Muslim-Christian Relations, Past and Present

Rita GEORGE-TVRTKOVIC

穆斯林與基督徒的關係，過去與今日

Rita GEORGE-TVRTKOVIC

[ABSTRACT] Throughout history and down to the present day, Muslim-Christian relations have varied greatly from one context to another. In the medieval Latin world, there was frequent animosity from Christians towards Muslims and Islam, but there were also expressions of interest and respect. The visit of St. Francis of Assisi to the Sultan in Egypt represents the more irenic approach; the polemic of the Greek Emperor Manuel II against Muhammad represents the more hostile stance. Both attitudes of hostility and respect continue to shape present-day encounters of Muslims and Christians. The Second Vatican Council expresses respect for Muslims and provides a basis for positive relationships; Pope John Paul II developed this attitude by referring to the shared Abrahamic heritage of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Pope Benedict XVI's quotation of the Emperor Manuel II aroused intense controversy throughout the Islamic world, but it also provided the occasion for an unprecedented Muslim outreach to Christians in "A Common Word between Us and You," which stresses the shared values of love of God and neighbor. In various locations today, including the Middle East and Nigeria, Muslims-Christian relations are troubled. The United States offers both positive and negative examples of the varied relationships of Christians and Muslims at the present time.

On the one hand, there is a rise in Islamophobia; on the other hand, there are multiple efforts to improve relations, and numerous Muslim students attend Christian, especially Catholic, colleges and universities in the United States and find a welcome atmosphere.

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It is impossible to understand Muslim-Christian relations today without some knowledge of history. But one might ask, what exactly is that history? Recently, two examples of historical Muslim-Christian interactions have played prominently in Catholic news circles, each one suggesting a different side of history. On the more positive side, ever since Pope Francis's election in March 2013, the media has been highlighting the fact that his namesake, Francis of Assisi, met peacefully with the Sultan of Egypt during the Crusades.[1] On the more negative side, a speech given by Pope Benedict at Regensburg in 2006 ruffled feathers with its reference to a fourteenth-century debate between the Greek Emperor Manuel II Paleologus and a Muslim leader.[2] The former event (Francis and the Sultan) is held up as a paradigm for dialogue; the latter (Manuel and the Muslim), a paradigm for polemic. But what really happened during these two medieval interfaith encounters, and how do

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[1] Just two examples of recent news articles linking Pope Francis to the Francis-Sultan meeting include: "Pope Francis has a Model for Muslim Engagement in St. Francis of Assisi," by Omar Sacirbey, *Religion News Service*, 15 March 2013 and "Pope Francis Embodies the Saint who Talked Peace with Muslims," by Aziz Junejo, *Seattle Times*, 12 April 2013. There are many more. It is interesting to note that Pope Francis himself has not, to date, mentioned St. Francis's meeting with the Sultan; when speaking about St. Francis, the pope always mentions being inspired by his radical poverty, not his interreligious acumen. For a historical analysis of the literature and art surrounding the Francis-Sultan meeting, see John Tolan, *Saint Francis and the Sultan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[2] Pope Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason, and the University: Memories and Reflections," September 12, 2006, Regensburg. See

<http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html>.

historical events such as these continue to inform dialogue today? This article will outline past and present Muslim-Christian relations, and highlight a few connections between the two.

I. Muslim-Christian Relations, Past

Any overview of the history of Muslim-Christian relations must begin with the caveat that one can never generalize about history. Context—both time and place—really does matter. Relations between Muslims and Christians have differed greatly, depending on whether one is talking about ninth-century Baghdad, twelfth-century Andalusia, or twentieth-century Nigeria. While this section will focus on medieval Latin Europe—partly due to the enduring nature of images created during this period and partly due to the author's area of expertise—it is important to remember that Arabic-speaking Eastern Christians in Egypt or Lebanon have had different experiences of Muslims than Latins have; this is likewise true for Greek-speaking Christians in Anatolia or Syro-Malabar Christians in Kerala. [3] But even interfaith relations in medieval Latin Europe—often thought to be uniformly poor—were more complex than is often assumed. Consider just two examples. First, even during the horrendous massacre of Jews by Christians in the Rhineland in 1096, Hebrew chronicles of the event describe diverse responses from Rhenish Christians, depending on the city. There were indeed mass killings in Mainz, Worms, and Speyer, but in Cologne most Jews were saved by their Christian neighbors. [4] Second, at the end of

