

Gerechtigkeit als hermeneutischer Schlüssel für die Auslegung von Bibel und Koran

**Documentation und Materialien der internationalen jüdisch-
christlich-muslimischen Konferenz an der Missionsakademie
Hamburg
(11.-16. April 2016)**

**hrsg. von
Zentrum für Mission und Ökumene – Nordkirche weltweit
und
Missionsakademie Hamburg**

Justice as Hermeneutic Key for the Interpretation of Bible and Qur'an

**Documentation and materials of the international Jewish-
Christian-Muslim conference at the Academy of Mission in
Hamburg
(April 11-16, 2016)**

**edited by
the Centre of Global Ministries and Ecumenical Relations of
the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Northern Germany
and
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Vorwort

Und der Gerechtigkeit Frucht wird Friede sein, und der Ertrag der Gerechtigkeit wird ewige Stille und Sicherheit sein - Jesaja 32,17

Als solche ihr nämlich in Christus hinein getauft worden seid, seid ihr mit Christus eingekleidet worden - sei es als Jude oder Grieche, als Sklave oder Freier, als männlich oder weiblich: Ihr seid nämlich alle einer in Christus Jesus - Gal 3,27-28

Sprich: Mein Herr hat Gerechtigkeit befohlen. Sammelt eure Aufmerksamkeit an jeder Stätte der Andacht und ruft Ihn an in lauterem Gehorsam gegen ihn - Sure Al A'raf 7,29

„Das ist so ungerecht!“ Leidenschaftlich können Geschwister darüber streiten, wenn sie die Kuchenstücke auf ihren Tellern vergleichen. Über Gerechtigkeit kann man schwer nüchtern und entspannt reden, da kochen schnell die Emotionen hoch: Werde ich benachteiligt (bin ich das Opfer), wer ist schuld (also der Täter) und wo ist der Retter / die Retterin? Und wer spielt welche Rolle mit welchem Gewinn? Ja, sogar von der Opferrolle kann ich profitieren, erlaubt sie mir doch die eigene Verantwortung auf Andere zu projizieren.

Das Kuchendrama lässt sich mühelos auf die großen Gerechtigkeitsdiskurse unserer Zeit übertragen. Da geht es dann etwa um Klimagerechtigkeit, um Geschlechtergerechtigkeit, um Chancengerechtigkeit, um globale Gerechtigkeit etc. Und mittendrin in diesen Diskussionen sind die Religionen. Hoffentlich - in produktiver Weise! Religiöse Kommunikation ist in modernen Gesellschaften unverzichtbar. Das sollte für Religionsvertreter_innen Ansporn und Herausforderung sein, gerade auch bei Gerechtigkeitsdiskursen.

Gerechtigkeit ist sowohl in der Hebräischen Bibel als auch im Neuen Testament und im Koran ein Zentralbegriff. Aus der Gerechtigkeit, die Gott für seine Schöpfung vorsieht, erwächst die Verpflichtung der Geschöpfe sie umzusetzen und zwar im Hier und Jetzt, zugegeben immer in der Gefahr dabei zu scheitern, aber ermutigt sich nicht entmutigen zu lassen. Der Gott, den die Bibel und der Koran bezeugen, wird über das Tun bzw. Nichttun des Gerechten dann zu einem von ihm gesetzten Zeitpunkt richten.

Das reiche Potential der Heiligen Schriften für die Gerechtigkeitsdebatten der Gegenwart wollen wir im Rahmen der jüdisch-christlich-muslimischen Stu-

dienwoche *Gerechtigkeit als hermeneutischer Schlüssel für die Auslegung von Bibel und Koran* bedenken und ausloten. Gibt es nicht ein umfassendes Ethos der Gerechtigkeit, das Judentum, Christentum und Islam verbindet?! Wir sind der Überzeugung, dass dieses Potential in den aktuellen Integrationsbemühungen nutzbar zu machen ist in Zeiten sich zunehmend pluralisierender Gesellschaften, um auf kulturelle und religiöse Fragmentierungen durch interkulturellen und interreligiösen Austausch zu antworten.

Wir freuen uns auf die Begegnungen und Gespräche!

Werner Kahl¹ | Axel Matyba²

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Preface

The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence for ever - Isaiah 32:17

For as such as you have been baptized into Christ, you have been clothed with Christ - be it as Jew or Greek, as slave or as free-person, as male or female: For all of you have become one in Christ Jesus - Gal 3:27-28

Say: "My Lord has commanded justice. Set your faces in every place of worship and call on Him, making your religion sincerely His" - Sura Al A'raf 7:29

"This is so unfair!" Siblings can get into heated debates when they compare pieces of cake on their plates. It is difficult to discuss matter of justice in a relaxed way. Emotions quickly rise: Have I been put at the losing end (me being the victim)? Whose fault is it (of course, the offender's)? And where is my helper? Who plays which role, and what is the respected profit? Indeed, at times I can even profit from the role of the victim; I can easily project my own responsibility on others.

The above kitchen-scene is easily translatable into the major contemporary discourses on justice. At issue here is, e.g., climate justice, gender justice, equal chances, global justice. And in the midst of these debates we find the religions. Hopefully - in a productive sense! In modern societies, religious communication is much needed. This should serve as motivation and challenge for religious leaders, in particular with respect to discourses on justice.

Justice is a central concern in the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Qur'ān. The justice that God intends for His creation evokes the obligation of God's created humankind to realize it in the here and now - by always being in danger of failure but encouraged not to become discouraged. The Bible and the Qur'ān give witness of God who will judge the deeds or non-deeds pertaining to justice, at the determined time.

The rich potential of the Holy Scriptures for current debates on justice provides the subject to be discussed during the week-long joint Jewish-Christian-Muslim workshop on "Justice as hermeneutic key for the Interpretation of Bible and Qur'ān". Is their not an all-embracing ethos of justice that connects Judaism, Christianity, and Islam?! We are of the opinion

that this potential should be drawn upon in the recent efforts at integration in increasingly pluralistic societies the world over, in order to balance cultural and religious fragmentation with cross-cultural and intercultural exchange.

We look forward to the encounters and the exchange.

Werner Kahl¹ | Axel Matyba²

¹ Werner Kahl is Head of Studies at the Academy of Mission in Hamburg and Professor of New Testament Studies at the University of Frankfurt/Main.

² Axel Mataba is Pastor and in charge of Christian-Muslim relations in the Northern Church.

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Werner Kahl

Programm

Programme

Programmablauf

Gerechtigkeit als hermeneutischer Schlüssel für die Interpretation von Bibel und Koran

Missionsakademie an der Universität Hamburg

11. – 16. April 2016

Sonntag 10.4.16: 18.00 Uhr Internationaler Gospelgottesdienst
(Junge Str. 7a, Hamburg-Borgfelde)

Montag (11.4.16)

9.00 Morgenandacht

Anreise

15.00 Ankommen bei Kaffee und Kuchen

16.00 Begrüßung - Erläuterungen zum Haus - Erläuterungen des
Programms - Vorstellungsrunde

18.00 Gemeinsames Abendessen

19.00 Christlich-Islamischer Dialog in Afrika (Nigeria, Tansania, Kenia)

21.00 Abendandacht

Dienstag (12.4.16)

8.00 Frühstück

8.45 Morgenandacht

9.00 Christlich-Islamischer Dialog in Indien und auf den Philippinen

11.15 Mittagessen

12.00 Interreligiöse Stadtrundfahrt

- 17.30 Begrüßung an der Universität durch Prof. Dr. W. Weisse
- 18.00 Öffentliche Abendveranstaltung an der Universität Hamburg
Auf dass die Welt gerechter werde – der Beitrag des interreligiösen Gesprächs
 Begrüßung
Was bedeutet mir der Dialog der abrahamitischen Religionen in dieser Stadt? Persönliche Kurzstatements von Bischöfin Fehrs, Weihbischof Jaschke, Landesrabbiner Bistritzky, Imam Ucar, Ayatollah Dr. Ramezani
 Grußwort der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (Staatsrat Dr. Christoph Krupp)
 Podiumsdiskussion: *Der interreligiöse Dialog und die eine gerechte Welt – Wie passt das zusammen?* Mit Prof. Dr. E. Meir, Prof. Dr. K. Amirpur, Prof. Dr. U. Dehn, moderiert von Prof. Dr. W. Weiße
 Anschließend: Empfang

Mittwoch (13.4.16)

- 8.00 Frühstück
- 8.45 Morgenandacht
- 9.00 Christlich-Islamischer Dialog in Palästina
- 9.45 Interner Studientag: ***Gerechtigkeit als hermeneutischer Schlüssel für die Interpretation von Bibel und Koran***
Impulsvorträge:
- 9.45–10.30 Aus jüdischer Perspektive – Rabbiner Jonathan Wittenberg: **Justice as hermeneutical key for the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible**
- 10.45–11.30 Aus christlicher Perspektive – Prof. Dr. Werner Kahl: **Justice as hermeneutic key for the interpretation of the New Testament**
- 11.45–12.30 Aus muslimischer Perspektive – Prof. Dr. Katajun Amirpur: **Justice as hermeneutic key for the interpretation of the Qur’an**
- 12.30 Mittagessen
- 14.30 Kaffee und Kuchen

- 15.00 Arbeitsgruppen mit Textstudium: Bibel / Koran
- 18.00 Abendessen
- Abend zur freien Verfügung
- 21.00 Abendandacht

Donnerstag (14.4.16)

- 8.00 Frühstück
- 8.45 Morgenandacht
- 9.00 Christlich-Islamischer Dialog in den Niederlanden und in Dänemark
- 10.30 Impulsvortrag: „Gerechtigkeitsvorstellungen“ im Buddhismus (Dr. C. Roloff)
- 11.15 Pause
- 11.30 Christlich-Islamischer Dialog in den USA
- 12.30 Mittagessen
- 14.30 Kaffee und Kuchen
- 15.00 Arbeitsgruppen: Erarbeitung von Thesen für das Plenum
- 16.30 Pause
- 16.45 Plenum: Vorstellung der Thesen (3x 20 min)
- 18.00 Abendessen
- 19.00 Kommentare zu den Thesen (A. A. Yakobi / W. Kahl / H. Krausen / U. Andrée / C. Roloff / W. Weiße - Moderation: K. Schäfer) und Plenumsgespräch
- 21.00 Abendandacht

Freitag (15.4.16)

- 8.00 Frühstück
- 8.45 Morgenandacht
- 9.00 „The sanctuary movement in Germany: A space of interreligious encounter?“ mit Pastorin Dietlind Jochims (Flüchtlingsbeauftragte der Nordkirche), Dietrich Gerstner (ZMÖ)
Gast: Indho Mohamud Abyan (Somalia)

- 12.00 Mittagessen
- 13.30 Teilnahme am Freitagsgebet in der Blauen Moschee
Ab Landungsbrücken: Rückfahrt per Schiff bis Blankenese
- 15.30 Kaffee und Kuchen
- 16.00 Vortrag und Buchpräsentation: ***Das Evangelium von einer besseren Gerechtigkeit im Koran*** – Präsentation des **Studienkorans** (Prof. Dr. W. Kahl)
- 17.30 Auswertung der Tagung
- 19.30 Abschlussfest mit Musik (H. Ibrahim, A. Shibly, W. Kahl) und Poetry Slam (K. Böler)

Samstag (16.4.16)

Frühstück – Abreise

Programme

Justice as hermeneutic key for the interpretation of Bible and Qur'an

Mission Academy at Hamburg University

April 11 to 16, 2016

Sunday, April 10, 6 pm: International Gospel Service

(Junge Strasse 7a, Hamburg-Borgfelde)

Monday (April 11)

09.00 Morning devotion

Arrival

15.00 Coffee and cake

16.00 Welcome - Information about the institution - Information about the programme - Introduction of participants

18.00 Evening meal

19.00 Christian-Islamic Dialogue in Africa (Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya)

21.00 Evening devotion

Tuesday (April 12)

08.00 Breakfast

08.45 Morning devotion

09.00 Christian-Islamic Dialogue in India and the Philippines

11.15 Lunch

12.00 Interreligious guided tour of Hamburg

17.30 Welcome at the University by Prof. Dr. W. Weiße

18.00 Public evening event at Hamburg University:

That there may be more justice in the world – the contribution of the interreligious debate

Words of Greeting

What does the dialogue of the Abrahamic religions in this city mean to me? Short personal statements by Bishop Fehrs, Suffragan Bishop Jaschke, Regional Rabbi Bistritzky, Imam Ucar, Ayatollah Dr. Ramezani

Greetings from the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (State Counsellor Dr. Christoph Krupp)

Panel discussion: *Interreligious dialogue and the one just world – how does that fit together?* With Prof. Dr. E. Meir, Prof. Dr. K. Amirpur, Prof. Dr. U. Dehn, Moderator Prof. Dr. W. Weiße

Afterwards: Reception

Wednesday (April 13)

08.00 Breakfast

08.45 Morning devotion

09.00 Christian-Islamic Dialogue in Palestine

09.45 Internal Study day: ***Justice as hermeneutic key for the interpretation of Bible and Qur'an***

Presentations:

09.45–10.30 From a Jewish perspective – Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg: **Justice as hermeneutical key for the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible**

10.45–11.30 From a Christian perspective – Prof. Dr. Werner Kahl: **Justice as a hermeneutic key for the interpretation of the New Testament**

11.45–12.30 From a Muslim perspective: Prof. Dr. Katajun Amirpur: **Justice as hermeneutic key for the interpretation of the Qur'an**

12.30 Lunch

14.30 Coffee and cake

15.00 Study groups working on texts: Bible / Qur'an

18.00 Evening meal

21.00 Evening devotion

Thursday (April 14)

- 08.00 Breakfast
- 08.45 Morning devotion
- 09.00 Christian-Islamic Dialogue in the Netherlands and Denmark
- 10.30 Address: „Concepts of Justice“ in Buddhism (Dr. C. Roloff)
- 11.15 Break
- 11.30 Christian-Islamic Dialogue in the USA
- 12.30 Lunch
- 14.30 Coffee and cake
- 15.00 Study groups: Developing theses for the plenary session
- 16.30 Break
- 16.45 Plenary: Presentation of theses (3 x 20 min)
- 18.00 Evening meal
- 19.00 Comments on the theses (A. A. Yakobi / W. Kahl / H. Krausen / U. Andrée / C. Roloff / W. Weiße - Moderator: K. Schäfer) and plenary discussion
- 21.00 Evening devotion

Friday (April 15)

- 08.00 Breakfast
- 08.45 Morning devotion
- 09.00 „The sanctuary movement in Germany: A space of interreligious encounter?“ with Rev. Dietlind Jochims (Official Commissary for Refugees of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany), Dietrich Gerstner (Centre for Global Ministries and Ecumenical Relations)
- Guest: Indho Mohamud Abyan (Somalia)
- 12.00 Lunch
- 13.30 Attendance at Friday Prayers at the Blue Mosque
- Return from Landungsbrücken by harbour boat to Blankenese
- 15.30 Coffee and cake

- 16.00 Address and presentation of the first volume of the
Studienkoran (Qur'an Study edition) by the author Werner Kahl:
Das Evangelium von einer besseren Gerechtigkeit im Koran
(The Gospel of a Better Justice in the Qur'an)
- 17.30 Evaluation of seminar
- 19.30 Festive evening with music (H. Ibrahim, A. Shibly, W. Kahl) and
poetry slam (K. Böler)

Saturday (April 16)

Breakfast - Departure

Grußworte

Words of Greeting

Klaus Schäfer¹

Eine Studienwoche zum Thema „Gerechtigkeit als hermeneutischer Schlüssel für die Auslegung von Bibel und Koran“ zu veranstalten, klingt zunächst nach einer akademischen Veranstaltung. Und tatsächlich geht es hier um eine durchaus anspruchsvolle Beschäftigung mit der Interpretation von Bibel und Koran. Wir wollen Texte lesen, nach Auslegungstraditionen fragen, Übersetzungen vergleichen und, jedenfalls an der einen oder anderen Stelle, hermeneutische Tiefenbohrungen versuchen. Und doch geht es noch um viel mehr!

Die Studienwoche, die vom 11.-16. April 2016 in Hamburg stattfindet, bringt Menschen, und zwar Christen und Muslime, aus neun Ländern zusammen, um miteinander in ihren jeweiligen religiösen Schriften – in Bibel und Koran – dem göttlichen Ruf zur Gerechtigkeit, als Gabe und Aufgabe Gottes an die Menschen, nachzuspüren und darüber ins Gespräch zu kommen. Gefordert ist für ein solches Gespräch tatsächlich ein gewisses Maß an Kenntnis der heiligen Schriften und ihrer Interpretationen, zugleich aber auch, genährt aus den Schriften, die Verpflichtung, in unseren jeweiligen Gesellschaften nach Gerechtigkeit zu streben und über die Grenzen von Ländern und religiösen Überlieferungen hinweg nach Gemeinsamkeiten zu suchen. Ein spannendes Unternehmen!

Dass für die interreligiöse Studienwoche, in denen Muslime und Christen gemeinsam ihre heiligen Schriften lesen, der Fokus beim Thema „Gerechtigkeit“ gewählt ist, verdankt sich einer Reihe von Gründen. Da ist zuerst natürlich die Wahrnehmung, dass „Gerechtigkeit“ in unseren jeweiligen religiösen Texten in unseren jeweiligen religiösen Texten eine große Bedeutung hat; die Orientierung an „Gerechtigkeit“ als Gottes Wesen und Gabe und des Menschen Auftrag ist ein „identity marker“ unserer jeweiligen religiösen Tradition. Zum anderen aber ist die Suche nach und das Engagement für Gerechtigkeit in der Welt heute eine außerordentlich virulente Herausforderung. Dies gilt für unsere Gesellschaft in Deutschland, aber selbstverständlich auch für die Gesellschaften, aus denen die Teilnehmer und Teilnehmerinnen der Studienwoche kommen – aus Indien

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und den Philippinen, aus Tansania und Nigeria, aus Palästina und den USA, aus den Niederlanden und aus England. Man braucht nicht viel Fantasie, um sich im Blick auf unsere jeweiligen Länder Gerechtigkeitslücken, Defizite von und Auseinandersetzungen um Gerechtigkeitsfragen vorzustellen. Welche Erfahrungen wir mitbringen, und wie wir uns in unseren Ländern und dann auch gemeinsam in internationaler, interkultureller und interreligiöser Vernetzung gerade aus den tiefsten Wurzeln unseres jeweiligen Glaubens heraus für Gerechtigkeit einsetzen, ist die spannende Suchfrage, um die es in der Studienwoche gehen soll.

Zugleich ist es aber heute, in einer Zeit, in der Religionen oft als Triebkräfte für Gewalt angesehen werden, wichtig, dass religiöse Menschen für sich selbst, ihre Gemeinschaften und mit Blick auf eine kritische Öffentlichkeit die Werte herausarbeiten, die für ihr religiöses Bekenntnis und ihr Engagement in der Gesellschaft leitend sind. Insofern ist die Studienwoche auch ein Beitrag zur Unterstreichung der Friedensfähigkeit von Religionen. Frieden wird nur gelingen, wenn es gerechter Frieden ist.

In der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Norddeutschland führen wir mit dem Thema der Studienwoche etwas weiter, was wir im vergangenen Herbst schon auf einer Konsultation mit beinahe 60 Delegierten aus unseren Partnerkirchen aus vielen Teilen der Welt bewegt haben. „Gemeinsam den Weg der Gerechtigkeit gehen“, war seiner Zeit das Thema, unter dem wir nach je eigenem, lokalem und gemeinsamen, international vernetztem Engagement im Blick auf die Situation von Flüchtlingen, der Schere von Arm und Reich, der Beachtung der Menschenrechte und den Herausforderungen zur Klimagerechtigkeit gefragt haben. Mit der christlich-muslimischen Studienwoche führen wir diese Fragestellungen jetzt in einer interreligiösen Perspektive weiter.

Ich bin gespannt auf die Entdeckungen und voller Erwartungen im Blick auf die Ergebnisse. Gerechtigkeit ist ein Thema für alle Religionen, denn - um es mit Worten jüdischer Weisheit aus der Büchersammlung zu sagen, die die Christen das Alte Testament nennen - „Gerechtigkeit erhöht ein Volk; aber die Sünde ist der Leute Verderben.“ (Sprüche 14,34).

Conducting a Study Week on the theme „`Justice´ as a hermeneutical key for the interpretation of Bible and Quran“ sounds as if we are about to organize a very learned, academically oriented programme. And indeed, the participants who we welcome from nine different countries are people who

have already for some time been engaged in reading and interpreting their respective religious scriptures and who are also involved in interreligious reading of holy texts. Since we would like to read together the holy scriptures of our traditions, engage in discussions on various traditions of interpretation, compare translations and search for meaning of words and expressions, we wanted to bring together a number of learned persons from various cultural backgrounds, Muslims and Christians alike. And yet, what we want to achieve in the Study Week, taking place from 11.-16. April 2016 in Hamburg, is much more than a scholarly exercise.

The purpose of the Study Week is the engagement in a common search of Christian and Muslims on God's calling for justice and righteousness - for our individual and personal life as well as for our communities and the world at large. When we thus study our scriptures with the aim to explore what they say about the God's justice as a gift to human kind and as a demand on the people on earth, we do this on the basis of a deep commitment to hail to God's calling and to walk then, as people within our respective communities and also jointly together as Christians and Muslims, inspired by our religious insights, along the path of justice.

To set the focus of our interreligious reading of our holy scriptures on the theme of „justice“ has various reasons. There is, first of all, the perception and conviction that „justice“ in our respective scriptures bears great significance; „justice“ as an expression of the nature as well as a gift of God and as a commandment for God's people is an „identity marker“ of our various religious traditions. It is obvious, on the other hand, that the search and cry and the engagement for justice is a very vital issue and challenge in the world of today. This is the case in our society here in Germany, but naturally also within the other eight different countries from where the participants of the Study Week come from - in India and the Philippines, in Tanzania and Nigeria, in Palestine and the United States of America, in the Netherlands and in England. One does not need a very great amount of fantasy in order to call to our minds what kind of deficits and what kind of issues in relation to the claim for justice prevail in those countries. It will be interesting to listen to stories and experiences that participants bring and share from their contexts in order to earthen our deliberations and relate them to real life situations. Reading of the holy texts and sharing about our experiences will hopefully strengthen and inspire us in order to engage in international, intercultural and interreligious networking for justice and righteousness.

We are, moreover, confronted today - for right or for wrong - with the charge that religions contribute not seldom to hatred and conflicts and may even be

regarded as driving forces for violence. In such a situation it seems important for us that religious people, for themselves and their communities and with a view of a critical public spell out and affirm the values that are considered to be the guiding principles for our religious convictions, our life and involvement in society. The Study Week therefore also seeks to contribute towards the affirmation of the ability of religions to work for peace in the world; and peace, we are convinced, will only blossom and spread, if there is justice as its foundation.

As Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Northern Germany we also take here up a topic that was last year already the focus of a consultation with almost 60 members of partner churches from all over the world. Under the theme „Walking together the Way of Justice“ we identified in our various societies as well as on the global level in regard to justice areas of concern that challenge us as religious people. Highlighted then were of course the situation of refugees, the gap between the rich and the poor in various societies as well as in global perspective, the struggle for and the affirmation of human rights, and the quest for climate justice. In conducting now a Christian-Muslim Study Week we continue the deliberations and involvement of last year now in an interreligious perspective.

We are happy that two people from eight different countries – one Muslim, one Christian – have accepted our invitation and engage with us, Christians and Muslims from Germany, in reading the holy scriptures. I am very much looking forward to the time of sharing together religious insights, concerns and affirmations. I am convinced that we will have very fruitful results, and it is my prayer that our findings and affirmations may spread out into our communities and contribute towards a deepening of a sense of reverence towards God, mutual respect towards one another, and the strengthening of our commitment to engage in the search and struggle for justice!

Wolfram Weisse¹

Durch die erheblich zunehmende religiöse Pluralisierung moderner Gesellschaften gewinnt das Thema „Religion und Dialog“ gegenwärtig große Aufmerksamkeit und ist mit hohen gesellschaftlichen Erwartungen hinsichtlich der Gestaltung des Zusammenlebens von Menschen verschiedener Religionen und Kulturen verbunden. Es ist eine vorrangige Aufgabe für Universität und Gesellschaft, analytische Perspektiven zu religiösem Pluralismus und zu den Beziehungen von Menschen mit unterschiedlichen Religionen und Weltanschauungen zu entwickeln. Dies ist auch das sehr wichtige Ziel dieser Konferenz - und hiermit befassen wir uns auch in unserer Akademie der Weltreligionen der Universität Hamburg. Wir sind in großem Maße am Thema und den Ergebnissen dieser Konferenz zur Frage „Gerechtigkeit als hermeneutischer Schlüssel für die Interpretation von Bibel und Koran“ interessiert. Um dieses Interesse zu konkretisieren, gebe ich Ihnen einige Hintergrundinformationen zu den Aktivitäten unserer Akademie der Weltreligionen auf den Gebieten unserer Forschung und unserer öffentlichen Aktivitäten.

Zwei Perspektiven sind dabei zentral und markieren zugleich Alleinstellungsmerkmale der Akademie der Weltreligionen der Universität Hamburg in der nationalen Forschungslandschaft: Zum einen verfolgt sie einen dezidiert dialogorientierten Forschungsansatz, der sich nicht auf das Nebeneinander von Religionen beschränkt, sondern auf die Wechselwirkungen zwischen den Religionen gerichtet ist, und zwar insbesondere im Hinblick auf bereits vorhandene Dialogorientierungen sowie zu fördernde Dialogpotentiale. Zum anderen bezieht die Akademie der Weltreligionen neben Christentum und Islam weitere ausgewählte Religionen wie Judentum, Buddhismus, Hinduismus und Alevitentum in die Forschung ein und berücksichtigt zugleich religiös nicht gebundene Personen bzw. Gruppen, deren Positionen zu Fragen von Religion und Dialog gesellschaftlich relevant, aber wissenschaftlich wenig erforscht sind. Das Forschungsprofil der Akademie erfasst so die religiöse Situation Deutschlands und anderer europäischer Gesellschaften in ihren

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Kernmerkmalen: Religionsvielfalt, Binnendifferenzierung, Individualisierung und säkulare Tendenzen.

Hierfür muss eine solide theologische Basis entwickelt werden, die den interreligiösen Dialog fundiert, und zwar auch im Blick auf unterschiedliche Bedingungen in modernen Gesellschaften. Dieser Aufgabe nehmen wir uns in unserem europäischen Forschungsprojekt *„Religion und Dialog in modernen Gesellschaften“* an. Es ist als praxisorientiertes Forschungsprojekt angelegt, das grundlegende Fragen des interreligiösen Dialogs untersucht, und zwar sowohl im Blick auf Möglichkeiten wie auf Begrenzungen.

