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Chapter 1 : The inter-religious dialogue | Pakistan Today

Syed Farid Alatas, An Islamic Perspective on the Commitment to Inter-Religious Dialogue (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies,), 8.

My Encounters with Muslims and commitment to inter-religious dialogue

1. Search after knowledge about Muslims and Islam. My commitment to Christian-Muslim Encounter. Some stepping-stones on the path of my encounters. These encounters have been, in most cases, informal cf. I have encountered and lived with Muslims in both my nuclear and extended family; in my village; in the different schools where I studied; in different countries: I have encountered social Muslims, nominal Muslims and committed Muslims. I have lived in different Islamic contexts: Probably you are asking yourselves why I mention all these different categories of Muslims, contexts and situations. I do so because I have found out that all these factors play, in one way or another, an important role in the type of encounter that can exist between Christians and Muslims. Today, the awareness of this diversity of Muslims and Islamic contexts helps me to avoid the mistake so often made of generalisation, that is to say, putting all the Muslims in the same bag as if they all form a homogeneous and monolithic group or speaking about Islam as if it is a monolithic religion. Allow me to end this point with one of my experiences in Kenya. The first one did not allow me to enter his office and on top of that, he expressed his surprise to see a person like me being a Christian! He further went on to convince me that Islam was the true religion! The second imam, about one kilometre away, welcomed me inside the mosque, shared with me his conviction about the importance and necessity of Christian-Muslim dialogue and at the end offered me a cup of tea! Just an example of two contrasting experiences in the same area within a few minutes one after the other! Search after knowledge about Muslims and Islam During the years of my studies up to the noviciate, I never had any lecture about the Muslims and the Islamic Religion. I regret this and I would not like it to happen today especially to the young generations of Christians whose future is destined to live and work in a multi-religious society! My search after knowledge about Muslims and Islam started especially in in Algeria where I had been sent for my missionary pastoral experience. Since then, I have discovered: In this search, I have set myself two guidelines: Never limit myself on what is written about the Muslims and Islam by non-Muslims. I try, in as much as I can, to read Muslim authors and listen to what they have to say about their own faith. I do this because I believe that: Muslims as well as believers of other religions are the best definers of their Islamic faith and identity. It is their right to define who they are and it is my duty to respect this definition whether it pleases me or not. However, this does not mean that I agree with all that the Muslims say and practice! Never limit myself to book knowledge. In addition to it, I take into consideration the living-Islam popular Islam through my personal contacts with the Muslims. Book knowledge can be of great help but only as a preparation for this personal encounter. And, contact with the living Islam has enabled me to encounter the Living Spirit that gives life to the Muslim believers. My commitment to Christian-Muslim Encounter Muslims have become not only part of my life, but also an important component of my vocation as a Christian and a Missionary of Africa. As a member of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa, I have, since I made my missionary oath 15 years ago, dedicated my life and ministry to the Christian Muslim Dialogue. And, the more I get involved in this dialogue the more I become convinced, not only of its importance but also of its urgency. The following have been the areas of my commitment to this dialogue: I have often taken the initiative in this out-reach, with the hope of reciprocity. But, I have never made this reciprocity a pre-condition for my out-reach to the Muslims. In my commitments, the following are some of my guiding principles: However, this does not mean that I under estimate the differences or consider them as a source of conflict. On the contrary, I am one of those who believe that our religious differences should lead us to mutual enrichment and not to war! In other word, avoid using double standards! In these different commitments, I have encountered some oppositions, suspicions, misunderstandings and indifferences from both Christians and Muslims. But, thank God, I have also encountered those who have shown interest and are

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fully committed to promote Christian-Muslim dialogue. Some stepping-stones on the path of my encounters Here below, I would like to share with you some of the events which in a special way have served as stepping stones in my reflections and involvement in Christian-Muslim Dialogue in particular and in interreligious dialogue in general. Of course, I have also seen Muslims who do not pray, who have no loving relationships with their neighbours and do not lead an ethically upright life. But, this is not an exception to the Muslims! Before these God-fearing men and women of Islam, I have seen the hand of God and the presence of His Spirit who, according to my Christian faith, is the only source of such a devotional life and its fruits. Their witness has been as much inspiring and challenging to me as that of the holy men and women of my faith community. Their witness is a proof for me that other religious traditions can also be valid means to help their adherents to fulfil the greatest commandment which is the love of God and love of neighbour. Not without my Muslim neighbours Although I had lived with the Muslims since my childhood, it is only during my stay in Algeria that the question of the salvation of the Muslims in particular and that of other believers in general became a moral dilemma for me. Are they in fact not in relationship with God? What do we make of their devotional life and all that has come out of it? At that time I could not make any theological sense of the problem; nor did I have the tools to do so. It was inconceivable to me; it was clearly unfair. I would not like to be in a heaven where my Muslim relatives, friends and neighbours were not! The reason is not so much because they are my relatives or friends or neighbours. It is because of their devotional life and all that come out of it. And, my commitment to promote a peaceful and constructive Christian-Muslim dialogue here on earth is for me a preparation for that heaven where the members of both faith communities will live together for eternity! That evening there was a number of young people in that family. These young people were debating amongst themselves about whom between the Muslim extremists and the other Muslims had the truth. At the end of the discussions, before leaving the house, the old grandmother, who was all that time sitting silently in the corner of the room, wanted to say something to us. My children, the truth is indeed with God! And then she said to us: I will never forget that night and those few words of wisdom of that grandmother! Another person whom I had the chance to live and work with, from the same country as the old woman echoes her words of wisdom: I am personally convinced that humanity is pluralist, and that when we claim to possess the truth or to speak in the name of humanity, we fall prey to totalitarianism and exclusion. No one possesses the truth, everyone is searching for it.. I believe there is a God.. One does not possess that God. One does not possess the truth, and I need the truth of other seekers. This is my experience with the thousands of Algerians whose existence I share and whose questions are my questions. Nearest among them in love to the Believers wilt thou find those who say: And, if we are humble enough to accept that we are all seekers of God Truth , then we have to take to heart the words of Gandhi: The seeker after Truth God should be humbler than dust! My commitment to interreligious dialogue started with the Muslims. The followers of African Traditional Religions come first because of my origin and vocation as a Missionary of Africa. This widening of the space of my interreligious encounter is the fruit of the discovery of the existence of other religions and the treasures they hold in their earthen vessels! Gandhi has been for me the source of inspiration in this evolution. Gandhi read a lot about other world religions and worked throughout his life to promote a peaceful and constructive co-existence between the people of different religions. He finally paid with his life for it while trying to reconcile the Hindus and Muslims in India. I make mine his conclusion when he says: I have come to the conclusion, in my own experience, that those who, no matter to what faith they belong, reverently study the teaching of other faiths, broaden their own instead of narrowing their hearts. Personally, I do not regard any of the great religions of the world as false. All have served in enriching mankind and are now even serving their purpose. African Conviviality and Religious tolerance at the service of Inter-religious Encounter. At the beginning of this year, I had the chance to visit the town of Toledo in Spain. During the Middle Ages, the followers of Judaism, Christianity and Islam lived peacefully side by side in this town. This is no longer the case today. The synagogue and the mosque are now museums! During my visit to this town, it came as a flash in my mind that the religious tolerance of Toledo remembered as history is a reality in many sub-Sahara African towns and

