

Jesuits in Dialogue the interreligious dimension

Secretariat for
Interreligious Dialogue
Society of Jesus

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and reports from Jesuits in:

India, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Poland, Switzerland, Zimbabwe

FEATURE STORY

JESUITS AND JERUSALEM

HISTORY: JESUITS IN THE HOLY LAND

St. Ignatius first conceived the desire of visiting the Holy Land during his recuperation at Loyola. He made the pilgrimage once, but clearly the Holy Land was always in his mind.

In 1909, the Pontificio Istituto Biblico was founded in Rome. In 1912, when the Holy Land was part of the Ottoman Empire, the first Jesuits came to Jerusalem under Fr. Alexis Mallon, S.J. The years between 1913 and 1962 was the period of Jesuit excavations, especially in Teleilat Ghassul in Jordan, and a few were carried out in Egypt. The results of these excavations constitute the bulk of the displays in the Institute museum. The only mummy in Israel was a gift to Fr. Mallon, S.J. from Jesuits in Alexandria.

In 1925, the Vatican bought the present property of the Jerusalem Biblical Institute from the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, and the cornerstone for the present Pontifical Institute was laid. The Institute formally opened in 1927, and from its earliest years its work was closely linked to that of the Biblical Institute in Rome. The library was gradually augmented, and some courses in Sacred Scripture, Biblical archeology, and Biblical Hebrew and Greek were offered.

In 1975, under the then Rector of the Biblical Institute in Rome, Carlo Maria Martini, a collaborative agreement was initiated between the Biblical Institute and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem according to which Biblical Institute

students would attend classes at the University. In 1984, a similar agreement was reached with the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem.

In 1989, a distinction between the Pontifical Biblical Institute and the Saint Ignatius community was formalized by Fr. Kolvenbach, the Superior General. The Director of the Institute is appointed by the

Aborted 17th Century Effort to Open a College in Jerusalem

In 1615, two French Jesuits residing in Istanbul, Frs. Canillac and Queyrot, made an exploratory trip to Jerusalem. At the invitation of Theophane, Patriarch of Jerusalem, whose brother had studied in the Jesuit college in Istanbul, and armed with a rescript from the Pope giving them powers to absolve and dispense in all parts of the Ottoman State, they proceeded, via a long stay in Cyprus, to Jerusalem. Canillac had the idea of opening a house and establishing a college in the Holy City. However, these plans were cut short by the opposition of the Guardians of the Holy Places, and the Jesuits were ordered to leave Jerusalem within ten days.

Rector of the Biblical Institute in Rome, and the superior is appointed by Fr. General. In 1994-95 - the 34th General Congregation gave special emphasis to the community in Jerusalem as a focal point for interreligious dialogue.

John Crocker, S.J.

THE JERUSALEM COMMUNITY IN DIALOGUE

Jewish-Christian dialogue

Some members of the community have participated for many years in Jewish-Christian dialogue in various established groups in Jerusalem. Among these are the Ecumenical Fraternity, the Rainbow Club and the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel (ICCI). Meetings on an academic level are held almost every month and usually include a presentation of a religiously related topic followed by discussion. Once or twice a year the PBI hosts these meetings. Most of those attending are Europeans and Americans, a large proportion of whom are Protestants, with an occasional participation of non-Latin Christian churches, e.g. Armenian Orthodox, Coptic, Ethiopian, Melchite, Syrian-Catholic and Greek Orthodox. Under the aegis of ICCI, a think-tank group consisting of five Muslims, five Jews, and five Christians meets once a month. One member of St. Ignatius community is a member. The discussions are held in Hebrew. In addition to the above activities, one member of the community teaches courses at the Hebrew Union College in Hebrew and gives talks to the Jewish Messianic Guides. The Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem is considering the possibility of a secretariat or commission to promote and coordinate its dialogue with Jews. It is the first Catholic Church in the Middle East to consider this option. There may be in this an opportunity for Jesuits to collaborate more closely with the Patriarchate in a specifically interreligious way.

Muslim-Christian dialogue

Since 1974, various Jesuits, including the late Antoine Roussos and George De Napoli, and Jan Bronsveld, present provincial of the Near East Province, have lived and worked in Bethlehem in collaboration with the Christian Brothers. Fr. Roussos, a Jesuit of Greek origin, also carried out a "worker-priest" apostolate in

Haifa as a day laborer in an Israeli construction firm, together with Jewish, Christian, Druze, and Muslim co-workers. Today, one member of the St. Ignatius community continues to reside in Bethlehem and teach at Bethlehem University. Since most of the teachers and students at the university are Muslims, he has many opportunities for the dialogue of daily life and for studying together with Christian and Muslim Palestinians the common problems that they must face. On some occasions, members of the St. Ignatius community attend meetings of Muslims and Christians organized by, for example, the Sabeel Conference and Al-Liqa. Other dialogue groups exist on a small scale, in which members of the community occasionally participate.

Ecumenical dialogue

Most contacts are on the informal level and include interritual gatherings and Ecumenical Bible prayer groups. Several members of the community attend the interritual prayer services during the Christian Unity Octave and other special occasions. With Protestants, there is an effort to promote conferences on prayer.

The Needs of the Jerusalem Community

The focus of most of the discussions of the community during the year 1995-96 centered on exploring the needs in the Jerusalem /Israel area which are not being adequately met, and to which the Society might make a contribution. Some actually emerged from requests made by specific groups including the Latin Patriarchate and the Patriarch himself, whereas others emerged from the community discussion and experiences. Several of these are listed.

1. **Insertion** into the Israeli and the Palestinian cultural and religious communities. Traditionally, the PBI has pursued its own goals, tied closely to those of the PIB in Rome. Except for the examples stated above, we have not become involved in the local community,

(cont. p. 6)

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF SAINT IGNATIUS COMMUNITY

A mission statement is an enunciation of a general principal. Details of how it is to be realized are spelled out only later under the category of implementation.

Since its founding in 1925 the mission of the Jesuit community at the Pontifical Biblical Institute has been to serve academically, spiritually and socially the students and professors from the Roman Biblical Institute. In addition, for many years the Jesuit community has been at the service of the universal Society in providing accommodations, lectures, spiritual and biblical renewal programs for Jesuits. The Saint Ignatius community will continue to serve in this capacity as a dimension of its mission.

In 1989, Fr. General effected a distinction between the Pontifical Biblical Institute and the Saint Ignatius Community. This separation opened the way for an expansion and clarification of a separate mission of the community distinct from although related to that serving the Biblical Institute in Rome. GC34, in its document *Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue*, recommended to Father General "to explore the possibility

The Mission Statement

The apostolic mission of the Saint Ignatius community at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Jerusalem while maintaining its historical and traditional service to the students, professors, and Jesuits who come to study and renew themselves in the Holy Land is to encourage, support and in so far as possible facilitate and collaborate in the cultural and religious dialogue among Christian communities and between Christians, Jews and Muslims in Israel and Palestine. Early preparatory formation of younger Jesuits committed to this mission, and willing to serve long periods of time, should ideally provide them with adequate facility in Hebrew and/or Arabic languages, as well as English, and a familiarity with these different cultures so that they may be comfortable living out a substantial period of their apostolic mission among them.

of expanding the scope of the apostolate of the Jesuit community of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Jerusalem, so that, in dialogue and in concert with other Christian centers in Jerusalem, the Jesuits there might explore programs in inter-religious dialogue among Jews, Christians and Muslims, along with their continuing work of Biblical and spiritual renewal of Jesuits from various provinces" [par. 157, OMID, 20].

