Churches—Syrian, Armenian and Greek. During the reign of Mahmud II, an Imperial Edict dated 21 Rejeb 1246 AH correspond to 24 May 1831 was issued to established the Catholic as a separate millet in the Ottoman Empire (Frazee, 1982).

The British Vice-Consul HE Wilkie Young reflected in his interesting dispatch from Mosul on 28 January 1909 on the work of the Catholic and Protestant missions in the city of Mosul:

> A Roman Catholic Mission was established here by Capucins in the 17th century and has been maintained continuously since. It is now in the hands of 13 Dominican Fathers and numerous Nuns. They have a very fine church

> and admirable schools giving instruction free to over a thousand pupils.
> The Pope is represented in Mesopotamia by a Delegate, Monseigneur Drure, [Désiré-Jean Drure, OCD (5 Mar 1904-27 May 1917)], who resides at Mosul. The funds by which the Delegation is supported, with considerable state, were bequeathed for this express purpose by a French lady more than two centuries ago on condition that the Papal representative should always be a Frenchman. (Young, 1909)

Later the Church Missionary Society (CMS) established a printing press in Malta in 1815 to print Bibles and religious tracts in Arabic. CMS sent its Anglican missionaries, as early as 1820s, to those Ottoman provinces followed by missionaries from the Presbyterian Church in America co-ordinated by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission to work among the indigenous Christians communities of the Ottoman Empire (Southgate, 1844; Ghanimah, 1998).

The British Vice-Consul HE Wilkie Young also described the work of CMS in Mosul in his dispatch from Mosul in January 1909.

> The Church Missionary Society maintains a School here which is attended by about 200 pupils, Protestant, Jacobite [*Suryān or old Syrians* or Syrian Orthodox] and a few Moslem. The most important branch of its work, however, is its Medical Mission … . During two years this Missions seems to have earned the respect and gratitude of all classes of the population … . It is easy to understand the eagerness with which … the establishment of the proposed Hospital are awaited.
> Though, thanks to the efforts of the French and English Missions, the Christians have made some progress. (Young, 1909)

Almost 20 years after granting a full millet status to Catholics in the empire. An Imperial Edict, dated Moharrem 1267/November 1850, was issued during the reign of Sultan Abdul-Majid to establish the emerging Protestant Churches and its community as a separate

Protestant millet in the Ottoman Empire. For details of protestant and evangelical missionaries Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire, (see Southgate, 1844; Joseph, 1983, 2000; Coakley, 1992; Ghanīmah, 1998).

In the same dispatch of 28 January 1909 Wilkie Young reflected on the diverse demographic spectra of Jews, Christians and Muslims living within the wall of the city of Mosul:

> Anything approaching an exact estimate is not obtainable, the population having hitherto successfully resisted all attempts to register their women: and, as usual in oriental cities but perhaps more so in Mosul than elsewhere, a very large proportion of the children not being entered at all. The total cannot, however, be far short of 100,000 of these; nine-tenths are Moslems and the remainder Christians and Jews.
>
> The total of the Christians in Mosul probably does not exceed 9,000. They are distributed among the following denominations: about 3,000 Chaldean Catholics, they have seven churches, twenty-one Priests and four schools which are attended by about 350 pupils. The rest of the children of this denomination attend the schools of the Dominican Mission. 2,500 Syrian Catholics, they have three churches, fifteen Priests and three Schools. There were 3,000 Jacobites or old Syrians [Syrian Orthodox]. They have four churches, four Priests and three schools attended by about 200 children, the rest of them attend the School of the English Mission. 40 Armenian families, 27 Protestants families and 8 Greeks Orthodox families, each have its Church. (Young, 1909)

Considering Wilkie Young estimated statistics, collated various data from many travelogues and other sources, it shows that the Syrian (Orthodox and Catholic) communities were the largest, most thriving and influential indigenous group in Mosul and other important Mesopotamian urban centres, with links to Syrian Orthodox networks along the Mesopotamian Syriac corridors from Istanbul to India. Genealogical studies have shown that missionary activities along these Syriac corridors were most active among the Syrian Orthodox. So

the entire Syrian Catholic and most of the Protestant communities were drawn from the Syrian Orthodox community and to a lesser degree from the Church of the East. (For a genealogical study, see: Ghanīmah, 1998.)

Vice-Consul Wilkie Young went further to document his impression of the Syrian Orthodox community in the city of Mosul.

> The Old Syrians or Jacobites are one of the most ancient and interesting of the Eastern Churches. In spite of persecution they have stoutly maintained their independence for sixteen centuries, steadily refusing to sacrifice their convictions and freedom for the advantages offered by Rome. When it is remembered that these advantages would include payment of their Priests and Bishops, free education for their children and, above all, the steady protection of their interests by the French Government, this unbending attitude is the more remarkable in a comparatively small community ...Their Head is the Patriarch Ignatius [Abdulla (1906–1915)] who lately had the honour of being received by His Majesty the King [Edward VII (1901-1910)] (v. 'Times' Dec.). He resides at the Monastery of Deir Zeforan near Mardin. There are several thousand Jacobites in India. (Young, 1909)

Meanwhile, the ancient indigenous Christians the Syrian Orthodox Church who kept a faithful presence in the Ottoman Empire and maintained the independence of their Church, tradition and dogma and had no link with or advocate among the beneficiaries of the capitulations system. They found themselves the last to be considered by the Sublime Port for the long overdue granting of the separate millet status until late in 1873 (Peter III, 1873; Taylor, 2013; O'Mahony, 2014; Dinno 2017).

Countdown to the *Sayfo* 1915

As relations with European countries started to deteriorate, and the ghost of war loomed on the horizon, the Turkish government decided to abrogate the Capitulations on 8 September 1914. This ended a concurrence which governed the commercial and judicial rights of the Europeans in the Ottoman Empire for more than three centuries.

On 2 November, 1914 Russia and the Ottoman Empire declared war on each other.

HMS *Espiegle* and *Dalhousie* entered the Shatt al-Arab and British troops landed in Fao on 5 November 1914 and advanced north declaring the start of the Mesopotamia campaign. On 11 November, Sultan Mehmed V declared Jihad against the alliance of entente countries (England, France and Russia). On the Russian front the Battle of Sarikamish started on 22 December. The year 1915 ushered in successive and massive militarily defeats for Turkey first with Russia, in the Caucasus, then Egypt and Sinai; meanwhile, the British were advancing north. On 25 April, British, French, Australian and New Zealand and Canadian troops landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The Young Turk leadership considered the regime—indeed the empire to be in a state of dire peril. On the eve of Gallipoli the Young Turks implemented a decision taken earlier of arresting on the night of 24 April the Armenian leadership and intellectuals in Istanbul. That was the first act of a violent process of exterminations of Christians in the empire throughout 1915 and beyond. (For a timeline of events, see Bartrop and Jacobs, 2015.)

Eventually, the long co-existence concluded with an ugly campaign of mass deportations and annihilation for all Christians in the Ottoman Empire orchestrated by the Committee of Union and Progress, the Unionist or Ittihadist. On 2 May 1915 the Ottoman parliament passed the Dispatchment and Settlement Law (or the Tehcīr Law) or what became known as *Safar Barlik* ('Exile'), authorizing the deportation of Armenians (apparently, initially Armenian Orthodox only), from the Ottoman Empire. Ultimately, by 30 May 1915, enraged civilians and soldiers killed many of the arrested Armenian leaders and many others at holding centres or on the way to their exiles. These annihilations extended to all other Christians in the empire.

One of the few diplomats left in Istanbul the American Ambassador

Henry Morganthau who described, in one of his wired dispatches, the massacres of 1915 in the Ottoman Empire as:

> Evidently Turkish nationalistic policy is aimed at all Christians and not confined to Armenians. 'A campaign of race extermination is in progress.' (Morganthau, 1918)

A rare account by an ex-Ottoman official who was in Diyarbekir documented what he witnessed as the unionists and their loyal officers in the provinces were implementing the Tehcīr Law and its consequences. He wrote, of the campaign against Protestant, Chaldean and Syrian Orthodox.

> Slaughter of the Protestant, Chaldean and Syriac Communities: The slaughter was general throughout these communities, not a single protestant remaining in Diyarbekir. Eighty families of the Syriac Community were exterminated, with a part of the Chaldeans, in Diyarbekir, and in its dependencies, none escaped save those in Madiât and Mardîn. When latterly orders were given that only Armenians were to be killed, and that those belonging to other communities should not be touched, the Government held their hand from the destruction of the latter. (El-Ghusein, 1917)

El-Ghusein went further to describe the courageous resistance put up by the Syrian Orthodox community.

> The Syriacs.—But the Syriacs in the province of Madiât were brave men, braver than all the other tribes in these regions. When they heard what had fallen upon their brethren at Diyarbekir and the vicinity they assembled, fortified themselves in three villages near Madiât, and made a heroic resistance, showing a courage beyond description. The Government sent against them two companies of regulars, besides a company of gendarmes which had been despatched thither previously; the Kurdish tribes assembled against them, but without result, and thus

> they protected their lives, honour, and possessions from the tyranny of this oppressive Government. An Imperial Irâdeh *[Farmān]* was issued, granting them pardon, but they placed no reliance on it and did not surrender, for past experience had shown them that this is the most false Government on the face of the earth, taking back to-day what it gave yesterday, and punishing to-day with most cruel penalties him whom it had previously pardoned. (El-Ghussain, 1917)

Recent research substantiates the narrative of El-Ghussain regarding the Syrian Orthodox heroic resistance.

> At the time of Sayfo, in 1915, when the order came forth to kill all Christians in the region, Hannko be Yakup, the headman of Beth Qustan, a Christian village, commanded all villagers to stay put and defend themselves in the village.
>
> Haçove Khortuk was a renowned head of clan and a great Muslim leader in the region. He was a good friend of Hannko and urged him not to remain in the village. Beth Qustan is embraced by a defenceless plateau which render the people very vulnerable. He advised his friend to take refuge in the castle in the neighbouring village, Hah. Haçove took a stick in his hand and broke it into 2 pieces and said that this is a command beyond his power, and that he could no longer protect the Christian village, Beth Qustan.
>
> After a long discussion with Hannko, who was against taking refuge in Hah, Haçove convinced the villagers to move. On their way, the Christians were shot at by Muslims, but Haçove stopped the Muslims from killing any of the Christians on exodus, by advising them to go and plunder the village instead.
>
> When they arrived at the castle, they realised that there were Christians there from other villages too. The Christians defended themselves in this castle, which still exists today as a present icon of Syrian Orthodox heroic

> resistance. Those who survived have said that they were aided by some local friendly Muslims, who supplied them with buckets full of bullets to defend themselves. (Oez, 2016)

Reciprocal co-existence was always the safety valve of inter-faith for centuries and still is.

However, relations between Churches and their leaders fluctuated according to the policies of individual rulers and their sycophants, especially when political survival was at stake. This often reflected, challenged and compromised their demography.

Finally, after the Unionists (Ittihadist) accomplished their 'Tehcīr Law' campaign, the Young Turks' triumvirate known as the Three Pashas, Talaat (1874-1921) Minster of Interior, Enver (1881-1922) Minister of War and Çemal (1872-1922) Minister of the Navy, of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) (Çemal, 2015) appeared. They endeavoured to institute a modernisation plan that would transform the multicultural Ottoman society into a much homogeneous Turkish one. Eventually, they could only drive those left in the Ottoman Empire in to the trenches of battlefields of the First World War to bring about the collapse and end of the Ottoman Empire (1453-1918).

The Unionist who dominated the Ottoman state's final decade proved to be the Ottoman bitterest poisoned chalice which was presented to the sick-man of Europe and his Christians subjects.

In addition to valuable eye-witness accounts, oral and documentary history, and manuscripts, much evidence now available in print will save valuable space narrating this atrocity which this article cannot possibly provide. (For comprehensive archival studies, see de Courtois, 2004; Qarabashi, 2005; Akçam, 2005; Gaunt, 2006; Ugur Ümit, 2011; Polatel, 2011, Ugur Ümit 2011; Akçam, 2012; Gasfield, 2012 and Gust, 2014.)

The Syrian Orthodox's diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference 1919

At the time when the future of the whole of civilisation seemed to be in the balance, the Allied victors of the First World War called for and convened a conference in Paris during the period 18 February

1919 to 21 February 1920. This became known later as the Paris Peace Conference or Versailles Peace Conference (Macmillan, 2002). Its intention was to set the peace terms for the defeated Central Powers following the Armistice of Mudros, a pact, which was concluded and signed at the port of Mudros, on the Aegean island of Lemnos on 30 October 1918. This ended hostilities in the Middle Eastern theatre of war between the Ottoman Empire and the Allies (Busch, 1976).

The Paris or Versailles Peace Conference is often narrated as a transformative moment in world history that heralded not just the end of the First World War but also the creation of a new international order based on the nation-state. The decisive dissolution of the system of empires—Ottoman, Habsburg, and Hohenzollern—had lost the war. While the institutional form of the nation-state was already prevalent in countries of Western Europe and North America, the victorious powers now endeavoured to extend it to the breakaway states created from the fallen empires. This was a momentous development in Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East particularly, where in excess of 100 million people were waiting in high expectation of being granted a state of their own. The Great Powers seemed to endeavour to link the guarantee of minority rights to territorial gain. They imposed clauses on minority rights which became requirements not only for recognition but were also conditions for receiving specific grants of territory.

The Conference involved diplomats from more than 32 countries and nationalities. All major decisions were taken by a joint emergency authority, the 'Council of Four' or the 'Big Four': David Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; Georges Clemenceau, nicknamed 'Père la Victoire' (Father Victory), the Prime Minister of France; President Woodrow Wilson of the United States, and Vittorio Emanuele Orlando Primer of Italy. These decisions were ratified by the others (Catalogue, 1926; Dockrill and Fisher, 2001).

The Conference concluded on 21 January 1920 with five major peace treaties and the inaugural General Assembly of the League of Nations. The government, effects and benefits for Middle Eastern communities who were represented in Paris and the effect and consequences of the Peace Conference on the Middle East and the emerging nation states and their inhabitants are still in need of comprehensive studies. However,

the most pivotal treaties for the Middle East were the Treaty of Sèvres (not ratified), the Treaty of Versailles 1919 and the Treaty of Lausanne 1923 (Martin and Reed, 2007).

From our comfortable distance we cannot appreciate what sort of thin ice Christians in the post-1918 Middle East have been skating on to maintain co-existence. Such a tranquil presence could only be achieved to varying degrees at different times in different milieus. The hopes of Christians in the Middle East were hanging on the outcome of the Peace Conference. Any minor perceptions of disturbances in law and order would undermine the necessary peace for their co-existence in these countries. An imbalance had the potential to trigger victimisation of Christians and other peaceful citizens on a huge scale in 1895 and 1915. That is indeed what happened a century later in Mosul in June 2014.

The organisers of the Paris Conference were keen to invite representatives of the affected spectra of indigenous peoples and citizens of the Ottoman Empire. Among the Syriac-speaking communities of the Ottoman Empire, official invitations were only sent to heads of Churches who had no affiliations with external ecclesiastical authority: Mor Ignatius Elias III (1917-1932) the war-time Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch, residing in Homs Syria, then under French control, and the newly elected Mor Shimun XXII Paulos (1918-1920), the Patriarch of the Church of the East, residing in Iraq, then under British control.

Patriarch Elias III wrote back to the organisers of the Peace Conference to acknowledge and accept the invitation. Elias III confirmed that he could not attend but would mandate his representative and confidant Mor Severus Aphram Barsoum (1887-1957), the newly consecrated Archbishop of Syria and Lebanon, 'the Bishop of War and Peace time' to attend and advocate the case and cause of his people at the conference (Behnam, 1959; Ibrahim, 1996).

Patriarch Shimun XXII officially appointed his sister and confidante, Surma D'Bait Mar Shimun (1883-1975) better known as Surma Khanum, the Semiramis of her time, to officially attend and represent the Church of the East at the Paris Peace Conference, accompanied with by W A Wigram, a member of the Archbishop of Canterbury's mission to the Assyrians (Coakley, 1992). Surma Khatum

arrived in London on 11 October 1919 together with Wigram in good time to attend the Conference (Beth Shmuel, 2008; Stafford, 1935). There are no records of the presence of the Church of East official delegation at the Peace Conference. Few sources touched on this case, anecdotally suggesting that there were three different delegations mostly made up of laymen who went independently to Paris from different diasporas of the Church of the East. They hoped to attend and officially represent their vital causes and aspirations of the Church of the East and its people at that fateful geopolitical crossroads in the history of the region. Allegedly, they submitted in excess of five different memorandums to be considered by the Peace Conference (al-Haidari, 1977). The representational void of the 'Smallest Ally', the Church of the East, at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 presented more questions of concern than answers (Wigram, 1920; al-Haidari, 1977; Beth Shmuel, 2008, Fisher, 2008). A century later the available data still impair the formulation of informed academic opinion about how the case and cause of the Church of the East were presented at the Peace Conference.

Unfortunate events eclipsed Surma Khanum's trip to Paris via London. She did not attend the Peace Conference to represent her people. Her elder brother Patriarch Shimun XXI Benyamin (1887-1918) was murdered and his successor, her younger brother Mar Shimun XXII Paulos (1918-1920), died prematurely. Surma Khanum then became *de facto* regent during the Patriarchal succession of her 12-year-old nephew, Mar Shimun XXIII Eshai (1908–75). In London, Surma Khanim subsequently campaigned on behalf of her people and wrote a book on her Church and the genealogy of her Patriarchal dynasty (d'Bait Mar Shimun and Wigram, 1920).

Critical analysis of the diplomatic discourse, statements, memorandum, letters and interviews of Mor Severus Aphram Barsoum at the Paris Peace Conference 1919.

Barsoum, who was an extraordinary eyewitness, observed firsthand the successive atrocities of the late 1800s, which culminated in the 1915 Genocide.[1] He became convinced that what Christians were subjected to had never been denominationally specific. If any of the rest of the Christian denominations were victimised because of the privileged status that the millet system afforded the Armenians for centuries, this was in addition to the miscalculation of some of the Armenians. After the Young Turk revolution, many Armenians were emboldened to believe that they could now enjoy freedom of speech and assembly. Some expounded in nationalistic rhetoric, proclaiming that the centuries of Armenian servitude had passed and that it was now the right and duty of his people to learn to defend themselves, their families, and their communities.

Essentially, as a Syrian Orthodox Christian, Barsoum took no interest in an earthly Kingdom (Matt 6:12-15, Rev 11:15). He believed that 'My kingdom is not of this world' (John 18:36). A Maslawi multilingual scholar through and through who could communicate and network in French, English, Arabic, Syriac and Turkish without an interpreter, the young bishop was too shrewd, incisive and realistic not to be moved by the Parisian political fair. He soon realised that great powers had strategic, political and economic interests in the political settlement of the non-Turkish territories. What he was witnessing was the multiple interests at play in this political jamboree.

Barsoum was convinced, and rightly so, that different ethno-religious indigenous communities in the region were only invited to Paris to 'ice the cake', not to have a slice of it. There was nothing whatsoever for his community, he noted, and for that matter for many other hopefuls in the regions. Their objective was to go to the Peace Conference with a *fait accompli*. This was in anticipation that one of the nation-states on offer would be theirs. Especially, their appetite

1 Armala, 1910, 1919; Audo, 1919, de Courtois, 2004, Gasfield, 2012; and genocide El-Ghusein, 1917; Gaunt, 2006; Akçam, 2005, 2012; Gust, 2014.

for power was already whetted by President Woodrow Wilson and his fourteen points, particularly his concept of self-determination that seemed to promise to so many people the fulfilment of their long awaited dreams.

Indeed those dreams and perceptions were substantiated with circulations at the Peace Conference of a plethora of proposed maps, those instruments of power, showing the potential and overlapping geographical remits of a future home and nation-state for the Armenians (Fig. 1), for the Assyrian (Fig. 2), and the Kurds (Fig. 3). None of which has yet been geopolitically implemented.

However, having observed the unfolding atrocities throughout 1915, the British Prime Minster Herbert H Asquith (1908-1916) in a pre-emptive logistical move summoned Mark Sykes, the then British Conservative MP with vital expertise on the Ottoman Empire (on 16 December 1915) to 10 Downing Street to offer some advice on how to reconcile the British and French interests in the Middle East. Mark Sykes pointed to a map, with pencil in hand, and told the prime minister: 'I should like to draw a line from the 'e' in Acre to the last 'k' in Kirkuk' (Fig. 4).

Then the two men, Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot, secretly met and agreed, with the assent of the Russian Empire, to divide the Middle East between them as a pre-empted contingency plan for the immanent dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Territory north of that stark line would go to France; land south of it to Britain. This secret deal was done and dusted and ratified on 16 May 1916. It appeared in good time on the desk for the arrival of the War Prime Minster David Lloyd George (1916-1922). This agreement was in judicious circulation two years and eight months ahead of the opening session of the start of the Paris Conference on 18 January 1919. The details of the agreement remained secret until the Bolsheviks exposed its contents to the public concurrently in *Pravda* and *Izvestia* on 23 November 1917 and in the British *Guardian* on 26 November 1917. Officially the 1916 Asia Minor Agreement, which is better known by the name of its negotiators as the Sykes-Picot agreement, still resonates with every political turn in the Middle East today. The exposé of these affairs was to the 'British embarrassment, the Arabs dismayed and the Turks delighted' (Firth, 1915; Fisher, 1998; Barr, 2012).

The unfinished geopolitical symphony of the Paris Conference kept, for the last century, sparked the imaginations, aspirations and the extrapolations on a range of maps.

Recently, a Bulgarian newspaper reported on a new map that was slipped in error into the geopolitical arena (School Map, 2012). The remerged map (Fig. 5) will challenge the Lausanne treaty and enliven the continuing geopolitical narrative of the ongoing Battles for Mosul and Aleppo (Danforth, 2016).

For Barsoum, the novel concept of self-determination was a mere 'dream' to ogle at by many during the Peace Conference. He was also well aware of the potential imbroglio which entangled his Church and communities if they were to be convinced that as an ancient and indigenous community they may end up on nationalistic grounds, territorial or ethnically, with a fair share of the then ongoing geopolitical bazaar. If the Syrian Orthodox people were to share the percolating illusions of other communities in the region their notion of an independent homeland was to be a mirage. They failed to capitalize on the concept of *Uti possidetis* (Latin for 'as you possess'). This was not the intention of this decimated, dismayed and Sayfophobic Syrian Orthodox community nor was the necessary geography available: it was neither accessible nor on offer to establish a homeland which could fulfil the dreams of other ethno-religious groups in the region, let alone for the Syrian Orthodox Christians who adhered to modest birth rates which rendered them demographically challenged.

Therefore, in his 'joint discourse' Barsoum pre-empted his collective appeal to the layers of identity at national, supra–national, regional, and religiously at the ecclesiastical and denominational levels. Such multi-faced identity was present in the psyche of the survivors of the genocide and *en masse* expulsions (Romeny, 2009). They were faced with the necessities of integration and assimilation into their new geopolitical realities with the aid of their language, religion and cultural ecology, within the framework of the emerging nation state, (Barsoum, 1952, 2006).

Barsoum submitted to the 'big four' a portfolio containing his credentials as the official delegate of the Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and the representative of his Syrian Orthodox Church and nation. Using his official archbishopric headed paper in French (Barsoum, 1920a), Barsoum confirmed that

he was present at the Paris Conference in his official capacity as the representative of the Patriarch of Antioch and the Syrian Orthodox Church and people. He was presenting himself as charged with a special mission by the Patriarch of Antioch to present the conditions and wishes of the people in Mesopotamia (Barsoum, 1920a).

Barsoum networked with other delegations from the region at the Peace Conference, especially with Prince Faisal the head of the Arab delegation (later King Faisal I of Syria 1919-1920 and King of Iraq 1921-1933) (Al-Jamil, 2017). Faisal promoted pan-Arabism and was inspired to create an Arab state that would include Iraq and Syria of the Fertile Crescent, with their ethnic and religious diversity that would be fully represented and participating on merit in its administration.

Barsoum had a previous encounter with Prince Faisal when he entered Damascus at the head of the Arab Army through Thabit Abdul-Nour (1890-1958) his cousin and classmate in Mosul, a Syrian Orthodox lawyer who joined the Arab revolt which began on 5 June 1916. He was a political aide of Faisal, who lead the Arab Army in the Battle for Petra and Jabal Mousa in Jordan. He later became minster in the first government of King Faisal in Damascus. He was the first ever Syrian Orthodox to be appointed as a minister in any of the Arab cabinets of the government of the newly established state in the Middle East (Atiyya, 1973; Al-Jamil, 2017).

The Hashemite dynasty looked with the deepest sympathy upon the victims of the Ottoman deportation orders and massacres. Prince al-Ḥusayn ibn ʻAlī al-Hāshimī (1854-1931), the Hashemite Grand Sheriff of Mecca from 1908 and King of the Hejaz from 1916 to 1924, who lead the Arab revolt, issued in 1917 an edict (see Appendix 1). Urging his son Prince Faisal and Prince ʻAbd al-ʻAziz al-Jarba, the Sheikh of Shammar (Williamson, 1999), to protect, offer hospitality and look after the Syrian Orthodox and Armenians 'who have been deported and will be passing through your territories on their way to Syria and Iraq.' Implementing such humanitarian gestures of tolerance had saved the lives of hundreds of Christians in their mass exodus. Most fatalities among Christian deportees occurred as a result of death marches and exposure to heat, thirst and starvation in the Syrian Desert.