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[3] For more on the history of Eastern Christians living under Muslim rule, see Sidney Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[4] For more on the Hebrew Crusade Chronicles, including English translations of them, see Robert Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) and idem, *God, Humanity, and History: The Hebrew First*

the fifteenth century Muslims and Jews were expelled from Iberia, but this was preceded three centuries earlier by the multi-lingual, multi-religious culture of Andalusia, whose thriving intellectual life was centered on translation houses such as the one in Toledo under the direction of Archbishop Rodrigo.[5] And concurrent with this famous period of Spanish history known as *convivencia* ("coexistence") is the presence of Muslim legal documents restricting Christian movement in Seville, and Christian legal documents restricting Muslim and Jewish movement in Castile.[6] In short, it is difficult to generalize about history.

Yet scholars still try to make sense of interfaith relations through time, and sometimes they are able to detect broad patterns. For example, Richard Southern has suggested that medieval Christian views of Islam changed over time in ways we might not expect: instead of advancing in a steady, positive trajectory from the medieval to modern period, the Christian understanding of Islam has waxed and waned. Southern describes three stages: 1. The Age of Ignorance (pre-1100), when most of Western Europe (minus Iberia and Sicily) knew little or nothing about Islam. 2. The Age of Reason and Hope (1150-1350), when new and fairly accurate information about Islam began to pour into Europe; this period includes Peter the Venerable's commissioning of the first translation of the Qur'an into Latin[7] and the rise of the mendicant orders, many of whose members went to live in Muslim countries. 3. The Age of Stagnation

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Crusade Chronicles (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

[5] See Lucy Pick, *Conflict and Coexistence: Archbishop Rodrigo and the Muslims and Jews of Thirteenth-Century Spain* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

[6] For translations of Muslim and Christian legal texts in medieval Spain, see *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*, 2nd edition, edited by Olivia Remie Constable (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2011).

[7] See James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964).

(1350-1650), when the same information about Islam gained during the Age of Reason and Hope was recycled over and over again; for example, the first printed edition of the Qur'an, published at Basel in 1542, was none other than the translation commissioned by Peter the Venerable four hundred years earlier. Southern's view of history is useful to a point, but some scholars have criticized it as overly simplistic. [8] Once again, it is difficult to generalize about Christian-Muslim relations in history.

Mainstream Medieval Theology of Islam

Even when accounting for differences across time and space, one can nevertheless detect a general shape to Latin Christian views of Islam during the medieval period which I will call the "mainstream medieval theology of Islam." By "theology of Islam" I mean Christian reflections on the meaning of Islam vis-à-vis Christianity, written for an internal Christian audience and rooted in traditional theological authorities: scripture, the fathers, and reason, but also drawing on other sources acknowledged by the author as quasi-authoritative, including Islamic texts and firsthand observation of Muslim praxis. [9] Medieval theologies of Islam can also be called

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[8] Richard Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962). For a critique of Southern, see Stephen Mossman, "The Western Understanding of Islamic Theology in the Later Middle Ages. Mendicant Responses to Islam from Riccoldo da Monte di Croce to Marquard von Lindau." *Recherches de Theologie et Philosophie Medievales* Vol. 74 (2007), pp. 169-224.

[9] Works representative of the "theology of religions" genre include Works representative of the genre include Michael Barnes, *Theology and the Dialogue of Religions; Gavin D'Costa, Theology and Religious Pluralism*; J.A. DiNoia, T*he Diversity of Religions*; Jacques Dupuis, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*; Paul Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religion*. Theologians who have been working to construct a Christian theology of Islam in the last fifty years include Michael Fitzgerald, Claude Geffré, Robert Caspar, Thomas Michel, Georges Anawati, and David Burrell.

nascent because the theology of Islam is a modern theological category, not a medieval one. But nevertheless, these texts do contain theological perspectives on Islam which are sometimes implicit and fragmentary, and sometimes explicit and systematic.