In the light of the recommendation from the General Congregation, the present community at the Pontifical Biblical Institute engaged in many meetings between 1995 and the first part of 1997 to explore the possibilities of this mission. The tentative and preliminary statement, as formulated and summarized by the Superior, is the result of these discussions.

The St. Ignatius Community, Jerusalem

Christian or otherwise. There is a greater need of this now on the part of Saint Ignatius Community, especially in light of the proposed peace process, and for the adequate implementation of its mission.

2. **Jewish-Christian dialogue.** Although there are many established groups for this dialogue, most are academic and involve largely European or American expatriates. There is a need for dialogue on the 'grass-roots' level. This area of dialogue raises some questions regarding the some Jesuits' stance on Judaism. Do residual anti-Jewish sentiments exist in some Jesuits? Is there a tendency to screen out the positive religious dimensions in Judaism, stressing the negative political, military and juridical history between Israelis and Palestinians in this land?

3. **Muslim-Christian dialogue.** The Society is expressing energetically the need for dialogue with the Muslims. Not unlike the question raised above about some Jesuits' stance on Judaism, does a similar attitude exist towards Muslims? Can residual anti-Muslim sentiments be found in some Jesuits? Is there a tendency to screen out the positive religious dimensions in Islam and stress the negative political, military and juridical history between Israelis and Palestinians in this land and between Muslims and Christians in other parts of the world?

4. Can the Society facilitate dialogue between and among **Orthodox and Latin Christians** as well as among Protestants? There is a patent need here. Such a dialogue could be in collaboration with the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. A program might be envisioned for its students to spend time in Jerusalem during which they would be in touch with all the Eastern Christian churches.

5. **Language.** Although much can be achieved using English, French and Italian, in order to meet some of the above-mentioned needs an Arabic and Hebrew speaking member of the community is needed.

John Crocker, S.J.



SJ community members and guests on archeological visit

WHAT SHOULD YOUNG JESUITS KNOW BEFORE UNDERTAKING THE JERUSALEM APOSTOLATE?

One member of the St. Ignatius community summed up the qualities that should be found in Jesuits interested in taking up the GC34 call to dialogue in Jerusalem.

Young Jesuits who are interested in this mission should realize that their formation will require a serious commitment over a long period of time, and comprises several dimensions:

- facility in Hebrew and/or Arabic, as well as in English,
- familiarity with the local cultures, so that one is reasonably at ease working and living with the people,
- a certain degree of political sophistication on justice issues, so that one does not fall victim to rash judgments, propaganda, exploitation, or one's own unexamined feelings,
- sensitivity to the religious sensibilities and beliefs of Jews and Muslims, and especially to the forms, feasts, and traditions of the Eastern Churches.

Peter Du Brul, S.J.

REFLECTIONS ON A VISIT TO JERUSALEM

In March of this year, I visited the St. Ignatius Community. The main purpose was to meet the community as they finalized their mission statement and to explore with them what needs to be done to implement the statement.

The St. Ignatius community is conscious that responding to the recommendation of GC34 will depend to a great extent on the persons who make up the community in the future. Efforts at dialogue are already being made by the local church and the rather extensive expatriate church concentrated in the holy cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth. Moreover, the way local Jews and Muslims view efforts at dialogue is not always the same as Christians. The challenge is to not reduplicate what is already being done and to respond to the needs as they are perceived by Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

In order to get a better understanding of the various viewpoints, the Jerusalem Jesuits arranged for me meetings with leaders of the local church (the Latin and Melkite patriarchs, the new Maronite bishop, the staff of the Latin seminary in Beit Jala, Bethlehem University), Palestinian laity, expatriate religious (White Fathers, Daughters of Charity etc.), Muslims, and rabbis and Jewish laymen involved in interreligious projects. I also met, though briefly, other minority communities: a day with the Bahais at their World Headquarters in Haifa and several long discussions with Druze who are, in fact, more numerous in Israel and Palestine than Christians.

The Biblical Institute Jerusalem

The Jesuits in Jerusalem agree on the centrality of their commitment to serve the students of the PBI-Rome and Jesuits visiting on Biblical courses and tours. The longstanding agreement with the Hebrew

University, while subject to criticism (students complain that some of the courses given at PBI in Rome are better taught, with better content, than those of HU), is not in need of reevaluation at this time. In addition to the second-semester Biblical tours which have been offered for many years in Italian, a highly successful course for Spanish Jesuits was undertaken this year. The possibilities of an English-language course for next year are being explored. On the other hand, some Jesuits felt that so much of the energy of the Jerusalem community is presently being taken up with running the "hotel" for Biblicum students and foreign Jesuits that they lack time for any significant application of the GC34 recommendation.

The St. Ignatius Community and Dialogue

The GC34 document speaks of "expanding the scope of the apostolate" of PBI Jerusalem to "explore programs in interreligious dialogue among Jews, Christians and Muslims" (OMID, 20). The community, in their mission statement, reflected on what must be done to implement this recommendation and on the forms this implementation might take.

Dialogue is seen as something broader than simply initiating theological discussions with Jews and Muslims. It indicates a deeper involvement with and insertion into the realities of Israeli Jewish life as well as participation in the ongoing mission of the local church towards Christian-Muslim encounter. A condition for accomplishing this at any depth would seem to be the presence in the St. Ignatius community of Jesuits conversant in Hebrew and Arabic. Jesuits limited to European languages can make important contributions within the expatriate communities, to pilgrim groups, and among Jewish and Muslim scholars comfortable with those languages, but for any deep involvement in the lives of Jewish Israelis and Palestinian Muslims and Christians, knowledge of the local languages is essential. Moreover, a sound

background in Judaism and/or Islam is important.

Given the highly secular nature of much of Israeli society, community members stressed that Jesuit engagement should not be limited to "religious Jews," but many areas of collaboration and study, in areas such as human rights, legal aid, and moral values, can be pursued with secular Jews. This apostolate would not differ greatly from the involvement of many Jesuits in Europe and North America with "post-modern secular humanists" in those regions.

Christians of various rites and churches (the majority of Palestinian Christians are Orthodox).