Barsoum was well aware of the attentive solidarity of the Grand Sherif of Mecca and his son Prince Faisal who were simultaneously championing and defending the common causes and shared interests of

the Syriacs and the Arabs. Faisal and his Arab delegates seemed to have been impressed with the conduct, diplomacy and debates of the young bishop. Prince Faisal and his delegation, which included Lawrence of Arabia, often cheered Barsoum and called him*: Muṭran al-ʾUrūbah wa Qass al-Zamān*— 'The bishop of Arabism and priest of all time' (Bahnim, 1959; Moosa, 1965; Ibrahim, 1996; Abdul-Nour, 2001).

After the conference, Barsoum embarked on an advocacy tour in France, England and America.[2] Barsoum visited London at the beginning of 1920 prior to the convening of yet another peace conference which was scheduled to be held in London and before the conclusion of the Treaty of Sèvres on 24 April 1920. He resided during his visit in a hotel in the West End of London, which is strategically located between Whitehall, the nerve centre of the empire, and the British Museum and Library which house the largest collection of Syriac and Arabic Manuscripts. Barsoum's first port of call was a letter dated 2 February 1920 to Lord Curzon the then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs asking for a short interview. The minutes of this meeting exhibited vividly the frustration and helplessness of a shepherd and the plight of his Syrian Orthodox community. Barsoum reiterated that:

> the Armenians had captured the ears of the world but no one realized that the Syrian Christians were being massacred too, no one listened to their cry and came to their help. His country was wrongly divided into two by the frontier drawn between the British and French spheres—in the French sphere no attempt was made by the French at protection. (Barsoum, 1920d)

A frustrating foggy February in London elapsed, during which Barsoum endeavoured to fulfil his mission and communicate with as many decisions-makers as possible in the British capital. Barsoum wrote letters together with a memorandum of six points and a list of damages and reparations (Appendix 2) to the Prime Minster, David Lloyd George, the President of the Supreme Council and the Speaker of the Parliament. Barsoum visited the British Library daily, absorbed

2 His political advocacy on behalf of his people who used to call them Nation (Barsoum, 1920a) can be traced and followed up through his correspondences with decision makers (Abdul-Nour, 2001).

for hours in studying the tomes of Syriac and Arabic treasures and what the Orientalists had translated and written about the subject. Probably a great deal of material for his future writings was collected during these hard and anxious days in London (Barsoum, 1979).

Finally, Lord Curzon's secretary officially replied to confirm to Barsoum that:

> Earl Curzon of Kedleston acknowledges your letter and memorandum of 8th March and conveys his Lordship's assurance that the interest of your people will not be lost sight of when the moment for their consideration arrives. (Barsoum, 1920b)

The Great Powers, in their attempt to remove minorities as pawns in world politics, tried to have it both ways. Both by internationalizing the problem and also containing it as best they could, 'they were leaving the unborn League of Nations the thankless task of turning confusing words into purposeful action' (Fink, 2004, p. 264). Later in 1932, Iraq with diverse spectra of indigenous communities was persuaded to accept minority obligations as part of the terms of its admission to the League of Nations (Preece, 1997). The League of Nations demanded and received from the Iraqi government a formal declaration promising to guarantee the rights of foreigners and minorities, as well as to allow freedom of conscience and religion. In October 1932, Iraq's membership of the League of Nations was approved by a unanimous vote of the League's Assembly. Iraq thus became the first of the League of Nations Mandates to achieve full independence as a sovereign state (Tripp, 2007, p. 73).

Incidentally, at the time of writing, the battle for Mosul-Nineveh was announced on 17 October 2016 and remains in its infancy, leaving very little room for intuitive and axiomatic extrapolation. If and when peace prevails, the fabric of this ancient city should always be reflected in the fabric of the soul of its original indigenous diversity, otherwise it may as well be a ghost city or a necropolis. Terrifyingly, the tug-of-war militarily, politically, ethnically, religiously and eventually diplomatically could easily revitalize a reminder of 'The Mosul Problem 1918-1926', a century old open wound left in the regional collective memory when the League of Nations granted Mosul to Iraq under a British mandate

in 1926. This may now provide the *raison d'être* to unpack the perilous legacies of the Treaties of Sèvres and Lausanne 1923 (Beck, 1981; Tripp, 2007; Al-Jamil, 2017).

The *Sayfo* Centennial Commemorations and the Canonization of its Martyrs

The long-serving Syrian Orthodox Church Patriarch Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas (1980-2014)[3] had observed and reflected on the unfolding crises in Iraq since 2003 and on the displacement and arrival of thousands of Iraqi refugees to the then safety of Syria. The octogenarian patriarch observed: 'We are back to square one!' We need to resettle again the necessary infrastructure to provide relief. The aid and relief programme that the Church established to meet the needs of the survival of the 1915 massacre are needed today. This time we must provide destitute Iraqi refugees with necessary humanitarian aid. This need reminds the Syrian Orthodox leadership of the days almost a 100 years ago when the Church in Syria, Iraq and Jerusalem had to contain the influx of refugees driven out of their villages and cities in Tur Abdin during the consecutive atrocities of the Hamidian Massacres that re-occurred in 1894, 1896, (Duguid, 1973) and then culminated in deportation orders and the 1915 Massacre of *Sayfo*. During this time, the Syrian Orthodox Church lost thousands of its faithful see (Appendix 2 and Fig. 6). When the Syrian Crisis of 2011 started and escalated, peaceful Christians and Muslim communities were targeted in ancient cities such as Homs, Ma'loula and Aleppo. It was apparent to Patriarch Zakka I that a second Genocide, a second *Sayfo* was unfolding. Kidnapping of religious leaders became an accessible and effective tool of war. For the Syrian Orthodox Church leadership this culminated in a severe blow with the kidnapping of the most senior Archbishop of the Syrian Orthodox Church, Mor Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim the Metropolitan of Aleppo, together with Bishop Paul Yazigi on 22 April 2014 as they were returning from a humanitarian mission to release kidnapped clergy (Oez and Abdul-Nour, 2016). Mor Gregorios was a close confidant and aide of Patriarch Zakka I. His magnetic appeal to the youth and to scholarship earned him as a young deacon in Mosul

3 See Ibrahim, 1981 and Abdul-Nour, 2005.

the esteemed Syriac title *Malfono* (teacher or wise man). Mor Gregorios' inclusive approach made him the *Factorem Ecclesiastis in the Syrian Orthodox Church* (Kourieh, 2016). Mor Gregorios and the supreme head of the church led the Syrian Orthodox Church in tandem as Patriarch and Catholicos in the golden days. The blow of this highly selective kidnapping of Mor Gregorios and the deafening silence enshrouding it, took its toll on the octogenarian patriarch. As the second *Sayfo* was emerging steadily and just before the commemoration of the centenary of *Sayfo*, the Syrian Orthodox Church received a further blow by losing its long serving and experienced patriarch on 21 March 2014. The late Patriarch Zakka I Iwas had been holding the fort firm, steady and intact throughout the last 35 turbulent years. His collective leadership style is a very hard task to follow and will be missed. Soon after, the Syrian Orthodox Synod elected a young and enthusiastic bishop, a disciple of Mor Gregorios, Mor Ignatius Aphrem II to be the 122nd Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and all the East. Aphrem II was installed on 29 May 2014 to preside over the Antiochian See of Peter in a sombre and moving ceremony. This was attended by wide national and international representations of ecumenical and inter-faith in support of the injured and vulnerable ancient Church and its young patriarch, who was entrusted with the hard and profound task of ecclesiastical responsibilities and leadership in a tumultuous era. The current patriarchate and headquarters of the Syrian Orthodox Church has been situated at the heart of Damascus since 1957. However, in recent history the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate had to relocate for second time since 1915 from Mardin in Turkey to Homs in Syria to Damascus, the new Antioch, the current capital of Syria by the Late Patriarch Jacoub III (1957-1980).[4]

Like the Apostle Peter the first Patriarch of Antioch, his 122nd successor, the new Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church today has to navigate the *Via Recta*, 'the Straight [and narrow] Street', in Arabic *Al-Shāri' al-Mustaqīm*, which runs east west and provides an exit from the old city of Damascus. Medhat Pasha built a lead shade over the *Via Recta,* as a far sighted preservation measure.

On the eleventh day of the Patriarchate of Aphrem II the Syrian Orthodox Church was struck with an unprecedented blow after the fall of Mosul on 9 June 2014. The Christians of Mosul, the largest,

4 See *The Times*, obituary, 1980.

most prosperous ancient stronghold of the Syrian Orthodox Church and the oldest continually inhabited city in the Orient, received an ultimatum to leave their city. This was a mirror image and a painful reminder of what happened a century ago in 1915, its second *Sayfo*.

> In less than three months, millennia-old communities in Mosul were decimated and irrevocably tore the social fabric of the once-diverse region. Now almost no members of the minority groups … live in Nineveh province. (Kikoler, 2015)

Entrusted with the heavy mandate to steer the Church through indeed a second *Sayfo*, this was a trying time for the new patriarch. Most of the Syrian Orthodox faithful were critically endangered not only in Mosul but in each and every ancient archdiocese in the Middle East. They were re-subjected to a ruthless campaign of displacement, and relentless ethno-religious cleansing which amounted to genocide and rendered them endangered in their homeland.

The centenary commemoration of the *Sayfo* 1915 was at the top of the new patriarch's agenda. An impressive programme was set. A competition was announced to produce an icon and crest or logo as part of a remarkable year-long commemorative programme. A logo and an artist's impression icon depicting vividly the events of the *Sayfo* were chosen and adopted (Fig. 6).

Many events marked the centennial commemorations of the *Sayfo* 1915, such as lectures, conferences, the opening of the Martyrs' Garden in the centre of Damascus. Monuments were also erected in different locations in Syria and in the diaspora. A special issue of the Patriarchal Journal covered the *Sayfo* commemorations (*Sayfo*, 1915).

Fortunately, in concluding the programme of the commemorations of *Sayfo* 1915, on Tuesday 21 June 2016, Patriarch Aphrem II unveiled a *Sayfo* monument in Al-Qāmishlī, a city with a considerable Syrian Orthodox presence located not far from the track of the highly politicised and romantic 'Orient Express', the luxurious train (Eames, 2005; McMeekin, 2010). This 'Line in the sand' and its overgrowth currently represent the volatile international borders between Syria and Turkey according to the Treaty of Lausanne1923. In the vicinity where thousands of Syrian Orthodox deportees crossed in 1915 the

railway track at the ancient city of Nisibis (Nuṣaybīn), refugees are to be housed in the safety of Al-Qāmishlī (Asfar, 2012). Concluding the events, a man disguised as a Syrian Orthodox priest with an explosive belt attempted to mingle with the crowd to reach the patriarch and detonate the bomb. Luckily this assailant was spotted by bodyguards; the perpetrator detonated his explosive belt before reaching the patriarch, causing mayhem and multiple fatalities. That is how the commemorations of 'the Year of the Sword' concluded with the trauma of gathering again body parts of martyrs. The young man who blew himself up with the explosive belt believed he would be a martyr for destroying Christians' lives.

Again as in the three and half year kidnapping saga of Mor Gregorios, no one claimed responsibility for such mayhem. No alibi was ever established for the targeting of the Syrian Orthodox Church's leaders. Such mysteries remain behind a wall of silence. Such a perpetual chill is sent down the spine as a vivid reminder that the ongoing second *Sayfo* is not a myth, nor is the *Sayfophobia* an unjustified overreaction.

However, the English saying 'a smooth sea never made a skilled sailor' is a heartening reminder. Such a horrendous experience did not deter the new patriarch. Turning the other cheek (Luke 6:29) is a survival tactic to help these persecuted and displaced Christians to forgive, forget and integrate in their new environments.

Sato is one of the few anthropologists with field experience among the Syrian Orthodox communities in Aleppo and Al-Qamishli, Syria (Sato, 2017). She has described as 'selective amnesia' the way the Syrian Orthodox communities coped with the martyrdom and mass immigration of their families to Syria and Iraq in 1915 and the arrival of the last caravan of the Edessan community to Aleppo in 1924 (Namiq, 1991; Sato, 2005). What is important to them is forging a peaceful future in their new home; dwelling on the agonies of the past is unhelpful.

However, the Syrian Orthodox is a Church of martyrs. Their liturgy is associated with the cult of saints with the celebration of the Eucharist dedicated to a particular saint and on the feast day of that saint which attracts pilgrims long enshrined in the lectionaries.[5] As the centenary of the *Sayfo* 1915 was approaching, Mor Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim was reminded of the need for a specific Remembrance Day for the Christian Martyrs of the *Sayfo*.

5 For Syrian Orthodox spiritualities, see Murray, 1975; Abdul-Nour, 2002.

In his address to the Assembly of the Special Synod of Bishops for the Middle East under the auspices of Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican, October 2010 (O'Mahony and Flannery, 2010; Sandri, 2016), Mor Gregorios highlighted the fact that:

> We are the Children of martyrs. We must not forget the martyrs of the 19th and 20th centuries. My proposal is that Your Holiness adopt the idea of a single feast for the Christian martyrs universally … a unified day to remember martyrs is … another step towards Christian Unity. (Sandri, 2016)

Since the kidnapping of Mor Gregorios on 22 April 2013, a day has been agreed unilaterally by the Syrian Orthodox Synod to commemorate Syriac Martyrs, '*Sayfo*'—on 15 June. The chosen date coincides with the birthday of Patriarch Ignatius Aphram I Barsoum.

Stringent canonical regulations govern the Canonizations and its liturgy in the Syrian Orthodox Church. However, the events of 1915 and the innocent martyrs challenged the Churches and consequently its canonisation process. However, the pre-occupations of the Church with the priorities of welfare and resettlement of hundreds of thousands of genocide survivors who were ethno-religiously cleansed and scattered all the neighbouring countries and in further distant diasporas led to the deferment of the synodical deliberations, and any discussion and decision on the issue of canonizing the Syrian Orthodox genocide martyrs. The notion of collective martyrdom was also promoted in preparation for the centenary commemoration and the Church decided to canonize all Syrian Orthodox martyrs of the *Sayfo*.

It is interesting that after a long respite, the Armenian Orthodox Church restored the canonisation rite and canonised all martyred victims of the genocide on their genocide day on 24 April 2015.

This day is enshrined in the Armenian Church Liturgical Calendar as the 'Remembrance Day of the Holy Martyrs who died for their Faith and Homeland during the Armenian Genocide'.

The Armenian Genocide Centennial Holy Mass was celebrated by the Holy Pontiff at St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican on 12 April 2015. Pope Francis emphasized the importance of recognising and

condemning the Armenian Genocide thus contributing to the prevention of crimes of genocide.

The Syrian Orthodox Church preceded the canonization of genocide victims. In 1989, Patriarch Zakka I Iwas canonised the late Patriarch Elias III (1917-1932). He served throughout the First World War and steered the Church from his headquarters at the Monastery of Zafaran in Mardin in the vicinity of Diyarbekir, through the last turbulent years of the Ottoman Empire and the decimation of his communities in Turkey. Elias III himself became victim of the genocide but not a martyr. He witnessed first hand the Massacres of Diyarbekır in 1895 and 1915. Elias gave refuge to approximately 7,000 Armenian refugees in the Monastery of Mor Quryaqos, Tur Abdin. He was forced in 1922 to desert his patriarchates and the Syrian Orthodox Church has never been able to restore his ancient see which served it for seven centuries. He initially relocated to the safety of Homs in Syria, then to Mosul in Iraq; he spent some time at St Mark in Jerusalem and then visited the Syrian Orthodox communities in India where he died. Elias III's shrine became a pilgrimage mausoleum for thousands of Indian Orthodox who visit his shrine annually on 13 February; his Feast day. 2017 will mark the centennial of the last Syrian Orthodox Patriarchal consecration at the Monastery of Zafaran (Turkey).

The Vatican canonised the Syrian Catholic Bishop Flavianos Michael Melke (1858-1915). The Eparch of the Diocese of Gazireh in Syria, he was martyred during the *Sayfo* 1915. Born in Qalat Mari near Mardin and consecrated as a Syrian Orthodox monk at the Monastery of Zafaran in 1868, Patriarch Peter III (1872-1894) appointed Melke curator of the library of the Monastery of Zafaran. He then joined the Syrian Catholic Church. Earlier he escaped martyrdom when his church and house in Tur Abdin were sacked and burned during the massacres of 1895 which also led to the murder of many members of his parish including his elderly mother. He was arrested by the Ottoman authorities on 28 August 1915, alongside the Chaldean bishop of the city, Orahim Pillipus Yaqub (1848-1915) and both were martyred the day after. On 8 August 2015, Pope Francis approved his beatification after he determined that Flavianos Melke was killed for his faith. Flavianos Melke was beatified on 29 August 2015, on the centenary of his martyrdom.

What's in a name?
The G-word, *Sayfophobia* and citizenship.

Genocide is equivalent to the old Syriac word *Qṭol'amo*. It is a single hybrid neologism, a combination of *génos* (Greek for 'race, people') and *-cide* (Latin for 'to kill or killing'). It was coined in 1943 by Raphael Lemkin (1900 –1959), who was dismayed by the tragic events and atrocities of 1915-1918 against Christians in the Ottoman Empire. It was intended to be an expressive, agile and a powerful détente term meaning 'the practice of extermination of nations and ethnic groups' It initiated the UN Genocide Convention in 1948, which concluded with the General Assembly resolution that 'genocide is a crime under international law which the civilized world condemns, and for the commission of which principals and accomplices are punishable.'

Genocide became the most powerful rhetorical device which immortalized in a generation. A Google search today gives you more than 50 million entries for Genocide. This word may describe today the plight of millions of effected people, many summarized chapters of contemporary atrocities. This eight letter word is a term that has acquired such power that some have refused to utter it aloud, calling it 'the G-word' instead (de Waal, 2015). The G-word of contention has become a perpetual irritant that continually annoys some world leaders and governments 'in the wrong way'. Alas, so far the civilized international community has collectively failed to make Genocide an obsolete word. Systematic campaigns of killing and ethno-religious cleansing continue to critically endanger people in our global village today. Cleansing brings about the total or partial extermination of a particular targeted group of people or any groups as unfortunate collateral damage. Whichever of the 'Fifty Shades of the G-Word' are used as euphemisms, all religions adhere to a commanding moral code: Do not kill, means do not kill.

Sayfophobia

Regardless of how others acknowledge these tragic events in history, as the Prime Minster of Turkey Erdogan mentioned in his statements marking the 90th anniversary of Christians massacred in 1915

confirming that 'we have a shared pain.' His statement is consolidated with the Turkish proverb: '*Ateş düştüğü yeri yakar*—Fire burns where it falls.' Indeed, the Syrian Orthodox Christians and other traumatized parties were at the receiving end of both fire and fear in 1915. The Armenians refer to the time when Christians were massacred as the 'Meds Yeghem' (Great Calamity or Catastrophe). Syriac-speaking people called this time '*Sayfo*' (or the year of the sword) or as the title of a recent book described it: *La Marcia Senza Ritorno* ('The March without Return') (Giansoldati, 2015). These events have their potent resonance and left an indelible mark in the collective psyche and history of those affected communities, who were described as 'the Swords leftover.'

The suffering and the endurance of centuries of traumatizing reminiscences of these consecutive and relentless atrocities left a toll of psychological scars and consternation on these communities. The fear of these helpless and peaceful communities of a possible repetition of similar atrocities developed what may be best described and defined as *Sayfophobia* which is a phenomenon, a syndrome or symptom of a chronic trauma suffered by the people who witnessed and survived the atrocity of the *Sayfo* 1915 and the generations of their offspring. 'Pigeon jitters' is how Hrant Dink, the slain editor-in-chief of the Armenian newspaper *Agos* in Istanbul, defined Armenian fears.

The victimised may resort to therapeutic effects of their experiences in mental comfort zones, a phenomenon which was described, as noted earlier in this article, by an anthropologist who worked with the Syrian Orthodox communities in Syria and Iraq as 'selective amnesia' (Sato, 2005).

However, *Sayfophobia* keeps simmering on back burners but never subsides. Memories of Genocide together with the current events are chilling.

Full citizenship not micro-minorities should be the civilised way forward

Syrian Orthodox Church members know how they have structured the fragments of their memories into a discourse which captures their

identity, inner fears and their ambivalent position as citizens. They have undergone a questionable and impaired model of citizenship in modern states where they find refuge (Sato, 2006, 2007; Taylor, 2013).

The topic of this article will not be complete without touching on the complex issue of identity.[6] In the BBC's 2016 Reith Lectures, Appiah who specialises in moral and political philosophy issues of personal and political identity said:

> We live in a world where the language of identity pervades both our public and our private lives … There is much contention about the boundaries of all of these identities … Indeed, almost every identity grows out of conflict and contradiction, and their borders can be drawn in blood. And yet they can also see to fade in the blink of an historical eye. The demands of identity can seem irresistible at one moment, absurd at the next. Most of us swim easily in the swirling waters of our multiple affiliations most of the time, but we can be brought up short in moments when the currents of identity tug us excruciatingly in opposite directions. (Appiah, 2016)

It is basically the trigger-happy nature *of uncertainty* of the way recent events have evolved after the fall of Baghdad in 2003 which foment the resulting *re-ethnicising* and *re-sectarianising* of the region. The Arab Spring, mass exodus of Christians from Mosul in 2008, the crisis in Syria since 2011 and the silent mass exodus of Christians from Homs 2012, Ma'loula and other cities in Syria are disasters. The attack on religious symbols, which is evidently on the increase, is manifesting clearly in the current Syrian crisis. Kidnapping is becoming an effective tool of war and civil strife. The kidnapping and detention, since 22 April 2013, of the Archbishops of Aleppo, Mor Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim and Paul Yaziji, (Oez and Abdul-Nour, 2016) is a case in point. It is a subtle ethno-religious cleansing technique and without a shred of doubt a factor which is driving indigenous Christians out of the region. The commemorations of the kidnapping of the archbishops of Aleppo and the remembrance of the genocide will forever coincide with Eastertide or Paschaltide as

6 For a narrative on the Syrian Orthodox identity, see Taylor (2013).

a reminder of the contemporary Golgotha and sends chills down the spines of Christians in the Middle East, which is becoming the chief cauldron of this contemporary disorder. What seems to be witnessed and endured in the globalisation of today is the reincarnation process of anarchy, a perennial tension in the world between forces of order and forces of disorder, where usually innocent people get trapped in the unfolding chaos between them and the events which define each era's particular character and players (Bull, 1977).

Eventually the fall of Mosul in 2014 and the campaign of a total ethno-religious cleansing of its ancient Christian communities, and their housing resulted in Internally Displaced People (IDPs). Christians were left licking their wounds in the political ambiguity of the region. They have discovered lately that even hope, pinned on the democratisation process and on any constitutional protection and safety net, was in tatters. Apparently, the committee in charge of drafting the Iraqi constitution ratified in 2005 lacked a Syrian Orthodox representative. Although the Iraqi constitution considered Syriac as the third spoken language in Iraq, it failed to consider the Syrian Orthodox communities as a recognised faith community in comparison with their co-ethno-religionist denominations the Chaldean and Assyrian Churches of the East. In effect, the constitution did not even consider the ancient indigenous faith group of Christians among the ancient diverse spectra of Iraqi multi-religious society which embraced Jews, Christians and Muslims: Sunni, Shi'i, Syriac, Armenian, Chaldean, Assyrian, Yazidis, Sabaean-Mandeans, Shabak, Kaka'i, etc. (Ghanīmah, 2002).

Understandably, drafting a constitution requires expert knowledge and experience; it is a thorny task in the best and safest of circumstances, let alone in Iraq after 2003. The executives of the committee entrusted with drafting the constitution have to navigate uncharted territories since the writing of the first Iraqi constitution in 1920s (Khaddūrī, 1939). With all the limitations imposed, each and every one of the deputies tried their utmost to serve and conserve the interest of their constituencies and members of their communities and to the best of their abilities, while vying to find a foothold in the evolving accumulating sectarian sand dunes. The Syrian Orthodox community has always had a relatively high percentage of qualified professional and technocrats who contributed on meritocratic bases to their respective

countries from the outset of parliaments since the mandate system, in the 1920s. They were elected deputies, minsters of state, county councillors, senior civil servants, academics and bureaucrats who served their countries efficiently and effectively in both Syria and Iraq right to the fall of Baghdad in 2003. Unfortunately, numerous straitjackets have restricted the flexibility of the formulation of the constitutional committee that was fraught with inconclusiveness. It lacked representatives from the Syrian Orthodox community and other communities, even in the consultative capacities in the constitutional and parliamentary subcommittees. This clearly reflected on the inclusivity and eventually functional impairment of the Iraqi institution.

Woodrow Wilson once said, 'The Constitution was not made to fit us like a straitjacket. In its elasticity [and inclusivity] lies its chief greatness.'

Therefore, after two millennia of existence in Iraq and all that suffering to initiate the democratisation process, to their peril, they realised that according to the Iraqi constitution as it stands, the Syrian Orthodox citizen can only be categorised in the religion section of the New National Identity Card, not as *'Suryān'* but as 'Other!'