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cities, thanks to the African sense of conviviality and religious tolerance. As an African, I consider this as a God-given gift that I must share with those other cultures and societies who are not used to living in a multi-religious society! Moreover, I also see it as my sacred duty to safeguard this virtue of my African heritage against those Christian and Muslim fanatic groups who are becoming a big threat in many African countries. As I have been treading on this path of inter-religious encounter for the last 20 years, I have felt a great need for a new spirituality suited for this particular path. The new spirituality I long for is one that would: This spirituality, though not yet clearly defined, already asks of me to become: Today, I am convinced more than ever before that inter-religious dialogue is one of the signs of the times. For me, its promotion is not an option but a sacred duty. We have to cease witnessing-against each other and become more and more co-witnesses of a Living and Merciful God to our world of today. We should cease to be definers and defenders of God and become more of His witnesses through our works of justice and mercy.

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Chapter 2 : The inter religious dialogue

"Inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue between Christians and Muslims cannot be reduced to an optional extra. It is, in fact, a vital necessity, on which in large measure our future depends." The second quotation is from a letter signed by Muslim Scholars and Leaders from across the Muslim world and sent to Christian leaders in

Heft, in a lecture on "The Necessity of Inter-Faith Diplomacy," spoke about the conflicts among practitioners of the three Abrahamic religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Noting that except for the Convivencia in the 14th and 15th centuries, believers in these religions have either kept their distance or have been in conflict, Heft maintains, "there has been very little genuine dialogue" between them. In the 16th century, the Emperor Akbar encouraged tolerance in Mughal India, a diverse nation with people of various faith backgrounds, including Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Christianity. The apostate Paulus [Pablo] Christiani proposed to King James I of Aragon that a formal public religious disputation on the fundamentals of faith should be held between him and R. Nahman Nachmanides whom he had already encountered in Gerona. The disputation took place with the support of the ecclesiastical authorities and the generals of the Dominican and Franciscan orders, while the king presided over a number of sessions and took an active part in the disputation. The four sessions of the disputation took place on July 20, 27, 30, and 31, according to another calculation, July 20, 23, 26, and 29. When the ecclesiastics who saw the "not right" turn the disputation was taking, due to Nahmanides persuasive argumentation, they urged that it should be ended as speedily as possible. It was, therefore, never formally concluded, but interrupted. According to the Latin record of the proceedings, the disputation ended because Nahmanides fled prematurely from the city. In fact, however, he stayed on in Barcelona for over a week after the disputation had been suspended in order to be present in the synagogue on the following Sabbath when a conversionist sermon was to be delivered. The king himself attended the synagogue and gave an address, an event without medieval precedent. Nahmanides was permitted to reply on this occasion. In his statement of purpose was revised to include advancing "understanding, dialogue and readiness to learn and promotes sympathy and harmony among the different religious traditions". It has branches and affiliated groups in over 50 countries on every continent. It is "one of the oldest interfaith bodies in the world". It does this by offering opportunities "to meet, explore, challenge and understand different faith traditions through events from small workshops to large conferences, partnership working, on-line conversation, and publications". Evans believed that unified prayer would "bridge theological or structural religious differences," would "open the mind and heart of the prayer to a new understanding of and appreciation for the beliefs and values of those following different spiritual paths," and would "advance interfaith understanding and mutual respect among religious traditions," [21] In 1988, the International Humanist and Ethical Union IHEU was founded in Amsterdam. It serves as "the sole world umbrella organisation embracing Humanist, atheist, rationalist, secularist, skeptic, laique, ethical cultural, freethought and similar organisations world-wide". It implements its vision by seeking "to influence international policy through representation and information, to build the humanist network, and let the world know about the worldview of Humanism". Since then, it "has been at the forefront of promoting the sympathetic study and understanding of world religions. It has supported academic inquiry and international understanding in this field through its residential community," and "its research efforts and funding, and its public programs and publications". Its purpose was "to challenge U. King used its platform for his "Beyond Vietnam" speech. To do this, Pope Paul VI established a special secretariat later a pontifical council for relationships with non-Christians. The papal encyclical Ecclesiam Suam emphasized the importance of positive encounter between Christians and people of other faith traditions. The Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions Nostra Aetate of 1964 spelled out the pastoral dimensions of this relationship. Its work includes "dialogue" that "bears fruit in common concrete action". Through the organization, diverse religious communities discern "deeply held and widely shared" moral concerns, such as, "transforming violent conflict, promoting just and harmonious societies, advancing human