Examples of (usually polemical) texts which exemplify the mainstream medieval theology of Islam abound. Nicholas of Cusa (d. 1464) conveniently provides a laundry list of such texts—the very books he consulted when writing his own argument against Islam, *Cribratio alkorani* (1460/1):

> As best I could, I made a careful attempt to understand the book of the laws of the Arabs [the Qur'an]— which I obtained at Basel in the translation commissioned for us by Peter, Abbot of Cluny [Toledan Collection]. I obtained it together with a debate among those noble Arabs, [*Risalah al-Kindi*]… I inquired whether any of the Greeks had written against these foolish errors. And I learned only that John of Damascus… had written the very few things [*De haeresibus*] which were on hand there. […] Thereafter, in Rome, I saw the book of Brother Ricoldo of the Order of Preachers [*Contra legem Sarracenorum*], who studied Arabic in Baghdad; this [book] was more gratifying than the others. I also looked at the catholic writings of other brothers on this [same] subject-matter — especially at St. Thomas's *De rationibus fidei contra Saracenos, Graecos et Armenos ad Cantorem Antiochenum,* and, lastly, at [the writing] of the most reverend lord and cardinal of St. Sixtus [Torquemada's *Tractatus contra principales errores perfidi Machumeti*], who with

cogent reasons refutes the heresies and the errors of Muhammad.[10]

Note the frequency of words such as "against, errors, perfidy, heresy, debate, refute" here, both in the book titles and Nicholas's descriptions of them. These polemical books could be categorized under an "adversus Saracenos" genre, parallel to "adversus Judaeos."[11] The mainstream theology of Islam articulated in these books includes many of the following points: a recognition of Islam's monotheism; a critique of Muslim Christology; a condemnation of Muhammad as a lascivious, violent, dishonest pseudo-prophet; a judgment of the Qur'an as a fabrication; a critique of the Islamic heaven as entirely physical; and the conclusion that Islam is a lax, carnal, violent, irrational heresy.[12]

Irenic Views

The medieval period also contains positive views of Islam. Examples include the thirteenth-century *Book of a Gentile and Three Wise Men* by Catalonian Ramon Llull, which describes three sages—a Christian, Muslim, and Jew—as friends engaging in polite dialogue. William of Tripoli's *Notitia* (late thirteenth century) and

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[10] Nicholas of Cusa, *Cribratio alkorani* in *Nicholas of Cusa's De Pace Fidei and Cribratio Alkorani: Translation and Analysis*, 2nd ed, translated by Jasper Hopkins (Minneapolis: Arthur J. Banning, 1994), pp. 75-76.

[11] For more on the *adversus Judaeos* genre, see *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics Between Christians and Jews*, edited by Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa (Tübingen, Mohr, 1996), Amos Funkenstein, "Basic Types of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics in the Later Middle Ages," *Viator* Vol. 2 (1971), pp. 373-82, and the classic by A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Iudaeos*, (Cambridge, 1935).

[12] The classic text outlining the mainstream medieval theology of Islam is Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh, 1964; reprint Oxford: Oneworld, 2000). A recent, excellent update is John V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York:, Columbia University Press, 2002).

Nicholas of Cusa's *Cribratio alkorani* (mid fifteenth century) both attempt to view the Qur'an in a positive light. William dwells on Qur'anic verses about Mary,[13] while Nicholas reads the Qur'an in light of the Gospel, and even has a name for his more positive hermeneutical approach, *pia interpretatio*.[14] We also have various historical accounts of Francis's famous encounter with the Sultan; the accounts differ, but they all agree that Francis came in peace and the Sultan was impressed by the Saint. While we must be cautious not to over-romanticize this event, it is certainly the case that theirs was a remarkably peaceful encounter during middle of the Crusades.[15] Furthermore, Francis himself actually wrote about Islam in his Earlier Rule (*Regula non bullata*), Ch. 16, "On Going among the Saracens and Other Infidels," where he counsels missionaries to approach Muslims and other non-Christians with humility.[16]

The medieval period also includes authors who express deep ambivalence about Islam. For example, the thirteenth-century Florentine Dominican Riccoldo da Montecroce, who lived in Baghdad for over a decade and studied Arabic and Islamic literature there, wrote one of the most popular anti-Qur'anic tracts of the entire Middle Ages, such that it was still being translated over two centuries later by the likes of King Ferdinand of Spain (who had an earlier Greek translation retranslated back into Latin) and Martin Luther.[17]

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[13] Wilhelm von Tripolis, *Notitia de Machometo*, edited by Peter Engels (Würzburg: Echter, 1992).