Little did Mor Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, the kidnapped and occulted, Syrian Orthodox Metropolitan of Aleppo, predict this scenario when he wrote his bestseller 'Accepting the Other' *(qabūl al-akhir)* (Ibrahim, 2006). The day will come when his ancient community in Iraq will constitutionally be 'the Other' in their motherland. The absence of Mor Gregorios at this juncture highlights how important, effective and visionary Church leadership matters and important and significant his role was. Mor Gregorios would have without any doubt worn the cap of Aphram I Barsoum and brought together the entire Syrian Orthodox Church's leaders, Christian politicians and specialist lay advisers in an ecumenical round table a type of gathering which can only described as Pope Francis called it 'ecumenism of blood' *(maskīniyyāt al-dam)*. With this round table he would have unpacked all the intra- and inter-Church impediments that had not been explained sufficiently clearly and courageously to the constitutional committee. Mor Gregorios would have gathered public opinion at large to make an informed, fair and lasting decision. In the absence of Mor Gregorios, this responsibility is an urgent priority for the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate. Priorities are vital.

Where is the wisdom in commemorating the centenary-old *Sayfo* 1915 while passively observing the ongoing second *Sayfo*?

Adding salt to all these injuries, some specialists and strategists in Iraqi politics seem to be challenged, entangled and easily running out of vocabulary and terminology as they try to fit and fix the Christian components of the Iraqi demography in the ongoing political scenarios. Minorities are a modern political compartmentalisation of a specific demographic grouping. In 1910-1911, the 11th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* had no entry for 'minority.' The post-First World War 14th edition was published in 1929 with an entry for this loaded new term 'minority' which runs to eleven pages. Now in 2016, it seems the best option available for think-tank specialists who are challenged with the demographically disrupted communities like Christians in Iraq and Syria is to consider them as a demographic surplus. Hence, Christians are described as the 'micro-minorities' of Iraq or those Iraqis in a 'micro-minorities' situation (Knights, 2016) in the hope that, whatever the ambiguities of such term it will pass as slightly more politically correct than the notion of 'demographic surplus.' At best, these alternating terms imply that Christians in the Middle East today who continue on a trajectory of precipitous decline into virtual extinction are now at best a negligible trace of a spent and depleted community of human beings; they belong to a story or narrative that does not count anymore. Striking are the historical similarities, those Christians who survived the *Sayfo* 1915 to start the twentieth century branded as 'the leftovers of the swords' and managed to thrive through the twentieth century. Now they find themselves in the globalised and technically connected twenty-first century being reduced after the fall of Mosul in 2014 to the status of Citizens N, the type of human you find in IDP camps. Now, when the battle for the liberation of their home city Mosul is under way, they are (politically correctly) introduced as 'micro-minority'! It remains to be seen if Christians will be further reduced to the status of a 'nano-minority' after the liberation of Mosul. Such expressively obnoxious terms are not only unpalatable for Christians and any other civilised human beings and polity but may also be illegal as they imply that micro-minorities can only produce micro-citizens; this is in violation of the UN Human Rights Declaration. Why are indigenous Christian citizens of a modern state denied full rights of citizenship?

Make ethno-religious cleansing, genocide and *Sayfophobia* history

If international law and constitutions of civilized states can enforce the ratified protection of critically endangered creatures like the giant panda, koalas, Amur leopard, black rhino, cross river gorilla, hawksbill turtle, Asian elephant, vaquita, etc., alas, the extinction of the Christians and Yazidis of Iraq and Syria represent a humanitarian imperative. These critically endangered peaceful citizens have never qualified for an entry in the UN list of endangered species like the World Wildlife Fund!

It is rather untenable for the civilized world of the global village to enjoy the luxury of indifference that they have been indulging in since 1915. It is the ethical responsibility of the UN to enhance the human rights of the obviously ethno-religiously cleansed Christians and Yazidis who are endangered in their homeland in Iraq, Syria and the rest of the Middle East. Here they are enduring being IDPs under the auspices of the UN in politically volatile and disputed regions with no light at the end of the tunnel to their plight.

What are the prospects for a citizens' safety net for the Syrian Orthodox community in Iraq post 2003? What is sufficiently watertight and secure enough to protect their futures—short of a UN resolution to consider the Christians and Yazidis of Iraq as ethno-religiously cleansed? This amounts to a genocide, rendering them critically endangered communities in their homeland. Their status must be established in the national constitution to provide them with the security and protection that the Red Indians of America and the Aborigines of Australia enjoyed, before it is too late. Clearly, the pace of these travesty of these events has its vital impact on the disparagement and deprecations of the integrity of their identity, dignity and presence and the re-examining of the validity of co-existence and the concept of citizenship must be re-established as a secure safety valve in the modern world and consolidate the fear of such uncertainty and its psychological impact on the psyche of the Christians in general and the Syrian Orthodox in particular. The prevailing scenario can best be described as *Sayfophobia*. All this is being played out while the international community still indulges in its perpetual indifference (GJC, 2016).

The rights to religious freedom and freedom of conscience are widely regarded as the jewel in the crown of democracy: granting

and guaranteeing the peaceful co-existence of religiously diverse populations, which is essential and for long indispensable for the survival of Christians throughout the geographical remits of this article and beyond. Their rights must be enshrined in national and regional constitutions, backed by international laws and binding treaties, sustained and monitored by the UN. The capacity to maintain one's choice of religion freely without coercion by the state or other institutions; and the creation of a polity in which one's economic, civil, legal, or political status should be unaffected by one's religious beliefs is a key criterion going forward. While all members of a polity are supposed to be protected by this right, modern wisdom has it that religious minorities are its greatest beneficiaries and their ability to practise their traditions without fear of discrimination is a critical marker of a tolerant and civilized polity. The right to religious freedom marks an important litmus test of democracy.

Mosul has experienced many misfortunes in its long history. But for the first time in history, it must confront the prospect of the decimation of its diverse indigenous communities. Mosul's original indigenous inhabitants whether Muslim or Christian have been subjected to what is in Syriac the equivalent of 'Persécution sans frontières'.

Will the church bells in Mosul ring tomorrow? The two million dollar question remains to be answered. Will the civilised world today allow what happened to Christians at the beginning of the twentieth century in 1915 to be repeated in the twenty-first century? Genocides are happening again both physically and psychologically. Is having been for so long situated in the crosshairs of the converging targets of the region simply enough to justify *sayfophobia*?

There is no doubt that these enormous tragedies must be remembered today. However, at this moment of reckoning, an abiding hope for Christians in the Middle East is that yesterday's lessons should stimulate a rational stand and action now. History is a potent force, and this juncture is its contemporary milestone, which makes such action the ultimate litmus test for both ecclesiastical and temporal leaders.

Clearly, procrastination is extremely detrimental. This time round there should be no excuses for inaction.

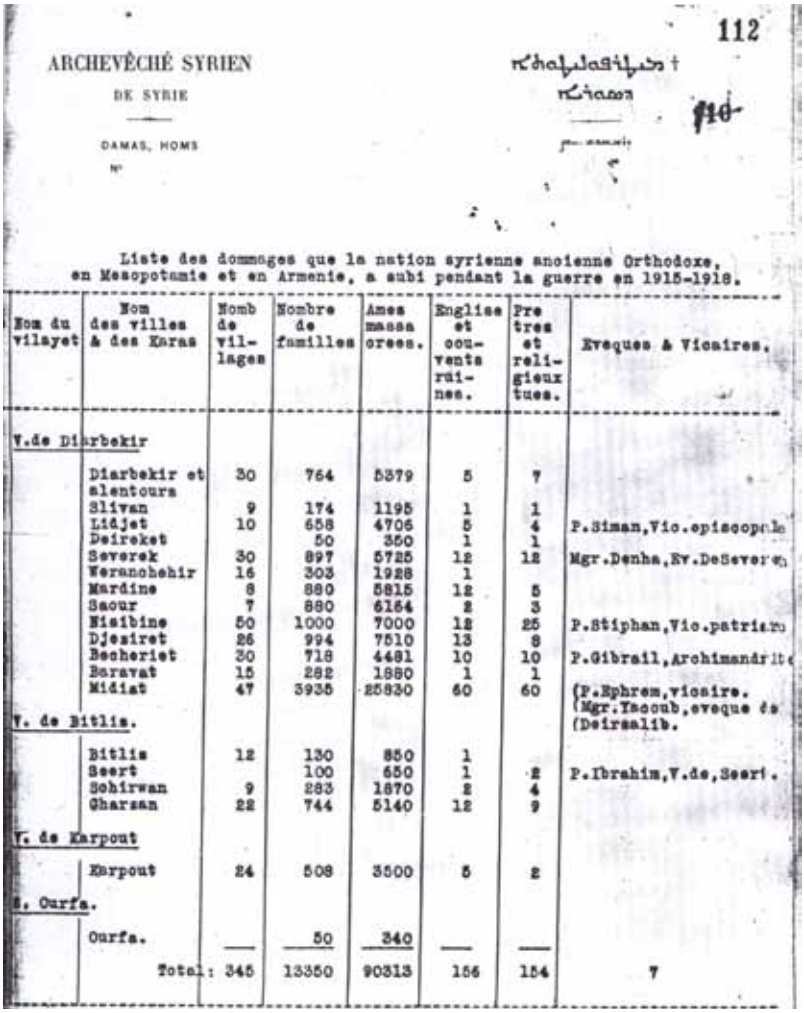
Appendix 1

Below is the translation of the Arabic text of the Hashemite Royal Court decree issued in 1917 by the Sharif of Mecca for the Protection of Syrian Orthodox and Armenians deportees from Turkey in to the Arab provinces (Mosul, Aleppo and Damascus), of the Ottoman Empire.

The Hashemite Royal Court
In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful.
We Thank Only God and No One but God.
From: Al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali, King of the Arab Home-Lands and Sheriff of Mecca and its Prince.
To: The Honourable and Admirable Princes. Prince Faisal [HRH The Hashemite Prince Faisal Ibn Al-Husayn bin Ali, later King Faisal I of Iraq (1921-1933)] and Prince Abd al-'Aziz al-Jarba [Sheikh of Shammar Tribe]
Greetings and the compassion of God and His blessings.
This letter is written from Umm Al-Qura (Mecca), on the 18th Rajab 1336, by the praise of God and no God except Him. We ask peace upon God's Prophet, His family and His companions (May peace be upon Him). We inform you that in our gratitude to Him we are in good health, strength and good grace. We pray to God that He may grant us, and you, His abundant grace.'
What is requested of you is to protect and take good care of everyone from the Jacobite [Syrian Orthodox] and Armenian communities living in your territories, frontiers and among your tribes; to help them in all of their affairs and defend them as you would defend yourselves, your properties and children, and provide everything they might need whether they are settled or moving from place to place, because they are the Protected People of the Muslims (Ahl Dimmat al-Muslimin)—about whom the prophet Muhammad (may God grant him His blessings and peace) said: 'Whoever takes from them even a rope, I will be his adversary on the day of Judgment.'
This among the most important things we require of you to do and expect you to accomplish, in view of your noble character and determination. May God be our and your guardian and provide you with His success. Peace be upon you with the mercy of God and His blessings'

Signed and sealed by
Al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali

Appendix 2



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ARCHEVÊCHÉ SYRIEN
DE SYRIE
DAMAS, HOMS
N°

Liste des dommages que la nation syrienne ancienne Orthodoxe, en Mesopotamie et en Armenie, a subi pendant la guerre en 1915-1918.

Nom du vilayet	Nom des villes & des Kazas	Nomb de villages	Nombre de familles	Ames massacrees.	Eglises et couvents ruinés.	Pretres et religieuses.	Eveques & Vicaires.
V.de Diarbekir							
	Diarbekir et alentours	30	764	5379	5	7	
	Sliwan	9	174	1195	1	1	
	Lidjet	10	658	4706	5	4	P.Siman,Vic.episcopale
	Deireket		50	350	1	1	
	Severek	30	897	5725	12	12	Mgr.Denha,Ev.DeSeverek
	Werancheh ir	16	303	1928	1		
	Mardine	8	880	5815	12	5	
	Saour	7	880	6154	2	3	
	Nisibine	50	1000	7000	12	25	P.Stiphan,Vic.patriar
	Djeziret	26	994	7510	13	8	
	Becheriet	30	718	4481	10	10	P.Gibrail,Archimandrite
	Baravat	15	282	1880	1	1	
	Midiat	47	3935	25830	60	60	(P.Ephrem,vicaire. (Mgr.Yacoub,eveque de (Deirsalib.
V. de Bitlis.							
	Bitlis	12	130	850	1		
	Beert		100	650	1	2	P.Ibrahim,V.de,Beert.
	Sohirwan	9	283	1870	2	4	
	Gharsan	22	744	5140	12	9	
V. de Karpout							
	Karpout	24	508	3500	5	2	
V. Ourfa.							
	Ourfa.		50	340			
	Total:	345	13350	90313	156	154	7

List of Damages and Losses in Lives and Properties Sustained by the Syrian Orthodox Community during 1915-1918. Document presented by Barsoum to Paris Peace Conference 1919. FO371/5130/2479/112. (Barsoum 1920c).

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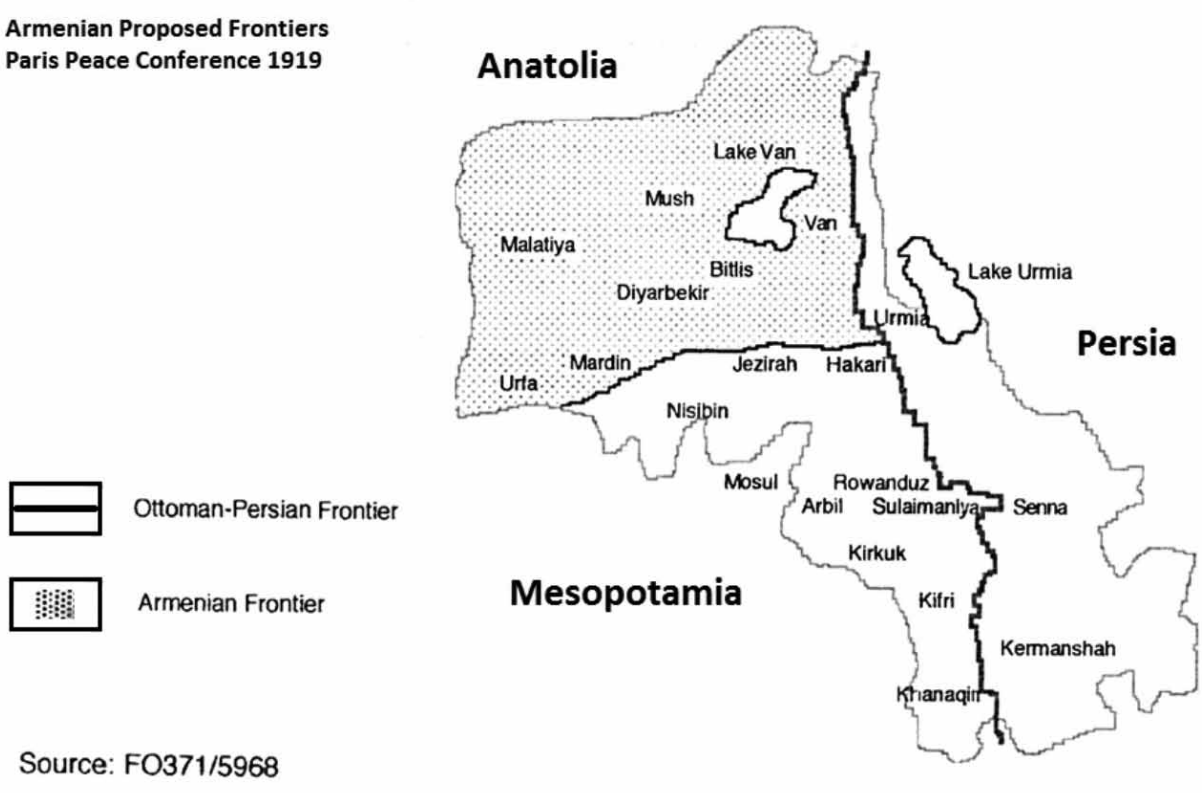

Fig. 1. Map of the Armenian Proposed Frontiers. Paris Peace Conference 1919.

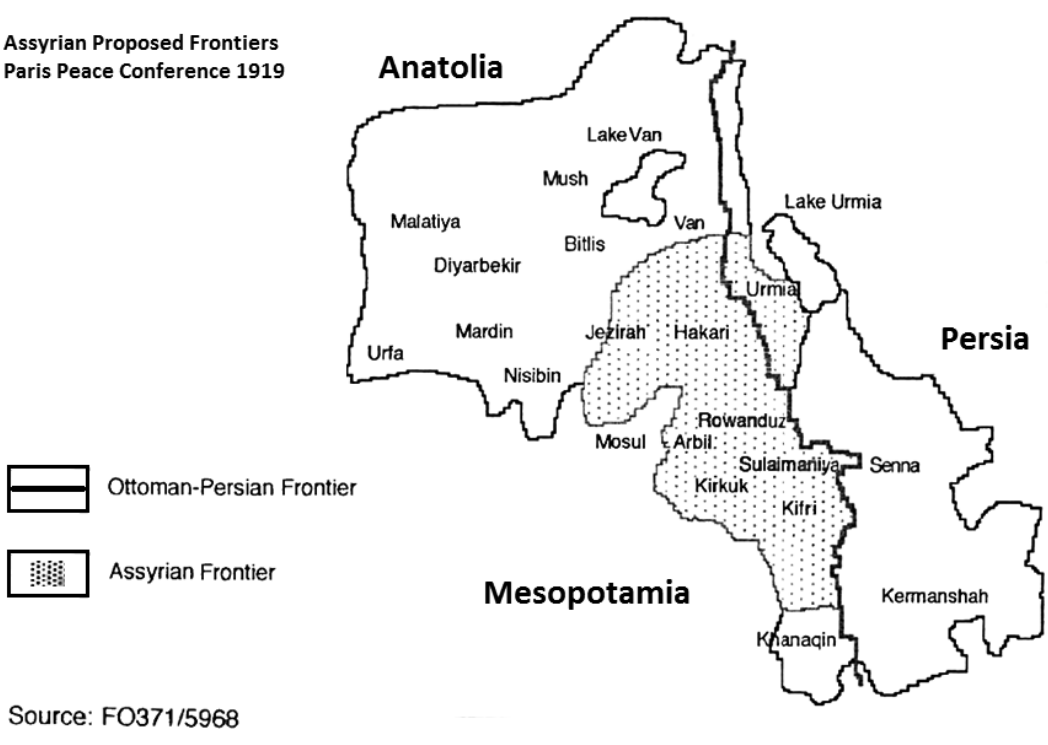

Fig. 2. Map of the Assyrian Proposed Frontiers. Paris Peace Conference 1919.

Fig. 3. Map of the Kurdish Proposed Frontiers. Paris Peace Conference 1919.

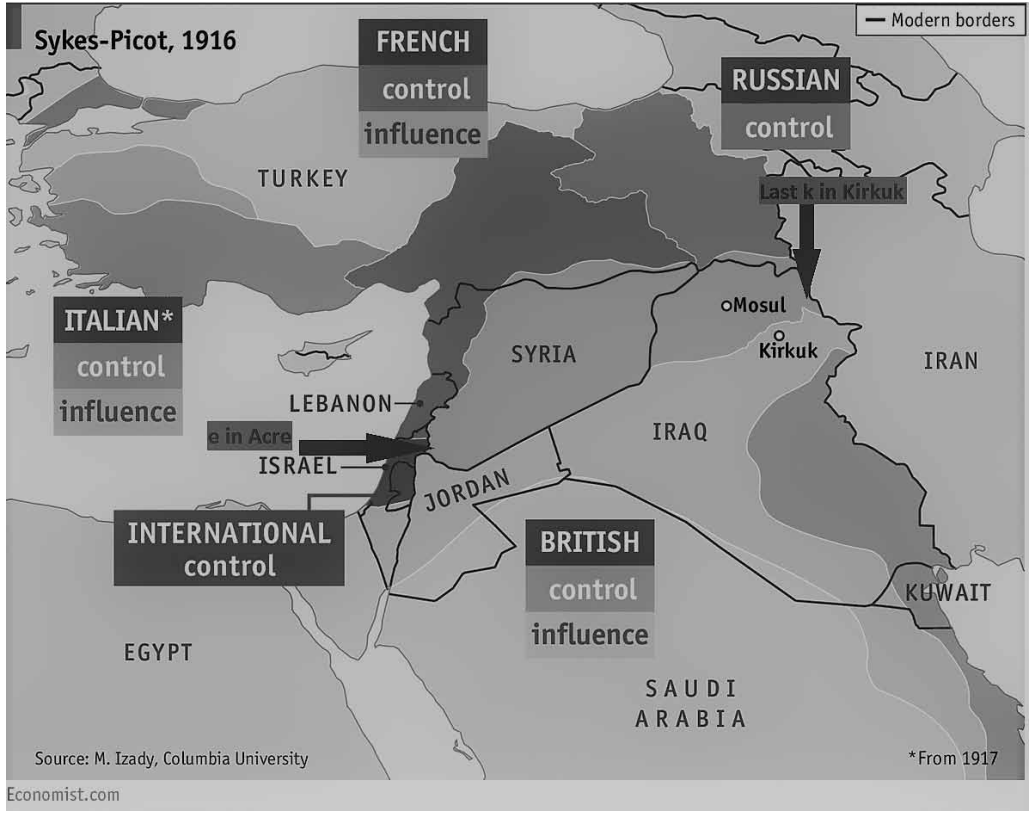

Fig. 4. Map of Sykes-Picot Agreement' Proposed Frontiers, 1916. The Economist May 16th 2016. http: www.economist.mblogs-graphicdetail201605daily-chart-13comblogsgraphicdetail201605daily-chart-13

Fig. 5. Newly Projected Geopolitical Map of the Region, (Danforth, 2016).

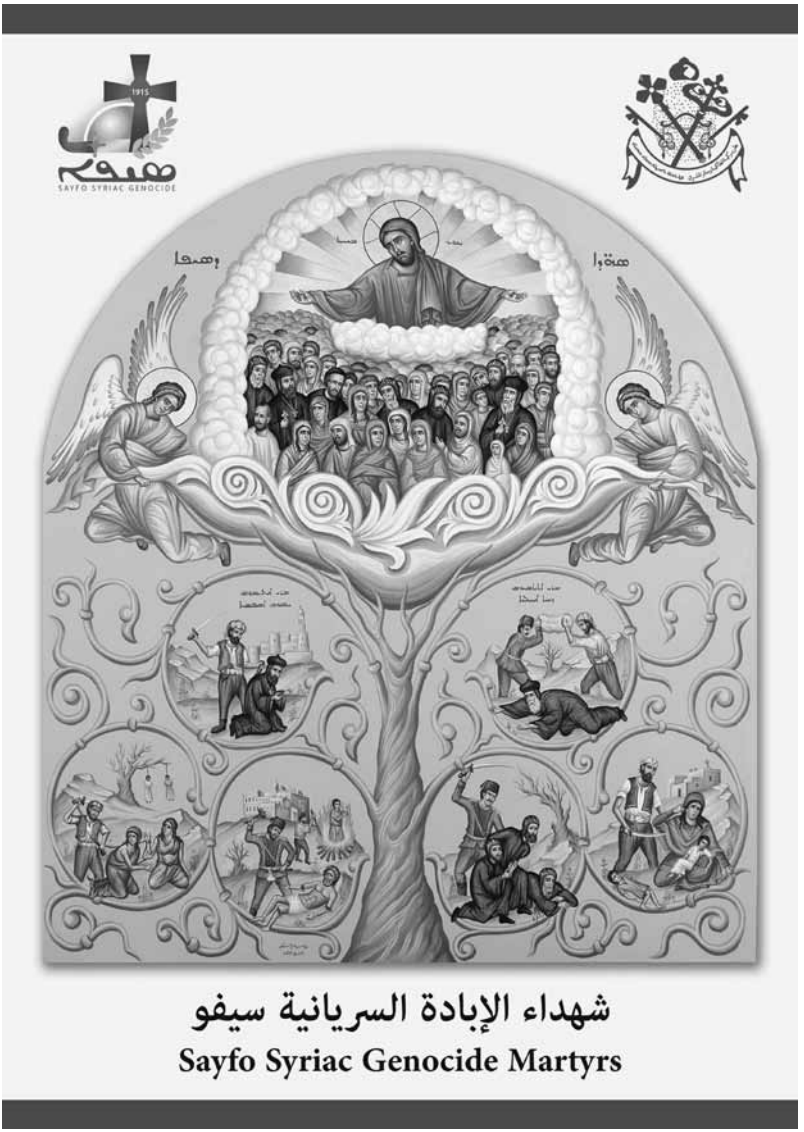

Fig. 6. Icon of the Sayfo Centenary 1915 - 2015. Adoted by the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch. Crest of the Patriachate (top right). Sayfo Logo (top left).(© Syrian Orthodox Church.)

THE PRESENT CRISIS IN IRAQI CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

Suha Rassam

Introduction

When we speak of an Iraqi Christian identity we have to remember that Iraq with its present borders is less than one hundred years old, created after the First World War and that it became a sovereign nation under King Faysal I in 1933.

However, Iraqi Christians have inhabited Mesopotamia from the first Christian century and feel a deep belonging to this land that includes Iraq. Their faith in Jesus Christ marked them from other sections of the population and stamped them with certain characteristics, making of them a distinct community.