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development and protecting the earth". In , Minhaj-ul-Quran was founded. Samartha says that the importance of that day of prayer for "interreligious relationships cannot be overestimated" and gives "several reasons" for its importance: For the prayers Christians were taken to one place and people of other faiths to another place. Eck launched the Pluralism Project by teaching a course on "World Religions in New England," in which students explored the "diverse religious communities in the Boston area". This project was expanded to charting "the development of interfaith efforts throughout the United States" and then the world. The Pluralism Project posts the information on the Pluralism Project website. Its conference decided to held meetings every two years. As of , the Interfaith Alliance has , members across the country made up of 75 faith traditions as well as those of no faith tradition. The Interfaith Alliance works to 1 "respect the inherent rights of all individuals" as well as their differences", 2 "promote policies that protect vital boundaries between religion and government", and 3 "unite diverse voices to challenge extremism and build common ground". The Center is a San Francisco Bay Area "interfaith friendship-building" that welcomes "people of all faiths". The Center is committed to "healing and peacemaking within, between, and among religious and spiritual traditions". ICNY works with hundreds of grassroots and immigrant religious leaders from fifteen different faith and ethnic traditions. Its "long-term goal is to help New York City become a nationally and internationally-recognized model for mutual understanding and cooperation among faith traditions". The purpose was to bring the Muslim and Christian communities together to defeat "terrorism and extremism". In particular, the Forum is interested in "pluralism, peace building and conflict resolution, intercultural and interfaith dialogue, social harmony and justice, civil rights and community cohesion". Its impetus dates from the late s in Israel when a group of visionaries which included Martin Buber recognised the need for interfaith dialogue. IEA is dedicated to promoting "coexistence in the Middle East through cross-cultural study and inter-religious dialogue". It forms and maintains "on-going interfaith encounter groups, or centers, that bring together neighboring communities across the country. Each center is led by an interfaith coordinating team with one person for each community in the area. The organisation comprises "people belonging to various religions and faiths" who "strive to bring about widespread divine love and global peace". It is "an independent body" that brings religious resources to support the work of the United Nations and its agencies around the world, nation states and other international organizations, in the "quest for peace". It offers "the collective wisdom and resources of the faith traditions toward the resolution of critical global problems". The IYYC was started to bring students of different religions "together not just to talk, but to work together to feed the hungry, tutor children or build housing". It "focuses on grassroots interfaith dialogue and coexistence". JICRC provides "advice to government and non-government organizations and individual decision makers regarding questions of inter-religious understanding" and "participates in interfaith efforts on the local, regional, and international levels". In A Common Word Between Us and You , Muslim scholars, clerics and intellectuals unanimously came together for the first time since the days of the Prophet[s] to declare the common ground between Christianity and Islam. The Festival invites "participants from all faith backgrounds" as a way contributing "to understanding, respect and community cohesion". The center was founded to "begin a theological dialogue" between Jews and Christians with the belief that in dialogue the two faiths will "find far more which unites" them than divides them. Its mission is "to promote dialogue, understanding and grassroots, congregational and academic partnerships among the oldest and the newest of the Abrahamic faiths while generating a contemporary understanding in this understudied area and creating new tools for interfaith communities locally, nationally and beyond. The conference was attended by religious leaders of different faiths such as Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism , Hinduism, and Taoism and was hosted by King Juan Carlos of Spain in Madrid. This conference explored ways and means to deal with the discord among major religions, according to Morari Bapu. Peshtan Hormazadiar Mirza on Zoroastrianism. The Centre "models dialogical, constructive, and innovative research, learning and social engagement". The Centre operates under the leadership of Principal and Dean, Dr. Wendy Fletcher, and Director, Rabbi Dr. She made a wish that the TED community would "help create, launch, and propagate a Charter for Compassion". After the contribution of

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thousands of people the Charter was compiled and presented. Charter for Compassion International serves as "an umbrella for people to engage in collaborative partnerships worldwide" by "concrete, practical actions". Working in pairs, the volunteers were paired up and given a Flip Video camera to record the interviews. The interviewees were asked three questions: Project Interfaith terminated in Its work is bringing together "faith groups, religious leaders, and teachers to promote peace and sustainability". The goals of the Challenge included maximizing "the education contributions of community-based organizations, including faith and interfaith organizations". By , more than institutions of higher education had responded to the Challenge. The board of directors included Jews, Christians, and Muslims. A rabbi on the board said that "the prime purpose is to empower the active work of those in the field, whether in the field of dialogue, of social activism or of conflict resolution". A Muslim member of the board said that "the aim is to promote acceptance of other cultures, moderation and tolerance". She defines interfaith spirituality as, "We respect and love all religions. What we want is to believe and respect interfaith religion, inclusive of all faith traditions. In our community spiritual practices, we invoke our prayers to the Divine, rather than invoking any particular name or form of God to the exclusion of others. The United States Institute of Peace published works on interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding [78] [79] including a Special Report on Evaluating Interfaith Dialogue [80] Religious intolerance persists The above section recounts a "long history of interfaith dialogue". However, a article in The Huffington Post said that "religious intolerance is still a concern that threatens to undermine the hard work of devoted activists over the decades". Nevertheless, the article expressed hope that continuing "interfaith dialogue can change this". As of , the thesis says that this has not been done. Sri Dhammananda has stated: In the history of the world, there is no evidence to show that Buddhists have interfered or done any damage to any other religion in any part of the world for the purpose of introducing their religion. Buddhists do not regard the existence of other religions as a hindrance to worldly progress and peace. Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. He believes that the "common aim of all religions, an aim that everyone must try to find, is to foster tolerance, altruism and love". During , he met in Dharamsala with a delegation of Jewish teachers for an extensive interfaith dialogue. He has also met the late Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. In , the Dalai Lama was joined by Rev. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. April Learn how and when to remove this template message Traditional Christian doctrine is Christocentric , meaning that Christ is held to be the sole full and true revelation of the will of God for humanity. In a Christocentric view, the elements of truth in other religions are understood in relation to the fullness of truth found in Christ. God is nevertheless understood to be free of human constructions. Many theologians, pastors, and lay people from these traditions do not hold to uniquely Christocentric understandings of how God was in Christ.

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Chapter 3 : Inter-religious Dialogue Research Papers - blog.quintoapp.com

An Islamic Perspective of the Interfaith Dialogue amidst Current Inter-religious Tensions Worldwide dialogue is a perspective.