[14] Jasper Hopkins, "The Role of *Pia Interpretatio* in Nicholas of Cusa's Hermeneutical Approach to the Koran," Ch. 2 in *A Miscellany on Nicholas of Cusa* (Minneapolis: Banning Press, 1994), pp. 39-56, and Pim Valkenberg, "Sifting the Qur'an: Two Forms of Interreligious Hermeneutics in Nicholas of Cusa" in *Interreligious Hermeneutics in Pluralistic Europe: Between Texts and People*, edited David Cheetham et al. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), pp. 27-48.

[15] See Tolan, *Saint Francis and the Sultan*.

[16] For a close read of *Regula non bullata*, Ch. 16, see Jan Hoeberichts, *Francis and Islam* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1997).

[17] This popular text is Riccoldo da Montecroce, *Contra legem Sarracenorum*. Latin

What makes Riccoldo's assessment of the Qur'an unique is its inherent ambivalence. In the midst of his many criticisms are comments which reveal a deep affection for the book and its Arabic language; Riccoldo calls the Qur'an "diabolical" in one breath and acknowledges that it contains "many useful things" in the next. In his other writings, Riccoldo praises seven Muslim "works of perfection," which he immediately follows with a six-point condemnation of the Qur'an.[18]

As this brief list of historical examples shows, Christian-Muslim relations in medieval Europe were extraordinarily complex. Contemporary relations are no less so.

II. Muslim-Christian Relations, Present

Many medieval Latin stereotypes about Islam linger today: e.g., that Islam is a violent, irrational, fanatical, misogynist religion. Controversial Danish cartoons published in 2005 depict Muhammad with bombs in his turban, while bus ads in the United States sponsored by an anti-Islamic organization accuse Muslims of being savages.[19] Yet, vestiges of the medieval Christian respect for Muslims also remain. These vestiges are nowhere clearer than in the 1965 Vatican II Council document *Nostra Aetate* ("On the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions"), the most authoritative

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edition by Mérigoux, Jean-Marie, *Memoire Domenicane* (Centro Riviste della Provincia Romana, 1986), pp. 60-142. There is currently no English translation of *Contra legem*.

[18] Riccoldo da Montecroce, *Liber peregrinationis*. For an English translation and analysis of the text, see Rita George-Tvrtković, *A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq: Riccoldo da Montecroce's Encounter with Islam* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012).

[19] One advertisement sponsored by Pamela Geller's anti-Islamic American Freedom Defense Initiative reads: "In any war between the civilized man and the savage, support the civilized man. Support the Copts. Defeat Jihad."

Catholic theology of Islam to date. In *Nostra Aetate*, the church declares Muslims worthy of "esteem," encourages interfaith dialogue, and lists shared beliefs and practices, many of which have been acknowledged by Christians since the medieval period, including: the oneness of God, divine attributes, a link to Abraham, judgment, resurrection of the body, certain aspects of Christology and Mariology, and the importance of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving:

> The Church regards with esteem also the Muslims. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving, and fasting.[20]

Some of the council fathers who wrote the above section from *Nostra Aetate* were inspired by Louis Massignon (1883-1962), a French scholar of Islam and a key figure in twentieth-century Catholic-Muslim relations. Massignon's influence continues today, not only through *Nostra Aetate*, but also in the now-popular term he

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[20] *Nostra Aetate*, section 3.

coined, "Abrahamic faiths," which connects Christians, Jews, and Muslims together through a shared spiritual patrimony.[21]