Other factors that are important for the formation of an identity, such as language, culture, political affiliation, and interaction with others in their own milieu, stamped them with features that differentiated them from other Christians. Over the centuries, they interacted with the Zoroastrian Persians, the Muslim Arabs, the Mongols and the Ottoman Turks. From the eighteenth century they came in contact with Western culture through traders and scientific and religious missions from whom they acquired elements that added another dimension to their identity and led to radical change in their structure and understanding of themselves. Finally the massacres they suffered before, during and after the First World War added feelings of fear and trepidation as well as a special strength that coloured their personality in various ways.

I will be discussing how these various factors led to a specific Iraqi Christian personality at the dawn of the twentieth century and how this personality is now in jeopardy after the events that transpired following the invasion of 2003.

Political and cultural background

Iraqi Christians have never been in political control of their land. They survived under various political systems, loyal to their rulers, holding on to their faith and principles, despite periods of suppression and persecution.

Under the Persians, Christians emerged as an independent community in the early fifth century after a long period of persecution.[1] During the Synod of Dadisho, convened in al-Hira in 424, the Church in Mesopotamia severed links with the Western Churches, becoming autonomous and autocephalous. This Church became known as 'The Church of the East' (CE), although it was also called the 'Persian Church' or 'The Nestorian Church', but the Church itself did not accept the latter terminologies for itself.[2]

By the time of the arrival of the Muslim Arabs in 630, the CE had become a sophisticated community with cultural centres of its own and had expanded to reach China, India and the Arabian Peninsula. Their true identity was simply Christian, deeply rooted in the Syriac language and culture and steeped in Greek learning and philosophy.

Under the Muslim Arabs, Iraqi Christians excelled in various fields of knowledge and contributed to the emergence of the 'Abbasid civilization despite being treated as second class citizens, having to follow the *dhimmi* rules.[3] Christians were pioneers in various fields of knowledge and served caliphs as physicians, translators, ministers and confidants. The translation process of Greek works to Arabic was mainly carried by the Christians since they were acquainted with both the Arabic and the Greek languages and had already translated Greek works into Syriac, a language that is closely related to Arabic.[4] Hunayn ibn Ishaq laid down the basis of modern translation techniques and became the head of the great institution called *Dar al-Hikmah* where a

1 Scattered persecution occurred during the third century, but under Shapur II thousands of Christians were martyred between 339-379. This is usually referred to as 'The Forty Year Persecution' or 'The Great Persecution'.

2 I Gillman, and H J Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia before 1500*, Curzon, London, 1999, p. 113.

3 Al-Mawardi, *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah* ('Laws of Islamic Governance'), London, 1996, p. 210-212.

4 S Brock, 'Greek into Syriac and Syriac into Greek', in *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity*, ed. Brock, S., Variorum Reprints, London, 1984.

group of translators under his supervision translated the whole corpus of Hippocrates, Aristotle and other Greek works. The translation process is of vital importance as it formed a significant part in the emergence of the 'Abbasid civilization.[5]

The process of translation flowed in the opposite direction. Christians responded to their Muslim critics using the Arabic language and started to compose apologetic and theological works in Arabic. There was also an active religious and philosophical dialogue that was conducted using the Arabic language. Sidney Griffith points to a process of enculturation[6] that is found in these writings. Christians were quoting from the Qur'an and some were using Islamic terminology. As early as early as the eighth century Christian philosophers and apologists wrote in Arabic in defence of their faith and were involved with Muslims in *'Ilm al-Kalam* (usually translated as 'theology'). They also translated the Bible and other religious works into Arabic.[7]

This initial process of co-operation and enculturation of Mesopotamian Christians had a far reaching influence on their identity that is palpable until now. Many of them became Arabised and the Syriac language receded in importance, remaining only as a liturgical language and spoken only by people living in the mountains and villages of northern Mesopotamia.

Under the Ottomans (from the sixteenth to twentieth centuries), Mesopotamian Christians continued to live next to their Muslim neighbours whether Arabs, Turks or Kurds. In the mountains they maintained a degree of self-rule while in the cities and the plain of Mosul they had to pay the *jizyah* and tolerate *dhimmi* status. There is no indication that they ever related to their pagan origins as Assyrians or Chaldeans. Both Christian and Muslims have forgotten their ancient civilizations and considered the Ottomans rulers as oppressors and occupiers.

From the eighteenth century onwards contact with the Western world changed their concept of themselves. This was the result of

5 See D Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Greco-Arabic translation movement in Baghdad and the early Abbasid Society*, Routledge, London and New York, 1998, p 138.

6 Sidney H Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, Princeton and Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 58.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

the arrival of traders, scientific and religious missions.[8] Contact with the Roman Catholic Church started in the twelfth century and culminated in 1553 with the union of some members of the Church of the East with the Roman Catholic Church that resulted in the formation of 'The Chaldean Church'. This term did not have any nationalistic connotation but only a cultural one and the Roman Catholic Church did not encourage members of this community to feel like a different nation descended from the Chaldeans. Likewise in 1662 the union of some members of the Syrian Orthodox Church with the Roman Catholic Church resulted in the formation of 'The Syrian Catholic Church'.[9]

Although there was some destabilisation and friction amongst the Christian communities as the new Churches emerged, there was the advantage of coming into contact with the universal Church. Catholic missionaries were the first to open schools, bring in a printing press and teach nursing in Iraq.[10]

Contact with British and American missionaries had a different influence. American missions reached members of the Church of the East in Urmia (in Iran) in 1832, while the Church of England reached the Hakkari mountains in 1842. Apart from opening schools and providing education, a few other influences occurred. The first was the introduction by the British of the term 'Assyrian' for members of the Church of the East. Archbishop Tait of the Church of England was the first to use this term officially for his mission in 1850. He gave it the title 'Assyrian Christian Aid Fund'.[11] Although the patriarch and the bishops of the Church of the East have acted as temporal as well as religious leaders of their communities, they did not conceive of

8 1. Traders: The East India Company was established in Basrah in 1723. 2. Henry Layard was excavating in Nineveh in 1845. 3. Religious: Catholic missions arrived in the Middle East from the twelfth century, while Protestant and Anglican missions in the early nineteenth century

9 Rassam, S, *Christianity in Iraq-Its origin and Development to the Present Day*, Gracewing, Leominster, 2010, pp. 107, 109 and 112.

10 The Carmelites opened the first school in Baghdad 1721 St. Joseph. The Dominicans opened the first school in Mosul 1750 and the first printing press 1873. Dominican nuns introduced domestic skills such as sawing and embroidery women in the villages of north Iraq and later started to practise and teach nursing in the Republic Hospital in Baghdad. They also opened a prestigious high school for girls in Baghdad which was sought after by both Christians and Muslims.

11 S Rassam, *Christianity in Iraq* …, p. 119.

themselves as a nation descending from the Assyrians. In fact it was Henry Layard who after unearthing the remains of the Assyrian capital Nineveh, exclaimed that the Christians in northern Mesopotamia were indeed as much the remains of Nineveh and Assyria as the ruins of the palaces he was excavating.[12] Moreover, the association of the Church of the East with the British caused friction with their Kurdish neighbours that led to the first massacre in 1842—one year after the arrival of the first mission.

Modern Iraq-Christian and Iraqi Christian identity

The First World War claimed the lives of thousands of Mesopotamian Christians which left a deep scar on the community's personality. While the massacres of the Armenians were blamed on their involvement in politics and their claims to rights were interpreted as a claim for independence, other Christians within the Ottoman Empire did not make such claims and yet they were massacred by the Ottomans and Turks during the First World War. These include the Chaldeans, the Church of the East, the Syrian Catholics and Syrian Orthodox.

However, the establishment of a democracy in modern Iraq after the end of the war, gave an impetus to the personality of the Mesopotamian Christian. The *dhimmi* status was eliminated and all minorities were given Iraqi citizenship with equal rights and opportunities. Christians were conscripted in the army and there was adequate representation in the House of Parliament, while the Patriarch of the Chaldeans represented the Christians in the House of A'yan (Senate). All minorities were given freedom of worship and equal access to education and jobs. However, since administrative jobs continued to be the prerogative of the Muslims, Christians excelled as professionals, craftsmen and traders. The Churches flourished and Christians became strong pillars in the building of modern Iraq. All this gave the Christians a deep sense of belonging as Iraqis and Christians, despite the fact that there were still vestiges of Muslim superiority that were felt in daily life and in certain laws. Inheritance and conversion laws continued to give advantages to Muslims and Christian history was noticeably absent from the Iraqi history books used in public schools.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 131.

Despite these disadvantages, the majority of Christians revelled in modern Iraq and the freedom it gave them. All denominations[13] except the Assyrians welcomed King Faysal and the democracy he was trying to establish. Their refusal to integrate in modern Iraq resulted in a massacre at Simmel [Summayl] in August 1933 and the deportation of their Patriarch Shimon XXI Eshi.[14] The majority of Assyrians involved left for Western countries where they continued to claim Assyrian nationality and the right for a land of their own in northern Mesopotamia.

After the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958, both Syriac- and Arabic-speaking Christians continued to have a deep national feeling of belonging as Iraqis. However, the conflict of the central government with the Kurds destabilised the situation of the Christians in north Iraq. Dozens of Kurdish and Christian villages were destroyed during the fight between the Kurds and the Iraqi government during the 1950s and 60s. After overcoming the Kurdish uprising, Saddam Husayn followed a policy of forced Arabization that was detested by both Kurds and Assyrians. Those whose villages were destroyed moved to Baghdad and other cities of Iraq and became fully involved in the life and fate of their country whether in times of peace or war. However, some of the Assyrians, in an attempt to maintain their Assyrian identity, formed the first Christian political party in 1979, 'The Assyrian Democratic Party'. It claimed Assyrian ancestry and national rights and had to go underground since it was outlawed by Saddam Husayn.

Christians in general avoided politics, although many were initially active in the Communist Party and later in the Ba'ath Party. Until 2003 there was no association of the majority of Christians with any nationality other than being Iraqis, except the Assyrians and the Armenians, who formed a minority within the total Christian population. Whether Arabs or Syriac speaking and to whatever denominations they belonged, they considered themselves Iraqis and Christians despite the setbacks that followed several military and

13 The Christian denominations of Iraq included: 1. The Chaldeans (75 percent) 2. Syrian Catholics (5-7 percent) 3. Syrian Orthodox (5-7 percent) 4. The Church of the East with its two branches, The Assyrian Church of the East and the Ancient Church of the East (5-7 percent) 5. Other small denominations: Latin, Protestant, Armenian Catholic & Orthodox, Greek Catholics &Orthodox and and The Church of England.

14 S Rassam, *Christianity in Iraq* …, p 145-146.

totalitarian regimes after the fall of the monarchy, the despotic rule of Saddam, the Iraq-Iran war and the long years of sanctions.

We can say that the Iraqi Christian identity that emerged with the formation of modern Iraq was deeply grounded in their faith with continued love of the land they grew up in. Christians of all denominations who lived in the cities spoke the Arabic language, be they Arabs, Assyrian or Armenians, while those in the villages maintained their Syriac language. All had a good relationship with their Muslim neighbours. Individual Christians were known to be honest, peaceful, tolerant and hard workers. As a group, they had a higher proportion of educated and cultured people.

These qualities were still strong before the invasion of 2003 despite some immigration that followed the first Gulf War and during the long years of sanctions. Many of those who left were awaiting improvement of the political situation in order to go back to their homes.

Recently, especially after the persecution and displacement of the Christians that followed the invasion of 2003, many Muslim Arab writers have highlighted the patriotic qualities of the Iraqi Christians and extolled the role they played in enriching their country in various fields.[15] Below is a quote from Faris Nadhmi:

> Do we exaggerate if we say that the most prominent virtue of the social personality in Iraq are personified in the personality of the Iraqi Christian individual. This minority in number has always been the socio-cultural reference for the majority population at least in the near historical context. The Christian community may be a minority in number but have always been the majority culturally by following the principles of reason, freedom, peace, forgiveness and tolerance.[16]

15 1. S Al-Jamil, The Iraqi Christians: Their historical cultural and national role. www.bakhdeda.net/articles/sayyarAljamil.htm 2. Ja'far al Mudhaffar, The majority are majority in truth and not in religion 3. Ismail Alwan al-Tamimi, The Iraqi Christians are symbols of virtue and bridges of renaissance (all in Arabic).

16 F K Nadhmi, *The Newspaper of the World*, Baghdad 239. 23.11.2010 or httpi//www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=236043 (both in Arabic. The quote translated by the author).

The situation after 2003

The identity of the Iraqi Christian was jeopardised after the invasion of 2003 for several reasons. Persecution, together with other factors that I will try to identify below, threatened the Iraqi Christian identity and caused thousands of Iraqis to flee the country leaving their homes and livelihood.

1. The division of Iraq into three regional governments (the south for the majority Shi'ites, 55 percent of the population; the north for the Kurds, 21 percent of the population; and the Sunni Arabs squeezed into a small area in the west of the country, 18.5 percent of the population). The plan also included the formation of a special province for the Christians in the Nineveh Plain of Mosul. Although the aim was to establish a federal state, the fact that it was based on sectarian and ethnic grounds, resulted in emphasis on sectarian, ethnic and religious identity, rather than a common national one. This caused a wide divide between the Sunni and Shi'ite sects of Islam, between Arabs and Kurds, which led to sectarianism, tribalism, ethnic tension and violence.

Such a division, not only destabilized the country as a whole, but also disadvantaged minority sections of the population,[17] since at times of difficulty the unifying factor has always been the common national identity. Now that this was weakened it had become difficult for all minorities to actually belong as full Iraqi citizens.

For the Christians community, this division had a far-reaching impact not only because they felt odd in an area that identified itself as Shi'ite or Sunni but also because of the plan that intendeds to push them into an exclusive area in the Plain of Nineveh. After the invasion Christian parties amongst other denominations emerged.[18] Some Chaldean parties started claiming Chaldean nationality, and Syrian Catholic and Orthodox parties, Syriac nationality. Consequently they started using the term 'Chaldo Assyrian and Syriac People' for the Christians. However, these parties did not represent the majority of the Christians and were often formed by handfuls of individuals. The majority of the Christians did not belong to a political party and did not want to live in an exclusive area as I will explain later.

17 Other minorities include the Mandaeans, the Yezidis, the Shabak and the Turkomans.
18 S Rassam, S, *Christianity in Iraq* …, p. 250.

2. Marginalisation in the emerging political process.

When the government was formed in April 2005, Christians were poorly represented in the Baghdad central government and in Parliament. The long awaited constitution contained ambiguities regarding the role of religion and the rights of minorities. It was drafted in haste and minorities were under-represented in the drafting process.[19] Apart from enshrining Islam as the official religion of the state, there was ambiguity in article 2 of the constitution. Section 'a' of article 2 states that 'no law may be enacted that contradicts the established provisions of Islam,' while section 'b' states that 'no law may be enacted that contradicts the provisions of democracy.' Interpretation of article 2 depends on Iraq's Supreme Federal Court, whose composition is laid down in article 92 of the constitution. It was feared that access to the employment of the judiciary and thus in court of minorities would be difficult and their true representation might be impossible.[20]

Moreover, Christians are referred to as 'Chaldo Assyrian and Syriac People' in the constitution, a term that has special nationalistic connotations different from how the majority of Christians perceive themselves and excludes some Christians such as the Armenians, Latin, Turkoman and Arab Christians.

3. Attempts of assimilation by the Kurds

The Kurds have been especially welcoming to the Christians who are well represented in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) with several ministers and Members of Parliament. However, the general situation for the Christians in Kurdistan is problematic in view of attempts by the Kurdistan government to assimilate minorities into a Kurdish nation and their plan of expansion. Officially the province of Kurdistan includes Arbil, Duhok and Sulaimaniyya, but actually they are also in control of Kirkuk, the plain of Mosul and Diyala which they want to annex to Kurdistan. This plan is fiercely resisted by the Sunni Arabs, the Turkomans and neighbouring countries as well as by many Christians.

19 F A Jabar, *The Constitution of Iraq: Religious and Ethnic Relations*, Minority Rights Group December 2005.

20 P Taneja, *Assimilation, Exodus, Eradication: Iraq's minority communities since 2003*. Report of MRG 2005.

Christians in the province of Kurdistan are expected to feel and behave as Kurds and the Arabic language is not taught. The Kurds are supportive of the various political Christian parties who want to put all Christians under the umbrella of Chaldo-Assyrians and Syriac people. This is a pointer at politicising them and an attempt at eliminating the Arabic identity which many cherish.

4. The plan of a special province for the Christians

The plan of creating a Christian province in the Plain of Mosul is fiercely resisted by the Sunnis of Iraq in general and those of Mosul in particular, as well as by many Christians. There is dispute among the planners whether such a province should be under the jurisdiction of the central government in Baghdad or under the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Christian politicians in the KRG have requested that a clause should be included in the constitution, which includes the Plain of Mosul under the control of the KRG, since they argue that this area lies within the expanded boundaries of Kurdistan. In an interview with Mark Latimer, Sarkis Aghajan, as Finance Minister in the KRG stated 'as Christians we regard the Nineveh Plain as our region …'[21]

As I mentioned previously, the majority of Iraqi Christians do not belong to a political party and do not want to live in an exclusive area. They consider all Iraq as their country and would like to be able to choose where to live in its vast expanses. They argue that for such a province to be viable, it needs protection by Western powers as well as the Kurds. Such a relationship will alienate them from the Sunni Arabs and link them more with the West, confirming the false accusation of fundamentalist Muslims, that the Christians are Western collaborators. Amongst Christian religious leaders opinions vary, but many have voiced their objections to this plan. As early as 2005, religious leaders of all denominations (except the Assyrians) expressed their concern regarding the new attitude to the Christians in a letter sent to the central government: 'We would like to express our sadness at what is happening in our country. We would like to stress that we support an independent and united Iraq which guarantees equality and justice to all regardless of religion or race … We would like to remind everybody that the Churches should be listened to through

21 M Latimer,' Mass Exodus', *Guardian Weekly*, 26 October 2006.

their official leaders …'[22] Regarding the 'Safe Haven', the most outspoken has been the Chaldean Bishop of Kirkuk, Louis Sako, who described the enclave as a 'ghetto' which would engender endless violence as in Palestine and Israel.[23] The Latin Archbishop of Baghdad, Jean Suleiman, stated in a meeting in London that the assembly of Catholic bishops and the heads of other Christian Churches in Iraq have rejected this solution.[24] Bishop Audo of the Chaldeans in Aleppo stated that the Sunnis of Mosul will take this so called 'Safe Haven to attack the Christians who are asking to be independent of us.'[25]

5. Persecution and displacement

The persecution that followed the invasion of 2003 has caused the displacement of the majority Christian population and the immigration to other countries of nearly half. With the violence that engulfed the country after the invasion of 2003, there was special targeting of the Christians and other minorities. First, people who run businesses that are considered un-Islamic were attacked, such as alcohol dealers and hairdressers, and Christian women were forced to wear the *hijab*. Then it proceeded to kidnapping and extortion, attacks on houses of worship and on the clergy. Since August 2004 over 60 churches have been damaged or destroyed, over 500 civilians were kidnapped, extorted of large sums of money or killed, 17 clergy were kidnapped and seven were brutally murdered. Systematic religious cleansing in al-Dora/Baghdad with threats to 'convert to Islam or be killed' occurred in 2006, and a spate of killings in Mosul caused 15,000 individuals to escape to the villages of northern Iraq in 2008. The persecution reached its peak with the atrocious attack on the Church of Our Lady of Deliverance on 31 October 2010 where the congregation witnessed unspeakable horror for five hours during which over fifty people were martyred including two young priests, and over seventy wounded.

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22 *Najm al-Mashriq*, no.41, 2005, pp.129-130 (translation from the Arabic by the author).

23 C Howes, 'On the Plains of Nineveh', *Daily Telegraph*, 7 July 2007, available at http://www.ankawa.com/english/?p=166.

24 Jean Suleiman was invited by the charity Aid to the Church in Need in September 2008 and spoke about the situation of the Christians in Iraq at Westminster Cathedral Hall.

25 J Pontifex, 'Flight from fear', *The Tablet*, 25 November 2006.

The language of hate addressed to Christians especially in Baghdad and Mosul, was intimidating and horrifying: 'You are Crusaders, allies of the invaders,' 'You are *dhimmis* who have to pay the *jizyah* or convert to Islam,' 'You are dirty infidels who are polluting the land of the Muslims …,' etc. These were messages sent on mobile phones, spoken by some mullahs from the pulpits, written on pieces of papers put under doorways or seen as graffiti on the walls. Many had this protection money actually collected from them. Having lost their income many had to close their businesses; they felt that it would be better to spend their savings in neighbouring countries awaiting immigration rather than spending them on terrorists. Others fled to Kurdistan or the villages of northern Iraq in the hope of returning to their homes when the situation improved.

Those who stayed are either the very poor or the highly motivated and with the decrease in their number, the remaining community is automatically weakened.

The persecution of the Christians and other minorities has been inflicted by both Sunni and Shi'ite Muslim radicals and there is some evidence that the Kurds may have been involved in the evictions that occurred in Mosul between September and October 2008.

Before 2003, the Christian population in Iraq was estimated between 1.2 and 1.4 million. Now the numbers are less than 500,000 and this figure is highly optimistic.

Many parishes in Mosul and Baghdad have closed (in Mosul 5 of 11 churches remain open) and 3 of the remaining parishes in the older part of Mosul have only between 25 to 50 families. Most of them live under extreme security risks and do not venture far from their homes. In Baghdad only 14 of 24 churches are open and some parishes share the same church service.

Summary

The fragmentation of the Iraqi Christian identity is in part related to the fragmentation of the general Iraqi identity. However, it is more acute for the Christians and other minorities than in the case of the Muslims. The sheer number of Muslims and the fact that they are in political control, whether Shi'ites or Sunnis, gives them strength

while the Christians and other minorities need to be protected and supported. Persecution together with their decreasing number makes their communities more vulnerable and their sense of belonging more difficult to sustain.

The association of identity with religion and sect excludes the other automatically. The call for a theocratic state by many of the ruling parties is an insurmountable obstacle for the Christian to belong to. Persecution by radical Muslims has robbed them of their homes and livelihood, while tribalism has excluded them from government offices. Scared and impoverished, they fled their country with the feeling that this is no longer the Iraq they knew. Threats continue in Baghdad and Mosul and people have the feeling that they are not wanted in their own country.

The attempt to push the Christians to a special enclave is a source of grave concern for many Christians, while their association with a special nationality, Chaldo-Assyrian and Syriac people, has alienated the Christians who do not fit in this category.

In Kurdistan, where there is a significant Christian presence, the situation is difficult for the majority as there are not enough jobs and the pressure to assimilate as Kurds is not accepted by many. The Christians of Iraq maintain their character of honesty and fidelity to their country but can no longer accept second-class citizenship and cannot survive if they are continuously being threatened and abused. Consequently many who are still there aim at emigration when the opportunity comes. If the situation continues as it is, the Christian community is in serious danger of extinction.

Challenges

1. The responsibility of the majority Muslim population

The prime challenge is for the central government in Baghdad to provide security and basic services for all and special protection for the minorities. It should also provide a constitution that ensures equality for all its citizens irrespective of religious belief or ethnicity. A process of reconciliation should be started for those who have been traumatised and abused verbally and physically. Those who were evicted from their homes can only be reconciled if their losses

are compensated and they are reassured that they will be treated with justice.

Then there is the responsibility of the intellectuals, the educators, religious leaders and the media. They have to make individual Muslim citizens aware that the Christians are the original inhabitants of Iraq and not some newcomers associated with the invaders. Education programmes should include Christian history in the curriculum and bring to prominence the vital role of the Christians in the emergence of 'Abbasid civilization as well as modern Iraq. The media has to spread the vital message that the Christians are part of the fabric of Iraqi society and their loss is a loss to the whole country. Muslim religious leaders have to be involved in serious dialogue promoting acceptance of the other and the formation of a multi-religious multi cultural society.

2. The responsibility of the Christian and their leaders

A united leadership of Christians from all denominations is needed in order to be effective. They need to meet with politicians and government leaders in order to secure fair treatment of their community and express the desire of their people and their rights to live in any area of Iraq. The nature of the so called 'Christian Province' or 'Safe Haven' should be clarified and its relation to the KRG or the central government in Baghdad decided. They also need to engage in dialogue with Muslim religious leaders, who are of key importance in educating their people, that establishing a multicultural multi-religious society is in their favour.

The continuing presence of Christians in Iraq depends largely on the effort of the Churches in encouraging their faithful to be patient and persevering rather than complaining and despondent. They should be reminded that this is not a time to be intimidated by those who consider us outsiders as they have shared with their Muslim brothers in fighting oppression for centuries and should persevere in fighting present oppression rather than succumb to voices of threats and alienation. They should be encouraged to develop inner strength, endurance and resolve and stand strong in claiming their legal and historical right as a Church and as a people of Iraq. They need to be reminded that witnessing to their faith is their responsibility and that

they have always been the salt of the earth and the leaven of the bread and should continue to be so in their beloved land, come what may. Over the centuries they have given thousands of martyrs and have not gone so far in order to give up now.

IS THERE AN END IN SIGHT RE THE DESTRUCTION OF CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES IN IRAQ?

Erica C D Hunter

It has been more than two years since Da'esh captured Mosul on 10 June 2014 and drove the Christian citizens from their homes. This exodus was particularly poignant; not only were people deprived of their homes and livelihoods as well as all their possessions; their flight ended a Christian presence in this great city that had spanned some 1800 years.