Sponsored by Pakistan and the Philippines, the text reaffirmed the solemn commitment of all states to fulfill their obligations to promote universal respect for, and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Terrorism, blasphemy and forced conversions Less than a week after the resolution was adopted, at least nine people were killed and over 50 wounded when two suicide bombers stormed a packed church in Quetta. Following the Quetta blast, security at places of worship has been beefed up across the country. However, majority of the 1, worship places of minorities present in Sindh still lack permanent security arrangements. The lethargy in the attitude cannot be helped but noticed. Pakistan has ranked sixth on the list of the countries where Christians are most persecuted, according to the world watch list Our hearts bleed at the atrocities committed in Kashmir, we storm the streets at the injustices done in Palestine, we gawk at the cold blooded ethnic cleansing in Myanmar, but avoid talking about the inhumane practices in our country on the pretext of blasphemy In , Asia Bibi “ a Christian ” was the first woman who was awarded the capital punishment of hanging to death on charges of blasphemy. In , the High Court of Lahore not only upheld the verdict of the session court against Asia but issued a stay order against presidential pardon which remains in force till today, while a hearing date for the case is pending since last year. In November last year, the Sindh Assembly passed a bill against the practice of forced conversions in the province, particularly in the case of the Hindu community. Their main objection was to the provision stipulating that the conversion of underage individuals would not be formally recognised until they reach the age of majority. Laws and their amendments put forth in the parliament do receive a debate, but often progress is hampered by some frantic reactions, as evident in the case of forced conversion law. When debates take place in social forums, only a few voice their concerns openly at the stifling atmosphere in the country and they also fear for their lives. Occasionally, there may be gatherings of inter faith harmony, but only for promotional purposes and declarations of love, brotherhood and tolerance only for the time being. The oft quoted but sadly disregarded are the words of the founder of the nation, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. In an address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan few days before the independence, he had stated: You will find that in course of time Hindus will cease to be Hindus and Muslims will cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as the citizens of the State. Not many years after and in complete oblivion to the statement quoted above, Khawaja Nazimuddin, the second prime minister of Pakistan and one of the leading founding fathers of the country, had said: I do not agree that religion is a private affair of the individual nor do I agree that in an Islamic state every citizen has identical rights, no matter what his caste, creed or faith be. They will have no voice in the making of the law, no right to administer the law and no right to hold public offices. Our hearts bleed at the atrocities committed in Kashmir, we storm the streets at the injustices done in Palestine, we gawk at the cold blooded ethnic cleansing in Myanmar, but avoid talking about the inhumane practices in our country on the pretext of blasphemy. Muhammad Ali Jinnah declared that non-Muslims would be equal citizens in the new country. We need to first convince ourselves and then the others, that equality for all citizens of Pakistan, regardless of religion, is their fundamental right. We need to educate ourselves, not only on the contributions made by all sectors of the society, but the horrors afflicted on them despite them being loyal to the country. We need to cooperate with others, in believing that we are all Pakistanis. The day when a Muslim in Pakistan will stand shoulder to shoulder with a non Muslim and feel the pain of injustice as his own, will be the day when an atmosphere of peace and nonviolence could be promoted. We could start today. The writer is a broadcast journalist and freelance writer. She has keen interest in issues concerning women, religion and foreign affairs. One Comment; - December 29, said: Hypocrisy Muslims is they expect full

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human rights of Muslims to be protected when they are in minority. They expect security and freedom of faith when in minority. They want their democratic rights to be respected when they are in minority. But when they are majority Muslim country they say Islam does not recognize democracy. Only sharia will rule. They do not respect the people and traditions of other faith. People have seen through this double standards. Stop blaming Non Muslims for problems faced by Muslims. And look in the mirror instead.

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Chapter 4 : Syed Farid al-Attas - Wikipedia

An Islamic Perspective on the Commitment to Inter-Religious Dialogue, Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies Malaysia, Alternative Discourses in Asian Social Science: Responses to Eurocentrism, Sage,

Religion, after all, is a powerful constituent of cultural norms and values, and because it addresses the most profound existential issues of human life. To transform the conflicts besetting the world today, we need to uncover the conceptions of peace within our diverse religious and cultural traditions, while seeking the common ground among them. It is no longer sufficient for transnational peace agendas to be defined primarily by the cultural experiences and perceived security threats of a particular nation or culture. One of the greatest barriers to open dialogue between major cultural traditions is the assumption that a universally valid and presumably secular framework of knowledge for peace and the resolution of conflicts already exists. This notion is untenable for two reasons. First, it is exclusive, and implies that approaches based on non-Western sources, or even religious precepts, for that matter, are dangerous or somehow invalid. Dallmayr The rising prominence of protracted ethnic and religious conflicts, however, has convinced many scholars that the cultural and religious aspects of conflict and its resolution must be taken seriously. An emerging literature on religion, conflict resolution and peace has contributed significantly to this development. One of the most important findings of cross-cultural conflict resolution research is that religion is a perennial and perhaps inevitable factor in both conflict and conflict resolution. Defining the Role of Religion in Conflict and Peacemaking Peace and conflict resolution are both universal and particular; similar as well as divergent approaches derive form and vitality from the cultural resources of a people. When we examine peacemaking and conflict resolution across cultures, we discover both common themes and significant differences, both of which enhance our general theories of conflict resolution and help to create constructive channels for the perennial religious impulse. Whether or not scholars and practitioners are consciously aware of religious influences in the shaping of their own perceptions, religious belief systems directly impact the development of theories of conflict and conflict resolution. Religious concepts of peace, then, embody and elaborate upon the highest moral and ethical principles of a given society and define the terms and conditions for individual and social harmony. Religion may be defined as a path of ultimate transformation, comprised of interconnected systems of symbols and guidelines. These shape the individual and group subconscious from which social practices and interactions are all given meaning. Galtung This common frame of reference underpins the very fabric of group and individual identity, providing the shared normative foundation that makes harmonious social interaction possible as well as meaningful. Social and political norms manifest the virtues, priorities and ideals of their religious culture. Religion in Conflict Situations In promulgating the ideals and values held in highest esteem by groups and individuals, religion profoundly influences goal-seeking behavior in conflict situations, by establishing the criteria or frames of reference for determining the rightness and wrongness of events. For disputants, the disruption that accompanies conflict can shake unstated, implicit expectations and reinforce tendencies to frame relationships in terms of religious categories. By enjoining a broad repertoire of models or precedents of desirable behavior in conflicted circumstances while specifically admonishing others, religion implicitly influences the desirability and likelihood of certain courses of action over others. When utilized constructively, religion can affect individual and social responses to triggering events through a placing the event in a historical, goal-seeking context, b providing meaning for events in light of values, goals and religious identity and c offering roles for dealing with conflict through appropriate, affirmative responses based on religious precepts and idealized models or precedents. When faced with difficult challenges or uncertainty in conflicts, participants rely on these established codes of conduct to alleviate cognitive dissonance, anxiety and guilt as well as to fashion a path of correctness based on idealized courses of action that promises to restore harmony and order. Religion and Conflict Resolution It is essential to recognize that the experience of conflict evokes a deep-seated need for affirmation of identity and restoration of meaning.