Global Relations

Since *Nostra Aetate* was promulgated in 1965, great strides have been made in Catholic-Muslim dialogue at all levels worldwide. In the 1970s and 1980s, Pope John Paul II further developed the "Abrahamic" connection between Christians and Muslims, which was mentioned only briefly and equivocally in *Nostra Aetate*.[22] The pope did this through several speeches, such as the one given in 1979 to Turkish Christians, where he specifically identifies "the spiritual descendants of Abraham" as "Christians, Muslims, and Jews."[23] During a 1985 speech to participants in a Muslim-Christian colloquium at the Vatican, the pope stated unequivocally: "As I have often said in other meetings with Muslims, your God and ours is one and the same, and *we are brothers and sisters in the faith of*

[21] Massignon was one of the first to assert that Muslims, Christians, and Jews share the spiritual patrimony of Abraham: "There in Jerusalem the Christians have Arab witness of their faith and the geographical convergence of the three Abrahamic faiths in one and the same Holy Land, "The Three Prayers of Abraham" (originally "Les trois prières d'Abraham, père de tous les croyants," 1949), translated by Allan Cutler in Testimonies and Reflections, edited by Herbert Mason (University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), p. 8. See also Neal Robinson, p. 194, "Massignon, Vatican II, and Islam as an Abrahamic Religion," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* Vol. 2 Issue 2 (1991), pp. 182-205. The notion of "Abrahamic faiths" has recently been criticized by some scholars. See especially Jon D. Levenson, *Inheriting Abraham: The Legacy of the Patriarch in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

[22] *Nostra Aetate* 3: "The Church regards with esteem also the Muslims… they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even [God's] inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God." This wording suggests a level of uncertainty regarding Islam's Abrahamic connection; while the Church wished to refer in passing to the Muslim claim of Abrahamic lineage, it seemed unwilling to affirm the connection definitively at that time.

[23] Pope John Paul II, as quoted in Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds which Unite Us: Sixteen Years of Christian-Muslim Dialogue* (Vatican City, 1994), p. 23.

Abraham."[24]　In addition, John Paul II became the first pope to visit a mosque in 2001, and under his tenure the Vatican began hosting an annual dialogue with Muslim scholars from Cairo's al-Azhar University.

In 2006, Pope Benedict XVI gave a speech in Regensburg, Germany, which included reference to a medieval dialogue between Greek emperor Manuel II Paleologus and a Persian Muslim. The speech upset some Muslims because it contained the following quote from Manuel II: "'Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.'"[25]　While this sentence does not reflect Benedict's own view of Muhammad, but is instead a quotation from a medieval Christian, these words were nevertheless misread as Benedict's by some people. In the days following the speech, there were riots throughout the Muslim world.[26] But what began as a controversy over this speech eventually ended up sparking a real and sustained dialogue between Christians and Muslims. One month after Regensburg, thirty-eight internationally known Muslim scholars wrote an open letter to the pope responding to specific points in the speech.[27] A year later, a larger group of Muslim scholars composed a more general, *Nostra Aetate-esque*

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[24] Pope John Paul II, "Address to the Participants in the Colloquium on 'Holiness in Christianity and Islam," 9 May 1985, section 1. Emphasis mine.

[25] Pope Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections," paragraph 3. Given on 12 September 2006, at the University of Regensburg. See

<http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html>

[26] For one of many news articles about worldwide reaction to the pope's September 2006 speech, see "Pope's Regrets Over Statement Fail to Quiet a Storm of Protests" by Ian Fisher, *The New York Times*, 19 September 2006.

[27] For the complete text of the Open Letter to the Pope by Muslim scholars, dated 13 October 2006, see

<http://www.bc.edu/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/news/openletter-8238DA.pdf>.

statement entitled "A Common Word between Us and You" which highlights the shared values of love of God and love of neighbor. The website constructed around this document has fostered an on-going dialogue between scholars, religious leaders, and ordinary believers throughout the world.[28] In addition, Benedict himself extended several goodwill gestures to Muslims, including a personal visit to the Blue Mosque of Istanbul in November 2006, just two months after Regensburg. Benedict also convened the first international Catholic-Muslim Forum at the Vatican in 2008, which was a response to one of the requests made by the Muslim authors of "A Common Word."