Prince El-Hassan bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan wrote on 24 July:

> In recent days, we have read with horror about Christians being asked to leave the town of Mosul within twenty-four hours. We have also heard about the desecration of Christian holy spaces and their symbols—the bombing of churches and a cross being removed from St Ephrem's Cathedral, the seat of the Syriac Orthodox archdiocese in Mosul.

Whether there will ever again be a significant Christian presence in Mosul is unknown. Even if Da'esh might be driven out of Mosul, many Christians would be extremely reluctant to return, out of the real fear that security and safety could not be guaranteed in the future.

The targeting by Da'esh of Christians in Mosul has been the deliberate implementation of a policy of ethnic cleansing to remove living communities from the landscape of Iraq where they have lived for centuries and contributed in many ways. Not content to exterminate the living communities, Da'esh also have embarked on eradicating physical evidence of their presence thus relegating the symbols of these communities to oblivion. In attempting to expel *al-jahiliyyah* (a term

now appropriated by Da'esh), paradoxically Da'esh manifest their gross ignorance and their cultural darkness, which stands in stark contrast to the rich multi-religious, ethno-linguistic demography of Iraq that spanned many centuries.

The violence against the Christian communities has not commenced with Da'esh. Shortly after the Allied invasion or 'liberation' of Iraq in 2003, the breakdown of society led to the first attacks on Christians. However the situation escalated dramatically after 2006 following the bombing of the al-Askeri Mosque in Samarra, one of the holiest Shi'ah shrines. Christians became implicated in the violence that erupted between the Sunni and Shi'a communities. In 2006-2007, a concerted ethnic cleansing of Christians took place in Dora, a suburb of Baghdad that had been dubbed 'the Vatican' of Baghdad. Hundreds of Christian families were driven out, losing their homes, their livelihoods and their possession under the pain of death if they did not convert to Islam. Graffiti scribbled on the walls at Dora, proclaiming 'Christians to Beirut, Shi'ah to the grave', gave a clear message that the Christians were no longer welcome or wanted.

The cycle of violence reached new depths at *Our Lady of Salvation* in Karrada on 31 October 2010 when a massacre claimed the lives of 58 parishioners and 2 priests. The atrocities took place during the celebration of Mass when gunmen burst into the cathedral; their victims included pregnant women and small children. In 2012, a bomb that had been hidden in a bag exploded at the door of the cathedral in Kirkuk on the day that Pope Benedict XVI concluded his tour of the Lebanon. This was a sign that Christians were—in the minds of the perpetrators—integrally associated with the West and *ab extensio* with the chaos into which Iraq has descended. This is the perception upheld by Da'esh who do not recognize Christians as *ahl-al kitab* ('People of the Book'), a status which they have traditionally enjoyed since the eighth century.

In the on-going cycle of violence, a total of 72 churches and ecclesiastical institutions throughout Iraq have been targeted:

44 churches in Baghdad
19 churches in Mosul
8 churches in Kirkuk
1 church in Ramadi

Many of these attacks were at the hands of al-Qaida terrorists, who bequeathed their terrorist agenda to Da'esh. However, it might be said that Da'esh have refined this agenda to a previously unprecedented degree. The physical destruction of all churches and monasteries, in keeping with the wider cultural destruction that Da'esh has perpetrated, goes hand-in-hand with their concept of *al-jahiliyyah*. Da'esh have equally targeted all denominations: Armenian Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Assyrian Church of the East, Chaldaean Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic, Anglican, Seventh Day Adventist, Chaldaean Catholic. Whilst there can be no accusation of partisanship since, Da'esh fail to recognize the ancient apostolic congregations whose origins lie in the first centuries of the Common Era from those (including the Uniate and the Protestant churches) that have derived from Western proselytism. All churches are thus vulnerable targets. Although Da'esh have not operated in Baghdad, St George's Anglican Church, which was founded in 1864, is situated in Haifa Street, Baghdad and is the only church in the 'red Zone' has been subject to five bomb attacks in the last three years. Despite these setbacks, it is still operating with an Iraqi curate and attracts Iraqi-Christian congregations to its weekly services.

The situation is very different in Mosul. On 16 June 2014, Da'esh decreed the destruction of all churches in Mosul.[1] Today, none operates as such. Fortunately, the relics of St Thomas, that were housed in the church of St Thomas, one of the oldest churches in the city, were able to be transferred on 17 June to the Syrian Orthodox monastery of Mar Matti, which is located in the territories administered by the KRG. In a telling example of the symbiosis between Christians and Moslems in the 'Abbasid period, the caliph al-Mahdi is purported to have listened to a grievance inside the church, during his trip to Mosul in 770.

Churches hailing from the early centuries of the Islamic era have fallen foul of Da'esh. In September 2014, the eighth-century Green Church in Tikrit, considered to be the most famous church the city, which was adjacent to the site of the seventh century Forty Shrines *(Al-Arba'in)* where 40 Shi'ah martyrs were buried, was destroyed. The Green Church had been excavated during the 1990s, yielding notable discoveries, including several coffins, including one bishop. The State Board of Antiquities and Heritage thereafter restored the building.

1 *'ISIL orders destruction of all churches in Mosul'*, *Iraqi News*, 16 June 2014. Retrieved 6 February 2016.

However, the 2014 destruction was not the first in the Green Church's long history. In 1089, the Muslim governor ordered it to be destroyed, but it was restored later. Although it was no longer consecrated, the restored Green Church stood as a monument and an important reminder of the multi-religious history of Tikrit which had formerly been a metropolitanate of the Syrian Orthodox Church.

Some churches have suffered several attacks. The St George monastery in Mosul was bombed on 23 December 2009. Located on a hill north of Mosul, the church had been founded by the Church of the East (Nestorian) in the tenth century but was rebuilt in the mid-nineteenth century by the Chaldaean Catholic Church. In December 2014, militants removed the iron crosses on the roof of the monastery and replaced them with the black flag of Da'esh. Three months later the church was attacked once again, men using sledgehammers destroyed its pictoral façade and the church bells were thrown to the ground. Such was the orgy of violence that even the dead have been targeted. Crosses were wrenched from graves and according to reports the cemetery has been destroyed. Stripped of its Christian symbolism, the monastery building is still standing and is currently being used by Da'esh as a detention centre for women.

Da'esh have destroyed the Mar Elias (Elijah) monastery, south of Mosul which had been dubbed 'the oldest monastery in Iraq' and was 1,400 years old. Satellite images taken in September 2014 confirm that the monastery, which originally had been built by the Church of the East, has been literally pulverized into dust, with no trace left of its once substantial structure and walls. Although it had been disused since 1743 when its monks refused to convert to Islam and were massacred, the monastery had been a place of pilgrimage over the centuries. The Iraqi Republican Guard used it as a base in the 1970s.[2] In 2003, the monastery became the base of US 101 Engineers, but in recognition of its historic significance, a programme of restoration was being implemented in conjunction with the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage.[3] Several services for troops were held in its precincts. Paradoxically, the attention drawn to the historic and religious

2 *'Iraq's oldest Christian monastery destroyed by Islamic State',* BBC. Retrieved 6 February 2016.

3 James Foley, 'In Iraq, a monastery rediscovered', *Smithsonian Magazine*, 15 September 2008. http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/in-iraq-a-monastery-rediscovered-12457610/Retrieved 6 February 2016.

significance of Mar Elias may have spurred on Da'esh, who would have viewed the monastery with especial opprobrium because of its recent military, as well as its religious, associations.

Da'esh have not just reserved their destruction for ancient monuments, but equally have launched vigorous attacks on the living monastic heritage of Iraq. Fighters stormed Mar Behnam monastery south of Nimrud in July 2014 and expelled its monks who were not allowed to take any of the monastery's ancient relics, or even their Bibles and other holy books. They literally left just with the clothes that they were wearing—and their faith. They were forced to leave behind the precious manuscript archives and sacred relics, although the monastery's manuscripts had been digitized by the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (Minnesota, USA), in a programme directed by Fr Columba Stewart SJ. There have been no authenticated reports as to whether Da'esh has destroyed these ancient works, but the chances that the manuscripts might have survived are slim. It is possible that some might emerge on the international 'art market', since such Da'esh is known to participate in the illicit trade that is part and parcel of the anarchy in which such groups flourish. Although the digitized images offer some compensation, the loss of priceless manuscripts is still a blow for scholarship and humanity.

The ancient monastery buildings were ransacked in July 2014, but worse was to follow. A report in March 2015 showed images of militants blowing up parts of the ancient monastery of Mar Behnam.[4] The monastery was built on the site of the martyrdom in the fourth century of the Sasanid prince Behnam and his sister, Sara, who were Zoroastrian but were converted by St Matthew, the eponymous founder of the Mar Matti monastery which is still standing and on the very frontier between the KRG controlled territories and Da'esh occupied lands. Refusing to renounce their newly acquired faith, Behnam and Sara were martyred on the orders of their father, who also converted to Christianity on his deathbed.

With its foundations in the fourth century, Mar Behnam monastery was a living symbol linked with the pre-Islamic era, but it was also a symbol of the regeneration of Iraq in the thirteenth century. Rebuilt

4 Gianluca Mezzofiore (19 March 2015), *International Business Times* (http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-blows-famed-4th-century-mar-behnam-catholic-monastery-iraq-1492703). Retrieved 6th February 2016.

following the incursion of the Mongols, the monastery was one of only a handful of buildings to survive from this period in all of Iraq. Although the gatehouse was modern, its ancient precincts featured ornate doorways built of local marble and carved with exquisite calligraphic inscriptions in Estrangela (the formal script of Syriac). The church featured domed ceilings and stalactite *murqarnas*—testifying the fusion of Christian and Muslim architectural styles. Although unconfirmed, reports suggest that the church may have survived the bombing perpetrated by Da'esh.

Not so the tombs of Behnam and Sara, housed in a shrine adjacent to the church, which were blown up. A unique thirteenth-century Syriac-Uighur inscription above the tomb of Behnam which read, 'May the happiness and praise of Khidr Elias befall and settle on the Il-khan and the nobles and the noblewomen!', was destroyed.[5] It had been commissioned in gratitude after the abbot of the monastery went to the Mongol khan to complain about the looting. The latter agreed to return all the goods. One can hardly imagine the response of Da'esh were anyone to dare ask them to return looted goods! The inscription was perhaps the most western example of the Uighur (Old Turkic) language that was spoken during the medieval period in Mongolia and the Sinkiang region of China. As such, the inscription was singular, not just for Christianity or for Iraq, but for world heritage.

Concluding comments

Da'esh's destruction of the renowned UNESCO World heritage sites such as Nimrud and Palmyra shocked many Western scholars and the general public. The desecration of churches by Da'esh has not received the same level of publicity, but it is important to remember that they also are 'world heritage' since they are the everyday symbols of faith serving the needs of the Iraqi Christian communities. The churches are the 'living stones' of faith and Da'esh has attempted to eradicate a unique strand of civilization that has made substantial contributions to Iraq's religious, architectural and cultural heritage

5 Amir Harrak and Niu Ruji, 'The Uighur Inscription at the Mausoleum of Mar Behnam, Iraq', *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 4 (2004), pp. 68-69.

for nearly two millennia. Nicholas al-Jeloo, a young Assyrian scholar from Australia, opined:

> IS is destroying the rich cultural fabric of the area, the multilayered, multilingual, multi-ethnic aspects of society. It's not just our heritage, it's the heritage of the world. It is part of our history and now it's gone.[6]

The destruction of churches and monasteries in Iraq is not just a religious purging, but is also an assault and eradication of the common bonds that have cemented Christian and Muslim communities who have co-existed for centuries; overcoming religious and ethnic partisanship. In their indulgence for ethnic cleansing which seeks to expunge all traces of undesirable and unethical strands in the history of Iraq, Da'esh have imposed a Puritanism that truly displays their disregard of the great and rich heritage of Iraq as well as the mutual relationships that have existed between Christian and Muslim communities since the seventh century.

However, recent events might signal that the pattern of destruction inflicted by Da'esh is coming to an end. Parts of Mosul and surrounding villages have been liberated in the last few days. Amidst the ashes and refuse left behind by Da'esh, new hope is already arising. The first Mass has been held in a church at Qaraqoche that fell to Da'esh in 2014. Apart from the physical rebuilding of churches and monasteries, particular effort will be required to rebuild the bridges of trust and co-existence between Christians and Muslims. In response to Da'esh' concerted and deliberate attempt to divide and destroy humanity, Prince El-Hassan bin Talal and other denominational leaders issued the following appeal:

> … we appeal to the leaders and brokers of power in Mosul, the Middle East region, and indeed around the world that the holy spaces, both in our sites of worship and in our hearts, should not devolve into venues that separate us from each other. Instead, they should be

6 Gianluca Mezzofiore (19 March 2015), *International Business Times* (http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-blows-famed-4th-century-mar-behnam-catholic-monastery-iraq-1492703). Retrieved 6 February 2016.

> venues for dialogue and for conversation, so that we may recognize the values of human dignity and solidarity to which we all subscribe.

Today this message is being acted out in Basra, a city that I was privileged to visit in late September. For more than thirty years, Basra and the Shatt-el-Arab were at the epicentre of violence: the Iran-Iraq War (1981-1988), the First Gulf War (1990). These vicissitudes, coupled with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism following the Allied offensive in 2003, have led to a sharp decline in Christian communities in Basra. However, Christian communities are still present in the city, some 350 families according to the estimate of The Chaldaean Catholic Archbishop of Basra, His Grace, Habib al-Naufaly. Despite its very troubled past and diminished communities, the city still hosts a variety of active churches: Chaldaean Catholic, Syrian Orthodox and Armenian Orthodox as well as Evangelical and Adventist denominations. Crosses on the churches are visible from the street and some are even illuminated at night. In Basra, the cross and minaret still do demarcate the skyline.

The churches are recognized as a precious reminder of the Christian presence in southern Mesopotamia that has continued for almost two millennia. A booklet produced by the Religions Heritage Campaign under the supervision of Qahtan Al Abeed, the Antiquities Inspector of Basra region, acknowledges the city's Christian heritage, along with Shi'ah shrines, Jewish temples and a Mandaean 'Mandi'—in short all the buildings belonging to different religious groups who dwelt or are still dwelling in Basra. Written in English and Arabic, it gives brief details about the dates of construction and history of all the churches of Basra and also includes the museum of Christian artefacts set up by His Grace Habib al-Naufaly. The overall future of Iraq is still very fragile, but the situation in Basra offers a glimmer of potential hope and a possible paradigm. Instead of emigrating, in Basra Christians have the opportunity to worship and reside amidst their Muslim citizens. As the Tigris and Euphrates flow through the Mesopotamian heartland, may the two great religions continue to exist side by side in Basra, and throughout Iraq.

Cross of the Armenian Orthodox Church & nearby minaret (© Erica Hunter)

Illuminated cross of Evangelical Church (© Erica Hunter)

The Evangelical Church by day (© Erica Hunter)

Exterior of the Chaldean Church of St Thomas (© Erica Hunter)

Sign of the Chaldaean Church of St Thomas (© Erica Hunter)

Interior of the Chaldean Church of St Thomas (© Erica Hunter)

Detail of the ceiling of the Chaldean Church of St Thomas (© Erica Hunter)

CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN THE SOVIET REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA DURING THE CATHOLICATE OF GEVORG VI CH'OREKCH'IAN (1945-1954) AND HIS SUCCESSOR, VAZGEN I PALCHIAN (1955-1994)*

Revd Dr Vrej Nerses Nersessian

The most decisive event in the shaping of the present situation of the Armenian Church was the Genocide of 1915, which dispersed the entire Armenian population of Turkish Armenia almost all over the world, literally changing the map of Armenian life, shifting its centre of gravity away from traditional Armenian lands, and into the diaspora.[1]

Holy Ejmiatsin had been the unimpeachable authority of the Armenian Church through centuries of history. In that time, it had accepted a complex and multifaceted position as the leader and consolation of the Armenian people. The Mother See had also become intimately connected with the idea of an Armenian 'nationhood', even when Armenian's historic lands were dominated by foreign rulers. If anything, this role had become even more urgent after the vicissitudes of the early twentieth century. In 1920, after a three year period as an independent republic, Armenia became one of the 15 Republics of the Soviet Union.[2]

From the very first moment it was obvious that the new Soviet regime in Armenia was hostile to the Church, unlike any other previous foreign regime, it intended to eliminate the Church's role in

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* Presented at the Conference: 'Eastern Christianity Today: Studies in Modern History, Contemporary Theology and Political Thought at Centre for Eastern Christianity', Heythrop College, University of London, May 2013.

1 *Հայկական Հարց: Հանրագիտարան* ('The Armenian Question. Encyclopedia'), Amalya Pertrosyan, ed., Erevan, 1996; Israel W Charny, ed. *Encyclopedia of Genocide,* Vols I-II, Santa Barbara, California, 1999, pp. 61-105; David Miller, 'The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, A History of the ' Blue Book', *Rusi Journal* (August 2005), pp. 36-43.

2 Behboudyan Sandro, Comp. *Վավերագրեր Հայ Եկեղեցու Պատմության(1921-1938 թթ.* ('Documents for the history of the Armenian Church, 1921-1938'), Erevan, 1994.

the life of the Armenian people. But the Church had been so deeply rooted in the history and the whole tradition of the Armenian people that a tactful and patient policy was needed in order to implement this objective by the Soviets. And, indeed, the first decade of Soviet rule in Armenia was a comparatively bearable period. Catholicos Gevorg V Sureneants' (1911-1930) refused to recognise the atheistic regime as the legitimate government of Armenia.[3] In retaliation, the Soviets began a merciless persecution of the Church. Religious instruction was curtailed, Church facilities were confiscated, and clergymen were assaulted in the streets. In 1922 a Church movement, which by its nature and specific aims was opposed to the official established Church, her tradition and her authority, received official support and recognition from the state. The new church movement was called 'Free Church' (Ազատ Եկեղեցի). Under the guise of a reformatory movement, it tried to undermine the official Church by attacking the central authority of Ejmiatsin. The movement was organised and directed by a small group of clergymen who had been excommunicated by Catholicos Gevorg V. The movement had also its periodical called *Free Church* (published in Tiflis between 1925 and 28).[4] The third measure was the slowest but the surest one: anti-religious propaganda on a well-organised basis. The Union of Atheists[5] established a branch in Erevan and began publishing their journal. About two thirds of each issue was devoted to satirizing pious Armenians, especially women of older generation. By the end of the first decade, the strength of the Church was extremely reduced.[6] The time was quite ripe for

3 Arzumanian Zawen, Archpriest, *Ազգապատում Դ հատոր Ա.Գիրք* (1910-1930) ('National History'), vol. IV, Part I (1910-1930) for 'Gevorg V Sureneants', pp. 70-382; Sandro Behboudyan, *Վաւերագրեր Հայ Եկեղեցու Պատմութեան Գիրք ԺԳ Գէորք Ե Սուրէնեանց Կաթողիկոս Ամենայն Հայոց* (1847-1930) ('Documents for the History of the Armenian Church. Book XIII. Georg V Sureneants' Catholicos of All Armenians (1847-1930)'), Erevan, 2005.

4 Arzumanian Zawen, *Azgapatum*, p. 314.

5 Arzumanian, Zawen, *Azgapatum*, pp. 310-13.

6 Manukyan, Armenak, *Հայ Առաքելական եկեղեցու բռնադատված հոգեվո- րականները 1930-38 թթ.(ըստ ՊԱԿ-ի փաստաթղթերի)* ('The purged clergy of the Armenian Apostolic Church between the years 1930-38 according to the KGB archives'), Erevan, 1997; K'narik Awagian, *'Հայ Աւետարանական եկեղեցու բռնադատուած քարոզիչները (1937-38թթ.) (Ըստ Պետական Անվտանգու- թեան Կոմիտէի Փաստաթղթերի)* ('The purged pastors of the Armenian Evangelical Church based on KGB documents (1937-38)'), *Haigazian Armenological Review* 23 (2003), pp. 441-98.

more drastic measures to put an end to the story of Christianity in Armenia. If repression was the first step, liquidation was going to be the second. After 1929, stricter and more harmful actions were taken. Catholicos Gevorg V finally acquiesced to the Soviet demands. As a matter of self-imposed penance, the catholicos thereafter signed official documents as Gevorg 'the sorrowful' (Վշտալի). Catholicos Gevorg died in May 1930.

During his catholicate Gevorg V implemented a number of reforms. In 1922 he allowed widowed priests to re-marry. In 1923 he introduced the use of the Gregorian calendar into the Armenian Church. He sanctioned the use of the organs in Armenian worship. On 1 January 1924 he set up the Supreme Spiritual Council and in 1925 he published the set of canons for convening National Religious Conclaves.

In 1931 Archbishop Ghevond Durian (1881-1934) was appointed primate of the Armenian Church in America. Within a week of Durian's election, the Boston-based Armenian daily newspaper *Hayrenik'* ('Motherland'), official organ of the Armenian Revolutionary Party *(Dashnak)* began publishing articles aimed at discrediting the new Primate. The *Dashnak* party which had arisen out of the matrix of ideological movements, which began in the nineteenth century and reached their highpoint on the world's stage in the 1930 and 1940s, began to consider all emanations of Armenian life—including the Church—to exist primarily as adjuncts to political activity. Similarly the criticism it levelled against the primate was, at its roots, political. It involved Archbishop Durian's steadfast loyalty to the spiritual authority of the Mother See of Holy Ejmiatsin. The crucial issue for the Armenians abroad was what did being under the rule of an atheist regime, determined to eliminate the Christian faith from Armenia and consequently for the diaspora mean? Was it decisively compromised by its uneasy reconciliation with the Soviet Union? Most Armenians felt the answer was no. But some political parties—most notably the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, which had been the governing party at the time of Armenian's loss of independence—used the issue to drive a wedge between the Motherland and the dispersion.

Archbishop Durian had been serving as primate for less than a year when the *Dashnak* party began direct attempts to erode his authority and that of Holy Ejmiatsin. The occasion for the first outburst against

the primate was 24 April 1932. Armenian Martyrs' Day, when the Church held its annual memorial for the victims of the 1915 Genocide. Archbishop Durian had directed all his pastors to hold solemn requiem services in their churches on 24 April. He had forbidden the pastors from attending any memorial programme held anywhere other than in church, because members of the *Dashnak* party were certain to use such gatherings, as occasions for unfriendly demonstrations against the government of Soviet Armenia. The primate's directive was issued in the spirit of an earlier encyclical from the Mother See, which had forbidden the participation of the clergy in anti-Armenia gatherings. Archbishop Durian was on a pastoral visit in Canada, where he was informed that the former primate, Archbishop Tirayr Yovhannesian, was invited to preside at a memorial in New York. Archbishop Durian dispatched a telegram, reminding Archbishop Tirayr of the prohibition against presiding over, or participating in, such programmes. Archbishop Tirayr complied with the ban to the extent that he did not preside over the gathering. He did, however, attend the memorial, and this decision threw Durian's absence from similar programmes into bold relief. The *Hayrenik'* monthly exploited the incident as a pretext for a vehement campaign against the primate, characterising him as a 'friend of Turks as well as of Bolsheviks'. At the Chicago World's Fair an 'Armenian Day' was scheduled for 1 July and the committee in charge of the programme had decided, after months of debate, not to display the red, blue and orange flag of the defunct Armenian Republic. An agreement in this regard was reached in order to avoid a potential clash between opposing factions. However, as he entered the exhibition hall to preside at the festivities, Archbishop Durian noticed the tricolour flag on the stage, placed deliberately by a minority. The primate's appeal to have the flag removed was ignored and police intervention was needed to separate the two factions. His Holiness Khoren Muradbekian refused to consider the minority segment's resolution, to remove the primate from office, and indeed the entire meeting to be illegal.

This impassioned controversy reached its terrible climax on 24 December 1933 at New York's Holy Cross Church, during the processional at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy. A front page story in *The New York Times* of 25 December—Christmas Day—presented the details to the world 'Archbishop Assassinated in Procession to Altar; Laid to Old world Feud'. The article begins 'set upon by assassins

while he was proceeding to the altar to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, Archbishop Ghevond Durian supreme head of the Armenian Church in his country, was stabbed to death yesterday in view of 200 worshippers at Holy Cross Armenian Apostolic Church 578 West 187th Street.'[7]

Following the death of Gevorg V Sureneants on 21 May 1930 the Supreme Spiritual Council confirmed the choice made by the late Catholicos Gevorg V through his encyclical dated 4 March 1923 to appoint Archbishop Khoren Muradbekian as *locum tenens* in the event of his death.[8] He was a strong man with a new policy which amounted to a *modus vivendi*. Predictably, the Soviet officials were not eager to allow the election of a successor, so the pontifical throne remained vacant for nearly three years. The Armenian press in the diaspora, particularly the *Dashnak* press through their organ *Hayrenik'* saw this as further evidence that the communist regime was determined to extinguish the Christian faith in Armenia. Under increasing pressure from abroad, the Bolsheviks granted permission and a National Ecclesiastical Assembly was held in the autumn of 1932, at Holy Ejmiatsin, in which Khoren Muradbekian was elected catholicos by an electoral assembly composed of seventy-three members of which fifty-three were laymen, and of which only seven came from outside the Soviet Union. For the first time in the long history of the Armenian Church, the election of a catholicos of the Armenian Church was supervised by the Bolsheviks.