The great concern of the Palestinian church is the continuing exodus of Christians from the country. Better educational preparation and financial resources result in greater emigration of Christians than Muslims to a freer, more tranquil life. As a result, traditional Christian centers like Bethlehem, Nazareth and Ramallah are taking on a greater Islamic color. The recent Islamic involvement in the Palestinian nationalist struggle is an added



Sharing the Passover meal

Because of the common cultural heritage and their shared experience of loss, dialogue between Palestinian Christians and Muslims appears to be somewhat easier than in countries where the two religious communities regard each other from positions of majority-minority, strength-weakness, and dominance-dependence. The Palestinian Christians I met affirmed that "they have no problem living with Muslims," and that sharing at various levels - social, intellectual, occupational - is the norm rather than the exception. The Jesuits in Jerusalem also feel called to contribute to ecumenical dialogue among local

concern to some Christians, although those with whom I met tended to downplay the importance of this factor.

Some ecumenical and interreligious organizations e.g., the Ecumenical Institute at Tantur, Al-Liqa') promote Christian-Muslim dialogue, but with limited success. However, from my brief stay, I got the impression that many more possibilities for collaboration and study are open to well-prepared Jesuits. For example, I was invited to address the students at the Islamic College in Umm al-Fahim. A Palestinian Catholic professor at Bethlehem University reported that her

experiences in an Islamic teacher-training institute have been positive and rewarding. The Latin Patriarch said that he would welcome greater Jesuit involvement in the spiritual life of the Arabic-speaking church. He is interested in providing theological, Biblical, and spiritual formation for educated Christian laity. Jerusalem offers many opportunities for courses and lectures by resident and visiting scholars in European languages, but the possibilities in Arabic are relatively few. To respond to this need, the hope was often expressed that greater forms of collaboration with the Near East Province could make the expertise of members of that province available to the Jesuit apostolate in Israel/Palestine.

The PBI and Other Locations in Israel

An issue often raised was whether a small community (or small communities) of Jesuits in Israel and Palestine could supplement the apostolate of PBI Jerusalem. The Latin Patriarch confirmed that the PBI, located in a strongly Jewish part of Jerusalem, is not an attractive location for Palestinians. Perhaps a location in the Old City of Jerusalem could be found where Jews, Christians and Muslims would all feel comfortable.

Outside Jerusalem, one Jesuit is living in an Arab university environment in Bethlehem. In the past, other Jesuits have lived in Tel Aviv, Haifa, and elsewhere. However, the community realizes that such plans will depend upon the talents and interests of Jesuits who will make up the community in the future. It is premature to explore possibilities of other houses and communities until the Jesuits already resident in Israel/Palestine are freer to pursue other forms of apostolate and until other Jesuits are sent to join in the work of dialogue.

Importance of the Mission in Jerusalem

There are many Jesuits around the world with deep academic and experiential knowledge of Judaism and Jews, as well as

many who have gone deeply into Islamic studies and dialogue with Muslims. It is extremely rare, by the nature of things, for an individual Jesuit to be able to delve deeply into both religions and cultures. As a result of their studies and life experiences, most of these Jesuits tend to "tilt" towards Judaism or Islam and to view theological, sociological and political issues from perspectives sensitive to the concerns of their interlocutors.

Moreover, there are still anti-Jewish and anti-Islamic prejudices in the Society which must be overcome if we are to bear the attitude of Christ to all. Jerusalem (and, more broadly, Israel and Palestine) offers the Society the possibility of Jesuits living together in one community who are deeply involved in local expressions of Judaism and Islam. The internal dialogue of Jesuits involved in these apostolates could help the whole Society arrive at a broader and more integrated approach to Jewish-Christian and Muslim-Christian dialogue. Finally, the respect that Jesuits enjoy in academic and ecclesiastical circles permits us to make significant contributions both to the bilateral dialogues and to the extremely difficult but much needed commitment to the "Abrahamic dialogue" of the three faiths.

Thomas Michel, S.J.

WE ARE ALL NEIGHBOURS NOW **Reflections for an Interreligious Dialogue**

Who is my neighbour? This is the question that evoked the parable of the Good Samaritan, where Jesus unambiguously tells us that the neighbour is not just the one in need, who is near to me, but the one in need to whom I must be near. The neighbour, then, is not so much a matter of geography as of concern, and common concerns make common neighbours. As children of the same God, the God of Abraham, our common concern is the faith, which makes us brothers and sisters and neighbours.

But our common humanity too makes for common concerns. Thus both faith in the divine and concern for the human are the foundation of our neighbourliness. These are not opposed but complementary dimensions. If the immediate basis of our concerns is ourselves, the ultimate concern for believers, for persons of faith, must be God. 'Man is the measure of all things,' the ancient Greek philosophers taught us, but God, the creator of all things visible and invisible, is the one who measures humans, for God has given us our measure.

However, we cannot avoid the grim reality of divisions that mark our societies in spite of our desire to be better and more united neighbours. If common human concerns bring us together, different social interests set us apart, just as faith in God unites, whereas differing beliefs divide us. We cannot wish away such differences, nor can we impose a uniformity over them or enforce a consensus on them. The usual way of settling such differences was by confrontation and controversy, wherein each party tried not only to prove its own position, but at the same time to demolish that of the other.

To my mind, the age of controversy settled nothing, nor did the religious wars it precipitated. Particularly in matters of conscience, human beings cannot be forced or imposed upon for an indefinite length of time. Yet there remains the temptation to fall back on such inhuman and 'final solutions'! History witnesses to numerous such instances, even into our own era. Today in a globalising world, conflicting economic interests are being interpreted as the 'clash of civilisations' with irreconcilable religious world views. In a unipolar world, such an understanding only invites the dominant cultures to suppress or assimilate the subaltern ones.

Repression and force make for unstable and potentially violent situations. In our world today, pluralism is an inescapable given,

whether ideological, religious, or otherwise. In the modern world, we have evolved a whole doctrine of human freedom and the dignity of the human person, but we have still a long way to go to make these a reality in the lives of our people.

Differences are not only between the individual and the group, but also between groups and peoples. Such differences at the level of the group can be even more intractable and uncompromising than those at the individual level. Religion is certainly one of the most primordial of these and fraught with a huge potential for explosive conflict. We are still coming to terms with the implications of religious freedom and cultural rights for different groups within a single society. We are beginning to realise that uniformity is not the only or the most creative response to difference. It often forces differences underground and when divisions disappear at one level they reappear at another, often in even more divisive and volatile expressions. Nor is mere co-existence a viable answer in an ever-shrinking world.

Hence we are coming to value diversity as something potentially enriching and even uniting at a higher level of union. This is certainly true of the rich religious traditions of India, when they are not manipulated for narrow political gain of subversive communal interests. Such an enriching union must inspire us as neighbours to reach out to each other in a common concern and in shared faith, a union that brings us together with our differences into a unity in diversity, one that does not negate our peculiarities, but rather one that accepts and respects, yes, even celebrates them.

In other words, the reality of pluralism today is not to be isolated as an unnecessary evil to be repressed before it engulfs us further, or tolerated as a necessary evil to be kept at a distance since it cannot be dismissed. Rather it is a

challenge which will not go away. It must be constructively and creatively met or it will exhaust and perhaps even destroy us. Nowhere is this truer than of religious differences and diversity.