Despite these positive steps, problems between the world's Christians and Muslims remain. Many of the most contentious issues today demonstrate the interrelatedness of religion and politics. For example, one situation universally decried by Catholic, Mainstream and Evangelical Christians alike is the precarious status of ancient Christian communities in many Muslim-majority countries: Chaldean and Syriac Christians continue to be persecuted in, and are emigrating en masse from places like war-torn Iraq and Syria; there are increased tensions between Coptic Christians and Muslims in post-Arab Spring Egypt; a tiny Christian minority in Pakistan is accusing the government of discrimination with its so-called blasphemy laws; and religious freedom is an issue for Christian domestic servants in the Gulf States.[29] Elsewhere, communal

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[28] For both the original Common Word document and five years of comments, see: <http://www.acommonword.com/>

[29] See for example "Pope Francis and the Christians of the Middle East," by Charles Chaput, OFM Cap, *First Things*, 22 March 2013; "Egypt's Christians Get Trapped in a Crossfire," by Matt Bradley, *The Wall Street Journal*, 20 August 2013; "Anti-blasphemy Law Creates a Tinderbox in Pakistan," by Affan Chowdhry, The *Globe and Mail*, 2 June 2013; "For Outsiders in Saudi Arabia, Worship Comes with a Risk," by Elaine Sciolino, *The New York Times*, 12 February 2002.

violence continues to flare up in countries with roughly equivalent populations of Christians and Muslims, such as Nigeria.[30] Western nations that have seen a large increase in Muslim immigration have also had problems with integration, most notably France and Germany, where Muslims now make up roughly 10% of the population of each, due mainly to North African and Turkish immigration. In 2004, France passed a law forbidding conspicuous symbols of religiosity, and in 2011 it outlawed the Muslim face veil in public. In Canada, the Parti Québécois government has recently sought to do likewise in the province of Quebec, causing much protest.[31] But the veil has also been an issue in historically Muslim countries such as Turkey, where only recently have students been allowed to wear the veil while attending university, and are still forbidden from doing so in public-sector jobs.[32]

Local Relations: United States

In an effort to avoid generalizing about contemporary Christian-Muslim relations, this section will offer a brief snapshot of local relations in a single country, the United States. What follows is a description of one example of positive Christian-Muslim relations, and one negative.

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[30] See for example "Nigeria Violence: Muslim-Christian Clashes Kill Hundreds," by Scott Baldauf, *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 March 2010.

[31] See for example "French Assembly Votes to Ban Religious Symbols in Schools," by Elaine Sciolino, *The New York Times*, 11 February 2004; "French Face Veil Ban Goes into Effect," by Elizabeth Tenety, *The Washington Post*, 11 April 2011; and "Thousands Rally against PQ's Secular Charter in Montreal," by Benjamin Shingler, *The Globe and Mail*, 14 September 2013.

[32] "Turkey Rolls Back University Scarf Ban," by Marc Champion, *The Wall Street Journal*, 6 October 2010.

One negative example of Christian-Muslim relations in the United States has been a recent upsurge in Islamophobia. After 9/11, many professionals engaged in interfaith dialogue worked tirelessly to decrease Islamophobia among Americans. There was some improvement in attitudes in the years that followed. But more recently, in the past two years or so, there has been a resurgence of Islamophobia throughout the country. For example, a Florida pastor threatened to burn the Qur'an in 2010, an Illinois bishop gave an anti-Islamic Christmas homily in 2011, and there has been an increase in hate crimes against Muslims all over the country in the past decade. But possibly the most emblematic and widespread example of Islamophobia in the United States has been the emergence of mosque controversies; the best known was over the so-called "Ground Zero" mosque in New York City.[33] This particular dispute raged for months in the fall of 2010, with national voices joining in the local conversation about the legality and seemliness of building a mosque so close to the former site of the World Trade Center buildings. However, after such uproar, the mosque opened without fanfare as Park 51 in September of 2011.[34] Park 51 is not, in fact, built on Ground Zero, it is two blocks away; it is modeled after a Jewish Community Center on the Upper West Side; it has an interfaith board, including a 9/11 family member; it is open to people of all faiths; and it recently featured an exhibition by a Jewish photographer who displayed images of Sikhs, Muslims, and others.