Conflict resolution does more than address material clashes of interest; it speaks to social reintegration, restoration and redemption, existential security, personal transcendence and transformation. These concepts are drawn from the backdrop of the sacred, which may be defined as any process that explicitly connects us to the largest possible context to which we belong Said, Lerche and Lerche ; see also Bateson and Bateson The affirmation of individual and group identity achieved through redemptive transformation is essential in giving meaning to a conflict and its resolution. Attempts to divorce the spiritual from conflict resolution practices deny an essential component of healing and social restoration that permits conflicts to be experienced as resolved. The religious cosmology of a group, in privileging some values and ideals over others, specifies how restoration, wholeness and healing can be achieved through distinctive paths of resolution adopted by different cultures Abu-Nimer Conflict resolution approaches that do not incorporate appropriate and relevant paths of redemptive transformation are less likely to yield more enduring or effective resolution. The ruptures experienced in conflict situations often require symbolic or other social exchange found within collective cosmologies. In this way, conflict resolution strategies manifest distinctive conceptions of peace, which illuminate the terms and conditions necessary for social harmony to be both understood and experienced. For example, in Christian cosmologies and in some Western approaches to conflict resolution, personal responses such as an aspiration toward transcendence or perceptual transformation are encouraged, emphasizing historical breaks from the past that enable renewal and revisionism. Significantly, Christianity alone among the monotheist traditions encourages this kind of comprehensive, unilateral conflict resolution approach, whereas in both Islam and Judaism, reciprocal or other social actions signal the achievement of resolution within a larger, historical context. The role of community and community leaders in achieving historically and communally acceptable solutions is particularly evident in Islamic approaches to conflict resolution. A Comparative Perspective Contemporary frictions between Western and Muslim societies underscore the importance of developing cross cultural frameworks that highlight inter-religious and faith-based dimensions of conflict resolution. Where poorly managed conflict leads to distortion and failure of communication, cooperative inquiry into traditions of peace and peacemaking helps to establish new points of contact and complementarity across cultures. For far too long, Western media and scholarship have tended to mirror the unfortunate estrangement between Islamic and Western societies and cultures. Popular as well as academic literatures have focused disproportionately on religious radicalism and militancy, effectively viewing Islam through the lenses of terrorism and violence and neglecting its role as a deeply embedded discourse and affirmative value system in the day-to-day lives of Muslims. To this day, the presumption of incompatibility has provided the dominant motif for storytelling about Islamic and Western cultures. Both Western observers and Muslims paint with broad brushstrokes when they engage in generalization about macro-cultural units of analysis, and fail to account for the diverse strands of cultural legacies. As protagonists of the story of incompatibility, they often resort to a language of exclusivity. This language is preoccupied with defining boundaries, and manifests a retreat from intercultural experiences to psychological and cultural segregation. Dialogue can enable Muslims to respond more substantively to the innovations of the West, while also making it possible for Westerners to appreciate Islamic conceptions of peace and thereby transcend the habit of focusing narrowly on those groups of Muslims that are responsible for destructive acts or confrontational rhetoric. Contrasting Western and Islamic Approaches to Peace Although Western approaches to peace reflect traditions within Christian religious cosmology, most are underpinned by largely secular intellectual constructs. In the field of international relations, the prevailing Western approach is apparent in an emergent synthesis of neorealist power politics and neoliberal institutionalism. Considered separately from justice, peace is equated with an absence of war; justice, in turn, is understood as an absence of gross violations of human rights. As an absence of war or organized violence, peace is maintained by the threat of coercion and by institutionalized cooperation among great powers. Peace is equated with stability and order guaranteed by hegemonic influence. Where institutionalized order cannot be guaranteed, as in politics among core and peripheral nation states, preponderance of coercive power is viewed as a necessary, albeit arbitrary, arbiter of

intractable disputes. In its defense of the contemporary world order, the dominant approach to peace in international relations reflects the modern Western tendency to think about peace and conflict resolution in terms of rational order or problem solving predicated upon reason and expediency. Following the example of such Greek thinkers as Plato and Euripides, modern Western thinking regards reason as sacred. Passion has been posited as the opponent of reason hence the putatively dispassionate quality of serious intellectual inquiry ; passion is dangerous and destructive. Emmanuel Kant , for example, understood history as progress toward rationality Reiss Not surprisingly, the conception of peace that is dominant among Western elites differs markedly from Islamic conceptions. Historically, Islamic thinkers benefited from and even extended the thought of the Greeks, but speculative thought never dissociated itself from religious precepts and values. Moreover, most Muslim thinkers were reluctant to imitate the Greek inclination to sanctify reason while denigrating passion. Reason was seldom regarded as sacred in its own right, nor was passion viewed solely as a source of disruption and injustice. The general tendency was to view reason and passion as complementary aspects of the human being that can be integrated through the faith and practice of Islam, active submission to the divine. Within the Muslim community, or umma, this calling has manifested, and will no doubt continue to manifest, in varied ways that reflect continuous efforts to interpret and apply foundational Islamic values in specific historical, social and cultural situations. Islam, like all religions, is not only a theological affirmation but also a living historical process with multiple syntheses and expressions that must be taken into account. Though in principle we may speak of Islam as an integral tradition, from a practical, realistic standpoint there are many Islams, each of which reflects a different approach to perennial challenges of integrating precept and practice. Through its varied traditions, Islam has much to contribute to intercultural and inter-religious dialogue on the advancement of peace and related humanistic and spiritual values Said, Funk and Kadayifci Practices of Islamic societies, of course, have often reflected those aspects of the prevailing Western approach to peace that call for coercive power, particularly through an emphasis on the role of centralized authority in checking centrifugal forces of rebellion and fragmentation. Nonetheless, Islamic norms have long rendered a minimalist approach to issues of peace and justice questionable in its religious legitimacy. Ever since Muslims first assembled themselves in political community, they have believed that a society guided by inspired laws, wise leadership and extensive consultation is superior to a society governed by the arbitrary whims of a king, dictator or oligarchy. Peace is understood to imply not only an absence of oppression and tumult, but also a presence of justice and conditions for human flourishing. While Muslim thinkers have given consideration to the same types of dilemmas that have preoccupied Hobbes and Locke, Islamic aspirations have long reflected a broad and holistic conception of peace. Peace in the world reflects higher realities. Interestingly enough, the word Islam derives not from the name of a particular prophet or people, but from the same root as salam s-l-m and suggests a condition of peace, security, wholeness and safety from harm that is attained through surrender taslim to the Divine. Peace, then, occupies a central position among Islamic precepts, where it is closely linked to justice and human flourishing. Peace in Islam suggests a condition of principle-based order “ a proper equilibrium of parts “ from which a pattern of harmony can emerge. This condition is both internal and external; upholding it is the responsibility of every Muslim. Islam adopts a positive view of human nature, insisting that the original human constitution fitrah is good and muslim in character. There is no conception of original sin, but rather a hopeful conception of human potential that is integrally related to a status of stewardship towards creation. The dignity of the individual is actualized through service, within a broader context of human solidarity. Forgiveness is consistently held out as the preferred option for humanity in matters of requiting clear injustice or crime. Neither naive pardon nor a mechanical retribution is urged; what is sought is a reformation or moral good accomplished by sincere forgiveness. A Communally Embedded Approach to Conflict Resolution From an Islamic point of view, the achievements of the dominant Western approach to peace are impressive, but also one sided. Where the Western approach celebrates human self-determination, the Islamic perspective underscores divine purpose and human exertion. While the Western approach points to political pluralism, individual rights and consumerism as the substance of peace,