Zusätzlich zu den grundlegenden Aufgaben von Forschung und Lehre an der Universität nimmt unsere Akademie der Weltreligionen auch am öffentlichen Diskurs über Religion und interreligiösen Dialog in Gesellschaft und Bildung teil. So haben wir zwei Mal im Jahr eine Veranstaltung im Hamburger Rathaus, bei der zwei Professoren von unserer Seite und zwei Politiker des Hamburger Parlamentes zu Fragen von Religion und Dialog miteinander diskutieren. Ein anderes Feld, in dem sich religiöse und säkulare Positionen begegnen können, ist die „Lange Nacht der Weltreligionen“, die wir gemeinsam mit einem der größten Hamburger Theater geplant wird – dem Thalia-Theater, in dem 1000 Besucherinnen und Besucher mit unterschiedlichem religiösem und weltanschaulichem Hintergrund Texte und Performances aus unterschiedlichen Religionen hören und den Diskussionen von Experten aus verschiedenen akademischen Disziplinen und mit unterschiedlichen religiös-weltanschaulichen Hintergründen.

Zumindest in Deutschland ist diese Öffentlichkeitsarbeit durch universitäre Einrichtungen nicht weit verbreitet, aber wir tun das, weil wir darin eine Chance sehen, unsere Themen in der Öffentlichkeit vorzustellen und damit interreligiösen Dialog in unserer Gesellschaft zu fördern.

Die Ergebnisse Ihres Seminars werden dazu beitragen, noch bessere Grundlagen für den interreligiösen Dialog zu etablieren. Dafür sage ich Dank und gutes Gelingen.

The growing religious pluralization of modern societies has placed the question of religions and dialogue at the centre of public attention, with great expectations for the peaceful coexistence of people from different faiths and cultures tied to it, and in the same time a growing awareness of the destructive potential of religions. Developing an analytical perspective on religious pluralism and the relations between people from different religious

traditions or belief systems thus is a vital task for academia and society at large. This is a most relevant aim of this conference, and this is what we are doing at the Academy of World Religions of Hamburg University. We are highly interested in the main theme of this conference and we are looking forward to see its results with regard to justice as hermeneutical key for the interpretation of the bible and the quran. Let me explain this by giving you some background information on what our Academy of World Religions is doing in view of research and public activities.

The two central perspectives exemplify the unique position that Hamburg University's Academy of World Religions has in German academia. The approach is deliberately dialogue-oriented, focusing not only on a coexistence of different religions, but on the interaction between them, especially with a view to extant dialogue orientation and future potential. Also, it integrates religions beyond Christianity and Islam, namely Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Alevism while also taking into account the perspective of the religiously unaffiliated and people or groups whose positions on religious questions are socially relevant, but under-researched. Thus, the Academy's research profile matches the central characteristics of the religious landscape in Germany and other European countries: pluralism, internal differentiation, individualization and secularization.

For this reason a sound theological foundation of interreligious dialogue anchored in the practical context of different modern societies remains to be developed. We are taking up this task in our research at the Academy of World Religions, and here I would like to mention our ReDi project: "*Religion and Dialogue in Modern Societies*" (ReDi) is designed as practice-oriented research addressing the fundamental questions of interreligious dialogue both regarding its possibilities and limitations.

Apart from the basic tasks at University – teaching and research – the Academy of World Religions takes also part in the public discourse on religion and interreligious dialogue in society and education. So we have a half-years format of discussions between two of our professors and two politicians from the parliament of Hamburg on new research in the field of religion and dialogue. Another space of encounter between religious and secular views is the so-called "Long Night of Religions", which is the result of a common planning of the Academy of World Religions in cooperation with one of the biggest theatres in Hamburg, where about 1000 people of different religions and secular world views see and hear texts and performances from different religions and can follow discussions of specialists from different academic as well as religious and secular fields.

At least in Germany this is not common activity from the side of University, but we see a chance, to expose our themes in the public, in order to promote interreligious dialogue in our society.

Your findings will help in laying even better foundations for such an interreligious dialogue. I wish you, I wish us a good conference.

Christoph Krupp¹

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren

im Namen des Senats der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg begrüße ich Sie recht herzlich zu Ihrem Studienprozess, der sich im Rahmen des Themenjahres 2016 „Reformation und die Eine Welt“ der Lutherdekade mit dem Beitrag des interreligiösen Dialogs zum Thema „Gerechtigkeit“ befasst.

Sich mit dieser sehr grundsätzlichen und anspruchsvollen Thematik gerade in Hamburg auseinanderzusetzen, erscheint mir sehr passend zu sein. Unsere Stadt ist inzwischen die Heimat von über hundert verschiedenen Religionsgemeinschaften. Das ist nicht nur zugleich Anlass und Herausforderung für den interreligiösen Dialog, sondern dieser Dialog findet auch seit langem in zugleich freundschaftlicher und lebhafter Weise statt. Dafür haben sich die Religionsgemeinschaften und insbesondere die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Norddeutschland als unsere größte Religionsgemeinschaft seit vielen Jahren engagiert. Und die Akademie der Weltreligionen der Universität Hamburg trägt den dialogischen Ansatz schon im Namen und er ist ihr Programm.

Die Bedeutung des Engagements für eine Verständigung der Religionen wird gegenwärtig auf dramatische Weise deutlich. Wir erleben Unverständnis und Hass, der sich auf religiöse Motive beruft. Dem kann kein deutlicheres und wirksameres Zeichen entgegengesetzt werden als der Austausch unter den Religionen, ein Austausch, der im Übrigen nicht nur Gemeinsamkeiten sucht, sondern auch Differenzen benennt und die Beteiligten befähigt, sie zu verstehen und zu tolerieren. Das Verständnis von Gerechtigkeit berührt dabei eine Kernfrage nicht nur des religiösen, sondern auch des gesellschaftlich-politischen Denkens, das seinerseits wohl in fast allen Gesellschaften der Welt mehr oder weniger stark von religiösen Vorstellungen und Motiven mit beeinflusst wird.

Mit dem gemeinsamen Nachdenken über den Beitrag des interreligiösen Dialogs zur Gerechtigkeit haben Sie also eine große Aufgabe übernommen, bei deren Bewältigung ich Ihnen viele neue Erkenntnisse und Erfahrungen, aber auch Freude und nicht zuletzt einen angenehmen Aufenthalt in Hamburg wünsche.

¹ Dr. Christoph Krupp ist als Staatsrat Chef der Senatskanzlei der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg / Head of the Senate Chancellery of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, State Counsellor.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

in the name of the Senate of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg I extend warm greetings to your study process in the thematic framework on „Reformation and the One World“ 2016, which is part of the Luther decade. Here dealing with the contribution of the interreligious dialogue to „justice“.

It seems especially fitting to me to address this essential and demanding topic here in Hamburg. Our city is home to more than one hundred different religious communities. This is not only reason and challenge for interreligious dialogue, this dialogue has happened for a long time in a friendly and vibrant way. Religious communities, especially the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany as our biggest religious community, have engaged in it for many years. And the Academy of World Religions of Hamburg University represents a dialogue approach both in its name and in its programme.

The importance of engaging in an understanding between religions is reflected in dramatic terms at present. We experience non-understanding and hatred, which claim to base themselves on religious motifs. An exchange among religions can counter this and offer clear and meaningful opposition. This exchange does not only seek the common ground but also names differences and enables those participating to understand and to tolerate them. The understanding of justice does not only touch on the religious core, but also on the social and political thinking, which in nearly all societies worldwide are influenced more or less by religious precepts and motifs.

You have taken on a big task by engaging in common reflection on the contribution of interreligious dialogue to justice. I wish you success and many new insights and experiences, and also a delightful and pleasant time here in Hamburg.

Mustafa Yoldas¹

Liebe jüdische, christliche und muslimische Geschwister und liebe Freundinnen und Freunde,

der Titel einer der Abendveranstaltungen im Rahmen der internationalen christlich-muslimischen Studienwoche lautet „Auf dass die Welt gerechter werde...“ und ich möchte einfügen „...und dadurch friedlicher...“, denn beides, Gerechtigkeit und Frieden, sind die zentralen Botschaften aller (abrahamitischen) Religionen und sind die beiden Seiten ein- und derselben Medaille. Man könnte auch sagen, ohne Gerechtigkeit kein Frieden.

Gucken wir uns die Unruheherde und Fluchtgründe der Menschheit an, dann stellen wir fest, dass die meisten Menschen vor Unrecht fliehen. Dieses kann politisch, wirtschaftlich, religiös oder ethnisch begründet sein. Durch den Mangel an Meinungs-, Presse- und Religionsfreiheit sowie der oft frustrierenden wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse meinen viele Menschen, entweder fliehen oder gewaltsam gegen bestehendes Unrecht vorgehen zu müssen. Dabei verleitet das Gefühl, zu den Verlierern zu gehören, viele Menschen dazu, radikale Maßnahmen zu ergreifen. Unrecht bereitet auch den Nährboden für Terror, der sich dadurch auszeichnet, auch und gerade Zivilisten zu treffen wollen.

Wie wir in den letzten Monaten auf grausame Art und Weise in Ankara, Istanbul, Paris oder Brüssel zu spüren bekommen haben, ist der Terror schon längst auch in unseren Breitengraden angekommen. Diese Tatsache wird aber wiederum von denjenigen, deren Weltsicht ebenfalls auf Intoleranz und Hass beruht, zum Vorwand genommen, gänzlich gegen Flüchtlinge, Migranten und insbesondere Muslime zu wettern (Erstarken rechtsextremer Parteien, PEGIDA, etc.) und oft auch gewaltsam gegen sie vorzugehen (gewaltsame Übergriffe auf Flüchtlinge, brennende Moscheen und Flüchtlingsheime).

Damit wir aber weiterhin in einer halbwegs friedlichen Atmosphäre und Gesellschaftsordnung leben können, müssen wir alles daran setzen, dass kein Mensch unter uns das Gefühl haben darf, ausgegrenzt, benachteiligt oder diskriminiert zu werden, weil das der ideale Nährboden für die Anfälligkeit zum Extremismus ist.

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Als Vertreter der Religionsgemeinschaften kommt uns dabei eine große und besondere Aufgabe zu. Da wir in Hamburg in vielfältiger Hinsicht im interreligiösen Dialog miteinander verwoben sind, gibt es eine vertrauensvolle Zusammenarbeit auf verschiedenen Ebenen. Ob nun der interreligiöse Religionsunterricht, die Akademie der Weltreligionen oder das Interreligiöse Forum in Hamburg; alle zeugen von einem gewachsenen Vertrauen und sind das Ergebnis dieses Vertrauens.

Damit unsere Gesellschaft weiterhin friedlich bleibt, müssen wir den Dialog unter den Religionen weiter hineintragen in die Gesellschaft, in die Basis, damit auch dort Begegnung stattfindet. Denn Angst entsteht da, wo man sich nicht kennt. Der Schwiegersohn des Propheten Muhammad hat gesagt: „Der Mensch feindet das an, was er nicht kennt!“

In diesem Sinne beglückwünsche ich die Nordkirche für dieses wichtige Event und betrachte dieses Seminar als weiteren Baustein im interreligiösen Gebäude unserer Stadt.

Dear Jewish, Christian and Muslim brothers and sisters, dear friends,

The title of one of the evening events in the international Christian-Muslim study week is „So that the world may become fairer...“ and I would like to add „...and by that more peaceful...“, for both justice and peace are the central messages of all Abrahamic religions and are the two sides of one and the same medal. One could also say: No peace without justice.

If we look at the trouble spots in the world and the reasons for people fleeing, we realise that most of them flee from injustice. This can have political, economic, religious, or ethnic reasons. Lack of freedom of opinion, press and religion as well as often frustrating economic conditions create a climate where people feel that they either have to flee or they have to take violent measures against existing injustice. The feeling of being on the losing side leads many people to adopt radical measures. Injustice is a breeding ground for terror, which is aimed also and specifically at civilian targets.

As we have realised in the past months in horrific ways in Ankara, Istanbul, Paris or Brussels, terror has already arrived in our regions. This fact however is being used by those, whose view of the world is also based on intolerance and hatred, as an excuse to rant against refugees, migrants and especially Muslims, (growth of extremely right-wing parties, PEGIDA etc.) and often to attack them violently (vicious attacks on refugees, burning mosques and

refugee homes).

In order that we can continue to live in a reasonably peaceful atmosphere and society, we have to do everything possible so that no one among us has to live with a feeling of being excluded, disadvantaged or discriminated against, as this is the ideal breeding ground for sliding into extremism.

As representatives of religious communities we have an especially important task here. As we in Hamburg are interwoven together in various ways in interreligious dialogue, there is an atmosphere of trust and cooperation between us on different levels. Whether it is the *Religious Studies for All* in school, the *Academy of World Religions* or the *Interreligious Forum* in Hamburg; all of them bear witness to the trust that has grown between us, and are the result of this trust.

In order for our society to remain peaceful, we must bring the dialogue among the religions further into society to the grass roots, so that encounters also take place there at that level. For fear grows where people do not know each other. The son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad said: „People are hostile to what they do not know! “

In this sense I congratulate the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany on this important event and I consider this seminar to be a further stone in the interreligious building of our city.

Sedat Şimşek¹

Liebe Gäste aus Nah und Fern,

ich freue mich sehr ein kurzes Grußwort sprechen zu können.

Gerade angesichts der aktuellen Ereignisse hätte das Thema unserer Tagung gar nicht passender sein können. Wir sehen auf der einen Seite mit Entsetzen wie Intoleranz und Gewalt unsere Gesellschaft bedroht. Auf der anderen Seite sehen wir auch, daß die Mehrheit unserer Gesellschaft geleitet von dem Gedanken ist, religiöse, ethnische und kulturelle Vielfalt als eine Bereicherung zu sehen. Dieser Gedanke erinnert mich an den Vers im Koran: *„O ihr Menschen! Wir haben euch aus Mann und Frau erschaffen und haben euch zu Völkern und Stämmen werden lassen, damit ihr euch kennenlernt.“* (Hucurat, Vers 13)

Die Vorstellung, daß die Vielfalt unserer Gesellschaft auch ein von Gott gewollter Gedanke ist, gibt mir immer wieder Zuversicht und Kraft, den Dialog und Austausch zwischen den Religionen zu fördern. Diese Arbeit erfüllt mich nicht nur mit viel Freude, sondern ich stelle immer wieder fest, daß unsere Religionen sich sehr oft auf die gleichen Werte beziehen. Diese gemeinsamen Werte können auch einen wertvollen Beitrag zur Förderung des Gerechtigkeitsgedanken in unserer Gesellschaft leisten. Denn der Gedanke, sich für das Gute und für eine gerechte Welt zu engagieren, wird von allen Religionen getragen.

Der interreligiöse Beitrag alleine wird die Welt nicht gerecht machen. Aber er kann einen sehr wichtigen Beitrag für eine gerechtere Welt leisten.

Und sicherlich können wir von einer „gerechten Welt“ unterschiedliche Vorstellungen haben. Dies kann aber auch nur als Zeichen unserer Vielfalt und somit auch als eine geistige Bereicherung gesehen werden.

Ich begrüße daher sehr, daß wir im Rahmen unserer Tagung die Möglichkeit finden, Ideen und wertvolle Anregungen über dieses wichtige Thema miteinander auszutauschen.

¹ Sedat Şimşek Vorstandsvorsitzender ist der Vorsitzende der Islamische Religionsgemeinschaft DITIB, Hamburg und Schleswig-Holstein e.V. / Chairman of the Islamic Religious Community DITIB, Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein e.V.

Dear guests from near and far,

I am very pleased to be able to speak a short greeting.

Particularly in view of current events, the theme of our meeting could not be more fitting. We see that intolerance and violence threatens our society on the one hand. On the other hand, we also see that the majority of our society is guided by the thought of seeing religious, ethnic and cultural diversity as an enrichment. This idea reminds me of the verse in the Quran: „O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another.“ (Hucurat, verse 13)

The idea that the diversity of our society is a thought that is willed by God, gives me the confidence and strength to promote dialogue and exchange between religions. This work fills me with not only a lot of pleasure, but I also very often realize that our religions very often refer to the same values.

The common values can also make a valuable contribution to promoting the principle of justice in our society. Because the idea to get involved for the good and for a just world, is supported by all religions.

Interreligious contribution alone will make the world not just. But he can make a very important contribution to a more just world. And certainly we can have different ideas of a just world. But this can also be seen as a sign of our diversity and thus also as a spiritual enrichment.

I therefore welcome very much that we will find the opportunity within the framework of our meeting to share ideas and valuable suggestions on this important issue together.

**Was bedeutet mir der Dialog der
abrahamitischen Religionen in dieser Stadt?
Stellungnahmen**

**What does the dialogue of the Abrahamic
religions mean to me in this city?
Statements**

Kirsten Fehrs¹

Der Herr, mein Gott, macht meine Finsternis licht. Das steht im Psalm 18, im Psalter, der als eines der schönsten poetischen Bücher der hebräischen Bibel gilt. Viele der Gedanken dort lassen sich auch im Koran finden – so etwa in der 4. Sure, wenn es heißt: "Wir sandten hinab zu euch ein klares Licht."

Dieses Licht sollen wir als Religionsgemeinschaften in der Stadt zum Leuchten bringen und nicht durch Streit und Polemik verdunkeln. Wir sind von unserer Tradition her aufgerufen, miteinander das erhellende Gespräch zu suchen. Darüber, was uns Licht ist und Trost, was uns wertvoll und heilig ist. Damit wir es gegenseitig achten, würdigen und schützen.

Wir haben diesen Dialog in Hamburg in langen Jahren eingeübt. Daraus ist viel Gutes entstanden. Ich denke an den Religionsunterricht für Alle, in dem Kinder sowohl ihre eigene Religion kennenlernen als auch die Traditionen und den Glauben der anderen. Das ist keine Selbstverständlichkeit, und natürlich gibt es auch Ängste, Befürchtungen, Zweifel – wie immer, wenn ein neuer Weg gegangen wird. Aber grundsätzlich herrscht ein Konsens in dieser Stadt, dass der gemeinsame Unterricht gewollt ist. Viele Rückmeldungen aus der Politik, aus der Gesellschaft, aus den Religionsgemeinschaften bestätigen das. Ein Beispiel ist auch die Akademie der Weltreligionen. Eine wichtige Wurzel ist schließlich die Gesellschaft für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit in Hamburg – sie war 1952 der mutige Versuch, zwei Weltreligionen miteinander ins Gespräch zu bringen.

Neben dem Gespräch braucht es immer auch gemeinsame Zeichen. Sehr beeindruckend waren für mich unsere Friedensgebete – 2014 vor der Blauen Moschee mit Christen, Juden und Muslimen, dann 2015 auf dem Domplatz neben St. Petri mit Vertretern aller Weltreligionen. Die nachhaltige Erkenntnis, die uns seitdem in Hamburg voran gebracht hat, ist: Es braucht mehr als das Gespräch der Religionsführenden in stiller Übereinkunft. Es braucht einen Resonanzraum hinein in die Gesellschaft, dass dies gewollt wird.

Denn wir haben als Religionsgemeinschaften eine Verantwortung für den Frieden in der Stadt und in der Welt. Unser Glaube will das Licht sein für eine sonst manchmal sehr düstere Welt, ein helles Licht – und keine Brandfackel,

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die ganze Länder entzündet und in Flammen aufgehen lässt, wie es im Mittleren Osten und in der Mitte Afrikas schmerzvoll zu sehen ist. Alle Menschen guten Willens müssen zusammenstehen gegen die Gewalt. Und das klappt nur, wenn wir uns über das verständigen, was zum Frieden führt.

Wir brauchen Räume, in denen wir lernen, wieder mehr davon zu reden, woran wir glauben. Was uns Herzenssache ist. Gern auch, was uns unterscheidet, warum nicht? Vor allem aber müssen wir aus unseren Vorurteilen ausziehen, so wie einst Abraham das altvertraute Haran verließ. Dann werden wir der Segen sein, den Gott gibt und den die Welt braucht.

The Lord, my God, lightens my darkness. This is written in Psalm 18, in the Book of Psalms, which is regarded as one of the most beautiful poetic books of the Hebrew Bible. Many of the thoughts there can also be found in the Qur'an, for example in Surah 4, where it says: "We have sent down to you a bright light."

As religious communities we should let this light shine in our city, and not let it be darkened by disputes and polemics. From our traditions we are called to seek enlightening debate with each other. On what our light is and our comfort, what is valuable for us and what is holy. So that we mutually respect each other, value each other and safeguard each other.

We have practised this dialogue in Hamburg for many years, and a lot of good things have come out of it. I am thinking of „Religious Studies for All“ in school, where children learn about their own religion as well as the traditions and the faith of others. This is not a matter of course, and there are of course also anxieties, fears, doubts – as always when things take a new direction. But we have a common consensus in this city that we want these lessons together. A lot of feedback from politics, from society and from the religious communities confirms this. Another example is the Academy of World Religions. And finally an important starting point is the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation in Hamburg –the bold attempt in 1952 to open up a dialogue between these two world religions.

Apart from debate it also always requires joint symbols. To me our prayers for peace were very impressive – in 2014 in front of the Blue Mosque with Christians, Jews and Muslims, then in 2015 in the Cathedral Square next to Saint Peter's with representatives of all world religions. The lasting awareness we have gained in Hamburg since then is: it needs more than just

the debate of religious leaders in quiet consensus. It needs to resonate into the spheres of society that consensus is the aim.

As religious communities we have a responsibility for peace in this city and in the world. Our faith wants to be a light in an otherwise often dark world, a bright light - and not a flaming torch that sets whole countries ablaze, as can be seen painfully in the Middle East and in central Africa. All people of good will have to stand together against violence. And that will only work when we find a consensus on what leads to peace.

We need space where we can learn again to speak more about what we believe. What touches our hearts. Also about what makes us different, why not? But above all we have to leave behind our prejudices, just as Abraham left his familiar Haran. Then we will be the blessing which God gives and which the world needs.

Hans-Jochen Jaschke¹

Von Abraham wird gesagt: „Er glaubte Gott, und es wurde ihm als Gerechtigkeit angerechnet. Daran erkennt ihr, dass nur die, die glauben, Abrahams Söhne sind.“ (Gal 3,6-7) So schreibt der heilige Paulus in seinem Brief an die Galater.

Abraham ist ein gemeinsames Vorbild für die Hinwendung des Menschen zu Gott. Der Glaube, die Hingabe an Gott als dem Zentrum der menschlichen Existenz. Gott ist das Zentrum und Ziel des Menschen. In ihm findet er Trost, Geborgenheit und Barmherzigkeit.

Diese Hingabe an Gott als dem Zentrum des menschlichen Seins verbindet die abrahamitischen Religionen. Wir haben in Abraham ein gemeinsames Vorbild.

Doch trotz des gemeinsamen Vorbilds im Glauben sind die drei Religionen, die sich auf Abraham berufen, „selbstständige“ Religionen, die jeweils ihre eigene innere Logik haben. Es gilt im Umgang miteinander, diese innere Logik der anderen Religion kennenzulernen und ihr mit Verständnis zu begegnen. Gegenseitiger Respekt ist eine unabdingbare Voraussetzung, denn nur dadurch nehme ich den anderen in seinem Denken und Glauben ernst.

Im gegenseitigen Kennenlernen können Missverständnisse und Ängste abgebaut werden. Dies ist notwendiger denn je. Immer wieder werden Religionen durch radikale Auslegungen verdunkelt, die die Barmherzigkeit und Hinwendung Gottes zu allen Menschen ausblenden. Andere Religionen und andere Auslegungen werden verdammt, der Mensch spielt sich zum Richter auf.

Die Liebe Gottes gilt allen, da alle Menschen Geschöpfe des einen Gottes sind. Zu diesem Kennenlernen gehört die Freiheit. Die Freiheit ermöglicht es dem Menschen, sich bewusst ohne Zwang und Angst Gott zu zuwenden. Gott will unsere Liebe, unsere Hingabe an ihn. Für uns Christen hat Jesus diese Hingabe in Freiheit beispielhaft vorgelebt.

Die Freiheit und damit auch die Religionsfreiheit muss überall auf der Welt als unveräußerliches Menschenrecht anerkannt werden. Wir erfahren sie in Deutschland und vor Ort in Hamburg. Fordern wir sie weltweit ein: in China,

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aber auch in vielen muslimischen Gesellschaften. Auch die Freiheit, nicht zu glauben, muss dazu gehören.

Nicht die Erfüllung von Gesetzen, sondern das Öffnen des Herzens in Freiheit für die Liebe und die Barmherzigkeit Gottes stehen im Mittelpunkt einer wahrhaftigen Religion.

Auch die Religion muss frei sein. Die Trennung von Religion und Staat ist für die freie Entfaltung des Glaubens notwendig. Religion darf nicht zu einer „Staatsreligion“ werden, die den eigentlichen Kern des Religiösen aufgibt und zu einer Ideologie wird.

„Gebt dem Kaiser, was dem Kaiser gehört, und Gott, was Gott gehört!“ (Mk 12,17) Dieses Wort Jesu ist Maßstab für uns Christen.

Ich glaube, dass wir in Hamburg auf einem guten Weg sind. Die Religionen – nicht nur die abrahamitischen – sind im Gespräch miteinander, üben den Dialog.

Durch diese Gespräche kommt es zu einem persönlichen Kennenlernen und Wertschätzen. Wir lernen einander kennen, wir entdecken die verschiedenen Frömmigkeitsformen und sehen in den Unterschieden keine Grenzen, sondern Herausforderungen und eine Bereicherung.

Durch die große Zahl von Flüchtlingen, die aus unterschiedlichen Ländern und Kulturkreisen zu uns nach Hamburg gekommen sind, sind die Religionen, die Gläubigen in unserer Stadt besonders aufgefordert, ein Zeichen für die Barmherzigkeit Gottes zu setzen. Wir lehnen gemeinsam Fremdenfeindlichkeit ab, erst recht den Terror, der uns bedroht.

Und was sagen wir jetzt, nach den Verbrechen von Brüssel im Namen eines islamischen Staates? Die Religionsführer dürfen nicht schweigen. Wo bleibt ihre laute Stimme, ihr weltweiter Protest, besonders der muslimischen Autoritäten? Natürlich verurteilen unsere muslimischen Freunde die Untaten, aber wir brauchen unüberhörbare Signale auf der ganzen Welt. Wie wollen die abrahamitischen Religionen vom Dialog über den Frieden reden, wenn solche Verbrechen im Namen des Islam geschehen? Zum Dialog gibt es keine Alternative, aber er braucht klare Worte.

Trotz Unterschiede in Glaubensfragen, können die abrahamitischen Religionen in ihrer Hinwendung und Unterstützung der Flüchtlinge die Nähe Gottes sichtbar machen, die helfen kann, Hass und Gewalt zu überwinden.

Wir tragen gemeinsam Verantwortung vor Gott und für die Menschen.

So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham.” (Galatians 3, 6-7) This is what St. Paul wrote to the Galatians.

Abraham is a common role model for human orientation to God. The religious faith, the devotion to God is the focal point of human existence. God is the centre and the aim of any human being. In God, human beings find consolation, warmth and security as well as mercy.