But mosque controversies have been raging not only in New York City, but all across the country, often in suburbs which have recently been transformed from religiously homogenous to religious

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[33] See "New York Mosque Went from Zero to Controversy," by Frank James, *National Public Radio*, 18 August 2010.

[34] See "Ground Zero Furor a Faint Memory at Park 51 Opening," by Mark Jacobson, *New York Magazine*, 22 September 2011.

diverse communities. Some of the most prominent and long-standing controversies include those in Murfreesboro, Tennessee and Dupage County, Illinois. In Willowbrook, Illinois, for example, the Muslim Educational Cultural Center of America (MECCA) sought to build a mosque. But when they brought their plans to the DuPage County Zoning Board they were rejected due to zoning, traffic congestion, and height violations—the proposed dome and minaret would have violated the 36-foot-high building limit. The DuPage County board eventually accepted a scaled-back proposal which eliminated the minaret and dome, but Muslims claimed religious discrimination, pointing to taller religious buildings in the area. DuPage County's unease with minarets and domes calls to mind the 2009 Swiss ban on minarets.[35]

In Murfreesboro, Tennessee, thirty miles outside of Nashville, the construction of a new mosque for area Muslims was a heated issue. Vandals repeatedly spray-painted construction signs with the words "not welcome" and set fire to construction equipment. At a public hearing in 2010, some residents claimed that Islam was not a religion and suggested that the center was part of a plot to replace the Constitution with Sharia law. The building permit was granted, then revoked, then reinstated by a federal judge in August 2012, just in time for Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting.

A more positive example of Muslim-Christian relations in the United States has been a rise in the number of Muslim students enrolling in Catholic colleges and universities. Several news outlets have highlighted this phenomenon recently.[36] Why do Muslims seem

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[35] See Nick Cumming-Bruce and Steven Erlanger, "Swiss Ban Building of Minarets on Mosques," *The New York Times*, 29 November 2009.

[36] Richard Perez-Pena, "Muslims from abroad are thriving at Catholic universities," *The New York Times*, 2 September 2012, and William Wan, "Enrollment of Muslim Students is Growing at Catholic Colleges in the U.S.," *Washington Post*, 10 December

to prefer Catholic colleges and high schools over secular institutions? One recent article quoted a Muslim student at the University of Dayton, a Catholic institution, who stated: "Here, people are more religious, even if they're not Muslim, and I am comfortable with that…I'm more comfortable talking to a Christian than an atheist." [37] Many Muslims also appreciate single-gender Catholic high schools, due to the traditional Islamic separation of the sexes.

These are just a few of the reasons Muslims enroll in Catholic schools. But what are some of the reasons Catholic institutions accept so many Muslims and others into their midst? Are they doing this to be politically correct, or because interreligious diversity and cooperation is the new buzzword on college campuses? Are Catholic colleges welcoming non-Catholics *in spite of* their Catholic identity? Most theologians would argue that Catholic colleges welcome adherents of other religions not in spite of, but *because of*, their Catholic identity. They would say that to be Catholic means to welcome the other, and they would point to *Nostra Aetate* as the Catholic rationale for welcoming Muslims and others into their midst. Furthermore, Catholic universities with religious order sponsorship (Franciscan, Dominican, Jesuit, Lasallian, Vincentian, etc.) often cite particular verses from their founding order's documents and history which serve as a foundation for openness to the other. For example, at the institution where I teach, Benedictine University, we root interreligious dialogue in Chapter 53 of the *Rule of St. Benedict*, which encourages hospitality towards guests. At our institution both the *Rule* and *Nostra Aetate* serve as the theological rationale for welcoming non-Catholics to campus.

2010.

[37] Perez-Pena, *The New York Times*, 2 September 2012.