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the Islamic perspective affirms cultural pluralism, communal solidarity, social justice and faith. The differences between Western and Islamic approaches to conflict resolution mirror some of the differences between Western and Islamic perspectives on peace. While conflict resolution specialists have begun to develop newer approaches in order to prioritize human needs and non adversarial processes Burton ; Laue , Western conflict resolution has traditionally reflected a cultural outlook of pragmatic individualism and a style of instrumental problem solving Scimecca This outlook has been associated with an emphasis on expediency and technique. From an Islamic standpoint, it can be criticized as an engineering approach that neglects relationships while focusing on isolated issues or on variables that can be manipulated mechanically. However suitable modern Western techniques may be in their original cultural milieu “ especially when harmonized with religious or humanistic values ” their applications in more traditional or non-Western contexts are circumscribed. John Paul Lederach , for example, has observed substantial differences between contemporary Western conflict resolution approaches and traditional Latin American approaches that are derived from indigenous culture and embedded in communal realities. Other scholars have also recognized the role that culture plays in conflict and peacemaking, and have affirmed the potential contributions of diverse religious institutions and principles to conflict resolution within divided societies Augsburger ; Avruch While the strongest current of the Western approach to conflict resolution prioritizes problems to be abstracted and solved, distinctively Islamic approaches resemble other non-Western approaches insofar as they frame conflicts as matters of communal and not just individual concern, and underscore the importance of repairing and maintaining social relationships. Muslim approaches to conflict resolution draw on religious values, social networks, rituals of reconciliation Irani and Funk and historical practices of communal and inter communal coexistence. Conflict resolution efforts are directed toward the maintenance of communal or intercommunal harmony. They favor recognition of mutual rights and obligations, and uphold shared values by calling for public apology, compensation for losses and forgiveness Irani and Funk Conflict resolution mechanisms are legitimized and guaranteed by communal leaders and traditionally elders who facilitate a process of reconciliation. History is regarded as a source of stability and guidance that provides lessons for shaping a common future for the society. Efforts aim to protect and empower families and the community as a whole to participate in a resolution process. Islam and the West: A Search for Common Ground Discussion of Islamic conceptions of peace and conflict resolution leads quite naturally to the question of Islamic political activism. Contemporary Islamic activism is best understood not as a backward looking rejection of the modern world, but rather as a deeply felt expression of cultural identity and a critique of domestic as well as international political orders Falk ; Salla One distinction that many observers of Islam fail to make concerns the difference between revivalism and fundamentalism. Islamic revivalism is a broad-based social and political movement directed toward internal renewal.

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Chapter 5 : Inter-religious Dialogue: An Imperative for Peace - Catholic Outlook

Islamic Perspective Of Interfaith Dialogue Islam came up with two types of directives as regards interfaith dialogue: one, approval of interfaith dialogue; and the other, rejection of it.

Interfaith , Marriage Views: The prohibition against inter-religious marriage is drilled into our ears from childhood with the result that the idea sounds to most of us as almost unthinkable. When such marriages occasionally do take place they are looked upon as unfortunate social accidents and generate a lot of tension or resentment within the concerned families and also society in general. Such marriages are not tolerated but merely endured by the family. One frequently hears of parents disowning their son or daughter. Both Hindus and Muslims reject the idea of inter-marriage on grounds, which are religious as well as social psychological or cultural. I shall deal with these grounds separately. As far as religious objections go I, as a Muslim, shall confine myself to Islam only. This position is based upon the following two verses of the Quran: A believing bondswoman is better than an idolatress though she please you; and give not your daughters in marriage to idolaters till they believe, for lo! A believing slave is better than an idolater though he please you. These invite unto the Fire, and Allah inviteth unto the Garden, and unto forgiveness by His grace, and expoundeth thus His revelations to mankind that haply they may remember. The food of those who have received the Scripture is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them. And so are the virtuous women of the believers and the virtuous women of those who received the Scripture before you lawful for you when ye give them their marriage portions and live with them in honor, not in fornication, nor taking them as secret concubines. Whoso denieth the faith, his work is vain and he will be among the losers in the Hereafter. This verse provides the textual basis for the Muslim canon law, which allows inter-marriage between Muslim men and Jewish or Christian women, but prohibits Muslim women from marrying Jews or Christians. Two comments are called for. Second, the basic mood, which pervades the verse, is one of reciprocal symmetrical liberalism with regard to the food and virtuous women of both Muslims, and those who have received the Scripture earlier. The emphasis of the text is upon virtuously living together in proclaimed wedlock rather than in maintaining clandestine relations between the sexes, irrespective of their religion. Now the traditional interpretation of the Qurainc verse does two rather unwarranted things, which erode the basic liberal humanistic thrust of the Quranic text. Second, it confines the permissibility of inter-marriage to the marriage of Muslim men with Jewish or Christian women. This interpretation will not stand in the light of careful analysis of the letter and the spirit of the Quran itself. If so, the people of, say, India and China, are as much the people of the book as the people of Palestine. Why then should their women be excluded from marrying Muslim men? Second, the one-sided permission of Muslim men to marry Jewish or Christian women does not make sense. Muslim commentators and jurists defend this asymmetrical permission of inter-religious marriage on the ground that the male partner will dominate the upbringing of the children who will automatically become Muslims. But this reasoning assumes that the influence of the father upon the progeny is invariably greater than that of the mother. This assumption is, however, not borne out by actual experience. Quite often the mother plays a more dominant and inspiring role in the education and training of her progeny. It is, therefore, a facile view that the spiritual health of the family will remain satisfactory if a Muslim male is married to a non-Muslim but not if a Muslim women is married to a non-Muslim. In the final analysis, the character and integrity of the spouses and their temperamental compatibility, quite irrespective of their professed religions, will determine the spiritual and material well being of the family. Let us now turn to the Quranic verse, 2: The prohibition of marriage in this verse applies symmetrically to idolaters and idolatresses. This approach, however, ignores the crucial fact that it is always a person or individual who practices idolatry or abstains from it, the group having no existence apart from the individuals composing it. In other words, the proper object of the judgment in question or the proper referent of the Quranic prohibition ought to be individuals rather than an entire group as such. Moreover, and this consideration is equally crucial, every large religious group always comprises