We cannot any more settle religious differences within, much less between, religious traditions through violence and controversy. Too much blood and tears have already been shed on this. The only way open for us now is that of tolerance and dialogue. No truly religious person can disagree with this. Only a few fundamentalists would, those whose religious world-view is closed and exclusive. With such as these we must still exercise tolerance and attempt dialogue. But lest what we are urging seems naive and simplistic we must clarify our understanding of these concepts so that the limits of tolerance and the conditions for dialogue can be addressed at some depth in their complexity.

Tolerance

In our understanding, tolerance cannot have merely a negative or passive meaning. Rather it must also imply an active and positive response to coping with our differences. Thus we can distinguish levels of tolerance from reluctant forbearance to joyful acceptance.

Following Raimundo Panikkar (*Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 1983), we can distinguish four levels of tolerance.

1) tolerance as a practical necessity, i.e., bearing with a lesser evil for the sake of a greater good. This amounts to passively accepting necessary evils, and is little more than political pragmatism.

2) the realisation that the human grasp of any truth is always partial and never complete. Certainly this is true of religious or revealed truth. Such a philosophical realisation makes us cautious in absolutising our own 'truth,' and even more

so in rejecting that of those with whom we disagree. From such philosophically founded tolerance will come respect.

3) ethical or religious tolerance derives from the moral imperative to love others, even those different from us, even our enemies. This is far more demanding than acceptance and respect at the earlier levels of tolerance. Yet the different 'other here still the 'object' of one's love. Such love can make us celebrate our differences, but it cannot overcome or transcend them completely in a higher unity.

4) "a mystical experience of tolerance". Here tolerance "is the way one being exists in another and expresses the radical interdependence of all that exists". In the final analysis, it is only this kind of mystical tolerance that can overcome and transcend the contradictions and conflicts between religious traditions, bringing them into a higher communion.

In each of these dimensions - the political, philosophical, religious, and mystical - we can distinguish two levels of understanding, or rather pre-understanding. Our comprehension can be in terms of a more or less explicit meaning that is conceptually grasped or, in the context of pre-understanding, of implicit judgments and presumptions, in terms of a meaningfulness that can be only symbolically represented. These are the levels of 'myth' and 'ideology'.

From mythos to logos

Myth is "the horizon of intelligibility or the sense of Reality" (ibid. p. 101). It is expressed in the 'mythic narrative' with its varied themes and disclosed in the 'living voice, the telling of the myth'. In sum, "myth is precisely the horizon over against which any hermeneutic is possible" (ibid. p.4). It is taken for granted, unquestioned, part of our preunderstanding, something we accept in faith, as that dimension in Man that corresponds to myth (ibid. p. 5).

Once it is rationally articulated, myth is demythicised and so is our faith, in a "passage from *mythos* to *logos*" (ibid. p. 21) from myth to reason, as the articulated conscious word. This then develops into an 'ideology': "the more or less coherent ensemble of ideas that make up critical awareness, i.e., the doctrinal system that enables you to locate yourself rationally...a spacio-temporal system constructed by the logos as a function of its concrete historical moment."

These distinctions have crucial implications for our understanding and practice of tolerance. The more coherent and cogent the articulation of an ideology is, the more likely it is to reduce other understandings to its own terms, or reject them if they cannot be fitted into its own horizons. Of course, we need ideologies, for we need to articulate and rationalise our understanding in the various dimensions of human experience. But ideologies must be able to accept such alternative understandings and open themselves out into broader and deeper perspectives. This must depend on the myth, the preunderstanding, from which it derives. The more extensive and intense the myth's meaningfulness, the richer and denser its symbolism, hence the more open and accommodating the ideology that can be built on it.

We can conclude with Panikkar: *the tolerance you have is directly proportional to the myth you live and inversely proportional to the ideology you follow* [emphasis in the original] (ibid. p. 20.) What we need is a *metanoia* of our myths to escape and be liberated from the *paranoia* of our ideologies - religious, political or other. Both myth and ideology are found in all the abovementioned dimensions of tolerance, though there is obviously a greater affinity for ideology in political and philosophical tolerance, as there is for 'myth' in the religious and mystical dimensions.

Religious 'faith' is essentially at the pre-rational, not irrational, level of "myth", while religious 'theology' is necessarily at the level of "ideology". This makes for a greater complexity and challenge in praxis as an action-reflection-action process, a dialectical interaction between theory and practice. It is our conviction that the constructive potential of such a dialectic can be fully realised only in a creative dialogue between myth and ideology. It is only in the mutual encounter of myths that they are deepened and enriched, and it is in the reciprocal exchange among ideologies that these become more open and refined.

Rudolf C. Heredia, S.J.

JEPASA Annual 1997

In the first issue of the *Bulletin*, we presented the final statement on dialogue of JEPASA, the organization of South Asian Jesuits in parish ministry. Those interested in learning more about JEPASA can find a variety of information in the special JEPASA annual of 1997 entitled *JEPASA Conception*. Write to: Jerry Rosario, JEPASA Coordinator, Lazarus Church, Chennai 600 028, INDIA.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

It is almost a banality to talk about the necessity for religious freedom in the contemporary world. People discuss certain guarantees, legal standards of that freedom but freedom itself is not called into question. Previous chairman of WCC Ninan Koshy wrote that "not a day passes without some reference in the media to religious freedom somewhere around the globe".

Vatican II declared that "the human person has a right to religious freedom", and that this right "has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person and this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself". Jesuits are particularly asked by Holy Father to make interreligious dialogue the apostolic priority for the third millennium.

The General Congregation encourages all Jesuits to promote peace, justice, harmony and human rights, of which a big part is the interreligious dialog. In the conclusion of the chapter "Our mission and interreligious dialogue" in GC 34 Decrees, we read "as companions of Jesus sent into today's world, a world characterized by religious pluralism, we have a special responsibility to promote interreligious dialogue". The opportunities for such a dialogue are many, not only in societies where many denominations live together.

I would like to present one of those opportunities. It is a project of the Center for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University "Religion, human rights and religious freedom".

The main aim is to promote collaboration between the world's religions and the contemporary human rights movement, especially to help develop self-perpetuating institutions that promote religious interaction in countries around the world.

The project organizes annual exchange and research programs for human rights advocates and religious figures. They mostly come from Poland, Romania, the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet states.

Each year there are nine funded fellows, appointed as visiting scholars at Columbia University. The first part of the fellows' program consists of a four-month academic component during which the participants study religious freedoms and human rights in their social context, together with national and international standards, policies and practices.

All participants are also required to take a basic course on human rights and international affairs as well as a course on a religious tradition other than their own. The academic courses are complemented by weekly training workshops on selected advocacy skills. Following the four-month academic program, the fellows disperse to work for three months with organizations around the world that specialize in religious freedom and religious tolerance.