This devotion to God as the centre of human being connects the Abrahamic religions. In Abraham we have a common role model.

However, despite this common role model in faith, the three religions - being orientated to Abraham - are "independent" religions, each having its own internal logic. It is essential for any dialogue to learn from each other about the respective internal logic and to regard it sympathetically. Mutual respect therefore is an indispensable precondition for any dialogue in order take each other serious in each other's religious faith and belief.

By learning from and about each other, misunderstanding and fear can be reduced. This has become even more essential than ever before. Again and again radical interpretations darken the key messages of religions, and so the mercy and love of God to every human being becomes invisible. Foreign religions and unshared interpretations are being condemned, mankind allows itself to judge like God. However, the love of God applies to every human being, as every human being has been created by God.

For any process of getting to know each other, freedom is the prerequisite. Freedom enables human beings to orientate towards God without any pressure or fear. God wants our voluntary love and devotion. For Christians, Jesus is the role model for this voluntary orientation and devotion to God.

Freedom and with that freedom of religion is an unquestionable human right.

We gladly may experience this freedom in Germany, in Hamburg. At the same time, we need to demand this freedom to become reality across all nations: in China, as well as in many Muslim societies. Of course, this also needs to include the freedom of not believing in God at all.

Not the pure fulfillment of laws, but the opening of hearts and souls in freedom for the love and mercy of God is the focal point of all religions.

Also, religion needs to be free. The separation from religion and state is necessary for the free development of faith and belief. Religion must not become a "state religion", losing its core messages and becoming an ideology.

Jesus said: "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." (Marc 12,17). This word of Jesus serves as a rule for Christians.

In Hamburg, I think we are on a good way. Members of the different religions - not only the Abrahamic religions - are taking part in the interreligious dialogue.

Through this dialogue, we meet on a personal level and we appreciate each other. We get to know each other and by that discover the different forms of devotion. These differences do not separate us; they are challenging us in relation to our own faith.

Due to the high number of refugees that have come to Hamburg from different countries as well as cultural and religious backgrounds, religious people in our city are especially encouraged to give a clear sign for the mercy of God. We refuse xenophobia as well as we refuse any form of terror and violence threatening all of us.

And what can we say now after the terror attack in Brussels in the name of the so called "Islamic State"? The religious leaders must not remain silent. Where is their loud voice, the worldwide protest especially of the Muslim authorities? Obviously our Muslim friends condemn these attacks, but we need to hear loud and clear signs for the whole world.

How can we talk about peace, if there is such crime happening "in the name" of Islam?

There is no alternative to enter into a dialogue, however we need to be clear and honest.

Despite the differences in faith and belief, the Abrahamic religions can help making Gods love and mercy visible in supporting the refugees and helping to overcome hate and violence.

It is our joint responsibility towards God to care for these people looking for help. The dialogue helps us to become even better in serving.

Shlomo Bistritzky¹

Während meiner Kindheit in Israel war das friedliche Zusammenleben von Moslems und Juden - Christen waren und sind in der Minderheit - eine alltägliche Erfahrung für mich. Wenn wir mit der Familie vom Norden nach Jerusalem gefahren sind, haben wir immer in Jericho gehalten, um dort einzukaufen. Man ging friedlich und respektvoll miteinander um. In dieser Welt bin ich aufgewachsen.

Heute wäre das undenkbar, die politische Situation in Israel hat sich stark gewandelt. Von den vielen religiös motivierten Kriegen und Auseinandersetzungen, die es überall auf der Welt gibt, muss ich hier aber nicht reden. Wir werden diese Welt hier auch nicht ändern können. Darum geht es heute aber auch nicht.

Heute geht es um das Zusammenleben hier in dieser Stadt, in Hamburg, und darum, was wir gemeinsam für ein friedliches und respektvolles Miteinander tun können.

Als Rabbiner, der „nur“ die jüdische Religion, die Tora und den Talmud, studiert hat, möchte ich nicht den Inhalt der anderen Religionen erörtern oder Glaubensfragen diskutieren. Dies wäre nicht richtig und auch unangebracht. Unser Glaube und unsere Einstellungen bezüglich religiöser Lebensführung unterscheiden sich, dementsprechend praktizieren wir Religion auf völlig unterschiedliche Art und Weise. Dies soll auch so bleiben, solange wir nicht das Recht eines anderen berühren. Auch das Recht der Religionsausübung hört dort auf, wo das Recht eines anderen beginnt.

Worauf es mir daher im Dialog der abrahamitischen Religionen ankommt, ist also, dass die Religionen sich respektieren und in Frieden miteinander leben, obwohl sie so unterschiedlich sind.

Und ich bin davon überzeugt, dass wir dafür viel gemeinsam tun können, wenn wir weiterhin im Dialog bleiben.

During my childhood in Israel the peaceful coexistence of Muslims and Jews - Christians were, and are a minority - was an everyday experience for me. When we drove from the North to Jerusalem with our family, we always

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stopped in Jericho to shop. We dealt with each other in a peaceful and respectful way. This was the world I grew up in.

This would be unthinkable today, the situation in Israel has changed a lot. I do not need to mention the many religiously motivated wars and struggles everywhere in the world here. We will not be able to change this world here either. But that is not what this is about.

Today is about coexistence here in this city, Hamburg, and about what we can do together to contribute to living together peacefully and respectfully.

As a rabbi, who has „only“ studied the Jewish religion, the Torah and the Talmud, I do not wish to argue the contents of other religions and discuss issues of faith. This would not be right or appropriate. Our faiths and our attitudes concerning religious lifestyles are different, we practise religion in very different ways. That should remain so, as long as we do not infringe on the rights of others. Freedom of religion has its limits where the rights of others begin.

My interest in the dialogue of the Abrahamic religions is about respect between religions and living together in peace, even though we are so different.

And I am convinced that we can do a lot together, if we continue our dialogue

Reza Ramezani¹

Der Schlüssel zu einem friedlichen und verantwortungsvollen Miteinander ist der Dialog. Werte wie Sicherheit, Gerechtigkeit, Freiheit und Frieden können nur gemeinsam auf Basis von gegenseitiger Akzeptanz sowie Respekt und Vertrauen erhalten und gestärkt werden.

Der heilige Qur'an als Licht der Wegweisung für ein ethisches und verantwortungsbewusstes Leben lehrt uns, den Dialog mit Weisheit und einem respektvollen Umgang miteinander zu gestalten. So bezeugt die Sure an-Nahl (16:125) nicht nur, den Dialog zu suchen, sondern auch, wie das Gespräch am besten zu führen ist. Denn die göttlichen Propheten sprachen mit jenen, die kein Wissen über den göttlichen Pfad besaßen, in schöner Ermahnung und Weisheit und debattierten auf die beste Weise in prophetischer Geduld mit ihnen. Hiervon zeugen die Fragen und Zweifel der Andersgläubigen, gar der Gegner und Widersacher der göttlichen Gebote und Gesandten einerseits sowie der Umgang, die Reaktionen und Debatten der Propheten mit ihnen andererseits, die uns allesamt zum freien Denken und zum gemeinsamen Dialog miteinander einladen.

Betrachten wir zudem die Lebensart des heiligen Propheten Muhammad (s. a.), sehen wir, dass er verschiedene Ansätze für den Dialog auswählte: So ist neben dem persönlichen Kontakt und Austausch, unter anderem beispielsweise mit den Stammesführern der Quraisch, auch auf den Dialog und die Gespräche durch seine persönliche Anwesenheit in den verschiedenen Stämmen, das Entsenden von Dialogbeauftragten sowie der schriftliche Dialog in Form von Briefen an die Könige und religiösen Oberhäupter seiner Zeit hinzuweisen.

Seit inzwischen mehr als 55 Jahren ist das Islamische Zentrum Hamburg (IZH) – auch bekannt als die Blaue Moschee an der Alster – ein Ort der Annäherung der Religionen und des gesellschaftlichen Diskurses, in der Muslime aus allen Rechtsschulen und Herkunftsländern ebenso wie Gläubige aus anderen Religionen und Wahrheitssuchende miteinander ins Gespräch kommen. Prof. Dr. Falaturi war einer der Begründer dieser seit den 1960er-Jahren regelmäßig stattfindenden interreligiösen Dialoge in Deutschland. Auf den islamischen Gelehrten und Philosophen geht auch die Gründung der Islamischen Akademie Deutschland (IAD) zurück, die seit 1996 einen

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wertvollen Beitrag für die Verständigung und das friedliche Zusammenleben in Deutschland leistet.

Zu den wichtigsten Zielsetzung der Dialogabteilung der IAD gehören:

- Vorstellung eines vernunftorientierten und gemäßigten Islams frei von nationalen, kulturellen und politischen Einflüssen – frei von jeglicher Über- und Untertreibung
- Diskussion und Dialog über gemeinsame Lehren und Werte der abrahamitischen Religionen und die gemeinsame Umsetzung dieser für mehr Ethik und Spiritualität in der Gesellschaft
- Förderung des intra- und interreligiösen Dialoges in Hamburg, Deutschland und Europa für ein sicheres und vereintes Europa
- Die Unterstützung und Förderung der islamischen Einheit sowie das Engagement der muslimischen Mitbürger für ihre Gesellschaft

The key for a peaceful and responsible community is dialogue. Values such as security, justice, freedom and peace can only be preserved and strengthened on the basis of mutual acceptance, respect and trust.

The holy Qur'an, as a beam giving direction to an ethical and responsible life, teaches us to enter into dialogue in wisdom and respectful interaction. The Surah An-Nahl (16:125) teaches us not only to seek dialogue, but also how best to lead the discussions. For the divine prophets spoke to those, who had no knowledge of the divine path, in attractive exhortation and wisdom, and their debate with them showed prophetic patience. This is shown by the questions and doubts of the people of different faith, even those who were opponents and adversaries of the divine commandments and the emissaries on the one hand, as well as the interaction, reactions and debates of the prophets with these on the other hand; thus we are all invited to free thinking and dialogue with each other.

If we look at the lifestyle of the holy prophet, we also notice that he chose various approaches for dialogue: Apart from personal contact and exchange such as with the tribal leaders of the Quraish, we can point to his dialogue and talks when personally present among various tribes, sending representatives for dialogue and his written dialogue in letters to kings and religious leaders of his time.

For more than 55 years the Islamic Centre Hamburg (IZH) – also known as the Blue Mosque at the Alster Lake – has been a place of contact for religions and

for social discourse, where Muslims from all schools of jurisprudence and countries of origin, as well as believers from other religions and seekers of the truth can enter into debate. Prof Dr Falaturi was one of the founders of these interreligious dialogues taking place at regular intervals since the 1960s in Germany. This scholar and philosopher is also behind the founding of the Islamic Academy Germany (IAD), which has made a valuable contribution towards understanding and peaceful coexistence in Germany since 1996.

Among the most important aims of the dialogue department of IAD are:

- Presenting a rational and moderate Islam free from national, cultural and political influences - free from any form of exaggeration or understatement
- Discussion and dialogue on common teachings and values of the Abrahamic religions and working together to transform them for more ethics and spirituality in society
- Promotion of intra- and interreligious dialogue in Hamburg, Germany and Europe for a safe, secure and united Europe
- Assistance and promotion of Islamic unity and involvement of Muslim citizens within society

Ramazan Ucar¹

Bismillāhi ar-Raḥmān ar-Raḥīm - Im Namen Allahs des Erbarmers des Barmherzigen

Im Islam spricht man traditionell nicht von „abrahamitischen Religionen“, weshalb jener Begriff in der religiösen Primärliteratur auch keine Verwendung findet. Stattdessen sprechen diese von „Religionen göttlichen Ursprungs“ [dîn-i-ilâhi] oder „monotheistischen [ḥanîf] Religionen“, wenn vom Judentum oder Christentum die Rede ist. Im Koran selbst wird oft direkt auf die Religion Abrahams² – Friede und Segen auf ihm – Bezug genommen, da Muslime davon ausgehen, dass die Glaubensfundamente der wahren Religion Gottes seit der dem ersten Menschen und Propheten Adam – Friede und Segen auf ihm – unverändert geblieben sind. Lediglich die von Gott gesetzten Handlungsnormen an die Menschen unterscheiden sich je nach Zeit, Ort und Gemeinschaft voneinander, nicht aber der Glaube an ihn selbst.

Die Religion des Islams erachtet alle Menschen, welche den ihnen entsandten Gottesboten und Propheten ihrer Zeit Folge leisten als Gläubige und Gottergebene, wobei die Pflicht der Menschen, dem jeweiligen Gottesgesandten zu folgen, bis zum Auftreten des nächsten Propheten befristet ist.

Der koranische Begriff der „Religion Abrahams“ betont den Monotheismus Abrahams, seinen Ein-Gott-Glauben. Ebenso lässt sich hieraus deuten, dass Abraham – Friede und Segen seien auf ihm – nur einer Religion anhing und weiterhin gilt er als „Urvater“ der Religion, was natürlich nicht bedeutet, dass andere Propheten vor ihm keine Religion verkündet hätten. Abraham wird als „Urvater“ verstanden, da seine Geschichte im Koran und den Aussprüchen des Propheten recht ausführlich geschildert und sein Leben und Wirken im Besonderen von der Verkündigung und dem Abmühen gegenüber der Vielgötterei und dem Unglauben geprägt ist.

Es ist äußerst wichtig einen Dialog mit allen Gläubigen zu führen, welche ihre Religion auf Abraham zurück führen, auf dass sich die abrahamitischen Religionen ihres gemeinsamen Ursprungs erneut bewusst werden, einander Kennenlernen und trotz aller Unterschiede ein friedliches Miteinander leben und zelebrieren können. Der Dialog dient ferner dazu die Perspektiven des jeweils anderen kennenzulernen und eigene Positionen zu reflektieren, denn

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² Qur'ān; u.A. 6:161; 2:130.

nur auf diese Weise wird Empathie ermöglicht und Toleranz gegenüber Anderem gefördert.

Wir Muslime, die Centrum-Moschee im Besonderen, betrachten den Dialog mit Anhängern anderer Religionen als religiöse Pflicht, sind in jeder Form an ihm interessiert und profitieren von ihm in hohem Maße. Ein konkretes Beispiel hierfür ist die mentale Unterstützung und das Vertrauen von unseren nichtmuslimischen Freunden aus den Nachbargemeinden, ohne die wir insbesondere unmittelbar nach dem 11. September es sehr schwer haben würden. Uns ist klar, dass viele Schwierigkeiten die wir als Muslime erleiden würden, beseitigt werden, schon bevor wir sie wahrnehmen. Aus diesen Gründen genießt der Dialog in unserer Gemeinde höchste Priorität.

Bismillāhi ar-Raḥmān ar-Raḥīm - In the name of Allāh, the most compassionate, the merciful

Traditionally one does not speak of “Abrahamic religions” in Islam, which is why this term is not used in primary literature. These primary texts instead use terms such as “religions of divine origin” [dîn-i-ilâhi] and “monotheistic religions”, in reference to Judaism or Christendom. The Quran itself often refers to the religion of Abraham³ - peace be upon him -, as Muslims suppose that the foundations of faith within the true religion of God remained unchanged since the first human being and Prophet Adam - peace be upon him. Even though norms and ethics set by God for people differ according to time, place and community, faith alone does not.

The religion of Islam considers people who follow the messengers and prophets of their time sent to them by God as believers. The first duty of man, to follow their respective messenger, is limited to the occurrence of the next prophet.

The Qur’anic term, “religion of Abraham”, emphasizes Abraham’s monotheism, his belief in one God. One can understand from this, that Abraham - peace be upon him -, followed only one religion and is still known as forefather of religion. However, clearly this does not mean that the religion preached by prophets before him lack Divine origin. Abraham is understood as the forefather due his detailed history related in the Quran and the prophetic traditions of the prophet Muhammad - peace be upon him -,

³ Quran: 6:161; 2:130; and elsewhere.

especially emphasizing his proclamation of faith and his struggle against paganism and disbelief.

To engage in dialogue with adherents of those who believe in a Religion which is traced back to Abraham is of utmost importance, so that the Abrahamic religions may once again realize their common origin, come to understand each other and live and celebrate a peaceful coexistence despite the differences of their traditions. Besides, dialogue serves the purpose of understanding each other's perspective and reflecting on one's own opinions that he or she may hold. Only through engaging with each other is empathy possible and tolerance promoted.

We as Muslims, in particular the Centrum-Mosque [Centrum-Moschee], deem dialogue with the adherents of other religions as a religious duty and are interested in all of its forms so that we may all continue to benefit from each other. A concrete example for this is the vast support and the trust of our non-Muslim friends from our neighbouring communities, without whom - especially after 9/11 - life would be very strenuous and troublesome for us. To us it is clear that our neighbours lift many difficulties from us that we otherwise would have to face, sometimes even before we realize them. Due to their kindness and countless other reasons, dialogue is highly prioritized in our community.

**Gerechtigkeit als hermeneutischer Schlüssel für
die Interpretation von Hebräischer Bibel, Neuem
Testament und Koran, und im Buddhismus**

**Justice as hermeneutical key for the
interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, New
Testament and the Qur'an, and in Buddhism**

Justice as hermeneutic key for the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible

Jonathan Wittenberg¹

Texts

Genesis 18:17-33 God's justice

Exodus 23:1-11 Society and justice

Isaiah 58:1-11 A passion for justice

Justice, *Tsedek*, is a central theme of the Hebrew Bible. It encompasses both the lowest and the highest, from our relationship with God to our responsibility towards the most vulnerable members of society here on earth.

The Torah [the five books of Moses, which comprise Judaism's core sacred text and lie at the heart of all further rabbinic interpretation] repeatedly enjoins the Jewish People to practice justice. This entails establishing a fair judicial system, avoiding corruption and bias, providing the same access to justice for richer and poorer, stronger and weaker alike, and, especially, protecting the widow, the orphan and the stranger.

The requirement to practise justice is underlined by frequent reference to the central and defining experience of the Jewish people in the narrative of the Torah, in effect the meta-story of the Jewish People: their slavery and suffering in Egypt and their subsequent redemption. This is as if to say: You who have experienced injustice and indignity against your very persons therefore know most deeply the importance of justice and human dignity.

The practice of legal justice falls within the framework of a wider understanding of social justice. On the sabbath, servant and maidservant,

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even working animals such as the ox and the ass, are entitled to rest, just like the more wealthy members of society. The seventh, or sabbatical, year represents a redistribution of wealth, most radically expressed in the institution of the Jubilee. The requirement to take responsibility for one another, especially in misfortune, is stressed again and again in Biblical and post-Biblical literature.

There is no clear line of demarcation between the moral and the spiritual. God seeks justice on earth; where it is absent, God would rather be absent also. Time and again the Hebrew prophets inveigh against social injustice, especially the oppression of the poor in the causes of tyranny and greed. The pathos of their words is at the moral heart of the Hebrew Bible; their power continues to inspire today, lying at the core of the impassioned messages of such champions of justice as Abraham Joshua Heschel and Martin Luther King.

Beyond the social dimension lie irresolvable spiritual questions. Is God just? This issue, with which Abraham challenges God's plans for Sodom right at the very beginning of the story of Judaism, reaches into the depths of the Book of Job, and remains perhaps the central, and most painful, concern of Jewish theology to this day, especially in light of the Holocaust.

Justice does not stand alone as the core value of the Hebrew Bible; it is always balanced by the counterpoise and partnership of *Hesed*, loving- or, perhaps better, faithful-kindness. *Hesed* represents a bond of deep compassion, leading its practitioners to act beyond the requirements of the law, to be generous, forgiving and unselfish. As God is understood to be compassionate, so too must we act with compassion. Both compassion without justice, and justice without compassion, remain incomplete.

Rabbinic teaching, from the earliest commentaries to this day, is pre-occupied with the challenges and ramifications, successes and failures, of the human endeavour to put these ideals into practice.

Justice as hermeneutic key for the interpretation of the New Testament

Werner Kahl¹

Texts

Mt 5-6

Rom 3:21-31; 12:14-21

Gal 3:26-29

The understanding of justice (*dikaiosynē*) in the writings of the New Testament is informed by the understanding of justice in the Jewish Holy Scripture. This is not surprising since all the New Testament writers, most likely, were Jews – Jews who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. They presupposed that justice is one of the most central attributes of God. Accordingly, the term justice in the New Testament became one of the most important terms used to bring to expression the meaning of Gospel as good news, i.e. what God did in, through, and with Jesus as universal Messiah.²

Paul interpreted the death (and resurrection) of Jesus Christ at the cross in terms of divine justice – not in the sense that his death was just or justified, but in the sense that this event 1. demonstrated God's justice on behalf of all humanity and 2. that it bestowed God's justice upon all human beings without discrimination (Rom 3:21-31). According to Paul, it is due to this event that equality of all humanity before God became realized. As the just God, God does not prefer anybody (Rom 2:11) but includes everybody amongst his chosen people.

Daniel Boyarin has drawn our attention to the danger – which became a widespread reality in the history of the church, esp. in mission history – of a misinterpretation of Paul according to which difference had to be eradicated

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² Other terms used in the New Testament for the purpose of communicating the meaning of Gospel are, amongst others: love, closeness of the kingdom of God, life in fulness or eternal life.

and others forced to endorse sameness as imposed by the powerful or by the majority.³ With respect to the organisation of transcultural faith communities, applied divine justice meant for Paul – as for Boyarin! – the *appreciation of difference*. Accordingly, Paul in Gal 3:28 means to communicate his conviction that in Christ all are one and equal, regardless of each and everyone’s heritage or social status: Being a Jew or Greek, a slave or free-person, a woman or man does matter but should not separate people. Before God, and in the community and society, each and everyone count the way s/he is.

The narratives of Jesus Christ depict the resurrection of Jesus as an act of God’s justice by which the unjust death sentence of the Romans had been reversed. The numerous narratives of Jesus’ healing and saving miracles in the Gospels can also be interpreted in terms of applied justice: They make transparent that especially the disregarded and suffering ones in society become subject of divine justice resulting in a reversal of their social, physical and mental plight.

God’s justice is supposed to be emulated by the followers of Jesus (Mt 5:6.20; 6:10.33; Mt 26.46). This emulation finds its strongest expression in the love of enemies (Mt 5:43-48; Rom 12:17-21). A paradigmatic Jesus narrative of the divine inclusion also of the enemies is presented in Lk 22:47-51 where Jesus heals the severed ear of a soldier who came to take Jesus captive.

In the history of Christianity, the social and economic implications of the Gospel about God’s kingdom where divine justice reigns have often been overlooked, due to an individualistic interpretation of Gospel. The notions on justice in the Qur’an can be read and appreciated from the perspective of Gospel by Christians as contextualized divine revelation. Passages like Sura 93 and 107 or those that criticize the abuse of scales in business transactions remind also Christians of the need of social and economic justice.

³ Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew. Paul and the Politics of Identity*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1994.

Justice as hermeneutic key for the interpretation of the Qur'an

Katajun Amirpur¹

There is a lot one could say about justice as a hermeneutical tool for Quranic exegesis. One can for example point to the two theological schools of the Mu'tazila and the Shia, who use justice as their main argument, why there can't be any determination in Islam. They claim that those verses in the Qur'an one might understand as if men were determined need to be understood in a different than the obvious way. They argue - and in doing that they contradict another theological school of Islam, the Asharia - that men must have a free will and a choice. Because otherwise it would be unjust from God if he punished people for what they have no free will to decide upon. Here justice becomes a main hermeneutical tool in understanding God's will.

Justice has become especially an important in Shi'i Islam. There are five things every Shi'i must believe in if wants to call himself a Shi'i Muslim. And here justice is definitely more outstanding than it is in Sunni Islam. A Shi'i Muslim believes in tauhid, the unity of God, the Imamate, the Prophethood of Muhammad, resurrection and adl, justice. So the most important characteristic of God is justice. And this is probably the most important feature he is associated with by all Muslims. Of course God is *al-rahman* too, the merciful. But the foremost feature of God is: Justice.

And because of this important role that justice plays, it has not been a long way to social justice and even Muslim socialism. Here justice is a hermeneutical tool for reading socialism into the Qur'an. In the first part of the 20th century a companion of the prophet was rediscovered by Muslim thinkers. Abu Dharr is credited as a principal antecedent of Islamic socialism, since he had protested against the accumulation of wealth by the ruling class during Uthman's caliphate and had urged the equitable redistribution of wealth. His interpretation of sura 9:34 was seen as predicting socialist ideas,

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as he had said, that no one should have more goods than what was needed to satisfy his basic needs; no one should accumulate wealth. One of the first thinkers to understand him as the first Muslim socialist was the Lebanese Ahmad Rida, who died in 1953. In the forties this idea gained followers among Egyptian intellectuals – and in 1945 the Egyptian ‘Abd al-Ḥamid as-Sahhar wrote a book calling Abu Dharr an ascetic socialist and a model for socialism in Islam.

This book was translated by the Iranian Ali Shariati into Persian and published in 1955 as *Abu Dharr, God’s socialist servant*. Here Shariati presented Abu Dharr as the perfect model of a devout socialist. Abu Dharr was seen as a hero of the poor and with them: of authentic Islam which means just Islam.

This idea of anti-capitalist Islam where justice is used as a hermeneutical tool to understand the Qur’an is nowadays becoming more and more important in Turkey. Ihsan Eliacik traces his ideas back to the same Ali Shariati and to Ayatollah Taleghani and his famous book *Islam and Ownership (Eslam va Malekiyat)* which argued in support of collective ownership as if it were an article of faith in Islam.

Eliacik has emerged as the public face of anti-capitalist Muslims, a loose group of pious activists, who deplore what they see as the venality, hubris and ostentation of Recep Erdogan and a new Islamic bourgeoisie that has thrived under his reign. “Islam is about social justice, not about rituals like praying five times a day, or women covering their head,” says Eliacik.

There is one other big dimension of justice when it comes to reading the Quran: Feminism. Islam and feminism combined, Islamic feminism even, is that at all possible, you might ask. The opinion that Islam and feminism are by nature dissimilar and even incompatible is something we often get to hear not only from critics of Islam, but also from conservative Muslims. But nonetheless it does exist - an emancipatory women’s movement using Islamic arguments to fight for equal rights and gender justice. These women see the Qur’an not as denying equal rights and gender justice but as demanding them even. They argue that wherever misogyny can be found, it does not originate in the Qur’an itself but with men interpreting the Qur’an. Men, they state, have been monopolizing Qur’an exegesis for centuries, and now this needs to change.

Islamic feminists use genuinely Islamic arguments to campaign for demands which ultimately are no less radical than those of their secular counterparts. But in contrast to secular feminism, the arguments used by Islamic feminists cannot be dismissed out of hand by the accusation that they are a-religious. In our days, this emancipatory discourse is most often associated

internationally with two women who have contributed seminal texts towards it. And I will introduce the two of them: Amina Wadud and Asma Barlas.