sub-groups or sects based upon internal distinctions or differences of various kinds. As a result of these internal distinctions any blanket dichotomous classification of the members of the group becomes extremely misleading. For instance, Hindus who belong to the Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj reject idolatry as much and as categorically as the Muslims themselves. The same applies to the Sikhs. Why, then, should they be subject to the Quranic prohibition on marriage of Muslims and idolaters? Again, numerous individual Hindus repudiate idolatry both in theory and practice, though they do not object if their co-religionists wish to practice it. In other words, it does not stand to reason to hold the entire Hindu community or group to be idolaters. In the light of the above analysis it appears that the correct or valid interpretation of the Quranic text would be that a Muslim should not marry such Hindus who are idolaters. Now this is a very different proposition from placing a total and unconditional ban upon inter-marriage between members of the different religious groups. To put the matter more directly, the deciding factor for attracting the clear Quranic prohibition should be the actual faith and practice of the parties to the marriage rather than any blanket judgment on the community as a whole. Let me try to explain my point by giving a hypothetical example. Suppose the Quran had prohibited Muslims from marrying a liar without specifying any other details. It is pre-eminently reasonable to hold that this prohibition would have applied to individual liars rather than to any particular group based on religion, region or race. Moreover, the proper way to act upon the Quranic injunction would have been actually to investigate whether or not a person is a liar rather than declare any particular religious, racial, regional or occupational group as liars who automatically attract the said Quranic prohibition. There is another very vital consideration, which would confirm the rightness of the view that the Quranic text must be interpreted, as applicable to individuals rather than a group as a whole. The Quranic verse 5: Now, while the Jews are conspicuous for their absolute repudiation of idol worship and their unqualified acceptance of pure monotheism, the same cannot be said of the Christians because of their commitment to the dogma of trinity. Indeed, numerous Islamic theologians honestly believe that the said Christian dogma involves associating others with the one God and that this amounts to polytheism shirk. If so, the marriage of a Muslim male with a Christian woman deemed permissible by verse 5: Now this would land Muslims in a quandary. The only way to resolve this contradiction is to accept the view that the concerned Quranic verses apply to individuals rather than to groups as a whole. On this interpretation the marriage of a Muslim, whether male or female, would be permissible with a non-Muslim provided he or she is not a polytheist and does not practice idolatry. Marriage is a contractual relationship between two individuals, according to Islam. If the contractual parties do not stand in the list of prohibited degrees of marriage, as given in the Quranic text, as such, Quran, 4: A Muslim marrying a non-Muslim does not violate any basic tenet of Islam so long as the non-Muslim, as an individual, does not commit himself or herself to idolatry. The Islamic canon law shariah already allows Muslim males to marry Jewish or Christian women. This amounts to accepting, in principle, the idea of inter-religious marriage. This step was a notable, rather a revolutionary, advance made by Islam in the direction of the humanistic concept of marriage as a loving contract between individuals irrespective of their religion. There is nothing wrong for Muslims to develop the nucleus of the humanistic approach to marriage, already found in the Islamic tradition, to its full and logical conclusion. The above suggestion will not appeal to conservative Muslim opinion. But new interpretations within a tradition, provided they are essentially productive of human welfare, gradually overcome the natural and quite understandable resistance to change. The following is a random but good sample. Muslim theologians at one time opposed the printing of the Quran and also books in general. The same applied to translating the Quran in different languages. Many Muslim and Catholic theologians are still opposed to family planning. Several Muslim theologians and jurists oppose music, drama, and painting of animal forms on various grounds. The pursuit of free enquiry, the freedom of conscience, and equal rights to women are deemed to be unIslamic by many learned Muslims. Yet profound changes, slowly but steadily, have taken place in different Muslim societies. It is a different matter that the pace of change has been slow to the point of exasperation, if not despair. However, the pace is likely to increase considerably due to the continuing technological revolution, in general, and the communications revolution in particular. The

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thought and value systems of Christianity and Hinduism have responded much more positively and vigorously to the requirements and demands of the modern age. But, unfortunately Islam has been left behind in the quest for a suitable reconstruction of its basic concepts and values to meet new challenges posed by the contemporary human situation. Creative Christian and Hindu scholars and savants have projected their religions in a manner that could claim an almost universal appeal. But most Muslim scholars and divines still equate the medieval Islamic paradigm with the essence of the Islamic faith. However, I honestly and respectfully submit that the humanistic interpretation of the Quranic texts on the subject of inter-religious marriage is an intrinsically valid insight rather than a mere pragmatic adjustment to the present global society marked by emerging democratic pluralism. Perhaps, the most common objection is that children of a mixed marriage are exposed to conflicting religious and moral messages in their formative years due to the opposed beliefs and practices of their parents and wider family members. If both the parents are indifferent to religion than children are spared the evil effects of the divided concerns of their parents, but then they are in the danger of losing all concern for religious and spiritual values altogether. It is further said that religious differences may not prove detrimental in the early years of marriage. But with the passage of time the mischief begins unless one of the spouses subordinates him or herself to the other. The argument goes on to say that while a lot of adjustment is needed in every marriage even when the couple profess the same religion the degree and type of adjustment required in an inter-religious marriage become forbidding. I shall first deal with the social psychological argument and then come to the cultural side of the issue of inter-marriage. It is true that the possession of a common or similar religious background is very helpful in promoting family harmony. But having a common or similar cultural and economic background is no less important. However, the single most important pre-condition of a happy and harmonious family life is temperamental and sexual compatibility of the spouses. In the absence of this compatibility a common religion will be of little avail. The objection that the clash of religious rituals, ceremonies and festivals prevents the couple from sharing their religious life does not hold good. This type of loving and active sympathy indeed, gives immense joy and elevates the human spirit. To give a personal instance, I once happened to travel in the same railway compartment as a distinguished Hindu lawyer of Aligarh. He was known to be an atheist in his circle of friends. As soon as the train reached the Ramganga Bridge, near Bareilly, my friend took out some coins, placed them in the hands of his wife and then threw them into the river below in the orthodox Hindu fashion. Soon afterwards the atheist lawyer gently explained to me that he had done so solely out of respect for his wife and that he himself did not at all approve of this form of venerating river goddesses. True understanding does not necessarily lead to actual commitment. But it enables one to pass from the outer ritual or symbol to the inner core of the faith and to see the world as it appears to the believer. I shall now examine the view that religious faith cannot flourish in adult life unless parents and teachers inculcate it in the childhood or early youth.

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Chapter 6 : The Role Of Faith In Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution

The Jerusalem Inter-Religious-Educational Leadership Program (JELP) is a 3-year program of inter-religious dialogue and experiential workshops for high school educators in the Jewish and Arab sections of East and West Jerusalem.