The election of Catholicos Khoren and the events that followed underscored the difficulty of the Mother See's position during the Soviet period. On the one hand, the Church in Armenia was only allowed to function by the fiat of the country's communist rulers. The catholicoi's election could only take place by their permission, and it is unlikely that a candidate unacceptable to them could be elected. On this limited evidence, one might give a hearing to the speculation that the Soviets were somehow complicit in the activities of Ejmiatsin.

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7 Arzumanian, Zawen, *Azgapatum* vol. IV, Book II, pp. 66-68.

8 Behbudyan, Sandro, comp. *Վավերագրեր Հայ Եկեղեցու Պատմութեան (henceforth VHEP): Գիրք ԺԳ, Գէորգ Ե Սուրէնեանց,* Document no. 444, p. 668. For a biography of Khoren Muradbekian, see Behbudyan, Sandro, *VHEP*, Vol. II, *Խորէն Ա Մուրադբէկյան Կաթողիկոս Ամենայն Հայոց,* 1901-1938 ('Documents for the history of the Armenian Church, Vol. II, Khoren I Muradbekian, Catholicos of All Armenians, 1901-1938'), Erevan, 1996. Document No. 162, pp. 290-92; Zawen Arzumanian, *Azgapatum*, vol. IV, Book II (1930-1955), New York, 1997, pp. 1-167.

On the other hand, the record of the catholicoi during this period strongly suggests that the opposite was actually the case. The story of Catholicos Khoren Muradbekian is the most dramatic illustration of this. The open hostility towards the Church started in 1936, and more openly in 1937, during the purge of all religious, national, cultural elements and influences which still kept alive the ancient, pre-Soviet tradition in the new world of communist ideology and social structure. A letter from Catholicos Khoren to Archbishop Garegin Hovsep'eants' (1867-1952) written on 16 April 1937, when the latter was Primate of the Diocese of America, illustrates the dire position of the Mother Church with the diaspora. On 10 January 1937 the primate wrote to His Holiness seeking his authority to approach the Rockefeller Foundation to undertake the restoration of the Cathedral Church of Holy Ejmiatsin. In his letter dated 16 April 1937, the catholicos begins his response with these words 'your request sounds very strange to us … without wishing to enter into the reasons in detail, we inform you that we are against the proposal and therefore cannot give our approval to proceed.' Then he continues 'The Mother Church is Armenian peoples' historically most sacred monument, the "Holy of Holies", the altar of light and the responsibility of its renovation is the duty and right of the Armenian people. Any individual who by his free will take upon himself the task of the entire restoration of the Mother Church, must be a faithful member of the Holy See, to whom we can grant that honour, and who then through his most generous act will link his name eternally with the "Enlightener's Only Begotten Cathedral".[9] The

9 Behboudyan, Sandro, *Documents for the History of the Armenian Church* ,Vol. II, Document No. 361, pp. 514-15.
At the age of twenty-nine Aghasi Khanjyan May 1930 became First Secretary of the Armenian Communist Party. He was a defender of the aspirations of the Armenian nation. In 1936 Khanjyan was called to Tiflis and unexpectedly announced that he had committed suicide, while the truth was that Lavrenti Beria had ordered his murder to remove a threat to his own monopoly of power in the Caucasus.
Another victim of the great purges of 1936-38 was the writer Vahan T'otovents', author of *Life on the Old Roman Roads* or *Scenes from an Armenian childhood; Tell Me, Bella* (*see* Vrej Nersessian, 'Armenian' in *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, ed. by Peter France, OUP, 2000, pp. 190-93). Another victim was the poet Eghishe Ch'arents', who had been an ardent revolutionary, but had been disillusioned when the Soviet Union betrayed Armenia by signing the Treaties of Moscow (16 March 1921) and Kars (13 October 1921) with Kemalist Turkey. In a poem called *Message*, which on its surface appeared to be

measures taken against the Church reached a point that bishops, priests and simple believers came forward to oppose them and to defend the integrity of the Church. The catholicos himself, who had been a man of compromise, could no longer bear this new attitude of hostility which was expressed through a new wave of persecution.[10] The Bolshevik's arrested the catholicos's two brothers, Sargis and Levon. They also arrested a close friend of His Holiness, Armenuhi Lalayan. From the documents related to the inquisition of the two suspects, it is clear that the officials were assembling evidence to prove that the catholicos was a *Dashnak* sympathiser and was involved in anti-Soviet propaganda. On 2 September 1937 Bishop Artak Smbatyan was arrested and murdered by a firing squad for 'being a trusted friend of His Holiness', who in 1934 had been appointed the overall representative of His Holiness over the churches.[11] On 4 April 1938, in retaliation for his defiance of communist thugs, to hand over the keys of the treasury, Khoren Muradbekian was murdered by agents of the Soviet secret police in his residence.

The story of his murder is told by Gegham Karapet Klykch'yan one of the servants of the catholicos. He recalls the event in these words:

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a standard poem in praise of Stalin, contains a cryptic message: the second letter of each line vertically spell the message 'O Armenian people, your only salvation is in your collective power.' In 1937 he was arrested and imprisoned, where he died on 29 November, 1937.

10 Behboudyan Sandro, *VHEP, Գիրք Գ.Արտակ եպիսկոպոս Սմբատ յանց(Տաուշեցի)Հոգեվոր, գրական, պատմա-բանասիրական գործունեութ յունը … եվ գնդակահարությունը 1876-1937 թթ.)* ('Documents for the History of the Armenian Church. Vol. III. Bishop Artak Smbatyants … and his murder by firing squad,1876-1937'), Erevan, 1997, 'The record of the interrogation of Bishop Artak Smbatyants', 14 July 1937', see Document No. 4226, pp. 617-31.

11 Step'anyants' Step'an, *Հայ Առաքելական եկեղեցին Ստալինյան բռնա պետության օրոք* ('The Armenian Apostolic Church during the days of the Stalinian purges'), Erevan, 1994, pp. 120-23; Gevorgyan Pargev,*«Ինչ եղավ քեզ,մարդ Աստծո»* ('For God's name what happened to you?') in *Hayreni Ezerk'* 7 (1991), pp. 32-37, Sandro Behboudyan, *Documents* Vol. II, *Khoren Muradbekyan*, Appendix, pp. 573-84; Zawen Arzumanyan, *Azgapatum*, Vol. IV, Book II (1930-55), pp. 151-54; *Գոհար Ավագյան, Նահատակ Հայրապետը : Երանյալ Հայրապե տի նահատակության 70-ամյակին* ('The martyred Catholicos. Album marking the 70th anniversary of his martyrdom'), Holy Ejmiatsin, 2006.

> In the evening of 4 April 1938, when I was collecting the dried branches of the trees in the garden, two individuals unknown to me approached me led by the lady named Pirouz. One of them in a very commanding voice told me, leave the residence, and go to Erevan. I protested saying 'I cannot leave His Holiness alone.' Do not be foolish one of them retorted—do you want to play with fire, when I say go, you should go. Do not dare to tell anyone about our visit nor about you being evicted from the residence. Worried and concerned, with broken heart I went into His Holiness room, he was drinking tea. I went back again and collected the tea cup and on my way out I had the strange feeling that this would be the last time I would see His Holiness. I went to see Father Mat'eos, the only other man remaining in the residence, he too was ordered to depart to Erevan. A day had not passed when news spread that His Holiness had died. When I heard, I hurried to the residence and entered His Holiness' bedroom. Saw him lying dead in bed. The priest Mat'eos was kneeling at His Holiness's bedside and weeping like a child. When I passed through the grand hall I saw electric wires. Before placing his body in a coffin, I washed him, clothed him in white, clerical garments. When washing him I saw wire marks around his neck. He had been strangled.[12]

On 18 April 1936 the late Catholicos Khoren had officially named Gevorg his deputy and head of the Supreme Spiritual Council. Khoren's letter stated:

> We instruct your Grace, after our death, to take care, by agreement with the Supreme Spiritual Council of Holy Ejmiatsin, of all affairs relating to our faithful flock and the Armenian Church scattered throughout the world, treasuring and defending the purity and integrity of the

12 Supreme Religious Council, *Երջանկահիշատակ Տ.Տ.Գեորգ Ջ Կաթողիկոսի կյանքը եվ գործունեությունը* ('The life and career of the Blessed Gevorg VI Catholicos of All Armenians'), Holy Ejmiatsin, 1955, pp. 46-47.

> traditions of the Church, and conducting elections of a new catholicos according to the established canons of the Armenian church.[13]

The rumours in circulation and often repeated were that, when Catholicos Khoren was murdered, Gevorg Ch'orek'ch'ian within days had fled to Tiflis. He had not been present at the hasty burial of the catholicos in the unmarked graveyard of the Church of St Hrip'sime, Rather he had taken refuge in the basement of house of the famous poet Avetik Isahakyan, who was a member of the Supreme Religious Council and he himself was expecting to be arrested, and was thus reluctant to give refuge. His wife Sofia later recalled:

> One night, at about three o'clock, there was a ring at our door. Avetik stayed in bed and, in my nightdress, I went to the door, full of fear and opened it. There at the threshold stood Bishop Gevorg. I let him in, and the bishop told us that he had reliable reports that they intended to arrest him and, although he had many friends in the town, could rely on no one and so had come to us.[14]

Gevorg was not arrested and took over as *locum tenens*. For almost four years the Church in Armenia was barely functioning. The *locum tenens* defended and cared for the cathedral, and the apartments of the catholicos, and with an aid of a local priest officiated at the services. Following Khoren's death, the Soviet authorities stepped up the pressure to further isolate Gevorg.

> One spring day in 1940 I was sitting in the patriarchal chambers thinking about what measures to take to raise the Armenian Church and the Holy See from the situation that had been created, when three state officials arrived from Erevan. Under the pretence of examining the catholicosate they came into the large

13 Gevorgyan Pargev, *ibid*., p. 37. Felix Corley, 'The Armenian church under the Soviet regime, Part I: the leadership of Kevork', *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 24, no. 1 (1996), p. 10.

14 Corley Felix, *ibid*., p. 11.

> hall of the catholicosate and presented themselves to me.[15]

They offered Gevorg work as a secular teacher, either of music or of Armenian studies, reminding him that they had set up the former Archimandrite Ervand Ter Minassian[16] to a good position at the university. Gevorg refused the offer telling the visitors:

> When I was consecrated bishop I signed an oath that I would faithfully serve the Armenian church … Serving the church means serving the Armenian people and doing more for the nation than any professor can do. This is my path which I must tread and no one can force me to turn away from it.[17]

The Church was in a dire state. In 1940 there were just nine functioning Armenian churches in the entire Soviet Union. Of the eight internal dioceses in operation in the Soviet Armenia none remained, only two churches in Erevan, one in Leninakan and three in the rest of the Armenian Republic were functioning. Not only was the Church institutionally close to extinction, the Soviet era had almost wiped out popular connection with the Church and religious ritual. Thanks to anti-religious work and propaganda of scientific atheism, a significant

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15 Ter Minasyan Ervand, *Հուշեր իմ կյանքից* ('Memories from my life'), ed. by Parouyr Mouradyan, Erevan, 2005; A N Srapyan, '*Երվանդ Տեր Մինասյան (Ծննդյան 90-ամյակի առթիվ)*' ('Ervand Ter Minasyan, on the 90th anniversary of his birth'), *Patma Banasirakan Handes* 4 (1969), pp. 189-96; K N Youzbashyan, 'Ervand Ter Minasyani gitakan zharangoutyoune' *(Ծննդյան100-ամյակի առթիվ)* ('The literary and academic heritage of Ervand Ter Minasyan'), *Patma Banasira- kan Handes*, 1 (1980), pp. 87-95.

16 Corley Felix, *ibid.*, p. 11.

17 In 1867 Catholiocs Gevorg IV (1866-82) went to St Petersburg to receive the Czar's permission to print the *Ararat* monthly. The first issue appeared in 1868 described in the title page as being a monthly of 'a religious, historical, philological and moral knowledge'. The decade beginning in 1908 lasted until 1919. In 1968 to mark the 100th anniversary of its publication a bibliography *Մատենագիտություն «Արարատ» ամսագրի, 1868-1919*, compiled by Seda Kotsinyan was published. An indepth analysis of the patristic, theological and historical texts published in *Ararat* are available in K D Avetyan, *«Արարատ» հանդեսի բնագրական հրատարակությունների մատենագիտություն (1869-1919 թթ)*, Erevan, 1989.

part of the population, especially young people, had been excluded from the influence of the Church.

On 10 April 1941, Gevorg summoned a Church Council in Ejmiatsin to elect a successor to Khoren. The poor attendance, especially from abroad, and the hostility of the Soviet authorities meant that the election was bound to fail. Only 52 delegates (two of them from abroad) of the 92 delegates needed for a quorum turned up. But those who attended were unanimous by accepting and confirming Archbishop Gevorg Ch'orek'ch'ian *locum tenens* in accordance with the murdered catholicos's wishes. Predictably, the communist rulers were loath to allow the election of a successor. But the intervention of the Second World War—and the need to ingratiate the central government with the fighting population of the various republics—led the Soviet Union to reconsider its posture of doctrinaire atheism, at least in the case of Armenia. The circumstances that led to the pontifical election in 1945 was a direct outcome of Gevorg's face-to-face meeting with Stalin, of whom he made various demands.

On 30 July 1941 the Second World War, referred to as the Great Patriotic War in the Soviet Union, began, which accelerated Armenia's integration into the Soviet industrial networks and seemed to have strengthened Armenian loyalty to the system. Whenever the motherland was in danger the Church had always been a strong spiritual bastion around which the nation had assembled—although the Bolsheviks had separated the Church from the state, thus forbidding the Church from meddling in political affairs. But the Church could not just stand by in the face of the impending horror. On the first day of the war the Russian Patriarch Sergey issued a circular urging all the Christians to assist the state. The Armenian Church could not remain unresponsive. On the 5 July 1941, the Supreme Religious Council issued a directive to all dioceses of the Armenian Church both internal and external to resist the Nazi invaders. In his second appeal written on 30 July 1941 the supreme Religious Council urges Armenians all over the world to contribute to the war effort saying:

> Armenians, have no other motherland except the Soviet Republic of Armenia. Armenians outside Armenia have no other surer footing than the Armenian Church and

> its leadership the Catholicate of All Armenians in Holy Ejmiatsin.

To support the Soviet Union means to support the Motherland. The victory won by the Soviet Union is also a victory won by the Armenian people. In his call the catholicos recalls the spirit of the Battle of Avarayr waged against the Persian in 451. The catholicos decided to actively engage in political activity. He decided to hasten the defeat of the enemy to embark on a large scale fund raising to create a tank division to be called *Sasunts'i David*, after the name of the hero of the Armenian national epic. Already in 1943 he had transferred valuable treasures worth 800,000 roubles, £1,000 and $50,000. He requested the authorities to open a bank account. He also sent an encyclical to all the primates inviting them to contribute to the fund. Stalin could not ignore the catholicose's gestures. The leader needed the co-operation of the Church and knowing the potential benefits of tapping into the loyalty of the Armenians towards Holy Ejmiatsin. In 1943 on the 26 of January, a telegram signed by Stalin is sent to Archbishop Gevorg from Moscow. It read:

> To Gevorg, in charge of the catholicate of All Armenians. I request you to express my greeting and that of the Red Army thanking the Armenian faithful and the clergy of Holy Ejmiatsin, who have contributed to the fund to create the Sasunts'i David tank division. Special directives are given for opening an account in the national bank.
>
> [signed] J Stalin

Gevorg took advantage of the freer atmosphere. His first act was to exhume Khoren's body from the unmarked grave in St Hrip'sime Church and laid Him to rest in St Gayane Church, with a modest memorial stone.

In the diocese of America Garegin Hovsep'eants', the primate at the time, instituted the 'mite of the Enlightener' *(Lusavortch'i luma)*, a kind of official dues assessed to each parish for the support of the Mother See. The war efforts provided another avenue for community action, and here again the primate took the lead, He organised a committee which, in a single year, collected $120,000 to aid Armenian soldiers

of the Red Army and Armenians harmed by the Nazi invasion. And Hovsep'ian raised over 85,000 roubles for the tank division unit by presiding and speaking at rallies. The Sassunts'i David tank unit was formed and on 29 January 1944 the column was formally handed over to the army.

In 1944 he started the publication of an official monthly of the Holy See called Ejmiatsin. This monthly was the successor of the former monthly called *Ararat* which began publication in 1868 and was stopped in 1919.[18]

In 1944 April-May Crimea was liberated from German occupation. The substantial Armenian community in Crimea was accused of collaborating with the Germans and with the Greek and Tartar population were exiled to Oufa. During the Nazi occupation the Armenians along with the other minorities had remained neutral.

The rapprochement policy with religious institutions was beneficial all around. In preparation for the April 1945 meeting the Armenian authorities suggested to Gevorg that he should consult his agenda with the Armenian Politburo member Anastas Mikoyan[19] who was also a past student of the Gevorgian Seminary.[20] Gevorg turned the proposal down maintaining that he would prefer not to consult him, explaining that if he were able to reach an agreement with Mikoyan state officials might not be pleased and if he failed to reach an agreement

18 Anastas Hovhannes Mikoyan (1895-1978) was a graduate of the Gevorgian Theological Seminary of Holy Ejmiatsin (1915-20).He was the sole Armenian member of the Poltiburo, but was powerless to counteract the excesses of the Stalin terror of 1936 and 1937.

19 The Gevorgian Theological Seminary bears the name of its founder Catholicos Gevorg IV *Kostandnoupolsets'i*, who after his meeting with Czar Alexander II in 1866, secured the consent of the Czar to establish the seminary whose building began in 1869 and the official opening was conducted on 28 September 1874. In 1917 the seminary was forced to close by the Communist regime and reopened 1 November 1945, following the meeting of Catholicos Gevorg VI with Stalin. See Hovhannisyan Petros,'Gevorgian Chemaran' in *K'ristonya Hayastan:Hanragitaran* ('Christian Armenia. Encyclopedia'), Erevan, 2002, pp. 209-211;*Նշանավոր Ճեմարանականներ* ('Famous graduates of the Gevorgian Seminary'), Holy Ejmiatsin, 2009.

20 *Matenadaran* is the Armenian name for the 'Mashtots' Institute of Ancient Manuscripts' a research institute founded in 1959. In 1920 the Manuscript collection in Holy Ejmiatsin was decreed state property. In 1922 manuscripts which had been taken to Moscow for safekeeping were returned. In 1939 the Ejmiatsin collection was transferred to Erevan and housed in the National State Library.

the Armenians would blame Mikoyan for the failure. He preferred, he said, to negotiate with Lavrenti Beria, whom he knew while he was the primate of the Diocese of Georgia. In the discussions, while Beria was persuading Gevorg that since some of the demand raised had already been fulfilled, there was no need for him to meet Stalin in person. However, Gevorg insisted, declaring that there were questions he could raise only with Stalin himself. 'Don't you trust us?' Beria had asked. 'If I didn't trust you I would not have approached you,' Gevorg is said to have replied. In April 1945 Gevorg was called to Moscow to meet Stalin. In his Letter to Stalin he begins by stressing his Church's 'historical faithfulness to the great nation [unspecified] and the Soviet State' during the war. Addressing the 'Great leader of the Soviet State', Gevorg sets out what he considered was necessary for the 'rejuvenation' of Ejmiatsin, which would 'ensure the wide range of co-operation in the interests of the Church and the Fatherland.'

> 1. Permission to reopen the theological Seminary at Holy Ejmiatsin.
> 2. Requested the return of the former library of the Theological Seminary, confiscated by the Soviet authorities and transferred to the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (*Matenadaran*).[21]
> 3. Demanded that Holy Ejmiatsin be allowed to have its own printing press, where religious textbooks, theological works, encyclicals, church calendars and the official journal *Ejmiatsin* could be printed.
> 4. The catholicos also sought permission to print religious and Armenological articles in the *Ejmiatsin* journal, similar in content to its predecessor *Ararat*, which would foster better relations between the Mother See and the communities abroad.
> 5. He called on the authorities to vacate the properties and buildings currently used by the military units and Soviet staff for the use of the Holy See.

21 Zvart'nots' Church ('Angels') is the palace church built by Catholicos Nerses III, 'the builder' between the years 641 and 666. The cathedral collapsed in the 10th century, as a result of an earthquake. The ruins were excavated between 1900 and 1907. T'T'oramanyan's researches of the ruins provided him enough data to propose a model for its reconstruction in 1905.

6. To return to Ejmiatsin the churches of Hrip'sime, Geghard and Khor Virp, which beside being historical monuments were also places of pilgrimage for the Armenian faithful.
7. To grant permission to begin the restoration of the church of Zvart'nots' (7th century) according to the plans drawn up by the architect T'oros T'oramanyan.[22]
8. To grant permission with the consent of the catholicos for Armenian senior clergy from abroad to visit Holy Ejmiatsin for special events and for clergy from Holy Ejmiatsin to go abroad on specific ecclesiastical duties.
9. He requested permission to be allowed to plan for the consecration of Holy Chrism and to invite 'leading wealthy figures as pilgrims with the aim of receiving from them donations for the restoration of the cathedral church of Holy Ejmiatsin.
10. To grant permission to open a foreign currency account in the State Bank in Erevan to be allowed to make transfers from it to purchase required items.
11. To grant permission to receive donations to purchase cars, typewriters, paper and other necessary items from abroad. The catholicos stressed that it was imperative to restore the authority of the Holy See as the centre of Armenian Christianity among the Armenians abroad, in order to 'guide the national interests of the Armenian nation and to give its desirable direction from the point of view of Soviet Armenia.'[23]

19 April August 1945 was a historic day—on the eve of the capture of Berlin, Gevorg was invited to see Stalin. The encounter was publicised in *Pravda* the following day. Also present at the meeting was the President of the USSR's Religious Affairs Committee, Ivan Polyansky. Stalin promised to satisfy all the requests. The catholicos had one more request up his sleeve :'In the archives of the Holy See there are letters, decrees, documents, *firmans* signed by Persian shahs, Ottoman sultans, Russian czars and other high ranking officials, which

22 Behboudyan Sandro, comp. *VHEP*, Georg VI Ch'orek'ch'ian, pp. 256-58.
23 *Op. cit.*, pp. 256-58.

are preserved with care. It would not be out of place to have among those documents a document bearing your signature, as a witness to your special interest towards the Armenian people and the Armenian Church.' Stalin returned the catholicos's document of proposals inscribed, 'I agree, Chairman of the Soviet of People's Commissars, Iosif Stalin, 19 April 1945.' Gevorg was also honoured with the medal for the 'Defence of the Caucasus'.

The first concrete result occurred on 16-22 June 1945, when delegates from all over the world gathered in the Cathedral of Holy Ejmiatsin to elect a successor to the throne of St Gregory the Illuminator by secret ballot, which had remained vacant since 1938. There were 102 delegates, of which 24 were clerics and 74 were laymen. The Opening Session of the Council was chaired by the *locum tenens* Gevorg Ch'orek'chian, Garegin Hovsep'eants', Catholicos of the See of Cilicia and Kiwregh Israyelian, the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem. Also present from Britain was the Dean of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson, who in his memoirs provides a vivid description of the election and the consecration two days later on 24 June.[24] On 22 June the Council elected Gevorg as the 129th Catholicos of All Armenians by a majority of 110 votes out of 111 eligible to vote. On 25 June the newly elected catholicos sent a telegram to Stalin which ends with the call:

> The Armenian people hope and wait impatiently the blessed day when Armenian land still under the foreign yoke will be returned to the dear Soviet Armenian Republic.[25]

The Armenian Church on behalf of the Armenian nation was demanding the closure of the injustice by returning the lost territories, which belonged to the Armenian people. Despite political and

24 The first issue of «*Սովետական Հայաստան*» ('Soviet Armenia') No.1 (July) 1945, devotes pp. 40-47 to «*Ծայրագույն Պատրիարք Ամենայն Հայց Կաթողիկոսի ընտրությունը եվ օծումը*» ('The election of the Patriarch and Catholiocs of All Armenians and his consecration') with his portrait and a picture of the Cathedral of Holy Ejmiatsin. The reflections of the Dean of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson (in Armenian), pp. 45-47. For the English text of the Dean's report, see Hewlett Johnson, *Searching for Light* (Michael Joseph, London, 1968, pp. 219-21, reproduced by Felix Corely, *ibid*., p. 17.

25 Armenian text of the telegram in *Sovetakan Hayastan*, No 1 (July 1945), p. 40.

economic difficulties, two issues appeared to provide an opportunity for co-operation between Moscow and Armenians in the post-Second World War period. This involved territorial claims, including re-annexation of Kars and Ardahan to Armenia, which Stalin had first raised with Gevorg in 1943:

> The War will come to an end soon .Our government is preparing to take back from Turkey the western provinces of Armenia handed over in 1920. It is clear that Armenians must live on these lands. It would be desirable for them to be the same Armenians who were forced to flee from Turkey and who now live in the diaspora. To achieve this the immigration of about one hundred thousand Armenians must be organised. Soon there will be a government decree on this. You in your turn must help us with this.[26]

While Stalin's motives can be debated, for Armenians at home and abroad the re-emergence of the issue as an international question revived hopes for territorial unification. In the conference held on 22 July 1945, Stalin raised the question of restoring the territorial positions as they existed before the First World War, by which he meant the return of Kars which was prior to the war part of Armenia and Ardahan '… and we have told Turkey that if they wish to sign a Treaty of cooperation, they must rectify the borders, if they decline this, then the possibility of a treaty of peace between our two countries is out of the question.' In response Harry Truman explained that any territorial dispute between the Soviet Union and Turkey was a matter to be resolved between themselves.' The British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was convinced that the handing over of the territories to Armenia under Bolshevik rule would threaten the stability of the Middle and Near East. On 5 March 1946 Winston Churchill, on a historic tour of the United States, delivered his 'Iron Curtain' speech. In it, Britain's wartime Prime Minister offered a prophetic warning to the Western democracies against the dangers of Soviet communism. On 12 March 1947, President Harry Truman announced his resolution to resist communist aggression

26 Step'anyants' Step'an, *ibid.*, pp. 179-86.

around the world, a decision which became the pivot-point of American foreign policy in subsequent decades. Two years prior to Truman's announcement, the Soviet Union had renounced the 1925 friendship pact it had with Turkey, and with the advent of Truman Doctrine, Turkey, became a beneficiary of US military and financial aid.