Some Remarks on the Notion of Justice in Buddhism¹

Carola Roloff²

In Buddhism there is no technical term for “justice”³ or “injustice”. One could take the Buddhist concept of *karma* as a theory of natural justice. The idea of *karma* is very complex and embraces both ethics and belief in rebirth, which is summed up in the word *samsāra*, the wheel of life/existences, the cycle of death and rebirth. The doctrine of *karma* is primarily concerned with the moral dimension of the Buddha’s teachings and denotes the consequences of moral behaviour. Good deeds result in happiness and bad deeds in suffering. For Buddhists karma is thus neither random – like luck – nor a system of punishments meted by a higher instance.

When dealing with human coexistence in the Here and Now, however, I suggest to rely on the “Four Immeasurables”⁴, also known as the Four Divine States (or Four Foundations of Divinity) or the four *brahmavihāras*⁵. They

¹ Excerpts from a forth-coming paper on „Openess towards the religious other in Buddhism. Challenges and Chances. The findings presented here are the results of the research project “Religion and Dialogue in Modern Societies Interdisciplinary and Internationally Comparative Studies on the Possibilities and Limitations of Interreligious Dialogue (ReDi)”. It is based at the Academy of World Religions, University of Hamburg, funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany (BMBF), whose help is gratefully acknowledged.

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³ Sallie B. King, *Being Benevolence: The Social Ethics of Engaged Buddhism*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005, 203.

⁴ Tib. *tshad med pa bzhi*, Skt. *catvāryapramāṇāni*, Pā. *catasso appamaññāyo*. The key texts and their embeddedness in their respective traditions are discussed in a forthcoming German publication on dialogical theology as part of the ReDi research project.

⁵ Skt. *catvāri-brahmavihārāḥ*, Pā. *cattāro brahmavihārā*.

have been given this name because they relate to an ‘immeasurable’ number of sentient beings⁶. These Four Immeasurables are:

1. Love, Loving-kindness or Benevolence (Skt. *maitrī*, Pā. *mettā*),
2. Compassion or Care (Skt./Pā. *karuṇā*),
3. Sympathetic Joy (Skt./Pā. *muditā*), the opposite of envy or schadenfreude,
4. Equanimity or lack of egocentricity⁷ (Skt. *upekṣā*, Pā. *upekkhā*).

A verse from the standard liturgy of Tibetan Buddhism serves as a key text, a four-line aspirational prayer⁸ that is a foundation of Buddhist meditation:

May all sentient beings have happiness and the causes of happiness.

May all sentient beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.

May all sentient beings never be separated from the supreme happiness that is free from suffering.

*May all sentient beings abide in equanimity, free of attachment to close ones and aversion against those distant to.*⁹

⁶ As explained in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* by the Buddhist master Vasubandhu (4./5. century), translated by Louis de La Vallée Pouissin. Engl. trans. Leo M. Pruden. 4 vols. (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1988–90), vol 4, 1264, VIII 29a.

⁷ I intentionally avoid the translation “impartiality” here, because the term implies neutrality, but when advocating justice, one does not remain impartial but rather cares for those oppressed. As Jay L. Garfield, *Engaging Buddhism: Why it Matters to Philosophy*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 290 points out, equanimity “is not a refusal to care about what happens to us. On the contrary, because it allows us to detach from egocentric involvement with the world, it allows us to care about what happens per *se*, not about its impact on *us*.” Thus he suggests not to see moral concern as depending on relations to oneself.

⁸ Tib. *smon lam*, Skt. *praṇidhāna*, see Mvy 764, 778, 921.

⁹ From “Skyabs 'gro sems bskyed”, in Zhal 'don phyogs bsdebs. (Varanasi: Dge ldan spyi las khang, 2007), 4: Tib. sems can thams cad bde ba dang bde ba'i rgyu dang ldan par gyur cig | sems can thams cad sdug bsngal dang sdug bsngal gyi rgyu dang bral bar gyur cig | sems can thams cad sdug bsngal med pa'i bde ba dam pa dang mi 'bral bar gyur cig | sems can thams cad nye ring chags sdang dang bral ba'i btang snyoms la gnas par gyur cig. See also: Bde chen snying po (1878–1941) *Dge ldan snyan brgyud kyi man ngag las byung ba'i bla ma'i rnal 'byor dga' ldan lha brgya mar grags pa*. Short title: *Bla ma'i rnal 'byor dga' ldan lha brgya ma*. *Gsung 'bum (Collected Works)*. vol. 2 (kha) 512.4-513.2. TBRC W3834. Lha sa: [s.n.], [199-]. Tib. sems can thams cad bde ba dang bde ba'i rgyu dang ldan par gyur cig | sdug bsngal

In the daily practice of Tibetan Buddhism, reminding oneself of this doctrine of the Four Immeasurables is very popular. In Gelugpa tradition, this verse is recited three times daily in the morning and in the evening along with the three-fold refuge to Buddha, his teachings, and his community.

While this quatrain does not originate in the canonical works of Buddhism but in a contemporary Tibetan “prayer book”¹⁰ Buddhist believers, however, trace the doctrine of the Four Immeasurables back to the Buddha himself. This doctrine is significant for all three main strands of contemporary Buddhism.¹¹ The verse can therefore serve as a key text for “Buddhist ecumenism”¹² as well as basis for the dialogue with other religions – it

dang sdug bsngal gyi rgyu dang bral bar gyur cig | sdug bsngal med pa'i bde ba dam pa dang mi 'bral bar gyur cig | nye ring chags sdang dang bral ba'i btang snyoms tshad med pa la gnas par gyur cig (May all sentient beings enjoy happiness and the causes of happiness, be free of suffering and the causes of suffering, be never separated from the supreme happiness that is free from suffering and abide in immeasurable equanimity, free of attachment to close ones and aversion against those distant to).

¹⁰ *Zhal 'don phyogs bsdebs*.

¹¹ Thich Nhất Hạnh, a leading representative of Vietnamese Buddhism, builds up on the Chinese canon. In *Old Path, White Clouds: Walking in the Footsteps of the Buddha*. (Berkeley, California: Parallax Press, 1991), 321 he mentions the “Four Immeasurables” as known. But unlike in the German translation, in English he uses the term “non-attachment” instead of equanimity (German: Gleichmut) and paraphrases it as “the way of looking at all things openly and equally”. See also the chapter “The Four Immeasurable Minds” in Thich Nhất Hạnh, *Teachings on Love*. (Berkeley, California: Parallax Press, 2007), 2–9, where he explains: “The fourth element of true love is upeksha, which means equanimity, nonattachment, nondiscrimination, evenmindedness, or letting go.” (*Love*, 8); by the same author, *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching: Transforming Suffering into Peace, Joy and Liberation*. (London, Sydney, Auckland, Johannesburg: Rider, 1998), 169–175. More details on the sources see part 2 of the forthcoming ReDi volume. For Theravāda cf. Bhikkhu Nyanatiloka, *The Buddha's Path to Deliverance: A Systematic Exposition in the Words of the Sutta Piṭaka*. (Onalaska, Washington: BPS Pariyatti Editions, 2002), 108 § 97. In the course of the project, for the two other mainstream traditions of Buddhism, corresponding literal parallels for the Sūtra *Majjhima Nikāya* 83 in the Pāli Canon *Makhādeva* [Maghadeva] (MN ii 74), *The Discourse on Makhadeva*, could be identified, cf. <https://suttacentral.net/mn83>

¹² For example, Dalai Lama & Chodron, *One Teacher*, 207–220 explain how, following Tibetan Buddhism, they understand the Four Immeasurables as presented in the contemporary Theravāda tradition. There are similarities as well as differences how this central teaching is understood. In Theravāda it is assumed that liberation from *saṃsāra* exclusively through the Four Immeasurables is not possible, cf. Bhikkhu Anālayo, “Brahmavihāra and Awakening: A Study of the Dīrgha-āgama Parallel to the Tevijja-sutta,” *Asian Literature and Translation* 3-4 (2015): 12, 15, 17, 20–21. If they are combined with the meditation on the Three Marks of Existence (Skt. *trilakṣaṇa*, Pā. *tilakkhaṇa*) and Nirvāṇa, however, the insight resulting from this leads to

provides connecting option both on the theological¹³ and on the empirical level.¹⁴

In Tibetan Buddhism, meditation often starts with the cultivation of equanimity. One first becomes conscious of the state of mind in which we discriminate between those close to and those distant from us. Using contemplation one then lets go of any “stigmatization” as friend or enemy, close or distant. The point is to develop a sense of equal nearness to all sentient beings, thus counteracting the tendency to discriminate between near and distant, familiar and strange, Buddhist or non-Buddhist, man or woman, etc. and, building upon that, accustoming the mind to new patterns of thought towards love and compassion and a respectful, compassionate, loving, and appreciative attitude towards others. This meditation puts an end to one’s habit to see oneself as the center of the moral universe, and allows one to become receptive to the needs of others.

When dealing with social justice one can rely on the term “equanimity” or on the Four Immeasurables in total with regard to equality, social justice, and

liberation (cf. Dalai Lama & Chodron, *One Teacher*, 216–217. In Tibetan Buddhism, the Four Immeasurables, in the context of the so-called ‘sevenfold instruction on the six causes and their result’, serve the production of the altruistic aspiration for awakening (Skt. *bodhicitta*) (cf. Dalai Lama & Chodron, *One Teacher*, 223–224). On the role of the Four Immeasurables in the emergence of *bodhicitta* cf. Dorji Wangchuk, *The Resolve to Become a Buddha: A Study of the Bodhicitta Concept in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*. (Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies, 2007), 285.

¹³ For a trans-traditional study of the Four Immeasurables (*apramāṇas*) or the four brahma-like states of meditation (*brahmavihāras*) in the history of the development of ideas see M. Maithrimurthi, *Wohlwollen, Mitleid, Freude und Gleichmut von den Anfängen bis hin zum frühen Yogācāra: Eine ideengeschichtliche Untersuchung der vier apramāṇas in der buddhistischen Ethik und Spiritualität*. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999). Besides, the doctrine of the Four Immeasurables can also be found e.g. in Hinduism, in Patañjali, and M. N. Dvivedi, *The Yoga-Sūtras of Patañjali: Sanskrit Text and English Translation*. (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1890), 22, verse 33. Also a commentary by Shankara (788–820) on the four *brahmavihāras* is supposed to exist. Moreover, Patañjali's text is said to have been translated to Arabic by the Muslim scholar al-Biruni (973–1048). Cf. Alexander Berzin, “Buddhist-Muslim Doctrinal Relations: Past, Present and Future,” in *Buddhist Attitudes to Other Religions*, edited by Perry Schmidt-Leukel. (St. Ottilien: EOS-Verlag, 2008), 213, 217.

¹⁴ In the ReDi handout “Suggestions for Main questions with adaptations and additions for different respondees” of 2nd October, 2013, Knauth, T., Ipgrave, J., and Vieregge, D. suggest for the ReDi projekt (level of dialogical practice) to ask the following guiding question for the investigation of various “attitudes”: “If you think of the people whom you encounter in everyday life: To whom do you feel close and why? Who rather seems strange to you and why? What role does religion have in this?”

gender justice, because the Buddhist mental training in love, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity includes *all* sentient beings without exception and irrespective of their religious affiliation, nationality or gender.

One may object that such reasoning is the attempt of a white feminist to influence or patronize Asian Buddhists by Western ideas. But this is not the case, my emphasis on equanimity derives from my experience with living Buddhism in Asia. For example, the first conclave of the “International Buddhist Confederation” in Delhi (India) in September 2013, adopted “*equanimity*” as an argument for demanding equality of women in Buddhism.¹⁵

In December 2013, in a petition for the ordination of nuns, the renowned Thai reformer Sulak Sivaraksa, referring to the Thai Sangha Council asked, somewhat polemically: “Is their opposition to Bhikkhunī ordination based on the Dhamma and the Brahmavihāras, or are they acting out of jealousy and ignorance?”¹⁶ This remark reveals that the four Brahmavihāras are also cited by Asian Buddhists in the context of gender equality.

If we examine ancient Indian Buddhist commentaries we already find a kind of inconsistency in relation to women, whether to fully include or partly exclude them. If Buddhists do not manage to treat other Buddhists including women and homosexuals, or more correctly LGBT or LGBTIQ¹⁷ humans, at eye-level, how can they respectfully treat the religious others? Let me take two examples from indigenous Buddhist commentaries to show where, from a Buddhist female perspective, I see such inconsistencies.

Buddhaghosa says in “The Divine Abidings (Brahmavihāra-niddesa)”, the ninth chapter of his well-known Theravāda commentary *Visuddhimagga* (*The Path of Purification*) that one considers all beings as equal with oneself:

The mind-deliverance of loving-kindness is [practiced] with specified pervasion in these seven ways: “May all women be free from enmity, affliction and anxiety and live happily. May all men ... all Noble Ones ... all not Noble

¹⁵ Roloff, “Interreligious Dialogue,” 250, 256.

¹⁶ <https://www.change.org/p/sangha-supreme-council-of-thailand-to-support-establishing-the-bhikkhuni-sangha-in-siam-thailand> [28.01.2015]

¹⁷ Since the 1990s LGBT is the common acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. Popular variants add the letter Q for those who identify as queer or are questioning their sexual identity, and the I too include intersex people.

Ones ... all deities ... all human beings ... all in states of loss be free from enmity, affliction and anxiety, and live happily” (Paṭis II 131).¹⁸

Nevertheless in the same chapter Buddhaghosa says:

For Loving-kindness should not be developed ... towards the opposite sex, or towards a dead person. (...) Then, if he develops it specifically towards the opposite sex, lust inspired by that person springs up in him.¹⁹

Another example stems from a much later commentary by Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo (1879–1941), a famous teacher in the Gelug tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. It shows that there are Buddhist masters who teach the Four Immeasurables on the one hand and are nevertheless convinced that being born as a man is superior to being born as a woman. In the context of explaining the eight qualities of higher rebirth, Pabongka states: “We could not have found a better rebirth than the present one, except those of us, who have not been reborn as a man.”²⁰

It can be assumed that reticence – the opposite of openness – towards women may go hand in hand with reticence towards religious others. Furthermore, the examples illustrate that different readings and ambivalence or ambiguity cannot only be found within different traditions of Buddhism but also within the very same tradition, and even within *one* exegetical work.

¹⁸ Buddhaghosa and Ñānamoli, *The Path of Purification: Visuddhimagga: The Classical Manual of Buddhist Doctrine and Meditation*. (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2010), 304. Cf. the Four Immeasurables in the Dīgha Nikāya 33: <https://suttacentral.net/en/dn33> (under “Fours”, Four ‘infinitudes’).

¹⁹ Buddhaghosa & Nyanatiloka, *Visuddhimagga*, 291–292.

²⁰ Tibetan text by Pha bong kha pa Bde chen snying po, *rNam grol lag bcangs*, ACIP S0004M.ACT, 159a3–4. While the Tibetan original states: “We could not have found a better rebirth than the present one, except those of us, who have not been reborn as a man.” (*rang cag rnam a pho rang gis ma byung ba kho na ma gtogs, rten 'di las lhag pa zhiq rnyed du med*), the English translation, *seemingly* sensitive to gender justice and equality simply reads: “Thus, if we fail to achieve anything of real value with our present life we have no one to blame but ourselves, for we couldn’t find a more excellent physical form than the one we currently possess.” But the translator does not note that and on which basis he revises the text. The German translation Pabongka, *Befreiung in unseren Händen*, trans. Claudia Wellnitz. (München: Diamant-Verlag, 1999), 365, 538 does not match with its English source Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in our Hands: Part Two: The Fundamentals*. (Howell, New Jersey: Sutra and Tantra Press, 1994), 82, 267, but with the Tibetan original. For another comparable Theravāda perspective on this matter see Bhikkhu Anālayo, “Karma and Female Birth,” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 21 (2014): 109–53.

The same author also states by the way that faith in religions other than Buddhism should be given up.²¹

These examples give an idea how, after the Buddha's passing away and depending on sociological and cultural context, the notion of the religious other and the minor importance of the female sex have been constructed. Masculinity and "one's own" religious tradition have become the norm and whoever deviates from this norm is defined as "other, i.e. inferior. That means when dealing with the question of openness towards the religious other, Buddhists are well-advised not to forget the openness - or the lack of it - towards the *Buddhist* other as far as the female sex or persons with different sexual orientations are concerned.

In principle, though, it is true that in Buddhism no sentient being is exempt from liberation. All, even religious others and non-religious people are soteriologically included.

²¹ Pabongka, *Liberation*, 207-212, in a chapter titled "Taking refuge by disavowing faith in other religions."

Christlich-islamischer Dialog – weltweite Perspektiven

Christian-Islamic dialogue – global perspectives

Christian-Muslim relations: dialogue activities in Nigeria

Joshua Mallam¹ | Muhammad Sani Isah²

Violence and terror in North East Nigeria

The people in the Lake Chad basin, which straddles Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger, the region has also become an epicenter of violence and terror.

Experiences of religious conflict in Kaduna State

Cases of religious conflicts in Kaduna state from 1980-2004:

S/NO	DATE	LOCATION
1	Thursday, May 01, 1980	Zaria (Kaduna State)
2	March 6-12, 1987	Kafanchan (Kaduna State)
3	March 1987	Katsina, Funtua, Zaria, Gusau and Kaduna (Kaduna State)
4	February 1998	Kaduna, Kaduna

¹ Joshua Mallam was ordained in 2003 as a priest in the Diocese of Kaduna, Anglican communion and preferred a venerable in 2013. He has a MA in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations from St. Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya. He serves as a regional coordinator in Anglophone West Africa in the Programme for Christian-Muslim relations in Africa (PROCMURA) / Anglikanischer Priester in der Diözese von Kaduna in Nigeria sowie Regionalkoordinator im anglophonen Westafrika von PROCMURA.

² Imam Muhammad Sani Isah graduated from the International University of Africa, Khartoum, Sudan, in 1991, and specialized in the Science of Hadith (Uloomul Hadith). He is currently a Senior Special Assistant (SSA) to the Governor of Kaduna State on Hajj and Islamic Matters / Gegenwärtig Berater des Gouverneurs von Kaduna State in Fragen von Hajj und Islam.

		Polytechnic (Kaduna State)
5	May 1992	Zangon Katab (Kaduna State)
6	February 28, 2000	Kaduna Mayhem (Kaduna State)
7	November 2003	Kawo (Kaduna State)
8	April 3, 2004	Makarfi (Kaduna State)

Source: News Watch, November 2, 2009 p. 18-19

Common experiences of PROCMURA

Our programmes

- Christian-Muslim relations in the political sphere
- Christian-Muslim relations in the economic sphere
- Christian-Muslim relations in the cultural sphere
- Christian-Muslim relations in the social sphere
- Christian-Muslim relations in the religious sphere

We don't do dialogue between Christianity and Islam but between human beings.

Areas where we work

- Engagement with Muslims in peace studies
- Conflict management
- Conflict prevention
- Issues of good and responsible governance
- Religious freedom e.g What does it mean in Islam to say there is no compulsion in religion?
- What do we mean from the Christian context by conversion?

PROCMURA has Association /Constituencies. Our engagement are both inter and intra faith in Nature.

Some Activities of Nigeria North Area

The Area has been at the frontline through the Most Rev'd Josiah Idowu-Fearon in facilitating the following programmes:

- In 2010 we had a conference on Christian and Muslim cooperation for conflict prevention/management.
- 2011 Kaduna Center for the study of Christian-Muslim relations was fully refurbished, modernized and ready for use for the study of Christian-Muslim relations.

The School

The 'KADUNA CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS, which had earlier and informally commenced offering educational and enlightenment Workshops and Seminars on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in 2003, was formally opened as a registered School on the 5th November, 2011 by the then Bishop of the Diocese of Kaduna, (Anglican Communion), the Most Rev. Dr. Josiah Idowu-Fearon

School Courses

Certificate class

The present session for the class commenced in June 2015 with nine (9) students to end June 2016. All the lectures take place every Friday from 3:00pm - 5:00pm. Two Resource Persons are regularly in attendance to deliver lectures specifically based on the Syllabus.

Resource Persons:(i) Ven. Joshua Mallam

(ii) Very Rev. Shettima John (the two are Christians)

Diploma Class

This class commenced as above and translated with the nine (9) students from the Certificate group. Lectures' time is every Saturday from 2:00-5:00pm

Resource Persons for regular lecture delivery are: (i) Imam Sani Isah (ii) Mal. Abdullahi Mohammed Sufi (the two are Muslims).

Administration

We have on ground Mrs. Dupe Olamorin in-charge of all relevant administrative and other related functions.

Organized Open Forum 17th-19th June, 2014

The General Adviser of the PROCMURA, Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah, Rev. Dr. Simeon K. Dossou from the All Africa Conference of Churches – AACC, regional office, Lome-Togo, Dr. Khalid Abubakar Aliyu (National JNI Kaduna) and a several Christian and Muslim leaders within Kaduna state were in attendance.

It was an open-forum. The forum had cohesive thrust within its organic formation and practical content the capacity for shaping positive thinking towards peace security and national development.

Forum envisage challenge and prospects for Christian-Muslim constructive relations especially in Northern Nigeria

Lomé: Christian and Muslim Leaders Consultative Forum West Africa (24th-28th August, 2015)

Main Development Goal of the Consultation

Increased visibility of religious leaders action in conflict prevention and rejection of religious extremism and radicalism in the sun-region as a tool for sustainable peace and development.

Main Objective of Consultation

Christian and Muslim religious leaders, women and youth leaders equipped and visibly proactive in conflict prevention and peace-building in the sub-region by 2018.

Nigeria Action Plans 2016

The two independent area committees: North and West shall do the following

Plan actions

- Advocacy to disseminate the report, the communiqué of Lomé peace consultation, PROCMURA Universal Vision and the Nigeria plan to religious bodies, government and other stake holders.
- Conflict prevention and peace building, workshops for religious leaders, youth leaders and women leaders in the area committees, provide humanitarian and psycho-social support to victims of violence and extremism
- Religious leaders consultative meeting on counter narratives.

National Plan

- PROCMURA National consultative meeting on peace and development.

- Religious leaders workshop on political participation and active citizenship.

Some NGOs engaging on Christian-Muslim dialogue and relation building in Nigeria

Some of strong NGOs working in that regard include Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC) Kaduna. This IMC has a project tagged: "TOLERANCE" i.e. (Training of Leaders For Religious and National Coexistence) in Borno, Bauchi, Kaduna, Kano, Plateau and Sokoto states.

There is also The Bridge Builders Association of Nigeria (BBA); working in all the Northern States; where myself and my colleague vulnerable Joshua Mallam here present, are among the active resource persons of the "BBA"!

There is Women Interfaith Council (WIC), that also works strongly in the North and it is being championed by both Christian and Muslim women and clerics.

There is another strong one at the national, states and local government levels, called: Nigeria Inter-religious Council.

Christian-Muslim Relations in Zanzibar: History, Current Challenges and Future Prospects for Collaboration

Issa Ziddy¹

Introduction

Zanzibar is an archipelago consisting of the two main islands of Unguja and Pemba and other surrounding small islets located in the Indian Ocean about 35 km off the coast of mainland Tanzania at a longitude of 39 degrees east and a latitude of 6 degrees south of the Equator. Since 1964, Zanzibar and Tanganyika together form the United Republic of Tanzania

This paper, which evaluates the state of Christian-Muslim Relations in Zanzibar today is concentrating on the challenges and looking at the prospects for collaboration for peace and development. The paper first goes to look at the history of Christian-Muslim Relations in Zanzibar, highlighting the social, political, and religious challenges Christian-Muslim Relations in Zanzibar is facing today.

Finally the paper is going to look for prospects of further collaboration between Christians and Muslims. In doing this, the paper is going to concentrate on the work of the joint committee of religious leaders for peace and tranquillity in Zanzibar, Zanzibar interfaith Centre (Zanzic), and the relation the two have to the Program for Christian Muslim Relation in Africa

¹ Dr. Issa H. Ziddy is Dean of the School of Kiswahili and Foreign Languages of the State University of Zanzibar (SUZA). He has conducted several researches on the role of Interfaith Organizations in Tanzania. He is a chairperson of the Network of the Tanzania Interfaith Based Organizations on Population and Development (TIBOPP), and the Interfaith Partnership for home-based care and counseling on the role of spiritual based advocacy strategies. He is a member of the Zanzibar Interfaith Association on Development and Aids (ZIADA) and a friend of the Zanzibar Interfaith Centre (ZANZIC) / Dekan des Departments für Kiswahili und Fremdsprachen an der State University of Zanzibar (SUZA).

(PROCMURA). The paper is also going to mention other interfaith programmes that are in Zanzibar, such as the Zanzibar Interfaith on Development and Aids (ZIADA) and the interfaith partnership for home-based care and counselling. However the concentration will be on the Joint committee and Zanzic, which are both closely related to each other, and to PROCMURA.

The History of Christian-Muslim Relations in Zanzibar

The relationship between Christians and Muslims in Zanzibar started with confrontation, occupation, and oppression in the Portuguese era. During the 19th Century CE Missionary work was more friendly and peaceful, a trend that continued during the colonial period. However, during the close of the 20th Century CE and at the beginning of the 21st Century CE things began to change. Below are some of the reasons why the relations between Muslims and Christians became tenser.

1/ Activities of extremist (majority) Muslim (95%) and Christian groups in Zanzibar, who taught intolerance and polarization by using the groups arranged *Mihadhara*² and Crusades³, which provoked the opponents.

2/ Union Politics also caused the situation between Christians and Muslims to get worse. In Zanzibar, a good number of Christians are migrants from Tanzania mainland. The migrants have managed to take well paid positions in the tourist industry, army, and government offices - especially departments which are under the union government. Indigenous Zanzibaris, who are mainly Muslims are not happy seeing “foreigners” take over their country while they feel, they are left behind. Though this is more a Mainland-Zanzibar issue, it takes religious connotations since one group is predominantly Muslim and the other predominantly Christian.

3/ The political situation in Zanzibar also contributed to poor relations between Christians and Muslims in Zanzibar. Christians were associated with the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) meaning the Revolution party. The main opposition party Civic United Front (CUF) had been a harsh

² Public debates where Muslims use the Bible to prove the superiority of Islam and the faulty of Christianity (if time allows people can watch video on Mihadhara)

³ Christian open air meetings. The term Crusade which was used Christians reminds Muslims on the Middle Ages where the term was used for wars to recapture Jerusalem, in which many Muslims were killed. The preaching in crusades were also offensive to Islam. For more information on Mihadhara and Crusades please confront Chesworth (2009)

confrontation with CCM since the 1995 elections. In 2001 the confrontation caused Zanzibar to produce refugees for the first time since the revolution.