In March, 1997, the Center for the Study of Human Rights organised in Budapest a Seminar on "Religious Organisations and the Human Rights Movement". The Conference gathered together scholars, human rights activists and religious leaders. I, a Polish Jesuit was privileged to take part.

Some of the topics of discussion were: equality and religious preferences, freedom to proselytize, recognition and registration of religious organizations, self determination and the right to secession of religious minorities under international law, legal advocacy and religious rights, social action and religious faith, churches, nongovernmental organizations and social reform, protection of minority religions, aspects of tolerance, democracy in Islam, etc.

(cont. p. 16)

SPW-Institute for Creation of
Spiritual Consciousness in Politics and the Economy

Lasalle-Haus Bad Schönbrunn was acquired by Swiss Jesuits in 1929 and functioned as a center for spiritual exercises until it was rebuilt in 1970 as a site for various training programs. In the 1994 the training center received a new function and a new name: Lasalle Haus. The Jesuit priest Hugo Enomiya Lasalle (1898-1990), a Zen teacher with an intimate knowledge of Christian spirituality, was known as a mediator between Eastern and Western thinking. His work among the poor in Tokyo and the creation of a Church of Word Peace in Hiroshima are examples of his devotion to the cause of justice and peace in the world. The name "Lasalle" thus evokes the central goals of the program at Bad Schönbrunn. The Lasalle-Haus program is based on three time-tested spiritual paths, each with a rich tradition: spiritual exercises, Zen and contemplation. Here are ways that do not simply lead to a passive inwardness. Instead they lead us back to the "market place" of everyday life, finding their fulfillment in social action. These aspects receive clear emphasis as central themes in our fasting and healing courses as well as in the activities of the newly founded *Institute for Creation of Spiritual Consciousness in Politics and the Economy*.

Tasks and Aims of the ISPW: 1) Create guidelines for dialogue and help people - regardless of their religious beliefs - to put these guidelines into practice in everyday life. 2) Hold regular symposia and conferences which encourage dialogue among religions and among nations.

3) Work toward a culture which encourages dialogue among religions.

4) Make people aware of the need for a world ethos and aid them in realizing that ethos. With the founding of the Institute for Creation of Spiritual Consciousness in Politics and the Economy, we wish to supply more room for the matter of interreligious spirituality while also doing justice to its political, economic and ecological dimensions. The institute hopes to make a contribution to a spiritual-cultural transformation without which, in our opinion, the urgent problems at the beginning of the 21st century cannot be solved.

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D I A L

G.E.X.E. - Christian-Jewish Ecumenical Group

G.E.X.E. began in Milan, Italy, as a study and documentation center. Its purpose is to promote, in a climate of respect and free discussion, mutual knowledge, understanding, and friendship between the Christian and Jewish worlds. This is done by the organization of meetings, conferences, round table discussions, study seminars, courses, and the promotion, publication and diffusion of research, acts, documents and bulletins. G.E.X.E. has a specialized library of more than 4800 volumes, various archives open to scholars and interested persons.

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Interreligious Dialogue and the
Irish School of Ecumenics

Readers of the CG 34 decrees and of *Jesuits in Dialogue: The Interreligious Dimension*, may be asking themselves where to go either for a Sabbatical or for a fourth year of Theology in order to study Interreligious Dialogue. One answer among others is The Irish School of Ecumenics (ISE), Milltown Park, Dublin 6, Ireland.

What are the disadvantages in going to ISE? The main one is that Ireland is a country whose culture is predominantly Christian: but Jews and Muslims are increasingly significant minorities, especially in Dublin.

What advantages are there in going to ISE?

1) Founded in 1970 it has many years of experience already behind it and Interreligious Dialogue is part of the programme.

2) It is affiliated with Trinity College, Dublin (Dublin University) and therefore can offer the postgraduate degree of M. Phil. For 12 month's study.

3) It also offers courses in Ecumenism and in Peace Studies. So three of the main features of the CG 34 vision are included in the ISE programme. In ISE the study of 'interreligious dialogue', although distinct from, is integrated with the study of Ecumenism and with Peace Studies. According to its Mission Statement ISE 'exists to promote...the unity of Christians, dialogue between religions and work for peace and justice in Ireland and abroad'.

4) ISE is Jesuit in origin and continues to be Jesuit-linked: the Irish Jesuit Provincial is a Trustee and President of Academic Council.

5) The student body is international and interdenominational and small (56 in the academic year 1996-7).

6) the programme includes a fieldwork component as well as classwork and research work.

7) There is the opportunity of visits to Northern Ireland (only a few hours away by road or rail or bus) to see how in conflict situations religion is often part of the problem and how it can become part of the solution.

Michael Hurley, S.J.

O G U E

"Seva Niketan"

Even before the mandate of GC 34, Seva Niketan foresaw the significance of the interreligious apostolate. Conducting various interreligious seminars and workshops, Seva Niketan is paving way to take up this work as its regional apostolic expression. The future challenge lies in getting to know and love the religious cultures of our Muslim brothers and sisters who are the majority surrounding Seva Niketan. Our "magis" beckons us saying: "You may know them but have you loved them and served them enough?"

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The situation in the East-Central Europe is not united in the matter of religious freedom. This freedom is mostly secured through the special bills. These laws, which definitely break away from the years of repressive and anti-religious actions, revolve around three key concepts: the freedom of conscience, the secularity of the state and the equality of religious organizations. With their newly acquired legal status, religious organizations now have the right to exist legally as well as socially through the possibility to contract, to engage in legal actions and, most importantly, to own property. Difficulties exist on the juridical and social level, e.g. certain imprecision in the terms of law, wide interpretation, delay in the administrative procedures in the registrations of foreign religious organizations, lack of balance between certain denominations after Stalin terror, different restrictive regulations in the matter of foreign missionaries. The clergy is not always able to undertake a dialogue. The critical financial position of indigenous churches contrasts with better possibilities of foreign missionaries.

In the former Soviet countries the problems are: excessive dependence of the Church on the protective walls drawn by the state, lack of an Orthodox theological response to the challenge of democracy and human rights, the problem of strict Orthodox values not open to change.

Big problems have been noticed in the Ukraine. Should churches which are in opposition to Ukrainian independence and actively advocate the reunion with Russia be tolerated equally with those which are loyal to Ukrainian independence? Polish problems concentrate on the state-church relations (guarantees of religious freedom in preparing the constitution, other bills, recognition by the Parliament of concordat with Vatican) as well as equality of opportunity of other denominations in the Catholic-dominated country.

Sharing and discussions during the conference showed differences in mentality, vocabulary, ways of describing of the problems connected with common human needs: the need for freedom of conscience and its external aspects. The Center for the Study of Human Rights has specialists of international law and legal standards of religious freedom. It is a pity that dialogue of religious experience and theological exchange are weak.

Dariusz Dankowski, S.J.

MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS: a view from Zimbabwe

As you approach Kwekwe you could be excused for thinking you are no longer in Zimbabwe but in Zanzibar. An impressive mosque bestrides the road. We hear that Islam is increasing rapidly in Africa yet figures do not suggest any immediate take-over of the continent. One might expect that Burkina Faso, on the rim of the Sahara, would be 80 or 90 percent Muslim. In fact it is 35%. In Chad it is 46%. In Kenya 7%. Yet it is true that Islam is spreading its message further and further south in Africa. Little mosques, like the one on the way to St Monica's in Seke, are appearing in cities and towns.

There are 850 million Muslims in the world, mostly in a great swath of the earth from Dakar in Senegal to Davao in the Philippines. What are our feelings about Islam? And, more specifically for our present purpose, what are the implications for us as Christians of the assertive presence of Islam in Africa? What of Islam and our question about relations with Christianity? Muhammad had a special affection for Jesus. The Qur'an says: "Those who are nearest in love to believers (Muslims) are those who say 'we are Christians'". It was a Christian monk, Bahira, who predicted that Muhammad would be a

prophet and when Muslims were being persecuted in Mecca, Muhammad sent them to Christian Ethiopia for protection.

If I say the choice is between confrontation and dialogue I give the game away. It was not always so simple. In 732, the Franks halted the Islamic advance into Europe in the battle of Tours, and in 846 Muslim pirates looted St Peter's in Rome. After a few centuries' lull, the Christians launched their unsuccessful crusades to wrest back the Holy Places and on the rebound Muslims took Constantinople in 1453. In their follow through they were halted at the gates of Vienna and at sea at Lepanto in 1571. Yet it was not all war. Mathematics, astronomy and philosophy in Europe all received new life through the Arab scholars of the middle ages. These scholars made a great contribution to the learning that later came to shape the enlightenment and the industrial revolution.

Yet to come to the present, and to be faithful to the Council and our congregations, is to come to dialogue. There are two sorts of dialogue: one with a hidden agenda and one without. If I enter into dialogue with another with the attitude that, not today, not tomorrow, but some day I will change that person to my point of view, then is it really dialogue? But if I enter with deep respect for that person's own way to God, searching to understand myself and perhaps helping him or her to discover more the riches of their tradition, then I am in dialogue. Von Hugel once said. "I never want to convert any soul that is practising in good faith the religion it possesses, I only want to deepen and strengthen what that soul has already got".

My fundamental attitude is that we have one Father and as he draws us to himself he also draws us closer to one another. How and when is not my task, but his. "We realise that God, who wants all people to be saved, leads believers of all religions to the harmony of the reign of God in ways

known only to him." There is a whole paragraph in GC 34 on dialogue with Muslims which notes St Ignatius' own relationship with them at Manresa and in Jerusalem. "The experience of Jesuits who have approached Muslims with preparation, knowledge and respect has often shown that a fruitful dialogue is possible".

Sometimes contact is difficult. Recently I met a Jesuit from West Africa who said a Muslim boy will promise a Christian girl he wants to marry that she will enjoy complete religious freedom. But when they marry pressure from his family leads to the erosion of this freedom.

In our respect for Islam and other faiths are we losing sight of our belief in Jesus as the unique saviour? Quite the contrary; "genuine dialogue with believers of other religions requires that we deepen our own Christian faith and commitment, since real dialogue takes place only between those rooted in their own identity" This is no football game where there is only one winner. We are totally out of the realm of competition. "Jesus leads us in our faith". Where we will reach is no clearer than it was for Abraham when he "set out without knowing where he was going."

I end with part the testament of one of the murdered Trappist monks who so loved the Muslims among whom he lived out his religious life. He was one who really lived dialogue who saw Muslims not as threats or competitors but as fellow pilgrims. This surely is the key to dialogue.

If it should happen one day - and it could be today - that I become a victim of the terrorism which now seems ready to encompass all the foreigners living in Algeria,

I would like my community, my Church, my family, to remember that my life was given to God and to this country.

I ask them to accept that the One Master of all life was not a stranger to this brutal departure.

My life has no more value than any other.

Nor any less value.

In any case, it has not the innocence of childhood. I have lived long enough to know that I share in the evil which seems, alas, to prevail in the world, even in that which would strike me blindly. I should like, when the time comes, to have a clear space which would allow me to beg forgiveness of God

and of all my fellow human beings, and at the same time to forgive with all my heart the one who would strike me down.

I could not desire such a death.

I do not see, in fact, how I could rejoice if this people I love were to be accused indiscriminately of my murder.

It would be to pay too dearly for what will, perhaps, be called "the grace of martyrdom", to owe it to an Algerian, whoever he may be, especially if he says he is acting in fidelity to what he believes to be Islam.

I know the scorn with which Algerians as a whole can be regarded.

I know also the caricature of Islam which a certain kind of idealism encourages.

It is too easy to give oneself a good conscience by identifying this religious way with the fundamentalist ideologies of the extremists.

For me, Algeria and Islam are something different: they are a body and a soul.

I have proclaimed this often enough, I believe, in the sure knowledge of what I have received.

I find there so often that true strand of the Gospel learnt at my mother's knee, my very first Church.

My death, clearly, will appear to justify those who hastily judged me naive or idealistic:

"Let him tell us now what he thinks of it!"

But these people must realise that my most avid curiosity will then be satisfied.

This is what I shall be able to do, if God wills, immerse my gaze in that of the Father, to contemplate with him his children of Islam just as he sees them,

all shining with the glory of Christ, the fruit of his Passion, filled with the Gift of the Spirit, whose secret joy will always be to establish communion and to refashion the likeness, delighting in the differences.

David Harold-Barry, S.J.,
excerpted from *Mukai*, Harare, Zimbabwe

A MESSAGE TO BUDDHISTS:

1. It gives me great pleasure, as President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, to present to you once again my heartfelt greetings on the occasion of *Vesakh*, the feast which commemorates great events in the life of Gautama Siddhartha Buddha.

2. This feast of *Vesakh* offers an opportunity for Christians to visit their Buddhist neighbours and friends to exchange greetings, and this helps to strengthen bonds of friendship that already exist and to create new ones. This annual message thus becomes like a bridge between Buddhists and Christians which is constantly being built and consolidated. I thank God for this and pray, on my part, that the relations between Christians and Buddhists may continue to grow stronger.

3. In three years time people all over the world will be celebrating the coming of a new millennium. For Christians the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 will commemorate the Birth of Jesus Christ. For us, as Pope John Paul II has said, "this time of expectation is a time of reflection, inviting us to make an assessment, as it were, of mankind's journey in the sight of God, the Lord of history". Echoing this call of His Holiness, I would like to invite Buddhists and Christians to set out together on a true *pilgrimage of peace*. Starting from the concrete situation in which we find ourselves, let us *seek peace along the paths of forgiveness* by drawing upon the genuine patrimony of our religious traditions.