Unfortunately rather prematurely Catholicos Gevorg on 25 October 1945 through an encyclical had requested the governments of Soviet Union, United States and Great Britain to support the territorial claims of Soviet Armenia from Turkey.[27] The opponents of the claim responded that present Turkey is a democratic law-abiding country, it is not the Turkey of old, and the Armenians, if they wish can return to their ancestral homes. While Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, the Primate of the American diocese, on 6-9 October 1945, presented a paper, entitled 'The Armenian Church since the First World War' in which he made claims of Soviet Armenia to revise its frontiers with Turkey, based on the recommendation of President Woodrow Wilson. Bishop Nersoyan on 'United Nation's Day' in 1946 delivered a sermon on the same theme to a large crowd at New York's mammoth Episcopal Cathedral. In the 'World Armenian Congress' held in New York between 30 April-4 May 1947, Bishop Tiran addressed the seven hundred delegates (from 76 cities of the US and 22 foreign countries), which was organised to make an appeal to the United Nations and the major world powers, to restore to Armenia its historic territories which were held by Turkey.[28]

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27 The Encyclical addressed to the World Armenian Congress was published in *Համառօտ Տեղեկատուութիւն Համաշխարհային Հայկական Քոնկրէսի: Ապրիլ 30-Մայիս* 4,1947 *Նիւ Եորք, Ամերիկա*,1947 ('Brief record of the proceedings of the World Armenian Congress, held between 30 April and 4 May 1947 in New York's Carnegie Hall'), pp. 35-41.

28 Nersoyan Tiran, Archbishop, *Վավերագրեր Հայ եկեղեցու պատմության: Գիրք ԺԲ. Փաստաթղթեր եւ նյութերի ժողովածու (Նվիրվուծ է ծննդյան 100- ամյակին): Կազմեց Սանդրո Բեհբուդյան* ('Documents for the history of the Armenian Church. Vol. XII. Tiran Nersoyan, Archbishop. Compiled by Sandro Behboudyan'), Holy Ejmiatsin, 2004. Document No. 26. Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan's letter of plea to the presidents and foreign ministers of America, Soviet Union and Great Britain seeking their intervention of on the question of demanding the return of the Armenian territories held by Turkey, on the eve of their meeting in Moscow. The letters are addressed to Harry S Truman, Mikhael Kalinin, V M Molotov and Ernest Bevan, pp. 91-93.

The 'cold war' intensified, aggravating the mistrust and separation that already existed between the worldwide Armenian diaspora and its Soviet-dominated homeland. Another promise of Stalin, vigorously pursued by the new catholicos was the promotion of the campaign to 'repatriate' diaspora Armenians to the 'home land'. The repatriation program had its origin at the Ecclesiastical Congress in Ejmiatsin, in the summer of 1945 on the occasion of the election and consecration of Catholicos Gevorg VI, when delegates from Europe and the Middle East petitioned the Armenian government to take immediate steps for the resettlement of repatriated Armenians. This was one of the greatest resettlement projects of our century. From some thirty countries throughout the world, to which they had been scattered after the First World War, many as 'political' refugees, Armenians were going 'home'. This was designed to promote Soviet Armenia as the national home. The Soviet State had issued its decree on repatriation in November 1945. The new catholicos eagerly in his pastoral communication instructed primates in the diaspora to organise and collect funds to support the emigration to Soviet Armenia. The first wave, from 1921 to 1925, involved about 25,000 Armenian returning from the Middle East (Syria, Iraq, and Iran), France and Greece. During the second wave (from 1926 to 1936) approximately 10,000 Armenians were repatriated, mostly from Bulgaria, Greece and France. It is likely that the worldwide economic depression contributed to this phase of repatriation. Although the third phase proved to be the shortest, from 1946 to 1948, it nevertheless resulted in the repatriation of between 70,000 and 100,000 Armenians, the highest number since the collapse of the republic in 1921. This was in line with the Soviet policy to strengthen the manpower of the country particularly in the aftermath of the war when they needed new strength and new skills for its reconstruction.[29]

The United States government in keeping with its standing policy of favouring the re-establishment of the Armenian nation agreed to facilitate their expatriation to Soviet Armenia. In 1947 in an exchange

29 Joseph B Schechtman, *Population transfers in Asia*, New York, 1949. Chapter II, pp. 51-83, contains the story of the Armenian repatriation; Claire Mouradian, 'L'immigration des Arméniens de la diaspora vers la RSS d'Arménie, 1946-1962', *Cahiers du monde russe et sovietique 20, 1 (January-March, 1979)*, pp. 79-110; Suny Ronald Grigor, 'Soviet Armenia' in *The Armenian People from ancient to modern times*, Vol. II, ed. Richard G Hovannisian, New York, 1997, pp. 367-69.

of notes between the United States and the Soviet Union, provision was made for all Armenians and Americans of Armenian extraction, who wished to depart from the United States for Armenia, to do so freely, all technical requirements for emigration being waived. Against this background an Armenian father named Hambardzum Ch'olakian[30] whose application had been approved applied to the Welfare Department for the release of his three children with the institutions, had his application turned down by the department in charge of the case, because of their disapproval of the Soviet Union and its institutions. The two Roman Catholic institutions opposed his petition on the grounds that Ch'olakian wanted to take his children and sick wife to a country 'different' from ours, and that he was unfit to have the custody of his children. Monsignor John J Corrigan, Head of the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin, admitted in court that Mr Ch'olakian's proposal to take his children to a communist country was the basic reason for the mission's refusal to release the children. Such a refusal is without precedent in the United States. It was the first time in American jurisprudence, the incorporation of a new unwarranted and evil principal, namely, the assertion of a paternalism against the natural private rights of a parent. The court's decision to support the Catholic Church disregarded the fundamental principles embodied in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which clearly states:

> Everyone has the right to leave any country including his own … The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and the state … Parents have prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

The then primate of the diocese of New York Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, who had organised a defence committee and had raised funds for the Ch'olakian case, declared:

30 Charles A Vertanes, *The case of the Cholakian family. A new phase in the history of the struggle for religious freedom in America*, National Committee for the right of the Cholakian Family, 1949-50. Offprint from *Armenian Affairs Quarterly*, vol. 1(Winter 1949-50), pp. 1-19.

> Armenian people all over the world have learned of the extraordinary decision of Justice Lumbard, and none of them can accept this verdict as expressive of American justice. No one who believes in religious liberty and freedom of conscience can view this decision as anything but trampling on the most sacred rights protected by the constitution of the United States. Tearing the children apart from their parents and their family as was done in this instance would give legal sanction to the courts to destroy family life in the interests of ideology.

Sometime before the case was taken to the Court of Appeals, a second proceeding was instituted to compel the Commissioner of Welfare—Raymond M Hilliard, a Roman Catholic—to place the Ch'olakian children in a Protestant institution. The incident was without parallel in the history of New York State. The second hearing was held in abeyance until the Court of Appeals decided the question of custody. If the children were restored to their family, who were by now in Armenia, the second proceeding would be dropped, if not, it would be brought on for a hearing.

The Catholic institutions refused to place the children in a Protestant institution or an Armenian on the grounds that, 'among other things, upon our refusal to subject the children to a sharp change in environment for what may well prove to be a temporary period. Obviously, if the Appellate court should reverse the Supreme court, the children will be free to go to Soviet Armenia' (*New York Star*, 20 January 1949). This statement was made as an answer to an article by Albert Deutsch in the *New York Star* for 19 January, in which Deutsch had attributed the actions of the Catholic agencies to the desire to destroy the doctrine of the separation of Church and state in America.

On 1 November 1947, on the repatriation ship Rossia Hambardzum Ch'olakian set sail for Armenia with his sick wife with his five children leaving behind his two sons George aged 13, Albert aged 12 and sick daughter Alice aged 7. The case of the repatriation of these children dragged on until 1950.[31]

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31 Nersoyan Tiran, Archbishop, Documents for the history of the Armenian Church vol. XII, *«Տիրան եպիսկոպոսի ուղղերձը 1948թ. Ազգային երեսփոխա- նական ժողովին»*, pp. 245-46.

In 1945 Gevorg in his capacity as *locum tenens* in a letter to Lavrenti Beria, had raised the importance of the need to have a uniform orthography conducive for the close co-operation between the homeland and the diaspora. The removal of the artificial barrier would unify the two separated factions. He recommended that language experts from the Armenian Academy of Sciences with the active participation of experts from abroad who could work together towards creating a unified orthography. Catholicos Ch'orek'ch'ian informs us that Academician Step'anos Malakhasyan, guided by scientific and practical considerations, has written an article for the monthly 'Ejmiatsin' in which the outline of the new orthography is drawn and seeks permission to print the article in the monthly for the purpose of generating a debate around the subject and prepare the ground for the government to discuss the subject. It is worth mentioning that the above mentioned Professor Malkhasyan's study was not printed in the monthly. He also sent an article to Moscow entitled 'Unified language, unified orthography' *(Միասնական լեզու, միասնական ուղղագրություն)*. For the small minorities of the Soviet Union the russification of the small languages, was implemented in the 1920s. He refrains from accusing the authorities for causing the rift, makes specific recommendations and concludes 'we only desire, to bridge the chasm, so as to reinstitute the uniformity in the orthography, as it has been for centuries.' He concludes his message paraphrasing a memorable saying of Jesus 'The sabbath was created for man and not *vice versa'* and so 'the orthography serves us and not we the orthography. We are the owners of our language and therefore of its orthography. From this it follows that we have the right to change it.'[32] There is a degree of frustration in these words. 'We will make only such changes to our ancient orthography, which are acceptable to our western Armenian compatriots. United people, united orthography.'

Having around him a wide range of academics, Catholiocs Gevorg raised with a Lavrenti Beria the future faith of Lake Sevan. In his extensive report he mentions that in a short period of time the water level of Lake Sevan has decreased by 12 metres and 'only 20 percent of the water released from Lake Sevan serves its intended purpose while the rest flows aimlessly into the Caspian Sea.' The issue raised a century ago receives

32 'And he said unto them, the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath' (Gospel of Mark 2: 27).

its final solution on 21 August 1961 when the government of the Soviet Armenia decided to protect the water lever of Lake Sevan by diverting the waters of the river Arapa to flow into Lake Sevan.

In an encyclical issued on 25 May 1950, His Holiness Gevorg VI urged Armenian Church communities around the world to shun politics, respect local authorities [and] maintain a loyal position regarding local governments. It was a sign that the tensions which had already characterised the 'cold war' were about to intensify. A difficult period lay ahead for the Armenian Church, which straddled the free and captive world. To function, it would struggle to evade the crossfire between East and West.

In the summer of 1954 on 9 May Catholicos Gevorg died at the age of 85. In his will which he had written dated 30 April 1954, addressed to Archbishop Eghishe Terterian[33] *locum tenens* in charge of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem he writes: ('From among our present senior primates and high ranking clergy after having made a long and careful search and also taking into consideration my political and ecclesiastical endeavours for the benefit of the Armenian Church, the Armenian people and the Motherland beginning from the days when I was a locum tenens, I have come to the conclusion that you are the only figure much loved and respected by our people, and so we have concluded you to be the most suited and competed person to carry on my our work is the present locum tenens of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem His Grace Archbishop Eghishe [Terterian]

33 *VHEP* (1938-1955թթ.), Vol. VI, Georg VI Ch'orek'ch'ian, «*Գէորգ Ջ կաթողիկոսի կտակը Եղիշէ արքեպ. Տէրտէրյանին տեղապահ նշանակելու մասին եւ պատասխան հրաժարականը*», Doc. No. 559-60, pp. 838-839. *'Մեր ներկայ աթոռակալների եւ բարձր հոգեւորականութեան մէջ երկար եւ խորազնին պրպտումներ կատարելուց յետոյ, այլեւ նկատի առնելով մեր տարած եկեղեցական քաղաքականութիւնը Հայ եկեղեցու, Հայ ժողովրդի եւ Հայրենիքի շահերի տեսակետով՝ մեր տեղակալական օրերից ցայսօր գնահատուած եւ սիրուած լինելով բաւական մեր ժողովրդից, մենք համարում ենք միակ կարող եւ շահաւէտ անձն, նոյն մեր գիծը տանելու եւ դերը վարելու կարող եւ հարմարաւոր անձն՝ Երուսաղէմի ներկայիս պատրիարքական տեղապահ Ամենապատիւ Տ. Եղիշէ արքեպիսկոպոսը... այլ նաեւ ապագայում պիտի ընտրէ նորան մեր փոխարէն ս. Լուսաւորչի գահը բազմելու համար.'*

and I am certain that when the time comes the nation will also elect him to occupy the throne of Saint [Gregory] the Illuminator.') In his letter of response addressed to the Supreme Spiritual Council dated 10 July 1954, Archbishop Eghishe Terterian lists four mitigating circumstances as to why he cannot accept the appointment as *locum tenens*.[34] The main reason for his rejection of the appointment was the precarious position the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem found itself in May of 1949, when fighting erupted between Arabs and Jews, causing serious harm to the Armenian Patriarchate, the St James's monastery, and the Armenian colony of the Holy Land. The task of feeding and sheltering the Armenian refugees became a challenge for the Patriarchate. At the request of Catholicos Gevorg VI directed to church leaders of the diaspora communities to raise funds for the victims of the fighting. Bishop Tiran Nersoyan raised $35,000 for the Old City, where St James' Monastery was located, which was by that time occupied and governed by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The financial crisis of the patriarchate also continued, with its real estate in Israeli-held territory subjected to heavy taxes, the *locum tenens* of the Patriarchate, Eghishe Terterian, appealed to Bishop Tiran Nersoyan asking for the latter's help in resuming the relief campaign in North America. Bishop Nersoyan represented the Armenian Patriarchate at the United Nations Trusteeship Council where the earlier decision of the UN General Assembly, whereby Jerusalem and its environs would be designated as an international zone, was accepted.[35]

On 6 and 7 October of that year, the primate had this to say:

> The political environment in which the supreme leader of our ecclesiastical and religious life- the incumbent of the throne of St Gregory the Enlightener—find himself, and the political environment in which we ourselves

34 Letter of rejection sent to the Supreme Spiritual Council, *ibid*., Doc. No. 560, pp. 839-40.

35 Nersoyan Tiran,Bishop, *Վավերագրեր, ibid*., p. 245; Editorial *«Պաղեստինահայ աղէտը»* ('The crisis for the Palestine Armenian community'), Hayastaneayts' Ekeghets'i, 4 (April 1949), pp. 99-102. Haig Aram Krikorian, 'Partition of Palestine and its consequences—attempt of usurpation of the Holy Places' in *Lives and times of the Armenian Patriarchs of Jerusalem. Chronological succession of tenures*, California, 2009, pp. 566-68.

> live, have developed into an adversarial state. But we remain loyal to the historic Mother See of our Church. This was in response to the scurrilous editorials which had appeared in the *Hayrenik* daily in 1951,which had instigated—and perpetuated—the factional strife in the diocese and in particular publishing scurrilous opinion pieces on archbishop Nersoyan. An editorial in the February 1951 issue of the diocesan monthly responded to these distortions, adding that 'the disease of *Hayrenik* is McCarthyism

—a diagnosis which is sufficient to suggest the tenor of the original attacks. A more general treatment of the question of the Church's political orientation appeared in two successive issue of *Hayastaneants Ekeghetsi* (June and July 1951), where in the editor argued:

> The Armenian clergymen should not be involved in political parties … He should not use the sacred pulpit of the church to advocate this or that political viewpoint. He should not set his sail to the winds blowing this way today and another way tomorrow. Remaining subject to the pontiff in spiritual matters, we can simply stay loyal to our civil obligations in the countries where we live—in our case,America—and become involved in ecclesiastical, religious and cultural work'.[36]

With hindsight though the Armenian Church existed in a difficult and precarious situation, the Armenian Church of America and its primates were not dupes of the Soviet Union. The painful nature of the accusation against the people of the diocese was, in essence, that by being loyal to the spiritual authority of the Holy See, Armenian Americans were traitors to their adoptive country. In 1953 a spate of articles appeared in the *Paik'ar* and the *Armenian Mirror Spectator*

36 Nersoyan,Tiran,Bishop,*ibid.*,«*Գեւորգ Զկաթողիկոսի շրջաբերականը ..., անկախաբար միջազգային դիվանագիտական մարմիններին դիմումեսեր չանելու մասին*» ('A decree issued by Catholicos Gevorg VI to all the primates of the dioceses in the diaspora to refrain from sending demands to international diplomatic missions, without prior knowledge of His Holiness'), Doc. No. 137, pp. 318-19.

(the official Armenian and English language organs of the Armenian Democratic Liberal [Ramkavar], party) objecting to Archbishop Nersoyan's use of the descriptive term 'Orthodox' in the official title of the Armenian Church. The editorials suggested that Nersoyan was thereby abrogating the distinctive identity of the Armenian Church—and perhaps flirting with ideas of union with the Russian Orthodox Church. The arcane controversy over the term 'orthodox' has long since died, but its remainder is in the bylaws published in 1953 approved and confirmed by His Holiness Gevorg VI which contains the following clause in the first paragraph of article:

> The Diocese of the Armenian Church of America is an indivisible part of the Armenian Holy Apostolic Orthodox Church and is found under the supreme authority of the Catholicos Patriarch of All Armenians.[37]

In the 1954 issue of *Hayastaneats' Ekeghets'i* there is a report of an ecumenical meeting, at St James Church, Jerusalem, where the Divine Liturgy was celebrated on successive days according to the Armenian, Malabar Indian and Coptic traditions and all present received Holy Communion in a spirit of Christian brotherhood. 'The independence we enjoy', Nersoyan had written earlier that year, in an editorial on the distinctive character of the Armenian Church, 'should not be an excuse for the Orthodox Churches to fail to recognise each other. Rather, it should be an invitation to respect each other and to enter into spiritual communion with one another.'

The pontifical throne remained vacant for over a year following the death of Catholicos Gevorg VI. Arak'el Arak'elian and Y Anosian who had gone to Ant'ilias to attend the funeral of Garegin I Yovsep'ian presented an extensive communiqué to His Holiness Gevorg VI on

37 Georg VI Ch'orek'ch'ian, *VHEP.*, «*Գէորգ Ջ Կաթողիկոսի շրջաբերա կան նամակը բոլոր թեմերին՝ Տիրան Արք. Ներսոյանի կողմից … «Որթոդոքս» մակդիրի ինքնովի ավելացումը անօրինական համարելու մասին*» ('A circular from Catholicos Georg VI to all the primates of the Armenian dioceses on the addition of the use of the term "Orthodox" in the official title of the Armenian Church by Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan'), Doc. no. 541, pp. 813-14; reprinted in Tiran Nersoyan, *VHEP*, Doc. 169, pp. 386-87. The Catholicos reaffirms the official title as *Հայաստանյայց Առաքելական Եկեղեցի* ('Armenian Apostolic Church').

the conditions in Lebanon (13 October 1952) and to Minister Hr Grigorian (6 May 1955) who identified three possible candidates for the catholicate—Garegin Khach'aturian, Patriarch of Constantinople, Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan and Archbishop Eghishe Terterian. Patriarch Khach'aturian was dismissed because there would be no one to replace him in Constantinople. Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan had made several errors for which the late Catholicos Gevorg VI had reprimanded him. Gevorg VI in his last will and testament had appointed Archbishop Eghishe Terterian *locum tenens* following his death and also had expressed his wish that 'the nation should elect him catholicos unanimously, as someone who is the most worthy and dedicated servant of the Armenian Church and the Motherland' and who was most capable of continuing his mission for the good of the Church and nation. The catholicos' expressed wish was sacrosanct and obligatory to honour; to oppose that would require serious and convincing objections. Archbishop Terterian ruled himself out while 'Archbishop Tiran had no desire to move to Ejmiatsin'. The observation reads «*Տիրան արքեպիսկոպոսը կապուած չէ ոչ Էջմիածնի եւ ոչ էլ Մայր Հայրենիքի հետ, թէկուզ դէմ է դաշնակցականների հակա էջմիածնական անջատական քաղաքականու-թեանը*» ('Archbishop Tiran [Nersoyan] is not attached to Holy Ejmiatsin nor the Motherland, although he is against the anti-Ejmiadsin politics of the Dashnak party').[38] Another candidate who had attracted the attention of the authorities was Bishop Vazgen Palchian, the Primate of Romania and Bulgaria. He had made several trips to Armenia and had made many friends among the intelligentsia and writers. H Sedgarian in his report to Mr H Grigorian, Minister of Religious Affairs, had also made extensive observations on the outsider. The first observation he makes about Bishop Vazgen Palchian is that the former is highly critical of Archbishop Vahan Kostanian the *locum tenens* in charge of supervising the election of the next incumbent and more damaging as he is actively working against the candidacy of the Primate of Bulgaria'. Vazgen also warns the authorities that he has with him letters from Garegin I Hovsep'ean written to the former Primate of Romania Yousik in which the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem have participated and with other high ranking clergy in discussions to transfer the See of

38 *VHEP*, Vol. 16, Vazgen I Catholicos of All Armenians (1908-94), compiled and ed. Georg Eazechian, Erevan, 2008, p. 36.

the Catholicate of All Armenians out of Soviet Armenia. This was not the case. Catholicos Garegin had vigorously campaigned against the move and he had succeeded. In Palchian's view if the election of the next catholicos was delayed, 'the plane of the movement to move the Armenian Catholicate out of Soviet Armenia would gather momentum, and this time it would be very difficult to stop.'[39] H Sedragian considers Vazgen Palchian an idealist although he has on many occasions 'hinted to me that he is inclined towards materialism *(հակուած է դէպի մատերիալիզմ)*. I can say with confidence, that he has no religious conviction and as he has confessed, he has become a priest not because of religious impulsion or as a consequence of individual choice or enterprise, but because of external factors:'[40]

> I can say with full confidence that he has no firm religious convictions and as he has confessed himself he became a priest not motivated by religious impulsions, not by his own desire but under the influence of external factors. I became a priest to serve my people and outside the Armenian people I do not recognise Christianity.'
> Vazgen I in the same vein and in his his own words continues: 'Science has no bearing on religion. It is never possible to defend a scientific thesis or explain any truth through religion. True scientists are inevitably atheists. Even if they believe in religion and consider themselves as believers, nevertheless, objectively speaking they remain atheists. It is a mistaken view that in western countries scientists and intelligentsia are religious minded. There also the majority are atheists. The real Christians are the labourers, craftsmen and farmers.')[41]

39 Vazgen I Catholicos of All Armenians, *ibid*., p. 110.

40 *Op. cit*., p. 116.

41 Eazechian Georg, Comp. *VHEP* Vazgen I Palchian, pp.116-18. *«Կարելի է համոզուած կերպով ասել,նա կրօնական հաստատուն համոզմունքներ չունի եւ ինչպէս ինքն էր խոսովանում,կրօնական է դարձել ոչ կրօնասիրական դրդումներով, ոչ թէ սեփական ցանկութեամբ եւ նախձեռնու թեամբ,այլ արտաքին այլ ֆակտորների ազդեցութեամբ». («Ես հոգեւորական եմ դարձել իմ ժողովրդին ծառայելու համար, հայ ժողովրդից դուրս ես քրիստոնեութիւն չեմ ճանաչում»).*

On his political views he observes 'it is true to say that he (Palchian) is a nationalist, but this is not a hindrance, according to his own pronouncement, to be a supporter of a socialist society. He regards himself a *«ընկերավարական»* ("Socialist") and *«ջերմ կողմակից կոմունիստական կարգերի»* ("sympathetic supporter of the communist order")'.[42] According to N Smirnov, Minister of Religious Affairs of the USSR, the candidate deemed most acceptable to be catholicos was Vazgen Palchian, while majority of the brotherhood preferred Archbishop Vahan Kostanian. It was not unexpected that soon after the election of Vazgen I four priests ordained by the late Catholicos Gevorg VI left church orders and entered academic life.[43]

On 18 August 1955 from the Holy See an announcement was made calling representatives from all the dioceses to assemble from around the world to elect a successor. The election was to be held in the week of 25-30 September. The chief order of business of the Ecclesiastical Conclave would be to elect a new catholicos: 138 delegates, the vast majority of which came from Armenia and the other Soviet Republics; 125 of whom cast their votes in favour of the victorious candidate, the forty-seven year-old primate of the diocese of Romania and Bulgaria, Bishop Vazgen Palchian. He was consecrated as His Holiness Vazgen I three days later, in the Cathedral of Holy Ejmiatsin.