4/ In 2012 the government of Tanzania decided to collect opinions on how to rewrite its constitution, a group that had been registered as a religious organization, with the name *Uamsho*, advocated for a more autonomous Zanzibar in the union structure. The Police reaction towards *Uamsho*, caused mass protest, which went out of hand and was difficult for anybody to control. The movement took a Christian-Muslim perspective when some people who were alleged *Uamsho* supporters started to burn down Churches and attacking Christian and Moderate Muslim leaders. Many of the attacks were presided by distribution of leaflets that claimed to be produced by *Uamsho*, that warned about a coming attack. However, *Uamsho* has repeatedly denounced relationship to the group of people acting in this way, and has repeatedly condemned these actions.

Challenges that Christian-Muslim Relations are facing today

There are a number of Challenges that Christian-Muslim Relations in Zanzibar faces today, these are some of them:

1). Mistrust between these two religious groups, which has been perpetuated by public debates known as *Mihadhara*, from the late 1990's. *Mihadhara* are public debates where the Christians use the Qur'an to show how Islam is wrong, and why Christianity is the better option, while Muslims use the Bible, to show how wrong Christianity is and why Islam is the better option.

2). Competition between Churches and Mosques, that are close to each other (as it is indicated in the picture below), which has often manifested itself in form of the so called *sound wars*, this refers to a situation when some people from the church will use amplifiers to set Music to the maximum level at the time of prayers for the Muslims, who are in many cases in a Mosque just next door, or the Muslims will have the loudspeakers on top of their Mosques preaching a sermon in a very loud voice on Sunday morning when it is time for Sunday worship. All these lead to bad relationships between Christians and Muslims.

3). It is very difficult for Christians to obtain building permits for the construction of churches, because of the bureaucracy of the administrative system in Zanzibar.

4) There is also a believe among Muslims in Zanzibar, that Tanzania is governed by the Church, and especially the Roman Catholic Church, in what they call *Mfumo Kristo* (the Christian System/Christian Hegemony).

5). Importation of dangerous ideas and conflicts from areas other than Zanzibar, through the internet and other media. This idea includes; militant Christian Zionism, extreme evangelical ideas on Islam, and militant Islam.

How Christians and Muslims come together in Zanzibar

- Formation of a joint group of religious leaders for home based care and counselling, which is supported by the Ministry of Health of Zanzibar.
- Formation of the Zanzibar Interfaith Association for Development and AIDS (ZIADA). ZIADA is an association that is formed by faith based organizations that deals with Development activities, Humanitarian Assistance and combating HIV/AIDS.
- Organization of the Joint Committee of religious leaders for peace and tranquillity in Zanzibar, which has been working in close collaboration with Zanzic and PROCMURA.

Prospects for Further Collaborations

Currently the joint committee of religious leaders in collaboration with Zanzic, is prioritizing on building the capacities of the three hundred local peace committees, formation of district peace committees, that will be the joint committee of religious leaders for peace and tranquillity to coordinate the three hundred local committees.

In doing that, Zanzic in collaboration with Tumaini University, Dar es salaam campus have developed a Diploma Curriculum in Intercultural relations, which will be used to train among others; coordinators of the district committees, and where applicable, members of the local peace committees.

Zanzic also aims at starting an incubation program for graduates of this program that will enable graduates to be accompanied to start projects that build good relationships between people of different faith. Given the experience of PROCMURA in this field for more than 100 years, this is an area that Zanzic, and Zanzibar in general can benefit from their advice, connections, and expertise.

Conclusion

Generally speaking, Zanzibar has a history of more than five hundred years of Christian Muslim relations. Though most of the times that relationship was good, but there are eras that were marked by tensions, and confrontations. The current era is marked with many challenges that are

both stimulated by internal and external factors. PROCMURA has played a vital role in helping to sustain and restore good relationships between Christians and Muslims in Africa, however, there is still a lot to be done, and Zanzibar hopes that the cooperation between PROCMURA and Zanzibar, through Zanzic will continue.

Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Kenya

Joseph M. Mutei¹

Facts about Kenya

People

42 different ethnic groups

40 million and growing

42% aged 14 and under

Religion

78% Christian

10.4% Muslim

10% indigenous beliefs

2% other (Hindu, etc.)

The Kenyan Economy

GDP: \$30 billion

GDP per capita: \$1,600

(US figure: \$46,000)

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50% live in poverty

(Less than \$1/day!)

75% of labour force in agriculture

40% unemployed

There are 4 periods of Muslim-Christian Relations in Kenya historically:

1- During the Portuguese invasion

2- Colonial Period (18s to 1963)

3- Independent Kenya (1963)

4- Contemporary Kenya (The popularity of Muslim terror groups around the globe, particularly U.S. embassy attack 1998 and 11 September attack 2001)

Reasons of Conflicts

- Seeking Converts from Muslim community

- Being against to slavery trade and this act of Arabs were taken as Islam is responsible

-Introducing Western Education and Health Services to spread Christianity

-The Role of the Colonial Government

Muslim-Christian relations in contemporary Kenya

-Muslim-Christian relations of contemporary Kenya is foremost theological. The colonial period was competitive

-Extremist Muslims are the ones who are shaping the relations of today in Kenya

-Social relations are dominant than the individual ones. Most of the conflicts are created by the leaders

Recent issues are:

-Kadhi courts (favour or initial right-competition)

-*Mihadhara* (Converting Methods)

-Education (School rules and I.R.E; C.R.E)

-Freedom of choosing a religion

The reasons of Muslim Christian Conflicts in Kenya

- Competition
- Seeking convert from each other
- Misconceptions of each other
- Interpretation of the scripture
- Extremism (*In Particular Wahhabiyya*)
- The Muslim terror groups
- Islamophobia
- The attitude of the leaders
-

Attacks targetted at Christians

Reasons for targeting Christians

- Association with the west
- Contested spaces
- Marginalisation
- Underdeveloped Islamic areas
- Tokenism in Islamic representation in the government
- Muslim clash with the government
- Internationalisation of Islam
- Suppressed Islamic ventures
- New outreach methods

Models for Christian-Muslim dialogue

- Historically Kenya has experienced sustained peaceful inter-religious co-existence. Although the two main religions, namely Christianity and Islam, have their differences, they equally have many similarities. Over the years people have tended to look positively to the common grounds than the differences between them.
- One overriding impression remains front and centre: the large majority of Christians and Muslims continue to view each other with "detailed ignorance". Despite, or perhaps because of extensive media attention, confusion and misunderstandings are readily evident among adherents in

both communities. Most Christians in the West are aware of many details, ideas, images, and sound bite impressions of Muslims; and vice versa.

Scriptural basis for Inter religious dialogue

Both Islam and Christianity have a strong scriptural push to live harmoniously through understanding with their neighbours. Core intuitions govern their view of human relations. For Christians, that fundamental theme is the self-giving love of God in Christ, who seeks the welfare of all humanity, and that approach is to be reflected by believers.

General approaches to inter faith engagement

In engaging each other, Christians and Muslims will always find that they have largely three approaches; Polemical, apologetics and Dialogue.

Proposed models for inter faith dialogue

- The Educational Model:
- Organized Dialogue Programs Model:
- Cooperative Efforts in Society Model:
- The Recollection Model
- The "Most Certainly Religious" Model
- The "Talking Things Through" Model
- The Model of Peace making from Below
- The Model of Deep Friendship

Christian-Muslim Relations in Ghana: An Example of Peaceful Coexistence

Makafui M. Tayviah¹

Abstract

Christian-Muslim encounters have gone through various challenges in history. Some of these challenges have been marked by wars, conflicts, confrontations, polemics and dialogue. There is no universal form of how Christians-Muslim relations should be observed and studied so in order to avoid generalizations, Christian-Muslim relations is studied in context according to a particular geographical area. Thus, every country has a story to tell with regards to the relationship between Muslims and Christians which may sound similar or different from what others will share. Whereas some adherents of the two religions accept the view that Christians and Muslims belong to a common humanity and must live together in a community irrespective of faith differences, others are unable to tolerate “the other”. For the latter, they can only relate well to people who share the same faith with them. Many countries have experienced or witnessed terrible religious conflicts as a result of “religious people’s” inability to relate well with one another. Ghana as a religiously pluralistic country has maintained some level of peace and peaceful relations in its religiosity through good interfaith relations. The impact of Christianity and Islam on Ghana has been phenomenal and the two religions have related well since their inception into the country. This paper examines how Christians and Muslims in Ghana have managed to still co-exist peacefully and have mutual relations in this era where the world faces emerging trends in various aspects. In conclusion, the paper argues that humankind and societies must learn to live together irrespective of their differing religious background for the sake of peace and development.

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Introduction

The current trend in Christian-Muslim relations in Africa seems to shift from 'let us forget our differences' to 'let us understand our differences and live with those differences in harmony'². Many religious pluralistic countries in the world allow for 'freedom of worship' in their constitution yet only few of these countries practically demonstrate this freedom of worship. Several factors which will be discussed later can be seen to have played crucial roles in modelling the nature of relations that exist between Christian and Muslims in Ghana today.

Christians and Muslims in Ghana appear to have found ingenious ways of living together in peace and harmony; with regards to dialogue and peaceful co-existence not just among Christians and Muslims but among people of different faiths. It is therefore worth examining the historical factors of Christians and Muslims in Ghana so as to discover how and why these two religions have been able to live peacefully. Peace is essential for development in a nation so if Christians and Muslims have managed to live in peace and harmony in spite of their competitive truth claims, then that nation is and must be an example for the world to emulate.

Ghana before Islam and Christianity

African Traditional Religion (ATR) was the indigenous religion of the people of Ghana (Gold Coast) before the advent of Islam and Christianity. Every Ghanaian community had her own way of relating to the Supreme Being and had their own beliefs and rituals. African Traditional Religion (ATR) bonded the people together because a family, clan or town shared the same belief so they saw each other as one. The local tutelary god was a uniting creature for all persons who believed in it. For several centuries Ghanaians lived in closed communities not widely encountering "the other". An encounter between two communities was made during wars. For instance, the Ashantis of Ghana went for several wars but these wars were for territorial expansion or commercial gain, hence there were never religious wars. Families and communities settled along common ancestral lineage and this made blood and family bond to remain paramount over and above any other affiliation.

The Arrival of Islam in Ghana

² Martha Frederiks. "Let us understand our differences". 2010 pp.1

The spread of Islam in Ghana was mainly as a result of the commercial activities of North African and Sahelian (Dyula-Wangara) Muslims. Thus, Islam made its entry into the northern parts of Ghana around the sixteenth century. Muslim traders and clerics from neighbouring West African countries brought the religion into the area. Between 16th-19th centuries it seemed that Muslims in Ghana never encountered Christians because of two factors. The first being that Islam pre dates Christianity in Ghana by nearly three hundred years; secondly, the north and south were apart for a very long time.

For the sake of clarity, we adopt Nathan I. Samwini's³ approach to the history of Islam by dividing Ghana into two halves. The first part comprises the three Northern territories of the country now Northern, Upper West, Upper East and North-West parts of the Brong Ahafo regions. The second half comprises Asante and other coastal towns like Accra and Cape coast.

The Dyula-Wangara traders established centers from which Islamization occurred among the states of Gonja, Dagomba, Mamprusi and Wala⁴. Islam entered into Dagomba in the 17th century but it was until the "reign of Na Zangina (1700-1714) that a strong and influential Islamic community began to emerge in Dagomba⁵. Islam came into Wa not earlier than 1650 to 1750⁶ Islam came into Gonja in the 18th and 19th centuries while Islam came into Mamprugu before the first half of the 18th century more importantly during the reign of Na Atabia between 1688 and 1741 because Na Atabia was interested in safeguarding the Northeastern trade routes from Timbuktu/Jenne to the north and Hausaland that passed through his chiefdom⁷. The Hausa were another group of people who brought Islam to Northern Ghana. The Hausa traders who lived in northern Nigeria moved

³ Nathan I. Samwini. "*Muslim Resurgence in Ghana*". pp.22-23. Nehemiah Levtzion, Jack Goody, Ivor Wilks, John S. Trimingham have always divided Islam in Ghana into "Islam in the Volta Basin" (comprising Northern Ghana), "Islam in Ashanti" (the middle belt of Ghana) and "Islam among the Coastal tribes".

⁴Ali M. Kettani, "*Muslim Minorities in the World Today*". London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1986. pp.178.

⁵Peter B. Clarke, "*West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century*". London: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd. 1982 pp.95

⁶ Nehemiah Levtzion. "*Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa: A study of Islam in the Middle Volta Basin in pre-colonial period*", Oxford: Claredon Press, 1968 pp.201-203. See Also Mervyn Hiskett. "The Development of Islam in West Africa, London: Longman, 1984 pp.125

⁷ Nathan I. Samwini. "*The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana since 1950: Its effects upon Muslims and Muslim-Christian Relations*". Lit Verlag Berlin, 2006 pp.28

from there through to Salaga and by 1775, they settled in Salaga in Gonja because it was a more convenient trading place for them.

The Hausa occupation of Salaga had important consequences for the spread of Islam in Ghana. After the British defeated the Asante in 1874, Salaga began to decline and the trading community of the Hausas eventually dispersed to the south.⁸ Muslims came to Asante on diplomatic missions from Masina while others came on visits or upon the invitation of clerics by the Asante kings⁹. By the early 19th century the then Asantehene, Osei Tutu Kwame (1777-1801) was regarded “as a friend on whom they could always rely for protection”¹⁰ Islam in Accra is generally believed to have been introduced by the first batch of freed Muslims slaves (tabons) from Brazil who arrived in 1836 and settled at the James Fort and Usher Fort in Accra, Elmina, Cape Coast and Keta¹¹. Benjamin Sam and Mahdi Appah are linked with the establishment of Islam in Fanteland¹² in 1885 and that was the beginning of Ahmadiyya Muslim Movement now Mission in Ghana. Today Islam is represented in Ghana by the Sunni; Tijaniyya, Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'a* (ASWAJ), Shi'ites, Ghana Muslim Mission and Ibadiyya.

The Arrival of Christianity in Ghana

⁸ Mervyn Hiskett, “*The Development of Islam in West Africa*”. pp.131

⁹ Nathan I. Samwini. “*The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana since*” 1950. pp.32

¹⁰ Joseph Dupuis, “Journal of a Residence in Ashantee” London: Colburn, 1824. pp.250. Among the Muslims in Ghana it is generally believed that Osei Tutu Kwame (Kwaku Dua) was destooled for becoming a Muslim; He is reported to have been ‘a believer at heart’. The next Asantehene, Osei Bonsu (1801-1824), commenced his reign as an enemy of Islam, and even executed several Muslims most probably to win back the support of the people (Levtzion,1968:187).

¹¹ Nathan I. Samwini. “*The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana since 1950*”. pp.35. See Also Sarbah, Cosmos Ebo. “A Critical Study of Christian-Muslim Relations in the Central Region of Ghana with Special Reference to Traditional Akan Values” A thesis submitted for Doctor of Philosophy to the School of Theology, University of Birmingham, 2010. Pp 37. The “*tabons*” or Brazilians were believed to have carried a copy of the Qur’an along with them into slavery but preserved it so that they returned with it after liberation.

¹² Islam in Fanteland is also known as *Fante kramo* (Fante Islam). Benjamin Sam was a Wesleyan (Methodist) catechist at Ekumfi Ekrawfo near Mankessim before his conversion to Islam. After his conversion, Sam used his previous experience as a catechist to build a sizeable Muslim community in Fanteland (Fisher, 1966:288-98; Debrunner and Fisher (trans.), 1960:17, 28 -29; Debrunner, 1967:241; Fisher, 1969:128-40).

The presence of Christian missionaries in Ghana began with the arrival of the Portuguese in 1482¹³ but after the Portuguese left Ghana in 1637 meant the Roman Catholic missionary work came to a halt only to resume in 1880¹⁴. There was limited Christian presence in the country between 1482 and 1828. By 1828 and 1835, the Presbyterian (Basel) and Methodist (Wesleyan) missionaries respectively laid the foundation for sustained evangelization by the church in Ghana. These missionaries began their work in the coastal regions of Ghana. For well over one hundred years Christian missionary activities were limited to the south of the country with no expansion to the north. Even in the south, the European missionaries kept their converts apart for several decades until the first quarter of the 1900s when the colonial administrators began to move clerks and other clerical staff particularly to Ashanti and the Northern territories. It was only then that people of the Northern and Southern Ghana began to interrelate. The Wesleyan Methodist concentrated on the Fante and Ashanti west of Ghana; the Basel mission concentrated on the Central, Eastern regions while the Bremen Missionaries who arrived in 1847 concentrated on the Volta region. Apart from these mission bodies other churches like the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) church started with inaugural meetings held in Cape Coast and Keta in 1898 while the Seventh Day Adventist church (SDA) and the Baptist Church began in 1898 in Sekondi and Cape Coast respectively. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel started in Sekondi in 1904, the Salvation Army begun in Agona Duakwa in 1911 and the Assemblies of God started in Yendi in 1935.

By the end of the 20th century, Christianity could be grouped in five ecumenical blocks: the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG); the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference; the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic council (GPCC); the National Association of Charismatic and Christian churches (NACC); the Association of African Initiated Churches (AAIC); the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Conference. Apart from the Catholic and SDA, all these church councils comprise large members of denominations.

Religious Demographics of Ghana

¹³ Debrunner, 1967:17; Sanneh, 1983:22&23

¹⁴ Fr. Eugene Murat and Fr. Auguste Moreau (SVD) arrived at Elmina probably sent by the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith on behalf of the Pope in 1880 missionaries, (Debrunner, 1967:219; Agbeti, 1986:103-105; Assimeng, 1989:82).

The religious composition of Ghana in the first post independence population census of 1960 was Muslims 30 %, traditionalist 38 %, Christian 24 % and no religion 8%¹⁵. A breakdown of the 1960 population census according to Christian denominations showed that 25% were Protestant, 13% were Roman Catholic and Independent African Churches were 1%. The 1970 population census did not present figures on the religious composition of the nation but according to the Ghana Statistical Service, the Population and Housing Census taken in 2010, showed Christians to be 71.2% of the population, followed by Islam 17.6%, no religion 5.3% and Traditional religion 5.2%.

Religious tolerance in Ghana can be described as fairly high since major Christian celebrations such as Christmas and Easter are recognized as national holidays. The *id al fitr* and *id al adha*¹⁶ are holidays and are observed by Muslims in Ghana. Traditional festivals like *Adae* which occurs fortnightly, and the annual *Odwira* are celebrated by Traditional chiefs and their people.

Religious Affiliation in Ghana

The table shows Religious Affiliations in Ghana during the 2000 and 2010 Population Census.

Affiliation	2000 census	2010 census
Christian	68.8%	71.2%
Pentecostal/ Charismatic	24.1%	28.3%
Protestant	18.6%	18.4%
Catholic	15.1%	13.1%
Other Religions	11%	11.4%
Muslim	15.9%	17.6%
Traditional	8.5%	5.20%
No Religion	6.1%	5.2%

¹⁵ Owusu-Ansah, D. 1994 "Urban-Rural Disparities: A Country Study: Ghana" (La Verle Berry). Library of Congress Federal Research Division

¹⁶ *id al fitr* is the Festival of Fast-Breaking celebrated after the month of Ramadan (fasting) while *id al adha* "Sacrifice Feast" celebrated by Muslims to mark the occasion when Allah (God) appeared to Ibrahim (Abraham) in a dream and asked him to sacrifice his son Ishmael, to demonstrate his devotion to Him

Others	0.7%	0.8%
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(Culled from the Population and Housing Census 2000 and 2010 Reports)

Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa

Christian-Muslim relations in Africa date back to the days where the persecuted Muslims in 615AD sought political asylum with the *Negus* of Axum (Ethiopia). Martha Frederiks asserts that the understanding of Surah 19 (*Sura al-Maryam*) is said to have played an important role because it served as the basis for the hospitality that was granted to the group of Muslim refugees¹⁷. The first Christian-Muslim encounter on African soil was peaceful in nature and this hospitality and interreligious acceptance is still frequently referred to as the African matrix for interfaith encounters¹⁸. Christianity and Islam considered each other to be competitors 'for the soul of Africa' in sub-Saharan Africa up till the mid-20th century so missionaries in both religions have always tried to convert the opponent as well as adherents of the African traditional religions.

The state of Christian-Muslim Relations in Ghana

Christians and Muslims in Ghana have always lived together in peace at the local communities and towns. In Ghana, it is very common to find members of the same family belonging to different religious traditions. Muslims visit Christian relatives and friends during Christmas to wish them well and Christians also visit their Muslim friends and relatives during their Islamic festivals; *Id-ul-Fitr* and *Id-ul-Adha*. During child-naming, weddings ceremonies, ordination of priests or pastors and funerals, Muslims come to church and vice versa without the question of religious affiliation because

¹⁷ Martha Frederiks, 2010. "Let us understand our differences: Current trends in Christian-Muslim Relations in sub-Sahara Africa". In: Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies Online Version: [Available at: <http://trn.sagepub.com/content/27/4/261>] (Accessed 22-June, 2014).pp. 2. The Negus of Ethiopia saw Surah 19 as a similar verse to the story of Mary in the Bible. He saw the belief of the Muslims to be similar to his so he accepted them and provided them with hospitality.

¹⁸ Martha Frederiks, 2010. "Let us understand our differences: Current trends in Christian-Muslim Relations in sub-Sahara Africa". In: Transformation".pp.3

the ceremony involves a friend or relative¹⁹. The important thing is to share in the joy of either or to share in the pain of the loss of a relative or a loved one. The “dialogue of life”²⁰ is well practised at the grass-roots level of Ghana. Muslims and Christians are found in every town or village in Ghana either as minorities or majorities.

In spite of these positive examples, there have been some moments of tension between Christians and Muslims in Ghana due to polemic teachings of either of the two religions. Until the last two decades Christians in Ghana did not take to deliberate evangelism of Muslims but this changed when Christian groups sprung up with the sole aim of converting Muslims to Christianity. The “Converted Muslims’ Christian Association” was started in the late 1980s in Kumasi by a convert of Islam who decided to preach and try to convert other Muslims to Christianity. This sparked controversies between Muslims and Christians in Ghana. Since then, public anti-Islamic polemical preaching conducted by this and other similar groups became common in Ghana.

The occasional confrontations and violence between Muslim-Christian polemics and between members of the two faiths threatened to challenge the wisdom of the adage that “too much meat does not spoil soup”²¹. This seems to suggest that the occasional and violent confrontations would have threatened the old peaceful nature of the religious atmosphere and the freedom of worship in Ghana.

In spite of the aforementioned instances of tension, longer periods of peaceful relations among the two religions have been recorded than moments of tension. Christian and Muslim leaders came together to issue statements on issues of national concern. John Azumah cites an example of the Christian Council of Ghana, the National Catholic Secretariat, the Ghana Pentecostal Council and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission who met and issued a statement calling on the political parties to exercise restraint during the general elections of 1992 when tension mounted between the opposition and ruling parties. Similarly during communal fighting in northern Ghana in

¹⁹ On the 9th of November 2014, the entire Muslim family of Nathan Samwini came from Wa to witness his induction as the Bishop of the Northern Ghana Diocese of the Methodist Church, Ghana.

²⁰ Nathan I. Samwini defines “Dialogue of Life” as coexisting peacefully with “the other” in spite of obvious religious differences. In dialogue of life, people from different religious traditions live and interact in their everyday lives. See Also: Samwini, Nathan Iddrisu. “The Need for and Importance of Dialogue of Life in Community Building: The Case of Selected West African Nations”. In: *Journal of Inter-Religious Studies* (JIRD) Issue 6. April 2011

²¹ Azumah, John. "Muslim-Christian Relations in Ghana: Too much Meat does not spoil the Soup", *Current Dialogue*, No. 36, pp. 5-9. 2000

1994, the religious bodies met and called upon warring factions “in the name of God and in the name of Allah” to stop fighting²². Religious leaders called on political parties to make the 2012 General elections peaceful. This year 2016, Ghana will go to the polls and Religious leaders have called on their adherents and political parties to make this year’s election a peaceful one. After the 2012 elections, the National Council of Peace was formed in order to facilitate peace building in Ghana by promoting cooperative problem solving to conflicts through religious reconciliation and transformative dialogues²³.

In Ghana, Christians and Muslims at all levels have always done things in common right from the family to national levels. At the national level, Ghana had a Catholic President and a Muslim vice president who were both sworn into office by a Chief Justice who was a Methodist in 2000. In northern Ghana, Muslim chiefs sometimes invite Christians to come and plant churches and open schools for their children in their communities²⁴. Muslim and Christian leaders attend and/or deliver goodwill messages at each other’s national conferences, synods and conventions. Christians and Muslims offer prayers for political leaders irrespective of their religious affiliation. During Independence Day celebrations of Ghana on the 6th of March every year, religious leaders are invited and prayers are offered to God by a Pastor or Priest, an Imam and a traditional Priest. In March 2009, the late President of Ghana, John Evans Atta Mills declared a National Prayer and Thanksgiving Day for Christians, Muslims and Traditional Believers. On this day Ghanaians are supposed to pray for the country in their various religious traditions.

²² Azumah, John. “Muslim-Christian Relations in Ghana: Too much Meat does not spoil the Soup.”

²³ http://mint.gov.gh/peace/about_us.htm. The National Peace Council is made up of Eight (8) representatives of various Religious groups in Ghana. The Council is made up of Most Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Asante Chairman of the Christian Council of Ghana representing the Christian Council of Ghana; Apostle Dr. Opoku Onyinah representative of the Ghana Pentecostal & charismatic Council; Nana Susubribi Krobea Asante (Asokorehene) representative of the National House of Chiefs; Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Osei-Bonsu(President of the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference) and representative of the National Catholic Secretariat ; Sheikh Mahmoud Gedel and Alhaji Adam Musah Abubakar are both representatives of the Office of Chief Imam ; Rev. Gideon Titi-Ofei (The General Secretary of NACC) representative of the National Association of Charismatic & Christian Churches. The Late Maulvi Dr. Wahab Adam the Ameer & Missionary-in-charge and representative of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission was also a member of the council until his death.

²⁴ (<http://nifcon.anglicancommunion.org>)

Factors which have led to the Peaceful Co-existence Christianity and Islam in Ghana

As mentioned earlier there are several reasons why Christians and Muslims in Ghana live peacefully with each other. These factors are discussed below:

a. Family and Ethnic Bonds

There are many families in Ghana that are “inter-faith households” this means members of same family belonging to different religious traditions. In such cases, bonds of family, blood ties and ethnicity are stronger than religious affiliations and serve to neutralize any form of religious hostility. People partake in the celebration of festivals in Ghana irrespective of their religious background. The celebrations of festivals are opportunities for people of a community to solidarise renew ties and contribute towards developmental projects. It is therefore difficult to find religious conflicts in the magnitude of what occurs in Nigeria in Ghana because of these good relations that exists between members of the same family and ethnic group.

b. Education

In Ghana, the school is the first place where students of different religions meet to learn. Muslims before 1960 felt reluctant to send their children to school because they feared that the schools which were being managed by Christian missionaries was a means of converting Muslim children. Muslim parents therefore realised that they were left out of employment of western jobs, so they changed their minds and sent their children to school. By the 1980s many Ghanaian Muslims sent their children to school without fearing that their children will be converted²⁵.