4. Time and again the *Dhammapada* reminds us of Buddha's words which are inspired by the logic of non-violence, compassion and love. He says, "*Among those who hate, blessed are we who live without hatred; in the midst of people who hate, we remain free from hatred*" (Dh. 197); and again, "*the winner engenders hatred and the loser dwells in distress;*

peaceful man rests tranquil abandoning simultaneously both winning and losing (Dh. 201).

5. Amidst the situations in our world marked by revenge, violent hatred and destructive wars we need to encourage people to ask and grant forgiveness because it is by its nature liberating. "Forgiveness, in its truest and highest form, is a free act of love. But precisely because it is an act of love, it has its own intrinsic demands: the first of which is *respect for the truth*... Where lies and falsehood are sown, there suspicion and division flourish... Another essential requisite for forgiveness and reconciliation is justice... There is no contradiction between forgiveness and justice. *Forgiveness neither eliminates nor lessens the need for the reparation* which justice requires, but seeks to integrate individuals and groups into society, and States into the community of Nations" (Pope John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace*, 1 January 1997). Could we who belong to the Buddhist and Christian communities not meet more often in order to remind our respective members of the important contribution all are called to make to world peace by becoming people of compassion and forgiveness?

6. While extending to you, on behalf of the Catholics in the world, cordial wishes of peace and joy, I renew the expression of my friendship.

Francis Cardinal Arinze
President of the PCID

DIALOGUE IN LEBANON: A REVIEW ARTICLE

Recent years have seen a plethora of articles on dialogue in the Lebanese press, and regular colloquia on dialogue in several of the villages and cities of Lebanon. The word dialogue has suddenly become fashionable, not only in appeals for installing a democratic process, but also in arranging Christian-Muslim relations.

Lebanon has a permanent committee for Christian-Muslim dialogue, which first appeared in the framework of the General Secretariat of the Islamic Spiritual Summit. Later, in August, 1993, in Bkerke, some of the same persons appear in an enlarged committee for Christian-Muslim Dialogue. The Eastern Catholic Patriarchs have been active in this line also. The preparations for the Synod on Lebanon included an Islamo-Christian dialogue committee, and the Final Message of the Synod strongly supported dialogue.

A new work in Arabic on Christian-Muslim dialogue

Recently, a new book on dialogue appeared in Beirut which merits consideration. I would like to present an overview to indicate how dialogue is conceived in Beirut at present.

The word dialogue was not always as acceptable as it is today. When the University of St. Joseph formed an Institute for Islamo-Christian Studies, it avoided the term *dialogue* because Muslim participants felt it was a loaded word which might create misunderstanding. In 1971, Fr. Youakim Moubarac published *Les Musulmans: consultation islamochrétienne* (Beauchesne, Paris) in which seven Muslim intellectuals from North Africa, Egypt, Iran, and India replied to questions concerning relations with Christians. One respondent considered that dialogue was for the Christian conscience what *cooperation* was for former colonialist countries: a new language adopted to the post-colonialist situation (p. 121).

Now dialogue is proposed as a necessity and, in the volume under consideration, the initiative comes from Muslims.

An Authoritative Reading
Christian Muslim Relations: an authoritative reading of history, the present and the future (Beirut: Center for Strategic Studies, Research and Documentation). The

book is conceived in a line somewhat similar to that of Fr. Moubarac, but the initiative comes from the Center for Strategic Studies, Research and Documentation in Beirut, closely tied to the Iranian Embassy.

The editor of the volume, Samir Sulayman, conceives that the new world situation puts Islam and Christianity, with their heavenly laws and their system of organization emanating from a divine source, in confrontation with the Occident with its materialistic model of society. Thus, the aim of dialogue becomes rapprochement in order to wage the battle together.

The result did not come up to his expectations. The Christians, he says, attack. They refuse the classic Islamic charges of infidelity (*kufi*) and deformation of their scriptures (*tahrif*), they refuse to be 'protected' people (*dhimmis*) and they refuse an Islamic state. He finds the Muslim contributions more defensive and evaluative.

Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah and Bishop Khidr both have brief paragraphs in a mystic vein in which one regards the other with a spiritual perception which dissolves differences.

Fadlallah states that when the believer, Muslim or Christian, lives in a state of spiritual ardor, divine love and lofty faith in openness to God, differences between people melt away and all the manifestations of life become manifestations of the greatness of God and a locus of His grace. Creatures, all creatures, are for him members of God's families (p. 33).

Bishop Khidr holds that those who fear God and follow his guidance with a soul thirsting for the truth speak of the guidelines of truth they have witnessed...This is the dialogue of the people of perceptivity following the path to God, marching in His steps wherever they

may lead. "If I be permitted a Sufi term, it is an aspect of the 'union of witness'. If they grasp the Lordship of God, they grasp immediately those who belong to Him. These all are Muslims according to the Quranic term, or they are the body of Christ according to the New Testament term (p. 205).

Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah

Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah tries to put the problem of Christian-Muslim relations where he considers they belong. There is no crisis between Islam and Christianity. He claims that in Lebanon "we try to limit the world to our view," as if the only problem were Islamic integritism. The Lebanese have to realize that the world situation is as harmful for Christianity as it is for Islam (p 31). The Islamic Movement is not even 1% anti-Christian; Christians pose no problem save in Lebanon and Sudan (p 53).

The real question is a not Islam against Christianity. It is rather a human question: strong against weak, rich against poor, north against south. Certain powers try to pose the problem as one between a moderate Islam and an extremist Islam. The danger is that Christian-Muslim relations may enter the international game of politics where they will be used to exploit old differences.

Here we can grasp the aim of dialogue for Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah: to plan an international Islamic-Christian movement to confront Arrogance (the Shi'ite term for imperialism). This Arrogance - political, cultural, economic, security - presses down the weak (p 39). Consequently, planning for complementarity or coordination among believers to confront cases of injustice in the region and the world will make the meeting of Islam and Christianity a vital question (p 41).

Faced with the harsh reality of the world today, Fadlallah is for open discussion -

thought (*fikr*) confronting thought - in order to face together the wicked West. With a notion that recalls liberation theology, he holds that Christians should not protest against political *jihād*, for this is precisely what will convince simple believers that religion has their interests at heart. Moreover, the Pope acts like any other politician; there is no excuse, however, for his recognition of Jerusalem. Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah makes a key point which could easily be put down as a precondition for dialogue: believers who are aware and educated should revise the way in which they arouse religious sensibilities among their co-believers, because there is such a thing as spiritual violence which can lead people to give a narrow interpretation to texts which are, in fact, open (p 34).

Thanks to our secretary

We are grateful that many of you have written us to acknowledge the first issue of the *Bulletin* and some have commented on its attractive, readable appearance. Most of the responsibility for this is due to our secretary, Sonia Berri. Sonia was born in Madrid but has lived almost all her life in Italy. Sonia has a degree in Experimental Scientific Informatics and, before coming to work for our Secretariat, worked at the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in the Vatican.