Sponsored by Pakistan and the Philippines, the text reaffirmed the solemn commitment of all states to fulfill their obligations to promote universal respect for, and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Govt on toes to facilitate Tharparkar: DC Terrorism, blasphemy and forced conversions: Following the Quetta blast, security at places of worship has been beefed up across the country. However, majority of the 1, worship places of minorities present in Sindh still lack permanent security arrangements. The lethargy in the attitude cannot be helped but noticed. Pakistan has ranked sixth on the list of the countries where Christians are most persecuted, according to the world watch list In November last year, the Sindh Assembly passed a bill against the practice of forced conversions in the province, particularly in the case of the Hindu community. Their main objection was to the provision stipulating that the conversion of underage individuals would not be formally recognised until they reach the age of majority. Putin briefly meets Trump in Paris Monologues and dialogues: Laws and their amendments put forth in the parliament do receive a debate, but often progress is hampered by some frantic reactions, as evident in the case of forced conversion law. When debates take place in social forums, only a few voice their concerns openly at the stifling atmosphere in the country and they also fear for their lives. Occasionally, there may be gatherings of inter faith harmony, but only for promotional purposes and declarations of love, brotherhood and tolerance only for the time being. The oft quoted but sadly disregarded are the words of the founder of the nation, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. In an address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan few days before the independence, he had stated: You will find that in course of time Hindus will cease to be Hindus and Muslims will cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as the citizens of the State. Not many years after and in complete oblivion to the statement quoted above, Khawaja Nazimuddin, the second prime minister of Pakistan and one of the leading founding fathers of the country had said: Liverpool tops as Chelsea gets held by Everton I do not agree that religion is a private affair of the individual nor do I agree that in an Islamic state every citizen has identical rights, no matter what his caste, creed or faith be. They will have no voice in the making of the law, no right to administer the law and no right to hold public offices. Our hearts bleed at the atrocities committed in Kashmir, we storm the streets at the injustices done in Palestine, and we gawk at the cold blooded ethnic cleansing in Myanmar, but avoid talking about the inhumane practices in our country on the pretext of blasphemy. Muhammad Ali Jinnah declared that non-Muslims would be equal citizens in the new country. We need to first convince ourselves and then the others, that equality for all citizens of Pakistan, regardless of religion, is their fundamental right. We need to educate ourselves, not only on the contributions made by all sectors of the society, but the horrors afflicted on them despite them being loyal to the country. We need to cooperate with others, in believing that we are all Pakistanis. The day when a Muslim in Pakistan will stand shoulder to shoulder with a non Muslim and feel the pain of injustice as his own, will be the day when an atmosphere of peace and nonviolence could be promoted. We could start today.

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Chapter 7 : Interfaith dialogue - Wikipedia

"Not without my Muslim neighbours": My encounters with Muslims and commitment to inter-religious dialogue Summary & Comment: "Not without my Muslim neighbours" is the motto of Richard Nnyombi, a member of the Missionaries of Africa and an Assistant to the Superior General of the Society.

Interreligious Dialogue is defined as: Interreligious dialogue, also referred to as interfaith dialogue, is about people of different faiths coming to a mutual understanding and respect that allows them to live and cooperate with each other in spite of their differences. The term refers to cooperative and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions, i. Each party remains true to their own beliefs while respecting the right of the other to practise their faith freely. Interfaith dialogue is not just words or talk. It includes human interaction and relationships. It can take place between individuals and communities and on many levels. For example, between neighbours, in schools and in our places of work - it can take place in both formal and informal settings. In Ireland, Muslims and Christians live on the same streets; use the same shops, buses and schools. Normal life means that we come into daily contact with each other. Dialogue therefore, is not just something that takes place on an official or academic level only – it is part of daily life during which different cultural and religious groups interact with each other directly, and where tensions between them are the most tangible. Increase mutual understanding and good relations. Identify causes of tension in Christian Muslim relations. These are often economic, social or political rather than religious. Build understanding and confidence to overcome or prevent tensions. Break down the barriers and stereotypes which lead to distrust, suspicion and bigotry. Interfaith Dialogue is not: About talking away or brushing aside differences. It does not aim at coming to a common belief. A way of converting the other. In dialogue each party remains true to their own faith. A space for arguing, attacking or disproving the beliefs of the other. It is about increasing mutual understanding and trust. Below are two quotations that highlight the urgency and need for Muslims and Christians to cooperate. It is, in fact, a vital necessity, on which in large measure our future depends. Without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world. The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians. In a world which desires unity and peace, but experiences a thousand tensions and conflicts, should not believers favour friendship between the men and the peoples who form one single community on earth? Dialogue between Christians and Muslims is today more urgent than ever. It flows from fidelity to God. Sometimes, in the past, we have opposed and even exhausted each other in polemics and in wars I believe that today God invites us to change old practices. We must respect each other and we must stimulate each other in good works on the path to righteousness. From a speech delivered to over 80, Muslims in Casablanca. These statements highlight the urgent need for Muslims and Christians to address the polarisation that is growing between them. This has been fuelled by wars, persecution, injustices and by individuals and groups stirring up religious divisions to achieve political or material gain. Dialogue between Muslims and Christians is needed now more than ever before to address the issues causing this growing division. Here in Ireland, over the past twenty years the Muslim population has grown to almost 50, Muslims are a permanent part of the Irish community. While the process of integration in Ireland has a long way to go, it is true to say that so far it has been a positive experience. Comparatively speaking, in Ireland, the relationship between Muslims and Christians is very good. This is not so much because of what we have done or achieved but because: Neither have we experienced the explosion of right-wing xenophobic politics evident in other European countries. As a result of these factors the distrust and violence that marks the relation-ship between Muslims and Christians in some places is currently not evident in Ireland. These advantages greatly increase the possibility of Muslims and Christians living together in peace, harmony and cooperation. Yet we do not live in isolation – we are influenced by what we hear in the media and by what is happening elsewhere in the world. Key to this is the promotion of respect and understanding between Muslim and Christian neighbours in local streets and residential areas. Members of

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both faiths need to come to know each other personally. Local interfaith contact, cooperation and interaction, in short dialogue, is of great importance as it makes a major contribution in helping to create an integrated and cohesive community at ease with diversity and secure in a sense of common purpose.

Chapter 8 : Inter-Religious Marriage And Islam - IslamiCity

The resource includes downloadable material under the title, Inter-religious Dialogue from a Catholic Perspective. Via this resource the Diocese hopes to better equip its members with an understanding of the basics of inter-religious dialogue and how to engage in such dialogue.

Chapter 9 : CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE?

Inter-religious dialogue is one topical issue that is promoted in the modern time. It is an issue which dominated the minds of Muslim thinkers and theologians.