The Ministry of Education also included Religious and Moral Education in the national public education curriculum. In many Basic schools pupils are taught about the three religions in Ghana namely: Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion. It is believed that this basic education would be a foundation of future interfaith relations in the mind of the Ghanaian child. Also because Christianity is the dominant religion in Ghana, many schools have adopted Christian liturgical practices as part of their morning and afternoon assembly meetings. The Lord’s Prayer is recited in many Ghanaian schools before the start of classes or at the close of the day and the pupils

²⁵ Boyle, H. N., Seebaway, Z., Lansah, I., & Boukamhi, A., 2007. Islamic Education Sector Study in Ghana. Education development Centre: USAID

recite it irrespective of their religious background. In Ahmadiyya schools which are open to any pupil irrespective of their religious background, the *Surah al-fatihah* is recited instead of the Lord's Prayer. All pupils and students of their schools, Christians included recite the *Surah al-fatihah*, and parents of these children have no ill-feelings about this. In Ghana, if a child is sent to a missionary school whether Christian or Muslim, that child should be ready to abide by the rules and regulations of that school.

c. Political Parties.

Muslims and Christians are members of the different political parties in Ghana. It is common to find Muslims and Christians campaigning together on common political platforms. As a result, in Ghana, Christians and Muslims are elected or appointed to high governmental positions. In 2004, the President of Ghana, John Agyekum Kufour was a Christian (Catholic) while his Vice-President Aliu Mahama was a Muslim. There are many ministerial positions that are occupied by Christians and Muslims; the Christian can be minister with a Muslim as his or her deputy or vice versa. This is to say that in Ghana, people are generally voted for based on their competence rather than on lines of religious affiliation.

d. Working Relationships

In Ghana, people work together peacefully irrespective of different religious backgrounds. Muslims manage organisations with Christian subordinates and vice versa. It is common to find Muslim men who serve as security men for many churches and even organizations owned by Christians. Christians and Muslims buy and sell from the same market, they sit in the same buses and taxis and they work together in many organisations. In Ghana, people are appointed as members of committees irrespective of their religion. The National Peace Council of Ghana formed in 2012, is made up of Christians and Muslims. The immediate past Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church Ghana, Emmanuel Asante is the Chairman while his Vice was the Ameer and Missionary in-Charge of the Ahmadiyya Mission, the late Maulvi Wahab Adam. In many public encounters where prayers are required the opening and closing prayers are said by a Christian and a Muslim respectively or vice versa.

e. Health

Health is an important factor in human life. Every community makes sure that its citizens are healthy. Christians and Muslims are careful to live in a clean environment. When there is an outbreak of disease it affects all members of the community irrespective of religious background. When there was an outbreak of Ebola in some West African countries, every Ghanaian was concerned and efforts were put in place to protect all Ghanaians from

acquiring the virus. Health officials who work in the hospitals and clinics in Ghana belong to different religious traditions but they all save lives.

Conclusion

Peace is important for the fulfillment of the world's many differences. Religious people must practice peace as their sacred teachings require them to do. Since many countries of the world are religiously pluralistic they must learn to co-exist peacefully and have mutual relations with each other.

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Christliche und muslimische Gemeindeleiter erkunden die interreligiöse Situation in Ghana

Werner Kahl¹

Im September 2014 machte sich eine kurzfristig (Ebola-Angst!) auf sieben Teilnehmer geschrumpfte Studiengruppe auf den Weg von Hamburg nach Ghana - zwei ghanaische Muslime aus dem Vorstand der Masjid Rahma Moschee in St. Georg/Hamburg, der dortige lutherische Pastor, der dortige Pastor der African-Christian Church aus Sierra-Leone, die kenianische Leiterin einer Pfingstgemeinde von ost-afrikanischen Frauen in Hamburg, ein Professor für Religionswissenschaft aus Rostock und ein Studienleiter der Missionsakademie.

Die interreligiöse und interkulturelle Gruppe wollte erkunden,

1. ob es in Ghana wie in weiten Teilen Westafrikas - mit der Ausnahme Nord-Nigerias - zwischen Christen (etwa 70%) und Muslimen (etwa 18%) tatsächlich keine nennenswerten Auseinandersetzungen, sondern ganz im Gegenteil ein gutes Einvernehmen gibt, wie oft berichtet;
2. worauf gute interreligiöse Beziehungen zurückzuführen wären;
3. und ob bzw. was von der ghanaischen Erfahrung für die Entwicklung und Gestaltung friedvoller Beziehungen im hiesigen Kontext zu lernen wäre.

Die Reise führte die Gruppe vom christlich dominierten Süden des Landes (Accra, Kumasi, Sunyani) bis in die muslimisch dominierte Stadt Tamale im Norden. Nach vielen Begegnungen mit christlichen und muslimischen Studenten und Professoren, Imamen, Pastoren und Moscheegemeinden ergaben sich folgende Erkenntnisse, die zum Abschluss der Reise den Pastorenanwärtern und Dozenten des Trinity Theological Seminary in Accra vorgestellt und zur Diskussion gestellt werden konnten:

¹ Prof. Dr. Werner Kahl of the Academy of Mission describes here, and reflects upon a study trip to Ghana in 2014 with pastors from Germany, Kenya, Sierra-Leone, with Ghanaian Muslim leaders from Hamburg and professors, studying Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana.

1. Generell ist tatsächlich ein einvernehmliches Zusammenleben von Muslimen und Christen in Ghana vorauszusetzen. Religionszugehörigkeit hat dort weithin keinen trennenden Charakter. In vielen Großfamilien gibt es Angehörige beider Religionen sowie der traditionellen Religion. Islam und Christentum sind einheimische Religionen geworden. Beide sind im Rahmen eines gemeinsamen traditionellen Weltwissens indigenisiert worden.

2. Unter der Oberfläche sind dennoch interreligiöse Irritationen wahrzunehmen. Bei Leitern von Kirchen und Moscheen ist verbreitet ein wechselseitiges Misstrauen anzutreffen, wonach „die anderen“ möglicher Weise eine „hidden agenda“ verfolgten, um die Gegenseite zur Konversion zu bewegen (Sorge der Muslime) oder um bei wechselnden Mehrheitsverhältnissen die Sharia einzuführen (Sorge der Christen). Außerdem wussten Muslime von Diskriminierungserfahrungen zu berichten (Zwang auf muslimische Schüler, den Schulgottesdienst zu besuchen oder die Kopfbedeckung abzulegen).

3. Gelegentlich lokal ausbrechende Auseinandersetzungen mit Gewaltpotenzial – etwa aufgrund einer den Islam verdammen Predigt eines Pfingstpastors – werden eingehegt durch die Intervention allseits respektierter Imame oder Pastoren. Sie stehen in direktem Kontakt zueinander, um bei Konfliktfällen zeitnah eingreifen zu können. Es verbindet sie die gemeinsame Sorge für den Erhalt und die Förderung eines friedlichen Miteinanders im Land. Diese in Ghana verfolgte Strategie der Konfliktbewältigung basiert auf der in der Gesellschaft vorausgesetzten Akzeptanz hierarchischer Autoritätsstrukturen. Wie lange aber können Spannungen „unterdrückt“ werden?

Herausforderungen für Christen und Muslime

Die historischen, kulturellen, gesellschaftlichen und ökonomischen Bedingungen der Gestaltung christlich-muslimischer Beziehungen in Ghana und in Deutschland unterscheiden sich deutlich voneinander. Dies schiebt einer unkritischen Übertragung ghanaischer Erfahrungen in den hiesigen Kontext einen Riegel vor. Dennoch sind die folgenden in Ghana gewonnenen Impulse auch für die Situation in Deutschland bedenkenswert, ganz abgesehen von der grundlegenden und ermutigenden Einsicht, *dass* ein friedliches Zusammenleben möglich ist:

1. Zwischen muslimischen und christlichen Gemeindeleitern besteht in Ghana weithin ein gutes Einvernehmen und gelegentlich ein Vertrauensverhältnis. Dieses wäre – auch in Deutschland – auf der lokalen Ebene des *Zusammenlebens* von muslimischen und christlichen Gemeinden

zu fördern, etwa indem Räume der Zusammenarbeit der Religionsgruppen kreiert werden.

2. *Generalisierungen* über die jeweils „anderen“ wären zu vermeiden und die Massenmedien an ihre gesellschaftliche Verantwortung zu gemahnen.

3. Ungerechtigkeiten, Beleidigungen und Respektlosigkeit gegen die eine Gruppe wären als eine Angelegenheit *aller* zu erachten. Sie erforderten eine gemeinsame Antwort der Gläubigen.

4. Im Bereich *theologischer Ausbildung* wäre die interreligiöse Kompetenz angehender Pastoren/Pastorinnen und Lehrer/Lehrerinnen zu fördern, und zwar insbesondere durch die Konzipierung von Seminaren unter Mitwirkung muslimischer Dozenten.

Christian Muslim Dialogue in India

Syed Zafar Mahmood¹ | Packiam T. Samuel²

I. Introduction

India is the seventh largest country by area, the second most populous country with over 1.2 billion people and the most populous democracy in the world. Bounded by the Indian Ocean on the south, the Arabian Sea on the south-west, and the Bay of Bengal on the south-east, it shares land borders with Pakistan to the west; China, Nepal and to the north-east; and Myanmar (Burma) and Bangladesh to the east. In the Indian Ocean, India is in the vicinity of Sri Lanka and the Maldives; in addition, India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands share a maritime border with Thailand and Indonesia.

Home to the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation and a region of historic trade routes and vast empires, the Indian subcontinent was identified with its commercial and cultural wealth for much of its long history. Four religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism—originated here, whereas Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam arrived in the 1st millennium CE and also shaped the region's diverse culture. Gradually annexed by and brought under the administration of the British East India Company from the early 18th century and administered directly by the United Kingdom after the Indian Rebellion of 1857, India became an independent nation in 1947 after a struggle for independence that was marked by non-violent resistance led by Mahatma Gandhi.

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² Dr. Zafar Mahmood, President, Interfaith Coalition for Peace, New Delhi; President, Zakat Foundation of India; President Iqbal Academy. Served as in the cabinet Secretariat of the Govt. of India and as Officer on Special Duty to the Prime Minister High level Committee, was Senior Govt Officer for last 30 plus Years. Has a Ph.D. in Political Science from Aligarh Muslim University / Zur Zeit Präsident der Interfaith Coalition for Peace, New Delhi, der Zakat Foundation of India und der Iqbal Academy.

Economists estimate India to have been the most populous and wealthiest region of the world throughout the first millennium CE. This advantage was lost in the 18th century as other regions edged forward. Currently, the Indian economy is the world's seventh-largest by nominal GDP and third-largest by purchasing power parity (PPP). Following market-based economic reforms in 1991, India became one of the fastest-growing major economies; it is considered a newly industrialised country. However, it continues to face the challenges of poverty, corruption, malnutrition, inadequate public healthcare, and terrorism. A nuclear weapons state and a regional power, it has the third-largest standing army in the world and ranks sixth in military expenditure among nations. India is a federal republic governed under a parliamentary system consisting of 29 states and 7 union territories. India is a pluralistic, multilingual, and a multi-ethnic society.

Traditional Indian society is sometimes defined by social hierarchy. The Indian caste system embodies much of the social stratification and many of the social restrictions found in the Indian subcontinent. Social classes are defined by thousands of endogamous hereditary groups, often termed as *jātis*, or "castes". India declared untouchability to be illegal in 1947 and has since enacted other anti-discriminatory laws and social welfare initiatives. At the workplace in urban India and in international or leading Indian companies, the caste related identification has pretty much lost its importance. Family values are important in the Indian tradition, and multi-generational patriarchal joint families have been the norm in India, though nuclear families are becoming common in urban areas. An overwhelming majority of Indians, with their consent, have their marriages arranged by their parents or other family members. Marriage is thought to be for life, and the divorce rate is extremely low. Child marriages are common, especially in rural areas; many women in India wed before reaching 18, which is their legal marriageable age. Female infanticide in India and female foeticide in India have caused a discrepancy in the sex ratio, as of 2005 it was estimated that there were 50 million more males than females in the nation. However the recent report from 2011 shown improvement among the gender ratio. The payment of dowry, although illegal, remains widespread across class lines. Deaths resulting from dowry, mostly from bride burning, are on the rise.

Many Indian festivals are religious in origin; among them are Chhath, Christmas, Diwali, Durga Puja, Bakr-Id, Eid ul-Fitr, Ganesh Chaturthi, Holi, Makar Sankranti or Uttarayan, Navratri, Thai Pongal, and Vaisakhi. India has three national holidays which are observed in all states and union territories: Republic Day, Independence Day, and Gandhi

Jayanti. Other sets of holidays, varying between nine and twelve, are officially observed in individual states.

Throughout India, many people practice customs and religious rituals, such as "Saṃskāra", which is a series of "personal sacraments and rites conducted at various stages throughout life".

II. Religions in India

Religion in India is characterised by a diversity of religious beliefs and practices. The Indian subcontinent is the birthplace of some of the world's major religions; namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Throughout India's history, religion has been an important part of the country's culture. Religious diversity and religious tolerance are both established in the country by the law and custom; the Constitution of India has declared the right to freedom of religion to be a fundamental right.

The western and northern part of India have been the home of one of the most ancient civilisation of the world called Indus valley civilisation. Most of the shrines, ancient temples of Hinduism and the birthplace of Hindu saints are in India. Allahabad hosts the biggest religious festival Kumbhamela, where Hindus from all over the world come together to take a bathe in the confluence of three sacred rivers of India: Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati. It is also home of around 90% world population of Hindus. The Indian diaspora in the West has popularised many aspects of Hindu philosophy such as yoga, meditation, Ayurvedic medicine, divination, karma, and reincarnation. The influence of Indian religions has been significant all over the world. Several organisations, such as the Hare Krishna movement, the Brahma Kumaris, the Ananda Marga, and others have spread Indian spiritual beliefs and practices.

According to the 2011 census, 79.8% of the population of India practices Hinduism and 14.2% adheres to Islam, while the remaining 6% adheres to other religions (Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism and various indigenous ethnically-bound faiths). Zoroastrianism and Judaism also have an ancient history in India, and each has several thousands of Indian adherents. India has the largest population of people adhering to Zoroastrianism (i.e. Parsis and Iranis) and Bahá'í Faith in the world even though these religions are not native to India. Many other world religions also have a relationship with Indian spirituality, such as the Baha'i faith which recognises Buddha and Krishna as manifestations of the God Almighty.

III. Islam in India

Islam is a minority religion in India, with 14.2% of the country's population or roughly 172 million people identifying as adherents (2011 census). Islam first came to the western coast of India with Arab traders as early as the 7th century AD to coastal Malabar and the Konkan-Gujarat. Cheraman Juma Masjid in Kerala is thought to be the first mosque in India, built in 629 AD by Malik Ibn Dinar. Following an expedition from the governor of Bahrain to Bharuch in the 7th century AD, immigrant Arab and Persian trading communities from South Arabia and the Persian Gulf began settling in coastal Gujarat. Islam arrived in north India in the 12th century with Turkic invasions and has since become a part of India's religious and cultural heritage. Over the centuries, there has been significant integration of Hindu and Muslim cultures across India and the Muslims have played a prominent role in India's economic rise and cultural influence.

India's Muslim population is the world's third largest and the world's largest Muslim-minority population. Officially, India has the third largest Muslim population next to Indonesia and Pakistan. India is home to 10% of the world's Muslim population. India has around 172 million Muslims (2011 census). Estimates show India may have more Muslims than Pakistan, though 2016 census in Pakistan will give the exact figure, as overall population of Pakistan is estimated at around 191.71 million

The vast majority of the Muslims in India belong to Indian ethnic groups. However, some Indian Muslims were found with detectable, traceable, minor to some levels of gene flow from outside, primarily from the Middle East and Central Asia. However, they are found in very low levels. Sources indicate that the castes among Muslims developed as the result of the concept of Kafa'a. Those who are referred to as Ashrafs (see also Sharif) are presumed to have a superior status derived from their foreign Arab ancestry, while the Ajlafs are assumed to be converts from Hinduism, and have a lower status. Actual Muslim social practice, including in India, points to the existence of sharp social hierarchies that numerous Muslim scholars have sought to provide appropriate Islamic sanction through elaborate rules of fiqh associated with the notion of kafa'a.

IV. Relationship of Muslims with Christians

A. Muslim-Christian conflict

In spite of the fact that there have been relatively fewer conflicts between Muslims and Christians in India in comparison to those between Muslims and Hindus, or Muslims and Sikhs, the relationship between Muslims and Christians have also been occasionally turbulent. With the advent of European colonialism in India with the demise of Mughal Empire beginning from 18th century, Christians were persecuted in some Muslim ruled princely states in India.

Anti-Christian persecution by Tippu Sultan in the 17th century

Perhaps the most infamous acts of anti-Christian persecution by Muslims was committed by Tippu Sultan, the ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore against the Mangalorean Catholic community from Mangalore and the erstwhile South Canara district on the southwestern coast of India. Tippu was widely reputed to be anti-Christian. The captivity of Mangalorean Catholics at Seringapatam, which began on 24 February 1784 and ended on 4 May 1799, remains the most disconsolate memory in their history.

B. Muslim-Christian Dialogue

Problems and Obstacles Muslim-Christian dialogue does not face such problems in India as it faces in the Muslim- and Christian-majority countries, primarily because both the Muslims and Christians are minorities and victims of Hindu religious chauvinism in India. But still there are certain problems and obstacles that need to be discussed and removed. One of the biggest obstacles in the religious dialogue between Muslims and Christians lies in the perceptions about the Lord Jesus Christ and the Prophet of Islam (pbuh). Muslims consider Jesus Christ a Prophet and revere him accordingly but most of the Christians still suffer from certain historical misgivings about the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Another problem consists in both Islam and Christianity being proselytising religions. Both want to enlarge their presence through religious propagation which creates tensions and impedes the process of dialogue.

Perceptions about the relationship between religion on the one hand and politics and political power on the other, is the third important point of conflict. Christianity has accepted the separation of Church and State as a

fact, while Muslims are not ready to accept this dualism and consider the Rightly-guided Caliphate as their model, although religion and politics have been independent of each other for the largest part of Islamic history.

The Christian world has achieved many freedoms, including that of expression, after a long and painful struggle against religious repression because of which they are not ready to give them up at any cost, whilst the Muslim world, because of an entirely different historical experience, finds itself against giving unlimited freedoms to the people. This also constitutes a great obstacle in the dialogue.

Conservative circles in both the religions are also creating problems in Muslim-Christian dialogue as they highlight contentious issues instead of concentrating on the points of accord and unity.

V. Towards a Future of Hope

Efforts so far made towards strengthening and intensifying the process of religious dialogue show that in spite of many forces working against it, the future of Muslim-Christian dialogue seems to be quite bright, as there are many more points of agreement than otherwise between the two great religious traditions. The Common Word initiative and the Mecca and Madrid Conferences point towards the fact that the process of dialogue has now got a firm ground upon which to grow. The way the religious and political leaderships in the Muslim world have joined hands to further the cause of dialogue is a potent indication that in countering the forces of clash and conflict among religions and civilisations, the religious leadership of different faiths would come forward with much more vigour and unity to intensify the process of dialogue at every level and force the political leadership to serve the cause of religious tolerance, coexistence and universal human brotherhood.

In India, though the tradition of religious interaction and dialogue is quite old and established, the process of religious dialogue, more particularly the Hindu-Muslim dialogue, is yet to find a coherent expression and a firm ground upon which to stand. The Hindu majority has not yet responded to the necessity of dialogue in the way and on the scale it demands. Small groups of different religious traditions are indeed engaged in this process at different levels but 64 these efforts are limited to conferences and seminars alone with practically no impact on the routine affairs of society. The process of dialogue has still not found a systematic academic articulation mainly because there is almost no institutional support for it. Academics who are engaged in this process largely remain confined to their private efforts and

generally do not join the activists of dialogue. But there is still a great hope in India for religious dialogue to grow, as this country has been a pluralist society for centuries and the Indian people share a living experience of religious tolerance and coexistence.

Muslim–Christian Dialogue in the Philippines from a Christian perspective

Villare S. Pailagao¹

History of the Philippines

Geographically, the Philippines is in Asia, but by race and culture, the Filipinos are a harmonious blend of the East and the West. Our Western heritage, largely acquired from Spain and America, has made distinctly different from other Asian nations.

First, Filipinos are predominantly Christian in Asian region where other nations are Islamic, Buddhist, Shinto, Confucian, polytheistic and animistic in beliefs.

Secondly, the Philippines is the first republic in Asia, being the first Asian nation to achieve independence by revolution and establish a Republic. It led the world in waging a “People power” revolution to oust a dictator by peaceful and prayerful means in 1986.

Finally, Filipinos are unique for culturally assimilating four heritages – the indigenous Asian, the European, the Latin and the American heritage.

Geography and Resources

God has given our archipelago of 7,107 islands of which 2,773 all the ecology needed to support a great nation – (1) fertile soil capable of producing large crops of rice, corn, coconut, banana and other agricultural products. (2) A good tropical climate (3) rich natural resources, such as forests, energy resources, mines yielding gold and other minerals, fisheries and an abundant plant and animal life.

¹ Rev. Fr. Villare S. Pailagao, a Parish Priest of Malitbog Parish of the Diocese of Malaybalay Bukidnon since May 2013, is member of various organization such as of ecological concern, peace and justice and of interfaith relation. Active on anti-mining, climate change and Christian-Muslim relation / Gemeindepriester in der Diözese Malaybalay Bukidnon und engagiert u.a. im christlich-muslimischen Dialog.

When we speak about minerals

- Its mineral deposits are valued at \$312 billion or about 40 percent of the country's total mineral reserves of \$840 billion (DENR-MGB, 2008).
- In Mindanao is likewise endowed with rich mineral resources. Its metallic deposits include lead, zinc, ore, iron, copper (4th), chromite, magnetite, gold (3rd) and nickel (6th). Gold mined in Mindanao accounts for nearly half of the national gold reserves.
- Major crops such as rubber (100% of national production), pineapple (91%), cacao (90%) as well as banana, coffee, corn and coconut (over 50%). The island also produces exotic fruits like pomelo, mangosteen and durian.
- More than 10 million hectares are devoted for agriculture

Colonization Period

1. Spanish Colonization (1521 - 1898) -Spain aims in colonizing overseas lands (including Philippines) may be keynoted by three G's. God, Gold and Glory.
2. The Coming of the United States (1898-1946)the Spanish - American war ended in the treaty of Paris (1898). The Filipinos, who expected the Americans to champion their freedom, instead were betrayed and reluctantly fell into the hands of the American imperialist.
3. Japanese Occupation (1942-45) - was one of the darkest interludes in the history of the Philippines
4. "I shall Return" US Imperialist, January 9, 1945 led by General Mc Arthur.

The Philippines and its People

Philippines is one of the richest countries of the world, but its people are wallowing in poverty.

- ✿ 100,700.000 approximate population
- ✿ 75% lives in the rural areas while 25% lives in the urban centers
- ✿ Religion in the Philippines is heavily influenced by its history as a part of the Spanish Empire. Today around 80% of the country's citizens are Roman Catholic Christians. Of the remaining people, 10% are from other Christian denominations and around 5% are Muslim, mainly based in the South West in the country.

Who is controlling and exploiting the wealth of the country?

- ✿ US Monopoly capitalists
- ✿ Other foreign monopoly capitalists

In collaboration with:

- ✿ Local ruling big bourgeois compradors and big landlords (1%)
- ✿ Workers, peasants, semi-workers, professionals and national bourgeoisies make up 99% of the population

Some Indicators of the crisis the Filipino people suffer from:

- ✿ Unemployment or Underemployment (50% of the labor force)
- ✿ Impoverishment - 80% of the population are living below the poverty line.
- ✿ COL - Php 506.00 vs. minimum wage
- ✿ Peasants don't own the land they till
- ✿ No security of tenure
- ✿ National bourgeoisies are threatened by big foreign monopoly capitalists

Interfaith and Dialogue Experiences in Northern Mindanao

1. Ramadan and Christmas Solidarity interfaith Harmony Week.
2. Mindanao Week of Peace
3. Public Interfaith Initiatives
4. School for Peace : Initiatives for peace building
5. World interfaith harmony week Celebration
6. Interfaith Forum on Climate Change
7. Candle Lighten activity
8. Church and Muslim place of Worship

Justice and Peace as Important Theme for Inter-religious Dialogue

1. **Dissecting Imperialism: Characteristics, Current State, and People's Resistance:** Ms. Lidasan shared stories of US intervention and human rights violations in the lives and struggle of the moro people for self determination, given the context of Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) and continuing presence of American troops in Mindanao thru the Enhance Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA).

2. Tools of Analysis for a Just and Lasting Peace: Taking the Worldview, Viewpoint and Method of the Poor and the Oppressed. The presentor aims to provided explanation on tools of analysis especially for the correct reading of the signs of the times from the perspective of God's Anawim.

3. Internalizing God's Mission; Living Out Justice, Equality and Peace: this topic provides a clear understanding about living God's mission in doing and seeking peace base on justice and equality.

There is so much to till about the lack of Justice and unpeace situation here in the Philippines particularly here in the Island of Mindanao.

1. The continuing arm conflict between the Government forces and of the Muslim armed groups.
2. The unresolved situation of Lumads(natives) on their flight to life, evacuated due to Mining Interest and development of their own. As of now, thousands of families flew and abandoned their homes and land due to development aggression and land grabbing.
3. The increasing poverty rate, unemployment, and of human rights violation committed by the state arm groups.
4. The Massacre of our lumads (natives) brothers and sisters in defending their rights to self determination and right to life.

By this mold the greater challenge in working for peace base on justice, especially to the Church in her mission and ministry in building a new heaven and earth in the sign of the times.

Muslim-Christian relations among the Bangsamoro in the Philippines, from a Muslim perspective

Kamarodin "Kamar" Abdulkarim¹

The Muslims in the Philippines consist of thirteen (13) Ethno-linguistics groups: Magindanaon, Maranao, Iranun, Tausug, Sama, Yakan, Jama Mapun, Ka'agan, Kalibugan, Sangil, Molbog, Palawani and Badjao. The Muslims who traditionally inhabited Mindanao, the islands of Basilan and Palawan, and the Sulu and Tawi-Tawi archipelago in the south of the Philippines identify themselves as *Bangsamoro*. The word Bangsamoro comes from the Malay word *bangsa*, meaning *nation* or *people*, and the word *Moro*. The name Moro was given by the Spanish colonizers to the Muslims in Mindanao whom they found to have the same religion and way of life with the Muslims of North Africa who ruled the Iberian Peninsula for centuries.