The new pontiff had come to the priesthood fairly late in life, at the age of thirty-five. Prior to that, under his baptismal name of Levon Karapet Palchian, the only son of Palchian family, was a teacher in his native city of Bucharest. He was ordained in 1943 and was consecrated bishop eight years later by Catholicos Gevorg VI.

As Vazgen I ascended to the throne of St Gregory the Enlightener, Ejmiatsin anticipated more than simply a new regime of leadership. For the first time in almost two generations, it could look forward to a small measure of relief from the relentless hostility of the

42 Vazgen I Catholicos of All Armenians, *ibid*., p. 118.

43 *Op. cit*., p. 127. On Vazgen's report on Archbishop Vahan Kostanian's personality contains this observation « *Վահան Սրբազանը խիստ բացասական մարդ է:Մեծամիտ,փառասէր,քինախնդիր:Իր ստորադաս հոգեւորականներին արհամարհում է բացահայտ կերպով, ուրիշների ներկայութեան,զուրկ է նուազագոյն փափկանկատութիւնից... եթէ Վահան Սրբազանի իշխանութիւնը երկարի,կամ Աստուած մի արասցէ նա կաթողիկոս ընտրուի բոլոր երիտասարդ հոգեւորականները կթողնեն կրօնական ասպարէզը...: Չկայ մի վանական,չկայ մի ուսանող, որ նրան սիրի …*», p. 115.

Soviet government. Stalin's death in 1953 had unleashed a period of treacherous unpredictability, as various individuals vied for power. But by the latter part of the 1950s, the struggle had been resolved. The new first party secretary, Nikita Khruschev was embarking on a momentous project of 'de-Stalinization', which would have salutary consequences for life in Soviet Armenia, and for relations between the Armenian homeland and its communities abroad. The Cold War was still far from over.

Ironically, at a time when the Armenian Church could at least contemplate some relaxation of its own, it was dealt its most severe blow. And the blow came from within. The events of 1956 rocked the Church to its institutional foundations, and it has yet to recover.

The scene for this drama was the See of Cilicia in Ant'ilias, Lebanon. Despite the passage of four years, no successor had been found to succeed Catholicos Garegin Hovsep'eants'.[44] A struggle was being waged for the position and, predictably, the *Dashnak* party was playing a pivotal role. The ARF brought its influence to bear on the ecclesiastical assembly and succeeded in electing Bishop Zareh Payaslian of Aleppo, Syria, as the new Catholicos of the See of Cilicia. His Holiness Vazgen I had departed from Erevan on 1 February to attend the proceedings. In his encyclical issued in December of 1957, Catholicos Vazgen I reported on the election and his efforts to oversee the election and consecration for the sake of national harmony and unity had failed. The ARF effectively hijacked one of great historic institutions of the Armenian Church, seized control for the party's own benefit. Catholicos Vazgen I refused to recognise the legitimacy of the election and called an emergency conclave of bishops in Cairo, to convene from 5 March through to the 8th. However, the conciliatory overtures subsequently offered by Catholicos Vazgen I to Ant'ilias were rejected and on 2 September the consecration ceremony for Catholiocs Zareh went ahead. The laying-on of hands was performed by three bishops two Armenian and one Syrian. With the backing of the ARF Catholicos Zareh Paylasian proceeded to extend his authority over Church communities in Iran, Greece, Venezuela, and part of the

44 Garegin I Catholicos of the See of Cilicia (1943-1952); see Eghiayian Biwzand, *Ժամանակակից պատմութիւն կաթողիկոսութեան Հայոց Կիլիկիոյ* 1914-1972 ('Contemporary history of the Armenian catholicate of Cilicia, 1914-1972'), Ant'ilias, 1976, pp. 565-628.

Middle East. The fracture in the Armenian Church opened into a separation, which cut through the worldwide diaspora. In America dissidents, through their reconstituted administrative machinery, applied to Catholiocs Zareh to enter under his jurisdiction. In an audacious manoeuvre, Catholicos Paylasian accepted. Bishop Khoren Paroyan, one of the two Armenian bishops who had taken part in Zareh's consecration, was sent to the United States in the autumn of 1957, to seal the pact between dissident faction and the Catholicate of Cilicia. These actions constituted a direct challenge to the authority of the Catholicos of All Armenians. There were now effectively two diocesan jurisdictions in North America: one established by Catholicos Khrimian Hayrik (1892-1907) in 1898,[45] under the spiritual authority of the Holy See of Ejmiatsin; the other a splinter faction, pleading allegiance to the See of Cilicia.[46]

The rivalry between Ejmiatsin and Ant'ilias was not the only controversy to materialize. The newly elected catholicos had to also to handle another profound controversy which had severe repercussions on his entire leadership.

Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, having been found unsuitable for the post of Catholicos of All Armenians, travelled to Jerusalem in 1955, lingered around the Holy City for three years, missing both the election at Ejmiatsin in September 1955, and the bishop's conclave convened in Cairo in March 1956. He witnessed firsthand the spiritual stagnation which prevailed at the St James monastery. As a lifelong member of the Jerusalem Brotherhood, he took it upon himself to improve on the situation. With characteristic decisiveness, Nersoyan initiated steps which resulted in his being elected *locum tenens* in 1956, and then patriarch in 1957.

Unfortunately for his plans, Archbishop Tiran underestimated two crucial factors in the struggle to chart a new course for the Jerusalem patriarchate. The first of these was his rival for the patriarchal seat, and former *locum tenens* Archbishop Eghishe Terterian. The second factor

45 'The phase of Church organization (1888-98)' in Christopher H Zakian, *The torch was passed. The centennial history of the Armenian Church of America*, New York, 1998, pp. 3-12; Nubar Dorian, 'The Church in America', *Ararat a quarterly*, vol. XVIII no. 1 (Winter 1977), pp. 85-89.

46 Arzumanian, Zawen, *Azgapatum*, Vol. IV, Book III (1955-1995), New York, 2003, pp. 73-74; *Documents on the schism in the Armenian Church of America,* by the order of His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate, New York, 1993.

involved the political situation surrounding the patriarchate. Due to its location in the Old City of Jerusalem, the Armenian patriarchate was subject to the government of Jordan, and traditionally the election of a new patriarch was contingent on a 'decree of recognition' issued by the Jordanian king. Influenced by Archbishop Terterian and his co-conspirators, however, King Hussein of Jordan refused to ratify Archbishop Nersoyan's election. What followed was a turbulent period of strike and counter strike between Nersoyan and his opponents. In the opening salvo, the patriarch was expelled to Lebanon, but he managed to return to the Jerusalem monastery after a period of five weeks. In retaliation, Terterian was banished to Amman, Jordan, expelled from the St James brotherhood, and suspended through pontifical decree issued by Catholicos Vazgen I. But the struggle was not yet over. In August of 1958, in the midst of a religious procession through the Holy City, Archbishop Tiran was seized by the Jordanian police, hustled to an airfield, and flown out to Lebanon. The order to remove Patriarch Nersoyan from Jerusalem was achieved through the intervention of Camille Sham'oon, then Prime Minister of Lebanon and friend of the Prime Minister of Jordan, who ordered the governor of Jerusalem to deport Nersoyan from the country. In later years when asked why he and the *Dashnaks* perpetrated this unsavoury act against Nersoyan replied 'Orders from above'. Three of his supporters, Bishop Shnork' Galustian (who later became Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, 1961-1990), Revd Torkom Manukian (Primate of the Eastern Diocese of America from 1966 until his election as Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem in 1990, d. 2012) and Revd Vazgen Kebreslian, were forcibly banished from the Holy City by the Jordanian police. This paved the way for Archbishop Eghishe Terterian, to end his long, involuntary exile in Jordan. He arrived at the St James monastery with an escort of military police, and took up residence in the Patriarchate. Terterian purged the brotherhood of a number of priests he knew were against him, and this paved the way for his election as patriarch. King Hussein of Jordan did not shrink, as he had in the case of Nersoyan, from recognising Terterian as the duly elected Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem. Catholicos Vazgen granted him his own recognition just before embarking on his trip to the Americas in 1960.[47] Bishop Shnork'

47 'A Period of Uncertainty (1949-1957)' and 'A period of Stability (20 March,1957-6 June,1960), in Haig Aram Krikorian, *Lives and Times*, pp. 576-629

Galustian presents an eyewitness account stating that when Catholicos Vazgen requested Terterian to arrange for a visa into Jordan, Terterian submitted an application to the foreign ministry in Amman in which the latter stated 'The Catholicos of 'Soviet Armenia' wishes to visit Jerusalem to hold a meeting. I hereby submit his request.' The tone of the application was such that it raised doubts in the minds of the Jordanian officials by playing upon the Cold War fears that Terterian did not approve of the entry of 'The communist church leader' into Jordanian territory.[48] He had also made the same accusation against Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, whom he accused of being a communist sympathizer[49] Tiran Nersoyan accepted that the Soviet religious policy was an active hindrance for the Church to develop, but he believed that the future is hopeful since ' the structure of Soviet society does require a spiritual basis. Events have proved it and will further prove it, and no one can refuse to comply with the requirements of historical necessity, except to his own detriment.' He has been vindicated.[50]

The period of de-Staliniasation brought significant benefits. The first was the establishment of close cultural relations between the homeland and the diaspora. For the first time in modern history, the

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and 630-44.

48 Krikorian Haig Aram, *Lives and Times*, p. 623; Archbishop Shnorhk' Galustian, «*Տէրտէրեանի անօրէնութիւնները*» ('The illegalities of Terterian'), Paris, 1961, pp. 41-43.

49 Nersoyan Tiran, *A Christian approach to Communism. Ideological similarities between dialectical materialism and Christian philosophy*, London, 1942, 2nd ed., 1943. Reviews by W T R, in *Eastern Churches Quarterly* 7-8 (July-December, 1943), pp. 228-29; Yedvard Gulbenkian, '" Marxist" Church seen emerging', *The Armenian Mirror Spectator*, June 19 (1971, p. 5); Bill Kelly, 'A Marxist Church? The thesis challenged', *The Armenian Mirror Spectator*, June 26 (1971). In 1953 Catholicos Gevorg VI to Eghishe Terterian urges *locum tenens* to restrain two members of St James' Brotherhood serving in the United States, namely Shnork' *vartapet* Galustian and Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan from adopting «*կասկածելի ու անպատշաճ ընթացք* » ('doubtful and improper stance') towards Holy Ejmiatsin *see Documents for the history of the Armenian* church, vol.VI, Gevorg VI *Ch'orek'ch'ian*, No. 515,pp. 755, item 6.In a lengthy letter addressed to Catholiocos Gevorg VI dated 12 July 1953, Archbishop Nersoyan defends himself, pledging allegiance to the Catholiocs of All Armenians, and refutes all the allegations and 'rumours', proclaiming himself to be a faithful servant of the Armenian Church. *Ibid*., Doc. 528, pp. 775-78.

50 Nersoyan Tiran, Archbishop, *Armenian Church Historical Studies. Matters of Doctrine and Administration*.ed.with an introduction by Revd Nerses Vrej Nersessian, New York, 1996, see pp. 33-34.

Supreme Catholicos was able to pay visits to his flock in dispersion. Between 1955 and 1994 he made over 30 pastoral visits to Armenian communities abroad. In 1963, he made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem from where he proceeded to Egypt and India, there being the guest of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Malabar (South India). In 1965 he went to Addis Ababa to attend the conference of the Heads of the Oriental Orthodox Churches which was convened by Haile Selassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia. On his way back to Ejmiatsin, he visited the Armenian communities in Cairo, Paris and London where he had a meeting with William Ramsey, the Archbishop of Canterbury. These pastoral journeys gave the catholicos an excellent opportunity of getting closely and personally acquainted with the situation of the Armenian people scattered all over the world. He could also secure funds for the restoration of churches and monasteries that were returned by the state to Ejmiatsin (Hripsime, Gayane, Geghard, St Sarkis (in Erevan). These visits marked also high moments of spiritual and national awakening among the dispersed flock of the Armenian Church.

Besides the pastoral visits, which were so characteristic of his reign, the restoration of churches and ancient monasteries constituted a major aspect of his tenure. Particularly the cathedral of and the catholicosate of Ejmiatsin were restored and redecorated in the typically Armenian style of architecture, sculpture and painting. The community life in Ejmiatsin and the theological education in the seminary received greater attention. In the newly equipped printing press several religious books were published: *Armenian Stone Crosses* (1973), *Armenian Churches* (1970), *Treasures of Holy Etchmiadzin* (1984), translation of the *New Testament* into Eastern Armenian (1969, 1976) under the auspices of the British and Foreign Bible Society with a print run of 20,000 [three printings].[51]

The first major outbreak of dissident nationalism within Soviet

51 Bassarak Gerhard, *Catholicos Vasken I. Spiritual Father of All Armenians*, Union Verlag, Berlin, 1983 (Series *Christ in the World*); Felix Corley, 'The Armenian Church Under the Soviet Regime. Part 2: the leadership of Vazgen', *Religion, State and Society*, Vol. 24, no. 4 (1996), pp. 289-343; Grigor Abgh. Tchiftchian, *Վազգէն Ա. Կաթողիկոս Ամենայն Հայոց* 1955-1994, Ant'ilias, 1994; Arzoumanian Zawen, *Azgapa toum*, Vol. IV, Book II (1955-1995), *S.S. Վազգէն Ա. Պալճեան,* New York, 2003*; Վազգէն Ա Կաթողիկոս Ամենայն Հայոց: Նվիրվում է մահվան 10-րդ տարելիցին* (Vazgen I Catholicos of All Armenians. Dedicated to the 10th anniversary of his death), Holy Ejmiatsin, 2006.

Armenia occurred on April 1965, on the 50th anniversary of the 1915 massacres and deportations of Armenians. Crowds entered the National Opera House as a quite official commemoration was being held inside. The protesters demanded that the Turks return the Armenian lands to Armenia. Government officials were unable to calm the crowd, only His Holiness Catholicos Vazgen was able to restore calm. His Holiness, to commemorate the 50th anniversary, had built a monument to the victims of the Genocide in the precinct of Holy Ejmiatsin, and the party leadership soon followed. In November 1967 Anton Koch'inian inaugurated the *Tsitsernakaberd* monument to the Genocide, fifty-two years after the events and forty-seven years after the sovietisation of Armenia.[52]

In the 1980 the influence of the communist party began to decline and the Armenian nationalist movement, led by the Karabagh Committee continued to grow. On 7 December 1988, a massive earthquake struck northern Armenia, killing 25,000 people and rendering hundreds of thousands homeless. World attention focused on Holy Ejmiatsin. Even as the country lay crippled by the earthquake, the party decided to arrest the Karabagh committee members. On 28 June 1989 Armenian nationalists in support of the Karabagh committee members in protest against the Gorbachev's Karabagh policies closed the airport. His Holiness Vazgen appeared on television where, uncharacteristically nervous and emotional, he appealed to the protestors directly: to resist the Soviet regime 'would mean to offer Armenia on a plate to our enemies.' He ended his message with these words: 'If you do not head to your patriarch (*hayrapetin*) and do not put an end to your extremism, I will curse my faith and remain silent forever' *(Եթե դուք չլսեք ձեր Հայրապետին եւ չդադարեցնեք ձեր ծայրահեղությունները,ես կանիծեմ իմ բախտը եւ կլռեմ հավիտյան).*[53]

Gorbachev's strategy by 1990s to reform the political structure while preserving a renewed Communist Party was failing. After more than two years of the Karabagh conflict, Armenians had moved from being the most loyal nation to completely losing confidence in Moscow.

52 Suny Ronald Grigor, 'The rise of the new nationalism', in *The Armenian People. From Ancient to Modern Times*, pp. 374–78.

53 Kaputikyan Silva, '*Նա իր գոյությամբ սրբացնում էր մթնոլորտը*', in *Վազգեն Ա Կաթողիկոս Ամենայն Հայոց*, p. 197.

As the power of the central State rapidly withered away, Armenians on 21 September went to the polls to reaffirm their commitment to independence; and on 16 October elected Levon Ter Petrossian first President of the Republic.

In November of 1989 the Catholicos of All Armenians Vazgen I had addressed the delegates of the newly formed Armenian Movement with this message:

> The fundamental idea of your organization, or movement, has been the word National. This is very dear to our heart … I would like to remind you that since you are taking about the nation…at this moment you are at a historical turning point, which created and shaped the national idea. The national identity of the Armenian nation, the national ethos of the Armenian nation [and] the national ideology of the Armenian people have been forged here at Holy Ejmiatsin, especially, in the fourth and fifth centuries.

Again on the occasion of the blessing of the Holy Chrism in September of 1991 the catholicos expanded on this theme in his homily and now described the idea of national independence as the creation of the Church. He declared: 'Today, it is only just to acknowledge the Armenian Church as the proto-witness, the forerunner of our national independence.' He named the 'holy chrism … blessed by the power of the Holy Spirit [to be] called the "Chrism of independence".'[54]

After 75 years of Communist rule in Armenia, official hostility towards manifest expressions of religious sentiment was put to rest. And with the relaxation of such strictures, the sensed of religious devotion which had long lingered below the surface of life in an atheistic regime emerged into the light of day. These developments culminated in the establishment in Armenia of an independent republic expressly devoted to—among other democratic ideals—the principle of freedom of worship was enshrined in its amended Constitution in 1995:

> The church shall be separate from the state in the Republic of Armenia. The Republic of Armenia recognises the exclusive historical mission of the Armenian Apostolic

54 Arzumanian Zawen, *Azgapatum*, Vol. IV, Book III (1955-95), pp. 343- 44.

> Holy Church as a national church, in the spiritual life, development of the national culture and preservation of the national identity of the people of Armenia. Freedom of activities for all religious organisations in accordance with the law shall be guaranteed in the Republic of Armenia. The relations of the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church may be regulated by the law.[55]

Notwithstanding the hospitable stance of His Holiness Vazgen I, various Christian denominations and sects abused their welcome, and began to extend their proselytising activity within the fold of the Armenian Apostolic Church itself. The majority of these groups entered Armenia under the pretence of providing humanitarian aid to the victims of the 1988 earthquake, to refugees from Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabagh. It rapidly became evident that, hidden behind the offer of material relief, the true intention of these groups was missionary activity, directed at the entire Armenian population and supported by affluent centres in the West.

Holy Ejmiatsin was obviously concerned but was also unprepared to protect the Armenian Church against the missionary activities of the other Christian denominations and sects. Such missionary activity may be laudable in remote territories where the Gospel has never been heard; but when it was directed to a nation whose people had been martyrs in the name of Christ for 1,700 years, this was a positive affront to the long Christian history of Armenia. This untenable situation was addressed by His Holiness Vazgen I, Catholicos of All Armenians, and by His Holiness Garegin II, Catholicos of the See of Cilicia, in a joint encyclical dated 30 August 1992, in which they declared that 'Armenia is not a mission-field for Christian evangelisation.'[56]

Soon after the publication of the of the joint encyclical, a 'Circular-Letter', dated 7 June 1992, was received at the Holy See. This 'Circular Letter' was signed by His Beatitude Hovhannes Petros XVIII, Gasparian, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Uniate Armenians—that is Armenians

55 *Հայաստանի Հանրապետության Սահմանադրություն: Ընդունվել է Հան րաքվեով* 1995*թ.Հուլիս 5-ին* ('Constitution of the Republic of Armenia'), Article 8.1.

56 Vazgen I and Garegin II, *Հայրական խոսք Հայ Ժողովրդին* ('Fatherly word addressed to the Armenian People'), New York, 1993.

affiliated with the Holy See of Rome. The contents of the 'Circular-Letter' inferred that the Armenian Apostolic Church was a heretical institution, which had persecuted the true believers. It goes on to clearly spell out the resolution of the Uniate Patriarch and his bishops to advance missionary activities in Armenia itself described as 'a boundless field'—in order to extend the jurisdiction of the Uniate Patriarch over the Armenian Catholics living in Armenia, Georgia and Crimea; to establish new parishes and seminaries in Armenia; and to become the spiritual head of all the Armenian Catholics. The Uniate Patriarch's 'Circular-Letter' and his plans for new missionary activity in Armenia became the topic of discussion at a synod of Armenian Apostolic bishops convened at Holy Ejmiatsin in September of that year. With the consent of His Holiness and the Armenian Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Constantinople, a delegation of bishops made arrangements with the Vatican to meet with His Holiness Pope John-Paul II and Cardinals Edward Cassidy and Achille Silvestini. The meeting took place in Vatican City on Tuesday 27 October 1992. Two official reports about the meeting: the first appeared in *L'Osservatore Romana*—the official publication of the Vatican; the second was issued by the Catholic Service.[57] The Pope and the representatives of the central authority of the Roman Catholic Church explained that they were unaware of the 'Circular-Letter', and that the Armenian Uniate Patriarchate had no intention of taking a polemical stand against the Armenian Church and her hierarchy.[58]

The Catholic Church had the habit of marking its centennial anniversaries by issuing Encyclical Letters inviting the non-Roman Catholic Churches to 'return to the fold of the Roman Catholic Church'. In 1951 on the occasion of the 1500th anniversary of the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451) Pope Pius XII (Eugenio Pacelli) (1876-1958) circulated his encyclical called *Sempiternus Rex*, in which he urges the congregations of all the non-Chalcedonian persuasion to return to the fold of the Catholic Church. Following his lead the

57 *The Mother Church and Roman Catholic Missionary activity in a reborn Armenia. Documents pertaining to the Armenian Uniate Patriarchate's design to proselytize in Armenian = « Հայաստանը Քրիստոնէական քարոզչութեան անծայրածիրդաշտէ»:Հայաստանեայց եկեղեցւոյ հակազդեցութիւնը Լիբանա նի Հայ Կաթոլիկ Պատրիարքութեան մարդորսական նպատակներուն դէմ(Վաւերագրեր),* New York, 1993.

58 The Mother Church, *ibid.*, 'Postscript: February 1993', p. 49.

Catholicos-Patriarch of the Armenian Catholic Church Cardinal Grigor Petros XV Aghajanian (1895-1971), who in 1946 had opposed the repatriation of Armenians to the homeland, in 1950 wrote his Encyclical called *Hovakan T'ught* ('Pastoral Letter') calling upon all Armenians to return to their to the faith of their ancestors in union with the Catholic Church.[59]

This ill-advised and unwarranted interference into the internal affairs of the Armenian Church was most unwelcome. In planning church-related programmes under the new circumstances of an independent Armenia, the catholicos who was well disposed towards the Armenian Roman Catholic faithful and their needs, actively worked towards finding a way by which clergy from the Mkhitharist Catholic Congregation in St Lazzaro, Venice, will shoulder the responsibility of taking care of the pastoral needs of the Armenian Catholic congregations in Armenia. As early as 4 December 1990, His Holiness Vazgen I had written to Fr Nerses Der Nersessian, head of the Mkhitharist Congregation in Venice inviting him to:

> In this way, your dream of having a 'Mkhitarist nook' on the soil of Armenia will come true … It is our sincere wish that the Armenian catholic communities in Armenia might always jurisdictionally be connected with the Congregation of St Lazzaro, and that their pastors hereafter come from the ranks of your brotherhood. We emphasise this point, since the monks of St Lazzaro in particular are favoured by our intellectuals and the Holy See.

In his letter of reply Fr.Nerses Der Nersessian wrote:

> … It is our intention to bring spiritual service, ministry and consolation to our brothers in the Catholic regions

59 Poladian Derenik,Bishop, *Թուղթ Հերքման:Պատասխան Կարդինալ Աղաճա- նեան «Հովուական Թուղթ»ի* ('Letter of Refutation. Reply to the "Pastoral Letter from Cardinal Petros Grigor XV Agajanian"'), Ant'ilias, 1951; Arzumanian Zawen, *Azgapatoum*, vol. IV, Book II (1930-1955),«*Թուղթ Հերքման*», pp. 275-78; « *Կարտինալ Աղաճանեան*» , pp. 285-86; *Azgapatum*, vol. IV, Book III, «*Թուղթ Միութեան*», pp. 112-14.
For an obituary of Cardinal Aghajanian, see *The Times*, 18 May 1971.

> of Armenia … and [we wish to carry out] all of this in harmony and close, brotherly relations with the Mother See of Holy Ejmiatsin and Your Holiness, as is the tradition of the Mkhitarists of Venice.[60]

Father Gomidas of the Mkhitarist order was appointed as the first pastor of the Catholic Armenian community in Armenia.

On 28 July 1994 President Levon Ter Petrosian honoured Catholicos Vazgen I with the 'National Hero of Armenia' medal.

On 18 August 1994, Catholicos Vazgen I, the eighty-six year old pontiff, died. He had in his last will and testament recommended that Garegin II Catholicos of the House of Cilicia should succeed him, in the hope that the separation of the rift between Holy Ejmiatsin and Cilicia and more important in the dispersion would be resolved. This was a rift that originated during his tenure and for almost half a century did everything conceivable to resolve. The elevation of Garegin II of the See of Cilicia to the throne of St Gregory the Enlightener failed to bring about that much desired union.

60 Arzumanian, Zawen, Revd., Azgapatum ('History of the Armenian Nation')] Vol. 4, Bk.3 (1955-1995) Vazgen I Palchian (1908-1994), St Vartan Press, New York, 2003 , pp.349-50; ed. Zakian Christopher H, *A Critical examination of Armenian Catholic Communities in Transcaucasia: Their Late Origins, Historical Development, and Contemporary Status*, St Vartan Press, New York City, 1994.