He considers that dialogue can be approached on two levels:

1. study jointly the movement of concepts in the popular imagination. Popular Christian consciousness of the divinity of Christ may be quite different from the philosophical concept of theologians. So too, popular Muslim belief in intercession may be quite other than the doctrine of the *ulama*.
2. Each should try to grasp the culture of the other from texts. He sees no problem in

one interpreting the texts of the other (p. 35) because dialogue is not making concessions nor is it avoiding sensitive points (p 41): it is thought confronting thought - or, thought meeting thought.

Parallel with this confrontation and discussion of differences, the two parties could teach morality in a unified framework. There is the problem of justice/injustice; freedom/servitude; arrogance/ weakness (p. 39). In these areas, there is no doubt but that complementarity and coordination add a vital dimension to dialogue (p. 41).

Ridwan al-Sayyid

Al-Sayyid reviews the history of Islamic-Christian dialogue. In the 1950s and 60s, Western Protestants tried to win Muslims to their side in the fight against Communism. In the late 60s and 70s, the focus became social problems. Now in the 80s and 90s, the focus is human rights. The Muslims, however, are still stuck in social problems, and Palestine and Muslim minorities are at the heart of dialogue for them.

He notes a certain development. From the 50s up through the 80s, dialogue bore an official stamp, save perhaps in Lebanon. Church delegations would come and meet with official Islamic parties. The Christian participants would be specialists in Islam and academicians. On the Islamic side, there was no knowledge of Christianity. The Muslims would cite verses from the Qur'an that were favorable to People of the Book and then go home. Many would never admit that they had participated in such an encounter. Now the Christians who participate have an anthropological rather than an Orientalist approach, and participating Muslims know Western culture, but they still lack a knowledge of the developments in Christian theology.

Through all this there is one constant: the Muslim desire to have Christians recognize Islam as an authentic revealed religion.

Islamic power was able to quench the spark of Christian politics throughout the East, but it could not get recognition as a religion in the Abrahamic context in which it put itself.

Because Muslims still crave recognition, whenever a hated Orientalist says something good about Islam, Muslims grab hold of it. They still have need of dialogue, which is a form of recognition. He considers, however, that dialogue is possible only with Western Christians because Eastern Christians have their own problems. Moreover, the West is where political decisions are made. Muslims and Eastern Christians are both lacking in self-criticism, which is a block to dialogue. Syriac Christians are on the point of extinction and the Orthodox are caught between nationalism and the revival of non-national authenticity with other Orthodox in Eastern Europe.

With rather uncommon vision, he sees that dialogue and communication are necessary today more than ever to face the changes taking place in human society. He ends on this note: Change will burn us all, so let it be conscious and controlled (p. 70).

The essays of **Fahmi Huwaydi** and **Sami Mukaram** have value as revealing the attitudes and positions of an Egyptian journalist who dines at all tables and of a Druze university professor, but they do not touch on vital points. The essays of **Tariq Mitri** and **William Qalawah** focus on history, which is certainly of interest. The former presents historic relations with judgment; the latter is victim of a conspiratorial reading of Egyptian history, and is much too long (over 100 pages in a book of 362 pages).

Of greater interest are the reactions of Bishops Khidr and Bustros, Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic, neither of whom hesitates to enter into public discussion with Muslim religious figures.

Bishop George Khidr

We have already referred to Khidr's mystic vision of a society where believers grasp the Lordship of God and can say 'I,' 'you' and 'we' in a free society - people of the earth with one destiny. Echoing, in a sense, the reflection of Ridwan al-Sayyid, Khidr considers that the aim of dialogue is not to pierce through the defenses of the other. Quite the contrary, the aim is for each to break out of his historical heritage. He touches a sensitive point (p. 212) when he reflects that he can repent for the history of his religion and ask pardon for the faults committed in the name of religion. He hopes that the Muslim can do the same.

Khidr considers that free discussion between Christians and Muslims will not be possible until Islamic countries reach a degree of economic prosperity and intellectual creativity similar to that in the West. In Abbasid times, free discussion was possible because Muslims had no inferiority complex. Today he knows of no place or system where free discussion is possible other than in Western democracy. Possibly the period of the Medina Constitution was similar.

The attitude which reigns in Western democracy is that which should be adopted in Islamic countries. With complete freedom, the Christians in the East would have no problem accepting Islamic civilization; they would be sincere citizens engaged in the dialogue of life striving for spiritual perfection and the formation of the new man (p. 208).

He has no interest in discussing elements of Islamic rule, but he would like to be assured that there be no application of *hudud* punishments to non-Christians, no *jizyah* or the like, and that Islamists not arrive at power by violence. Nor does he accept arguments about *tahrif* and Christian belief because the Qur'an says so. The Muslims have to start applying textual criticism. He understands why Muslims

prefer to dialogue with the West; that is where political decisions are made. But dialogue without Eastern Christians will be incomplete. Christian Arabs feel marginalized.

His inventory is rather bleak, but he still hopes for a time when there will be an *umma* of Muslims and a church of Christians practicing brotherhood in a way which assures each that he is at home.

Bishop Bustros

Bishop Bustros is less nuanced. He states from the beginning that the future cannot be like the past. The Christians of today are not the *Nasara* of the Qur'an. The only way there can be dialogue is for Muslims to decide that what is in the Qur'an is not a true expression of what Christians believe. The Muslims have to stop telling Christians that their Gospel was deformed.

He refers frequently to Church documents and, in the spirit of Vatican II, he is willing to focus on common points: unity of God, Creator, Prophets, morals. He appeals to the role of Christians in shaping Arab civilization, and he is ready to work with believing Muslims in completing God's creation and protecting the honor of man. But he will not discuss an Islamic state.

Bishop Bustros labels as naive one of Fadlallah's favorite themes, that while Christians have no revealed system of social organization, Muslims do; therefore, Christians should be as open to discussion about an Islamic state as they are to discussion of a socialist or a liberal state. Christians, he states, do not accept that there are revealed systems; they consider the Islamic system medieval and static, and they cannot coexist with it. How can we possibly build a state with such contradictory mentalities? He closes by citing the Greek Catholic declaration of 25 September 1985, listing the presuppositions for resolving the Lebanese crisis: unity, freedom, and accord.

There are many points of interest overlooked in this brief review. The volume is a success in as much as several clearly expressed how they and their side want to be considered, but the project of rapprochement on the basis of a 'system of divine origin' presented in the *Introduction* found no resonance among the Christian participants. The political aims of the persons chosen to speak for the Christians coincide neither with those of the editor of the volume nor of Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah. In other contexts, it is possible that political criticisms of the present state of the world might converge, but once politics is framed in symbolism which is completely Islamic, there is little wonder that it finds no resonance among Christians.

Yet, it is possible that a volume like this could be a step towards realizing that frames of thought have to be broadened if dialogue is to be really serious.

John Donohue, S.J.

DON'T HIDE YOUR LIGHT UNDER A BARREL!

WRITE and tell us how you are involved in dialogue, the research you are working on, the activities of your dialogue group, the vision of your dialogue center. You can also send us a photo. Perhaps your experience and initiative will inspire others!