The homeland of the Bangsamoro people consisted of the territories under the jurisdiction of their governments before the emergence of the Philippine state. At the height of its power, the Sulu Sultanate exercised sovereignty over the present day provinces of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Palawan, Basilan and the Malaysian state of Sabah (North Borneo). The territory of the Magindanaw Sultanate included Maguindanao province, the coastal areas of the provinces of Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato, Sarangani, parts of Lanao provinces, Davao del Sur and Davao Oriental, and the eastern part of Zamboanga del Sur. The Datu Dakula of Sibugay, who ruled the Sibugay autonomous region under the Magindanaw Sultanate, exercised jurisdiction over Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga City and the western part of Zamboanga del Sur. The Rajah of Buayan ruled North Cotabato, the upper valley of Maguindanao and the interior areas of Sultan Kudarat and South Cotabato and some parts of Bukidnon. The Pat a Pangampong ko Ranao (confederation of the four lake-based emirates) ruled the interior parts of Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, and parts of Bukidnon, Agusan, and eastern

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and western Misamis provinces. The small sultanate of Kabuntalan separates the domains of Magindanaw and Buayan.

As the result of the colonial policy of the Philippine government to reduce the Bangsamoro into minority by encouraging Filipino settlers from the north to settle in their traditional homeland, the Bangsamoro are now confined in the provinces of Tawi-Tawi, Sulu, Basilan, Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao, and some municipalities of Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga del Norte, Lanao del Norte, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato, Sarangani, Davao Oriental, Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte, Compostela Valley and Palawan. Although their territory was significantly reduced but the Bangsamoro people continuously assert their right over their homeland, which gain implied recognition by the government.

Mindanao week of peace

The Mindanao Week of Peace is an annual activity that was initiated in Zamboanga City, Philippines by Peace Advocates Zamboanga Foundation, Inc. (PAZ) and SALAM Foundation in 1997. It later snowballed into a Mindanao-wide event as adopted by the Bishop-Ulama Conference and became an annual activity.

The President of the Philippines declared the last Thursday of November up to the first Wednesday of December of every year thereafter as the Mindanao Week of Peace through Presidential Proclamation No. 127 series of 2001.

All concerned government agencies and instrumentalities, including government owned and controlled corporations and members of the private sector and civil society based in Mindanao are enjoined and encouraged to engage in relevant and meaningful activities in celebration of the Mindanao Week of Peace in coordination with the Bishops-Ulama Forum.

The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process in partnership with the Bishops-Ulama Forum Secretariat shall provide the necessary help to ensure a successful coordination of all undertakings during the said week of peace. (*Presidential Proclamation No. 127 series of 2001*).

Since 1999

The Mindanao Week of Peace is a take-off from the annual Zamboanga Week of Peace. Mindanao's Bishops-Ulama Forum (now Conference) opted to make the celebration Mindanao-wide beginning 1999. The BUC was born three years earlier.

The MWOP's **themes** through the years, based on MindaNews' research:

1999: Healing the Past, Building the Future

2000: Mindanaoans Journeying Together Towards a Culture of Peace.

2001: Peace: Sharing the Vision of Unity and Hope

2002: Peace through Reconciliation: Mindanaoans seeking a Common Ground

2003: Healing through Forgiveness: Key to Total Human Development

2004: A Reconciled Family, Agent of Reconciliation

2005: Millennium Development Goals: Women and Youth as Partners in Peace Building

2006: In the Name of the Almighty, God of Harmony, Care for the Earth

2007: Building Bridges of Peace with our Peace Officers

2008: Integrity of Mind and Heart a way to Reconciliation and Peace!

2009: Think Mindanao, Feel Mindanao, Bring Peace to Mindanao

2010: Responsive and Responsible Governance: Key to Peace, Development and Sustainability

2011: Common Word between us and you: Love of God, Love of Neighbor

2012: Love of God and Love of Neighbor, A Challenge for Mindanao

2013: Dialogue and Hope: Key to Peace

2014: Pray for Long-Lasting Peace

2015: Peoples' Solidarity for Integrity, Justice and Peace

Mindanao Week of Peace Activities (November 26 to December 2 of every year)

Nov. 26 - Grand Opening Peace Parade

27 - Youth Peace Camp / Mural Peace Painting

28 - Children and Youth Peace Assembly

29 - Peace Weavers Awards Night

30 - Historical and Solidarity Journey

Dec. 01 - Forum on Mindanao Peace Process and Beyond

02 - Torch Parade / Cultural Peace Festival

Hope

The existence of the Mindanao Week of Peace is brought about by hope. If there is no hope why would anyone bother to solve such a massive social issue. Until now, hope is what keeps us in doing things that seems to have no solution. It is what makes the impossible possible. People see the value of

peace because of violence and because Mindanao has been infected with violence we want to change that. We want to make Mindanao a better place.

If you look at the history of Mindanao, the tri-people of Mindanao has been fighting through out the years, but then people started to realized that to create peace we must not strive for dominance but interdependence. To achieve we must understand others to see the bigger picture and not correct them of our narrow perspective. Such approach, such values, such perspective has been spread out because of the Mindanao Week of Peace.

In the end, the Mindanao Week of Peace tells us that we are still on a quest towards peace and tell us that it is indeed possible to achieve such. It reminds us that we need peace. That peace is a vital element towards a developed society. That peace will create a better Mindanao.

Struggle for Freedom

The struggle has been in existence for centuries, starting from the struggle against the Spanish up to the Moro rebellion in the American period until the current Islamic Insurgency in the Philippines.

The history of the Islamic Insurgency in the Philippines began shortly after independence. The Philippine government envisioned a united country in which Christians and Muslims would be assimilated into the dominant culture. This vision, however, was generally rejected by Muslims, who feared that it was just a euphemistic equivalent of assimilation. Because of this, the government realized that there was a need for a specialized agency to deal with the Muslim community so they set up the Commission for National Integration in 1957, which was later replaced by the Office of Muslim Affairs and Cultural Communities (now National Commission for Muslim Filipinos).

Concessions were made to Moros after the creation of these agencies, with Moros receiving exemptions from national laws prohibiting polygamy and divorce. In 1977, the government attempted move a step further by harmonizing Muslim customary law with the national law.

Unfortunately, most of these achievements were superficial. The Moros, dissatisfied with the government, established the Moro National Liberation Front led by Nur Misuari with the intention of creating their own homeland. This initiated the Islamic Insurgency in the Philippines in the late 1960's, which is still ongoing up to the present and has since created a fracture between Muslims and Christians.

By the 1970's, a Christian terrorist organization called the *Ilagas* (Rats) began operating in Cotabato. In retaliation, Muslim armed bands, like

the *Blackshirts* of Cotabato and the *Barracudas* of Lanao began to appear and fight the *Ilagas*. The Armed Forces of the Philippines were deployed to install peace, however their presence only created more violence.

In 1981, internal divisions within the MNLF caused the establishment of a conservative organization called the MILF. The group proved to be more effective than the MNLF in continuing the insurgency.

After the 1986 EDSA Revolution, President Corazon C. Aquino decided to reach out to the Moro community.

In the year 1987, peace talks with the MNLF began with the intention of establishing an autonomous region for Moros. On August 1, 1989, through Republic Act No. 6734, otherwise known as the Organic Act, a plebiscite was held in the provinces within the *Bangsamoro*. This was to determine if the residents would want to be part of an Autonomous Moro Region. This led to the creation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Currently, the Philippines is under threat due to the presence of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (the breakaway faction of the MNLF), The Abu Sayyaf (an offshoot of the terror groups), and by Jemaah Islamiyah. While the government is currently under peace talks with both the MILF and the MNLF, the violence is still far from over.

Peace must be implemented on the long run. While it may be hard in the start, in fact until now the issue still persists but if you educate and promote awareness to the youth the quest for peace will still be alive and if there will be a solution the culture of peace will then follow.

Christian-Muslim Living Together in Palestine

Tharwat Zaid¹ | Fuad Giacaman²

Moslem-Christian living together is a pillar of Palestinian society. Palestine is one nation with people who share a great many characteristics in the fields of language, culture, and national aspirations. However, there is now more than ever a need to bring out these commonalities in the face of growing extremism and fanaticism in the region.

The Arab Educational Institute, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education in the Palestinian Authority, runs an inter-religious education project in the occupied West Bank called: "Diversity and Citizenship: Moslem-Christian Living Together." In this project we emphasize the commonalities between the religions while focusing on two concepts considered generally important in modern education: citizenship and diversity.

It is vital for community members to learn about the religion of the other. Respect for religious and cultural diversity is essential for citizenship. After all, citizenship is not cherry picking - taking only the things you like or which favor your own group. Citizenship requires learning about others in the community. This may be difficult but it is also enriching.

Moslem-Christian living together is not the same as dialoguing. Dialogues are between different groups who are in fundamental disagreement or conflict. That is as a whole not the case among the religions in Palestinian society. Moreover, in the inter-religious context, dialogue is associated with the fear for evangelization or conversion. This is a very sensitive matter as Palestinians live in a society with religion as a dominant element in all walks of life.

¹ Tharwat Zaid is presently Director General of the Scientific Directorate in the Palestinian Curriculum Center / Generaldirektor von Scientific Directorate im Palestinian Curriculum Center.

² *Fuad Giacaman* has 50 years of experience in education and teaching at high school and university levels, and was for 8 years school principal at the Freres School in Bethlehem / war acht Jahre lang Schulleiter der Freres School in Bethlehem.

Good models

The present project builds community so as to make people stronger in believing and communicating values of tolerance, equal citizenship, diversity, and respect for others. Doing so we want to provide a good model to the neighbors and the world.

Good, strong models are now more important than ever, and not only in education. First, there is a need to refute false claims about Christians persecuted by Moslems in Palestine, and to show the real, quiet and overall good Christian-Muslim relations here and present them to the Arab region and the world as an overall unique model of Christian-Muslim living together. Second, good models can challenge the ongoing deterioration of the situation and the rise of religious extremism away from the true teachings of religion. ISIS is an example.

Our vision is the formation of a future modern Palestinian state built on inclusive values of citizenship and respect for diversity, and not the misuse of religion for political reasons, nor the exclusion of secularists.

Subjects of the presentation

This presentation will cover the following subjects:

1. *The significance and historical background* of Christian-Muslim relations in Palestine.
2. *Christian and Muslim religious education* and the traditional education system in general. The last is still characterized by rote learning, and a focus on grades rather than critical and creative thinking.
3. *Moslem-Christian relations in the society: challenges.* There are challenges at the interpersonal and intergroup levels including stereotyping, religious fanaticism and misuse of religion, lack of knowledge of the religious other, suspicion of conversion attempts, as well as concern about mixed marriages. At a broader social and political level are hindrances like the occupation, absence of rule of law, tribalism and factionalism, a Christian minority 'complex', Christian emigration, and in general a lack of social and economic development.
4. *The positive characteristics of Moslem-Christian living together* in Palestine which include a basic tolerance in the society, a widespread knowledge of the Christian contributions to the Arab Islamic civilization, and the existence of many Arab Christian institutions. Moreover, there is an ongoing 'dialogue' in daily life between Moslems and Christians in education and work settings.

5. AEI's and the Ministry's *work in the present interreligious education project on diversity and citizenship*. We will elaborate on the project's interreligious education curriculum where Christian and Muslim students come together in a joint lesson and explore connections with national and civic education. We will discuss experiences with teacher workshops, joint celebrations, fieldtrips to Moslem and Christian holy places, and the results of studies and interviews about facing the challenges and problems in Christian-Moslem relations, and building upon the historical base of living together in Palestine.

6. We will finally discuss *recommendations* that we have for the development of our project including the use of (social) media to promote values of Christian-Moslem living together and to enhance and encourage debates, contests, testimonies, stories and community events in the spirit of the project.

Christian-Muslim encounter – a Dutch impression from Rotterdam- Delfshaven

W.M. (Martijn) van Laar¹ | Alper E. Alasag²

Introduction

We are facing challenging perhaps even troubling times. Actual developments in Irak and Syria, terrorist attacks and threats, the ever growing stream of refugees crossing European borders, it all causes a sphere of uncertainty, anxiety and fear. In such an atmosphere there is often the tendency of groups to withdraw in the inner circle, the tendency of ‘living apart together’, stereotyping the other. Some studies suggest that two third of the native Dutchmen barely has any contact with immigrants and two third of the native Dutchmen thinks there are too many immigrants in Holland.

This we are also signalling in Rotterdam.

Rotterdam is the second largest city in the Netherlands and hosts a diversity of religious groups. Delfshaven is one of the more multicultural districts of Rotterdam. To give you some figures: Approximately 70% of the population has a non-Dutch background. In some districts - like Spangen - it is even 85%. People having roots in Surinam, Cape Verde, The Netherlands Antilles. Many of our citizens is also of Turkish and Moroccan origin.

In such a diverse multicultural and multireligious setting very soon the need was felt for interfaith encounter. A need that has become only more

¹ Pastor W.M. (Martijn) van Laar is since 2004 connected to the monumental Pilgrimfathers Church in Rotterdam-Delfshaven belonging to the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN). He is chairman of the Workinggroup Encounter with Muslims of the PCN / Pastor der Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN) in Rotterdam-Delfshaven.

² Alper E. Alasag was born in the Netherlands. His parents were among the very first guest workers who came to the Netherlands from Turkey. Since 2000 he has worked for Islam and Dialog Foundation as director. Recently he became the general secretary of Platform INS / Direktor der Islam and Dialog Foundation und Generalsekretär der Platform INS.

urgent considering the actual developments. We hope to share with you some experiences we made in this field of encounter. Some impressions from a Christian and Muslim community experimenting, learning and tentatively searching its way.

Perhaps we can say that since 9/11 the nature of radical and moderate Islam has been a pressing and polarising issue and the topic of much public debate in Dutch society and Rotterdam city. While the fear and anxiety for Islam grows, the distrust of Muslims grows because of polarizing statements of Dutch politicians. The Dutch Parliament also widely discusses their worries on the growing gap between native Dutchmen and immigrants. There are growing differences between “white schools” and “black schools”, increase of discrimination and racism, attacks on and threats to mosques, et cetera.

A polarized city and society are waiting for peacemakers and bridge-builders, connecting and tearing down walls of distrust. We hope that we as Christians and Muslims can be such peace builders. Bringing different people together in an atmosphere of friendliness and creating places where people feel comfortable and safe to express themselves, feel at ease and at home. In a spirit of humility and vulnerability.

In these encounters our inner drives and motives in a very natural way come to the fore. However, we do not aim at convincing or persuading the other, let alone at exerting pressure but hope to be persuasive persons, witnessing of our faith and belief. In all our encounters we aim at reciprocity. Christians and Muslims must both feel free to give words to their deepest motives and beliefs. This requires a safe atmosphere of trust.

We will shortly sketch the genesis and development of the interfaith encounter with Muslims in Rotterdam-Delfshaven.

Interfaith encounter in Rotterdam-Delfshaven

Our encounters started with a meeting in an Iftar-tent during Ramadan. There we, a Muslim director of *Stichting Islam & Dialoog* and a Christian pastor of a local congregation of the *Protestant Church in the Netherlands* met for the first time. We had a very good encounter and decided to continue meeting each other. After some encounters we suggested that others might as well benefit from such interfaith encounters and we proposed to bring together some other Muslims and Christians we knew. As a result we started an interfaith meeting group, meeting every month. In those meetings we discussed all kinds of themes: image of God, image of man, religion and violence, religion and science, Israëel, sermons, prayer,

Jesus, Mohammed, favorite piece of music, etc... In a sphere of friendship we learned to trust each other. Sometimes we felt a surprising kinship and recognition, sometimes also alienation and pain. All risks of a open and honest encounter. But because of the good relations we had built over the years also controversial themes can be discussed and difficult questions can be posed in a sphere of respect and friendship. We also support and help each other in interfaith activities on international level and work together in a consortium.

Hoping to share our experience with such dialoguing and reciprocal witnessing together with Muslims we organized debates for Christian and Muslim students on e.g. religion and science and started a joint course for Muslims, Christians and others interested. Since 2008 every year we welcome around hundred participants. Most of them convinced and 'orthodox' believers, whether Muslim or Christian. And we encourage each participant not to downplay his/her identity and to be a true witness. But at the same time we challenge the participants to be willing to learn something new from one another and so being open to be changed during the meeting. Both Muslims and Christians happen to learn new things: about each other and about their own religious identity. And in all these meetings we hope to show that it is possible to live peacefully together despite the differences.

Our experience is that these reciprocal encounters prove to be very encouraging for others. We have the impression that for many it is a relief to discover that it is possible to be a convinced Christian or Muslim and at the same time to be a friend with a person of another faith, not having a hidden or double agenda. Several times we visited other Christian congregations or groups with Muslim friends to share our experiences. We were asked to give together interviews to newspapers, radioprograms and television documentaries. That vulnerability requires mutual trust and friendship.

Muslim-Christian dialogue in Denmark from a Muslim perspective

Kassem Ali Rachid¹

There is about 6 millions people living in Denmark, and 75% of those people are member of the church. There is 350.000 Muslims in Denmark and 3000 people have converted to Islam and they have 140 mosques.

I was born in a refugee camp in South Lebanon. I finished my secondary school and went to High School and studied architectural drawing.

I came to Denmark in 1987 as a refugee and I learned the Danish language. Then I studied social and health assistance. After that I worked as a translator with the national police at the border between Denmark and Germany. I also worked as a translator at the municipality, hospitals and so on.

I have studied Imam studies in France in the European Institute for Humanity Science at the Islamic facility in three years. I also worked as a Imam in Flensburg mosque from 10 years ago until today. I also travel to many mosques in Denmark and work as an Imam. I also work as a lecturer in schools and in many places in the private and in the public.

I am a member of Christians and Muslims leaders council where we every year hold a conference in Copenhagen.

I have made many projects in Denmark with churches and mosques for many years.

The first project I started was called "my faith and your faith". It started in Copenhagen and then spread over many places in Denmark.

In this project we are three persons: a priest, a rabbi and an Imam. We go to different elementary schools and first we start with presenting our self. We talk about who we are, what we do and why we like working with the project. Then every one of us talk about our religion and what the religion contains. That could be: the faith, the holy book and practical things in the religion. Then the students can ask us about every one of the religions. At the end,

¹ Imam Kassem Ali Rachid is working as translator for the national police. Born in south Lebanon, he was educated as Imam in France / Imam, geboren im Libanon, und Übersetzer für die Polizei in Dänemark.

one of us talk about how everyone should be tolerant, and respect and accept each other across religions.

The second project I am in, is called "The Faith café." In this project a Christian priest, his family, my family and I also go to many different schools and talk about our religions. We divide the students into groups and give them some questions that they can sit and discuss for about 20 minutes and then we go around the groups and hear what they have to say and then we also discuss the questions with them. At the end of this project we stand in front of them and they can ask us questions.

The third project is a cooperation between the mosque and the church. Me, a priest, a group of young Muslims and a group of young Christian confirmands spend a day together. First we go to the mosque where I talk about Islam and the young people can talk with each other and the Muslims can show the Christians around the mosque where we at last eat some Arabic food that the Muslims have made. Afterwards we go to the church where the priest talk about Christianity and the young Christians show the Muslims around the church. At the end there is cake and coffee that the Christians have made.

This is almost everything that I am working with right now. I hope that you can use my experience and I also hope that I can learn from other people.

“Religious Pluralism & Ministry” at McCormick Seminary in Chicago, USA

Janaan Hashim¹ | Robert Cathey²

Janaan Hashim and Robert Cathey have been teaching “Religious Pluralism & Ministry” since 2006 to students preparing for Christian ministry at McCormick Seminary in Chicago, USA. This is only one site where we are engaged in Christian – Muslim dialogue, but a vital one.

Our course offers students both academic and first-hand exposure to inter-religious relations. Substantively, the course provides a three-week cycle for each of the five traditions studied: Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Hinduism.

The cycle begins with a layperson from a respective tradition lecturing the students on: 1) how that person connects to what is sacred; 2) how this is done on the collective level; and, 3) how their tradition views “the other.” A lay person is chosen over a scholar for two main reasons: 1) because most faith practitioners are lay people whom our students will encounter in ministry, and 2) to separate the scholar’s voice and perspective, which students are highly exposed to, from the practitioner’s.

The next week students visit the tradition’s house of worship where they observe, ask questions, and, if comfortable, participate in some sacred practices. Before the next week’s class, students write a 300 - 500 word scholarly essay on any topic related to the tradition being studied, which they submit before class. The essay must have a minimum of three, hard-

¹ Janaan Hashim is an attorney and the managing partner at Amal Law Group, LLC, the first law firm in the US founded by six Muslim women. She has served as adjunct professor at McCormick Theological Seminary since 2006, as well as Loyola University of Chicago and American Islamic College. In 2015 she completed her second of two terms as a trustee of the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions / Anwältin und Professorin am McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, an der Loyola University of Chicago und am American Islamic College.

² Dr. Robert Cathey is professor at McCormick Theological Seminary (Chicago, Illinois, USA). He is a member of the Christian Leadership Initiative of the American Jewish Committee and the Shalom Hartman Institute (Jerusalem) and he has served on the Presbytery’s Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Work Group of the Presbyterian Church / Professor am McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago und engagiert in der Arbeitsgruppe für Ökumene und Interreligiösität der Presbyterianischen Kirche.

copy resources cited, excluding the course textbook.

In class, the professors question students on their writings, finding commonalities and differences, posing assumptions, etc. Since students are expected to have read their classmates' essays before coming to class, the conversation then naturally carries itself into a broader discussion. In the second half of this class, the next layperson lectures on the next faith being studied and the cycle repeats itself.

The semester's final class is an introspective one, with students writing an unlimited word essay on their personal reflections and growth over the semester. After the semester, the essays are compiled into a book and distributed to our hosts the following year, seminary leadership, and others.

Over the years we have witnessed how our course has been transformative for many of our students, esp. for those with limited prior contact with other religions. The course functions like a journey: from the "safe space" of the classroom to the sacred place of another religion where students are immersed in new symbols and practices. E.g., when we visit a Sikh sacred house in a suburb near Chicago and are welcomed to a meal of sacred hospitality, student anxiety is replaced by solidarity. Finding the humanity of "others" and learning that sacred communities of all traditions struggle with finances, passing along their tradition to youth, and explaining themselves to others creates a new sense of "safe space." At the end of the course we hear some students say they are moved to do ministry not only with their co-religionists, but also with other traditions.

What makes this course transformative? Our team models diversity. Hashim and Cathey were introduced to each other at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Barcelona, Spain, 2004. Teaching together we have been in dialogue for ten years, working through theological and pedagogical issues. In our classroom there are no "stupid" questions. We seek to make the course accessible for students with no prior background in inter-religious relations.

At the same time, we are careful to correct misrepresentations of other traditions. We seek to dissuade students from reducing the complexity of other traditions to analogies of their own faith. We challenge theologies that see other traditions as already fulfilled by Christianity. We introduce students to communities where Christians are "religious others" who are welcomed without being asked to abandon their faith. Although we certainly aim at a contextual understanding of all religions, we discourage forms of relativism that ignore significant differences. For example, when we visit Hindu Temples, we talk about the challenge that Hindu iconography and its

interpretation poses to believers in one God. When we visit Buddhist communities, we discuss what religion means in a context where no Creator is recognized.

Students are also transformed by meeting “lay people” from other religions who speak unapologetically, persons who are transformed by their spirituality and passionately committed. As religious minorities in Chicago, some of our speakers have faced discrimination. Nevertheless they have met negativity with compassion, misunderstanding with education, and injustice with righteous action. Their testimonies challenge students to ask: would I pray five times a day? Spend three years in a monastic retreat? Feed every homeless person who came to the door of my church? Fight for the religious liberty to build a mosque? Be patient when others treat me with suspicion? Go on a pilgrimage half way around the world?

The journeys outward and inward in our class also cause students to wonder deeply about their own faith. Does the Bible teach only one way to understand other traditions? Would my religion ask me to fast, go on pilgrimage, or practice radical hospitality? Are there respectful ways to communicate the Christian message in a pluralistic world that avoid proselytizing? Are there issues of justice, religious liberty, ecology, and theological integrity where Christians should work in solidarity with others? In universities and hospitals, how should people of other traditions be treated with respect, not merely tolerated with indifference? In what ways can we learn to be better Christians by becoming neighbors and citizens with persons of other traditions? What if the most important social change movement of our generation is the inter-religious movement?

Der christlich-islamische Dialog in Hamburg

A. A. Yakobi¹ | Axel Matyba²

Da ist in dieser Stadt viel Vertrauen gewachsen. In Hamburg gibt es seit 2000 das Interreligiöse Forum, in dem sich evangelische, katholische, muslimische, jüdische, buddhistische, hinduistische, alevitische und Mitglieder der Baha`i-Gemeinden regelmäßig austauschen. 2012 wurden grundlegende Fragen im Verhältnis der Stadt zu den islamischen Verbänden und der Alevitischen Gemeinde vertraglich geregelt - ein Meilenstein auf dem Weg zu einer rechtlichen Anerkennung dieser Religionsgemeinschaften weit über Hamburg hinaus.

Folgende Ebenen des Dialoges werden in der Hansestadt gepflegt: Ein Schwerpunkt bildet der theologische Austausch, d.h. das Bemühen um ein wechselseitiges Verständnis der religiösen Konzepte und die gemeinsame Suche nach der Wahrheit. Ein Dialog, der die Wahrheitsfrage ausblendet, ist letztlich kein Dialog. Für den eigenen Glauben immer wieder Worte zu suchen und zu finden, das stärkt den eigenen Glauben. Und gerade im Dialog mit Andersgläubigen sind wir dazu herausgefordert. Ja, das ist sozusagen das Geschenk des Dialogs. Dabei gilt es dann aber auch, konkurrierende Wahrheitsansprüche auszuhalten, demütig auszuhalten. Demütig ist nicht beliebig, aber eben auch nicht verabsolutierend. Wer demütig um die Wahrheit ringt, tut das mit aller Leidenschaft, mit Herz und Verstand und der Gewissheit, dass endgültige Wahrheit nur bei Gott ist. Solche Diskussionen finden in Hamburg an der Akademie der Weltreligionen der Universität ebenso statt wie an der Missionsakademie, den christlichen Akademien dieser Stadt oder auch im Islamischen Wissenschafts- und Bildungsinstitut. Das theologische Gespräch ist gerade auch für junge

¹ Imam A. A. Yakobi, Muslimischer Theologe, Dialogbeauftragter der SCHURA - Rat der Muslimischen Gemeinschaften in Hamburg, Vorsitzender des FIS - Fachrat für Islamische Studien Hamburg / Muslim Theologian, Official representative for dialogue of the SCHURA - Council of Muslim Congregations in Hamburg, Chairperson of FIS - Expert Committee for Islamic Studies in Hamburg.

² Pastor Axel Matyba, Islambeauftragter der Nordkirche, davor: u.a. Auslandspastor in Kairo / Islam Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany, previously pastor of the German Congregation in Cairo.