Although the increase of Muslim students on Catholic campuses is an opportunity to get to know each other, there are some challenges, too, and fears on both sides. Some alumni at Catholic universities with high percentages of Muslim students ask if the university is still Catholic. Some Muslim students wonder if they truly belong. The challenge for college campuses is: how to maintain a balance between fidelity to the Catholic tradition and openness to others? There is a certain tension here, but it is a tension that should not be resolved. This approach is different than secular pluralism, which often implies that everyone is the same, differences should be ignored, commonalities should be stressed, and students should focus on interfaith service, not theology. Interfaith cooperation is important, but at a Catholic Christian college this is not sufficient. We need to get comfortable with difference. The mere existence of pluralism does not guarantee that we will know or understand one another. We have to work at it, we have to be *intentional* about bringing people together, and we have to know the theological rationale why. And Muslims need to know their own theological rationale for entering into dialogue, too (some have suggested this verse from the Qur'an: "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other").[38]

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We live in a world which is ever increasing in its religious diversity, not only in cities, but also in suburbs and rural areas. But as history shows, there is no such thing as a gradual, inevitable evolution of tolerance. So how will Christians and Muslims come to respect each other more, increase their trust in the other, and improve

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[38] *Sura* 49:13.

their relationships? There is only one way: people must commit to building relationships over time. There is no dialogue between the religions of Islam and Christianity; there is only dialogue between individual Muslims and Christians. Building such relationship takes time and perseverance. It takes ordinary people, mostly. Such efforts might seem small and insignificant. Yet it is the seemingly small, insignificant encounter which makes all the difference. I will end with an anecdote which demonstrates just that. Last summer, several students from my university went on an interfaith training weekend together. In the van on the way home, one of the Catholic students tentatively mentioned how much it bothered her when certain Muslim students moved the furniture of the university chapel around during their prayer but did not move it back. The Muslim in whom the Catholic confided was horrified; she apologized to the Catholic and later rectified the situation by speaking with her fellow Muslims. It was only because the Catholic and Muslim had built up trust in one another, and had a concrete place to talk (e.g., the van) that this interchange was able to occur at all. Clearly, building personal relationships with Muslims is one of the best ways Catholics can live out the following statement from *Nostra Aetate*: "The Catholic Church regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all."[39]

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[39] *Nostra Aetate* 2.

For Further Reading

Griffith, Sidney. *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

Mohammed, Ovey. *Muslim-Christian Relations: Past, Present, Future* (New York: Orbis, 1999).

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Tolan, John. *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

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Zebiri, Kate. *Muslims and Christians Face to Face* (London: Oneworld, 1997).

[摘要] 從古到今，穆斯林和基督教之間的關係在不同景況下存在很大差異。在中世紀拉丁語世界中，基督徒經常對穆斯林教徒及伊斯蘭存有敵意，但也有互相尊重及對雙方表示興趣的時候。譬如阿西西的方濟探訪埃及蘇丹就代表了比較和平的方向，而拜占庭皇帝曼努埃爾二世對穆罕默德的抨擊則表示敵對的態度。這些敵對或尊重的態度仍塑造當今穆斯林及基督徒之間的接觸。第二次梵蒂岡大公會議對穆斯林表達尊重及提出建構正面的關係模式。教宗若望保祿二世指出猶太教徒，基督徒及穆斯林教徒之間共同享有個亞巴郎的傳承，以闡述這種思想。教宗本篤十六世曾引用曼努埃爾二世的話語，此舉引來伊斯蘭世界中廣泛爭

議，但同時也提供了一個前所未見的場合，令穆斯林教徒去接觸基督徒。透過在《我倆共同的語言》一信中，穆斯林教徒強調愛天主/真主，愛鄰人這個貫通兩宗教的共同價值。今天在各地包括中東及尼日利亞，穆斯林及基督教之間的關係受到困擾。美國在現今的穆斯林及基督徒的關係上同時提供了正面及反面的例子。伊斯蘭恐懼症正在加劇，但同時也有不同的力量去改善兩宗教之間的關係。眾多穆斯林學生在美國的基督教，尤其是天主教的學院及大學讀書，感受到對穆斯林教徒友善的氣氛。