Theolog_innen, Religionspädagog_innen und interreligiöse Mediator_innen wichtig, damit sie sich kenntnisreich mit religiösen Pauschalisierungen und Diskriminierungen auseinandersetzen können. Wenn sich kürzlich in Hamburg junge muslimische Akademiker_innen im „Fachrat Islamischer Studien“ mit dem Ziel eines verstärkten intra- und interreligiösen Dialoges zusammengeschlossen haben, ist das eine wichtige zusätzliche Stimme.

Theologische Diskussionen sind dabei auch immer auf die Fragen zu beziehen, die in den Gemeinden auftauchen und umgekehrt. Gerade vor Ort gilt es einander in aller Unterschiedlichkeit kennen zu lernen, Vorurteile abzubauen und nicht zuletzt miteinander zu feiern. Da treffen sich dann muslimische und christliche Frauengruppen, Jugendliche unterschiedlicher Gemeinden spielen miteinander Fußball, man besucht sich zu Ramadan und Weihnachten und gestaltet Friedensgebete und Schulanfängergottesdienste gemeinsam.

Eine weitere Ebene ist der Dialog in Einrichtungen wie z.B. Kindergärten, Schulen, Krankenhäusern, Altenheimen und Gefängnissen. Eine interreligiöse und interkulturelle Kompetenz sollte möglichst früh vermittelt und eingeübt werden. Auch die Ausbildungs- und Fortbildungsmöglichkeiten für die in diesen Einrichtungen Beschäftigten sollten intensiviert werden, um auch in Konfliktsituationen adäquat reagieren zu können.

Hamburg geht auch mit seinem Modell eines „Religionsunterrichtes für alle“ einen ambitionierten Weg. Hier werden Schüler_innen unterschiedlicher religiöser Beheimatung und junge Menschen ohne bzw. mit verschütteten religiösen Hintergrund auch im Fach Religion gemeinsam im Klassenverband unterrichtet. Interreligiöser Dialog findet hier im Klassenzimmer statt. Die Schüler_innen hören Grunderzählungen unterschiedlicher Religionen und Traditionen und werden zu einer reflektierten eigenen Urteilsbildung angeleitet. Dabei geht es nicht um neutrale Wissensvermittlung sondern um das engagierte Gespräch mit Lehrer_innen, die zu ihren eigenen Überzeugungen stehen. Es bleibt zu wünschen, dass sich dieser Weg in der Praxis bewährt.

Die Rahmenbedingungen für all diese Dialoge haben sich in den letzten Jahrzehnten enorm verschoben. Die Gesellschaft der Bundesrepublik ist bunter und vielfältiger geworden. Was viele begrüßen erleben andere als Verunsicherung und Bedrohung. Hier kommen durch weltweite Migrationsbewegungen und weitere Auswirkungen der Globalisierungsprozesse auch auf den christlich-islamischen Dialog neue Herausforderungen zu. Wie gelingt es, Glaube und Religion überzeugend für zivilgesellschaftliche Fragen in Gespräch zu bringen und sich gleichzeitig gegen fundamentalistische Strömungen jedweder politischer und religiöser Färbung zu verwahren. Für uns

ist unser je eigener Glaube ein Schatz, den es immer wieder neu zu heben und zum Glänzen zu bringen gilt – gerade auch im Gespräch miteinander. In Hamburg können wir uns dabei auf bewährte Gesprächsforen verlassen. Dafür sind wir dankbar und wollen daran weiter engagiert mitarbeiten.

Christian–Muslim Dialogue in Hamburg

A lot of trust has grown in this city. Since 2000 the Interreligious Forum has existed in Hamburg, where Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hinduist, Alevi and members of the Baha`i congregations regularly exchange views. In 2012 basic issues on the relationship of the city to the Islamic confederations and the Alevi congregation were settled in a written agreement – a milestone towards legal recognition of these religious communities not just in Hamburg.

The following levels of dialogue are maintained in the Hanseatic City: A focus is the theological exchange, i.e. the endeavour to reach a mutual understanding of the religious concepts and to seek together for the truth. Any dialogue that ignores the question of truth is in the end no dialogue. To seek and to find words for one’s own faith again, strengthens one’s belief. And we are especially challenged to do this in a dialogue with people of other faiths. That is, so to speak, the gift of dialogue which however also requires us to endure competing claims to the truth, and endure them humbly. Humbleness is not randomness, but neither does it go for the absolute. Anybody who humbly strives for the truth, does so with passion, with heart and mind and with the certainty that the final truth is with God alone. Such discussions are held at the Academy of World Religions at Hamburg University as well as at the Mission Academy, the Christian academies in this city and also at the Institute for Islamic Studies and Education (Islamisches Wissenschafts- und Bildungsinstitut). Theological debate is especially important for young theologians, religious educationists and interreligious mediators so that they can challenge religious stereotypes and discrimination. The fact that recently young Muslim academics formed an „Expert Committee for Islamic Studies“ (Fachrat Islamischer Studien) in Hamburg with the aim of strengthening intra- und interreligious dialogue is another important voice.

Theological discussions always have to reflect issues that come to light in the congregations and vice versa. It is of great importance to get to know each other locally with all our differences, to remove prejudices and last but not least to celebrate with each other. Muslim and Christian women's groups meet, youths from different congregations play soccer together, people visit each other at Ramadan and Christmas and joint prayers for peace are held and joint services to celebrate the children starting school.

Another level of dialogue is in institutions such as kindergarten, schools, hospitals, retirement homes and prisons. Interreligious and cross-cultural competence should be learnt and exercised from an early point in time. Training and Further Training facilities for those employed in these institutions should be enlarged in order to react adequately in situations of conflict.

Hamburg sets an ambitious course with its model of „Religious Studies for All“. Pupils from different religious backgrounds and young people without or with only submerged religious background are also taught in the subject “Religion” as a whole class. Interreligious dialogue happens in the classroom. The pupils listen to the basic stories of different religions and traditions and are taught how to form their own opinions in a reflected way. This is not about a neutral passing on of information, but rather about an active exchange of ideas with teachers who stand by their own convictions. It is to be hoped that in the classroom this way of teaching can stand the test.

The framework for all these dialogues has shifted enormously in the last decades. Society in Germany has become more varied and diverse. While some appreciate this, others feel insecure and threatened. Here global migration movements and other consequences of globalisation create new challenges also for the Christian-Islamic dialogue. How can we succeed in starting a debate between faith, religion and the issues of civil society whilst at the same time blocking out fundamentalist tendencies of any political or religious background. For each of us our own faith is a treasure which we have to raise again and let shine - especially when talking to each other. In Hamburg we can rely on proven forums of debate. We are thankful for this and wish to continue actively contributing to them.

Studienkoran Band 1

Die frühmekkanischen Suren

**chronologisch angeordnet,
reimschematisch dargestellt
und textnahe übersetzt¹**

Qur'an Study edition Vol. 1

The early Meccan Suras

**in chronological order,
presented according to their rhyme-patterns
and in close translation**

von / by

Werner Kahl

¹ Der erste Band des Studienkorans ist in der Reihe der Missionsakademie SITMA als Band 7 erschienen: Hamburg 2015 (ISBN 978-3-921620-95-3). Das Buch ist kostenfrei herunterzuladen von der website der Missionsakademie:
http://www.missionsakademie.de/de/pdf/7_sitma_Studienkoran.pdf

Short Summary

Werner Kahl presents the first volume of the *Qur'an Study edition* which contains the early Meccan suras in chronological order and in a new translation which draws on Western and traditional lexicographical insights as communicated by Elsaid M. Badawi and Muhammad Abdel Haleem² The poeticity of the Qur'an has been made transparent by the arrangement of the verses according to their Arabic rhyme-patterns. A transliteration of the Arabic Qur'an is added next to the translation. This makes possible easy comparisons with Biblical Hebrew. The arrangement of the suras according to chronological order allows for an understanding of the contextualization and development of the proclamation of Muhammad in the earliest phase.

The *Qur'an Study edition* has been produced for the use of students of theology, of religion, of Islam, and of Arabic studies. It should be especially useful in the context of Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Volume 2 of this study edition will present a commentary of the early Meccan suras from the perspective of the New Testament and the history of the ancient church and theology.³

Volume 3 will present, with a commentary, *all* those qur'anic passages in chronological order from the middle Meccan period onwards, which reflect Christian traditions.⁴

² Elsaid M. Badawi und Muhammad Abdel Haleem, Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage (Handbook of Oriental Studies. Handbuch der Orientalistik. Section One: The Near and Middle East, Band 85), Leiden und Boston 2008.

³ Expected year of publication: 2016.

⁴ Expected year of publication: 2017.

Kurzbeschreibung

Werner Kahl legt mit dem ersten Band des *Studienkorans* die frühmekkanischen Suren in einer nach neuen Maßstäben erarbeiteten textnahen Übersetzung vor. Diese speist sich aus lexikographischen Erkenntnissen sowohl der internationalen westlichen Koranforschung als auch der traditionellen muslimischen Koranglehrsamkeit. Die Suren kommen zudem reimschematisch zur Darstellung, um die Poetizität des Koran als unveräußerliches Wesensmerkmal erkennbar werden zu lassen. Eine parallel nebenher laufende Transliteration des arabischen Koran verhilft zu Begriffsvergleichen mit der Hebräischen Bibel. Die chronologische Präsentation der Suren macht die Kontextualität und Entwicklung der Verkündigung Muhammads seit ihren Anfängen transparent.

Der Studienkoran ist für Studierende der Theologie, der Religionswissenschaft, der Islamwissenschaft und der Arabistik erarbeitet worden. Darüber hinaus eignet er sich insbesondere auch als Referenztext für den muslimisch-christlichen Dialog.

Als Band 2 des Studienkorans ist eine aus neutestamentlicher und theologischer Perspektive kommentierte Ausgabe vorgesehen.¹

Band 3 wird sämtliche Korantexte in chronologischer Anordnung bieten und kommentieren, die christliche Traditionen reflektieren.²

¹ Voraussichtliches Erscheinungsjahr: 2016.

² Voraussichtliches Erscheinungsjahr: 2017.

Einführung in den Studienkoran

Dieser erste Band des Studienkorans bietet in seinem Hauptteil die 43 Suren, die nach Theodor Nöldeke¹ und Angelika Neuwirth² in die frühmekkanische Zeit des prophetischen Auftretens Muhammads datiert werden, d.h. in die Jahre 610 bis 615. Nach Ausweis der offiziellen Ausgabe des arabischen Koran in der Version von 1962 (Kairo) gehören bis auf Suren 55 und 99 alle hier berücksichtigten Suren immerhin in die mekkanische Zeit (Jahre 610 bis 622).³ Diese Suren finden sich im hinteren Teil des kanonischen Koran ab Sure 51.

In einem Anhang sind einige spätere Suren beigefügt, um das sogenannte „letzte Dreißigstel“ (Suren 78-114) in dieser Studienausgabe vollständig zugänglich zu machen, inklusive der bekennnishaften Sure 112. Des Weiteren findet sich in diesem Anhang die „eröffnende“ Sure 1, damit die Rahmung des Koran durch die erste und durch die beiden abschließenden apotropäischen Suren 113 und 114 erfasst ist.

Diese Ausgabe der frühmekkanischen Suren ist für Studienzwecke im universitären und kirchlichen Umfeld erarbeitet worden. Insbesondere Akteuren im interreligiösen Gespräch soll der vorliegende Band des Studienkorans dazu verhelfen, die Prophetie Muhammads in ihrer geschichtlichen Bezogenheit und Entwicklung zu begreifen und die für Muslime wesentliche Dimension ihrer im Hören der Rezitationen wahrzunehmenden Poetizität zumindest erahnen zu können.

Dieser Band fokussiert die Suren aus der Anfangszeit des prophetischen Auftretens Muhammads. Auch wenn hier noch nicht explizit Bezug genommen wird auf das Christentum im Allgemeinen oder auf Traditionen Jesu im Besonderen, so ist es die in diesen frühen Suren präsente anfängliche Verkündigung Muhammads, welche übrigens bereits Reaktionen auf sein Auftreten reflektiert, die im Koran die größten Nähen aufweist zum Kern der Botschaft Jesu, wie sie in den Evangelien in aller Diversität ihren Wiederhall findet. Es dürfte sich hier kaum eine Aussage finden lassen, die inkompatibel

¹ Theodor Nöldeke, Geschichte des Qorans, Göttingen 1860.

² Angelika Neuwirth, Der Koran Bd.1: Frühmekkanische Suren. Poetische Prophetie. Handkommentar mit Übersetzung, Berlin 2011.

³ Koranausgaben in der Istanbul Tradition hingegen geben für Sure 55 Mekka als Offenbarungsort an.

wäre zur Verkündigung Jesu – so weit wir sie greifen können – bzw. zu den in den Evangelien vorliegenden, je spezifisch geprägten Erinnerungen an sein Auftreten. Insofern bieten gerade die frühmekkanischen Suren die Möglichkeit, grundlegender Kontinuitäten christlicher und muslimischer Glaubens-traditionen gewahr zu werden, die durch – aus christlicher Perspektive – problematisch erscheinende Äußerungen in späteren Suren oder durch – aus muslimischer Perspektive – problematisch erscheinende Interpretationen des Christusgeschehens bereits in neutestamentlichen Schriften allzu schnell überblendet werden.

1. Die Organisation der Surendarbietung im Studienkoran

Die überlieferten Titel der Suren verdanken sich fast immer der wörtlichen Aufnahme eines Begriffs aus der nachfolgenden Sure. Um diese Aufnahme anschaulich zu machen, habe ich sie jeweils durch Unterstreichung hervorgehoben.

Hinter die Titel habe ich in Klammern die Position der jeweiligen Sure nach den Chronologisierungsvorschlägen – in dieser Reihenfolge – von Angelika Neuwirth, an deren Entwurf ich mich hier gehalten habe, von Theodor Nöldeke und der Kairo-Edition von 1962 gesetzt.

Als Anhang ist beigefügt eine Tabelle, die diese drei chronologischen Sequenzierungen der frühmekkanischen Suren vergleichend nebeneinander stellt. Diese Tabelle dient auch dem Auffinden der frühmekkanischen Suren im Studienkoran.

Kursiv gesetzt ist zum einen die den Suren vorangestellte stereotype Einleitungsformel „*Im Namen Gottes, des barmherzigen Erbarmers!*“ – die sogenannte *Basmala*. Zum anderen sind diejenigen Passagen kursiv vom jeweiligen Ko-Text abgehoben, die nach Ausweis der Kairo-Edition – und in Übereinstimmung mit westlicher Koranexegese – als medinische Einschübe in mekkanischen Suren gelten.⁴

Parallel zur deutschen Übersetzung auf der jeweils linken Buchseite verläuft rechts daneben der arabische Korantext in der von Hans Zirker erarbeiteten Transliteration.⁵ Des Arabischen kundigen Lesern und Leserinnen wird so durchgängig die kritische Überprüfung der Übersetzung nahegelegt und erleichtert. Nicht arabisch kundigen Lesern und Leserinnen mit Hebräisch- und vielleicht sogar mit Aramäisch-Kenntnissen wird es so ermöglicht,

⁴ Vgl. Tilman Nagel, *Medinensische Einschübe in mekkanischen Suren*, Göttingen 1995.

⁵ Siehe: http://duepublico.uni-duisburg-essen.de/servlets/DerivateServlet/Derivate-24992/Koran_transliter.pdf

sprachliche und begriffliche Nähe zur hebräischen Bibel, aber auch zu Texten syrischer Kirchentraditionen aufzuspüren.

2. Die chronologische Abfolge der Suren

Der Studienkoran soll die Anliegen der Verkündigung Muhammads *in ihrer Anfangszeit* veranschaulichen. Diese sind schon für die Frühphase der Surenkommunikation nicht statisch festgelegt, sondern aktualisierenden Re-Interpretationen vorangegangener Offenbarungen unterworfen. Um diesen Prozess abzubilden, werden die Suren *chronologisch* dargeboten. Dass alle Suren bzw. Surenverse Bezug nehmen auf konkrete historische Situationen, die sich in Mekka und dann in Medina ergaben, ist eine Grundannahme, die die muslimische Koranglehrsamkeit seit ihren Anfängen in den ersten Jahrhunderten der islamischen Zeitrechnung mit der westlich-akademischen Koranforschung seit dem 19. Jahrhundert teilt. Bezüglich der genauen chronologischen Sequenzierung der Suren gibt es allerdings weder innerhalb der muslimischen Gelehrtentraditionen noch innerhalb der westlichen Koranexegese hundertprozentige Übereinstimmung. Und die Unterschiede zwischen beiden Perspektiven sind einigermaßen markant. Versuche einer historischen Chronologisierung der Suren sind bleibend mit großen Unsicherheiten behaftet. Für den Studienkoran habe ich mich an den von Angelika Neuwirth unterbreiteten Vorschlag gehalten. Ihre Analysen sind methodologisch-exegetisch verantwortet, akademisch nachvollziehbar und insgesamt gut begründet: So – oder so ähnlich – *könnte* es gewesen sein. Auf jeden Fall stellt die von ihr vorgelegte Chronologie eine plausible und längst überfällige Revision des allzu lange nachwirkenden und methodisch überholten Entwurfs von Nöldeke dar.

3. Reimschematische Anordnung der Suren

Die Verse der Koransuren sind in Reimprosa überliefert, d.h. sie gehen auf Reime aus, ohne dass sie einem Versmaß unterworfen wären. Bezüglich der Reime liegt gerade in den meisten frühmekkanischen Suren ein hohes Maß an Variation vor. In früheren akademischen Koranübersetzungen geriet dieses wesentliche Merkmal des Koran völlig aus dem Blick, indem die Suren als Fließtexte wiedergegeben wurden.⁶ Die koranische Reimprosa ist aber nicht als etwa äußeres formales Merkmal der Suren zu vernachlässigen, sondern als wesentliches ernst zu nehmen, bezeugt es in der Innenperspektive doch

⁶ Dies gilt noch für die neueren Ausgaben Der Koran, übersetzt und kommentiert von Adel Theodor Houry, Gütersloh 2007 und Der Koran, vollständig und neu übersetzt von Ahmad Milad Karimi, Freiburg/Basel/Wien 2009.

das Wunder des Koran als Menschenmöglichkeiten übersteigende, Gottgewirkte Dichtung.

Mit neueren Koranübersetzungen habe ich mich für den Studienkoran für eine versweise Wiedergabe der Suren entschieden.⁷ Insbesondere habe ich mich hier wiederum an den Analysen von Neuwirth orientiert, wenn auch kritisch.⁸ Dabei habe ich ihre Strukturierungen der Suren nach inhaltlichen Gesichtspunkten nicht übernommen, sondern habe mich strikt beschränkt auf die durch die Reime im Arabischen nahegelegten Zusammenbindungen von Versen. Der Versuch einer Wiedergabe der Reime selbst verbot sich in der Übersetzung.⁹ Durch Reime zusammengebundene bzw. abgesetzte Verse werden im Studienkoran durch Absätze und Einrückungen kenntlich gemacht.

4. Übersetzung

Alle deutschsprachigen akademischen Koranübersetzungen der letzten zwei Generationen sind durch die hinsichtlich ihrer philologischen Präzision und Gewissenhaftigkeit unübertroffene Übersetzung von Rudi Paret¹⁰ mehr oder weniger stark geprägt worden.¹¹ Sie bildet gewiss nicht – das wusste Paret selbst am besten – die Schönheit des Koran ab und sie verdankt sich einer ganz bestimmten, eben der deutschen arabistischen Tradition des 20. Jahrhunderts. An dieser Stelle geht die vorliegende Übersetzung des Studienkorans bewusst neue Wege, auch um deutschsprachigen Lesern und Leserinnen des Koran andere Möglichkeiten von Wiedergaben zugänglich zu machen, so wie sie auf der fruchtbaren Überlappung von traditioneller muslimischer Koranglehrsamkeit und westlich-internationaler akademischer Arabistik und Koranwissenschaft erarbeitet worden sind und vor kurzem ihren Niederschlag gefunden haben im Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage von Elsaid M. Badawi und Muhammad Abdel Haleem.¹²

⁷ Vgl. Der Koran, aus dem Arabischen neu übertragen von Hartmut Bobzin, München 2010; Neuwirth, Frühmekkanische Suren; Der Koran, übersetzt und eingeleitet von Hans Zirker, Darmstadt 2013.

⁸ Angelika Neuwirth, Studien zur Komposition der mekkanischen Suren. Die literarische Form des Koran – ein Zeugnis seiner Historizität?, Berlin 2007; dies., Frühmekkanische Suren.

⁹ Vgl. den großartig gescheiterten und unvollendeten Entwurf von Friedrich Rückert aus der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts.

¹⁰ Der Koran. Übersetzung von Rudi Paret, Stuttgart usw. 1966.

¹¹ Das gilt in verschiedenem Maß für die akademischen Übersetzungen von Khoury, Neuwirth, Bobzin, Zirker und erstaunlicher Weise auch für die von Karimi.

¹² Elsaid M. Badawi und Muhammad Abdel Haleem, Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage (Handbook of Oriental Studies. Handbuch der Orientalistik. Section One: The Near and Middle East, Band 85), Leiden und Boston 2008.

Dabei habe ich mich darum bemüht, den arabischen Text in allen seinen Bestandteilen möglichst wörtlich wiederzugeben und Paraphrasierungen zu vermeiden.¹³ Enigmatisches im Original wurde als solches in der Übersetzung transportiert, zuweilen unter Nachahmung der arabischen Konstruktion. In Klammern habe ich stellenweise mitzudenkende Referenzen hinzugefügt.

Mit neueren Übersetzungen habe ich vormals gewöhnlich aus dem Arabischen beibehaltene Begriffe wie Allah, Koran, Muslime und Derivate von *kafara* übersetzt: Allah gleich Gott, Koran gleich Vortrag bzw. Rezitation, Muslime gleich (Gott-)Ergebene und *kafara* gleich (die Offenbarungswahrheit) leugnen. In der koranischen Innenperspektive werden die hier kommunizierten prophetischen Eingebungen auf *denselben* einen und einzigen Gott zurückgeführt, wie ihn auch Juden und Christen voraussetzen. Mit dem Begriff *Qur'ān* wird in den frühmekkanischen Suren nicht die als Buch in Händen zu haltende Heilige Schrift der Muslime bezeichnet – das wäre eine anachronistische Annahme –, sondern der göttliche Vortrag, wie er Muhammad eingegeben wurde und wie er ihn rezitierte. /Muslime/ bezeichnet hier noch nicht Angehörige der Religion des Islam (Gotteshingabe) etwa im Gegenüber zu anderen monotheistischen Religionen wie das Judentum oder das Christentum – auch dies wäre ein anachronistischer Eintrag, denn im Gegenüber zu Judentum und Christentum begann sich die sich um Muhammad versammelnde Gemeinde erst in späterer mekkanischer und dann einschneidend in medinischer Zeit zu formieren. Vielmehr verweist der Begriff im Kontext der Verkündigung Muhammads unter polytheistisch gesinnten arabischen Stämmen auf all jene, die exklusiv den einen und einzigen Gott anbeten und sich ihm also ganz hingeben. In eben diesem Kontext ist ein Kafir (*kāfir*) jemand, der diesen Gott ablehnt bzw. der die im Koranvortrag geoffenbarte Wahrheit von und über Gott willentlich verdeckt und also diese Offenbarungswahrheit leugnet. Damit sind im Koran nicht kategorisch Juden und Christen als vermeintlich „Ungläubige“ gemeint. In den frühmekkanischen Suren bezieht sich dieser Begriff ausschließlich auf Polytheisten.

Durch die Übersetzung der arabischen *Bedeutungen* dieser Begriffe kann zum einen die am Anfang der koranischen Verkündigung stehende ungebrochene Nähe zu jüdischen und christlichen Traditionen in der Übersetzung deutlich werden; eine religionsgeschichtliche Nähe, die mittels der vormals durchgängig gepflegten Transkription konsequent überdeckt wurde. Zum anderen

¹³ Unter den akademischen deutschsprachigen Koranübersetzungen der letzten Jahre bieten insbesondere die Ausgaben von Bobzin und Neuwirth neben präzisen Wiedergaben unmotiviert erscheinende Paraphrasierungen und Ungenauigkeiten. Dies gilt auch für viele der online zugänglichen Surenübersetzungen des Corpus Coranicum Projekts, das an der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften angesiedelt ist (<http://www.corpuscoranicum.de>).

- und dies ist für das muslimisch-christliche Gespräch besonders relevant - erleichtert diese Wiedergabe den Zugang etwa von Christen zum Koran und bietet eine Anschlussmöglichkeit, die vormals künstlich verstellt wurde - übrigens auch von einigen muslimisch verantworteten Koranübersetzungen, die eher für erbauliche Zwecke bestimmt sind.¹⁴ Christen kann sich so ein Doppeltes erschließen: erstens, dass sie sich mit Muslimen in einem großen, gemeinsamen Traditionsstrom befinden, der sie im übrigen mit dem Judentum verbindet; und zweitens, dass der Koran - und das gilt vor allem für die frühmekkanischen Suren - das Potenzial hat, als von dem einen und selben Gott ausgehende Prophetie auch sie anzusprechen und zu inspirieren.¹⁵

Aufgrund der Reimprosa, der Poetizität des koranischen Stils überhaupt und der zeitlichen und enzyklopädischen Abständigkeit dieser Offenbarungen steht eine Übersetzung des Koran vor erheblichen und zum Teil unlösbaren Problemen, wie sie Hebraisten etwa auch durch poetische Passagen der Hebräischen Bibel oder Altphilologen durch Wortwahl und Versmaß der homerischen Dichtungen vertraut sind. Kein Werk und erst recht kein Zeugnis poetisch hoch aufgeladener Prophetie wie der Koran lässt sich eins zu eins in eine andere Sprache übersetzen. Bedeutungsverschiebungen sind bei jeder Übersetzung unvermeidlich. Wenn in der hier vorgelegten Übersetzung uneindeutig oszillierende Ausdrücke begegnen, so verweisen sie auf entsprechende Wendungen im arabischen Original, zu dessen Kennzeichen es geradezu gehört, dass es sich - schon in Bezug auf die Erstrezipienten - stellenweise einem vollständigen kognitiven Verstehen entzieht und andere Sinne beansprucht. Dadurch werden Surenrezitatoren und Zuhörer in der Tiefe angerührt. Dies lässt sie des Wunders der Gottesoffenbarung im Koran gewahr werden.¹⁶

¹⁴ Vgl. die in Deutschland weit verbreitete Übersetzung von Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rassoul: *Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, in verschiedenen Editionen, z.B. Istanbul 2012.

¹⁵ Dies wäre wohl eine wichtige Konsequenz des Ansatzes von Angelika Neuwirth zur Rehabilitierung des Koran als Zeugnis einer kritischen Re-Lektüre der Bibel, vgl. dies., *Koranforschung - Eine politische Philologie? Bibel, Koran und Islamentstehung im Spiegel spätantiker Textpolitik und moderner Philologie*, Berlin/Boston 2014.

¹⁶ Vgl. dazu prägnant Navid Kermani, *Gott ist schön. Das ästhetische Erleben des Koran*, München 2011, 233-314.